



Systematic Review of Philosophical Engagement among Home Economics professionals in Nigeria

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Abstract

The Nigerian home economics profession has played a significant role in citizens' personal development and nation building. But it is besieged by several challenges, which we propose can ultimately be traced to the ill-defined and non-progressive philosophical basis that has been rigidly constructed for the profession. As it is globally, many Nigerian home economics professionals rarely engage with philosophy, although their subconscious answers to basic, philosophical questions of life are likely the basis of their actions and practice. Four research questions guided this exploratory study that employed a systematic review of the only global journal of home economics and three local Nigerian journals. Results showed that Nigeria's contribution to this philosophical discourse was very scanty - globally and locally. After tendering a philosophical mosaic of the global discourse, we recommended that Nigerian home economists consider reinforcing the unification of the profession in Nigeria, engaging in a deliberate discourse on the philosophy of home economics for their context, constituting a robust think-tank for home economics philosophy, and emphasising home economics philosophy in educational processes.

KEYWORDS: PHILOSOPHICAL ENGAGEMENT, HOME ECONOMICS, PROFESSION, NIGERIA, PHILOSOPHICAL MOSAIC

Introduction

At the global level, home economics was started as a profession near the beginning of the Progressive Era, at Lake Placid, New York (1899) by women like Ellen Swallow Richards and Maria Panoa and men like Melvil Dewey (Admin, 2022). This was a sequel to an earlier monumental mention in the *New York Times* (1895) of *oikology* as the first-ever academic and scientific study of the home. This concept was heavily sponsored by women in Boston, Massachusetts, where Ellen Swallow Richards lived at the time. Cornell University's College of Home Economics was founded at the beginning of the 20th century, but its original Charter, stating the goals of the College, was said to be very ambiguous - open to several interpretations (Cornell University, 2012). We maintain that this ambiguity has traveled with the profession everywhere it is practised, including its philosophy and members' engagement with philosophy.

This paper is about philosophical engagement among Nigerian home economics professionals relative to global engagement.

Home Economics in Nigeria

In Nigeria, Catholic missionaries from France, who arrived in Lagos in 1873, introduced *Domestic Science* as a major subject in St. Mary Convent School's curriculum (Okonmah, 2019). It entailed the teaching and learning of laundry, needlework, knitting, childcare, cookery, and housekeeping. Its goals were to prepare students (mostly female) for good homemaking, a home-related career, or both. In the early 1960s, the name *home economics* displaced *Domestic Science* and was added to the syllabi for the West African School Certificate (WASC) and the Grade II Teachers' Training Colleges. This was in response to similar happenings in the United States at the time (Admin, 2022).

Over time, home economics has evolved in Nigeria to entail the application of knowledge from the pure and applied sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities to equip women and men with fundamental competencies in proffering scientific solutions to problems and improving the quality of life in the family, community, nation, and world at large (Kammainga as cited in Okonmah, 2019). In Nigeria, several scholars have underscored the profession's contributions to humanity and national development. Gamawa (2015), for instance, affirmed that home economics strives for the upliftment of human dignity (p. 326) and consequentially national development (Funmilayo & Larai, 2015). They do so by developing and deploying best practices in quintessential areas of life such as family relationship, household resource management, human development, safe sanitation, and water use, nutrition and food production skills, gender equity and equality, and entrepreneurship (Gamawa, 2015). In fact, respected professionals, such as medical doctors, have indicated that the provision of a curriculum that trains students in food preparation and nutrition may be among the best investments society can make (Taleb & Itani, 2021).

Challenges Facing Nigerian Home Economics Profession

The significant role home economics plays in personal development and nation building is notwithstanding the myriad of challenges besieging the Nigerian profession. These hurdles, in a deductive order of causation, relate to extra-disciplinary administration, socioeconomic realities, professionalism, and the profession's philosophical basis. Immediately observable challenges include unfavorable university restructuring policies (Elias, 2008); appalling cuts in budgetary allocations for general education and home-related studies in particular (Gisslevik et al., 2017; Nanayakkara et al., 2018); and acute disparity in stakeholders' interests and agendas within and outside the profession (Christensen, 2019). These challenges are indicative of administrative dysfunctions beyond the control of home economics professionals. Yet they may also be attributed to at least two factors: the socio-economic realities that surround the profession, and internal inadequacies within it.

Balogun et al. (2009) observed that the socioeconomic realities that set the context for Nigerian home economics professional practice include the dominance of gender stereotyping and inequality, unmanaged diversity in social and religious beliefs across the country, ever-declining economic conditions, and rigidity in cultural orientation. Another area of concern is the unsatisfactory level of professionalism within home economics. McGregor (2015a, 2015c) and Renwick (2018) noted that the demand for genuine home economics teachers remains unmet. This is particularly true in Nigeria (Ode et al., 2013) and elsewhere where non-professional teachers are employed to teach home economics (Håkansson, 2016; Nanayakkara et al., 2018). This practice is carried on almost with impunity in home economics but is considered a huge crime in other professions such as law and medicine.

