



## **Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Utilization Among Home Economics Education Graduates of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria**

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**Abstract.** The paper looked at the entrepreneurial skills acquisition and utilisation of skills among the home economic graduates of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State Nigeria. It critically examines the concepts of the key terms, Entrepreneurship skills acquisition and home economics education. The paper has also tried to look at the unemployment rate in Nigeria. The concept of entrepreneurial skills acquisition is seen as the training that provides experience and skills that are suitable for self-employment of graduates, with the help of creativity, innovation and foresight. While home economics is the field of study that is concerned with strengthening individual and family life that provide functional knowledge for self-reliance. The paper went further to look into utilisation of skills in home economic which involves food and nutrition skills, clothing and textiles skills, home management skills, child development skills and housing and design skills. Utilisation of the above mention skills will equip, inculcate the sense of self-reliance and promotes healthy interpersonal relationship. At the end the paper gives some recommendations on how to improve the quality of both entrepreneurial skills acquisitions and utilisation of skills of graduates.

### **1. Introduction**

Entrepreneurship programmes is also learn and embraced by many tertiary institutions in United State of America, East Asia, Latin America and Africa, but there is a concern that many training institutions offer very little entrepreneurial skills (Odia 2013). Over recent years huge policy weight has been placed upon the shoulders of entrepreneurial skills globally for employment. Entrepreneurial skills have become the magic bullet to solve a range of social and economic problems (Keep and Mayhew 2010) In Scotland there is a remarkable consensus across political parties about the importance of entrepreneurial skills (Scottish Government 2010). Entrepreneurial skills in Uganda, it is observed that TechnoServer, an international non-profit business development organization, implements a business training program called Women Mean Business(WMB) in four cities in central Uganda, namely Kampala, Entebbe, Jinja and Mukono (Fischer, Karlan and Startz, 2014).The objective is training and mentoring programs in Uganda, which aimed at helping female entrepreneurs develop the skills they need to run thriving business.

The need for entrepreneurial skills acquisition started in Nigeria in the mid 1980s when the

economy collapsed due to political instability and inconsistencies in the socio-economic policies of successive governments; this resulted in very high youth and graduate unemployment (Arogundade 2011). Graduates of tertiary institutions were not having sound knowledge and skills which would make them self-reliant. This led to the introduction and emphasis on entrepreneurial skills, owing to the belief that its introduction into tertiary education would lead to acquisition of skills that would enable its graduates to be self-reliant and consequently reduce unemployment problems (Odia 2013). Entrepreneurial skills training incorporates the total learning experience offered in the educational institutions that can impact knowledge, ideas and abilities to make matured judgement and be in a position to create goods and services in the area of home economics education, business education, industrial technical education, agricultural education and other courses. The Federal Republic of Nigerian Policy on Education (2008) states that, one of the goals of Education in Nigeria is acquisition of appropriate skills, the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. The policy also implies that any program that will qualify as education in Nigeria should not just offer certificate alone it must be work oriented. This will go a long way in solving unemployment problems.

## **2. Concept of Entrepreneurial skills acquisition**

The word entrepreneurship descends from the French word 'entreprendre' which indicates an act which the individual attempts, tries, and undertakes as an act of some sort. According to Lemo (2013), entrepreneurial skills acquisition is the training that provides experience and skills that are suitable for entrepreneurial endeavours. Entrepreneurial skills acquisition therefore; trains graduates with entrepreneurial knowledge, competence and skills needed for self-reliant (Pakpa 2013). In line with the above definitions Osemek (2012) defines entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new with value by devoting

the necessary time and effort. According to Ndumanya (2012) Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is a specialized training given to student or trainees to acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment than being employed for pay. The entrepreneurial skills acquisition attributes for this study included Innovations, Creativity, and foresight, whereas utilisation of skills in home economics education included Food and Nutrition skills, Clothing and Textiles skills, Home Management skills, Family and Child Development skills, and Housing and Design skills.

