



The Relationship Between Environmental Concern and Environmental Action in the US as Affected by Age Group



Aviva Branoff, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

Introduction

- Evidence has shown that children and young people are especially vulnerable to psychological effects including anxiety, depression, learning difficulties, and PTSD, as a result of exposure to the climate crisis (Godden et al., 2021).
- While these impacts can be seriously detrimental to one's mental health and wellbeing, studies have found a decrease in this correlation through one's involvement in collective action (Schwartz et al., 2022).
- While many studies have investigated the impact of youth climate anxiety on their involvement in climate action (Vamvalis, 2023; Ediz & Yanik, 2023; Nutkiewicz et al., 2023), there is a lack of research on the relationship of how age group may affect the association between environmental concern and environmental action.

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between environmental concern and environmental action?
- How does age affect the relationship between environmental concern and environmental action?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=27,591) were drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS) of 2021, a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults in the U.S. who speak either English or Spanish.

Measures

- Environmental concern was measured with the question "Generally speaking, how concerned are you about environmental issues?" Possible responses ranged from 1 (Not at all concerned) to 5 (Very concerned).
- Environmental action was measured with the question "(How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?) I do what is right for the environment, even when it costs more money or takes more time." Possible responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree).

- Respondent's age ranged from 18 to 89+. This variable was coded categorically with ages 18 to 34 as young adult, ages 35 to 64 as middle age and ages 65+ as elder age.

Results

Bivariate

- ANOVA bivariate analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between the variables environmental concern and environmental action within this data set ($p < 0.001$).
- A post-hoc test on this data showed that each categorical pairing of environmental concern and environmental action was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) except for the levels 3-2, and 2-1.

Multivariate

- In using a multiple linear regression test, age is shown to be a moderator of the relationship between environmental concern and environmental action ($p < 0.05$) except for environmental concern=2.
- The middle aged category of respondents follows a mostly linear relationship between environmental concern and environmental action.
- The elder aged category was more involved with environmental action for those with an environmental concern level 1. The youngest age category was also more involved with environmental action for those with environmental concern level 1 while not as much as the eldest.
- Concern level 5 had similar levels of environmental action between ages

