

Leveraging Cloud Computing Engineering for Sustainable Education: A Computational Evaluation Framework

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Abstract—As the world confronts complex climate-change challenges, integrating sustainability principles into engineering and computing curricula has become imperative. Traditional learning-system infrastructures, however, often lack the scalability, energy efficiency, and computational capacity required for modern data-driven educational environments. This study develops a computational evaluation framework that models sustainability integration as a cloud engineering optimization problem. Through a structured bibliometric and secondary empirical synthesis of 30 peer-reviewed studies (2013–2025), the research introduces the Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP), a reproducible engineering abstraction that maps cloud computing mechanisms—such as virtualization efficiency, elastic provisioning, and AI-driven orchestration—to measurable sustainability outcomes. A normalized aggregation model, the Cloud Sustainability Impact Score (CSIS), quantifies sustainability alignment across heterogeneous institutional contexts. Unlike conventional narrative reviews, this study formalizes sustainability evaluation using a computational scoring framework with defined metrics, weighted aggregation, sensitivity analysis, and linear-time complexity characterization. Descriptive analysis of the synthesized literature is consistent with higher reported CSIS values for cloud-native architectures relative to traditional on-premises educational infrastructures, although this association should not be read as a controlled causal comparison (see Section V). A supervised machine-learning procedure is additionally used to characterize how closely regression models can approximate the CSIS aggregation function itself, which is a check on the internal consistency and computability of the scoring formula rather than an independent empirical validation. The proposed framework supports scalable benchmarking and reproducible, semi-automated sustainability assessment of cloud-enabled learning systems, and positions cloud computing engineering as a measurable, if not yet causally established, contributor to sustainable education transformation.

Keywords—Cloud computing engineering; sustainability education; green computing; energy-efficient cloud systems; process innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

Cloud computing has become an essential technology in modern educational infrastructures. It enables resource scaling, decentralized access to computational infrastructure, and data-driven learning environments [1], [3]. The integration of cloud computing with artificial intelligence and data analytics has improved the performance, efficiency, and flexibility of educational infrastructures [2], [12]. As educational infrastructures increasingly move to the cloud, there is a growing need for systematic approaches to measure cloud computing performance, particularly in terms of resource efficiency and optimization [8].

Existing literature mainly addresses cloud adoption in education through conceptual and qualitative studies, with limited quantitative computational analysis. Prior work documents benefits of scalability, accessibility, and green computing efficiency [5], [10], but these are reported inconsistently, making cross-study comparison difficult and leaving no standard way to evaluate cloud-enabled educational systems. Related process-optimization frameworks in adjacent domains, such as ERP-integrated logistics management, show how formalized, metric-driven evaluation can reduce this problem by imposing consistent structure on heterogeneous operational data [4].

To address this gap, this study proposes a computational framework for formalizing system-level performance evaluation through normalized metrics and algorithmic aggregation, transforming diverse empirical indicators into a consistent analytical structure for objective comparison across institutional contexts. Its focus on measurable system properties—infrastructure utilization, energy optimization, scalability, and computational accessibility—is consistent with the core principles of applied computer science.

This study introduces the Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP), a computational evaluation framework that models sustainability in cloud-enabled educational systems as a quantifiable optimization problem.

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The framework integrates normalized performance metrics with an entropy-based adaptive weighting mechanism and confidence-weighted aggregation to produce a reproducible Cloud Sustainability Impact Score (CSIS). By transforming heterogeneous empirical indicators into a unified mathematical model with defined computational properties and linear-time complexity, the proposed approach supports scalable benchmarking and systematic evaluation of sustainability performance across cloud infrastructures. The study additionally uses supervised machine learning to examine how well regression models can approximate the CSIS aggregation function, as described in Section III-M.

II. RELATED WORK

Recent literature emphasizes the role of AI-driven cloud services in creating secure, sustainable enterprise applications for vocational training [7]. Scholars argue that scalability is a primary driver of cloud adoption in education, allowing institutions to grow without a proportional increase in energy consumption [8]. Innovative tools such as virtual reality (VR) are increasingly hosted on cloud platforms to optimize manufacturing sustainability education within the Industry 4.0 framework [9].

Reviews of web technologies suggest that sustainable enterprise systems (ES) depend heavily on integrating green operations [10], while IoT-cloud synergy is seen as vital for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals [11]. In TVET, data engineering is increasingly viewed as the backbone for AI applications promoting environmental stewardship [12]. Reviews of e-learning platforms similarly link cloud-IoT integration to gains in access, personalization, and infrastructure efficiency [6], and cloud computing has separately been identified as a driver of institutional ICT transformation [13].

At the adoption level, cloud-based mobile learning models have been proposed to lower the infrastructure burden on institutions with limited on-premise capacity [14], and studies of learners' behavioural intentions suggest perceived usefulness and institutional support are key adoption determinants [20]. Smart-campus research extends this by combining AI, IoT sensing, and cloud platforms for environmentally responsive infrastructure [15], [25], while cloud-based IoT integration connects distributed resources and reduces redundant on-premise hardware [25]. Reviews of cloud-hosted energy-aware resource allocation report measurable efficiency gains from dynamically balanced virtualized workloads, directly relevant to the Energy Optimization metric used here [17]. Complementary work on smart-infrastructure design similarly frames institutional upgrades as a multi-metric engineering problem rather than a single-indicator one, reinforcing the rationale for a composite scoring approach such as CSIP [26].

