

## **Challenges of Male Students of Home Economics in Tertiary Institution in Anambra State**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated the challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Five research questions were answered. It adopted a survey research. The population for the study was 260 students offering Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institutions. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using mean. Findings include, among others, 13 family-related challenges, eight society-related challenges, 22 self and peers-related challenges. It was recommended that adequate public awareness programmes should be mounted on the prospects and career opportunities in Home Economics; parents should not discriminate among their children on choice of courses; and government should pay adequate attention to Home Economics education by providing funds, equipment and training for the teachers.

**Key words:** Challenges, Males, Students, Home Economics, Entrepreneurship

### **Introduction**

Youth unemployment calls for serious attention. One way of doing this is to make them self reliant. This can be achieved by exposing the youths to those courses that can equip them with knowledge and practical skills. In the face of growing threat of unemployment in Nigeria today, it becomes pertinent that youths be exposed to Home Economics subjects

at all levels of education to make them self- employable on graduation (Nwankwo & Okpetu 2008).

Home Economics is a vocational technical course offered in most tertiary institutions in the country. It is a broad based field of study which brings together knowledge from many discipline for the purpose of achieving and maintaining the wellbeing of individuals and families

in an ever changing world (Lemchi and Anyakoha 2006). The content of Home Economics encompasses the physical, biological and social sciences, the arts and the humanities, with the major objective of equipping individuals with skills to enable them live a useful and satisfying life and be self reliant. Home Economic education is expected to help youths assume their roles in their environments in areas of personal growth, family life, vocational preparation and community involvement. It contributes meaningful to the solution of the problems of the society such as unemployment, poverty and malnutrition (Flecks 2000). Home Economics is an entrepreneurship based skill, oriented field of study that is expected to equip learners with salable skills that makes for self-reliance (Abiamume, Seriki, and Lemon 2014). Home economics is made of many areas which are inter-related such as foods and Nutrition, Clothing and Textile, Home management, consumer education, housing and interior decoration, child care and development. All these areas of Home Economics have various career opportunities which equip boys and girls for self reliance and national growth development (Anyakoha 2014).

According to Obiaze and Ukpore (2014), one of the objectives of education is to produce persons who are capable of playing effective roles in national, economics and

technological growth and development. Home Economics prepares males and females for both home making and different jobs that require Home Economics skills, knowledge and attitude. Some of these careers opportunities are seen in different areas of Home Economics which include careers in clothing and textile which according to Anyakoha (2014), offers employment opportunities in occupations related to clothing construction, costume designing, craft work among others, careers in food and nutrition which include nutritionist, catering, hotel management etc, careers in home management which include interior decoration, advertising and promotion, institutional house-keeping, social welfare among others.

The aim of Home Economics education curriculum at the tertiary level is to teach the learners how to strategically plan and use available resources in their environment to improve their homes, families and societal needs (National Policy on Education, 2013). Arubaye (2014) asserted that Home Economics is characteristically skill and activity oriented which when properly taught with relevant tools and equipment will equip the learner with salable skills needed for self reliance. Home Economics is very important in the following way: It teaches people how to live a good healthy and happy life in the family, it prepares people to use what they have (resources) to get what they need, it prepares boys and

girls for home making, it prepares people for the jobs that require Home Economics knowledge and skills, it can help people to start their own business, it teaches people how to care for themselves.

Home Economics as a field of study does not exclude any gender, age or any other classification (Ovute 2001). According to her, the low enrolment and gender disparity in enrolment have been attributed to the wrong perception of the meaning and role of Home Economics. This wrong perception has grossly affected the attitude of male students in choosing Home Economics as a course of study. According to Ovute (2001) Home Economics is perceived as “the female domain” into which males need not venture. This is why males are inferior to females in attitude, interest and enrolment in Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institution.

Challenges are those things encountered while carrying out a particular task and which tends to deter the individual from progressing in the task. (Chidume & Igbo 2012). Social challenges refer to problems that people have in interacting with people in the society or engaging in normal social behavior. Hartley (2001) stated that social issues are moral problems that affect a member or members of a society directly or indirectly. Some of these issues include poverty, divorce, bullying etc which are considered to be matters of concern, problems and controversies.

Some of these challenges are family related challenges, society related challenges, self related and peers related challenges.

Youths in Nigeria are faced with challenges which may be sociological in nature. According to Chidume & Igbo (2012) societal challenges pertains to problems we have as we interact with one another, either as individuals or in group. Some of these society related challenges include: society see Home Economics as subject for female, society look down on boys who offer Home Economics as a course of study, society see Home Economics as only cooking and sewing, society has poor perception of Home Economics among others.

Some family members due to their wrong perception of Home Economics do not encourage their male children to register the course. According to (Young 2000) parents have different career aspiration for their sons and daughters. According to Meyer and Anderson (2012) parental attitudes starts early in life as they place the males at a disadvantage as far as Home Economics is concerned.

