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Think Globally, Act Locally, Panic Internally: Climate Anxiety's Impact on Political Participation

Emily Hasecke



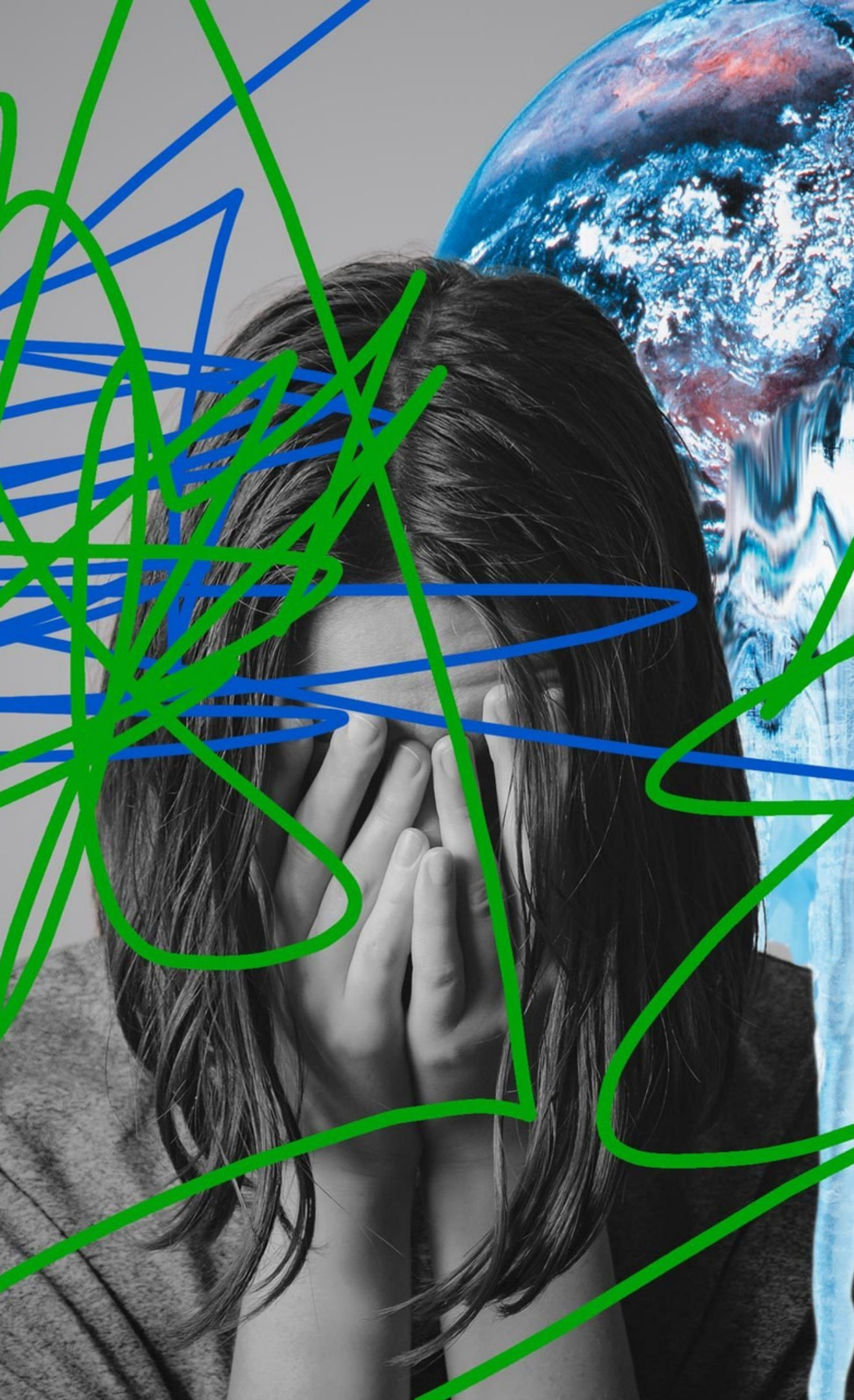
01.

