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FEATURE

Professional Accountability via Professional Imperatives

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Addressing practical, perennial problems with no discernible solutions (e.g., income insecurity, food insecurity, housing insecurity, health inequality, unsustainability) generates moral fallout—people could be harmed. As a profession, family and consumer sciences/home economics mandates that its practitioners hold deep obligations to the public they serve. Thus, morally- bound practice cannot go unchecked. Family and consumer sciences (FCS) professionals can bolster their professional accountability if they embrace eight professional imperatives, which range from the abstract and the theoretical to the concrete. These include being philosophically grounded, ethically compelled, morally obligated, values oriented, ideologically aware, theoretically mature, intellectually savvy, and competent and skilled. When embraced, these imperatives will better ensure professional accountability by FCS practitioners.

The family and consumer sciences (FCS)/home economics[1] profession must be accountable for its practice because many of its actions have moral implications—people could be harmed (McGregor, 2014c). Accountability presumes the expectation or requirement to justify, to self and others, one's intentions, judgments, actions, omissions, and decisions (Bivens, 2006). This paper addresses the issue of how members of the profession can augment professional accountability by respecting and implementing professional *imperatives*, from Latin *imperativus*, "specially ordered" (Harper, 2023).

Home economics, now FCS in the United States, *is* a *profession* (Brown & Paolucci, 1979), from Latin *professionem*, "a public declaration" (Harper, 2023). Public declarations can pertain to principles, intentions, motives, policies, or obligations (Wordnik, n.d.). "I publically declare (profess) that . . . ." Wynia (2013) explained how words with the root *profess* are interrelated (see also Cuff, 2014):

> Profess: To speak out in public, openly declare
>
> Profess**ion**: A group speaking out, together, about their shared standards and values
>
> Profess**ional**: An individual member of the group; an act or behavior that is in conformance with the declared standards and values of the group
>
> Profess**ionalism**: a belief system (an *-ism*), holding that professional groups are uniquely

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[1]Other terminology used in the field includes: human ecology, consumer sciences, home ecology, home sciences, household sciences, family studies, human sciences.

> well-suited to organize and deliver certain social goods—establish shared standards and values to govern our work—ensure adherence to them. (Wynia, 2013, Slide #16, emphases added)

Drawing heavily on Brown (1965) and Brown and Paolucci (1979), McGregor (2016) further explained why FCS/home economics can be characterized as a profession.

> Succinctly, home economics is a profession because it has a body of knowledge that it calls its own and which is necessary for the good of society. This complex body of knowledge is systematic, logical, and derived from research. Acquiring it necessitates a prolonged period of study in higher education. Professionals have a monopoly on this knowledge, and they can each readily identify with it. Members need approval to enter the profession and licensing or certification to practice. They hold an esteemed position in society and are viewed as legitimate contributors to public affairs and policy. Also, service to the public involves intellectual activity, including practical judgements (think before you act). Members of the profession actively assure the public that their work is morally defensible. The scope and purpose of the profession are necessarily limited to ensure the level of competence and independent thought required to be a professional in the field of practice. (p. 56)

FCS/home economics' professional status intimates that its practitioners must hold *deep* obligations to the public they serve. With these obligations come serious professional imperatives. This article identifies and elaborates on eight especially ordered imperatives that the author deems essential and vitally important to FCS practice (see list below). They range from the abstract (philosophy, ideology, ethics, morals, values, principles) and the theoretical to the concrete (body of knowledge, and competencies). The eight imperatives are:

- Philosophically grounded
- Ethically compelled (right vs. wrong)
- Morally obligated (good vs. bad)
- Value oriented
- Ideologically aware
- Theoretically mature
- Intellectually savvy
- Competent and skilled

The collection of ideas in the list above resonates with Kieren et al.'s (1984) seminal approach to characterizing the profession as a system comprising three interrelated subsystems: (a) subsystem 1: philosophy (goal or mission), (b) subsystem 2: content (body of knowledge), and (c) subsystem 3: practice. They posited that practice is multidimensional and constitutes (a) a personality that affiliates and identifies with the essence of FCS/home economics, (b) the theory-practice relationship of FCS/home economics as a practical science (i.e., reasoned thought and reflection before action), (c) the employment of service delivery processes and skills, and (d) the application and integration of knowledge and competencies pursuant to ensuring improved well-being and quality of life—our mantra. Each imperative is addressed below.