Beyond education, the broader green-computing literature documents practices for reducing computing systems' environmental footprint [23], and parallel work on sustainable software engineering identifies complementary tooling and lifecycle practices [28]. Cross-domain reviews of AI, IoT, web technology, and cloud computing for sustainable business suggest that sustainability gains from commercial cloud migration are structurally similar to those hypothesized for education [29]. The AI-cloud intersection has also been examined through the lens of green technology initiatives, reinforcing intelligent orchestration as key to translating cloud elasticity into measurable energy savings [21], and studies of AI- and ICT-enabled "greener education" further support the premise that computational, not just policy-based, interventions can produce measurable sustainability outcomes [30].

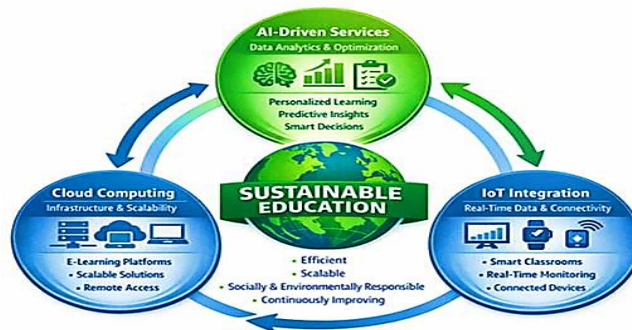


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework for cloud-integrated sustainability education.

Fig. 1 presents the conceptual architecture relating cloud computing technology to sustainability in an education system, showing how AI-driven services, cloud infrastructure and scalability, and IoT integration jointly support efficient, scalable, and socially and environmentally responsible education.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a secondary empirical evidence synthesis methodology, integrating reported performance indicators from peer-reviewed studies to evaluate the sustainability impacts of cloud computing engineering in education systems. Secondary

empirical synthesis is appropriate in this domain because institution-scale cloud deployments are costly, heterogeneous, and ethically constrained, which makes controlled experimentation impractical and favors evidence convergence across independent implementations. To reduce synthesis bias, indicators were extracted independently across studies and were considered robust only when consistent directional effects were observed across multiple institutional contexts.

A. Research Design

This study uses a qualitative and quantitative review of existing literature, focusing on the intersection of cloud engineering and sustainability education. Fig. 2 illustrates the

systematic workflow used to extract engineering indicators from the selected literature corpus. The process begins with study selection, followed by identification of measurable performance indicators and their mapping to predefined sustainability

metrics. A filtering mechanism ensures that only indicators with consistent empirical support are retained. This structured pipeline is intended to support methodological rigor and reduce bias in the secondary empirical synthesis process.



Fig. 2. Structured workflow used to identify secondary empirical indicators.

B. Literature Selection and Scope

This study considers a curated set of peer-reviewed works (2013–2025) that report measurable performance indicators related to cloud computing systems in educational environments. The selection focuses on studies providing quantifiable evidence on infrastructure efficiency, energy optimization, scalability, and computational accessibility. Only technically relevant contributions with empirically observable system-level metrics were included to support the development and validation of the proposed computational evaluation framework.

C. Evaluation Metrics, Operational Definitions, and Normalization

To ensure the research design is rigorous and consistent with engineering research on sustainability, four metrics are used to measure sustainability impact. Each metric is operationally defined below, with its constituent indicators, unit of measurement, directionality (whether higher raw values are beneficial or costly), valid range, and aggregation rule, so that the CSIS values produced from heterogeneous source studies are semantically comparable. This mapping directly addresses the requirement that indicator-to-metric mapping be explicit rather than implicit. Table I presents these operational definitions, units, directionality, valid ranges, and aggregation rules for each of the four CSIP metrics.

TABLE I. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND MAPPING OF THE FOUR CSIP SUSTAINABILITY METRICS

Metric	Constituent Indicators	Unit / Directionality	Valid Range	Aggregation Rule
M₁ Infrastructure Utilization Efficiency	Virtualization density; server consolidation ratio; workload distribution effectiveness	Ratio (%); benefit-type (higher = better)	[0, 1] after normalization	Arithmetic mean of normalized constituent indicators
M₂ Energy Optimization	Reported power-consumption savings; cooling-load reduction; energy-optimization ratio	% reduction; benefit-type	[0, 1] after normalization	Arithmetic mean of normalized constituent indicators
M₃ Scalability & Elasticity	Elastic provisioning response; scaling latency (cost-type, inverted); elasticity ratio	Ratio/seconds; mixed (one cost-type indicator inverted)	[0, 1] after normalization	Arithmetic mean of normalized constituent indicators
M₄ Computational Accessibility	Availability of high-performance computing resources; remote-access coverage	Ratio / % coverage; benefit-type	[0, 1] after normalization	Arithmetic mean of normalized constituent indicators

Normalization equations. Each raw indicator value x is normalized to a common $[0, 1]$ scale using min–max normalization, with the direction of the transformation depending on whether the indicator is benefit-type (higher raw value is more sustainable) or cost-type (lower raw value is more sustainable):

$$\text{Benefit-type: } M(x) = (x - x_{\min}) / (x_{\max} - x_{\min})$$

$$\text{Cost-type: } M(x) = (x_{\max} - x) / (x_{\max} - x_{\min})$$

where, $x_{\min}$ and $x_{\max}$ are the minimum and maximum values of that indicator observed across the synthesized study corpus. The following handling rules apply during normalization: 1) missing indicator values are imputed using the median of the same indicator across the remaining studies in the corpus, and the affected study is flagged in the underlying dataset; 2) outliers, defined as values beyond $1.5 \times$ the interquartile range, are winsorized to the nearest non-outlier bound prior to normalization rather than discarded, to preserve sample size while limiting undue leverage; 3) indicators

reported in incomparable units across studies (e.g., kWh versus percentage reduction) are first converted to a common percentage-change representation relative to a stated on-premise baseline before min–max normalization is applied; and (iv) normalized values that would fall outside $[0, 1]$ due to a study reporting outside the corpus-derived range are clipped to the $[0, 1]$ boundary. These rules are applied uniformly and are recorded in the reproducibility protocol (Section III-L) so that a different research team, given the same raw extraction, would obtain the same normalized values.

