🌻 The factors table

22 Sep 2025

Summary

The factors table is a **summary view** of your map: it tells you which factors are most prominent in the current view of the data, and how that changes across groups.

- **Input**: the current (already filtered) links table.
- **Output**: one row per factor label, with counts and optional breakdowns.

The key idea: **everything starts from links**. The factors table is derived from them.

When to use it

- **Orientation**: “what are people talking about most?”
- **Role reading**: “which factors mainly show up as outcomes vs causes?”
- **Comparison**: “what differs by group/context?”

What the counts actually mean

The factors table is built from “factor mentions” that come from links:

- each link contributes a **cause mention** and an **effect mention**
- totals therefore count **mentions**, not “number of links”

Two useful evidence units:

- **Sources** = how widely shared (distinct sources)
- **Citations** = how often said (coded claims; sensitive to verbose sources)

Typical views people use

1) Overall prominence

Sort by Source count or Citation count to find the “main” factors in the current view.

2) Causes vs outcomes

Split counts into:

- **out** (“as a cause”)
- **in** (“as an effect”)

This helps you read whether a factor is mostly described as a driver, an outcome, or both.

3) Group breakdowns (comparisons)

If your sources have metadata (e.g. district, gender, age band), you can break the table down by group to ask:

- “which factors are disproportionately mentioned by group A vs group B?”
- “which outcomes differ by context?”

4) Normalised (percent) views

Normalisation is for fair comparison when groups differ in:

- number of sources, or
- overall verbosity.

In practice: percent views are about **relative prominence**, not absolute volume.

5) Significance tests (optional)

If you choose exactly one grouping variable, the app can highlight factors where the group differences are unlikely to be just “baseline group size” effects.

Use these as **attention guides**, not as definitive proof: always go back to quotes/links to interpret what the difference actually is.

Examples (from the app)

Factors table: group differences + tests

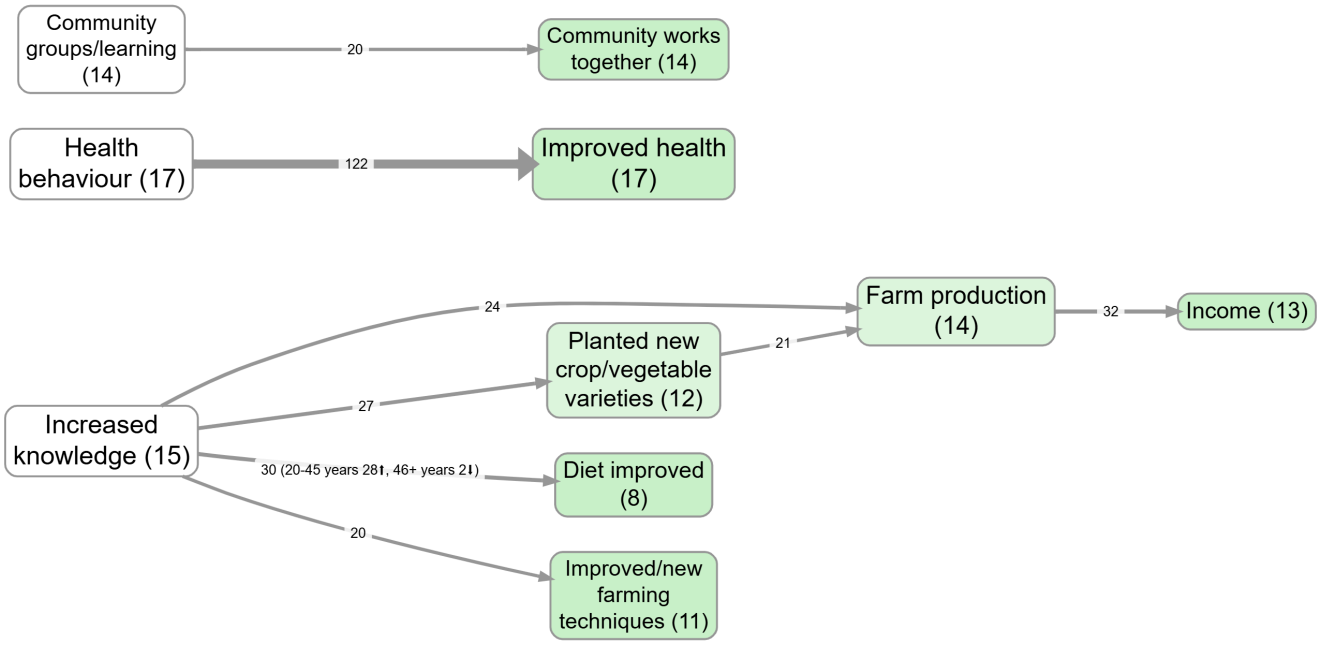
Bookmark #535

Showing 1-10 of 170 rows **Page Size** 10 First Prev 1 2 3 4 5 Next Last

Factor	Significant	custom_# Age of the main respondent - 20-45	custom_# Age of the main respondent - 46+	# Citations	# Sources	In-Degree	Out-Degree	Outcomeness	Avg Incoming Sentiment
Increased knowledge	No	158	72	230	18	22	208	0.096	0.000
Farm production	Yes	89	68	157	16	76	81	0.484	0.000
Health behaviour	No	93	58	151	17	26	125	0.172	0.000
Improved health	No	89	54	143	17	136	7	0.951	0.000
Diet improved	Yes	78	23	101	18	81	20	0.802	0.000
Income	Yes	44	44	88	15	47	41	0.534	0.000
Planted new crop/vegetabl	No	42	20	62	13	28	34	0.452	0.000
Improved/new farming tec	Yes	20	24	44	14	21	23	0.477	0.000
Ability to buy food	Yes	14	23	37	12	17	20	0.459	0.000
Food consumption quantit	No	22	15	37	17	31	6	0.838	0.000

Bringing group differences onto the map (as link labels)

Bookmark #980



Formal notes (optional)

If you want the precise construction, here it is.

Factor mentions

Each link row contains a cause label, an effect label, and a `source_id`. From each link row we derive two mention records:

- one mention for the cause label (direction = `out`)
- one mention for the effect label (direction = `in`)

These mention records are the atomic units that the factors table aggregates. This is why totals across factors are totals of mentions (each link yields at least two mentions).

Label rewrites

Before aggregating, apply any label-rewrite transforms (collapse, remove bracket text, etc.). These are temporary rewrites for analysis/presentation; they do not change the underlying coding.

Group breakdown cells

If G is a grouping variable on sources (e.g. district), a cell can be computed in citations-mode or sources-mode:

- citations mode counts mention records in that cell
- sources mode counts distinct sources that contribute at least one mention in that cell

Percent-of-baseline intuition

\[\text{share}(f,g) = \frac{\text{cell}(f,g)}{\sum_{f'} \text{cell}(f',g)} \]

Significance tests (intuition)

Even if group A has more mentions overall than group B, a per-factor test asks whether factor f is still over-represented in one group relative to those baselines.