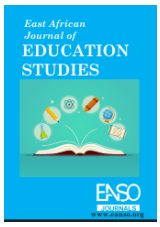
East African Journal of Education Studies, Volume 8, Issue 2, 2025
Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220



**East African Journal of Education Studies**
eajes.eanso.org
**Volume 8, Issue 2, 2025**
**Print ISSN: 2707-3939 | Online ISSN: 2707-3947**
Title DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-3947

EAST AFRICAN NATURE & SCIENCE ORGANIZATION

*Original Article*

# Exploring Effective Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning of Home Economics and Clothing Textiles in the Disintegrated Malawian Secondary School Curriculum

*Harriet Chanachi-Phiri*[1*] *& Prof. Vinnaras Nithyanantham, PhD*[2]

[1] DMI St. Eugene University, P. O. Box 330081, Lusaka, Zambia.
[2] UNICAF University, Cyprus.
[*] Author for Correspondence ORCID ID; https://orcid.org/0009-0006-66658-4813; Email: harrietchanachi@gmail.com

**Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220**

**Date Published:**

*27 June 2025*

**Keywords**:

*Disintegrated Curriculum, Integrative learning, Knowledge and Skills Acquisition, Constructivism Learning Theory, Home Economics (HEC), Clothing and Textiles (CT), Innovative Strategies.*

## ABSTRACT

The growing acknowledgement of the importance of Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) in developing essential skills for a dynamic economy underscores the need for thorough research on their teaching practices in Malawi. This study addresses the gaps in the disintegrated implementation of HEC and CT curricula in Malawian secondary schools. This study employs a mixed-methods design based on the interpretive paradigm and Dewey's (2009) constructivist learning theory to examine the gap. The research primarily assessed how the teaching and learning environment, alongside educational policies, affect the effectiveness of knowledge and skill acquisition in these subjects. The study specifically investigated the strategies employed to teach HEC and CT in their disintegrated form, as well as the challenges encountered. Furthermore, an empirical conceptual model of the proposed methods to improve teaching practices in Malawian secondary schools has been developed. The findings indicated that students have limited knowledge and skills due to an overemphasis on theory that reduces practical application. The current challenges include inadequate resources, outdated teaching methods, insufficient time allocation, ineffective instructional strategies, and minimal integration of information and communication technology (ICT). To address these issues, the study recommends adopting innovative teaching strategies, such as incorporating Information and Communication Technology (ICT), providing hands-on learning experiences, and enhancing teacher training programs. Additionally, revising the curriculum to integrate modern practices, such as computer-aided design, is crucial for improving educational outcomes in HEC and CT, ultimately preparing students for successful careers in the economy.

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

**APA CITATION**

Chanachi-Phiri, H. & Nithyanantham, V. (2025). Exploring Effective Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning of Home Economics and Clothing Textiles in the Disintegrated Malawian Secondary School Curriculum. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, *8*(2), 889-905. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

**CHICAGO CITATION**

Chanachi-Phiri, Harriet and Vinnaras Nithyanantham. 2025. "Exploring Effective Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning of Home Economics and Clothing Textiles in the Disintegrated Malawian Secondary School Curriculum". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 8 (2), 889-905. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

**HARVARD CITATION**

Chanachi-Phiri, H. & Nithyanantham, V. (2025) "Exploring Effective Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning of Home Economics and Clothing Textiles in the Disintegrated Malawian Secondary School Curriculum", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 8(2), pp. 889-905. doi: 10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

**IEEE CITATION**

H. Chanachi-Phiri & V. Nithyanantham "Exploring Effective Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning of Home Economics and Clothing Textiles in the Disintegrated Malawian Secondary School Curriculum" *EAJES*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 889-905, Jun. 2025.

**MLA CITATION**

Chanachi-Phiri, Harriet & Vinnaras Nithyanantham. "Exploring Effective Strategies to Enhance Teaching and Learning of Home Economics and Clothing Textiles in the Disintegrated Malawian Secondary School Curriculum". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 8, no. 2, Jun. 2025, pp. 889-905, doi:10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

## INTRODUCTION

Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) play pivotal roles in secondary education, fostering essential practical skills that align with personal development and economic productivity. In Malawi, these subjects are integral to the nurturing of competencies that prepare students for various sectors, including food and nutrition management, clothing production, and entrepreneurship (MIE, 2013). This educational focus not only promotes self-reliance but also addresses critical national goals as outlined in the Malawi Vision 2063 Agenda, which emphasises the need for a skilled workforce to drive economic growth and technological advancement (Malawi Vision 2063, 2018).

Historically, the teaching of HEC and CT has undergone considerable evolution, reflecting changes in societal needs and educational philosophy. The curriculum aims to equip students with practical skills that contribute to improved family welfare and societal development (Kozina, 2016; Mooka, 1985; Kehinde *et al*., n.d.; Okorie *et al.*, 2021; Pendergast, 1999). The effective teaching of HEC and CT enhances individuals' capabilities to meet both personal and global demands in clothing and textiles, entrepreneurship, food, and technology, as well as address food-related illnesses (Azonuche & Anyakoha, 2018) and Kunkwezu (2007).

The necessity for a cohesive approach to Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) education, alongside other science subjects, remains insufficiently explored. With the Malawian government actively pursuing a ten-year educational development plan aimed at improving agricultural productivity, industrialisation, and urbanisation, integrating HEC and CT into this framework can enhance the potential for skill-oriented learning that aligns with national development objectives (Malawi Vision 2063, 2018). Therefore, schools must prioritise adopting integrative learning approaches, collaborating with industry, and equipping laboratories to facilitate a more engaging educational experience. Kumwenda (2024), (NESP 2018), MIE (2013), MOEST (2022), and Mwale (2023).

