

Embracing Ecological Spirituality: An Exploration of Volunteer Motivations

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the relationship between volunteer motivations among 111 students and the core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism. Through a survey and thematic analysis, a connection emerges between the students' motivations for volunteering and the foundational principles of ecological spirituality and volunteerism. Notably, motivations such as personal fulfillment, positive impact creation, and a sense of duty to others resonate with the principles of service, compassion, unity, interconnectedness, gratitude, personal growth, and the well-being of fellow beings. These findings underscore the role played by ecological spirituality and volunteerism in shaping the students' decision to engage in volunteer activities, illuminating how these values contribute to their sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in community service. Additionally, this study evaluates the students' contentment with their motivations, revealing an overall satisfaction rate of 83.78%, thus emphasizing the impact of embracing ecological spirituality in volunteerism on their satisfaction levels.

Keywords: core values, ecological spirituality, volunteer motivations, volunteerism

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, Pope Francis emphasized the importance of cultivating an ecological spirituality rooted in the teachings of the Gospel. He expressed his desire for Christians to embrace a passionate concern for the protection of our world. Recognizing the connection between personal motivations and broader ecological spirituality, a recent study investigates the relationship between volunteer motivations and the underlying values that drive volunteer engagement (LS #216).

This research delves into the alignment of individuals' motivations with the shared core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism, including service, compassion, unity, interconnectedness, gratitude, personal growth, and the well-being of others. It explores how these motivations, such as personal fulfillment, making a positive impact, and a sense of duty towards others, resonate with the principles of ecological spirituality and volunteerism. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study aims to deepen our understanding of the profound interconnectedness between motivations and core values (Aronson 1995).

The study has two primary objectives. Firstly, it seeks to examine the relationship between individuals' motivations for volunteering and the core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism. Secondly, it aims to assess the satisfaction levels of volunteers, particularly students enrolled in four classes, with their motivations for participating in volunteer activities. Through qualitative analysis using thematic analysis and quantitative assessment using Satisfaction Rate Calculations (Smart Survey™ 2021), the research intends to shed light on the alignment between motivations and core values among volunteers.

By shedding light on the factors that drive individuals to engage in volunteer activities and their connection to ecological spirituality, this research contributes to our understanding of volunteerism. The findings have practical implications for volunteer management practices, program development, and policy decisions, ultimately fostering a deeper appreciation for the interplay between personal motivations, core values, and

the promotion of volunteer engagement in ecological and spiritual contexts.

A. Research Design

Adato (2011) emphasizes the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. While surveys provide generalizable findings, qualitative methods offer a deeper understanding of the underlying explanations for outcomes and impacts. By employing both methodologies, researchers can achieve more coherent and useful conclusions. The quantitative approach, based on structured questionnaires, focuses on statistically significant results, while the qualitative approach explores how individuals perceive and experience their environment.

This paper utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to comprehensively investigate teaching and learning in a fully online modality. By capturing a holistic and contextual picture, the research aims to uncover various dimensions of data that complement each other, addressing questions related to intervention and strategies for enhancing resiliency and promoting inclusion. To collect and measure data systematically, a Google Forms questionnaire survey is employed. This free and efficient tool allows for the automatic saving of survey data into Google Sheets, facilitating data visualization (Murphy 2017).

Questionnaires play a crucial role in gathering data, and their nature determines the analysis method. Closed-ended questions with multiple-choice options are analyzed quantitatively, often represented through pie-charts, bar-charts, and percentages. On the other hand, open-ended questionnaire responses are analyzed qualitatively, involving discussions and critical analyses without numerical calculations. The combination of these approaches enables a comprehensive examination of the research topic (Business Research Methodology 2021).

B. Research Problem

Ecological spirituality and volunteerism are grounded in values such as service, compassion, unity, interconnectedness, gratitude, personal growth, and the well-being of others. However, a research gap exists in understanding how individuals' motivations align with these core values. The relationship between motivations and the values that drive volunteerism remains unclear, despite their recognized importance in volunteer engagement.

Another research gap pertains to the satisfaction levels of volunteers with their motivations for participating in volunteer activities. Volunteer satisfaction plays a vital role in sustaining engagement and maximizing the positive outcomes of volunteering experiences. Yet, there is a lack of research investigating volunteers' satisfaction levels and their perceptions of how well their motivations align with the core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism. Understanding volunteer satisfaction is crucial for developing strategies to enhance their experiences and ensure ongoing commitment to volunteer activities.

