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## **Perception of climate change by students of Journalism and Social Communication at the University of Gdansk**

### **Abstract**

The article addresses the topic of how young people perceive climate change and the phenomenon of so-called “eco-anxiety”. The issue of climate change is an important issue for people of the so-called “generation Z”, who, as various studies show, experience negative emotional states due to climate change. The author presents the results of a survey conducted among a group of students of Journalism and Social Communication at the University of Gdansk, through which she wanted to find out how students who are representatives of generation Z perceive climate change? Where do they get information on this subject and how do they evaluate it? Do they also experience eco-anxiety and what behaviours do their knowledge and emotions generate in them?

**Keywords:** climate change, eco-anxiety, generation Z, journalism students.

### **Postrzeżenie zmian klimatu przez studentów kierunku Dziennikarstwo i komunikacja społeczna Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego**

#### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł podejmuje tematykę postrzeżenia zmian klimatu wśród młodych odbiorców zaliczanych do „generacji Z”, które, jak pokazują liczne badania, często doświadczają zjawiska tak zwanego eko-niepokoju. W tekście przedstawiono wyniki badania ankietowego przeprowadzonego wśród studentów kierunku Dziennikarstwo i Komunikacja Społeczna Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Celem analizy było ustalenie, czy studenci będący przedstawicielami generacji Z doświadczają eko-niepokoju i jak postrzegają zmiany klimatu oraz skąd czerpią informacje na ten temat i jak je oceniają?

**Słowa kluczowe:** zmiany klimatu, eko-niepokój, generacja Z, studenci dziennikarstwa.

## Introduction

Climate change is perceived by representatives of “generation Z<sup>25</sup>” as a threat that disrupts their mental well-being. This thesis is confirmed by the results of many international studies. The first to indicate is the analyses of the European survey entitled “What do young people say about climate change?<sup>26</sup>” from 2020, specifying that almost half of young EU citizens (15–35 years old) consider climate change to be one of the most serious global problems, and as many as 85% of them are very or moderately concerned about this problem.

This phenomenon, called eco-anxiety<sup>27</sup> is defined as despair over the climate crisis<sup>28</sup>. Similar conclusions can also be found in the 2021 British Psychotherapy Society research, which shows that 73% of young Brits (aged 17–24) say they are experiencing mental health problems due to climate change<sup>29</sup>. Another confirmation of the phenomenon is a study of young people from 10 countries: Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Portugal, the UK and the US conducted for Avaaz. It shows that for 60% of respondents, climate change is a cause of concern, while 40% of respondents declare that feelings related to climate change have a negative effect on their daily lives<sup>30</sup>. It is also worth mentioning that many respondents state that they feel a whole range of negative emotions such as fear, sadness, anger, a sense of helplessness, guilt, anxiety and similar<sup>31</sup>.

The mentioned study did not include Poland, but it was in the cited survey covering the EU youth. According to the results of the Polish survey, young Poles are only slightly less concerned about climate change than the European average. Concern about this topic was declared by 74% of respondents<sup>32</sup>. At the same time, when asked about climate action, only 14% of young Poles admitted that they take or have taken action to improve the climate by participating in peaceful protests, and only 9% declared that they participate or have participated in volunteering or activist groups or political party activities for climate<sup>33</sup>. They declare social media and television as their main sources

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<sup>25</sup> K.A. Nowak, K. Durczak, M. Bartkowiak, *Postawy reprezentantów pokolenia Z wobec wyzwań klimatycznych w kontekście Modelu Ograniczeń Planety*, „Studia BAS” 2023, No. 2(74), p. 238.

<sup>26</sup> A. Dunne, D. Bijwaard, *Co młodzież mówi o zmianach klimatu? Wyniki sondażu*, IPSOS, Kraków 2021, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> C. Hickman, E. Marks, P. Phikala, S. Clayton, R.E. Lewandowski, E.E. Mayall, B. Wray, C. Mellor, L. van Susteren, *Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey*, “The Lancet” 2021, No. 5, p. 863.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/what-therapy-can-help-with/eco-and-climate-anxiety/> (access on: 10.10.2024)

<sup>30</sup> C. Hickman, E. Marks, P. Phikala, S. Clayton, R.E. Lewandowski, E.E. Mayall, B. Wray, C. Mellor, L. van Susteren, *Climate anxiety in children and young people...*, p. 866.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 863.

<sup>32</sup> A. Dunne, D. Bijwaard, *Co młodzież mówi...*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

of knowledge about climate change, as well as information websites, and to a lesser extent radio, printed sources or conversations with relatives or teachers<sup>34</sup>.

The phenomenon of “eco-anxiety”, which sometimes (e.g. among activists) even takes the form of “eco-depression”<sup>35</sup>, interested the author of this article. She noticed that experiencing such strong, negative emotional states, as indicated by researchers from the UK, is strongly correlated not only with the phenomenon of climate change itself, but also with the way information is presented and knowledge about the ways how the media affect us. It should be noted that the author of the text, not being a climatologist, does not claim the right to decide on climate change issues. Neither they are not the subject of her interest. Instead, her focus is on the attitude of young people to information about climate change that is available in the media. It should also be emphasized that the subject of the media debate around climate change is a very complex phenomenon that deserves much more attention, and the results of the study presented below do not exhaust the topic in any way but allow for a closer look at a tiny fragment of it.