In light of this context, Home Economics has been divided into two distinct areas: Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles in the secondary school curriculum. This separation raises significant concerns about whether the current multidisciplinary learning environment and educational policies adequately prepare students

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

with the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in Home Economics within Malawian secondary schools. This study focused on examining the effects of instructional practices, particularly the strategies employed in lesson delivery, to assess whether these methods promote the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it offers recommendations for enhancing these practices to improve learning outcomes in HEC and CT. In the context of Malawi, this topic is underexplored, the results will provide evidence-based recommendations for educators, curriculum developers, policymakers, government officials, and relevant stakeholders to improve instructional strategies and curriculum design, ultimately fostering a more comprehensive understanding of teaching Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles among students and facilitating better knowledge and skill acquisition.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Home Economics Conceptualisation

Home Economics is a vital vocational subject in the Malawi educational system, taught at both secondary and higher institutions, and is an elective component of the secondary school curriculum (Kunkwenzu, 2007; MOEST, 2022). It encompasses food and nutrition, textiles, and essential life skills, contributing significantly to personal and social development (Azonuche, 2020). As societal dynamics evolve, the Home Economics program must adapt to address contemporary challenges and ensure graduates possess relevant managerial and entrepreneurial skills (Pendergast, 1999). The integration of an entrepreneurship curriculum aims to enhance graduates' competencies, better preparing them for diverse career opportunities in a rapidly changing global economy. (Kehinde *et al.*, n.d.).

### Practical and Innovative Teaching Strategies in Science Subjects, Including Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles

Scholars have described innovative strategies as creative methods that enhance practical skills, critical thinking, and real-world application, thereby facilitating effective learning. Oluwaleyimu (2021) and Chikwanda (2020). Some examples may include demonstrations, problem-solving exercises, practical work, experiments, case studies, peer observations, reports, research, and computer-aided learning. These strategies play a pivotal role in enhancing educational experiences. These methodologies not only promote hands-on activities but also significantly elevate student engagement, thereby facilitating the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills (MIE, 2013; Chuks, 2011).

The importance of practical learning strategies is underscored by research conducted by Ezenwanne (2021), which investigated the effects of demonstration and problem-solving methods on the development of entrepreneurial skills in Foods and Nutrition among secondary students in Anambra State. The findings indicated that demonstration methods resulted in higher skill acquisition scores compared to both problem-solving approaches and traditional lectures.

While a significant amount of research has focused on innovative teaching strategies, many educators struggle to implement them effectively. Key studies, including those by (Blessing & Patrick, n.d.; Joana *et al.*, 2015; Matthew *et al.*, 2021; Sylvester, 2021; Sundqvist, 2023; Elbyaly & Elfeky n.d.; Luzuwano, n.d.), have emphasised the benefits of using computer-aided designs, flipped classrooms, and digital learning methodologies in educational programs such as Clothing and Textiles and Home Economics. These studies show increased student engagement, especially during challenging times like the Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings highlight the crucial role of innovative strategies, including computer-aided design and

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

modern technology, in enhancing e-learning experiences. Moreover, the research collectively concludes that practical methods substantially improve skill acquisition and advocates for their increased integration into the curriculum to foster better entrepreneurial competencies.

Nevertheless, despite the recognised value of these strategies in knowledge enhancement, studies by Azonuche & Abamba (2024), Chirwa *et al.* (2022), and Ezema (2017) reveal a concerning underutilization of these methods, primarily due to various challenges within the teaching and learning environment. This highlights the need for further investigation into these barriers and the development of effective implementation strategies in educational settings.

**Challenges Faced When Implementing HEC and CT, and Ways of Improving the Teaching of HEC and CT**

***Teacher Preparedness***

Inadequate teacher preparation is among the challenges that impede the effective implementation of the curriculum globally. Several authors have attributed different meanings to teacher preparedness in the context of the teaching and learning process. For instance, Damien & Claire (2022) and Waiti *et al.* (2023) described it as the extent to which a teacher is adequately equipped with knowledge, skills, and resources to deliver lessons and facilitate student learning effectively. It encompasses both preservice preparation and ongoing professional development. The findings from Damien & Claire (2022) revealed that 26.2% of teacher preparedness was able to affect the level of students' academic performance, while the remaining 73.8% of students' academic performance can be affected by other variables. Further, Chirwa *et al.* (2022), Chikwanda (2020), Chikasanda *et al.* (2014), Kunkwenzu (2007) and Kozina (2016) demonstrate that teacher preparedness is a key factor in professional development and effective pedagogical choices during the teaching and learning process. A prepared teacher can effectively manage the classroom, plan engaging lessons, and foster meaningful learning experiences for students. (Waiti *et al*., 2023).

***Teaching Strategies***

Research studies from Malawi and beyond suggest that hands-on approaches, such as experiments, projects, and practical work, are the most effective methods for teaching science subjects, including Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT). However, these methods are often underutilised in educational settings (Chikasanda *et al.*, 2014; Sylvester, 2021; Chucks, 2011; MIE, 2013; Kalande, 2006). The authors argue that a primary barrier to the effective implementation of these teaching strategies is the inadequate training and orientation provided to teachers, as well as a lack of ongoing professional development opportunities. This underscores the need for a more robust framework to support educators in integrating these essential pedagogical approaches into their classrooms (Asiimwe, 2023).

A strong foundation in science subjects, including Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles, in Malawi is essential for enhancing workforce readiness (Banda, 2020). However, recent reports indicate that students have underperformed in practical and application-based assessments, scoring only 40% in meal planning and food safety and 45% in textiles appeal and pattern development (MANEB, 2022). These shortcomings can be attributed to several factors, such as poor and dilapidated laboratory facilities, inadequate funding, school culture, curriculum overload, insufficient time allocation for practical subjects like Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles, inadequate teacher preparation, the marginalization of Home Economics in many schools, and ineffective teaching strategies (Asiimwe, 2023; Anku, 2015; Chirwa *et al.*, 2014; Kunkwezu 2007). Therefore, the need for investment in educational

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

resources, professional development, and curriculum restructuring is crucial. Implementing effective teaching methodologies that align with Constructivist principles can significantly enhance student outcomes (Dewey, 2009). It is strongly believed that adequate teacher preparation in integrative learning can support meaningful learning (Haapaniemi *et al.*, 2019).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

### Dewey's Constructivist Learning Theory

This study emphasises the significance of active learner participation within a multidisciplinary curriculum, particularly focusing on Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) in secondary education (Alberta, 2007). It investigates whether learners are placed at the centre of the educational process, thereby facilitating the effective acquisition of knowledge and skills. This inquiry is grounded in Dewey's (2009) Constructivism Theory, which states that knowledge is constructed through individual experiences and perspectives. The theory underscores the role of learners as active participants in processing and reflecting on information, ultimately leading to logical conclusions (Bohm, 2022; Hein, 1991).