To address these research gaps, this study focuses on two main questions: first, how do individuals' motivations for engaging in volunteer activities relate to the core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism? Second, what is the level of satisfaction among volunteers with their motivations for participating in volunteer activities? By exploring these questions, the study aims to provide new insights into the interplay between ecological spirituality, volunteerism, and individual motivations for voluntary service.

C. Participants

The researcher examines the feedback given by the 111 students who are currently enrolled in their four Religious Experience and Spirituality (REEXSPI) classes at De La Salle – College of Saint Benilde. These

classes are being conducted in a blended teaching format, meeting once a week, during the 3rd Term of the Academic Year 2022-2023.

During the 3rd Term, Academic Year 2022-2023, the researcher’s once-a-week blended modality classes in REEXSPI consist of 4 sections, with a total of 178 students. The following are their section labels, day, time and room of synchronous sessions, ONSITE and ONLINE, and the numbers of students per section, namely: (1) REEXSPI BHTR1 M 09:40-11:10 I904 ONSITE and REEXSPI BHTR1 W 09:40-11:10 ONLINE with 44 students, (2) REEXSPI BDGE4 M 11:20-12:50 ONLINE and REEXSPI BDGE4 W 11:20-12:50 R508 ONSITE with 46 students, (3) REEXSPI BDGE3 T 11:20-12:50 ONLINE and REEXSPI BDGE3 H 11:20-12:50 R507 ONSITE with 44 students, (4) REEXSPI BDGE5 T 13:00-14:30 R504 ONSITE and REEXSPI BDGE5 H 13:00-14:30 ONLINE with 44 students.

Your age group
111 responses

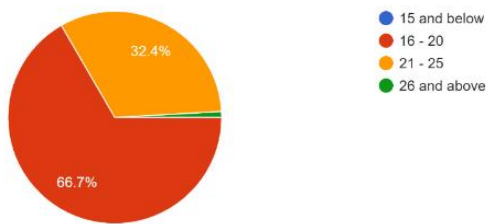


Fig. 1 Your age group

Representing the result of ‘Your age group’, the age distribution of the population in the above chart (Figure 1) shows that 66.7% or 74 of REEXSPI Students are between the ages of 16 and 20, 32.4% or 36 are between the ages of 21 and 25 and 0.9% or 1 is between 26 and above.

You classify yourself as
111 responses

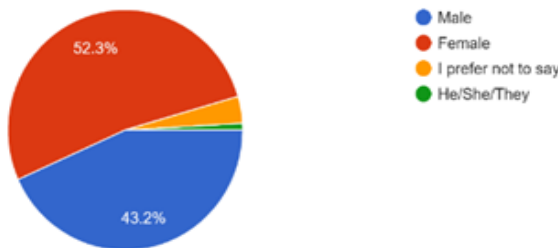


Fig. 2 You classify yourself as

Representing the result of ‘You classify yourself as’, the gender distribution of the population in the above chart (Figure 2) shows that 52.3% or 58 of REEXSPI Students classify themselves as Female, 43.2% or 48 as Male, 3.6% or 4 prefer not to say and 0.9% or 1 as He/She/They.

Your age group
111 responses

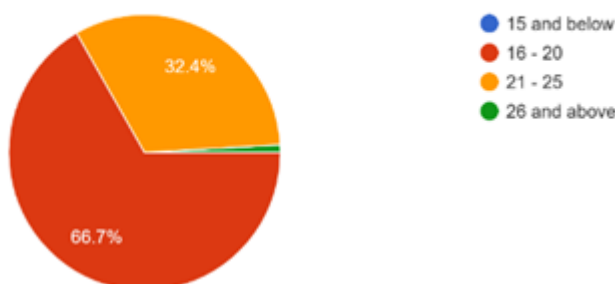


Fig. 3 Your age group

Representing the result of ‘Your age group’, the age distribution of the population in the above chart (Figure 1) shows that 66.7% or 74 of REEXSPI Students are between the ages of 16 and 20, 32.4% or 36 are between the ages of 21 and 25 and 0.9% or 1 is between 26 and above.

