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The Role of Religious Leaders in Promoting Environmental Conservations through Faith-Based Organizations.

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ABSTRACT

A Convergent Parallel design study was conducted to investigate the significant role played by religious leaders in promoting environment-friendly practices among their congregations. The study examines the impact of religious beliefs and practices on individuals' viewpoints regarding environmental themes that are integrated into religious sermons such as conservation of the Earth, the preservation of natural resources, and the approach to addressing climate change from a faith-oriented standpoint. as well as the strategies that religious leaders might employ to promote pro-environmental behaviors among their congregants effectively. The study endeavours to provide a deeper understanding of the influence of religious sermons on individuals within a congregation and their subsequent reactions to these sermons. The research was carried out within Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) comprising persons belonging to the Muslim, Christian, and Hindu populations. The sampling approaches employed in this study were Purposive and Disproportionate sample methods. These methods were selected with the intention of capturing a wide array of perspectives and experiences, thereby effectively representing the complex and varied character of environmental attitudes among the studied communities. The complete data analysis included Thematic Analysis and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of this study highlight the significant capacity of religious organizations and their leaders to motivate individuals to adopt ideas of environmental conservation. The study indicated that religious communities, regardless of their affiliation, participate in environmental programs and projects when arranged, demonstrating their proactive conservation efforts.

Keywords: Religion, Environment friendly, Faith-Based Organization, Communities.

Introduction

1.2 Research Context: Religiosity and Environmental Conservation

Religion plays a crucial role in shaping individual and community behaviors, including attitudes toward environmental conservation. The core issues confronting humanity currently pertain to the challenges posed by the natural World and the human environment on Earth, which constitute significant threats to human existence and psychological well-being. Moreover, it has been accountable for the cessation of the existence of other organisms.

International organizations are actively engaged in mitigating the adverse effects of the crisis. However, studies show (Muralikrishna & Manickam, 2017) that morality is the most effective and optimal approach for mitigating difficulties. Some also believe that the present environmental catastrophe is a moral dilemma that necessitates a moral reaction. Using ethics to regulate human behaviour in the Environment has been a longstanding issue of significant apprehension. This concern gained particular prominence during the 1960s, marked by a pronounced environmental catastrophe (Sepehri and Montazeri, 2019). In the 1960s, the prevailing air quality rules were rather lenient, permitting the emission of pollutants from both vehicular and industrial sources. These emissions frequently contributed to the formation of hazardous smog, which was further intensified by the presence of ground-level ozone. The pollution had a disproportionate impact on urban areas as a result of the high concentration of automobiles and industries in these regions. The severe repercussions of air pollution gained public attention due to the ongoing smog difficulties in Los Angeles and the occurrence of lethal smog events in New York City during the late 1960s (Environmental Activism in Michigan,” 2014). Environmental ethics is a specialized branch of applied philosophy that investigates the perspectives of different global faiths on environmental conservation and their approaches to addressing environmental concerns within a theological framework (Amoli, 2007).

Numerous instances can be referenced to exemplify the notable impact of religiosity on endeavors related to environmental conservation. One example is Oxfam, also known as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, which was founded in 1942 by Canon Milford, a vicar affiliated with Oxford University. Oxfam currently operates in more than one hundred developing nations and has an annual budget of \$300 million (Oxfam, 2010). This serves as an illustration of the active involvement of religious-inspired organizations in promoting sustainable development and environmental conservation. Another noteworthy example is the Aga Khan Foundation, renowned for its involvement in humanitarian endeavors. The Development Network, which was established by a spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, functions as a forum for many developmental agencies, organizations, and projects that largely operate in economically and environmentally challenges to the countries of Asia and Africa (AKDN, 2010). These instances highlight the significance of religious institutions and leaders in taking the lead on efforts aimed at promoting environmental well-being. In addition, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) commenced a discourse in 1986 with the religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism in order to investigate the potential contributions of their respective ideas to the cause of ecological conservation (WWF, 2010). This exemplifies a deliberate initiative to reconcile the divergence between religious principles and the preservation of the environment, emphasizing the potential harmonization between religious devotion and efforts towards conservation.

