

APPRAISAL OF INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE SYNERGY BETWEEN INFORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION IN NCE HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to appraise innovative pedagogical approaches for improving the synergy between informal and formal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education (HEEE) to meet the challenges of 21st century in Nigeria. Two research question guide the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised 14 Home Economics lecturers in Colleges of Education and 50 entrepreneurs in Minna, Niger state. Total population consist of sixty-four (64). All the population was used as sample size. The researchers' constructed questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by senior lecturer in the department of Home Economics. Mean was used for data analyses. The Experiential learning and Project Based Learning were agreed to be innovative pedagogical strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE HEEE. Based on the finding, the study therefore, recommended that The NCCE minimum standard curriculum implementation framework should emphases use of experiential learning and project-based learning strategies for instructional delivery of HEEE curriculum contents. This will enhance the synergy between formal and informal education.

Keywords: Innovative, Pedagogical, Approaches, Synergy, Informal And Formal Education, Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

Introduction

Education is the most important tool that empowers individuals with the essentials for their survival in life. Every individual requires the right education and training so as to be able to contribute maximally to self, family and societal progress. Entrepreneurship Education in particular is the most important tool that empowers individuals with essential knowledge, skills and competences for survival in the world of business. The ability of an individual to contribute to the economics and technology development of the country lies in the quality of entrepreneurship education acquired. Provision of quality Entrepreneurship

education in Nigeria is ultimate to meet the growing need for skilled entrepreneurs that will propel economic, technology and social development of the country. This could be achieved through synergy between formal and informal education. Obanya (2014) contended that close collaboration between the school and the work place should be a must, this would allow the exposure to entrepreneurship in practice.

The merits of formal education are undeniable, as it provides a systematic framework that enables learners to gain expertise in various disciplines. Students benefit from access to a diverse range of subjects, expert guidance, and a supportive community of peers. However, while formal education instills academic prowess, it is often criticized for its limitations in promoting creativity, adaptability, and real-world application (Munshi, 2023). On the other hand, informal learning is the power of experience. Informal learning occurs through experiences and activities outside the conventional classroom setting. It is often self-directed and driven by personal curiosity, interests, and practical challenges. One of the most significant advantages of informal learning is its focus on real-world application. Learners are encouraged to explore and experiment, fostering a deep understanding of subjects and the development of valuable skills like problem-solving, adaptability, and resilience. Moreover, informal learning allows individuals to tailor their educational journeys to suit their unique interests and passions (Munshi, 2023).

Synergy between informal and formal education to enhance quality teaching and learning of HEEE in Colleges of Education is highly needed. Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education is expected to equip the learners with three domains of learning suggested by Obanya (2014). He further explained the three domains of learning as thus: The first is attitude and value which represents hard work and perseverance, interpersonal skill and creative thinking. The second is cognitive knowledge dimension which include capabilities in basic economics, management, accounting, communication skill and good human relation. The third is technical skills which comprises combination of competency in ICT and specialized skills. Wu and Wu, (2017) argue that Entrepreneurship Education (EE) should aim at cultivating in students' entrepreneurial ability and thinking and to promote successful entrepreneurship.

One of the objectives of Home Economics program is to equip students with entrepreneurial and manipulative skills for self-employment and self-reliance (NCCE minimum standard, 2020). To achieve this, the minimum standard curriculum contents, focus on technical skills acquisition in all areas of Home Economics. Emphasis was placed on field trip and invitation of resource persons. The curriculum contents recommended instructional strategies cannot give the learners entrepreneurial experience and manipulative skills for self-employment as required. In addition, the course contains a lot of practical activities which in some cases resources needed to implement the HEEE curriculum are not adequate. This calls for looking beyond the four-wall classroom teaching and learning, because most of the resources needed are often available and accessible in the community through small and medium-size enterprises and private corporate organization. What this require is refocusing on what pedagogical approaches could be adopted for improve the synergy between formal and informal education to allow students the opportunity to attaining quality HEEE. According to Munshi(2023) instead of pitting formal and informal learning against each other, their complementary nature should recognize. Both avenues of learning serve different purposes and contribute distinct benefits to an individual's growth and development. In the

same vain Jafari- Sadeghi, *et.al.*(2019) observed that there should be a rigorous plan for formal and informal educational systems to effectively develop essential knowledge economy for launching new businesses and foisting the innovation and entrepreneurship. The knowledge Economy of the twenty-first century places equal emphasis both on what the person is and on who the person is (Obanyan, 2014). Educational policy and its implementation require an education-driven pedagogical approach to achieve improvements in both quantity and quality of teaching and learning, which can only be achieved through the use of pedagogical innovation by educators.

Innovative Pedagogical approaches for improving the synergy between informal and formal education

.Pedagogical approaches refer to the strategies, methods, and philosophies that educators use to facilitate learning and teaching. These approaches encompass a wide range of instructional techniques and principles that guide how educators interact with students, and create learning environments. For a higher quality of EE, it is necessary to adopt suitable pedagogical approaches within and outside the collegeto facilitate students' entrepreneurship career.EEwhich requires teachers to teach students through various teaching methods (Wang and Yang, 2018). In the context of these paper innovative pedagogical approaches focus on innovative curriculum content and pedagogical strategies.