Your Course, Section, Day and Time

111 responses

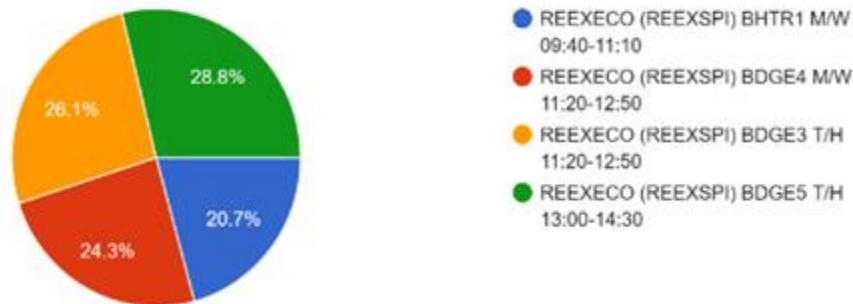


Fig. 4 Your Course, Section, Day and Time

Representing the result of ‘Your Course, Section, Day and Time’, the class section distribution of the population in the above chart (Figure 4) shows that 20.7% or 23 of REEXSPI Students belong to BHTR1 M/W 09:40-11:10, 24.3% or 27 belong to BDGE4 M/W 11:20-12:50, 26.1% or 29 belong to BDGE3 T/H 11:20-12:50 and 28.8% or 32 belong to BDGE5 T/H 13:00-14:30.

D. Data Collection Methods

Among these three types of questionnaires, namely, (1) the structured or close-ended questionnaire, (2) the unstructured or open-ended questionnaire, and (3) combination (between structured and unstructured), the writer used the combination type. The questionnaires provided consist of 10 items, 5 which are the unstructured type and 5 of which are the structured type:

- Unstructured type:** The researcher aims to understand the experiences and perspectives of individuals who volunteer by developing a set of five questions to explore different aspects of volunteerism, including its impact on personal growth, motivation, values, and spirituality. These questions cover topics such as the duration of volunteering, initial motivations, the meaning of service, the role of compassion, sense of unity with the community or causes, expressions of gratitude, perceived personal growth, the purpose or goal of volunteering, the influence of well-being on decision-making, conflicts with core values, and the relationship between volunteer activities and ecological spirituality. Through gathering responses to these questions, the researcher hopes to gain valuable insights into the thoughts and experiences of people engaged in volunteer work: What initially motivated you to engage in volunteer work? How does compassion play a role in your decision to volunteer and in your interactions with those you serve? What is the purpose or goal of your volunteer work? How do you perceive the well-being of others as a driving factor in your decision to volunteer? And how has your involvement in volunteer activities influenced your understanding and practice of ecological spirituality?
- Structured Type:** The researcher’s aim is to assess the overall satisfaction levels of individuals in various aspects of their volunteering experiences. This is done through five statements that participants are asked to rate. These statements cover different dimensions such as satisfaction with years involved in volunteering activities, initial motivation, the meaning of service, the role of compassion, sense of unity with the community or causes, expressing gratitude, personal growth, purpose, or goal of volunteer work, considering the well-being of others, alignment with core values, and the influence on understanding and practice of ecological spirituality. Please rate your overall satisfaction: with your initial motivation to engage in volunteer work, with how compassion plays a role in your decision to volunteer and in your interactions with those you serve, on the purpose or goal

of your volunteer work, on perceiving the well-being of others as a driving factor in your decision to volunteer, and on your involvement in volunteer activities influencing your understanding and practice of ecological spirituality. All the questions are using a percentage-based scale in their choices, namely 100%, 75%, 50%, 25% and 0%.

- Satisfaction Rate:** as one of the metrics provided by Basic Statistics gives an overall percentage of how satisfied the respondents are with products and services (Smart Survey™ 2021). Using the Satisfaction Rate to get the overall percentage of all the questions, students are to choose their level of satisfaction. During the 3rd Term, Academic Year 2022-2023, a total of 178 survey questionnaires were emailed to the sample respondents (the students), of which only 111 questionnaires were returned to the researcher. A ‘Practical-Deliberative-Interpretivist Perspective’, in a practical action research approach, aims to understand and improve the teaching and learning practices by applying the insights of the participants (students) with regards to the relevance of full online modality (Masters 1995). In an article, ‘A Pragmatic View of Thematic Analysis’, Jodi Aronson (1995) contends that, ‘once the information is gathered, researchers are faced with the decision on how to analyze the data’.

