



Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skills and Its Utilization among the Home Economics graduates of Federal College of Education Zaria. A Case Study of Home Economics Graduates in two Geopolitical Zones of Kaduna State

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the current rate of unemployment in Nigeria which places an increased demand for students to acquire skills that may enable them to become self-reliant and compete in the global market after graduation. For this study three (3) entrepreneurial skills and their utilization among the graduates of Home Economics in two geopolitical zones of Kaduna state were chosen and examined. The three (3) entrepreneurial skills used are creativity skills, innovation skills and foresight skills and its utilization among the graduates. The population consisted of 1,015 Home Economics graduates in two Geopolitical Zones of Kaduna State. The sample size of 205 participants was selected through purposive and random sampling procedures. The questionnaire contains Thirty-five (35) items which were divided into four parts, namely, A, B, C and D. The section was for the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age and qualification. Section B contains Ten (10) questions on innovation skills and their utilization, section C contains Ten (10) questions on creativity skills and their utilization, and the last section D also contains Ten (10) questions on foresight skills and their utilization, while out of the 205 administered questionnaire, only 156 were returned valid. The study employed a survey research design, and the data collected was analyzed using frequency, mean and standard deviation. The results show a general agreement on the positive aspects of knowledge and creativity. It shows a general and strong agreement that the items related to innovation are viewed positively and also there is a general agreement across all items related to foresight skills. Recommendations were formulated according to the research's findings.

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INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurial skills acquisition training was imposed in all the tertiary schools of Nigeria in the mid-1980s when the economy collapsed due to political instability and inconsistencies in the socio – economic policies of the successive government. This crisis prompted the introduction and emphasis on entrepreneurial

skills training in tertiary institutions, aiming to equip graduates with skills for self-reliance and to mitigate unemployment and societal issues. Consequently, Home Economics Education became closely linked with entrepreneurship, as it plays a critical role in reducing graduate unemployment and has been a vocational

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discipline since before entrepreneurship was formally introduced in schools.

Home Economics Education aligns with its philosophy as outlined by the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), focusing on educating youths for family living, preparing them as intelligent consumers and producers, and enhancing their roles in home, community, and nation. It supports the national policy on education's goals of self-reliance and gainful employment by preparing individuals to contribute positively to their communities and improve family services and goods.

This study specifically examines Home Economics Education graduates from the Federal College of Education Zaria, focusing on their entrepreneurial skills acquisition and application in Kaduna State's two geopolitical zones. The aim is to gather accurate information on how these skills are utilized post-graduation for the benefit of individuals, families, and society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the persistent call by the parents and Stakeholders for the need to introduce a skillful training programmes into the school's curriculum, it has always been observed that majority of our graduates and especially those that had gone through little skills training and those that were expected to have acquired the skills for self-reliance and join the pool of utilization, find it very difficult and impracticable to find their feet on ground being employed or self-employed after graduation, despite having the skills required for creative employment. Graduates in Home Economics programs are equally affected by similar issues (Sunday, 2012). Another dilemma is due to the misconception and low social recognition of the Home Economics course, many people viewed Home Economics course as a type of course meant for only females' dropouts, which involves only cooking and sewing for those with low educational attainment (Ahmed, 2010).

Other studies have also confirmed that Home Economics and its practitioners have image problems in many of the African countries (Anyakoha, 2007). This is so because in most of the African countries the real image of the Home

Economics is not there, people assume that it only involves cooking and sewing. Because of this, the graduates are reluctant to use their newly gained talent, and the field of Home Economics is being stigmatized, leaving it in the ghetto. Therefore, having taken cognizance of the problem of our new generation of university and colleges graduates, this prompted the researchers to carry out a study that looked at the entrepreneurial skills and its utilization among the Home Economics Education graduates in two geopolitical zones of Kaduna state.

Objectives of the Study

The study assessed the entrepreneurial skills and its utilization among the home economics graduates in two geopolitical zones of Kaduna state. The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate the utilization of creativity skills among the Home Economics graduate in two geopolitical zone of Kaduna State.
2. Establish the utilization of innovation skills among the Home Economics graduates in two geopolitical zone of Kaduna State.
3. Determine the utilization of foresight skills among the Home Economics graduate in two geopolitical zone of Kaduna State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Skill in Relation to Home Economics Education

Home Economics is a profession with a rich history spanning over a century, marked by significant milestones such as the centennial celebrations of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) in 2008 and the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in 2009. These events highlight the enduring influence of generational theory on the field's establishment, ongoing development, and future. Alonge (2010) describes Home Economics as encompassing creativity, innovation, foresight, healthy lifestyles, social responsibility, sustainable development, and cultural heritage.

