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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECT OF TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL PROFICIENCY ON THE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARDS HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

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Abstract

Home economics is a significant subject in Nigeria's educational ecosystem that aims to facilitate the empowerment of students to have a positive relationship with food skills and a healthy diet. There are growing indications that the field has been experiencing low enrolment in the recent decade. Thus, the present study examined the teacher's pedagogical proficiency as a factor influencing the student's attitude towards home economics education. Ninety-six undergraduates enrolled in the home economics department from two higher education institutions in the Enugu State of Nigeria participated in the study. A simple percentage score indicates that the majority of the students (65.5%) indicated a positive attitude towards home economics education, while less (34.5%) showed negative attitudes. Furthermore, a simple regression analysis was performed to test the study hypothesis. The result revealed that teachers' pedagogical proficiency positively predicted students' attitudes towards home economics education.

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Introduction:-

The more significant part of an individual's life has traditionally centered on the family and home, hence, the ubiquity of home economics in the educational curriculum of many societies. Basic knowledge of home economics equips an individual with the potentialities relative to homecare. Thus, the subject occupies a central position in the school curriculum due to its necessity to inculcate homecare skills in young learners (Pendergast et al., 2011). Home economics is primarily concerned with helping people acquire valuable life skills through various creative means that will lead to sustainable livelihood and an improved economy for the individual, family, and society (Meludu, 2020). Perhaps, the subject aims to facilitate students' learning and further develop their resources and competencies in their personal lives. Nevertheless, home economics education seeks to promote the empowerment of students to have positive relationship with food skills and a healthy dietary lifestyle (Azonuche, 2020; Choi, 2020; Fordyce, 2009; Hjalmskog, 2013; McCloat et al., 2017; Oogarah-Pratap et al., 2004; Øvrebø, 2013; Piscopo, 2016; Renwick & Powell, 2019; Ronto et al., 2016; Slater & Hinds, 2014). It allows the learners to acquire transferable skills, knowledge, and adaptive abilities to address everyday food and health issues. Accordingly, (Pendergast et al., 2011) noted that home economics equips students with skill and the practical application of skills. Thus, it provides a comprehensive, applied, and suitable experiential learning environment for studying food education (McCloat & Caraher, 2020).

Home economics is widely recognized as an essential component of employability skills (Oladokun, 2021). Employability skill is the most vital skill besides technical knowledge to compete for employment and sustain jobs (Ismail & Mohammed, 2015). Consequently, home economics education has remained a subordinate discipline in

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terms of societal recognition and has attracted less student choice in the Nigerian context. There are indications that students' performance in practicing home economics skills is low compared to its objective. Also, indications suggest that this is a consequence of poor parent support relative to studying the subject in school (Ekaete, 2015). The classroom learning environment ((Uwameiye, 2015), teacher factors (Badmus, 2007), and gender issues (Nnubia, 2013) have been found to influence attitudes towards home economics. Nonetheless, the teacher's expertise is a critical variable that could determine attitudes towards home economics.

Attitudes describe an individual's assessments and emotional feelings towards any aspect of their environment. Attitudes are developed from human and societal needs and express personal intellectual processes. Attitudes toward home economics entail positive or negative evaluation of skills relative to homecare and the overall disposition to assume systematic skills necessary for human progression and family development. Attitudes encompass three aspects: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive component indicates students' knowledge about home economics which determines affection and response towards the discipline. Attitudes have been linked to positive learning (Cahill et al., 2018) and predict a person's behavior, mainly when the attitude object is pertinent (Fabrigar et al., 2006). Thus, students are more likely to acquire a favorable attitude towards home economics education when the concept is comprehensive. Perhaps, instructors are essential actors that assume the crucial position of determining the effectiveness of the learning process (Shelly et al., 2020). The present study is aimed to examine teachers' pedagogical competency as a contributory factor in students' attitudes towards home economics.

Teacher's pedagogical proficiency (TPP) reflects the teacher's ability to express content knowledge, impart learning and attract students' attention. It refers to the instructor's capability relative to theoretical mastery and its application in teaching performance (Nopriyeni et al., 2019). Pedagogical proficiency generally involves knowledge and skills (Ningtiyas & Jailani, 2018), knowledge of learning theory, classroom management, and student motivation (Auerbach & Andrews, 2018), which contributes hugely to achieving quality student learning outcomes (Fadil & Aryani, 2021). Competent teachers can effectively manage to learn and enhance students learning passion and improve learning quality (Amanah et al., 2020). Thus, learners' overall perception of teachers' competence could influence their attitude toward a particular subject and participation in the classroom activity. Nevertheless, students mainly assess their teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, communication ability, teaching method and the general classroom management skills. An instructor rated high on these indices in the perception of the students is likely to influence the learner's attitude. Indeed, teacher's pedagogical proficiency could significantly influence a student's attitude towards any subject.

Hypothesis:

Teacher's pedagogical proficiency will predict student's attitudes towards home economics education

Method:-

A cross-sectional research design was implemented in the study. Participants in this study comprised 96 undergraduates from two higher education institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. Students enrolled in the home economics department were randomly selected from each institution. Students in different levels of academic years comprising males and females were considered the target population because they are more likely to comprehend the concept of home economics. The participant consists of 38 males and 58 females. Their mean age was 43.37 (SD = 4.54), ranging from 19 to 30 years.