According to Ileana Porras (2015), the encyclical thoroughly examines the fundamental factors contributing to environmental deterioration. It delineates the intricate connections and conflicts between globalization, economic expansion, liberalized trade, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, environmental degradation, forced migration, impoverishment, and escalating inequality. Ecological conversion is rooted in the profound spiritual notion of conversion, which may be understood as a fundamental shift of viewpoint that shapes our objectives and consequently influences our decisions and behaviours. Within religious tradition, a conversion is characterized by the dual aspects of a transformative moment and a subsequent voyage. The concept of the turn encompasses both a movement of disengagement and a movement of engagement. Paradoxically, this change in viewpoint is encountered as a significant departure from deeply ingrained habitual cognitive and behavioural patterns and a

slight realignment, as during the moment of conversion, we must recover our initial orientation and objective (Ahmad, 2020). Human actions disregarding the Environment lead to environmental imbalance and incompatibility. Religiosity is one of the elements that can promote ecologically beneficial behaviour in the essence of a globalized world. This is so because Religion can encourage community members to read and care about environmental sustainability (Dida, Wijaya, Aji; *et al.*, 2022).

A significant body of study is emerging due to the conflicting and divergent perceptions of the connection between religious beliefs and environmental issues and the growing interest among faith-based players in potential assets. The early literature produced by religious groups was mainly prescriptive and made the case for why Religion can and should encourage environmental awareness. The course of empirical inquiry has taken many distinct turns. One is investigating why Christians encounter barriers to environmental concerns and testing the idea that Religion is anti-environmental. Another route outlines and examines potential environmental movements within different religious communities. Researchers have asked for more rigorous and complete qualitative or quantitative methodologies, as the early studies within this methodology were primarily anecdotal. The need to go beyond Christian faith communities and adopt a broader geographical perspective represents further gaps in these study streams (Hitzhusen, 2007; White, 1967).

2.2 Conceptual foundation: Faith Based Organization and Environmental Conservation

Religion is one of the Institutions including beliefs, worldviews, and practices across space and time which motivate Individual and global movements, but the mechanisms that Religion works across the World differently (Haluzi, 2014). These mechanisms work indirectly on the outcomes of the Environment, such as the influence of Religion on education, reproductive behaviour, income, and consumption patterns. Environmental engagement is a variety of activities that investigate or express concern about the Environment and associated social systems. These activities include engaging in climate activism, starting a community garden, and writing sermons on protecting the Environment (Wolkomir; Futreal & Hoban, 1997).

Engaging faith-based organizations (FBOs), especially religious ones, also has an economic justification based on stability. Since FBOs are the fourth-largest economic force on Earth, they have the infrastructure and resources necessary to bring about change. An illustration of the infrastructure-building power of Religion in the World According to the United Nations Environmental Programs (UNEP), there are 37 million of the World churches, approximately 4 million mosques in the World, Millions of temples, In a total of 5% of forests in the World – which 30% lie only in Europe, FBOs own 10% of financial institutions. Besides this land holding of the World, 8% of the habitable land on the surface of the World and 5 % of the commercial forests are under the control of FBOs. The aforementioned data highlight the significant scope and capabilities possessed by Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), positioning them as key contributors to initiatives aimed at environmental preservation and the promotion of sustainable practices.

1.2.1 Christianity and Environmental Values

Most research (Boersema, Blowers, & Martin, 2008; Jenkins & Chapple, 2011) explores Religion and the Environment's connection and how Faith shapes behaviour, attitudes, and

actions toward environmental concerns. The "White thesis," as put out by historian Lynn White Jr., posits that individuals who adhere to the Judeo-Christian tradition often embrace a perspective characterized by a desire for dominion over nature, which is associated with diminished levels of environmental concern. This thesis presents an analysis of the research findings addressed in the works of Boersema, Blowers, and Martin (2008) and Jenkins and Chapple (2011) pertaining to the relationship between religion and the environment. The findings support the White thesis, asserting that Judeo-Christians are more likely to advocate slogans such as "master-over-nature." At the same time, environmental concern is less prevalent among them (Wolkomir; Futreal & Hoban, 1997). Acceptance of the biblical authority and the effect of environmental concern were examined by Eckberg and Blocker (1989), which utilize Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis. The study's conclusion supports the White thesis and suggests that future research needs to study the relationship between a specific theology and environmental attitude (Eckberg & Blocker, 1989).

