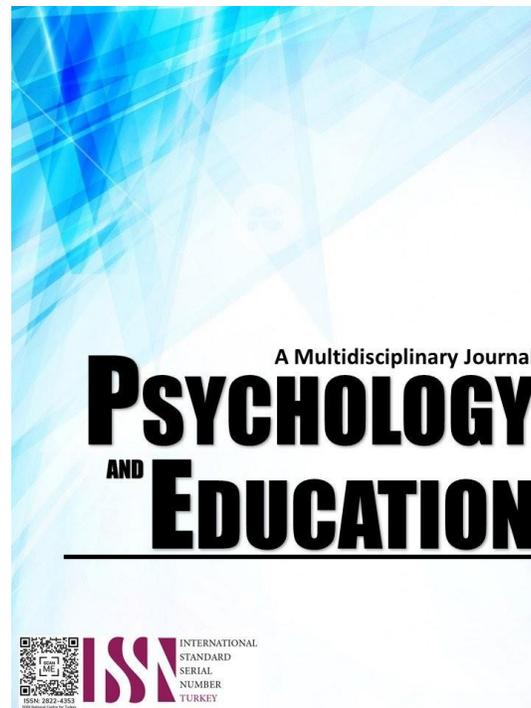# ASSESSING ECO-ANXIETY OF SELECTED RESIDENTS IN ENVIRONMENTALLY CHALLENGED URBAN LOCALE: BASIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY MODULE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Assessing Eco-Anxiety of Selected Residents in Environmentally Challenged Urban Locale: Basis in the Development of Environmental Psychology Module for Mental Health and Sustainable Community

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Abstract

As the rising extreme weather events occurring in the Philippines, the extreme heat index during El Niño and consecutive tropical typhoons during La Niña created construct consciousness of the Filipinos with regards to climate change that is also increasing over the period; this consciousness may be labeled as a psychological term to "Eco-anxiety" which may create an adverse impact in terms of emotional and physical aspects. Thus, this study aims to investigate awareness, explore factors, and propose programs regarding eco- anxiety inside the urban locale area and was done in collaboration with the City Environment Service Department (CESD)- Bacoor (formerly known as City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO). The research was conducted in the three areas of Bacoor, namely San Nicolas III, Molino III, and Molino IV, which employed mixed- methods design, incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and used validated instruments for interviews and survey questionnaires. There were 400 survey respondents, and 15 participants were interviewed. The data was analyzed using the following statistical treatment of frequency count and percentage and weighted mean for descriptive interpretation; the Colaizzi method was utilized for qualitative analysis. As such, results indicated that participants experienced eco-anxiety at a relatively low level. Coping mechanisms included relaxation techniques, optimism, and engaging in recreational activities. Physical manifestations of eco-anxiety included sleeping difficulties and fatigue. While it generally had a minor impact on social relationships, some respondents reported occasional disruptions and conflicts, especially related to differing environmental perspectives. The study recommends considering areas that are directly impacted by climate change, such as flood-prone areas. Additionally, the higher level of the term awareness may create significant contributions towards environmental sustainability in communities.

Keywords: *eco- anxiety, climate change, climate education, environment, environmental awareness*

Introduction

In the current societal phenomenon, one of the foremost and pressing concerns confronting humanity is the pervasive and impactful phenomenon of climate change. It is evidently seen by the drastic increase of sea-rising levels, tropical disasters, and especially the rising heat temperature that we experience in the popularly known as the "Pearl of the Orient Sea" in Southeast Asia—The Philippines.

It is known to consist of 7,641 islands, which is labeled as an archipelago country. As a result, the country is prone to tropical typhoons, which result in extreme floods that affect selected areas, destroy thousands of homes, killing hundreds of Filipinos during La Niña season, and increase in extreme heat index during El Niño season. Despite the fact that the country has experienced numerous climate disasters, it strongly marked its psychological identity as being resilient.

