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Students' Application of Curriculum-Based Home Economics Competencies in Everyday Living

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Home economics education equips students with essential life skills that support sustainable living and family well-being. Despite extensive curriculum development, limited research has examined whether students apply home economics competencies in real-life contexts. The present study evaluated the frequency of application and self-reported competency of home economics skills among 200 junior high school students. The findings revealed a high frequency of application and self-reported competency in areas such as home management, meal preparation and clothing care, while skills like sewing, handicrafts and food preservation showed a low frequency of application and self-reported competency. Mismatches between frequency of application and self-reported competency were also observed, with some skills being frequently applied despite low confidence, or vice versa, highlighting variability in student experience. These results suggest overestimated abilities, limited practice or contextual barriers affecting skill transfer. Curriculum implications include emphasising hands-on, experiential learning, contextualised practice and targeted reinforcement to ensure effective skill application at home. Strengthening these strategies can enhance practical competency, promote sustainable living and support lifelong well-being.

Keywords: home economics curriculum, learning competencies, life skill transfer in everyday living

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Kako učenci uporabljajo kompetence iz učnega načrta za gospodinjstvo v vsakdanjem življenju

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Izobraževanje na področju gospodinjstva opremi učence z osnovnimi življenjskimi veščinami, ki podpirajo trajnostno življenje in blaginjo družine. Kljub obsežnemu razvoju na področju učnih načrtov je le malo raziskav do zdaj preučevalo, ali učenci uporabljajo kompetence iz gospodinjstva v realnem življenju. V tej študiji smo ocenjevali pogostost uporabe in samoporočano kompetentnost, kar zadeva veščine iz gospodinjstva, med 200 učenci zadnjega triletja osnovne šole. Ugotovitve so pokazale visoko pogostost uporabe in samoporočane kompetentnosti na področjih, kot so: gospodinjstvo, priprava hrane in skrb za oblačila, medtem ko so veščine, kot so: šivanje, ročna dela in konzerviranje hrane, pokazale nizko pogostost uporabe in samoporočane kompetentnosti. Opazili smo tudi neskladje med pogostostjo uporabe in samoporočano kompetentnostjo, pri čemer so bile nekatere veščine pogosto uporabljene kljub nizki samozavesti ali nasprotno, kar poudarja raznolikost izkušenj učencev. Ti izsledki kažejo na precenjene zmožnosti, omejeno prakso ali kontekstualne ovire, ki vplivajo na prenos veščin. Implikacije za učni načrt vključujejo poudarjanje praktičnega, izkustvenega učenja, kontekstualizirane prakse in ciljno okrepitev, da se zagotovi učinkovita uporaba veščin doma. Krepitev teh strategij lahko izboljša praktično kompetentnost, spodbuja trajnostno življenje in podpira vseživljenjsko dobro počutje.

Ključne besede: učni načrt za gospodinjstvo, učne kompetence, prenos življenjskih veščin v vsakdanjem življenju

Introduction

There is growing concern over the lack of essential life skills among today's youth, limiting their ability to navigate personal, social and economic challenges (UNICEF, 2022). As technology advances, the generation gap widens: older adults struggle to adapt, while many young people lack basic life skills (Teenink, 2025). Life skills, defined as abilities acquired through education and real-life experiences, empower individuals to manage everyday challenges effectively (British Council Greece, 2025). Critical thinking, problem-solving, financial literacy, nutrition, healthcare and interpersonal communication are essential for long-term success (WHO, 1997; UNICEF, 2019). Without these competencies, young people face higher risks of unemployment, poor health and social exclusion (Prajapati et al., 2017). The problem is exacerbated by the focus of secondary education on academic achievement, exams and honours over practical life preparation, leaving students academically capable but ill-prepared for independent adulthood (Klein, 2022; Teenink, 2025).

Home economics (HE) education offers a practical, interdisciplinary platform that has the potential to bridge these gaps. It teaches students real-world skills that foster well-being, sustainable living and active citizenship. By connecting theoretical understanding with practical experiences, HE develops decision-making, resource management and active engagement in family and community life (International Federation for Home Economics [IFHE], 2024b). It is an essential catalyst in empowering adolescents to be resilient and productive in a rapidly changing world.