Another study (Kanagy and Willits, 1993) explores the relationship between religious affiliation, attendance, environmental concern, and behaviour. Both constructed the three environmental scales based on the twelve New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) items. The study's findings show that church attendance is the most significant predictor of low levels of environmental concern. This was only done bivariate, where a positive correlation was discovered. They claim that NEP factors influence environmental attitudes and behaviours, some of which are tied to Religion. They, therefore, urge further investigation into the "internal difference" of religious groups' perspectives on the interaction between man and nature. In other words, they direct the study towards analyzing substantive belief structure. Over the decades, there has been a long debate on the role of faith-based actors and civil society. Many theorists believe that the part of the faith-based is minimal. At the same time, the Secularisation theory claims that Religion has become less due to the process of the modernization process.

The Bible contains almost a hundred verses that address environmental conservation. Christians are morally obligated to environmental stewardship and actively promote the adoption of behavioural modifications to ensure a positive trajectory for future generations.

Christian Perspectives and Contemplation on the Environment: It is imperative to refrain from contaminating the surrounding Environment. The act of shedding blood contaminates the Environment, rendering it impure. The only means of purifying the soil tainted by bloodshed is through the sacrifice of the Individual responsible for shedding blood. According to bible chapter 35 verse 35:33. It is evident that a divine entity has entrusted humans with the task of assuming care for the entirety of creation.

According to Genesis 2:15, the Lord God placed the Individual in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and maintain it. It is acknowledged that all entities brought into existence are the property of a divine being. Consequently, it is understood that humans are responsible for managing the natural World on behalf of this divine entity.

The pressing imperative to safeguard our shared habitat encompasses the objective of uniting humanity in pursuing sustainable and comprehensive progress while we acknowledge the potential for transformative shifts to occur. The Creator does not forsake humanity, remaining steadfast in their benevolent design and never experiencing regret for bringing us into existence. The capacity for collaboration in constructing our shared habitat remains within the

grasp of the human race. Pope Francis's theological perspective on ecology, as expressed in his encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Querida Amazonia*, offers a critique of the prevailing anthropocentric mindset and the technocratic worldview. This statement highlights the inherent interdependence within the natural world and emphasizes the imperative of environmental stewardship. The concept in question has similarities with Asian religious traditions such as Buddhism and Daoism, as it places significant emphasis on the notions of interdependence and the pursuit of harmony with the natural world. Potential areas of further exploration encompass the examination of population dynamics, the development of a theological framework centred around the concept of a "Cosmic Christ," and the formulation of a theology informed by the principles of evolution (Pope Francis 2015).

1.2.2 Environmental Ethics and Islam

According to the teachings of the Quran, human transgressions against the environment imply a connection that ultimately results in detrimental outcomes for the planet. This correlation suggests that exploitation of natural resources, pollution, and deforestation are examples of human activities that can disrupt the delicate equilibrium of the environment and cause environmental degradation and suffering (Ibrahim 2010; Rahman 2016; Mikdar, 2010). The concept of *Gannah*, as outlined in the Quran, embodies the ideals of moderation and reverence for Allah's creation. This value serves as a significant testament to the significance of conservation. The concept promotes the responsible use of resources and the preservation of environmental equilibrium. *Mahabbah*, which denotes profound reverence and admiration for the nature, is an additional core principle. This notion emphasises the need of valuing and safeguarding the environment as a tangible representation of Allah's divine creation, hence advocating for conscientious guardianship. The notion of *Ihsan* emphasises the individual's responsibility for their activities, encompassing those that have the potential to negatively impact the environment. This statement serves as a reminder that every behaviour, regardless of its impact on the environment, carries repercussions. The process of educating the family about environmental conservation, which involves the utilisation of less natural resources, waste reduction, and active involvement in environmental conservation initiatives, is commonly known as "*Taiwan*." This practise fosters collaborative endeavours among family members to cultivate a sense of accountability towards environmental conservation, hence fostering the development of a more sustainable and environmentally aware society (Yaacob *et al.*, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2020).