In many locations across the Philippines, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas, a prevalent observation is extensive littering, with trash, notably plastic waste from stores and markets, widely scattered and visible. On the contrary, Manila's well-visited high economic zones provide sustainable maintenance to keep the areas neat. Local governments actively prioritize and allocate budgetary resources toward environmental preservation through policy measures such as implementing imposing charges and employing personnel tasked with maintaining cleanliness. Not to mention such local malls where they are mandated to alternatively utilize reusable bags for plastic waste.

According to the study by Meiger et al. (2021), this Asian country is one of the seventh among the top ten plastic-polluted rivers in the world. The country is also responsible for 36.38% of global oceanic plastic waste in 2019. Another cause of the extreme utility of plastics is the lack of availability of proper waste disposal and the cheap convenience of plastic packaging products to the market, labeled as the "sachet economy" by numerous researchers (Manalo, 2022; Edoria et al., 2023; Oblea & Cabatuan, 2022).

Moreover, the prevalence of aforementioned environmental concerns can contribute to the psychological distress of an individual—collectively known as "Eco- anxiety." The American Psychiatric Association describes it as the chronic fear of environmental cataclysm that comes from observing the seemingly irrevocable impact of climate change and the associated concern for one's future and that of the next generations.

In line with the ongoing crisis in the Philippines, the government's implementation of the environmental blueprint may be seen as selected and designated for tourist attraction areas. Besides that, the national implementation and its organization have made slow progress in maintaining civilian discipline. Hence, these uncontrollable circumstances can lead to an individual's frustration and

hopelessness. Hickman et al. (2021) found that 74% of the people surveyed worried about the local climate situation that affected their daily functioning. Another study by Reyes et al. (2021) concluded that people who have poor mental health have a strong tendency to acquire climate anxiety.

With regards to this, eco-anxiety can be utilized as a useful tool to combat climate change in the community by providing proper intervention that can benefit both individuals and large groups. It is important to address the rising concern of eco-anxiety in the selected environmentally challenged urban locales in order to collect and weigh the awareness of people on the ongoing crisis of climate change and take into account the significance of environmental psychology in the Philippine setting.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents based on the following?
    1.1. Age
    1.2. Sex
    1.3. Locality
2. What is the level of eco-anxiety among the residents of the selected urban locale based on the four dimensions of eco-anxiety?
3. What are the emergent themes regarding eco-anxiety among the residents of the selected urban locale?
4. What programs can be developed to help build a mentally resilient and sustainable community?

Literature Review

Eco-anxiety, Psychological Factors, and Definition

Amidst the increasing concern over the worsening environmental condition, a new term has emerged: "eco-anxiety." Hickman (2021) highlighted that about forty-five percent of the participants across the world reported experiencing the negative effects of climate issues in their daily activities, such as eating, focusing on work and school, sleeping, nature immersion, playing, having fun, and handling relationships. It was also reported that in the Philippines, this number drastically went up to 75 percent, which was alarming. These numbers showed that youth in the global south are going through a much more extreme eco-anxiety, which was described by the American Psychiatric Association as "a chronic fear of environmental doom."

However, the subject matter "eco-anxiety" is still unrecognized in the Philippines, and there are only a few research studies published and available locally due to its foreign limitations. It has been recognized only in Western and European studies. As such, Bauck (2023) emphasized Psychologist AJ Guilao's opinion about eco-anxiety being an "overwhelmingly white phenomenon," which is based on the fact that the recent research on "eco-anxiety" started in Europe and North America. As a result, Sunglao, Guinto, and Torres agreed with the opinions and that eco-anxiety required more discussion in taking into account cultural distinctions by providing a decolonial approach to mental health care for further improved data that would support sustainable action. Due to its limitation, Southeast Asian countries are already paying attention to the study gradually, wherein the anticipated adverse weather events may increase in the following years. This can create interventions for both psychology and adaptation that can enhance an individual's resilience in coping with a climate crisis. As these anticipations have already occurred, there is a greater risk of acquiring levels of climate anxiety and other psychological conditions (Mamac, 2023).

