

**PROMOTING FAMILY LIVING THROUGH HOME  
ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE  
LIVELIHOOD IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The study sought how to promote family living through Home Economics education for sustainable livelihood. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Population of the study was all the households, teachers and students of Home Economics in secondary and tertiary schools in Oshimili South of Delta State. Two Hundred respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected with questionnaires and analyzed using means, standard deviation and t-test for testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that household poverty, poor health, dual households and environmental pollution are challenges impacting family living. But evolving income generating ventures, resource management, developing new technologies and family living education are ways Home Economics education can sustain family livelihood. There is no significant difference in the challenges impacting family living between urban and rural households. It was concluded that Home Economics education should be pursued in schools since it is a potent instrument for promoting sustainable family livelihood. It was recommended that students of Home Economics and household should engage in entrepreneurial training and skills to uplift and sustain the family.*

**Keywords:** *Promoting, Family Living, Home Economics, Sustainable Livelihood, Entrepreneurship.*

## **Introduction**

The society is made of complex set of relationships involving the family. Family is a small unit of the larger society yet very important and functional. Anene-Okeakwa (2010) defines family as the basic social institution composed of persons united by common consent, sharing things in common and characterized by common residence. Family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption and often characterized by common residence and economic cooperation (Anyakoha, 2015). As a unit the family performs functions as child bearing and rearing, protection, economic support, socialization and affection. The family serves as an agent in determining status, control human institution and function in society. Being the most personal of all groups in the society, yet, it has experienced several challenges and setbacks towards ensuring its survival. Ogbene (2015) stressed that Nigerian society is rife with myriads of emerging issues that have some far reaching effects on family life. These are socio-economical, environmental and educational as well as health issues. These contemporary issues are changes in the system that can culminate into challenges when adequate attention is not given. The government invested in the family through education of young people in the school and workers' employment. This investment in human capital, better education, entrepreneurship and skill training for new jobs and businesses are seen as crucial steps to selvedge the economy and sustain family life. Home Economics education is in the right direction to providing practical solution to societal challenges through better family living practices.

Family living is one of the processes involved in the management of a home. It is the way families live in their homes. Anyakoha (2015) stated that family living is a social living where family members depend upon each other for many things. However, it could be noted that families vary in needs, values, norms, attitude, patterns, structures,

size, home situation and socio-economic status (Mba, 2000). For survival and happy living, the family members need to adhere strictly to these norms, values, patterns and needs as spelt out in the family. The family can then confront the challenges impacting their existence. There are values and patterns that most families, if properly enlightened through functional Home Economics education, could go a long way to promote family living (Osifeso, 1998). To Mba (2000), functional teaching of family living education through extension services, expanded programmes and mass media can assist to direct families on procedures of setting standards and outlining needs according to values. Families take employments which keep them apart affecting family intimacy and relationships.

Home Economics as a multi-disciplinary subject through its programmes and practices, usually addresses these family living challenges. Home Economics to Ogbene (2015), is synonymous with healthy living, responsible management of both human and material resources, as well as entrepreneurial skills that empower the family and younger generation for economic sustainability. Home Economics is a multi-disciplinary field of study evolving new ways for better family living through the use of their potentials. International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE, 2012) stated that Home Economics is an academic discipline to educate new scholars, create new knowledge and is an arena of everyday living in households, families and communities for developing human growth potentials. Therefore, Home Economics prepares and empowers the individuals in this family for their development and sustainable well being.

Family development and well being has been impacted so much that the basic human needs consistently remained scarce resource to most Nigerian families. These challenges make the family not to function effectively and properly, amongst them are household poverty, dual households,