Philosophically Grounded

Philosophy is from the Greek *philosophia*, "love of knowledge, pursuit of wisdom, systematic investigation" (Harper, 2023). It is imperative that FCS professionals are philosophically grounded, philosophically curious, and philosophically committed. They must be deeply aware of the beliefs that guide their professional behavior. Beliefs include doctrines, ideologies, principles, valued ends, and rules. Philosophies set out what is important to FCS professionals to ensure their practice is high quality, ethical, and normative (should and ought) (McGregor, 2014a).

It is imperative that FCS professionals are philosophically grounded, philosophically curious, and philosophically committed.

Unfortunately, FCS professionals tend to be antiphilosophical (Brown & Paolucci, 1979). They eschew philosophy in their practice, which should

not be surprising as most graduate from university without a philosophy course (McGregor, 2014a). To illustrate, Spitze (1979) said Brown and Paolucci's (1979) philosophical definition of home economics was very hard to read "even though in my doctoral study I probably had more than the usual number of courses in philosophy" (p. 195).

In 2012, McGregor assumed the Guest Editor role for a special issue of *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* on "philosophy in home economics" (see https://www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum19-1.html). A year and a half later, she lamented that, "to date, no one aside from me has submitted a paper for this issue. . . . Lack of submissions tells me there is a lack of currency for the idea of philosophy" (McGregor, 2014a, p. 1). Given that she wrote three quarters of the 11 peer-reviewed papers published in this special issue, she eventually concluded that the profession was resisting and struggling with philosophy.

> Home economists are struggling against bringing a philosophical lens to their work. Without this lens, they engage in practice that is not reflective. Lack of reflection means lack of deep insights into *why they* are doing what they do (or not). Lack of insights sets people up for unaccountable practice, let alone unstimulating practice. This *philosophical lassitude* is not sustainable. (McGregor, 2014a, p. 2)

She went on to tender six plausible reasons for this resistance: (a) FCS professionals may feel intellectually inadequate to cope with philosophy, thereby letting others do it for them, (b) engaging with philosophy may suggest that they and the profession are in crises intimating failure, (c) they may be afraid of being perceived as intellectually indolent (philosophically inactive), (d) they may fear self-revelations or revelations about the profession emergent from philosophical musings about the deeper side of their practice, (e) they may resist philosophy because of sheer indifference to the role it plays in their practice, and (f) they may be apathetic (i.e., simply not interested in or concerned about philosophy). These emotional, push-back states can thwart professional accountability (McGregor, 2014a, 2014b).

Any lack of philosophical groundedness has repercussions (McGregor, 2014b). FCS professionals are supposed to be socialized to make ethical and moral decisions about problems facing humanity, problems that are lived out in individuals' and families' lives and homes. FCS practice focuses on morally laden, practical, perennial problems faced by families in all generations (e.g., income insecurity, food insecurity, housing insecurity, health inequality) with an appreciation that what worked before may not work again or even be appropriate (see also Brown & Paolucci, 1979). Because these problems may not have solutions in our lifetime, FCS professionals must draw on a philosophy that provides deep-rooted ideas about what *should* guide their mission-oriented practice.

Philosophical unawareness and philosophical disengagement (both creating ungroundedness) can thus lead to unaccountable and irresponsible practice in that our work may be irrelevant, unethical, or even harmful (immoral). At worst, without philosophical grounding, FCS practice could become boring, uninspiring, outdated, or not invigorating. These sentiments threaten to deaden FCS practice, making philosophical grounding an imperative (McGregor, 2014b).