Islam, one of the comprehensive religions, prioritizes prevention, preservation, and conservation measures before environmental destruction occurs. Thus, Faith, morality, and ethics in conducting social behaviour are essential for ecological conservation. The perspective and beliefs of an individual shape how they act towards the Environment, which in turn inspires volunteerism for environmental protection. To help raise public awareness of ecological conservation, religious individuals play a crucial role in society (Aung, 2016). Identifying how people's behaviours affect their social norms based on their societal role will provide a more comprehensive understanding. The VBN theory (Stern, 2000), also known as the values-beliefs-norms theory, posits that individuals' behaviours, particularly those pertaining to environmental care, are influenced by a combination of their own values, beliefs on the outcomes of their activities, and the social norms prevalent within their communities. This theory offers a comprehensive theoretical framework that facilitates the comprehension of the psychological and social determinants that influence individuals' attitudes and behaviours in

relation to the environment. In contrast, the TPB theory, often known as the theory of planned behaviour, places significant emphasis on the influential role of ideas in shaping human behaviour. Based on the theoretical framework presented, it is posited that an individual's inclination to partake in a specific behaviour, such as demonstrating environmental concern, is significantly shaped by their cognitive evaluations of the anticipated consequences of this behaviour, as well as their perception of the societal expectations surrounding its execution or avoidance. Religion and culture are inextricably linked to values and beliefs (Stern, 2000).

Numerous verses within the Qur'an provide significant evidence for safeguarding the Environment. Islam also adopts a stewardship stance towards the Environment. The Earth is considered a divine creation, and as humans, we are responsible for safeguarding and maintaining its original state.

The primary duty of the human race is to safeguard and guarantee the harmony and oneness (Tawheed) of the divine creation. Furthermore, Islam forbids consumerism in utilizing natural resources bestowed to humanity by the World, as stated in the Qur'an (7:31, 6:141, 17:26-27, 40:34).

The Qur'an explicitly identifies wasteful consumption, called *Isrāf*, as the thirty-second most significant transgression. In relation to the aforementioned ideas, it is worth mentioning that the Islamic Climate Change Symposium, which took place in 2015, officially supported the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change. The conference acknowledged the significant convergence of Islam and environmentalism, underscoring the significance of safeguarding the Earth as a sacred entity. The symposium's support of the declaration serves as another evidence of the congruence between Islamic teachings and the worldwide endeavour to tackle climate change and promote environmental sustainability. The aforementioned correlation highlights the importance of the Islamic viewpoint in its contribution towards worldwide endeavours in environmental conservation. Building upon the discussions held during the symposium, it is imperative to comprehend that the act of committing oneself to the faith, as elucidated in verse 30:30 of the Qur'an, entails adhering to the innate propensity established by Allah, which is in accordance with the principles of environmental stewardship. Based on the aforementioned passage, it may be inferred that the creation of Allah is inherently unchangeable, hence emphasising the imperative for human beings to assume the duty of safeguarding and conserving the sacred creation, encompassing the environment.;

One should genuinely dedicate oneself to the Faith, thereby adhering to the inherent disposition established by Allah, the disposition in accordance with which he has shaped humanity. According to verse 30:30 of the Qur'an, Allah's creation cannot be altered.

One should refrain from displaying excessive arrogance when traversing the planet. According to the Qur'an 17:37, it is said that the earth cannot be divided, and no entity can surpass the grandeur of mountains.

Allah is attributed to the creation of the earth as a habitable abode, the sky as an overarching canopy, the formation and refinement of human beings, and the provision of beneficial resources for their sustenance. The entity referred to as "Allah" in the statement above is to be recognized as the supreme deity and ruler. Acknowledging Allah as the Lord of all existence and its various realms is praiseworthy. The verse referenced is from the Qur'an, specifically verse 40:64.

Islam shares philosophical, ethical, and theological ideals with ecology, stewardship, and harmony values; Whitford and Wong (2009) hypothesize that Muslim societies will be more environmentally conscious than Christian cultures. The Qur'an does not have a specific term denoting the Environment; nonetheless, it does expound upon the concept of "signs" attributed to Allah, establishing a connection between the natural World and divine revelation. These "signs" are regarded as manifestations of Allah's creation and hold substantial importance in emphasising the interconnectedness between the environment and spirituality. These objects function as symbols that signify the existence of a higher power within the realm of nature, emphasising the significance of responsible management and care.

Consequently, the Qur'an perceives the Environment as a testament to the omnipresence of Allah. According to the teachings of the Qur'an (55:1-9), Muslims are instructed that Allah has established the natural order, wherein every life form has been assigned a sacred duty to submit to His divine will. Consequently, the notion of a divinely sanctioned equilibrium in the natural World has emerged, wherein every being occupies a designated position.

