

Exploring the Impact of Using a Co-design Process to Generate Ideas for Sustainable Travel Solutions

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Abstract

This paper presents an empirical study of whether participants who took part in a co-design process generated more ideas than those taking part in a more traditional top down consultative process. The context for the study was the need to generate ideas to reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys to and from a UK university campus. 16 staff took part in a co-design study and 12 generated ideas as part of a less participative email mediated process. The groups were matched with respect to potentially confounding factors (creativity when problem solving, normal commuting mode and intention to adopt sustainable behaviours). The co-design group generated a significantly greater number of ideas overall and a significantly greater number per participant than non-co-design group. The co-design group generated nearly twice as many ideas which were judged as innovative within the local context and also generated a much broader range of ideas than the group following the traditional process. The findings suggest that co-design offers real benefits as a process for idea generation within the sustainable travel context. The vast majority of co-design participants also valued the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and learn about the perspectives of others.