Innovative Curriculum Contents

Curriculum content can be described as all the academic contents taught in schools or in a specific course or program. It can also be seen as the knowledge, skills, attitudes as well as extracurricular activities imparted to learners through teaching and learning. It is the subject matter or topics consisting of facts, concepts, ideas and knowledge within a particular course, based on a duration and how it will bring about a relatively permanent change in an individual and the society (Ereh, Anthony, &Ikpo, 2019). HEEE needs innovative curriculum content that comprehensive, well organized, relevant to the entrepreneurial needsof an individual and the society. It is believed that when the curriculum content is not relevant to the needs of the learners, interest will not be registered to enable effective learning. Therefore, the system is bound to produce poorly skilled graduates who cannot defend their certificates, thereby unable to secure employment (Ereh, *et.al.* 2019). EE needsactivity- based curriculum designed to focus on activities structure with curriculum contents that will engage learnersin specialized entrepreneurial skills, knowledge on basic economics, management and accounting, communication and human relation, technical skill on ICT. Also, attitude and society values should be integrated into curriculum (Obanyan, 2014).

Innovative Pedagogical Strategies

Innovative pedagogical strategies could be used for effective teaching and learning of Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education which are Experiential Learning (EL), and Project-Based Learning (PBL).

Experiential Learning (EL), according to Sweizer and King (2004), the best-known proponent of experiential education was the education philosopher John Dewey (1916/1944). Dewey believes strongly that “an ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory. Simply it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance”. This idea was reiterated by kolb, Boyatzis and Mainements (2000) who put forward the concept that

learning only occurs when experience is transformed into knowledge. The experiential learning theory describes two means of acquiring experience: the first one is concrete experience which imply participant in, or observation of, a real event. The second is abstract conceptualization information derived from the experience and knowledge of others. These forms of experience can be transformed into knowledge in two ways: first, reflective observation-thinking about the experience. Second, active experimentation-testing out different way of doing things (Stokes, Wilson & Mador, 2010).

Experiential learning is based on the premise that for real learning to take place, students need to be active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information given by a teacher. Utilization of informal education approach for teaching and learning HEEE could be regarded to a form of experiential learning for the students to gain concrete experience and abstract conceptualize in different areas of entrepreneurial skills. Informal learning using community resources will provide an opportunity for the learners to transform field experience into knowledge by active participation, observation and reflection (Shehu, 2017). Ene-Obong (2006) recommended that building entrepreneurial culture in students can be done through “experience”.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered and teacher-facilitated learning approach with extensive methodological support and built on the foundation of learning by doing. It is considered one of the most suitable active learning methodologies to be applied in order to achieve 21st-century skills, which are: Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Creativity and Communication. PBL is an effective approach in developing self-regulatory learning and engaging students around authentic issues (Medeiros, 2018). PBL positively impacts student motivation, engagement, and understanding of concepts in real-life situations, while also developing transversal skills in higher education (Alve, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Quality HEEE required relevant and adequate curriculum contents with pedagogical strategies that will facilitate acquisition of soft skills, hand skills, and hand on skills. However, the researchers observed that the curriculum content, instructional strategies and resources are not adequate for quality delivery of HEEE program. In this era of globalization, entrepreneurship education is designed to equip students with skills to carve out their niche as an educator and innovative entrepreneur. To achieved this entrepreneurship program must be highly equipped to help students learn to utilize resources (Oluwade, Suleman, & Olumoyegun, 2022). The informal setting has no curriculum but a lot of facilities and expertise. They engaged on more practical and hand on activities more often. It is on this note that the study seeks to appraisal pedagogical approaches for improving the synergy between informal and formal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education in Niger State

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to appraise innovative pedagogical approaches for improving the synergy between informal and formal education in NCE Home Economics entrepreneurship education in Niger State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify innovative pedagogical strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

- ii. Examine innovative curriculum content for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study

- i. What are the innovative pedagogical strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.
- ii. What are the innovative curriculum contents for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey was used on appraisal of innovative pedagogical approaches for improving the synergy between informal and formal education in NCE home economics education entrepreneurship in Niger State. According to Nassaji (2015) the goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. It is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened. Descriptive survey design is considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researchers to establish the dimension and the predictive value of the variables of the research null hypotheses.

Population and Sampling for the Study

The population for the study comprises fourteen (14) Home Economics lecturers and fifty (50) entrepreneurs in Minna, Niger state. The total population consist of sixty-four (64). The sample size comprised sixty-four (64) with respondents made up of four-teen (14) Home Economics teachers and fifty (50) entrepreneurs. Total population was used because the population is small. All members in the population for the study were carefully chosen because individual views are considered important for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

Researchers' constructed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument has section A and B. Section A was used to elicit responses on innovative instructional strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education. Section B was used to obtain information on innovative curriculum content for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education. The instrument was subjected to face content validity by senior lecturers in the department of Home Economics. The comments and suggestions made by the validators guided the final draft of the questionnaire. The corrected questionnaire was used for data collection.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers personally administered the instruments with the help of one train research assistant. The instrument was distributed and retrieved from respondents after they have responded to the questionnaire. Only fifty-five (55) questionnaires were retrieved.

