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Textile and Clothing Education in Home Science: A Contemporary Framework for Sustainable Household Living

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Abstract

Textile and clothing education is a significant area of Home Science because it connects textile science with everyday household decisions. Contemporary consumers must choose among many fibres, fabrics and garments while considering comfort, cost, durability, maintenance and waste. This conceptual paper proposes a practical framework linking fabric literacy, garment selection, scientific care, repair, reuse and responsible disposal. It argues that Home Science education can move beyond memorization of textile properties and develop practical decision-making skills for sustainable household living. The framework can be used for classroom teaching, extension activities and future empirical studies.

Keywords: *Home Science, textiles, clothing, fabric selection, garment care, sustainability, textile waste, consumer education*

Introduction

Textiles and clothing affect comfort, hygiene, appearance, household expenditure and daily labour. Home Science traditionally provides knowledge about fibres, yarns, fabrics, clothing construction and care. In the contemporary market, however, learners also need skills in label reading, quality assessment, wardrobe planning, repair, reuse and responsible consumption.

Rationale

The growing variety of textile products makes informed selection increasingly important. A garment that appears economical may require frequent replacement or demanding care. Therefore, textile education should connect material properties with practical consequences for comfort, cost, time and resource use.

Problem Statement

Textile instruction can become overly descriptive when fibre and fabric properties are taught without linking them to actual household decisions. A more integrated approach is needed to connect textile science with clothing management and sustainability.

Objectives

The study aims to examine the educational importance of textiles and clothing in Home Science; identify practical competencies for fabric and garment selection; connect clothing care with resource conservation; promote repair and reuse; and suggest indicators for evaluating textile literacy.

Research Questions

What textile competencies are useful for present-day households? How can fabric selection be linked with comfort, durability and cost? How can clothing-care education extend garment life? What educational practices can encourage repair, reuse and responsible disposal?

Scope

The paper covers household textile and clothing decisions including selection, care, repair, reuse, budgeting, consumer awareness and waste reduction. It is conceptual and does not claim original survey or laboratory results.

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Methodology

A conceptual and descriptive framework-development approach was used. Major Home Science textile-and-clothing concepts were organized into a practical life-cycle model suitable for teaching and future field research.

Fabric Selection and Household Use

Material	Useful Characteristics	Household Consideration
Cotton	Comfortable and absorbent	May crease or shrink; suitable care is needed
Wool	Warm and resilient	Requires appropriate washing and storage
Silk	Smooth, light and lustrous	Gentle handling is generally required
Polyester	Strong and crease resistant	Heat and care conditions should be considered
Blends	Can combine fibre properties	Care depends on the blend composition
Regenerated fibres	Often soft with good drape	Performance varies by fibre and finish

Textile Properties as Decision Tools

Learners should understand absorbency, strength, elasticity, thermal behaviour, drape, crease resistance, colour fastness and care requirements. The educational objective is application: students should be able to select a fabric for a particular purpose and explain the reasons for the choice.

Clothing Care and Resource Management

Appropriate washing, drying, ironing, stain treatment and storage can help maintain garment usability. Home Science instruction should emphasize care-label interpretation, suitable washing procedures, avoidance of unnecessary harsh treatment, appropriate drying and safe storage. Care education can be treated as a resource-management activity because damage and premature replacement may increase household expenditure.

Repair, Alteration and Reuse

Simple repairs such as button replacement, seam repair, patching and hemming can extend garment use. Alteration can improve fit and reduce the need to replace otherwise serviceable clothing. Reuse may involve repeated wearing, family transfer, donation, exchange or transformation into another useful textile product.

Textile Waste and Responsible Consumption

Responsible consumption begins before purchase and continues through the use and end-of-use stages. Need-based buying, versatile garments, quality assessment, proper maintenance, repair and reuse can reduce avoidable disposal. Where appropriate systems exist, unwanted textiles can be directed to donation, collection or recycling channels.

Proposed Textile Literacy Framework

Stage	Learning Focus	Expected Outcome
Select	Need, fibre, fabric, fit, quality and price	Informed purchase
Use	Comfort, function and wardrobe planning	Better utilization
Care	Washing, drying, ironing and storage	Longer service life
Repair	Seams, buttons and minor alterations	Reduced replacement
Reuse	Continued use and creative transformation	Higher material value
Dispose	Donation and appropriate separation	Lower avoidable waste

Role of Home Science Education

1. Use fabric samples and care-label exercises.
2. Teach basic repair and alteration through practical work.
3. Introduce wardrobe planning and clothing budgets.
4. Compare garments using durability and cost-per-use.
5. Conduct reuse and textile-transformation projects.
6. Assess practical decision-making rather than memorization alone.

Recommendations

1. Integrate sustainability into textile-and-clothing lessons.
2. Make garment-care demonstrations routine.
3. Teach consumer comparison and label literacy.
4. Include household budgeting and cost-per-use exercises.
5. Promote repair, alteration and reuse activities.
6. Develop community-oriented textile education programmes.

Evaluation Indicators

Competency	Possible Evidence
Fabric literacy	Matches material properties with suitable uses
Care literacy	Interprets care labels and selects procedures
Consumer awareness	Compares quality, price and expected use
Repair skill	Completes a basic repair or alteration
Sustainability awareness	Identifies reuse and disposal options
Household management	Creates a practical clothing-care plan

Discussion

The framework positions textile and clothing education as a practical household-management subject. Fabric knowledge becomes meaningful when it informs choices about comfort, care, durability and expenditure. Repair and reuse further extend the educational role of Home Science by treating clothing as a resource whose useful life can be managed.

Limitations and Future Research

The paper is conceptual and contains no primary statistical findings. Future research can test the framework among Home Science learners, measure textile-literacy changes after practical instruction, and examine changes in clothing-care, repair and purchasing behaviour.

Conclusion

Textile and clothing education remains highly relevant to Home Science when textile science is connected with consumer literacy, household economics, garment care and sustainability. A life-cycle approach can help learners make informed decisions about selecting, using, maintaining, repairing, reusing and disposing of clothing.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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