Ethically Compelled and Morally Obligated

The Australian Council of Professions (2000) defined a profession in such a way that a code of ethics is inherently necessary to govern all professional activities. They said a profession is a:

> disciplined group of individuals who adhere to high ethical standards and uphold themselves to, and are accepted by, the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised, organised body of learning derived from education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to exercise this knowledge and these skills in the interests of others. (para. 1)

Given the incredible power wielded by professions, it is imperative that FCS professionals are ethically compelled and morally obligated in their service to individuals, families, communities, and society. For clarification, ethics pertain to the rightness or wrongness of a decision or action, and morals relate to the goodness or badness. Ethics

are defined by others and externally imposed, whereas morals are personal and arise from within. To illustrate, a professional association would formulate and administer a code of ethics, but individual practitioners would be expected to follow their own moral compass while adhering to the code. Ethics are governed by professional and legal guidelines within a particular culture, but morals transcend cultural norms (i.e., accepted behavioral standards). Ethics are certain within a context and vary among contexts, but a person's morals are normally consistent across all contexts ("Ethics vs. morals," 2022).

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Because FCS practice has moral overtones (i.e., harm could ensue), it is imperative that practitioners engage in ethically consistent and morally defensible practice (Brown & Paolucci, 1979). For ethical consistency, they can take direction and guidance from a professional association's code of ethics. For defensible practice, they must make morally bound individual decisions. Each time they encounter a pressing societal issue that is having a negative impact on the well-being or quality of life of individuals, families, or communities, they should take a moral *stand.* This term is a play on words for acting with moral *standards,* which are principles of honorable behavior (integrity) that people can use to judge their actions as morally acceptable or unacceptable (i.e., they are being accountable).

Taking a moral stance thus involves positioning oneself on moral ground and taking moral considerations into play when striving to address a pressing problem. *Will someone be harmed by the choice I am considering?* If so, a different choice should be considered so one can exercise moral responsibility and accountability as an FCS practitioner. For clarification, people *take* responsibility and live with the consequences but are *held* accountable by others or themselves (i.e., by accurately and neutrally recounting the sequence of choices leading to the consequences) (McGregor, 2014c). Brown (1980) argued that home economists "cannot legitimately maintain the myth of moral neutrality, for what is done professionally *does* intervene in the lives of people 'served'" (p. 23).

Value Oriented

Ethics (right or wrong) and morals (good or bad) go hand in hand with values, which in Old French means "degree to which something is estimable, useful; its moral worth" (Harper, 2023). If something is of value, it is important, highly thought of, worthy, and deserving of attention and energy. FCS professionals are thus charged with being *value oriented* (i.e., inclined to be strongly guided by values) with special attention paid to (a) valued ends versus given ends, and (b) the importance of making value judgments (Brown, 1980; Brown & Paolucci, 1979).

Valued Ends

FCS professionals provide services with specific ends (i.e., the state of affairs that a decision or action is intended to achieve) that are supposed to be in the interest of individuals, families, communities, and society. *Interest* means gaining an advantage or a benefit (Anderson, 2014). For example, it is in the family's *interest* to have healthy relationships, be well fed, and be sheltered. FCS professionals are expected to examine and judge the ends proposed to meet these interests in concert with those affected by their decisions. For this reason, they are called *valued ends* rather than *given ends*, which are predetermined or *given* by an expert (Brown, 1980).

Sole reliance on the FCS professional's expertise (their given end), without due consideration of what the individual or family wants or values (their valued end), amounts to unthoughtful and possibly unaccountable practice. Individuals and families have agency, and sole reliance on technical

expertise can dismiss that power. Value-oriented practice mitigates this eventuality (a technical, how-to approach) and opens the door for interpretive (meaning making) and critical (empowerment) practice (Brown, 1980; Brown & Paolucci, 1979; Vaines & Wilson, 1986).