## Purpose and assumptions of the research

The aim of the study was to find out how young people, journalism students, perceive the media debate around climate change in Poland. The study was conducted by using a quantitative method (a diagnostic survey) and realized with the use of the questionnaire addressed to students of Journalism and Social Communication at the University of Gdansk. The selection of students of this course was purposeful. The author wanted to find out whether journalism students, future employees of the broadly understood world of media, demonstrate awareness of the influence of the media on the shape of the public debate around such an important topic for their generation and can verify the climate media content? Whether the knowledge of the influence of the media that they acquire during their studies contributes to their conscious and critical reception of emotionally charged media content? Is pessimism and a sense of threat equally strong experience of the journalists to be? And are they active, engaged participants of the public debate on climate change?

## Discussion of the survey results

The survey was conducted by an online survey website. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions divided into four groups, each containing 3 questions: 1) initial, probing the general attitude of students towards popular opinions on climate change,

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> A. Gurgul, *Psycholożka: Polki nie chcą rodzić dzieci z powodu depresji klimatycznej. Kto i dlaczego na nią cierpi?*, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,177851,26776373,psycholożka-denialisci-tez-cierpia-na-lek-klimatyczny-szukaja.html?cta=1pbox-2cl-3an-5ZLWoydyjloNW>, (access on: 10.10.2024).

2) regarding information on climate change that they encounter, 3) regarding emotions related to climate change, 4) regarding climate action. A short metric was attached to the questionnaire at the end. The survey was anonymous, and participation was voluntary. 110 respondents took part, 107 people provided a complete set of answers.

In the first question, the author asked whether students agreed with the opinion that climate change is a fact? As it can be seen in the chart below, 104 people (95.45%) answered affirmatively, while 5 people (4.6%) had no opinion on the matter. No one gave a negative answer.

Do you agree with the statement that climate change is the fact?

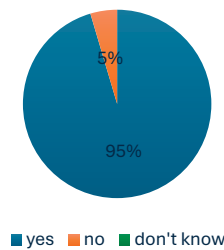


Chart 1. Attitude towards climate change

The second question concerned the opinion on the influence of people on climate change. The author wanted to check if the respondents think, people are responsible for climate change. As it can be seen in the chart below, 91 people (83.5%) answered affirmatively. 10 (9.2%) had the opposite opinion and 8 (7.3%) had no opinion on the matter.

Do you agree that people are responsible for climate change?

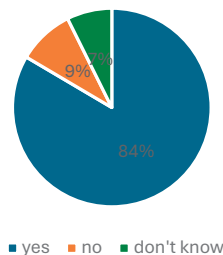


Chart 2. Responsibility for climate change

The third question concerned the opinion on people’s agency and their ability to influence the shape of the state’s climate policy. The author asked whether the respondents agreed with the statement that people had an influence on the state’s climate policy. 80 people (73.4%) answered affirmatively. 21 people (19.3%) gave a negative answer and 8 people (7.3%) had no opinion on this matter, as shown in the chart below.

Do you agree that people have an influence on the state's climate policy?

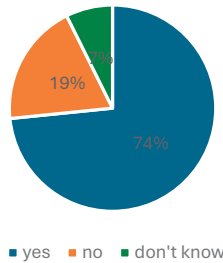
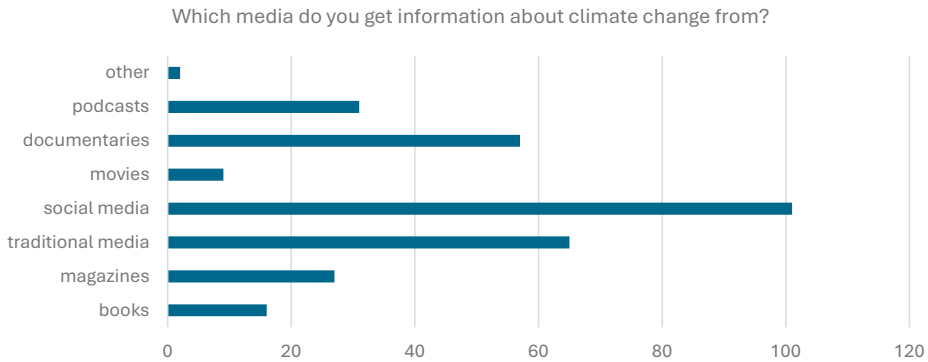


Chart 3. The influence of people on the country’s climate policy

To sum up the results gained in the introductory part, students mostly agree with popular opinions on climate change. None of the respondents questioned the truth of the statement about the reality of climate change. And the majority agree with the opinions on human responsibility for climate change and the potential impact of politicians in this area.

The next three questions in the survey concerned the assessment of the credibility of information sources on climate change. In the first question, students were asked from which media sources they drew knowledge on climate change. The answers included in the questionnaire mentioned: books, magazines, traditional media, social media, feature films, documentaries, podcasts and others. As can be seen in the chart below, respondents chose social media the most, 101 out of 110 people (92.7%). The medium with the second highest response rate were traditional media, selected by 65 people (59.6%). Third in line were documentaries, with 57 indications (52.3%). Fourth place according to respondents was taken by podcasts, indicated by 32 people (29.4%). Fifth place was taken by magazines, indicated by 27 people (24.8%). Sixth place was taken by books, indicated by 16 people (14.7%), and last place by movies, selected by 9 people (8.3%).

