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Classroom Teacher's Adherence to Philosophy and Ethics of Home Economics for Sustainable Development in Anambra State Nigeria (Pp 439-450)

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Abstract

This study analyzed and discussed the philosophy and goals of education, evaluating them on how classroom teachers adhere to the ethics of home economics for sustainable development in Anambra state, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used and the sample, randomly selected, was made up of two hundred (200) home economics teachers in public (government owned) secondary schools in Anambra state, through the random sampling method. A structured questionnaire used for data collection was analysed with mean ratings. Findings indicate that the teachers are aware of the philosophy and ethics in home economics and to some extent; they are applying them to maintain their professionalism. However, the adherence to principles of clothing with regards to practical work in choosing clothes, sewing or mending them and how students are to use and care for clothing needs of the family is poor. It was recommended among others, that vocational education teacher, especially home economics

teachers, should adopt an in-dept practical oriented training sessions in classrooms, to be able to pass to the future generation the traditions of home economics.

Key words: Home Economics, Secondary School, Teachers and students, Adherence, philosophy and Ethics, sustainable Development.

Introduction

Home economics, one of the vocational education subjects taught at all levels about all that affects man and his environment. Ukpore (2000) believes that everyone is affected by his environment and so the individual must learn ways of adopting or coping with changes in his environment. The concept of Home economics is based on a conceptual model made up of four components: (1) the goal of home economics (optimum family and individual life); (2) the intervention process; (3) the disciplines working to achieve the goal; and (4) environmental influences (natural, human, behavioural, and human-constructed environment), (Heather, 1991). According to Ukpore (1983) the two basic goals of Home Economics are:

1. To strengthen family life through personal, family and community living and
2. To prepare for employment related to Home Economics.

The above goals of Home Economics emanate from the National Policy on Education for vocational education. These are:

- To provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels.
- To give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically (National Policy on Education, 2004 pp 30-31).
- To achieve the above goals of Home Economics the teacher must adhere to (which means to support or uphold) the philosophy and ethics of the profession.

The philosophy of Home Economics is basically concerned with the everyday living of people, ranging from what they eat to what they wear and the home which they live in. The Philosophy of home economics also

portrays the subject as a vehicle for creating vocational and economic opportunity for girls and women and for educating boys and men about domestic skills (Heggstad, 2009). Thus, one strategy to achieve philosophy of home economics is for the teacher to have a strong philosophy of his or her own, because it will give the teacher the direction as to which she can move. Ukpore (2000), believes that the ultimate goal of home economics is to ensure that man, whether as an individual, family, community or nation, is able to utilize effectively available resources (human and material) for his or her welfare.

Ethics refers to the systematic science of morals, principles, the rules or standard of conduct and moral judgment (Peretomode, 1992). Ethical values are formed in childhood by the examples provided by parents, teachers, and other significant adults (Richards, 2005). Consequently, Home Economics teachers could play significant role in imparting ethical values to students. Examples of ethical values include honesty, kindness, responsibility and trustworthiness. In the educational sector, Educational Ethics describes practical methods used by the 'competent teacher', congruent to the profession that is morally justifiable as what is expected of them. Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981), described the competent Home Economics teacher as a guide, a director and a supervisor of student's activities and not just purveyor of knowledge.

The above indicates that Home Economics can assist in sustainable development. Sustainability is defined as a process of growth that would enhance the quality of life for all people (Johnson, 2000). Atilas and Cude (2002) posited that family and consumer sciences (home economics) is equipped to play a significant role in resource development and sustainability because the profession has made significant contributions to the knowledge base that defines sound management of many types of resources including time, money and human resources. It is also hoped that if home economics is effectively implemented, it could meet the goals for National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2005). The goals include wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value reorientation.

Ajaja (2002) and Uko-Aviomoh (2005), however, lamented the inability of most secondary school graduates of Home Economics to effectively apply occupational skills to ensure productive living. The resultant effect on the students is lack of motivation and low self esteem among students. The

problem of this study is therefore to find out how teachers in secondary schools meet the goals, and philosophy of home economics conforming to the ethics of education in secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the classroom teachers adherence to philosophy and ethics of home economics for sustainable development in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific purposes of this study include to:

1. determine the extent teachers are aware of the ethics of home economics teaching.
2. examine the extent teachers apply the ethics of Home Economics in teaching.
3. determine the extent teachers consider the philosophies of Home Economics teaching adequate.
4. identify the extent teachers consider the philosophy of home economics adequate for teaching the subject.
5. identify the strategies teachers use to improve their adherence to the ethics and philosophy of home economics teaching.

Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. to what extent are Home Economics teachers aware of the ethics of teaching home economics?
2. to what extent do teachers apply the ethics of teaching home economics?
3. to what extent are teachers aware of the philosophies of teaching home economics?
4. to what extent do teachers consider the philosophies adequate for teaching home economics?
5. what strategies do teachers use to improve their adherence to the ethics and philosophies of teaching home economics?

