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How Do Currently Employed Home Economics Teachers Feel About Incorporating Teachings on Sustainability into Their Curricula?

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Abstract
The major objective of home economics is to advocate for sustainable development, which is crucial for the survival of present and future generations. The researchers aimed to assess the proficiency of home economics teachers in identifying chances to integrate sustainable development principles into their courses. Additionally, they sought to determine the most effective sustainable development themes that may be incorporated into home economics classrooms. The data was obtained from a survey that involved 89 randomly selected home economics instructors from Slovenia, who were chosen as a representative sample of the population. The selection of these professors was not made impulsively. Prior to analysis, the findings underwent qualitative and quantitative reviews. The study's findings indicate that home economics teachers who are currently employed in the sector recognise the significance of their courses in promoting sustainable development education. There is a common perception that commercial firms and the textile industry have fewer opportunities to adopt environmentally responsible practices compared to the food production and residential construction sectors. This is apparent from the current educational system's sustainability curricula, which prioritise the methods of maintaining and improving living conditions. The study's findings indicate that current home economics teachers should have unfettered opportunities for ongoing professional development. In order to integrate sustainable development into their home economics teachings, it is essential for them to acquire expertise in these fields. Due to the numerous possibilities for educating youngsters about sustainable living, it is imperative to modify the curriculum. The importance of this issue is increasing.

Keywords: teaching home economics, sustainable development, and how to teach for sustainable development

Introduction

In the academic literature, the idea of "sustainable development" (SD) has been given a variety of different meanings (Holden et al., 2014; Lorek & Spangenberg, 2014; Meadowcroft, 2007). Nevertheless, the definition of sustainable development that was proposed by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 is frequently cited. According to this definition, sustainable development comprises "development that satisfies present needs while safeguarding the capacity of future generations to fulfil their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 43). According to DeFries et al. (2012), sustainable development involves a wide variety of academic fields, including geography, engineering, architecture, biology, medicine, nutrition, agronomics, citizenship, sociology, psychology, political science, history, legal studies, and economics and business. Because of its multidisciplinary nature, home economics has the potential to influence policy formation in a variety of socioeconomic domains, including the environment (IFHE, 2008). Several academics, such as Dale and Newman (2005) and Luppi (2011),

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have emphasised how essential it is to take an interdisciplinary approach in order to realise successful education for sustainable development (SD). According to a report that was published by UNESCO in 2014, the enhancement of educational opportunities is of the utmost significance in the promotion of sustainable development and the advancement of persons' overall well-being. According to UNESCO (2009), education for sustainable development (ESD) is a cognitive process with the goal of acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for making informed decisions that take into consideration the long-term prospects of the economy, ecology, and the equitable development of all communities (p. 1). According to Devetak and Krek (2013), the material includes knowledge that comes from the domains of social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, and technological studies. (UNESCO, 2009) Sustainable development theories typically include social, environmental, and economic aspects into their conceptual frameworks. According to Dresner (2008), there is not currently a universal agreement on how to fairly distribute emphasis across the three facets of sustainable development. (Burmeister et al., 2013; Haapala et al., 2012; Summers et al., 2004) Research has shown that educators working in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) have a tendency to place a greater emphasis on the environmental dimension than the economic or social elements of sustainable development. In contrast to this is an all-encompassing method that takes into account all three dimensions (Burmeister et al., 2013; Haapala et al., 2012; Summers et al., 2004). According to Breiting (2000, as cited in Borg, Gericke, and others' 2012 article), sustainable development (SD) is frequently regarded as an expansion of environmental education. An instructional process that tackles the interactions between humans and the environment, employing an interdisciplinary problem-solving approach, and prioritising the explanation of values is referred to as environmental education (EE). It has been noted that, as stated by UNESCOUNEP (1983) and Pavlova (2013), it has been found that... The implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) should be a shared duty among educators, according to Vartiainnen and Kaipainen (2012) and Buza (2010). Teachers of natural sciences, in particular, place a strong focus on this viewpoint, as they are strong proponents of including environmental education throughout the entirety of a student's educational experience. According to Torkar (2013), students in Slovenia who are either pre-service or in-service who are majoring in environmental science or pre-school education have an expectation that their teachers will adhere to the principles of sustainable development (SD). According to the International Federation of Home Economists (2008), home economics is a field that may be characterised as both multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary in its approach. Individuals need to be equipped with a wide variety of knowledge and skills in order for them to be able to properly deal with the myriad of complex problems that exist in the modern world. Because of the aforementioned factors, home economics is recognised as an important multidisciplinary field (IFHE, 2008; Sproles & Sproles, 2000). This highlights the significance of the field. According to Hira (2013), the concept of "home economics literacy" encompasses a variety of literacies, including financial, health, nutrition, and

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environmental literacy. This is an argument that she makes in her article. According to Gale Smith (2015), it is commonly acknowledged that the inclusion of home economics courses in the curriculum is essential due to the increasing environmental concerns and the rising need for sustainable development. In addition, it is widely known that the inclusion of home economics subjects in the curriculum is imperative due to the growing need for sustainable development. In addition, Lce and Reihmane (2015) emphasise the importance of incorporating a variety of topics that are pertinent to sustainable development within the content of the home economics curriculum. In addition to providing individuals and families with the skills and information they need to improve their quality of life and foster a pursuit of learning that lasts a lifetime, the goal of home economics education is to also prepare the next generation to deal with a variety of issues that affect the entire world (Pendergast, 2006, 2012; Renold, 2008). It was proven in a study that was carried out in 2011 by Dewhurst and Pendergast that home economics teachers consider the incorporation of sustainable themes in their instruction to be vital, and that they possess the qualifications to effectively accomplish this task. The research was published in the Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences. According to Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011), it is of the utmost significance for home economics courses to incorporate discussions on issues related to sustainable living.

