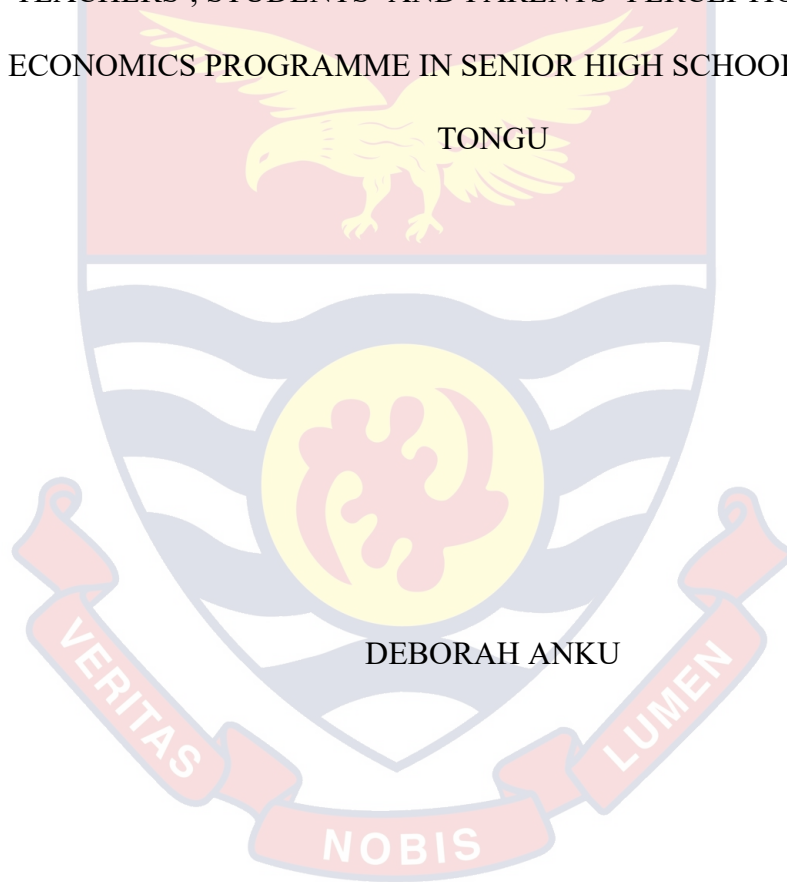


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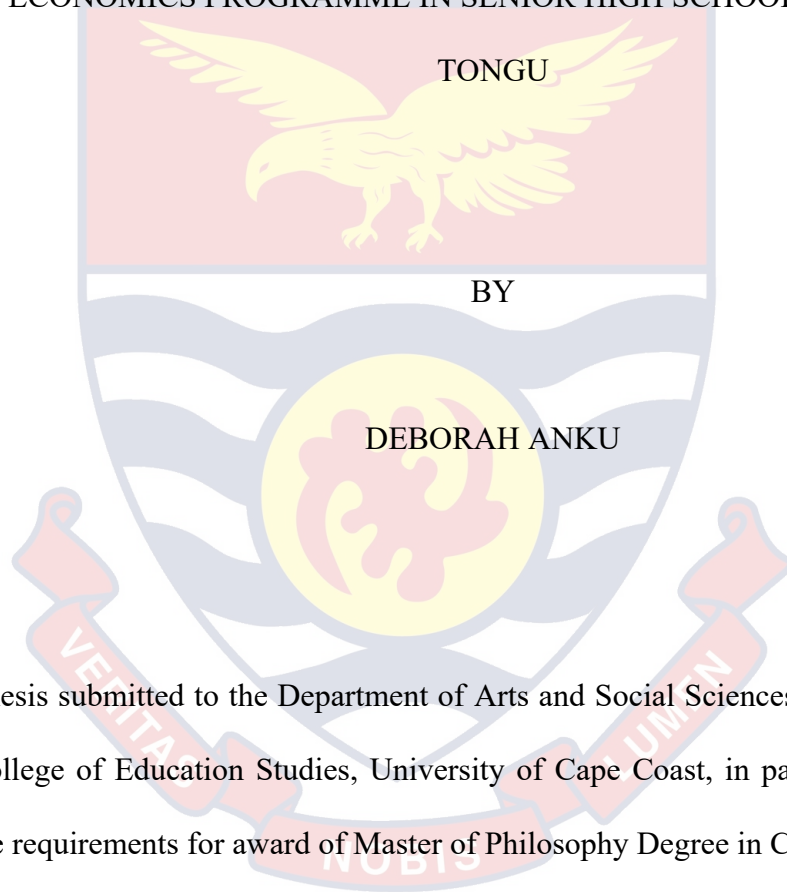
TEACHERS', STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF HOME
ECONOMICS PROGRAMME IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN NORTH



2015

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

TEACHERS', STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF HOME
ECONOMICS PROGRAMME IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN NORTH



This thesis submitted to the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education of the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum Studies

JUNE 2015

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Anku Deborah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Dr. Ekuia Tekyiwa Amua-Sekyi

Co-supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Prof. (Mrs) Sarah Darkwa

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess perceptions of the image of Home Economics held by teachers, parents and students of Senior High Schools in the North Tongu District. This was achieved through examining their awareness and knowledge of the content of the Home Economics programme and any differences that existed in the perception of both Home Economics and non Home Economics students by gender.

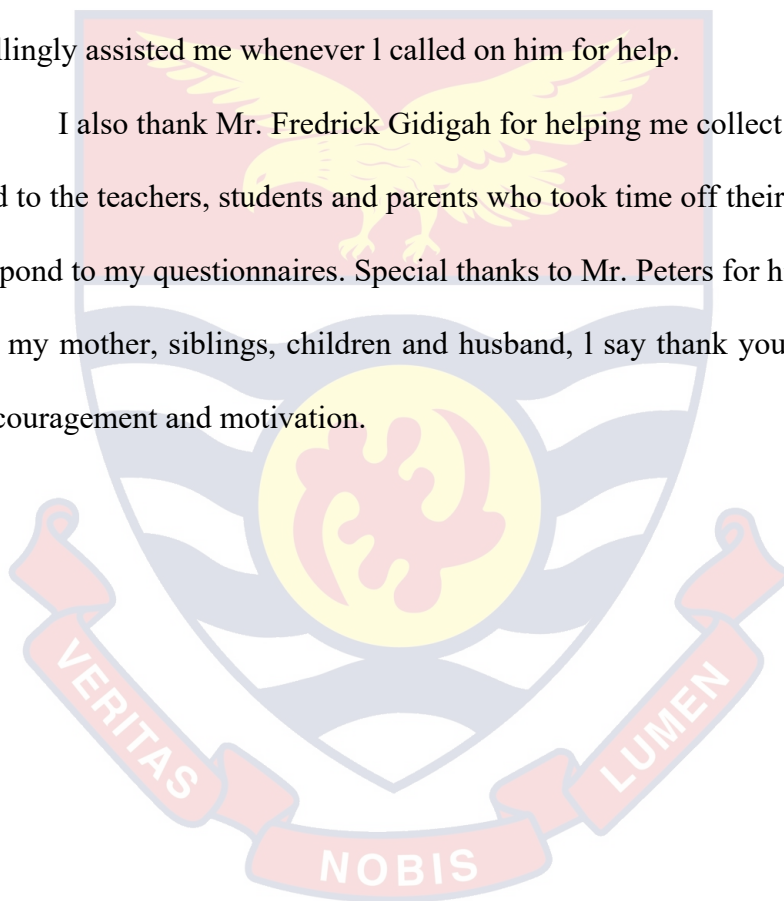
A descriptive survey was employed to carry out the study. A total of 691 respondents made up of 263 teachers, 87 parents and 341 students were randomly sampled. Questionnaires were administered to all categories of respondents. Data was analysed by using descriptive statistics and Independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses.

The study showed that teachers and students had good knowledge and awareness of the content areas of the Home Economics programme. It also found that teachers, students and parents of the students also had good perceptions about the programme. They perceived the programme to be relevant to learners in their future. The study revealed that there was no statistical significant difference in the perception of male and female students. It was found that there was a significant statistical difference between Home Economics and non-Home Economics students' perception of the Home Economics programme. It was recommended that the Ghana Education Service should educate Ghanaians through teachers on the importance of Vocational and Technical Education to help improve the perceptions of people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible through the support and encouragement of many people. I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisors, Dr. Ekua Tekyiwa Amua-Sekyi and Prof. (Mrs) Sarah Darkwa, who guided me with useful constructive comments and suggestions to make this thesis a reality. I am also grateful to Mr. Eric Mensah of DASSE, University of Cape Coast, who willingly assisted me whenever I called on him for help.

I also thank Mr. Fredrick Gidigah for helping me collect data from schools and to the teachers, students and parents who took time off their tight schedules to respond to my questionnaires. Special thanks to Mr. Peters for his clerical work. To my mother, siblings, children and husband, I say thank you for your support, encouragement and motivation.



DEDICATION

To my family



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER	
ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Questions	7
Hypotheses	7
Significance of the Study	8
Delimitation of the Study	8
Limitations of the Study	9
Organisation of the Rest of the Study	9
TWO	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	11
Perception	11
Historical Development of Home Economics	12
Home Economics in Ghana	17
Components of the Home Economics Programme	21

	Foods and Nutrition	26
	Management in Living	27
	Clothing and Textiles at the SHS	27
	Models for Home Economics	28
	Management of Household	28
	Application of Science for Improving Environment	30
	Inductive Reasoning	31
	Education of Women for Womanhood: Homemaking	34
	Home Economics and its Importance to Students	36
	Education Ideals and the Educated Person	37
	What the Future Holds	45
	Home Economics in England	50
	Home Economics in United States	52
	Perceptions of people towards Vocational and Technical Education: Students	53
	Parents	56
	Teachers	60
	Gender Perception towards Home Economics	61
	Gender and Home Economics	63
THREE	METHODOLOGY	73
	Research Design	73
	Population	74
	Sample and Sampling Procedure	75

	Instruments for Data Collection	77
	Data Collection Procedure	78
	Data Analysis	79
FOUR	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	80
	Characteristics of Respondents	80
	Main Results and Discussion	84
	Research Question 1	84
	Research Question 2	86
	Research Question 3	88
	Research Question 4	91
	Research Question 5	96
	Hypothesis 1	98
	Hypothesis 2	100
FIVE	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
	Summary	102
	Overview of the Study	102
	Key Findings	103
	Conclusions	105
	Recommendations	106
	Suggestions for Further Studies	107
	REFERENCES	108
	APPENDICES	123

A	Questionnaire for Teachers	123
B	Questionnaire for Students	127
C	Questionnaire for Parents	130
D	Introductory Letter	132



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Teachers and Students of the six Senior High Schools in North Tongu	76
2 Gender Distribution of Respondents	80
3 Age Range of Teachers	81
4 Number of Years of Teaching	81
5 Age Range of Students	82
6 Age Range of Parents	82
7 Programme of Study of Students	83
8 Teachers' Awareness of Content of the Home Economics Programme	84
9 Students' Awareness of Content of the Home Economics Programme	86
10 Teachers' Perceptions of the Senior High School Home Economics Programme	89
11 Students' Perceptions of the Senior High School Home Economics Programme	93
12 Responses of Parents on the Home Economics Programme	96
13 How Parents Perceive the Home Economics Programme	97
14 Independent t-test Results on Difference between Male and Female Students' Perceptions of the Home Economics Programme	99

- 15 Independent t-test Results on Differences between the Perceptions of Students who Study Home Economics and those who do not Study Home Economics

101



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The term “Home Economics” was coined during the first ever Lake Placid Conference in 1899. Ellen Richards, Isabel Bevier and other highly respected figures in early 20th Century academics met at a conference in order to lay the grounds for a Home Economics curriculum where none had existed before. They felt the need for students in primary and high schools offer courses that would open up professional opportunities for women in that time. The Lake Placid Conference was considered successful as it was the force behind the establishment of the American Home Economics Association. The subject spread all over the world with different perceptions attached to it. The content studied in Home Economics courses has also changed over time due to the ever changing nature of society’s interests. Courses offered in the beginning of the 20th Century had stronger foci on teaching scientific approaches towards domestic skills while presently, the focus has shifted towards nutritional education and hygiene awareness. This is mostly attributed to today’s more sophisticated technologies and better understanding of science (East, 1980).

Reiger, (1986) recorded that in New Zealand, the development of Home Economics and the associated body of knowledge must be considered in the context of life and times of the late 19th century, which was one of rapid change as a result of industrial revolution. These changes had significant impact on social issues of family life education and welfare, and altered the very fabric of family living. Home Economics emerged in response to the impact of these social issues on the health and wellbeing of home and family.

In Australia, there was some perception that Home Economics was non-academic with a low status (Ministry Of Education, 2005; Hipkins & Conner, 2005). Research also indicates that perception by teachers, students and parents is a barrier to encouraging male students to study Home Economics (Pendergast, 2001). Arubayi (2004 & 2006) revealed that more females enrolled in Home Economics programme than men. This is because the curriculum being offered is in the area of Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, and Home Management which are domains ascribed to women. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students studying Home Economics are considered to be less academic in comparison to student achievement standards because of the ability of students with low levels of literacy to engage and respond to complex issues. This perception of low status contributes to the low number of students studying Home Economics in senior school (MOE, 2005).

Students in New Zealand again cited various reasons for not being able to take their chosen option. One of these reasons is that parents did not want them to study Home Economics with the reason that it is a low status subject (Hipkins &

Cornor, 2005). A similar result was also found in an Australian research (Jones, 1994). Students in New Zealand see themselves disadvantaged in their progression of study of Home Economics because, the subject lacks the status of an “approved subject” for entrance to university, and does not have a scholarship examination (MOE, 2005). By default this adds further credence to the perception that the subject is of little academic value and provides a system, international or otherwise, for the traditional streaming approach to operate where Home Economics courses are identified with vocational pathways.

In Africa, the history of Home Economics is linked to the work of the early missionaries. Those who preceded the era of Home Economics were the wives of the missionaries. They tried to address the situation of African women but they did it using their own experiences and cultures. Unfortunately, the notion of training wives of distinguished men in society through Home Economics still exists. This objective however creates confusion for Home Economists themselves as they plan and operate national programmes (Kwawu, 1985). For example, in Kenya, since 1930, Home Craft as a subject has been changed to Domestic Science though the content has not changed significantly. The skills focus on housekeeping, needlecraft, motherhood and housewifery, while marriage and motherhood and homemaking were the goals. Hence, the perception of the subject was conceived as “cook and eat and sew and wear”. In the 1980’s as recorded by (East,1980) Domestic Science or Home Economics subjects offered at secondary level reflected a British or western life style. Electric or gas cookers and household appliances remain the standard equipment in many senior level

Domestic Science classrooms, regardless of their location or of local practices. Students in those classrooms were tested for knowledge of this subject matter and how to perform technical skills and efficiently use modern technologies, rather than for creative thinking about their own home and family situation, or the problems of the poor. Examinations are set and or validated externally with the belief that there is a universal and independent body of knowledge to be learned, independent of social conditions or human values.

In Ghana, Home Economics is recognized as the most important programme for families and households to improve their lives and to prevent poverty. Many people in Ghana perceive Home Economics as making perfect gravy, sewing aprons and cake baking. These are familiar images of Home Economics, but do they tell the story? So often Home Economics is cast as a “conspiracy to keep women in the kitchen” an interpretation that has overlooked its impressive field that brought science to the farm home and women into higher education and leadership positions in public education, academia, and industry. Brown (2013) stated that most teachers, students and parents have created the impression that Home Economics is the preserve of the academically weak. School administrators and teachers perceive Home Economics as a low status course as well as a female oriented subject. Funds for Home Economics practical lessons are diverted to the purchase of science equipment and other items. On several occasions, parents who withdraw their wards from Home Economics programme to other programmes with the argument that their wards obtained better grades have had the opportunity to be enlightened. Others in similar

situation have refused to take care of their wards who opt for Home Economics. These attitudes and others directed the study to look at teachers, parents and students' perception and knowledge of the SHS Home Economics programme.

Statement of the Problem

Home Economics education was introduced into the educational system to seek the welfare of the individual, the family and the society as a whole. Irrespective of the vital role Home Economics plays, there are uncertainties about the programme and its relevance (East, 1980). The crux of the matter is that Home Economics has been marginalized in the educational sector where it was supposed to gain grounds. Consequently, the notion created is that everybody can cook and sew as exhibited in comments and attitudes by people especially, teachers and students who were supposed to educate parents who do not know about the programme.

The 2012 Senior High School admissions showed that students whose aggregates were as low as 40 were given admissions to read the vocational subjects especially in the rural areas. Home Economics teachers brought to fore at Ghana Home Economics Association meetings the ordeal they go through with other committee members when selecting first year students who sought admission into their school. Moreover, it is common to find Home Economics being referred to by teachers and students in North Tongu schools as 'stitch and stir' or 'tomato course'. It may interest one to know that out of the 148 students reading home economics in the school I teach, only three are males, two in the

first year and one in the second year. Even that the Home Economics teachers have to persuade them not to run away.

The low esteem attached to studying Home Economics, especially in the Senior High School made home economics students feel inferior and would not come forward to take up leadership positions in school. These generated my interest in this topic which looked at the perception of teachers, parents and students of SHS in North Tongu District in the Volta Region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out how teachers, parents and students perceived Home Economics and its importance in everyday life, specifically the school system. Specifically, the study investigated:

1. senior high school teachers' awareness of the content of the Home Economics programme.
2. senior high school students' awareness of the content of the Home Economics programme.
3. senior high school teachers' perception of Home Economics programme
4. senior high school students' perception of Home Economics programme
5. parents of senior high school students' perception of Home Economics programme.
6. differences, if any, between SHS male and female students' perceptions of Home Economics programme.

