Abstract
COVID 19 marked a significant event and turning point in World history. The pandemic left indelible marks on the economy, individuals, families and communities. This paper accessed the aftermath of the pandemic – post COVID era and its implications on Home Economics and Family living. It presents an overview of the pandemic, its influence on Home Economics and Family Living and the way forward for the profession and families in the post COVID era in such areas as Information Communication Technology, health, family economics, gender issues, family values and relationships amongst others. The paper concludes that the post COVID era demands resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability and suggests amongst others that Home Economists and families should adjust to the demands of the new era through researches, curriculum review and acquisition of relevant digital skills to match with the evolving nature of living.

Key words: COVID, Post COVID Era, Home Economics, Family Living

Introduction
Home Economics is an interdisciplinary course which focuses on human development, personal and family finances, consumer issues, housing and interior design, nutrition and food preparation as well as textile apparel (American Association of Family and Consumer Science, 2015). It is also regarded as a field of knowledge and services concerned with strengthening family life through educating the individuals and families and the means of satisfying these needs. The discipline helps its professionals to develop 21st century life skills such as applied academic skills, critical thinking, resource management, information use and interpersonal skills. It is a vast course that covers all the areas of operations of human development. Family living is one of the areas of Home Economics and focuses on the sum total of all the activities that family member living together in a household engage in; and share together to guarantee sustainability (Aviomoh, 2021). Such activities include marriage, family relationships, parenting, family health, family resource management, family life education, family values and wealth creation amongst others.

This forum represents an arena where the practice of Home Economics is viewed as an academic discipline and this paper addresses the issues, challenges and implications of COVID 19 on Home Economics and family living with a view to professing plausible input for the discipline and families in the post COVID era. The paper discusses:

(i) overview of the COVID 19 pandemic
(ii) COVID 19 and Home Economics
(iii) COVID 19 and family living
(iv) Home Economics and Family Living in post COVID era

Overview of COVID 19 Pandemic
The world witnessed the emergence of the novel and deadly corona virus in the global space in 2019 which changed the world’s history. It is a communicable disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease which had no cure, spread from person to person through infected air droplets that are projected during sneezing or coughing. Although first reported in China, the disease spread throughout the world. The disease wrought confusion and devastation on all nations of the world including Nigeria with dissimilar influences. Due to the evasiveness of the spread of the virus, the number of infected persons and the death toll, it was termed an epidemic. The total number of confirmed cases globally is 621,667, 262 and 265, 074 in Nigeria...
while the total number of deaths recorded globally is 6,559,046 and 3,155 in Nigeria (covid19.ncdc.gov.ng). To curb the spread of the disease, the Federal government embarked on population wide social distancing, isolation, quarantine combined with home isolation of cases and closure of schools and universities in the beginning and later imposed a total lockdown which interrupted all sectors of the economy such as health, agriculture, business, travels, tourism, trade and commerce including all social institutions.

Preceding to the pandemic, the Nigerian economy was unstable, as the country was already dealing with non-COVID-19 related insecurity, falling oil prices, trade restrictions, and public deficit issues, on top of long-standing developmental challenges like inadequate fiscal economic policies, unemployment, inflation, shortage in consumer goods and depreciation of the naira which affected the livelihood and spending patterns of individuals; significant loss of job was experienced despite the already high (55%) rate of youth unemployment/underemployment (Dushime and Osele, 2021). The immense and unprecedented pressure on the country’s underinvested healthcare system with greater impact on the older population was greatly enhanced by the pandemic. The social fabric of the society was also affected; there were evidences of stress initiated by economic losses; once socially unacceptable norms became more frequent such as increase in domestic violence, abuse and exploitation of women and girls – especially care givers (UN Women, 2020).

COVID 19 and Home Economics in Nigeria: Home Economics in the 21st century has four dimensions of practice namely: as an academic discipline; as an arena for everyday living in households; as a curriculum area; as a societal arena to influence and develop policies (IFHE, 2008).

As an academic discipline, Home Economics is taught at all levels of the educational systems (primary, secondary and tertiary) in Nigeria. The pandemic led to the closure of all educational institutions in the country thus disrupting teaching and learning of the course. As an arena for everyday living in households, all families and households were affected by the pandemics. The lockdown meant no movement for individuals; business activities were grounded; some families had victims who were infected by the virus, quarantined and needed care and management by other members of the family. As a curriculum area, the pandemic affected the curriculum content and delivery of Home Economics and necessitates a review of the curriculum to reflect current global issues and trends in an evolving world. Finally as a societal arena to influence and develop policies, the emergence of the pandemic affected some existing policies in the society and these policies need to be reviewed.

