



Family Conflicts in Homes: Implications for Home Economics in Delta State.

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Abstract

This study explored family conflicts within households and their implications for Home Economics in Delta State. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 154 Home Economics Education lecturers in 3 Colleges of Education in Delta State. The entire population was studied due to its manageable size. The questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was structured using a 4-point response scale. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Coefficient alpha and a coefficient of 0.89 was obtained suggesting a high reliability. All 154 copies of the instrument were administered, however only 150 copies were returned after due completion. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics. Findings of the study revealed that family conflicts negatively impact the effectiveness of Home Economics Education in teaching life skills to students. Effective strategies taught in Home Economics for managing and resolving family conflicts in Delta State include; encouraging active listening and open dialogue; promoting activities that require collaboration; and engaging students in role-playing exercises etc. The study recommended among other that schools should offer workshops for parents to learn conflict resolution, budgeting, and family management skills, reinforcing what students are learning in Home Economics.

Keywords: *Family Conflicts, Home Economics, Financial Stress, Parenting Education*

Introduction

Family conflicts refer to the disputes, disagreements, or misunderstandings that arise within a family unit. These conflicts can vary in intensity, ranging from minor arguments to significant, ongoing disputes that disrupt family harmony (Alabi, 2020). Family conflicts can occur among various members, such as between spouses, parents and children, siblings, or even extended family. Often, these conflicts are the result of unmet needs, clashing expectations, or miscommunication, and they have the potential to affect the emotional well-being and unity of the family (Blais and Hébert, 2021). Unresolved conflicts can foster tension and resentment, gradually eroding trust and affection, which are essential for a healthy family environment. Some of the most common causes of family conflicts include; financial issues, parenting styles and expectations, communication breakdowns, power struggles and issues related to control within the family, general differences, external stressors such as work pressure, social expectations, health issues and challenges in other relationships (Koeske and Koeske, 2022). Addressing family conflicts constructively is essential to maintaining positive relationships, ensuring that all members feel valued, respected, and supported.

Family conflicts within households in Delta State present complex challenges for Home Economics education, as this discipline focuses on fostering well-being, effective communication, and strong family relationships. Chikwendu and Nwafor (2021), perceived Home Economics as a field of study focused on improving the quality of individual and family life through practical skills and knowledge. It encompasses



a wide range of subjects that address daily living needs, such as nutrition, cooking, family resource management, child development, budgeting, interior design, and health education (Cardella and Cummings, 2020). In addition, Home Economics aim to equip individuals with skills for managing households efficiently, promoting personal well-being, and fostering strong family and community relationships. Through hands-on learning and practical applications, Home Economics empowers people to make informed decisions about their lifestyle, finances, and health, ultimately contributing to healthier, more balanced lives (McGregor, 2020).

Adjusting the Home Economics curriculum to include conflict resolution skills is essential in preparing students to manage relationships and resolve disputes in constructive ways. Ojo and Adeyemi (2023), buttressed that conflict resolution and emotional intelligence are crucial life skills that can greatly improve the quality of family relationships. By integrating lessons on identifying the causes of conflict—such as financial strain, misunderstandings, and household roles—students can gain a deeper understanding of why conflicts occur and how to approach them. According to Nwuche and Abana (2021), teaching strategies for effective conflict management, including techniques like negotiation, empathy, and active listening, could provide Home Economics students with practical tools for reducing family conflicts. This knowledge could help students better manage their relationships at home, equipping them to foster a harmonious family environment and setting the stage for positive family dynamics including how to manage financial stress.

Financial stress is a leading cause of conflict within households, and Home Economics education can play a significant role in addressing this issue by teaching financial literacy and resource management. Koeske and Koeske (2022), opined that when families face financial challenges, tensions often rise, impacting the overall stability and harmony of the household. Home Economics programs can provide students with essential financial skills, such as budgeting, saving, and managing credit, that can help reduce these economic pressures. By equipping students with financial knowledge, Home Economics empowers them to contribute to their families' financial well-being, potentially reducing stress and fostering responsible economic behavior (Alabi and Keswet, 2015). Learning to prioritize needs, manage limited resources, and plan for the future could help students and their families build financial stability, which is critical for creating a peaceful home environment.

Parenting education and an understanding of family dynamics are also essential areas that Home Economics can emphasize to address family conflicts. According to Afu and Nteh (2020), different parenting styles can lead to misunderstandings and disagreements within families, as parenting approaches affect everything from discipline to household roles. Home Economics can serve as a platform for teaching students about the impact of parenting styles and how they shape family interactions. Lessons on family dynamics can help Home Economics students understand the roles and expectations that come with different family structures and cultural backgrounds, which are especially diverse in Delta State (Helland, Holt, Gustavson, Larsen and Røysamb, 2021). By fostering an awareness of positive family roles, shared responsibilities, and effective communication, Home Economics can help students appreciate the value of constructive family relationships and contribute to a stronger sense of unity within their own homes.

