

Establishing a Model of the Environmental Behavior of College Students: The Example of Global Climate Change

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Abstract : Using global climate change as its main theme, this study establishes a model for understanding the environmental behavior of college students. It examines their beliefs about the environment, sustainability, and social impact. Theories about values, beliefs, norms, and planned behaviors helped establish the path relations among various latent variables, which include the students' values regarding sustainability, environmental concern, social impact, perceived risk, environmental attitude, and behavioral intention. Personality traits were used as moderator variables in order to analyze their role in influencing environmental behaviors. The components-based partial least square (PLS) method was adopted, and the measurements and structural models were analyzed using the SmartPLS software. The proposed model complies with various test standards, including individual item reliability, composite reliability, average variance extracted, goodness-of-fit, and cross-validated redundancy. When college students are taught the concept of environmental sustainability, sustainability becomes an environmental attitude for them, and they are more likely to uphold an ethic of sustainability. The more an individual perceives the risks of global climate change, the stronger her emotional connection to the issue becomes. This positively affects the environmental attitude of college student, pushes them to participate more proactively in improvement activities, and encourages them to display their behavioral intention to improve global climate change. When considering the interaction effect among four latent variables (values regarding sustainability, social impact, environmental concern, and perceived risk), this study found that personality traits have a moderate effect on environmental attitude.

Keywords : partial least square, personality traits, social impact, environmental concern, perceived risk

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