A schema showing the influence of COVID 19 on Home Economics

COVID 19 and Family Living in Nigeria: The family is the most important primary and universal institution which has a characteristic of permanence compared to other social institutions; it is a micro subset of the larger society where members share a place of residence (https://www.purdue.edu>file)
therefore whatever impinges on the society affects the family. Family Living comprises of the sum total of all principles and activities for creating an optimal home environment for individuals, marital and family development; or it can be regarded as the secular and sacred significance of temporal activities in the home or the influence of context and family processes on outcomes (https://catalog.byu.edu/home-and). These activities include health, relationships and interactions, resources amongst others. COVID 19 influenced family living in a diversity of ways

A schema showing the influence of COVID 19 on Family Living

**Health:** The pandemic militated against the health of family members in various ways: some persons were infected by the virus, (meaning that they displayed physical symptoms of the virus); others had mental health issues (inability to cope with the stress of the epidemic); the death toll arising from being infected around the world and in Nigeria kept increasing; family members infected were isolated from their loved ones; those who died as a result of the epidemic were denied proper burial and families who lost members of their families were stigmatized.

**Physical:** Observations revealed significant decrease in recreational activities, mobility, walking, physical activities and increases in sedentary lifestyle caused by the restriction of movement and lockdown.

**Socio-Economic:** The pandemic resulted in disruption of regular social interaction which is the bedrock of human existence and family living such as school closure (91% of enrolled learners were affected) with children lacking access to remote learning tools; girls were prone to teenage pregnancy and early marriage; other forms of employment were also closed. Family members were forced to stay together and the length of time they stayed together increased significantly (Sevilla and Smith, 2020). Reported cases of Human rights infringements also increased; there was 20% increase in violence; a sharp rise in domestic violence (Gender Based Violence (GBV), 61 million cases of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)). The economic challenge posed by the pandemic on family living were the closure of businesses, increased loss of employment and livelihood, decline in family income, poverty, hunger and fall in household consumption as consumers spent primarily on essential goods and services amongst others (Bassey, 2020).

**Psychological:** Experiences arising from other impacts of the pandemic, led to diverse emotional reactions by family members such as fear, anxiety, depression and so on.
Home Economics and Family Living in Post COVID Era

The post COVID era is referred to as the period after the lockdown imposed on the people and business by the government have been relaxed; it depicts the evolutionary phase concerning the period emerging after the COVID 19 crisis (Raimi, 2021). In view of the impact of COVID on Home Economics and family living, to ensure sustainable family living in the post covid era, the author proffers some principles and practices that will aid families to cope in the period:

Information Communication Technology (ICT):
The closure of schools during the period made education to shift from the physical structure of schools to the home and become more digital in nature. It therefore marked a turn in the mode of teaching and learning of Home Economics as well as all other subjects. Teaching and learning became remotely done requiring online programmes; Home Economics teachers, professionals and heads of households therefore need to acquire relevant digital skills in Information Communication Technology (ICT); own appropriate digital equipment and supplies for distance education in virtual environments and deploy Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) tools such as Google classroom, Google Meet, Social Media, Blogger, Slides and video maker amongst others to aid them in teaching. They also need to access Open educational resources (OER) which are materials intentionally created and licensed to be free for the end user to own, share, and in most cases, modify for teaching, learning and research purposes to enhance their ability to cope with these demands (Goudeau, Sanrey, Stanczak, Manstead, and Darnon, 2021); Blicher, Essmiller, Reed and Santiago, 2021). Acquisition of ICT related skills can aid family members to take on online work, sales or services in the post COVID era. This hybrid approach to work have become a ‘New Normal’.

Curriculum Development and Research: With the advent of the novel virus and the associated challenges it has posed on the individuals, families and communities globally, there is dire need to review the Home Economics curriculum at all levels of the Nigerian educational systems to accommodate current global issues and trends (COVID 19) and global best practices. As a family related discipline, Home Economists should advance researches on the impact of COVID 19 on family dynamics and living, as well as human development. Findings of such researches will aid in policy formulations.

Laws and Vaccines: The Federal government promulgated a law as one of the measures to reduce the spread of the virus known as Coronavirus Disease (COVID 19) Health Protection Regulations (2021). Like every other law, it has provisions for protocols, offences, penalties and mode of enforcement, however, most Nigerians (family members) are unaware of existing law (https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng ; Awodipe, Thomas-Odia, Eze, Agboluje, Akpeji, Oyewole and Wantu, 2021). Also, there are now COVID vaccines, however, the vaccine acceptance rate is low in Nigeria because of factors such as propaganda, adverse effect concerns (Olu-Abiodun, Abiodun and Okafor, 2022). Home Economists as educators, can assist to teach households both in the rural and urban areas in Nigeria, the law, as well as the need to comply with the law to forestall harassment by law enforcement agencies. Families should also be educated on the need to take the COVID 19 vaccines which is taken in doses to avoid being infected by other variant specie of the virus.