Aronson (1995) noted that, ‘There are many ways to analyze informants’ talk about their experiences and thematic analysis is one such way’. From any conversations that take place in any face-to-face session, ideas that emerge can be better understood under the control of a thematic analysis, which focuses on identifiable themes and patterns (Aronson 1995). For the thematic analysis, the writer adapted these steps based on the work of Aronson. The five (5) steps are the following, namely Step 1 Collecting all the data, Step 2 Identifying patterns of experiences, Step 3 Cataloguing related patterns into sub-themes and themes, Step 4 Obtaining feedback from the informants and Step 5 Telling the whole story. (Aronson 1995). However, this writer opted to adapt only the first three (3) steps and the last (5th) step, excluding the 4th step for a practical reason. The writer intentionally excluded the 4th step, which had no negative impact or effect on doing the thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are the students’ quantitative responses during the 3rd Term, Academic Year 2022-2023

A. Analysis of Data Collected

Please rate your overall satisfaction with your initial motivation to engage in volunteer work

111 responses

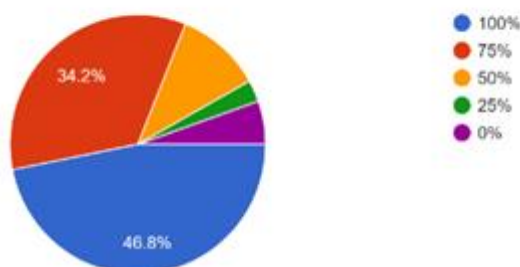


Fig. 5 Population’s satisfaction with their initial motivation to engage in volunteer work.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of the population’s satisfaction with their initial motivation to engage in volunteer work. Among the students surveyed, 46.8% (52 students) rated their satisfaction as 100% (Excellent), 34.2% (38 students) rated it as 75% (Good), 10.8% (12 students) rated it as 50% (Fair), 2.7% (3 students) rated it as 25% (Poor), and 5.4% (6 students) rated it as 0% (Not Applicable). The Satisfaction Rate Percentage Value, calculated using Satisfaction Rate Calculations, is 78.6% (Excellent). This indicates a high level of overall satisfaction with their initial motivation for engaging in volunteer work among the surveyed students.

Please rate your overall satisfaction with how compassion plays a role in your decision to volunteer and in your interactions with those you serve.

111 responses

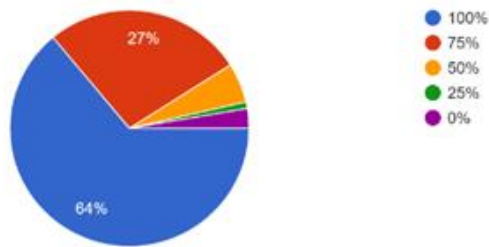


Fig. 6 Population’s satisfaction with how compassion plays a role in their decision to volunteer and in their interactions with those they serve.

Figure 6 reveals the distribution of the population’s satisfaction with how compassion plays a role in their decision to volunteer and in their interactions with those they serve. Among the surveyed individuals, 64% (71 students) rated their satisfaction as 100% (Excellent), 27% (30 students) rated it as 75% (Good), 5.4% (6 students) rated it as 50% (Fair), 0.9% (1 student) rated it as 25% (Poor), and 2.7% (3 students) rated it as 0% (Not Applicable). The Satisfaction Rate Percentage Value, calculated using Satisfaction Rate Calculations, is 87.16% (Excellent). This indicates a high level of overall satisfaction with how compassion influences their decision to volunteer and their interactions with those they serve among the surveyed population.

Please rate your overall satisfaction on the purpose or goal of your volunteer work.

111 responses

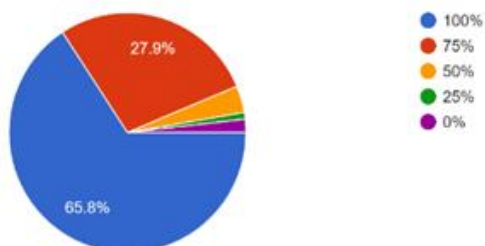


Fig. 7 On the purpose or goal of the volunteer work.

Figure 7 showcases the overall satisfaction on the purpose or goal of the volunteer work among the surveyed population. According to the chart, 65.8% (73 students) rated their satisfaction as 100% (Excellent), 27.9% (31 students) rated it as 75% (Good), 3.5% (4 students) rated it as 50% (Fair), 0.9% (1 student) rated it as 25% (Poor), and 1.8% (2 students) rated it as 0% (Not Applicable). The Satisfaction Rate Percentage Value, calculated using Satisfaction Rate Calculations, is 88.74% (Excellent). This indicates a high level of overall satisfaction with the purpose or goal of their volunteer work among the surveyed population.

Please rate your overall satisfaction on perceiving the well-being of others as a driving factor in your decision to volunteer.

111 responses

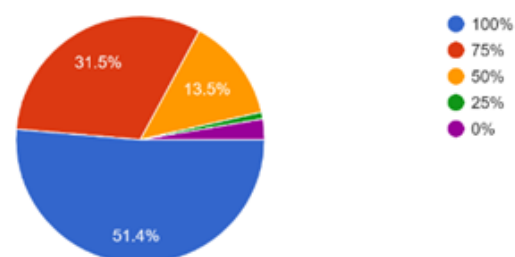


Fig. 8 On perceiving the well-being of others as a driving factor in the decision to volunteer.