Regarding its psychological aspects, according to Aruta and Guinto (2022), the research from psychology showed that psychological distance—a cognitive bias that made people see threats and occurrences as notional and less probable to affect them personally, now, or in their community—influenced people's perceptions of climate change. There was strong evidence that experiencing extreme weather firsthand could help people perceive climate change as psychologically closer by making the concept of its psychological distance less abstract and more concrete. The annual barrage of typhoons that pummel the Philippines could lead to a proximal perception of climate change. A Filipino citizen may encounter over a thousand typhoons in their lifetime, given the average life expectancy in the country. Understanding this fact could lead to climate anxiety because it is predicted that in the upcoming years, climate change will escalate the periodicity and intensity of these typhoons.

Reyes et al. (2021) examined the relationship between eco-anxiety and Gen Z Filipinos, revealing its linkage with the MHI-38's global scale of Psychological Distress. Although eco-anxiety may not be directly associated with the global scale of mental health, it serves as a strong predictor for lower mental health among Gen Z Filipinos.

Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health

Severe weather occurrences like cyclones and scorching heat waves, which took thousands of lives, worsened mental health conditions like depression and anxiety (Cabico., 2024). Rees et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive study, revealing that the Philippines was listed as 31st among 163 countries that have the highest risk of environmental concerns that negatively affect children's health. The data denoted significant susceptibilities with a score of 8.9 in terms of climate and environmental factors, 4.0 for child vulnerability, and 7.1 for children's climate risk index. In addition, the recent local survey of Social Weather Stations (2024) found that 87% of adult Filipinos stated that they have personally experienced the impacts of climate change for the past three years. Other than that, 81%

believed that climate change could pose a danger to mental health, 87% felt negative emotions, 57% believed that humanitarian advocacy could help eradicate climate change, and 39% tried to participate in reducing climate risks. Emily and Rodriguez (2022) stated that the country's small size was not one of the major contributors to the continuous increase of climate change. But, it was very vulnerable and prone to be immensely affected by the adverse consequences of climate change. As such, it concluded that climate anxiety is undoubtedly evident in nations that were already going through observable changes due to the climate crisis, for example, the Philippines, a country that is tremendously prone to storm surges and typhoons (Hickman et al., 2021).

Drawing upon these insights, another study stressed that climate change is found to be directly associated with distress, worry, and perceived danger from climate change (Reyes et al., 2021). Children and young people worldwide reported that eco-anxiety and other unsettling emotions and perceptions about climate change affected their day-to-day activities. This distress was linked with the notions of the lack of governmental action and feelings of deceit. In addition, the majority of them also underwent emotional disturbance and a broad range of complex emotions such as sadness, fear, furious, helplessness, guilt, mortification, hopelessness, hurt, sorrow, and depression. Likewise, a great number of them also reported undergoing functional impairment and harboring a negative apprehension about the future, such as feeling unfulfilled when it comes to their role of taking care of the planet, fearing for the future, thinking humanity will soon meet its end, concerns on not having access to the same avenues their parents had, worries the destruction of everything they see as important, fear about their sanctuary being at risk, and reluctance to have kids (Hickman et al., 2021).

Vulnerability, Challenges, and Coping Strategies

In the Philippines, the aftermath of the climate crisis to mental health was seen yearly. The crisis lays bare the frailty of the mental health system in the country, such as low human resources, lack of funding, and poor policy implementation. Despite the scarce resources, like in other low- and middle-income countries, collective efforts have given way to improvements in the past years (Alibudbud, 2022). Urbanization, as criticized by Hechanova (2019), while might bring modernization and economic growth. It also created challenges for the urban poor. Difficulties such as too many people, not enough money, and not enough help from the government, together with the threats of environmental health problems that pose a danger to them, make their lives hard. These hardships, combined with psychological stress, increase their proneness to mental health disorders; especially in less economically developed countries, mental health care remains extensively out of reach to the poor, leaving them further disadvantaged (Alibudbud, 2022).

