



A LITERATURE SURVEY ON SOCIOECONOMIC SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG TEACHERS

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Abstract

Sustainability considers how we might live in harmony with the natural environment around us while also guarding it from harm and destruction. All programs for sustainable development must take into account the three sectors of sustainability- environment, society, and economy-as well as a cultural dimension. So that, when people pursue different careers, their sustainable habits and lifestyles will influence civic making plans, ecologic advisory (both built and natural environments), food production, strategic initiatives, nutrition assessment and planning and even legislation and decision-making. Good health depends on the state of mind and body. Each exerts a direct influence on the other, but owing to the power of mind over nature, good health is of supreme importance. Kumar (1992) stated that mental health is an index that shows the extent to which the person has been able to meet his environmental demands social, emotional or physical. The paper aims to present the role of socio economic sustainable practices and mental health of school teachers.

Key words : Sustainability, Environment, Society, Economy, Socioeconomic Sustainable Practices, Mental Health, State of Mind, Good Health, School Teacher.

1. Introduction

The availability and use of mental health treatments are influenced by a variety of factors, including scientific evidence, cost, ethics, and politics. However, the concept of social sustainability also plays a significant role. Social sustainability, which refers to the minimum social requirements for society to function and develop (Littig & Griessler, 2005), impacts the use of these treatments. As mental illness ranks as the leading cause of disability worldwide (Whiteford et al., 2013), its impact on individuals' social functioning is significant, thus affecting the social sustainability of communities on a global scale.

Social sustainability in mental health has two main aspects. First, it involves restoring the social capital lost due to mental illness, such as housing, education, employment, and community connectedness (Colantonio, 2009). Second, it pertains to the societal support needed to continue providing care. This thematic section introduction considers how societal support can sometimes be more influential than even a solid scientific evidence base in the use of mental health treatments.



The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a "shared blueprint" for global action to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. Mental health is a crucial component of this effort, as the World Health Organization (WHO) states, "there can be no health or sustainable development without mental health." The WHO's decision-making body, the World Health Assembly (WHA), will meet in May, and mental health should be a top agenda item. Despite progress in some countries, much more work is needed to meet the UN's SDG 3 goal of promoting well-being for all at all ages.

According to the WHO's 2020 Mental Health Atlas, only 25% of its members have integrated mental health into their healthcare systems. This means that diagnosis, treatment, and care remain out of reach for most of the 280 million people worldwide suffering from depression. Globally, over two-thirds of people with mental health conditions do not receive the care they need. In low- and middle-income countries, up to 85% of people with mental disorders are untreated. Moreover, while the economic burden of mental illness for most countries is 4% of GDP, their investment in better diagnostics and treatments can be less than 0.5% of GDP.

Even the world's most developed countries face challenges in addressing mental health issues. In the U.S., 57% of people with mental illness are untreated, and among those receiving treatment, a third fear being stigmatized. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the global mental health crisis, with a study in *The Lancet* reporting significant increases in depression and anxiety, resulting in an estimated 53.2 million new cases of depressive disorder and 76.2 million new cases of anxiety disorder.

Organizational leaders managing global workforces can significantly impact employees' mental health by fostering a stigma-free, supportive culture that encourages seeking help. This includes providing accessible, geographically tailored mental health resources and training supervisors to recognize and support employees struggling with mental health challenges. However, companies alone cannot address this issue; effective action requires global cooperation. Leading organizations and governments must work together to promote evidence-based, cost-effective, and accessible mental health solutions. Despite the WHO's assertion that many mental health conditions can be treated at low cost, the percentage of people receiving care remains low, highlighting the need for global action.

The paper is organized into four main sections: background of variables, sustainable habits and mental health (with a literature review on teachers' mental health), the importance of socioeconomic sustainable habits and their impact on secondary school teachers and concluding with discussion and further research opportunities.

2. Concept of Socio-Economic Sustainable Practices and Mental Health

2.1 Defining Socio-Economic Sustainable practices

Sustainability involves addressing environmental problems caused by human activities,



with definitions often integrating development aspects like growth, progress, and satisfaction, showing a direct relationship between economic growth and population satisfaction.

Sustainability is a long-term goal, while sustainable development refers to the various methods used to achieve it, considering the three pillars: environment, society, and economy, with culture as a subordinate aspect (UNESCO, 2012). Global challenges like climate change, ozone depletion, and global warming are driven by careless environmental behaviour influenced by personal values and attitudes.

Environmental education research focuses on fostering positive environmental attitudes, deemed essential for education. The primary aim of this study is to assess secondary school teachers' attitudes, expertise, and understanding of environmental education and sustainable development and their relationship to environmental protection.