7. differences, if any, between Home Economics students' perception of Home Economics and non-Home Economics students towards the Senior High School Home Economics programme

Research Questions

The study attempted to address these specific questions:

1. what is the level of awareness of Senior High School teachers in the North Tongu District with the content of Home Economics syllabus?
2. what is the awareness of Senior High School students in the North Tongu District with the content of Home Economics?
3. what are the perceptions of teachers, of Senior High Schools in the North Tongu District have about Home Economics programme?
4. what are the perceptions of students in the North Tongu district about the Home Economics programme?
5. what are parents' perceptions of Senior High School Home Economics programme?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- H₀: There is no significant difference between SHS male and female students' perceptions of Home Economics programme.
- H₀: There is no significant difference between the perception of Home Economics and non-Home Economics students towards the senior high school Home Economics programme

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will add to the existing literature on the importance and benefits of Home Economics which will help boost the image of the programme in the district in particular and Ghana in general. Also, the findings could help identify important issues and gaps in the knowledge of teachers, parents and students of the Home Economics programme. This may encourage male students to develop a positive attitude towards Home Economics and help them see the programme as beneficial to both sexes. The findings would be presented to the President of the Ghana Home Economics Association (GHEA) for dissemination to members to re-orient Home Economics in Ghana. Finally the result may serve as a research material for students and teachers of Home Economics.

Delimitation of the Study

This study was restricted to the Senior High Schools in North Tongu in the Volta Region. Responses were limited to the perceptions of Senior High School teachers, students and their parents through the completion of questionnaires. The following schools were included:

1. Adidome Senior High School
2. Aveyime Battor Senior High School
3. Battor Senior High School
4. Dorfor Senior High Senior
5. Mafi-Kumasi Senior High School
6. Mepe St. Kizito Senior High School.

Limitations of the Study

Since the study is a descriptive survey which specifically examined teachers', students' and parents' perceptions of the Home Economics programme in Senior High Schools in the North Tongu District in the Volta Region, the generalizability of the results to cover the views of other respondents in Ghana may be limited. The inability of the researcher to carry out an extensive study in various parts of the country could be attributed to financial constraints and limited time. Some respondents were unwilling and reluctant to answer the questionnaires administered to them for fear that their responses would not be treated confidentially. They felt that the study was very sensitive and were reluctant to release information.

Moreover, most of the respondents complained of their busy schedules and were therefore unable to find adequate time to attend to me. Some respondents might have provided incomplete information. However, with patience and word of encouragement, I was able to convince them to participate in the study.

Organisation of the Rest of the Study

Chapter Two is a review of literature that is relevant to the study. It provides the theoretical framework for the study. Also, the chapter contains a discussion and summary of other early empirical studies that are related to the issue under investigation. Chapter Three deals with the methodology which comprises the description of the research design, the population, the sample and sampling procedure, the research instruments, as well as data collection procedure

of the study. The analysis of the data collected is also discussed in this chapter. Chapter Four presents the results and discussion. The chapter consists of the discussion of the preliminary results as well as the major findings that emerged with regard to the research questions and hypotheses. Finally, Chapter Five focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Suggested areas for further research are also captured in this chapter.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to the study. It is organized under the conceptual framework, theoretical and empirical review. The issues covered under this chapter are organized into the following sub-headings:

1. Concept of Perception
2. Historical Background of Home Economics
3. Home Economics and its Components
4. Models of Home Economics
5. Practical Application of Home Economics education to the society
6. Gender and Home Economics

Concept of Perception

Hilgard, Atkinson, Atkinson (1979) defined perception as the process of becoming aware of objects, qualities, or relations by way of the sense organs. They explained that while sensory content (i.e. the five senses) is always present in perception, whatever is perceived is influenced by prior experience, so that perception is more than a passive registration of stimuli impinging on the sense organs. Similarly, Berelson and Steiner (1964) defined perception as the process by which we select, organize and interpret input to create a meaningful picture of

the world. Kotler and Keller (2009) explained that in marketing, perceptions are more important than reality, because it is perception that affects the consumer's actual behaviour. They added that people's perception about objects or subjects depends not only on physical stimuli but also on the stimuli relationship to the surrounding field and conditions within each individual.

Historical Development of Home Economics

East (1980) wrote that the history of Home Economics can be traced well over 150 years ago. One of the first to champion the economics of running a home was Catherine Beecher. Catherine and Harriet Beecher were both leaders in the mid 1800s in talking about Domestic Science. These two women valued education especially for women.

The Morrill act of 1862 propelled Domestic Science further ahead as land grant colleges sought to educate farm wives in running their households as their husbands were being educated in agricultural methods and processes. Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota and Michigan were early leaders in offering programmes for women. There were women graduates of these institutions several years before the Lake Placid Conferences which gave birth to Home Economics movement (East, 1980).

Up until the first Lake Placid Conference in 1889, much of the work in Domestic Sciences had not been documented. There were activities in the East surrounding the New Kitchen and nutrition for the masses. Ellen Swallow Richards was instrumental in having her very own space at the World's Fair in 1893 called RUMFORD KITCHEN. She said nutrition was not women's work,

but information for all. The ideology of the various schools of thought influenced the curriculum and perception of Home Economics. The early Home Economists: Ellen Swallow Richards (1842 – 1911), Isabel Bevier (1860 – 1942), Grace Dodge (1856 – 1914), Benjamin Richards Andrews (1877 – 1963), were each influenced by Aristotle’s realism and Dewey’s pragmatism (East, 1980)

Aristotle’s theory believes that humans learn through their senses and as individuals experience the world, they develop and refine concepts about objects through direct experiences. He said as people practiced thinking and behaving in productive ways they develop habits that would lead to excellence. Grace and Benjamin (1856-1963) accepted Aristotle’s theory of realism and prepared women to take up domestic roles (East, 1980).

Dewey’s pragmatic theory on the other hand, according to East (1980) viewed education as preparation for life in a democratic way. Dewey argued that when people are educated democratically, they are prepared for life and when education concentrates on real life problems, it prepares people for living fully and effectively in a democratic way. Dewey believed that individuals possess the intelligence to govern themselves and to direct their own actions. The function of education is to enhance human potential. Pragmatists therefore believe that children should be encouraged to learn to make difficult decisions by considering the consequences their actions might have on others. Ellen and Bevier (1842-1942) adopted this theory to train women to use scientific approaches to solve problems in nutrition and other related problems in the home.

East (1980) again recorded that Ellen and her contemporaries met at Lake Placid and other places over the next 10 years, each year exploring the latest in advances in the profession. Their goal was to form an education and scientific association as a necessary component for formalizing the profession.

In January 1909, the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) was formed. This name was held until 1993 when a group of modern Home Economists met in Scottsdale, Arizona to chart the course for Home Economics in the new millennium. Upon the recommendation arrived at the Scottsdale Conference, the name was changed to the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Before the Scottsdale Conference many colleges and universities had changed the Home Economics name to titles such as Human Sciences, Human Ecology, Consumer and Family Sciences just to name a few. The new names sought to position the profession within the academic communities and further illustrate the actual majors in the profession. While this naming benefited many in the higher educational arena, the failure to have just one name continued to erode the focus of the profession and fragmented any brand recognition for the profession.

The change in name comes about because of changes in societal needs and gives a positive determinant that Home Economics is a living subject. As people tried to define Home Economics, four models were identified. The first is Management of the Household: Economics of the Home, the second is Application of Science for improving Environment: Human Ecology, the third model is Inductive Reasoning, Cooking and Sewing and the fourth is the

Education of Women for Womanhood: Home making. Each has its own definition, philosophy, proponent and opponent. Some used Aristotle's realism to operate because the model revolved around that and others operate using Dewey's pragmatic philosophy (East, 1980).

Home Economics (also known as Family and Consumer Sciences, Human Ecology, Home Science) is the profession and field of study that deals with the economics and management of the home and community. Home Economics is a field of formal study including such topics as consumer education, institutional management, interior design, home furnishing, cleaning, handicrafts, sewing, clothing and textiles, commercial cooking, cooking, nutrition, food preservation, hygiene, child development, managing money, and family relationships. These teach students how to run a family environment and make the world a better place for generations to come. Sex education and drug awareness might also be covered, along with topics such as fire prevention and safety measures. It prepares students for home making or professional careers, or assist in preparing to fulfil real-life responsibilities at home. It is taught in secondary schools, universities and colleges, vocational schools, and adult education centres; students include women and men.

Situated in the human sciences, Home Economics as a programme of study, draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. This interdisciplinary knowledge is essential because the phenomena and challenges of everyday life are not typically one-dimensional. Historically, Home Economics has been in the context of the

home and household, but this has extended in the 21st century to include the wider living environment as we better understand that the capacities, choices, and priorities of individuals and families impact at all levels, ranging from the household to the local and global community.

Home Economists are concerned with promoting and protecting the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, they facilitate the development of attributes for lifelong learning, for paid, unpaid and voluntary work.

The content of Home Economics courses vary, but may include: food, nutrition and health; personal finance; family resource management and planning; textiles and clothing, shelter and housing; consumerism and consumer science; household management, design and technology; food science and hospitality; human development and family studies; education and community services among others. The capacity to draw from such disciplinary diversity is the strength of the profession, allowing for the development of specific interpretations of the field as relevant to the context.

In the Ghanaian Home Economics curricula, courses have been put into three broad areas; Foods and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles and Management in Living. These are studied at all levels of education.

According to Bailey and Firebaugh (1986), Home Economics is a fully oriented profession with a major focus on family well-being, growth and development of family members and their families. They stated that home economists are dedicated to the problems that directly or indirectly confront

families and need to create programmes that are responsive to the impact of social policies and industry practices on the family.

Several studies looking at the image of Home Economics (Findlay, 1976; Johnson, Holcombe, Kean, Woodward, Tweeten & Hafers, 1987; Robinson, 1989; Yankelovich 1974) pointed to a need for continued assessment of perceptions and attitudes regarding the importance of Home Economics programme and content. Societal perceptions toward Home Economics do not represent accurate understanding of the profession and its goals. Johnson et al. (1987) provided evidence that the image which supported the need for public relations programme in Home Economics was still viewed in the very traditional way.

Spitz (1983) cited several problems Home Economics faces at the secondary level: declining enrolments, decreasing budgets, instructor cutbacks, and lack of respect and credibility. Iana (1984) suggested that lack of respect for Home Economics may be based on the view that Home Economics is not an academic course that is relevant for today's students or capable of incorporating the teaching of critical thinking skills. Gibbs and Wood (1986) however emphasized that superior Home Economics programme can apply academic subject such as science, mathematics, and communication to practical daily problems.

Home Economics in Ghana

According to Amu,Offei-Ansah and Amissah (2015), Home Economics was formally introduced into the Ghanaian school curriculum in 1921 and is credited

to Rubby Quartey Papa-fio the then headmistress of Accra Government School. Prior to this time, an informal training started in 1821 when Mrs. Harriet Javis a widow of one of the merchant officers started to teach needlework to African girls to help the girls become good servants to their white mistresses and to train the girls to be good wives to the catechists. This school collapsed after six years and in 1840, the first girls' school Wesley Girls High School was established by Mrs Wiggley, wife of a Methodist Priest in 1886 to teach domestic science. After the death of Mrs. Wiggley, Mrs. Wardron took over the running of the school. The Basel mission also established a girls school at Aburi where cooking, sewing, mending and housekeeping were taught.

Laundry work was later introduced into the formal school system in 1921 by Ruby Quartey Papa-fio the then headmistress of Accra Girls School, and cookery was added later. The Governor was impressed about the keen interest of the girls in education and so donated firewood stove upon an appeal made by the headmistress after the first dish, boiled cassava was cooked on a three stone fire stove under a tree. He also provided a building for teaching the subject. Housewifery, mother-craft and child welfare were added and then domestic science became an examinable subject for the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination in 1931.

At the Secondary School level, Achimota school became the first to introduce Domestic Science into the curriculum, and Domestic Science, was first examined in 1933. As more schools taught Domestic Science, diploma training programme was introduced at the Specialist Training College at Abetifi. The

trainees, after four years study were awarded Diploma in Home Science Certificate by the University of Ghana. The specialist programme was discontinued in 1963 and the name Housecraft was changed to Home Science because science was applied to solve problems in the home. The four year programme was changed to a three year course. Throughout all these stages, the emphasis of the programme was on females since all the courses offered and their contents were traditionally female oriented.(Amu et. al., 2015).

A four year degree programme was introduced into the University of Ghana alongside a diploma in Home Science Extension between 1960 and 1967. In 1977, University of Cape Coast offered one year programme for teachers with Diploma in Home Economics from Winneba. In October, 1987, a four year Bachelor of Education (Home Economics) programme was started with one student who had trained at the Specialist Training College. In 1994/95 a Masters Degree programme in Vocational Technical Education was introduced. The University College of Education Winneba was established in 1992 to train teachers with diploma certificate in a two year post diploma programme. Today, Home Economics is known as Home Economics in S.H.S., University of Cape Coast and University of Education Winneba. However, the Home Science Department at the University of Ghana has been changed to Family and Consumer Sciences based on the model adopted by the university.

Heneritta (1980) regarded the family ecosystem as a core of Home Economics. According to Parker (1980), the Home Economists view the family as a major source of nurturance, protection and renewal for the individuals. As an

educational force, the family significantly contributes to the quality of development of its individual members and has the potential to prepare them for effective productivity in respect of self and society. Since Home Economics and the family are inseparable, Home Economics programme works through the family to develop a balance between people and the social environment and thus paving the way for healthy human development.

A curriculum based on the needs, aspirations and aptitudes of individual and family universally is acknowledged for improvement of the individual lives. Needs and aspirations are always changing with time, and with the development of new technologies thus it is necessary to make changes in the Home Economics curriculum to make it more acceptable and practicable in current times. Wiles (1980), described the curriculum as the ground which pupils and teachers cover to reach the goal or objective of education. The curriculum has been regarded as an academic endeavour that determines the quality of the education system (Anonymous, 2000 as cited in Arkhurst, A. P. & Anyakoha, E. U., 2004). The present curriculum has limited relevance to real life problems and hardly promotes creativity and innovation which are essential for advancement in areas of human endeavours. The said situation equally applies to the quality of Home Economics education. Tanner (1981) presented that educational experiences which provided joy and meaning would certainly stimulate learners to: take increased responsibility for their own learning; to show interest in anything that is surely motivating and if fed properly, learners will develop more interest and curiosity.

Any education which is not applicable and relevant to the need of students, is waste of time for both teacher and those taught (Malik, Bhatta, Almas, Zakera & Abbas, 1991). The programme once developed cannot be guaranteed to be satisfactory and ideal forever. It demands adjustments in various aspects of the programme in the light of suggestions or needs of the students and society.

Components of the Home Economics Programme

The syllabus provides information on the history of fashion and social implications, concerns for the consumer as well as actual clothing construction. Awareness is given to individuals on the importance of choosing designs and styles suitable for the body type so as to construct clothing and advice others on the choice of fabrics and clothing to wear on different occasions. Studies show that the most enjoyable parts of the Home Economics discipline is the ability for students to treat their own clothes or other projects (Arkhurst & Anyakoha, 2004). Students learn how to correctly use the various tools and materials necessary to construct their clothing. They learn how to follow the sewing instructions with limited assistance and are encouraged to use their creative skills. Different tailoring techniques and ways to assess their quality are also demonstrated. With these skills, clothing and textiles students are supposed to demonstrate the skill of interpreting clothing labels, how to perform the laundry, purchasing behaviours, managing an apparel, budget and select the right clothes for specific occasions. This knowledge makes them different from those who acquired the skill through apprenticeship (MOE, 2003).

The programme includes sex education and drug awareness along with topics such as fire prevention and safety procedures. It prepares students for home making, professional careers and assists in preparing to fulfil real-life responsibilities at home. It is taught in secondary schools, colleges and universities, vocational schools and adult education centres and students include women and men.

Historically, Home Economics has been in the context of the home, but this has extended in the 21st century to include the wider living environment as we better understand that the capacities, choices and priorities of individuals and families impact at all levels, ranging from the household to the local and global community. Home economists are concerned with promoting and protecting the well-being of individuals, families and communities, they facilitate the development of attributes for lifelong learning for paid, unpaid and voluntary work. Home Economics professionals are advocates for individuals, families and communities.

Students are also enlightened on the roles and responsibilities of parents. They are introduced to theories, skills and approaches to parenting and child guidance. Students are prepared to analyze various aspects that affect decisions to become a parent, including family planning and responsibilities of parenthood. They are introduced to the characteristics of pregnancy and the factors that affect prenatal development and postnatal health. The coursework also requires candidates to recognize parenting theories and techniques, methods and strategies to guide a child's development and behaviour. Students are taken through

childhood illnesses and healthcare needs, including potential safety hazards and planning for emergencies. The programme provides knowledge of child abuse and neglect issues, including legal responsibilities related to ensuring a child's safety and well-being.

Management in Living is structured such that students are taken through the major theories in human development and the methods, strategies and approaches that can be used to foster physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. It also provides knowledge of development, guidance and education of children in family and career settings. These topics are broken down further into stages and characteristics of child development, including hereditary and environmental factors. The coursework includes major child developmental theories, research methods, and observation and assessment techniques. The programme instructs candidates in developmentally appropriate activities for children that promote emotional, cognitive, physical and social development. The programme also provides students with the knowledge of industrial career paths, transferable knowledge and aptitudes and responsibilities related to careers in child development.

The Food and Nutrition science programme provides course work in physiological and biochemical processes. The programme prepares candidates to apply these processes in the preparation and use of food and nutrients. The programme prepares candidates to understand and apply dietary guidelines, disorders of the diet, and food related issues that affect health and well-being. The programme prepares candidates to apply terminology used in food and nutrition

and science and apply the knowledge of current research and new technologies in nutrition and safety. Candidates in the programme analyze cultural, environmental and socioeconomic factors that affect diet, nutrition, and health throughout the life cycle. The programme provides knowledge of career paths, transferable knowledge and skills, aptitude and responsibilities related to careers in nutrition and food science (MOE, 2003).