Families, parents and guidance play significant role in the occupational aspiration and career development of their children. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities (Wong and Liu 2010). The parental

influence upon their children's career choice is very high. Some of these family related challenges include: parents have different career aspirations for their sons and daughters, some parents look down on Home Economics as a course of study, parents allow gender stereotyped activities for their male and female children at home, parents prefer their female children rather than male to study Home Economics as a course of study among others.

Through socialization, peers play an important role in influencing young people's choice of career. In line with this, Kenellekis (2007) stated that individuals are usually receptive to the various social influences around them. According to Meyer and Anderson (2012) social influences are strong variables in the susceptibility of individuals to peer acceptance and reference group. A peer group is made up of members who have equal standing within the group. Makgosa and Mohube (2007) asserted that most people feel a strong need to fit in with other members of their peer group. Students who want to belong choose courses to fit the group they are associated with for peer acceptance or approval.

Some of the peer related challenges include: peers look down on males who offer Home Economics as a course of study, peers make jest of male students who offer home economics as a course of study, peers

see the course as only reserved for girls among others.

The major challenges facing our graduates today is the issue of unemployment. It leads to economic waste, suffering in the family and it is the main cause of poverty and ill health (Alabi & Anyakoha 2014). Home Economics courses as stated in the National policy on Education (2013) at tertiary level provide entrepreneurial technical and job - specific skills for self reliance, commercial and economic development, provide trained manpower in the applied science and technology and also inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence. Considering therefore the foregoing definitions of Home Economics, we can see that Home Economics education is capable of producing graduates who have the capacity to engender economic growth, create wealth, reduce poverty and enhance a sustainable national economy. In spite of this usefulness of Home Economics it appears that male students who are studying home economics are not adequately encouraged by the society, family, peers, siblings and government thus leading to low self esteem of the males studying Home Economics.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in

tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Specifically, the study identified:

1. family-related challenges facing male students of Home economics.
2. society-related challenges facing male students of Home economics.
3. peer group related challenges facing male students of Home economics.
4. personal challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary Institution in Anambra State.
5. ways for resolving the challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in tertiary Institution in Anambra State.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What are the family- related challenges facing male students of Home Economics?
2. What are the society-related challenges facing male students of Home Economics?
3. What are the peer group related challenges facing male students of Home Economics?
4. What are personal challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
5. What are the ways of resolving the challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in tertiary institution in Anambra State?

#### **Methodology**

**Research Design:** A survey design was employed to seek the opinion of the respondents on the challenges

faced by male students of Home Economics at tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

**Area of the Study:** The study was carried out in Anambra State. The study covered three tertiary institutions in the state that offer Home Economics.

**Population for the study:** The population for the study consisted of students offering Home Economics as a course at tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The total population of these students according to school record was 260. This number was retrieved from school record for (2014/2015) academic session Federal Polytechnic Oko 105, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze 90 while Nwafor Orizu College of Education 75.

**Sampling for the Study:** A sample of 145 students was used for the study. This was made up of 70 students from a Polytechnic, 75 Students from two Colleges of Education. This selection was done through random sampling.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** Data were collected using structured questionnaire and focus group guide. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part one contained three items designed to seek background information about the respondents. The second part was divided into four sections. This section consisted of 45 items based on literature review and specific purposes of the study. The questions sought information on social challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in

tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The response options were based on a 4 – point rating scale. It was validated by three experts from the department of fashion design and clothing technology and Home and Rural Science, Federal Polytechnic Oko. The reliability index of 0.83 was obtained, and adjudged reliable for embarking on the study.

**Method of Data Collection:** A total 145 copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents by hand. One hundred and forty copies of questionnaire were retrieved back from the respondents after five days showing 95% return rate. One session of focus group discussion were also held to obtain a qualitative data from the respondents.

**Method of Data Analysis:** The data were analysed using mean to answer research and information retrieved through focus group discussion was summarised. The mean scores were used to determine the perceived importance level expressed on a 4 –

point scale for each of the item. A mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision making.

