

Problems and Challenges Experienced by Home Science Teachers in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Home Science integrates the application of various science and humanities to improve the human environment, family nutrition, Home management, Child development, and Textile and Clothing. Since Home Science is a broad subject area, to develop this subject the teaching-learning resources should be increased and enhanced. In our country, due to the lack of awareness of the subject, the teachers who are involved in teaching Home Science have faced various problems and challenges in developing this subject at the school level. This study highlights the problems and challenges experienced by Home Science teachers in government schools in Sri Lanka. The sample was collected randomly and used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data. The findings show that there are several problems and challenges experienced by Home Science teachers, most of the problems are related to resource availability for teaching-learning activities of Home Science. Therefore, the teachers face difficulties to improve Home Science education at the school level. The study found that nearly 70% of teachers faced difficulties in teaching textiles and clothing because of lack of teaching - learning resources. Further, the findings reveal that the teachers face challenges related to a wide range of syllabus, assessment procedures, challenges with instructional resources, and other general challenges such as lack of motivation, and lack of interest of students in the subject. These problems and challenges will affect the quality of teaching and learning activities at the school level. So the present study aims to find the problems and solutions to improve Home Science Education at the school level.

Keywords: Home Science, teachers, problems, challenges, teaching – learning

Introduction

Today, Home Science is said to be a diverse learning program in which both boys and girls participate. Home Science education at home has now reached a new dimension. It helps to develop skills and competencies for successful careers, professions and careers on national and international level, taking into account individual needs and interests. As such, it has become an essential tool for empowering women at home and in her community, as professionals in various science and humanities to improve the human environment. Family nutrition, resource management, child development and clothing style. Home is the beginning of life and school is the beginning of formal education. In this way, what is learned at home can be further enhanced at school. In the recent scenario, Home Science is gaining popularity among students. Those who choose a career in this field must be equipped not only with a logical mind, but also with a realistic approach and a balanced attitude. More and more people are opting for building career in this field. Home Science teachers play an important role in student development. Increasing awareness of educational quality, increased competition, increased pressure on teachers, and shifts from other factors make education stressful. Besides, Home Science teachers must be qualified in all subject areas. There are several factors that influence the improvement of science education and the quality of teaching and learning activities. The most important ingredients for teaching Home Science education are resources for teaching-learning activities and teachers knowledge in all areas of Home Science. This present study identifies some of the main problems and challenges experienced by Home Science School teachers. These Problems and challenges may hinder the teaching-learning activities of Home Science. This study aims to find problems and challenges experienced by Home Science teachers at the school level.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the availability of teaching-learning resources for Home Science Education.
2. To find the problems and challenges experienced by teachers in teaching.

Statement of the Problem

Home science education helps to build in learners the necessary scientific attitudes to achieve greater efficiency and bring a qualitative change in life and homes. The objectives of home science education are to help each learner lead a more satisfying personal, family, and

community life. Home science is the application of many sciences and arts towards achieving better, healthier, and happier homes. It includes knowledge of basic sciences, arts, and applied sciences, such as nutrition, food, clothing, and child care, home management, and human relationships. The majority of the subject's areas are tied to practical work, materials for teaching and learning activities are must require to teach this multidisciplinary subject at the school level.

According to Smith and de Zwart (2010), Home Science as a discipline has been recognized and included in educational systems in almost all continents. Consequently, Home Science is a subject that requires teachers with the relevant skills and experience required to empower individuals with requisite functional skills. It is however noted that, Home Science education continues to be faced with challenges in most nations. Because of a lack of awareness of this subject, the teachers face a number of issues and difficulties when delivering Home Science Education in the classroom. The learning environment has been recognized as the physical, psychological and instructional atmosphere that supports the learning process (Maina, et al, 2019). This study focuses on the issues and difficulties faced by Sri Lankan school teachers.

Limitation of the Study

Home Science subject conducting both in Tamil and Sinhala mediums in various schools in Sri Lanka. The study was limited to Tamil medium Home Science teachers in government schools in Sri Lanka. The present study is limited with the Problems and Challenges faced by Tamil medium Home Science teachers in Sri Lanka.

Methods and Materials

In this study, data collection and data analysis were done to achieve the objectives. Primary and secondary data sources are used for data collection. The framed questionnaire helped to collect the required primary data. Published and unpublished literature sources, books were used for secondary data collection. The sample included hundred Home Science teachers working in various government schools in Sri Lanka. Sample was selected randomly. All respondents were female teachers. The questionnaire was distributed to two hundred Home Science teachers and the investigator selected hundred from the filled in questionnaires. The analysis was conducted under the descriptive method by using data tables, graphs, and percentages in excel software.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows that the respondents had various educational qualifications but all had background knowledge in Home Science. The findings indicate that 34% of teachers qualified in G.C.E advanced level (General Certificate Examination), they have not taken any attempt to get a degree in Home Science, but they were experienced teachers with more than 20 years of work experience in the field. 17 % of teachers were experts in all areas of Home Science and held bachelor's degrees in the field. 17%, had post-graduate degrees in various fields, while one-seventh, or 27.7%, had diplomas. 4.3% of the teachers were qualified through different programmes pertaining to the teaching profession. The respondents pointed out that there aren't enough courses available in Sri Lanka for those who want to hone their skills and raise their educational credentials in the field of home science.

