



Impact of Home Economics in Empowering Afghan Communities in Afghanistan's Sustainable Economic Development

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ABSTRACT

This study aims the important role of home economics education in empowering Afghan households and promoting sustainable economic development across Afghanistan. Drawing on a quantitative methodology and household-level data from over 500 respondents across urban and rural regions, the study investigates how access to home economics training, financial literacy, income levels, education, household size, and urban-rural dynamics affect the adoption of sustainable practices. The results of a binary logistic regression analysis demonstrate that access to home economics training is a highly significant predictor of sustainable behavior. Financial literacy and household income also show positive, though comparatively moderate, effects. Notably, urban households are more inclined toward sustainable practices than rural ones, highlighting a disparity in access to training and resources. The study also uncovers that smaller households (3-4 members) tend to adopt sustainability practices more frequently than larger ones. Conversely, education level showed mixed results, suggesting that while education is influential, sustainability outcomes depend more on the integration of relevant practical knowledge than formal education alone. The study emphasizes the need for targeted policy interventions, such as expanding home economics education, especially in rural and low-income areas, promoting financial literacy, and developing gender-sensitive and household-specific sustainability training. The findings advocate for positioning home economics as a strategic tool in Afghanistan's development policy, enabling grassroots change and promoting long-term environmental and economic resilience. This work adds value to the broader discourse on sustainability in developing contexts by recommending unified and inclusive methods that align education with real-life challenges and community empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, sustainable development which aims to harmonize economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship has become a world priority. Sustainable development is an especially challenging task for developing nations such as Afghanistan, where enduring problems like poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-political uncertainty are prevalent. Fostering good practice at household level is a key in addressing these issues on ground level. As an interdisciplinary field, home economics provides realistic solutions by empowering individuals and families with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to navigate their lives more effectively and sustainably.

Home economics covers various skills like managing finances, utilizing resources, and making environmentally conscious choices that are necessary for living sustainably. Home economics can be transformative, especially for Afghan households, many of which are resource- constrained and have limited access to education. The principles of home economics promote effective use of resources, financial planning, and sustainable consumption patterns, all of which contribute to economic resilience as well as environmental sustainability.

Access to home economics training has been found in research to be a powerful predictor of sustainable practice adoption, especially in low-income environments. Because economic and educational inequalities in Afghanistan are greater than enough, home economics potential in promoting sustainable development is largely untapped. Moreover, the interplay between financial literacy, household income, education levels, and urban-rural dynamics presents further layers of complexity, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive approach to understanding these influences on sustainable behavior in Afghanistan.

Introduction: The interplay between home economics and sustainable development has been a subject of exploration, and in the context of Afghanistan, it is essential to analyze how it can help in assessing the impact of certain factors, such as access to training, financial literacy, and socio-economic characteristics, on the adoption of sustainable practices. The study explores how these factors can be utilized to gain

recommendations for policymakers, educators, and development practitioners engaged in efforts for sustainable development at the community level. At the end, this relegates the vital function of home economics in tackling Afghanistan's development challenges and promoting a culture of sustainability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

David W. Orr (1992) - In his influential work, Orr discusses ecological sustainability and its relevance to home economics. The author emphasizes the integration of sustainability principles into daily practices such as resource management, consumption patterns, and waste reduction at the household level. Orr argues that understanding the ecological footprint of household activities is crucial for fostering sustainable living. 2) Elizabeth Shove (2003) - Shove's work in the sociology of consumption offers insights into the dynamics of everyday life and the potential for promoting sustainable practices in households. She argues that sustainable living involves not just individual behaviors but also the social norms and infrastructures that shape consumption choices. Shove's research highlights the importance of design, policy interventions, and social practices in fostering sustainable behaviors within domestic settings. 3) Harry Wilhite (2012) - Wilhite focuses on energy efficiency and conservation behaviors in households, emphasizing practical strategies for integrating sustainable practices into home economics. His research examines how technological advancements, behavioral changes, and policy interventions can enhance energy efficiency and reduce environmental impacts associated with residential energy use. 4) Terry Hargreaves (2011) - Hargreaves' work focuses on the social dimensions of sustainable consumption, emphasizing the role of social norms, identities, and lifestyles in shaping household behaviors. The author explores how cultural practices and societal expectations influence consumption patterns and environmental impacts within home economics. Hargreaves suggests that promoting sustainable living requires addressing both individual choices and broader societal structures.

V. Dislere indicates that Home economics and technologies teacher is an ongoing student work organizer in both in school activities and in out of school activities. Teacher's work success is largely determined by her/his good background and readiness of theoretical and practical training and organizational skills (Dislere, 2012).