### Findings

The study identified the following:

- Thirteen family-related challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. (Table I)
- Eight society – related challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. (Table 2)
- Eleven self – related challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. (Table 3)
- Eleven peers related challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State (Table 4)
- Thirteen ways for resolving the challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra. (Table 5)

**Table 1:** Mean responses on family-related challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

SN	Family related challenges	Mean	Remark
1.	Parents have different career aspirations for their sons and girls. Some parents look down on Home Economics as a course of study.	2.82	Agreed
2.	Parents allow gender stereo-typed activities for their male and female children at home.	3.05	Agreed
3.	Parents prefer their female children rather than male to study Home economics as a course of study.	3.07	Agreed
4.	Parents wants their male children to		

	study other subjects rather than Home economics.	2.75	Agreed
5.	Parents do not provide necessary requirement For their male child learning home economics	2.67	Agreed
6.	They encourage them to do other courses other than home economics.	2.59	Agreed
7.	Parents tell their male child that home economics has no job prospect other than teaching.	1.70	Agreed
8.	Parents tell their male child offering home economics that the course cannot fetch them enough money to run a home.	2.55	Agreed
9.	Siblings of male students offering home economics make Jest of them.	2.67	Agreed
10.	Siblings look down on their brothers who offer home Economics	2.66	Agreed
11.	Siblings tell their brothers offering the course that they feel shy telling their friends the course of study of their brother	2.67	Agreed

Table I shows the family related challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study which include: Parents have different career aspiration for their sons and daughters, parents allows gender stereo-typed activities for their male and female children at home, parents do not see Home Economics as lucrative subject, parents want their male children to study other subjects

rather than Home Economics and others. From the items listed above, all the items have their mean ranged from 2.55 to 3.07. This showed that the mean value of each item was above the cutoff of 2.50 indicating that Nigerian families discriminate against their boys offering Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

**Table 2:** Mean responses on the society related challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

SN	Society related challenges of male students of Home Economics	Mean	Remark
<b>Society:</b>			
1.	see Home economics as subject for female	2.62	Agreed
2.	look down on boys who offer Home economics as a course of study	2.52	Agreed
3.	see Home economics as only cooking and sewing	2.75	Agreed
4.	has poor perception of Home economics	2.83	Agreed

5.	lack adequate information about Home economics.	2.73	Agreed
6.	lack adequate information on career opportunities in Home Economics	2.85	Agreed
7.	have misconception that Home economics is for dull students	2.65	Agreed
8.	see male students offering Home economics as wasting their time	2.60	Agreed

Table 2 shows that the society is not adequately informed about the prospect and job opportunities in Home Economics as a result they look down on males offering the course at tertiary institutions.

**Table 3:** Mean responses on the self-related challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study at Tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

SN	Self related challenges of male students of Home Economics	Mean	Remark
<i>Male students offering Home Economics:</i>			
1.	feel inferior to their friends and relations	2.63	Agreed
2.	feel inferior to their friends in other subject areas.	3.02	Agreed
3.	lack interest in Home economics	2.70	Agreed
4.	lack encouragement from lecturers	2.62	Agreed
5.	lack focus because of the challenges they face	2.72	Agreed
6.	lack concentration in class work	2.82	Agreed
7.	lack interest in practical classes	2.70	Agreed
8.	lack zeal and enthusiasm about the course	2.62	Agreed
9.	fail to carry out assignment	2.58	Agreed
10.	have nonchalant attitude in the class	2.80	Agreed
11.	lack seriousness with both theory and practical	2.52	Agreed

Table 3 shows that all the items have their mean ranged from 2.52 to 3.02. This showed that the mean value of each item was above the cutoff of 2.50 indicating that male students have self imposed challenges in choosing Home Economics as a course of study.



**Table 4:** Mean responses on the peers - related challenges of male students of Home Economics in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State.

SN	Peer related challenges of male students of Home Economics	Mean	Remark
Other male students (peers):			
1.	Lack adequate information about careers in Home Economics	2.57	Agreed
2.	Have poor perception of Home economics	2.79	Agreed
3.	Look down on males who offer Home economics	2.67	Agreed
4.	Give wrong advice and information to their friends who want to enroll in Home economics	2.72	Agreed
5.	Prefer males who are in male-dominated subject areas.	2.59	Agreed
6.	See the course as only reserved for girls	2.88	Agreed
7.	make a jest at their peers who offer home economics as a course of study	2.78	Agreed
8.	they tell them that they will only end up in the kitchen	2.51	Agreed
9.	they tell them that the course have no job prospect to them	2.63	Agreed
10.	they tell them that the course is only for women	2.78	Agreed
11.	they tell them that the course cannot offer them enough money to cater for their family	2.68	Agreed

Table 4 above shows the peers related challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study. From the items listed above, all the items have their mean ranged from 2.51 to 2.88. This showed that

the mean value of each item was above the cut-off of 2.50 indicating that peers have negative influence on their male friends offering Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

**Table 5:** Mean responses on ways resolving the challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study.

SN	Ways of resolving the challenges	Mean	Remark
1.	Parents should encourage their male children to enroll in home economics	3.02	Agreed
2.	Parents should not discriminate among their children on their choice of course of study	2.82	Agreed
	Parents should not allow gender stereo-typed for their male and female children	3.05	Agreed
3.	Parents should not look down on their male children	3.07	Agreed