Table 1

Educational Qualifications of the teachers

Educational qualification	Percentage
G.E.C Advance Level	34 %
Diploma	27.7%
Under graduation	17 %
Post-graduation	17 %

Table 2 shows that the difficult area in teaching Home Science. According to the study, 9.5% of teachers had trouble teaching human development and home management, while 23.8% had trouble teaching nutrition and food. The results show that due to insufficient training and practices, 66.7% of teachers have trouble teaching textiles and apparel.

Table 2

The areas which are feel difficulties to teach Home Science

Educational qualification	Percentage
Food and Nutrition	23.8 %
Textiles and Clothing	66.7%
Human development	5.5 %
Home Management	4 %

The study found that, there aren't enough home science books in the school library, and lack of training programme conducting for textile practical part to teachers in their zonal education. And 95.2% of teachers prefer to use Tamil-language textbooks as references. Additionally, 63.6% of instructors found it challenging to refer English-medium texts, while 59.1% of teachers used the internet to search materials for their subjects. Seminars and workshops should be held in each departmental zonal area to increase teachers' knowledge across all subject areas. Teachers should also hold lectures for students at the same time. The study's findings indicate that 84.1% of teachers held seminars and workshops for their students right before final exams, however the majority of institutions did not allocate the necessary funds for such activities. According to the study's findings, 73.3% of instructors attended seminars and workshops held by their district's zonal education. The paucity of seminars held by their zonal education was cited by 42.2% of respondents.

The most crucial tool in the teaching and learning processes of Home Science is the laboratory facilities. According to the study's findings, 37.8% of respondents said they lacked the necessary lab space for conducting food science and textile and apparel practical, while the remaining respondents said they had a lab for conducting teaching and learning activities in Home Science. 39 % of respondents stated their satisfaction with the availability of resources for the teaching and learning of Home Science, compared to 30% who expressed fair satisfaction, 14 % voiced their dissatisfaction, and 17% articulated greater satisfaction. Only a smaller number of respondents expressed extreme satisfaction. This indicates that an improvement in Home Science education at the school level is essential. Figure 1 represents the level of satisfaction expressed by the respondents towards the available resource and materials to teach Home Science.

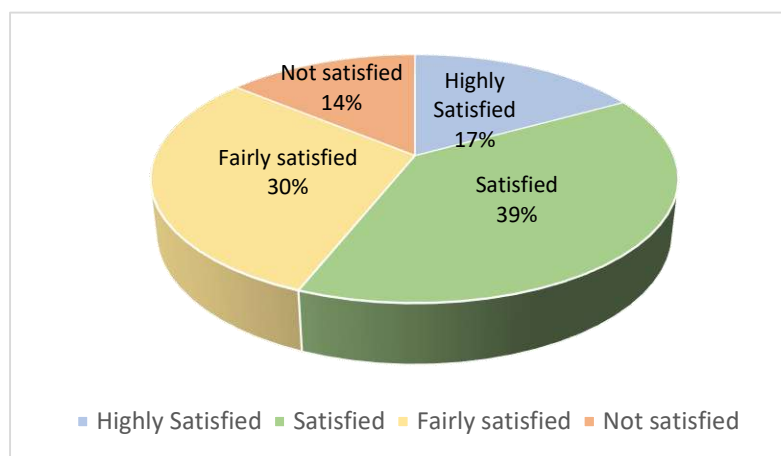


Figure 1. Level of Satisfaction on Resource Availability

Teaching-learning activities and improving Home Science Education at the School level. There are several problems and challenges experienced by teachers in Home Science. The results shows that 24% of teachers experienced by lack of teaching-learning materials, and 20 % related to inadequate infrastructure facilities. 21% of respondents mentioned low funding to improve facilities for Home Science, 9% of respondents mentioned lack of time for covering the syllabus, 14 % of respondents mentioned lack of interest among the students to learn Home Science, and 12 % of respondents mentioned other problems such as internal problem, lack of supportive staffs and lack of motivation. These information are represented in Figure 2 below.

