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UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPANTS IN CITIZEN SCIENCE: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTIVATION, WELL-BEING AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Citizen science is increasingly becoming a used and accepted method for data collection within the natural sciences. Discussions often revolve around the robustness of scientific methods and data aspects of citizen science. However, this focus on natural science aspects has left the socio-personal dimensions of participation in citizen science largely unexplored. Guided by new developments in well-being theory and using established volunteer motivation theory, this research uses data collected from participants in citizen science projects to explore motivations of participants, well-being benefits of participation and impact of these socio-personal dimensions on the achievement of citizen science project goals. We argue that understanding why participants get involved and continue in citizen science projects provides project managers with valuable information to ensure the sustainability of projects. Project managers who understand participant motivation can tailor recruitment and engagement techniques to target audiences, which in turn may positively influence the well-being of recruited participants. The motivation and well-being of participants may subsequently influence their engagement in the project and ultimately impact on the amount and quality of data collected and the project outcome.



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