This component again provides course work in the procedures and techniques related to food preparation, meal management, equipment and facilities. This component prepares prospective candidates to know and apply the principles of food safety and sanitation, including the causes and prevention of food-borne illnesses. It includes instruction in the selection, use, storage and care of food preparation equipment. Candidates in the programme are required to study meal management needed to effectively plan, prepare, present and serve meals in home and commercial settings. Candidates in the programme study the principles, techniques, and terminology of food preparation in the food service and hospitality industries. Candidates are prepared to identify and describe public and private agencies and their roles in relation to the food service and hospitality industries. The programme prepares candidates to recognize the differences in styles of food preparation and meal service throughout a variety of cultures. Students are also required to transfer and apply the knowledge, skills and aptitudes to careers in the industries related to food service and hospitality.

Home Economics programme provides instruction in fashion, textiles and clothing construction. Candidates are instructed in the history of fashion and

fashion industry, elements and principles of design as related to fashion, textiles and clothing construction, wardrobe planning, selection and care of clothing and textiles items. The coursework also includes properties and applications of natural and manufactured fibres, fabrics and finishes. Candidates are enlightened on selection, use care of apparel construction equipment and materials, and are taught how to evaluate apparel quality. The course includes the analysis of cost, time and energy factors involved in use and reuse of textile items. The programme promotes in candidates transferable knowledge and skills, aptitudes and responsibilities related to careers in the fashion and textile industries.

The Home Economics programme has housing and interior design as an aspect within the course. It entails instruction in housing and interior environment. The programme prepares students in basic factors in selecting housing and design to create living environments. It also provides instruction on housing and furnishings, laws regulations related to housing issues, element and principles of design in planning, selecting and evaluating furnishings for interior environments. Life cycle concerns relating to living environment are learnt and knowledge and skill, aptitudes and responsibilities related to careers in Home Economics is also taught.

Management of personal resources, consumer rights and responsibilities and economic systems are taught in Home Economics. This course includes personal and financial management and analysis of the factors that influence consumer decision-making. The programme addresses consumer fraud issues, identifying resources available to consumers, managing resources to balance

home, work and life, and also enlightened about factors that affect local, state and international economies. The coursework also instructs students on local, state and federal laws and agencies that protects consumers. Communication skills in negotiating and problem solving difficulties related to purchasing goods and services. Transferable knowledge and skills, aptitudes and responsibilities related to careers in consumer services are also learnt. These courses are all embedded in the Home Economics programme making the three broad areas which every individual needs to have a quality family living, hence, its definition as drawing knowledge from all disciplines, synthesizing the knowledge and making it suitable for family living.

Foods and Nutrition

The Food and Nutritional Education SHS syllabus of Home Economics aims at equipping the individual with skills for providing good nutrition for the various groups of people in the family such as, invalids and convalescents, nursing and lactating mothers, infants and children, pregnant women, vegetarians, aged and people with various disease conditions like diabetes, marasmus, kwashiorkor, hypertension etc. Knowledge in foods and nutrition at the SHS helps the adolescent who is very susceptible to negative body image and is at risk of developing eating disorders become informed. Considering how food and nutritional related health problems have become common in Ghana, it is critical that formal education on dietary choices be a part of every student's lesson plan. The Home Economics syllabus at the SHS allows students to gain access to such

essential information. Studies have shown that food habits learned at an early age of life are hard to be influenced and changed (MOE, 2003).

However, school programmes designed to educate and encourage children to make wise eating choices can help reduce the prevalence of obesity and other related disease conditions. Possessing knowledge in food and nutrition and its related content can help the Ghanaian student to become self employed in the food industry to help improve local dishes through research (MOE, 2003).

Management-In-Living

An aspect of Home Economics is Management in Living. It aims at preparing the individual acquire skills that he/she needs to be able to deal creatively with relevant problems of a changing society to improve the quality and meaning of life. This aspect deals with ways for managing human and non-human resources to achieve the quality of life desired by individuals, families and society. It deals with the family as a basic unit of society, communication in the family, parenting and parenthood issues, housing of the family, adolescent reproductive health and sexuality and consumer education. I believe adequate preparation in management in living given to the individual prepares him/her to be creative in managing challenges in the home and society (MOE, 2003)

Clothing and Textiles at the SHS

The Clothing and Textiles domain of Home Economics programmes was originally intended to provide women with a means to clothe themselves and their families in an efficient and economical way. Another objective was to provide the students with a more formal understanding of the textile industry for future career

opportunities within that field. Early Home Economists helped to make positive contributions to this area by studying different fabrics and dyes, and the proper ways to care for fabrics. Modern Home Economics programmes continue to place importance on the Clothing and Textiles domain of the curriculum (Arkhurst, 2004).

Models for Home Economics

According to East (1980), four models were identified as schools which form the basis of Home Economics. They are as follows:

Management of household- First model

Application of Science for Improving Environment- Second model

Inductive Reasoning- Third model

Education of Women for Womanhood (Homemaking)-Forth Model

These models have influenced and are still influencing Home Economics as a field of study.

Management of Household – First Model

East (1980) describe this model as based on Aristotle's ethics which is based on the five (5) states of mind through which truth is reached, these are; science, arts, practical wisdom, intuitive wisdom and theoretical wisdom. He referred to this as Aristotle's system of categories of knowledge. He was profoundly influenced by Plato's thoughts and personality even though eventually, he broke away from Plato's philosophy. According to him, politics, economics and practical wisdom fall under practical reasoning. Politics deals with the state, economics about the family, and practical wisdom about the individual.

The word economics, derived from the Greek word 'oikonomia' meaning household management, was to create the best system for people to live together in families and household. In his 'theory of the household', Aristotle discusses the composition of the family and household as the relationships of husband and wife, parent and children, master and slave and acquisition of household properties. This is basically what Home Economics is about in most of its definitions. According to East, Aristotle describes a household as a part of a city, or state, and the society of which husband and wife, parent and child belong.

Aristotle saw good household as basis to good societies and saw both as needed to achieve a good life. He considered man as a household manager. Unfortunately, the Home Economics programme is seen as a programme for women, of which men are not interested in to be trained to take up this managerial positions in the home. The teaching of Home Economics emphasizes the home as a unit of society and management of the home as a business which needs critical thinking and special training to achieve goals. Traditional beliefs of many countries especially African countries of which Ghana forms part relegate the woman to the home to the extent that many believe educating the woman is a waste of resources and that the kitchen is her place after all. Managing the home indeed involves critical thinking of which women are experts and with education, women have become seasoned managers of the home. This training has enabled most women to perform better on jobs than men (East, 1980).

Application of Science for Improving Environment – Second Model

This model is also referred to as Human Ecology. Environment is defined in this model as the circumstances or conditions that surround an organism or group of organisms as well as the complex social or cultural conditions that affect an individual or community. In other words, environment involves all experiences an individual encounters in interacting with organisms in carrying out activities in his/her daily life.

Ecology on the other hand is the scientific study of relationships between organisms and their environment (East, 1980). This model is concerned with the life histories distribution and behaviour of individual species as well as the structure and function of natural systems at the level of populations, communities and eco-systems.

The eco-system is specific to biological community, its physical environment interacting in an exchange of matter and energy. Human ecology refers to the interrelationship between humans and the entire environment (i.e. physical, biological, socio-economic and cultural) including the interrelationships between individual humans or groups of humans and other human groups of other species.

This model defines Home Economics as a study with a subject matter composed of four forms of knowledge – laws which are social contracts, conditions which are empirical data, principles which are explanatory rules and ideals which focus on goals, hopes and norms. The model emphasizes the application of science to improve the environment (East, 1980). The application

of science is essentially a deductive process which deals with learning from known (i.e. what the individual already knows) to unknown or simple to complex. In other words the individual develops upon the knowledge he/she already has. It became a powerful model at the beginning of the century as can be seen from the composition of all the eleven founding members who were all scientists. Home Economics has been influenced more by the biological behavioural sciences than the arts and humanities. The influence of sciences have been most important particularly chemistry and biology for improvement of home life.

Many early leaders were chemists and so chemistry became an essential part of the curriculum. Microbiology helped students to understand the activities of germs and this helped to improve sanitation of the environment. The early Home Economists were concerned about sanitary practices at home and such concerns led to the college of Home Economics in Cornell University. Emphasis was placed on chemistry and biology in Domestic Science as evident in the first four year Domestic Science curricular which were established in colleges such as Illinois, Iowa and Kansas. In our Ghanaian schools today, chemistry, biology, entrepreneurship, physics and general knowledge in art form part of Home Economics to help students understand the composition of food and to acquire the knowledge of providing safe food for the family's consumption.

Inductive Reasoning – Third Model

The inductive reasoning model pre-supposes that children are to develop specific manual and domestic skills as a first step to acquiring generalized basic insight and intellectual and moral traits. However, manual art education for

understanding the rules in industries and eventually vocational education, which means that the original idea of developing intellectual and moral traits of the individual which leads to generalized basis of insights through the use of hands and development of useful skills was not followed. Children still learned specific manual or domestic skills but these led to a vocation (East, 1980).

Institutions which applied this model established schools in the 1880s and 1890s to train girls for generalized intellectual skills. For example, Washington University and Toledo School in domestic economy are some of the schools. Common understanding was however that the children were developing useful skills, skills that were learnt at home from parents or from master craftsmen as apprentices were being learned in school. This transformation was formalized by Charles Richards Teachers' College Columbia in 1904, which suggested that the term manual arts should be changed to industrial arts and then Douglas Commission appointed by the governor of Massachusetts to consider vocational education in 1905. This gained support of educators, labour groups, agricultural agencies and national society for the promotion of industrial education. Subsequently, a number of states developed plans. Congress finally passed the Smith Hughes act in 1917 that is the national education act, and made provision for financing vocational education. Between 1905 and 1917, several bills were introduced in congress which mentioned names like Domestic Art or Science, but it was not clear whether the training was for home making or occupations related to home making.

In England, special Home Craft courses were designed to train domestic servants who were not interested in going back to domestic jobs after the 1st World War. They were given free tuition to get them to go back to domestic services. Home Economics was eventually included in the Smith Hughes Act of 1917, but as a separate subject with restriction on the amount to be used for training Home Economics teachers, although no reason was given. It was believed that Home Economics had been well accepted and would be supported by local schools. This model of inductive logic therefore did not feature prominently in Home Economics. Home Economics was considered:

- a) a vocational subject and was to train girls for employment outside the home unless those who lived on the farm.
- b) a related subject to agriculture where the useful employment was in relation to persons who were preparing for farm work or farm home.

Both conceptions of Home Economics emphasize the vocational aspect. The names associated with this model are John Dewey (1899 – 1905) and William James (1890-1910). East (1980) stated that writings of James probably influenced early Home Economists like Ellen Richards. This model was more clearly defined by Dewey who introduced domestic science and industry as one of the departments of his laboratory school in 1899 at the University of Chicago. Dewey believed that cooking could be given the same consideration as a Greek liberal if its power to start and direct significant enquiry and reflection were used to advantage. That is, anything that starts the brain thinking and probing is valuable. According to East (1980), Dewey's idea was that if children were

involved in concrete action with actual materials in situations of immediate interest to them, they would learn more effectively the general principle underlying the activity and become more curious about other application of the principles. This led to the planning of school experiences for the average child of the industrial classes who was then spending more time in school. This also marked the beginning of incorporating manual training or practical art education into the regular school system.

This model suggested that laboratories were essential and that work with real objects were necessary. Home Economics then became a subject of cooking and sewing (activity subject or practical subject). This model again suggests that Home Economics is an inductive process of education which leads from sensory manual experiences with concrete and familiar object with skill in their use. That is, having knowledge about something and still in its operation or manipulation, recognition and discovery of basic principles and general rules and to the development of basic abilities.

Education of Women for Womanhood: Homemaking

The fourth model assumes a traditional stand:

1. that woman's primary life role was domestic nurturing and subservient as defined in the Bible and indeed by Aristotle.
2. that formal system of education for women should prepare them to do, to perform effectively in a socially sanctioned role and this idea reflected in a number of writings by Catherine Beecher about educating women for their place in the home during the period 1830–1870.

Her writing argued that women should be trained for their jobs which is home making as men are trained for their jobs as trades and profession. Development of Home Economics was seen as an attempt to recognize the domestic duties of women to focus attention on them and to keep women at home. One can therefore say that the idea of helping poor and immigrant women and children by the rich and to cope with their new situation was probably the reason Home Economics was associated more with black colleges in the south and that Home Economics departments were for blacks (East, 1980). Attempts were made to teach little girls how to sit quietly and sew.

Women were attending kitchen school to learn how to cook in the sense of studying chemical and physical changes in food during preparation. The major concern was to help women cope with their daily chores that is, getting meals on the table for a large family and some included nutrition information.

The model has been another powerful model along the applied science model. Teachers however did not seem to agree on how to teach Home Economics so while some teachers called the classrooms laboratories, others called them kitchens and their approaches were also different.

There has been controversy on the question on Home Economics for boys as well as girls in the United State of America (USA). The law requires that no course should be offered for only one sex. However, some parents object to the idea of boys taking Home Economics course, they think Home Economics would make them “sissy” because parents believe Home Economics programme teaches

femininity (East, 1980). The programme, East said, is still regarded as a subject for girls and women all over the world (East, 1980).

Home Economics and its Importance to Students

Home Economics has an extremely important place in our educational system today. No other academic discipline incorporates in its curriculum as many pertinent life skills that help students succeed independently of their chosen career paths. Education in Home Economics and knowledge obtained through this programme prove valuable throughout their life span.

The areas of Home Economics that are considered to be among the most essential are the emphasis on personal development, decision-making and intra-personal skills. According to a study done in Japan, students' personal initiatives play an extremely large role in determining how they would react to their changing work situations. Those who lack the ability to make effective personal decision are more at risk of experiencing hardships in the instabilities found in the real world. Taking courses in Home Economics at school allows students to acquire the necessary decision-making, social and communications skills deemed critical for occupational success.

In addition to the development of valuable intra-personal skills, the Home Economics curriculum also introduces the students to a wide variety of potential career paths. Students become aware of the career opportunity relating to each domain as well as being taught the skills associated with them. The Home Economics discipline has led individuals to the field of education, nutrition, social service and hospitality management. It is hard to find a single subject taught in

schools today that incorporates as many topics of interest as Home Economics, helping students to become more well rounded individuals.

Consumer-related material covered in Home Economics courses is another area that provides students with information pertinent to their living as adults. This programme helps supply students with an understanding on how economic, social and cultural factors personally affect them and their behaviours in consumerism. While other academic courses may cover theoretical aspects of personal finance, Home Economics gives a more practical, everyday application of the subject matter. However, there have been some criticisms to how useful learning about consumerism as adolescents actually is. Research by Anozie (2006) showed that motivation to study consumerism in school was not particularly high, because they felt true consumerism started at adulthood. I believe students offering Home Economics programmes can benefit from learning purchasing practices at a younger age. Because of its real-world applications, students may find these techniques conducive to their everyday lives.

Educational Ideals and the Educated Person

All educational endeavours embody values. The subject matter of programmes represents, for example, value judgment about what knowledge should be used. Similarly, the goals of educational programmes reflect certain valued ends and implicit in these ends are particular views of the kind of people students should become and of the kind of society in which they should live (Eisner, 1985; Giroux & Simon 1989). Peters (1967) argued that one's conception of education is ultimately based on an "ideal" of the person who is educated.

According to Peters, such an individual will possess certain traits and dispositions which are developed through the process of education. It is proper to assume therefore that some ideal of the educated person is present either implicitly or explicitly in programmes which are educational in their intent.

Current curriculum reforms all over the world explicitly acknowledge the importance of educational ideals. In some cases, a vision of the person who is to be educated is used as a foundation for programme development, eg., British Columbia's "Year 2000" Curriculum framework described the programme in terms of 'the educated citizen' and identified specific characteristics of these educational ideals as part of the educational mandate for the province (British Columbia MOE, 1990). While all curricular areas ultimately contribute to the development of an educated person in general, specific subject areas have articulated the attributes that should be developed in the individual who has been educated in the subject. Brown's (1990) conception of Home Economics provides a useful point for examining educational ideals in Home Economics. This conception of Brown's addresses the notion of what it means to be educated in this field of study. It should be noted that while Brown's work focused specifically on Home Economics in school settings it may also have implications for the professional education of Home Economics.

Brown (1980) integrated Brown and Paolucci's (1979) definition of Home Economics and Peters (1967) analysis of the concept of education to develop a conception of Home Economics education. In the first part of her analysis, Brown outlined the central features of Home Economics as described by Brown and

Paolucci, (1979). She reiterated the ultimate purposes (the mission) of Home Economics as enabling “individual and families to build and maintain systems of action leading to individual self-formation and to enlighten, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of goals and means for accomplishing them” (Brown & Paolucci 1979, p. 23). She outlined the field’s central emphasis as the practical problems of individuals and families in their everyday lives, the functions of families in meeting the needs of their members for food, shelter, clothing and nurturance and the pursuit of human happiness in a democratic society.

Three systems of action were identified as the basis for solving such problems, instrumental actions, communicative action and emancipatory action, Brown (1980), noted that these problems of individuals and families are not practical in a utilitarian sense, but are concerned with taking action in situations for which reflective decision-making or practical reasoning is required. The knowledge brought to bear in resolving such problems is interdisciplinary and broad in scope. Brown then linked this conception of Home Economics with Peters’ (1967) description of the concept of education. According to him education is concerned with the development of knowledge (having beliefs which are justified by good reasons and evidence) and understanding (having the ability to explain to reason and to arrive at conclusions on the basis of adequate and accurate evidence). The learner is considered to be autonomous and have the capacity for rational action and independent judgement. Thus, the purpose of education (as opposed other undertakings such as training indoctrination) is to

enable people act on the basis of reason. Using this conception of education in conjunction with Brown and Paolucci (1979) definition of Home Economics, Brown conceptualized the central lectures of Home Economics education. She indicated that the field is centrally concerned with “Developing the breath of perspective understanding and values with which the student... will perceive and act upon conditions and problems of the family, p.103 – 104). According to Brown, as an educational endeavour, Home Economics seeks to solve specific immediate problems [of the family]... than to develop the capacities of students

- 1) to define problems of the family in historical social context and
- 2) to participate in enlightened and reflective solutions to those problems (p. 104).

