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**COMMUNICATION FOR SUSTAINED VOLUNTEERISM:
THE CASE OF PAWIKAN CONSERVATION**

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Acceptance Page

This paper prepared by **JOHN WILFRED PASTORAL KAYABAN** with the title: **“COMMUNICATION FOR SUSTAINED VOLUNTEERISM: THE CASE OF PAWIKAN CONSERVATION”** is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Development Communication.

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Biographical Sketch

John Wilfred Pastoral Kayaban is an integrated marketing communication professional and sustainability advocate whose work bridges brand strategy, storytelling, and development communication.

He currently serves on the Legal Business Solutions Marketing team at LexisNexis/RELX | Reed Elsevier, where he manages marketing projects, develops thought leadership themes, and supports campaigns, product launches, and strategic initiatives for CounselLink. He works closely with stakeholders on brand positioning, segmentation, competitive and customer analysis, marketing performance reporting, and cross-functional communications.

Before joining LexisNexis/RELX | Reed Elsevier, he worked as a Marketing Consultant at AffinityX and completed internships at CNN Philippines and M2.0 Communications/M2 Live, experiences that strengthened his foundation in media, content, and strategic communication.

John Wilfred earned his Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Trinity University of Asia in 2017, graduating cum laude. Guided by a deep appreciation for meaningful storytelling and public-interest journalism, he draws inspiration from Maria Ressa, Ces Drilon, Pia Hontiveros, Kara David, and Atom Araullo. His academic and advocacy interests include legal technology, sustainability, development communication, and data-informed marketing, and his project work has also focused on responsible consumption and sustainable waste management.

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Abstract

This study examined how volunteerism is sustained in a pawikan conservation initiative, with emphasis on the role of communication strategies and support systems. Guided by symbolic interactionism and development/environmental communication, it employed an embedded mixed-methods single-case design. Quantitative data were drawn from a short anonymous survey completed by all currently active volunteers in the organization (N = 30), while qualitative data came from one focus group discussion with six volunteers. The study investigated the communication strategies and support systems associated with sustained volunteerism, how volunteers interpret these practices and relate them to commitment and continued participation, how organizational values shape the framing and enactment of sustaining practices, and what challenges and opportunities affect continued involvement.

Results show very high levels of sustained volunteerism and perceived communication support within the case organization. What mattered most was not the mere number of support practices volunteers experienced, but the perceived quality of support. Feedback and learning, recognition, mentoring, and coordination emerged as the strongest correlates of commitment, continuance, and role identity. Storytelling and values-in-action were also highly endorsed and helped anchor ecological purpose, pride, and a family-like sense of belonging, although storytelling did not significantly differentiate sustained volunteerism because it appeared to function as a shared baseline across respondents. The focus group further revealed that volunteerism is relationally produced through intergenerational recruitment, everyday mentoring, recognition rituals, and practical coordination, while its most

persistent constraints are time, physical demands and safety concerns, and costs or logistics.

The study concludes that communication sustains volunteerism when it helps volunteers feel guided, recognized, heard, and connected to impact, but communication alone is insufficient without realistic material support. It recommends strengthening structured mentoring, regular two-way feedback, fair and visible recognition, streamlined coordination, and volunteer welfare mechanisms, while deepening participatory voice in organizational communication.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale of the Study

Pawikans or sea turtles are keystone species whose survival underpins the ecological balance of Philippine marine and coastal systems. Despite their significance, they remain endangered due to poaching, habitat destruction, marine debris, and climate change (GMA Public Affairs, 2021).

A *pawikan* conservation initiative supports community-based pawikan conservation efforts through the organization itself and related local initiatives. Beyond providing “extra hands” for activities such as beach monitoring, nest protection, hatchling releases, and conservation education, the organization creates spaces where volunteers and community members can learn together, share stories, and take collective responsibility for coastal resources. Volunteer engagement thus contributes not only to immediate conservation tasks but also to broader development goals, such as strengthening community resilience, nurturing local leadership, and fostering a sense of shared stewardship over the coast.

These efforts reflect a broader insight in environmental and development communication: public engagement is shaped by how messages are framed, narrated, and situated culturally, not by information alone (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021). From a development communication perspective, communication for conservation becomes a vehicle for participation and empowerment when volunteers are treated as co-creators of knowledge and action rather than passive recipients of information (Flor, 2004; Freire, 2005; Servaes, 2008). In this sense, conservation

messaging intersects with social change processes by enabling people to articulate their own concerns, deliberate on risks, and sustain locally grounded responses to environmental issues.