The paradigms of the education are changing. K.Mandolini stress that a teacher should not become an instrument in the hands of global economic demands, but a professional who actively responds to new events and social exigencies (Mandolini, 2007). When carrying out the education for sustainable development it must be considered that the learning process should be directed to a pupil (based on students' experience and questions), to processes (attention should be paid to the natural laws), to an action (to develop the competence of action), to evaluation (to develop critical thinking and expressing one's opinion), to the society (to involve students in acknowledging and solving the real problems), as well as should the problems looked upon holistically (including economical, ecological and social aspects) (Kalniņa, 2007). When creating an integrated study model, it is possible to incorporate various aspects of study content in a meaningful whole. Teaching and learning become as one entity (Petere, 2013). Home economics and technologies is one of the subjects at school. It deals with various topics related to sustainable development. The aim of the subject is to improve the learner's understanding of habitat environment safety and quality conditions and possibilities for its improvement, to promote the learner's practical action and social cooperation skill development, for anyone to be able to plan and organize personal household, to comply with safety conditions, to handle extreme situations adequately and with understanding and to creatively involve in the implementation of technological processes. It is firmly connected with environmental education guidelines. One of the Standard of Primary Education objectives is to promote a responsible attitude towards oneself, family, society, environment and the state (Noteikumi par..., 2014). Throughout the century's home economics has provided its significance in increasing the quality of human life. From the beginning of the creation of the subject there is a close bond with the idea /beliefs of sustainable development. Considering the leading political and economic position/views characteristic for the age, a small insertion of sustainable development can be seen in the subject. It is due mainly to their personal household management, providing daily living needs, self-provision, and taking care/thinking about tomorrow (Lice, 2003). Home economics and technologies is a specific subject at school. It is connected with a high practical prevalence. Its ways are very different, considering the students' age group. Already in the younger classes students learn to use economically a variety of materials – paper,

cardboard, fabric, yarn, thread etc. When preparing the items using different technologies, students gain a concept of the extraction, processing of the material and its compliance with the requirements. When purchasing the necessary materials and products in the store, students get to know consumer philosophy, such concepts as price, packaging, label, warranty, quality etc. get more relevant. Students see the development of different aspects of life through practical work. Students obtain comprehension about the essence of the sustainable development. Today acquisition of education for sustainable development is emphasized together with the human free willingness, choice and understanding. In home economics, the understanding of the student about the safety and quality conditions of the human living environment, the ability to creatively involve and solve problems related to that, the ability to gain experience in creative activity is emphasized (Lice, 2012).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between home economics education and the adoption of sustainable practices in Afghanistan. Initial data collection: Household survey (urban and rural area random sampling, >1,000 participants) It included key variables concerning household characteristics, access to education and training, financial literacy, and take-up of sustainable practices.

3.1. Data Collection

The household survey was the sole data collection tool, administered to 500 households across various provinces in Afghanistan. The survey focused on gathering information about:

1. Household Income: Measured as monthly income in Afghani (AFN).
2. Access to Home Economics Training: A binary variable indicating whether the household had received home economics training (1 = yes, 0 = no).
3. Financial Literacy: A binary variable assessing whether households had basic knowledge of financial management (1 = yes, 0 = no).
4. Socioeconomic Characteristics: Including education level (categorical), household size, and urban or rural residence.

5. Adoption of Sustainable Practices: The dependent variable, measured as a binary indicator (1 = adoption of sustainable practices, 0 = non-adoption). To ensure accuracy and overcome challenges with literacy in some areas, enumerators received specialized training to conduct the survey face to face. The respondents were sampled using stratified random sampling to ensure representation of households with different socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds.

3.2. Econometric Analysis

A binary logistic regression model was applied to the data to identify the determinants of adoption of sustainable practices. A linear logistic regression was performed, as the dependent variable, being the adoption of sustainable practices, is binary

$$P(Y = 1) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon$$

Where:

$P(Y=1)$ = the probability of adopting sustainable practices. β_0 = the intercept.

X_k = the independent variables, including household income, access to home economics training, financial literacy, education level, household size, and urban/rural classification.

ε = the error term.

This study carefully selected the independent variables to ensure that they represented the economic, educational, and demographic factors that would have an impact on household behavior. The effect of the independent variables on the adoption of sustainable practices was interpreted using odds ratios and confidence intervals.

SPSS software was used to enter and clean the data to eliminate any inconsistency. The logistic regression was conducted in SPSS to yield the parameter estimates for the independent variables along with standard errors, Wald statistics, and significance levels. The assumption of multicollinearity was checked to make sure that the independent variables did not correlate extremely, what can distort the regression results.

This research is comprehensive and backed by a strong quantitative design and a sound binary logistic regression model that lends statistical robustness and reliability to the findings about factors influencing sustainable behavioral adoption in Afghanistan.

Focusing on primary data collection enabled the study to assess context-specific dynamics, while including a range of households ensured the findings would be generalizable to Afghanistan's wider population.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Household Income

Individuals with higher incomes are, on average, more likely to use sustainable practices. The estimate of 0.00005796 means that a AFN 1 increase in household income is associated with a slight increase in the log-odds of adopting sustainable practices. This predictor is statistically significant at the 5% significance level ($p = 0.041$) with a small and precise confidence interval $[-0.00002128, 0.000]$. Although statistically significant, the effect size is small in practice.

