

# **The influence of mass media on environmental knowledge, attitudes and behavioural intentions: An empirical study**

## Abstract

This study explores the influence of use of mass media on environmental characteristics in Hong Kong using a cross-sectional survey. A probability sample telephone survey of 745 Hong Kong residents was conducted to test a model linking use of news media and pro-environmental behavioural intentions.

The major constructs of the model include use of mass media for environmental news, salience about the environmental problem, knowledge and attitudes about the environment, perceived social norms about the need to protect the environment and the intentions to participate in pro-environmental behaviours.

The use of mass media for environmental news is hypothesized to have impact in the following ways:

- 1) increased use of mass media for environmental news will increase the perceived salience of the environment as a problem and leads to higher intentions to act in a pro-environmental way;
- 2) increased use of mass media for environmental news will increase knowledge about the environment and leads to higher intentions to act in a pro-environmental way;
- 3) increased use of mass media for environmental news will increase knowledge about the environment that leads to the establishment of pro-environmental attitudes which in turn leads to higher intentions to act in a pro-environmental way;

- 4) increased use of mass media for environmental news will influence the establishment of pro-environmental attitudes which in turn leads to higher intentions to act in a pro-environmental way; and
- 5) increased use of mass media for environmental news will increase perceived norms to protect the environment which in turn leads to higher intentions to act in a pro-environmental way.

Results indicated that use of mass media for environmental news had great impact on the public's intentions to participate in various types of pro-environmental behaviours.

Use of mass media for environmental news helped to increase knowledge about the environment and to establish favourable attitudes toward the environment. Use of mass media for environmental news was also positively related to the degree of perceived social norms. The inclusion of the government and the mass media as sources of influence for environmental protection was first introduced and measured explicitly in the research program. The direct effect of use of mass media on behavioural intentions was strong, indicating that use of mass media served as an important reminder to motivate green actions.

Demographic variables had important and differential impact on use of mass media and environmental knowledge, attitudes, perceived social norms and behavioural intentions. (399 words)

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Abstract form

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