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[UNDERSTANDING HOW CLIMATE CHANGE ANXIETY AFFECTS THE MENTAL HEALTH OF UK TEENAGERS: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW]

by

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DECLARATION

I, [INSERT NAME] declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that the work contained herein is entirely my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification, in whole or in part, except as specified.

Signed:……Mansi……

Date:……5th June 2026……

Acknowledgements

The acknowledgements section is where you thank those who have helped and supported you during the research and writing process. This section is optional, and should be no longer than one page.

Move from thanking the people most formally involved (supervisors, academics) to those who have supported you in other ways (friends and family).

If you include acknowledgements, make sure to thank your supervisor!

Abstract

Background:

The aim, objectives and research question are to investigate the impact of climate change anxiety on the mental health of teenagers in the UK. Climate change anxiety is a rising, non-clinical form of distress characterised by chronic fear, worry, and helplessness regarding environmental damage and the future of the planet. The strategic approaches and coping mechanisms such as reducing media exposure, mindfulness meditation, and action-oriented form of hope are significant that focus on taking actionable approaches to manage anxiety among teens. The literature review has depicted the factors prevalence and severity of climate change anxiety among the teenagers with literature gaps. Furthermore, the psychological effects of anxiety on the mental health of teenagers and their impacts have been analysed here. Furthermore, the coping strategies with interventions have been evaluated as recommendations. The two Psychoanalytic theories of eco-anxiety and Cognitive-Coping Framework have been analysed here to reduce eco-anxiety among the young adults of the UK.

Method:

A systematic review of 12 peer reviewed article has been conducted within this research in terms of analysing the thesis objectives. It has been recognised that the thematic analysis has been conducted within this research in terms of analysing the research key objectives. The research has utilised a keyword searching strategy as a data collection procedure in terms of accumulating necessary and accurate secondary data information from peer-reviewed journals.

***Result*:**

The chapter is a focus of qualitative research by identifying the main themes, psychological effects, and coping mechanisms of climate anxiety on the mental well-being of UK teenagers. The chapter has an insight into the findings of the study that evaluated the impact of climate change anxiety on the overall mental wellbeing of teenagers in the UK. 4 themes have been generated that have been developed based on identifying the common patterns in the data to improve outcome.

Conclusion

The research has concluded that Climate change anxiety has been recognised as Eco-Anxiety, which is responsible for the growing mental health crisis, chronic fear and distress over environmental destruction. It has been recognised that climate action is considered to be aligned with causing arousal symptoms in PTSD and depression due to the natural health disaster and its impact on the future of the coming generations.

Table of Contents

List of figures 7
List of tables 8
List of abbreviations 9
Chapter 1: Introduction 10
1.1 Introduction 10
1.2 Background of the thesis 10
1.3 Problem Statement and Rationale 12
1.4 Research aims and objectives 14
1.5 Thesis Questions 14
1.6 Purpose of the research 14
1.7 Methodological aspects 15
1.8 Thesis structure 15
Chapter 2: Literature review/theoretical framework 16
2.1 Introduction 16
2.2 Factors of Prevalence and severity of climate change anxiety among teenagers 16
2.3 Psychological effects of climate anxiety on the mental health of teenagers 18
2.4 Highlighting the impacts on stress, depression, and self-esteem based on the psychological effects 20
2.5 Strategies for the management of Climate Change Anxiety, available to UK teenagers 22
2.6 Theoretical underpinning 24
2.6.1 Psychoanalytic Theory of Eco-Anxiety 24
2.6.2 Cognitive-Coping Framework 25
2.7 Conceptual framework 26
2.8 Literature gaps 27
2.9 Chapter summary 27
Chapter 3: Research Methodology 29
3.1 Introduction 29
3.2 Research philosophy 29
3.3 Ethical consideration 29
3.4 Research approach 30
3.5 Research strategy 30
3.6 Study design 30
3.7 Data collection method 31
3.7.1 Search strategy 31
3.7.2 Framing thesis Question (PICO) 31

3.7.2 Data Search procedure 32
3.7.3 Hand Search 32
3.7.4 Grey Literature 32
3.7.5 Inclusion and exclusion criteria 32
3.7.6 Screening results 33
3.8 Study Selection 34
3.9 Summary of how many articles were left 34
3.10 PRISMA 34
3.11 Quality Assessment 35
3.12 Data Characteristics 35
3.13 Data Synthesis 35
3.14 Methodological Limitations 36
3.15 Chapter summary 36
Chapter 4: Results 37
4.1 Introduction 37
4.2 Presenting qualitative results 37
4.3 Key Thematic Analysis 43
4.4 Summarise result relation to the research questions 48
4.5 Summary 49
Chapter 5: Discussion 50
5.1 Interpret your results 50
5.2 Discuss the implications 50
5.3 Acknowledge the limitation 52
Chapter 6: Conclusion 53
6.1 Answering the main research question 53
6.2 Reflect on the research 54
6.3 Making Recommendations 55
6.4 Emphasise the contribution (Future Research) 55
6.4.1 New knowledge contributed 56
6.4.2 Clear impressions of the research matters 56
Reference list 57
Appendix 1: [PRISMA Framework] 68
Appendix 2: [CASP] 69

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Climate change anxiety effect on the population 11
Figure 1.2: Extent of Youth climate fear across global countries 13
Figure 1.3: Research structure 15
Figure 2.1: Psychoanalytic theory of eco-anxiety 24
Figure 2.2: Cognitive-Coping Framework 25
Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework 27

List of tables

Table 3.1: PICOS framework 31
Table 3.2: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria 33
Table 3.3: Screening result 34
Table 4.1: Thematic Table 43

List of abbreviations

UK: United Kingdom

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The research will aim to explore the key impact of climate change anxiety on the mental health of teenagers in the UK, exploring psychological outcomes, coping mechanisms, and potential interventions. Climate change is becoming a recognized threat to mental health and concepts like eco-anxiety and solastalgia have risen to the forefront (Mosca *et al.* 2025). Based on this aspect, the chapter is going to develop the research key objectives that are going to be fulfilled in the findings chapter. Apart from this, this chapter is going to analyse the background information about climate change anxiety and its impacts on teenagers' mental health. Moreover, the chapter will discuss the methodological perspectives that are going to be used for accumulating information within this research. The overall research structure is going to be demonstrated within this chapter.

1.2 Background of the thesis

Climate change anxiety is often recognised as Eco-Anxiety that has been responsible for growing mental health crisis, chronic fear and distress over environmental destruction (Cosh *et al.* 2024). Climate change anxiety has been impacting the young population by increasing the rate of depression, sleep disturbances, and suicidal ideation. Climate change anxiety is considered to be a rising, non-clinical form of distress characterised by chronic fear, worry, and helplessness regarding environmental damage and the future of the planet. According to a global survey report, out of 1000 children, 50% have reported feeling extremely worried about climate, with some responding across 10 different global countries Gov, 2026). As per the figure mentioned below, the majority of the female population in the UK is mostly affected by climate change anxiety in recent times (Ons, 2026). The increasing anxiety level among the UK population has resulted in an increase in depression cases.

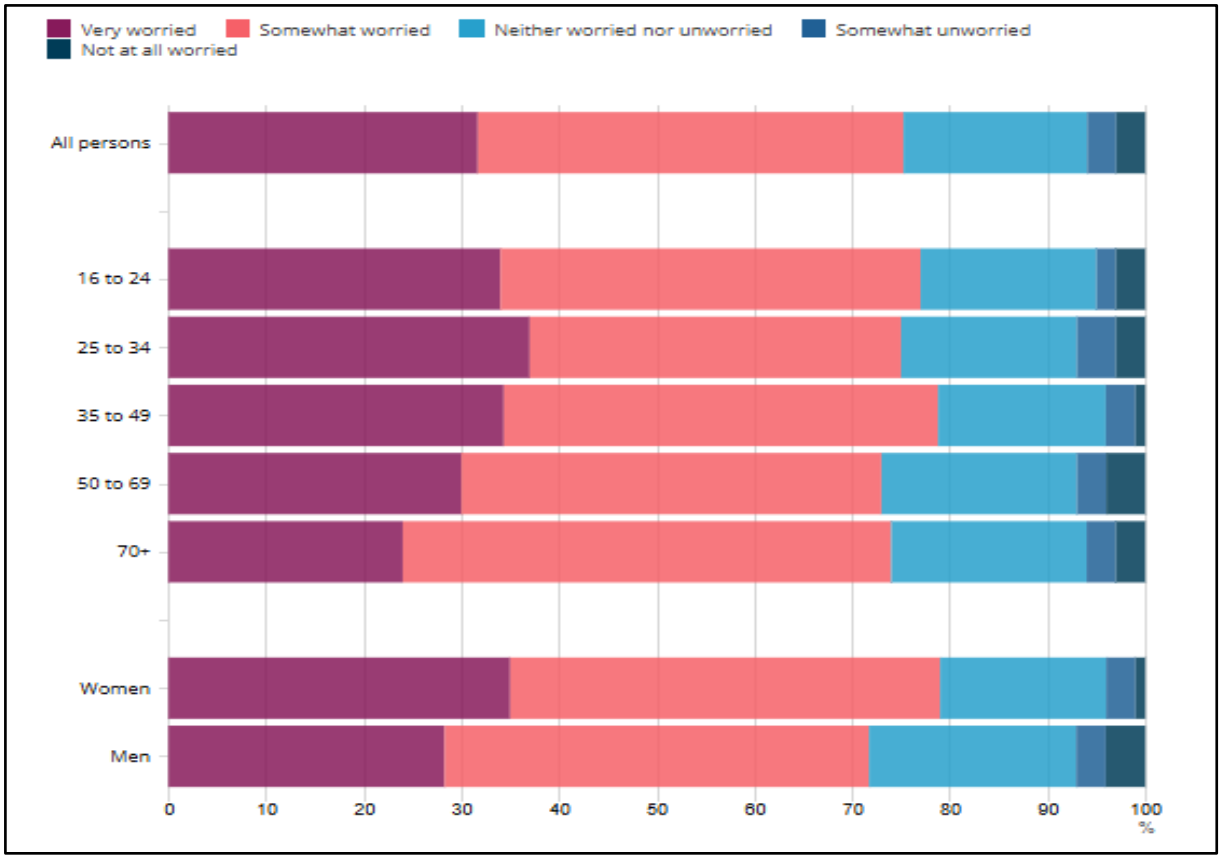

Figure 1.1: Climate change anxiety effect on the population

(Source: Ons, 2026)

It has been recognised that the negative impacts from an awareness of climate change are greatest on children's and young people's mental health. As per the analysis of Ogunbode *et al.* (2025), the increasing greenhouse gas emission has enhanced earth temperature by 2 degree Celsius every decade. The fingerprint of climate change is considered to be detectable within any single day of globally observed temperature as well as moisture. The occurrence of such evidence has made the young generation feel worried about their future, resulting in depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. According to a survey of young adults belonging to the age group 16 to 25 years, 75% have reported that they feel frightened while thinking about the future, whereas 45% have reported getting frightened regarding the relevance of climate change, which can impact their day-to-day functioning Ogunbode *et al.* (2025). Thus, climate change anxiety has been significantly impacting UK teenagers, driving higher levels of depression, insomnia, and functional impairment.

The climate crisis has been a significant long-term implication for physical and mental health conditions. As per the analysis of Hickman *et al.* (2021), exposure to chronic stress within childhood has been identified as having a long-lasting impact as well as an increased risk of

mental health problems, leading to rising climate anxiety among children. About 70% of primary teachers have stated that the lack of time to help students with concerns about climate change in the UK (Gelmini, 2025). On the other hand, the report of the ONS in 2022 has made 4.6% of the UK's population feel worried about rising temperatures that can directly affect them by 2030 (Dunne, 2022). Apart from this, the report from the BBC highlights that 60% of young people felt extremely worried about climate change as well as its future consequences (Harrabin, 2022). However, climate anxiety is not exclusively negative; it is a significant driver for action, including reduced red meat consumption, lower energy usage as well as increased recycling. Thus, engaging in environmental activism or adopting sustainable habits can help reduce feelings of anxiety and improve well-being

1.3 Problem Statement and Rationale

The changing climate in the present time has negatively impacted the UK's teenagers' mental as well as physical aspects, which has led to increased anxiety, depression and hopelessness.