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Entrepreneurial skills are integral to Home Economics, involving the creation of something valuable through time, effort, and risk, leading to financial and personal rewards (Aminu, 2008). Nwoye, as cited in Ibrahim, Mandara, and Soba (2008), emphasizes qualities like creativity, initiative, and innovation as essential for successful entrepreneurship, acknowledging the possibility of failure.

Leebaert (2008) defines entrepreneurial skills as the process of organizing, managing, and taking on business risks. Ezeudu (2008) views entrepreneurial skills as a practical program aimed at developing entrepreneurs through targeted education, which equips individuals with the necessary knowledge, competence, and skills for self-reliance. Bolarinwa (2001) and Nwoye (2007) further support the idea that entrepreneurial education is crucial for preparing individuals for entrepreneurship, fostering self-employment, and contributing to national development. Given the rising graduate unemployment, developing entrepreneurial skills within Home Economics education is essential for empowering graduates and advancing the country.

Needs for Innovation Skills in Home Economics programmes

Innovation in Home Economics involves introducing new methods, practices, and creative approaches within the educational context. Onu (2014) defines innovation as a novel way to approach tasks creatively. The modern Home Economics curriculum requires not only creativity but also significant funding and infrastructure to implement programs that address current and future challenges (Chiduma&Emelue, 2011). Innovation in Home Economics centers on nutrition education, food culture, family studies, consumer, and environmental issues, all grounded in human aspects and daily life. Alonge (2010) describes Home Economics as a blend of creative development, healthy living, social responsibility, sustainable development, and cultural heritage preservation. Ahmed (2010) notes that despite variations across nations, Home Economics consistently adapts to change, incorporating critical and reflective thinking and

metacognition. Common themes include wellness, technology, global interdependence, human development, resource management, and family and community studies. These themes reflect the discipline's focus on addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges while promoting a holistic understanding of the global family.

Needs for Creativity Skills in Home Economics Programmes

Lemchi (2016) highlights a positive philosophical shift in home economics education, emphasizing discussions, group projects, higher-order thinking, decision-making, critical analysis, and reflective learning. Home economics adapts well to change, requiring specialized thinking like critical and reflective thinking, and metacognition. Common themes in Home Economics across nations include wellness, technology, global interdependence, human growth, and resource management, along with family development, food and nutrition, home management, and consumer choice (Allan, 2008).

Creativity, a key aspect of problem-solving and entrepreneurial activity, involves creating and rearranging knowledge uniquely (Achor, 2012). Creativity is fundamental to entrepreneurship, and training enhances creative expression (Ihensekhein & Cas-Ogiegbaen 2014). Home economics education fosters entrepreneurship through skills in areas like clothing, food, home management, and family relations, leading to self-reliance and employment.

Creativity in home economics is characterized by innovation, originality, and inventiveness. Creativity requires critical thinking, viewing problems uniquely, and finding novel solutions (Lopes, 2012). Graduates of home economics education possess skills essential for creative and employment opportunities, achieved through mental discipline and openness to new ideas (Ihensekhein and Cas-Ogiegbaen 2014).

Needs for Foresight Skills in Home Economics Programmes

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In starting scenario planning one need to outlines several steps that can help to build robust plans, which include:

1. Identify a focal issue and then build outward toward that position
2. Outline those forces that can influence the outcome of the scenario
3. Review those forces that are most important to a scenario and those that are most uncertain

Foresight is vital for successful entrepreneurship. Panagiotakopoulos (2013) highlights it as one of five key factors for a company's survival. It is essential for enhancing organizational performance and individual productivity by linking directly to talent utilization (Rabby, 2010). Effective foresight helps employees perform better and complete tasks more efficiently.

Organizational success relies on the effective use of human resources. Panagiotakopoulos (2013) notes that a lack of financial benefits can impact employee performance, while Dysvik and Kuvaas (2010) link intrinsic foresight to reduced turnover intention. A successful firm combines workforce efficiency with visionary and responsive actions (Kuo, 2013). Strong organizational culture and dedicated employees are critical for achieving excellent results when foresight is applied (Gignac and Palmer, 2011). Additionally, foresight aids in knowledge sharing within organizations and leverages social media for goal achievement (Vuori and Okkonen, 2012).

Monetary incentives, as summarized by Park (2010), can boost employee action and enthusiasm, fostering better performance and skill utilization. Beretti, Figuières, and Grolleau (2013) discuss how foresight-related monetary incentives contribute to a positive work environment and sustained employee interest. Other influential dimensions of foresight include training, job satisfaction, promotions, and job security.