In the same vein of thought, Christensen (2019) remarked that changes in home economics programmes are often prompted by momentary, political, and economic issues rather than professional and philosophical concerns. For instance, because of Nigeria's current economic meltdown, the Nigerian home economics profession is currently gearing toward more vocational training than scientific endeavor. This shift implies that, once the economic situation improves, the impact of the course may wane, or its focus may abruptly change again. Another challenge is the difficulty in cross-generational transfer and expansion in the profession (McGregor & Halls, 2020; Smith, 2015). They implied that young graduates are not seamlessly inducted into the profession: rather, they are *used* as logistics errand runners without providing a genuine platform for them to actively contribute to shaping the future of the profession they can call their own (see also Gronseth, 2018).

We maintain that all the foregoing can ultimately be traced to the ill-defined and non-progressive philosophical basis that has been rigidly constructed for the profession. For one, Nigeria has a share in the global dearth of proper documentation of the main domains of learning and respective high-level topics or knowledge areas that define the profession's intellectual gambit in - also known as its Body of Knowledge (BOK) (McGregor, 2015a). The only exception is the American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences' (AAFCS) BOK for American practitioners (Nickols et al., 2009). This lacuna points out a distressing scarcity of philosophical engagement within the profession.

Philosophical Engagement

Philosophical engagement involves reflective thinking about the most basic things of life - such as the origin and end of a matter (such as humanity or a profession). It entails thinking about how reasoning occurs and the way to know what is to be known. It puts the mind to continuous and random and critical and constructive work, but the process progressively becomes directional and defined. McGregor (2020) considered philosophy as asking questions that are very basic about the ultra-large world, immediate society, and the place of humans (in this case, a profession) within these contexts.

Philosophical engagement includes a thoughtful examination of (a) the fundamental nature of reality and existence (ontology - what exists, how, and why? What stuff is reality made of?) (Hofweber, 2018); (b) knowledge and knowing (epistemology - what and why should we know and come to know it? How do we understand and judge what counts as knowledge? What are the sources, structure, and limits of the knowledge?) (Steup & Neta, 2020); (c) reasoning (logic and rhetoric - what, how, and why should we think? How do we think, make inferences, judge, and perceive until we reach the truth?) (McGregor, 2020); and (d) values and worthiness (axiology - what and why should we value a phenomenon? How do we evaluate situations and the worth or merit of a thing? What is the role of values in research?) (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016; Schroeder, 2016). These are the four axioms of philosophy (that is, taken for granted - no proof required).

Philosophical engagement in a profession may begin as personal and subconscious reflections (McGregor, 2020), but it soon assumes a larger scale, as people in the same field of interest collectively and deliberately reflect on their fundamental beliefs and practices. Although the process is largely abstract, a careful examination of the philosophical beliefs of the home economics profession matters because these beliefs and assumptions are the very foundation for all professional practice, whether people are aware of them or not (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016). The home economics profession's philosophy has an organic *form* (that is, responses to ontological and axiological questions) and organic *substance* (that is, responses to epistemological and logical questions) both of which are asked in three directions: what?, how? and why? (McGregor, 2012).

Research Problem and Questions

In Nigeria, there seems to be a relative dearth of literature on the philosophy of home economics as a profession. Any available statements were judged obsolete and static - made years ago or with a few adjustments. For instance, referring to Tate (1961), Ehumadu said that the Nigerian home economics philosophy was to develop *values* which give guideline and direction of *life* and improve society *wellbeing* (2020, p. 4). This position has always been maintained in university textbooks and scholarly writings (e.g., Okolie & Okpala, 2006, cited in Ejinkeonye & Uloko, 2010, p. 37). In the meantime, Anyakoha (2008) opined that the philosophy of home economics education involves improving the *quality of life* of individuals, families and society at large. Notwithstanding, Nigerian home economists have not definitively conceptualised values, life, and well-being for their context. Ukpore and Obunadike (2010) slightly did so when they alluded to well-being comprising intellectual development, acquisition of maturity, and enhancement of physical development.

As noted, Balogun et al. (2009) stated that home economists in Nigeria should ensure that men and women are competent in using science to find solutions to problems and in accessing and using resources and information on the facts of life to improve people's *standard of living* (and that of the community, nation, and world). But this is barely an improvement on earlier statements. Recently, Ehumadu (2020) used the verb *strengthening* quality of life instead of *improving* quality of life, and stated that the philosophy of home economics education in Nigeria is for the students to learn those skills that will help them to *fulfill their roles* as family members *most satisfactorily* for themselves, their families and their communities or societies (p. 4). This lack of conceptualisation implies that not much has been done to scrutinise, and possibly scaffold or shift, the profession's paradigm, and philosophical axioms have not been well elucidated in Nigeria.