Research Questions

How is climate anxiety related to political participation?

How does political self-efficacy influence this potential relationship?





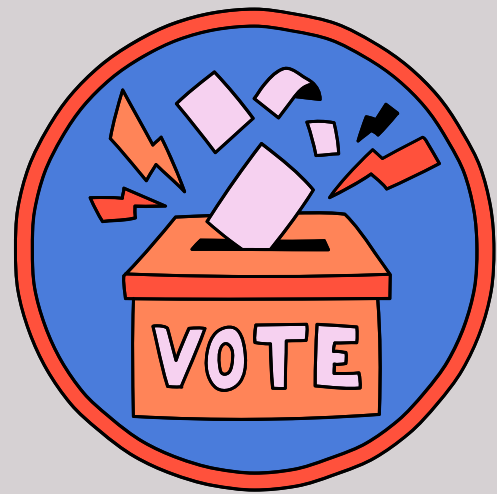
Climate Anxiety



an indirect effect of climate change rooted in perceptions of the severity of the crisis
(Clayton 2020)



Political Participation



- **Conventional Participation**

Voting, donating to campaigns, participating in town halls, writing letters, running for office

- **Non-Conventional Participation**

Protesting, boycotting, rioting, issue-related action



Political Self-Efficacy



perception that a political issue is addressable within the system and that people have the ability to enact the change they want to see

Internal Political Self-Efficacy

- a belief that a person is competent and is able to engage meaningfully in the political system (Caprara et al. 2009)

External Political Self-Efficacy

- a perception that government officials will be responsive to calls for certain actions and to general public opinion (Hart & Feldman 2016)

Governmental Political Self-Efficacy

- a perception that the government's performance is in the best interest of its citizens (Gil de Zuniga et al. 2017)
- attitudes about government effectiveness and democratic competence (Gil de Zuniga et al. 2017)

Hypotheses



- 1 Individuals who experience high levels of anxiety will exhibit less frequent political participation habits.

Applying the Yerkes-Dodson Model.

- 2 Individuals who experience a moderate level of anxiety will exhibit the most frequent participation habits.

Applying the Yerkes-Dodson Model.

- 3 Political self-efficacy will factor into this relationship as a mediating or moderating variable.

This hypothesis is exploratory.

Methodology



● Participants

164 participants recruited through CloudResearch

- 18-67 years old
- 61 women, 94 men, 7 non-binary, 2 no report
- 81% Democrat, 40% Republican, 36%

Independent, 7% other



● Procedure

After providing consent and passing two qualifying questions, participants completed survey

● Materials: Survey

9 questions on PSE

- IPSE: "I consider myself well qualified to participate in politics."
- EPSE: "No matter whom I vote for, it won't make a difference."
- GPSE: "The government makes decisions based on what citizens want."

22 on CA

- "Thinking about climate change makes it difficult for me to concentrate."

8 on PP

- "How often do you vote?"