Hence, the research explored whether learners were exposed to the teaching and learning environments and curriculum-related aspects that foster meaningful knowledge and skills acquisition. Classroom observations were conducted to assess the types of teaching strategies used to determine their effectiveness in promoting skill acquisition in HEC and CT. The theory guided this study to establish an understanding of whether the methods used enhanced knowledge and skills Acquisition in HEC and CT in their disintegrated form. Although the constructivist theory, as outlined by Dewey (2009) and Kolb (2014), underpins an interactive learning environment for constructing knowledge, it was unclear whether the Secondary School Curriculum (SSC) provided this environment for HEC and CT students. Hence, curriculum documents, including timetables and instructional materials, were analysed. This evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the secondary curriculum equips students with the essential knowledge and skills in these subjects. This helped to establish an understanding of whether these documents had an impact on the method used by teachers and suggested the possible ways of improving the teaching and learning of HEC and CT within a disintegrated framework, while relating to other science subjects. In constructivist learning theory, the teacher acts as a facilitator to help learners construct relevant knowledge (Dewey, 2009) and Kolb (2014). Within an integrated curriculum, students work collaboratively, guided by teachers who facilitate connections to real-world experiences (Meghan, 2008). This aligns with the tenets of Constructivism, emphasising collaborative knowledge acquisition. However, the effectiveness of teachers, as highlighted by Mulkeen *et al*. (2004) and Janni *et al.* (2022), is contingent upon their subject knowledge (PCK).

In this case, the teachers' preparedness and influence on the pedagogical strategies were not clearly understood. The theory did not adequately outline the various factors surrounding the choice and use of pedagogical strategies, nor the teachers' role in preparing to be effective facilitators in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the study was guided by this theoretical gap to conduct interviews with teachers to gain deeper insights into the strategies used, the possible reasons behind these strategies in class, and to suggest the best approaches for improving the teaching of HEC and CT in the disintegrated Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles Curriculum (DHCSC). This study aimed to explore the related challenges of implementing the curriculum concerning the strategies employed. Teacher interviews and questionnaires, along with focus group discussions with learners, were used to gather insights into their

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

experiences with HEC and CT in a disintegrated format.

Key learning goals in Constructivist Theory involve heuristic problem-solving, metacognitive understanding, motivation, creativity, and originality, all of which contribute to effective learning outcomes (Wertsch, 1997 & Hein, 1991). In line with the theory, classroom observations were conducted to examine the strategies and activities used to determine their effectiveness in providing relevant knowledge and skills in HEC and CT. These observations highlighted the impact of these methods on enhancing problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities.

Social Constructivism further asserts that learners bear increasing responsibility for their education as they construct meaning through investigation and assessment (Hein, 1991; Glaserfeld, (1989) observations were conducted to evaluate the learning environment and learner-centered strategies that foster knowledge construction, a necessary skill for all students, including those with special educational needs. Mental engagement paired with hands-on experiences is vital, aligning with (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Dick & Carey, 2010; Mahmodi & Barzegar, 2017; Mertens 2010).

This study examined the role of Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing (CT) education in knowledge and skill acquisition within Malawi's secondary school curriculum (MSSC), revealing the strategies employed and potential methods to enhance the teaching of HEC and CT. As a result, the best instructional practices necessary for effective teaching and learning of HEC and CT in Malawi's disintegrated Secondary School Curriculum (SSC) were identified.

### Interpretivist Research Paradigm

The research paradigm is fundamentally defined by the core beliefs and assumptions that guide inquiry, methodology, data interpretation, and understanding within a specific research context (Creswell, 2007; Guba, 2000). This study was grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, focusing on analysing strategies to improve the teaching of Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) within the disintegrated secondary school curriculum. Importantly, this approach aims to develop relevant knowledge and skills among students.

The ontological perspective supported by interpretivism emphasises producing descriptive analyses that foster a deep interpretive understanding of social phenomena (Helning, 2004). As Krauss (2005) highlights, it is essential for individual self-understanding to form the basis for social interpretation, concentrating on the negotiation and preservation of meanings in specific contexts. This was a key focus of the study, aiming to gain a thorough understanding of the strategies employed in Malawian secondary schools and to suggest ways to enhance the teaching and learning of HEC and CT. Furthermore, Creswell (2007) and Kraus (2015) state that the interpretivist approach encourages the use of mixed methods by combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of research phenomena, which was employed in this study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to examine strategies for teaching Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) in their disintegrated forms and to suggest ways to enhance instruction of these subjects, focusing on knowledge and skill acquisition among learners. This research adopted a mixed-methods research design with a qualitative approach, grounded in constructivist learning theory, and an interpretetive research paradigm, which are essential for examining the disintegrated curriculum as a dynamic process that necessitates the interaction of various systems to achieve desired outcomes. This approach enabled better triangulation of findings. (Dick & Carey, 2010; Mahmodi & Barzegar, 2017; Mertens, 2010).

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

The research sites included two educational divisions. A total of six secondary schools offering HEC and CT in Malawi were sampled. This study involved a total population of 163 (8 teachers, 1 ministry official, 6 head teachers, and 148 students). Eight teachers and 6 head teachers were interviewed for this study. In each school, students were organised into groups of at least eight, resulting in a total of 18 focus groups to determine the strategies used, identify the challenges faced, and suggest ways to enhance the teaching of HEC and CT in Malawian secondary schools. For the qualitative segment of the research, the sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which was reached when further data collection no longer yielded novel insights or emergent themes (Creswell, 2013 & Mertens, 2010). Recordings were transcribed, and themes such as "Teacher preparedness, innovative strategies, curriculum-related factors," among others, were conceptualised in the model shown in Figure 3. Questionnaires from teachers, classroom observations, and summarised activities and strategies were analysed quantitatively using figures and graphs.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected and the credibility of the findings, a pilot study was conducted in May 2022 at two schools to clarify and estimate the time needed to use the tools in the study (Creswell, 2013). The schools involved in the pilot did not participate in the main study; however, similar participants were included. This phase helped identify ambiguities and redundancies in some questions (Mertens, 2010). Actual data collection took place from May 2023 to July 2024. The observation checklist was used to assess content, pedagogical issues, how learners interacted with the learning environment, and the type of environment. To address ethical issues, a clearance letter with the number DMISEU/R&D/AD/2024/013 was obtained. Permission was sought from the ministry to conduct the study in secondary schools. Participants signed written consent during the researcher's school visits and were assured of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and codes. They were also assured that they could leave the study at any time without penalty (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process provided valuable insights into teachers' preparedness, teaching strategies employed, environments, and other challenges, as well as students' experiences with the current curriculum (Mertens, 2010; & Creswell, 2013).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