It has been recognised that the majority of the UK's teenagers are facing mental health issues due to the increasing fear of a changing climate. According to the report of MH, about 9 in 10 people in the UK felt anxious at least twice a week (Mentalhealth, 2025). On the other hand, the NHS report states that "Separation anxiety' has been the most common among younger children, whereas older children, as well as teenagers, tend to worry more about school or have social anxiety (Nhs, 2026). However, the report of the Woodland Trust highlights that 1 in 3 people in the UK are concerned about climate change, resulting in increased anxiety levels (Phillips, 2026). As per the analysis of Ojala *et al.* (2021), the increasing global awareness of the evidence of psychological impacts of climate change, particularly among teenagers, has remained fragmented as well as limited. Thus, anxiety has been identified as one of the most prevalent mental health conditions among UK teenagers, affecting nearly one in four, with significantly higher rates reported among teenage girls.

According to the World Health Organisation, about 41% of the UK young population are experiencing depression, resulting in increasing suicidal attempts to a great extent (Statista, 2026). On the other hand, the exposure to natural risk has increased eco-anxiety, resulting in exacerbating consequences of mental health, particularly among 33% Gen Z and 38% Millennials (Vankar, 2025). This signifies that Climate anxiety has been closely linked to higher instances of depression, anxiety, and self-harm symptoms among teenagers. Thus, beyond eco-anxiety, climate-related events such as flooding in the UK have been directly associated with increased PTSD and depression symptoms. It has been recognised that acknowledging

and validating young people's concerns is considered to be a crucial aspect rather than dismissing them, to prevent the exacerbation of more serious mental health problems.

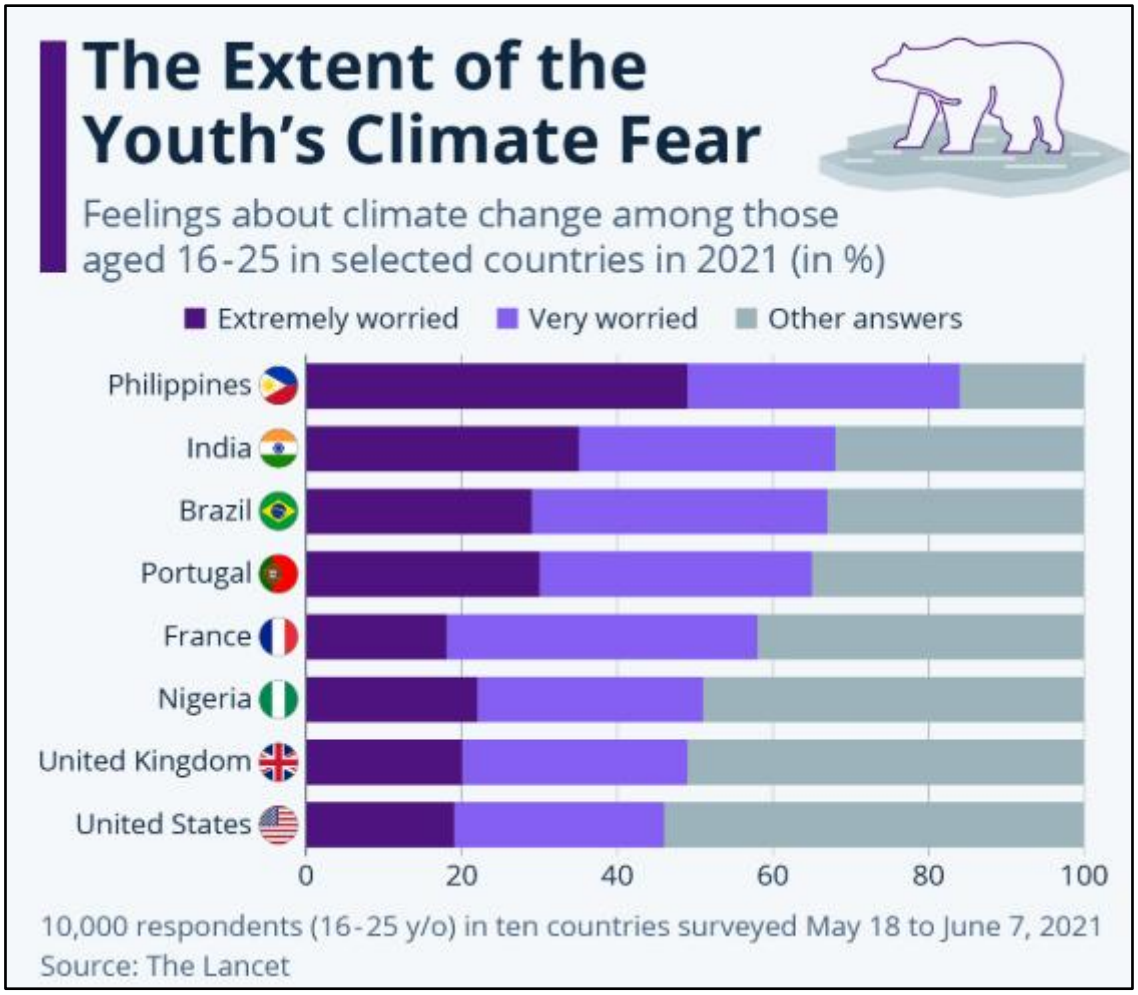

Figure 1.2: Extent of Youth climate fear across global countries

(Source: Buchholz, 2022)

Mental health problems can persist for months or years, with some individuals reporting anxiety, depression, and PTSD up to four years after an event. As per the above-mentioned figure, nearly 20% of UK youth are afraid of climate change, whereas 51% of the youth population are extremely worried about such change (Buchholz, 2022). Apart from this, the majority of the youths in the UK have experienced the psychological tension that is caused by the feelings of being trapped between the truth of climate as well as ecological destruction. The climate mental health crisis has already been hitting the destitute population. Additionally, 77% of participants from a survey of 10000 young people belonging to an age group between 16 and 25 stated that climate anxiety made them feel depressed (Kalmus, 2022). It has been recognised that the majority of young people reported that their feelings about climate change

negatively impacted their daily lives, including concentration and social relationships. Thus, the rationale behind conducting this research can help in evaluating certain causes of climate change as well as strategies for improving the mental health of youth.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

Aim

The thesis aims to investigate the impact of climate change anxiety on the mental health of teenagers in the UK, exploring psychological outcomes, coping mechanisms, and potential interventions.

Objectives

- **RO1:** To assess the prevalence and severity of climate change anxiety among UK teenagers.
- **RO2**: To examine the psychological effects of climate anxiety, including impacts on stress, depression, and self-esteem.
- **RO3:** To identify coping strategies, support systems, and interventions available to UK teenagers.

1.5 Thesis Questions

- **RQ:** How does climate change anxiety influence the mental health of UK teenagers, including stress, depression, and self-esteem?

1.6 Purpose of the research

The key purpose of this research is to evaluate the potential impacts of climate change anxiety on the young generation, which has led to increasing anxiety and depression levels. The increasing mental health crisis has led to increased suicidal attempts among the Uk's young population. The evaluation of the research can help in determining the prevalence of climate-related distress, anxiety, and depression in UK youth. Additionally, the thesis can investigate how youth manage climate anxiety, including the role of activism as a buffer. Apart from this, the evaluation of this thesis can provide evidence for school counsellors and mental health professionals in terms of developing targeted, constructive as well as supportive interventions. Thus, the research is considered to be a pivotal aspect for understanding the psychological cost of climate change among young people in the UK.

1.7 Methodological aspects

A systematic review will be conducted for this research by accumulating secondary qualitative information from existing literature. A Systematic Literature Review can be a pivotal aspect for providing a comprehensive, transparent, and reproducible summary of existing research based on climate change anxiety among the UK's young generation. Apart from this, the selection of the existing information will be performed in a systematic manner. The overall procedure will be elaborated within the methodological chapter. Apart from this, the information will be further interpreted through a thematic analysis in terms of meeting the research key aims and objectives.

1.8 Thesis structure

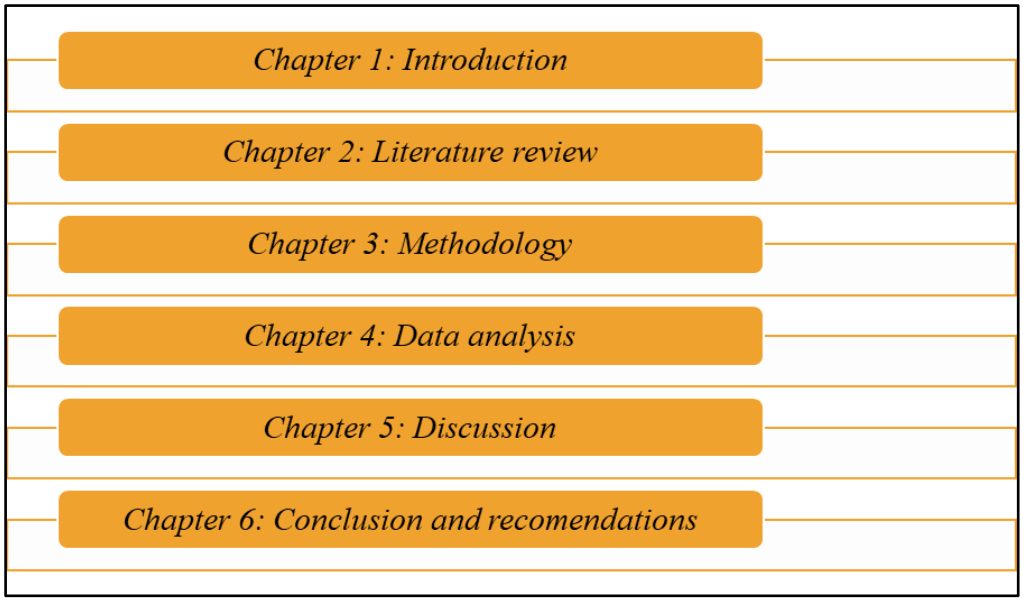

Figure 1.3: Research structure

(Source: Self-developed)

Chapter 2: Literature review/theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter of this dissertation is going to review the previous literature on climate change anxiety and its impact on teenagers, considering mental health. A synthesised evaluation of existing knowledge on this research topic is going to be reviewed through this session. Maltreatment and other types of family violence are seen as one of the most extreme stressors that a child can experience early in life (Sharratt *et al.* 2022). These valuable insights collected from the existing literary sources are to be used for comparison with the findings of the session, as well as to illustrate how climate change anxiety impacts the mental health of teenagers in a negative way. Theoretical aspects of the relevant topic, a literature gap, as well as a conceptual framework, are provided through this chapter on climate change anxiety and the mental health of teenagers.

2.2 Factors of Prevalence and severity of climate change anxiety among teenagers

Global, social and environmental factors

It has been recognised that the severity of climate change anxiety among the young generation has been increasing day by day. As per the views of Léger-Goodes *et al.* (2023), guilt, sadness, hopelessness, and anger are the main factors of eco-anxiety. The age group is recognised as the main factor that hinders the balance of the emotional factors among children. The early industrialisation and its impacts on biodiversity and wildlife have created a sense of emotions such as anger or sadness. In addition, COVID-19 has created an uncertain situation about the future, and children face problems dealing with this complex situation. The literary sources have clearly highlighted that climate change anxiety is not a pathological problem; it simplifies an emotional context among children. On the other hand, Crandon *et al.* (2022) have recognised the stressors such as bullying victimisation, child maltreatment, family violence, poverty and conflict. The increased anxiety about climate change directly impacts occupational roles. Léger-Goodes *et al.* (2023) examine aspects of emotion that manifest as internal emotion drivers, including guilt and hopelessness. Similarly, Crandon *et al.* (2022) broaden their analysis of emotional distress in young people by contextualising sources of external stress and systemically related vulnerabilities, which may result in higher levels of psychological distress in the young adult population.

The literary source by Niedzwiedz *et al.* (2025) has referred to eco-anxiety as distress arising from climate as well as environmental changes. It has been recognised that shaping the social,

political and environmental factors in order to handle the emotional stressors is difficult for children. The quantitative survey by Niedzwiedz *et al.* (2025) has recognised that the most affected people by eco-anxiety are the teenage group. The national-level policies to address climate change issues do not consider the mental health of children. On the contrary, the greenhouse gas emission, the governmental policies to address the situation, as well as the inadequate responses by industries are the significant pillars behind eco-anxiety (Lammel, 2025). Both the insights oppose that climate distress is an internal cognitive developmental problem for teenagers, whereas the other considers the condition as an external outcome of systemic problems such as emissions and government policies. Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and negative feelings about the future are promoted by the climate change policies, along with the negative responses. The child group from the age of 8 years in the UK are the most affected group who failed to process this environmental news. In other words, this age group included the consequences of climate change in their future and daily lives.