McGregor (2014) noted that many home economics practitioners resist engagement with philosophy, but this profession-wide stance does not stop each person from acting and behaving in the profession based on their personal answers to the basic questions about life (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016). This is much likely to be responsible for the vast disparity in the belief systems, nomenclature, and practices in the profession from place to place within Nigeria and even around the world. Many practitioners fear that philosophising may expose an apparent absence of a substantial body of agreed results (McGregor, 2020). We maintain that a lack of or insufficient deliberate personal and collective philosophical engagement in Nigeria may have left the latter helpless when subject to critics' scrutiny and caused instability to rage within the profession. In a powerful example, as noted, instead of offering a concrete philosophical response to shocks from hostile policies and poor student enrolment, the Nigerian home economics profession has had to deal with unprecedented curricular modifications and rebranding according to external situations, passions, and whims.

In this context, this study seeks to point out the need to correct the limitedness of philosophical engagement within the Nigerian home economics profession. The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent is the philosophy of home economics profession given attention globally?
2. To what extent is the home economics profession in Nigeria lending her voice to the global exchange of ideas in the field, especially the discourse on philosophy?
3. To what extent is the philosophy of home economics profession discussed in Nigeria?
4. What is the current state of the philosophy of home economics profession globally?

Methods

This exploratory study adopted the systematic quantitative literature review (SQLR) methodology, which is most likely to yield quantifiable and replicable results without arbitrary selection and exclusion (Pendergast et al., 2022). The SQLR was used to identify articles published about home economics philosophy in reputable home economics journals that are relevant within the *glocal* scope of this study (that is, the interconnectedness of local and global issues).

First, a scoping review was performed between February and April 2023 through an electronic search to identify publishers of home economics journals that best fit the study. Four publishers were selected. The first was the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), which is the only worldwide body concerned with home economics as a profession. Since 2008, IFHE has published the *International Journal of Home Economics* (IJHE) twice a year. At the time of the study, IJHE had published 15 volumes (30 issues) and $N = 355$ articles. The journal is described as an international platform for the publication of high-quality research and dialogue about, for, and from members of the profession - and those aligned with it (Pendergast, 2008). We suspect it is more likely that Nigerian home economists will strive to publish in this journal than in country or region-specific home-economics journals or other non-home-economics-specific international journals.

The IJHE editor categorises published manuscripts as editorials (notes, journal information, and announcements); papers (position and peer-reviewed/refereed); presentations (congress keynotes and plenaries); and reviews (print and audio-visuals). The researchers read all 355 abstracts to further group them by topic. Seven groups were identified: professional philosophy, professional practices, educational theory, and practices, personalities, research methods, and others. The numerical data was analysed statistically using *Microsoft Excel 2013* (descriptive statistics: frequency and percentages). Results were used to answer the first research question.

We then searched each issue of IJHE for the word *Nigeria* and derivatives to track the number of articles published by Nigerians. About 38 (11%) articles were authored by Nigerians or contributed from Nigeria. All were papers (position and peer-reviewed/refereed). We read the titles and abstracts of these 38 papers again to identify specific topics covered. Ten (10) topics were identified. Again, numerical data underwent descriptive statistical analysis (frequency and percentage) using *Microsoft Excel 2013*. Tables and relevant charts were generated to help answer the second research question.

In the third phase, an electronic search revealed at six home economics professional associations in Nigeria, five of which claimed to publish journals (Home Economics Professional Association of Nigeria [HEPAN], 2023b). However, only three had online archives, which were reviewed to answer the third research question:

1. The Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria (HERAN, 2023) publishes the *Journal of Home Economics Research* (JHER),
2. The Family and Consumer Sciences Society of Nigeria (FACSSON) publishes the *International Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* (IJFACS) (2023) and
3. The Home Economics Professional Association of Nigeria (HEPAN, 2023a) publishes the *Nigeria Journal of Home Economics* (Nig-JHEC).

None of the archives were comprehensive and up to date, and the Nig-JHEC issues were still being uploaded at the time of the study. An electronic search for the word stem *philosoph-* was conducted in JHER and IJFACS to find words like *philosophy*, *philosophise* (*philosophize*), *philosophical*, and *philosophically*. Meanwhile, for Nig-JHEC, only 81 article *titles* were available for review (not the paper itself nor its abstract). We read all titles to identify articles with a philosophical undertone per derivatives of the word stem *philosoph-*.

Results

The results are organised by research questions.

Research Question 1: To What Extent Is the Philosophy of the Home Economics Profession Given Attention Globally?

In the IJHE, discourse on the philosophy of home economics was evident, but it received less attention than other topics such as philosophical practices, and educational theories and practices in home economics (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The only exceptions were issues 1(1), 2(1), and 15(1) where topics on philosophy accounted for 91%, 36%, and 44% of the issue, respectively. Overall, 17% of IJHE articles concerned discourse on philosophy, which is even less than the *Other* category. This low representation may confirm McGregor’s (2014) assertion that home economics professionals resist philosophical engagement. Virtually all philosophy-based articles were penned by only three people: Sue McGregor, Donna Pendergast, and Kelly Renwick with almost singular cases by a few others.