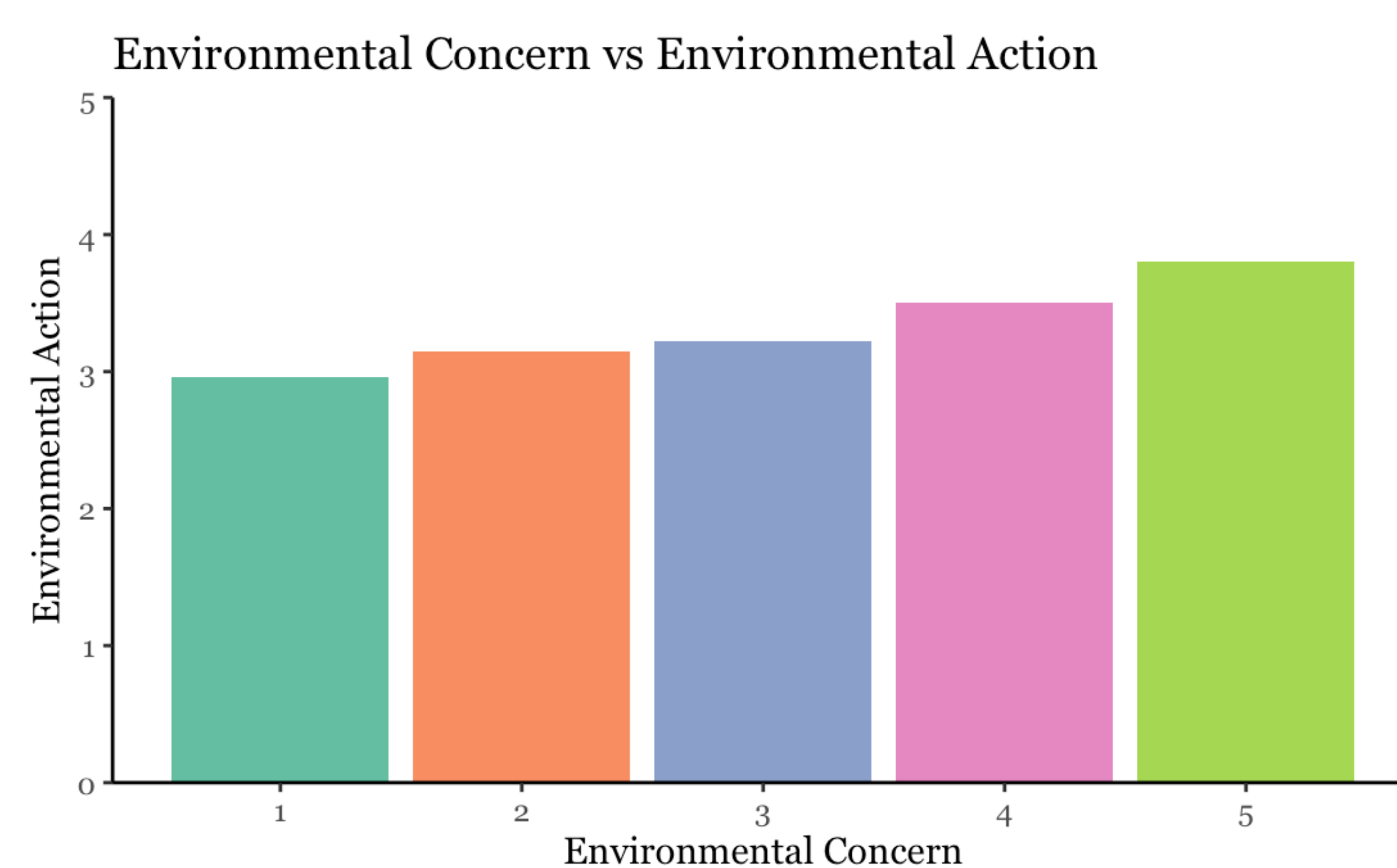


Figure 1: The Relationship Between Environmental Concern and Environmental Action

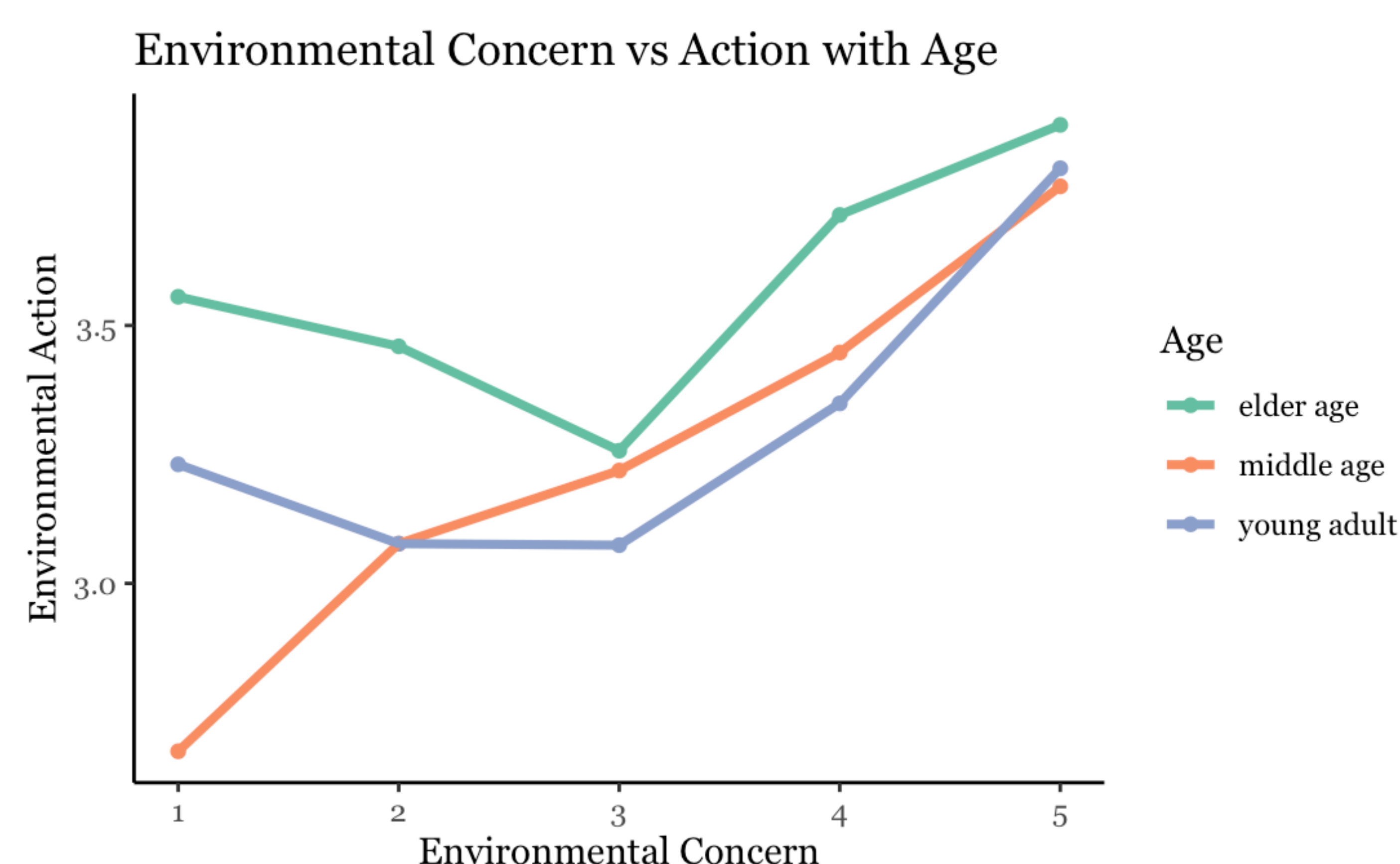


Figure 2: The Relationship Between Environmental Concern and Environmental Action as Differentiated by Three Age Categories

Discussion

- Those who are more concerned about the environment are more likely to be involved with environmental action.
- Those who are most concerned about the environment will be more involved with environmental action regardless of age. Those who are least concerned with the environment will be more involved with environmental action if they are in the young adult age group and even more so if they are in the eldest age group as opposed to middle aged.
- Further research is needed to determine any potential confounding variables such as wealth, occupation, or location of residence.

References

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