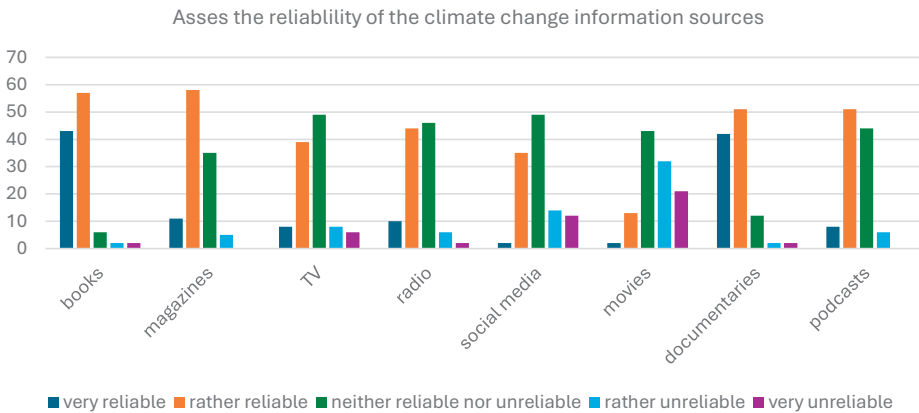


**Chart 4.** Sources of knowledge on climate change

The next question concerned the assessment of the credibility of sources of information on climate change. Respondents were asked to assess the credibility of sources such as: books, magazines, television, radio, social media, movies, documentaries, and podcasts.

As can be seen in the chart below, students rated books as the most trustworthy. 100 respondents considered them to be a trustworthy source of information about climate change (43 – very reliable and 57 – rather reliable). Only 6 people had a problem with assessing their trustworthiness and 4 considered them unreliable (2 – rather unreliable and 2 – very unreliable). Magazines also have received a high level of trust, with 69 people considering them reliable (11 – very reliable and 58 – rather reliable). 35 respondents were unable to assess their reliability and 5 considered them rather unreliable. No one chose the answer very unreliable in relation to magazines. The trustworthiness assessment of traditional media, i.e. radio and television, was quite similar. In the case of television, 47 people considered it reliable (8 – very reliable and 39 – rather reliable). Radio fared slightly better, with 54 respondents considering it reliable (10 – very reliable and 44 – rather reliable). A similar number of respondents had difficulty assessing the credibility of both sources of information in relation to climate change. 49 people considered television to be neither reliable nor unreliable, while slightly fewer, 46 people, considered radio to be so. When it comes to indications of unreliability, the answers were in favour of radio, which received a total of 8 indications as unreliable (6 – rather unreliable and 2 – very unreliable). Meanwhile, 14 people considered television to be unreliable as a source of information on climate change (8 – rather unreliable and 6 – very unreliable). Another medium with a high credibility index were documentaries, which were considered reliable by as many as 93 respondents, while 12 people were unable to assess their reliability and 4 considered them unreliable (2 – rather unreliable and 2 – very unreliable). Podcasts also enjoyed a relatively high trust index as a source of knowledge about climate change. They were considered credible by 59 surveyed students, of whom 8 described them as very reliable and 51 as rather reliable. A relatively large number,

as many as 44 people, were unable to assess whether podcasts were a credible source of information or not? But only 7 described them as unreliable (5 – rather unreliable and 2 – very unreliable). In turn, social media were assessed as reliable by only 37 people (2 – very reliable, 35 – rather reliable). They are also a source of knowledge that the largest number (49 people) considered neither reliable nor unreliable. 24 respondents considered them unreliable (13 – rather unreliable and 11 – very unreliable). The least reliable source of information for the surveyed students turned out to be movies, which were rated as reliable by only 15 people (2 – very reliable and 13 – rather reliable). Also, a relatively large group, 43 people were unable to assess whether social media are a reliable source of information about climate change or not? While 52 considered movies as an unreliable source of information about climate change (31 – rather unreliable and 21 – very unreliable).



**Chart 5.** Assessment of the credibility of sources of knowledge about climate change

As it can be seen from the answers to the two questions above, students highly value the quality of content contained in books and magazines, although they use them less often than social media. In turn, mass media, which are in the second place in terms of gaining information, received the most indications showing the difficulty in assessing the credibility of the content in the field of climate change. Whereas the media typically associated with Generation Z were rated second from the bottom in terms of credibility, with an equally high index of difficulty in assessing the credibility of the content. Movies were the least credible and at the same time the least frequently indicated as a source of information. On the contrary, the documentaries were rated completely differently, as highly valued source of information (third place), and their credibility was rated similarly high.