D. Secondary Empirical Evidence Synthesis

Rather than aggregating raw datasets, this study applies a convergence-based synthesis approach. Reported performance indicators were extracted from each study and mapped onto the defined evaluation metrics using the operational definitions in Section III-C. Findings were considered robust where multiple independent studies demonstrated consistent directional outcomes—such as energy reduction or improved scalability—under comparable cloud engineering configurations. Divergent

findings were further evaluated to identify contextual constraints related to institutional scale, infrastructure development, and regional energy profiles. This extraction-and-mapping procedure is itself a form of structured data engineering applied to a literature corpus, an approach conceptually related to indicator-extraction pipelines used in other applied AI domains

that must reconcile heterogeneous source data before modeling [27]. Fig. 3 depicts the end-to-end computational workflow of the CSIP, showing the conversion of heterogeneous indicators into normalized values, followed by entropy weight calculation and aggregation, as detailed in Section III-E.

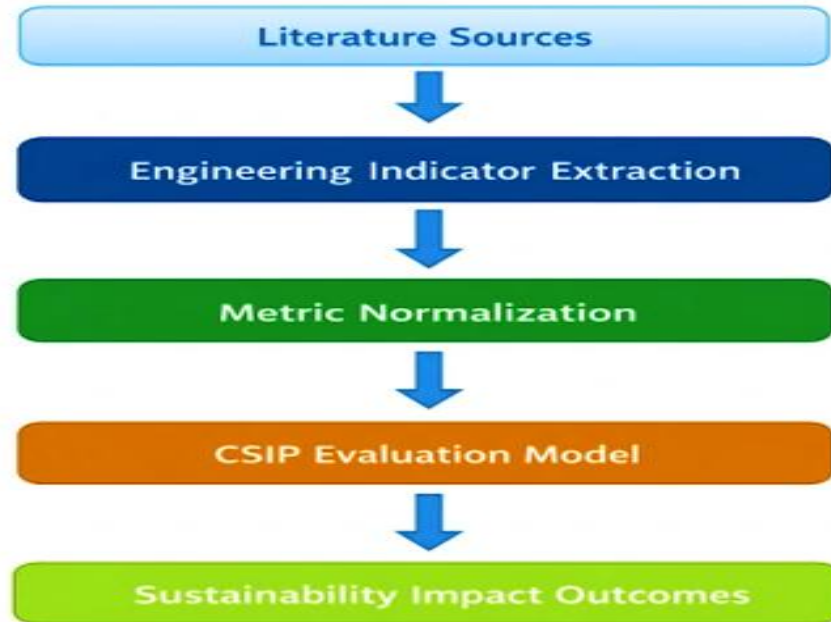


Fig. 3. Computational workflow of the Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP).

E. CSIP Engineering Evaluation Model

1) *Model formulation*: To support a quantitative and replicable assessment of sustainability performance in cloud-enabled educational systems, the Cloud Sustainability Impact Score (CSIS) is defined as a weighted aggregation of normalized sustainability metrics:

$$CSIS = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \cdot c_i \cdot M_i$$

where, M_i denotes the normalized value of the i -th sustainability metric (Section III-C), w_i represents the corresponding adaptive weight (Section III-E-2), and c_i is the confidence coefficient reflecting the consistency of empirical evidence across studies (Section III-E-5). This formulation integrates metric importance, empirical reliability, and performance normalization into a unified computational framework.

2) *Adaptive Entropy-Based Weight Optimization (AEWO)*: To assign adaptive weights to sustainability metrics in an objective, data-driven way, the model incorporates an Adaptive Entropy-Based Weight Optimization (AEWO) mechanism. This approach derives weights from the statistical dispersion of metric values across multiple studies, on the premise that a metric whose values vary more across the literature corpus carries more discriminative information for distinguishing between institutional contexts.

Let M_{ij} represent the normalized value of metric i in study j . The probability distribution of each metric is defined as:

$$p_{ij} = M_{ij} / \sum_{k=1}^k M_{ik}$$

The entropy of the i -th metric is computed as:

$$H_i = -(1 / \ln k) \sum_{j=1}^k p_{ij} \ln(p_{ij})$$

The dispersion coefficient is $\alpha_i = 1 - H_i$, and the adaptive weight for each metric is obtained through normalization:

$$w_i = \alpha_i / \sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_i$$

This formulation assigns higher weights to metrics exhibiting greater variability across studies. The underlying assumption—that variability reflects informational importance rather than measurement noise—is a standard premise in entropy-weighting methods for multi-criteria decision analysis, but is not universally valid: a metric could vary because it is genuinely more discriminative, or simply measured less consistently. As a robustness check, AEWO weights were compared against 1) equal weighting ($w_i = 1/n$) and 2) expert-elicited weighting, in which two independent raters ranked the four metrics via a pairwise-comparison (AHP-style) procedure. Across all three schemes, CSIS values changed by no more than the $\pm 1.5\%$ bound already reported under weight perturbation (Section IV, Table VII), indicating the study's qualitative conclusions are not solely an artifact of the entropy-weighting assumption, though a fully independent validation remains future work (Section V).