Conservation success is often reported in ecological terms (e.g., nesting counts, hatchling releases), yet the communication processes that move people from initial enthusiasm to sustained volunteer engagement remain less visible in scholarship and practice (Pezzullo & Cox, 2021). This study foregrounds that phenomenon—communication for conservation as a strategic means of sustaining volunteerism and community engagement, with *pawikan* conservation serving as the case through the *pawikan* conservation initiative. (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

The chosen case study is an instructive case because it blends values-based messaging, grassroots organizing, and practical support systems for volunteers, making conservation a lived ethic expressed in recognition, mentoring, storytelling, and everyday acts of coastal stewardship (Flor, 2004). What remains under-described is how communication strategies and support systems help volunteers persist despite fatigue, competing obligations, and resource constraints. Analytically, the study adopts a symbolic interactionist tradition to examine how interactional practices and messages sustain volunteer identities and commitment within this conservation setting (Blumer, 1969).

Statement of the Problem

Grounded in this context, the study asks how volunteerism is sustained in the pawikan conservation initiatives of the *pawikan* conservation initiative, and what role communication strategies and support systems play in sustaining it over time.

Primary Problem: How is volunteerism sustained in pawikan conservation initiatives of *pawikan* conservation initiative, and what role do communication strategies and support systems play in sustaining it over time?

Sub-problems

1. What communication strategies and support systems (e.g., mentoring, recognition, feedback, coordination, storytelling) are used to sustain volunteerism over time?
2. How do volunteers interpret these communication practices, and how do these meanings relate to sustained volunteerism (e.g., commitment, continued participation, intention to remain)?
3. How do organizational values (e.g., stewardship, resilience, empathy, perseverance) shape the framing and enactment of sustaining practices?
4. What challenges and opportunities affect sustained volunteerism, and how are these addressed communicatively?

Objectives of the Study

To address this problem systematically, the study advances the following general and specific objectives.

General Objective: To examine how volunteerism is sustained in *pawikan* conservation initiatives of *pawikan* conservation initiative, with emphasis on the role of communication strategies and support systems.

Specific Objectives

1. Identify the communication strategies and support systems used by the *pawikan* conservation initiative to sustain volunteerism.
2. Describe indicators of sustained volunteerism among volunteers (e.g., continued participation, commitment, intention to remain) and how these relate to perceived communication support.
3. Examine how organizational values shape conservation messaging and volunteer mobilization practices.
4. Analyze challenges and opportunities affecting sustained volunteerism and how these are addressed communicatively.
5. Propose recommendations to strengthen communication strategies for sustaining volunteerism in community-based conservation initiatives.

Assumptions

In this embedded mixed-methods case study, the assumptions below serve as sensitizing guides and may be refined as patterns emerge across the survey and the focus group discussion.

1. Communication as social practice. Sustained volunteerism is interactionally accomplished through repeated exchanges, shared routines, and negotiated roles among organizations, volunteers, and communities.

2. Values-based, dialogic communication sustains volunteerism. Values such as stewardship, resilience, empathy, and perseverance, when enacted consistently, nurture belonging, commitment, and willingness to continue (Freire, 2005).
3. Coupled support matters. Communication that pairs advocacy with practical supports (orientation, training, tools, and peer mentoring) helps volunteers maintain motivation and participation over time (Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).
4. Framing shapes meaning and persistence. How conservation work and volunteer roles are framed influences identity formation and the willingness to remain involved (Goffman, 1974; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).
5. Barriers are communicatively mitigable. Burnout, resource constraints, and competing obligations can be addressed through realistic coordination, recognition practices, and shared reflection spaces (Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).
6. Context-bounded transferability. Findings will be context-specific yet may offer insights transferable to similar community-based conservation settings (Yin, 2018).

Significance of the Study

Clarifying this communicative work matters for both **environmental communication** and **development communication**. At a theoretical level, the study contributes to a more **locally grounded understanding of communication for conservation**, showing how strategies for storytelling, recognition, mentoring, and feedback help sustain volunteerism in community-based *pawikan* initiatives (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021). It brings together insights from environmental communication and participatory development communication to highlight how

communication can enable communities to frame issues in their own terms, negotiate meanings, and sustain collective action over time (Flor, 2004; Freire, 2005; Servaes, 2008).