The third question from the group of questions about the credibility of information concerned authorities. The surveyed students were asked to indicate in their answers who of the above and to what extent was an authority on climate change for them? The answers included media authorities (journalists), institutional authorities (scientists,

environmental organizations), personal authorities (family, friends), social authorities (influencers, activists) and state authorities (politicians, youth organizations). As it can be seen in the chart below, for journalism students the greatest authority in the field of climate change are scientists (101 indications, including 70 – a definite authority and 31 – rather an authority) and the smallest are politicians and political parties. Only for one person scientists were not an authority in the field of climate change and 8 people were unable to assess whether they are an authority for them or not? The second most important authority were ecological organizations, which were assessed as an authority by 69 people (25 – definitely an authority, 44 – rather an authority). For 15, these organizations were not an authority (10 – rather not, 5 – definitely not). And 26 surveyed students were unable to assess whether ecological organizations are an authority for them or not? Journalists as climate change authorities were indicated in the third place, chosen by 50 surveyed journalism students, with only 6 people indicating that journalists were a definite authority, but for 44, rather an authority. A relatively large group of 38 people, were unable to assess whether journalists are an authority for them? And for 22 respondents, they are not an authority (14 – rather not, 8 – definitely not). The respondents marked family (45 people, including 16 – definitely yes, 29 – rather yes) and activists (44 people, including 11 – definitely yes and 33 – rather yes) in further positions. However, for 35 respondents, family was not an authority (18 – rather not, 17 – definitely not). A similar group was unable to assess whether family can be considered an authority? In turn, activists were not an authority for 39 respondents (21 – definitely not, 18 rather not). 27 people were unable to decide whether they are an authority for them or not? Friends were chosen as an authority on climate change by 38 people. Slightly fewer, 36 people, chose other youth organizations, i.e. not related to ecological issues (5 definitely yes, 31 – rather yes). Whereas 44 people, indicated that they could not assess whether they were an authority on climate change for them or not? And for 30 they were not an authority (20 – rather not, 10 – definitely not). The fewest indications in terms of the strength of authority were received by groups such as influencers and politicians and political organizations. For 13 people, influencers were an authority (1 – definitely yes, 12 – rather yes). But they were not for 77 respondents (30 – rather no, 47 – definitely not). This was the most negative indication in relation to other groups of authorities mentioned in the study. However, politicians turned out to be the group considered the least authority in the field of climate change. None of the respondents chose politicians and political parties as a definite authority, and only 8 as a rather authority. In turn, as many as 74 people indicated in their responses that this group was not an authority in the field of climate change (27 – rather no, 47 – definitely not).



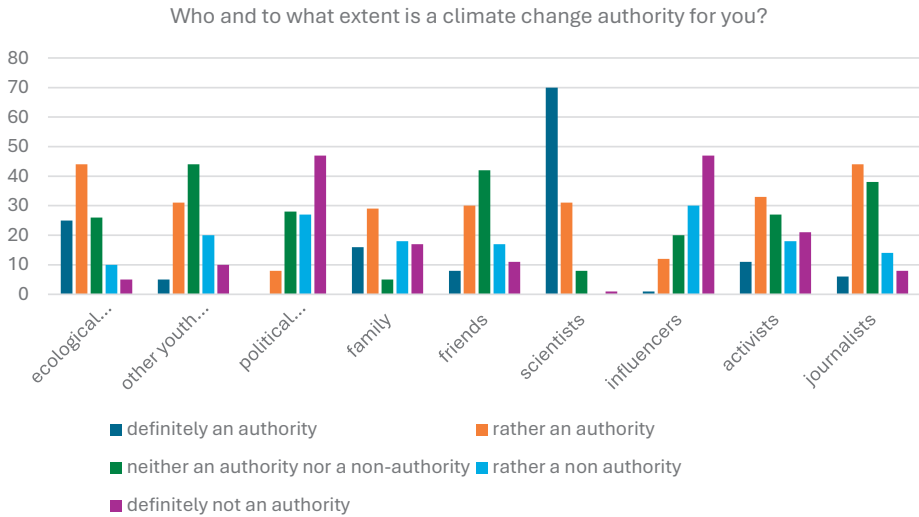


Chart 6. Sources of authority in the field of climate change

As it can be seen in the results above, although the largest group of journalism students chose social media as a source of knowledge about climate change, they are critical to its content, consequently they do not recognize the influencers as authorities in the field of climate change. Books are still the most reliable source of knowledge. Even though they were chosen by only 16 respondents as a source of knowledge, they were rated the highest in terms of reliability. Magazines and traditional media (radio, television) were also considered as reliable sources of information. Moreover, journalists received the second highest response rate as an authority on climate change, which may be influenced by the field of respondents' studies. When it comes to the authority, students rated scientists the highest. On the contrary, social media attributed to Generation Z as their "natural environment" were rated very low in terms of credibility, only movies were rated lower.

The next 3 questions concerned emotions related to climate change. The first (seventh in the survey as a whole) concerned the belief in the impact of human activity on climate change. As it can be seen in the chart below, more than half (57.8%), i.e. 80 surveyed students agreed with the statement that the involvement of ordinary people could stop climate change. On the other hand, 28.4%, i.e. 21 respondents, had the opposite opinion. 13.8% (8 people) don't know.

Do you think civic engagement can impact on climate change?

