

Environmental Collective Action – November 2022

This summary is prepared for the 2022 three-month trial of the Forward Project of the Social Change Lab - Susilo Wibisono & Winnifred R. Louis – details of the methodology and all summaries available here: <http://www.socialchangelab.net/forward.html> and via subscription/email at <https://socialchangelab.substack.com/>. Feedback welcome, to w.louis@psy.uq.edu.au .

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Month/Year	November 2022
Key term	“Environmental Collective Action” and Environmental Collective Action
Database	Google Scholar
Link to database	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17p2fFHcyHQ0-hhlzNb2ZV-nzAUPxBPYs1fXsVC1_IRY/edit?usp=sharing

Overview

In total, there were 82 publications under the keyword ‘environmental collective action’ in the month of November 2022 on Google Scholar. These fell into journal articles, books, book chapters, research reports, and proceedings. Overall, there were 54 articles classified as ‘not relevant’ publications, 16 classified as ‘partially relevant’, and 12 classified as ‘relevant’ publications. Out of the relevant and partially relevant publications, there were 15 journal articles, 1 book, 6 book chapters, 2 research reports, and 4 proceedings. Solely considering the relevant and partially relevant journal articles, there were 13 empirical and 2 theoretical documents, 80% of which were quantitative, 13% were qualitative, and 7% were case studies (classed as ‘other’). Experiments were the main method of data collection, with 64% of quantitative studies using it, followed by surveys, with 18% of quantitative studies using it. The remaining 18% of quantitative studies used archival data.

Participants and Data

Data was collected from a multitude of countries and could be classed as ‘global’ if data from several countries in different continents were collected, ‘unspecified’ if the location was not mentioned or unknown (due to lack of access to some publications), or the specific country/continent would be named if it was the sole location the data were collected from. Out of all relevant and partially relevant publications, eight publications were ‘global’, five were ‘unspecified’, two were from Europe, two were from USA, two were from UK, one

from Asia, one from South America, two from Greece, and the remainders from Brazil, India, Australia, Liberia, and Indonesia. Participants consisted of undergraduate university students in 3 studies (Ταπάσκου et al., 2022; Larson & Lee, 2022; Their & Lin, 2022), teachers in one study (Brasil, 2022), general population aged 18-65 years olds in 1 study (Ekinci & Van Lange, 2022), and from all ages in another study (Meijers et al., 2022). For studies without participants, social media data were collected and analysed (Sanford et al., 2022; Weaver et al., 2022).

Findings and themes

To quote Tilman, “A lack of regional and international collective action is the greatest barrier to achieving global environmental sustainability” (2022: p. 1). Focusing on the relevant and partially relevant publications, November’s findings focused heavily on the themes of the link between social media and human behaviour, both important themes contributing to achieving awareness toward collective action at global level.

Factors influencing behaviour are integral considerations influencing environmental collective action. A study found that if people share their common goals, high-levels of self-organised, cooperative behaviour occurs, leading to long-term resource sustainability (Tu et al., 2022). Additionally, if they had selfish/individualistic goals, resources depleted faster, reinforcing the fact that collective action leads to sustainable governance of resources (Tu et al., 2022). It is likely that when taught from a justice perspective to understand others’ goals and the need for collective action, people feel more encouraged to engage in climate action (Larson & Lee, 2022) and therefore may be able to put their individualistic goals aside to do so. This seems to apply on a global level as well. Social media may be an important resource that allows environmental collective action to occur on a global scale (Tang & Xu, 2022). It presents an opportunity to advertise the different angles of environmental issues. For example, a study by Weaver et al. (2022) found that “*climate change solutions such as tree-planting are well represented in Great Britain, while climate change impacts such as forest fires, flooding and other extreme weather events are strongly represented in the US and Canada*” (p. 1). Unpaid social sharing also impacts internet users, creating more impressions no matter how much is spent on an advertisement (Weaver et al., 2022). This is important, as social media seems to intertwine with our environmental behaviour, as it has the ability to affect our mood. When participants saw negative social media contents, they reported higher intentions to engage in climate action, but were less inclined to actually act (Sanford et al., 2022).

Selected References – Environmental Collective Action – November 2022

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