Figure 8 reveals the overall satisfaction perceiving the well-being of others as a driving factor in the

decision to volunteer among the surveyed population. According to the chart, 51.4% (57 students) rated their satisfaction as 100% (Excellent), 31.5% (35 students) rated it as 75% (Good), 13.5% (15 students) rated it as 50% (Fair), 0.9% (1 student) rated it as 25% (Poor), and 2.7% (3 students) rated it as 0% (Not Applicable). The Satisfaction Rate Percentage Value, calculated using Satisfaction Rate Calculations, is 81.98% (Excellent). This indicates a high level of overall satisfaction with perceiving the well-being of others as a driving factor in the decision to volunteer among the surveyed population.

Please rate your overall satisfaction on your involvement in volunteer activities influencing your understanding and practice of ecological spirituality.

111 responses

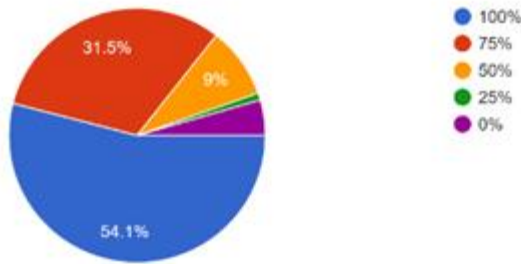


Fig. 9 On the involvement in volunteer activities influencing the understanding and practice of ecological spirituality.

Figure 9 examines the overall satisfaction on the involvement in volunteer activities influencing the understanding and practice of ecological spirituality among the surveyed population. According to the chart, 54.1% (60 students) rated their satisfaction as 100% (Excellent), 31.5% (35 students) rated it as 75% (Good), 9% (10 students) rated it as 50% (Fair), 0.9% (1 student) rated it as 25% (Poor), and 4.5% (5 students) rated it as 0% (Not Applicable). The Satisfaction Rate Percentage Value, calculated using Satisfaction Rate Calculations, is 77.03% (Excellent). This indicates a high level of overall satisfaction with how involvement in volunteer activities influences the understanding and practice of ecological spirituality among the surveyed population.

B. Summary and Findings

These figures present the distribution of students' satisfaction levels in various aspects of their volunteer work. The data indicates that a significant proportion of students rated their initial motivation, compassion's role, the purpose or goal of their volunteer work, the well-being of others as a driving factor, and the influence of volunteer activities on ecological spirituality as excellent. The study demonstrates a high overall satisfaction rate of 83.78%. These findings highlight the positive experiences and fulfilment that students derive from their volunteer engagements across different dimensions.

Below are the students' qualitative responses during the 3rd Term, Academic Year 2022-2023

C. Identification of Key Themes

Below are the students' qualitative responses during the 3rd Term, Academic Year 2022-2023

In interpreting students' qualitative response as text, we cannot separate ourselves from the meaning of the text. The reader belongs to the text (or social situation) that he or she is reading (or experiencing). Understanding is always an interpretation, and an interpretation is always specific, an application (Warnes 2015). There are five (5) steps of thematic analysis based on the work of Aronson, but this writer only adapted the first three (3) steps and the last (5th) step for this paper, with some modifications (Aronson 1995, par. 1-9 as cited in Ingles 2017, 106).

Step 1: Data Collection: The researcher collects qualitative responses from students for open-ended questions and organizes the answers by categorizing them according to the questions.

Step 2: Identifying Experience Patterns: The researcher analyses qualitative responses from all students to identify common themes related to the fundamental values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism, as well as the motivations driving their involvement. By examining patterns in the students' responses, the researcher expands upon these patterns and gathers relevant information (Aronson 1995). **Step 3: Cataloguing Themes and Sub-Themes:** After analyzing all student responses, the researcher groups comment entries into themes. Themes capture recurring patterns in topics, vocabulary, activities, meanings, emotions, and cultural sayings. The researcher carefully connects these fragments to form a comprehensive picture of the collective experience (Aronson 1995). **Step 4: Crafting the Narrative:** The final step involves creating a coherent storyline by formulating theme-statements based on the qualitative responses. The researcher weaves together these threads to tell a complete and cohesive story (Aronson 1995)

Question 1: 'What initially motivated you to engage in volunteer work?'

