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Sustainability Knowledge and Attitudes —Assessing Latent Constructs

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Chapter

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Abstract

The majority of sustainability related social science research conducted to date has primarily focused on individual level behaviors occurring within the environmental domain. In order to achieve the advancements needed to move towards a truly sustainable society, this interdisciplinary field must grow to not only include the social and economic domains, but also expand in scope to study groups and institutions. Sustainability research has paused at the brink of this needed growth and expansion because it has failed, thus far, to build new theories specifically tailored to the three domain model of sustainability. The purpose of this chapter is to encourage scientists to begin identifying and measuring sustainability latent constructs in order to do just that, and to submit two such measures to the academic community. This chapter introduces a revised Assessment of Sustainability Knowledge (ASK) and the Sustainability Attitudes Scale (SAS), and discusses when

and how to use them for applied and theoretical purposes. Building theoretical models using these (and other) latent constructs will allow social scientists to test a new and diverse set of hypotheses and push the field to create cutting edge, sustainability-tailored theories.

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