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Investigating Sustainability of School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning in New Zealand Schools

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Abstract

This research investigated sustainability of School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (SWPB4L) in New Zealand schools. An existing sustainability survey was adapted to fit the New Zealand context and electronically distributed to primary, intermediate, and secondary schools who were implementing SWPB4L; completed surveys were received from 338 school staff who had encountered or been involved with SWPB4L within the schools. The quantitative data strand included respondent ratings of statements relating to key factors of sustainability which have been recognised within relevant literature; these included *prioritisation*, *school leadership*, *external leadership*, programme *effectiveness*, programme *efficiency*, collection and use of *data*, and *capacity building* for staff. Each statement was rated for importance, which provided an insight into which sustainability factors the respondents perceived as important in relation to maintaining SWPB4L, and truth, which provided an insight into how accurately these factors were being applied within New Zealand schools implementing the initiative. The qualitative data strand included short comment answers to two open ended questions relating to SWPB4L sustainability supports and sustainability barriers. Respondent comments allowed for a more in depth analysis of sustainability concepts and identification of unanticipated ideas relating to successful implementation of SWPB4L. Integration of the data strands allowed for meaningful discussion relating to sustainability of SWPB4L in New Zealand schools. The findings suggested that overall the sustainability factors widely considered in existing literature were all considered to be relevant to sustainability of SWPB4L. The respondents placed the highest relative importance on *leadership* within the school and *capacity building* for school staff. Further, *staff commitment*, *communication*, and *consistency* of implementation were also considered to be important for supporting ongoing implementation. The factors of *school leadership, capacity building,* and *effectiveness* were found to be sustainability strengths within the schools. Features of *efficiency* and *external leadership* were found to offer the greatest room for improvement. Conclusions from the current study have led to practical recommendations for understanding and increasing sustainability of SWPB4L in New Zealand schools.

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