Correlational Results



Table 2. Correlations

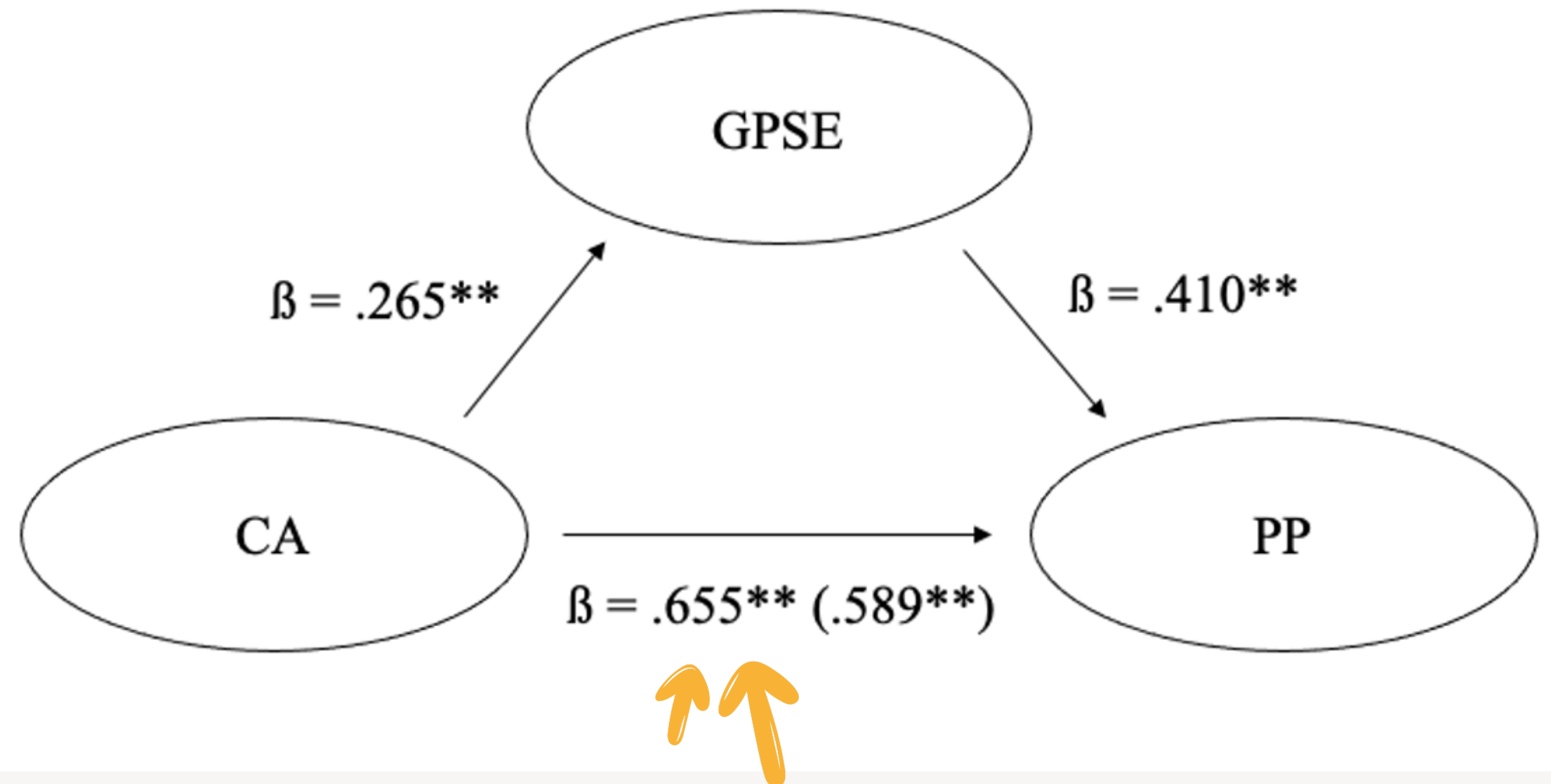
Variable	CCA		PP
CCA			.655** ←
IPSE	.033		.308**
EPSE	.066		-.181*
GPSE	.265** ←		.410**

Note: * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$.