Value Judgments

Dealing with valued ends requires *value judgments*. Judgments are objective decisions, opinions, or evaluations formed by deliberation and discernment (Anderson, 2014). *Value* judgments are for any *What should be done?* scenarios rather than *What has been done in the past, what am I qualified to do, expected to do, or what are others doing*? scenarios. Because their actions intentionally affect people's lives, FCS professionals are morally obligated to determine what end states or goals people desire. *Value judgments* thus concern both the professional's valued (desired) ends and the values and goals held by people being served. Decisions should ultimately be based on a value judgment that doing one thing is better for someone's interest than doing something else (Brown, 1980).

Murphy (1979) admitted there are times (e.g., exhaustion, expediency, impatience) when FCS professionals just want to fall back on prescribing what to do while wearing an expert hat (given ends). But there are times (on a case-by-case basis) when they must make judgments about which valued end to seek—*What* should *be done in this particular situation?* Their answer matters because people could be harmed (Brown, 1980; Murphy, 1979).

In any case, the choice of valued ends cannot be an emotional one. It must be logical and rational (defendable); value judgments are objective. Also, a value judgment is different from a value expression, which is an articulation of one's personal beliefs ideally arising from value clarification. Value judgments, in contrast, "are grounded in evaluation of conditions and consequences [in light of a valued end] and result from a process of deliberation" (Murphy, 1979, p. 188). Given the significance of the impact of FCS professionals' actions, it is imperative that they engage in value-oriented practice.

Ideologically Aware

Values are an inherent aspect of ideologies, and "ideologies matter in the home economics profession" (McGregor et al., 2008, p. 48). Ideology is from French *idéologie*, "study or science of ideas" and is commonly understood to be a "systematic set of ideas, doctrines through which the world is interpreted" (Harper, 2023, para. 3). It is imperative that FCS professionals study these ideas so that they are ideologically aware, or else they will be too easily influenced and swayed by powerful cultural blueprints (dictates, assumptions) of what is (a) worthy of belief and attention, (b) accepted as true, and (c) valued. Ideologies are a set of rules for how society should work and how people should behave in that society (Johnson, 2005). Put another way, they are the ruling ideas of the time and a prescribed way to live our lives (Dillman, 2000).

Successful ideologies become so ordinary that they are invisible and tend to go unquestioned (Duerst-Lahti, 1998). Examples include capitalism, patriarchy, top-down globalization, neoliberalism, political conservatism, religious conservatism, social Darwinism, and consumerism. To illustrate, people who embrace the values of the capitalism, neoliberalism, and consumerism ideologies can happily assign positive meaning to profit, success, wealth, materialism, production, consumption, efficiency, competition, and related concepts. People who instead favor mindful markets, sustainability, and humanism would feel a profound disconnect between what society is telling them is valued and the overall results they see from people adhering to those beliefs, values, and notions of truth: lost human potential, beleaguered human security, and compromised human conditions (McGregor, 2008). Below is another example using a camp (ideology) and watchtower (paradigm) metaphor.

> Imagine that the people living in the camp are following the ideological cultural blueprint of Darwinism's survival of the fittest, competition for scarce resources (capitalism), and power extorted by a few men over the many (patriarchy). If the person standing in the watchtower values the same things, life in the camp will

> make complete *sense* to them. If, however, that person believes in different values, like collaboration, sharing, sustainability, and gendered power, the camp activities they observe will take on totally different meanings. They will *see* exploitation, waste, and oppression and be stymied as to how anyone could willingly live in that camp. (McGregor, 2019, p. 19)

Wearing ideological blinders is not a tenable prospect for a profession focused on liberating and empowering individuals and families (Brown & Paolucci, 1979). An enduring concern for the well-being and quality of life of individuals and families should compel FCS professionals to critically examine prevailing ideologies to reveal underlying causes of oppression, discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, and structural violence. Their second trust is to become familiar with contending ideologies so they can counter the dominant cultural blueprint with a viable alternative that prioritizes individuals, families, communities, and societies (McGregor, 2019; McGregor et al., 2008). Ideologically aware practitioners are more prone to professional accountability.