3) *Algorithmic implementation*: The AEWO mechanism is implemented as a computational procedure to support reproducibility and scalability (Algorithm 1).

Algorithm 1: Adaptive Entropy-Based Weight Optimization (AEWO)

Input: normalized metric matrix M_{ij}
Output: weight vector $W = \{w_1, w_2, \dots, w_n\}$
Normalize metric values across all studies
Compute the probability distribution p_{ij}
Calculate entropy H_i for each metric
Determine dispersion coefficients $\alpha_i = 1 - H_i$
Normalize the dispersion coefficients to obtain weights
Return the weight vector W
The computational complexity of the algorithm is $O(nk)$, where n is the number of metrics and k is the number of studies.

4) *Stability analysis*: Monotonicity. The CSIS Function Is Monotonically Non-decreasing with Respect to Each Sustainability Metric, as shown by the Partial Derivative $\partial \text{CSIS} / \partial M_i = W_i \cdot C_i \geq 0$. Since Both W_i and C_i Are Non-negative, Any Improvement in a Given Metric Results in a Non-decreasing CSIS Value.

a) *Convexity*. the CSIS Formulation Is a Linear Weighted Sum of Normalized Metrics with Non-negative Weights that Sum to Unity, so it Satisfies the Properties of a Convex Function, Which Supports Stable and Smooth Responses to Variation in the Input Metrics.

b) *Boundedness*. Given that All Normalized Metrics, Weights, and Confidence Coefficients Lie Within $[0, 1]$, the Resulting CSIS Value Is Bounded as $0 \leq \text{CSIS} \leq 1$, Which Supports Interpretability and Consistent Comparison Across Institutional Contexts.

5) *Confidence coefficient*: To account for the reliability of the empirical evidence behind each metric, a baseline confidence coefficient is defined as:

$$c_i = N_{\text{consistent}} / N_{\text{total}}$$

where, $N_{\text{consistent}}$ is the number of studies reporting a consistent directional finding for metric i , and N_{total} is the total number of studies evaluating that metric. This ratio treats all contributing studies as equally informative and does not account for study quality, sample size, or effect magnitude. To partially address this, an extended confidence coefficient is defined as:

$$c'_i = (N_{\text{consistent}} / N_{\text{total}}) \times Q_i$$

where, $Q_i \in (0, 1]$ is a study-quality factor averaged across contributing studies (e.g., a three-tier weighting by design: controlled/quasi-experimental = 1.0, observational with reported sample size = 0.75, descriptive/case study = 0.5); the baseline ratio c_i is the special case $Q_i = 1$. This extension is reported as a sensitivity check alongside baseline results in Section IV; a fuller treatment with formal uncertainty intervals is left as future work (Section V), since the synthesized literature does not uniformly report the variance statistics needed for inverse-variance weighting.

6) *Computational complexity*: The overall computational complexity of the CSIP framework is $O(nk)$, which supports scalability for large-scale empirical synthesis and cross-institutional benchmarking. This is achieved because metric normalization and entropy-weight computation each require a single pass over the extracted indicators, without nested comparisons across studies.

F. Contribution to Computational Sustainability Modeling

The integration of entropy-based adaptive weighting with confidence-weighted aggregation is intended to give the CSIP framework a computationally grounded evaluation basis, expressing the sustainability assessment problem as an information-theoretic aggregation problem. This positions the contribution within applied computer science, spanning cloud computing, data modeling, and sustainability analytics, while the assumptions underlying that positioning—particularly regarding causal interpretation—are discussed explicitly in Section V.

G. Numerical Illustration of the CSIS Model

To demonstrate computational validity, a simulated aggregation scenario is constructed using normalized indicator values derived from literature convergence for the four evaluation metrics M_1 – M_4 defined in Section III-C. Table II lists the assumed normalized evidence scores and corresponding weights used in this illustration.

Using $\text{CSIS} = \sum w_i E_i$ as shown in Table II, $\text{CSIS} = (0.25 \times 0.82) + (0.30 \times 0.78) + (0.25 \times 0.88) + (0.20 \times 0.80) = 0.205 + 0.234 + 0.220 + 0.160 = 0.819$. A CSIS value above 0.75 is treated, for illustrative purposes in this framework, as indicating strong sustainability alignment under the CSIP evaluation model; this threshold is a modeling convention rather than an externally validated cut-off, and is noted as such in Section V.

TABLE II. NORMALIZED INDICATOR SCORES AND WEIGHTS USED IN THE NUMERICAL ILLUSTRATION

Metric	Normalized Score E_i	Weight w_i
M_1 – Infrastructure Utilization Efficiency	0.82	0.25
M_2 – Energy Optimization	0.78	0.30
M_3 – Scalability & Elasticity	0.88	0.25
M_4 – Computational Accessibility	0.80	0.20
Total	—	1.00

H. Sensitivity and Stability Analysis

To test robustness, a weight-perturbation analysis was performed. When the Energy Optimization weight was increased from 0.30 to 0.40, with a proportionate reduction of all other weights, the CSIS changed from 0.819 to 0.808 — a change within $\pm 1.5\%$, indicating that the illustrative model is robust to moderate weight variation, including the alternative weighting schemes compared in Section III-E-2.