Table 1 Manuscript Categories in IJHE and Extent to which the Philosophy of Home Economics Was Given Attention Globally

Volume (Issue)	Philosophy	Practices	Education	Personalities	Research	Others	TOTAL n =	% Philosophy
1 (1)	10	0	0	0	0	1	11	91
1 (2)	0	3	4	0	0	3	10	0
2 (1)	4	1	3	0	0	3	11	36
2 (2)	2	2	0	0	0	2	6	33
3 (1)	2	2	0	0	1	2	7	29
3 (2)	1	1	1	0	0	2	5	20
4 (1)	0	4	0	0	0	2	6	0
4 (2)	2	1	1	0	0	2	6	33
5 (1)	1	5	0	0	0	2	8	13
5 (2)	2	11	5	0	0	4	22	9
6 (1)	1	10	1	0	0	5	17	6
6 (2)	1	8	3	0	0	2	14	7
7 (1)	1	2	2	0	0	2	7	14
7 (2)	1	2	3	0	0	2	8	13
8 (1)	2	5	1	0	0	2	10	20
8 (2)	1	2	0	0	0	2	5	20
9 (1)	1	2	3	0	0	3	9	11
9 (2)	2	6	5	0	0	2	15	13
10 (1)	2	7	8	0	1	2	20	10
10 (2)	0	2	18	0	0	3	23	0
11 (1)	1	2	5	0	0	3	11	9
11 (2)	2	1	1	0	0	2	6	33
12 (1)	3	2	1	1	0	2	9	33
12 (2)	3	1	5	0	0	2	11	27
13 (1)	2	2	6	0	1	2	13	15
13 (2)	1	2	4	0	0	2	9	11
14 (1)	1	6	6	0	0	2	15	7
14 (2)	2	5	5	0	0	2	14	14
15 (1)	8	1	7	0	0	2	18	44
15 (2)	2	18	6	0	0	3	29	7
Total	61	116	104	1	3	70	355	17

