

Revitalizing Home Economics Education for Sustainable Livelihoods in Nigeria's Era of Uncertainty

Rukayyatu Abdulkadir Umar¹ Hauwa Mahdi Jummai² Favour Donson Ahmed³

Correspondence email address: umarukayyatu@gmail.com

Correspondence Phone Number: 08060817786

Department of Home Economics, School of Secondary Education (Vocational) Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe, Gombe State

Abstract

The recent deregulation of fuel prices in Nigeria has created economic uncertainty and volatility for citizens. In light of disruptions and rising costs, home economics education plays a vital role in equipping learners with knowledge and skills for sustainable livelihoods. This paper examines strategies to advance vocational home economics curricula to empower students facing unpredictable conditions. It emphasizes teaching adaptive capacity, entrepreneurial thinking, financial literacy, and technology integration within home economics. Education on nutrition, sustainable production, resource management, income generation, and community involvement can build relevant life skills. Collaborating with stakeholders to align training with contemporary realities is proposed. Home economics must evolve to nurture resilience and tackle challenges. Building partnerships, contextualizing curricula, and utilizing technology are highlighted as key approaches to equip learners for success despite volatility. This paper offers insights on strengthening home economics to impart lasting proficiencies, contributing to discussions on advancing vocational studies for prosperous livelihoods during Nigeria's uncertainty.

Introduction

Nigeria's recent deregulation of fuel subsidies has led to rising and unpredictable fuel prices, disrupting the economy and citizens' daily lives by increasing transportation, food, and other costs (Mamman et al., 2022; Omoju & Isa, 2020). Lower income households, spending over 50% of earnings on food, are the most impacted by livelihood stress and struggles to afford necessities (Salau et al., 2022). These unpredictable conditions require Nigerians to adapt money management, consumer behavior, transportation modes, and income sources. However, many lack the knowledge and skills for optimal adjustments and decisions amidst volatility (Adewara & Visser, 2021). Home economics education has a pivotal role in developing youth adaptive capacities and mindsets needed to sustain resilient livelihoods despite economic fluctuations. This paper examines strategies for advancing Nigerian vocational home economics curricula to empower students to tackle unpredictable challenges. It emphasizes contextualizing learning, fostering partnerships, and integrating technology. Analysis aims to contribute insights on strengthening home economics to impart lasting proficiencies that enable graduate resilience and prosperity despite uncertainty.

Nigeria's economy has been disrupted in recent years by policy changes, global oil price shocks, rising national debts and inflation, and most impactfully, the removal of fuel subsidies by the government (Ajibade et al., 2021). This deregulation led to sharp increases and unpredictable fluctuations in fuel prices, practically doubling transportation costs and causing over 20% hikes in food prices within months (Ebelechukwu, 2021). Lower income

households spending majority of earnings on food face intensified livelihood stress and inability to afford basic necessities amidst rising costs (Salau et al., 2022). This economic volatility requires citizens to urgently adapt their financial management, consumption behavior, transportation modes, and income sources. However, decades of dependency on fuel subsidies and fixed incomes have left many Nigerians without the requisite knowledge and skills to make optimal adjustments for sustainability (Fox, et al., 2019). Youths are especially vulnerable, facing increasingly precarious employment and income prospects in the disrupted economy. Home economics education has a vital role to play in developing resilient capacities within young Nigerians to maintain sustainable livelihoods despite unpredictable conditions. This paper argues for advancing Nigerian vocational home economics curricula to equip students with the adaptive abilities, mindsets, literacy, and life skills needed to tackle contemporary challenges. It examines localization, partnerships, and technology integration as key strategies to make learning relevant to evolving realities. The analysis aims to contribute insights on how home economics can build youth preparedness and prosperity in the face of economic uncertainty. More broadly, it highlights approaches to strengthen vocational education systems to empower citizens to creatively adapt and respond to disruptive change.