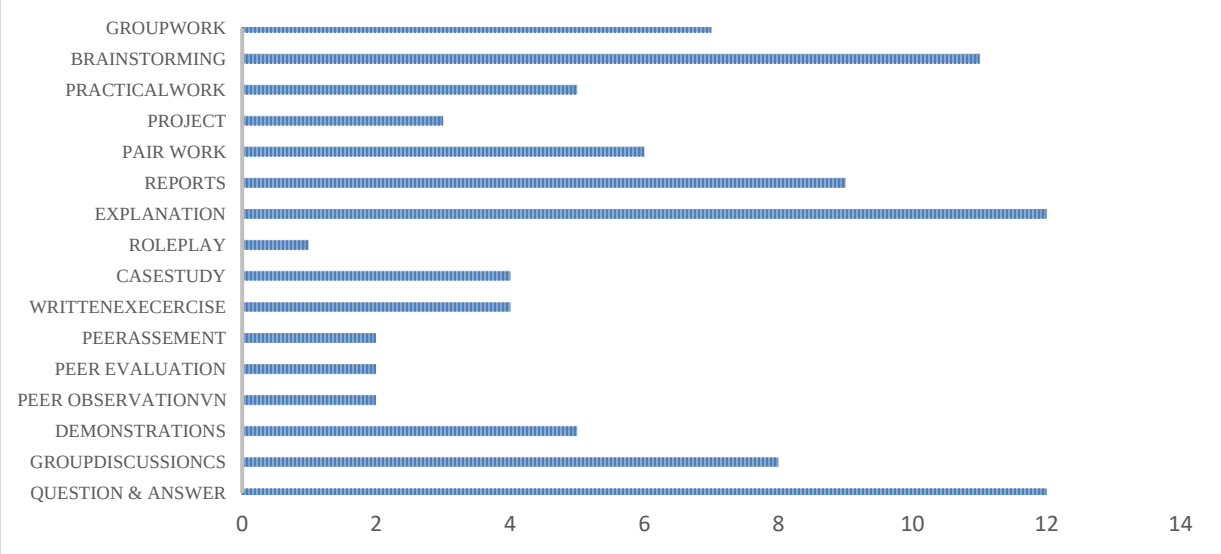
### Teaching Strategies

Based on the findings, it was revealed that students in HEC and CT were not exposed to a supportive environment that would facilitate the acquisition of sufficient knowledge and skills. In this study, students were rarely exposed to the strategies that could allow them to develop critical thinking skills. The MIE curriculum (2013) and MIE (2001) recommended the 13 teaching methods. These included questions and answers, group discussions, demonstrations, peer observation, peer evaluation, peer assessment, written exercises, case studies, role-plays, explanations, reports, pair work, projects, practical work, brainstorming, field trips, and group work. According to the findings, not all these methods were observed among teachers during class observations. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the methods used among different teachers.

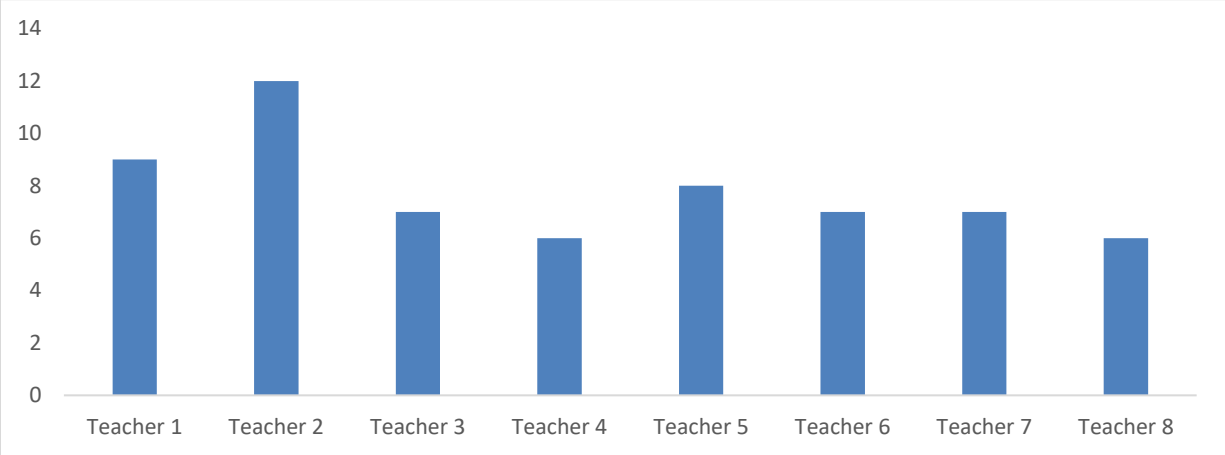
Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

**Figure 1*:* Distribution of Methods Used among Different Teachers**




The findings showed that all teachers primarily used question-and-answer sessions and explanations. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the teaching methods by each teacher.

**Figure 2*:* Distribution of the Teaching Methods by Each Teacher**




Experiments, projects, practical work, role play, case studies, and field trips were rarely used, even though (Sylvester, 2021; Chucks, 2011; MIE, 2013; Kadzera, 2006) suggest that these are the ideal methods of teaching science subjects, including HEC and CT. This means that HEC and CT students were not fully exposed to the teaching methods that could facilitate adequate skill and knowledge acquisition in secondary school in their disintegrated form.

