DOI: https://doi.org/10.71317/kjard.2.11.2026.1122

Kashmir Journal of Academic Research and Development

Journal homepage: https://rjsaonline.org/index.php/KJARD

Navigating the Ecological Crisis: The Interplay between Climate Change Anxiety and Emotional Resilience among College Students

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ARTICLE INFO

Received:
October 23, 2026
Revised:
November 04, 2026
Accepted:
November 15, 2026
Available Online:
November 25, 2026

Keywords:
Climate Change, Emotional Resilience, College Students

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to navigate the role of climate change anxiety and emotional resilience among college students. It has numerous effects on adolescents which is the time of rapid changes in various aspects of lives at the same time when they experience or see someone who has lost his loved ones, homes, security issue, unmet needs and desires they got panic and anxious for the themselves their family, and educations as well. This can affect their academic achievement, lower concentration, anxiousness, depression and uncertainty of everything. In Pakistan (2022), flood various people lost their beloved, homes, unable to recover the disaster. The present research were comprised of 100 participants including both genders boys (n=50) and girls (n=50), age range of participants were 18 to 21 years. Simple random sampling used for the data collection. Two valid and reliable questionnaires were administered namely, climate anxiety scale, Clayton & Karazsia (2020) and Connor-Davidson resilience scale. The results were analyzed through SPSS V. 26. The findings of the study suggested that the climate change anxiety has a negatively correlated with resilience among youth. Results also found that functional impairment score is higher as compared to cognitive emotional scale which indicates that it's mainly affects the behavioral tendencies of the students. In these condition, the role of climate change and resilient should be addressed. Psychologists, counsellors, teachers, authorities should make and implement the beneficial policies and strategies for the betterment of learners psychological wellbeing and become resilient to overcome the hardship.

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of swift developmental changes in emotional, physical, and psychological aspects. Where they find motivation as well as occasional pressure from environmental challenges and alterations. They possess greater chances to succeed and be accomplished individuals. In this stage, if they encounter any type of uncertainty due to unexpected disasters like floods, earthquakes, heatwaves, and others. They experience eco anxiety, feeling scared about both the present and the future (Vergunst, et al.2024).

Students get distressed of sudden unpredicted events caused by disaster either man-made or natural ones for instance flood, earthquake, and landslides. These create distress are linked to global systematic threat as long-term consequences on their lives like as psychological strain, moral injury and other life threats. This age is the time where they are emerging towards adulthood and want to indulge in planning, career making, personal decision making and responsibilities of themselves as well as their family. In this circumstance these uncertainty stressed them to be safe and secure themselves and family. The point when they experience or observe the effects of these harmful condition in the form loss of their loved one , family, basic needs become deteriorate, and their need of security include shelter need can affects they suffer from environmental anxiety. This anxious state is the psychological, somatic and behavioral effect on their lives and from these profound threats to planetary and the climate alteration. The beginning of ecological tipping point is the associated with widespread exposure to environmental degradation through technological or consistent back drop of ecological vulnerability.

Every country is affected by this issue such as Nepal has recently go through flash flood affected many people, places , building, died and injured residents which has adversely effected their mental and physical health. Emotional stability is the capability of an individual to cope with the challenging situations, events by using problematic strategies to overcome its difficulties effectively. Uncertainty in adverse condition can be caused the serious psychological issues, poverty, basic needs unfulfilled such as fresh air, water, secure environment and lower academic success. According to climatic scientists, man-created activities are main risk of global warming reported in National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 2021, by rising temperatures, changing precipitation, and extreme weather events become more basic bring, they affected health consequences like vector-borne diseases, respiratory issues due to air pollution, and heat-related illnesses (Yildiz, 2025).