In the Philippines, HE is a core component of Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) under the K-12 curriculum. Designed with a spiral progression, HE allows students to reinforce and expand foundational skills as they advance. TLE comprises four components: HE, Agri-Fishery Arts (AFA), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Industrial Arts (IA). HE and Livelihood Education (HELE) is taught in Grades 4–5 (in Filipino), while TLE is taught in Grades 6–10 (in English) and Technical-Vocational Education (TVE) is taught in Grades 11–12. At the elementary level (ages 10–12), instruction focuses on basic, non-technical skills that enhance personal, family and community life. Secondary-level learning (ages 12–16) emphasises common, industry-related competencies as a foundation for future technical-vocational certification, with senior high school (ages 16–18) providing more specialised, industry-based skills. In Grades 7–8, exploratory TLE courses of 40 hours per quarter expose students to various fields, helping them identify interests and prepare for future specialisation. The curriculum follows the Department of

Education's (DepEd) Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), which highlight critical skills for lifelong learning and careers, especially amid pandemic-related educational shifts (DepEd, 2020; Llego, 2024). TLE emphasises technological proficiency, entrepreneurship, practical processes, work values and life skills, aiming to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for employment, entrepreneurship, middle-level careers or higher education (DepEd, 2016).

Table 1 presents the theoretical scheme outlining the progression of the HE curriculum across grade levels. It shows how learning areas develop specific life skills appropriate to students' age and learning stage. Recognising that HELE and TLE are skill-based subjects, the scheme highlights the connection between curriculum-based competencies and their intended application in real-life contexts, supporting the development of practical knowledge and independent living skills.

Table 1

Theoretical scheme of the HE curriculum in the Philippines

Grade Level & Age	Grade Level Standards	Key Learning Areas
Grade 4 (9–10 years old)	The learner demonstrates basic knowledge, skills and values in entrepreneurship and ICT, AFA, HE and IA that can help improve self and family life.	1. Caring for one's clothing by sewing 2. Home and yard cleaning practices and waste segregation 3. Preparation of nutritious meals, proper use of utensils, and systematic meal clean-up and aftercare
Grade 5 (10–11 years old)	The learner demonstrates increased knowledge, skills and values in entrepreneurship and ICT, AFA, HE and IA aimed at improving family life and the community.	1. Caring for one's clothing by laundry and ironing 2. Creating household items using hand sewing and sewing machine 3. Planning, marketing, cooking and presenting nutritious meals in accordance with food safety
Grade 6 (11–12 years old)	The learner demonstrates enhanced and expanded knowledge in entrepreneurship and ICT, AFA, HE and IA aimed at improving the family's economic life and the community.	1. Management of family resources for family, home and societal needs 2. Sewing and marketing household linens as a means to augment family income 3. Applying the principles and methods of food preservation and marketing preserved/ processed food based on market trends and demands
Grade 7 (12–13 years old)	The learner demonstrates an understanding of basic concepts and underlying principles in developing fundamental skills in exploratory TVE.	1. Caregiving 2. Dressmaking 3. Cookery 4. Nail care 5. Handicraft making 6. Front office services
Grade 8 (13–14 years old)	The learner demonstrates an understanding of his/her personal entrepreneurial competencies, the environment and market, and process/production and delivery of the TVE course in which he/she has specialised.	

HE directly supports the United Nations' 2030 Agenda by addressing issues such as food security, poverty alleviation and gender equality through its curriculum. The skills and knowledge imparted in HE classes can contribute to sustainable food production and consumption, financial literacy and understanding gender roles in household management (Pendergast, 2019). The IFHE (2024b) describes HE as a foundational field addressing the economic, social and ecological dimensions of daily life. Positioned within the human sciences, it draws from multiple disciplines to promote optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities, fostering values and lifelong skills that support personal, professional and societal development (Pendergast, 2021). In the Philippines, youth involvement in shaping a sustainable future is encouraged (Barrios, 2023), reflecting mounting pressure as the country lags behind in achieving several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality Education (Sachs et al., 2024; Sustainable Development Report, 2025), amidst concerns over education, employment, health and climate change (Mangaluz, 2024; UNICEF, 2024).

With HE seen as an avenue to develop essential life skills that contribute to nation-building and global progress, it is necessary to examine whether students effectively translate classroom-acquired competencies into real-world contexts. The Home Economics Literacy Model emphasises that true HE literacy spans four practice areas – academic discipline, everyday living, curriculum area and societal arena – each addressing essential dimensions of knowledge, skills and application. For example, HE literacy involves understanding theoretical foundations while applying them to meet practical household needs (Pendergast, 2015). Its core ideology reflects historical richness and growing relevance in addressing twenty-first-century societal challenges and improving quality of life (McCloat & Caraher, 2016). Given the dynamic societal needs, ongoing curriculum revisions are imperative to maintain cultural relevance and responsiveness to social change (Erjavšek, 2021).