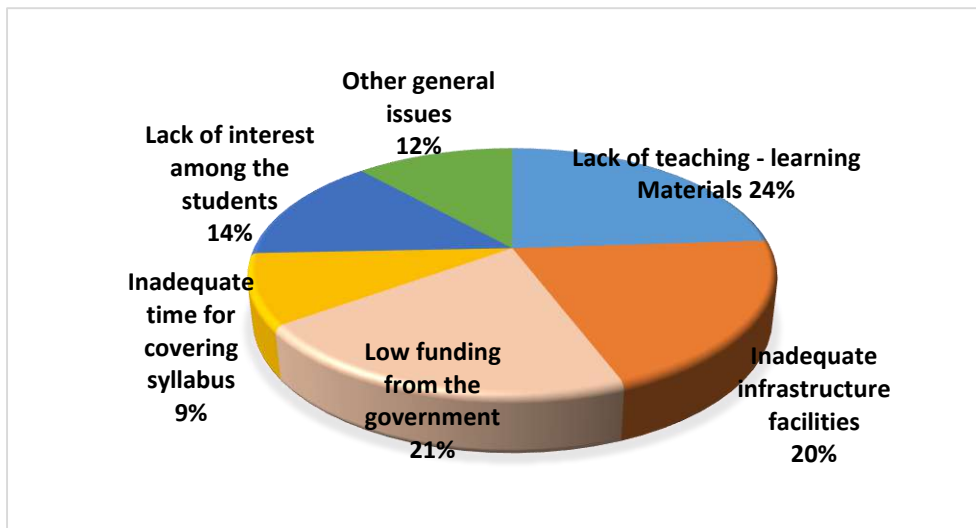


Figure 2. Problems Experienced by Home Science Teachers

The findings of the survey indicated that the majority of instructors had difficulties with assessment methods, such as translation issues, an excessive number of examiners, and questions that deviated from the course outline. 33% of respondents brought this up. 16% of respondents cited curriculum-related challenges, and 28 % cited instructional resource-related challenges, such as lack of teaching resources, inadequate support and funding, inadequate equipment and tools, and lack of motivation, as the most significant obstacles in Home Science Education at the school level. Additionally, many general obstacles are highlighted as impacting Home Science Education. 23 % of respondents highlighted general obstacles such as internal obstacles, student interest in the topic, etc. Figure 3 shows the challenges faced by Home Science teachers.

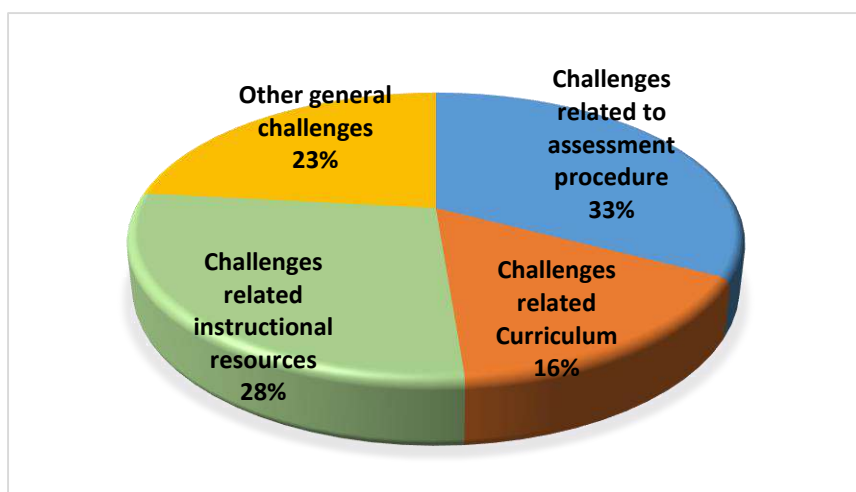


Figure 3. Challenges Faced by Home Science Teachers

Suggestions for Enhancing School-level Home Science Education

In addition, respondents were requested to provide proposals for improving Home Science Education at the school level. All the respondents were interested in implementing Home Science Education in schools. The following recommendations were provided by the Home Science instructor.

1. Allocate the necessary time for Home Science practical tasks, such as food and nutrition, textiles and apparel, and interior design.
2. There should be an increase in the number of seminars and workshops offered to Home Science instructors by their education zone.
3. Management should provide more resources to the advancement of Home Science.
4. The pupils should be made aware of the subject matter and employment options.
5. Home Science teaching-learning activities should get more funding.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that Home Science educators struggled with a wide range of concerns, including a lack of support from administration, a dearth of resources to use in the classroom, a lack of student interest in the subject matter, a general lack of motivation, issues with lesson plans, teaching materials, assessment, and students' perspectives on the topic. The teaching-learning of Home Science in schools is constrained by these worries and constraints. The zonal education system is responsible for providing twice per semester workshops and seminars for teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Educators should have

more hands-on experience with textiles and clothing. It was discovered through this study that textile and clothing education provide unique difficulties. That's why it's crucial to increase teachers' expertise. Providing students with a quality education necessitates finding solutions to problems in Home Science, which spans several disciplines. Perceptions need to be changed. If these concerns are swiftly addressed, then teaching Home Science in schools may be beneficial.

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