Based on the comment entries provided, the researcher categorizes them into the following theme: Personal Growth and Development. Engaging in volunteer work has become a significant part of their personal growth and development. Their involvement in co-curricular activities initially sparked their interest in volunteering. Through volunteering, they not only assist those in need but also enhance their social skills and self-esteem. Helping others brings them great joy, and they have a strong desire to share their love and blessings with everyone. Volunteering allows them to experience new things, enrich their spiritual life, and make a positive impact on the community. The smiles and gratitude from those they help motivate them to continue volunteering, as it gives them a sense of fulfilment and purpose. Ultimately, their longstanding aspiration has always been to contribute to the betterment of society and assist those in need.

Question 1. Summary and findings

Personal fulfilment is achieved through activities such as helping others, being of assistance, and actively engaging in volunteer work. These actions allow individuals to serve as instruments of change, providing valuable services to others and making a positive impact on their communities. By participating in outreach programs, joining volunteer organizations, and dedicating their time and capabilities to helping those in need, individuals go beyond their own self-interest and contribute to the well-being of others. This sense of duty towards others is often driven by empathy, compassion, and a desire to bring about positive change.

Question 2: 'How does compassion play a role in your decision to volunteer and in your interactions with those you serve?'

Based on the comment entries provided, the researcher categorizes them into the following theme: Role of Compassion: Compassion emerges as the fundamental catalyst for volunteer work and service, playing a crucial role in decision-making, motivation, and interactions with others. It serves as the driving force that fuels the desire to help and make a positive difference in the lives of those in need. Compassion fosters empathy, deepens understanding, and enables volunteers to relate to the challenges and needs of others, ultimately establishing trust and connection.

It is widely recognized as an essential element in serving marginalized communities and promoting social justice, as it allows individuals to approach others with kindness, support, and care, without judgment or prejudice.

Question 2. Summary and findings

Personal fulfilment is derived from the sense of purpose and satisfaction gained from serving others and

opening one's heart to them. Making a positive impact is achieved through offering assistance, support, and understanding to those in need, cultivating empathy and a desire to improve their lives. There is a sense of duty towards others, where compassion plays a crucial role in the decision to volunteer and in interactions with those being served. It is essential to understand and empathize with their struggles and challenges, emphasizing compassion as a necessary component in serving others.

Question 3: 'What is the purpose or goal of your volunteer work?'

Based on the comment entries provided, the researcher categorizes them into the following theme: Purpose and Intentions. The common theme among the statements is the purpose and intention to make a positive impact and provide help and support to those in need. These individuals aim to be a helping hand and to give back to the community by rendering actual service and changing lives for the better. They acknowledge and give importance to marginalized individuals and communities, aiming to empower them and fill in the gaps left by the government. Their ultimate goal is to create an impact, improve the welfare of others, and contribute to the betterment of society. They seek to bring up those in need, make their lives better, and provide hope and a sense of belonging. Their intentions are rooted in compassion, love, and the desire to engage with the community, sharing talents, knowledge, and resources to make the world a better place for all.

Question 3. Summary and findings

Actively engaged in addressing the challenges faced by society, volunteer work is an embodiment of this belief, as it serves to fulfil our duty towards others and contribute to the well-being of our communities, ultimately bringing about personal fulfilment through the positive impact we make. It is our responsibility to extend a helping hand to those in need and to support marginalized groups who have been deprived of their basic needs. By volunteering, we acknowledge our role in creating a more compassionate and inclusive society, where everyone can thrive and where the true needs of individuals are recognized. It is a way to demonstrate that we are not alone in our struggles and that there are people who genuinely care and are willing to make a difference. Through volunteer work, we seek to empower others, to provide hope and support, and to bring about positive change in the world, no matter how big or small. It is a way of spreading goodwill, love, and fostering unity among humanity, reminding us that there is still hope for a better future. By engaging in volunteer activities, we contribute to the collective effort of making our communities and the world a better place, finding purpose and fulfilment in the process.

Question 4: 'How do you perceive the well-being of others as a driving factor in your decision to volunteer?'

Based on the comment entries provided, the researcher categorizes them into the following theme: Motivation and Driving Factors.

The statements highlight the motivation and driving factors behind volunteering. Many individuals are driven by their perception of the well-being of others, seeing it as a compelling reason to volunteer and make a positive impact. They feel a sense of social responsibility and a duty to care for others, recognizing the importance of supporting and creating positive change within communities. Empathy, compassion, and concern for the welfare of others serve as strong motivators, as individuals want to provide emotional support and improve the lives and well-being of those in need. They also acknowledge their own privilege and express a desire to give back and show gratitude by helping others. Overall, personal fulfilment, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment are important driving factors for volunteers, as they aim to make a difference in the lives of others.