While existing HE research emphasises curriculum design and pedagogy, the arena of everyday living remains underexplored. This practice highlights households, families and communities as vital spaces for nurturing human potential and fulfilling basic needs (Hira, 2013). UNICEF (2012) underscores the foundational role of the home environment in shaping the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that underpin social development. A global scoping review on life skills development in emerging adults also highlights the relevance of this issue across Asia, Africa, Europe and North America (Tanious et al., 2023), yet research in the Philippine context is limited. Evidence on how HE competencies are taught, internalised and applied in the home remains sparse

(Arundel, 2022; Delgado, 2022; IFHE, 2024a; McSweeney, 2014). Recent curriculum reviews in the Philippines have noted a focus on literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional learning due to curriculum congestion, limited teaching time and sequencing challenges (DepEd, 2024). Students are rarely given opportunities to assess the curriculum or suggest improvements central to basic education.

The lack of empirical evidence on students' application of HE competencies raises concerns about their literacy and preparedness for adult life. Without reinforcement at home, where students are expected to exercise responsibility and contribute to household tasks, HE risks losing its transformative impact. Students may miss opportunities to cultivate sustainable habits for independent living, leaving instruction less effective or stagnant (McGregor, 2022; Pendergast, 2015, 2019; Reupert et al., 2022). David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (1984) supports learning through hands-on experiences, reflection and practical application. Students can gain concrete experience in cooking, home management and clothing care, reflect on their learning, and experiment with new approaches in daily life (NU Editorial Contributors, 2022; McLeod, 2025). Accessible school facilities and resources enhance skill attainment and enable lessons aligned with students' home environments (Embodo, 2024; Limon, 2016; Mendoza & Ikezaki, 2007). In Japan, for instance, home projects promote sustainable consumer behaviour by having students solve real-life home problems, linking school lessons with meaningful real-world outcomes (Imoto, 2015).

The present study addresses the empirical gap, exploring HE as a structured platform for life skills transfer during early middle childhood. Despite the global emphasis on life skills education, limited attention has been given to how HE facilitates the meaningful transfer of classroom competencies into the home. This research examines the effectiveness of the HE curriculum in promoting the transfer of life skills from classroom to family, investigating both frequency of application and students' perceived competency at home. It identifies specific competencies requiring reinforcement and highlights areas where teachers should focus instructional efforts, strengthening the relevance of HE for lifelong learning. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How frequently do students practise the practical life skills taught in HE within the household context?
2. How competent do students feel when performing HE-related tasks at home?
3. Which specific HE competencies are most and least frequently applied

by students at home?

4. Which specific HE competencies do students perceive themselves to be most and least competent in when applied at home?
5. How can the existing HE curriculum be enhanced to strengthen students' practical application of life skills in everyday living?

Method

Participants

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the respondents based on age, gender and monthly family income. The study surveyed 200 Grade 8 junior high school (JHS) students from three public national high schools in Iligan City, Philippines, enrolled in the 2024–2025 school year. Most of the respondents were 13–14 years old, with a balanced gender distribution and predominantly from low- to poor-income families. Grade 8 students were selected because they have completed basic competencies and are exposed to exploratory TLE courses, providing a broad foundation of skills relevant to everyday living. At this early adolescent stage, which marks the transition from childhood to adolescence, students begin developing independence, responsibility and self-efficacy, making it a critical period for applying HE concepts to real-life contexts. Their experiences offer valuable insights into how HE education fosters personal growth and prepares students for responsible, independent adulthood.

Table 2
Respondents' demographic profile

Demographic Factors	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12 years	7	3.5%
	13 years	138	69%
	14 years	47	23.5%
	15 years	4	2%
	16 years	4	2%
	Total:	**200**	**100%**
Gender	Female	105	52.5%
	Male	95	47.5%
	Total:	**200**	**100%**
Demographic Factors	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**

Monthly Family Income	Poor (Less than 12,030)	120	60%
	Low Income but not poor (12,030–24,060)	42	21%
	Lower Middle Income (24,060–48,120)	24	12%
	Medium Middle Income (48,120–84,210)	9	4.5%
	Upper Middle Income (84,210–144,360)	2	1%
	Upper Income but not rich (144,360–240,600)	1	0.5%
	Rich (more than 240,600)	2	1%
	Total:	**200**	**100%**

Note. All monetary values are expressed in Philippine peso (₱).