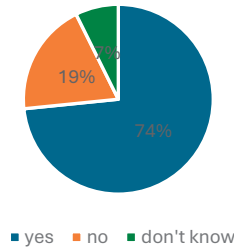


Chart 7. Civic engagement and climate change

In the next, eighth question, students were asked to mark which emotional states they experienced in connection with climate change. The questionnaire included several negative (passivity, aggression, apathy, fear, anger, anxiety about the future or a sense of danger) and positive emotions (motivation to act, willingness to do something). Respondents had the opportunity to add emotions that were not included in the questionnaire, which 2 people did, adding “tiredness” (1 person) and “anger, but probably not because of climate change itself, because it has appeared on Earth many times, but because this topic has become a money-making machine” (1 person).

As it can be seen from the chart below, the most frequently indicated were fear about the future – 71 respondents (65.1%) and a sense of danger, 66 people (60.6%). The third emotion indicated by students was fear – 41 indications (37.6%). Next, 32 people (29.4%) chose the first positive emotion in this list – willingness to do something. Then came motivation to act – 22 people (20.2%) and anger, 20 – people (18.3%). Passivity and apathy received the fewest indications, 15 (13.8%) and 9 people (8.3%), respectively. Nobody marked aggression as an emotion associated with climate change awareness.

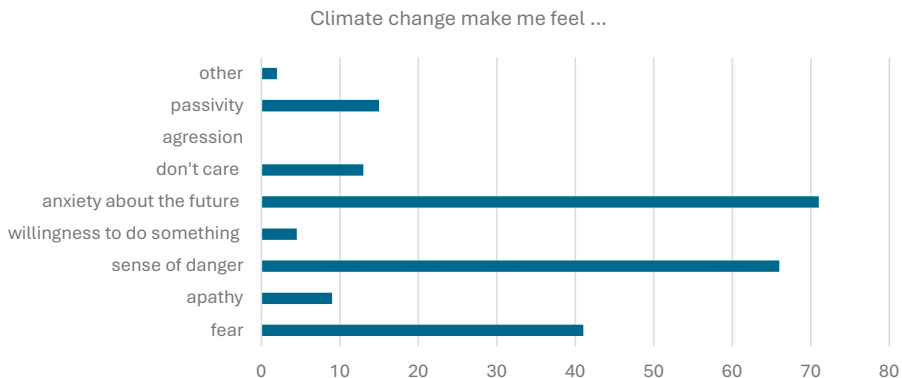


Chart 8. Climate change awareness and emotions

In the last question related to emotions, the surveyed students were asked to respond to 10 popular opinions on climate change. Some referred to negative emotions: “I am worried that people do not care about the planet”, “I am afraid that climate change will bring very unfavourable changes to me and my loved ones”, “I am irritated by the constant presence of climate change in the media”, “Climate catastrophe is inevitable”, “I do not want to have children due to the uncertainty of the planet’s climate”. Others recalled positive emotions: “I feel better when I work to improve the climate, even if it involves additional restrictions”, “I enjoy doing something good for the climate. There was also a group of statements referring to feelings of passivity and uncertainty: “I don’t know what to do to have an impact on climate change”, “No matter what I do about climate change, it won’t make much difference” and “I’m not afraid of climate change because it’s beyond my control”. As can be seen from the graph below, the respondents most often agreed with the statement: “I’m worried that people don’t care about the planet” (91 people, 61 – definitely agree, 31 – rather agree). 6 respondents disagree with it (2 – rather not, 4 – definitely not). And 8 respondents are unable to say whether they agree with this statement or not? The next sentence with the highest number of positive answers was: “I’m afraid that climate change will bring very unfavourable changes for me and my loved ones”. 80 people, 46 – definitely yes, 34 – rather yes). 13 people disagreed with it (9 – rather not, 4 – definitely not). 16 people did not know whether they agreed or disagreed? Further, 77 people declared that they felt happy when they were able to do something good for the planet (29 definitely agree and 48 rather agree). 64 believed that they felt better when they acted to improve the climate even when it involved additional restrictions (29 definitely agree, 35 rather agree). Accordingly, only 8 people did not agree that they felt happy because of the possibility of doing something for the climate (6 tend to disagree, 2 strongly disagree), and 18 did not think that they felt better when they acted to improve the climate even when it involved additional restrictions (16 tend to disagree, 2 strongly disagree). 24 people were not able to say whether they felt happy or not when they acted for the climate, and 33 could not decide whether they felt better when they acted for its benefit. More than half of the respondents (59 responses, including 20 – definitely yes and 39 – rather yes) agreed with the statement that no matter what they do for the climate, it would not make a big difference. 32 people had the opposite opinion (19 – rather not and 13 – definitely not). And 18 people had no opinion on the subject. Slightly less than half, 54 people agreed that a climate catastrophe was inevitable (19 – definitely yes, 35 – rather yes). This was also the opinion with the highest percentage of no opinion, as many as 38 people had no opinion on the matter. 26 disagreed with this statement (11 – rather no and 5 – definitely not). 46 people declared that they did not know what they could do to influence climate change (17 – definitely agree and 29 – rather agree). 32 respondents had a different opinion (20 people rather disagree and 12 strongly disagree). However, as many as 31 people did not know whether they agreed with this statement or not?