Procedure for Data Analysis

After the collection of data, the researchers cross examine the questionnaires to ascertain the returned rate, completeness and clarity. The data obtained from the respondents was subjected to the statistical package of Version 26. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the research questions. Four-point scale with descriptive statistics options of strongly agree,

agree, strongly disagree, disagree, carrying points of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively were used to answer each item. Thus, each item was subjected to mean computation to establish the balance point in the distribution. The limit for decision rule: An average mean of 2.5 and above was considered as agree, while an average mean below 2.5 was considered disagree. The mean criterion of 2.5 was calculated from the sum of 4+3+2+1 divided by 4. A theoretical mean of 2.5 according to Achilleas (2014) should be used as a criterion to judge mean score for four items question format.

Results

Table 1: Mean responses on innovative pedagogical strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

S/No	Items	N	Mean	Decision
1	Experiential Learning (EL)	55	3.00	Agree
2	Project-Based Learning (PBL)	55	2.93	Agree

Key: N = Number of Sample; Decision Mean = 2.5, Sources: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1 revealed that items 1, and 2 have an average means value ranging of 2.93 and 3.00 which are above decision means of 2.5. This means that majority of respondents extensively agree with the opinion of innovative pedagogical strategies EL, and PBL for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

Table 2: Mean responses on innovative Curriculum content for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education

S/no	Items	N	Mean	Decision
1	Learning experience on Basic Economics.	55	3.15	Agree
2	Learning experience on Business Accounting,	55	3.00	Agree
3	Communication and Human Relation Skills	55	3.13	Agree
4	Technical Skill Specializes on any areas of HEEE	55	3.15	Agree
5	ICT	55	2.93	Agree
6	Attitude and Society Values	55	3.04	Agree

Key: N = Number of Sample; Decision Mean = 2.5. Sources: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2 showed that items 1-6 have an average means value ranging from 2.93 – 3.15 which are above decision means of 2.5. This means that majority of respondents broadly agree with the opinion of innovative Curriculum content for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

Major Findings

The findings from the descriptive statistic shows that all the two research questions were accepted. Meaning that:

- i. EL and PBL were agreed to be innovative pedagogical strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.
- ii. Learning experience on Basic Economics, Business Accounting, Communication and Human Relation Skills, Technical Skill Specializes on any areas of HEEE, ICT, Attitude and Society Values were agreed to be innovative curriculum contents for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

Discussion of findings

The result of the study showed that Home Economics teachers and experts in informal sectors agreed with all items in table 1 as innovative pedagogical strategies that could be used for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education. This implies that EL, and PBL. are learners center pedagogical strategies that required active participation and resources through synergy between formal and informal education. This is in agreement with the statement of Shehu (2017) that using community resources (informal environment) will provide an opportunity for the learners to transform field experience into knowledge by active participation, observation and reflection. Supporting this, Ene-Obong (2006) recommended that building entrepreneurial culture in students can be done through “experience”. Also, compliance with the result is the argument of Medeiros, (2018) that PBL is an effective approach in developing self-regulatory learning and engaging students around authentic issues. Similarly, Alveet.al. (2016) seen PBL has pedagogical strategy that has positive impacts on student motivation, engagement, and understanding of concepts in real-life situations, while also developing transversal skills in higher education. In addition, Yuan and Wu, (2020) noted that EE requires teachers to teach students knowledge, skills, and mindset through various teaching method.

The second finding of this study also revealed that learning experience in Basic Economics, Business Accounting, Communication and Human Relation Skills, Technical Skill Specializes in any areas of HEEE, ICT, Attitude and Society Values were agreed to be innovative curriculum contents for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education. This finding is in line with that of Obanya (2014) who suggested that EE needs activity- based curriculum focused on curriculum contents that will engage learners in specialized entrepreneurial skills, knowledge on basic economics, management and accounting, communication and human relation, technical skill on ICT, attitude and society values should be integrated into curriculum.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that EL and PBL are innovative pedagogical strategies for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education. Also, Basic Economics, Business Accounting, Communication and Human Relation Skills, Technical Skill Specializes in any areas of HEEE, ICT, Attitude and Society Values were identified as innovative curriculum contents for improving the synergy between formal and informal education in NCE Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education.

Recommendation

1. The NCCE minimum standard curriculum implementation framework should emphases on the use of experiential learning and project-based learning strategies for instructional delivery of Home Economics Entrepreneurship Education curriculum contents. This will enhance the synergy between formal and informal education.
2. Curriculum planners, Home Economics Educators and experts in formal and informal education should work together in selection of learning experiences for Basic Economics, Business Accounting, Communication and Human Relation Skills, Technical Skill Specializes on any areas of HEEE, ICT, Attitude and Society Values.

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