Students experience distress from unforeseen events caused by disasters, whether natural or man-made, such as floods, earthquakes, and landslides. These distressing events are connected to global systemic threats and have long-term effects on their lives, including psychological strain, moral injury, and existential threats. The adolescent stage is when individuals transition to adulthood, seeking to engage in planning, career development, personal decision-making, and taking on responsibilities for themselves and their families. In this situation, this uncertainty compelled them to prioritize the safety and security of themselves and their family. When they encounter or witness these detrimental conditions in the form of loss of loved ones, diminished and abandon family members availiability and support, eroding basic needs, and faces insecurity and homeless, they experience eco-anxiety. This state covers psychological, somatic, and behavioral effects begin from predicated jeopardy. The onset of the ecological tipping point correlates with extensive exposure to environmental degradation resulting from technological influences or a persistent context of ecological vulnerability. Every nation experiences this problem; for instance, Nepal faces flash floods that impact numerous individuals, locations, and structures, resulting in deaths and injuries among residents, which negatively affects their mental and physical well-being (Gholamnia, et al. 2025).

Flexibility refers to a person's capacity to handle tough situations and events by employing effective strategies to successfully navigate their challenges. The uncertainty condition can lead to significant psychological problems, poverty, unmet basic needs such as clean air, water, a safe environment, and lower academic achievement (Vergunst, et al. 2024). Alternation in geographical weather is defined as the long term statistical variance last for decade or more. The magnitude of climatic alternation leads by affected by global atmospheric pressure influence humans of all ages. Mostly these changing circumstance are caused by little ignorance to natural things such as greenery, plants and tress remains, deforestation (Nwata, et al. 2024).

It is unavoidable that geographic changes will have devastating consequences for not only the natural world, but human societies and cultures as well. It has observed that some people live at coastal areas and vulnerable to sudden increase sea level, due to their lack seriousness, government warned but they never migrate hence sometime faces these results (Hauer, 2017; Neumann et al., 2015).

These modify sometimes cause intense heat waves, flood hazard and various other disasters where they experience or observe others in context of their existential anxiety, they face sudden collapse of buildings, loses their home, families and unable to carry dangerous risky results. Climate crisis boost the emotional resilience behavior and distress and enable them to take actions individually or collectivity (Lammel, 2025; Lawarence, et al., 2024). It has huge influence on person as well as global crisis such as economic loses, health and psychological hurdles (Richardson, 2025).

Resilience is multifaceted, flexibility and adaptation to existence threat. Broadly, deep resilience involves flexible adaptation at the individual, family, community, societal, and geographical scales in response to existential threats to individuals, families, communities, societies, geographical regions, and the planet itself (Weems, et al., 2025). Post-traumatic stress disorder is the long-term result of trauma influenced the person way of living by losses of nearer ones, property destruction. It is not just a personality trait but a combination of social, psychological and biological factors to deal with adversities effectively (Southwick et al., 2014).

Significance of the study

1. This study will be beneficial for identifying the ecological crisis: interplay between Climate Change Anxiety and emotional strength among College Students to highlights the awareness regarding anxiousness among young generation towards their future.
2. It will be help for the learners to aware about the risk analysis and vulnerability and seek professional guidance from mental health services provided by psychologists, psychiatrists to overcome their anxiousness and become familiar to psychological first aid, counselling.
3. It will be fruitful for teachers, intuitional heads to provide strategies and policies to strengthen the resilient capacity building skills.
4. Psychologist, counsellor and organizations should arrange seminar, conferences to highlighting the issues and form the framework for the successful and strong resilient nations with healthy psychological wellbeing.

Research gap

This research filled the gaps in the form of literature as well as quantify the values of these variables. Because very few studies are conducted on theses variables in Hyderabad district on youth. It is need of the hour to conduct and address the studies to establish some implications to strengthen our young generation to live their lives fullest and never fear of the circumstance uncertainty.