Family conflicts in homes can also have a profound impact on students' emotional well-being and academic performance. Chikwendu and Nwafor (2021), submitted that when students experience stress and anxiety due to family conflicts, their ability to focus and perform well academically can be compromised. Addressing this challenge requires schools to provide access to counseling and support services, helping students cope with the emotional toll of family conflicts. Home Economics programs can collaborate with counselors or local organizations to offer students guidance and support, creating a safe environment for them to discuss their concerns. By equipping students with coping mechanisms, stress management strategies, and emotional resilience, Home Economics can help them maintain their focus

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on education despite family challenges (Nwuche and Abana, 2021). In addition, support networks within schools can provide students with the necessary resources to handle family conflicts, empowering them to bring constructive approaches to conflict resolution back to their households (Cardella and Cummings, 2020). By promoting self-care and resilience, Home Economics equips students to handle the pressures of family life in healthier ways, improving their ability to focus on studies and contribute positively to their home environments.

Home Economics can extend beyond the classroom by encouraging students to engage in community programs that focus on conflict resolution and family well-being. Koeske and Koeske (2022), highlighted that community engagement activities, such as workshops or family support groups, can provide students with a broader perspective on family conflicts and solutions. These programs create opportunities for students to learn about family values, shared responsibilities, and communication skills, helping them to better understand and manage family conflicts. Additionally, engaging with the community also allows students to gain insights into the social and cultural factors that contribute to family conflicts, helping them apply these lessons within their own families (Cardella and Cummings, 2020). Through such initiatives, Home Economics education could foster stronger, more supportive communities in Delta State, creating a positive ripple effect that benefits students, their families, and society as a whole. It is against this background that this study examined family conflicts in homes: Implication for Home Economics in Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

Family conflict in homes is a significant problem for Home Economics for several reasons, primarily because it directly impacts the educational goals and effectiveness of the subject in preparing students for real-life challenges. First and foremost, family conflict disrupts the stability and emotional well-being of family members, particularly children and adolescents who are still developing their social and emotional skills. When students come from conflict-ridden households, their ability to focus on their studies and engage in classroom activities can be severely hindered. This disruption affects their overall academic performance and can diminish their participation in Home Economics courses, which are designed to teach essential life skills such as communication, financial management, and problem-solving (Alabi, 2020). Additionally, family conflicts can undermine the core objectives of Home Economics, which aims to promote healthy family dynamics and effective household management. When conflicts arise within families, the teachings of Home Economics—such as effective communication, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution—become even more critical. However, if students are not equipped with the tools to manage conflicts at home or if their families do not support these lessons, the effectiveness of the curriculum may be diminished. The ideal of fostering a nurturing environment for family members can be challenged by the realities of ongoing disputes, thereby limiting the positive outcomes that Home Economics seeks to achieve. Moreover, the presence of family conflict can create barriers to the application of practical skills taught in Home Economics. For example, lessons on budgeting and financial management may not resonate with students who are witnessing financial disputes within their families or who are experiencing economic instability. Similarly, teachings on meal planning, nutrition, and healthy relationships may be overshadowed by the stress and tension caused by unresolved conflicts. As a result, students may struggle to relate to or apply the concepts learned in class to their own family situations, leading to disengagement from the subject. In this way, family conflict not only affects individual student outcomes but also challenges the broader mission of Home Economics to empower individuals and families to thrive. As a result of the foregoing, this study examined family conflicts in homes and its implication for Home Economics in Delta State.



Purpose of the Study

This study examined family conflicts in homes and their Implications for Home Economics in Delta State. More specifically, it examined how family conflicts impact the effectiveness of Home Economics education in teaching life skills to students in Delta State and the most effective strategies taught in Home Economics for managing and resolving family conflicts in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. How does family conflicts impact the effectiveness of Home Economics education in teaching life skills to students in Delta State?
2. What are the most effective strategies taught in Home Economics for managing and resolving family conflicts in Delta State?

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 154 Home Economics Education lecturers in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale. The numerical value for the scale points include; Strongly Agreed = SA (4 points), Agree = A (3 points), Disagree = D (2 points) and Strongly Disagree = (1 point). Any item with mean score less than or equal to 2.49 was considered as disagreed while any item with mean score equal to or more than 2.50 was considered as Agreed. The instrument was validated by two experts from Educational Foundations. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Coefficient alpha and a coefficient of 0.89 was obtained suggesting a high reliability. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered 154 copies of the instrument and retrieved 150 copies which were used for analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation. The decision was based on the criterion mean of 2.50, thus, any item with mean score 2.50 or above were accepted while any item having a mean score less than 2.50 was rejected.

Results

The results for this study were obtained from the research questions answered through the analysis of data.