In turn, the statement with the highest number of negative answers was: “I am not afraid of climate change, because it does not depend on me”, with which 70 respondents

disagreed, (32 – rather not, 38 – definitely not). 25 respondents agreed with this statement (9 – definitely yes, 14 – rather yes). And 16 people had no opinion on this subject.

Next, 62 people disagreed with the statement that they did not want to have children due to the uncertainty of the planet’s climate change (22 – rather not, 40 – definitely not). 29 people had the opposite opinion (12 definitely agree, 17 rather agree). And 18 people were unable to decide whether they agreed with this statement or not. 55 people disagreed with the statement that they were irritated by the large presence of the topic of climate change in the media (26 – rather not, 27 – definitely not). 32 people had the opposite opinion, for 10 this topic was definitely irritating and for 22 rather irritating. And 22 surveyed students could not assess whether they agreed with this statement or not?

As it results from the part of the study devoted to emotions related to climate change, the surveyed journalism students feel anxiety about the future, a sense of threat and fear. As many as half of them also believe that a climate catastrophe is inevitable. However, the majority admit that climate activism has a positive impact on them and civic engagement can have an impact on the fate of the planet.

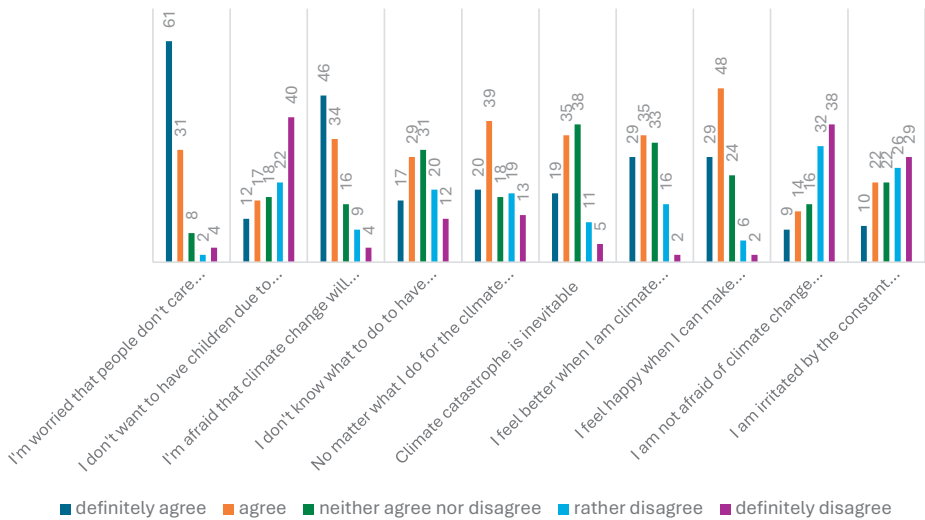


Chart 9. Attitudes towards popular opinions on climate change

In the last part of the study, students were asked about climate activity.

In the tenth question, respondents were asked to mark all the places listed in the questionnaire where they engaged in climate activity. As it can be seen in the chart below most respondents, 89 people (83.2%) declared that they engaged in pro-climate actions at home. Less than half, 51 people (47.7%) claimed that they were active in their local community and only 32 people (29.9%) admitted that they engaged in climate action

at university. Even fewer, 19 people (17.8%) marked work as a place of activity. The last two places were occupied by the media. 5 out of 6 people who added their own answer admitted that they did not engage. And one mentioned the media.

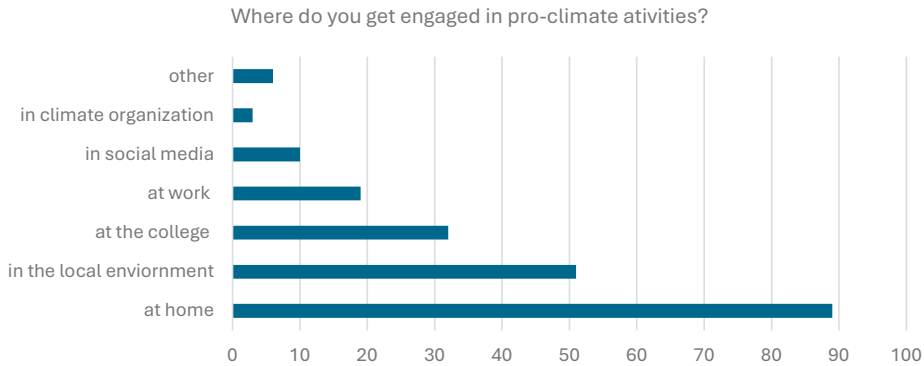


Chart 10. Engagement in pro-climate activities

In the next question, students were asked to mark which climate actions they took from those listed in the questionnaire and to estimate their frequency. The study included: sorting waste, saving water and energy, as well as communication actions: riding a bike, using public transport, not flying on vacation, consumer behaviour: buying second-hand clothes, not eating meat, paying attention to the carbon footprint of products and paying attention not to waste food, and those requiring planning and greater involvement such as collecting rainwater, planting plants, growing your own fruit and vegetables.