Changing Realities Impacting Citizens' Livelihoods

In recent years, Nigeria's economy has undergone major shocks and disruptions that have severely impacted citizens' livelihoods and created an era of uncertainty. Several macroeconomic factors have converged to destabilize the economy and undermine household financial security. Firstly, the 2008 global financial crisis led to a crash in international oil prices, which depleted Nigeria's oil export earnings that provide over 90% of foreign exchange (Venugopal et al., 2019). Currency devaluations and growing national debt servicing costs further strained the economy. At the same time, loose monetary policies triggered high inflation which has averaged 13.5% over the past decade, eroding purchasing power of fixed incomes (Duguma et al., 2021). However, the policy change with the most far-reaching impact was the removal of fuel subsidies in 2021, which had kept petrol prices stable for Nigerians for decades. This deregulation caused pump prices to practically double within months. Fuel is central to the economy, so this rapidly increased transportation costs by 100% and pushed food inflation up by over 20% (Ebelechukwu, 2021).

These economic shocks and policy changes have put enormous pressure on Nigerian households' budgets and capacity to afford basic necessities. Lower income groups especially face critical livelihood challenges and financial precarity. Over 90 million citizens living on less than US\$1.90/day spend over 50-60% of their income just on food (Salau et al., 2022). Thus rising food costs have drastically reduced their ability to meet nutritional requirements. Families also struggle to afford rent, utilities, healthcare, and education. Uncertainties over fuel prices add further stress to managing commute and business costs. This is exacerbating poverty and unemployment too. Over 40% of Nigerians were projected to be unemployed by 2022 (Trading Economics, 2022). The need for citizens to urgently adapt financial practices, transportation modes, and income sources to maintain resilient livelihoods has never been greater. Youth face the biggest risks as their employment and income prospects erode amidst a disrupted economy. Equipping citizens, especially youth, with the knowledge and skills to adapt to economic volatility and unpredictability thus emerges as an urgent priority. Home economics education has a key role to play in developing resilient capacities.

The Pivotal Role of Home Economics in Developing Youth Resilience

Home economics as a field of study has traditionally focused on building competencies in domestic skills like food preparation, nutrition, textiles, household maintenance, and

consumer education (Shahzad, et al., 2019). In the past, these skills largely prepared youth, especially women, to manage households and care for families. However, as this paper argues, today's unpredictable socioeconomic realities require an evolution in home economics curricula to equip young Nigerians with a wider range of adaptive capacities to sustain resilient livelihoods. The complex challenges citizens face in maintaining financial security call for a new purpose and orientation for home economics. Beyond technical proficiencies, learners need developmental mindsets, critical thinking abilities, and social conscience to navigate uncertainty (Dibie & Dibie, 2021). Home economics instruction must enable youth to creatively adapt income sources, consumer behavior, money management, and career pathways in the face of evolving realities. Education must provide solution-focused coping skills to manage precarity stemming from volatility. This positions home economics as a forward-looking subject vital for youth to develop holistic life competencies that empower graduation, social contribution, and dignity regardless of wider economic conditions. It is pivotal for safeguarding youth futures amidst uncertainty. This requires broadening home economics curricula to include:

5. Instruction in entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, and income diversification strategies to expand livelihood options
6. Training in nutrition, health, and sustainable local food production to improve self-sufficiency.
7. Education in resource management and community involvement to build collective resilience.
8. Projects linking learning to real-life problem solving for context-specific solutions.
9. Integration of technology to equip digital proficiency and employability.
10. Experiential pedagogies to nurture analytical faculties and proactive mindsets.

