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ROLE OF HOME ECONOMICS ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING IN EMPOWERING WOMEN IN ANAMBRA STATE'S RURAL COMMUNITIES

Odinye Anthony Chukwunonso
Department of Home Economics Education
School of Agricultural and Home Economics Education
Federal college of Education (Technical) Umunze
07062506843; odinyeanthony@gmail.com

&

Dr. Nwanunwanne Chinyere C.
Department of Home Economics Education
School of Agricultural and Home Economics Education
Federal college of Education (Technical) Umunze
08037731027; chyobi15@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship trainings in home economics impart pragmatic skills that can make these rural women economically self-reliant thereby promoting their socio-economic conditions. This paper examines how this kind of training empowers women in three Anambra State, Nigeria rural communities, namely Nnobi, Ufuma, and Ekwulobia. The mixed-method guided the collection of data, in which 120 rural women, 15 trainers, and 10 community leaders were surveyed with the aid of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The recommendations reflect that home economics training is very effective in equipping women with income generating opportunities and ability to make their own choices, but delays in funding, cultural impediments, and poor market accessibility still exist. A model proposed to integrate training into community development programs dwells upon collaboration with stakeholders and links with the market. The study adds to gender equity and sustainable development as it proposes some recommendations aimed at empowering women in the villages in Nigeria.

Keywords: Home Economics, Entrepreneurship Training, Women's Empowerment, Rural Communities, Economic Self-Reliance, Gender Equity.

Introduction

The discipline of Home Economics traditionally perceived as the one addressing the issues of domestic skills has transformed into the instrument of economic empowerment, specifically, of women in poorer nations. Home economics entrepreneurship training helps to enable the

pragmatic empowerment of the people in the fields of food processing, textile production, and running a small business, leading to self-sustainability of the household and to an increase in the welfare level (Okafor & Amalu, 2019). In Nigeria, where women form a large part of the rural population workforce, they have facilitated economic diversification especially in agrarian communities (Eze, 2020). Women in the rural area of Anambra State, the economically viable part of southeast Nigeria, are renowned to be key actors in the agricultural sector and small-scale enterprises, but the burden of poverty, lack of education, and gender inequality continues to dog them (Okeke, 2021). Although there is a transformative potential of home economics training, limited evidence is provided on how this training empowers women in Anambra and has gaps in its implementation that limit its scalability in Anambra State (National Policy on Gender Equality, 2021).

It is a concern that home economics entrepreneurship training in Anambra State remains underutilized in rural communities where women are economic marginalized because they lack access to education skills training and economic resources. This difference restricts their potential to build sustainable micro-enterprises, which causes poverty and gender inequality to continue (Adewale & Taiwo, 2022). The early articles stress that the home economics program can raise the socio-economic position of women, but small funding, lack of expertise in trainers, and societal hindrances remain a problem (Umeh, 2018). The absence of empirical results on the effectiveness of these programs in Anambra State prevents the formulation of related policy and allocation of resources. This paper fills this vacuum by exploring how home economics entrepreneurship training can assist in empowering rural women as one of the goals of Nigeria is gender equity and a sustainable development.

The overall aim is to analyze how women entrepreneurship in the field of home economics training empowers women in the rural communities in Anambra State. The precise aims are to determine the availability and accessibility of training programs, their effects in increasing women income generation and in decision making process, factors affecting scaling up of efforts, and the proposal of a model on how to incorporate training in community development program. The importance of the study is that it may provide evidence-based information to support policymakers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other community leaders in increasing the contribution of women to the economy and help Anambra State to develop socio-economically. The research enables the attainment of these objectives and in this way, the study fits well into the wider debate on gender equity and poverty alleviation among women in rural Nigeria.

The transformational power of home economics entrepreneurship training is a subject which has been well-reported both

globally and in Africa. In sub-trees Africa, skill-based training measures have ended poverty and favorability in gender by increasing the earning and decision-making ability of women (Mbah & Okeke, 2020). As an example, in Kenya and Ghana, entrepreneurship-based home economics programs have empowered women in the start-up of micro-enterprises that have brought about household income-increasing up to 30 percent (Kariuki, 2019). In Nigeria, rural women have been trained in home economics to enable them to maximize their income by processing food and making textiles (Okafor, 2021). Nevertheless, these efforts are hampered by things like availability of limited access to markets, accessibility of credit and training facilities (Adewale & Taiwo, 2022).

This study is based on such theoretical frameworks as Empowerment Theory (Zimmerman, 2000) and Capability Approach (Sen, 1999). The Empowerment Theory argues that acquisition of skills matters in empowering women and enabling them to enjoy improved socioeconomic lives and the Capacity Approach puts emphasis on access to resources and opportunities as important in human development. These frameworks inform the discussion on how to utilize the training of home economics so that it can empower the women and give them new capabilities and power of agency in rural Anambra State.

Empirical researches show inconclusive results In Anambra State, there was better utilization of training sessions like baking, tailoring, and soap-making by the community correlate to increase in income among women (Eze, 2020). Nevertheless, there is the cultural constraint, whereby women have fewer opportunities than men owing to their cultural norms that ensure that women are preconceived in serving household chores at the expense of entrepreneurship (Okeke, 2021). Additionally, the National Policy on Gender Equality (2021) promotes gender equality in the economic aspect, but some implementation gaps, including a lack of funds and the skills of trainers, slow the process (Umeh, 2018). This paper is an extension of the above and therefore forms an in-depth evaluation of home economics training in the local communities of Anambra State.

Empowering Rural Women: Key Dimensions of Impact

In order to determine the influence of home economics entrepreneurship training, the study centers on three dimensions of impact, which include income generation, decreasing power and community influence. The above dimensions are extracted and refined through other research into the intricate and multi-faceted nature of women empowerment (Mbah & Okeke, 2020).