pollutions, diseases, all forms of abuse, gender issues, aging and retirement. Poverty has for long posed serious threats to the family unit. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report on Nigerian poverty in 2010, highlighted that 112.519 million people live on relative poverty conditions. Statistician-General of NBS lamented that if urgent intervention programmes are not embarked upon, the figure would increase in 2011 report (Nigerian Insight, 2014). All the attributes of human development are deprived by poverty syndrome in the family. Household poverty is lack of good job or business, lack of food to eat, inadequate housing and clothing, poor health, no education to mention but a few for the family. According to Maduagwu (2007), poverty creates frustration, loss of hope/prospects and value for life, loss of meaning for life and purpose of living. The National Planning Commission (NPC, 2004) reported that most often, poor parents begat poor children, creating a kind of dynasty of the poor. Families can shift from this present condition to better and happier household through functional Home Economics in form of skills acquisition, training and entrepreneurship education in various areas of the subject. In an attempt by the family to meet up with their needs and demands, men and women have taken employment and in most cases, are subjected to heavy work load even on weekends. Often times, the families live apart while maintaining dual households. The family members live together only on weekends or see one another monthly. This situation impairs intimacy and family relationships between couples and other family members. Members of the family become stranger in their own family. This, Anyakoha (2014) noted has posed challenges for families in striking a workable and healthy balance between work and family responsibilities (conflicting priorities). This is of negate parenting and home management skills in the family. Adequate home making knowledge and skills in the utilization of family resources, good family relationship

and good nutrition will provide healthy family living.

The heavy workload which the family members engaged in to meet basic needs bring about stress conditions that challenge family health. Inadequate nutrition and drug abuse are factors against the well being of family members. Health issues in form of high blood pressure, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Ebola pandemic among others, are global challenges that impact family living. Available reports showed that about 30 million people have HIV worldwide as at 2010 (UNAIDS, 2010). Okeke and Nwankwo (2009) noted earlier that the entire masses in Nigeria are exposed to diseases and the health care system of the people is poor. These issues are of great concern to the Home Economists, who Ogbene (2015), opined that through adequate selection, processing, planning and preparation, knowledge and skills can use food to build good health, heal wounds and prevent diseases. The environment which the family lives is crucial to its health and survival, but it has suffered degradation and pollution which affects directly or indirectly the people that live therein. Since the family depends on the environment for survival, it is their duty to manage the environment and its resources effectively for sustainable livelihood. Environmental issues impacting the families are air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, soil pollution, erosion and flooding, global warming and poor refuse disposal. These even pose greater health hazards to family members. Attempts by the government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) to help families overcome these challenges have proved abortive.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) addressed the need for a functional education that would eradicate illiteracy and improve individual standard as well as enhance family status and the society. Home Economics is expected to prepare individuals not just for teaching alone, but also to adapt to situations through the

utilization of knowledge, skills and creativity learnt to combat family challenges and uplift their level of living.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine ways of promoting family living through Home Economics Education for sustainable livelihood in Oshimili Local Government Area. This study sought to:

- Determine challenges impacting family living for sustainable livelihood in Oshimili Local Government Area.
- Determine ways of promoting family living through Home Economics Education for sustainable livelihood in Oshimili Local Government Area.

### **Research Questions**

These research questions guided the study

1. What are the challenges impacting family living for sustainable livelihood in Oshimili Local Government Area?
2. What ways can family living be promoted through Home Economics education for sustainable livelihood?

### **Hypothesis**

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the challenges impacting family living between urban and rural households.

### **Method**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The justification of this design was informed by the fact that the study's purpose was descriptive and allows collection of data without interference. The area of the study was Oshimili South Local Government Area and is made up of urban and rural households. The population of this study consists of all the students of Home Economics at secondary and tertiary levels, Home Economics educator at these levels and all households in Oshimili South. The

population is 149,603 (National Population Commission, 2006). The sample of the study was two hundred (200) subjects. These subjects were drawn using purposive sampling technique to select seventy Home Economics students at senior secondary school (SSS) and tertiary levels that offer Home Economics and thirty Home Economics educators at the secondary and tertiary levels. One hundred (100) households were purposively selected based on their location (urban and rural). Questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire were in two sections, Section A contains the demographic information of the respondents. Section B contains questions with four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4,3,2 and 1 point respectively. The instrument was face validated by two Home Economics educators from Delta State University, Abraka, who made corrections which were used for final items. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered to 7 students in Home Economics, 3 Home Economics teachers and 10 households who were not part of the population. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha was used to compute data and reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. The instruments were administered to the respondents through the help of research assistants by hand. Two hundred copies of the questionnaires were given out to the respondents. In households where respondents could not read, the questionnaire were interpreted to the subjects by the researcher and the research assistants. All questionnaires were responded to and returned. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected. A cut off point of 2.50 was used as mean. Items with mean of 2.50 and above were regarded as Agreed, while 2.50 and below were considered as Disagreed, t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## Result

