

Teachers' Perspectives in Establishing Sound School Food Literacy Education and School Food Environment: A Qualitative Study



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RATIONALE/OBJETIVE

Teachers are a main stakeholder group for food literacy education who are involved directly in the teaching-learning process.

- Aim** -To explore the insights of teachers into food literacy education in Sri Lankan schools from grades 6 to 11 to understand its barriers and opportunities.

METHODS

Study design: Qualitative

Sample: Eleven teachers (teach Home Economics, Agriculture, Practical and Technical Skills, and Science) representing different types of government schools in six provinces in Sri Lanka.

Method of data collection: Semi structured interviews average time 16 min.) The interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached. All the interviews were conducted in local languages and they were recorded, transcribed, and translated to English.

Data analysis: Using NVivo (Version 11) software following the Thematic Analysis Technique.

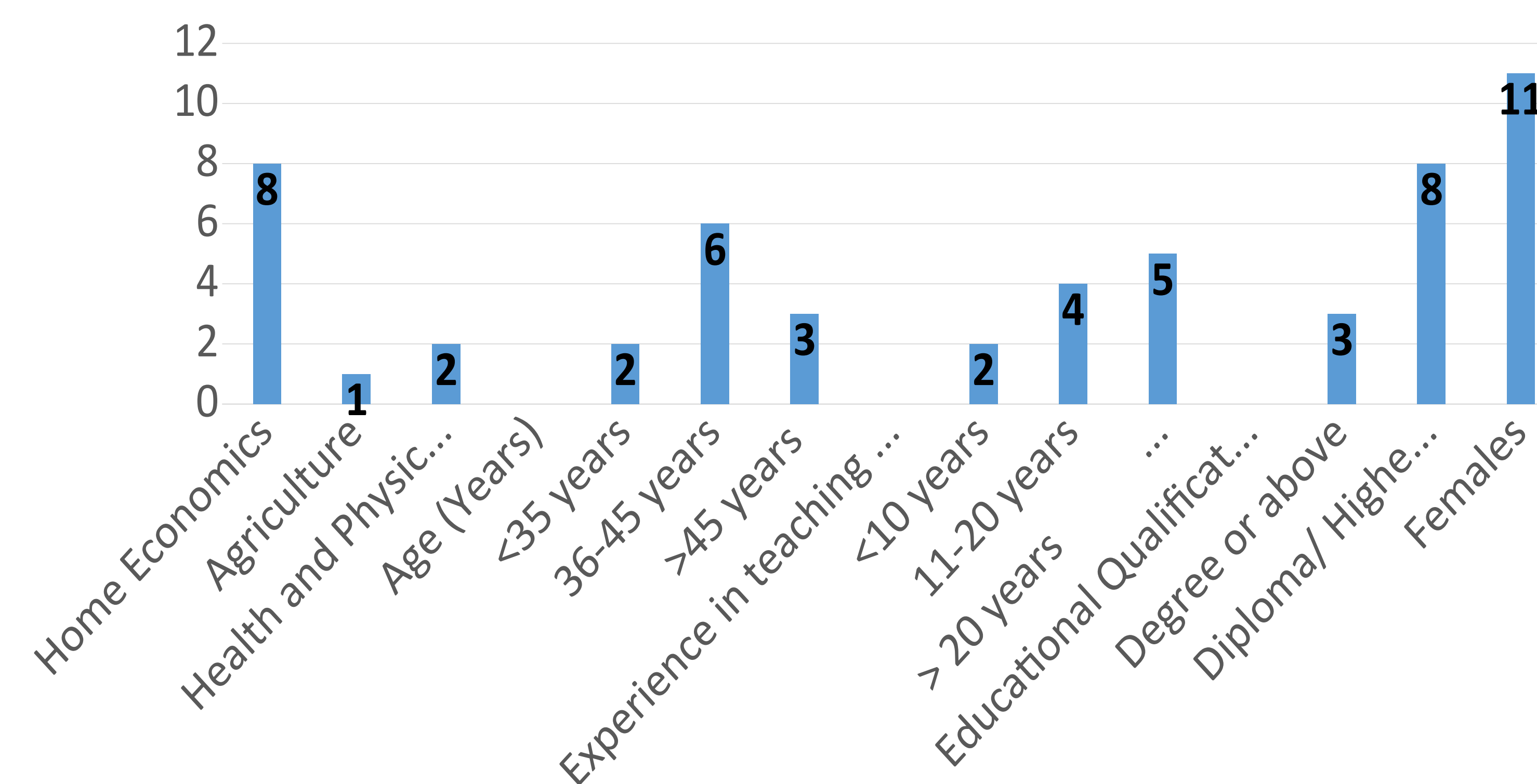


Figure 1: Demographic characteristics of the teachers participated in the study

RESULTS

A few quotations from teachers' interviews:

For me, I haven't had a formal training from Department of Education. I have gone to Vidatha centers and had a training privately

.....the people around me appreciate me saying that they learnt this and that from me. Therefore, I believe that the children may also learn the things well

Our school don't have water

.....we can not agree that the canteen follow the instructions accordingly and sell the recommended food. But the school have implemented a system

Actually education is exam-oriented

The students today are the mothers and fathers in future. Therefore, this should be an essential subject with more practical component



Figure 2 : Photos from some teachers' interviews conducted

According to the findings,

- Current food literacy curricula are exam-oriented and lack focus on skill development.
- Teachers suggested improving the school food environment to support food literacy education, including making all school communities (teachers, non-academic staff and parents) food literate and establishing healthy school canteens.
- Uneven distribution and limited resources (infrastructure and human) among schools, undervaluing of food literacy-related subjects, and inadequate training for teachers were identified as the main obstacles to food literacy education
- The support provided by parents, other school communities, and education administrators was identified as enablers of food literacy education.