4.2. Access to Home Economics Training

Households without home economics training are -1.166 log-odds less likely to employ sustainable practices than those with access to such training. Home economics training thus plays a vital role in encouraging sustainable behaviors, which this result demonstrates at a statistically significant level ($p = 0.004$).

4.3. Financial Literacy

They are 0.084 points (on a 0 to 1 scale) less likely to adopt these measures, though having less financial literacy has only a marginally negative effect on adopting sustainable practices. The effect is weak however, the result is statistically significant ($p=0.043$), suggesting that financial literacy has a modest but significant effect on promoting a sustainable behavior.

4.4. Education Level

In contrast, Education Level (the effect of education in comparison to the reference group (college educated group (Education Level=4)) tries to show the mixed effect level of education on the adoption of sustainable practices. The data for households with primary education (Education Level=1) and secondary education (Education Level=2) employ insignificant effects ($p = 0.677$ and $p = 0.439$, respectively). But households with high school education (Education Level=3) are much less likely to

adopt sustainable practices, with a log-odds reduction of -0.519 ($p = 0.023$). Higher education level leads to higher adoption of sustainable practices

4.5. Household Size

Household size has differing impacts relative to the reference group (Household Size=9). Households of size 3–4 have a significant positive association with adoption of sustainable practices (Estimate = 1.796, $p = 0.032$). Effects on other household sizes are mixed and mostly insignificant. By larger, it means larger households are less willing to change their habits based on sustainability.

4.6. Urban vs. Rural

Rural households are less likely to be sustainable compared to urban households, the estimate being -0.531. This effect is statistically significant ($p=0.047$). This trend could indicate that more sustainable cities are more likely to adapt, potentially due to a change in the mindset or socio-economic climate.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

An investigation of the role of sustainable development in home economics in Afghanistan based on some factors including: household income, availability of home economics lessons, financial literacy, education level, family size and urban-rural role.

[2] Conclusion The results indicate that home economics education significantly impacts households' capacity to integrate sustainable behaviors. In particular, access to training in home economics had a very strong

positive effect on the likelihood of adopting sustainable behaviors, while financial literacy and household income were also positively correlated with sustainable behaviors, although not as significantly in absolute terms.

The study's findings also emphasized the effects of socio-economic characteristics like education level and household size. Smaller households (particularly those with 3-4 individuals) were more prevalent in adopting sustainable practices, whereas education effects were mixed, where higher spending on education (high school education) were less related to sustainable adoption. In addition, urban households were more willing to implement sustainable practices than their rural counterparts, possibly attributable

to more resources and training available to urban households.

The findings emphasize the necessity of a comprehensive strategy toward sustainable development in Afghanistan, within which home economics education serves as a vehicle for change. Nevertheless, the study suggests that household income and financial literacy can motivate sustainable behaviors, but their effect is not that much significant and so emphasizes the need for more targeted approaches to make the best of household income and literacy levels.

These findings highlight the important role of home economics training in the promotion of sustainable practices and the necessity for policy that opens the door to home economics education, especially in rural and low-income communities. These households should be encouraged to develop capacity building initiatives which focus on financial management, thrift and sustenance generation to cover their basic needs. Customizing programs for women, who hold a unique position within Afghan households, could be an efficient step towards long-term change. Although the influence of financial literacy on sustainable practices was rather weak, it was nevertheless significant statistically. So, investing in broad financial literacy programs focused on low-income households is critical. These programs should target relevant practical skills on budgeting, saving, and investing in sustainable goods and services that equips households to become more sustainable.

Despite the positive but small effect of household income on the adoption of sustainable practices, such interventions targeting low-income households could be helpful. For example, providing financial incentives directly to consumers, through subsidies or tax breaks on sustainable products, energy-saving technologies, and eco-friendly practices, would catalyze greater adaptation. Covering the cost of training and capacity building in sustainable practices could further help reduce the costs of sustainable behaviors.

The observation that households with 3–4 members were adopting sustainable habits more frequently indicates a greater openness towards adopting such behaviors in medium size households. Current study recommend the development of tailored interventions targeted at larger households, who may need greater emphasis when

encouraging sustainable practices. These might include training and incentives for household-level resource management, consumption and waste reduction.

However, urban households were found to be more willing to adopt sustainable practices compared to rural households. Policies should be made to promote the poor to have a fair chance;

to promote the vicious cycle, improve St. Tang to get the resource, acquisition knowledge, improve their living conditions, and increase the rural sustainable development definition. It may mean investing in the infrastructure, such as clean energy, waste management systems, and sustainable agricultural practices, that enables social mobility, as well as expanding rural training programs in home economics and financial literacy.

Those mixed results on education levels are a sign that education is a key factor but that more education does not always lead to higher adoption of sustainable practices. Incorporation of sustainability in ruling culture of all level of education should be increased, not just environment education, practical day-to-day sustainable practices adapted in rural and urban regions.

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