**Research Question 1:** What are the challenges impacting family living for sustainable livelihood?

**Table 1:** Mean Rating of Response Challenges Impacting Family Living for Sustainable Livelihood.

S/N	Challenges impacting family living	X	SD	Decision
Poverty				
1.	My family lacks food	3.00	0.81	A
2.	My family lacks shelter	2.81	0.65	A
3.	My family lacks clothing	2.76	0.58	A
4.	My family lacks access to education	2.70	0.42	A
5.	My family lacks access to social amenities	2.93	0.90	A
6.	My family lacks employment	3.39	0.87	A
7.	My family lacks access to land	2.98	0.77	A
Health issues				
8	My family suffers hazards of degenerative diseases.(Blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes and ulcer)	3.00	0.66	A
9.	My family suffers hazards of deadly Diseases (HIV/AIDS, Cancer and Ebola)	2.50	0.99	A
10.	My family suffers drug abuse	2.86	0.87	A
Dual household				
11.	My family lives apart	3.00	0.52	A
12.	My family does not share intimacy	2.83	0.82	A
13.	I visit my family only on weekends	2.56	0.88	A
14.	I visit my family once a month	2.53	0.67	A
15.	I perform parenting tasks alone in the family	2.75	0.71	A
Pollution				
16.	My family suffers air pollution	3.10	0.91	A
17.	My family does not have clean water	3.00	0.87	A
18.	My family is affected by noise in the environment	3.02	0.90	A
19.	My family suffers flooding	3.80	0.81	A
20.	My family is affected by erosion in the area	2.87	0.91	A
21.	My family does not live in a clean environment	2.61	0.89	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 showed that all the items had mean scores above the cut off mean of 2.50. This means that the respondents agreed to all the items as challenging the family living. This indicates that challenges impacting family living for sustainable livelihood are household poverty, poor

health, dual household and pollution in the environment. The standard deviation of the items range from 0.42 -0.99. This implies that the respondents were close in their responses on challenges impacting family living.

**Research Question 2:** In what ways can Home Economics education promote family living for sustainable livelihood?

**Table 2:** Mean Rating of Responses on Ways of Promoting Family Living for Sustainable Livelihood.

S/N	Education and entrepreneurship skill training	X	SD	Decision
Income generating ventures				
22.	Garment making	2.92	0.87	A
23.	Catering/banking	2.90	0.90	A
24.	Fabric dying	2.64	0.67	A
25.	Interior decoration	3.01	0.92	A
26.	Event planning	3.25	0.87	A
27.	Handicraft	2.68	0.77	A
28.	Soap and body cream production	2.88	0.76	A
29.	Laundry and dry cleaning	2.50	0.99	A
Resource Management				
30.	Money management	2.59	0.68	A
31.	Time management	2.65	0.43	A
32.	Energy management	2.76	0.78	A
33.	Management of the environment	2.68	1.10	A
Development of new technologies for the household				
34.	Improving food preparation techniques	3.20	0.95	A
35.	Improved food processing	2.89	0.98	A
36.	Improved food storage	2.94	0.65	A
37.	Improved meal planning	2.69	0.87	A
38.	Improved diet therapy	2.87	0.89	A
Family living				
39.	Family relationship education	2.76	0.84	A
40.	Parenting skills	2.92	1.03	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.81</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 showed that all the items are above the mean of 2.50 which implies that the respondents agreed to all the items as ways Home Economics education can promote family living. This indicates that evolving income generating ventures, resources management, development of new

technologies and family living education are ways of promoting family living for sustainable livelihood.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the challenges impacting family living between urban and rural households.