Health, Nutrition and Food Security: The post COVID era has witnessed the emergence of the variant species of coronavirus. Therefore, to ensure sustainable family health, family members should continue to implement some appropriate precautionary measures enforced during the COVID epidemic such as maintaining safe distance from others even if they don’t appear to be sick; stay in well-ventilated spaces; clean hands frequently by washing them with soap under running water or use alcohol-based sanitizers; cover nose and mouth with bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing and stay at home when they are unwell or lack definite things to do outside the home (Amzat, Aminu and Danjibo, 2020; Omaka-Amari, Aleke, Obande-Ogbuinya, Ngwakwe, Nwankwo and Afoke, 2020). Families with members who have been infected with the virus and with serious, complex or life threatening experiences need to embrace palliative care which is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness through early detection, assessment and treatment of the associated conditions whether physical, psychosocial or spiritual (World Health Organisation, 2003). COVID 19 aggravated mental health issues among family members such as fear,
anxiety and depression. To overcome these challenges in a post COVID era, families should teach affected members to practice **age specific self care** like abstaining from the social media temporarily, listening to music, reading a book and indulge in exercises. However, where these measures fail, professional help should be sought.

Good nutrition is essential for supporting the human immune system and reducing the risk of infections. Although the COVID was a respiratory illness and there are no evidences that food itself is a vector of its transmission (ICMSF, 2020) however, the pandemic had multiple dynamics characterised by high level of uncertainty and profound implications for food security and nutrition, as people’s ability to access food diminished in the crisis, this had a negative impact on their ability to afford a healthy diet (FAO et al., 2020).

Globally and in Nigeria, individuals and families witnessed not only a major disruption to food supply chains but in the six dimensions of food security, which are availability, access, utilization, stability, agency and sustainability which are essential for ensuring the right to food, undermining the right to food and stalling efforts to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: “Zero hunger” (Ghebreyesus, 2020; Khorsandi, 2020; HLPE, 2020b).

The implications in the post COVID era are:

- Emphasis in Home Economics classes at all levels should be on role of Food and Nutrition in curbing the condition with focus on Nutrients that aid recovery; meal planning and management; food hygiene and food handling practices; practical gardening; food processing and preservation methods and nutritional management of infected persons and other family members. Focus on these areas will aid in creating awareness on the role of nutrition in managing the infection and prevent the spread of the variant species of the virus.
- Families should ensure constant provision of rich but cheap foods for its members to forestall possible nutritional deficiency diseases that may arise from food shortage and inadequacy.
- Family meals should be prepared at home. Family members should be encouraged to eat home-made foods to forestall consuming stale and contaminated foods in restaurants; they should reduce their consumption of processed foods and embrace fresh foods and fruits;
- Families should plant home gardens, raise fish and engage in animal production to boost food production at home and reduce the scourge of hunger and under nutrition occasioned by the pandemic

**Family Economics:** COVID 19 dealt a devastating blow on family economics. The lockdown led to businesses and employments being closed down; family members lost their jobs resulting in a drastic reduction in family income; poverty and a reduction in family consumption of goods and services.

The pandemic spurs a more conscious use of family resources to avoid further financial stress and non-sustainable by-products of major consumption which includes increased solid waste generation, upsurge in plastic and disposable utensils that family use for daily consumption (Abrelpe, 2020). To ameliorate this condition in the post COVID era, family members should be taught certain principles and strategies that will lead to effective utilization of family resources; reduction in family expenditure and increase in family income thereby cushioning the effect of poverty experienced during the pandemic.

These principles are:

- Family resource management – family members should be taught to creatively, innovatively and effective use of all family resources – human, material and community-based resources available at their disposal for sustainable family living and wealth creation; families should embrace zero waste by deploying the 5Rs of waste management which are - (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle) thus turning waste to wealth for a green economy.

