

## Human Resource Improvement in the Family: Roles of Home Economists in Federal Tertiary Institutions in South-East of Nigeria

Uju . E Nnubia

Department of Home Economics/Home Management and Tourism  
College of Applied Food Sciences and Tourism  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia-State, Nigeria

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n26p119

### Abstract

The study investigated human resource improvement in the family: Roles of Home Economists in Federal Tertiary Institutions in South-East of Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. Three research questions guided the study; the area of the study was South-East of Nigeria. The population for the study was all the 51 Home economists in five out of the ten Federal Tertiary Institutions offering Home Economics in South-East of Nigeria. Questionnaire was used for collection of data. Mean was the instrument used for data analysis. The findings of the study include: 8 factors militating against human resources improvement in the family, 12 importance of human resources improvement and 9 roles of Home Economists in human resource improvement in the family. Based on the findings, recommendation was made which stated that curriculum planners should include human resource development (HRD) in the area of Home Economics from primary through tertiary education.

**Keywords:** Improvement, Resources, Human-Resources, Family, Home Economics Education and Home Economists

### 1. Introduction

Resources are those assets used by individuals and families to attain their goals. According to Olson and Defrain (2000), resources are tools, talents and possessions one uses to create a life-style, solve everyday problems and reach goals for better living. Resources are very important in the family because it leads to a healthy family living. A healthy nation is an offshoot of a healthy family. When a nation is healthy, people tend to be happy and productive (Nwankwo, 2010).

Resources are classified into two namely: human resources and material resources. Human resources are abilities and characteristics of individual and other resources that cannot be utilized independently of people. These resources are inherent in human beings. According to Steidle and Bratton in Anyakoha (2004), human resources include: cognitive resources, affective resources, psychomotor resources and temporal resources.

These human resources need to be developed and improved upon in order to assist and support parents in their roles as caregivers, with the goal of promoting parental competency, strengthening family life which leads to having healthy children and family development. It also helps in developing the key competencies that enables an individual perform current and future job through planned learning activities (Gilley & Egglund 1989).

Family human resource improvement therefore, involves harnessing those personal characteristics and attributes of family members as well as personal and family possessions for well-being of family, economic independence and self sufficiency. According to Robert & Mitchell (1995), human resource development (HRD) is organized learning activities arranged in order to improve performance and/or personal growth. It involves the use of training, organization and career development efforts to improve individual, group and organizational effectiveness. According to Ogwu (2004), developing human resources involves combination of skills which could be applied to quicken understanding of the job to be accomplished. The skills involved are:

- a. technical skills: These are specialized knowledge and ability required to perform the primary task.
- b. human relation skills: These are ability to work with people, members of the family; and motivating them for desired performance. Such skills include reward, praise, appreciation, etc.
- c. managerial skill: These are the ability to make decision and see relationship that is crucial to the family.

Improving human resources could also be done through communication. According to Anyakoha (2004), communication is the most important skill to learn in interpersonal relationships in the group for human resource development. She further noted that it has the capacity of building up ones knowledge, skills, values, interests including both desirable and undesirable. Human resource improvement should be a continuous process of impacting new

information, skills, attitude and ideas required for a change in the family. It is a means of overcoming obsolescence through education and training. In a situation where human resource improvement is neglected, families will be unable to develop anything; members of the family are not kept current with the situation of things around their environment. However, through human resource improvement, members of the family are totally trained in quantity and quality to be great assets to the family as a unit. But when it is lacking, there is bound to be socio-economic and political instability both at family level and at national level (Omodia, 2004)

There is therefore, great need for human resources improvement in the family because it assists families in achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency. It exposes family members to wide and variety of knowledge, builds a strong and wise individual family community; and helps to promote the growth of critical thinking among family members (Nwankwo, 2010). According to Robert & Mitchell (1995), training and development remains a major component of human development. To achieve this in families, Home Economics education is needed.

Home economics education is that type of education that primarily concerns itself with the upliftment of individuals and the family. The education is expected to revive the family life, help foster family solidarity, enables family members cope with changing demands of different stages of family life and ensure wholesome relationships among family members. Home economists, professionals in Home Economics are elites that have gone through this type of education which prepares them with needed skills and knowledge for upliftment of individual and family welfare. They are the channels to be used to communicate to members of the society the need for human resources development in the family. Based on the above information, the researcher looked at factors militating against human resource improvement in the family, the importance of improving human resources and finally, roles of Home Economists in human resources improvement in the family.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate roles of Home Economists in Federal Tertiary Institutions in the South-East of Nigeria in human resource improvement in the family. Specifically, the study determined the following:

1. The importance of human resource improvement in the family.
2. Factors militating against human resource improvement in the family
3. Roles of Home Economists in improving human resources

## 3. Research Questions

The study answered the following questions:

1. What are the importance of improving human resources of the family?
2. What are the factors militating against improvement of human resources in the family?
3. What are the roles of Home Economists in human resource improvement?