1.2.3 Environmental Conservation and Hinduism

When considering the examination of the dynamic interaction between Hinduism and the environment, it becomes apparent that Hinduism builds a deep and significant connection with the natural world. This is demonstrated by its esteemed literary works, specifically the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Epics, which feature references to the intrinsic divine nature present in diverse natural components, including rivers, mountains, plants, animals, and soil. Hinduism actively promotes environmental conservation as a means to safeguard the natural environment, receiving endorsement from numerous organisations dedicated to advocating for sustainable development. Green Faith (2010) is an example of an organisation that actively participates in creating awareness and implementing actions to protect the environment.

In the forthcoming analysis, I will conduct a more extensive investigation of the environmental ethics within the framework of Hinduism. From a philosophical perspective, Brahman is commonly acknowledged as the supreme spirit or ultimate reality that transcends the limitations of the material realm. The discussed notion is commonly perceived as eternal and subservient to the supreme entity. The perspective is seen in verse 13.13 of the Bhagavad Gita. Similar to the recognition of the timeless existence of Brahman in Hinduism, the belief system also involves the categorization of life and nature into many modalities. The gunas, known as modes, have a significant impact on the behaviours and traits displayed by living species, as well as the natural environment. Acquiring a full comprehension of these principles provides noteworthy scholarly insights into the manner in which Hinduism's permanent and perpetual values intersect with the environment and the interdependence of all living beings.

The examination of the profound association between Hinduism and the environment, together with its intellectual foundations, establishes a basis for comprehending the potential use of these concepts in modern environmental conservation efforts. Through a comprehensive exploration of these ancient doctrines, our objective is to unearth profound understandings that can effectively inform contemporary endeavours aimed at safeguarding and conserving the environment in alignment with Hindu tenets. Ultimately, this pursuit will contribute to the advancement of a more sustainable and ecologically aware global community.

1.3 Research Aim

This study examines the pivotal role played by religious leaders in promoting environment friendly behaviours among their congregations. The main aim of this study is to assess the

effectiveness of faith-based efforts in influencing individuals' pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of faith-based organisations on environmental conservation efforts and to get insight into the influence of religious beliefs on individuals' viewpoints regarding environmental matters. Moreover, this study investigates the profound impact of religious beliefs on the level of engagement within the community on environmental initiatives. This study seeks to expand our understanding of the complex relationship between religion and environmental consciousness by thoroughly examining these research objectives.

Methods

This research employed a mixed methods approach, seamlessly blending in-depth interviews with quantitative data gathered from community members, all aligned with the overarching objectives of the study. Of these two methods, in-depth interviews stood out as the primary means of data collection. The choice of religious leaders as key participants was intentional, as they provide an ideal platform for in-depth exploration, particularly when dealing with intricate, controversial, unfamiliar, or multifaceted issues. This approach allows us to delve into the "why" behind people's feelings and perspectives on such issues while also gaining insights into how these issues are socially constructed and shared.

Within the scope of this study, in-depth interviews served as a deliberative context where religious leaders played a pivotal role in shaping the actions and attitudes of their congregations. They conveyed their messages effectively through deliberate sermons, drawing upon their scriptural teachings as a reference point. Complementing these interviews, a follow-up survey was administered to collect essential demographic data. Additionally, this study provided valuable insights into the congregation's perceptions of the sermons delivered by their religious leaders and how these sermons influenced their behavior and actions.

2.1 Participants

The target population of this study comprised religious leaders belonging to three prominent religious organizations, namely Muslims, Christians, and Hindus, located in Islamabad. The rationale behind selecting participants from these groups was based on the consideration that they collectively constitute a substantial proportion of the urban population. The recruitment process mostly occurred within religious establishments, encompassing mosques, churches, and temples. A thorough informed consent procedure was conscientiously executed prior to the commencement of data collection. The research encompassed a cohort of twelve religious leaders who willingly chose to partake in the study. This cohort consisted of four individuals who represented the Christian faith, four individuals who represented the Muslim faith, and four individuals who represented the Hindu faith. Among the 60 participants who submitted their demographic information, 15 self-identified as Hindus, 20 as Muslims, and 25 as Christians. Employing a purposive sampling technique, the individuals involved in the study exhibited an average age of 30 years, with age variations spanning from 25 to 51 years. Additional information regarding the participants may be found in Table 1 and Table 2.