Also, for sustainable family living in a post COVID era, families should:

- Create Passive income by engaging in earnings that require minimal or no active work to earn additional income like selling online, investments or online work amongst others.
- Start a side business by using hobbies that provide values to the public to generate income such as farming, freelance writing, laundry services, and photography amongst others.
- Earn a certification, that is get additional professional certification to grow skills
- Open an online shop that displays and sells different products such as arts, painting, crafts, accessories, clothing, food items or other Home Economics related skills.
- Sell fairly used items by trading things that they no longer need to people either physically or through designated websites.
- Teach courses or workshops on topics and skills that they are versatile with through one-on-one lesson or online classes.
- Advertise on Social Media – family members who have large followers on social media can partner with businesses to share paid post; create a blogger account dedicated to their interest; share photos and videos and grow the account or contact brands as partners that can sponsor content for them.
- Rent out family property, extra space or vehicle. They can also list their properties with third party companies.
- Volunteer for extra hours in work place.

However, family members should desist from plunging already lean family income into unprofitable ventures like Ponzi Schemes or gambling.

**Gender Issues:** During the COVID period, a couple of gender issues were recorded such as girls’ inaccessibility to remote learning tools, deprioritization of education, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, child marriage increased and there were cases of female genital mutilation. Women and girls engaged in more unpaid work such as child care, care for the elderly and ill family members as well as siblings who were out of school and household work like cleaning and cooking. Cases of gender-based violence, child labour and exploitation increased due to increased economic stress on families and quarantine measures. There was approximately 20% increase in violence and in 61 million cases of intimate partner violence with some resulting in death of women (United Nations Women, Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria During the COVID 19 Crisis: The Shadow Pandemic, 2020).

To tackle these challenges in the post COVID era, families should:

- Report cases of GBV should be reported to relevant criminal justice professionals (police, prosecutors, judges and magistrates, lawyers and legal aid providers, etc.) and civil society organizations.
- Increase in the investment of safe and continued learning for girls’ given the increased risk of child marriage and teenage pregnancy; parents should promote equal distribution of unpaid care work, labour and home learning so that girls can focus on learning, and lessons should be broadcast through appropriate radio channels across all 36 states of the Federation.
- Incorporate Anti-GBV and harmful practices messaging, including information on toll-free lines into the virtual teaching/education.
- Educate its members on legislations regarding GBV such as The Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act (2015); the law enforcement agencies trained and equipped to respond to incidences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and one stop centres providing support to survivors. Although the legislation is robust and responds to sexual and gender-based violence against girls and women and the actions that must be taken by the various stakeholders, only 10 states in Nigeria have domesticated and implemented it.
- access livelihood opportunities for survivors of GBV such as programmes that target vulnerable women and women’s economic empowerment

**Family Values and Relationships:** The family is an institution with distinct values and a network of people interacting in different ways. The lockdown led to family members being forced to stay together for longer periods of time and this had both positive and negative impacts on family relationships. It created an opportunity for bonding between family members. Family members spent quality time together resulting in intimacy; engaged in shared activities such as communication, meals, stories, household work, recreation and other activities that create pleasure. The closeness also led to the re-inculcation of family values in family members such as respect for elders, chastity, dignity of labour, patriotism, courage and self-reliance. The period also witnessed an increase in cases of domestic violence.

In the post COVID era, families should:

- have more family time to strengthen family intimacy and relationship;
• increase opportunities for family member to continue to engage in healthy practices that create bond and unity between family members such as playing indoor games, learning new skills, watching movies, eating together amongst others;
• teach their members new family values and traditions as well as inculcate in them old family values for a better Nigerian society.
• Increase the quality of parent-child relationship and use the post COVID era to teach and learn new life coping skills, self-sufficiency, stress management skills, household work skills, better Technology skills and problem solving skills.
• continue to show interest in the education of their children as demanded by home-schooling during the pandemic;
• adopt healthy and globally accepted conflict resolution approaches like negotiation, mediation, compromise amongst others to resolve family conflicts rather than resort to violence.

Conclusion and Recommendations
COVID 19 posed severe challenges to all spheres of human life and development and left a lasting imprint on the world economy causing permanent changes and teaching important lessons. The impact of the pandemic had gruesome consequences on all sectors of the economy with more negative than positive concerns. However, it also had copious lessons for Home Economists and Family Living Development specialist to steer a way forward for the profession and everyday living of the discipline. The post COVID era therefore calls for resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability for Home Economics and family living in Nigeria.

Because the world is evolving and constantly changing, Home Economics and its professionals must be ‘expert novices’. They need to acquire new and better way of doing old thing to enable them fit into the ‘New Normal’ this can be achieved by critically reviewing the Home Economics curriculum at all levels in the Nigerian educational system; incorporating and applying 21st century technology skills in all areas of the discipline. Heads of households also need to acquire and teach family members divergent skills that will guarantee sustainable family living in post COVID era. Also, members of the family need to acquaint themselves with relevant information on the COVID pandemic and associated variants species as well as current measures and provisions put in place by the government to curb the post COVID syndrome.

References


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