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Abstract

Concerns over the consequences of global warming have been expressed through a variety of media; however numerous studies have shown that a significant portion of the general public has a tenuous grasp of the issue (Weber & Stern, 2011). Two laboratory experiments tested the impact of polarized messages on attitudes toward global warming, the environment, and climate knowledge. Results indicate the messages did not create significant differences in participant attitudes. However HLM results indicate mild informational messages may increase climate knowledge, and the increase appears to last over time. As in other studies (Borick & Rabe, 2010) differences in global warming and environmental attitudes were found when comparing political parties; results show that Democrats and Independents have more motivated attitudes towards the environment when compared to Republicans. Furthermore, when comparing religious affiliation differences in attitudes were found; specifically, individuals who identified as having religious affiliation maintained less motivated attitudes.