Mediation Analysis Results

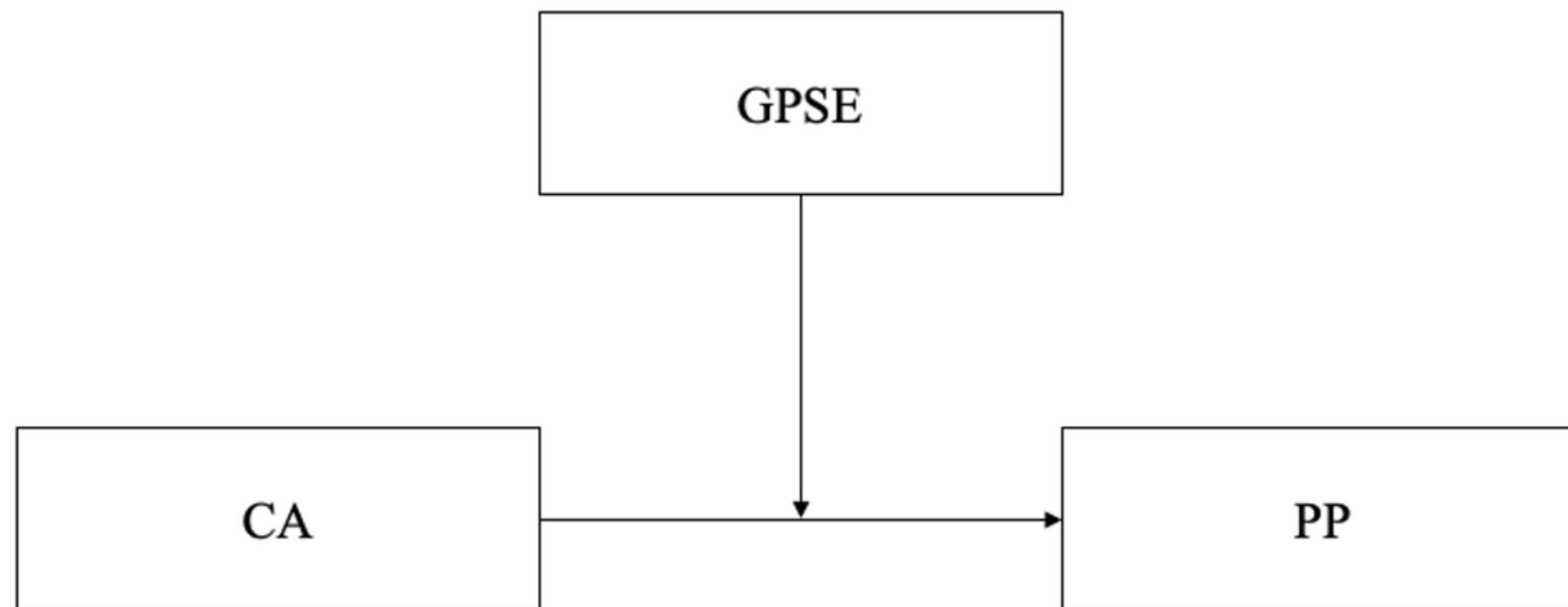
Results from a mediation analysis indicate that the relationship between climate anxiety and political participation is **partially mediated** by GPSE.

Figure 1. Mediation Analysis



Moderation Analysis Results

Figure 2. Moderation Model



Results from a moderation analysis indicate that the relationship between climate anxiety and political participation is **stronger** for individuals who **also rate high in GPSE.**

Demographic Results

Table 3. Demographic Correlations

Variable	IPSE	EPSE	GPSE	CA	PP
Education	.182*	-.062	.223**	.000	.157*
Age	.185*	-.028	-.075	-.141	.003

Note: * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$.

ANOVAs were conducted for gender and political affiliation and did not reveal any significant correlations, except that political affiliation had a positive effect on GPSE.



