

Factors affecting the choice of Home Economics course by male students in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone.

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Abstract- This survey study attempts to investigate the factors affecting the choice of Home Economics course by male students in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone. The purpose of the study was to find out student, government, teaching, institutional and society factors influence male learners' choice of the subject. The targeted population for this study was students of the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology from teacher certificate, higher teacher certificate and first degree levels. The structured questionnaire was the main data collection instrument where 120 was administered only 100 received filled which form 83.33% response rate. The collected data was analysed by applying the simple percentage score method for each item under each factor were used. It was found that the male students' choice of Home Economics as a course is influenced by society, student, institutional, teaching and government factors. It is recommended that; the government of Sierra Leone to build more technical and vocational centres in the Northern province that cater for even the non-formal sector; Provide adequate funds or grant to support these institutions so that it can enhance their capacity to accommodated more students;

Index Terms- Home Economics, teaching ,learning,participants,factors and career

I. INTRODUCTION

Home Economics is an elective course comprised of three subjects, food and nutrition, clothing and textiles and management in living. Students of Home Economics have the option of specializing in either food and nutrition or clothing and textiles. When it comes to Home Economics as an academic course of study, gender is visible in Sierra Leone and plays a determinative role in students' participation. In all the male dominated schools in the Northern part of Sierra Leone, Home Economics is not taught there and at the same time technical subjects are not taught in girl schools. Few co-educational schools have introduced both courses but males students normally don't enroll into Home Economics as few girls enroll into technical courses. The aim of introducing Home Economics in Sierra Leone

educational institutions was to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead effective lives in different roles and contexts in society. In Sierra Leone today, the society is still having the stereotype perception as there are jobs for males and females. These differential roles for boys and girls pose a very serious problem to Home Economics as a course of study for male because a lot of people see it as a course meant for females. Despite being thought of as female oriented discipline was never intended to be for women only. Home Economics is on the other hand perceived by many people in society as a course purely designed for domestic affairs, hence a course for girls. The society both educated and uneducated look down on any male learner studying Home Economics (Nnuba 2013). It is apparent that there is a gender gap in Home Economics. Male learners are significantly more likely to choose Science, Agriculture, Business or technical studies.(World Bank 2012). One of the components of technology and livelihood education in secondary level is Home Economics. This is being taught since most people are likely to have and will build families of their own.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) The influence of parents on learner' choice of Home Economics

The influence of parents in the development of learners' interest in vocational/technical subjects cannot be over-emphasized because parents seem to have much influence on children's choice of educational career(Davies et.al.2006). Parents use double the amount of discouraging comments towards daughters than they do to sons when it comes to the subjects that take. This enforces the stereotypes that already exist about gender differences leading females to feel less confident in certain subjects and opting to take other subjects (Tenenbaum 2009).The socio-economic status of the parents of a child has the likelihood to determine the type of career one chooses to follow. Some parents have biased and rigid thoughts regarding the occupational choices of a child/children. As a result, it is usually common for learners from poor background to choose Home economics as a subject (Nnubia 2013)

b) Teachers' perception towards male learners choosing Home Economics

Teachers believe that family living should be taught in the home rather than at school, and they recognized that the organization of a co-educational class would need to be different from girls' class. In addition to this, boys are more likely to be influenced by their male group members who might devalue schoolwork and so put them at odds with their academic achievements. This shows that female teachers are expecting to have female learners in their Home Economics classes. That is why they do not allow learners to choose subjects themselves but help them to do so (Egun, 2008)

c) Male learners' perception toward Home Economics

The subjects choices open to a learner depend on the average popularity of subjects in the school and this varies with the social mix of learners. The gender of learners can often affect their enrolment in a class (Davies et,al 2006) indicated that boys and girls have different values and there are certain standards or expectations that vary between genders. This means that some schools offer varieties of elective subjects and the common norm is that learners tend to choose the subjects mostly enrolled for in the school. Generally, a negative attitude towards a given subject leads to a lack of learners' interest in the subject and when subjects are to be selected, as secondary school learners commonly avoid the subject or course. According to Abell (2006) stated that the quality of a subject means that laboratories for this subjects are well equipped and the subject is taught by qualified teachers

d) Cultural and traditional norms and beliefs preventing male learners in selecting Home Economics

