

Entrepreneurial Skills and Students' Interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study sought to investigate the influence of selected entrepreneurial skills (technical, handiwork and teamwork) on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone of Akwa Ibom State. Three objectives and three hypotheses were formulated to give direction to the study. The study was conducted in Uyo Educational Zone. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consisted of 1,958 Junior Secondary School II students in public schools in the study area offering Home Economics. A sample size of 200 respondents (10% of the population) was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged Entrepreneurial Skills and Students' Interest in Home Economics Questionnaire (ESSIHEQ). The questionnaire had two sections and 25 and was face validated by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 justified the instrument fit to be used in the study. Data obtained was analysed using t-test statistical analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there was significant difference in technical, handiwork and team work skills and students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational zone of Akwa Ibom State. Thus all the null hypotheses were rejected and the alternate ones were accepted. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend amongst others, the training programmes should be organized for Home Economics teachers by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEP) to equip them with the necessary entrepreneurial skills that can promote students' interest in the subject.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills, Students' Interest, Home Economics

Introduction

In the field of Education, Interest has been the pivot that enables a student to be actively involved in any course of study. Interest brings excitement and deep concentration in what is being studied. The concept of interest centres on what an individual values and is able to foster. Kundu and Tutoo (2004) explained interest as an attitude which arranges

our activities in a subjective scale of which an individual displays. Hidi and Renninger (2006) proposed a four-phased model of interest development and deepening of learners' interest. These four-phases are triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, Emerging (less-developed) individual interest and well-developed individual interest. Whenever an individual is grossly interested in a field of study or venture, the individual is determined to make a positive impact. This is what occurs in the field of entrepreneurship, where the entrepreneur utilizes various entrepreneurial skills to achieve pre-designed goals.

Educationally, interest is important for student's involvement in any area of study. The extent to which a student is interested in a particular course of study is indicated by the student's active participation in the study of the subject with resultant good performance in same. Various elements control and determine the rate at which a student's interest is geared towards any area of study (Chauhan, 2007). These elements include learning environment, occupational attractiveness of the course, benefit of the course to the individual, curriculum content, inclusion or exclusion of skills in the teaching and learning of the subject and teacher's teaching abilities. These elements apply in all the fields of study including Home Economics. Home Economics is a family-related discipline. The course deals with improvement of the lives of individuals, family and society at large (Anyakoha, 2009).

Home Economics is a skill oriented discipline and proffers entrepreneurship for practitioners. Entrepreneurship Education is the process of acquiring the knowledge attitudes and skills of entrepreneurship. It equips individuals for creative problem solving and innovation. Skill is referred to as expertness, practiced ability, dexterity and tact (Okorie, 2001). Thus, entrepreneurial skills are those activities both mental and physical, displayed for development of new product. The role of entrepreneurship education is to make students self reliant (Saboe, Kantor and Walsh, 2002). It involves the use of entrepreneurial skills such as technical skill, creativity, handiwork, teamwork and initiative innovation, communication skills, perseverance, self-confidence, drive, decisiveness, among others for wealth creation (Anyakoha, 2009).

Technical skill is the expertise as well as the aptness in operating equipment and machineries used in the course of production to produce high quality goods Onuoha (2010). It is also the specialized knowledge and ability required to perform the primary task inherent in a particular situation. It is connected to the ability to arrange activities such that they go smoothly and simultaneously. Technical skill can be connected to Home Economics in various forms such as preparation of confectioneries, manipulation of equipment like the mixers, egg whisk, gas, electric and microwave ovens. Technical skill is required in the manipulation of needles to produce various designs during crocheting, knitting and weaving.

Handiwork skill entails production of articles and items by use of hand (Onuoha, 2010). Home Economics articles and items can be produced by use of hand and manual energy. Such activities include fabric dyeing, knitting, crocheting, tatting, hair braiding, batik making, hand designing, embroidery, tufting, matting, preparation of snacks amongst others. Other products made by hand include, hats, beaded bags, jewelry and accessories, hand-made scarves, head and hand rests, table, covers, sandals, ties, bed sheets, throw-pillows, aprons (Ogbene, 2006).