Methodology

The research design used for this research was the descriptive survey method. This type of study intends to collect data from a sample of home economics teachers in government owned secondary schools in Anambra State.

The sample for this study was made up of two hundred (200) home economics teachers in public (government owned) secondary schools, selected randomly from the six educational zones in Anambra State: Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha, and Otuocha.

The instrument used in collecting data for this research survey was a questionnaire titled "Classroom Teachers" Adherence to philosophy and Ethics of Home Economics for sustainable Development (CTAPEHES). It consisted of 24 items based upon the 4 point scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point).

The content and face validity of the research instrument were determined by one expert in Measurement and Evaluation at Delta State University, Abraka Delta State, and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe Anambra State. Based on their suggestions some corrections were made.

Thirty home economics teachers not involved in the study were given the questionnaires to complete. The reliability of the instrument was then determined by Cronbach alpha procedural model which was used in establishing the consistency of the reliability of the research instrument used in conducting the survey. The result was 0.78 which was considered adequate.

The questionnaire was administered and retrieved within a period of eight weeks, due to the geographical terrain. This was done with the help of six research assistants. However, of the two hundred and thirty eight (238) copies administered, thirty eight copies (38) were not completed. Thus 200 of the questionnaires were used for the study.

The analysis of the data obtained in this survey was done with the aid of an arithmetic mean based on a 4-point scale. Thus mean ratings of 2.50 and or above represented agreed, while mean rating below the 2.50 cut off mark was used to represent disagreed (negative perception of home economics teachers).

Results

Research Question 1: *To what extent are Home Economics teachers aware of the Ethics of teaching home economics?*

From data in In Table 1, it is shown that all the items scored a mean above 2.50. These scores indicate that to a great extent, majority of the Home Economics teachers are aware of the ethics of teaching Home Economics stated in table 1.

Research Question 2: *To what extent do teachers apply the ethics of teaching Home Economics?*

From the data in Table 2, it is shown that items 6, 8, 9, and 10 scored above the 2.50 which is the cut off mark. These responses indicate that majority of the Home Economics teachers agreed that they apply the ethics of teaching Home Economics stated in these items. However, item 7 scored below the 2.50 mark which shows that teachers do not agree to the fact that Law courts may regard detention of students after school hours for practical as false imprisonment.

Research Question 3: *To what extent are teachers aware of the philosophy of teaching Home Economics?*

From the data in Table 3, it is shown that all the four items on this table scored above the 2.50 which is the cut off mark. This indicates that the teachers to a great extent are aware of the philosophy of teaching home economics as stated in table 3.

Research Question 4: *To what extent do teachers' consider the Home Economics philosophies adequate for teaching Home Economics?*

From the data in Table 4, it is shown that to a great extent the Table 4 revealed that to great extent teachers consider adequate the philosophy for teaching Home Economics. All the items were scored above 2.50. These scores revealed that home economics teachers consider adequate the philosophy of home economics as stated in table 3.

Research Question 5: *What strategies do teachers use to improve their adherence to the ethics and philosophy of teaching home economics?*

From the data in table 5, it is shown that only item No 18 scored above 2.50 which is the cut off mark. This result indicates that the major strategy used by teachers to improve their adherence to the ethics and philosophy of teaching

home economics was involving the students' in practical aspects of sewing. However, items No. 19, 20, 21 and 22 scored below 2.50 (the mark mean) which indicates that most home economics teachers did not agree to the other strategies stated in Table 5.

Discussion

The responses to research question 1, shows that to a great extent most Home Economics teachers are aware of the ethics of teaching home economics. They agreed that their duty as teachers is to ensure that students right to life and dignity are protected, that no male teacher flogs a female student, and that chemicals and harmful substances in the laboratories must be clearly labelled. The teachers also acknowledge that they must not collect illegal levies from students and that students cannot and should not be used for experiments that are hazardous to health. These results suggest that the teachers are trying to be role models to the students by demonstrating great moral values. Richard (2005) revealed that Laura Jane Harper was a great role model who demonstrated high level of integrity and moral values; that her most compelling commitment was her dedication to students.

Responses to the research question 2 reveals that to some extent teachers apply the ethics of teaching Home Economics. Majority of the teachers agreed that teachers and students must wear safe and recommended clothing's during practical; all cooking gadgets in the laboratory must be checked for safety before use; student's expulsion for any offence during home economics lessons can only be authorized by the principal, and that students should not be denied recreation due to practical lessons. However, it also indicates that teachers did not agree to the fact that Law courts may regard detention of students after school hours for practical as false imprisonment, an indication which suggest that most schools permit teachers to do practical lessons after school. In a round table conference during the 96th Annual conference and expo in Minneapolis, Maxine L. Rowley said that teachers also play role models in schools as they help children know what is right (Roundtable on ethics, 2005).