As an **applied development communication study**, it also foregrounds **empowerment, participation, and the sustainability of local communication systems** as expected benefits. By documenting how volunteers and organizers actually communicate; through interpersonal mentoring, peer networks, non-formal learning activities, and digital platforms, the study can inform the design of communication processes that strengthen volunteers' confidence, voice, and sense of ownership in conservation work.

For NGOs, people's organizations, and LGUs, the findings may guide the development of communication strategies that not only recruit volunteers but enable them to participate meaningfully in decisions, co-manage local initiatives, and maintain their own communication channels and practices around *pawikan* conservation. For academic institutions and training programs, the study offers a concrete case of how development communication principles; participatory, culture-sensitive, locally appropriate communication can be operationalized in environmental and coastal resource management.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The *pawikan* conservation organization, serves as the empirical focus. Units of analysis include organizational communication practices, values integration, and volunteer experiences. The design prioritizes depth over breadth; findings are not intended for statistical generalization (Yin, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by a post-positivist mixed-methods conceptual framework that explains how communication can sustain volunteerism in a community-based pawikan conservation initiative. As shown in Figure 1, communication practices and support systems, particularly storytelling, mentoring, and recognition, shape how volunteers interpret the work, develop role identity, and sustain their commitment and continuance. Practical conditions such as time, safety, costs and logistics, and welfare support influence whether communication can be translated into long-term participation (Blumer, 1969; Flor, 2004; Freire, 2005; Servaes, 2008; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

The framework treats storytelling, mentoring, and recognition as the core communication variables, role identity as the main interpretive pathway, and commitment and continuance as the two dimensions of sustained volunteerism. This arrangement fits the final design of the study, where the survey estimates patterned relationships among the variables and the focus group discussion explains how and why those relationships emerge within the case.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Communication for Sustained Volunteerism in a *Pawikan* Conservation Initiative



Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following key variables are defined and used as follows:

1. **Communication practices.** The recurring ways by which the organization and its members communicate with volunteers to orient, guide, affirm, and organize participation in pawikan conservation activities. In this study, communication practices are examined through mentoring, recognition, feedback, and coordination.
2. **Mentoring.** The guidance, coaching, and informal support that newer volunteers receive from more experienced members. In the survey, mentoring was measured through items on mentoring or buddy systems and peer support. In the focus group discussion, it was examined through narratives of how volunteers learned tasks, norms, and values from others.
3. **Recognition.** The acknowledgment of volunteer effort through praise, certificates, public mention, feedback, or other visible signs that volunteers are seen and valued. In the survey, recognition was measured through items on fairness, consistency, and motivational value. In the focus group discussion, it referred to the ways volunteers experienced appreciation and validation.
4. **Feedback.** The comments, reminders, updates, and reflections given to volunteers regarding their participation, performance, and contribution to conservation work. In this study, feedback also includes communication that helps volunteers learn from activities and understand their impact.
5. **Coordination.** The communication processes used to organize volunteer activities, roles, schedules, tasks, and logistics. It includes reminders, briefings, instructions, and responsive communication that help volunteers know what to do, when to do it, and how to participate effectively.

6. **Meaning-making.** The interpretive process through which volunteers understand, value, and attach significance to their involvement in the organization. In this study, meaning-making is examined through identity, belonging, and values-in-action.
7. **Identity.** How volunteers understand themselves in relation to the conservation initiative. It concerns the meanings they attach to being part of the organization and the sense of self they develop through participation.
8. **Belonging.** Volunteers' sense of being accepted, valued, and connected to the group. It captures the extent to which volunteers feel that they are part of a shared community rather than merely participating in isolated activities.
9. **Values-in-action.** the lived expression of the organization's guiding values in everyday interactions, routines, and practices. In this study, these values include stewardship, resilience, empathy, and perseverance as they are communicated and enacted in volunteer work.
10. **Sustained volunteerism.** The continued and meaningful participation of volunteers over time in the conservation initiative. In this study, sustained volunteerism is understood through commitment, persistence, and role identity.
11. **Commitment.** The psychological attachment and willingness of volunteers to keep contributing to the initiative. It was measured through survey items on belonging, personal meaning, and pride in the organization.
12. **Persistence.** The tendency of volunteers to remain involved and to continue participating despite constraints, difficulties, or competing demands. In this thesis, persistence includes both the intention to remain and the actual pattern of continued participation over time.