Theoretically Mature

On a related front, FCS professionals must not be atheoretical. Their work should always be as theoretically sound as possible (Kieren et al., 1984). But this imperative may not be readily feasible. Brown and Baldwin (1995) claimed "there is evidence of an antitheoretical bias among home economists" (p. 8). This is unfortunate because theories serve several key roles in practice. They help FCS professionals (a) understand reality (*What is this*?) (b) explain reality (*What is happening here*?) (c) predict reality (*What will happen if . . .?*) and/or (d) control reality (*Is treatment A better than B*?) (McGregor, 2018).

Highly theorized work is consciously grounded in assumptions about reality and the phenomenon in question with the appreciation that each theory views reality and explains phenomena differently. Family systems theory, exchange theory, and conflict theory, for example, all approach a phenomenon with different assumptions, defined concepts, and a network of propositions stating how the concepts are related (Boss et al., 1993). Framing problems, posing research questions, interpreting family dynamics and study results or findings—many aspects of practice are deeply affected by which theory (if any) is at play (see Table 1). Atheoretical practice means insights may be gained or lost, interventions on or off target, solutions optimized or satisfied, advice informed from multiple perspectives or unidimensional in nature, and so on. Accountable practice requires FCS professionals to be theoretically mature and savvy.

Highly theorized work is consciously grounded in assumptions about reality and the phenomenon in question with the appreciation that each theory views reality and explains phenomena differently.

Tight (2004) observed that "some communities of practice tend to engage with theory more explicitly and commonly. Others do so far less frequently and typically only implicitly. So some . . . communities of practice are relatively a-theoretical, while others . . . are highly theorised" (p. 409). These insights also apply to FCS and its subdisciplines (specializations), which also work in communities of practice (i.e., a collection of practitioners that improves its practice through regular interactions) (Brandes, 2017; Wenger, 2000). Brown and Baldwin (1995) admonished that although "an antitheoretical attitude prevails in our society" (p. 8), the FCS/home economics profession must rise above this disengagement with or dismissal of theory because atheoretical practice has many pitfalls.

First, FCS practitioners may adopt false conceptions of a phenomenon or conceptions that are against the mission of the profession (Brown & Baldwin, 1995). Second, if the interpretation of the social context that affects families is not theoretically enlightened, FCS professionals may

Table 1. Illustration of Two Theories on Why a Couple Divorced

FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY	EXCHANGE THEORY
A couple divorced because the *boundaries* around their *system* (including their relationship) became so closed off that no new *input* could enter (e.g., counseling, family support), and any self-learning or insights could not leave as *output* and become *feedback* to redress imbalances to achieve *equilibrium* to put things back on track. The processes they needed to relate to each other (*throughputs*) had broken down (e.g., communication, patience, respect, trust). *Changes* to one part of the system (one of the people in the relationship) had inevitably caused changes in the *whole system* (their marriage and family unit). The *system actors* (couple) were not sufficiently *flexible* or *adaptable,* and the *complexity* of the situation became too much to handle. The *chaos* led to the whole system breaking down.	The couple divorced because the *exchange* process between them was no longer producing *utility* (satisfaction). *Competition* between them had become so fierce that the two parties were no longer benefiting from the exchange (no *profit*). The exchange was rife with *diminishing returns* in that increased contact led to less satisfaction and a less *efficient* exchange (wasted resources like time, money, emotions, and effort). *Supply* and *demand* could not be reconciled. What one person was willing and able to offer, the other person was not willing or able to obtain. Every *transaction* (personal encounter) was deeply affected by *price elasticity*. That is, the *price* for remaining in the *exchange* was too high. *Opportunity costs* (loss from missed or ill-chosen opportunities) were also too high. The exchange was terminated.

not appreciate or understand its significance and therefore may misjudge its import. Third, failing to develop and use coherent theoretical and conceptual frameworks creates the risk of haphazardly dealing with social issues affecting well-being and quality of life. Haphazard practice can be random, sloppy, hasty, and hit-or-miss. Fourth, hand in hand with this is the inability to justify our interventions and practice if we cannot theoretically justify our actions (Brown & Baldwin, 1995). For these reasons and more, professional accountability depends on theoretical maturity.