**Ways to Improve Teaching and Learning of HEC and CT in their Disintegrated Form**

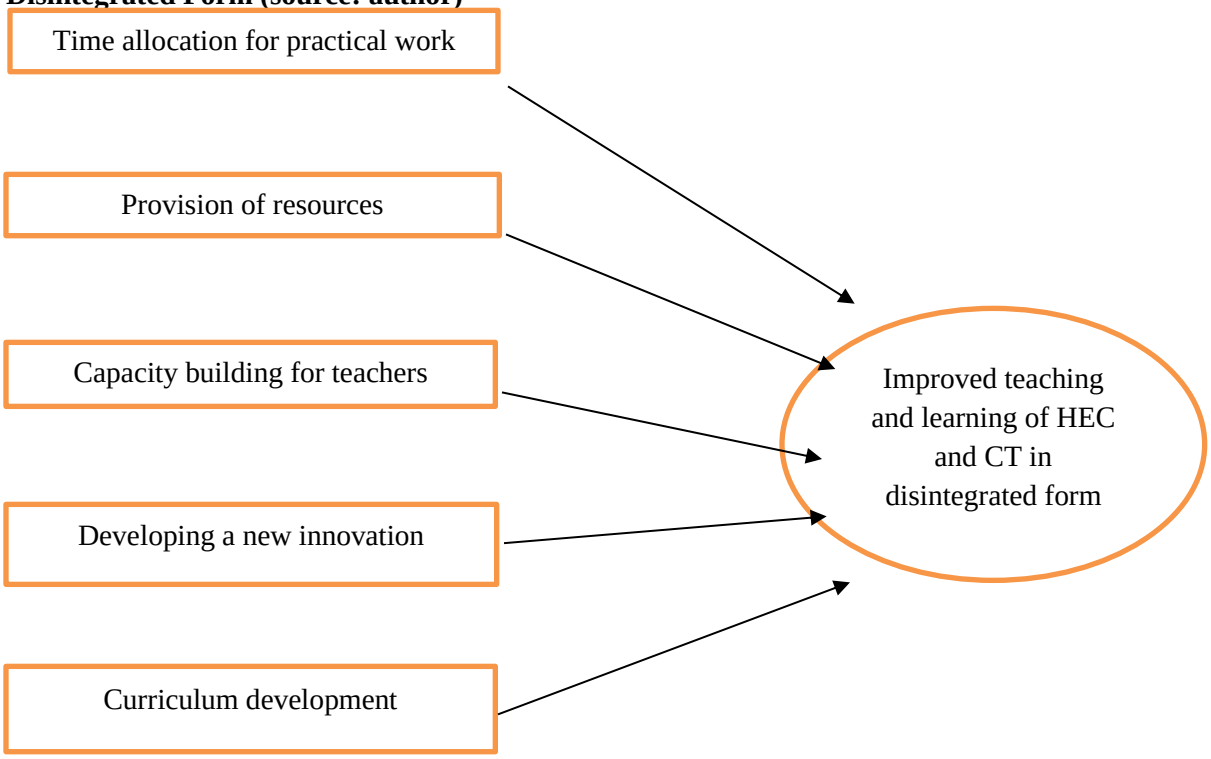
Based on the findings, it was revealed that students in HEC and CT were not exposed to a supportive environment that would facilitate the acquisition of sufficient knowledge and skills. As a result, a conceptual model was developed to improve the teaching of Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles in Malawian Secondary Schools. This has laid the groundwork for discussions aimed at establishing an understanding of knowledge and

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

skills acquisition in these subjects and suggesting methods to enhance the teaching and learning of HEC and CT in their disintegrated form in Malawian Secondary Schools.

**Figure 3*:* Conceptual Model: Ways to Improve Teaching and Learning of HEC and CT in Disintegrated Form (source: author)**




***Capacity Building***

This was also one of the themes generated regarding ways to improve the teaching of HEC and CT in their disintegrated form in Malawian secondary schools. The study revealed numerous gaps in teacher preparation. These gaps hurt the pedagogical strategies in the teaching of HEC and CT. These gaps ranged from a lack of content knowledge in handling specific topics, such as entrepreneurship, difficulties in conducting practical sessions and teaching practical topics in the classroom. Hence, many teachers did not like to teach the subject despite being trained at the college. These Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) gaps originated immediately from the training colleges, as evidenced by the teachers in this study. "*I would say mostly the part where they give us to practice because we only get to practice when they allocate us for TP, and that's after the 4th year, meaning that unless you volunteer like I am doing here, you will not be able to practice until the end of the 4th year. So maybe if they were giving us chances to just go and help out like teacher assistants so that we get familiar with the students, etc, that would have been much better than just starting the TPs. Even the handling of practical sessions was not effectively done at the college. We did not do a lot of practice because of resources and time for us and lecturers…this course clothing, especially the slopper thing, is so difficult. Most of us don't teach CT."* Furthermore, the study revealed difficulties in handling large classes with minimal resources. "*It becomes difficult to handle large classes with few resources, so we don't teach, or we rush through to finish the syllabus, and use the methodologies that can help us finish the syllabus. To us, teaching a topic without resources is a waste of time.*"

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

Based on the discussion in this section, the study has identified gaps related to implementation that require capacity building for the existing educators in HEC and CT. It addresses the challenges faced by teachers in Malawi regarding the instruction of Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles (HEC and CT) in secondary schools. The study highlights significant deficiencies in teacher preparation, particularly in pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which negatively impacts their teaching effectiveness. Specific issues identified include inadequate content knowledge in areas like entrepreneurship, a lack of hands-on experience before reaching practical teaching assignments, and difficulties in managing large classes with limited resources. The study underscores the need for more opportunities for student teachers to practice in real classroom settings and the detrimental effects that insufficient training and resources have on teaching methodologies, ultimately questioning the value of teaching without adequate materials and support. Therefore, capacity building should include areas of PCK, class management, and embracing modern technologies, such as using computer-aided lesson education platforms for E-Learning, as this can help improve the teaching of HEC and CT in the disintegrated curriculum. The suggested solutions have also been opined by Siyakwazi (2003), who stated that when teachers are well prepared, they can also deliver competently.

***Administrative Support, Provision of Resources***

Administrative support in teaching and learning Home Economics and Clothing, particularly in secondary education, plays a vital role. It involves organising lesson plans, managing classroom resources, and coordinating extracurricular activities. Effective administrative functions ensure that educators have access to essential materials and tools, ultimately enhancing student engagement, creativity, and skill development. By fostering a well-structured learning environment, administrative support significantly contributes to the overall success of educational programs, promoting not only academic achievement but also improved student morale and collaboration in practical learning experiences. This collaborative effort between support systems and educational goals creates a thriving atmosphere for both teachers and students.

This study has revealed critical insights regarding administrative support and resource provision, highlighting their indispensable roles in curriculum implementation, particularly for Home Economics and Clothing Textiles (HEC and CT) in Malawian secondary schools. A significant challenge identified was the inconsistency of administrative support, which often affects teachers' ability to deliver the curriculum effectively. Without strong support from school leadership, educators struggle to access necessary resources, such as textbooks, laboratory materials, and other teaching aids, resulting in compromised instructional quality.