Question 4. Summary and findings

Volunteering is a valuable way for individuals to contribute to the betterment of others and their community.

It allows them to witness the suffering of those in need and motivates them to act. By offering their services and witnessing the smiles and gratitude of those they help, volunteers experience a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment. Most people naturally feel a sense of achievement when they passionately engage in volunteer work and assist others. Small acts of assistance can have a profound impact on people, animals, and organizations in need, emphasizing the importance of volunteering for the well-being of others and the community. Recognizing the duty to care for our neighbors, volunteers strive to provide relief and create positive change, even if only for a short time. For many, the desire to help others stems from a genuine concern for their welfare and a belief in the social responsibility of supporting one another. Volunteers understand that no person exists in isolation, and the opportunity to help at any time encourages them to actively engage in volunteering. To motivate others, volunteers share the benefits and positive outcomes of their own experiences, encouraging them to join in making a difference through volunteering.

Question 5: ‘How has your involvement in volunteer activities influenced your understanding and practice of ecological spirituality?’

Based on the comment entries provided, the researcher categorizes them into the following theme: Spiritual Growth and Reflection. The statements highlight the theme of ‘Spiritual Growth and Reflection’ in relation to understanding and practicing ecological spirituality. They emphasize the deepening connection with nature, fostering gratitude for blessings and the act of sharing with others. The individuals recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence between all living beings and ecosystems, which in turn strengthens their spirituality and faith. Through their involvement in volunteer activities and hands-on experiences, they gain a deeper understanding of ecological spirituality, recognizing the importance of preserving and caring for the natural world. This connection with nature allows them to reflect on their blessings and develop a sense of gratitude, leading to a desire to share these blessings with others in need. Moreover, they acknowledge the interconnectedness of all living creatures and the interdependence between humans and nature, leading to a stronger spiritual foundation and faith in a higher power.

In summary, the theme of ‘Spiritual Growth and Reflection’ in relation to ecological spirituality is evident in these statements as individuals express the transformative impact of their experiences in deepening their connection with nature, fostering gratitude, and recognizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living beings. These reflections contribute to the strengthening of their spirituality and faith, guiding them towards a more holistic and sustainable approach to life.

Question 5. Summary and findings

Engaging in volunteer work brings personal fulfilment and enhances personal growth. Through volunteer activities, one gains a different perspective on life, realizing that love has the power to create positive change. It broadens one’s understanding of the world and allows for reflection and application of this newfound knowledge in daily life. Furthermore, volunteerism provides a healthy boost to self-confidence, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction. It fosters a sense of belongingness and deepens understanding of diverse communities. By participating in volunteer work, one becomes more aware of their privileged point of view and is motivated to help others through collective action, emphasizing the importance of altruism and caring for others. Making a positive impact is an integral part of one’s ecological spirituality, as it recognizes the interconnectedness of all living and non-living beings. This understanding shapes the belief that the world operates in a give-and-take cycle, both spiritually and rationally. Witnessing the smiles of those helped reinforces one’s growth in ecological spirituality, while engaging in volunteer work facilitates connections with new people and their stories, further enriching personal spirituality. Contributing to activities like planting and cleaning in the community strengthens the bond with the environment and promotes its betterment. Volunteerism is not only an expression of goodwill but also a reflection of a person’s commitment to be like Jesus to others. The experience instils a sense of duty to contribute to the well-being of people, animals, and nature, recognizing the inherent interconnectedness of all things in God’s

universe. This deepened awareness guides one's actions and fosters a generous heart that seeks to share blessings with those in need. Volunteer activities highlight the equality of all individuals as creations of God and call for mutual support and care. They cultivate a sense of interconnectedness and respect for all life forms, motivating individuals to utilize their God-given resources for the greater good. Through volunteerism, one's spirituality is strengthened by the realization that helping others is an integral part of God's plan and a testament to one's faith.

CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative responses provided by the students focus on the notion of attaining personal fulfilment through volunteerism and the act of assisting others. These responses underscore the pivotal roles that compassion, empathy, and a sense of duty play in motivating individuals to participate in volunteer endeavors. Additionally, the impact of volunteering on both the volunteers and the beneficiaries is emphasized, illustrating how it catalysis favorable transformations within communities and contributes to the personal development of those who volunteer. Derived from the students' qualitative input, several recurring themes emerge as follows.