Home Economics education emphasized the development of conceptual systems [knowledge], which transforms the individual’s way of viewing the family and its relation to society” (p.104). Brown argued that “with greater communicative competence regarding the family, with mature moral consciousness and with realizing adequate interpretations of one’s own feelings and motivations, the individual is both wiser and happier in his/her own family life and more capable of interacting with others on behalf of well-being of the family and of social evolution toward a free society” (p. 104). Problem posing, critical thinking and communication, thus appear to be important elements of the concept of Home Economics education as outlined by Brown (Thomas & Arcus, 1991).

This is Brown’s ideal person educated in Home Economics.

Brown’s Ideal	Extension
Is one who	
...has a breadth of perspective vis-à-vis conditions and problems of the family.	...has a global perspective vis-à-vis conditions and problems of the family
...is able to define perennial practical problems of the family within a social-historical context	...is able to define problems of the family including those resulting from biases and inequities such as sexism, racism, classism homophobia, and other forms of structural violence.
...has knowledge and understanding of the perennial practical problems of the family to provision of food shelter, clothing, decisions about parenthood, the need for lasting nurturing relationships.	...has “connected knowledge (Belenky et al, 1986) and the ability to recognize relationships vis-à-vis everyday life in families.
...uses the three systems of action in reflective systems decision making and problem solving	...enhance the use of all three systems of action as essential
*instrumental/technical -knowledge of “how to” eg., provision of physical necessities.	...addressing the perennial practical problems of the family.
*communicative -shared or inferred meanings, values,	

beliefs, attitudes.

*emancipator

-exerting control over one's life rather than coping or reacting.

-possibilities for social change.

...has developed a moral consciousness

...has developed an "ethic of caring which includes concern, commitment, nurturance, and sense of community.

...has developed the ability to communicate and can function more effectively in family relationships.

...listen to and knows that there are a variety of voices and perspectives

...advocates for the well-being of all families in a just society.

within families and among families

...advocates for the well-being of all families in a just global society.

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Martin (1981) identifies several limitations of Peters' (1967) conception of education and the ideal of the educated person. She argued that Peters' conception of education is theoretical and abstract, with little application to everyday life. She stated that the educated person is an Ivory tower person one who can reason but has no desire to solve real problems in the real world (p. 206). She indicates that

Peters' educated person is individualistic and detached from the world, one who "will have knowledge about others but will not have been taught to care about their welfare... [who] will have some understanding of society but will not have to feel its injustices or even to be concerned about its fate" (p. 206). As well, Martin criticized Peters' ideal as patriarchal, That is based on the values of the public or productive sphere which has traditionally been dominated by males. She suggested that such as ideal does not include or account for reproductive processes in the private sphere. Thus, she argued, "unless we reject the institutions of private marriage, home, family, and children and drop responsibility for carrying on the reproductive processes of society out of our lives, we must reject education ideals and theories which take no accounts of the tasks and traits associated with these processes" (Martin, 1984, p. 347).

However, the extent to which these limitations are evident in Brown's conception is unclear. For example although not stated as such, Brown appears to have characterized the field in terms of everyday life, moral caring and the values of the private sphere, which Martin claims are lacking in Peters' conception of education Brown's use of "practical" to describe the type of problems appropriate for study in Home Economics illustrates this point. Practical problems require action and are therefore not detached from the realities of daily life. Moreover, practical problems may be classified as either procedural or uncertain. While procedural require instrumental action (i.e., "how to"), uncertain practical problems may require other sorts of action. This latter type of practical problems may be resolved on the basis of either prudential reasoning involving individual

wants, needs or goals and requiring communicative action or moral/practical reasoning involving caring for others, honesty and concern for social justice and requiring emancipative action. However, Brown's ideal person educated in Home Economics can be found in the extension.

In Kenya, as recorded by Waudo (1993), Home Economics dealt with the welfare of the family as it happened in almost all the African countries. She wrote that before the coming of the Europeans into Africa, they (Africans) had their own informal way of training their young women for their future responsibilities. This information again shows that Home Economics education is mainly to prepare the girl child. This is the reason most people perceive it as a course for females rather than males. She reveals that the history of Home Economics education shows that African countries inherited educational programmes from the British and French. The aim of Home Economics education then was to train servants to work for colonial masters. The curriculum, content, textbooks as well as teaching materials were designed to inculcate European lifestyles which included their values, norms and standards in various aspects of life. With this orientation came a new lifestyle which contributed to the erosion of the African culture and created conflict between traditional culture and western culture (Eghan, 1987). The results have been that people were conditioned to look down on their own culture and accept everything foreign as good. She writes that the present time Home Economics programmes have continued to perpetuate this attitude, for example, in the classrooms the use of local materials is equated to backwardness while the foreign items are equated to modernization by both students and teachers. Even today

African Home Economics programme tend to emulate western culture because they think anything foreign is the best. This perceived attitude has influence on the structure of Home Economics in Africa, for instance, Foods and nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, Home Management, Child Development and Family relations are courses distributed across these areas because, that structure is viewed by African trainers as role models. Moreover, many highly educated Home Economists have been trained in the United States, Canada and Britain and therefore bring this Western influence into curriculum and instruction. In addition, due to lack and/or shortage of local teaching resources such as textbooks, many teaching materials are imported but are not suitable to local needs.

Home Economics is offered at primary school level by both sexes. At the high school level, to be gender oriented and it is accepted only by girls revealed by Wuado (1993). Sigot (1988), wrote that due to the negative attitudes accorded to the discipline, only a few girls in Kenya are inclined to pursue the subject in high school.

What the Future Holds

In 1990s, Home Economics programmes in Africa did not only address the changing needs of individuals and families, but also included future-oriented career strategies that would enable students cope with changing labour force mix. As a profession, Home Economics educators need to develop the talents of future leaders. In order to address women's career goals, the curriculum should address myths surrounding management and leadership (Bands, 1992). There is a great need for training in agriculture because such training will help Home Economists

address the practical problems of families. Since the purpose and image of Home Economics is still vague, there is need to clarify the purpose and practice of Home Economics by sensitizing Home Economists to the field so that its programmes are not misunderstood. Home Economists should clarify the definitions and the assumptions of the Home Economics curriculum with regards to the learner and appropriate knowledge (Eghan, 1987). This should be based on the kind of person Home Economics intent to produce. Since we are living in an interdependent and changing world, Home Economists need to understand and cope with change by reflecting on it, listening to one another, learning from other disciplines, learning from the field, and learning from our colleagues abroad. By doing so home economists in Africa will be able to explore new ideas, develop new skills, become self-reliant and become familiar with new technologies. The needs for both global perspectives and greater integration in Home Economics have also been identified as important issues for Home Economics (Prehm, 1991).

Home Economics, if given a broader perspective, is likely to address the needs of families more adequately. The more recent trend of establishing twinning programmes with associations/universities abroad is also a move in the right direction (Caribbean Home Economics Association, 1983). This is because such linkages help strengthen the profession through research, training, curriculum development and networking ventures. However, in such twinning programmes, North American Home Economics models should not be allowed to dominate any projects which are undertaken together (CHEA, 1983).

Prehm (1991) further explained that Home Economists as change agents need to understand the needs of their clients if they are to successfully address the needs of families in the future. There is also a need to involve men in issues affecting families because without their involvement nothing is likely to change. Men in the African tradition control most of the family resources. If Home Economists are to address the changing needs for families, they must not only consider the range of content commonly associated with Home Economics but also engage in areas of expertise or dialogue with other professionals (Prehm, 1991; FAO, 1986).

Gitobu and Gritzmacher (1991), also revealed that since most women in Africa are engaged in business ventures, all areas of Home Economics can incorporate business-related aspects to make the curriculum relevant for entrepreneur. They suggested that entrepreneurship can be incorporated into Home Economics curriculum and study in its cultural, social, political and economic context. Home Economics programmes in Africa can provide relevant business training either independently or through incorporation into subjects such as family resource management, foods and nutrition, and clothing and textiles. Due to problems facing Africa such as farming, economic crises, structural adjustment and programmes imposed by the World Bank and International Monitoring Fund (IMF), Home Economics needs to play a crucial role in helping families deal with these changes by providing relevant education and services.

The following needs were identified at a workshop in Kenya; Home Economics curriculum be reviewed at all levels, development of local teaching

methods and materials, changing Home Economics status through clarification of definitions and potential contribution to development, networking with women's organizations, changing the image of women and their work in Africa, training in appropriate household technology, food security, intra-household resource allocation and management, and preparation of a Home Economics Association for Africa (HEAA, 1989).

Based on the prevailing situations of Home Economics programme in Africa as identified by HEAA at the workshop in Kenya, the following recommendations were suggested.

1. In order to make Home Economics relevant to the African context, the process needs to begin to sensitizing future Home Economics educators to their own culture. There is the tendency for highly educated Africans to be alienated from their own culture.
2. Since Home Economics is a practical subject, there is a need for overall transformation of the educational reward system in which technical subjects are valued. Programmes which concentrate on passing the examination rather than applying knowledge to practical problems need to be discouraged.
3. Workshops, seminars, conferences and in-servicing should be organised to help Home Economics educators develop competence in addressing the practical problems of families.
4. Efforts should go into the development of teaching materials that are suitable and relevant to local needs.

5. The curriculum should be revised so that it reflects the need of the majority of the people. The curriculum reforms should be built from the bottom-up involving all the concerned teachers, community leaders, parents and students.
6. Instruction, research and extension must take into consideration the psychological, and economical needs of individuals and families.
7. More collaborative research is needed in order to effectively address critical issues of families and to improve the knowledge base and the resulting practice of Home Economics.

Mary Pelton wrote in a Canadian Journal 43 (4) 1993 that as long ago as Greek times, care of the home was a concern for all family members. The husband, the head of the Greek household, managed the farm estate and was expected to instruct in the matters which he delegated to her. Women needed to know about the art of sewing and household keeping so that they could instruct the maid in the proper execution of her duties, but the husband was responsible if household was poorly managed (Xenofan cited in Wilson, 1966). Throughout the ages, instruction of the girls in skill of home making- food preparation, clothing provision and care, and the proper care and management of the home-was carried out by mothers and by the older female members of the household: grandmothers, aunts, or older sisters (Rowles, 1964, 1966). The continuation of traditional values, culture of music, poetry, and stories from the older generation to the next was ensured through demonstration and contact between the age groups. Homemaking knowledge was acquired gradually as a girl developed skills over

the years, enabling her to become increasingly adept at various household tasks. Ultimately she became a competent home maker able to run her own home efficiently and to care for her own husband and family.

As schools were introduced for children, these traditional ways of transmitting knowledge were less practical. When children spend most of each day at school, the time available for learning homemaking skills were lessened. Thus, school became the obvious place where such knowledge could be transmitted (Rowles, 1964). That was how educational training in “Home Economics” began. The paper outlines the development of Home Economics in Canada. Because the influence of developing “Home Economics” outside of Canada cannot be overlooked when tracing the progress in Canada, it first reveals events that occurred in England and the United States. It further contends that issues addressed by home economists today are important and relevant as they were at the turn of the century.

Home Economics in England

Eighteenth century educationalists, Erasmus Dawin (1731-1802) and Hannah More (1745-1833) stressed the importance of the study of home-making skills for girls of well to-do families so that they would be able to instruct their servants in the proper conduct of the home (Sillitoe, 1933). Needle work had been taught to girls in British schools for many years, sometimes as early as in kindergarten (MacDonald, 1986); however, it was not until 1840 that it was introduced as a subject (Sillitoe,1933). By 1846, needle work was “expected to be taught to girls in elementary schools” (Sillitoe, 1933, p. 15) but was not made a

compulsory subject until 1862. Needle work taught in the “Ragged Schools” (those schools established for children whose personal hygiene excluded them from attending ordinary school) was used as starting point for personal cleanliness (Sillitoe, 1933). Clean hands were important to good needle work. The Education Act of 1870 established school boards, made elementary education compulsory and made “domestic economy” a compulsory subjects for girls (Sillitoe, 1933).

Rapid growth of towns and many changes in social structures throughout Britain were caused by the industrial revolution. Many people found themselves in conditions much different from what they had been used to. Working classes lived in cramped quarters and had only a small range of foods available. Well-to-do classes were often untutored in proper cookery methods. Many working men were the ones who chose the Sunday “joint” and brought it home, often overindulging the budget for the entire week. Utensils were scanty and inadequate. Poor diets became prevalent (Sillitoe, 1933).

Cooking became “fashionable” after the International Exhibition of 1873 in South Kensington which include demonstration and lectures in a well equipped and conveniently set-out area (Sillitoe, 1933). The following year National Training School of Cookery was established in the exhibition building. Within less than ten years, there were cooking schools in Liverpool, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and Leicester (Rowles, 1964). As more schools were established, standards were set for graduates and teachers. However, classes mainly reached the middle and upper classes. Those who most needed instruction did not receive it. Eventually, “practice lessons in cookery for elementary schools

girls were introduced in 1878” (Sillitoe, 1933, p.31). These were “hands-on” practical lessons in contrast to the demonstration-only, lessons which had been conducted in the several years preceding, and were the method of instruction for adult classes.

Home Economics in the United States

In the United States, a similar pattern of development could be seen. After many years of unofficial instruction in Sewing, the commissioner of education for Massachusetts recommended in 1973 that sewing be gradually introduced into classes (Rowles, 1964); however; Rowles reported that grade schools in Boston had been giving needlework since 1835, and Bevier (Cited in Budewig, 1957) claimed that sewing was taught as early as 1798 in Massachusetts public schools. The Boston normal school of cooking was started in 1886, due to the effort of Mrs. Hemenway who also gave leadership, time, and money for the introduction into Boston school of cooking, sewing, kindergarten (Rowles, 1964). Mrs. Fannie Farmer was one of the early principals (Wilson, 1966). The purpose of the normal school was “to provide teachers for school teaching of Boston” (Rowlers 1964 p.8).

It was important that teacher training institutions be established so that “Home Economics” instructions could be carried out only in the public schools, but also in the colleges (Wilson, 1966). Normal schools addressed this need in part, but other institutions were involved in Home Economics teacher training: YWCA in New York and St. Louis; Pratt institute, Brooklyn, New York; Drexel institute, Pennsylvania; and New York College for Training Teachers

(Wilson,1966). The Pratt institute gave a two year Normal School course in Domestic Science for the purpose of providing teachers for public and private schools and colleges (Rowles, 1964). Drexel Institute at first, offered a two-year course in Home Economics as well as shorter special courses. Later, both institutions offered Home Economics degree programmes (Rowles, 1964).

The American Land-Grant Act of 1862 provided federal land to the states for the purpose of establishing colleges “ ...to teach such as learning branches as are related to the agricultural and mechanic arts ...to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes...”(The Morrill Land-Grant College Act, 1862 p. 172). The first degree in the world in the home was established in the Mid-western United State (Rowles, 1964). Between 1870 and1874; Home Economics was begun in the colleges established in Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois (Budewig, 1957). By 1890 there were programmes in household science in the agricultural Colleges of Kansas, Iowa, Oregon and South Dakota and by 1906, there were thirty-six Land Grant Colleges teaching Home Economics (Rowles, 1964).

Perceptions of people towards Vocational and Technical Education

Students

The perceptions of people towards technical and vocational education in recent time is moving towards positive direction because people have come to realize that technical education is the foundation for national development. The high rate of unemployment and the large volumes of untapped natural resources have awakened the government of the day to call for curriculum reforms that

would promote technical education to provide solutions to these problems. A significant proportion of current TVET trainees, particularly in the informal sector (primarily apprenticeships), are therefore labelled as school dropouts, which impacts on the self-esteem and external perceptions of trainees' abilities.

In the past, technical education was misconceived as belonging to the less fortunate in society. Even today some people still have the wrong perception that technical education belongs to those who do not have the ability to cope with pure academic work. Bortei-Doku, Doh and Andoh's (2011) study on vocational education and training in Ghana, reported a consensus among informal trainees and informal graduates that only people who are unable to get the grades to enter into higher academic pathways opt to go into TVET. Bortei-Doku et al. from the study remarked: 'We are not respected because we are unable to speak English.' One graduate pointed out that 'the country has no respect for trade workers, they think of them as complete 'illiterates'. TVET, however, poorly perceived, is often seen as the reserve option for those unable to achieve the grades to enter into higher education (Bortei-Doku et al., 2011).

Draft African Union Strategy to Revitalise TVET in Africa (2007) affirmed that many countries including Ghana considered vocational and technical education as a career path for the less academically able. Bortei-Doku et al. (2011) emphasised that negative perception about vocational education was mostly expressed by those in the informal traditional apprenticeship system rather than those in the formal TVET system. Trainees from formal TVET institutions did not feel technical and vocational education belonged to those with low

academic ability. The majority saw themselves as on the same level, in terms of academic competence, as those in the secondary school system.

Secondly, people regard clerical work (white collar job) as prestigious and look down on people who offer handicraft programmes. According to Bortei-Doku et. al. (2011) significantly, some trades such as hairdressing have become stigmatised because they are seen to be associated with other anti-social trades. They consequently struggle to attract the strongest students, and the value of these trades in society is downplayed. This is particularly unfortunate as these trades have the potential to absorb large numbers of young people.