Sex-stereotyped occupation of girls over boys is a tradition which has socialized males into believing that it is ridicule of manliness to venture into an occupation that is female reserved (Egun 2008). According to Seze (2001) found the factor that influence male learners in the field of Home Economics to be differential socialization patterns of boys and girls at early stages of life. Male learners who choose to socialize with female learners at an early age are considered to be homosexuals. Male learners who choose Home Economics are viewed as different from the culturally directed belief of maleness. In the past, girls were expected to make marriage and motherhood their main concern while boys were expected to go on to work and support the family (Dike 2006). Therefore, the school life reflected these expectations as girls now have greater confidence in their abilities (World Bank,2012). Feminism has influenced cultural attitude change but also changes in education. Policies that promote equal opportunities in education and career have reduced bias in gender expectations. Boys and girls may choose different subjects because of early because of early socialization.

e) Strategies to change the perceptions and increase enrolment of male learners in Home Economics

According to Tenenbaum (2009) lamented that the school has a great role to play in influencing learners' choice of subjects and so it should support subjects and career decision making. This will go a long way to encourage learners' choices of subjects. In addition, learners need information about the structure and content of the subjects they want to study. Poor orientation is the reason why males are not interested in the study of Home Economics. If males in secondary schools are given good orientation about the study of Home Economics as a course in tertiary institutions, they

may be interested to study it particularly Dike (2006) suggested that if career days are organised by schools from time to time, it will help motivate and stimulate the interests of learners as the learners listen to some experts in the various areas of Home Economics

f) Teaching of Home Economics

The teaching of Home Economics as a practical subject is crucial if the needed skills, knowledge, value and attitudes are to imparted in the learner. It is critical that teachers have the professional competencies necessary to impact knowledge, skills and attitudes to learners. Hence, teacher education is vital and important as it echoes that in order for teachers to teach effectively there is need to consider the quality of Teacher Education in colleges. Training of teachers is also necessary especially in today's environment to cope with the changing demands of the profession. As such, proper techniques need to be employed for the teaching and learning process to be real and fruitful. In other words, the quality of teacher education is as good as the quality of the teacher. Teachers are important in any educational system because the quality of the teacher in any educational system determines to a greater extent the quality of the system itself Adeosum (2009).The measure of the teachers' qualification, teaching practice, teacher certification, teacher experience and teaching preparation all define teacher quality. If the quality of teachers is poor, the quality of education will be poor. What this means, therefore, is that the quality of teachers will determine the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. It is understood that teacher education programmes are intended to impart not only a body of knowledge in teacher trainee but also to inculcate in them those skills, competencies and attitudes that would enable them to adapt effectively to the changing demands of the educational system and of the society.

III. METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted for this study for the purpose of assessing factors affecting the choice of Home Economics by male students in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone. The population for this survey study was all year Home Economics students in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone were used for the study. The total number of students offering Home Economics in the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology are approximately 250 ranging Teacher Certificate, Higher Teacher Certificate and first degree. The main data collection instrument used for this survey study was the structured questionnaire consisted of demographic characteristics and 5 items representing institutional factors, society factor, student factors, government factors and teaching factors. Students were requires to score each of the items between 1 and 5 in their order of importance and representing the extent to which the factor is challenging. A former letter was written to the Registrar of the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology to facilitate the administration of the questionnaires through their Head of Department.

The instrument was faced validated by five experts in Home Economics Department of Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology and corrections and observations were used in the final draft of the questionnaire in order to ensure