Likewise, Aruta and Simon (2022) suggested that it is essential that the government set aside funds for those in the country who suffer from severe cases of climate anxiety. Bollentino et al. (2020) stressed the universal repercussions of climate change, with governments striving to mitigate its effects. Vulnerable groups, especially the impoverished and coastal dwellers, were set to bear the brunt, notably affecting island nations like the Philippines. Their study revealed limited awareness of climate change among Filipinos, varying by region. Previous disaster exposure, education, and health influenced preparedness. Active community engagement correlated with disaster readiness. Despite low overall awareness, better-informed individuals showed greater readiness for future environmental challenges. As a result of these aforementioned challenges, many schools near coastal areas have been experiencing sea-rise levels that are currently affecting multiple children. Bernal and Baker (2023) noted Atty. Rivero who called for urgency on the Department of Education (DepEd) for climate action amidst rising sea levels, which affected multiple schools in selected areas of the Philippines. Locally, the country had a weak carbon footprint foundation, and these acts of urgency may have aided in the call for citizens to be aware.

Algo (2023) suggested ways to deal with this climate anxiety crisis. One, participate in the global and local calls for climate justice and action. Although, initially, this may have sounded pointless, particularly to those people who want less exposure to environmental concerns. Still, this was about taking a more proactive action. Two, share relevant thoughts and emotions with people who are most comfortable listening. Sometimes, a pleasant conversation or two with someone willing to lend their ears is all one needs to ease their stress. Upon doing this, people might have learned new ways to deal with this growing concern and also discovered eco-friendly good practices. Three, join outdoor activities. This includes engrossing yourself in green parks, spending time in the seaside or mountains, or participating in tree-planting and growing activities. All of these might give some needed comfort. In addition, small gardening is also advisable as it could make you feel more connected with nature. Four, embrace more pro-environment lifestyles and activities. These included having a healthier diet, making your home more energy- saving, educating our loved ones, or volunteering in community programs aimed at addressing the local impact of worsening environmental conditions.

Punzalan (2020) discussed that environmental education had been integrated into various syllabi, such as biophysics, social studies, and moral education. He also suggested the potential of environmental education initiatives in enhancing students' awareness and helping them to fully understand various impacts of environmental issues in order to prevent eco-anxiety. Desabayla and Gueta (2023) learned that senior high school students are indifferent in regard to climate change. The respondents were also found to agree that there are numerous sources of information pertinent to climate change. However, in a study conducted by Lualhati (2019), she found that the students were not well-informed about environmental issues and policies, albeit they were moderately participative in activities related to taking care of the environment. Adding to the discourse, Uri and Regio (2023) revealed that the state of climate change education is unbalanced, implying a need to increase public knowledge and understanding of the matter. Likewise, Corpuz (2023) stated that students were aware of climate change, its causes and effects. Yet, their knowledge was not broad enough, specifically in

terms of health. For instance, they were not aware that it could cause cancer and mental health problems, which was an indication that there was a need to educate the youth about the detrimental effects of climate change, not only on physical well-being but also on the mental aspect.

A study conducted by Escatron et al. (2023) found that there was a notable association between climate change cognizance, conservation attitude, and environmental actions. They discovered that as students increased their awareness regarding environmental issues, they were more likely to play a part in green initiatives. Additionally, Desabayla and Gueta (2023) recommended that climate change education must continue among senior high school students through the help of teachers to boost their outlooks on the diverse ways of alleviating the ramifications of climate change. The researchers also recommended that there should be a demonstration of readiness in senior high school students regarding combating the effects of climate change. It was crucial that students utilize various on-hand sources of information to understand climate change further.

Federigan (2024) stated that Climate Change education should now be regarded separately from environmental education since "climate change as everything issue" indicated that the phenomenon should no longer be seen as an environmental issue but rather as a component of environmental education. Equipping with precise and comprehensive details about climate change was a significant step in solving the issue and improving comprehension and awareness in producing high-teaching materials, training for instructors, and public awareness campaigns (Uri & Regio, 2023).