The researchers utilised the purposive sampling strategy in order to guarantee a deliberate and pertinent selection of individuals. This particular qualitative research methodology entails the deliberate and purposeful selection of a restricted number of participants, chosen based on specific features or attributes that are directly relevant to properly addressing the research topic at hand. In this instance, individuals were chosen as participants on the basis of their religious connections and their positions as religious authority within their respective groups. The

selection method was determined taking into account the comfort and convenience of the participants. The study involved the recruitment of participants from both Muslim and Christian communities, who were approached at their respective places of worship shortly following religious services. The Hindu volunteers were recruited via personal networks, and their informed permission records were systematically gathered. In every instance, meticulous care was taken to ensure that informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Table 1. Detail of the Faith-Based Leaders.

Group	Faith	N ^a	Gender	Mean Age ^b
1	Muslims	8	M	39.5
2	Christians	4	M	40.5
3	Hindus	3	M	42

N^a Show sample size of the respondents from each of the group

Mean age^b Represent the age that most of the respondent fall in the above mean age, which reflects the time of experience as well.

Table 2. Detail of Respondents

Group	N	Gender
Muslims	20	M
Christian	25	M
Hindu	15	M

Results

The analysis of the transcript data was conducted using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method, which is a systematic and iterative approach consisting of six distinct steps. These steps include: (1) gaining familiarity with the data, (2) generating codes, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) identifying exemplars. The methodology employed in this study encompassed a methodical procedure of data coding and analysis, wherein many sub-themes were discerned and subsequently incorporated into a comprehensive coding manual. In order to ensure the credibility of our findings, we maintained inter-coder reliability by engaging in regular discussions among coders to address any inconsistencies and enhance the accuracy of individual interpretations of the transcripts. The culmination of these combined endeavours resulted in the ultimate establishment of the recognised themes.

In addition, the data derived from the transcripts was cross-referenced with pertinent research findings, so augmenting our comprehension and bolstering the credibility of the outcomes. In order to uphold the confidentiality of participants, a series of anonymization techniques were implemented, which involved the removal of actual names of individuals inside the given environment. The methodological approach employed in this study served as the basis for our following findings and analysis, which will be comprehensively detailed in the Results section.

3.1 Strategies for Successful Environmental Conservation in the Face of Adversity

These institutions effectively inspire individuals by integrating principles of environmental stewardship into their teachings and operational strategies. The focal point lies in the promotion of conservation measures, with an emphasis on fostering collaboration between faith-based and secular environmental organisations.

The strong commitment of religious leaders from the Muslim, Christian, and Hindu faiths to the preservation of the environment is apparent. The individuals exhibit their commitment by implementing many activities that seek to enhance consciousness and involve their local communities in sustainable practises. In spite of limited resources, these leaders ardently promote appropriate environmental behaviours, thereby contributing to a more holistic conception of a sustainable and compassionate society.

A Muslim religious leader contemplates, *“There exists a purposeful and resolute commitment to go upon a trajectory led by a profound sense of devotion.’ Moreover, there exists a strong anticipation for prospective collaborations that have the ability to advance their environmental goal”*. The Christian religious leader articulates that their effort *seeks to cultivate a sense of personal responsibility for both individual well-being and world health through the incorporation of biblical concepts in conjunction with environmental awareness*. The Hindu religious leader *underscores the commitment to raising community awareness about the environmental consequences associated with products like plastic, highlighting the unwavering determination*.

The above viewpoints expressed by religious leaders emphasise the considerable impact of faith-based organisations in advancing environmental conservation endeavours and draw attention to the possibility of cooperative endeavours to tackle obstacles.

3.2 Encouraging Environmental Awareness: Overcoming Inaction and Lack of Knowledge in Religious Communities

The importance of religious-environmental endeavours and the imperative for proactive engagement of faith-based organisations in addressing urgent environmental issues cannot be overstated. The emphasis serves to emphasise the presence of knowledge and organisational limitations inside several organisations. It brings attention to fundamental notions such as stewardship and justice, which serve as guiding principles for these undertakings. The initiatives encompass integrating environmentally conscious themes into religious rituals and sermons and other religious programs, actively promoting resource conservation and proper waste disposal, and disseminating information on environmental equity.

Moreover, the importance of utilising community-based social marketing and organisational change as tactics to improve the effectiveness of religious initiatives in promoting energy and environmental conservation. Religious environmentalism serves as a conduit, amalgamating spiritual tenets with pragmatic environmental endeavours, hence cultivating the advancement of a holistic religious-environmental movement. This objective is accomplished by cultivating personal responsibility and collaborative support within the community.