Reasons behind the increased severity among teenagers

Eco-anxiety within a country indicates the environmental impact on its population on mental health. Based on the views of Ayassamy *et al.* (2024), 45% of the population of a country is emotionally affected by environmental issues, such as anxiety. Sadness, anxiousness, anger, powerlessness, helplessness, and guilt are the feelings that promote stress and anxiety among teenagers in the way of addressing environmental issues. This literary source has reflected that the tension of job loss due to industrialisation, fear of health problems or environmental issues and the ineffective responses towards sustainable practices have impacted the mental health of teenagers deeply. This age group has a limited ability of strategic thinking as well as decision making, which has increased the severity of anxiety among children due to climate change anxiety. On the contrary, Soutar and Wand (2022), have highlighted that a poor understanding of environmental change and climate change consequences has created anxiety among the population. The worry for the future is the fundamental reason behind this distress and the children's group is the most affected segment as per the understanding capability. The authors from this literary source have clearly recognised that climate change solutions have a multitude of immediate and long-term benefits for business. Strategic thinking workers behind the policies of greenhouse gas reduction or biodiversity preservation. Teenagers who have less insight into these segment results are affected by the current context of climate change.

Based on the views of Fatima *et al.* (2022), studies have recognised that young generations are more likely to face poor mental health consequences regarding anxiety and depression.

These are caused by impending climate disaster, ecological grief, pre-traumatic stress and experiencing eco-anxiety. The young generation has created a thinking about climate change facts from the locality, such as high pollution, working culture, environmental policies and organisational innovation towards climate change. On the contrary, Hajek and König (2022), have highlighted the relation among Climate Anxiety, Loneliness as well as Perceived Social Isolation. It has been recognised that Increased air pollution, extreme temperatures, and melting of the polar ice caps signify that climate change is taking place. The insights oppose each other as one defines the specific emotions such as powerlessness and guilt as the major promoters of stress among teenagers, while the other proposes that anxiety is due to the lack of basic understanding of environmental change and its impact. The fear of maintaining the ecological foundation and keeping the existence of human beings has increased the dress level among the population. A negative association between climate change anxiety and the disrupted mental health of teenagers have taken place in this segment. The majority of studies have recognised that the mental development of teenagers is not balanced with the complex issue of climate change.

2.3 Psychological effects of climate anxiety on the mental health of teenagers

Chronic conditions

Psychological distress regarding chronic conditions and mental disorders is the consequence of climate change anxiety among teenagers. As per the views of Cosh *et al.* (2024), high levels of anxiety, depression, and PTSD are linked to both direct and indirect exposure to climate disasters. It has been recognised from the literary source that eco-anxiety and mental health symptoms are positively related. Younger people in the country failed to understand the processed divergence pattern and became anxious by thinking about the uncertain future. In the long term, this stress level has promoted a pathological trait and created emotional distress. On the contrary, Souza (2022), has reflected the mental health consideration as “Ecological Anxiety Disorder". The negative normative influence of the climate change issue on teenagers on the earth and the inherent influence of normative values are the main factors behind this mental disorder. The insights contradict each other as one draws attention to the development of specific clinical conditions such as anxiety and depression in the young generation, while the other stresses the social aspect of the crisis by linking climate distress to loneliness and isolation.

Daily Life Interference

It has been recognised that daily life interference is the outcome of eco-anxiety among the teenage group in countries with huge climate change issues. Based on the views of Kankawale and Niedzwiedz, (2023), the concerns about climate change, which interfere with daily responsibilities. These include activities in school for teenagers and motivating the behavioural engagement towards recycling or consuming less meat. The high or chronic levels of eco-anxiety lead to emotional fatigue and psychological burnout, and teenagers fail to deliver an effective academic performance. On the other hand, Qiu and Qiu (2024), have highlighted that the daily functional activities are hampered when eco-anxiety becomes unmanageable. Eco-anxiety spurs environmentally sustainable behaviours, and the supporters of this aspect from the teenage group may be involved in short-term conflicts. The insights are complementary as they connect environmental distress to clinical mental health symptoms, as the former identifies the prevalence of anxiety, depression and PTSD after environmental exposure and the latter suggests the classification of these symptoms as a new specific Ecological Anxiety Disorder. It has been recognised from this context that eco-anxiety or climate change anxiety makes the environmental threats bigger. The habitual worrying thoughts damage the present productivity level. Cognitive-emotional impairments as well as the worry about climate change, include an enduring fear of environmental catastrophe.

Cognitive factors

It has been recognised that teenagers and young adults are considered to be increasingly experiencing a sense of loss regarding their future, driven by intense pressure, economic uncertainty, and anxiety over career paths. As per the analysis of Verlie (2024), deep-seated feelings that the future is hostile cause young people to feel that they have no place or future in a warming world. Apart from this, the article has also highlighted that the feeling of climate injustice is considered to be one of the major specific phenomena rather than feeling climate anxiety. On the other hand, Giannakopoulos (2025) has argued that teenagers experience anger, sadness, powerlessness, and, in severe cases, insomnia or depression due to the increasing condition of climate change. It has been recognised that the frequent, graphic, and media reporting on climate events plays an important role in contributing significantly to anxiety. Both insights support each other as they collectively demonstrate that climate issues hinder the ability of adolescents to perform daily tasks and engage in routine activities, especially when the distress is severe. Based on the age and development stage, teenagers are not capable of examining the vulnerabilities or the climate change facts. This situation has created a feeling of homelessness among this group, creating a sense of fear and leading to anxiety.

2.4 Highlighting the impacts on stress, depression, and self-esteem based on the psychological effects

The adolescents appear vulnerable since the developmental transitions could find the formation and future-oriented thinking intersect with perceived environmental uncertainty. In this context, Ogunbode *et al.* (2022) highlighted that climate anxiety contributes to enhancing stress responses and depressive symptoms by reducing self-esteem, particularly among teenagers in industrialised countries such as the UK. Furthermore, the psychological consequences could align with climate change awareness, such as chronic stress. The adolescents often report persistent concerns about environmental degradation, extreme weather and perceived political inaction. A cross-national aspect in which the climate concerns have been associated with sleeping disturbance, intrusive thoughts and lack of concentration, leading to the major factors of stress. In alignment with this, Yu *et al.* (2025) stated that the experiments derived from human subject experiments reveal movies as a helping factor to get sleep immediately, and also the traumatic movies can reduce the number of intrusive memories for a person as well. Both insights support each other as they collectively show that experiencing a hostile future and feelings of displacement are associated with extreme emotional and health problems such as powerlessness, insomnia, and depression. The mental health form UK reports recommend that the climate-related issues could impact negatively on the mental health of young people and school well-being assessments (NHS, 2023). The link between psychological distress and intervention as one identifies that climate anxiety increases stress and depressive symptoms by undermining self-esteem. Similarly, specific media use can be a coping strategy to reduce intrusive memories and promote healthy sleep patterns.

The sustained stress responses have been associated with environmental concerns by contributing to depressive symptoms. The depression among adolescents affected by eco-anxiety manifests as hopelessness about the future, leading to emotional fatigue and disengagement from long-term goals. In line with this, Mosca *et al.* (2025) reflected that the eco-anxiety dimensions, including rumination and personal threat aspects, have been strongly aligned with depressive symptoms and are able to reduce the positive well-being factors. This view provides insights into climate anxiety or situational concern.

The UK government climate adaptation reports note that climate-related fear may enhance the existing mental health inequalities, especially among the socially disadvantaged adolescents (Basistha *et al.* 2025). This inference highlights that the young adults who experienced anxiety or economic instability may interpret the environmental risks as of their insecurity and depressions. In line with this, a recent report has revealed that the youth mental

health impacts need to be considered as physical environmental risks (GOV.UK, 2025). This results in psychological well-being being part of national resilience strategies. Both insights support each other as they collectively highlight that climate-related issues and specific dimensions of eco-anxiety, such as rumination, have a negative effect on the mental health of young people and act as a barrier to positive well-being in school settings. This can identify the development of adolescence involving constructing beliefs about personal agency and social worth. The young people might internalise the feelings of guilt, believing their generation has inherited unsolvable problems in the context of an uncontrollable environmental crisis. Furthermore, some of the adolescents could show moral distress, especially when they feel their personal behaviours could not align with the environmental concepts.

Furthermore, Lutz *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that eco-anxiety and subjective well-being recommend complex effects on self-identity. While moderate environmental issues might enhance a sense of purpose and pro-environmental identity, excessive issues have been aligned with one's emotional burden to reduce self-confidence as well. Additionally, Žukauskienė *et al.* (2025) examined that eco-anxiety and psychological satisfaction connected with the environmental concern shaping emotional well-being to influence the way young people perceive their role in society. Both insights support each other as they collectively argue that the psychological effects of climate-related distress should be addressed in the same way as the physical health risks associated with environmental threats, especially to mitigate mental health inequalities among at-risk adolescents. Hence, the climate awareness needs to link with the identity formation and social belonging for some aspects, however, this enhances feelings of insignificance of helplessness. This divergence shows that self-esteem outcomes depend highly on coping strategies, social support and perceived effectiveness.

The social environments, peer networks and media exposure encourage the way adolescents interpret environmental risks. On this note, Mitchell *et al.* (2024) indicated that the repeated exposure to climatic disasters without constructive coping guidance can intensify emotional distress. On the other hand, adolescents engaged in supportive educational or community environments may experience lower depressive symptoms by promoting a sense of agency. The climate-related issues might increase existing psychological strain as an independent cause. The public health researchers need to consider eco-anxiety as a multiplier of adolescent mental health risks against the discrete disorders (Cosh *et al.* 2024). This view aligns with the broader ecological models of mental health to focus on psychological outcomes enhanced by the interactions between individual cognition, social environment and perceived future stability. Both insights support each other as climate-related distress plays a key role in how adolescents perceive themselves, their purpose and satisfaction with life, either through

the dual role of anxiety in creating meaning and emotional distress. This can also ensure QoL through the impact on a young person's perceived role and satisfaction in their community.

2.5 Strategies for the management of Climate Change Anxiety, available to UK teenagers

The implications of coping strategies are effective and crucial for the effective management of climate change anxiety among young people and teenagers in the UK. Nimo *et al.* (2025) defined that Mindfulness practices, such as breathing exercises and meditation, are effective approaches for handling anxiety to process fear and worrying feelings in a non-judgmental manner. This outlined that climate change invokes similar anxiety among young people and emotional reactions such as ecological grief and distress, highlighting the complexity of the effects of climate change. Similarly, Poonamallee (2025) also emphasised that Mindfulness practices within communities and among children have the potential benefits in climate change anxiety management through stress reduction, emotional regulation and improved focus. Both insights support each other by collectively suggesting that climate-related distress is an important multiplier of mental health risks, especially when there is repeated exposure to environmental threats that are not supported by effective coping strategies. The mindfulness-based practice, including breathing and meditation, resonates with spiritual, cultural and humanistic values that can be aligned with the psychological health of individuals for improving wellbeing. Moreover, Monsillion *et al.* (2023) have defined that Mindfulness practice including breathing exercise, yoga and meditation positively influences factors such as stress, personal wellbeing in school children. These insights jointly argue that mindfulness and meditation are effective approaches to the therapeutic management of climate-related distress through emotion regulation, stress reduction and the non-judgemental assessment of fear. By suggesting that mindfulness activities, including yoga, meditation and breathing exercises, can be used to boost personal well-being and reduce stress among students. Thus, the existing literature outlined that mindfulness-based practices are positively associated with managing climate change anxiety through enabling teenagers to regulate emotions, reduce stressful feelings and to foster resilience.

The emphasis on limiting media exposure is also a significant strategic approach that must be taken for enhancing the outcome regarding the effective management of climate change anxiety among teenagers. Shantz (2024) have emphasised that 45% of people experience sadness, anger and fear due to extensive media exposure of the climate change related news. Limiting the media exposure to children and the teenagers in the UK is crucial to address it and reduce the risk of climate change anxiety. In comparison, Maduneme (2024) has outlined that media exposure for prolonged time periods among young and college going students

have an adverse impact on their mineral stability due to fear of climate change consequences. Both insights support each other as they both highlight that regular exposure to climate-related media causes considerable disruptions to young people's emotional well-being through heightened levels of fear, sadness and anger about climate impacts. The increasing fear of extreme weather events, feeling of helplessness, features of the future along with perceived lack of action from communities and authorities drive climate change anxiety.