Problem for Research

According to Benn (2008), the primary purposes of home economics are to enhance the quality of life and to promote learning that continues throughout one's entire life. These objectives take into account the needs of both individuals and society as a whole. It has been found in a number of studies (IFHE, 2008; Pendergast, 2006; Torkar & Koch, 2012), among others, that it is absolutely necessary for home economics curriculums to cover concerns related to sustainability. According to Kostanjevec et al. (2017), a range of stakeholders who are involved in the process of providing home economics education or who provide home economics education themselves are of the opinion that students should acquire functional home economics literacy while they are participating in the formal education literacy process. This literacy encompasses the kinds of information and abilities that are common in the SD and consumption regions. According to Hira (2013), the efficiency of this method can assist students in acquiring proper home economics literacy, which can lead to changes in one's behaviour and an improvement in one's quality of life. According to the findings of a study conducted by Kostanjevec et al. (2017), teachers in Slovenia claimed that home economics education has a positive impact on students' development of a higher level of environmental consciousness and the establishment of attitudes that are environmentally friendly. Pendergast and Dewhurst (2012), Hoijer et al. (2011), Lichenstein and Ludwig (2010), Slater and Hinds (2014), and other studies have come to the conclusion that neither the subject matter nor the role of home economics teachers in elementary schools can be considered to be on the periphery when it comes to teaching about sustainable development. As a direct consequence of this, sustainable development ought to be taught in home economics lessons (Gale Smith,

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2015; Grayson, 2013). According to Zsóka et al. (2013), the behaviours and perspectives of today's student generations have the potential to have an effect on the environment in the foreseeable future. Given the pedagogical knowledge they bring to the table, in-service teachers Home economics teachers are in a privileged position to successfully incorporate sustainable development (SD) principles into home economics curricula because of their specialised training and expertise. However, if instructors do not appreciate the significance of sustainable development topics that are not officially included in the curriculum 32, this will have a negative effect on their attitudes towards the incorporation of sustainable development. To the best of our knowledge, no relevant research has been conducted in Slovenia to determine which ESD-related topics are significant to home economics teachers and which of these topics are covered in their classes. This is something that we would find very interesting to learn. The goal of the current study is to: a) determine whether home economics teachers recognise the potential of their subject to educate students for sustainable development; and b) determine whether themes are included in the curriculum that home economics teachers feel have an influence on SD. Both of these questions are intended to determine whether home economics teachers recognise the potential of their subject to educate students for sustainable development. On the basis of the objectives of the study, we formulated two research questions (RQ): How significant do instructors place an emphasis on the importance of home economics as a subject for promoting ESD? Which pedagogical units and topics related to sustainable development are covered in home economics classes?

Conclusion

The in-service training for home economics is going to be the focus of the conversation. According to the teachers in Slovenia who participated in the research, there is a notion that making home economics a required subject in primary schools has the ability to stimulate students' interest in the investigation of social justice issues. This idea comes from the fact that home economics is currently an obligatory subject in secondary schools. According to the viewpoint of the lecturers, the Slovene Home Economics curriculum consists of four teaching modules that are advantageous in the process of merging disciplines that are in line with sustainable development (SD). There is a wide range of opinion among educators regarding the degree of significance that should be attached to the various instructional modules. The Nutrition module was thought to be the most important, but the Textiles & Clothing module was regarded as having a lower level of relevance. According to the findings, the incorporation of issues relating to sustainable living into home economics classes is consistent with this point of view. It has been demonstrated that certain instructional modules within the area of home economics education lack sufficient integration of sustainable concepts on a regular basis. This was something that was mentioned earlier. It is likely that this occurrence might be explained by the lack of clear guidance within the Slovenian home economics curriculum regarding the inclusion of topics and skills relevant to sustainable development. This is one of the probable explanations that can be attributed to this phenomenon. It's possible that this is also the reason why educators who currently

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have jobs frequently don't have appropriate teaching practises for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). As a result, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that educators have access to graduate-level academic programmes at universities as well as possibilities for continuing their professional development of a high standard. The findings also imply that home economics teachers currently working in the field saw SD as a sort of environmental education. As a result of this, we propose that the Home Economics curriculum in Slovenia be revised in order to contain topics linked to Sustainable Development (SD) that are more clearly differentiated from one another. This would effectively highlight the economic, environmental, and social elements of SD.

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