Instruments

The researchers developed a self-report questionnaire to assess students' application of HE curriculum-based competencies in everyday life. Competencies from Grades 4–8 were systematically mapped from the MELCs and organised by grade level. Since the study focused on Grade 8 students (ages 13–14), who had acquired both basic and common HE competencies, only psychomotor-domain competencies – identified by action-oriented verbs indicating practical skill performance at home – were selected. These were rephrased into clear, student-friendly statements to ensure comprehension and reduce survey fatigue.

The instrument underwent expert validation by HE professionals teaching in state universities and affiliated laboratory high schools. Based on feedback, minor revisions were made. Expert ratings indicated high relevance (M = 3.74) and clarity (M = 3.71). The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with 52 Grade 8 students who had provided informed consent and parental assent. The pilot produced a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.909, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability. Final revisions were made before administering the survey to 200 Grade 8 participants, excluding the pilot-test students.

The final questionnaire, translated into English as well as into Tagalog and Cebuano (dialects) for clarity, consisted of two parts. The first part collected demographic information, while the second part listed 50 HE competencies across home management, clothing care, sewing, handicraft, food preservation, meal preparation and cookery. The students reported their frequency of application (FOA) and self-reported competency (SRC) at home using a five-point

Likert scale. Completion time ranged from 20–25 minutes.

Research Design

A quantitative approach was employed, using a validated self-report survey administered via cluster sampling. The participants reflected on competencies progressively acquired from Grades 4–8 and applied at home, beyond direct school observation.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's ethics committee, and the Schools Division Office of Iligan City authorised the survey, which was conducted in three public national high schools that had consented to participate. An orientation session was conducted prior to data collection in order to explain the study's purpose and distribute consent and assent forms. Only students with signed forms participated. The questionnaires were administered in classrooms and completed at the students' own pace, supervised by teachers or advisers.

Data analysis involved frequency counts and calculation of mean scores for FOA and SRC across the seven HE learning areas. General mean scores summarised how frequently the students applied HE competencies and how competent they felt. Competencies were ranked from most to least applied and from highest to lowest perceived competence, with standard deviations highlighting variability. This analysis identified which skills the students commonly practiced at home and which learning areas required additional reinforcement, thus informing curriculum improvements.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents the students' HE outcomes – FOA and SRC – across seven HE learning areas within family settings. These results highlight the extent to which students apply HE competencies at home, providing insights into the practical relevance of the curriculum. By examining areas of high and low application and perceived competence, the findings inform curriculum implications, identifying which competencies may require reinforcement, adaptation or greater emphasis in instruction. This analysis offers guidance for curriculum planners and educators to align HE learning objectives with students' real-life experiences, ensuring that the curriculum supports the meaningful transfer of knowledge and skills from school to home and family life.

Table 3

Students' HE outcomes in family settings across learning areas of HE

HE LEARNING AREAS *N* = 200	FOA			SRC			Degree of Reinforcement Needed
	Mean	Rank	*SD*	Mean	Rank	*SD*	
A. Home Management							
1. Clean the house and yard properly	4.03		0.997	3.89		0.819	low
2. Segregate the garbage in the house properly	3.78		1.044	3.81		0.876	low
3. Manage our family resources efficiently	4.07		1.232	3.83		1.061	low
4. Prioritise needs over wants	3.99		1.276	3.89		1.026	low
5. Allocate budget for food	4.11		1.079	3.92		0.966	low
6. Allocate budget for clothing	3.67		1.245	3.68		0.935	low
7. Allocate budget for education/ school needs	3.99		1.175	3.97		0.992	low
8. Allocate budget for savings/ emergency	3.87		1.159	3.96		0.945	low
	3.94	**1**	**1.151**	**3.87**	**1**	**0.952**	**low**
B. Clothing Care							
1. Take care of my clothes	4.38		0.938	4.17		0.807	low
2. Mend torn clothes by hand sewing	3.09		1.265	3.44		1.159	low
3. Identify stains on clothes and remove them with correct treatment	3.85		1.236	3.78		1.028	low
4. Laundry clothes properly	4.09		1.093	4.03		.902	low
5. Iron clothes properly	3.55		1.314	3.59		1.153	low
	3.79	**3**	**1.170**	**3.80**	**2**	**1.010**	**low**
C. Sewing							
1. Use sewing machine or hand to make household linens (e.g., towels, pillowcases, curtains)	2.22		1.327	2.64		1.296	moderate
2. Sew creative and marketable household linens as a means to increase family income	2.02		1.254	2.48		1.299	high
3. Select appropriate measuring tools for dressmaking	2.44		1.391	2.87		1.348	moderate
4. Take accurate body measurements	2.85		1.368	3.11		1.329	moderate
5. Assess the appropriateness of design based on the person's features	2.46		1.344	2.80		1.316	moderate
6. Observe proper handling and cleaning of the machine	2.63		1.485	2.96		1.394	moderate
	2.43	**6**	**1.362**	**2.81**	**6**	**1.330**	**moderate**
D. Handicraft							
1. Use basic tools in embroidery	2.49		1.215	2.91		1.249	moderate
2. Follow the proper steps in making different embroidery stitches	2.74		1.386	2.98		1.320	moderate
3. Create embroidered articles based on the principles and elements of design	2.38		1.321	2.79		1.337	moderate
4. Produce recycled articles artistically	3.02		1.311	3.37		1.161	moderate