Recommendations to make home economics relevant to Nigeria's changing realities Equipping Nigerian youth with relevant skills and resilience to navigate uncertainty requires reimagining home economics curricula and instruction. This refocuses home economics as a forward-looking subject vital for holistic youth development. It imparts versatile competencies tailored for new realities across formal and informal employment. Students gain multi-dimensional skills to sustain resilient livelihoods and collectively strengthen communities. Key recommendations include:

- a. Incorporate entrepreneurial skills development: Teaching business planning, financial literacy, sales, and networking skills can empower students to create their own opportunities and income sources amid disruption (Dibie & Dibie, 2021). Experiential projects like student-run enterprises foster proactive mindsets.
- b. Strengthen financial literacy: Money management capacities enable wise financial decisions during volatility. Home economics should include interactive lessons on budgeting, saving, investing, taxation and managing debt tailored for Nigeria (Adewara & Visser, 2021).
- c. Promote sustainable food production: Local farming skills promote nutrition, health and self-sufficiency. Urban agriculture techniques can be integrated to foster eco-friendly food production using local inputs (Ochuko & Omodamiro, 2014).
- d. Leverage technology: Digital skills open diverse income pathways. Home economics can teach applications like e-commerce, fintech, remote work, and food processing technologies (Tarus, 2020).

- e. Encourage community involvement: Service learning nurtures social awareness and networks vital for resilience. Projects that engage students in solving local problems provide grounded learning (Johnson, 2016).
- f. Adopt experiential learning: Problem and project-based pedagogies build critical thinking and adaptive abilities. Case studies, simulations and experiments make learning participative.
- g. Forge partnerships: Collaborations with industry and local partners ensure workplace relevance and provide internships (Berchoux, et al., 2019).

Strategic Approaches for Impactful Home Economics Education

Advancing these aspects of home economics education can equip Nigerian youth with the dynamic skills, mindsets, knowledge and social responsibility needed to sustain resilient and fulfilling livelihoods despite economic uncertainty. These approaches facilitate impactful delivery of adaptive capacities and mindsets fueling success despite volatility. Delivering empowering education responsive to Nigeria's changing realities involves strategic collaboration, localization, and technology integration:

- i. **Teaching Adaptive Capacity:** Home economics education should prioritize developing students' adaptive capacity and resilience to effectively respond to changing economic realities (Johnson, 2016). This involves instruction in problem-solving, critical analysis, creativity, and cognitive flexibility to adapt to new situations (Piya, et al., 2019). Role-playing complex real-life scenarios and case studies can build capacity to devise context-specific solutions. Teaching self-regulation helps manage stress during uncertainties. Fostering growth mindsets versus fixed mindsets encourages effort and self-improvement. Overall, the curriculum must evolve from teaching rigid technical skills to nurturing dynamic faculties to adapt to unpredictable futures.
- ii. **Promoting Entrepreneurial Thinking:** Entrepreneurship education integrated into home economics helps cultivate innovation, self-reliance and empower students to create opportunities amidst uncertainty (Dibie & Dibie, 2021). It focuses on teaching market analysis skills, business planning, financial literacy, and networking, while promoting problem-solving attitudes and calculated risktaking. Incorporating experiential learning through student-run enterprises, business idea competitions, and community service projects builds entrepreneurial mindsets. Case studies on youth entrepreneurs provide realistic role models. Collaborating with business mentors introduces students to networks and resources for enterprises. This enables graduates to diversify incomes through entrepreneurship.
- iii. **Enhancing Financial Literacy:** Building financial literacy is vital for students to make wise financial judgments and manage money effectively during volatility (Adewara & Visser, 2021). Home economics curricula should incorporate interactive lessons on budgeting, saving, investing, taxation, debt management and financial planning tailored to local contexts. Simulated exercises in making earnings projections, choosing investments, and managing budgets are useful. Collaboration with banks and experts provides real-world perspectives. Financial literacy fosters prudent spending, saving, borrowing, and investing capacities.
- iv. **Integrating Technology:** Technology integration improves learning experiences and equips students with digital skills for the modern economy (Tarus, 2020). Home economics teaching can utilize interactive e-resources, videos, simulations, games, and social media tools to engage learners. Students can gain hands-on technology experience through computerized sewing

machines, hydroponic farms, food processing equipment, and e-commerce. Digital literacy training prepares graduates for technology-enabled jobs and entrepreneurship. Blended learning also enables curriculum delivery during uncertainties.