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized descriptive mixed methods for gathering data in order to assess the psychological impact of environmental challenges. Descriptive research is a research design that focuses on extensively and precisely describing a population, situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2019). Mixed methods research design is a type of research that is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research design, which is conducted in a single research study (George, 2021). As such, the descriptive mixed method design is focused on describing the phenomenon using quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative method was used to measure the level of eco-anxiety among the respondents, and the qualitative method was used to formulate the different emergent themes regarding eco-anxiety using the Colaizzi method.

Respondents

Table 1. *Frequency Distribution of Respondents*

Socio-demographic	Frequency (n=400)	Percentage (%)
Age		
Under 12 years old	4	1.0
12 – 17 years old	57	14.2
18 – 24 years old	160	40.0
25 – 34 years old	79	19.8
35 – 44 years old	43	10.8
45 – 54 years old	32	8.0
55 – 64 years old	20	5.0
65 – 74 years old	4	1.0
75 years or older	1	0.3
Sex		
Female	235	58.8
Male	165	41.3
Locality		
Barangay Molino III	129	32.3
Barangay Molino IV	139	34.8
Barangay San Nicolas III	132	33

This table shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents categorized by age, sex, and locality. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the younger to middle-aged (18–24 years old), constituting 40.0% of the total respondents. Additionally, across other age brackets, 12–17 years old comprise 14.2%, 25–34 years old at 19.8%, and 35–44 years old at 10.8%.

Furthermore, the data reveal a gender distribution within the sample, with females comprising the majority at 58.8% and males representing 41.3% of the respondents. This imbalance in gender representation may have implications for the interpretation of survey results, as it suggests potential differences in perspectives, behaviors, and experiences between male and female respondents. For the distribution of locality, data shows that 34.8% of respondents are residents of Barangay Molino IV, 33% are from Barangay San Nicolas III, and 32.3% are from Barangay Molino III.

Instrument

The researchers utilized two instruments: the Hogg Eco-Anxiety Scale (HEAS) and the Eco-Anxiety Scale (EMEAS), which both came from a website and had already been validated. Hogg Eco-anxiety Scale is a 13-item questionnaire, while EMEA is a 4-item questionnaire used for interviewing respondents, where the researchers added four follow- up questions.

Procedure

Firstly, the researchers gained permission from the respective developers of the HEAS- 13 and EMEA to use it in the study, and then local validation was performed in order to translate it into the local language. Secondly, researchers composed permission letters to conduct a survey, which were signed by the dean, thesis adviser, and Barangay Captains. Thirdly, the researchers then requested data about the overall population per barangay. To determine the appropriate number of respondents, the researchers used Slovin's formula. Fourthly, the interviews were conducted, and at the same time, the questionnaires were also disseminated among the selected people living in three barangays with the highest waste generation. This is along with the assurance that the data obtained from them would be confidential. Lastly, the researchers collected all the data from the respondents and then checked, interpreted, and analyzed.

Ethical Considerations

The Research Ethics Committee of St. Dominic College of Asia approved this research, confirming its adherence with the minimum standards of the SDCA Research Guidelines. Respondents were selected based on their willingness to participate in this study with informed consent.

Results and Discussion

In terms of the level of eco-anxiety, the findings showed that the respondents were experiencing eco-anxiety at a reasonably low level. In terms of themes, the interviews revealed four emergent themes related to eco-anxiety: bodily manifestations, social and relational impact, coping mechanisms, and anxiety in reaction to climate change.

Level of Eco-anxiety Among the Residents of the Selected Urban Locale

Table 2.