Notable Conclusions

1

Climate anxiety was correlated with increased political participation

3

Climate anxiety had a stronger correlation to participation than PSE

2

GPSE was the only correlate with climate anxiety

4

Climate anxiety was not correlated with any specific demographics

Implications

**WE'RE ALL
GOING TO
DIE!!**

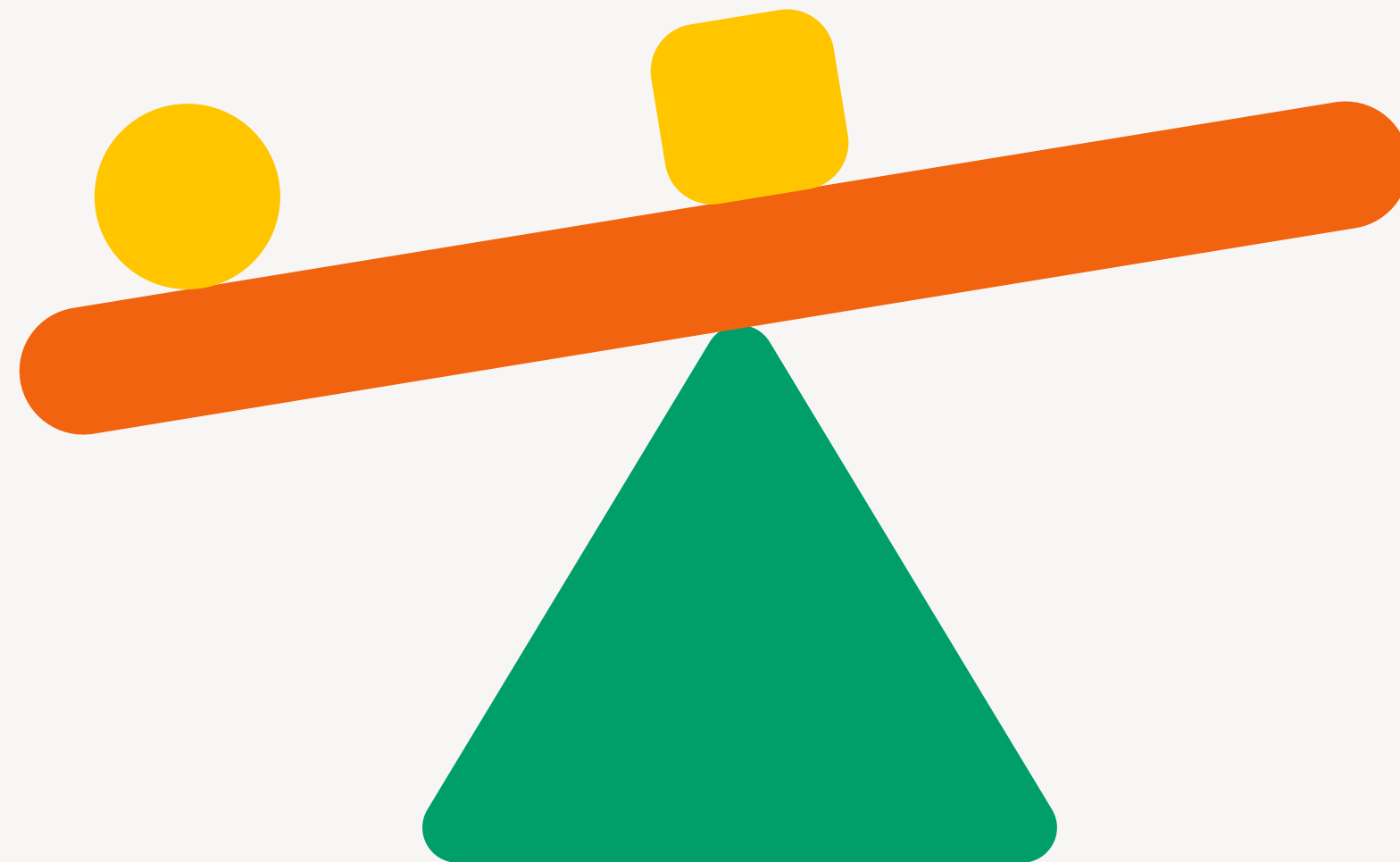
- Climate messaging
- Studying political self-efficacy



Limitations

Most participants
did not experience
extreme climate
anxiety

Definitions of self-
efficacy components
were inconsistent
across literature





"The feelings we experience are linked not just to climate change's impacts, but to how we see people (particularly in positions of power) acting in response to the crisis. When we believe peers, fellow citizens, business owners, and political leaders are taking it seriously it gives us a sense of connection, comfort, and relief. However, when we believe people are responding without sufficient urgency, we feel despair about the unnecessary harm being caused, angry at the injustice being inflicted by the world's richest people (particularly on the world's poorest, vulnerable, and marginalized groups), fearful of impacts occurring in the future, and unimportant – as if our concerns and future quality of life do not matter" (Diffey et al. 2022).