

Exploring the research for ESD: Agency of perception

Considering the goals of UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the ways to reach them, the approaches used by researchers to investigate this field, their beliefs, presuppositions, self-evaluations and possible consequences of their self-experience should be studied. The study aims to pilot the survey “Research for ESD” and to discover 1) the performance related self-perceptions of researchers about their studies on ESD; 2) their definitions of ideal research for ESD; and 3) the influence of demographic, social and research related variables on the two former points. Sixty researchers from all over the world differing by gender, age, researcher status and position, educational background, methodological approach, length of experience of research for ESD and other research fields filled out the survey consisting of 32 items. The survey grounds on the model of agency of perception by Reunamo suggesting for four factors (scales): agentive assimilation or theory-specific aspects of ESD, agentive accommodation – the tool production for ESD, adaptive assimilation – the situation-specific conditions of ESD, and adaptive accommodation – the general conditions of ESD. The vertical continuum of model is featured by agency of ideas and study of ideas, horizontal continuum is determined by the specific conditions and contact to larger environment. The views on ideal research for ESD were exposed by an open question treated by qualitative content analysis. The quantitative data obtained from the survey was used for the psychometric analysis of survey items and validity of scales as well as to answer the research questions. The results implicates both to the contribution in the development of new research instruments for the field of ESD and to sustenance of the global efforts in this research area since the envisaged global dissemination on the results allows for the well-considered collaboration and networking of further local and global research for ESD.