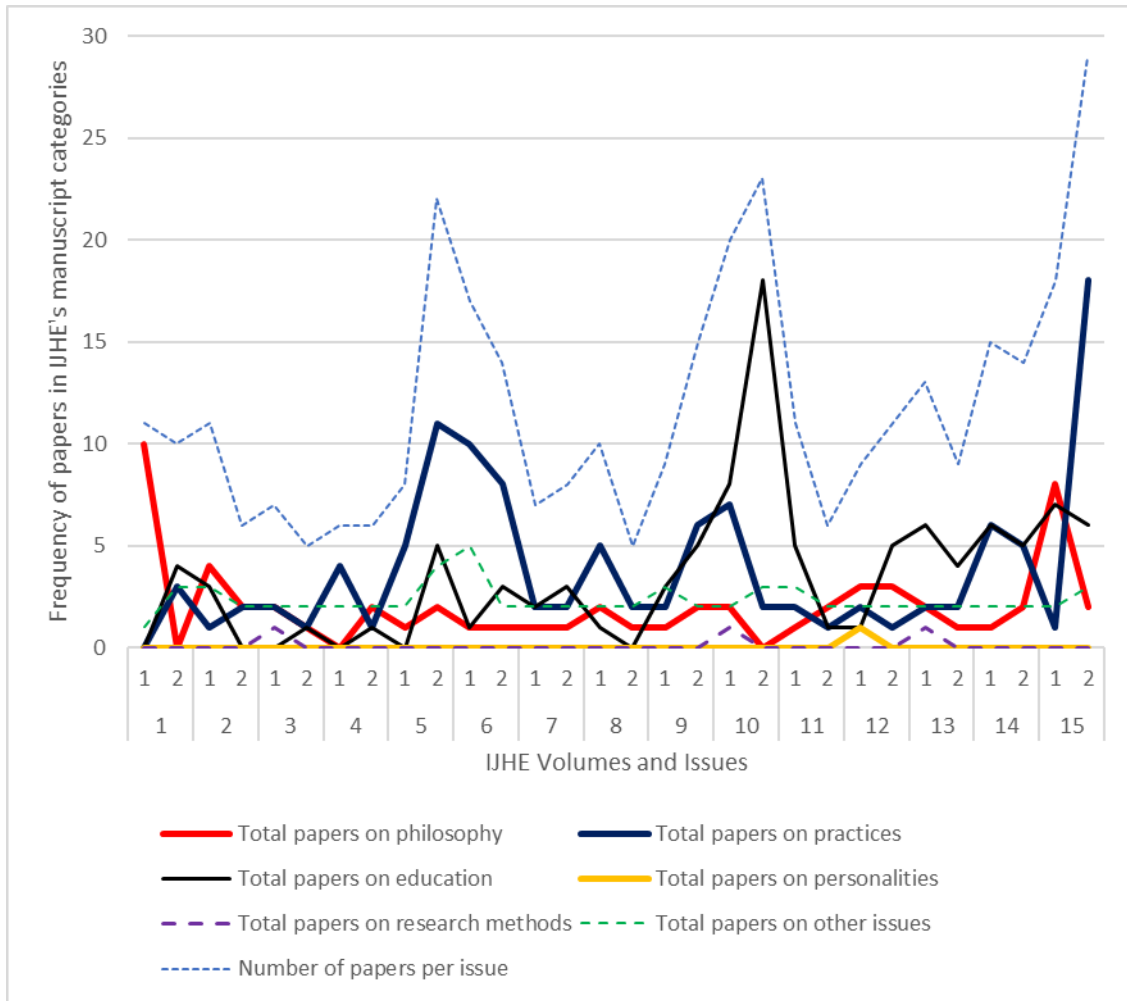


Figure 1 Frequency of Papers in IJHE's Different Manuscript Categories

Research Question 2: To What Extent is the Home Economics Profession in Nigeria Lending Her Voice to the Global Exchange of Ideas in the Field, Especially the Discourse on Philosophy?

Of all papers ($n = 355$) published in IJHE, 11% ($n = 38$) were from Nigeria (see Table 2). After very low initial participation, Nigerian contributions to IJHE increased (see Figure 2), but topics concerned mostly maternal health and, to a lesser extent, professional practices and education (see Figure 3). These topics likely represent each professional's conviction of which issues warrant home economists' attention based on their personal inquisition around philosophical questions about life (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016). No articles ($n = 0$) from Nigeria were related to home economics philosophy. This result suggests that resistance to philosophical engagement noted by McGregor (2014) is strong in Nigeria relative to globally. We did not think Nigeria's participation in home economics philosophical engagement would be so absolute (absent) until the third research question was answered.

Table 2 Publications in IJHE and Number of Articles from Nigeria

Volumes & Issues	Total	From Nigeria n =	From Nigeria %
1 (1)	11	0	0
1 (2)	10	0	0
2 (1)	11	0	0
2 (2)	6	1	17
3 (1)	7	0	0
3 (2)	5	1	20
4 (1)	6	0	0
4 (2)	6	0	0
5 (1)	8	3	38
5 (2)	22	0	0
6 (1)	17	5	29
6 (2)	14	2	14
7 (1)	7	1	14
7 (2)	8	0	0
8 (1)	10	1	10
8 (2)	5	2	40
9 (1)	9	1	11
9 (2)	15	3	20
10 (1)	20	2	10
10 (2)	23	2	9
11 (1)	11	1	9
11 (2)	6	0	0
12 (1)	9	1	11
12 (2)	11	0	0
13 (1)	13	0	0
13 (2)	9	1	11
14 (1)	15	2	13
14 (2)	14	0	0
15 (1)	18	0	0
15 (2)	29	9	31
Total	355	38	11