	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Kinakabahan, nababahala, nag-aalala, nag-aalinlangan (Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge)	1.28	0.73	Hindi Nararanasan (Not at all)
2. Hindi mapigilan ang pag-alala (Not being able to stop or control worrying)	1.23	0.78	Minsan (Several of the days)
3. Labis na pag- aalala, lubhang pagkabahala (Worrying too much)	1.05	0.83	Minsan (Several of the days)
4. Nakakaramdam ng pagkatakot (Feeling afraid)	1.24	0.77	Minsan (Several of the days)
5. Hindi mapigilan ang pag-iisip sa hinaharap na problema tungkol sa climate change at iba pang suliraning pangkapaligiran. (Unable to stop thinking about future climate change and other global environmental problems)	1.30	0.87	Minsan (Several of the days)
6. Hindi mapigilang maisip ang mga nakaraang pangyayari na may kaugnayan sa climate change. (Unable to stop thinking about past events related to climate change)	1.24	0.86	Minsan (Several of the days)
7. Hindi mapigilang pag-aalala tungkol sa pagkapinsala ng kalikasan. (Unable to stop thinking about losses to the environment)	1.30	0.89	Minsan (Several of the days)
8. Nahihirapang matulog (Difficulty sleeping)	0.85	0.92	Minsan (Several of the days)
9. Nahihirapang magsaya sa mga okasyon kasama ang pamilya at mga kaibigan. (Difficulty enjoying social situations with family and friends)	0.68	0.79	Minsan (Several of the days)
10. Nahihirapang magtrabaho o mag-aral (Difficulty working and/or studying)	0.85	0.84	Minsan (Several of the days)
11. Nababahala sa epekto ng iyong pag-uugali o gawi sa mundo (Feeling anxious about the impact of your personal behaviours on the earth.)	1.12	0.97	Minsan (Several of the days)
12. Nakararamdam ng pagkabahala tungkol sa iyong responsibilidad na makatulong ukol sa mga problemang pangkapaligiran. (Feeling anxious about your personal responsibility to help address environmental problems)	1.22	0.91	Minsan (Several of the days)
13. Pag-aalala at pagkabalisa sa iyong kakayahan na may maliit na magagawa lamang upang makatulong na masolusyunan ang suliranin. (Feeling anxious that your personal behaviours will do little to help fix the problem)	1.17	0.92	Minsan (Several of the days)
Overall Mean	1.12	0.85	Minsan (Several of the days)

This table shows the level of eco-anxiety among residents of a selected urban locale measured using the quantitative analysis of Hogg's Eco- Anxiety Survey Scale (2021). The level of eco-anxiety among residents of a selected urban locale focuses on four dimensions of eco-anxiety. Overall, the respondents reported experiencing eco-anxiety at a relatively low level, with an overall mean score of 1.12 on a scale ranging from 0 to 3. The mean falls within the category of "Minsan" (Several of the Days), indicating that respondents experience eco- anxiety occasionally rather than on a daily basis. This suggests that while eco-anxiety exists among residents of the urban locale, it may not be pervasive or severe.

Thematic Map on the Emergent Themes Regarding Eco-anxiety among the Residents of the Selected Urban Locale

Table 3.

Anxiety as a Response to Climate Change	*Coping Mechanism*	*Physical Manifestations*	*Social and Relational Impact*
Emotional Responses • Anxiety • Helplessness • Worry	Emotional Responses • Relaxation, "go with the flow" • Hope, optimism, proactive	Physical Symptoms • Difficulty sleeping, feeling hot • Irritation, restlessness	Emotional Responses • Impact on interactions • Minor impact on interactions
Concern for Nature and Climate Change • Worry about environmental issues • Anxiety about nature and climate change	Engaging with Nature and Taking Action • Nature walk • Taking action	Cognitive and Emotional Responses • Worry about global events • Concern for vulnerable	Communication Challenges • Occasional disruptions in daily activities and emotional well-being • Minimal impact on relationships
Future Uncertainty and Need for Faith • Concern for the future • Need for faith	Religious or Spiritual Coping • Faith • Maintaining routine, prayer	Sensory Sensitivities • Climate-related weather events • Sensitivity to environmental stimuli such as bad smells and pollution	Conflict Resolution • Interpersonal conflicts may arise when discussing environmental issues • Minimal impact on relationships

Four emergent themes were formulated from the respondents' interview answers, namely, anxiety as a response to climate change, coping mechanism, physical manifestations, and social and relational impact. The data showed that the respondents were experiencing eco-anxiety as forms of worry, helplessness, or anxiety concerning environmental issues and climate change, and feelings of uncertainty towards the future state of nature. Some respondents experience eco-anxiety when obtaining environmental news regarding pollution, extreme weather events, and climate change, indicating that environmental news acts as eco-anxiety triggers for these residents.

