

# Current Conditions of Consumer Education in Elementary School Home Economics Courses: A Comparison of Home Economics Teachers in Overseas and Domestic Japanese Schools

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## Abstract

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The objective of this study was to clarify the current conditions of consumer education in elementary school home economics courses through a comparative survey of elementary schools in Japan and Japanese schools. In our data analysis, we found on overseas the "decision making ability and thinking" and a given teacher's content and method of teaching. The results were as follows:

- 1) In Japan, teachers who had home economics licenses, specialized in home economics and took lectures in consumer education were more likely to teach the "decision making ability and thinking" than those who did not experience them.
- 2) In comparison with teachers in Japan, the number of teachers at overseas Japanese schools who used newspapers, magazines, TV/radio, public publications, or lectures and workshops as resources for their students to acquire knowledge of consumer education was relatively small. In contrast, teachers at overseas Japanese schools were more likely to utilize the internet than their counterparts in Japan.
- 3) Regarding teaching materials and aids for consumer education, overseas teachers were less likely to use educational materials, video, DVDs, and newspapers than teachers in Japan. However, the number of overseas teachers using the internet and resources in the school was greater than that of teachers in Japan.
- 4) In Japan, teachers with a higher level of awareness of the importance of decision making ability and creative thinking were more likely to teach classes with several kinds of content and use a variety of methods than teachers with a lower level of awareness. At overseas schools, however, the level of awareness was not significantly related to teachers' content and method of education.
- 5) In overseas Japanese schools, the opportunity to be informed of students' consumption and to acquire information is limited. As a result, it is difficult to teach consumer education in overseas schools.

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*Key words:* Home Economics education, Japanese school, consumer education, teacher, decision making