- v. **Education on Nutrition and Sustainable Food Production:** Home economics should impart nutrition knowledge and sustainable food production skills for healthy lifestyles and environmental sustainability (Ochuko & Omodamiro, 2014). Students must gain scientific understanding of balanced diets and nutritional requirements. Local, seasonal ingredients can make food preparation training more relevant. Urban farming techniques enable practical education in environmentally responsible agriculture. This fosters agency in food choices while enhancing food security and self-sufficiency.
- vi. **Building Creative Income Generation Skills:** Income generation skills are vital to expand livelihood options amid economic disruption (Dibie & Dibie, 2021). Home economics can nurture creativity and innovation in generating income through small enterprises, handcrafts, food processing, ecotourism and other ventures. Teaching business, marketing, and networking skills enables such microenterprise. Collaborating with local artisans, cooperatives and vocational institutes facilitates mentorships and apprenticeships. Experiential marketbased projects develop entrepreneurial proficiencies. This provides diversified income streams.
- vii. **Community Involvement and Engagement:** Community service, outreach and engagement enrich home economics learning and develop social awareness (Johnson, 2016). Students can be involved in community nutrition programs, financial literacy camps, sanitation drives, or local enterprises. This builds teamwork, communication skills, civic responsibility, and connections. Active engagement with communities makes learning grounded in social realities while enabling students to contribute positively to society. It nurtures wellrounded graduates.

Contextualizing Home Economics Curricula

For home economics education to effectively build adaptive capacities in learners facing unpredictable futures, curricula must reflect students' contemporary realities, needs and contexts (Suzuki, 2020). The subject matter, case studies, projects and instructional methods utilized should connect to local cultures, challenges, resources and emerging opportunities. Blending global knowledge and best practices with familiar community examples, challenges, traditions and resources enhances relevance. Learners can envision implementing contextualized learning to tackle local issues (Wasisno, 2023). This localization of home economics makes it a lived curriculum that empowers youth as change agents in their unique realities. Some recommendations for contextualization include:

1. Financial literacy education should use incomes and savings vehicles familiar to students. Lessons can involve calculating household budgets, savings goals and investments using typical local salaries and options like informal savings groups.
2. Entrepreneurship training can identify viable microbusiness opportunities through local market gap analysis and value chain studies. Business ideas can be co-created to align with community needs and youth interests.
3. Food production skills must align with local agro-climatic conditions, endemic crops and seasonal calendars. Hands-on farming activities can utilize indigenous methods enhanced by new appropriate techniques and technologies.

4. Nutrition education can address specific community issues like childhood stunting or micronutrient deficiencies in women through balanced, affordable recipes utilizing local ingredients.
5. Technical skills training should focus on livelihoods relevant in that locality whether agriculture, trade, crafts, tourism or services. Apprenticeships with local artisans and experts add value.
6. Social awareness builds on indigenous support systems like extended families and hometown associations. Learnings from traditional resilience practices can be leveraged.

Fostering Partnerships for Responsive Education

Strategic partnerships between home economics programs and diverse local stakeholders can help continually align teaching and learning with evolving realities, needs, opportunities and resources (Roelecke, et al., 2023). This fosters responsive, demand-driven education. These partnerships allow a two-way exchange of knowledge, resources and opportunities between educational institutes and communities. Students are exposed to practical complexities through site visits, mentoring and collaborative activities, nurturing critical faculties. Partnerships thus make learning dynamic, grounded, and more responsive to social contexts and needs (Zhang, et al., 2022). This symbiotic integration of education, industry and community is key for empowering and employable graduates. Potential partners include:

- a. Employers and entrepreneur associations to provide internships, apprenticeships and insights on workplace skills demands. This enables curricula to stay updated.
- b. Community organizations to identify real problems for service learning projects. Allowing students to apply knowledge builds motivation.
- c. Agricultural extension services to collaborate on food production training, leveraging expert inputs.
- d. Financial institutions to share resources for financial literacy instruction tailored to available local products.
- e. Vocational training institutes to create pathways between academic and vocational education streams.
- f. University faculty to conduct collaborative research on curriculum innovations and community problem-solving.
- g. Alumni networks to provide feedback on strengthening programs based on their experiences. Alumni also serve as mentors and role models.
- h. Industry professionals to deliver guest lectures and demonstrations to inspire students through real-world perspectives.
- i. Women's self-help groups to partner on projects relevant to women's needs like nutrition or microenterprise.