A team is a collection of individuals who work towards a common goal (Onuoha, 2010). It is identified by certain characteristics such as pleasing, comfortable and informal

atmosphere; commitment to task by team members; consideration of other team members' ideas; freedom of expression of view by team members; constructive criticisms; cooperation on implementation of decisions; positive example from team leaders; constructive management of difficult situations, among others (Nagarajan 2010). In teamwork, collaboration and Dialogue is also encouraged to bring a balance between team member's differences in knowledge, power, social status, situational role, gender, interpretive frameworks and other factors for positive entrepreneurial direction (Felder and Kaufman, 2000). Teamwork also encourages easy and speedy accomplishment of task since there is division of labour. If abandonment of task by any group member occurs, another group member can be appointed to fill the gap. In Home Economics, there are various activities that teamwork could be incorporated. These activities include house cleaning, gardening, poultry production, cooking and serving of meals, day care management, tie-dyeing, motifs production, cake making, food vending, sewing, peanut production.

Okonkwo (1996) observed that greater proportion of problems currently confronting Nigerians can be traced to the failure of educational institutions to impact the appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude readily available for gainful or self-employment. The issues of entrepreneurship in Home Economics revealed that a lot of entrepreneurial skills can be connected to the different areas of Home Economics such as Ice cream and yoghurt production confectionery/Bakery management, fast food services, restaurant management, milk and fruit drinks production, Jam-making in Foods and Nutrition; weaving, sewing, crocheting, dyeing and batik making, fashion designing, decoration in Clothing and Textile, as well as soap making, body cream production, Nanny and Nursing services, nursery management in Home Management.

Despite the entrepreneurial qualities of Home Economics, it has been observed that in Nigeria, there is poor enrollment of students into the study of Home Economics at the tertiary levels. This could be attributable to the fact that students' interest in Home Economics at the Secondary School level in has dwindled. Usually, students choose courses of study in the tertiary institution while in secondary school, stemming from their prior interest in such subject. In the field of Home Economics, students seem to lose their interest in the course at the Senior Secondary Level due to poor or absence of interest in it at the Junior Secondary School Level. This is evident by the number of students that choose Home Economics options at the Senior Secondary level, as compared to other subjects.

The relevance of Home Economics as a course with entrepreneurial skills cannot be overemphasized. However, to harness the potentials in the discipline, students' interest need to be accessed and rejuvenated. This study therefore sought to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial skills on students' interest in Home Economics in Secondary Schools in Uyo Educational Zone of Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial skills on students' interest in Home Economics in Secondary Schools in Uyo Educational Zone of Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of:

- 1 technical skills and students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

- 2 handiwork skills and students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
- 3 teamwork skills and students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Technical skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone.

H₀₂: Handiwork skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone.

H₀₃: Teamwork skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone.

Methodology

Design of the Study: The survey research design was employed for this study. Survey design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the independent variable is not subject to manipulation. It is a design through which a large population is studied through a representative sample.

Area of the Study: The area of study that was used for the research was Uyo Educational Zone. The Uyo Educational Zone had a total of thirteen Public Secondary Schools as at the time of this research (Statistics Unit, Uyo Local Education Authority, 2012). The zone covers Offot clan, Oku clan, Ikono clan and Etio clan. This zone shares boundaries with Itu, Uruan, Ibesikpo-Austan, Abak and Etinan. Out of the 13 schools, seven of them were offering Home Economics as at the time of this research. The seven Public Secondary Schools were: Community Comprehensive Secondary School, Four Towns; Community Secondary School, Mbak-Etoi Uyo; Community Secondary School, Aka offot- Uyo; Offot Ukwa Secondary School, Uyo; Uyo High School Uyo; Christian Secondary School Uyo; Community Secondary School, Ikot Oku Ikono.

Population of the Study: The population was 1,958 consisting of all Junior Secondary Two (JSS II) students offering Home Economics in Public Secondary Schools in Uyo Educational Zone.

Sample and Sampling Technique: A sample of 200 Junior Secondary Two Home Economics students drawn from the entire population of 1,958 students, representing 10.1% of the population was used. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The sampling technique was chosen in order to obtain a true representation of the population. The sample was divided among the seven schools giving a total of approximately 29 respondents from each school. The sampling technique was chosen to ensure that the sample was equally divided among the seven schools since those schools did not have equal number of students.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire, Entrepreneurial Skills and Students' Interest in Home Economics Questionnaire (ESSIHEQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was on Entrepreneurial skills and was divided into three sub-sections to cater for each of the entrepreneurial skills clusters. Each sub-section had five items, thus, giving a total of 15 items. Section B was on students' Interest in Home Economics.

