

# WHY DO SCHOOL TEACHERS ENGAGE WITH SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION?

## Exploring the Role of Personal, Group and Organizational Influence Factors

### Problem Background

Consumption is a key theme in education for sustainable development (ESD). However, it lacks institutional integration in school curricula, subjects and teacher education programs. Against this backdrop, the motivation of teachers to deliberately engage with sustainable consumption issues professionally is of crucial importance. There is, however, a paucity of research on factors explaining teachers' engagement with sustainable consumption issues. This study adds to this largely underexplored field.

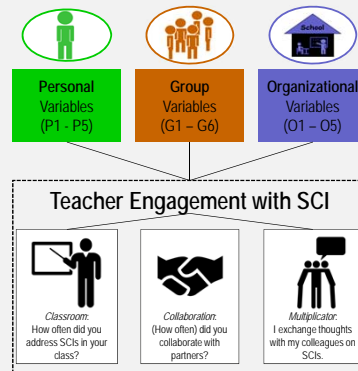
### Research Question

What role do *personal*, *group* and *organizational* factors play in explaining teacher engagement with sustainable consumption issues (SCI)?

### Research Design and Analysis

Based on previous research drawing on

- **Personal variables (P1 to P5)** covered the teacher's personal commitment to the promotion of sustainable development and his or her interest in the concept of ESD [1].
- **Group variables (G1 to G6)** comprise the perceived support climate for SCI activities in the organisation and the estimated proportion of teachers who are regularly working on sustainability issues in their classes [2].
- **Organizational variables (O1 to O5)** operationalized the (in)transparency of information flows at school and the extent to which ESD feature in inner-organizational communication [3].



Ordinal regression analysis: Parameter estimates and odds ratio

Level	Independent Variables	Wald statistics	Odds Ratio	95% CI	
				Upper	Lower
Personal	P1 Commitment to ESD	0.95	1.25	0.71	2.20
	P2 Interest in ESD	9.18 **	3.29	1.52	7.11
	P3 Influence on the development of traditional consumer competencies	0.17	1.18	0.53	2.65
	P4 Influence on the development of transformative consumer competencies	1.88	0.62	0.32	1.22
	P5 Influence of school actors	0.35	0.89	0.53	1.40
Group	G1 Support for ESD action	3.16	1.53	0.96	2.44
	G2 Proportion of ESD activists: few (5-25%)	3.09	0.41	0.15	1.11
	G3 Proportion of ESD activists: some (5-25%)	1.35	2.61	0.52	13.10
	G4 Leadership dedication to and interest SCI	0.00	1.00	0.63	1.59
	G5 Student dedication to and interest in SCI	2.66	0.55	0.26	1.13
	G6 Administration dedication to and interest in SCI	4.66 *	1.80	1.06	3.06
Organizational	O1 Inner-institutional communication on SCI	1.63	0.79	0.56	1.13
	O2 School General transparency of communication in	4.39 *	1.46	1.02	2.08
	O3 General intransparency of communication in school	0.30	1.11	0.77	1.61
	O4 Transformative consumer educational goals	0.01	1.02	0.76	1.37
	O5 Traditional consumer educational goals	0.77	1.22	0.78	1.89
		0.33	0.84	0.47	1.51

Note: R<sup>2</sup>=.45. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01. CI=Confidence interval.

### Findings

Results of regression analysis (using listwise deletion, n=83) show that the overall model of personal, group and organizational factors explains 45% of the variance in teacher engagement with SCI. Three factors are particularly influential: **personal interest in ESD (P2)**, **perceived interest of students in SCI (G5)**, and **inner-institutional communication on SCI (O1)**.

### Implications

Possible implications of the study and its findings could be to focus professional development more thoroughly on reexamining individual norms, ethics and values, explore ways to connect SCI to the experiences of students and to utilize not only outward bound, but internal communication strategies more systematically in whole-school-approaches to ESD.

### References

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### Project BINK

This study was conducted as part of the project BINK (German acronym for Educational Institutions and Sustainable Consumption, carried out between 2008 and 2012 with financial support of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research).



The aim of BINK was to design, implement and evaluate transdisciplinary organizational change processes towards a more sustainable culture of consumption in six educational institutions [4]. The change process in each institution was managed by teams of teachers, students and other stakeholders.

In the course of the project, more than 34 intervention measures have been planned and implemented with the participation of teachers, students and other stakeholders [5].

### Contact



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