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# TEACHING CHALLENGES OF HOME ECONOMICS AMONG NON-SPECIALIST TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAOANG, NORTHERN SAMAR

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the teaching challenges of non-specialist teachers handling Home Economics in secondary schools in Laoang, Northern Samar. Specifically, it examined the demographic profile of non-specialist teachers in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, and years of teaching experience; the challenges encountered in teaching Home Economics with respect to pedagogical content knowledge, use of specialized equipment, confidence and professional identity, and professional development needs; and (the relationship between demographic profiles and teaching challenges.*

*Data were gathered from 20 respondents using descriptive statistics and pearson r analysis. Results revealed that most teachers were in mid-age groups, predominantly female, and held bachelor's degrees, but half specialized outside Home Economics. Findings showed that teachers faced significant challenges in content mastery, handling specialized equipment, and maintaining confidence and professional identity. Professional development needs were consistently high, reflecting teachers' recognition of their limitations and desire for training. Chi-square tests indicated no significant relationship between demographic variables such as age, gender, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience with the challenges encountered. However, field of specialization showed near-significant results, suggesting that specialization may influence difficulties in content mastery, equipment use, and confidence.*

*The study concludes that the challenges faced by non-specialist teachers are systemic rather than personal, rooted in the mismatch between specialization and subject assignment. Addressing these issues requires systemic reforms in staffing policies, provision of adequate resources, and targeted professional development programs. By strengthening teacher competence and confidence, Home Economics can fulfill its vital role in equipping students with essential life skills and supporting community development.*

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Home Economics (HE) is a vital subject in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track of the Philippine K–12 curriculum. It equips learners with practical skills in food preparation, clothing, household management, and entrepreneurship, preparing them for both livelihood opportunities and personal life management. The effectiveness of HE instruction depends largely on the teacher's expertise and specialization.

In many secondary schools, however, teachers whose majors are outside Home Economics are assigned to teach HE subjects due to staffing shortages. This mismatch between specialization and teaching assignment often results in challenges such as limited pedagogical content knowledge, difficulty in handling specialized equipment, and reduced confidence in teaching practical skills. These challenges may affect instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

Studies have documented similar issues in technical-vocational education. Amine and Evangelio (2021) found that non-specialized teachers struggle with knowledge transfer and adapting to skill-based instruction. Salvador (2022) emphasized that teaching outside one's specialization remains a pressing concern in Philippine TVE programs. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2020) highlighted globally that teacher expertise is central to effective vocational training, and mismatches in specialization can negatively affect student outcomes.

Given this context, it is important to investigate the teaching challenges faced by non-specialist teachers in delivering Home Economics in Laoang, Northern Samar, where secondary schools rely heavily on non-specialist teachers for TVL subjects.

### Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1.What are the demographic profiles of non-specialist teachers teaching Home Economics in secondary schools in Laoang, Northern Samar?

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a. Age
b.Gender
c. Educational Attaintment
d.Major/Field of Specialization
e. Years of Teaching Experience
2. What challenges do non-specialist teachers encounter in teaching Home Economics in terms of:• Pedagogical content knowledge
• Use of specialized equipment
• Confidence and professional identity
• Professional development needs
3. Is there a significant relationship between non-specialist teacher demographic profile and challenges of non specialist teachers.

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study will use a descriptive-correlational quantitative design to measure challenges and examine relationships between variables.

### Participants

The sample will consist of 20 teachers from secondary schools in Laoang, Northern Samar, including both HE specialists and non-HE specialists assigned to teach HE subjects. Stratified random sampling will ensure representation of both groups.

### Data Collection

Surveys will be distributed to participants, with responses collected anonymously.

### Data Analysis

• Descriptive Statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) to demographic profile and teaching challenges.
• Pearson Correlation to examine the relationship between non-specialist teacher demographic profile and challenges of non specialist teachers.

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents the data on demographic profile both non specialist and home economics teacher. Age: The majority (40%) are in the mid-range age group, suggesting a workforce that is neither too young nor nearing retirement. This balance implies stability but also highlights the need for continuous training.

Gender: With 50% in one dominant gender category, the teaching force reflects traditional patterns in Home Economics, though diversity is present.

Educational Attainment: Most teachers hold bachelor's degrees, with nearly half pursuing graduate studies. However, only 5% reached the highest level, indicating limited advanced specialization. Years of Teaching Experience: The distribution is balanced, with both new and experienced teachers represented. This mix suggests varied levels of confidence and adaptability, but not necessarily subject mastery.

Field of Specialization: Half of the teachers specialize outside Home Economics, confirming the mismatch between training and teaching assignment.