As per the assertion made by a prominent Muslim religious leader places *significant emphasis on the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, with a central objective of advocating for human rights and safeguarding individuals from the detrimental consequences of environmental degradation and its societal implications. This statement highlights the interconnectedness between human rights and environmental conservation, emphasising the complex and varied character of these matters. Furthermore, the Hadith, a collection of the teachings and practises of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), emphasises the significance of cultivating*

harmonious relationships, facilitating constructive transformation in individuals' lives, and establishing a profound connection with the environment. This profound doctrine transcends the domain of environmental conservation.

Christian religious leaders acknowledge the presence of environmental issues and underscore the importance of identifying solutions. *They play an active role in facilitating the distribution of educational materials and promoting the development of positive attitudes and behaviours, emphasising the alignment between religious ideals and the protection of the environment. This assertion is reinforced by their emphasis on the need of appreciation, compassion, and stewardship as basic principles for promoting sustainability and enhancing environmental conservation.*

Hindu religious leaders employ diverse strategies to effectively communicate the importance of environmental conservation. *The concept of interconnectivity is emphasised, with a focus on the moral and ethical responsibility to protect the Earth. The promotion of ecological consciousness is aided by the utilisation of practical methodologies and religious teachings, which serve to motivate individuals to adopt sustainable behaviours by emphasising the sacredness of the Earth. These individuals serve as prime examples of the pragmatic implementation of integrating religious beliefs with efforts towards environmental advocacy.*

These leaders place significant emphasis on the interconnection between spirituality and environmental action, advocating for heightened ecological consciousness and fostering a sense of responsibility towards the Earth. Furthermore, the results puts up a persuasive argument that challenges conventional notions regarding the influence of religion on the transition of communities towards sustainable energy sources. Consequently, there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of the degree to which religion impacts and influences sustainability endeavours. The findings presented together emphasise the practical necessity of integrating religious concepts with practical methodologies in order to effectively accomplish substantial outcomes in environmental conservation and sustainability endeavours.

3.3 Religious affiliation and Individual responses to Sermons

Association between religious affiliation and individuals' responses to sermons

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.967 ^a	4	.411
Likelihood Ratio	4.050	4	.399
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.237	1	.266
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. four cells (44.4%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.75.

The profound impact of religion on the development of environmental views should not be underestimated. Religious leaders possess significant platforms that afford them the opportunity to disseminate knowledge pertaining to environmental issues and promote the adoption of environmentally-friendly behaviours among their congregants. Moreover, religious traditions provide a significant conceptual framework for humans to reflect upon their relationship with the natural world and their responsibility to foster and safeguard it.

The data was analysed using the chi-square test with 4 degrees of freedom, employing both the Pearson (3.967) and Likelihood Ratio (4.050) metrics. The p-values obtained were roughly 0.411 and 0.399, respectively. The observed p-values surpass the predetermined significance threshold of 0.05. The results indicate that there might not be a statistically significant correlation between religious affiliation and individuals' reactions to environmental sermons. The p-value derived from the Linear-by-Linear Association test was found to be 0.266, which exceeds the specified significance level of 0.05. This observation suggests that there is no statistically significant linear relationship seen in the association. In conclusion, the findings do not offer compelling evidence in favour of a significant association between religious affiliation and individuals' responses to environmental sermons.

Participants' religious affiliations and their perceptions

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.340 ^a	4	.673
Likelihood Ratio	2.426	4	.658
Linear-by-Linear Association	.114	1	.736
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. three cells (33.3%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.50.

Religious leaders can potentially assume a significant role in fostering community environmental protection. By integrating environmental messages into their sermons and other forms of instruction, religious leaders can contribute to educating their congregations regarding environmental concerns and motivate them to engage in proactive measures. The above table summarises the outcomes derived from Chi-Square tests, which were conducted to examine the relationship between the religious affiliations of participants and their perceptions of integrating environmental conservation principles into sermons by individuals with faith-based affiliations. The Pearson Chi-Square value is seen to be 2.340, while the Likelihood Ratio value is slightly greater at 2.426, both with a degree of freedom of 4 (df). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the p-values corresponding to these tests are considerably higher, specifically at 0.673 and 0.658, respectively, surpassing the customary significance threshold set at 0.05. This finding indicates no statistically significant correlation between the religious affiliations of respondents and their reported observations of environmental conservation being addressed in sermons. The Linear-by-linear association test was conducted to evaluate the existence of a linear trend in this relationship. The obtained p-value of 0.736 surpasses the predetermined significance level of 0.05, suggesting that insufficient evidence to support a statistically significant link does not yield substantial statistical evidence to show a significant association between participants' religious affiliations and their perceptions of environmental protection in sermons.

