

Environmental anxiety: Towards a better understanding of the concept and its implications for marketing

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Abstract

Experts have never been so alarmist regarding the future of our planet and their pessimistic forecasts are starting to affect individuals' well-being. A growing body of research highlights the effects of environmental issues on mental health. This phenomenon has been identified as eco-anxiety, solastalgia, climate anxiety, climate depression etc. Here, we use the neutral and more inclusive terminology of 'environmental anxiety'. The objective of this paper is to understand the scope and stakes of this concept. We conducted an exploratory qualitative research (n= 30) using a creative methodology (self-administered, mix of direct and projective techniques, using pictures and text). Respondents were asked to describe how they felt about environmental anxiety and to select and comment pictures illustrating this anxiety. Our findings underline the severe psychological manifestations of environmental anxiety, the causes of this anxiety (what triggers it) as well as its consequences and coping mechanisms. We offer a definition of the concept and discuss implications for future research and policy makers.

Keywords: *Environmental anxiety; Eco-anxiety; Pro-environmental behavior*

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