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**Table 1. Demographic Profile**

| Variable | Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 22-30<br>31-40<br>41-50<br>51 above | 6<br>2<br>8<br>4 | 30.0%<br>10.0%<br>40.0%<br>20.0% | A significant portion are in the youngest group.<br>Few belong to the second age bracket<br>Largest group, indicating mid-range age teachers dominate<br>Some are in the oldest bracket. |
| Gender | Male<br>Female | 6<br>14 | 30.0%<br>70.0% | Minority gender group represented<br>Majoririty gender group represented |
| Educational Attainment | Bachelors<br>Masters<br>Doctorate | 10<br>9<br>1 | 50.0%<br>45.0%<br>5.0% | Half hold bachelor's degrees<br>Nearly half have higher units/graduate studies<br>Very few reached the highest attainment |
| Years of Teaching | 1 -3 years<br>4-6 years<br>7-10 years<br>11 years+ | 6<br>3<br>6<br>5 | 30.0%<br>15.0%<br>30.0%<br>25.0% | Many are relatively new teachers.<br>Few have moderate experience.<br>Another large group with mid-level experience.<br>Quarter are highly experienced. |
| Field of Specialization | Non-HE<br>HE-Specialist | 10<br>10 | 50.0%<br>50.0% | Half specialize outside Home Economics<br>The rest are spread across other fields. |

Table 2 A shows the overall data." I can explain HE topics clearly to students" scores are low (means mostly between 1.7–2.7. This indicates that non-specialist teachers lack deep content knowledge in Home Economics, relying more on theory than practice. This implies students may not acquire practical life skills effectively. Professional development programs focusing on subject-specific pedagogy are urgently needed

**Table 2 A. Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

| Item | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel confident teaching Home Economics concepts. | 1.90 | 0.788 | Low mastery of subject matter |
| 2. I have sufficient knowledge of HE subject matter. | 2.10 | 0.852 | Slightly better, but still limited. |
| 3. I can explain HE topics clearly to students | 1.70 | 0.865 | Very low confidence in teaching technical content |
| 4. I find it difficult to prepare lesson plans for HE. | 2.10 | 0.852 | Moderate struggle in lesson delivery |
| 5. I rely heavily on external resources (e.g., internet, textbooks) to teach HE. | 2.75 | 0.910 | Highest among PCK items, but still below strong mastery |

Table 2.B Means range from 2.0 to 3.55, with "I struggle with operating specialized HE equipment" and "lack of equipment hinders my ability to teach HE effectively" showing the highest values. This suggests that operating specialized equipment (e.g., sewing machines, kitchen tools) is the most pressing challenge.Without proper training and resources, teachers cannot deliver practical lessons. Schools must invest in equipment training and maintenance.

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**Table 2 B. Use of Specialized Equipment**

| Item | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. I can effectively demonstrate the use of HE tools and equipment. | 2.45 | 0.826 | Moderate difficulty using equipment |
| 7. I feel comfortable handling HE laboratory materials. | 2.35 | 0.933 | Similar moderate struggle. |
| 8. I struggle with operating specialized HE equipment. | 3.35 | 0.671 | High difficulty — strongest challenge |
| 9. I need assistance when conducting practical HE lessons. | 2.00 | 0.918 | Low confidence in handling tools. |
| 10. Lack of equipment hinders my ability to teach HE effectively | 3.55 | 0.510 | Very high difficulty — most critical issue. |

Table 2. C Scores are generally low to moderate, indicating that teachers feel insecure about teaching Home Economics, as it is outside their specialization.

This implies that affects motivation and classroom delivery. Strengthening professional identity through recognition and support can improve confidence.

**Table 2 C. Confidence and Professional Identity**

| Item | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11. I feel competent teaching HE despite my specialization. | 1.90 | 0.788 | Low confidence |
| 12. I sometimes feel inadequate compared to HE specialists. | 2.30 | 0.733 | Slightly better, but still weak |
| 13. Teaching HE affects my confidence as a teacher. | 2.00 | 1.08 | Low professional identity |
| 14. I am motivated to improve my HE teaching skills. | 2.85 | 0.875 | Moderate confidence. |
| 15. I believe my non-HE background limits my teaching effectiveness | 2.60 | 0.821 | Moderate, but not strong |

Table 2. D shows all items are above 2.8, with Continuous training is necessary for effective HE instruction at 3.30. This shows teachers strongly recognize their need for training and support. This implies capacity-building programs, workshops, and continuous professional development are essential to address gaps in knowledge and skills.

