

The effect of three different SLCA methods

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Any tool is developed because of its ability to solve or mitigate a problem. In the same way, we are interested in developing the Social Life Cycle Assessment (SLCA) *only* because of its ability to solve or mitigate some problem. We take this problem to be the improvement of social conditions for stakeholders in the product life cycle. Taking SLCA to be a decision support tool, a basis for this analysis is that SLCA's improvement effect should arise through its use in decision support. Three different ways in which SLCA can have an improvement effect is outlined: One, called the 'consequential SLCA'. Here the idea is that the SLCA should show the consequences of choosing relevant decision alternatives. If the decision maker in this situation can be led to choose the product which causes the most favourable social impacts, an improvement has been created in comparison to the uninformed choice, where, in terms of social impacts, a random choice would be made. The second SLCA is called 'educative SLCA'. Here the idea is to 'educate' the market in a certain direction, by communicating the preferences of the decision makers in terms of a 'good SLCA score' to the market. The idea is thus that the 'good SLCA score' should be a market parameter, hereby creating a push in the market towards having a 'good SLCA score' for a product. The third is called the 'management SLCA', which is directed towards the internal decision maker, for example a company manager, who has the power to change the effects of the product life cycle from within.

Empirical and theoretical evidence from relevant fields of research are used to address the claimed improvement effect of the three SLCAs, and it is found that some problematic issues can be raised in relation to all three methods.