Pimpa (2007) on reference groups and choices of Vocational Education in Thailand confirmed that the key criteria students used in confirming their decision to enrol in the vocational institutions are personal attitude towards vocational education, curriculum of the courses offered by institutions, potential for future employment after graduation, attractiveness of the campus, and tuition fees and scholarships. These factors should be strategically communicated to the potential students. With regard to the attitude towards vocational education, Thai Ministry of Education must carry on promoting a good image of vocational education and its students to the society. Since vocational education has suffered from being perceived as a second class education and taught which militates against effective learning, marketing communication, in an effort to create an on-going understanding with students and community, is strongly recommended.

Not only in Malaysia but also in the United States (Wancott, 2000) technical and vocational education has low image problems among parents and

teachers. There are some myths and realities identified about technical education and vocational training in the United States. Most people think that vocational education is only for drop outs and special students (Stone, 1993). But the reality is 80% of students in secondary schools will take at least one vocational subject, and one out of eight students from the academic field will take more than one vocational subject (Wancott, 2000). The second myth which is, vocational graduates earn less than the academically - streamed students.

According to Stone (1993), many studies have shown that graduates of vocational institutions are more likely to be employed and their salary higher than graduates of academic programme. The third myth is that more parents encourage their children to pursue a four year programmes or more of academic courses which would guarantee better future careers. On the contrary, academic graduates are not guaranteed high incomes (Gray, 1997). Even welders, mechanics, electrical technicians, healthcare workers, and plumbers have higher demand in the near future (Brady, 1999:41). In early 1990s, the largest sector in the job market was the services sector, rather than the manufacturing sector (Berliner & Biddle, 1996:38) and this has directly or indirectly affected the demand for skilled workers in the field of vocational and technical.

Parents

The association between vocational and technical skills training and weak academic ability is clearly noted in discussions with parents and guardians of trainees in Bortei-Doku et al. (2011)'s study. Some parents and guardians suggested that they decided to send their children into vocational training or

apprenticeships after they failed to perform well at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The implication was that if the child had performed well, he/she would have been sent to the secondary school and not a vocational or technical training institute. In Bortei-Doku et al. a parent remarked:

'There was something that the child wanted to pursue. Firstly, the child didn't perform well after examinations and secondly, there wasn't any support to help the child continue his/her education. That was why the child went into [vocational] training.' **Parent**

Aside the perception that only the weakest children in terms of academic ability enter into TVET, it is important to recognise that the issue also has to do with the finances available to support the child and not just his or her academic performance. Some parents chose the option of skills training because lack of money at home to support the child to go to Senior High School (Botei-Doku et al. (2011). Parents generally felt that young people are less interested in TVET-related careers. This lack of interest is attributed to the perceived low returns, in comparison with other economic activities such as petty trading, which also has low barriers to entry. It is important therefore to find an entry point into the psyche of young people to make TVET more appealing.

According to Wancott (2000), the mere mention of vocational education gives a negative image automatically to parents. On the other hand research in Missouri and Oklahoma area shows that 91% of respondents/population agrees schools should give greater emphasis to the subject of skills relating to the current

job market, such as ICT, mathematics and science. Positive attitudes towards vocational education as preparation in a challenging career, high income (salary) and path for continuing education and career with more job security portends a new trend in the labour market of the new millennium (Wancott, 2000).

At one time, people in Malaysia considered the image of Vocational Secondary School (VSS) as ideal for bad boys, second class, blue collar, and so on, but the reality is now otherwise since vocational schools are seen as a conduit to prepare students for careers in the future. This perception has changed and the number of vocational graduates finding employment upon completion of their training and the salaries they receive are comparable to graduates pursuing academic training and a similar increase in opportunities for graduates of the vocational career path is much more promising than for academic graduates (Kang & Bishop, 1986). Campbell, Elliot, Seusy (1987) found that vocational graduates were 14.9% more likely to be in the labour force and were paid 9% more per month than academic graduates. This study showed that vocational education had a positive effect on earnings because vocational concentrators worked longer hours and also showed that, in order to reach these higher earnings, it was very important for the vocational graduate to enter a career related to the vocational education (Mane, 1999). On the other hand, majority of students in Malaysia are less interested in entering vocational schools because, they still regard that the school houses students who drop out of purely academic programmes per se (Utusan Malaysia, 8 April, 2010). While Ahmad Esa (2010) found that peoples' perception placing the vocational stream students as second

class or dropouts should no longer exist. This is because students in the vocational stream are chosen based on their talents and interests, not the results of the examination (Utusan Malaysia, 13 April, 2010).

Alavi, Sail and Awang (2013) indicated in a study that parents have a positive image of technical education and vocational training as it provides broader educational opportunities, especially, to students who are less interested in academics. Students who are less interested academically can succeed in doing "*hands-on*" work. Besides, parents and teachers also believe that these students can further their education overseas, such as Japan. Students in technical education and vocational training can earn salaries comparable to academic graduates. However Alavi et al. reported parents' resilience in the perception of the negative image of vocational training. Several negative images that can be submitted from the perception of parents are that a vocational career is not encouraging, is belittled and has low status in terms of jobs and career paths.

According to Boateng (2012), another challenge facing Vocational Technical Education in Ghana is the perception that it is a route for those who are not able to function within an academic setting. This perception is compounded by a lack of progression routes from vocational technical education into, higher education (African Union, In fact this negative perceptions are not limited to those who have little understanding of vocational education. In 2002, a survey of public TVET teachers found that none of the 87 respondents wanted their own children to study TVET programmes (Anamuah-Mensah, 2004). Aside inadequate financing and negative perceptions, the socio-economic environment and the

contextual framework within which vocational education is delivered in Ghana, is characterised in general by other factors such as, huge numbers of poorly educated, unskilled and unemployed youth, uncoordinated, unregulated and fragmented delivery systems, low quality gender and economic inequities, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, poor management and ill-adapted organisational structures (African Union, 2007).

Teachers

Sheng, Hall and Rojewski (1996) indicate that some vocational educators had a different opinion when discussing funding. One-fifth of the educators expressed that money set aside for promoting female participation in non traditional programmes should be cut without any objection when the budgets are tight or money set aside is not necessary, since most females entering non traditional programmes usually drop out. Since Sheng et al. study sought a broad overview of vocational educators' perceptions, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine if underlying dimensions which represented vocational educators' perceptions could be identified. The analysis revealed that vocational educators might form perceptions based on four discrete factors including promotion of females in non-traditional programs, perceived educators' role in non-traditional programmes, female enrolment in non-traditional programmes, and barriers for females entering the male's world. Future work in this area may expand and clarify these preliminary factors. In any event, it appears that vocational educators' perceptions towards female participation in non-traditional programmes are a multidimensional construct.

The impact of select variables on vocational educators' perceptions was also examined in the study. Gender had an impact on all four identified factors. Female educators reported more positive perceptions toward female participation in non-traditional programmes than did their male counterparts. This finding supported and extended the work of past researchers (Cunningham, Martin, & Miller, 1982; Lasonen, Burge, & Finch, 1990) who found that male vocational educators had more traditional attitudes than female counterparts, and that female educators held more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than male educators. However, the finding also demonstrated a great improvement in male educators' perceptions toward females from previous studies (Dittman, 1976; Hantijis, 1977; Hollenback, 1984; Manrow, 1978). Male educators today seem more positive toward females in non-traditional programmes and in their future careers than ever before. According to Alavi et al. (2013), the perception of school teachers is that science and mathematics education have more priority when compared to training education for those who are not interested in the academic field.

Gender Perception towards Home Economics

For the past two decades, significant efforts have been made to eliminate gender discrimination and gender stereotyping in vocational education. Since Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the federal government has been promoting gender equity, thus insuring opportunities for education which had previously been denied to people because of their gender.

Nevertheless, the overall status for females in non-traditional programmes remains relatively low (Burge & Culver, 1990) despite great efforts to change and

create a more favourable environment for females. Vocational educators sometimes have gender stereotyping attitudes and behaviours without these individuals even being cognizant of their detrimental effect. These have contributed to difficulties experienced by females who are either enrolled or are contemplating enrolling in non-traditional programmes.

Gender equity is a topic frequently in the news (Plawin, 1993); however, little is known about vocational educators' perceptions toward female participation in non-traditional programmes. The present study was a first step to develop empirical measures of vocational educators' perceptions toward female participation in non-traditional programmes. As such, the study's purpose was exploratory, providing an assessment of perceptions.

Findings from the study by Sheng, Hall and Rojewski (1996) provide a picture of vocational educators' perceptions toward female participation in non-traditional programmes. Overall, perceptions of vocational educators at technical institutes in Georgia towards female participation in non-traditional programmes were quite positive, as measured by their responses to 22 perception statements. Vocational educators surveyed generally believed that females should be able to enter any vocational programmes in which they are interested and capable of completing, and females enrolled in programs such as engineering technology, drafting, and industrial maintenance can solve problems as well as males.

This finding does not support the historical belief that there should be definite male and female occupational separation in vocational programmes (Hollenback, 1985). It did demonstrate a change in educators' perceptions from an

early study by Harrison (1979) who found that vocational educators were reluctant to have females in non-traditional programmes. Part of the reason for changes from the past decades to the present might include federal regulations, social influence, gender equity workshops and in-service training, and the fact that more females are entering the workforce.

Gender and Home Economics

A study conducted in Nigeria on reasons why there is gender gap in the study of Home Economics and the strategies on how to close the gender gap in the study of Home Economics (Ozioma, 2012) revealed the following.

1. The usefulness of Home Economics to all sexes.
2. What should be done to close the gender gap in the study of Home Economics?
3. Education that should be done to parents before choosing a course of study for them.
4. How to increase the male enrolment in the study of Home Economics.

Home Economics should be equally accessible to male and female students but as students enter into high school and tertiary education large numbers of them begin to lose interest in the course. The Gender Gaps Fact Sheet 1997 emphasized that students enrol into other science courses like medicine, computer with the exception of Home Economics education. Leinch (2001 as cited by Ozioma, 2012) stressed that Home Economics is built upon many disciplines from which an individual who engaged on it gains that opportunity, experience and skills required for effective output. Ilinden (1999 as cited by

Ozioma, 2012) pointed out that Home Economics is a dynamic and involving profession, this is because it focuses on the welfare of individuals, families and the society.

Ekpenyong (2008) wrote that it has passed a stage when Home Economics was regarded as only the acquisition of skill in household arts or just cooking which prevents the male's enrolment in the course related areas of the study of higher institutions of learning. Today Home Economics has broadened its scope in the line with the dynamics of the present to forestall credibility in carrier establishment as well as skills concrete enough to sustain individuals, family and the nation at large. It encompasses all areas of Food and Nutrition, Home Management, Clothing and Textiles, Child and Family Living, Consumer Education hence integrating them into all aspects of life.

Keller (1991) defined gender as masculine, feminine or neuter. It is the condition of being construct, which distinguishes the role, behaviour, mental and emotional characteristics between male and female. Gender is expressed in many spheres of human endeavour. Its level of demonstration varies with time, place and culture. It relates to the circumstances of discrimination against a person, politics, religion, economics and social services determines the level of political and economic empowerment that keeps certain group of people at advantage position. In relation to offering Home Economics in the Tertiary institutions male gender has been a problem and female gender mostly undertake the course.

American Heritage (1986) explained gender bias as a separation of gender in a way which prefers one sex over the other. However, problem of gender

inequality in Home Economics is not only a national concern but that of the whole world at large, thus the misconception of Home Economics as a woman's subject/course.

Gender gap which exists between males and females starts at home. The home provides the child with first experience, these include the models with which the child can identify, the parents provide range of materials for home play, and there are also value systems which are basic to special roles. Children quickly learn that the roles of men in the family are different from the role of women. This differential role for boys and girls constitute a serious problem to Home Economics studies as it affects the male students from undertaking the course.

There are varieties of theories as to why males lose interest in Home Economics. One speculation is that boys simply approach Home Economics differently. Some point to parental influence, some blame teachers and the overall educational institution. There is also lack of role models. Teachers may treat girls differently than boys causing differing expectation. For instance, boys and girls are often approached differently when dealing with inappropriate physical verbal attacks on others. As such, boys may want courses that are more tasks oriented than girls (Miller, Chaika & Gropper, 1996).

Okorie and Ezeji (1988) stated that some parents are not guiding the male children well to develop interest in the study of Home Economics courses. They would not want their children to develop interest in the study of Home Economics. They would want their male children to develop interest in Law and medicine rather than Home Economics.

Osai (2006) emphasized that the influence of parents on the male's interest in the study of Home Economics is unquestionably one of the strongest and most persistent factor determining what the child's interest in school will be. The socio-economic status of parents can influence students in their choice of course of study to a great extent. Parents from poor socio-economic background would always have greater expectation from the male child and as such would not want to study Home Economics. They are often more interested in occupations or professions which will bring money and prestige to the family, than in suitability of their children for a particular career (Okoh, 2006). It is therefore imperative that parents always set aspirations of their children hence they would not want their male children to study what they regard as woman's subject.

Consequently, the name given to the course tends to discourage females and males, mostly males in studying the course. They would rather prefer the name given to the course be changed since it will motivate them to study the course. Since the name Home Economics makes the course as if it is exclusively for women alone. Thus, women are known to be mostly involved in domestic works or activities.

The interest in the study of Home Economics started from home. Ferry (1988) stated that the root causes of gender in Home Economics, is from home. The home provides the material for playing role difference, which creates gender differentials among the children of the home. To curb this problem, parents should not give room for anything that should create gender difference among the children since this tends to make children lose interest in some areas of life,

particularly, males, who would not want to fall in line with Home Economics as a course of study. APU (1998) emphasized that parents should guide and educate male children on the importance of Home Economics in societal building since it is going to encourage the males to pursue Home Economics as a course.

Poor orientation is another reason why males are not interested in the study of Home Economics if students are taught about merits and demerits and career areas that are available to Home Economics. Dike (2006) suggested that if career days are organized by schools from time to time, it would help motivate and stimulate the interest of students as they listen to some experts in the various areas of Home Economics. This is because some male students would want to study Home Economics but they feel shy to be referred to as “sissy” whereas it is a course in which most students would have done better than the other courses. Dike expressed that wrong perception of Home Economics dated back from colonial era, makes it difficult for the perception to change. Bound and Hopson (1989) stated that boys are more concerned with career that will make quick money while girls tend to pay more attention to future family improvement.

According to Agusiono (1988), varieties of factors both within individual and within the environment are stressed as factors for male’s enrolment on the study of Home Economics, and so the perception of Home Economics as woman’s subject or course made the educated look down on anyone who studied or is studying Home Economics. Osuola (1994) emphasized that at the heart of our society and economics problem is a national attitude that implies that vocation subjects (Home Economics) are designed for somebody else’s children and is

meant primarily for the children of the poor, for the drop out, and less privileged and less intelligent. This is one of the reasons students lack interest in the study of the course.

Anozie (2006) wrote that males do not know what this Home Economics is made of, they see it as course for cooking and eating alone, thus attributing it to the course for females alone not knowing that the course Home Economics is much more than that.

Iloeje (1999) stated that the different areas of Home Economics have career options that can keep the graduates gainfully employed where they cannot get paid employment jobs. The following are career options.

1. Nursery school management
2. Interior decoration
3. Hotel management
4. Cloth management
5. Craft work
6. Tailoring
7. Fashion design
8. Baking
9. Opening a snack bar
10. Opening a fast food shop
11. Laundry services
12. Industrial cafeteria management
13. Soap and pomade making

14. Pattern making
15. Teaching
16. Wedding and Birthday Decorations
17. Dietetics
18. Journalism
19. Institutional Matron
20. Food Scientist

These careers are the job areas that males and females who study Home Economics can get involved in, hence this would make the students to be self-reliant after graduation rather than waiting for Government employment. The situation in Nigeria according to Iloeje (1999) was that the government is not ready to provide job for the youth, therefore, the study of Home Economics by males could make a difference in trying to reduce poverty and unemployment in the country.

Iloeje also states that males need Home Economics just as females. They need to know how to budget, prioritize needs, and manage available resources to live happily these can be achieved through the study of Home Economics.

Nwankwo (2004) identified some factors that made men not to study Home Economics. These are:

- a) Community attitude
- b) Peer attitude
- c) General attitudes of individuals
- d) Parents attitude

- e) Teachers attitude
- f) Resource materials

Community Attitude

Dowell and Greenwood (1975) opined that the cookery class regarded as “not for boy”, then if the same course is termed “bachelor survival” or a clothing course labelled “bachelor endeavours”, boys will be interested.

Peer Attitude

Most often teenagers abhor anything that will tarnish their ego before friends. Such males would rather not go into anything that would not gain peers’ approval. Therefore, if Home Economics has this “female only” the image will then affect male enrolment (Nwankwo, 2004).

General Attitude of Individuals

Most individuals still observe the 18th century concept of Home Economics that it is of cooking and eating. Thus you find men in influential positions and even parents allowing ignorance to guide their views about Home Economics (Nwankwo, 2004).

Parents Attitude

Parents most often decide for their children because of the stereotype idea of what a male child and female child should do. These parents would want their children to be engineers, doctors, etc., thereby biasing the child’s mind and at times confusing the child (Nwankwo, 2004).

Teachers Attitude

Most Home Economics teachers and other teachers do not encourage males to study the course because they see males as difficult people to teach (Nwakwo, 2004).