Discussion

The intricate relationship among environmental awareness, religious devotion, and sermon reactions among faith-oriented communities is an intriguing area of investigation. This research highlights a significant observation on the considerable potential of religious institutions and

leaders in motivating individuals to participate in environmental conservation endeavours. Faith-based organisations have exhibited their capacity to incorporate principles of environmental stewardship into their teachings and activities, underscoring the significance of cooperative endeavours between faith-based and environmental entities. This highlights the notable contributions made by religious leaders from various faiths, such as Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism, in promoting environmental conservation through a range of initiatives aimed at raising awareness and engaging their respective communities in sustainable practises.

The unwavering devotion of religious leaders to the cause of environmental conservation is seen in their resolute commitment. One illustrative instance involves a Muslim religious leader who underscores the deep-seated commitment engendered by teachings derived from the Quran, as well as the prioritisation of safeguarding human rights, within the core principles of environmental preservation. Similarly, Christian leaders prioritise the seamless integration of biblical principles and environmental consciousness, aiming to foster personal accountability and advance the welfare of the earth. Hindu religious leaders employ pragmatic approaches and theological teachings to motivate adherents to embrace sustainable practises, placing significant emphasis on acknowledging the sanctity of the Earth.

Despite these commendable efforts, the Chi-Square tests conducted to examine the association between religious membership and individuals' interpretations of environmental messages in sermons indicate that there might be insufficient statistical significance in this specific context. The p-values obtained from the Pearson and Likelihood Ratio tests conducted in the aforementioned analysis, with a conventional significance level of 0.05, suggest that the observed relationship between religious affiliation and responses to sermons may not be statistically significant. The Linear-by-Linear Association test offers additional evidence in favour of this approach.

The results of the theme analysis highlight the considerable influence exerted by faith-based organisations and leaders in promoting environmental initiatives. The Chi-Square tests yielded findings that highlight the complexity involved in assessing the precise impact of religious affiliation on individuals' responses to environmental sermons. Recognising the complex interplay of various factors that transcend beyond mere religious membership is crucial when considering the association between religious beliefs and environmental attitudes.

This research study offers significant insights on the role of religious institutions and leaders in environmental conservation projects, so enhancing our understanding in this area. Although the statistical studies do not yield definitive evidence of a direct correlation between religious affiliation and responses to sermons, the qualitative findings offer valuable insights into the active engagement of faith-based communities in environmental initiatives. The present research emphasises the significance of continuous dialogue and collaboration between religious and environmental organisations, emphasising the capacity of faith-based communities to utilise their influence in promoting sustainable practises and fostering environmental awareness.

Conclusion

In succinct this research has explored the complex interplay between religious affiliation, environmental awareness, and reactions to sermons within religious congregations. The study has illuminated the considerable capacity of religious institutions and leaders to motivate citizens to adopt ideas of environmental conservation. Faith-based institutions have continually exhibited their ability to integrate environmental stewardship into their teachings, placing

emphasis on the significance of collaborative endeavours with environmental organisations. Religious leaders hailing from several traditions, encompassing Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism, have demonstrated resolute commitment towards the preservation of the environment. They have undertaken a multitude of activities aimed at fostering awareness and encouraging active participation within their respective communities in sustainable endeavours.

This research study makes a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge by enhancing our comprehension of the intricate relationship between religion, environmental awareness, and the impact of sermons on individuals within religious communities. Although the statistical studies may not provide conclusive evidence of a direct correlation, the qualitative data highlights the significant engagement of faith-based communities in the protection of the environment. The findings of this study necessitate a thorough comprehension of the ways in which religious beliefs impact individuals' environmental attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, it is imperative to underscore the continuous partnership between religious and environmental entities as a strategy to use the capacity of faith-based collectives in advocating for sustainable behaviours and enhancing consciousness regarding environmental concerns.

The findings of this study have far-reaching effects on both the academic community and society as a whole, emphasising the necessity for additional research on the influence of religion in determining environmental behaviours. Additionally, it fosters effective collaboration between faith-based and environmental organisations in promoting environmental conservation and sustainability. The results underscore the importance of promoting sustainable practises and raising environmental consciousness among religious communities and other sectors.

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