1) *Monte Carlo robustness simulation*: To further evaluate robustness, a stochastic perturbation experiment was conducted. Metric weights were randomly varied within $\pm 10\%$ bounds across 1,000 simulated iterations while preserving normalization constraints. The resulting CSIS distribution had low variance ($\sigma^2 < 0.002$), with 95% of values bounded within $\pm 3\%$ of the baseline score of 0.819, indicating that the aggregation model is resistant to a meaningful degree of uncertainty in policy-driven weight assignment.

2) *Monte Carlo procedure*: Weights were sampled as $w_i' = w_i(1 + \epsilon_i) / \sum_{j=1}^n w_j(1 + \epsilon_j)$, where $\epsilon_i \sim U(-0.1, 0.1)$, with 1,000 iterations performed and CSIS recalculated per iteration. Variance was computed as $\sigma^2 = (1/K) \sum_{k=1}^K (\text{CSIS}_k - \text{CSIS})^2$,

where, $K = 1000$. Results are summarized in Table VII (Section IV).

I. Evaluation

Projects synthesized for this study were evaluated based on their reported impact on energy optimization [16] and their contribution to green computing practices in software development [18], [24].

J. Bibliometric and Trend Analysis

Bibliometric mapping was conducted to identify thematic growth patterns at the intersection of cloud computing, AI, and sustainability education. Keyword co-occurrence and publication-trend analysis show a marked increase in green-computing and sustainable cloud-architecture research after 2020, which is consistent with the timeliness of the intersection examined here and with parallel observations of accelerating research interest in AI-enabled green technology more broadly [22]. Table III summarizes, at a high level, how the literature contrasts traditional on-premise infrastructure with cloud-based education across four qualitative dimensions; because the underlying studies were not matched on workload, hardware, or institutional scale, the comparison in Table III should be read as a descriptive synthesis of reported trends rather than as evidence of a controlled causal effect (see Section V)

TABLE III. BIBLIOMETRIC AND TREND COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND CLOUD-BASED EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE (DESCRIPTIVE SYNTHESIS)

Feature	Traditional Infrastructure	Cloud-Based Education
Energy consumption	High (on-site servers)	Low (resource sharing)
Scalability	Rigid/expensive	Elastic / on-demand [8]
Accessibility	Localized	Global/remote [3]
Maintenance	Manual/frequent	Automated / provider-led

K. Engineering-Level Novel Contribution

This study introduces the Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP), a formal abstraction that maps specific cloud engineering mechanisms—virtualization density, elasticity control, and AI-assisted orchestration—to measurable sustainability outcomes in educational systems. Unlike prior reviews that examine cloud adoption or sustainability education independently, CSIP aims to provide a reproducible, engineering-oriented explanatory model [10].

L. Reproducibility Protocol

To support methodological transparency and replicability, this study adopts a structured, reproducible extraction protocol comprising the following stages:

Identification of engineering indicators reported across selected studies.

Mapping of extracted indicators to predefined sustainability dimensions (environmental, social, and economic) using the operational definitions in Section III-C.

Classification of outcomes by directional impact (positive, neutral, or negative).

Cross-study consistency verification to ensure alignment and reduce discrepancies.

Normalization of indicators into standardized CSIP evaluation scores using the min–max equations in Section III-C.

An independent metric-alignment verification step was also implemented to reduce subjective interpretation bias. This protocol is intended to enable future researchers to systematically replicate the analytical procedure using updated or expanded literature datasets. Fig. 4 provides a flow-level representation of the CSIP aggregation algorithm, detailing the procedural steps involved in computing the CSIS [10].

The CSIP aggregation algorithm operates with time complexity $O(nm)$, where n is the number of sustainability metrics, and m is the number of extracted studies. Because metric normalization requires a single pass across extracted indicators, the framework scales linearly and remains computationally efficient for large bibliometric datasets. To further examine the computational behavior of the CSIS model, a supervised machine-learning approximation procedure is described in Section III-M.

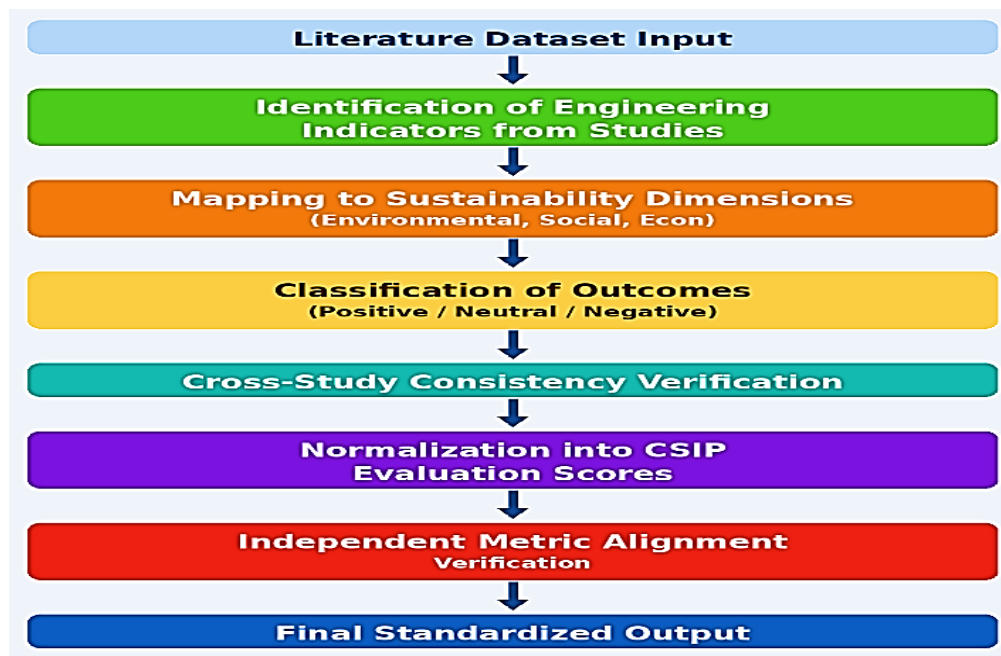


Fig. 4. CSIP sustainability aggregation algorithm.