On the other hand, Amriwijaya and Anindita (2025) have emphasised that communities and societies can develop an action-oriented form of hope, focusing on developing strategies for addressing climate change. The comprehensive action-oriented form of hope can include community clean ups, volunteers, reducing plastic use and developing school environmental clubs that focus on reducing distress and anxiety through taking an actionable approach to address the issues. Venhof and Jeronimus (2026) defined that developing action-oriented and meaning-focused coping seems to foster a sense of agency and purpose among young individuals that assist in managing prolonged climate related distress. Similarly, both the insights support that encouraging action-oriented and meaning-focused coping strategies in communities allows young people to cope with their climate distress by feeling they have agency, meaning and hope. This reflected that the role of actionable approaches is significant as these are more focused on strengthening psychological wellbeing through boosting the rates of belongingness among young individuals. Thus, a collaboration of diverse coping and strategic approaches can be developed based on mediations, community-based actions and actionable community clean ups for managing the issues of climate change anxiety.

The school-based climate resilience education is another coping strategy which could manage climate change anxiety among the UK young adults. This intervention can focus knowledge, agency and collective problem-solving to transform anxiety into constructive engagement instead of considering mindfulness-focused ones. In this context, Ge *et al.* (2025) provided that adolescents receive structured climate education combining with the psychological coping guidance, levels of distress decrease while self-effectiveness enhances. These collectively indicate that targeted climate education that prioritises agency and collective action is more effective in reducing distress and increasing self-efficacy than mindfulness-only interventions. The educational programs that integrate environmental science with emotional literacy can be beneficial for the students to interpret climate information specifically.

Furthermore, Llistosella *et al.* (2023) stated that the resilience-focused climate education enhances the strengths of adolescents' sense of control to focus on their adaptive behaviours, community solutions and achievable actions against environments. Mottishaw and MacQuarrie (2025) highlighted the need for schools to consider students with both

environmental knowledge and coping skills to manage climate-related uncertainty. Both insights support each other as they collectively highlight that resilience education needs to integrate technical environmental knowledge with coping skills to enhance an adolescent's sense of control and promote adaptive and community-oriented responses. Resilient education can support adolescent emotional regulation and future optimisation by considering climate change as a solvable challenge. Hence, school-based resilience education can represent a practical and scalable intervention as it operates within existing educational structures by addressing both cognitive and emotional factors of eco-anxiety.

2.6 Theoretical underpinning

2.6.1 Psychoanalytic Theory of Eco-Anxiety

The psychoanalytic theory of eco-anxiety interprets climate distress as an expression of unconscious grief, loss and existential fear enhanced by perceived environmental destruction (Pihkala, 2022). This theory suggests that people respond to climate threats rationally with deep emotional procedures shaping with mental attachment, defence and identity. The adolescents can internalise fears about planetary decline as symbolic threats to safety, continuity and belonging. This can build anticipatory mourning for imagined futures, lost landscapes and intergenerational security.

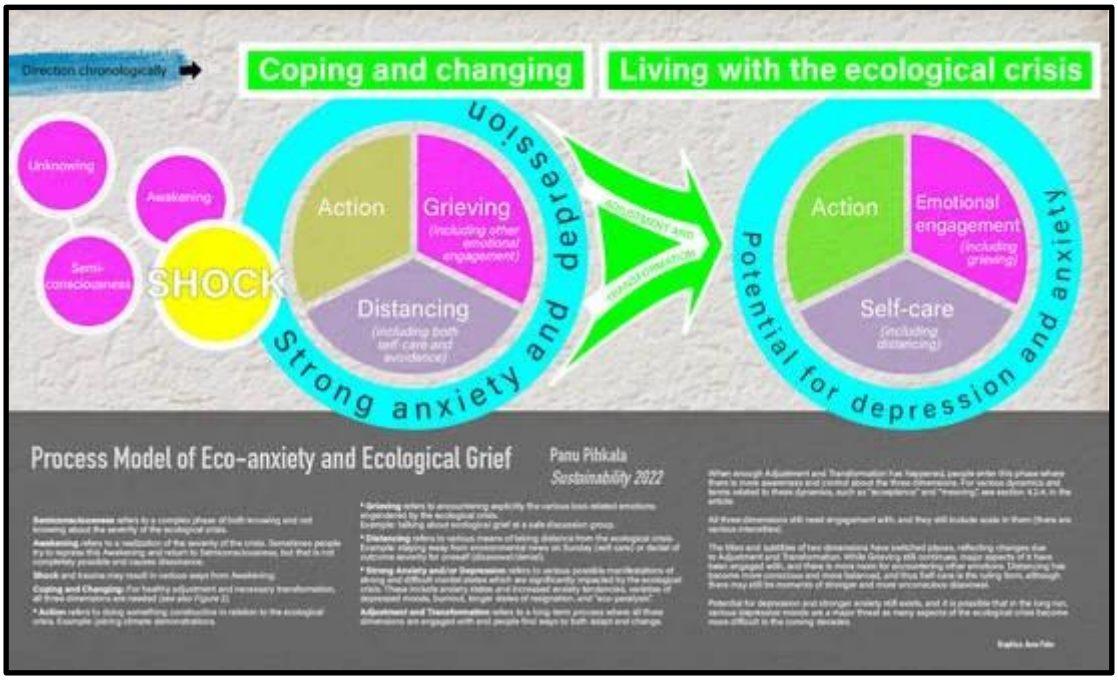

Figure 2.1: Psychoanalytic theory of eco-anxiety

(Source: Pihkala, 2022)

This theory suggests that young adults need to implement defence mechanisms including denial, displacements, intellectualisation in high grief (Pihkala, 2022). Eco-anxiety may surface as guilt, anger toward adults of institutions within teenage developmental stages with moral awareness. This aspect has been relevant with this research since eco-anxiety is considered here as a meaningful emotion signal reflecting attachment to the natural world and concern for the collective survival of UK teenagers. These unconscious dynamics are beneficial to explain the reason behind climate fears that persist when factual knowledge or reassurance is provided to them. This has highlighted the emotional need for UK teenagers with supportive environments.

2.6.2 Cognitive-Coping Framework

The cognitive coping framework enhances eco-anxiety with the appraisal possess, regulation and adaptation process. This framework has been derived from transactional stress theory with the meaning of focusing camping research as well. This framework can suggest that distress enhances when a person perceives environmental threats as significantly facing difficulties to control. The adolescents evaluate climate information in alignment with personal futures, social expectations and perceived agency. However, the coping is dynamic rather than defensive which the emotion-focused responses with worry can emerge as threats. Meaning-focused coping occurs to the young people for reinterpreting climate challenges through values, goals or collective identities that can keep psychological coherence (Jordan and Prayag, 2021). For example, the engagement in school sustainability projects, the community campaigns or pro-environmental behaviours can build a sense of purpose offset helplessness. This type of coping predicts high resilience, optimism and social connectedness even when anxiety remains there.

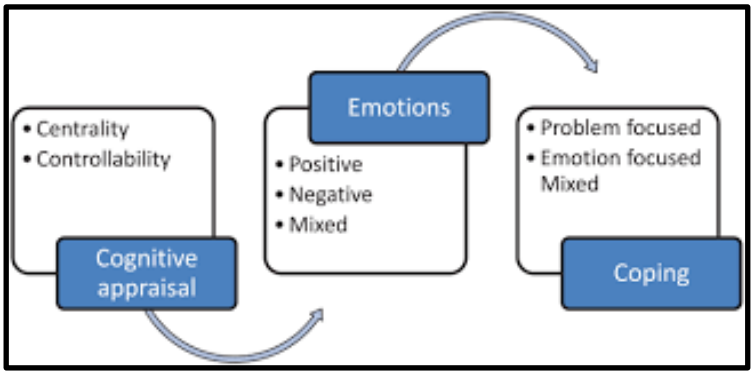

Figure 2.2: Cognitive-Coping Framework

(Source: Jordan and Prayag, 2021)

Furthermore, the framework identified coping effectiveness depending on available resources such as supportive adults, educational opportunities and peer networks as well (Jordan and Prayag, 2021). Adolescents may utilize meaningful construction to integrate environmental concerns in building identities where climate education and youth activism are highly visible. Hence, this framework could be beneficial for reducing eco-anxiety as stress by enhancing potential drivers such as motivations, collective responsibilities and psychological protective future orientations among the UK teenagers.

As a result, these both theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive explanation of eco-anxiety in adolescence. The psychoanalytic theory finds the emotional depth of climate distress to highlight unconscious grief, fear and defence processes associated with identity formation and perceived loss. Furthermore, the cognitive coping framework compliments how teenagers reinterpret climate threats' meaning, values and collective engagements. These two theories could highlight the adaptive potential and resilience by integration to understand eco-anxiety. This meaningful way could be helpful to the UK teenagers by simultaneously distressing and developmentally justified. This synthesis will support the balanced research interpretation to inform interventions by validating emotions while promoting agency, participations. The supportive environments for young people are required to avoid uncertainty beyond environmental challenges.

2.7 Conceptual framework

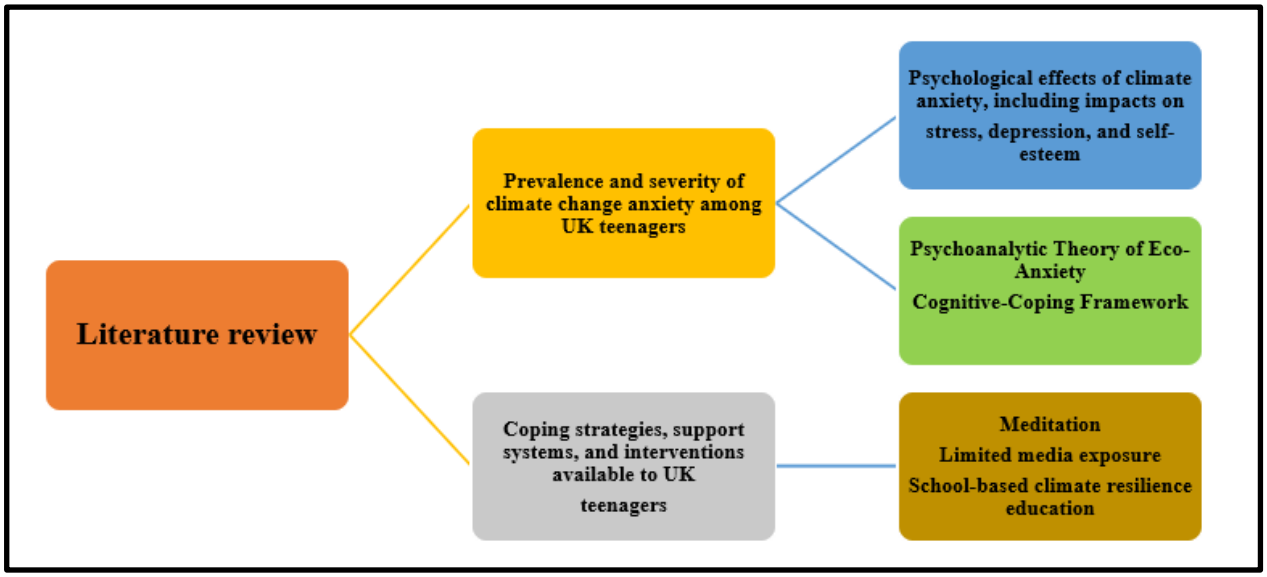

Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework

(Source: Self-made)

The conceptual framework of this research depicts climate change awareness as the major independent variable to motivate adolescent or young mental health outcomes. The psychoanalytic theory of eco-anxiety mediates this relationship to shape the way of interpreting environmental risks. Social support, climate education and perceived personal effectiveness function as moderating several factors to reduce negative outcomes. Furthermore, the cognitive-coping framework also assumes higher perceived environmental threats combined with lower perceived control leading to poor mental health outcomes. The coping strategies with scientific interventions have been depicted here to support children with adaptive environments in the climate concerns. This could translate into constructive engagement over psychological distress.

2.8 Literature gaps

The literature gap has been identified in relation to UK adolescents with eco-anxiety research. The lack of empirical data derived from global or cross-national samples, rather than UK-specific studies, has highlighted limitations on contextual relevance. Furthermore, the research might measure general anxiety instead of differentiating climate-specific psychological mechanisms. Moreover, limited longitudinal evidence aligns with investigating the way eco-anxiety develops across young adults in the UK. These gaps are required to inform targeted mental health strategies to ensure the topic's relevance. Environmental policies are associated with adolescent psychological needs through this research.

