Climate change concern remains high across the globe...

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..says Synovate and Deutsche Welle global study Â
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People cite extreme weather conditions as main danger of climate change; almost half willing to pay more for eco-friendly products

Climate change. Global warming. Greenhouse effect. Whatever the terms used, over the past few years the world has become used to hearing about it on a regular basis.

Whether people believe climate change will have devastating long term effects on the planet or not, it's a global issue fraught with emotions, and one that's not going away.

Environmentally conscious consumers - no longer the small niche market it once was - are using their spending power to support earth-friendly products, whilst companies and governments around the globe have received the message loud and clear.

To understand more about this hot issue, global market research firm Synovate and international media company Deutsche Welle examined people's attitudes towards climate change and the issues surrounding it in a recent global research study.

The study, conducted with over 13,000 people in 18 countries, also addressed the responsibilities and roles of media in combating this global concern. This is the third global climate change research study that Synovate has conducted since 2007.

Climate concerns?
The study reveals that the world's population remains as concerned as ever about the effects of climate change. Across all countries surveyed in the three rounds of research conducted by Synovate, 30% of people in 2010 and 2008 said they were 'very concerned' about climate change, versus 29% in 2007.

Interestingly, there was an increase in the percentage of people who aren't concerned about climate change at all because they believe it's just part of a natural cycle of events.

Nine percent of those surveyed this year compared to 4% in 2008 are not worried, no doubt at least partially influenced by the several groups who have questioned the validity of the concerns around climate change over the past year.

Steve Garton, global head of media research at Synovate, said:
"The issue of climate change has continued its rough ride since our last climate change survey in 2008. Global conferences that have been organised to tackle the challenges have struggled to reach a meaningful consensus whilst the underlying science has been questioned by some. At the very least, the most important beliefs of the impacts relating to climate change have not been made simple and clear enough to people around the world."

Erik Bettermann, Deutsche Welle Director General, believes that the media has a huge responsibility
"The media must provide an objective and comprehensible view of the main topics for the future. At the same time, it will become even more important for journalists to advocate action from individuals with well-researched articles. They have to create a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions and can't get sucked in by people wanting to sell questionable catastrophe scenarios or by those who prematurely say the coast is clear."

In the latest survey, countries with the highest number of people reporting they are 'very concerned' about climate change include Colombia (69%), Ecuador (59%), and China (58%, which is more than double the 26% of Chinese who were very concerned in 2007).

Darryl Andrew, CEO for Synovate China, said:
"The Chinese Government is well aware of the need to address the challenges they are facing in order to preserve the environment for future generations, whilst balancing the need to ensure China continues on its path for economic growth. Government has been behind many initiatives at the grassroots level, not only to raise awareness of the need to protect the environment but also enact changes in behaviour.

"Consequently, there have been policies developed including monetary incentives to force a dramatic reduction in plastic shopping bags and cash incentives for purchasing cars with smaller engine sizes and / or alternative fuel vehicles, along with many others. The Government has pursued these policies whilst also putting in infrastructure to support them and,

simultaneously, launching an education campaign targeting consumers. There is no better statement of this than the International Expo in Shanghai with the theme 'Better city, Better life', and some of this revolves around the sustainability of future urban development."

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