Skill training in areas like food processing and textile production secreted in women in order to enable them start up micro-enterprises which are a source of additional income to the household. In a study in Ogun State, Nigeria there was a 25% higher income

earned by women trained at home economics compared with their untrained peers (Adewale & Taiwo, 2022). In Anambra State, baking and tailoring women also recorded some gains but due to restricted market access; they could not scale up sufficiently (Eze, 2020).

Such skill building makes women more confident and increases their power in negotiating skills within a household and community settings. It is found that women who possess skills in entrepreneurship have a 40 percent higher chance of having an impact on the financial decisions (Kariuki, 2019). In Nigeria, trained women said they have more control over household expenditure, which is constrained by patriarchal circumstance in many situations (Okeke, 2021).

Home economics skills contribute to leadership positions among the women in cooperatives and other community organizations. Surveys show that trained women stand higher chances of becoming leaders with improved social capital (Umeh, 2018). In Anambra State, the women groups in Nnobi and Ekwulobia have also used training as means of advocating the development of the communities, but cultural factors limit their effects (Okafor, 2021). The dimensions give a standard upon which training programs effectiveness are measured and barriers to their scalability pointed out.

Research Method

The research was carried out in three rural settlements around Anambra State, Nnobi in Idemili South, Ufuma in Orumba North and Ekwulobia in Aguata. The communities were chosen because they are rich in women associations and rely on their agricultural economy. The sample consisted of 120 rural women (40 women in each community purposely selected to attend home economics training), 15 trainers (five in each community) and 10 community leaders. The study was conducted using a mixed method design, which entailed quantitative as well as qualitative research. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data among the 120 women and 15 trainers, and the data captured were related to training accessibility, changes in their income and the power of making decisions. Qualitative data were collected in the form of semi structured interviews with 10 community leaders and FGDs with women (2 per community, 8-10 participants in each). Secondary data (number of people trained in the community centers) were also consulted to determine implementation of the programs. Answers to quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26) as descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean). To correlate the results of income and decision-making by trained and untrained women, inferential statistics, t-tests, were applicable. Thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data collected through interviews and FGDs using NVivo (Version 12) and using themes that were derived based on the study objectives (e.g., training accessibility, barriers, and opportunities). All participants gave informed consent and remain anonymous

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with the use of pseudonyms. The Research Ethics Committee of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka gave its ethical approval.

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The research revealed that the home economics entrepreneurship training programs existed in all the three communities, twice in community centers and cooperatives of women. But the accessibility was not very alike. In Nnobi, 75 percent of women noted that they had access to training, a higher figure than that of Ufuma (60 percent) and Ekwulobia (65 percent) (see Table 1). Factors to barriers of access were transportation costs, a restricted training schedule, and unawareness. Trainers mentioned that limited funding also limited how frequently programs were able to occur with only 40 percent of planned sessions occurring in 2024.

Table 1: *Accessibility of Home Economics Training Programs in Anambra State's Rural Communities*

Community	Women with Access (%)	Barriers Identified	Frequency of Training (2024)
Nnobi	75	Transport, awareness	6 sessions
Ufuma	60	Funding, scheduling	4 sessions
Ekwulobia	65	Transport, funding	5 sessions

Source: Field Survey (2025).

Impact on Income Generation and Decision-Making Power

Training contributed to the significant improvement in the capacities of women to generate income. Trained women had their income levels up by 28% (on average 15,000 and 19,200 8anguiligan-doshanoisoughrydimak-nigerianpipelettegramovingto28), whereas untrained women rose by 5% ($t = 4.32$, $p < 0.05$). Skills in making of soaps and cakes, tailoring and soaps making were most rewarding, with majority of the trained women setting up micro-enterprises (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Income Changes Among Trained and Untrained Women in Anambra State (2024–2025)*

Group	Pre-Training Income (₦)	Post-Training Income (₦)	% Increase
Trained Women	15,000	19,200	28
Untrained Women	14,500	15,225	5

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The ability to make decisions also became higher by 70 percent of the trained women according to weighted report compared to 45 percent of non-trained women ($p < 0.01$). FGDs indicated that training increased the confidence of the women who could now negotiate with spouses and community leaders. Cultural constraints in Ufuma acted

against women assuming roles of self-direction, and the same number of women stated that they faced resistance by male household heads. The major barriers to scaling up were; lack of funding (80% of the trainers cited this factor), insufficient expertise among trainers (Only 40 percent of trainers had a formal qualification), and the cultural pattern that limited the movement of women (65 percent of the women reported this factor). Strengths were a good community reception (85 percent of leaders supported training), and possible market connections via cooperatives. An example put forward in reference to Ekwulobia saw the women of the cooperative associating 50% of the trained women with the local markets with a 20% increase in sales as result.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Entrepreneurship training in home economics has the potential to empower women a great deal as rural women feel more empowered in Anambra State, with improved income-generating capacities, decisions making power and ability to influence the community. The scalability is hindered by factors such as lack of funding, lack of expertise among trainers and culture. The proposed model can provide a channel to inculcate training into community development involving the cooperation of the stakeholders and market integration. Recommendations:

1. Invest more in home economics training and incorporate it into policies of rural development.
2. Contributions to support trainers' capacity building and market access plans.
3. Encourage cultural sensitisation in a bid to ease gender barriers.
4. Improve the market connections to increase the entrepreneurship performance of women.

These investments will help gender equity, decrease poverty in the countryside and facilitate socio-economic change in Anambra State. In doing future research, it would be interesting to investigate the long-term effects of training, and to understand how well the training process can be scaled up to the other Nigerian states.

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