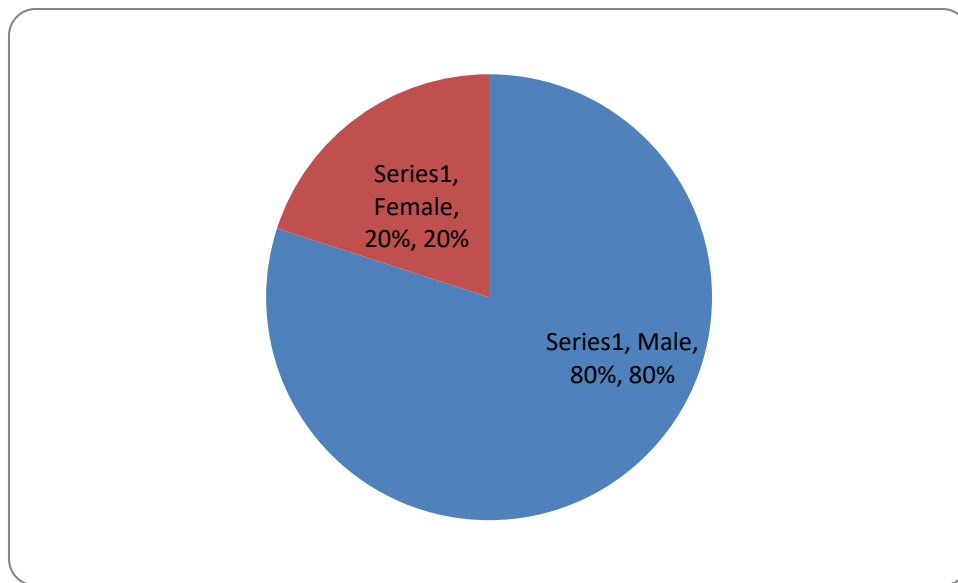
content and face validity for the questionnaire. Reliability of the instrument was established by split-half method together with the Spearman's Brown prophecy Formula which were used to obtain a reliability co-efficient of 0.82.

The researcher administered 120 copies of the instrument to the students by hand delivery and 100 were received making 83.33% return rate. In analyzing the simple percentage score method for each item under each factor were used.

IV. RESULTS

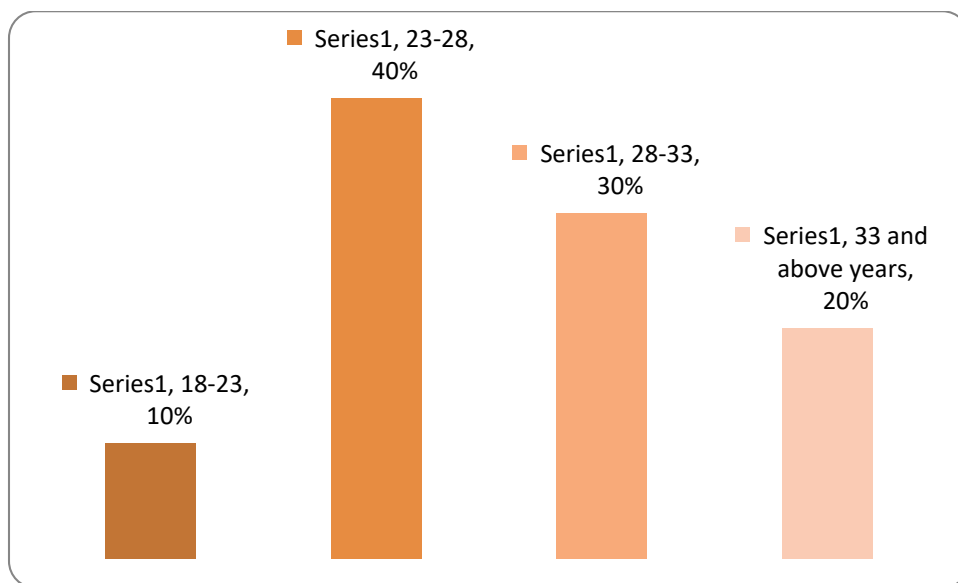
The collected data was analysed by the use of Excel to generate tables and graphs. The figures comprise of gender, age, level and type of institution.

