

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (20799) - DESIGNING A SIMPLE AND INTERVENTION-FRIENDLY MODEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

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Background and objectives

Environmental activism is becoming increasingly more popular, especially with young people and young adults. At the same time, there is a resurgence in research directed at understanding environmental citizenship, how it develops and how to best educate people for it. One of the more prominent expressions of environmental citizenship is youth environmental activism, which can be a vector for positive social and political change, provided that activists have sufficient factual knowledge and seek evidence-based solutions. There is, however, a lack of a simple framework or a model that would enable the study of these processes from a developmental perspective or in intervention contexts.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

A convenience sample of 267 young adults from 18 to 40 years of age participated in the study by filling in a questionnaire that assessed various components that comprise a model of environmental citizenship and filled in measures of the big five personality traits and political orientation.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The results uncovered a functioning data-driven model that can be used as a change model in interventions as well as in longitudinal research. The data uncovered a mismatch between factual knowledge regarding environmental issues and participants' perceived competence regarding these issues, indicating that their environmental citizenship might be more influenced by their subjective beliefs, rather than factual knowledge.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Based on the data, a gap in environmental education and education for environmental citizenship was identified, namely – the mismatch between real and perceived competence regarding environmental issues. This gap provides a practical starting point for interventions that can be addressed through education for environmental citizenship. By addressing this gap, we could move closer toward more evidence-driven civic participation and more sustainable solutions to our current environmental problems.