**Table 3:** t-test on Challenges Impacting Family Living

Household X	SDD	ft-cal	t-table	Decision		
Urban	2.68	0.81				
Rural	2.97	0.73	198	1.24	1.96	Accepted

Table 3 shows that t-calculated value 1.24 is less than t-table value of 1.96. Hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the challenges impacting family living between urban and rural households.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study showed challenges impacting family living. The challenges identified as impacting family living for sustainable livelihood were household poverty, poor health issues, dual households and environmental pollution. It was discovered that the family lacks basic needs and amenities which are crucial to human survival and sustainable livelihood. This finding agrees with Anyakoha (2014) who noted that poor families fail to meet basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and health. Poverty manifests in lack of income, hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, inadequate housing and unsafe environments. Poverty impedes human development and well-being. To this, Ogbene (2015) noted that poverty is hunger, lack of well paying job, poor health, low education, low self-esteem, lack of land, lack of adequate housing, inability to clothe oneself/family and low economic status. Families are victims of health hazards and diseases. These diseases damage the immune system and interfere with one's body's ability to fight the organisms that cause diseases. According to Anyakoha (2015), it is very important for families to know about these diseases and how to prevent them. Ogunonu (2014) noted that education is useful in managing threats to health. This employment conditions that force complies to live apart, not sharing intimacy is a serious threat to family livelihood. To Anyakoha (2014), many couples are married, yet they remain as strangers in their homes. The physical environment where the family lives affects the family and the family is also affected by it through various forms of pollution. Anene-Okeakwa (2010) noted that the problem of physical environment which include

pollution and depletion of resources in the environment contribute to threat to human health, making life unbearable for families. Families need to be healthy and happy for a sustainable livelihood.

Finding also showed ways Home Economics education can promote family living. These areas include evolving income generating ventures, resource management, development of new technologies and family living education for sustainable livelihood. Home Economics is a discipline that evolves ways of equipping learners with knowledge, skills and abilities to function and contribute effectively to family survival. In agreement with this finding, Meludu and Njoku (2008) noted that Home Economics is concerned with home-based skilled activities such as food processing like garri production, food vending, handicraft, fabric dyeing and animal husbandry. These activities when carried out will help to generate income and reduce level of poverty in the family. To Anyakoha (2014), creativity and entrepreneurship are synonymous with Home Economics. Home Economics education enables learners to practice the management of human and material resources in all areas of their lives. It equips learners with appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skill training for efficient and effective utilization of family resources to meet family needs, goals and build life styles. Supporting this, Anyakoha (2015) asserted that good management of family resources leads to the improvement of quality of those living within the family and brings happiness to the home. Through appropriate researches in Home Economics new improved technologies are constantly being developed for households such as improved food production, processing, preservation, storage, use of functional foods and use of household equipment. These appropriate technologies can be made available to the rural families who are often poor through effective Home Economics extension programmes (Anyakoha, 2001). Since Home Economics brings about development of human growth potentials through family

living education, it helps individuals and families to solve the enormous problems that confront them including those relating to child rearing and family relationship for better family life. This is why Ogunonu (2014) recommended education for sustainable development to improve family income and livelihood. Family training acquired through inter-disciplinary and holistic learning experiences and acquisition of skill is a direct tool in sustaining family livelihood in Nigeria.

Finding further showed no significant difference in the challenges impacting family living between urban and rural households. This is not surprising because the socio-economic situation in Nigeria cuts across all households, irrespective of location. This is in consonance with Anyakoha (2014) who pointed out that families are impacted and challenged in various ways such as complete displacement of families, loss of livelihood, pollution through oil spillage, living with refuge dumps and diseases. These myriads of family challenges threaten the existence of families in Nigeria. The crises that have overtaken the modern families call for urgent attention. Home Economics education is in the right direction of improving the level of living of families at present and in the future. Through functional participation of its recipients in family living, capabilities and status will improve to a greater height and quality family livelihood sustained.

### Conclusion

The relevance of Home Economics education in promoting family living cannot be overemphasized. It is a potent instrument for promoting family living. Findings showed that poverty, poor health issues, dual households and pollution are challenges impacting sustainable family living. Through Home Economics education, family living can be promoted by evolving income generating ventures in different fields of the subject, manage family resources, develop improved technologies for the households and improve family relationship through

family living education. There is no significant difference in the challenges impacting families between urban and rural households.

### Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Home Economics extension services should be made available to households to acquire knowledge and skills that they can utilize to help them promote family living.
2. Entrepreneurial training and skills should be given to Home Economics students, who as members of the family, can apply these experiences in diverse ways to bring about change in family settings, so as to promote family living.
3. Family members should engage in income generating ventures to lift the family above poverty level
4. Families should utilize improved techniques in food processing and preparation as well as functional foods to improve family health.

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