In addition, the results revealed that various factors, including time constraints in allocating adequate time on the school timetable for the subjects, posed significant administrative challenges. This was attributed to the structure of the secondary school curriculum within the multidisciplinary framework in Malawian secondary schools. The Malawian secondary curriculum is overloaded with too many subjects, which requires administrators to fit all subjects into the timetable. As lamented by head teachers, there were suggestions to decongest the curriculum and pursue integration. "*I don't know whether the government of Malawi is ready for that because it involves more personnel (teaching of HEC and CT in their disintegrated form). But aside from that, our curriculum has too many subjects, and I believe that we have been moving toward integrating some of the subjects to create space in the timetable. This problem we currently face congests the timetable and does not allow schools to offer a reasonable number of subjects. We can already see that MANEB is on its own, integrating SES and Life Skills in terms of examination, but the ministry insists these must be different subjects*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

*when teaching in schools. When you examine the content, you will find many similarities. If we can have similar elements in our subjects, we should be moving toward integration rather than disintegration*." Additionally, the study revealed policy issues, such as deploying specialist teachers to teach subjects not offered in schools, including national examination schedules, which significantly influenced the selection of teaching strategies and curriculum implementation. This is evidenced by HEC and CT teachers in this study. "*I have been in the system for twenty-three years, but I have been in schools where HEC was not taught. I have only taught HEC for one year. Then, postings sent me to schools where HEC was not taught, which means I have spent many years without teaching HEC.----- we forget what we learn at college, so it becomes difficult to handle certain topics, especially practicals.*" Furthermore, the involvement of HEC and CT teachers in national projects, administrative support, and adequate funding significantly influenced teacher effectiveness. Low student enrollment and gender-related issues posed challenges to utilising the best approaches for implementing the HEC and CT curriculum when disintegrated. These factors impacted skills and knowledge acquisition in the subject and overall performance. Hence, the study offers evidence-based solutions to the challenges highlighted in the discussion, indicating the need for adequate provision of resources and administrative support for teachers teaching HEC and CT in secondary schools in Malawi.

The findings were opined by Ashong (2021), Beinert *et al.* (2021) and Okorie *et al*. (2021), who suggested that effective teaching of Home and Clothing and Textiles greatly depends on the teaching and learning environment in the school setting. The findings were contrary to the principles of Dewey's (2009) constructivism theory, which guided this study. The theory states that knowledge is not gained merely through listening to words but through experiences in the environment. According to Kolb & Fry (1984), knowledge is constructed based on personal experiences and hypotheses about the surroundings. In this context, HEC and CT, which require significant hands-on activities and exploration, appear to be inadequately taught within the disintegrated secondary school curriculum.

This situation is consistent with findings from previous research conducted by Anku (2015), Banda (2020), Beinert *et al*. (2021), Chucks (2011), Dzama (2006) and Phiri (2015) all of which highlight similar difficulties faced by teachers in effectively implementing curricula for science subjects, including HEC and CT, both in Malawi and internationally.

The study highlighted that the lack of available resources and time pressures significantly influenced both what content is taught and the instructional methods employed. As articulated by one learner, "*Our teacher is always tired... we have done practical work only once in Form only twice in Form Two. We enjoy practical work because it teaches us how to cook good meals".* Similarly, teacher remarked on the inadequacy of time, books, equipment, consumables*;* 2 or 3 periods per week for HEC, questioning how practical activities could be conducted within such limited hours-, *"Time allocated for HEC is not enough to do practical our school do not provide resources when it comes to practical work they say it is expensive… they think we just request for fun…, or to eat not learning purposes…. I use my pamphlets which becomes a challenge when it comes to share with learners… we tried to ask the publishers but they are very scarce especially the CT mmmm… misleading and sketchy information the text books is another… sometimes you say how I teach this topic for example entrepreneurship words are too technical and confusing* (HEC and CT teachers 001, 302, 0123,12B).

Addressing these challenges requires a systematic improvement of the school culture that prioritises resource allocation and recognises the importance of administrative involvement. Effective collaboration between educational authorities and

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

school administrations is essential for securing funding and resources that enhance teaching and learning. Following Dewey's (2009) constructivist theory, which highlights the significance of a rich learning environment, it is crucial to create conditions where educators can actively engage with students. This not only improves lessons in HEC and CT but also fosters a supportive environment for learners to acquire essential skills and knowledge effectively.

### *Curriculum Restructuring and Relevant Education Policies*

Keswet *et al*. (2019) conducted their study on the implementation of the Home Economics curriculum in Nigeria's private and public secondary schools. The results revealed challenges similar to those in Malawi regarding the implementation of Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles in a disintegrated form. This study's findings showed that both the old and new Home Economics curricula were available in many schools and were appropriate in terms of goals and content; however, Malawian schools primarily followed the new, disintegrated syllabus. Some topics from the old syllabus were retained while others were omitted. For instance, the old HEC included a topic on traditional methods of food preservation, which is absent in the new Home Economics (MIE, 2013). However, what was most lacking was a blend of modern and traditional technologies, along with innovative teaching strategies in the implementation methods. The teaching methods used to deliver the curriculum were primarily theoretical due to inadequate time allocation caused by curriculum overload, which affected timetable structuring, as well as a lack of laboratories, tools, and equipment necessary for effective HEC and CT instruction. Students' knowledge and skills in acquiring entrepreneurial competency were significantly low, as there was an insufficient production of marketable goods and services to demonstrate practical knowledge in most schools. This is what one of the teachers said regarding gaps and what to improve: "*CTEX: They have included most of the things; like when you look at the core elements, they have emphasised the materials you can use and what you can produce, there is entrepreneurship and consumerism. But it lacks the part of implementation where it gives the students an actual chance to practice, like giving the students a chance to run a business in school; I think that would be beneficial. HEC: The same can be alluded to HEC; they have emphasised nutrition, family resource management, housing, and environment. Maybe the students were given a chance to practice what they are learning in school, like improving the school environment or sensitizing other students on nutrition, so that they are not just equipped with theoretical knowledge but also practical but also practical".*

Therefore, the study recommended that curriculum developers reposition the Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles curriculum from a predominantly theoretical orientation toward a more practical approach for sustainable development. Furthermore, policymakers should include HEC and CT subjects among the core subjects, and during time allocation for national Exams, there should be equal alignment with other subjects in the curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

