

Social Learning and Green Consumption: Evidence from Climate Shocks

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of learning about the adverse effects of climate change on households' environmental behaviors. We rely on natural disaster-triggered climate discussions from friends to generate exogenous variations in the intensity of learning. Utilizing proprietary data from a major food delivery platform in the U.S., we find that individuals' learning about their friends' disaster experiences via social media translates into a dietary transition towards foods with a low-carbon footprint. Friends' climate-related social media posts act as an accelerator, enhancing these changes in consumption patterns. Further, individuals subsequently increase their own climate change discussions online, creating a reinforcing information-consumption loop that propagates through the network.

KEYWORDS: Climate Change, Social Networks, Social Learning, Information Diffusion, Information-Consumption Loop, Green Consumption