The respondents' coping mechanisms mainly revolved around doing relaxation techniques, instilling hope, being optimistic, maintaining routine, engaging in recreational activities such as nature walks, and seeking solace in faith, family, and friends. Some mentioned coping by seeking information about environmental issues to find ways to help, and taking small actions to positively contribute to the environment.

Eco-anxiety manifests in various ways, one of which is through physical manifestations. The analyzed data indicated that residents of the selected urban locales experience eco-anxiety physically through sleeping difficulties, fatigue, headaches, feelings of hotness, irritability, restlessness, concern for the vulnerable and worry about global issues such as extreme weather and pollution. Some mentioned experiencing physical reactions such as breathing pattern changes when exposed to environmental stimuli like pollution.

Eco-anxiety was reported to have impacts on interactions and relationships. Majority of the respondents claimed that it has a minor impact on their social relationships. However, it was found that a small portion of the respondents have experienced occasional disruptions in their daily activities and emotional well-being, especially when witnessing environmental degradation or extreme weather changes. Further, few respondents reported experiences of interpersonal conflicts when discussing environmental issues, particularly if other people do not take the matter seriously or if they fail to see its importance, leading to strained relationships.

In a survey conducted by the Social Weather Station in 2023, the majority of the participants, mounting up to 81%, reported having concerns about the threat that climate change poses on their mental health. Among them, 37% described it as "very dangerous", while 44% considered it "somewhat dangerous". Contrarily, 19% of participants answered that the impact of climate change on their mental health was not dangerous, with 14% proclaiming it was "somewhat not dangerous" and 5% saying it was "not dangerous at all". Additionally, the survey divulged that individuals who reported experiencing extreme impacts of climate change in the last three years were more likely to perceive it as dangerous to their mental well-being, in comparison to those who experienced the moderate impact

to none at all. Drawing upon this insight, the relatively low levels of eco-anxiety might have something to do with how much climate change is impacting the respondents' lives, as the researchers conducted the study only on the urban locales with waste management issues and not on the basis of the places that faces most of the effect of climate change such as the flood prone areas (Social Weather Station., 2024).

Individually, the dimensions of eco-anxiety varied in terms of mean scores and standard deviations. For instance, respondents reported the lowest level of difficulty sleeping (Mean = 0.85) and difficulty enjoying social situations (Mean = 0.68), suggesting that these aspects of eco-anxiety were less pronounced. On the other hand, respondents reported higher levels of anxiety related to personal responsibility for addressing environmental problems (Mean = 1.22) and worrying about the impact of personal behaviors on the environment (Mean = 1.12), indicating greater concern in these areas.

These findings have implications for understanding the psychological well-being of individuals in relation to environmental concerns. While eco-anxiety may not be a dominant or constant emotional state, it still plays a role in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards environmental issues. Moreover, these results address eco-anxiety and promote psychological well-being in the face of environmental challenges.

Conclusions

In conclusion, overall, the respondents were experiencing eco-anxiety at a reasonably low level. The interviews revealed four emergent themes related to eco-anxiety: bodily manifestations, social and relational impact, coping mechanisms, and anxiety in reaction to climate change. The findings suggested that eco-anxiety is a prevalent issue characterized by feelings of uncertainty about the future of the environment, worry, helplessness, or anxiety over environmental problems and climate change. Exposure to environmental news, such as reports of pollution, harsh weather, and climate change, can serve as a trigger for eco-anxiety in certain individuals.

This research has shown that eco-anxiety was found to have an impact on the interactions and relationships of respondents. While most reported only minor effects on their social relationships, a subset of respondents experienced occasional disruptions in their daily activities and emotional well-being due to environmental degradation or extreme weather changes. Moreover, some respondents reported interpersonal conflicts when discussing environmental issues, particularly if others did not take the matter seriously or did not see its importance. These findings highlighted the need to address eco-anxiety as a significant concern that can affect not only individuals' mental health but also their relationships and social interactions.

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