As the chart below shows, the actions that the respondents declared as taken most often were sorting waste, using public transport and paying attention not to waste food. Sorting waste was indicated by 106 surveyed students (93 – always, 29 – often, 13 – from time to time). 3 people did not pay attention to this action and 1 admitted that they definitely did not segregate waste. 102 people declared that they used public transport (60 – always, 34 – often, 8 – from time to time). 5 claimed that they did not use public transport (3 – rather not, 2 – definitely not). 4 people did not pay attention to it. When it comes to not wasting food, 100 people indicated that they did not waste it (58 – always, 29 – often, 13 – from time to time). 5 people answered oppositely (3 rather not, 2 definitely not). Also 5 people declared they did not pay attention to it at all. The vast majority of respondents (96 people) also declared that one of their actions for the climate was buying second-hand clothes (15 – always, 44 – often, 37 – from time to time). Planting plants and cycling were indicated less often. 54 surveyed people declared that they planted plants (12 – always, 8 – often, 34 – from time to time). At the same time, 46 people declared that they were not involved in planting plants (24 – rather not, 22 – definitely not). 10 people did not pay attention to it. 53 people declared that they rode a bike (13 – always, 16 – often, 24 – from time to time). And

47 did not use it (25 – rather not, 22 – definitely not). 9 people did not pay attention to this activity. The least frequently taken activities amongst the surveyed group included collecting rainwater, not eating meat and not flying on vacation. 75 respondents declared that they did not collect rainwater (56 – definitely not and 19 – rather not). 24 people claimed the opposite (9 – always, 7 – often, 8 – from time to time). 12 people did not pay attention to this activity. Vegetarianism as a form of pro-climate action was chosen by less than half of the respondents, i.e. 50 people (25 – always, 10 – often and 15 – from time to time) declared they did not eat meat. 63 respondents marked that they did not agree with this statement (16 – rather not, 47 – definitely not). 6 people did not pay attention to this activity. Slightly more often, the respondents declared that they grew fruit and vegetables and that they paid attention to the carbon footprint of products, although less than half of the respondents undertook all these actions. 44 respondents admitted growing fruit and vegetables, but (9 – always, 7 – often and 28 – from time to time). 57 respondents declared that they did not undertake this form of activity (13 – rather not, 44 – definitely not). In the case of flying on holiday, 28 people declared that they did not fly on holiday in order to take care of the climate (7 people – always, 8 – often, 13 – from time to time). The opposite attitude was represented by 60 respondents (18 people rather flew by plane and 42 definitely flew by plane). 12 people did not pay attention to this activity.