Intellectually Savvy and Professionally Competent

To round out this discussion, it is imperative that FCS professionals are knowledgeable in areas that have an impact on the well-being and quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. They also must be skilled and competent when applying this knowledge to address pressing problems affecting everyday life now and across generations. A lingering concern is whether FCS professionals should be trained to be generalists or specialists to achieve these two imperatives (Darling, 1995). *What* knowledge should they know, and *what* competencies and skills should they hone?

In 1935 (just 25 years after our interdisciplinary, integrated profession was founded), Raitt (1935) commented on the profession's loss of power due to excessive specialization. Nearly 60 years later, Brown (1993) continued to lament "the autonomous specializations that had developed in home economics" (p. 373). The specialization trend has not abated. Florencio (2015) recently observed that "as the idea of hyperspecialization flourished, a sense of respect for and pride in the . . . discipline itself diminished" (p. 10). Appreciating the reciprocal relationship between generalization and specialization better helps FCS professionals realize this imperative.

Generalization versus Specialization

Specialization is expertise in a particular area for a specific purpose. *Generalization* is less localized and specific; it is concerned instead with more widely applicable knowledge and competencies (Anderson, 2014). In FCS, generalization manifests in students being exposed to (a) an array of subjects affecting family life (e.g., food, housing, consumption) in concert with (b) the generalized processes and skills needed to apply that knowledge (especially management, leadership, communication, problem solving, decision making, policy analysis, research, and FCS history and philosophy). Generalization also requires all students to (c) study electives in an array of sister disciplines as they learn to use this information in their practice (i.e., natural sciences, applied sciences, social sciences, administrative sciences, and humanities). "Home economics serves as the interpreter of [these disciplines]" (Raitt, 1935, p. 272).

To illustrate, generalist students who *specialized* in food and nutrition would also take courses

related to housing, childcare, and family dynamics while completing *general* courses with the entire complement of their student peers (e.g., FCS-provided courses such as communication, home economics philosophy, and research as well as courses from other academic disciplines). They would obtain a generalist degree but be able to market themselves and practice in their specialization.

Specialization can manifest in a university program that has a collection of subdiscipline degrees related to FCS (e.g., child studies, clothing and textiles, foods, human nutrition, consumer studies) but no interaction among the different degree programs (i.e., no common courses but all degree programs are housed in one unit, likely a college or faculty). Or specialization can occur within separate units (different departments and academic degrees) with no connection to an overarching umbrella unit (Brown, 1993).

In truth, there is likely a continuum from broadly generalist to highly specialized FCS degree programs and practitioners. Indeed, Daniels (1980) viewed the profession as requiring a common purpose (generalist base) *and* specializations. But as early as the 1930s, this imperative had begun to lose favor (Raitt, 1935). In her discussion of home economics loss of power in higher education, Marshall (1973) lamented our lack of respect for the power of generalization and our misguided privileging of specialization. "We have paid insufficient attention to the ties that bind home economics together as a field and practitioners together as professionals" (p. 9). An attendee at the 1973 11th Lake Placid conference recognized this persistent divide with her claim that the profession must "define the specialist-generalist relationship (home economics is more than the sum of its parts)" (American Home Economics Association [AHEA], 1973, p. 13). The connecting, generalist link had been compromised.