**Table 2 D. Professional Development Needs**

| Item | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I need more training to teach HE effectively. | 3.10 | 0.641 | Strong need for training. |
| 17. I would benefit from workshops on HE pedagogy. | 3.05 | 0.686 | Consistently high demand |
| 18. Mentoring from HE specialists would improve my teaching. | 2.85 | 0.813 | Moderate to high need. |
| 19. I am willing to attend professional development programs for HE. | 2.80 | 0.523 | Moderate need. |
| 20. Continuous training is necessary for effective HE instruction | 3.30 | 0.865 | Highest demand for professional development. |

Table 2. E shows teachers perceive themselves as moderately effective, with item 5 “I believe I contribute positively to student learning in HE” scoring highest. However, effectiveness is limited by lack of specialization and resources. This implies teachers try to adapt, their effectiveness is constrained. Support systems and mentoring from specialists could enhance teaching outcomes.

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**Table 2 E. Perceived Teaching Effectiveness**

| Item | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My students understand the lessons I teach in HE. | 2.75 | 0.851 | Moderate effectiveness |
| 2. I can engage students in practical HE activities. | 2.90 | 0.788 | Slightly higher confidence. |
| 3. My teaching methods in HE are effective. | 2.90 | 0.718 | Consistent moderate perception. |
| 4. Students perform well in HE under my instruction. | 2.45 | 0.605 | Lower effectiveness |
| 5. I believe I contribute positively to student learning in HE | 3.15 | 0.671 | 0.671 |

**Table 3 Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Challenges**

Gender: Across all domains (PCK, USE, CPI, PDN, TES), p-values ranged from .253 to .661, all above the 0.05 threshold. This indicates no significant relationship between gender and teaching challenges.

Age: P-values ranged from .193 to .669, again all above 0.05. Thus, age does not significantly influence the challenges encountered.
Educational Attainment: P-values ranged from .273 to .896, showing no significant relationship between educational attainment and teaching challenges.

Years of Teaching Experience: P-values ranged from .121 to .599, all above 0.05. This means experience does not significantly reduce or increase the challenges faced.

Field of Specialization: P-values ranged from .053 to .277. While most are above 0.05, the values for PCK (.072), USE (.086), CPI (.091), and PDN (.053) are close to the threshold, suggesting a near-significant relationship. This implies that specialization may influence challenges more than other demographic factors, though results are not statistically conclusive. This implies Gender, age, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience show no significant relationship with challenges. This means difficulties are systemic rather than personal. Field of specialization shows near-significant results, suggesting that teachers outside technical fields struggle more with content mastery, equipment use, and confidence.

Staffing policies should prioritize assigning Home Economics classes to teachers with relevant backgrounds. Professional development must be targeted to non-specialists, especially those from unrelated fields. Since challenges are consistent across demographics, training programs should be inclusive and equitable.

**Table 3. Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Teaching Challenges**

| Demographic Variable | Challenge Domain | $\chi^2$ Value | p-value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | All domains | 13.167-17.656 | .253–.661 | Not Significant | Gender does not influence challenges. |
| Age | All domains | 20.486–33.111 | .193–.669 | Not Significant | Age does not affect challenges. |
| Educational Attainment | All domains | 7.870–16.685 | 273–.896 | Not Significant | Attainment does not reduce challenges. |
| Years of Teaching | All domains | 24.556–35.756 | .121–.599 | Not Significant | Experience does not reduce challenges. |
| Field of Specialization | PCK, USE, CPI, PDN | 13.000–15.333 | .053–.091 | Significant | Specialization may influence challenges. |

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a complex picture of the teaching of Home Economics in secondary schools in Laoang, Northern Samar. The demographic profile (Objective 1) shows that most teachers are in their mid-career stage, predominantly female, and academically qualified with bachelor's degrees. However, half of them specialize in fields outside Home Economics. This mismatch between specialization and teaching assignment is the foundation of the challenges identified in Objective 2.

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The challenges encountered by non-specialist teachers are systemic and multifaceted. Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) scores were low, indicating limited mastery of technical content. This is expected given that most teachers were trained in other disciplines. As a result, lessons often lean toward theoretical discussions, depriving students of the experiential learning that Home Economics requires. This has implications for student outcomes, as practical skills such as cooking, sewing, and household management are essential for both personal development and community livelihood.

The use of specialized equipment emerged as the most critical challenge, with high mean scores reflecting difficulty in handling sewing machines, kitchen tools, and other technical apparatus. This challenge is compounded by inadequate school facilities and limited training opportunities. Without proper equipment use, teachers cannot deliver meaningful hands-on lessons, which diminishes student engagement and undermines the subject's practical value.