Home Economics addresses unemployment by equipping individuals with practical skills for today's job market. According to Anyakoha and Lemchi (2006), Home Economics

identifies and tackles problems impacting families and society, offering solutions through entrepreneurial skills and innovation. These skills are essential for self-reliance and can significantly reduce unemployment, poverty, and associated social issues. Home Economics education provides various opportunities through innovation skills in areas such as food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, home management, child development, and housing design (Ahmed, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed survey research design and the results collected represent all the Home Economics graduates of Federal College of Education, Zaria in Kaduna State. The population consisted of 1,015 Home Economics graduates in two Geopolitical Zones of Kaduna State. The sample size of 205 participants was selected through purposive and random sampling procedure. However, in order to accomplish this study a structured questionnaire was used for data collection from the respondents, while out of the 205 administered questionnaires only 156 were returned valid. The questionnaire contains Thirty-five (35) items which was divided into four parts, namely, A, B, C and D. Section A was for the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age and qualification. Section B contains Ten (10) questions on utilization of innovation skills, sections C contains Ten (10) questions on utilization of creativity skills, and the last section D also contain Ten (10) questions on utilization of foresight skills.

The data collected were analyzed statistically using the statistical package of the social science (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the perception of the respondents on utilization of creativity skills, utilization of innovations skills and utilization of foresight skills among the Home Economics Graduates

RESULTS

This section provides the raw data and outcomes of this study and explains what the results mean. The data collected were analyzed

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statistically using the statistical package of the social science (SPSS). Frequency and percentage were applied for demographic characteristics of respondents, while mean and standard deviation were also used to analyze the perception of the respondents on creativity skills,

innovations skills and foresight skills. The following mean ranges were used to arrive at the mean of the individual indicators and interpretation for the findings of the relationship between the three (3) entrepreneurial skills in home economics and their utilization among the graduates.

Mean	Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
3.26	4.00	strongly agree	Very High
2.51	3.25	Agree	High
1.76	2.25	Disagree	Low
1.00	1.75	strongly disagrees	Very

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics provide insights into the composition of the sample population

used in the study. Here is a detailed breakdown and interpretation of each demographic characteristic:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Gender	F	Age Group	F	Qualification	F	Occupation:	F
Male	0	33-35	37	Diploma	30	Teachers & Self Employed	156
Female	156	36-41	36	NCE	43	Others	0
Total	156	42-47	48	B.Ed.	56	Total	156
		48 and above	35	Masters and Above	27		
		Total	156	Total	156		

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the respondent demographics in this study. All respondents are female, highlighting a homogeneous gender distribution that reflects the perspectives and experiences of women. The age distribution is fairly balanced, with the largest group being those aged 42-47 years (48 respondents). The age groups of 33-35 and 36-41 years follow closely, with 37 and 36 respondents respectively, while the 48 years and above group includes 35 respondents. This diversity in age ensures a broad range of perspectives and experiences across different life stages. Regarding educational qualifications, the largest group holds a Bachelor's degree in Education (B.Ed.), with 56 respondents. This is followed by respondents with an NCE (43 respondents) and a Diploma (30 respondents). The smallest group

comprises those with a Master's degree or higher (27 respondents). The variation in educational background is likely to contribute to a diversity of insights related to foresight skills. The occupation category, though not quantified, indicates that respondents are either teachers or self-employed. This dual occupational status suggests that respondents bring practical and varied experiences, potentially enriching their perspectives on creativity, innovation, and foresight skills. Overall, this demographic diversity, particularly among female educators and self-employed professionals, enhances the relevance and applicability of the study's findings by ensuring a wide range of perspectives and experiences are represented.

Table 2: Utilization of creativity skills of home economics graduates (n=156)

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ITEMS	Mean	STD	Decision
Possess knowledge	3.692	0.463	Strongly Agreed
Applied knowledge	3.647	0.479	Strongly Agreed
Practical work	3.5	0.713	Strongly Agreed
Research on creativity	3.185	0.794	Agreed
Teachers encouragement	2.961	1.163	Agreed
Supervised	3.166	1.084	Agreed
Motivate	3.807	0.395	Strongly Agreed
Enhance products	3.955	0.207	Strongly Agreed
Equipped creativity	2.025	0.753	Disagreed
Cannot compete	1.878	0.557	Disagreed
Total	3.182		Agreed

Table 2 presents the responses on knowledge and creativity among graduates of home economics education, categorized into SA (Strongly Agreed), A (Agreed), D (Disagreed), and SD (Strongly Disagreed). Responses were weighted (SA * 4, A * 3, D * 2, SD * 1), and overall statistics include total scores, mean scores, standard deviations (STD), and decisions based on mean scores. Key findings include shows strong consensus that graduates possess the necessary knowledge for creativity skills, reflected in a high mean and low variability. Decision: Strongly Agreed. There is high confidence in applying creativity skills in various activities, with strong agreement. General agreement exists on the importance of creativity in practical work, with some variability. As such respondents strongly agreed. The table shows a moderate agreement on the importance of research, with notable variability. There are mixed responses on

teachers encouraging creativity, with the lowest mean among "agreed" items and high variability. Hence, they agreed that teachers encourage creativity. The results show the importance of the role of supervision and motivation, though with diverse opinions yet the response have agreed. Strong positive response to self-employed graduates motivating consumers through creativity, with low variability leading to strong Agreement. There is high agreement on using creativity to enhance product attributes, with strong consensus. However, there is disagreement on whether graduates are adequately equipped with creativity skills, indicating diverse views. This implies according to the results that graduates are not adequately equipped with creativity skills. There is also disagreement that graduates are "half-baked" and unable to compete globally, with general consensus.

Table 3: Utilization of Innovation skills of home economics graduates at their various places of work or businesses (n=156)

ITEMS	MEAN= Total/156	STD	Decision
Productivity	3.826923	0.37953	Strongly Agreed
Hard work	3.935897	0.24572	Strongly Agreed
Performance	3.769231	0.43767	Strongly Agreed
Simple	3.858974	0.34916	Strongly Agreed
Management	3.961538	0.19292	Strongly Agreed
Competition	3.583333	0.61127	Strongly Agreed

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Work place performance	3.974359	0.15857	Strongly Agreed
Dynamic	4	0.00000	Strongly Agreed
Challenges	3.955128	0.20768	Strongly Agreed
Sellable	3.339744	0.51427	Strongly Agreed
	3.821154		Strongly Agreed

Table 2 presents total scores, mean scores, standard deviations, and decisions based on the mean. Key findings include strong consensus that embracing innovation enhances productivity, reflected in a high mean of 3.8269 and low standard deviation (0.3795). Innovation strongly encourages hard work, with a mean of 3.9359 and minimal variation (SD 0.2457). Innovation boosts job performance, though with some variability (mean 3.7692, SD 0.4377). Innovation is seen as simplifying work and increasing productivity, with a mean of 3.8590 and low variability (SD 0.3492). Innovation is highly valued for improving time, energy, and resource management, with the highest mean (3.9615) and lowest standard deviation (0.1929). While still positive, innovation's role in global competition shows the most variability, with the lowest mean (3.5833) and highest standard deviation (0.6113). Innovation is highly rated for enhancing workplace and

business performance, with a mean of 3.9744 and very low variability (SD 0.1586).

Innovation is unanimously viewed as dynamic and requiring constant updates, with a perfect mean score of 4.0000 and no variability (SD 0.0000). High agreement on the challenges associated with innovation, with a mean of 3.9551 and low standard deviation (0.2077). The global sell ability of work due to innovation has the lowest mean (3.3397) and higher variability (SD 0.5143), but still receives positive agreement. Overall, the findings show strong agreement that innovation is viewed positively across all items, with mean scores generally near 4. The low standard deviations suggest consistent views, except for "Competition" and "Sellable," which have more varied responses. The unanimous support for the "Dynamic" item underscores a particularly strong positive perception.

Table 4: Utilization on Foresight skills of home economics graduates at their various places of work or businesses (n=156)

ITEMS	Mean	STD	Decision
Work guide	3.615	0.484	Strongly Agreed
Planning	3.673	0.467	Strongly Agreed
Proper planning	3.891	0.310	Strongly Agreed
Bulk buying	3.455	0.776	Strongly Agreed
Work hard	3.942	0.232	Strongly Agreed
Flexibility	3.198	0.726	Agreed
Day to day	3.307	0.871	Strongly Agreed
Dependently fail	3.410	0.961	Strongly Agreed
Optimal profit	3.807	0.392	Strongly Agreed
Apply foresight	3.942	0.232	Strongly Agreed
	3.624		Strongly Agreed

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Table 4 provides an analysis of foresight skills across various items, revealing a general consensus of strong agreement among respondents, with each item receiving a "Strongly Agreed" decision. The findings include high agreement that foresight skills guide home economics graduates in proper work planning. The moderate variability in responses is reflected in the standard deviation. Respondents strongly agree on the value of foresight for planning future circumstances, with low variability indicating consistent views. There is very high agreement that proper planning, organizing, implementation, and coordination are successful due to foresight skills. The low standard deviation shows strong consensus. Although there is agreement that foresight aids in making bulk purchases at cheaper prices, there is notable disagreement, as indicated by a higher standard deviation.

