

The missing piece in sustainability indices: accounting for the human factor

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Abstract-

Sustainability is the result of a complex combination of factors. Social, cultural and personal elements are key for the pursuit of a sustainable future. Beyond the existing, very broad program on sustainability studies, additional research should contribute to specify how those social and human factors affect sustainability indices. General beliefs, values, attitudes, habits, assumed lifestyles or even meaning systems projecting purpose on one's own life have an impact on sustainability as well. Our aim in this paper is to describe these factors, which we group under the label of 'sustainability human factors'. This task requires a multidisciplinary effort involving anthropology, psychology and social sciences, covering cognitive, emotional or cultural dimensions. First, we set the stage describing the expected network of features and traits that could describe the human factor. Second, we propose a model which can help to assess it through multiple scales and surveying instruments. These instruments can provide valuable data that could expand the current indices. It is important to connect our program with the ongoing research in this field and to develop a broad model that highlights the human factor and its central role when planning for a sustainable future.

Index Terms- sustainability; beliefs; values; attitudes; behaviour

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