2.9 Chapter summary

The above-mentioned chapter has concluded that the early industrialisation, as well as its impacts on biodiversity and wildlife, has created a sense of emotions such as anger or sadness. In addition, COVID-19 has created an uncertain situation about the future, and children face problems dealing with this complex situation. Apart from this, sadness, anxiousness, anger, powerlessness, helplessness, and guilt are considered to be the feelings that promote stress and anxiety among teenagers in the way of addressing environmental issues. On the other hand, the ineffective and irrelevant thinking about this segment has created a mental shock among the young people. The fear of maintaining the ecological foundation and keeping the existence of human beings has increased the stress level among the population to a great extent. Additionally, in the long term, this stress level has promoted a pathological trait and created emotional distress.

It has been recognised that daily life interference is the outcome of eco-anxiety among the teenage group in countries with huge climate change issues. Younger people within the country failed to understand the processed divergence pattern and became anxious by thinking about the uncertain future. Thus, eco-anxiety spurs environmentally sustainable behaviours, and the supporters of this aspect from the teenage group may be involved in short-term conflicts. Mindfulness practice has included breathing exercises, yoga and meditation, which positively influence factors such as stress and personal well-being in school children. In addition, the communities and societies develop an action-oriented form of hope, as well as focusing on developing strategies for addressing climate change issues. Thus, developing action-oriented and meaning-focused coping seems to foster a sense of agency, which leads to purpose among young individuals who assist in managing prolonged climate-related distress.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The chapter had explained overall methodological approaches that were used within this research in terms of meeting the aims and objectives. Secondary data analysis is a cost-efficient, easily obtainable and quick way to use existing data in order to answer new research questions (Kelly *et al.* 2024). Based on this aspect, the chapter had evaluated the key methodological paradigm that had been integrated within this thesis in terms of evaluating key findings. Additionally, the chapter evaluated the specific data collection and analysis methods that were essential for data interpretation as well as evaluation of the research findings.

3.2 Research philosophy

The philosophy of interpretivism paradigm had been used within this research in terms of evaluating social reality regarding the effects of climate change anxiety on teenagers' mental health aspects. As per the opinion of William (2024), Interpretivist philosophy states that social reality is considered to be subjective, multiple and socially constructed rather than objective. However, the low generalizability of using interpretivism philosophy had been a potential limitation within this research that hindered the use of a large sample size. Apart from this, the use of such a paradigm was effective for analysing the key factors that have enhanced climate change anxiety in recent times. On the other hand, the methodological paradigm had emphasised that realities are constructed through social processes and interactions. Thus, interpretivist philosophy was selected within this research in terms of developing a suitable research design and gaining a philosophical understanding of climate change anxiety.

3.3 Ethical consideration

The ethical standard of this research was maintained throughout the research in terms of making the key findings reliable and valid in the context. In this respect, the research had ensured to avoid the copy-pasting practice in terms of maintaining University guidelines based on plagiarism issues. Apart from this, avoidance of such practice had helped the research to follow the UK Copyright Act 1988 as well. The Copyright Act 1988 in the UK ensures that contractual terms, such as those in a database license, cannot restrict specific fair dealing exceptions for research or private study (Gov, 2026). Additionally, the research had already ensured the avoidance of information misinterpretation within this research. Thus, the influence of such practices had helped this thesis to maintain ethical standards.

3.4 Research approach

The qualitative research approach was selected within this research in terms of accumulating secondary information for evaluating the key factors and the effect of climate change anxiety on teenagers. As per the analysis of Lim (2025), the qualitative research strategy is considered to be an iterative, flexible approach aimed at understanding complex human experiences, behaviours, and social contexts through non-numerical data. It had been recognised that the use of such an approach was beneficial for this research to describe the key findings with a deeper understanding. However, the high resource intensity of such methodological approaches was identified as a potential limitation. In essence, the research had focused on using a specific searching strategy in terms of addressing such potential limitations. On the other hand, Phillips (2023) highlighted that qualitative research had been essential in social sciences, psychology, and health research for understanding the reasons behind behaviours. Thus, the selection of such a methodological approach was effective in evaluating the key factors of climate change anxiety as well as its effects on teenagers in the present times.

3.5 Research strategy

A deductive research strategy was used within this thesis in terms of developing a suitable research design for evaluating the key factors of increasing climate change anxiety and its impacts on teenagers. As per the analysis of van Woerden (2025), the deductive strategy provides a structured, efficient framework for validating hypotheses, ensuring high precision in research, and delivering immediate clarity in teaching or decision-making. It had already been recognised that the use of such a strategy helped this research to integrate a deeper context of theoretical perspectives in terms of understanding the relevance of the key findings to the research topic. The influence of such a strategy was beneficial in answering the research question by meeting the key objectives.

3.6 Study design

A systematic review design was incorporated within this research in terms of accumulating secondary information from existing peer-reviewed journals based on climate change anxiety as well as its impacts on teenagers. As per the analysis of Shaheen *et al.* (2023), systematic reviews are considered to be critical in research and evidence-based practice, acting as the highest level of evidence to minimise bias by comprehensively identifying, appraising, and synthesising all relevant studies on a specific question. However, the selection bias was identified as a potential limitation of such methodological design that hindered the data collection procedure in the initial stage. In this respect, the research ensured to utilise specific

data collection procedures in terms of addressing such potential issues. It has been recognised that the systematic review design has influenced this thesis to accumulate information in a systematic way, in terms of enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. Thus, the use of systematic review design was beneficial in selecting secondary information that is based on climate change anxiety and its effects on teenagers.

3.7 Data collection method

3.7.1 Search strategy

The research has utilised a keyword searching strategy as a data collection procedure in terms of accumulating secondary data information from peer-reviewed journals. As highlighted by Abusaada and Elshater (2024), using a keyword search strategy in secondary research is considered to be an essential aspect for efficiently navigating the vast amount of existing information. The use of such a strategy helped to find highly relevant, niche, or long-tail information about climate change anxiety that broad searches would miss as well as ensured the research is in-depth.

3.7.2 Framing thesis Question (PICO)

PICO	***Search Terms***
Population	UK teenagers belonging from age group between 13 and 19
Intervention	Interventions based on the home and school settings
Comparison	Adolescents with lower vs. higher levels of climate anxiety
Outcome	Mental health outcomes, including diagnosed disorders, psychological distress, emotional responses, and functional impairment
SETTING	Systematic review of empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals, specifically focusing on the UK context.

Table 3.1: PICOS framework

(Source: Self-developed)

The PICOS framework is considered to be a structured, five-component tool used in systematic reviews in terms of defining precise research questions, guiding search strategies, and establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria (Hudays *et al.* 2023). The above-mentioned table highlights the factors that helped this research to develop a research question in terms of conducting a systematic review.

3.7.2 Data Search procedure

Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) is the National Library of Medicine (NLM)'s controlled, hierarchical vocabulary used to index, catalogue, and search over 19,000 biomedical and health-related articles, books, and documents (Nlm, 2026). The use of MeSH ensured accuracy by linking varied terminology to standardised, annually revised concepts, most notably in PubMed and MEDLINE. Apart from this, secondary databases used for selecting peer-reviewed journals are PubMed, CINAHL, Cochrane Library and MedlinePlus. The article that was selected for this review was published after 2018. The reason behind selecting such a long tenure had ensured the reliability and validity of the information. Additionally, the incorporation of inclusion and exclusion criteria regarding the selection of 12 specific articles has been effective for this research.

3.7.3 Hand Search

The hand searching practice was conducted after the selection of the articles in terms of ensuring their relevance to the thesis objectives. As per the analysis of Golub and Szostak (2025), the hand searching strategy ensures maximum comprehensiveness, reduces publication bias, and locates studies not yet indexed or inaccurately indexed. The use of such a strategy was beneficial in identifying relevant studies, particularly abstracts, letters, and grey literature that were missed by electronic databases, which may only capture about half of all studies.

3.7.4 Grey Literature

The research excluded grey literature, as the articles were not published commercially. However, the grey literature is essential for minimising publication bias in systematic reviews. This signifies that including this material ensured a comprehensive, up-to-date evidence base, reducing the risk of missing studies with null or negative results. However, grey literature was excluded in terms of ensuring the validity and reliability of the research information.

3.7.5 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

PICO	*INCLUSION CRITERIA*	*EXCLUSION CRITERIA*
Population	Included articles having information of UK based population	Excluded articles having information other than UK based population
Intervention	Included articles using interventions based on the home and school settings	Excluded articles using interventions other than home and school settings
Comparison	Articles having information on climate change anxiety among Adolescents.	Articles excluded that are having information other than climate change anxiety among Adolescents.
Outcome	Empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals	Excluded existing systematic reviews
SETTING	Included articles based on the healthcare setting	Excluded articles other than healthcare settings

Table 3.2: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

(Source: Self-developed)

3.7.6 Screening results

Database	*Search Dates*	*Inclusion Year*	*Search Results*	*Excluded*	*Included*
EMBASE	22.1.2026	2018-2026	226	224	2
CINAHL	25.1.2026	2018-2026	156	154	2
PubMed	28.1.2026	2018-2026	125	121	4
Google Scholar	2.2.2026	2018-2026	65	63	2
HAND SEARCH	10.2.2026	2018-2026	14	2	2
TOTAL ARTICLES					12

Table 3.3: Screening result

(Source: Self-developed)

3.8 Study Selection

- ***Step 1:*** The initial stage for integrating the inclusion and exclusion strategy was the screening of the articles.
- ***Step 2:*** In this stage, the title and abstracts of the article was screened in terms of minimising bias. An article's abstract signifies the overall journal summarisation, which helped in understanding the article's relevance to the thesis context. Thus, articles with no abstracts have been excluded in the initial stage of the screening process.
- ***Step 3:*** In this stage, the selected articles were downloaded and proceed through a hand search approach in terms of determining the articles' aims, objectives and key findings. This helped in determining the relevance of the article in the context of the research topic and question.
- ***Step 4:*** The final stage was accomplished through the selection of articles for this research in terms of answering the research question.

3.9 Summary of how many articles were left

Analysing the overall screening process, it was recognised that 12 peer-reviewed journals have been selected within this research in terms of meeting the thesis aims and objectives. The screening process has been an essential approach for this research. The screening process in this systematic review was a rigorous, two-stage method that has been used to select relevant studies based on pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Reviewing the articles' abstracts was helpful in understanding their relevance to the thesis topic.

3.10 PRISMA

The PRISMA is considered to be an effective framework for a systematic review as it helps in ensuring transparency, accuracy and completeness (van den Akker *et al.* 2023). Additionally, PRISMA is considered to be applicable for various types of systematic reviews as well as helps in producing high-quality, evidence-based, and replicable results. The Prisma framework was ensured for reducing bias within the research by integrating identification and completing the screening process. The PRISMA framework was developed in the findings chapter before the data collection procedures *[refer to Appendix 1]*. Thus, the influence of such

a framework was beneficial in selecting the most appropriate and relevant articles that suit the thesis aims and objectives completely.

3.11 Quality Assessment

Quality assessment (QA) in systematic reviews was considered to be a critical appraisal of included studies in terms of evaluating their methodological rigour, risk of bias, and applicability. As per the analysis of De Cassai *et al.* (2025), Quality assessment involves using standardised, domain-specific tools to assess, document, and report the trustworthiness of evidence. The use of such tools within this research was effective in determining the relevance of the information that has been interpreted within the findings. Moola *et al.* (2017) have highlighted the use of the JBI case control study checklist tool in terms of checking the quality of information used within a research paper. Based on this aspect, this research focused on using CAPS tools in terms of determining the information quality as well as enhancing the research findings' validity and reliability.

3.12 Data Characteristics

Evaluating data characteristics within a systematic review involves rigorously extracting, appraising, and synthesising study findings to minimise bias and ensure reproducibility (Shaheen *et al.* 2023). The data extraction table was formed within the findings and analysis chapter after the selection of 12 peer-reviewed articles. The data characteristic table evaluated the aims and objectives of each selected journal in terms of understanding their relevance for this research. Additionally, the strengths and limitations of the research was determined in each article, which was beneficial in reducing bias. It has been recognised that the proper extraction of study characteristics is considered to be crucial for avoiding erroneous conclusions that could lead to ineffective or harmful interventions.

3.13 Data Synthesis

Thematic analysis was conducted within this research in terms of analysing the research's key aims and objectives. The information is interpreted through a thematic analysis, which has helped in understanding the concept of climate change anxiety that affects teenagers' mental and physical health aspects. As per the analysis of Christou (2022), thematic analysis is considered to be a widely used, flexible qualitative research method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. Based on this aspect, 4 objective-oriented themes was developed using keywords in terms of conducting thematic analysis.

The stages of thematic analysis

Step 1: The initial stage of thematic analysis determined in depth understanding of the thesis context that helped in developing keywords.