## 4. Research Methodology

**Design:** The study employed a survey research design.

**Area of the Study:** The area of study was South-East of Nigeria. It is one of the six geo-political zones in the country. It is made up of five states namely: Anambra, Abia, Ebonyl, Enugu and Imo. There are ten federal tertiary institutions in the area.

**Population of the Study:** The population of the study consisted of the 51 Home Economists in five out of the ten tertiary institution that offers Home Economics in the South-East zone of the country

**Sample Size:** There was no sampling; the whole population was used due to the fewness of the number.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** The instrument for data collection was questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was divided into two main sections. Section A was structured to obtain personal data of the respondents. Section B was subdivided into A, B, C and sought information aimed at providing answers to the three research questions. A four point rating scale of "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree" was used.

The instrument was subjected to both content and face validation by three experts in Home Economics/Hotel Management and Tourism, Department of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia-State, Nigeria.

The instrument was pre-tested using 10 Home Economists from state tertiary institutions who are not part of the sample for the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability index was used to arrive at a coefficient value of 0.82 which showed a good reliability.

## 5. Technique for Data Collection

A total of 51 copies of questionnaire were administered with the help of two research assistants to all the respondents. A period of two weeks was given to fill the copies. There was 100% return rate.

## 6. Analysis Technique

Data collected were analyzed using mean. The researcher used 2.5 as the level of acceptance; that is any item with mean rating of 2.5 and above was regarded as accepted while any item with mean below 2.5 was regarded as rejected.

## 7. Research Findings

The tables below show the analysis of data related to each question.

**Table 1:** Mean Responses of Respondents on the Need for Human Resource Improvement in the Family.

S/N	Importance of Human Resource Improvement in the Family.	X	Decision
1	Exposes family member to wide and variety of knowledge	2.8	Agreed
2	Increases the workers interest in a given task	3.0	Agreed
3	Builds a strong and wise individual family in the community	2.6	Agreed
4	Assists and supports parents to cope with challenges of child rearing	2.8	Agreed
5	Promotes the growth of critical thinking among family members	3.2	Agreed
6	Helps family to achieve greater self sufficiency	2.7	Agreed
7	Gives room for increased opportunities in the world of work.	2.8	Agreed
8	Strengthens family culture, values and identity	2.6	Agreed
9	Helps family to manage their affairs confidently	3.2	Agreed
10	Leads to improvement of quality of living within the family and happiness in the home.	3.0	Agreed
11	Development of family members directly or indirectly.	2.8	Agreed
12	Leads to raising healthy and intelligent children and general family development raising	2.9	Agreed

Table 1 reveals that all the respondents agree to all the items listed. All the items had mean ratings above 2.5. This implies that all the items are the importance of improving human resources of the family

**Table 2:** Mean Rating of Respondents on Factors Militating against Human Resource Improvement in the Family

S/N	Factors Militating against Human Resource Improvement in the Family	X	Decision
1	Lack of specialized knowledge and ability required to perform primary tasks.	3.2	Agreed
2	Communication gap among family members	2.9	Agreed
3	Lack of motivation such as reward, price, praise, appreciation	3.0	Agreed
4	Lack of human relation skills	2.8	Agreed
5	Gender disparity among family members	3.2	Agreed
6	Lack of time management skills	2.8	Agreed
7	Incompetence in decision making skills	2.6	Agreed
8	Lack of funds	3.2	Agreed

**Table 2** above reveals that the entire items scored above the cut off point of 2.5. The respondents therefore, agree that the listed items were factors that militate against human resource improvement in the family.

**Table 3:** Mean Responses of Respondents on Roles of Home Economists in Human Resources Improvement in the Family

S/N	Roles of Home Economists in Human Resources Improvement in the Family	X	Decision
1	Writing and publishing books and journal on human resources development for wider publicity	2.8	Agreed
2	Planning and airing programme on human resource development using mass media to educate the public	3.2	Agreed
3	Laying emphases on human resource development when opportunity calls for it	2.6	Agreed
4	Organizing workshops/seminars for families on human resource development	2.7	Agreed
5	Being role models to students and people around	2.9	Agreed
6	Improvement on teaching facilities and techniques	3.0	Agreed
7	Organizing long vacation programmes on human resource development for students of all levels	2.6	Agreed
8	Encouraging family members to have confidence in their ability to come up with solution to family problems	3.0	Agreed
9	Encouraging families to discover new ways of using existing resources they have to produce completely new or changed version of existing goods and services	3.2	Agreed

Table 3 above reveals that all the respondents agree to all the items listed. All the items had mean ratings above 2.5. This implies that all the items are roles of Home Economists in the development of human resources.