It had 10 items. The questionnaire therefore, had a total of 25 items. A four-point Scale of Very high, High, Low and Very low was used for the questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument: The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered to respondents who were not part of the sample. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to analyse the data. A reliability coefficient index of .75 was obtained and based on that, the instrument was adjudged reliable.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis Technique: Copies of the questionnaire were distributed by research assistants trained by the researcher and assigned to the Junior Secondary Two Home Economics students of the seven public secondary schools. The questionnaire was administered on-the-spot and collected by the research assistants. This style was chosen to ensure 100% receipt of the questionnaire. T-test statistical analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Technical skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone.

Table 1: t-test analysis of the influence of technical skill on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone

	Technical skill in Home Economics	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Students' Interest in Home Economics	Low	66	29.50	5.20	198	-7.47	1.98	Rejected
	High	134	34.46	3.98				

Table 1 shows that the calculated t-value of -7.47 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. The result is significant, therefore, the null hypothesis that technical skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone is rejected and the alternate is retained. The result means that students with high technical skill show more interest in technical skilled activities associated with Home Economics than those with low technical skill.

Hypothesis 2: Handiwork skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the influence of handiwork skill on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone

	Handiwork skill in Home Economics	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Students' Interest in Home Economics	Low	43	27.02	5.47	198	-10.83	1.98	Rejected
	High	157	34.41	3.45				

In Table 2, the result shows that the calculated t-value of -10.83 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. The result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis that handiwork skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone is rejected and the alternate is retained. The result means that students' with high handiwork skill show more interest in handiwork skilled activities associated with Home Economics than those with low handiwork skill.

Hypothesis 3: Teamwork skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone

Table 3: t-test analysis of the influence of teamwork skill on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo Educational Zone

	Teamwork skill in Home Economics	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Students' Interest in Home Economics	Low	16	25.88	6.91	198	-6.36	1.98	Rejected
	High	184	33.43	4.31				

Table 3, shows the calculated t-value of -6.36 is greater than the critical -t value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. The result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis that teamwork skill does not significantly influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone is rejected and the alternate is retained. The result means that students' with high teamwork skill show more interest in teamwork skilled activities associated with Home Economics than those with low teamwork skill.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis of the null hypothesis on the influence of technical skill on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone revealed that technical skill significantly influences students' interest in Home Economics in the study area. This finding confirms the assertion by Hidi and Renninger (2010) that interest can be maintained through persistence and focus attention in a given activity. The students' who displayed high technical skill that resulted in high interest could do that as a result of persistence in practicing those skills which caused their interest to be maintained at a high level.

The result of the analysis of null hypothesis 2 on the influence of handiwork skill on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone was rejected. Based on the result, it is apparent that the students', who engaged in regular handiwork skills that they were exposed to, displayed more interest for handiwork inclined activities in Home Economics. This result agrees with the declaration of Ogbene (2006) that regular involvement of students' with preparation of handiwork items like scarves, table covers, handkerchiefs, foot mat and hair ruffles, draw students interest towards Home Economics.

Finally the analysis on the null hypotheses 3 on the influence of teamwork skill on students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone was rejected. The findings of the study portrayed that teamwork can influence students' interest in Home Economics. Nagarajan (2010) opined that close attention and focus on flexibility, synergy, comfortable and informal atmosphere for the teamwork can endear students to specific tasks. This implies that teamwork can influence students' interest towards Home Economics in Uyo educational zone.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that entrepreneurial skills such as technical, handiwork, teamwork can influence students' interest in Home Economics in Uyo educational zone and they are therefore considered indispensable for the improvement of students' interest in Home Economics in the study area. It therefore becomes expedient that, to save the discipline from extinction from the list of subjects offered in Secondary Schools in Uyo educational zone in particular and other educational zones of Akwa Ibom State in general; also, to engender students' interest in Home Economics, teachers of the subject, need to implore the various entrepreneurial skills that will boost students interest in the discipline for its sustainability.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Home Economics is a subject that has enormous entrepreneurial potentials for self-reliant and job creation at all levels in the educational system. Students', parents and teachers should develop entrepreneurial skills that will result in the generation of students' interest in the subject.
2. Training programme should be organized for Home Economics teachers by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEP) to equip them with the necessary entrepreneurial skills that can promote students' interest in the subject.
3. The use of technical equipment by the students during practical lessons in Home Economics should be encouraged by Home Economics teachers.
4. Practical lessons in Home Economics that involve the production of various articles by hand should be designed and taught by Home Economics teachers.
5. Home Economics teachers should utilize group activities to be accomplished by the students, in the teaching of the subject.
6. Curriculum planners should spell out entrepreneurial activities for Home Economics classes, with respect to these selected entrepreneurial skills.

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