Figure 1. Gender of respondents



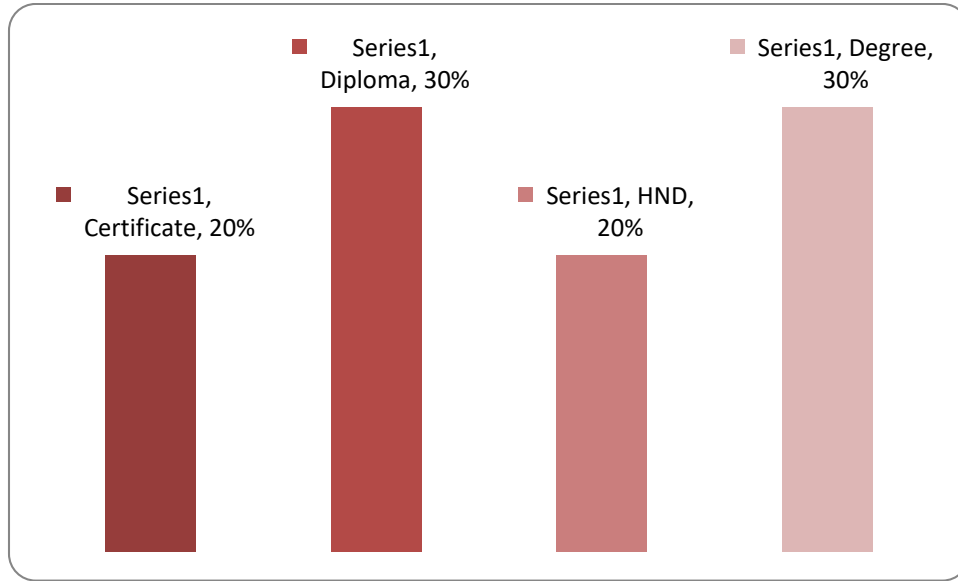
The figure above describe the percentage of respondents contacted for this survey study. 80% are males and 20% are females

Figure 2. Age bracket of respondents



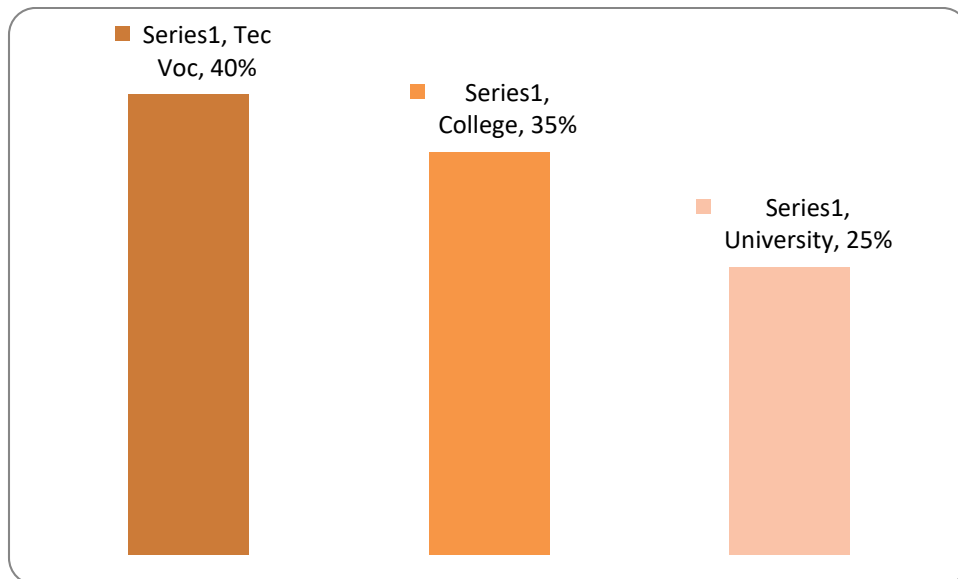
The figure above shows that 10% of the respondents contacted for this survey study are between the ages of 18-23 years, 40% between 23-28 years, 30% between 28-33 and 20% between 33 and above years,

Figure 3. Level of study



The figure above reveals that 20% of the respondents contacted for this survey study are at certificate level, 30% are at diploma level, 20% are at Higher National Diploma level and 30% at degree level.

Figure 4 Type of institution



The figure above show that 40% of the respondents contacted for this survey study are from Tec-Voc institutions, 35% are from colleges and 25% from university.

The respondents were asked to indicate against each item the following: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly

agree in the ranking of 1,2,3,4 and 5 on the various factors that affect the low intake of male students into Home Economics course.

Table 1. Institutional factors

No	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	%
1	Facilities are not available for teaching and learning	10	8	7	35	40	100%
2	No good electricity to empower equipment	9	12	4	30	45	100%
3	Learning environment not conducive	10	5	5	40	40	100%
4	Skill content in the course content are inadequate	8	11	6	30	45	100%
5	Learning resources are absolute	7	16	7	35	40	100%
6	Inadequate facilities	8	6	8	40	38	100%
7	Time allotted for practical is inadequate	9	15	9	35	32	100%