## **3. Concept of Home Economics Education**

Home economics education is the key player in entrepreneurship development process and so has an important role to play in reducing massive graduate unemployment and the social menace which it represents. This is in line with Achor (2012) who defines Home economics education as "a self-reliance oriented field of study whose central theme hinges on the improvement of the lives of everyone in the society". It is a vocational subject that aimed at helping people develop desirable social attitude and skills necessary for the world of work, resourcefulness and ability to adapt to life's changing situation (Odo 2011). Home Economic Education operated within the realms of the national policy on education (2008) for self-reliance and gainful employment through functional education. Home Economics Education is that educational process which prepares man for successful family and community living. It is also a form of education that impacts in man all the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are essential to one's all-round successful development, this emulates improving man's creativity in life.

Fortunately home economics has several opportunities in both small and medium scale business. This gives the individual opportunity for gainful self-employment. Home economics related utilization of skills relayed on:

- Food and Nutrition Skills

Fast food vending catering services, Bakery-Bread making, snacks, cake making and decoration, Ice cream business, Restaurant management, preparing of fruits drink, e.g zobo drink, bottling of groundnut, grounded pepper, and other spices.

- Clothing and Textiles Skills

Fashion designing (men/women apparel), Tile and dye/batik production, embroidery, dressing (saloon), Fashion school operation, Bridal shop, and making of children apparel

Home Management Skills

Soap and body cream production, laundry and cleaning services, Rug cleaning services and housekeeping.

- Child development Skills

Nursery management, day-care centres and baby sitting

- Housing and design Skills

Interior decoration, Toys and gift shop and Making of craft

The above innovative skills offered under home economics education will provide individual with the necessary skills/tools for further creative work. Utilisation of skills on the above mention skills may require creativity, innovation and foresight to be inculcated into the students. This will enhance the graduates productivity, effectiveness and efficiency on utilization of skills. It will also reduce the problem of unemployment among the graduates.

#### 4. Unemployment in Nigeria

In today's world, the twin challenges of unemployment and poverty are facing graduates of tertiary institutions and professionals owing to the global economic meltdown and economic recessions in most countries including Nigeria. The government braces up to these challenges through the various programmes and entrepreneurial initiatives. (Odia 2013). Unfortunately, the unemployment rate for 2011 stood at 23.9% translating to about 40 million of the population and the average youth unemployment rate was an appalling 46.5 % (Lemo 2013). Recently, the National Bureau of Statistic (2016) put the unemployment rate in the first quarters of 2016 at 12.5%. The current rate of unemployment in Nigeria and global growth

in technology places increased demands for students to be skilful and productive. Kolawole (2012) reported further that government and private sectors need to generate more than 2.5 million jobs each year since around 60% of Nigerian graduates are unemployed. This shows clearly that the Nigerian graduate's unemployment situation is increasing drastically. Entrepreneurial skills acquisition remains the only viable option to create jobs and to reduce unemployment, poverty and empower the graduates to develop businesses, pursue their dreams and contribute to overall productive capacity and national economic growth and development.

#### 5. Creativity and Utilisation of Skills in entrepreneurship

Creativity has been identified as one of the most distinct of human attributes. It is indeed a special case of problem solving in which originality is emphasized. According to Achor (2012) creativity is the disposition to make and recognise valuable innovations. It manifests itself in the ability of the individual to create his own symbols of experience. A person is said to be creative if he has the ability to combine or rearrange established patterns of knowledge in a unique fashion. Creativity is the fundamental premises and genesis of entrepreneur activity, creativity is not exclusive right possession of a chosen few. It is in all human being though in varying degrees: however, training has been found to increase the manifestation of creative abilities (Ihensekhein and Cas-Ogiegbaen 2014). This is a major function of home economics education, it inculcate in the individual with skills of creativity.

