

IC - (20816) - CLIMATE CHANGE ANXIETY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH SPANISH ADOLESCENTS

Rocío Rodríguez Rey¹; Silvia Collado²; Myriam Sanandrés¹; José Antonio Corraliza³

1 - Universidad Pontificia de Comillas; 2 - Universidad de Zaragoza; 3 - Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Background and objectives

Climate change anxiety (CCA) has been defined as the distress caused by climate change where people are becoming anxious about their future. In 2020, the climate change anxiety scale (CCAS) was developed to be used in EEUU. Since then, it has been used to measure CCA in adults from different countries (i.e., Italy and Germany), showing that adults tend to report relatively low levels of CCA. To our knowledge, there are no studies examining CCA with the climate change anxiety scale in adolescents. The main objective of this study is to examine Spanish adolescents' CCA and to evaluate CCA's correlates.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Participants were 250 adolescents (12-18 years old). Data were collected through a pen a pencil questionnaire including the following variables: demographic data, CCA, climate change knowledge, anxiety and depression symptoms, frequency of contact with nature, connection to nature, pro-environmental behaviors, coping strategies in relation to climate change, personality traits and social influence.

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

Results show that the CASS is a useful instrument to measure Spanish adolescents' CCA. Spanish adolescents' report low levels of CCA ($M=1.47$; $SD=.40$). Scores were higher in the emotional dimension, followed by the cognitive and functional ones. Girls showed higher CCA than boys. Participants who feel more connected to nature reported higher levels of CCA and tend to behave in a more pro-environmental way. Regarding coping strategies: adolescents who use a problem-focused strategy tend to report lower levels of CCA, while those that use a meaning-focused strategy report higher levels of CCA.

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

The CCAS is a useful tool to register CCA in Spanish adolescents. In line with studies with adults, some adolescents suffer emotionally due to climate change and its consequences, and CCA is related to adolescents' social group's perception of climate change and their behaviors towards the environment.

Palavras-chave : climate change anxiety, eco-anxiety, climate change anxiety questionnaire, adolescents, Spain