Resource Materials

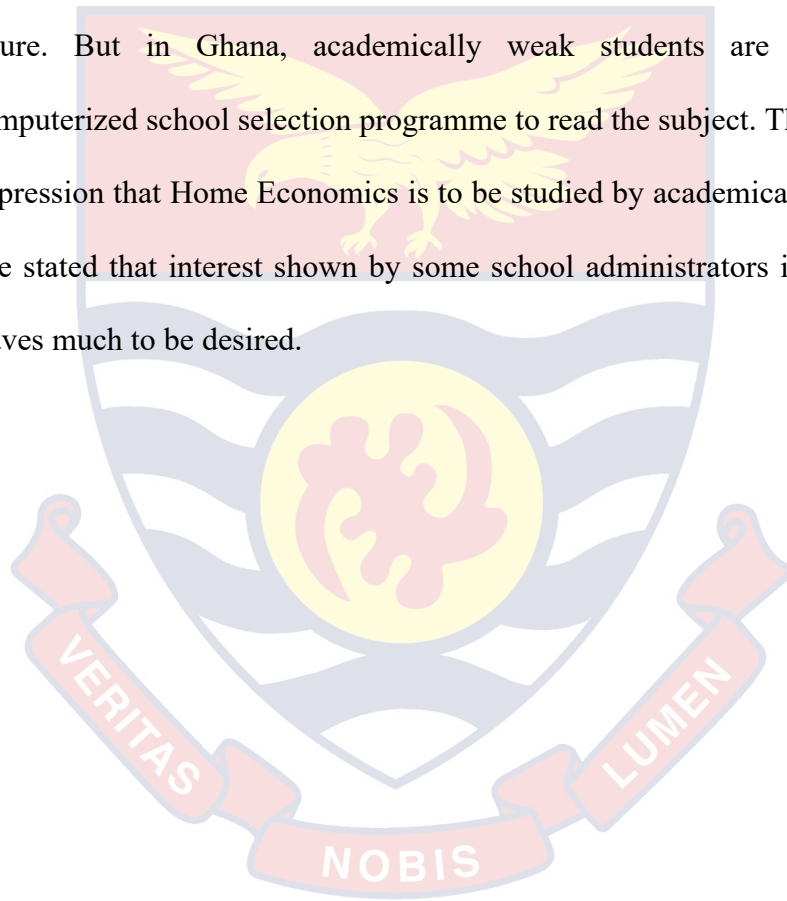
Textbooks especially are not geared towards males. All illustrations are female gender oriented and content is gender biased in favour of the females. In relation to the above Lawson (1977) noted that Home Economics programme which deals so vitally with life, the home and home problems should be made available for men and if left predominately as an arena for women action and opinion, they(women) may have no right to speak or take action for the family. So for Home Economics to adequately serve the family as a body, the profession must have to be for both men and women.

Canter and Canter (1991) revealed that educational systems and teachers have the ability to help boys overcome gender gap in Home Economics. He also wrote that if boys are to be more involved in Home Economics, we must begin with parents. Parents can begin to encourage boys to study Home Economics from home by exposing them to learn how to cook and make a home.

Gender gap sheet (1997) suggests that parents' position can influence gender equality in Home Economics at school as well at home. Home Economics therefore, is one of the courses that has the individual and family as its central focus and improving the well-being of the members, since the family in all cultures is the corner stone of any society. It is therefore paramount that Home

Economics be made available for both males and females because its focus allows no room for gender discrimination.

Brown (2013) stated in a report during the Ghana Home Economics Day celebration that Home Economics is a subject that incorporates pertinent life skills of interpersonal and personal development, that help individuals and families to succeed in their present lives and constantly be of use as they continue into the future. But in Ghana, academically weak students are selected by the computerized school selection programme to read the subject. This has created the impression that Home Economics is to be studied by academically weak students. She stated that interest shown by some school administrators in the subject also leaves much to be desired.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedure followed in carrying out this study. It comprises the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis.

Research Design

The research design appropriate for conducting this research is descriptive survey. The descriptive research specifies the nature of a given phenomena, determines and reports the way things are. Descriptive research involves the collection of data in order to test hypothesis or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Gay, 1992). Best and Kahn (1998) described descriptive research as concerns with the conditions or relationships that exist such as determining the nature, conditions, practices and attitudes opinions that are held, processes that are on-going or trends that are developed.

Amedahe (2002) also maintained that in descriptive research, accurate description of activities, objects, processes and persons are the objective. This design is chosen because the study seeks to determine the nature, conditions, practices, attitudes and opinions of teachers, students and parents with regards to

the relevance of Home Economics and its teaching and learning. Since it is a survey, detailed description of existing phenomena with the intent of employing data to justify current conditions and practices and to make intelligent plans for improving them are employed.

The advantage of this design to the study is that it can collect data from a large population and since the population of this study involves students and teachers the descriptive survey is appropriate. Another advantage of the descriptive survey is that it recognizes the natural setting as the direct source of data collection and is less expensive and less time consuming because it limits itself to its immediate subject and does not go beyond it. Since attitudes and opinion are measured, basic concepts of human behaviour is revealed.

Population

A total population of 3116 students, 263 teachers and 87 parents was involved in the study. All Senior High Schools in the North Tongu District which offered Home Economics (106) Business (50), General Science (85) and General Arts (100) formed the population of the study. Visual Arts and Agricultural Science students were not part of the population because Visual Arts was part of the Vocational Department which Home Economics represented in the study. Agricultural Science students in Adidome Senior High School on the other hand, were having practical lessons on the farm at the time the researcher got there and so were dropped in the other schools as well. All teachers in the selected schools, together with the students and their parents, were the specific population of

interest. The schools that make up the North Tongu District include Adidome, Aveyime-Battor, Battor, Dorfor, Mafi-Kumase and Mepe St Kizito Senior High Schools.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size comprised 263 teachers, 341 students and 86 parents of the selected students. Two hundred and sixty-three teachers in the district were used for the study. Out of the total number of students, 341 were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Eighty-seven parents (14 from five communities and 17 from Adidome, the largest community) were purposively chosen. In all, 690 respondents made up of teachers, students and parents were given questionnaires to answer which were self-developed specially for each of the categories. Items in the questionnaire covered biographic information of respondents, awareness, knowledge and perception of Home Economics of the different categories of subjects.

The samples from the six Senior High Schools in North Tongu selected for the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers and Students of the six Senior High Schools in North Tongu

Schools	Students	No. of Students Selected	Teachers
Adidome Senior High School	992	109	64
Mafi-Kumase Secondary Technical	422	46	43
Dorfor Senior High School	552	60	44
Battor Senior High School	214	24	19

Table 1 Continued

Aveyime-Battor Secondary	497	54	46
Technical			
St. Kizito Secondary Technical	439	48	47
Total	3116	341	263

Two hundred and sixty-three teachers in all the six schools were used for the study. Census survey was used to collect data from all the teachers. This method involves collecting data from every member of the population of teachers (Cooper & Schindler, 2000). Out of the 3116 students, 341 students were selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size for research activities. These students were selected using the simple random technique from four programme areas. The lottery method of the simple random sampling was employed to select the sample. For the lottery method, a sampling frame which consisted of an alphabetical list of names of each student was used. The names listed in the sampling frame were substituted with numbered marble such that each one corresponded to a name of student. The marbles were put in a container, mixed thoroughly and were randomly removed one by one without replacement. The number of any selected marble was registered to correspond to a student's name. This process was continued until the required number of respondents was reached. The method was repeatedly used in all the schools to select 341 students who participated in the study. This was to ensure that each student in all the groups has equal and independent chance of being selected. However, the

selection of the sample size was judgmentally proportionate to the total number of the students in each school. The sample of parents matched that of the students which means that 341 parents were also sampled and out of this number, 87 were purposively selected at P. T A. meetings. In each community, 14 parents were selected except Adidome where 17 parents were chosen because the community had more parents. The simple random sampling method was used to select the various categories of respondents. This ensured that each member of the population was given an equal opportunity or chance to be selected. The aim of this was to keep sample error to a minimum (Ofori & Dampson, 2011).

Instrument for Data Collection

A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. The use of questionnaire was appropriate for the study because it is an instrument used to gather information from a large group of people and also to collect data about knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Taylor-Powell, 2000). A large amount of data can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). As compared with other tools of data collection, questionnaires also guarantee confidentiality. Questionnaires often allow respondents time to think before responding and also impose uniformity on the information obtained by asking all the respondents the same questions. There are disadvantages though, in using questionnaires, for instance it is hard to construct items which are free from ambiguity of which respondents may misinterpret. There is also no flexibility for the respondents.

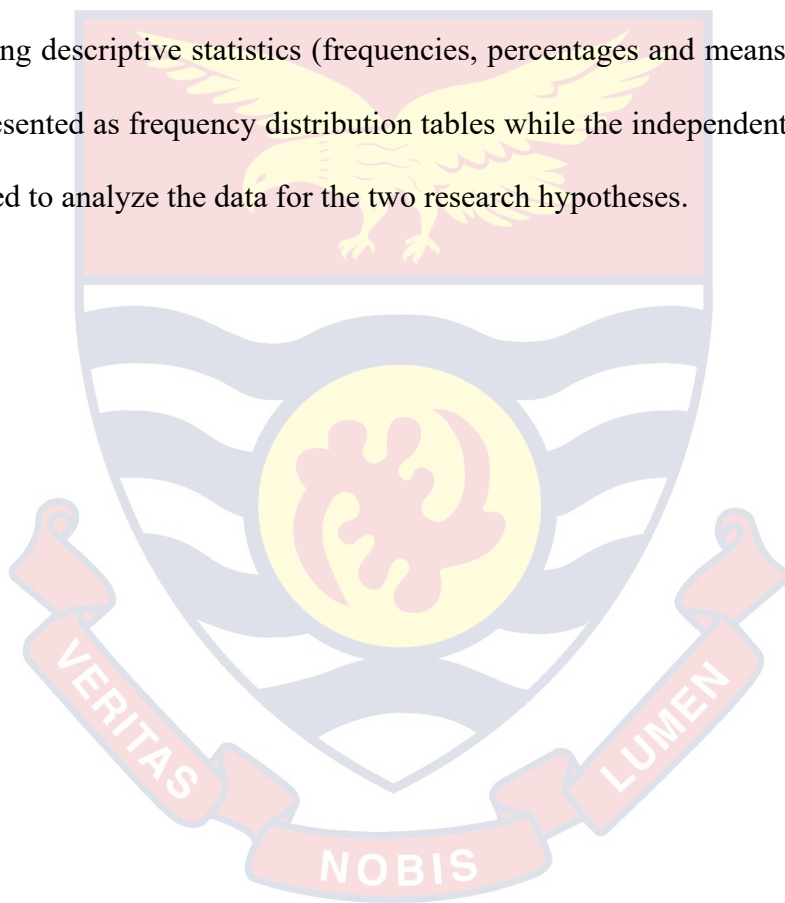
Three sets of questionnaires were self-developed for collecting data from teachers, parents and students. The questionnaires were in sections, such as biological or personal data, teachers' and students' awareness of the content of Home Economics, teachers' students' and parents' perception of Home Economics, male and female students' perception of Home Economics, perception of Home Economics students, non-Home Economics students and recommendations required to highlight the importance of Home Economics.

Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction was collected from the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education (DASSE) and presented to the various schools to seek permission, to collect data and to facilitate the administration of the questionnaires. Prior to administering the questionnaire for the main study, they were pilot tested using respondents from Sogakope Senior High School to ensure the validity of items in it. Response to the questions proved positive and this gave way to the research to take off. The six schools where data was collected were visited prior to the main study and a rapport established. Consent from the various schools and the subject used, was obtained prior to administering the questionnaires. A research assistant was trained in administration and retrieval of questionnaires. He also assisted in the data collection process. All data was collected within twelve days.

Data Analysis

Data collected were coded and analysed using SPSS (version, 16) and variables that required determination of difference were subjected to standardised t-test to investigate whether there is significant difference between the variables. Munro and Page (1993) reported that Gosset invented the t-test as a more precise method of comparing groups. Data for the other research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages and means) and results were presented as frequency distribution tables while the independent sample t-test was used to analyze the data for the two research hypotheses.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section looked at the characteristics of the respondents and the second section focused on the presentation and discussion of the main findings of the study. The main findings are presented and discussed in line with the various objectives of the study.

Characteristics of Respondents

This section deals with the main characteristics of the respondents. These include the gender and age ranges of teachers, students and the parents as well as the programme of study of the students. Tables 2 to 7 give details of these characteristics. Table 2 indicates the gender of the respondents.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondent

Respondent	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Teachers	195	74.1	68	25.9	263	100
Students	157	46	184	54	341	100
*Parents	36	41.4	51	58.6	87	100

*Parents included siblings or relatives who attended PTA meeting on behalf of students.

It is seen from the Table that, most of the teachers used for the study were males while majority of the students were females. More female parents were selected for the study as compared to males.

The research also sought to find out the ages of the teachers. Table 3 presents results on the ages of teachers.

Table 3: Age Range of Teachers

Age Ranges	No.	%
20-30	58	22.1
31-41	159	60.5
42-52	46	17.5
Total	263	100

The result in Table 3 shows that majority of the 159 (60.5%) teachers were between the ages of 31-41, while the age range of 42-52, 46 (17.5%) of the teachers fall within that range. This means majority of the teachers who participated in the study fell within 31-41 age range.

Table 4: Number of Years of Teaching

Years of Teaching	No.	%
1-5	20	7.6
6-10	79	30.0
11-15	121	46.0
16-20	30	12.7
21 and above	13	3.7
Total	263	100

The results of Table 4 show that a greater number of 121 (46.0%) of the 263 teachers, had taught for a considerable number of 11-15 years and fell within the ages of 20-30 years. Also, 7.6% of these teachers have the knowledge that Home Economics programme forms part of the Senior High School curriculum. Thus, these teachers are familiar with teaching Home Economics hence, their views and knowledge were solicited and these were included in the study.

Table 5: Age Range of Students

Age Ranges	No.	%
15-20	274	80.4
21-25	67	19.6
Total	341	100

Students in the selected schools were predominantly in their late teenage years which are normal for Senior High Schools. Table 5 indicates that majority of the students were between the ages of 15-20, while 67 of them representing 19.6% were between 21-25 years.

Table 6: Age Ranges of Parents

Age Ranges	No.	%
30-35	40	46
36-40	22	25.3
41-46	23	26.4
47 and above	2	2.3
Total	87	100

Out of the 87 parents, 46% were between the ages of 30-35 years while 26.4% were between the ages of 41-46. Only 2.3% of them were 47 years and above. Thus, of the parents in the selected senior high schools are within the 30-35 age range. This was used for the study.

The programme of study of the students selected was of interest to the study. Table 7 shows the results on the programme of study of the students who participated in the study.

Table 7: Programme of Study of Students

Programme	No.	%
Home Economics	106	31.1
Science	85	24.9
General Arts	100	29.3
Business	50	14.6
Total	341	100

From Table 7, out of 341 students, 106 of them were studying Home Economics representing 31.1% and 100 representing 29.3% of the students were studying General Arts. Fifty (14.6%) were studying Business while 85 (24.9%) students were pursuing Science as a programme of study.

Discussion of Main Results

This section of the chapter presents the main results of the data collected from respondents in the field. The main results relating to the purpose and objectives of the study are presented in this section. In order for the results to be presented systematically, it would be presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question One: How well are Senior High School Teachers in North Tongu District aware of the Content of Home Economics Programme?

This research question sought to find out how well teachers are aware of the content of the Home Economics programme. Therefore, teachers were asked to indicate their awareness or otherwise of the content areas in the programme. Table 8 gives details of their responses to these content areas.

Table 8: Teachers' awareness of Content of the Home Economics Programme

Content Area	Aware		Not aware		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nutrition throughout life	256	97.3	7	2.7	263	100
Safety and sanitation	204	77.6	59	22.4	263	100
Clothing selection	230	87.5	33	12.5	263	100
Entrepreneurship	116	44.1	147	55.9	263	100
Creative arts	162	61.6	101	38.4	263	100
Consumer Education	173	65.8	90	34.2	263	100
Communication	154	58.6	109	41.4	263	100
Reproductive Health and Security	199	75.7	64	24.3	263	100

Table 8 Continued

Parenting and Parenthood	203	77.2	60	28.8	263	100
Chemistry	180	68.4	83	31.6	263	100
Biology	224	85.2	39	14.8	263	100
Physics	109	41.4	154	58.6	263	100
French	102	38.8	161	61.2	263	100
General Knowledge in Art	211	80.2	52	19.8	263	100
Resource Management	213	81.0	50	19	263	100

The results from Table 8 indicate that teachers in the schools were aware of the existence of almost all the content areas they were asked to respond to. Almost all (256 out of 263) thus 97% of the teachers were aware that nutrition throughout life was part of the Home Economics programme. Again, 87.5% of the teachers were aware that Clothing selection was one of the content areas. With the issue of Biology being part of the content areas, 224 representing 85.2% teachers out of 263 indicated that they were aware it was part. Resource management as a content area was affirmed by 213 teachers representing 81% of the teachers. However, French, Physics and Entrepreneurship received the least affirmation with 61.2%, 58.6% and 55.9% respectively.

The results of the study show that most teachers were generally aware of the essential content area of the Home Economics programme. Most teachers were aware that nutrition throughout life, Safety and sanitation and Clothing

selection form an essential component of the Home Economics programme at the Senior High School level. This means that teachers as the main agents of curriculum implementation have knowledge about the content areas of the Home Economics programme.

Research Question Two: What is the awareness of Senior High School students in North Tongu District with the content of the Home Economics programme?

Research question two sought to find out the awareness of Senior High School students in North Tongu District with the content of the Home Economics programme. To this end, students were tasked to indicate their awareness or otherwise of the content areas of the programme. Table 9 gives details of students' response.