The above table reveals responses from respondents on institutional factors. With regards to the item facilities are not available for teaching and learning, 10% of the respondents contacted for this survey study indicated strongly disagree, 8% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to no good electricity to empower equipment, 9% indicated strongly disagree, 12% indicated disagree, 4% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree. With regards to learning environment not conducive, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 5% indicated disagree, 5% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to skill content in the course content are inadequate, 8% indicated strongly disagree, 11% indicated disagree, 6% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree. With regards to learning resources are absolute, 7% indicated strongly disagree, 16% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to inadequate facilities, 8% indicated strongly disagree, 6% indicated disagree, 8% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 38% indicated strongly agree. With regards to time allotted for practical is inadequate, 9% indicated strongly disagree, 15% indicated disagree, 9% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 32% indicated strongly agree.

The table above shows the responses from respondents on student factors. With regards to support system for carrying out practical is weak, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 11% indicated disagree, 9% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 35% indicated strongly agree. With regards to have poor background on the subject, 14% indicated strongly disagree, 12% indicated disagree, 4% indicated neutral, 34% indicated agree and 36% indicated strongly agree. With regards to most students are lazy, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 8% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 35% indicated strongly agree. With regards to most students in Home Economics lack creativity, 12% indicated strongly disagree, 11% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to financial demand to study Home Economics is too high, 12% indicated strongly disagree, 16% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 30% indicated strongly agree. With regards to have no interest in Home Economics as a course, 11% indicated strongly disagree, 6% indicated disagree, 8% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 35% indicated strongly agree.

Table 2. Student factors

No	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	%
1	Support system for carrying out practical is weak	10	11	9	35	35	100%
2	Have poor background on the subject	14	12	4	34	36	100%
3	Most students are lazy	10	8	7	40	35	100%
4	Most students in Home Economics lack creativity	12	11	7	30	40	100%
5	Financial demand to study Home Economics is too high	12	16	7	35	30	100%
6	Have no interest in Home economics as a course	11	6	8	40	35	100%

Table 3. Teaching factors

No	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	%
1	Inadequate trained and qualified lecturers	10	8	7	35	40	100%
2	Shortage of lecturers teaching Home Economics	9	12	4	30	45	100%
3	Lecturers attitude towards practical class is not encouraging	10	5	5	40	40	100%
4	Lecturers do not come to lecture regularly	8	11	6	30	45	100%
5	Lecturers utilize lecture method to teach practical	7	16	7	35	40	100%
6	Lecturers do not utilize modern learning facilities to teach	8	6	8	40	38	100%

7	Methods utilized for Home Economics courses are uninteresting	9	15	9	35	32	100%
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The table above is the responses from respondents on teaching factors. With regards to inadequate trained and qualified lecturers, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 8% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to shortage of lecturers teaching Home Economics, 9% indicated strongly disagree, 12% indicated disagree, 4% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree. With regards to lecturers attitude towards practical class is not encouraging, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 5% indicated disagree, 5% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to lecturer do not come lecture regularly, 8% indicated strongly disagree, 11% indicated disagree, 6% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree. With regards to lecturers utilize lecture method to teach practical, 7% indicated strongly disagree, 16% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to lecturers do not utilize modern learning facilities to teach, 8% indicated strongly disagree, 6% indicated disagree, 8% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 38% indicated strongly agree. With regards to methods utilized for Home Economics courses are uninteresting, 9% indicated strongly disagree, 15% indicated disagree, 9% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 32% indicated strongly agree.

Table 4 Society factors

No	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	%
1	Public opinion about Home economics for males	10	8	2	35	45	100%
2	Student perception about Home Economics	9	12	1	38	40	100%
3	Job consideration	10	10	5	40	35	100%
4	Beliefs and attitudes	12	10	8	30	40	100%
5	Few male lecturers	7	16	7	35	35	100%
6	Public apathy toward Home Economics	15	6	9	40	30	100%

The table above reveals the responses from respondents on society factors. With regards to public opinion about Home Economics for males, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 8% disagree, 2% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree. With regards to student perception about Home Economics, 9% indicated strongly disagree, 12% indicated disagree, 1% indicated neutral, 38% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to job consideration, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 10% indicated disagree, 5% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 35% indicated strongly agree. With regards to beliefs and attitude, 12% indicated strongly disagree, 10% indicated disagree, 8% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to few male lecturers, 7% indicated strongly disagree, 16% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 35% indicated strongly agree. With regards to public apathy toward Home Economics, 15% indicated strongly disagree, 6% indicated disagree, 9% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 30% indicated strongly agree.