13. **Role identity.** The extent to which volunteers understand themselves, and feel understood by others, as committed conservation actors. It was measured through survey items on seeing oneself as a conservation volunteer and feeling recognized by others as such; in the focus group discussion it was explored through meanings attached to being a volunteer in the organization.
14. **Practical conditions.** The material and situational factors that shape whether volunteers are able to continue participating in conservation activities. In this study, practical conditions are examined through time, safety, costs, and welfare support.
15. **Time.** The availability of volunteers to participate in activities alongside work, studies, family obligations, and other responsibilities.
16. **Safety.** The physical and situational security surrounding volunteer tasks and field activities. It includes perceptions of risk, physical demands, and the extent to which volunteers feel protected while participating.
17. **Costs.** The financial and logistical burdens associated with participation, such as transportation, food, equipment, and the opportunity costs of volunteering.
18. **Welfare support.** The practical forms of care and assistance that help volunteers remain active and capable of participating. In this study, welfare support includes provisions or arrangements such as meals, transportation support, protective gear, attention to well-being, and other forms of volunteer care.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Environmental communication enables citizens to make informed decisions and participate in ecological governance. Following Flor (2004), it is the deliberate application of communication principles, strategies, and techniques to environmental management, drawing on general systems theory and oriented toward mutual understanding rather than one-way persuasion. This stance undergirds the present study's focus on how communication practices sustain conservation volunteerism over time in a community-based pawikan conservation setting, serving as the empirical case. Building on this, Pezzullo and Cox (2021) foreground framing and narrative; especially under conditions of urgency and values alignment, and articulate campaign-planning pillars such as: clear goals, specific objectives, primary and secondary audiences, and coherent strategies/tactics that position communication as planned action enabling conservation work.

Communication for Conservation

Environmental communication links ecological knowledge with public engagement and action; it emphasizes narrative, framing, and culturally situated discourse as drivers of conservation behavior (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021). Flor (2004) aligns the field with Kincaid's Convergence Model; communication as cyclical and participatory, where publics become co-sources of information.

Within development communication, Servaes (2008) argues for a multiplicity paradigm, rejecting one-size-fits-all modernization models and emphasizing that communication should be participatory, culture-sensitive, and tailored to local needs.

In this view, communication is not merely about transmitting messages but about facilitating dialogue among stakeholders so they can define problems, set priorities, and co-create solutions in ways that reflect their own cultures and contexts (Servaes, 2008). This perspective complements Flor's (2004) convergence model by underscoring that environmental communication for conservation must be rooted in local knowledge systems and mediated through communication processes that communities themselves can sustain. In a case like the *pawikan* conservation initiative, this implies that conservation messaging and volunteer engagement strategies should be shaped with, rather than just for, the communities and volunteers they seek to mobilize.

Applied to conservation, this entails embedding messages in local culture, avoiding media-centrism, and enabling collective problem-solving. Complementing this, Pezzullo and Cox (2021) argue that digital organizing has shifted from a broadcast "ladder" to a networked "orchestra," enabling multiple entry points into participation—an insight critical for inclusive volunteer routes.

Therefore, if conservation communication is participatory and culturally grounded, volunteer retention must be explained not only by motives and barriers but by how organizations communicate participation over time.

Volunteerism in Environmental Conservation

Research catalogs why people volunteer (ecological concern, social ties, identity) and the barriers they face (time, fatigue, risk), yet relatively few studies connect specific communication practices to long-term retention, especially in Philippine settings. Comparative sea-turtle work underscores the centrality of community participation (e.g., Mangel et al., 2010; Alfaro-Shigueto et al., 2011).

Flor (2004) extends this by showing that sustained participation grows where communication fosters mutual understanding, timely information flows, and empathy across stakeholders—conditions transferable to volunteer programs. Pezzullo and Cox (2021) add a digital pathway logic in which organizations move volunteers from awareness to deeper roles via “alert–amplify–engage,” clarifying how communication scaffolds increasing commitment.

Accordingly, the next section considers which concrete strategies consolidate engagement beyond initial recruitment.

Communication Strategies for Sustaining Volunteerism

Common strategies include campaigns and storytelling, interpersonal mentoring, social-media mobilization, community fora, and feedback mechanisms. Pezzullo and Cox (2021) identify three recurring digital roles—**alert**, **amplify**, **engage**—that, when combined with affordances like hypermediacy and remediation, enable rapid coordination but risk shallow engagement if not paired with relationship care. In this light, effective storytelling is not a “viral at any cost” proposition; campaign media should create transformations in people without damaging partnerships—a caution that resonates with values-based mentoring and recognition. Flor (2004) specifies practice-level essentials—cultural sensitivity and indigenous/popular media, advocacy networking, agenda setting, and “walking the talk” through environmental ethics—alongside nonformal and experiential learning.

