From Climate Anxiety To Sustainable Consumption: A Conceptual Framework Of Psychological And Social Mechanisms Among Southeast Asian Youth

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Abstract

Climate change has become not only an environmental challenge but also a psychological concern that influences individuals' perceptions, emotions, and behavioral decisions. While previous research on sustainable consumption has primarily emphasized cognitive factors, such as environmental awareness, attitudes, and values, the role of climate-related emotions in shaping sustainable consumption remains insufficiently understood. This study develops a conceptual framework to explain how climate change anxiety may contribute to sustainable consumption behavior among Southeast Asian youth through psychological and social mechanisms.

Drawing upon Environmental Psychology Theory, Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory, Self-Identity Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study proposes an integrated framework linking climate change anxiety, environmental concern, environmental identity, social influence, and sustainable consumption behavior. The framework suggests that climate change anxiety may enhance environmental concern, which subsequently contributes to the formation of environmental identity and encourages sustainable consumption practices. Furthermore, social influence is proposed as an important contextual mechanism that strengthens the translation of environmental identity into sustainable consumption behavior.

This study contributes to sustainability and consumer behavior literature by extending existing explanations beyond rational decision-making perspectives and highlighting the interconnected roles of emotional, identity-based, and social mechanisms in sustainable consumption. The proposed framework provides a foundation for future empirical research and offers practical insights for promoting sustainable behaviors among young consumers in culturally diverse Asian contexts.

Keywords: Climate change anxiety; Sustainable consumption behavior; Environmental concern; Environmental identity; Social influence; Sustainable consumption; Southeast Asian youth