However, if an individual graduate from Home Economics Education, that individual has the secret of creativity and a key to job opportunities. In order to become creative in home economics it is necessary to discipline the mind, to learn to operate with open mind to new things (Ihensekhein and Cas-Ogiegbaen 2014). This is done by overcoming the natural barriers to the mind and starts to challenge the various approach to situation. Creativity cannot be taught but can be developed in people by using planned strategies and techniques. Home

Economics is a study that offers numerous occupations for individuals. As a skill oriented course, it possesses the capability of equipping individuals with saleable skills that equip them for self employment, as well it helps individual to attain a useful and satisfying life and to be self reliant (Ahmed, 2010). The role of Home Economics teachers or instructors is very important for fostering creativity among students. A well directed experiment in Home Economics Education can generate in the students, plenty of new ideas and thus pave the way for further experiment and creative art.

Creativity has been associated with the uniqueness of Home Economics Education in many areas that involves development of new ideas or products. Oyindoyin (2013) noted that researchers in the area of creativity have used terms such as innovation, novelty, imagination, discovery, newness, ingenuity, uniqueness/unusualness, intuition and invention to describe the nature of creativity in any area of life and not just in Art. Really, creativity is a systematic process that involves critical thinking in order to produce newness or uniqueness in product. Alonge (2010) identified the indigenous textiles and craft in Nigeria that Home Economists produced adding creativity through the use of raw items such as: Tie and dye/Batik, weaving of mat, cane and textiles, pottery making of flower vase and pots for interior decoration, beads work of key holders, necklace, bags, and bangles among others. Other skills that involves creativity includes; making of Throw pillow production, soap making production, air freshener production, wall hangers production, curtain holders production, pastry production, pomade production, footman production, bed sheet production and table mats production among others. Akunnaye (2012) defines skills as those skills that will enable the individual to maximise the resources around him within the limits of his capabilities. Home economics education is inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans- disciplinary. It is a field of study with various marketable skills that can ensure self reliance and management. Mbah (2001) labels home economics education as the people's profession because it is a multidiscipline functional delivery system. Achor (2012) define

home economics as that field of study that is concerned with strengthening individual and family life by providing functional knowledge and skills Utilisation. Achor, (2012) opines that home economics education is a means through which the individual may be led to a stronger growth and development, thus enabling him to take responsibilities in the family and society.

## **6. Innovations and Utilisation of skills in entrepreneurship**

Innovation is change that creates new dimension of performance uses. The term innovation is referred to ideas or practice that is within the context of the school. Another definition of innovation involves newly introduced method, customs device, change in the way of doing things, renew, and alter among others. Onu (2014) view Innovation as a means of doing things differently in different ways. Home Economics education today is not a field for the mere Courage and imagination, but a course that is needed in developing an innovative programme to meet the challenges of the present and foreseeable future in interpreting programmes, which needs a demanding funds and facilities to carry out these programmes (Chiduma and Emelue 2011).

Home Economics is a profession with more than a hundred years of global history. Celebration for the centennial of the establishment of the international federation for the home economics (IFHE) peaked at the world congress in 2008, and the American Association of family and Consumer Sciences celebrates its centenary in 2009. Given these milestone, which trumpet the longevity of the profession, it is timely to reflect on what could be regarded as one of the defining and enduring influences on the establishment, continued development, and the future of the field- the place and importance of generational theory. According to Alonge (2010) Home economics is described as a combination of innovative development, healthy life style, social responsibility, sustainable development and use of resources and cultural heritage. The innovation in home economics focus on nutrition education and food culture, family studies, consumer and environmental issues, all

based on human aspects and everyday life. Ahmed (2010) identifies a philosophical shift in practice and pedagogy for home economics, with positive outcomes for students. This shift includes: encouraging students to clarify their own ideas, make their own decisions, use critical analysis, reflect on their learning, use research tools and strategies, explore issues, and encourages discussions, group work, and “ensuring higher order tasks involving the generation, application, analysis, and synthesis of ideas”.