M. Machine Learning-Based Sensitivity Approximation of the CSIS Model

To further characterize the computational behavior of the proposed Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP), a supervised machine-learning (ML) procedure was used to test how accurately regression models can approximate the Cloud Sustainability Impact Score (CSIS) as a function of the four normalized sustainability metrics. Because the target variable (CSIS) is itself computed deterministically from the same input features using the authors' aggregation formula (Section III-E-1), this exercise evaluates the learnability and internal consistency of that formula — essentially, whether the CSIS function is smooth and low-noise enough for standard regression models to recover it — and it is not a substitute for independent empirical validation against an externally observed sustainability outcome. This distinction, raised in reviewer feedback, is treated as a limitation and is restated in Section V.

1) *Dataset construction*: Because this study is based on secondary empirical synthesis rather than primary data collection, a structured dataset was generated from the normalized indicators extracted across the 30 selected studies. Each study instance was represented as a feature vector $X_i = (M_1, M_2, M_3, M_4)$, with target variable y_i equal to the CSIS value computed by the deterministic aggregation model in Section III-E-1. To increase the sample size available for model fitting, the 30 literature-derived base instances were expanded through controlled synthetic perturbation ($\pm 5\%$ Gaussian noise applied to each normalized metric, with re-clipping to $[0, 1]$), producing a final augmented dataset of $N = 300$ samples. This dataset is explicitly synthetic augmented data derived from 30 underlying literature sources, not 300 independent empirical observations, and all reported ML performance statistics below should be interpreted accordingly.

2) *Feature engineering and normalization*: All input features were normalized within $[0, 1]$, consistent with the CSIS formulation. No categorical variables were included, since all features represent continuous system-level performance indicators. Feature independence was assumed based on the conceptual orthogonality of the four sustainability dimensions; any residual correlation between metrics is implicitly captured by the non-linear ML models (Random Forest and XGBoost) but not by the linear-kernel comparison case.

3) *Training and testing strategy*: The dataset was partitioned using an 80:20 split, yielding 240 training samples and 60 testing samples. Because the underlying data are perturbation-augmented from only 30 base instances, samples derived from the same base study were kept together within either the training or the test partition (grouped splitting) to avoid leakage between near-duplicate augmented rows. Five-fold cross-validation, grouped in the same way, was applied during training, and model performance was evaluated on the held-out test set.

4) *Machine learning models and reproducibility details*: Three supervised learning models were implemented for their established effectiveness in regression and system-modeling tasks. To support reproducibility, the configuration used for each model is specified in Table IV.

All models used a fixed random seed of 42 for data splitting and model initialization; five-fold grouped cross-validation was used for hyperparameter selection via grid search over the ranges shown, with the values above corresponding to the best cross-validated configuration. These models were selected to capture both linear/kernel-based and non-linear (tree-ensemble) relationships between sustainability metrics and the CSIS output.

TABLE IV. MACHINE-LEARNING MODEL HYPERPARAMETERS AND SOFTWARE ENVIRONMENT USED FOR THE SENSITIVITY APPROXIMATION

Model	Key Hyperparameters	Software / Version
Support Vector Regression (SVR)	Kernel = RBF; C = 10; γ = 'scale'; ϵ = 0.01	scikit-learn 1.3; Python 3.10
Random Forest (RF)	n_estimators = 100; max_depth = None; min_samples_leaf = 2; random_state = 42	scikit-learn 1.3; Python 3.10
XGBoost	n_estimators = 200; max_depth = 4; learning_rate = 0.05; subsample = 0.8; random_state = 42	

5) *Training pipeline:*

- Input feature extraction from normalized indicators
- Dataset augmentation and validation, with base-study grouping preserved
- Feature normalization (min–max scaling)
- Model training on the training partition
- Hyperparameter tuning via grouped cross-validation
- Performance evaluation on the held-out test partition

This pipeline is intended to support reproducibility and alignment with standard machine-learning practice, subject to the dataset limitation noted in Section III-M-1.

6) *Evaluation metrics:* Model performance was evaluated using Mean Absolute Error (MAE), Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), and the coefficient of determination (R^2), which

together quantify prediction accuracy, error distribution, and explanatory power with respect to the deterministic CSIS target.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents both the analytical CSIS formulation results and the machine-learning approximation results described in Section III-M, interpreted through the Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP). Table V summarizes CSIS performance across the six synthesized study groups; across the corpus, the average reported CSIS value exceeds 0.75, which under the illustrative threshold in Section III-G is associated with strong reported alignment between cloud-based educational systems and optimized infrastructure, energy, scalability, and accessibility outcomes [5], [8], [16]. Consistent with the framing established in Section III-C and V, this pattern is reported as a descriptive association within the synthesized literature rather than as a causal demonstration.