The findings reveal a significant gap in the teaching methods used in Home Economics (HEC) and Clothing and Textiles (CT) education, characterised by an over-reliance on traditional strategies such as questioning and explanations. Innovative approaches, including experiential learning and practical activities, remain underutilised, hindering students' critical thinking and skill development. Recommendations emphasise the need to integrate diverse teaching methods, such as field trips and technology-based learning, to create a more supportive and engaging learning environment. By adopting these strategies, educators can enhance students' knowledge acquisition and better prepare them for real-world applications in their respective

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

fields of Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles. Improving the teaching of Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles in Malawian Secondary Schools is essential for acquiring practical knowledge and skills, thereby fostering students' overall educational development and future success. The study revealed an over-reliance on traditional teaching methods, such as theoretical instruction and rote memorisation, which hinder students' critical thinking and practical skills development. Furthermore, this study underscores the need for a paradigm shift toward a more practical curriculum that harmonises theory with hands-on experiences, enabling students to apply their learning in real-world settings. Recommendations stress the importance of capacity building for educators and suggest improvements to teacher training programs to address gaps in content knowledge and pedagogical strategies. Overall, restructuring the HEC and CT curricula is crucial for fostering holistic educational growth and empowering students for future success in their respective fields.

**Recommendations**

- Diverse Teaching Methods: Utilise a range of teaching strategies, including experiential learning, project-based learning, and collaborative activities, to engage students and accommodate diverse learning styles.
- Curriculum Reform: Review and revise the Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles curricula to ensure they balance theoretical knowledge with practical applications, aligning with industry standards and skills needed in the workforce.
- Professional Development for Educators: Implement regular training sessions and workshops focused on innovative teaching practices, classroom management, and the integration of technology in teaching to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills.
- Resource Allocation: Increase investments in teaching resources, such as equipment, materials, and technology, to support hands-on learning and ensure that students have access to the necessary tools to succeed.
- Administrative Support: Advocate for stronger administrative support at the school level to encourage the implementation of innovative teaching strategies and to address challenges such as curriculum overload.

**Areas of Further Studies**

- Investigate the effectiveness of various innovative teaching strategies on students' engagement and skill acquisition in Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles.
- Technology Integration: Examine the impact of technology-based learning tools on student outcomes in HEC and CT education, and explore how they can be effectively integrated into the curriculum.
- Conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the outcomes of curriculum reforms in HEC and CT on students' career readiness and entrepreneurial success.

**Acknowledgement**

I want to thank the University and the Ministry of Education for making this research possible.

**REFERENCES**

Anku, D. (2015). *Teachers', Students' and Parents' Perception of Home Economics Programme in Senior High Schools In North Tongu* [PhD Thesis, University of Cape Coast]. https://ir.ucc.edu.gh/xmlui/handle/123456789/7825

Alberta, (2007). *Primary Programs Framework for Teaching and Learning (Kindergarten to Grade 3) Curriculum Integration: Making Connections*. Alberta, Canada. Retrieved from

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

http://education.alberta.ca/media/656618/curr.pdf

Ashong, E. L. D. (2021). *An exploration of innovations for teaching home economics the views and experiences of home economics teachers and students in teacher education universities in Ghana* [PhD Thesis, University of Education, Winneba]. https://ir.uew.edu.gh/handle/123456789/3010

Asiimwe, A. (2023). *Improving students enrollment in home economics through selected career guidance strategies: A case of bwera primary teachers' college in kasese district* [PhD Thesis, Kyambogo University [unpublished work]]. http://kyuspace.kyu.ac.ug/handle/20.500.12504/1825

Banda, E. K. (2020). *Challenges facing school managers in the implementation of the revised secondary school curriculum: A case study of four selected secondary schools in Lilongwe district* [Thesis, Mzuzu University]. http://repository.mzuni.ac.mw:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/repository.mzuni.ac.mw/handle/123456789/319

Bank, W. (2010). *The Education System in Malawi*. World Bank Publications.

Beinert, C., Palojoki, P., Åbacka, G., Hardy-Johnson, P., Engeset, D., Rudjord Hillesund, E., Selvik Ask, A. M., Øverby, N. C., & Nordgård Vik, F. (2021). The mismatch between teaching practices and curriculum goals in Norwegian Home Economics classes: A missed opportunity. *Education Inquiry*, *12*(2), 183–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2020.1816677

Blessing, C., & Patrick, C. (n.d.). *Demonstration and Discussion Teaching Methods in the Enhancement of Academic Achievement of Students in Senior School Biology in Yenagoa and Ogbia Local Government Areas, Bayelsa State*. Retrieved October 14, 2024, from https://www.arcnjournals.org/images/2726145 22371491.pdf

Chikasanda, V. K., Nyirenda, L., & Kapengule, M. (2014). Exploring teaching practices of science and technology in Malawi primary schools. *International Journal of Science and Technology Education Research*, *5*(6), 67–78.

Chikwanda, N. N. S. (2020). *Learner-centred practices in primary school human ecology classrooms: A case of selected schools in Chankhanga Zone, Kasungu District* [Thesis, Mzuzu University]. http://41.70.100.7/handle/123456789/repository.mzuni.ac.mw/handle/123456789/335

Chuks, D. (2011). *Impact of home economics laboratory in teaching and learning food and nutrition*. https://www.academia.edu/91774430/Impact_of_home_economics_laboratory_in_teaching_and_learning_food_and_nutrition

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study*. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48/

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Damien, N., & Claire, M. M. (2022). Influence of Teachers' Preparedness on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rwanda. *Journal of Education*, *5*(2), Article 2. https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5069

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. SAGE.

Dzama, E. N. N. (2006). *Malawian secondary school students' learning of science: Historical background, performance and beliefs* [PhD Thesis]. University of the Western Cape.

Ezema, P. N. (2017). Strategies for Achieving Sustainability in Teaching and Learning of Clothing and Textiles in Nigerian Institutions of

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

Higher Learning: Abia State in Focus. *International Journal of Operation Research in Management, Social Science and Education*, *3*(1), 147–154.

Ezenwanne, D. N. (2021). Effect of Demonstration and Problem-Solving Methods on Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition In Foods And Nutrition Among Secondary School Students In Anambra State. *Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Delta State University. Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2013). National Policy on Education. NERDC Press*.