Objectives of the study

Following are some objectives

1. To assess the relationship between climate change and its subscales among youth
1. To analyze the gender difference between climate change and emotional resilience among youth

Hypotheses of the study

1. There would be significant relationship between climate change and its subscales among youth
2. There would be significant gender difference between climate change and emotional resilience among youth

Literature review

Evidence from various findings suggested that awareness or acknowledging people about the disasters either created by nature or human made has tremendous impact on human lives. The ongoing wave of frightening situation losing hope, families, children as well as older. Some experiences the needs to fulfil the needs of themselves as well as loved one belongings, they search for food, shelter and privacy. Climate transform anxiety and resilience are correlated and impact on individual psychological beings. Training provide a framework in the form of distributing responsibilities, which helps an individual to take a one step forward or enable themselves to provide psychological first aid to people who go through trauma or grief condition such as hopelessness, helplessness, social interaction, aggression and stress and suicidal ideation or thoughts. Hazard risk analysis helps to reduce the long-term effects of disasters on individual. Overall the impacts has affecting livelihood, cities and other issues. Activists or the trained ones can deal with it safely and its difficulty but they can overcome it with efficiently. They offer the help for other in the form of establish social support and cooperative environment, manage resources and repair relationships (Clayton & Parnes, 2025).

According to Abbas, et al. (2025), climate eco-anxiety has positive significant relationship with emotional distress perceived by environmental crisis. These shift can sometime vulnerable to psychological issue, either psychological or physical. Uncertainty of alternation leads to negative consequences. Some remain alone, fear of abundance, lower self-esteem, unhealthier lifestyles, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation as well. A study conducted by Jered and Alwan in (2026), a negative interplay role of these variables has been seen. In order to decrease the effects on a lighter zone it citizens should provide nursing and mental health professional support to overcome the discomfort and build resilient society with good mental health.

An article based on 70 articles compiled with usage of sources taken from Google Scholars, pub Med and Web of Science proposed by Motevalli, et al. (2023), that resilient is a individual way of coping with every situation no matter of how much its difficult but if they are capable enough, they can manage it properly and when it is linked with environmental vary, he/she could use better coping strategies to get rid from hazardous conditions in a safer way for oneself and others. Education infrastructure diminished, schools mostly get closed, insufficient supplier of goods. Students get nervous, lower motivation,

unhealthy academic involvement and achievement. Timely implement of solution oriented strategies enhances plan for severe, unusual or seasonal weather and conditions like heatwaves, drought and wildfires, flood, cyclone and cold waves effects on academics task, and health.

Theoretical background

The relationship between eco-anxiety and resilience can be explained by the Transactional model of stress and coping and appraisal theory, environmental threat is a serious situation with limited coping resources like social support, self-efficacy, organizational assistance, eco-anxiety leads to feelings of helplessness and functional difficulties. On contrast, strong self-efficacy and meaning-centered coping, the anxiousness and avoidance behavior can be converted to proactive involvement and increased resiliency (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In Pakistan, the entire nation has been facing a significant danger caused by floods, droughts, increasing temperatures, and various climate obstacles (Hussain et al., 2018; Adnan et al., 2024). The largest province, Baluchistan, is particularly at risk owing to its vast area, arid climate, water shortages, sparse population, and insufficient organizational resources, in some affected areas people get resources in large amount, but the distant regions gets limited due to providers will not able to knoe the data needs, road worst, transportation, communities values, and communication issues are not addressed properly hence children, women, elder or a person who has any disease or on medications not get the help at a time. The scenario presents significant challenges for sustained learning and enhancing the resilience of higher education institutions (Arif, et al., 2025; Fatima et al., 2025). It can present considerable obstacles to educational systems by interrupting institutional functions, infrastructure, and the continuity of learning, especially in at vulnerable locations. Climatic variation adversely affects individual education (Baloch & Aslam, 2025).

The ecological systems theory model illustrates how human development is affected by various overlapping layers of context known as environmental systems. adaptability is established by protective ecosystems (like wetlands) and comprehensive government policies. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Shelton, 2025.) These encompass geographic characteristics, national infrastructure, cultural principles and regional or national standards, along with historical periods or zeitgeists. Although actions of this magnitude can lead to significant effects, their execution relies on involvement from different communities' means entire city, country. It addresses crises in distinct manners, utilizing resources like local governance, and community-led programs such as recycling or environmental cleanup projects. The impact of various levels of influence on resilience and responses to temperature-related emergencies (Weems, 2019; Weems et al., 2021, 2023). A study conducted by Cohen, et al. (2019) finding suggested post counselling services has satisfactory impact on the people lives.