Step 2: The second stage of thematic analysis was focused on developing the key words that are systematically labelled and organised as meaningful features of the data.

Step 3: The third stage is considered to be the searching by examining the codes created in step two, looking for relationships or similarities to merge them into potential, overarching themes.

Step 4: The fourth stages ensured the themes work in relation to the coded data and the entire dataset.

Step 5: The fifth stage is considered to be the theme defining stages. In this stage, the themes were defined in terms of addressing the research aims and objectives.

3.14 Methodological Limitations

Lack of quantitative measures regarding the data collection approach has been identified as a potential limitation of this research. This resulted in a reduction in the in-depth analysis of the research findings. Additionally, budget and time constraint was a potential limitation that had criticised the research findings. For instance, a few articles in the data sources required access permission, which were excluded from this research.

3.15 Chapter summary

The above-mentioned chapter has concluded that the screening process in this systematic review is a rigorous, two-stage method that was used to select relevant studies based on pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Additionally, the Prisma framework was ensured for reducing bias within the research by integrating identification and completing the screening process.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The chapter examines the results of the systematic review by summarising the qualitative data on climate change anxiety among UK teens, based on the selected peer-reviewed articles on the subject. Thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic approach to analysing qualitative data (Wæraas, 2022). The findings are organised according to the major research themes in line to the study objectives, showing the patterns, repetitive results, and significant differences in the literature. The chapter critically examines the effect of climate anxiety on psychological outcomes like stress, depression, and self-esteem and also the factors and strategies that lead to these effects. Therefore, the thematic analysis approach allows synthesizing various research results, which will give an all-inclusive insight into the mental health consequences of climate change anxiety in adolescents.

4.2 Presenting qualitative results

Author	**Aim**	**Objectives**	**Methodology**	**Findings**	**Themes**
Lawrance *et al.* (2022)	The study aims to evaluate the impact of climate change as global challenges on mental health condition of people	To evaluate the psychological responses of young pope in UK due to global challenges such as climate change	Conducted an online survey between Aug 5 and Oct 26 2020 by involving people aging from 16-24 years in UK	The results indicate that the concerns of life disruption is moderate to high along with mild symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress	**Theme 1- Key factors associated with climate change anxiety among UK to teenagers consists of sadness, hopelessness, anger and guilt, causing daily functional impairment**
Lawrance *et al.* (2022)	The aim of the study is to evaluate the impact of climate change and the significance of	To provide a comprehensive narrative review on the impact of climate	The study has adopted a narrative review for analysing and assessing existing study on	The findings suggested that effective actions that centred climate justice reduces the current and future	

	emotional response on mitigating climate action	change and its interaction with mental health and wellbeing	climate change and its impact on mental health	mental health burden	
Giannakopoulos (2025)	The aim of the study is to review the global and interdisciplinary research on psychological impact of climate change in on critical developmental c stage	To analyse the mental health outcome of climate change and its integration into climate adaptation frameworks	Narrative review has been integrated in the study for exploring the impact of climate change on children and adolescent mental health	The findings identifies cultural practices, education and youth climate engagement strategy for improving mental health outcome of young children	
Yang *et al.* (2026)	The study aims to explore the specific symptoms for example hyper vigilance or anhedonia might function as potential links within PTSD and depression.	To involve sleep problems and other symptoms with potential bridging symptom group	1444 adolescents affected by the Zhouqu debris flow. Participants were assessed at 3-, 15- and 27-months post-disaster.	The symptoms within the arousal and reactivity closure have been exhibited with high and stable BEI across 2 years. However, the specific bridge symptoms shifted across phases, as startle and irritability were more influential within 3 and 15 months. The network comparison revealed that the limited structural overlaps across the	**Theme 2- Sleep disturbance, widespread distress and trauma are key psychological effects of climate anxiety that is causing stress, depression and self-esteem of UK teenagers**

				time highlights the stage-specific changes in comorbidity patterns.	
Venhof and Jeronimus, (2026)	The study aims to generate insights that are able to inform public health strategies that support mental wellbeing, resilience and also adaptive engagement within the context of climatic changes.	To focus on rapid climate change and its anticipation impacts trigger significant worries and distress within vulnerable groups.	The research lies within mixed-methods design with combining quantitative data on emotions; responses to climatic changes with qualitative insights within emotional & psychological needs of young adults. The online survey comprises 3 analytical distinct studies with presenting 30 study reports.	The findings underscore the key needs for multi-level public health responses towards climate-related emotions. These are simultaneously mitigating the emotional needs, structural barriers and also the opportunities for meaningful engagement.	
Lai *et al.* (2026)	The research study aimed to conduct a systematic review and the meta-analysis of the quantify risks of mental health illness and also suicide from the	To reduce the outdoor time and the physical activity among the younger age group with the lower capacity for thermoregulati	The systematic review and the meta-analysis was further conducted following the 2020 PRISMA guidelines. The key protocol for the work was	The findings suggested that the need for early life interventions and the evidence-based adoption policies are considered for preventing climate-induced mental illness and suicide.	

	high temperature extremes those are employing a structured population-exposure-comparator-outcome-study.	on, resulting within a sedentary lifestyle with reduced body fitness and elevated risk of mental illness.	registered on PROSPERO. The adolescents aged ≤24 years within 10 to 24 years to closely reflect on the period of adolescent growth and transition to adulthood.	Optimizing the policies will further be essential for high and upper-middle income countries that are among more scientific evidence from the lower-income economies that are warranted.	
Cosh *et al.* (2024)	The aim of the study is to focus or explore on the relationships between eco-anxiety with validated mental health outcomes, specifically psychological distress and the symptoms of the major affective disorders.	The adverse impacts of climatic changes on mental health is a burgeoning area although findings are inconsistent. The key impacts are aligned to the emerging concepts of eco-anxiety by representing distress within relation to climate changes and might be related to	EBSCO, ProQuest as well as Web of Science databases have been searched for the studied adult samples quantifying eco-anxiety. The symptoms of psychological distress and the major affective disorders are assessed.	83 studies were performed with k=35 studies that were involved within the review.	**Theme 3- Climate change is negatively associated with higher rates of depression young people in UK that leads to clinical depression and anxiety**

		mental health.			
Crandon *et al.* (2022)	The aim of the study is to provide an overview of the current evidence to inform the mental health's setting to climate change	To analyse the impact that climate change have on individuals' mental health along with its clinical implications for community and system-wide responses	The study has integrated a narrative and systematic review for analysing the influence that climate change initiatives have on enhancing mental health and wellbeing through community-based educations	The findings suggested that a comprehensive, community and system-wide response along with advocacy and education is crucial for offering guidance on mental health assessment and clinical risks from climate change. The findings also suggested that mental health professionals must lead on climate action and sustainability in healthcare.	
Wahid *et al.* (2023)	The aim of the study is to investigate common dental disorders including depression and anxiety that are impacted by climate change.	To examine climate-related and socio-demographic correlates of depression and anxiety	The data has been gathered from 2019 and 2020 that consist of quantitative information to comprehend the climate change implication on common mental health disorder	The findings of the study revealed that individual experience of climate related shocks and other stressors have an importance associated with the burden of depression and anxiety.	

Nimo *et al.* (2025)	The aim of the study to find sustainable and positive coping mechanism for dealing with the mounting psychological and emotional load of climate change	To investigate the climate change and its role in invoking similar to anxiety or emotional reactions such as ecological grief among young people	The study has integrated as secondary qualitative approaches that has been integrated for obtaining existing information on the impact of climate change in invoking the	The findings outlined that the mindfulness intervention along with cognitive reframing and encouraging environmental engagement have positive influence on navigating the emotional toll of climate change	**Theme 4- Mindfulness practices and community-based action-oriented climate change strategy are effective for enhancing the climate change anxiety among Teenagers in the UK**
Singh (2025)	The study aims to analyse b the impact of climate anxiety among youth, indigenous communities, and vulnerable Population, marked by fear, helplessness and sadness	To evaluate the impact that the educational curricula along with psychological therapies have a community driven interventions development for climate	The study on psychology behind climate anxiety has integrated a secondary approach through accessing and gathering information on climate anxiety, an effective community-based intervention for	The findings outlined that the implications such as Psychological Therapies are effective for enhancing health outcomes impacted by climate change including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	

		management	improving the mental health outcome of young people.		
Jackson *et al.* (2025)	The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of school-based climate change literacy programmes for children under the age of 18 to enhance climate anxiety management among youth	To investigate the effectiveness of school-based climate change literacy programme in building resilience and try supporting emotional wellbeing o of children in school under the age of 18 for reducing the metal impact of climate change	Cochrane Handbook of Systematic Reviews of Interventions has been adhered and complied with in the study for conducting systematic review of the existing information and articles.	The findings of the study defined that the development of a community and social network is effective and crucial to foster adaptive capacities and implement action-oriented learning. The findings also outline that action-oriented learning along with critical thinking and development of cognitive flexibility is crucial to provide social support and adaptive models in implementing climate actions.	

Table 4.1: Thematic Table

(Source: Self-created)

4.3 Key Thematic Analysis

4.3.1 Factors of Prevalence and severity of climate change anxiety among teenagers

The prevalence of climate change anxiety among the youth is emphasised by a combination of direct environmental exposure and the chronic awareness of ecological degradation. According to Giannakopoulos (2025), globally, 50% of children and adolescents are worried

about climate change, while 75% perceive their future as frightening. This statistic highlights that the nature of existential distress is increasing and has a normative response to a legitimate global threat. However, the severity of this anxiety is exacerbated by a perceived lack of agency and the relative inaction of adult leadership.

Psychological symptoms in adolescents have an influence on specific demographic and geographic factors, such as urban and rural settings. Giannakopoulos (2025) claimed that the severity of mental health impacts is disproportionately higher among marginalised populations and those living in areas with high climate vulnerability, such as regions prone to extreme weather events like flooding or wildfires. These have an impact on localised stressors with developmental vulnerabilities, including physiological sensitivity and dependence on caregivers. These also increase the emotional instability among the teenagers by fostering chronic anxiety and feelings of powerlessness regarding their future. Therefore, the intersection of systemic inequities and environmental disruption creates a complex landscape of risk for teenage mental well-being.

It has been recognised that Climate change anxiety among teenagers commonly presents as sadness, hopelessness, anger, as well as guilt. A major segment of teenagers is reported to face these emotions, which cause daily functional impairment. Difficulty sleeping or concentrating and feeling a sense of betrayal by governments, as well as feelings of helplessness regarding a frightening future, are the consequences of these feelings. As per the views of Lawrance *et al.* (2022), respondents were asked to recognise the degree to which they experienced a wide range of emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Feelings of anger, disgust, shame, guilt, outrage, concern, and disappointment were all significantly more prominent in response to climate change than to the pandemic. In addition, the breadth of emotions, which respondents reported, although at a moderate level, as well as suggest interest along with emotional engagement with both crises are recognised as relatively strong. Helplessness, frustration, disappointment, concern, and anxiety were among the most strongly experienced emotions across crises among the teenagers. These negative feelings not only impact the regular performance and well-being of teenagers but also create long-term anxiety symptoms. Thus, Young people commonly expressed moderate feelings of distress about both crises, particularly when considering the future and the impacts on public health and the environment.

On the other hand, Lawrance *et al.* (2022) have provided a narrative review that offers a broader theoretical and clinical framework in terms of understanding the mechanisms of climate-related harm. It has been recognised that the adverse feelings of teenagers synthesise evidence on how climate change acts as a component, such as a threat multiplier for mental

health. It can indicate the categorising impacts into three pathways, such as direct or extreme weather events, indirect or economic disruption and food insecurity, and vicarious or anxiety stemming from the awareness of the crisis. From this article, the cultures of colonisation have been recognised, which disconnect people from lands, eco-systems as well as traditional practices of sustainability. It is living with the beyond-human world, and has both contributed to and perpetuated the climate crisis.

4.3.2 Psychological effects of climate anxiety on the mental health of teenagers

The thematic analysis revealed that climate anxiety produces important psychological effects among teenagers in the UK, which are mostly manifested in sleep disorders, generalized emotional instability, and trauma-related reactions. On the other hand, the cumulative effect of these is heightened amounts of stress, depression, and diminished self-esteem, which proves climate anxiety as a serious mental health issue. Among the most outstanding discoveries is the high occurrence of sleep disturbances associated with climate related worry. Insomnia, intrusive thoughts, inability to have regular sleeping patterns are common among teenagers who constantly worry about environmental degradation and uncertainty of the future. In this, Lai *et al.* (2026) emphasize that adolescents are exposed to climate-related stressors, including extreme heat, which are linked to the elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes and suicidal tendencies. Sleep disturbance also contributes to emotional instability, lowering cognitive performance and exposing the person to anxiety and depressive symptoms. This is in line with the rest of the literature, which suggests that disturbed sleep is both a symptom and a cause of psychological distress among climate-anxious young people.