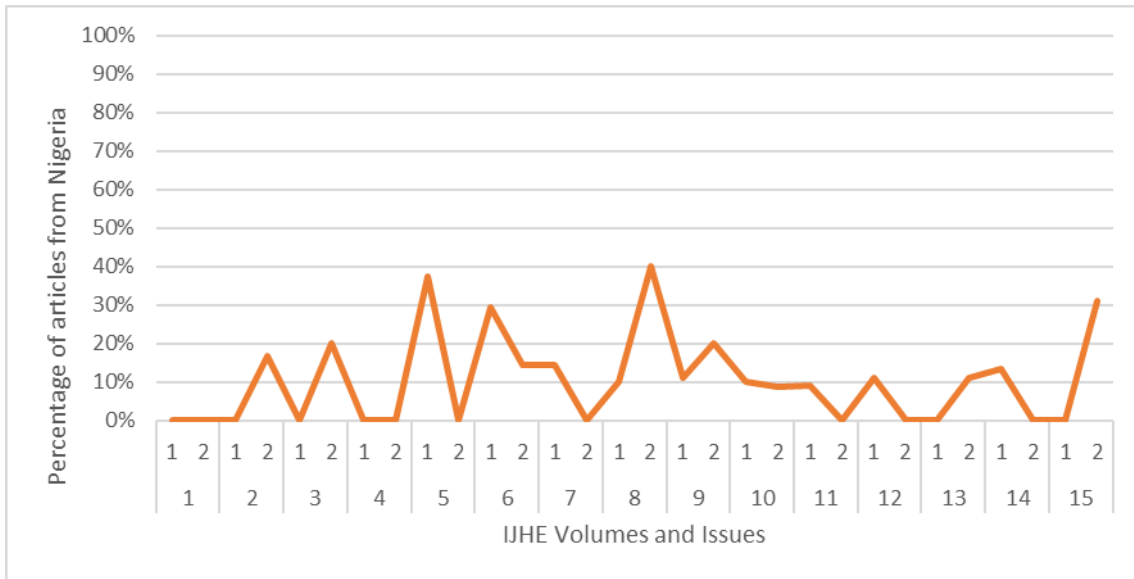


Figure 2 Nigerian Contribution to IJHE

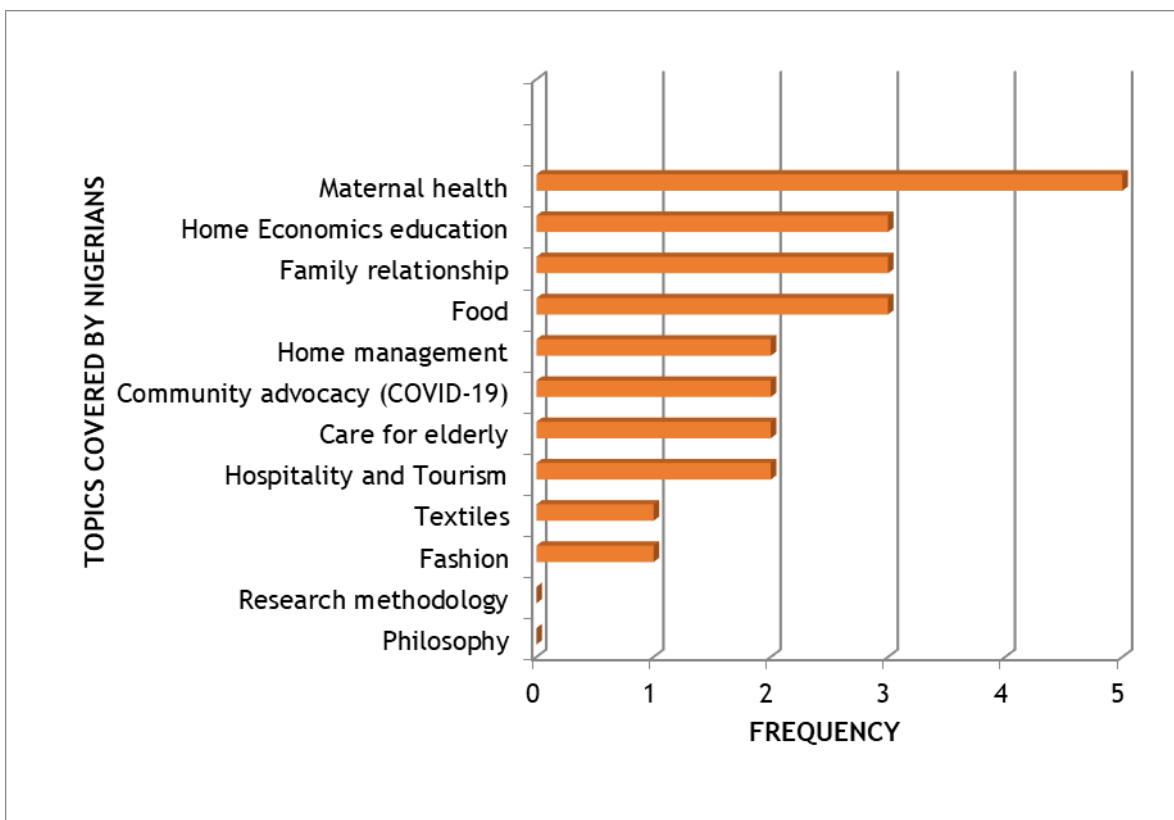


Figure 3 Topics Covered by Nigerians in IJHE

Research Question 3: To What Extent Is the Philosophy of the Home Economics Profession in Nigeria Discussed Locally?

Only 9% ($n = 37$) of JHER articles contained word stem philosoph-. More than half of the time (54%, $n = 30$), the stem was found in the reference list; 46% ($n = 26$) of the time, it was in the

text. Per the latter, the authors used the word stem both to directly refer to and allude to the philosophy of home economics profession and a few other disciplines, howbeit, scantily. The deliberateness in the usage of the word words is questionable.

The journal contained strands of references to some philosophical axioms but not necessarily home economics philosophy. For instance, Ogunou (2014) described one of the major challenges facing modern Nigerian families as confused *ontological* views such as atheism (denial of God's existence), relativism (denial of absolute truth), modernism (denial of authority in religion), hedonism (holding that man's [sic] highest purpose in life is pleasure), and materialism (obsession with worldly possessions). Anyawu and Abiogu (2012) touched on *axiology* when they investigated the value system of people in marriage. They reported that Nigerians highly valued the spouse's religion, procreation, companionship, collective action, extended family relationships, societal respect, power, and wealth that came with being in a marriage. Igbo and Igba (2015) supported one of their findings with the assertion that philosophers have established the role of parents in transmitting cultural values to their children. We suggest that these two aspects point to the *philosophical form* of the home economics profession.