Mike and Ann (2007) studied student teachers' conceptions of sustainable development using a questionnaire completed by 123 postgraduate students. Analysis revealed that while many recognized the importance of environmental (72%), economic (53%), and social (31%) factors, only 15% highlighted all three.

2.2 Defining Mental Health

Good health hinges on the state of both mind and body, with each directly influencing the other. However, due to the mind's powerful control over nature, mental well-being holds paramount importance. The Health Education Authority (1997) defined mental health as the emotional and spiritual resilience that enables individuals to endure pain, disappointment, and sadness. Similarly, Kumar (1992) characterized mental health as an indicator reflecting how well a person meets social, emotional, and physical environmental demands.

According to the Surgeon General's report (1999), mental health is characterized by the effective functioning of mental capacities, leading to productive activities, satisfying relationships with others, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. Mental health is crucial for personal well-being, family and interpersonal relationships, and contributing to the community or society. It serves as the foundation for cognitive and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience, and self-esteem.

The World Health Organization (1948) defined mental health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Further, the WHO (2004) described mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals recognize their own abilities, can manage the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to their community. Mental health encompasses complete physical, mental, and social well-being, beyond just the absence of illness or uniformity.



Challenges to Teachers' Mental Health:

- **Lack of Recreational Facilities:** Teachers often lack time for recreation, making their professional lives dull and stressful.
- **Poor Physical Health:** Teachers' physical health suffers due to low income and lack of recreational facilities, impacting their mental health.
- **Maltreatment by Management:** Private schools often treat teachers from different casts unfairly, causing worry and stress.
- **High Moral Expectations:** Women teachers are expected to be ideal role models, leading to frustration and mental health issues when societal expectations are not met.
- **Unhealthy Interpersonal Relationships:** Conflicts among teachers due to professional organizations and politics result in a lack of harmony and goodwill.
- **Lack of Facilities:** Poor school infrastructure, including ill-equipped classrooms and lack of teaching aids, adds to teachers' stress.

2.3 Review of Literature

There is substantial evidence indicating that school-based mental health programs, when properly developed and implemented, can positively affect children's behavioral and emotional functioning (Durlak & Wells, 1997; Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001; Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003). Psychosocial factors significantly influence academic learning (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997), and many socioemotional programs also benefit children's academic functioning (Durlak & Wells, 1997; Jalongo et al., 1999; Tremblay, Pagani-Kurtz, Masse, Vitaro, & Pihl, 1995). As a result, there's growing recognition that enhancing social and emotional competencies facilitates learning and academic achievement (Adelman & Taylor, 2000; Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

Increased confidence in the efficacy of these programs has led to widespread implementation (Clayton, Ballif-Spanvill, & Hunsaker, 2001; Elliot, 1998), directing more attention to the complexities of real-world program implementation (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Elias, Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg, 2003; Pentz, 2004). Research on scaling up innovative practices in schools has typically focused on big-picture factors like organizational infrastructure (Adelman & Taylor, 2000, 2003; Connell & Klem, 2000; Elmore, 1996; McLaughlin & Mitra, 2001).

However, less attention has been given to teacher/classroom factors that affect implementation fidelity and program sustainability (Kealey, Peterson, Gaul, & Dinh, 2000; Rohrbach, Graham, & Hansen, 1993). This paper discusses teacher-level factors influencing the implementation and sustainability of classroom-based mental health programs. Teachers often act as program providers for school-based interventions, making effective programs by existing school personnel essential for fiscal sustainability (Atkins et al., 1998). Teacher-implemented programs can be integrated into general

curricula, promoting positive development and skills generalization through frequent practice opportunities (Grossman et al., 1997; Hawkins, Von Cleve, & Catalano, 1991; Weiss berg, Barton, & Shriver, 1997).

2.3.1 Studies Related to Sustainable Practices

Sustainability is often seen as a long-term goal, aiming for a more sustainable world, while sustainable development refers to the various methods to achieve this, such as sustainable agriculture, forestry, production, consumption, good governance, research, technology transfer, education, and training. Sustainable development programs must consider the three pillars of sustainability—the environment, society, and economy—with culture as an additional aspect. These programs will vary globally, addressing local conditions (UNESCO, 2012).

Global challenges like climate change, ozone depletion, and global warming are causing widespread concern, often due to careless environmental behavior influenced by people's values and attitudes (Meinhold & Malkus, 2005; Ramsey & Rickson, 1976; Rennie, 2005, 2007). Thus, environmental education research focuses on fostering positive environmental attitudes, as recommended by trade conventions and charters.

The primary goal of this study is to assess secondary school teachers' attitudes, expertise, and understanding of environmental education and sustainable development, and their relationship to environmental protection. Mike and Ann (2007) studied student teachers' conceptions of sustainable development using a questionnaire completed by three cohorts of postgraduate students (N=123). They identified key features of sustainable development, finding that while many recognized the importance of environmental (72%), economic (53%), and social (31%) factors, only 15% highlighted all three.