1. **Compassion and Empathy:** These emphasize the importance of compassion and empathy as driving forces behind volunteering. The desire to make a positive impact and help those in need stems from an understanding of others' struggles and challenges. This compassionate approach is seen as a necessary component for effective service.
2. **Sense of Duty:** The concept of duty towards others emerges consistently in all summaries. Volunteers see it as their responsibility to extend a helping hand and support marginalized groups. This sense of duty aligns with a belief in creating a more compassionate and inclusive society.
3. **Positive Impact and Fulfilment:** Volunteering is depicted as a source of personal fulfilment and accomplishment. The act of assisting others, witnessing their gratitude, and making a positive impact on their lives contributes to the volunteers' own sense of purpose and satisfaction.
4. **Personal Growth and Awareness:** Engaging in volunteer work is portrayed as a means of personal growth. It offers new perspectives, broadens understanding of diverse communities, and boosts self-confidence and self-esteem. Volunteers reflect on their privileged positions and strive for collective action to help others.
5. **Interconnectedness:** The interconnectedness of all beings and the belief in the give-and-take cycle of the world are recurring themes. Volunteerism is seen as an expression of ecological spirituality, recognizing the inherent connection between all living and non-living entities. This understanding shapes individuals' beliefs and actions.
6. **Spirituality and Faith:** A spiritual dimension is present, where volunteer work is considered a reflection of one's commitment to be compassionate and supportive, akin to the teachings of spiritual figures like Jesus. Volunteerism is seen as an opportunity to align actions with faith and contribute to the well-being of all creations.

They collectively highlight the profound impact of volunteering on individuals, communities, and the world at large. Compassion, empathy, duty, and a sense of interconnectedness drive volunteers to actively engage in helping others, ultimately leading to personal fulfilment and growth. The connection between volunteering, positive impact, and spiritual or ecological beliefs underscores the holistic nature of this altruistic activity. It can be concluded that volunteer work is not merely an act of assistance; it's a pathway to personal growth, fulfilment, and positive change. The consistent themes of compassion, empathy, duty, and interconnectedness underscore the significance of volunteering in creating a more compassionate and inclusive society. By actively engaging in volunteer activities, individuals contribute to the collective effort of making the world a better place, fostering unity and hope for a brighter future. Whether driven by spiritual beliefs, ecological principles, or a simple desire to help, volunteers play a crucial role in shaping a

more compassionate and interconnected world.

The data analysis underscores the strong alignment between the motivations for volunteering and the core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism.

The participants’ motivations, such as personal fulfilment, making a positive impact, and a sense of duty towards others, reflect the values of service, compassion, unity and interconnectedness, gratitude, personal growth, and the well-being of others. These motivations demonstrate a deep connection between individuals’ personal values and the principles underlying ecological spirituality and volunteerism.

Table I

Volunteers’ Motivations	Core Values of Ecological Spirituality and Volunteerism: (Service, Compassion, Unity and Interconnectedness, Gratitude, Personal Growth, and Well-being of Others)					
Personal fulfilment	Service	Compassion			Personal growth	
Making a positive impact	Service		Unity and interconnectedness			Well-being of others
Sense of duty towards others	Service	Compassion		Gratitude		

The table graph illustrates a significant correlation between the students’ motivations and the core values of ecological spirituality and volunteerism. It highlights how their motivations, such as personal fulfilment, making a positive impact, and a sense of duty towards others, align with the corresponding values of service, compassion, unity and interconnectedness, gratitude, personal growth, and the well-being of others. This alignment reinforces the integration of these values within the students’ volunteer activities, promoting a more compassionate, sustainable, and interconnected world.

In terms of personal fulfilment, the students’ motivation aligns with the values of service, compassion, and personal growth. This suggests that they find fulfilment in serving others and show empathy and care towards those they assist, while also recognizing the opportunity for personal development through their volunteer work. Moreover, the data indicates that making a positive impact is closely aligned with the values of service, unity and interconnectedness, and the well-being of others.

This highlights the students’ understanding of the interconnectedness of all beings and their commitment to collective action for creating positive change. By engaging in volunteer activities, they aim to serve others, foster unity and interconnectedness among individuals, and prioritize the well-being of others as they work towards making a meaningful impact in the world. Additionally, the students who have a sense of duty towards others demonstrate alignment with the values of gratitude and service, as well as showing compassion towards those they serve. Their motivation reflects a deep understanding of the importance of giving back to the community and taking care of the environment. By recognizing their duty to others, they actively engage in volunteer work, embodying the values of gratitude, service, and compassion.

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