

Students' Perception of Home Economics Undergraduate Curriculum

AISHA SIDDIQUE, RIZWAN NAZIR† AND NIAZ HUSSAIN MALIK

Division of Education and Extension, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad-38040, Pakistan

†University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore-Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Home Economics Education plays a pivotal role in converting unskilled women folk into skilled one and thereby the foundation of Home Economics curriculum is recommended to be laid on the needs of its clients. In order to see the validity of curriculum in vogue in College of Home Economics, Lahore at undergraduate level, the survey was carried out to assess "The perception of Home Economics students about their undergraduate curriculum". It was an exploratory study in which an equal number of 50 students were taken from all the four classes of B.Sc. Home Economics degree course and thus 200 respondents were interviewed. The research study conclusively proved that students regarded the subjects relating to major areas of Home Economics as most relevant, meaningful, interesting and applicable in everyday life.

Key Words: Curriculum; Home Economics; Perception

INTRODUCTION

Home Economics is an applied field, which integrates knowledge obtained from various relevant disciplines. It generates knowledge as well as uses concepts from other fields and applies them to help individuals and families improve their modes of life and society as a whole. Heneritta (1980) regards the family eco-system as a core of Home Economics. According to Parker (1980), the Home Economics views the family as a major source of nurturance, protection and renewal for the individuals. As an educational force, the family significantly contributes to the qualitative development of its individual members and has the potential to prepare them for effective productivity in respect of self and society. As the relationship between the family, home & home economics is inseparable, so from this perspective, home economics works through family to develop balanced relationship between people and social environment and thus paving the way for healthy human development. Quite contrary to the present perceived view, Home Economics is much more than cooking and sewing and thereby the curriculum must be flexible, individualized, diversified and aimed at the provision of good foundation to the liberal arts. The contents of Home Economics should be a synthesis of the physical, biological and social sciences, the arts and the humanities as they are applied to the improvement of family life relations.

In order to achieve the desired objectives of the Home Economics, the importance of curriculum cannot be over looked. The curriculum based on the needs, aspirations and aptitudes of students is universally acknowledged for the improvement of individual and family life. The needs and aspirations are always changing with the passage of time, development of new technologies and thereby it seems necessary to make needed changes in Home Economics

curriculum to make it more acceptable and practicable in the changed circumstances. Wiles (1980) describes 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 endeavor that determines the quality of educational system (Anonymous, 2000). 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 endeavors. The said situation equally applies on the quality of Home Economics education. Tanner (1981) presented that educational experiences, which provided joy and meaning would certainly, stimulate learner to take increased responsibility for their own learning. Interest in any thing is surely motivating, if learners are fed properly, interest is developed and curiosity is grown.

Any education, which is not applicable and relevant to the needs of the students, is waste of time for both teacher and the taught (Malik *et al.*, 1991). It must be understood that the programme once developed cannot be guaranteed to be satisfactory and all right forever. It demands alterations in various aspects of the programme in the light of suggestions/needs of the students and society. It was, therefore, necessary to conduct a scientific survey for finding out the weaknesses and strengths of prevailing curriculum and to suggest necessary amendments for its improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data for the present study were collected from College of Home Economics, Gulberg, Lahore. A total sample of 200 respondents was selected randomly for the study by taking 50 students from each class. Simple frequency and percentage methods were used to assess the

results. The data obtained were analyzed and entered into the computer and are presented in the form of tables. The main parameters of the study were to find out that to how much extent various subjects were relevant, applicable, interesting and practicable as viewed by the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I indicates that an equal percentage of 56 respondents perceived the subject of Food and Nutrition as the most relevant subject and chemistry as the least relevant one. Whereas, out of the remaining subjects, clothing and textile and Home Management were considered as the most relevant by 12 and 20% respondents, respectively.

Table I. Determination of the relevance of various Home Economics subjects

| Subjects | Most relevant | | Least relevant | |
|----------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Food and Nutrition | 112 | 56 | 04 | 02 |
| Chemistry | 08 | 04 | 112 | 56 |
| Clothing and Textile | 24 | 12 | 16 | 08 |
| Home Management | 52 | 26 | 08 | 04 |
| English | 0 | 0 | 04 | 02 |
| Islamic Education | 04 | 02 | 0 | 0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 36 | 18 |
| Music | 0 | 0 | 20 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 200 | 100 | 200 | 100 |

Table II. Determination of the applicability of various Home Economics subjects

| Subjects | Most applicable | | Least applicable | |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Food and Nutrition | 68 | 34 | 0 | 0 |
| Chemistry | 0 | 0 | 92 | 46 |
| Clothing and Textile | 48 | 24 | 16 | 08 |
| Home Management | 56 | 28 | 16 | 08 |
| English | 08 | 04 | 16 | 08 |
| Islamic Education | 20 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 16 | 08 |
| Music | 0 | 0 | 44 | 22 |
| TOTAL | 200 | 100 | 200 | 100 |

Table II shows that 34 and 46% of the respondents found the subject of Food & Nutrition and Chemistry as the most applicable and least applicable respectively. Whereas, Home Management was considered the most relevant by 28% respondents. The subject of Urdu and Music were liked by none.

Table III reveals that 38 and 32% respondents found the subject of Home Management as the most interesting and Chemistry as the least interesting respectively. It was interesting to note that Islamic Education was neither considered to be most interesting nor the least interesting by any one.

Table IV reveals that 68 and 78% of the respondents perceived the subject of Food & Nutrition's Practical work as the most beneficial and Chemistry's practical work as

least beneficial respectively. Whereas, the remaining subjects were liked or disliked by nominal/none of the students.

Table III. Determination of the level of interest in various Home Economics subjects by the students

| Subjects | Most interesting | | Least interesting | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Food and Nutrition | 24 | 12 | 12 | 06 |
| Chemistry | 24 | 12 | 64 | 32 |
| Clothing and Textile | 24 | 12 | 40 | 20 |
| Home Management | 76 | 38 | 16 | 08 |
| English | 12 | 06 | 12 | 06 |
| Islamic Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 52 | 26 |
| Music | 40 | 20 | 04 | 02 |
| TOTAL | 200 | 100 | 200 | 100 |

Table IV. Determination of the students' perception towards the usefulness of practical oriented subjects

| Subjects | Most useful | | Least useful | |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Food and Nutrition | 136 | 68 | 08 | 04 |
| Chemistry | 0 | 0 | 156 | 78 |
| Clothing and Textile | 24 | 12 | 28 | 14 |
| Home Management | 40 | 20 | 08 | 04 |
| English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Islamic Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Music | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 200 | 100 | 200 | 100 |

CONCLUSIONS

A summary of the conclusions drawn from the opinion of the respondents indicates that the majority of the students perceive subjects related to major areas of Home Economics like Food & Nutrition, Clothing & Textile and Home Management as the most interesting, meaningful, pertinent and applicable in everyday life. However they wanted to maintain balance in the practical and theoretical work of these subjects.

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