Besides sleep problems, general emotional distress also became a prominent theme. Teenagers complain of chronic fear, hopelessness, sadness, and anger about climate change. These feelings are usually compounded by the perceived lack of movement by governments and institutions resulting in a feeling of disempowerment. Venhof and Jeronimus, (2026) indicates that unmet emotional needs like the security and hope needed are obstacles to adaptive coping hence emanating distress. This ongoing emotional load exacerbates the stress levels and predisposes depressive symptoms especially in adolescents who are not well equipped to cope with such stress or have no social structures to rely on. In addition, the analysis demonstrates that there are trauma-related reactions, such as pre-traumatic stress and ecological grief. Other than that, teenagers tend to foresee the occurrence of environmental disasters that are going to happen and they experience chronic and psychological strain as in post-traumatic stress responses. This foresight anxiety interferes with normal functioning, school performance, and social life. Overall, the end result of these

experiences that are traumatising in nature is a huge drop in self-esteem since the adolescents internalise feeling powerless and feel incapable of affecting environmental outcomes.

The interrelationship between trauma and emotional dysfunction is a highly important issue of research in the measurement of long-term mental health of adolescents. Yang *et al.* (2026) reveal that arousal symptoms, especially sleep disturbances and irritability, constitute the central bridge nodes between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms. This implies that during adolescence, individuals face general distress due to environmental or natural catastrophes. The ensuing physiological stimulation does not allow emotional restoration and maintains a state of persistent stress. Therefore, sleeping disturbances have side effects and also act as a comorbidity between trauma and depression.

The stability of these psychological networks indicates that trauma-induced distress has a lasting impact on an adolescent's self-perception and emotional regulation. Moreover, Yang *et al.* (2026) also said that bridge symptoms like hypervigilance and startle responses remain consistent over time, and erode a sense of individual safety and self-esteem. This long-term pre-traumatic and post-traumatic stress condition ensures a vicious circle in which the teenager develops a sense of being more and more unable to control their inner emotional world. Therefore, the management of arousal and sleep quality is a condition which is central to reducing the drastic psychological impact of climate-related trauma.

4.3.3 Highlighting the impacts on stress, depression, and self-esteem based on the psychological effects

The psychological well-being of teenagers in the UK is increasingly compromised by the multifaceted pressures of the climate crisis, leading to measurable declines in mental health. According to Crandon *et al.* (2022), climate change affects mental health through three primary pathways: direct exposure to extreme events, indirect impacts through social and economic disruption, and the chronic awareness of the climate crisis itself. This framework suggests that the ubiquitous quality of environmental change is a stressor entering different spheres of life of an adolescent. Moreover, the magnitude and frequency of these climate-related events reduce the effectiveness of psychological recovery (Crandon *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, the constant challenges of environmental imbalance have become one of the key factors that increase stress levels among young people.

The emerging phenomenon of eco-anxiety has been identified as a significant correlate of general psychological impairment. According to Cosh *et al.* (2024), eco-anxiety exhibits small to large positive correlations with validated mental health outcomes, including symptoms of

major affective disorders and pervasive psychological distress. This suggests that the internalisation of global environmental degradation manifests as a measurable clinical burden. On the other hand, Crandon *et al.* (2022) claimed that the awareness of the climate crisis often leads to feelings of helplessness and a perceived lack of control over the future. This lack of power develops a healthy self-concept during the critical years of adolescence. This insight supports that teenagers with a view of inherent life undermined by environmental breakdown are often motivated and self-devalued. Therefore, the climate change crisis is an existential threat, which weakens the foundational self-esteem needed in adolescent resilience.

The compound effect of environmental shocks further has an impact on the emotional foundations that are required for maintaining high self-esteem. Wahid *et al.* (2023) claimed that the experience of climate-related shocks is increased by 15% to 31% in the probability of co-occurring anxiety and depression. The high comorbidity rate indicates that the stress in the environment establishes an emotional environment in which positive self-regard is hard to maintain. Moreover, the persistent stock ensures the psychological burden is not episodic but chronic, constant, and enduring, leading to sustained anxiety. However, the evidence supports the fact that climate-related distress is one of the primary contributors to the extensive erosion of adolescent self-esteem.

The relationship between eco-anxiety and self-perception highlights the need for targeted psychological interventions to change anxiety into agency. Cosh *et al.* (2024) claimed that individuals with high eco-anxiety are more likely to report lower levels of life satisfaction and a diminished sense of well-being. This correlation indicates that the preoccupation with ecological destruction can overshadow personal achievements and milestones, leading to a fragmented sense of self. Furthermore, the systematic review confirms that these effects are consistent across diverse geographical and social contexts. Therefore, the psychological effects of climate change represent a significant threat to the stress management, mood stability, and self-esteem of the UK's teenage population.

4.3.4 Strategies for the management of Climate Change Anxiety, available to UK teenagers

Climate change is considered to be increasingly recognized as a significant threat to global mental health, acting as a threat amplifier that induces intense emotional responses. Nimo *et al.* (2025) have highlighted that climate change invokes similar anxieties and emotional reactions like ecological grief and solastalgia highlights the complexity of the effects of climate change on mental health. It has been recognised that the complexity of these effects has been highlighted by the emergence of specific psychological conditions, notably solastalgia and

ecological grief, which are distinct from traditional anxiety disorders. On the other hand, Singh (2025) has argued that the media plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception of climate change, often amplifying feelings of anxiety. The argument states that media coverage has been a strong predictor of eco-anxiety, with news consumption often correlating directly to increased feelings of stress, worry, and fear regarding the future. Thus, individuals perceiving higher personal impact from climate news tend to experience higher levels of eco-anxiety.

It has been recognised that utilising techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing or meditation to stay grounded in the present moment can help in addressing anxiety and depression. As per the opinion of Jackson (2025), the influence of the educational process may foster resilience as well as emotional well-being through supportive learning environments. This signifies that supportive learning environments in the educational process foster student resilience and emotional well-being by prioritizing positive relationships, safety, and active learning. On the other hand, Singh (2025) has contradicted that emotional states often coexist with, or mediate, PTSD, depression, and anxiety, especially after extreme events such as floods or wildfires. Apart from this, ecological loss is considered to be often not recognised or validated by society, leading to a sense of isolation in one's sorrow. Frequent exposure to catastrophe-focused climate news often fosters fear, anger, and feelings of helplessness, known as eco-anxiety. Apart from this, empathetic interactions, constructive feedback as well as teacher emotional support significantly reduce student anxiety and foster a sense of security, leading to improved resilience. Thus, creating a psychologically safe space where students feel heard and valued allows them to manage emotions effectively, such as anxiety or frustration.

4.4 Summarise result relation to the research questions

The findings of the study outline that climate change, as a global challenge, has a direct impact on the well-being and outcome of young people's mental health through causing mental stress and depression. Apart from this, the majority of the youths in the UK have experienced the psychological tension that is caused by the feelings of being trapped between the truth of climate as well as ecological destruction. Lawrance *et al.* (2022) have outlined that the concerns of climate change and its impact on life through disruption in the future is a major factor among young people to experience depression and anxiety. The increased climate change challenges and their impact on the overall well-being, including mental health, of young people in the UK have necessitated the implication of comprehensive community-based initiatives and interventions. In comparison, Lawrance *et al.* (2022) have investigated that the government, along with the community-based climate actions are significant in the UK for boosting the mental health and wellbeing of young children. In support of this view,

Giannakopoulos (2025), has emphasised that holistic approaches consisting of cultural practices, educational and youth climate engagement strategies are beneficial for improving mental health and well-being through action-oriented approaches. Thus, the development of action-oriented strategies including community climate action are effective for providing practical support and assistance to youth, leading to reduced climate change anxiety.

4.5 Summary

It can be summed up from the above discussion that climate change anxiety among teenagers commonly presents as sadness, hopelessness, and guilt, as well as disrupting emotional well-being. Teenagers tend to foresee the occurrence of environmental disasters, which are going to happen and this group experience chronic and psychological strain as in post-traumatic stress responses. The young people might internalise the feelings of guilt, believing their generation has inherited unsolvable problems in the context of an uncontrollable environmental crisis. Furthermore, some of the adolescents could show moral distress, especially when they feel their personal behaviours could not align with the environmental concepts. These negative feelings not only impacted the regular performance and well-being of teenagers but also created long-term anxiety symptoms. Climate action is aligned with causing arousal symptoms in PTSD and depression due to the natural health disaster and its impact on the future of the coming generations. In addition, the Problem-Focused Coping strategy motivates teens in participating in action-oriented activities such as protesting, volunteering and it improves their mental wellbeing. Thus, implementing community-based interventions along with mindfulness meditation is positively aligned with improving mental and care outcomes of youth.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Interpret your results

These findings suggest that UK adolescents experience climate anxiety not just as an emotional concern but as a disabling impairment that affects their day-to-day lives due to its multidimensional nature. Understanding of vulnerability is rather broad at the moment and needs to be qualified in respect of various contexts (Turesson *et al.* 2024). Systemic inaction and media exposure appear to compound the psychological distress associated with climate anxiety and have resulted in a significant number of adolescents developing chronic sleep disorders and pre-traumatic stress. Therefore, it is essential to provide validated mental health treatment interventions that are specifically designed for adolescents.

5.2 Discuss the implications

Discussion on Theme 1

Climate anxiety is driven by global environmental changes and social betrayal that affects the mental health of UK teenagers. According to the existing literature, guilt, hopelessness, and the COVID-19 pandemic result in an uncertain future for children (Léger-Goodes *et al.* 2023). The findings provide a critical view by explaining that 75% of young people feel their future is frightening due to perceived political inaction and government betrayal (Giannakopoulos, 2025). Social and geographic factors play a crucial role in vulnerability to climate distress by determining both the exposure to physical hazards and the capacity of communities. According to the existing literature, children as young as eight cannot cope with news on the environment, causing sustained depression (Niedzwiedz *et al.* 2025). On the other hand, the results critically analysed that the severity is greater among marginalised groups and areas highly vulnerable to climate change, such as flood-prone areas (Giannakopoulos, 2025). This reaffirms that climate anxiety is a threat multiplier which compounds with pre-existing injustices to enhance mental health.

Climate anxiety is a multifaceted psychological impact that interferes with day-to-day life, characterised as a chronic fear of environmental doom and profound distress. According to the existing literature, poor mental health, such as pre-traumatic stress and ecological grief among adolescents, is linked to local pollution and poor policies (Fatima *et al.*, 2022). This finding supports this view by further identifying three distinct pathways, including direct weather events, indirect economic impacts and vicarious anxiety through global awareness (Lawrance *et al.*, 2022). These findings suggest psychological shock is not less valuable than natural hazards, but a significant disability that impairs sleep and attention.

Discussion of Theme 2

Teenagers' persistent eco-anxiety undermines their capacity to lead a productive and fulfilling life. As per the view of Kankawale & Niedzwiedz (2023) and Qiu & Qiu (2024), productivity and academic performance are negatively impacted when worry becomes chronic as a result of emotional exhaustion. However, the findings show that this generalised "burnout" by arguing that interference is often driven by the perceived inactivity of governments and associated disempowerment (Venhof & Jeronimus, 2026). According to the view of Verlie (2024) and Giannakopoulos (2025), teenagers perceive the future as hostile because the media frequently reports climate change, and they are unable to comprehend the strategic implications of this. Moreover, the findings confirmed these insights and also added a notion of pre-traumatic stress in which teenagers experience foresight anxiety, fearing disasters before they happen (Lai *et al.* 2026). This finding reveals that the cognitive burden is not only related to the news but also to the permanent loss of security and self-worth.

Discussion of Theme 3

The psychological scenario of UK teenagers is increasing, and it is dependent on a complex interplay between behavioural habits, physical wellness, and mental health outcomes. The finding is synthesised by analysing factors such as physical activity, technological engagement, and body perception, which influence the prevalence of stress, depression, and self-esteem within this demographic. The escalation of environmental stressors is directly linked to the rising prevalence of clinical affective disorders within the adolescent population. According to Wahid *et al.* (2023), climate-related stocks, such as significant deviations in temperature and humidity, are robustly associated with increased odds of experiencing depression and anxiety. However, contradicting existing literature, Mitchell *et al.* (2024) indicated that repeated exposure to climatic disasters without constructive coping guidance can intensify emotional distress among teenagers. This fact implies that minimal changes in the ecological environment can create the development of a deep emotional crisis, especially in groups of people with socioeconomic weaknesses. Additionally, Wahid *et al.* (2023) also added that climate change is not a distant threat but an immediate catalyst for depressive episodes among teenagers. However, the modern psychiatric assessment needs to include environmental factors to identify the actual causes of teenage depression.