Table 9: Students' Awareness of Content of the Home Economics Programme

Content Area	Aware		Not aware		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nutrition throughout life	296	86.8	45	13.2	341	100
Safety and sanitation	263	77.1	78	22.9	341	100
Clothing selection	294	86.2	47	13.8	341	100
Entrepreneurship	255	74.8	86	25.2	341	100
Creative arts	208	61	133	39	341	100
Consumer education	221	64.8	120	35.2	341	100
Communication	220	64.5	121	35.5	341	100
Reproductive health and security	205	60.1	136	39.9	341	100

Table 9 Continued

Parenting and parenthood	226	66.3	115	33.7	341	100
Chemistry	285	83.6	56	16.4	341	100
Biology	263	77.1	78	22.9	341	100
Physics	191	56	150	44	341	100
French	209	61.3	132	38.7	341	100
General knowledge in Art	178	52.2	163	47.8	341	100
Resource management	283	83	58	17	341	100

Results from Table 9 give an indication that there is a slight difference in what students consider as part of the content areas of the Home Economics programme and that of the teachers. A look at the results show that majority of students indicated their awareness of the content areas of the Home Economics programme. Almost all the students (86.8%) affirmed that nutrition throughout life is a content area, followed by clothing selection which had 294 out of 341 representing 86.2% of students affirming their awareness of it, then chemistry also had 83.6% of the students confirming their awareness of it being a content area. Resource management had 283 out of 341 students representing 83% affirming that it is part of the content areas. Despite majority of the students being aware of all the content areas listed above, some of the areas received low affirmation. These included General Knowledge in Arts (52.2%) and Physics 56%. The students were aware that the Home Economics syllabus covers many aspects which make Home Economics a whole. In the syllabus, general knowledge in art helps in food selection, cooking and service while physics also

helps in the application of heat to food. The study revealed that students in the Senior High Schools in the study area were aware of the content areas of the Home Economics programme.

Research Question Three: What are the perceptions of Senior High School teachers in North Tongu District about the Home Economics programme?

This question was formulated in order to find out from the teachers how they perceive the Senior High School Home Economics programme. In other words it sought to find out what teachers in the district think about students who study Home Economics at the High School level. To this end, teachers in the selected schools were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement to some statements. The responses of teachers are shown in Table 10.

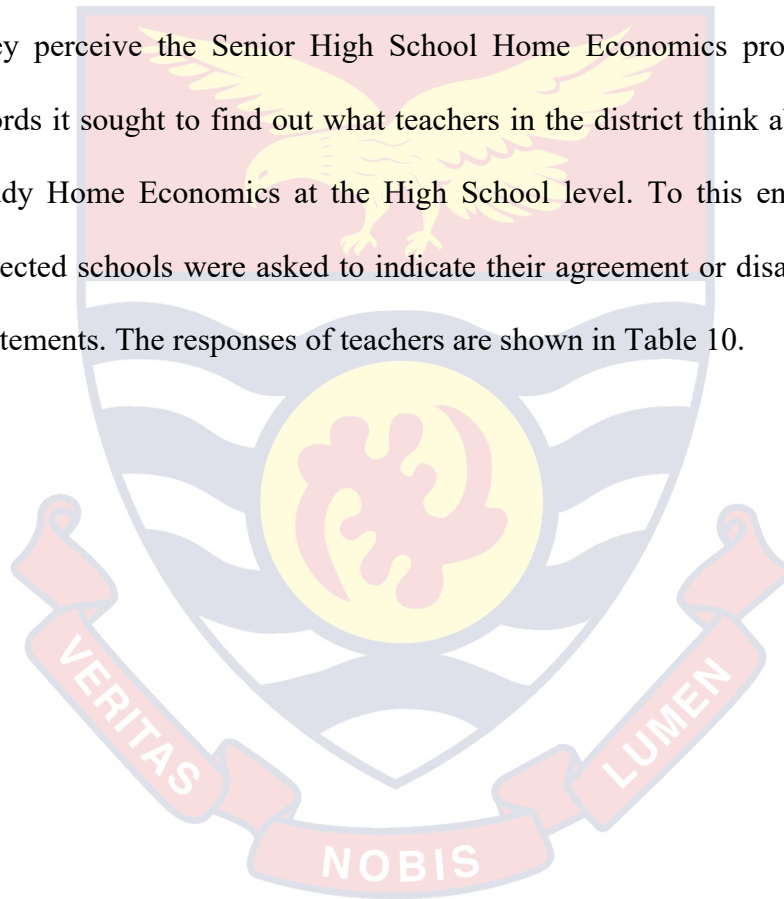
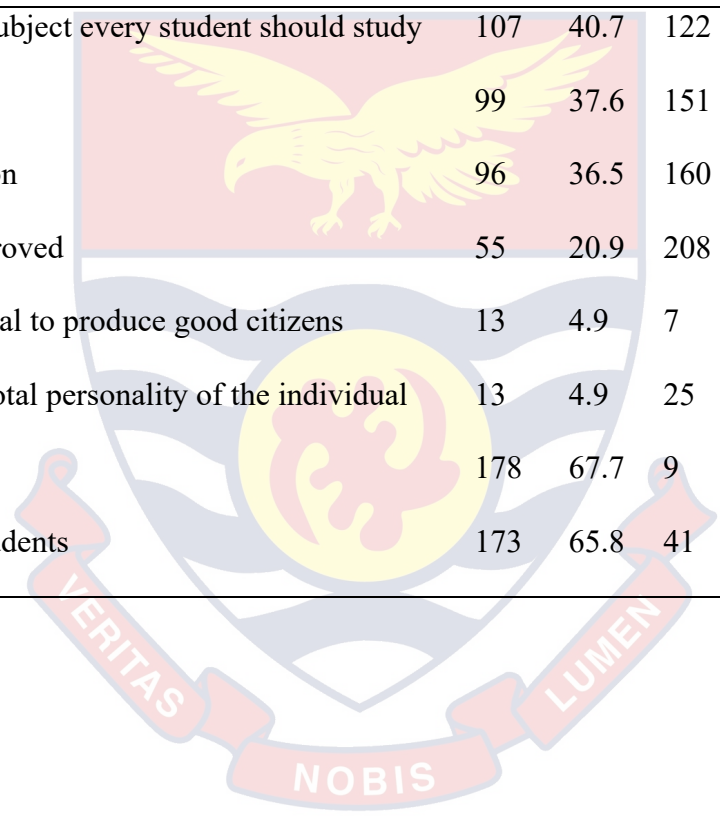


Table 10: Teachers Perceptions of Senior High School Home Economics Programme

Statement	SA		A		DA		SDA		Mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Home Economics is a very important subject every student should study	107	40.7	122	46.4	7	2.7	27	10.3	3.2
It helps improve one's choice of food	99	37.6	151	57.4	13	4.9	0	0	3.3
It helps improve one's clothing selection	96	36.5	160	60.8	7	2.7	0	0	3.3
Management of one's resources is improved	55	20.9	208	79.1	0	0	0	0	3.2
It is the only course that has the potential to produce good citizens	13	4.9	7	2.7	89	33.8	154	58.6	1.5
It is the only course that develops the total personality of the individual	13	4.9	25	9.5	84	31.9	141	53.6	1.7
It is a course for females only	178	67.7	9	3.4	63	24	13	4.9	1.7
It is a course for academically weak students	173	65.8	41	15.6	18	6.8	31	11.8	1.6



Results in Table 10 show the perceptions that teachers in the North Tongu District have about the Home Economics programme at the Senior High School level. From Table 10, it can be seen that almost all the teachers (97.3%) agreed that the Home Economics programme helps improve one's clothing selection. Again, 95% of the teachers agreed that the programme helps to improve one's choice of food. Apart from these, about 87% and almost all of them agreed that Home Economics should be studied by every student because it helps in the management of one's resources respectively. However, about 92% of the teachers disagreed to the fact that it is the only course that has the potential to produce good citizens. Again, about 28.9 % disagreed that it was a course for females only while 18.6% disagreed that it is a course for academically weak students.

This is a positive indication that teachers in North Tongu are gradually responding to the changing interventions laid down by American Home Economics Association (AHEA) that the perception of Home Economics as being a course for females only is a thing of the past. The finding is similar to that of Ozioma's (2012) result that males need Home Economics just as females because males are also members of the family. They however disagreed with the statement that it is the only course that has the potential to produce good citizens. But one may argue that Home Economics is the only course that has an elaborate syllabus which cuts across all the subject areas moulding the individual into an ideal person. As recorded by Schwarzenegger (2010) and MOE (2005) the elaborate syllabus of Home Economics trains the student physically, psychologically, emotionally, economically and scientifically making the individual a complete

person. Traditionally, the head of the family needs the appropriate knowledge and skill for their respective role. They need to know how to budget, prioritize needs, and manage available resources to live happily and this can be achieved through the study of Home Economics. North Tongu teachers perception on gender and Home Economics is positive unlike Ozioma's finding about Nigerian teachers who would not encourage males to study the course.

Research Question Four: What are the perceptions of Senior High School students in North Tongu District about the Home Economics programme?

This research question was formulated in order to find out at first hand, how students in Senior High Schools in North Tongu District saw the Home Economics programme. In other words, it sought to establish the mindset of students on the Home Economics programme. The students here included all Business, General Science, General Arts and those who study Home Economics. The students were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement to statements. Table 11 gives details of the results.

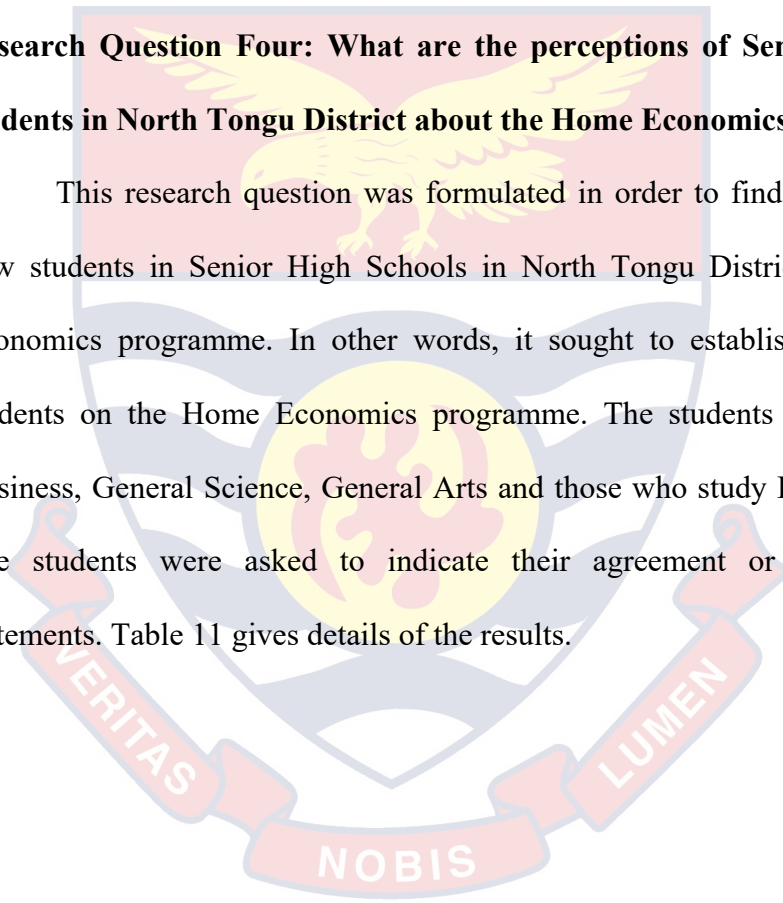
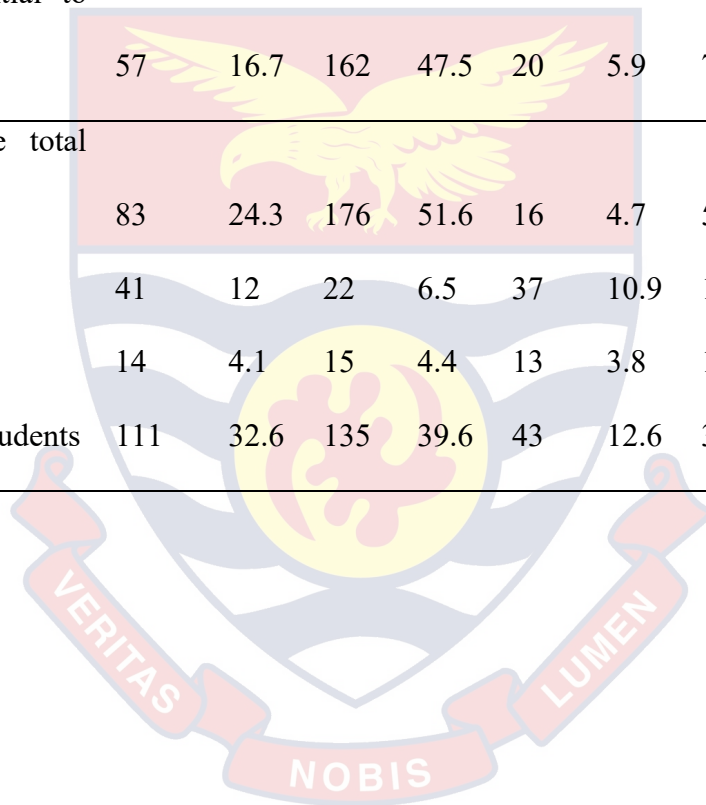


Table 11: Students’ Perceptions of Senior High School Home Economics Programme

Statement	SA		A		U		DA		SDA		Mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Home Economics is a very important subject every student should study	70	20.5	127	37.2	27	7.9	77	22.6	40	11.7	3.3
The subject improves one’s grooming practice	67	19.6	188	55.1	19	5.6	52	15.2	15	4.4	3.7
It helps improve one’s choice of food	120	35.2	160	46.9	17	5.0	40	11.7	4	1.2	3.6
It helps improve one’s clothing selection	80	23.5	150	44	32	9.4	60	17.6	19	5.6	4
Management of one’s resources is improved	75	22	199	58.4	29	8.5	27	7.9	11	3.2	3.9
It helps people to meet their goals	89	26.1	182	53.4	25	7.3	29	8.5	16	4.7	3.9
Students become self employed after completion	106	31.1	194	56.9	8	2.3	33	9.7	0	0	4.1
It improves one’s self esteem	80	23.5	221	64.8	10	2.9	17	5.0	13	3.8	4.0
Students develop better attitudes and values in life	60	17.6	159	46.6	65	19.1	50	14.7	7	2.1	3.6

Table 11 continued

It is the only course that has the potential to produce good citizens	57	16.7	162	47.5	20	5.9	71	20.8	31	9.1	3.4
It is the only course that develops the total personality of the individual	83	24.3	176	51.6	16	4.7	54	15.8	12	3.5	3.8
It is a course for females only	41	12	22	6.5	37	10.9	114	33.4	127	37.2	4.2
It is a course for academically weak students	14	4.1	15	4.4	13	3.8	139	40.8	160	46.9	3.8
Students are proud to be Home Economics students	111	32.6	135	39.6	43	12.6	35	10.3	17	5	3.8



Results from Table 11 indicate that students had positive attitude towards the Home Economics programme. It is clear that 241 out 341 students representing 70.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that the programme was meant for only females. Again, 300 out 341 (88%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed that students who take the Home Economics programme become self employed after completion. With a strong mean of 4.0, 219 of the students also agreed that the programme helps to improve the self esteem of students who study it. Again, with a mean of 3.9, most students agreed that the programme helps students to know how to manage their resources and also help them to meet their goals in life.

The statements with the lowest response or mean were that Home Economics is a very important subject and that it is the only course that has the potential to produce good citizens. They had a mean of 3.3 and 3.4 respectively. On the whole, students had positive perception about the Home Economics programme. The findings of this study are not consistent with Bortei-Doku et al. (2011) previous research which was conducted in Ghana to eradicate the misconception about technical education as belonging to those who do not have the ability to cope with pure academic work. In their findings, Technical and Vocational Education Trainees (TVET) remarked that the country has no respect for trade workers and that they think they are complete illiterates. Their findings revealed the poor perception that people have developed towards TVET as the reserve option for those who are unable to achieve the grades to enter into higher education. Draft African

Union Strategy to Revitalise TVET in Africa 2007 also affirmed that many countries including Ghana considered vocational and technical education which includes Home Economics as a career path for the less academically able.



Research Question Five: What do parents in North Tongu think about the Senior High School Home Economics programme?

Parents play very important roles in the education of their children. To this end, their perceptions about programmes of study are vital. This research question sought to find out how parents in North Tongu district perceive the Home Economics programme in Senior High Schools. Tables 12 and 13 give details of the results.

Table 12: Responses of Parents on Home Economics Programme

Statement	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you like Home Economics?	44	50.6	33	37.9	77	100
Do you agree that males should read Home Economics	77	88.5	10	11.5	87	100
Do you agree that Home Economics programme is for academically weak students	77	88.5	10	11.5	87	100

Parents were asked to either indicate yes or no to the three statements in Table 12. It is clear from the results in the table 50.6% of the parents liked the Home Economics programme, 88.5% of them agreed that males should be allowed and encouraged to read Home Economics and 88.5% of them also agreed that it is for academically weak students, which contradicts what the students and teachers thought. However, their real perceptions about the programme are given in detail in Table 13.

Table 13: How Parents Perceived the Home Economics Programme

Statements	No.	%
It is a life saving programme	5	5.7
It helps in knowing what to eat and wear	7	8
It's a good course for everybody (boys and girls)	14	16.7
It is for people who are interested in it	6	6.9
It prepares students to be able to face life challenges	12	13.8
It helps people to appreciate nutritional values	7	8
It gives job opportunity to those who study it	14	16.1
It should be made a core subject	4	4.6
It cuts across disciplines	8	9.2
It is too expensive	10	11.5
Total	87	100

Results as shown in Table 13 show the perception of parents of the selected students from Senior High Schools in the North Tongu district about Home Economics programme. The study revealed that 14 (16.1%) parents had the perception that it is a good course for both boys and girls and that it gives job opportunity. Twelve out of 87 (13.8%) indicated it prepares students to be able to face life challenges. However, only four of them indicated that it should be made a core subject for every student to study. Apart from 10 (11.5%) of parents indicating that the programme is too expensive, the general perception about the Home Economics programme was good, according to the results in Table 13. The finding supports what Ekpenyong (2008) wrote that it has passed the stage when Home

Economics was regarded as only acquisition of skill in household arts or just cooking. He stated that Home Economics today has broadened its scope in the line to forestall credibility in carrier establishment and giving skills which are concrete enough to sustain the individual, family and the nation. He clarified the fact that Home Economics encompasses all areas of Food and Nutrition, Home Management, Clothing and Textiles, Child and Family Living, and Consumer Education.