HE LEARNING AREAS *N* = 200	FOA			SRC			Degree of Reinforcement Needed
	Mean	Rank	*SD*	Mean	Rank	*SD*	
5. Perform basic gift-wrapping techniques	3.12		1.071	3.52		1.070	low
6. Apply decorative articles to enhance wrapped gift items	3.07		1.141	3.45		1.097	low
7. Observe good working habits in handicrafts	3.31		1.242	3.53		1.079	low
	2.87	**5**	**1.241**	**3.22**	**4**	**1.188**	**moderate**
E. Food Preservation							
1. Conduct simple research to determine market trends and demands in preserved/processed foods	2.74		1.281	3.06		1.281	moderate
2. Use the tools, utensils and equipment and their substitutes in food preservation/processing	3.28		1.280	3.43		1.280	low
3. Preserve food by applying principles and skills in food preservation/processing	2.97		1.285	3.30		1.285	moderate
4. Market preserved/processed food in varied and creative ways	2.51		1.326	2.94		1.326	moderate
	2.87	**5**	**1.293**	**3.18**	**5**	**1.293**	**moderate**
F. Meal Preparation							
1. Plan nutritious meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner	3.98		1.077	3.97		0.870	low
2. Select fresh, affordable and nutritious ingredients	3.81		1.227	3.81		0.989	low
3. Prepare the ingredients in cooking (e.g., measured and cut ingredients)	3.79		1.252	3.83		1.028	low
4. Cook nutritious meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner based on the family budget	3.67		1.228	3.79		1.027	low
5. Follow the nutrition guidelines in preparing and cooking foods	3.61		1.280	3.72		1.090	low
6. Follow food safety in preparing and cooking food	3.89		1.273	3.82		1.075	low
7. Prepare a well-presented dish	3.59		1.285	3.73		1.042	low
8. Use utensils in a proper way	4.02		1.207	4.01		0.967	low
9. Carry out the cleaning and washing of dishes systematically	4.29		1.054	4.21		0.931	very low
	3.85	**2**	**1.209**	**3.87**	**1**	**1.002**	**low**
G. Cookery							
1. Select appropriate types of chemicals such as detergents and chlorine for cleaning and sanitising kitchen tools, equipment and paraphernalia	3.71		1.128	3.77		0.913	low
2. Clean kitchen tools and equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions	3.97		1.084	3.82		0.884	low
3. Sanitise kitchen tools and equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions	3.84		1.149	3.75		1.027	low

HE LEARNING AREAS *N* = 200	FOA			SRC			Degree of Reinforcement Needed
	Mean	Rank	*SD*	Mean	Rank	*SD*	
4. Use cleaning tools, equipment and paraphernalia in accordance to standard operating procedures	3.83		1.195	3.72		0.993	low
5. Use appropriate kitchen tools, equipment and paraphernalia in cookery	3.85		1.177	3.77		0.996	low
6. Observe regular maintenance of kitchen tools and equipment, and work area	3.50		1.276	3.55		1.041	low
7. Measure ingredients according to recipe requirement	3.49		1.280	3.58		1.024	low
8. Convert systems of measurement according to recipe requirement	3.27		1.302	3.43		1.118	low
9. Perform substitution of ingredients (e.g., margarine to butter; lemon to vinegar)	3.19		1.281	3.43		1.123	low
10. Compute the cost of production	3.40		1.276	3.44		1.059	low
11. Recognise the importance of occupational health and safety procedures in cookery	3.55		1.318	3.64		1.174	low
	3.60	**4**	**1.224**	**3.63**	**3**	**1.032**	**low**
Overall	**3.42**		**1.236**	**3.54**		**1.114**	**low**

Legend:

Mean Score Range	FOA Interpretation	SRC Interpretation	Degree of Reinforcement Needed
4.21–5.00	Applied consistently	Highly competent (proficient)	Very low
3.41–4.20	Applied frequently, but not always	Competent	Low
2.61–3.40	Applied occasionally or in some situations	Moderately competent (advanced beginner)	Moderate
1.81–2.60	Applied seldom or infrequently	Less competent (beginner)	High
1.00–1.80	Not applied at all	Not yet competent	Very high

Figure 1
FOA and SRC mean scores by HE learning areas with reinforcement levels

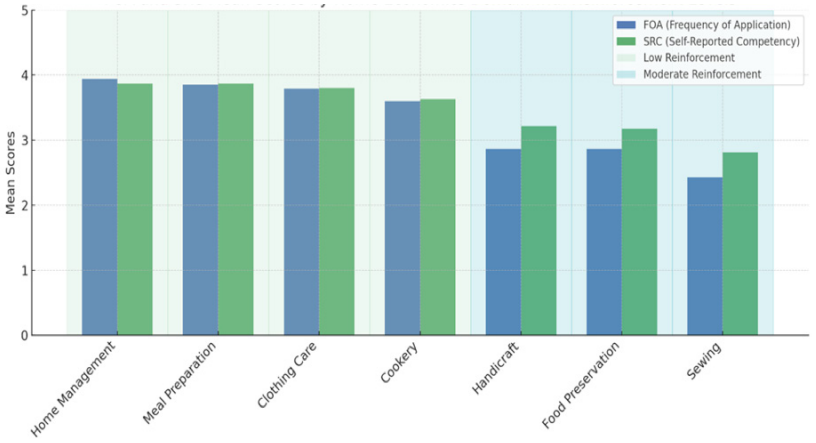

Figure 1 shows a visual comparison of the students' FOA and SRC. Incorporating reinforcement levels through colour shading indicates where interventions are most needed (see legend).

Frequency of Application

The overall mean FOA score of 3.42 indicates that the surveyed JHS students frequently, but not uniformly, apply HE competencies within the family setting. This suggests a strong integration of HE-related skills into the students' daily routines, shaped by both personal initiative and household context. The findings also show that, regardless of gender, the students are generally engaged in HE tasks at home. This may be attributed to their socioeconomic background, as most of the respondents come from low-income families, where household participation is often necessary for daily living rather than optional.

In contrast, Klein et al. (2009) found that children in middle-class families in Los Angeles participated minimally in domestic work due to the availability of paid household help. Similarly, studies in Estonia and Brazil revealed that children from higher-income families, or those with working mothers, tended to engage less frequently in household responsibilities, while participation was greater among girls and lower-income groups (Drummond et al., 2015; Jõers-Türn & Kasearu, 2024). Taken together, these findings suggest that economic necessity can shape household participation: students from less affluent families, such as those in the present study, are often more exposed to practical

home management activities, which in turn reinforce their HE competencies in real-life contexts.

Among the competency strands, Home Management (M = 3.94; SD = 1.151) emerged as the most frequently applied, while Sewing (M = 2.43; SD = 1.362) had the lowest application rate. This aligns with the collectivist values of Filipino families, which emphasise shared domestic responsibilities and interdependence (AFS-USA, 2024). Core practices like home management, meal preparation, clothing care and cooking remain embedded in household routines. This is consistent with Wong's (2023) view that life skills like food preparation and garment maintenance promote self-efficacy and mindfulness.

In contrast, competencies such as Food Preservation, Handicrafts and Sewing recorded lower mean scores and higher standard deviations, suggesting low application and variability in experience. These trends may reflect shifts toward convenience-based living, including increased dependence on ultra-processed foods and mass-produced garments. Henry and Michell (2019) argue that recontextualising traditional skills like sewing, via creative, sustainability-focused activities such as DIY or upcycling, could help counter youth disengagement and curb the impact of fast fashion.

Attitudinal barriers also matter. In Latvia, Lice-Zikmane (2018) found that negative student perceptions towards handicraft-making hindered engagement, a pattern mirrored in the present study. Similarly, the decline in food preservation use may be tied to modern consumption habits, although Nickols et al. (2010) note the enduring value of such skills during crises. In Iligan City and similar urban contexts, reintegrating these competencies through project-based and sustainability-oriented curricula could revive their relevance (Reardon et al., 2020).