There is extremely high agreement on the importance of foresight in encouraging hard work, with minimal variability in responses, indicating strong consensus. While most respondents agree that foresight encourages flexibility and open-mindedness in conflict resolution, significant variability in responses suggests differing views. There is moderate agreement that graduates learned foresight skills in daily activities before graduation, but the noticeable disagreement and high standard deviation reflect diverse perspectives. General agreement exists that entrepreneurs without foresight skills are likely to fail, but significant disagreement is present, as shown by the high standard deviation. Respondents strongly agree that foresight skills lead to optimal profit in business, with low variability indicating a strong consensus. There is very high agreement on the necessity for all entrepreneurs to learn and apply foresight skills for better productivity, with very little variability in responses.

In summary, the analysis highlights a strong overall agreement on the importance of foresight skills, with most items showing consistent responses. However, items like "Bulk buying," "Flexibility," and "Day-to-Day"

demonstrate more diverse opinions among respondents. The overall decision is "Strongly Agreed" (SA) based on the aggregate mean score of 3.624, indicating a general consensus on the importance of foresight skills. The standard deviation shows moderate variability in responses, reflecting that while there is overall agreement, opinions vary on specific items.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

In Table 2: Which is in line with specific objective one. To establish the utilization of creativity skills among the Home Economics graduates in two geopolitical zones of Kaduna state. The overall finding on the survey shows strong agreement on the positive aspects of knowledge and creativity, with mean scores mostly above 3. Items like "Enhancement of Products" and "Motivation" received the highest ratings, while "Cannot Compete" was the only item with a negative consensus. Variability was highest for "Teachers Encouragement" and "Supervision," indicating more diverse opinions. These findings align with previous studies by Lemchi (2016), Achor (2012), and Ihensekhein and Cas-Ogiegbaen (2014). In Table 3: That looked into objective two, to investigate the utilization of innovation skills among the Home Economics graduate in two geopolitical zones of Kaduna state. The findings of these results show a general and strong agreement that the items related to innovation are viewed positively, most items have mean scores close to 4, indicating a trend towards strong agreement which align with studies by Onu (2014), Chiduma & Emelue (2011), and Ahmed (2010). Specific objective 3 is reflected in Table 4. To determine the utilization of foresight skills among the Home Economics graduate in two geopolitical zones of Kaduna state, and the overall decision is strongly agreed as shown by the aggregate mean score, suggesting a general consensus of agreement across all items related to foresight skills. The study's findings align with the perspectives of Rabby (2010), Kuo (2013), and Vuori and Okkonen (2012).

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CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Home Economics graduates were trained to be successful entrepreneurs. The study also revealed that the Home Economics graduates of the two (2) geo political zones of Kaduna State, serves as government employees or being self-employers of labor. Therefore, based on the findings of this survey it was observed as a paramount importance for the society to embrace the Home Economics programmes as the magic bullet for solving the unemployment issues that course many social problems. The study indicated that the entire respondent where been employed or were self – employed. They are also acquiring more skills and utilize intelligently, in addition to innovation skills, creativity skills and foresight skills. This is so, in order to promote their product, to be successful and be competitive in their business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study elicited the following recommendation:

1. There is need for Stakeholders and Government to give full funding and support to Home Economics programs, being a vocational course that deals with practical's through the use of hands and brain. The students of Home Economics learn more skills through practical and less on theories. Getting required funds for the practical will motivate the students to learn more kills and these will enhance learning adequately.
2. The general public need to embrace and encourage their children to enroll into the Home Economics course, being a course that possesses more potential that can help in eradicating the graduates' unemployment. Home Economics Graduates can be employed or be self – employed and also employed others into their business.
3. Parents, stakeholders and the general public need to be enlighten more on the real image of the Home Economics

course, being a science course and a professional course similar to all the other Professionals courses in our tertiary institutions. However, with the knowledge of Home Economics course, its graduates can work in various sectors and serve conveniently and enhance the productivity of the sector.

4. The Home Economics students need more support and financial grand from the government that can help them to stand on their own and utilize the acquired skills, do their business without looking for white collar jobs. This can help them; help their families and the entire society in general.

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