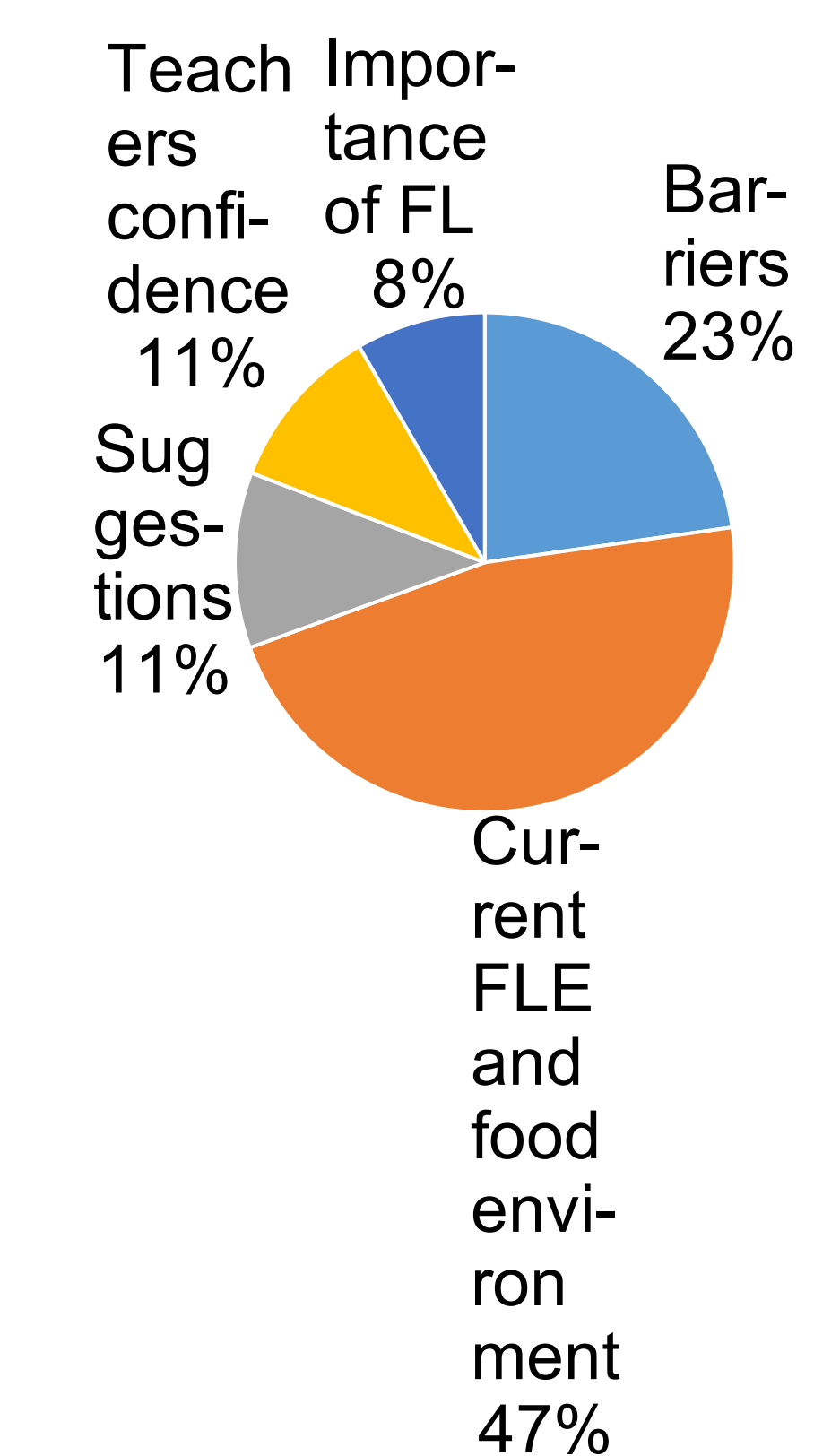


Figure3: Themes generated using Nvivo with it's frequencies

CONCLUSIONS

- The Sri Lankan school food literacy curriculum does not sufficiently address the food skills of school children, and school food environments need improvement to support food literacy education.

IMPLICATIONS

- Education authorities could use the findings in curriculum revisions, policy developments and education reformations.
- Researchers and authorities may able to design intervention research based on the findings.

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