Home economists at the 1993 AHEA Scottsdale name-change meeting committed to "integrated knowledge across subject and functional areas [aka specializations]" (American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences [AAFCS], 1994, p. 38). This renewed respect for integration (wholeness) is an improvement on the past as Brown and Paolucci (1979) had asserted that specializations should not go off on their own without common grounding. They said, "specializations . . . must contribute to the defined mission or purpose" (p. 9) and be informed by it. Interpreting Brown and Paolucci's message, McGregor (2008) further explained that

> because of the level of competence and independent, intellectual, morally grounded thought required to practice in a profession, the scope and purpose of the profession is necessarily limited, but not the complexity of knowledge and practice in the profession. And, although the field may have to generate specializations in order to deal with the scope of the profession, all offshoots will adhere to the same agreed-to social end. (p. 25)

Achieving the joint imperatives of intellectual savviness and professional competency may become clouded by the ongoing tension between generalization and specialization.

Body of Knowledge

In short, achieving the joint imperatives of intellectual savviness and professional competency may become clouded by the ongoing tension between generalization and specialization. *What* knowledge should you know, and *what* competencies and skills should you hone? One could address this quandary by relying on the Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge (FCS-BOK) (Nickols et al., 2009), the only one of its kind in the FCS/home economics world. A Body of Knowledge, developed by a professional association, reflects the "common intellectual ground shared by everyone in the profession, regardless of specialities, sub-disciplines, or career paths" (McGregor, 2014d, p. 18).

The current version of the FCS-BOK is organized using three overarching constructs (see

Table 2) that are accompanied by a conceptual framework, which "demonstrates their relationships, synergy, and interaction" (Nickols et al., 2009, p. 269) (see Figure 1). This approach lends itself to *generalization* while respecting *specialization* as it provides insights into what knowledge to know (theories, conceptualizations, concepts, principles) and what generic skills and competencies to sharpen to apply that knowledge.

To illustrate, even if someone's specialization is consumer studies, their practice can still be informed by the FCS-BOK. Its application would just look different from that of someone who specialized in housing, family studies, foods, or gerontology. Generalized knowledge (e.g., communication, research, leadership, philosophy) is still required when practicing one's specialization. Content area-specific knowledge is not enough. In short, respect for both generalization and specialization enables FCS professionals to successfully tailor their approach to achieving the dual imperatives of intellectual savviness and professional competency thereby better ensuring professional accountability.

Table 2. Three Overarching Constructs Comprising the Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge

Integrative elements (2)
life course development
human ecosystems
Core concepts (4)
basic human needs
individual well-being
family strengths
community vitality
Cross-cutting themes (5) pertinent in all specializations and work environments
capacity building
global interdependence
resource development and sustainability
technology [appropriate use]
wellness

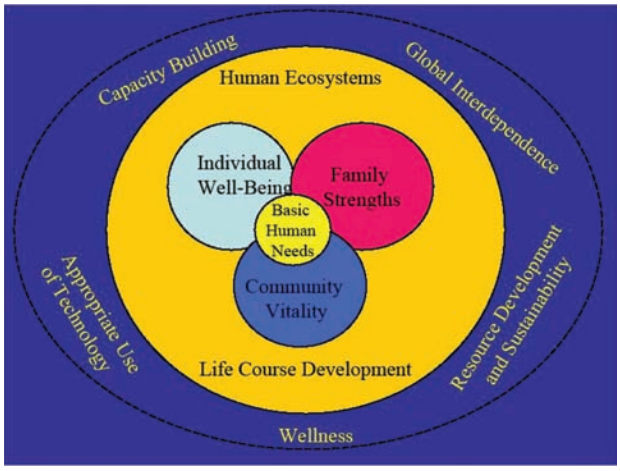

Figure 1. *Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge Conceptual Framework* (used with permission).

Conclusion

FCS practice can be more professionally accountable if practitioners embrace eight professional imperatives: being philosophically grounded, ethically compelled, morally obligated, values oriented, ideologically aware, theoretically mature, intellectually savvy, and competent and skilled. These imperatives range from the abstract to the theoretical to the concrete. In combination, these imperatives help ensure that FCS professionals have accountability for morally bound practice because their professional actions, decisions, and omissions may cause harm. These imperatives bolster the profession's preparedness for its deep obligation to individuals, families, communities, and society. Morally bound practice cannot go unchecked.

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