Climate Change Anxiety: Does It Moderate the Relationship Between Hope and Action?

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Introduction

- Climate change refers to long-term changes in weather patterns.
- Climate change action includes both individual and collective actions that can reduce climate change.
- Hope is a motivating factor in climate change action, but anxiety about climate change can also trigger action.
- This study aims to determine if climate change anxiety moderates the relationship between climate change hope and action.
- Perhaps anxious people only take action if they are hopeful.

Method

Participants

- 500 United States MTurk workers, who are CloudResearch's Approved Participants.
- 15 participants who did not believe in climate change were removed.
- 11 multivariate outliers were filtered out, leaving a final sample of 474 participants.
- 474 remaining participants: 274 female, 197 male, and 3 non-binary; ages 19 to 76; 82% identified as white.

Measures

- Climate Change Action Inventory (Barchard et al., 2021)
- Climate Change Anxiety Scale (Clayton & Karazsia, 2020)
- Climate Change Hope Scale (Li & Monroe, 2018)

Climate change anxiety and hope both predict climate change action.

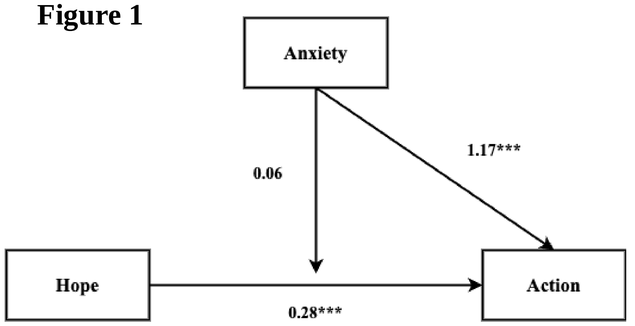
Results

- Both climate change anxiety ($\beta = 1.17$, $t(470) = 17.92$, $p < .001$) and climate change hope ($\beta = 0.28$, $t(470) = 7.28$, $p < .001$) predict climate change action.
- Anxiety does not moderate the relationship between hope and action ($\beta = 0.06$, $t(470) = 0.82$, $p = .415$).

Discussion

- Climate change anxiety and hope both predicted climate change action. Anxiety had a large effect, while hope had a small effect.
- Participants were all located in the United States, mostly identified as white, and were all adults. Future research can replicate these findings in other cultures and ethnic groups and using teenagers who will be strongly affected by climate change in their lifetimes.
- This study was correlational and cannot make causal claims. Future research can determine if experimentally induced changes in anxiety and/or hope led to changes in behavior or behavioral intentions.
- Nonetheless, the current findings suggest that we can encourage more climate action by both acknowledging the disastrous consequences of unchecked climate change and the effectiveness of many climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Figure 1



*** $p < .001$.