Integrating Technology in Teaching and Learning

Incorporating technology into home economics education is vital for engaging youth, building contemporary skills, and enabling learning continuity during uncertainties like pandemics or conflicts (Ramaila & Molwele, 2022). Technology aids experiential learning-by-doing, provides flexible remote learning options, and equips digitallyconnected graduates for evolving job landscapes (Ahmad & Hamad, 2020). It is a powerful tool for delivering dynamic home economics education that empowers youth with adaptive capacities for uncertain futures. Educators can utilize:

1. Interactive e-learning platforms, apps and open courseware for blended instruction.
2. Digital simulations to safely practice risky or expensive skills like operating farm machinery.
3. Virtual tours and videos to showcase entrepreneurial innovations and livelihood options.
4. Social media networking with peers and industry professionals for collaborative learning.
5. Online resources and games to make financial literacy education interactive.
6. Mobile messaging services for educational outreach and information dissemination.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted contextualization, partnerships, and technology integration as key strategies to advance Nigerian home economics education and equip youth with the proficiencies to tackle unpredictable economic futures. As discussed, localizing curricula to students' contemporary realities fosters adaptive capacities to solve localized problems. Strategic partnerships between schools, communities and industries facilitate dynamic curriculum co-creation aligned with emerging needs and opportunities. Purposeful technology integration expands pedagogical approaches, enables resilient delivery models, and provides 21st century skills. Ultimately, this paper argues for a forward-looking reorientation of home economics to empower Nigerian youth to create sustainable livelihoods and drive community development despite economic uncertainty. The subject must evolve from technical domestic skills to nurture multi-dimensional adaptive capacities and mindsets. Learner-centric instruction on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, nutrition, resource management and social responsibility can equip graduates to creatively prosper amid volatility. Home economics is vital to safeguard youth futures and strengthen community resilience in challenging times. By making education locally rooted, collaborative and digitally-enriched, vocational programs can impart lasting proficiencies for life and livelihoods. Youth can become empowered change agents to equitably improve wellbeing. Rather than victims of circumstance, home economics graduates can proactively advance individual and collective sustainability. The strategies in this paper aim to catalyze discussions on reconstituting vocational education to develop Nigerian youth capabilities to adapt to, survive, and thrive in the face of disruptive change. Their success spells hope.