Institutions with greater coping capacity employed emergency response strategies and resources for enhancing mental stability, whereas those with limited resources struggled to manage or formulate policies to avert hazardous circumstances (Scolobig & Balsiger, 2024; Fatima et al., 2025). A moderate correlation found between students' perspective about their institution facilities provided in the form of academics, social and administrative environment on their overall academic resilience. There was statistically significant variations associated to gender and GPA, higher in female students but no relationship with study field (Abood & Abu-hamid, 2023)

Men with greater awareness of climate modification experience higher levels of anxiousness and possess more effective coping strategies compared to women (Yildiz, 2025). This techniques leads to lasting transition in weather patterns, primarily resulting in harmful effects on the general population (Amerson, et al., 2021).

Analysis of the Result

Descriptive statistics table shows Male were 60 and female were 40 respondents, rural were 60 and urban were40 learners were participated in the study. SPSS V.26, mean, Standard deviation, Correlation coefficient were used for the data analysis. .05 were set as probability level.

Table No. 1: An independent sample test, Mean, SD, Correlation coefficient ere used

H1: There would be significant gender difference between climate change and emotional resilience among youth

Variable	Male		Female		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
CA	23.50	16.87	23.00	4.47	-.72**
ER	85.66	13.14	89.25	34.85	

df=98,CI= 95, p>.001, CA=Climate Change, Er= emotional resilience

Table 1 finding suggested that males CA *M* was 23.50, *SD*= 16.87, female *M* =23.00, *SD*=4.47, SR *M*= 85.66, *SD*=13.14 whereas female *mean*= 89.25, *SD*= 34.85. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Table No. 2: Independent sample t-test were used

H2: There would be significant age difference between climate change and emotional resilience among youth

Variable	Age	M	SD	F	t	p value	
CA	16-17	25.60		17.59	22.15	1.67*	.00
	18-19	21.00		8.18			
ER	16-17	83.80	10.34	67.92			
	18-19	90.40	32.42				

df: 98,p>005, CA=Climate Change, Er= emotional resilience

The table shows 16 -17 has slightly higher climate change anxiety than age 18 to 19 years of respondents. While ER score is high in 18 to 19 age than 16 to 17 years. Hence the hypothesis has accepted.

Table No. 3: Descriptive statistics, mean, SD & correlation coefficient were used

H3: There would be significant correlation between climate change and its subscales

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*t*
CCA	23.30	13.84	.915**
FI	11.80	10.90	
CE	11.50	5.84	

df=98, p=.00,p.005, CA=Climate change anxiety FI=Functional impairment, CE= cognitive emotional

The table shows CCA *m*= 23.30, *SD*=13.84 alomg with its subscales FI and CE values such as *mean* of FI is 11.80, 10.90, as CE *Mean* and *SD* was 11.50 and 5.84. the vale of FI subscale is higher than the CE score among the participants.

Instruments

Demographic information form

This form is based on gender, age and socio-class of respondents .

1. The Climate Change Anxiety Scale: this scale was developed by Clayton & Karazsia (2020), the CCAS measures two distinct factors such as Cognitive-Emotional Impairment focuses on personal distress, intrusive thoughts, sleep disruption, and negative affect stemming from climatic awareness. Functional Impairment subscale based on evaluates the degree to which climate concerns interfere with a student's ability to complete academic tasks, socialize, or maintain daily functioning. The crobach alpha of this sacle is .84.
2. The Resilience scale was developed by Connor-Davidsonin in 2013. It is comprises of 25 items, each rated on a 5-point scale (0-4), with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. The response category of this scale is 0 to 5 Likert scale 0 not true to almost true. The crobach alpha is .75 to .86. this instrument is a reliable scale.