Confidence and professional identity were also found to be weak among non-specialist teachers. Many expressed insecurity in teaching a subject outside their specialization, which affects their motivation and classroom delivery. This lack of confidence reinforces the perception that Home Economics is a secondary assignment rather than a professional identity, further marginalizing the subject.

Professional development needs were consistently high, showing that teachers themselves recognize their limitations and are eager for training. This is a positive finding, as it indicates openness to capacity-building initiatives. However, the absence of regular training programs and workshops leaves these needs unmet, perpetuating the cycle of inadequacy.

Perceived teaching effectiveness was moderate, reflecting resilience and adaptability among teachers despite systemic constraints. While they strive to deliver lessons, their effectiveness is limited by lack of specialization, inadequate resources, and weak confidence. This highlights the importance of institutional support to enhance teaching outcomes.

Objective 3 examined the relationship between demographic profiles and challenges. The results showed no significant relationship between gender, age, educational attainment, or years of teaching experience and the challenges faced. This suggests that difficulties are systemic rather than personal, affecting all non-specialist teachers regardless of background. However, field of specialization showed near-significant results, indicating that teachers from non-technical fields struggle more with content mastery, equipment use, and confidence compared to those with backgrounds closer to science or technology. This reinforces the conclusion that specialization is the most critical factor influencing challenges.

Overall, the discussion points to a structural issue in the education system: teachers are assigned to teach Home Economics without adequate preparation, training, or resources. This mismatch undermines the subject's role in equipping students with essential life skills and supporting community development

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Teaching Challenges of Home Economics Among Non-Specialist Teachers in Secondary Schools in Laoang, Northern Samar

Part I: Demographic Profile

(Please check or fill in the appropriate information)

1. Age:1☐( 22–30) 2☐ (31–40) 3 ☐ (41–50) 4☐ (51+)
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Educational Attainment: ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's ☐ Doctorate
4. Years of Teaching Experience: 1☐ (1–3) 2 ☐ (4–6) 3 ☐ (7–10) 4 ☐ 11+
5. Major/Field of Specialization: ☐ Non-HE ☐ HE-Specialist

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**Part II: Teaching Challenges Scale**

A. Pedagogical Content Knowledge

| | Very Low Challenge (1) | Low Challenge (2) | High Challenge (3) | Very High Challenge (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel confident teaching Home Economics concepts. | | | | |
| 2. I have sufficient knowledge of HE subject matter. | | | | |
| 3. I can explain HE topics clearly to students | | | | |
| 4. I find it difficult to prepare lesson plans for HE. | | | | |
| 5. I rely heavily on external resources (e.g., internet, textbooks) to teach HE. | | | | |

B. Use of Specialized Equipment

| | Very Low Challenge (1) | Low Challenge (2) | High Challenge (3) | Very High Challenge (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. I can effectively demonstrate the use of HE tools and equipment. | | | | |
| 7. I feel comfortable handling HE laboratory materials. | | | | |
| 8. I struggle with operating specialized HE equipment. | | | | |
| 9. I need assistance when conducting practical HE lessons. | | | | |
| 10. Lack of equipment hinders my ability to teach HE effectively | | | | |

C. Confidence and Professional Identity

| | Very Low Challenge (1) | Low Challenge (2) | High Challenge (3) | Very High Challenge (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. I feel competent teaching HE despite my specialization. | | | | |
| 12. I sometimes feel inadequate compared to HE specialists. | | | | |
| 13. Teaching HE affects my confidence as a teacher. | | | | |
| 14. I am motivated to improve my HE teaching skills. | | | | |
| 15. I believe my non-HE background limits my teaching effectiveness | | | | |

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D. Professional Development Needs

| | Very Low Challenge (1) | Low Challenge (2) | High Challenge (3) | Very High Challenge (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I need more training to teach HE effectively. | | | | |
| 17. I would benefit from workshops on HE pedagogy. | | | | |
| 18. Mentoring from HE specialists would improve my teaching. | | | | |
| 19. I am willing to attend professional development programs for HE. | | | | |
| 20. Continuous training is necessary for effective HE instruction | | | | |

Part III: Perceived Teaching Effectiveness Scale

| | Very Low Challenge (1) | Low Challenge (2) | High Challenge (3) | Very High Challenge (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My students understand the lessons I teach in HE. | | | | |
| 2. I can engage students in practical HE activities. | | | | |
| 3. My teaching methods in HE are effective. | | | | |
| 4. Students perform well in HE under my instruction. | | | | |
| 5. I believe I contribute positively to student learning in HE | | | | |

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