Research Question 1: How does family conflicts impact the effectiveness of Home Economics education in teaching life skills to students in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on how Family Conflicts Impact the Effectiveness of Home Economics Education in Teaching Life Skills to Students in Delta State.
n = 150

S/N	STATEMENTS	\bar{x}	SD	REMARK
1.	When students are preoccupied with familial issues, their motivation to learn can diminish, directly affecting their ability to grasp and retain the life skills being taught.	3.40	0.49	A
2.	Family conflicts can lead to heightened emotional distress for students, making it difficult for them to focus on their studies.	3.73	0.50	SA



3.	Family conflicts can result in a lack of parental support or guidance, limiting students' access to resources that reinforce learning.	3.42	0.72	A
4.	Students from conflict-ridden homes may not have the opportunity or encouragement to practice skills learned in Home Economics, such as cooking or budgeting.	3.95	0.21	SA
5.	The cumulative effect of emotional distress and lack of support can lead to poor academic performance among students.	4.00	0.00	SA
Grand Mean		3.70		SA

Analyses on Table 1 reveals that the mean scores range from 3.40 – 4.00. This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the statements in items 1-5. Data in Table 1 further shows the grand mean for the entire item which is 3.70, and falls within the response option of strongly agreed. This indicates that family conflicts impact the effectiveness of Home Economics education in teaching life skills to students in Delta State..

Research Question 2: What are the most effective strategies taught in Home Economics for managing and resolving family conflicts in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the most Effective Strategies Taught in Home Economics for Managing and Resolving Family Conflicts in Delta State.

n = 150

S/N	STATEMENTS	\bar{x}	SD	REMARK
1.	Emphasizing active listening and open dialogue to ensure that all family members feel heard and understood, which can prevent misunderstandings and escalate tensions.	3.86	0.48	SA
2.	Teaching methods such as negotiation and compromise, where family members learn to find common ground and agree on solutions that satisfy everyone involved.	3.78	0.54	SA
3.	Promoting activities that require collaboration, which can strengthen relationships and improve the ability to work together during disputes.	3.73	0.50	SA
4.	Instilling systematic approaches to identifying issues, brainstorming solutions, and evaluating outcomes helps families collaboratively address conflicts.	3.55	0.59	SA
5.	Engaging students in role-playing exercises to practice conflict resolution in a controlled environment, allowing them to develop and refine their strategies for real-life situations.	3.59	0.59	SA
Grand Mean		3.70		SA

Analyses on Table 2 reveals that the mean scores range from 3.55 – 3.86. This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the statements in items 6-10. Data in Table 2 further shows the grand mean for



the entire item which is 3.70, and falls within the response option of strongly agreed. This reveals that the most effective strategies such as the ones highlighted in table 2 are taught in Home Economics for managing and resolving family conflicts in Delta State.

Discussion

One of the findings of this study revealed that family conflicts impact the effectiveness of Home Economics education in teaching life skills to students in Delta State. Data from the instrument of data collection shows that when students are preoccupied with familial issues, their motivation to learn can diminish, directly affecting their ability to grasp and retain the life skills being taught; family conflicts can lead to heightened emotional distress for students, making it difficult for them to focus on their studies; family conflicts can result in a lack of parental support or guidance, limiting students' access to resources that reinforce learning; students from conflict-ridden homes may not have the opportunity or encouragement to practice skills learned in Home Economics, such as cooking or budgeting and; the cumulative effect of emotional distress and lack of support can lead to poor academic performance among students. This findings is in line with Chikwendu and Nwafor (2021), that when students experience stress and anxiety due to family conflicts, their ability to focus and perform well academically can be compromised.

Another finding of this study revealed that the most effective strategies are taught in Home Economics for managing and resolving family conflicts in Delta State. Some of the most effective strategies taught in Home Economics as agreed by the respondents include; emphasizing active listening and open dialogue to ensure that all family members feel heard and understood, which can prevent misunderstandings and escalate tensions; teaching methods such as negotiation and compromise, where family members learn to find common ground and agree on solutions that satisfy everyone involved; promoting activities that require collaboration, which can strengthen relationships and improve the ability to work together during disputes; instilling systematic approaches to identifying issues, brainstorming solutions, and evaluating outcomes which helps families to collaboratively address conflicts and ; engaging students in role-playing exercises to practice conflict resolution in a controlled environment, allowing them to develop and refine their strategies for real-life situations. This finding is in consonant with Nwuche and Abana (2021), that teaching strategies for effective conflict management, including techniques like negotiation, empathy, and active listening, could provide Home Economics students with practical tools for reducing family conflicts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, family conflicts have a significant impact on Home Economics education, as they can disrupt students' ability to focus, participate, and apply life skills in constructive ways. Home Economics provides students with essential strategies like communication skills, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation, which can be crucial for managing familial tensions effectively. By equipping students with these tools, Home Economics not only helps them navigate conflicts in their own lives but also fosters a foundation for healthier family dynamics, encouraging stability and resilience in both personal and future family relationships.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings of this study.

1. Schools can offer workshops for parents to learn conflict resolution, budgeting, and family management skills, reinforcing what students are learning in Home Economics.
2. National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) among others should equip Home Economics educators with the latest tools and strategies for teaching conflict resolution, ensuring they can effectively support students dealing with family conflicts.



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