Watling and Zhou (2011) examined people's attitudes toward sustainability, finding that education and information foster positive views on sustainability. The study concluded that age, gender, or power do not significantly affect attitudes toward sustainability.

2.3.2 Studies Related to Mental Health

Mental health refers to the successful performance of mental functions, leading to productive activities, fulfilling relationships, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. Dr. Kishora Kumar Bedanta (2020): In a study on the mental health challenges of schoolteachers, involving 480 participants, results from the S. Pradhan Mental Health Inventory revealed that male teachers had significantly better mental health compared to female teachers. Heqing Huang, Yanchun Liu, and Yanjie Su (2020): Their research on the relationship between empathy and mental health in preschool teachers, with a sample of 4,348 preschool teachers, used the Symptom Checklist 90 (SCL-90). It concluded that as teaching experience increases, preschool teachers exhibit more mental health symptoms. Ms. Akshita Lamba & Dr. Rajashree Roy Som (2020): They studied psychological well-being and mental health problems among college and schoolteachers, with a sample size of 160. Using the General Health



Questionnaire of Goldberg (1970), they found that male schoolteachers had better mental health and psychological well-being compared to their female counterparts.

Female teachers must balance work and home responsibilities, continually update their teaching and social skills, and learn new technologies. Additionally, the demands from children, elderly parents, and household activities place significant stress on their mental health. Women teachers who had a secure and supportive adolescence and childhood, and can exercise emotional control and social skills, are better equipped to handle adulthood's challenges (WHO, 2012). Women teachers play a crucial role in fostering balanced personality development and better adjustment in learners. The effectiveness of teachers in students' personality development and adjustment largely depends on the teacher's own personality.

3. Importance of Socioeconomic Sustainable Practices, Mental Health and their Impact on Secondary School Teachers

The socio-economic aspect of education for sustainable development requires engaging with normative issues, even in areas that appear value-neutral. To go beyond simply adopting externally imposed values, 'sustainable teachers' must be equipped to reflect on prevailing standards and principles within the complexities of a globalized society. The increasing pluralism of values and the understanding that culture is a dynamic, fluid system interwoven with conflicting standards and values (Geertz, 1995) highlight the limitations of socio-economic education. Instead of teaching fixed values, education should enable individuals to make better judgments and decisions about their social actions (Gewecke & Huse, 2011). Socio-economically grounded education aims to develop economically responsible citizens who can reflect on complex economic and social relationships and understand economic rationality. Comprehensive basic economic knowledge is essential, as economism may be the last major ideology of our times (Ulrich, 2000).

Teaching is among the most stressful professions. A survey of FTE teachers in the US found that 1.86 million teachers described their mental health as 'not good,' with 61% frequently experiencing high levels of stress. Teachers face pressures such as economic inequality, increasing student mental health issues, declining resources, and growing job demands, which affect their mental health and that of their students. Poor mental health among teachers not only impacts their well-being but also affects student achievement and increases school costs. Given their crucial role in society, supporting teachers' mental health is essential.

Improving mental health in schools offers several benefits, including higher teacher retention, improved student achievement, and lower dropout rates. Addressing mental health should begin at school and extend to all aspects of life.

Strategies to improve mental health in schools include:

- Teaching stress reduction techniques.

- Removing stigma around mental health through open discussions.
- Prioritizing wellness by ensuring adequate sleep.
- Adopting a growth mindset toward learning and teaching.
- Focusing on gratitude.
- Establishing clear boundaries between school and personal life.

These approaches can help enhance the mental health of both students and teachers, fostering a healthier and more productive educational environment.

4. Conclusion

Studies have shown that experience can contribute to developing skills for managing mental illness (Borthwick, Thornell, & Wilkinson, 1982; Robin, Saffer, & Kornitzer, 2000). Good mental health in teachers is positively related to job satisfaction (Ray, 1982; Srivastava & Asthana, 2008; Stepal, Cropley, Griffith, & Kirschbaum, 2000) and personality traits (Kumar, 2003). Psychological stress poses problems that impact teachers' mental health (Singh & Singh, 2006). These findings suggest that teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, personality, and mental health are interconnected areas of interest for researchers in education. Notably, job satisfaction has been a focal point for many studies.

Kumar (1992) described mental health as an indicator of how well an individual meets social, emotional, and physical environmental demands. However, there is a lack of studies on teachers' sustainable habits in relation to job satisfaction, personality, and mental health. Therefore, examining the sustainable practices of school teachers and their correlation with mental health is both significant and timely.

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