Measures:-

Attitude towards home economics

Attitude towards home economics education was measured with a scale designed to assess students' positive or negative evaluations of home economics. The scale consists of 10 items that assess attitudes and feelings about home economics with demographic data. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-form scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always). A higher score on this scale specifies a favorable attitude. The validity of the scale was ascertained following a pilot study .76 Cronbach's alpha was obtained.

Teachers Pedagogical Proficiency

The respondents rated their perceived teacher's pedagogical proficiency with a 10-item Linkert form scale scored in 5-point ratings ranging from 1 (not likable at all) to 5 (very likable). The instrument was validated after a pilot study,

and the Cronbach alpha .78 reliability coefficient was recorded in the survey. A higher score shows a high perceived teacher's pedagogical proficiency.

Procedure:-

With authorization from the management of the institutions, students from all levels of the study year in the department of home economics were approached between August and October 2021. A total of 116 students were asked to participate in a survey to understand their attitudes about their course of study. In all, 112 students out of the 116 contacted consented to participate in the survey. Thus, the research instruments were administered to the students. One hundred and twelve (112) copies of the questionnaire administered were completed and retrieved immediately. However, only the satisfactorily filled questionnaires (i.e., 96) were subjected to statistical analysis. The remaining 16 copies were rejected due to improper completion or unreturned.

Result:-

Firstly, the percentage score of the attitudes towards home economics was ascertained. Table 1 below showed that most respondents (65.5%) expressed a positive attitude towards home economics, while (34.5%) indicated a negative attitude towards home economics. This outcome presupposes that a large number of the students have a positive attitude towards home economics.

Table 1:- Table showing the percentage score of attitudes towards home economics.

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Positive attitude | 72 | 65.5 |
| Negative attitude | 24 | 34.5 |
| Total | 96 | 100 |

It was expected that the teacher's pedagogical proficiency would positively predict attitude towards home economics. To test the hypothesis that pedagogical proficiency will predict students' attitudes towards home economics education. A simple regression analysis was conducted on the data. The investigation revealed that teachers' pedagogical proficiency statistically significantly influenced the participant's attitude towards home economics, $F(1,94) = 279.71$, $P < .05$. With R^2 of .368 as shown in Table 2 below. The result indicated that teachers' pedagogical competence accounted for 36.8% of the variation in students' attitudes towards home economics. Thus, the expectation that teachers' pedagogical competence will significantly predict students' attitudes towards home economics was affirmed.

Table 2:- Table showing the simple regression results on the influence of teachers' pedagogical proficiency on students' attitudes towards home economics.

| Model | B | SEB | β | R^2 | t | Sig. |
|------------|------|------|---------|-------|-------|------|
| (Constant) | .431 | .084 | | | 5.12 | .000 |
| TPP | .784 | .051 | .819 | .668 | 15.25 | .000 |

Note. TPP = Teacher's Pedagogical Competence; B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; SEB = Standardized error of the coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination. * $P < .000$.

Discussion:-

The present study aimed to determine the attitude of secondary school students towards home economics. The percentage score outcome revealed that most respondents (65.5%) expressed a positive attitude towards home economics education. This result reflects a high rate of favorable attitudes towards home economics. It signifies the importance of the field to the students and their knowledge and exposure to the concept of home economics education. This assertion describes the essential components of attitude, which encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral mechanisms. In particular, the cognitive component reflects the overall knowledge relative to home economics education. The affective component explains the subjective state of acceptance or aversions, while the behavioral part symbolizes the accompanying response. Accordingly, knowledge about home economics education activates an

emotional state of like or dislike, which broadly governs students' response towards home economics education. The probable explanation for this outcome might be attributed to the growing intimation suggesting that home economics teachers are skill-oriented in that they not only pose the requisite expertise but also can impart a homeware attitude to the students.

Furthermore, it was expected that teachers' pedagogical proficiency would significantly predict students' attitudes towards home economics education. The simple regression analysis result established a statistically significant influence of teachers' pedagogical proficiency on the respondent's attitude towards home economics education. The result revealed that teachers' pedagogical proficiency accounted for 63.8% of the variation in the respondent's attitude towards home economics education. Therefore, the result supported the expectation of the study. The finding is aligned with a previous study (Fauth et al., 2019), which found that teacher competence (pedagogical content knowledge and teaching enthusiasm) was positively related to students' interests. In addition, teachers' pedagogic competence has been implicated in student motivation (Saggaf et al., 2018). More so, the study by Florence (2019) found that teachers' pedagogical competence significantly influenced students' attitudes to basic science. This study suggests more elaborate pedagogical practices in higher education institutions.

Practical implication

The present study revealed that teachers' educational and experiential backgrounds influenced the quality of students' attitudes relating to home economics. The critical importance of understanding this mediation effect underscores teaching competence as the core reason for better student performance in home economics. This assertion is based on the relationship between attitude and enhanced learning outcomes. In particular, the present result can provide valuable data for the development and sustainability of the discipline of home economics.

Conclusion:-

This study focuses on assessing attitudes towards home economics education in the Nigerian educational landscape. The study revealed a more positive attitude regarding home economics education. In addition, a positive association was established between teachers' pedagogical proficiency and attitude towards home economics education. Thus, the study concludes that a teacher's pedagogical proficiency is a vital determinant of a student's attitude towards home economics education in a higher education institution. Despite this knowledge, the study's sample size might affect the generalization of the result. However, the study contributes to the literature by revealing teachers' pedagogical competence as essential in home economics. Therefore, it is recommended that instructors in home economics education be exposed to regular training to expand their content knowledge, instruction method, use of relevant IT tools, and improvisation approach.

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