Self-Reported Competency

The overall SRC mean of 3.54 suggests that the participating students generally perceive themselves as competent in performing HE tasks, although not yet fully proficient. This implies that they have acquired the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to carry out these tasks: they understand the concepts and are able to follow procedures and achieve acceptable results. However, their competence can still be strengthened, standardised, systemised and sustained for life by fostering greater efficiency, accuracy, creativity and adaptability, particularly when performing tasks independently or in new contexts. In doing so, students can progress from simply being able to do tasks to being able to do them well, reflecting true proficiency in applying HE competencies.

Among the learning areas, Home Management and Meal Preparation recorded the highest mean scores (M = 3.87; SD = 0.952 and 1.002, respectively), indicating stronger perceived competence. The previously reported high FOA scores in these areas suggest that frequent engagement may contribute to enhanced self-perceived competence. However, high SRC does not always correspond to equally high FOA, revealing potential gaps between perceived ability and actual application. The consistency observed between SRC and FOA in some areas highlights effective knowledge transfer and the positive impact of experiential learning.

Conversely, Handicraft (M = 3.22; SD = 1.188), Food Preservation (M = 3.18; SD = 1.002) and Sewing (M = 2.81; SD = 1.330) were the lowest-ranked areas, suggesting instructional or environmental limitations. The relatively high standard deviations indicate varied experiences, reflecting unequal access to resources, limited practice opportunities or reduced motivation due to the availability of ready-made products. As Imoto (2015) notes, home-based projects can help close these gaps, fostering skill development and confidence. Curriculum design also influences these patterns; Autio et al. (2012) found that a bifurcated craft curriculum balancing innovation and textile work increased participation and reduced gender bias. Adapting the Philippine HE curriculum in a similar way could enhance engagement with undervalued competencies and boost student confidence.

Curriculum design alone cannot, however, fully account for variations in student confidence and the application of HE skills; economic and lifestyle factors also play a role. Students from low-income households reported high confidence in meal preparation, likely due to greater reliance on home-cooked meals, whereas higher-income families may limit hands-on practice due to easy access to processed foods (Horning et al., 2016; Marino et al., 2021). Integrating interdisciplinary approaches – such as mathematics for budgeting and meal planning in terms of price, proportion and nutrient adequacy, and science for understanding food composition and nutrition – can further enhance conceptual depth and real-life relevance in meal management across diverse family contexts (Dossey et al., 2024; Fooladi et al., 2023; Morgan et al., 2023).

Degree of Reinforcement Needed

The relationship between FOA and SRC across competencies reveals important instructional implications. Some competencies with high FOA show a slightly lower SRC, while some with high SRC show a significant decrease in FOA, indicating misalignment between use and confidence. The following

matrix was used to determine reinforcement needs:

- High FOA & High SRC: skills internalised; minimal reinforcement.
- High FOA & Low SRC: practice exceeds confidence; scaffolded feedback needed.
- Low FOA & High SRC: competence exists but is underutilised; more application opportunities needed.
- Low FOA & Low SRC: skills weak in both use and confidence; targeted instruction required.

Standard deviation patterns reinforce this diagnosis. For instance, Sewing and Handicrafts have high SDs in FOA and SRC, implying heterogeneity in application and ability. The heterogeneity suggests that there may be inequities in access to practice, in the quality of instruction, or other possible barriers.

In order to identify instructional priorities systematically, competencies were classified based on a five-point Likert scale for SRC:

- 1.00–1.80 = very high reinforcement needed
- 1.81–2.60 = high reinforcement needed
- 2.61–3.40 = moderate reinforcement needed
- 3.41–4.20 = low reinforcement needed
- 4.21–5.00 = very low reinforcement needed

Lucero and Chen (2020) and Macalisang and Bonghawan (2024) affirm that targeted reinforcement enhances skill development.

In the present study, Entrepreneurial Sewing and related technical skills generally required moderate-to-high reinforcement. The competency *"Sew creative and marketable household linens to increase family income"* was undervalued by the surveyed students, being rarely applied and associated with lower self-reported competence. This reflects a gap between curriculum expectations and students' lived realities. Sewing, once considered a vital home and livelihood skill, is now often seen as less relevant due to modern lifestyles, limited access to sewing tools at home, or the availability of affordable ready-made products. Opportunities or motivation to practise sewing outside the classroom may also be lacking, particularly when families do not engage in related income-generating activities. Teachers can address this gap through innovative, hands-on approaches that allow students to create textile products and generate income.

Meanwhile, the competency *"Carry out the cleaning and washing of dishes systematically"* was highly valued and frequently applied, with students reporting high competence. This alignment between curriculum and students'

daily lives reflects the skill's practical relevance. Dishwashing requires no specialised tools or supervision, making it accessible across households regardless of gender, socioeconomic status or family structure. Regular engagement in such routine tasks fosters responsibility, reinforces discipline and builds confidence, providing a foundation for more complex home management skills.