Sample

The participants of the study was comprised of 100 participants, male were 50 and female were 50. Simple random sampling was used to collet the data. Data was gathered through standardized questionnaires from various college students studying at Hyderabad such as Hayat College, Zubeida Girls College, Qasimabad girls Degree College and Nazrat College Latifabad. Sample were selected by simple random sampling and it was comprised of 100 girls and 100 boys.

Procedure

Before starting the study and distributed questionnaires to the respondents consent was taken from the participants and briefly explain the objective to the students. With respect to their confidentiality and agreeableness they study was started and they were not bound to anyhow get involved in the study without their permission or authority issue. Although the topic was not a sensitive issue but ethical guideline of APA 7th edition was implemented.

Inclusive criteria

1. Participant who ever seen or witnessed any kind of disaster were involved.
2. Only enrolled College students were taken.
3. Youth age 16-19 was also consider.
4. Male and female participants were involved.

Exclusive criteria

1. Those who were enrolled in college as private or completed their studies.

Discussion

The results concluded that climate alternation anxiety has significant resilience among youth. Males has higher anxiousness in this manner than females. The connections among individuals, families, community infrastructure, and state policy can also be demonstrated in post-disaster recovery efforts. The subscale of this instrument has found that emotional cognitive impairment score high than behavioral impairment in boys. Thses findings are consistent with (Jered, et al. 2026). Important enhancements for community infrastructure and state policies for disasters like Hurricane, flood affects many residents individuals and families to reduce the disasters risk factors through analysis and strictly instructs the people to take the precautions seriously and clear communication, community involvement, and recognition of personal experiences are just as vital as technical solutions. In both mental health and infrastructure, resilience relies on confronting the stories individuals hold about themselves, their families, communities, and the broader socio-political environment (Nelson et al. 2023, 2025)

Ultimately, it is essential to talk about these issues give local people, citizens distributes duties among them, like some will take responsibility of food, few will arrange medicines and psychological first aid, shelter and other resources along with the organizations will decrease the adverse effects and enhance insightful resilience. Identifying these apprehension of individuals, families, communities, and societies may facilitate to determine common basic goals and the actions taken to achieve them. Negative self-talk or thinking can somehow effect on the individual coping mechanisms in state where they look after so much option instead on just looking at the problem has diminishing the situation worst and unable them to seek the secure path for themselves as well as the communities. International court of justice declared this as a serious one and implemented some strategies to get rid of this issue psychological through introducing various ways to deal with support of government to provide the profitable information through mass media, and other sources to rebuild the trust, autonomy and mentally adaptable skill in humans (Zraick, 2024; Kinniburgh, 2023; Kota & Mahoney, 2020).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, climate change anxiety has play an important role in decreasing resiliency among students. Disaster preparedness is the strategies taken by the citizens, organizations, both PDMA, NDMA and NGOs to which help a person to be aware and follow the guidelines properly to become safe in any kind of hazards or lessly influenced by protracted effects. Individuals who are known about the challenges or ways to keep themselves and their families safe under these uncertainty.

Suggestions

Following are some suggestions are given below

1. Educators also recognized that poor weather, unexpected school closures, increasing temperatures, and unsuitable classroom environments are significantly impacting learners academic achievements. It is suggested that educational authorities enhance the resilience of awareness regarding climate events by developing efficient strategies. Local education departments were advised to design safer school infrastructure and adaptable academic calendars.
2. The program aimed at raising educational awareness successfully enhances university students understanding, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors concerning climate change. Significant effort is needed to incorporate climate change ideas into the university courses. The created program and handbook could act as a foundation for additional educational initiatives.
3. Higher education institutions need to establish comprehensive support structures to mitigate student eco-anxiety and enhance their adaptive capabilities.
4. Climate-Informed Counseling implemented in educational institutions, hire mental health professionals to provide eco-anxiety therapy, acknowledging student distress while avoiding the negative ecological concerns.

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