4. School authority should give incentive to students offering offering the course by giving them materials for practicals	3.07	Agreed
5. Home economics association should encourage their members to upgrade their knowledge so as to impact positively on students.	2.85	Agreed
6. Awareness of what home economics should be created through media by the association	2.77	Agreed
7. Adequate enlightenment should be disseminated to the Public on career opportunities in home economics	2.90	Agreed
8. Relevant practicals should be taught by teachers to the students	2.87	Agreed
9. Teachers should make their teaching, student centered	2.79	Agreed
10. Teachers should give encouragement to their male Students offering home economics	3.04	Agreed
11. Teachers should be more patient with their male students offering home economics	3.01	Agreed
12. Home economics should be properly taught by well qualified teachers	2.70	Agreed
13. Teachers teaching home economics should upgrade their knowledge through training	2.65	Agreed

Table 5 shows the ways of resolving the challenges faced by male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. From the items listed above all the items have their mean ranged from 2.65 to 3.07. This showed that the mean value of each item was above the cut-off of 2.50 indicating that the respondents agreed with all the ways of resolving the challenges.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The study shows challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Such challenges which include that Nigerian parents prefer their female children rather than male to offer Home Economics as a course to study, some parents also look down

on Home Economics education as a course of study, some parents do not see Home Economics education as lucrative, parents have different career aspirations for their sons and girls. This finding is in line with the opinion of Ovute (2001) which states that Home Economics is perceived as "the female domain" into which males need not venture. The findings were also in agreement with the opinion of Johnson (1991) who is of the opinion that at home the child rearing practices are different for boys and girls. Girls are allowed to engage in activities which enhance their interest in Home Economics like playing with toys more than boys. The findings were in line with the opinion of Skorikov and Vondra (2011) who stated that the influence

which parents have upon their children's career choice is very high.

The findings on Table 2 shows the mean responses on the society related challenges of male students of Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The societal challenges include that the society see the course as female oriented, society look down on boys who offer Home Economics as a course of study, society see the course as only cooking and sewing, society lack adequate information about the course, society lack adequate information on career opportunities in Home Economics. This findings were in line with the opinion of Asuguo (2010) who stated that lack of adequate career information in a particular field of study can hinder the enrolment of students into the field of study.

The findings in Table 3 shows the mean responses on self related challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study at tertiary institutions in Anambra state. These include that male students offering Home Economics feel inadequate, they feel inferior to their friends, they lack interest in the course, they lack encouragement from lecturers, they lack focus because of the challenges they face, they lack encouragement from parents. The findings are in line with the opinion of Uwadie (1993) who stated that Home Economics is perceived as "the female domain" into which males need not venture. This is why males

are inferior to females in attitude, interest and enrolment in Home Economics as a course of study in tertiary institutions. (Eze 1996).

The findings on Table 4 revealed the mean responses on peers related challenges of male students of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Anambra state. These include that peers lack adequate information about Home Economics, peers have poor perception of the course, peers give wrong information and advice to their friends, peers are more at home with courses accepted by their peers. These findings are in line with the opinion of Leung, Hou, Gati & Li (2011) who asserted that most people feel a strong need to fit in with other members of their peer group. Students who want to belong choose courses to fit the group they are associated with for peer acceptance or approval. This is also in line with the opinion of Meyer and Anderson (2012) who stated that through socialization, peers play an important role influencing young people's choice of career.

The findings in Table 5 reveal the mean responses on ways of resolving the social challenges of boys offering Home Economics as a course of study which includes; Parents should encourage their male children to enroll in Home Economics education, government should equip Home Economics laboratory so that students should get the necessary training, relevant practicals should be taught to students so that they get adequate

skills, parents should not discriminate among their children on the choice of course of study, adequate enlightenment programme should be given to public about the course, government should release funds for practical classes to encourage students. This is in line with the opinion of Obunadike (2009) in Ewubare (2010) that lack of adequate laboratory facilities compel Home Economics teachers to use inappropriate methods of teaching also Ewubare (2010) pointed out that inadequate fundings has often affected teaching and learning in school. Nwaokomah (2010) also suggested that workshops and seminars should be encouraged in Home Economics to update the knowledge of teachers and also equip them with new trends in the use of equipment and machines.

### Conclusion

It is evident from the study that males students have challenges in studying Home Economics as a course in tertiary institutions. Some of these challenges include family related challenges, society related challenges, self related challenges, peers related challenges. Some recommendations has also be given on the ways of resolving the challenges of male students offering Home Economics as a course of study.

### Recommendations

1. Male students should be encouraged by their families to

enroll in Home Economics education.

2. Parents should not discriminate among their children on their choice of course
3. Adequate enlightenment programmes should be given to the public on prospects and career opportunities in Home Economics.
4. School authorities should give incentives to students offering the course by providing materials for their practicals.
5. Teachers teaching Home Economics should be trained through workshop, seminars and conferences to update their knowledge.

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