Curriculum Implications

Although the combined overall mean score of 3.48 (FOA: $M = 3.42$ and SRC: $M = 3.54$) for HE outcomes indicates a good rate of application and high self-reported competence, the findings reveal uneven engagement across learning areas, emphasising the need for targeted curriculum adjustments. Fundamental skills such as home management, meal preparation, clothing care and cookery are consistently applied and culturally relevant, while competencies in sewing, handicrafts and food preservation remain underutilised. These gaps may reflect limitations in access, instructional time, perceived relevance and household necessity, underscoring the importance of adapting the curriculum to contextual realities and evolving household dynamics.

In order to enhance effectiveness, the Philippine HE curriculum could be streamlined to prioritise essential and relevant competencies, providing students ample opportunities for mastery and real-life application (DepEd, 2024). Resource constraints – such as limited access to sewing machines or food preservation equipment – must be addressed through creative instructional strategies, ensuring that skills can be practised and internalised despite environmental limitations.

For instance, sewing can be reinforced through real-life projects such as garment repair or upcycling, connecting traditional skills to practical, entrepreneurial outcomes. Handicraft activities can be made more engaging and relevant by incorporating collaborative, market-oriented projects that emphasise functional and creative uses. Similarly, food preservation can be recontextualised to promote healthier, home-made alternatives to processed snacks, thus enhancing students' ability to apply knowledge sustainably. Even routine tasks like dishwashing can be elevated by integrating lessons on hygiene, ergonomics, water and energy conservation, and efficiency, transforming everyday chores into reflective, value-driven experiences.

Overall, curriculum design should move from simply delivering competencies to fostering transformative learning. By aligning instruction with students' lived contexts, integrating sustainability and entrepreneurship, and offering differentiated, experiential opportunities, HE can ensure that students not

only perform household tasks but also understand their broader social, economic and environmental significance. This approach positions HE as a practical, adaptive and life-oriented discipline that prepares learners for meaningful participation in family and community life.

Conclusions

The findings of the present study reaffirm the enduring relevance of HE as a discipline embedded in everyday life. The participating students demonstrated competence in applying curriculum-based skills, particularly in household responsibilities such as cleaning, organising and food preparation, thus providing clear evidence of real-life application. Grounded in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, these results illustrate how HE skills are enacted within authentic home environments, nurturing both self-care and care for others.

However, meaningful and sustained reinforcement remains crucial for the full internalisation of these competencies. Limited engagement in sewing, handicrafts and other income-generating tasks highlights the need to revitalise traditional competencies and adapt them to contemporary household contexts. Integrating themes such as sustainability, resource management and entrepreneurship can transform routine tasks into opportunities for innovation and livelihood development. Thus, HE must move beyond habitual practice toward transformative learning, whereby students not only perform tasks but also understand their economic, environmental and social relevance.

The present study also offers a valuable point of reflection for educators and curriculum planners in other contexts. By examining how their own HE competencies manifest in students' homes, they may identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for strengthening practical skill application beyond the classroom, as well as curriculum enhancements.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its use of self-reported data, which introduces potential bias, and its focus on a specific population, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Future research should incorporate observational or performance-based assessments to validate self-reports, employ mixed methods to explore disparities between competency and application, and conduct longitudinal studies to examine how HE skills evolve into adulthood. Evaluating targeted interventions – such as home-based projects or entrepreneurship-integrated modules – may provide deeper insights into strengthening real-world skill application.

Ultimately, HE should not be viewed merely as a compliance-driven, grade-oriented subject but as a transformative life discipline. Its purpose

extends beyond preparing students for employment; it nurtures responsible, resilient and values-driven individuals capable of sustaining themselves, their families and their communities. In order to fulfil this mandate, educators and curriculum planners must rethink and strengthen HE delivery, revitalising neglected competencies, aligning instruction with learners' contexts, and bridging the gap between curriculum expectations and lived realities. When effectively implemented, HE equips learners not only to be life-ready but to be prepared for purposeful living in an ever-changing world.

Ethical Statement

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, on 30 May 2024.

Data Availability Statement

The data are securely stored by the authors on personal devices and are not publicly available; however, data may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Disclosure Statement

The authors have no conflict of interest and financial funds to declare. They affirm full responsibility for the overall conduct of this research, including the conceptualisation and design of the study, data gathering and analysis.

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used for the generation of this paper, and accept full responsibility for the content and integrity of the publication.

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