The responses to research question 3 show that teachers are aware of the philosophies of teaching home economics. For instance, the importance of education should be enhanced to acquire intellectual knowledge that education is essential to acquire maturity that students need education for physical development, and that participation in curriculum development leads to increase in professionalism. These results indicate that the Home

Economics teachers are protecting their profession. As observed by Gina Eubanks “A professional organization safeguards the profession and the profession is safeguarded by what we do” (Roundtable on Ethics, 2005 p.6).

The research question 4 also indicated that to a great extent, teachers consider the philosophies of Home Economics adequate for teaching the subject as all the items scored above 2.50. The respondents agreed that the application of philosophy helps in solving basic problems of education that the use of philosophy helps education policy makers to think more clearly, and Teachers are to teach every one, moral conviction.

Finally, the responses to research question 5 reveals that teachers involve the students in practical aspects of sewing. However the responses also indicates that the teachers do not devote time in teaching the students how to mend their clothes, and that the students do not know how to arrange and organize their household articles including clothes. Students are not taught how to sew for themselves and members of the family, and that students are not taught how to use and care for clothing needs of the family. These findings reveals that there is need to encourage more practical work in schools as done in developed countries including Scotland(European Community, 2006). In order to achieve sustainability, young people should be given opportunity to develop creativity as it enhances sustainability and the goals of NEEDS.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Concluding this research, Educational Ethics have been developed to instil values, morals, and behavioural pattern across the Nigerian Society. It is the way of life in the educational sector and home economics as a vocational education subject is not left out. The goals stated in this research signifies the outcome of vocational education, which results in the knowledge students acquire through the learning process; in this case it was geared towards the application of textile and clothing. This paper also explored how teachers in secondary schools meet the philosophies and ethics in education as it applies to clothing and textile in home economics. It was also found that teachers adhere to the ethics but do not actually engage students in its practices. This could hinder achievement of sustainable development which aims to better the life of people in a nation. The researchers therefore proffered the following suggestions:

- Teachers should apply real live scenario in their methods of practical teaching,

- Devote time for each student in live demonstrations to ensure each student learns the trick of the trade,
- Students should be taken more on excursions to see for themselves the applications of the knowledge they are acquiring,
- Government should provide all the necessary equipment for effective practice and mastery of the field.

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Table 1: Mean scores showing teachers' responses to the extent teachers are aware of the ethics of teaching home economics

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	It is your duty as a teacher to ensure that students right to life and dignity are protected	3.50	Strongly Agree
2	No male teacher should flog a female student	3.10	Agree
3	Chemicals and harmful substances in the laboratories must be clearly labelled	3.30	Agree
4	Teachers must not collect illegal levies from students	3.12	Agree
5	Students cannot be used for experiments that are hazardous to health	3.13	Agree

Table 2: Mean ratings of home economics teacher's responses to the extent teachers apply the ethics of teaching Home Economics

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
6	Teachers and students must wear safe and recommended clothing during practical.	3.22	Strongly Agree
7	Law courts may regard detention of students after school hours for practical as false imprisonment.	2.42	Disagree
8	All cooking gadgets in the laboratory must be checked for safety before use.	2.90	Agree
9	Student's expulsion for any offence during home economics lessons can only be authorized by the principal.	3.12	Agree
10	Students should not be denied recreation due to practical lessons.	2.87	Agree

Table 3: Mean ratings of teachers' responses to the extent teachers are aware of the philosophy of teaching home economics

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
11	Importance of education should be enhanced to acquire intellectual knowledge.	3.22	Agree
12	Educations is essential to acquiring maturity	3.35	Agree
13	Student's need education for physical development	3.20	Agree
14	Teachers must be aware that participation in curriculum development leads to increase in professionalism	3.10	Agree

Table 4: Mean scores showing teachers' responses to the extent teachers consider adequate the philosophy for teaching Home Economics

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
15	The application of philosophy helps in solving basic problems of education.	3.12	Agree
16	The use of philosophy helps education policy makers to think more clearly.	2.92	Agree
17	Teachers are to teach every one's moral conviction	3.32	Agree

Table 5: Mean scores showing teachers' responses to the strategies teachers use to improve their adherence to the ethics and philosophy of teaching home economics

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
18	Teachers involve the students in practical aspects of sewing.	2.65	Agree
19	Teachers devote time in teaching the students how to mend their cloths.	1.72	Disagree
20	Students are aware on how to arrange and organize their households articles.	2.37	Disagree
21	Students are taught how to sew for themselves and members of the family.	2.07	Disagree
22	Students are taught how to use and care for clothing needs of the family.	2.10	Disagree