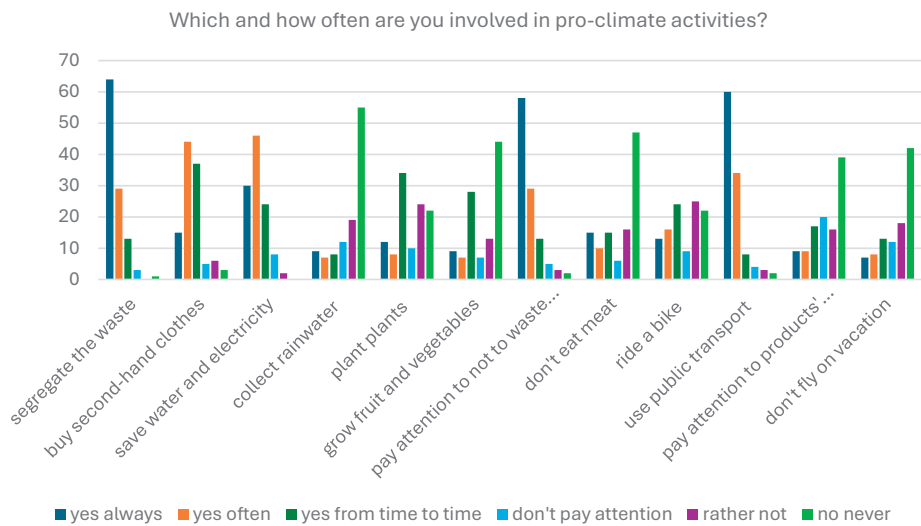


Chart 11. Pro-climate actions

The last question was about educational activities that the surveyed students took. The activities that the surveyed were asked about included activities taken at home and among friends, as well as in social media and the local community. The respondents were also asked about their activities in climate organizations and organizing protests. As the chart below shows, the only activities that received more than 50% positive responses were: "I talk about it to my friends" and "I draw my family's attention, when I see inappropriate behaviour." The largest number of people, 79, declared that they drew the attention of their families when they saw inappropriate behaviour (23 – always, 27 – often, 29 – from time to time). 24 did not engage in such activities (12 – rather not and 12 – definitely not). 7 respondents did not pay attention to it. Slightly fewer, 77 people declared that they talked about climate change with friends (15 – always, 27 – often and 36 – from time to time). 21 respondents did not engage in such activities (12 – rather not, 9 – definitely not). 13 did not pay attention to it. The fewest people declared that they had organized a climate strike (95 negative indications, including 13 – rather not and as many as 82 – definitely not). 7 people declared that they had had such an experience (3 – always, 2 – often, 3 – from time to time). For 6 it was not important. 89 claimed that they had not organized educational workshops (23 – rather not, 66 – definitely not). 11 people declared the opposite (4 always organize them, 3 – often and 4 – from time to time). For 9, this topic was not important. Slightly more, 23 people claimed that they had participated in a climate strike/protest (4 – always, 3 – often, 15 – from time to time). At the same time, 75 respondents claimed that they did not participate in this type of activity (19 – people rather not, 55 – definitely not). 85 respondents admitted that they had not been involved in the activities of climate organizations (22 – rather not, 63 – definitely not). Activity in this type of organizations was declared by 15 people (3 – always, 2 – often, 10 – from time to time). For 10, the topic was not important. When it comes to activity in social media, neither publishing nor even sharing content received 50% positive indications. 43 respondents declared that they shared valuable content in social media (9 do it – always, 14 – often, 19 – from time to time). 60 respondents did the opposite (17 – rather not share, 43 – definitely not). 8 people did not pay attention to it. Only 23 people declared that they published content in social media about climate change (4 – always, 8 – often, 11 – from time to time). 77 people did not publish content about climate change in social media (24 – rather not, 53 – definitely not). For 10 people, this topic was not important.

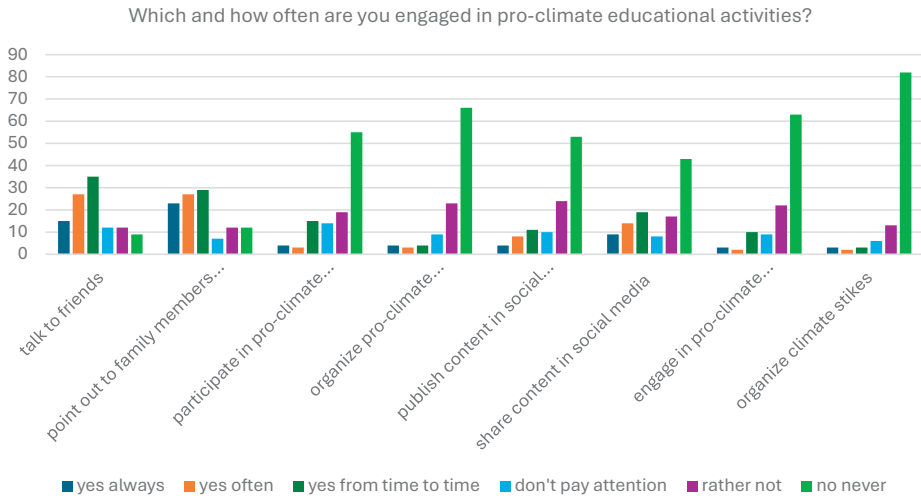


Chart 12. Pro-climate educational activities

As it can be seen from the part of the survey concerning students’ activity for the climate, if they act, it is in the home environment and their local surroundings. They segregate waste, use public transport, buy second-hand clothes and try to not waste food. Few have decided to be more involved, requiring the sacrifice of time, their own comfort or going out into public space. The low activity of the respondents in social media, observed in the survey, correlates positively with the negative assessment of this type of media. However, it is interesting why journalism students who are aware of the influence of the media do not use the knowledge they have acquired for the climate in an area that is considered the “natural environment” of generation Z?

### Discussion on the survey results

Compared to the results of the Kantar study or the European survey, journalism students also consider the issue of climate change to be emotionally important. Most of them admit that they feel anxiety about the future, experience a sense of threat and fear, but these emotions do not increase their activity, despite the awareness that activity and involvement have an impact on both the country’s climate policy and climate change itself. Although journalism students, like most young people from EU countries, take information about climate change from social media, they demonstrate considerable awareness in assessing sources of information. They consider traditional media such as books and magazines, as the most credible, not social media. They consider scientists, journalists and climate organizations, not influencers, to be authorities in the field of climate change. This result of the study may be influenced by the specificity of the studies. It would be worth to develop the results of this survey by expanding and deepening



the study of the attitude of journalism students to sources of knowledge about climate change. The lowest level of authority among the surveyed students is enjoyed by politicians, which is slightly different from the results of the European survey, where 25% of respondents admit that they vote for politicians who treat climate issues as a priority. In the European study, young Europeans and young Poles, although they were aware of the impact of people on climate change, did not demonstrate proactive attitudes. The results of the study of UG journalism students shows a similar result. Most of the respondents undertake the most popular activities in the field of environmental protection, such as separating waste, saving water and energy, and trying not to waste food, while only a few undertake activities related to greater effort or restrictions for their comfort, such as collecting rainwater. Very few students declared educational activity or admitted that took part in protests or other forms of pro-climate activism. The lack of activity noted in the study is another area that requires in-depth research. What may be the cause of the feeling of lack of agency in young people? For example, can the content and, above all, the style of the media debate on climate change be one of the factors contributing to the attitude of passivity?

## Summary

The results of the study on the attitude of UG journalism students towards climate change presented in the above article do not exhaust the subject in any way. However, the obtained results encourage further research. They suggest directions for deepening them and encourage their expansion, e.g. to include students of other fields or to include all students of journalism in the study. It is intriguing, among other things, that future students of journalism show low activism for climate, although they experience negative emotional states related to this phenomenon.

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