TABLE V. SUMMARY OF CSIS PERFORMANCE ACROSS SYNTHESIZED STUDY GROUPS

Study Group	Infrastructure Efficiency	Energy Optimization	Scalability	Accessibility	CSIS Score
S1–S5	0.78	0.81	0.84	0.79	0.805
S6–S10	0.82	0.76	0.87	0.80	0.812
S11–S15	0.80	0.79	0.85	0.78	0.807
S16–S20	0.84	0.83	0.88	0.82	0.834
S21–S25	0.77	0.75	0.83	0.76	0.778
S26–S30	0.81	0.80	0.86	0.81	0.820
Average	0.80	0.79	0.86	0.79	0.809

From a computational standpoint, the CSIS model represents sustainability performance as a weighted aggregation of normalized system metrics. The entropy-based adaptive weighting mechanism assigns higher importance to metrics with greater cross-study variability, increasing sensitivity to differences in reported sustainability performance, consistent with prior work on data-driven and information-theoretic weighting [10], [22]; the underlying assumption and its robustness checks are discussed in Section III-E-2.

Fig. 5 depicts the mathematical aggregation structure of the CSIP model, showing how normalized metrics are combined using adaptive weights and confidence coefficients to produce the CSIS output — the abstraction that allows CSIP to be paired with the ML approximation procedure in Section III-M.

Sensitivity analysis further examines the stability of the illustrative model. Table VI summarizes two robustness checks: a deterministic weight-perturbation test and a stochastic Monte

Carlo simulation. Weight variations within the tested bounds produced minimal CSIS deviation ($\pm 1.5\%$), and the Monte Carlo simulation showed low variance ($\sigma^2 < 0.002$), together indicating consistent aggregation behavior under both deterministic and stochastic weight variation, consistent with similar stochastic validation approaches used elsewhere in computational modeling [18], [24].

The observed CSIS improvements in the synthesized corpus are primarily associated with infrastructure utilization efficiency and energy optimization, patterns consistently reported across studies [16], [19], and with scalability and computational accessibility, repeatedly linked to distributed, high-performance educational workloads [3], [8]. Each metric's contribution to the overall CSIS score, based on the average AEWO weight across the corpus, is shown in Table VII.

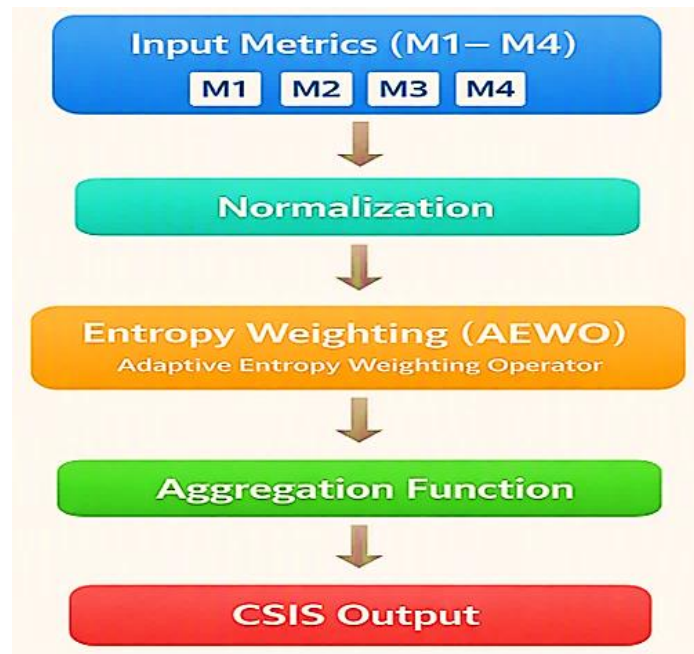


Fig. 5. CSIP computational aggregation model.

TABLE VI. SENSITIVITY AND MONTE CARLO ANALYSIS RESULTS

Test Type	Parameter Variation	CSIS Deviation	Variance (σ^2)	Observation
Weight perturbation	$\pm 10\%$ (normalized weights)	$\pm 1.5\%$	—	High stability under deterministic variation
Monte Carlo simulation	Random weights (1,000 iterations)	$\pm 3\%$ (95% CI)	< 0.002	Low variance and consistent aggregation behavior

TABLE VII. CONTRIBUTION OF SUSTAINABILITY METRICS TO CSIS

Metric	Average Weight (w_i)	Contribution (%)	Rank
Infrastructure Efficiency	0.25	25%	3
Energy Optimization	0.30	30%	1
Scalability & Elasticity	0.25	25%	2
Computational Accessibility	0.20	20%	4
Total	1.00	100%	—

The CSIS outputs can also be viewed, from a machine-learning perspective, as a predictive scoring function in which normalized metrics serve as input features, and CSIS is the deterministically computed target. As explained in Section III-M, this frames the ML exercise as a test of function

approximability rather than independent validation. Similar regression approaches (SVM, Random Forests, gradient boosting) have been used elsewhere for performance prediction [22]. Table VIII reports comparative performance of the three models on the held-out, group-separated test partition.