References

- Adewara, S., & Visser, M. (2021). Developing youth financial literacy education for uncertain economic conditions in Nigeria. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45*(5), 713-722. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12589>
- Ahmad, A., & Hamad, K. (2020). Technology Integration in Teaching: A Study that Examines How Technology Integration Affects Student Achievement. *Journal of education and culture*, 4, 44. <https://doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v4n3p44>.
- Ajibade, A., Ogunmakin, K., & Fasina, F. (2021). Rising debt profile in Nigeria: Implications on citizen's welfare and livelihoods. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 15*(2), 32-41. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2020.1289>
- Anho, J. E. (2011). Reforming Home Economics curriculum for quality education and sustainable development in Nigeria. *International Education Journal*, 12*(1), 61-70. <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/IEJ/article/view/7709>
- Berchoux, T., Watmough, G., Hutton, C., & Atkinson, P. (2019). Agricultural shocks and drivers of livelihood precariousness across Indian rural communities. *Landscape and Urban Planning*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.LANDURBPLAN.2019.04.014>.
- Dibie, R., & Dibie, J. (2021). Integrating entrepreneurial education into home economics curriculum for self-reliance. *AFHERT Journal of Home Economics Research*, 3*(1), 132-139. <https://www.afhert.org/publication/integrating-entrepreneurialeducation-into-home-economics-curriculum-for-self-reliance/>
- Duguma, L., Noordwijk, M., Minang, P., & Muthee, K. (2021). COVID-19 Pandemic and Agroecosystem Resilience: Early Insights for Building Better Futures. *Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU13031278>.
- Ebelechukwu, C. (2021, September 13). The high cost of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. *Daily Sun*. <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/the-high-cost-of-fuel-subsidyremoval/>
- Fox, A., Īriste, S., & Bezeljak, P. (2019). Detecting a Sustainable Mindset through Using Content Analysis of Teacher-produced Learning Journals. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 21, 35 - 47. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2019-0003>.
- Johnson, M. (2016). Home economics education: Enhancing resilience in vulnerable individuals, families, and communities. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 9*(2), 128-138. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.561986205513829>
- Mamman, J., Alhassan, A. R., & Balogun, O. S. (2022). Fuel subsidy removal and the future of energy policy in Nigeria. *Journal of Energy Policy*, 159*, 112675. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2021.112675>
- Musa, A., & Maduewesi, B. U. (1999). Home economics in Nigeria. *Nigerian Vocational Association Journal*, 4*(1), 121-128. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/njva/article/view/76124>
- Ochuko, E. S., & Omodamiro, R. M. (2014). Home economics education as a tool for effective food insecurity and poverty management in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Review*, 7*(4), 534-539. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jer/article/view/105119>
- Omoju, O. E., & Isa, M. K. (2020). Deregulation and anti-poor policies in Nigeria: The quest for alternative regulatory approach. *Africa Development*, 45*(2), 199-218. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26965449>

- Piya, L., Maharjan, K., & Joshi, N. (2019). Climate Change and Rural Livelihoods in Developing Countries. *Socio-Economic Issues of Climate Change*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-5784-8_2.
- Ramaila, S., & Molwele, A. (2022). The Role of Technology Integration in the Development of 21st Century Skills and Competencies in Life Sciences Teaching and Learning. *International Journal of Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v11n5p9>.
- Roelecke, K., Grim, J., & Garcia, S. (2023). Closing the Gap between Schools and Community: University/Community Collaboration Addresses Identified Barriers to Student Learning. *ENGAGE!*. <https://doi.org/10.18060/26750>.
- Salau, E. S., Otunaiya, A. O., & Idowu, A. O. (2022). Food insecurity status of households in Nigeria: Evidence from a 2020 national survey. *Nigerian Journal of Nutritional Sciences*, 43(1), 106-118. <https://doi.org/10.4314/njns.v43i1.15>
- Shahzad, L., Tahir, A., Sharif, F., Khan, W., Farooq, M., Abbas, A., & Saqib, Z. (2019). Vulnerability, well-being, and livelihood adaptation under changing environmental conditions: a case from mountainous region of Pakistan. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 26, 26748 - 26764. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-019-05880-x>.
- Suzuki, A. (2020). Research on home economics teacher training curriculum that approaches general-purpose skills by focusing on the essence of the subjects. *Impact*. <https://doi.org/10.21820/23987073.2020.8.15>.
- Tarus, J. K. (2020). Adoption of e-learning tools and technologies in home economics education curriculum delivery. *African Journal of Online and Distance Learning*, 3(1), 1-16. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1261862>
- Trading Economics. (2022). Nigeria Unemployment Rate. <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/unemployment-rate>
- Venugopal, S., Gau, R., Appau, S., Sample, K., & Pereira, R. (2019). Adapting traditional livelihood practices in the face of environmental disruptions in subsistence communities. *Journal of Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JBUSRES.2018.12.023>.
- Wasisno, W. (2023). Peningkatan hasil belajar ekonomi dengan pembelajaran contextual teaching and learning berbasis media power point. *EDUTECH : Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Berbantuan Teknologi*. <https://doi.org/10.51878/edutech.v2i4.1872>.
- Zhang, M., Matthews, K., & Liu, S. (2022). Recognising cultural capital through shared meaning-making in cross-cultural partnership practices. *International Journal for Students as Partners*. <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v6i1.4893>.