Haapaniemi, J., Venäläinen, S., Malin, A., & Palojoki, P. (2019). Home economics education: Exploring integrative learning. *Educational Research*, *61*(1), 87–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2018.1564626

Hein, G. E. (1991). Constructivist learning theory. *Institute for Inquiry. Available at:/Http://Www. Exploratorium. Edu/Ifi/Resources/Constructivistlearning. htmlS*. http://beta.edtechpolicy.org/AAASGW/Session2/const_inquiry_paper.pdf

Helning, E. (2004).*Finding your way on qualitative research*. Pretoria: Vansachalk.

Glaserfeld, E. (1989). *Constructivism in education.* Oxford England: Pergamon Press. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED444966.pdf.

Kalande, W. M. (2006). *The Influence of Science Teacher Preparation Programs on Instructional Practices of Beginning Primary School Teachers in Malawi*. http://hdl.handle.net/10919/30146

Kehinde, O. R., Osarenkhoe, I. S., & Okorua, J. O. (n.d.). Gender Issues and Challenges in Post Covid-19 Pandemic: A Home Economist Perspective. *Research Studies*, *3*(7), 1285–1291.

Keswet, L. A., John, Y. S., & Margaret, K. M. (2019). Implementation of Home Economics Curriculum in Private and Public Secondary Schools in Plateau State, Nigeria. *NIU Journal of Humanities*, *4*(3), Article 3.

Kozina, F. L. (2016). Pre-service Home Economics Teachers' Attitudes on Selected Aspects of Practical Teaching. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, *6*(3), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.67

Kumwenda, B. H. H. (2024). *The influence of school-culture on students' learning in high and low performing schools in Malawi: A case study of school managers' perspectives in Central West Education Division.* [PhD Thesis, Mzuzu University]. http://repository.mzuni.ac.mw/handle/123456789/529

Kunkwenzu, E. D. (2007). *Professional experiences of beginning home economics teachers in Malawi: A grounded theory approach*. http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/1408

Krauss, S. E. (2005). Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The Qualitative Report*, *10*(4), 758‑770.

Luzuwano, M. (n.d.). *EDUCATION STATISTICS REPORT*. Retrieved May 14, 2025, from https://www.academia.edu/109409369/EDUCATION_STATISTICS_REPORT

Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) (2022). Chief Examiner's Report Home Economics and Clothing and Textiles. Zomba: Malawi.

Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (2013). Clothing and Textiles Secondary School Sylabus. Domasi: Zomba; Malawi.

Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (2013). Home Economics Clothing and Secondary School Sylabus. Domasi: Zomba; Malawi.

Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (2001). Home Economics Clothing and

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

Secondary School Sylabus. Domasi: Zomba; Malawi.

Mahmodi, F., & Barzegar, R. (2017). The Effect of Dick and Carey Instructional Design Model on Learning, Retention and Achievement Motivation in Science Instruction. *Journal of Curriculum Research*, *7*(1), 97–117.

Matthew, U. O., Kazaure, J. S., & Okafor, N. U. (2021). Contemporary development in E-Learning education, cloud computing technology & internet of things. *EAI Endorsed Trans. Cloud Syst.*, *7*(20), e3.

Mooka, S. J. (1985). *An Investigation Into the Teaching of Home Economics in Selected Lusaka Schools—Zambia*.

Meghan, K. (2008). How does using an integrated curriculum promote critical thinking and engagement in middle school students learning? *Masters research project report*: Retrieved from http://www.cehs.ohio.edu/resources/documents/roush.pdf

Mulkeen, A., Chapman, D. W., & Dejaeghere, J. G. (2004). *Recruiting, retraining and retaining secondary school teachers in Sub Sahara Africa;* Washington, DC: World Bank and Academy for Education Development.

Mwale, E. G. C. (2023). An investigation into the challenges of inclusive education in institutions of higher education in Malawi. *UNICAF University*. https://cdn.unicaf.org/websites/unicaf/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Ftc1PbCP-Emily-Grace-Chiumia-Mwale-FINAL-thesis.pdf

Okorie, M. N., Effiong, M. M., & Akpan, A. F. (2021). Challenges and prospects of teaching home economics in college of education during economic recession era. A case study of the Department of Home Economics, College of Education, Afaha Nsit. *International Journal of Educational Benchmark (IJEB)*, *18*(1), 1–12.

Oluwaleyimu, O. O. (2021). Strategic Approaches For Enhancing Innovative Instructional Technologies for Teaching Clothing and Textiles in Southwest Nigeria. *Nigerian Online Journal of Educational Sciences and Technology*, *3*(1), 18–28.

Pendergast, D. (1999). *Re-thinking home economics: From modern to postmodern accounts of pedagogical bodies* [Phd, Queensland University of Technology]. https://eprints.qut.edu.au/36587/

Phiri, H. C. (2015). *An analysis of knowledge and skills acquisition in home economics in integrated science and technology curriculum in selected Teachers' Training Colleges in Malawi* [PhD Thesis, Mzuzu University]. http://41.70.100.7/handle/123456789/227

Sack, R. (2017). *Review of Malawi National Education Sector Plan II (NESP)& Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESP)*. World Bank.

Siyakwazi, P. D. F. (2003). Teaching Strategies used in Home Economics Classes at Colleges: Implications on Re-conceptualisation of Home Economics in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Educational Studies*, *2*(1), 32–50.

Sundqvist, K. (2023, October 27). *Digitalisation Meets Home Economics Teachers: A Mixed-Methods Study of the Conditions Related to Finnish Home Economics Teachers' Use of Information and Communication Technologies*. Åbo Akademi - Åbo Akademi University. https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/187910

Sylvester, S. (2021). *Clothing and textiles course as a foundation for the fashion design and textiles programme in Accra Technical University* [Thesis, University of Education Winneba]. http://41.74.91.244:8080/handle/123456789/3092

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.8.2.3220

Waiti, J., Imonje, R., & Mugambi, M. (2023). *Influence of Teachers' Preparedness on English Curriculum Implementation in Kenyan Schools*. https://philpapers.org/rec/WAIIOT

Wertsch, J.V. (1997). *Vygotsky and the formation of the mind.* New York: Cambridge. Retrieved from http://.www.learningtheories.constructivi sim

World Bank. (2010). *The education system in Malawi" World Bank working paper*