Several references were made to the *epistemological* aspects of home economics. Achebe (2012) quoted Anyakoha's (2008) coinage of the philosophy of home economics education as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies which family members require to improve family living (Achebe, 2012, pp. 161-162). Igbemi and Igbo (2019) emphasised that the nature of learners, society, and subject specialists should be screened psychologically and philosophically. Osifeso and Chigbu (2018) noted that skill acquisition, which is a crucial aspect of home economics education, corresponds to the philosophies of empiricists and pragmatists. Awo and Ukonze (2012) opined that home economics students should become competent in maintaining a customer-oriented philosophy (see also Wonah & Sonye, 2020). Mgboro and Igba (2013) similarly explained that entrepreneurs should have a firm philosophy that puts many skills to action at the same time without the fear of risks involved.

Seriki-Mosadolorun et al. (2017) referred to Bocher's (2015) assertion that the environmental awareness entails self-awareness and thoughts about personal and environmental philosophies. Ogbonnaya (2021) also alluded to one's philosophy of dressing as a motivational factor that influences dressing patterns. Similarly, when defining fashion, Ugbah and Ugbah (2013) alluded to the *fashion of philosophy*. A few authors alluded to, but did not elucidate, the philosophy of other fields such as information resource management, entrepreneurship, marketing, library information, social studies, and economics. This suggests that the authors who used the word stem in their articles were at least aware of the notion of philosophy.

As for IJFACS, word stems were found in only 1.4% ($n = 2$) of the 148 articles reviewed. At no time was the word stem part of the title in either journal (see Table 3). In IJFACS, Oyegunwa (2013) explained that the philosophy of buy now and pay later has brought about financial depression and arguments related to it, while Idowu and Soewu (2017) mentioned development philosophy as a key factor for maximizing organizational training. These points feel peripheral to our professional philosophy (albeit about philosophy) and accentuate the need for Nigerian home economists to address philosophical issues deliberately and consciously.

In the Nig-JHEC, none of the article titles ($n = 81$) contained the word stem philosoph-. This collective result clearly demonstrates that the subject of philosophy was never deliberately discussed in these three local journals. This lack of (or insufficient) intentional personal and collective philosophical engagement in the Nigerian home economics profession was a surprising discovery for the authors. It is conceivable that it accounts for the Nigerian profession's helplessness when subject to critics' scrutiny. We recommend that Nigerians begin to

deliberately engage themselves in philosophical discourse within the profession. A helpful entry point is thus a grasp of the present state of the discourse globally, as evident in the IJHE.

Table 3 Mention of Philosophy in Nigerian Home Economics Journals

Journal	JHER	IJFACS
Years Covered	2009-2022	2012-2021
No. of Issues N =	21	10
Total Articles N =	397	148
Articles with Mention (%)	n = 37 (9.3)	2 (1.5)
Mention of Philosoph-	Total n =	2
	In title (%)	n = 0 (0)
	In text (%)	n = 26 (46)
	In references (%)	n = 30 (54)

Key: JHER = Journal of Home Economics Research
IJFACS = International Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences

Research Question 4: What Is the Current State of the Philosophy of Home Economics Globally?

Using results for IJHE (17% of papers dealt with philosophy), we pondered the current global state of home economics philosophy, so we could draw lessons for Nigeria. From scrutinising these IJHE papers, and using our personal familiarity with the topic, we know that at least 12 home economists from among tens of thousands around the world contributed to the definition of the philosophy of home economics. They include (from six countries) Marjorie Brown (1993) and Barbara McFall (2006) from the United States; Sue L. T. McGregor (2012a-d, 2015b, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020) and Mary Gale Smith (2016) from Canada; Donna Pendergast (2009, 2012) and Kerry Renwick (2018) from Australia; Kaija Turkki (2006, 2012, 2015a, 2015b), Terttu Tuomi-Gröhn and Päivi Palojoiki (2000), and Henna Heinilä (2004) from Finland; Jette Benn (2004, 2006, 2009) from Denmark; and Fusa Sekiguchi (2004) from Japan.

Similarly, non-practitioners' philosophical ideas contributed to the development of home economics on the global scale: Bakhtin (1981) from Russia; Rich (2014) from Canada; and Heidegger (1962), Bollnow (1963), and Husserl (1983) from Germany (McGregor, 2020). Since the 1960s, aspects of home economics philosophy have evolved both in form and substance (as discussed by McGregor, 2012b, 2020, and observed by us when examining our data sets). Figure 4 represents a philosophical mosaic that we created. The older aspects of the philosophy were struck through and replaced with more recent ideas about what should constitute the profession's philosophy and belief system.

Figure 4 reveals that, globally, the philosophy of home economics is undergoing a progressive shift albeit, we surmise, not fully embraced and practiced yet. In terms of philosophical form, the *why* of the profession is to help every human being show new-found respect for everyday life, especially how people make sense and meaning within their daily life; *what* practitioners are concerned with is the home in its new conceptualisations as a place for humanity and the ascendancy of human beings rather than just shelter for separate family units; and *how* they do this is by conceiving competent practice as predicated on the sustainability of culture and society, personal and social responsibility, and a willingness to live and manage together rather than the ability to do what others cannot do (see McGregor, 2012b, 2020).