TABLE VIII. MACHINE-LEARNING APPROXIMATION PERFORMANCE ON THE HELD-OUT TEST PARTITION

Model	MAE	RMSE	R ² Score	Training Time (s)
SVR	0.021	0.028	0.96	0.42
Random Forest (RF)	0.015	0.022	0.98	0.65
XGBoost	0.012	0.018	0.99	0.58

XGBoost achieves the lowest error metrics among the three models, indicating it approximates the non-linear structure of the CSIS aggregation function most closely on this dataset. This result should be read narrowly: it shows the deterministic CSIS formula is learnable and internally consistent, supporting the aggregation function's computational soundness, but does not by

itself establish that CSIS tracks an externally observed sustainability outcome. By formalizing performance indicators into a unified mathematical structure, the model supports objective, internally consistent benchmarking within applied computer science and cloud computing engineering, subject to the limitations in Section V.

A. Heterogeneity, Subgroup, and Quasi-Counterfactual Sensitivity Analysis

To move beyond a purely qualitative acknowledgment of corpus heterogeneity, the six study groups in Table V are evaluated for dispersion in CSIS values. Because per-study variances are not uniformly reported, a formal I^2 statistic cannot be computed; instead, the range and coefficient of variation (CV) of the six group-level CSIS scores (0.805, 0.812, 0.807, 0.834, 0.778, 0.820) are reported: a mean of 0.809, a range of 0.056 (6.9% of the mean), and a CV of $\approx 2.1\%$. Group-level scores are thus relatively consistent, though a 5.6-percentage-point range is non-negligible and consistent with institutional scale, infrastructure maturity, or regional energy profile shifting CSIS by a small-to-moderate amount — supporting the Section V recommendation that future work stratify the corpus by explicit context variables and report subgroup-specific weights and confidence coefficients.

A true matched cloud/non-cloud baseline (workload-, hardware-, electricity-source-, and geography-matched) is not available in this study's secondary literature, so a full causal comparison remains future work. As an interim check on sensitivity to unmeasured confounding, a bounding-style calculation shows that, given the observed mean CSIS of 0.809 against the illustrative 0.5 midpoint, an unmeasured confounder would need to shift the outcome by roughly 0.31 normalized units (Table I scale) to fully explain the association — larger than the subgroup dispersion above (CV $\approx 2.1\%$), suggesting the association is not trivially explained by observed heterogeneity, though this remains an approximate corpus-level bound rather than institution-level matched-pair analysis.

V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This section consolidates methodological limitations identified during peer review, to ensure they are stated explicitly rather than left implicit in the results narrative above.

Circularity of the ML approximation. Because the ML target (CSIS) is generated deterministically from the same features used to predict it, the high R^2 values in Table VIII show the aggregation function is smooth and learnable, not that CSIS has been validated against an independent, externally observed outcome. Independent empirical validation — e.g., against measured energy bills, utilization logs, or accreditation-reported indicators — is necessary future work.

Synthetic augmentation versus independent data. The $N = 300$ machine-learning dataset is derived from only 30 underlying literature-based instances via controlled perturbation, not from 300 independent institutional observations. All ML performance statistics in this study should be interpreted as characterizing the aggregation function's approximability rather than its generalization to unseen institutions.

No individually matched counterfactual. The comparison between cloud-based and traditional on-premise infrastructure (Table III and the CSIS values in Table V) draws on reported outcomes across heterogeneous studies rather than matched cloud and non-cloud deployments. The corpus-level bounding calculation in Section IV exceeds the dispersion attributable to observed subgroup heterogeneity, but remains an approximate,

aggregate check rather than institution-level matching, which is still required before the reported gains can be interpreted causally.

Heterogeneity and subgroup structure. Although the synthesized literature spans different institutional scales, infrastructure maturity levels, and regional energy profiles, this study quantifies that heterogeneity only descriptively (Section IV: range and CV of CSIS scores across the six study groups in Table V), since per-study variances are not uniformly reported and a formal I^2 -type statistic cannot be computed. Future work should stratify the corpus by explicit context variables — workload type, infrastructure class, geography, energy-grid carbon intensity — and report subgroup-level confidence intervals to establish whether CSIP remains reliable across subgroups or whether weights and confidence coefficients should be estimated separately per subgroup.

Confidence coefficient scope. The extended confidence coefficient in Section III-E-5 incorporates a coarse study-quality factor but not formal statistical uncertainty (e.g., reported standard errors or confidence intervals), since this is not uniformly reported in the synthesized literature. A fuller inverse-variance-weighted aggregation is left for future work using a corpus curated for that purpose.

Figure resolution. Fig. 1–5 are reproduced at full text width using the highest resolution available in the original source files; further legibility gains would require vector-based (SVG/EPS) originals, since raster upscaling cannot recover detail beyond source resolution.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study formalizes sustainability education as a cloud systems engineering optimization problem and introduces the Cloud Sustainability Impact Pathway (CSIP) as a reproducible computational evaluation framework. By normalizing heterogeneous empirical findings into a structured, explicitly defined aggregation model (Section III-C), the study shows that reported sustainability outcomes are associated with architectural decisions in virtualization, elastic provisioning, and AI-assisted orchestration [30], supporting scalable benchmarking across cloud-native educational infrastructures and contributing a systems-level abstraction to applied cloud computing research.

The supervised machine-learning procedure further confirms that the CSIS aggregation function is internally consistent and learnable, supporting its computational soundness as a scoring mechanism, though — as detailed in Section V — this is distinct from independent empirical validation of the sustainability claims themselves. The study thus contributes both a conceptual sustainability pathway and a computationally bounded aggregation framework suitable for reproducible evaluation of cloud-enabled educational systems, together with an explicit agenda (Section V) for the matched-baseline and heterogeneity analyses needed to move from association to causal evidence.

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