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Table 5 Government factors

No	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	%
1	Inadequate funding	10	8	7	35	40	100%
2	Inadequate infrastructures	9	12	4	30	45	100%
3	Incentives for Home Economics not encouraging	10	5	5	40	40	100%
4	Government lukewarm attitude towards Voc/Technical programmes in universities	8	11	6	30	45	100%

The table above is responses from respondents on government factors. With regards to inadequate funding, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 8% indicated disagree, 7% indicated neutral, 35% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to inadequate infrastructures, 9% indicated strongly disagree, 12% indicated disagree, 4% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree. With regards to incentives for Home Economics not encouraging, 10% indicated strongly disagree, 5% indicated disagree, 5% indicated neutral, 40% indicated agree and 40% indicated strongly agree. With regards to government lukewarm attitude towards Voc/Technical programmes in universities, 8% indicated strongly disagree, 11% indicated disagree, 6% indicated neutral, 30% indicated agree and 45% indicated strongly agree.

V. FINDINGS

Below are findings from the survey study analyzed data. It was found out that 80% of the respondents are males, 40% between 23-28 years, 30% are at diploma and degree levels level. It was found out that 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to facilities are not available for teaching and learning, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to no good electricity to empower equipment, 80% indicated agree and strongly agree to learning environment not conducive, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to skill content in the course content are inadequate, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to learning resources are obsolete, 78% indicated agree and strongly agree to inadequate facilities and 67% indicated agree and strongly agree to time allotted for practical is inadequate. With regards to student factors, 70% indicated agree and strongly to support system for carrying out practical is weak, 70% indicated agree and strongly agree to have poor background on the subjects, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to most students are lazy, 70% indicated

agree and strongly agree to most students in Home Economics lack creativity, 65% indicated agree and strongly agree to financial demand to study Home Economics is too high and 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to have no interest in Home Economics as a course. With regards to teaching factors, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to inadequate trained and qualified lecturers, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to shortage of lecturers teaching Home Economics, 80% indicated agree and strongly agree to lecturers attitude towards practical class is not encouraging, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to lecturers do not come to lecture regularly, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to lecturers utilize lecture method to each practical, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to lecturers do not utilize modern learning facilities to teach and 67% indicated agree and strongly agree to methods utilized for Home Economics courses are uninteresting.

With regards to society factors, it was found out that 80% indicated agree and strongly agree to public opinion about Home economics for males, 78% indicated agree and strongly agree to student perception about Home Economics, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to job consideration, 70% indicated agree and strongly agree to beliefs and attitudes, 70% indicated agree and strongly agree to few male lecturers and 70% indicated agree and strongly agree to public apathy toward Home Economics. With regards to government factors, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to inadequate funding, 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to inadequate infrastructures, 80% indicated agree and strongly agree to incentives for Home Economics not encouraging and 75% indicated agree and strongly agree to Government lukeworm attitude towards Voc/Technical programmes in universities

VI. CONCLUSION

From the findings it can be concluded that; there is a low enrollment of male student into Home Economics in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone, the few Voc/Technical institutions are challenged ranging from inadequate funding, infrastructures, modern facilities and electricity to enhance kitchen equipment. Male students are not interested in Home Economics course as it is considered female course, limitation in terms job seeking, the perception of the public about a male student offering Home Economics course and finally, the government of Sierra Leone is paying lukeworm services to these institutions offering Home Economics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusion the following are recommended:

Government to:

Build more technical and vocational centres in the Northern province that cater for even the non-formal sector;
Provide adequate funds or grant to support these institutions so that it can enhance their capacity to accommodate more students;

Institutions to:

Review their curriculum on Home Economics to make it interesting and allot enough time for practical;
Recruit trained and qualified lecturers to lecture Home Economics
To introduce career guidance counsellors where students will be adequately oriented of the career path
Create a conducive environment for Home Economics practical equipped with modern equipment
Revisit the cost of offering Home Economics as compared to other courses like business, human resource management to new a few;
Home Economics Departments start to recruit male lecturers if they are available so that male students will see them as means of encouragement;
Home Economics Departments to introduce incentives that will make the Home Economics interesting in order to attract male student.

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