Source: Researchers (2023)

Figure 4 Philosophical Mosaic of Home Economics as a Profession

In terms of philosophical substance, the *why* of the profession is to focus on the human condition, basic human needs, and qualities of living rather than just well-being and quality of life; consider the restoration of humanity by viewing home economics as a discipline for human protection focused on the soundness and fullness of human life and existential hope (based on the assumption that the destruction of private life leads to the destruction of the conditions of humans in general); and accept the idea that everyone on earth has a right to basic education for life competence (a rights-based approach) to foster the culture of family life (see also McGregor, 2012b, 2020).

What the profession is concerned with is positioning the profession beyond patriarchy; considering the concepts of whole sight and being-in-the-world; conceiving her BOK as agent-centered rather than subject- or content-centered (facilitated through communities of practice instead of separate specialisations); embracing celebratory, reflective, and transformative leadership with a focus on human action (ethical, spiritual and authentic) rather than transactional leadership; and prioritising human intellectual and philosophical capital rather than conventional resource management (see McGregor, 2012, 2020).

How the profession does this is by embracing new notions of what it means to be an expert (that is, expert-novice and integral specialist); moving away from integrated practice to integral practice (shifting from balance and harmony to a respect for the emergent and healthy tensions that hold things together as they continually evolve in an attempt to see order emerging in chaos); and moving beyond multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary to the intellectually energising spaces of transdisciplinarity and emergent, integral thinking (see also McGregor, 2012b, 2020).

Implications of Philosophical Engagement to Nigerian Home Economics Profession

Incorporating philosophical engagement into the Nigerian home economics profession can help ensure it remains relevant, ethical, and responsive to society's changing needs. It can also provide a deeper understanding of the Nigerian profession's underlying principles and values as articulated by dedicated home economics philosophers living and working in Nigeria.

1. Philosophical engagement can help establish a strong ethical foundation for the profession, guiding professionals in making morally sound decisions regarding issues such as food safety, nutrition, and consumer rights.
2. An understanding of philosophy can assist in defining the cultural context of home economics in Nigeria, thus helping practitioners adapt their practices and teachings to align with the values and traditions of the local population.
3. Philosophical discussions can emphasise the importance of human well-being and flourishing by focusing on promoting not just physical health but also emotional, social, and psychological well-being.
4. Philosophical engagement can underline the significance of sustainability in the home economics profession, as it can encourage professionals to incorporate sustainable practices in areas like food production, waste management, and resource utilisation.
5. Philosophical discussions can challenge traditional gender stereotypes and promote gender equity in the profession by emphasising that home economics is not limited to any specific gender.
6. Philosophy encourages critical thinking and questioning of assumptions such that practitioners constantly reevaluate and update their approaches leading to more dynamism and adaptability.
7. Philosophical engagement can encourage the integration of knowledge from various disciplines and sectors into home economics with the aim to enrich the Nigerian profession and its contributions to society.
8. Philosophical discussions can inspire Nigerian home economics professionals to engage in policy advocacy. They can use philosophical arguments to advocate for policies that promote family well-being, nutrition, and education.
9. Philosophical engagement can emphasise the importance of community engagement and outreach. Nigerian home economics professionals can use philosophical principles to guide their involvement in community development projects related to nutrition, housing, and family dynamics and to national development.
10. Philosophy can play a role in shaping education and curricular development in Nigerian home economics. It can help in defining the core principles and values that should be taught to students pursuing home economics degrees in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations


Results confirmed evidence of a global discourse around the philosophy of home economics, although it was not as pronounced as other topics such as specific practices and education-related concerns. That said, Nigeria's contribution to this discourse was very scanty - globally and locally. Considering the importance of repositioning the profession to face the myriads of challenges that confront it in the nation, Nigerian home economists should take a cue from the progressive philosophical engagement on the global level (see Figure 4) and deliberately discuss

the hitherto vaguely stated philosophy of home economics. To that end, we respectfully offer several recommendations:


1. Executive boards of all Nigerian home economics-related associations should intensify work towards a profitable unification (an umbrella organisation) that can better provide a formidable front for the all-important task of spelling out the unanimously agreed-to first principles of the profession.
2. Nigerian home economics practitioners - particularly leaders - should make room for discourses on the profession's philosophy on every available platform. This will facilitate the exchange of ideas via conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia, and the publication of scholarly articles.
3. A Nigerian-based think-tank should be constituted to spearhead the articulation of a BOK for the Nigerian profession while working closely with several home economics-related associations in the country and with individual practitioners across all educational levels and professional practice areas.
4. Once articulated, the philosophy of home economics in Nigeria should deliberately become a core part of the educational process at all levels and repeatedly be alluded to as the basis for all professional and educational practices.

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