## 8. Discussion of the Findings

The data presented in table 1 reveals the importance of human resource improvement in the family which include; exposure of family members to wide and variety of knowledge, increase in the interest of a worker in a given task, promotion in the growth of critical thinking among family members, strengthening the family's culture, values and identity, leading to improvement of quality of live within the family and happiness in the homes and so on. This conforms with the view of Anyakoha and Eluwa (1991) who pointed out that good management of family resources leads to improvement of the quality of living within the family and happiness in the home. The findings are also in agreement with Nwankwo (2010) who also stated that developing human resources in the family exposes members of the family to wide and variety of knowledge, increases the workers interest in a given task, builds a strong and wise individual family community and finally promotes the growth of critical thinking amongst family members.

The findings in table 2 show that there are factors militating against improvement of human resources in the family which include: lack of specialized knowledge and ability required to perform primary tasks, lack of human relationship skill, gender disparity among family members, lack of communication, lack of time management and so on. This confirms the saying that one can not give what he/she does not have. For instance, if a mother in charge of decision making does not have high quality interpersonal skills in knowledge of task to be done; other members of the group will have the same trait. According to Ndu et-al (1997) the virtue (human resources) is transferred to the members of the group through interpersonal relationship. Therefore, the standard of interpersonal abilities or skill the person at the hem of affairs possesses, determines what is to be transmitted to other members of the group. Lack of time management skills is another factor that cripples human resource development in the family. According to Nwankwo (2010), understanding time management skill, leads to a more integrated perspective of the use of other resources. She further said that time management helps to establish a routine for household tasks. In a situation where the skill is lacking, problems will crop up. Lack of communication skill is yet another factor that hinders improvement of human resources in the family. When there is communication gap among family members, problems ensue. Communication is the most important skill needed for development of human resources in the family. According to Anyakoha (2004), communication as a process is the most important skill to learn in interpersonal relationship in the group for human resource development. It is used for change in behaviour and to acquire new skills.

Table 3 revealed the roles of Home Economists in the improvement of human resources in the family which include: writing and publishing books and journal on human resources improvement for wider publicity, Planning and airing programme on human resource improvement using mass media to educate the public, organizing workshops/seminars for families on human resource improvement, encouraging family members to have confidence in their ability to proffer solutions to family problems, encouraging families to discover new ways of using existing resources they have to produce completely new or changed product etc. These findings were in line with Ezeobele and Anyakoha (2010) who stated that Home Economists should be given better positions in the family related programs so that they can use it to organize seminars and workshops to educate the public. They are also in line with Ozioko (2006) who stated that individuals should discover new ways of using existing resources and materials to produce completely new or changed revision of existing goods and services.

## 9. Recommendation

Curriculum planners should include human resource development (HRD) in the area of Home Economics from primary through tertiary institutions.

## 10. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There is need for human resources improvement because it has to do with the gradual growth of individual's capabilities to achieve family goals.
2. There are factors militating against the improvement of human resources in the family which include lack of communication, lack of time management, gender disparity, lack of motivation etc. These factors make the complexity of today's living more tasking on families.
3. Home Economists have great roles to play in the development of human resources in the family. As resource developers, they should help in ameliorating the complexity of family problems. They should write and publish books and journals on human resource improvement for wider publicity.

## References

- Anyakoha, E. U (2004) *Home Economics for Junior Secondary Schools*. Onitsha: Africana First publishers Ltd
- Anyakoha, E. U and Eluwa, A. M (1991) *Home Management for Schools and Colleges* Onitsha: Africana First publishers Ltd
- Ezeobebe, C. C and Anyakoha, E. U (2010) Strategies for Enhancing Family Relationship Skills Utilizing of expanding Families in Anambra-State in *Journal of home Economics Research (JHERA)*. 13:110-119
- Gilley, J. W & Egglund, S.A (1989) *Principles of Human Resource Development*. NewYork: Addison-Wesley
- Ndu, A Et-al (1997) Dynamics of Educational Administration
- Nwankwo, G. N (2010) Management and Development of Human Resources in the Family in "The Christian Light" Magazine of the Mothers' Union and Women's Guild, Diocese of Aguata. 5:46-47
- Ogwo, B (2004) Administration and Supervision of Vocational Technical Education. Lecture Note (Unpublished) University of Nigeria, Nsukka
- Olson, D.H and Defrain (2000) *Marriage and the Family: diversity and strength*. Mountain view, C.A 9204 Mayfield Publishing Company
- Omodia, S (2005) The Family as a Vehicle for sustainable Democracy in Nigeria. *J. Fan Dev*, 1 (1): 83
- Ozioko, J. N.N (2006) Promoting Entrepreneurship through Developing Creativity. *Journal of Home Economics Research (JHERA)* 7:164-170
- Robert, H R & Mitchell, E. K. Jr (1995) *Beyond Training: a Perspective on Improving Organization and People in the Paper Industry* by Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry