

# From Screens to Green: Understanding How to Connect Young People with Nature and Create Pathways for Environmental Action

**Elizabeth Ford**  
University of Portsmouth

Acknowledgements:  
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Cite as:  
Ford Elizabeth (2026), From Screens to Green: Understanding How to Connect Young People with Nature and Create Pathways for Environmental Action. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (133627)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



# From Screens to Green: Understanding How to Connect Young People with Nature and Create Pathways for Environmental Action

## **Abstract**

This study addresses why young adults (18–25) with high environmental concern rarely act, creating a persistent value–action gap. Twelve UK student focus groups (n=90) were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to develop an integrated framework combining Self-Determination Theory, values theory, efficacy beliefs, and the Five Pathways to Nature Connection. Novel findings include technology as a paradoxical moderator reducing nature contact yet enabling discovery via social media, identity barriers such as fear of judgment and activism backlash, and the need to align nature connection and action for nature with young people’s core values. Practical insights for public sector and non-profit marketers include peer-led group activities, wellbeing framing, visible local impact, integration with hobbies, and positive messaging. These strategies can convert concern into meaningful environmental action.

**Track:** Public Sector and Non-Profit Marketing