Basic Stance of Home Economics Education about the Outline of the Countermeasures to Society with the Declining Birthrate and Approach to the “Declining Birthrate Issue”: Analysis of Textbooks in High School Home Economics

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Abstract

The purposes of this paper are to examine the relationship between the Outline of the Countermeasures to Society with the Declining Birthrate and home economics education, and the approach to the “declining birthrate issue” in high school home economics, and to show the basic stance of home economics education about the Outline. The materials used for analysis included the Outline of the Countermeasures to Society with the Declining Birthrate which was revised in March 2015, and the high school home economics textbooks that conformed to the curriculum guidelines implemented in 1989 and afterwards. The analysis confirmed that home economics is a prominent part of today’s birthrate measures, given that, as future tasks, the revised outline calls for the development of supporters of family life who have both knowledge and skills about child-rearing and housework, instead of a mere theoretical understanding of the importance of home and family. The results also call for support for comprehensive career development with a view to improving both work and family life. Furthermore, it is found that the home economics textbooks cover the following birthrate issues: declining birthrate and aging population are making it difficult to maintain Japan’s social and economic systems, environments for child development and parental growth have deteriorated, and several factors are causing the low birthrate, which make childbirth complicated even if it is desired.

Key words: home economics education, declining birthrate, the Outline of the Countermeasures to Society with the Declining Birthrate, textbooks analysis