Hypothesis One

H₀ There is no statistical significant difference between male and female Senior High School students in North Tongu district’s perception of Home Economics programme

This hypothesis was formulated to find out if the perception of students about the Home Economics programme is influenced by gender. To this end, the independent sampled t-test was employed to test for this hypothesis. Table 14 gives details of the results of t-test employed to measure the hypothesis

Table 14: Independent t-test Results on Difference between Male and Female Students’ Perceptions of the Home Economics Programme

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig (2-tailed)
Female	184	51.39	7.63	339	-4.9	.000
Male	157	55.29	6.67			

Table 14 shows perception of female students about Home Economics programme ($M= 51.39, SD= 7.63$) as well as perception of male students about Home Economics programme ($M=55.29, SD=6.67$). It can be seen that the perception of male students about the Home Economics programme is higher than female students. This means that male and female students have difference in perception towards Home Economics.

However, the independent sample t-test was employed to examine whether there is the need to find out whether this difference has any statistical significance. The above results on mean of female students' perception of the Home Economics programme ($M= 51.39, SD= 7.63$) and the mean of male students' perception of the Home Economics programme ($M=55.29, SD=6.67$) show that there is a statistical significant difference ($t= -4.9, p= .000$). Therefore because $p<.05$, I reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistical significant difference in male and female students' perceptions in Home Economics programme. Thus, it was found that there is a significant statistical difference between male and female students' perception of Home Economics as a programme in Senior High Schools.

Although the orientation of Home Economics can be traced far back to the era of colonial rule when females were trained to acquire skills in household chores, hence, its name, parents, teachers and students of North Tongu District demonstrated that the era is fading gradually. For this reason, Ekpenyong (2008) asserted that among the areas of education, Home Economics employed to

enhance development. He wrote that Home Economics has persistently identified itself as the step in the right direction. It has passed the period when it was regarded as only the acquisition of skills in household arts or just cooking which prevents males' enrolment in the course related areas of the study in higher institutions of learning. It is not yet reflecting in enrolment in Ghanaian schools but the study revealed that people are beginning to perceive Home Economics as a course that can sustain an individual, a family and the society as a whole.

Hypothesis Two

H₀ There is no significant differences between the perception of students who study Home Economics and those who do not study Home Economics

It is often common to hear students having negative perception about the Home Economics programme. This hypothesis was posed in order to find out if differences exist between the perception of students who study Home Economics and those who do not. To this end, the independent sample t-test was employed to test for this. Table 15 gives details of the results of T-test results.

Table 15: Independent t-test Results on Differences between the Perceptions of Students who Study Home Economics and those who do not Study Home Economics

Programme	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig(2 tailed)
Home Economics students	106	55.02	8.67	339	-3.1	.002
Non-Home Economics students	235	52.36	6.69			

Table 15 shows the perception of students who studied Home Economics programme ($M= 55.02, SD= 8.67$) as well as perception of students who did not study Home Economics programme ($M=52.36, SD=6.69$). It can be seen that the perception of Home Economics students about the Home Economics programme is higher than students who do not study Home Economics. However, there is the need to find out whether this difference has any statistical significance. It is obvious from the results as shown in Table 15 that the mean of the perception of students who studied Home Economics about the Home Economics programme ($M= 55.02, SD= 8.67$) and the mean of the perception of students who did not study the Home Economics programme ($M=52.36, SD=6.69$) show that there is a statistically significant difference ($t=-3.1, p= .002$). Therefore because $p<.05$, I reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistical significant difference in their perceptions. This means that there is statistical significant difference between the perception of Senior High School students in North Tongu district who studied Home Economics and those who do not study Home Economics.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research process and the major findings of the study as well as the conclusions drawn and recommendations for further studies are outlined.

Summary

Overview of the Study

The issue of perception has been looked at in many studies all over the world. Peoples' views about an element or object inform their perception. In teaching and learning, the perception of those who teach and those who learn are very crucial to the success or otherwise of the subject. Therefore, the study was conducted in the North Tongu District of the Volta Region to explore the perceptions of teachers, students and their parents on the Senior High School Home Economics programme were sought. Specifically, the study sought to find out Senior High School teachers' and students' awareness of the content of the Home Economics programme, also the perceptions of teachers', students' and parents' about the Home Economics programme. Finally it sought to find out if differences exist in the perception of students about the Home Economics programme based on their gender and whether they studied Home Economics or

not. Emanating from these, five research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guard the study.

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all Teachers and students of the six Senior High Schools in the North Tongu district of the Volta region as well as parents of the students. Out of 3116 students and 263 teachers, 341 students were selected for the study and all teachers were used as well as 87 parents. In all the sample size was 691. A questionnaire was developed for teachers, students and parents. The SPSS was used to analyse data. Means, frequencies and percentages were employed for answering research questions one to five. The independent sampled t-test was employed to test the two hypotheses.

Key Findings

The major findings of the study were:

1. the study revealed that teachers in the Senior High Schools in the North Tongu district were aware of the content of the Home Economics programme at Senior High School level. However, 40% of the teachers indicated that French, Physics and Entrepreneurship were part of the Home Economics.
2. the study showed a slight difference in what students considered as part of the content areas of the Home Economics programme and that of the teachers. However, students exhibited their awareness of the content of the Home Economics syllabus.
3. the study identified that teachers in Senior High Schools in the North Tongu district in general had positive perceptions about the Home Economics

programme. Most of the teachers (97.3%) agreed that the Home Economics programme helps improve one's clothing selection. Again, 95% of the teachers agreed that the programme helps to improve one's choice of food. Most teachers (87.1%) also agreed that Home Economics should be studied by every student and all teachers affirmed that it helps in the management of one's resources.

4. the study found that students in the senior high schools in the North Tongu district had positive perception towards the Home Economics programme as well as their parents. They perceived that the programme helps learners to become self-employed, improve upon their self-esteem, know how to manage their resources and also meet their goals in life.
5. most of the parents (88.5%) agreed that males should be allowed and encouraged to read Home Economics. Parents had the perception that it is a good course for both boys and girls and that it provides job opportunity. Twelve out of 86 (13.8%) indicated it prepares students to be able to face life challenges. However, only four of them indicated that it should be made a core subject for every student to study. Ten parents indicated that the programme is too expensive.
6. gender of the students in the North Tongu district did affect their perception about the Home Economics programme. It was found that there is a significant statistical difference between male and female students' perception towards Home Economics as a programme in senior high schools in the country.

7. students who studied Home Economics had higher perception as compared to those who do not study it. There was a statistically significant difference in their perceptions.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that teachers and students of the Senior High Schools in the North Tongu district were aware and knowledgeable of the content of the Home Economics programme. They were aware of most of the issues and concepts that were embedded in the syllabus. In other words, none of the teachers as well as the students was ignorant of the issues in the syllabus for Home Economics.

Again, students were more enlightened about the content of Home Economics than teachers who were not Home Economics teachers because they did most of the courses together. For example, Home Economics students meet in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, and General Knowledge in Arts classes with other students.

It can also be concluded that teachers, students and parents of the students also have positive perceptions about the programmes. They perceived the programme to be relevant to learners in their future since it can prepare its learners to become responsible citizens.

Gender of students influenced their perception about the Home Economics programme. Moreover, students who studied Home Economics significantly differ from those who did not study Home Economics in terms of their

perceptions about the Home Economics programme at the Senior High School Level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Home Economics teachers should ask for a platform at Parent Teacher Association Meetings to convince parents encourage their male children to read Home Economics by enumerating the benefits and the job opportunities involved in reading the course.
2. The Home Economics Departments in the various schools should periodically invite old students to talk to students during Students' Representative Council Week celebrations to enlighten them on the advantages they (Home Economics) students have over other students especially at the Nurses Training College.
3. The Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders of Vocational and Technical Education need to make frantic efforts at educating the Ghanaian populace on the importance of Vocational and Technical Education and for that matter the Home Economics programme.
4. Efforts need to be put in place to ensure that the tagging of the Home Economics programme as feminine becomes a thing of the past. More sensitization programmes, such as career days should be organized by schools from time to time. This will help motivate and stimulate the interest of students as they listen to experts in Home Economics.

5. Home Economics teachers should use all platforms in their schools to enlighten teachers about the programme so as to prevent them from making derogatory remarks about the programme to students to help reduce the negative perception that is attached to the programme.
6. Home economists should put information about the Home Economics programme on social media for the public to be enlightened.
7. Home Economists should host programmes on Television and Radio Good Nutrition and Health, Clothing Selection, Marriage, Management of Resources and Environment and Sanitation to eradicate health, improper use of clothing, divorce, sanitation and other social issues that are affecting the society.

Areas Suggested for Further Research

The study should be replicated in other districts in the region probably with a larger sample size to help make the findings more generalised and representative of the Ghanaian population. Moreover, the study can be replicated in vocational institutions in order to ascertain the real perceptions of students who are studying Home Economics.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAMME IN NORTH TONGU

This study is conducted to identify teachers', parents' and students' perception, awareness and knowledge of Home Economics education. I therefore humbly request you to respond to the items in the following questionnaire as sincerely as possible. Any information you give will be treated as confidential material and will be used for this purpose only. Permission has already been sought from the Headmaster/Mistress for the conduct of this study.

Questionnaire for Teachers

General Instruction

Please tick [] the appropriate column or fill in the blank spaces if necessary.

Section A : Personal Data

1. Gender – tick []
Male [] Female []
2. Age: 20-30 () , 31-41 () 42 – 52 () Others (specify) _____
3. How long have you been teaching? 1 – 5 [] 6 – 10 [] 11- 15 []
16-20 [] 21 and above []
4. What subject (s) do you teach?.....
.....
5. Academic and Professional Qualification
Tick [] the Highest Qualification
Diploma in Education []
Degree []
Masters []
H N D []
Others _____ Please
Specify.....

SECTION B

This section seeks to find out teachers' awareness of the content of Home Economics.

6. What are the content areas of Home Economics you know?

i.....

ii.....

iii.....

Others, please specify

Indicate your awareness of these areas in Home Economics Please tick [√]

Content Area	Aware	Not Aware
7. Nutrition throughout life cycle		
8. Safety and sanitation		
9. Clothing selection for all body types and occasions		
10. Entrepreneurship		
11. Creative arts		
12. Consumer education		
13. Communication		
14. Reproductive health and security		
15. Parenting and parenthood		
16. Chemistry		
17. Biology		
18. Physics		
19. French		
20. General knowledge in art		
21. Resource management		

22. What do you think Home Economics entails?.....

.....

.....

SECTION C

Teachers' Perception of Home Economics

Please indicate the degree to which you agree to the following statement. SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree

Perception	SA	A	D	SD
23. Home Economics is a very important subject every student should study				
24. It helps improve one's choice of food				
25. It helps improve one's clothing selection				
26. Management of one's resources is improved				
27. It is the only course that has the potentials to produce good citizens				
28. It is the only course that develops the total personality of the individual				
29. It is a course for females only.				
30. It is a course for academically weak students				

31. Would you advice your son to read Home Economics at the SHS?

Yes No

If no, why, and if yes, why?.....
.....

32. Would you advice any student with aggregate 6 – 10 to read Home Economics?

Yes No

Why No?

Why Yes?.....

33. Do you teach any of the Home Economics classes in the SHS?

Yes No

If yes, which of the subjects do you teach?

.....
.....

Tick (✓) the performance of Home Economics students in your class as compared with other students.

- Excellent []
- Very Good []
- Good []
- Satisfactory []
- Poor []

SECTION C

Adult influence on students' selection of Home Economics

34.If you have the opportunity to help students select courses at JHS or SHS, which courses would you allow boys or girls to select?

Boys

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

Why?.....
.....
.....

Girls

- i.....
- ii.....
- iii.....

Why?.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION
TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF HOME
ECONOMICS PROGRAMME IN NORTH TONGU

Questionnaire for Students

This study is planned to investigate the perception of teachers, parents and students' of Home Economics in the Senior High School. As students you are at the best position to help give information about the programme in order to improve it. I will be most grateful to you for your sincere and candid responses to the following questions. Be assured of anonymity and also all responses will be treated confidentially and for this purpose only.

SECTION A

Background Information

1. Age: 15 - 20 (), 21- 25 () Other (specify).....
2. Gender – Tick []
Female [] Male []
3. Which programme are you reading?
General Arts []
General Science []
Home Economics []
Business []
Visual Art []
4. Will you encourage your friend or sibling to study Home Economics?
Tick [] Yes [] No []

Why?

.....

.....

.....

SECTION B

Please indicate the degree to which you agree to the following statements as it relates to your perception to the Home Economics programme.

SA = Strongly Agree. A = Agree U = Undecided D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

	Attitudes	SA	A	U	D	SD
5.	Home economics is a very important subject every student should study					
6.	The subject helps improve one's grooming practices					
7.	It helps improve one's clothing selection.					
8.	It helps improve one's choice of food					
9.	It helps improve one's management of resources					
10.	People's goals are met					
11.	Students are self employed after completion.					
12.	It improves one's self esteem					
13.	Students develop better attitudes and values					
14.	The course has the potential to produce good citizens					
15.	Develops the total personality of the learner					
16.	It is a course for academically weak students					
17.	It is a female course					
18.	Students are proud to be Home Economics students					

SECTION C

This section seeks to find out students awareness of the contents of Home Economics programme.

Indicate your awareness of these content areas in Home Economics.
Please tick

Content Area	Aware	Not Aware
19. Nutrition throughout life cycle		
20. Safety and sanitation		
21. Clothing selection for all body types and occasions		
22. Entrepreneurship		
23. Creative arts		
24. Consumer education		
25. Communication		
26. Reproductive health and security		
27, Parenting and parenthood		
28. Chemistry		
29. Biology		
30. Physics		
31. French		
32. General knowledge in art		
33. Resource management		

34. How do you perceive Home Economics?

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APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION
TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF HOME
ECONOMICS PROGRAMME IN NORTH TONGU

Questionnaire for Parents

This study is planned to investigate the perception of teachers, parents and students' of Home Economics in the Senior High School. I will be most grateful to you for your sincere and candid responses to the following questions. Be assured of anonymity and also all responses will be treated confidentially and for this purpose only.

SECTION A

Background Information

1. Age: 30 – 35 36 – 40 41 – 46 Others please specify:.....
2. Gender – Tick Female Male
3. Occupation:
Teaching Nursing Trading Farming Others, (please specify).....
4. Which programme is your ward reading at the Senior High School?
General Science General Arts Home Economics
Agricultural Science Business Visual Arts
Others, (please specify):.....
5. Is your ward reading Home Economics? Yes No

Why?

.....
.....

6. Do you like Home Economics for your ward?

Yes [] No []

7. Do you agree that males should read Home Economics?

Yes [] No []

8. Do Home Economics students read the following subjects?

Please tick.

Chemistry [] Biology [] French []

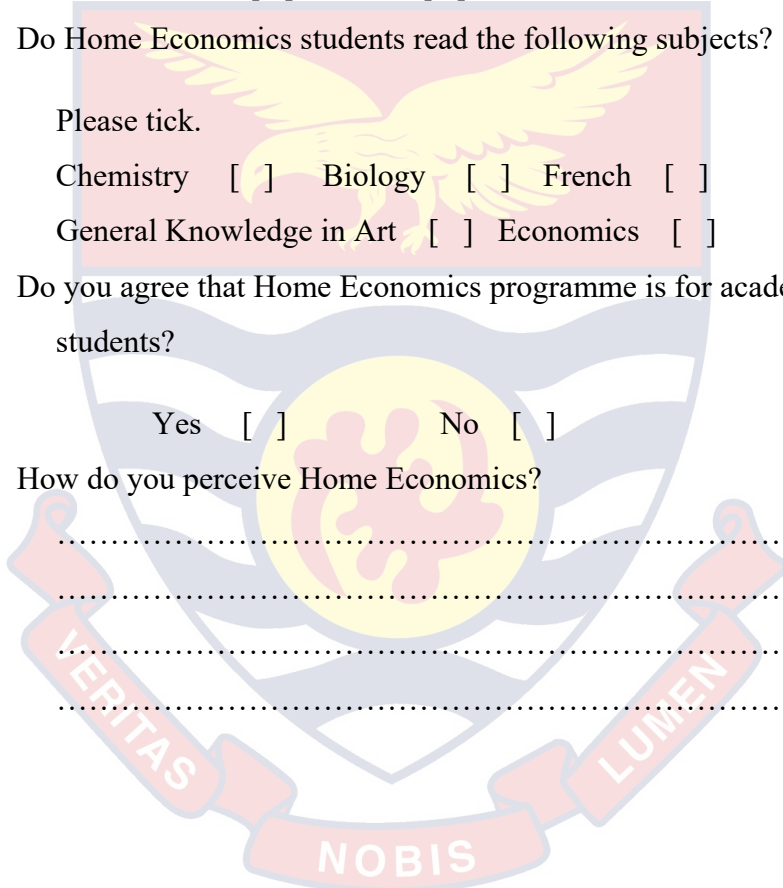
General Knowledge in Art [] Economics []

9. Do you agree that Home Economics programme is for academically weak students?

Yes [] No []

10. How do you perceive Home Economics?

.....
.....
.....
.....



The logo watermark features a shield with a yellow eagle with wings spread, a yellow sun with rays, and a red banner at the bottom with the Latin motto "VERITAS NOBIS LUMEN".

APPENDIX D

Introductory Letter

LETTER TO HEADS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY IN YOUR SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

I am a graduate student carrying out a study on ‘Teachers’ Students’ and Parent’s Perception of Home Economics Programme in North Tongu’.

I would be grateful if you could permit me interact with teachers and students in your school. This study would help improve the teaching and learning of Home Economics in schools. The study will be conducted at a time convenient to the teachers and students and will no way disturb their classes and also assured you of anonymity and confidentiality. All information will be used only for the purpose of this study.

Thank you for your co-operation.

(Deborah Anku)