Discussion of Theme 4

It has been recognised that climate change anxiety or eco-anxiety directly impacts the mental health of teenagers, causing chronic worry, grief, anger, as well as feelings of helplessness

regarding the future. Handling these negative components is important for eliminating the level of anxiety, which requires transforming despair into agency through proactive coping strategies, such as engaging in local environmental action as well as building resilience. Nimo *et al.* (2025) have recognised the core way of doing mindfulness for processing feelings in a non-judgemental way. However, contradicting existing literature, Poonamallee (2025) also emphasised that mindfulness practices within communities and among children have the potential benefits in climate change anxiety management through stress reduction, emotional regulation and improved focus. In essence, the school curriculum can include climate change educational initiatives emphasizing self-efficacy, hope, optimism as well as resilience to assist young people in dealing with their climate-related anxieties. Apart from this, Venhof and Jeronimus (2026) have argued that developing action-oriented and meaning-focused coping seems to foster a sense of agency and purpose among young individuals that assist in managing prolonged climate-related distress. This strategy can be beneficial to overcome climate-related distress and enhance psychological resilience amongst the UK young adults. This strategy could promote informed understanding, collective engagement and perceived effectiveness in this context.

5.3 Acknowledge the limitation

The secondary qualitative findings have helped in evaluating the research key objectives. However, a lack of primary evidence within the research has hindered the identification of the relationship between the thesis variables. Apart from this, time and budget have been potential limitations of this research that have hindered the evaluation of the research key variables. Lack of time has hindered the selection of articles that have a larger sample size.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Answering the main research question

The overall research has concluded that Climate change anxiety has been recognised as Eco-Anxiety, which is responsible for the growing mental health crisis, chronic fear and distress over environmental destruction. Climate action is considered to be aligned with causing arousal symptoms in PTSD and depression due to the natural health disaster and its impact on the future of the coming generations. The key emotional needs that youth demand, including more climate action at community, governmental and personal levels, for motivating positive news. The literature review has highlighted that climate change and its impact on the future, their focus on implementing action-oriented community and government action has become a highlight and is recommended to reduce the climate impact. Apart from this, the implications of mindfulness interventions include cognitive reframing, encouraging environmental engagement, and positively influencing the emotional toll of climate change.

The influence of a secondary qualitative approach has been designed in a systematic approach in terms of conducting a thematic analysis. A descriptive research design has been selected within this research in terms of analysing the research questions. Apart from this, the use of thematic analysis has been performed through developing key themes based on the thesis objectives. CAPS tools have also been used for conducting quality assessment of the 12 peer-reviewed articles. Apart from this, the PRISMA framework has been used within this research in terms of selecting the peer-reviewed articles. The key findings of the study suggested that implementing community-based interventions along with mindfulness meditation and talking therapies are positively aligned with improving mental and care outcomes of youth for climate change anxiety management.

The research's first objective has been fulfilled by developing the research's first theme. The first objective aims to evaluate the prevalence and severity of climate change anxiety among UK teenagers. In this respect, the thematic analysis has highlighted that globally, 50% of children and adolescents are worried about climate change, while 75% perceive their future as frightening (Giannakopoulos, 2025). Additionally, the key findings have also highlighted that the prevalence of climate change anxiety among the youth is emphasised by a combination of direct environmental exposure and the chronic awareness of ecological degradation. This signifies that the research's first objective has been fulfilled by developing the first theme in thematic analysis.

The research's second objective aims to examine the psychological effects of climate anxiety, including impacts on stress, depression, and self-esteem. This has been fulfilled by the

development of the second theme in thematic analysis. The second theme in thematic analysis has highlighted that adolescents are exposed to climate-related stressors, including extreme heat, which are linked to the elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes and suicidal tendencies (Lai *et al.* 2026). Apart from this, sleep disturbance also contributes to emotional instability, lowering cognitive performance and exposing the person to anxiety and depressive symptoms. The information signifies that the second objective has been fulfilled by the development of the second theme in thematic analysis.

The third objective of this research has focused on evaluating the coping strategies, support systems, and interventions available to UK teenagers. The development of the third theme has helped to fulfil the third research objective. The third theme of the research has highlighted that the psychological well-being of teenagers in the UK is increasingly compromised by the multifaceted pressures of the climate crisis, leading to measurable declines in mental health. According to Crandon *et al.* (2022), climate change affects mental health through three primary pathways: direct exposure to extreme events, indirect impacts through social and economic disruption, and the chronic awareness of the climate crisis itself. Moreover, the persistent stock ensures the psychological burden is not episodic but chronic, constant, and enduring, leading to sustained anxiety. This signifies that the researcher's third objective has been fulfilled by the development of the third theme.

6.2 Reflect on the research

The use of secondary qualitative research has been a potential strength of this research, as it has helped in analysing the research objective successfully. The use of such a method has helped in evaluating the prevalence of climate change anxiety among the youth, which is emphasised by a combination of direct environmental exposure and the chronic awareness of ecological degradation. Apart from this, the research question has been answered using thematic analysis. Additionally, the rigorous data collection procedure has also been a potential strength of this research as tools such as CAPS and Prisma have been used within this research for quality assessment. The ethical standard of this research has been maintained throughout the research in terms of making the key findings reliable and valid in the context. In this respect, the research has ensured to avoid the copy-pasting practice in terms of maintaining University guidelines based on plagiarism issues.

Lack of primary research has been acknowledged as a potential limitation of this research. Lack of time and budget has been a major constraint for conducting primary research. As per the opinion of Michelen *et al.* (2024), time and budget constraints within research lead to a necessary narrowing of the study's scope, increased pressure on researchers, and reduced

flexibility in methodology. The thesis may shift to quicker, lower-cost methods, such as utilising existing secondary data instead of primary research or using focus groups instead of in-depth interviews. Apart from this, time constraints have limited the ability to explore unforeseen avenues of research, causing people to stick to a narrow, pre-planned path even if it is not the most effective. Thus, the above-mentioned limitation has hindered the integration of primary evidence of this research.

6.3 Making Recommendations

Analysing the overall research, it is suggested that teenagers be provided with community-based interventions in terms of improving their mental health stability from the effects of climate change anxiety. As per the opinion of Vamvalis (2023), community-based interventions to improve teenagers' mental health regarding climate anxiety focus on fostering collective action, nature connection as well as supportive dialogue. It has been recognised that shifting from anxiety to agency by engaging in local environmental action can help teenagers feel empowered rather than helpless. Additionally, exposure to nature and outdoor activities can help teenagers act as a protective factor against climate anxiety as well as depression. Additionally, Marks *et al.* (2023) have highlighted that implementing school programs for encouraging open discussion about eco-distress and connecting climate topics to skills-building can help teenagers improve their mental health conditions. Thus, involving local communities, particularly indigenous communities, can foster resilience through strong community attachment and shared, culturally relevant actions.

6.4 Emphasise the contribution (Future Research)

The need for longitudinal studies to track how climate-related distress within the UK adolescent population is evolving. Based on this section, the need for conducting primary research is considered to be a pivotal aspect in terms of understanding the relationship between the variables. It has been recognised that future studies are required to apply an intersectional lens to examine how climate anxiety intersects with existing systemic inequalities such as poverty, regional disparities in environmental quality, and pre-existing health vulnerabilities in terms of ensuring that mental health resources are equitably accessible and tailored to those most at risk. Apart from this, the selection of larger sample sizes can help the researcher to establish a deeper analysis of the themes. Future research is required to investigate the potential of climate change for constructive civic engagement. This can help the research address the identified gaps within this research and make the key findings more valuable in the coming times.

6.4.1 New knowledge contributed

The knowledge gained from this thesis is based on the fact that climate change anxiety among teenagers commonly presents as sadness, hopelessness, anger, and guilt. Yang *et al.* (2026) have recognised the uncertainty of the creation of psychological distress, as people struggle to envision a stable or secure future. Understanding the aspect of climate change helps in handling the societal pressure to maintain certain lifestyles. It can be stated from the above discussion that finding positive meaning, like engaging in personal growth or finding hope, can help reduce negative emotions. On the other hand, the Problem-Focused Coping strategy has helped in participating in action-oriented activities such as protesting and volunteering. It used to motivate me to act as a motivator to feel empowered. Encouraging teens to share feelings and validating their emotions is a vital point in mitigating distress. Lastly, helping teenagers understand that while the crisis remains unsolved, collective actions can be effective in reducing feelings of powerlessness.

6.4.2 Clear impressions of the research matters

The key findings of the research highlight that adolescents are exposed to climate-related stressors, including extreme heat, which are linked to the elevated risk of poor mental health outcomes and suicidal tendencies. The evaluation of the research can help to convey the necessity for addressing mental health conditions of teenagers who are affected by the changing climate in the present time. The evaluation of this report can help in analysing the potential impact of changing climate on adolescents' mental health conditions.

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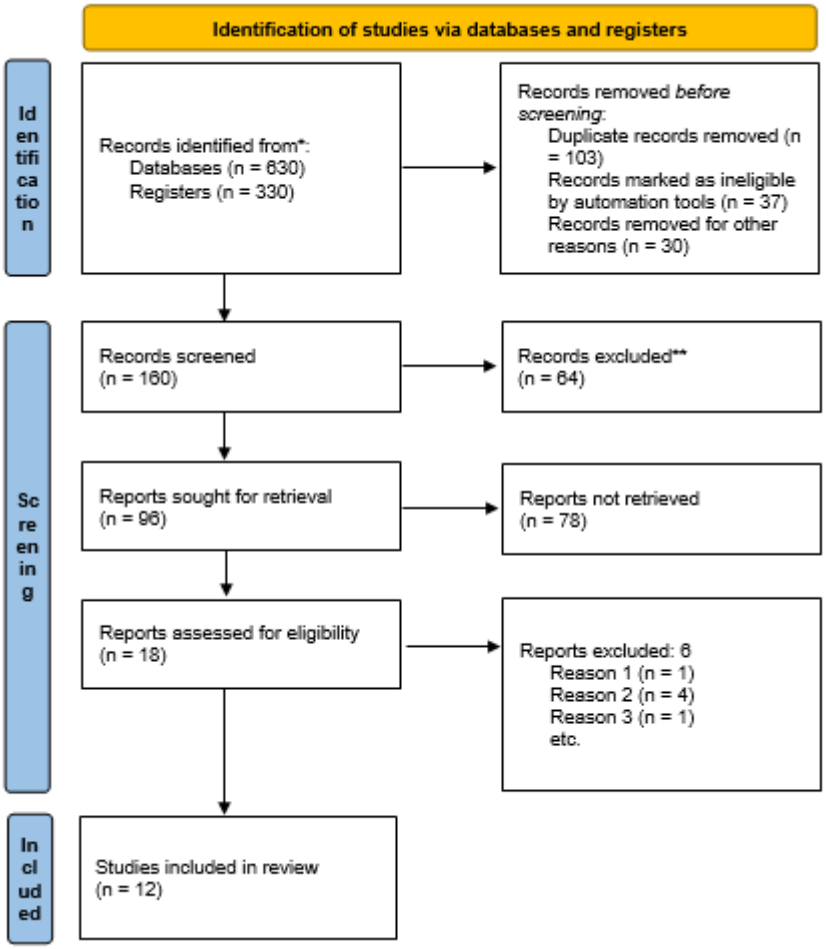
Appendix 1: [PRISMA Framework]



Appendix 2: [CASP]

References	*Inclusion criteria*	*Study settings*	*Exposure measurement*	*Standard procedure*	*Confounding factors*	*Strategy to deal confound factors*	*outcome*	*Statistical analysis*	*score out of 8*
Léger-Godes *et al.* (2022)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Giannakopoulos (2025)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Crandon *et al.* (2022)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Meo *et al.* (2025)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	8
Lawrance *et al.* (2022)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Martin *et al.* (2022)	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Yes	6
Proulx *et al.* (2024)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Leonhardt *et al.* (2022)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Cosh *et al.* (2024)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Vergunst and Berry (2022)	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Walinski *et al.* (2023)	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Clayton *et al.* (2023)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Yes	8