### **7. Foresight and Utilisation of skills in entrepreneurship**

Foresight is one of the most important factors for any organisation. According to Panagiotakopoulos (2013), it is one of the five factors that determine the existence of any organization, as they put foresight on an equal footing with men, money, machines, and morale. The ingredients of utilisation of skills lie within foresight and the internalised drive toward dominant thought of the moment (Rabby 2010). Foresight directly links to individual performance that gain to organisation performance and as a catalyzer for all individual employees working for an organization to enhance their working performance or to complete task in much better way than they usually do. Organization runs because of people working for it, and each person contributes toward achieving the ultimate goal of an organization. Panagiotakopoulos (2013) concluded that factors affecting staff utilisation of skill is at a period where the financial rewards are kept to the least leads to stimulate employee’s performance. Similarly Dysvik and Kuvaas (2010) concluded that intrinsic foresight was the strongest predictor of turnover intention and relationship between mastery-approach goals and turnover intention.

As per Kuo (2013) a successful organization must combine the foresight and utilisation of internal employees and respond to external changes and demands promptly to show the organization’s value. Foresight is the heart of every productive and successful business lays a thriving organizational culture and hardworking people collaborate passionately to produce great

result (Gignac and Palmer 2011). In line with the above literatures it gives clear indications on how foresight enhances the performance of employee’s utilisation of skills for the benefit of the organization. Vuori and Okkonen (2012) stated that foresight helps to share knowledge through an intra-organizational social media platform which can help the organization to reach its goals and objectives. Also as summarized by Park (2010), foresight can be monetary incentive acts as a stimulus for greater action and inculcates zeal and enthusiasm toward work, it help an employee in the recognition of achievement. More also Beretti, Figuieres and Grolleau (2013) discussed that foresight on monetary incentives used to build a positive environment and maintain a job interest, which is consistent among the employee and offer a spur or zeal in the employees for better skills utilization and performance. Other dimensions of foresight that can influence skills utilization could be on training, job transfer, job satisfaction, promotion, Achievement, working condition, appreciation, job security, recognition, and social opportunities.

### **8. Conclusion**

It is certainly obvious in black and white that home economics education as a field of study provides so many job opportunities for one’s self and household, there is no private enterprise without an element of domestic work. Thus, all the work performed by the Home Economist need initiation and creativity; that will add beauty, longevity, health and durability of a product apart from the old knowledge of the product known by the people. In all the definitions of home economics, functionality is emphasised, this implies the ability of an individual to utilise skills gained or acquired and be able to relate it to real life situations and solve their needs. Home economics education and skills utilisation are two sides of the same coin. Home economics education is the key player in skills utilisation development process and so has important role to play in reducing massive graduate unemployment and the social menace which it presents. Boosting the skills utilisation also benefitted government, as skills hold out the promise of reducing unemployment, poverty and income inequality and for families

to be happier, healthier, fairer and more successful lives.

### Recommendations

Only graduate in home economics should be allowed to teach home economics courses both in primary, secondary and higher institution for effective entrepreneurial skills acquisition and utilisation of skills.

Well equipped home economics laboratories should be provided by the government in public universities and it should be made mandatory in private universities.

Teachers salaries and allowance should be paid at when due, this will motivate the zeal of imparting proper entrepreneurial skills and utilisation of skills by the graduates.

Where ever the home economics graduates are, they should be allowed to use their initiatives in creativity, innovation and foresight for entrepreneurial skills and utilisation of skills to enhance productivity.

Frequent seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for home economics graduates by the International Federation for the Home Economic (IFHE) or by the Home Economics Teachers Association of n Nigeria (HETAN) to update their knowledge.

Government should support and motivate the home economics graduates with recognition and incentives to start their own business instead of waiting for white collar jobs. This will surely help in reducing the unemployment problems.

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