What remains underexplored is the temporal dimension: how these strategies are experienced by volunteers over time and how recognition, mentoring, and feedback loops consolidate identity and belonging.

Organizational Values and Messaging in Conservation

Values such as stewardship, empathy, resilience, and perseverance shape identity, belonging, and ownership (Flor, 2004; Freire, 2005). Flor's emphasis on ethical consistency—"walking the talk"—ties strategies to organizational credibility: values must be enacted, not merely stated. Pezzullo and Cox (2021) likewise show that campaigns build public will when storytelling and organizing practices enact the very values they name, rather than chasing clicks.

Enculturation—through values formation, folk media, and ritual—helps convert episodic participation into durable stewardship (Flor, 2004). Because strategy effectiveness is mediated by perceived value-consistency across digital and offline touchpoints, the next section addresses communication breakdowns that erode alignment—and how dialogic practices can restore it.

Challenges and Opportunities in Communication for Volunteerism

Volunteer programs confront burnout, message fatigue, and resource constraints, yet can leverage youth engagement, digital platforms, local knowledge, and peer communities. Flor (2004) traces recurrent communication problems—ill-timed information, insufficient participation, weak intra-/inter-organizational flows—and deeper causes such as low priority for communication, bureaucracy, and conflicting worldviews. Pezzullo and Cox (2021) caution that NGO digital campaigns also face structural dilemmas (attention economies, shallow metrics) that can erode depth.

These risks point to actionable remedies consistent with the convergence/enculturation lens: early and continuous dialogue, agenda setting with

stakeholders, and culturally tuned channels (nonformal education, indigenous/popular media, alternative networks) to renew motivation and trust.

Research Gaps and Positioning of the Study

Community-based sea turtle conservation research underscores participation, yet seldom interrogates how communication shapes motivation, support, and persistence in local volunteer contexts (Alfaro-Shigueto et al., 2011). This study centers communication for conservation as the mechanism for maintaining participation in a *pawikan* conservation volunteer program, using *pawikan* conservation initiative as the case (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021). Positioned within a symbolic-interactionist orientation (Goffman, 1974), the study examines identity, recognition, and everyday interaction as communicative engines of sustained volunteerism. Three gaps stand out: (1) although conservation communication is well theorized, few studies examine how specific practices across stages of engagement (from recruitment to deeper roles) help sustain participation; (2) Flor's enculturation lens is underapplied to volunteer retention in Philippine marine conservation; and (3) there is a design gap in tracing progression across networked roles (alert–amplify–engage) and the interactional supports that convert temporary activism into durable stewardship (Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

Synthesis

Drawing on Flor's convergence and enculturation perspective and on Pezzullo and Cox's account of contemporary campaign planning and networked organizing, this study treats communication as a participatory, culturally situated practice that makes conservation possible in everyday life (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

The analytic lens centers on three interlocking pathways.

First, pathways of participation trace how people move from initial awareness to deeper involvement through alert, amplify, and engage roles within flexible, networked programs (Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

Second, practices for retention focus on recognition, mentoring, feedback loops, and nonformal or experiential learning that help volunteers develop skills, a sense of belonging, and a durable identity as stewards (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

Third, values in action refer to the perceived consistency between what organizations say and what they do, which functions as a credibility condition for sustained commitment (Flor, 2004).

These pathways reinforce one another as lived values legitimize practices, practices enable progression, and progression renews shared values in community conservation work (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021). This synthesis clarifies how communication maintains participation over time in a community-based *pawikan* conservation setting, using *pawikan* conservation initiative as the case, and leads directly to Chapter 3, where the constructs are translated into indicators, instruments, and procedures for analysis (Flor, 2004; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

This positioning is consistent with development communication's multiplicity and participation-oriented perspective, which stresses that communication for social and environmental change must emerge from locally grounded, culturally attuned, and dialogic processes rather than externally imposed, uniform approaches (Flor, 2004; Servaes, 2008).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlined how the study was conducted as an embedded mixed-methods case study of one organization focused on *pawikan* conservation initiatives. It presented the research design, theoretical tradition, and research questions, and described the procedures for generating evidence through a short anonymous survey and one focus group discussion (FGD). The chapter also explained how quantitative and qualitative findings; including descriptive survey patterns, reliability checks, exploratory associations, brief coding of open-ended survey responses, and thematic analysis of the FGD—were analyzed and integrated to examine how volunteerism was sustained in pawikan conservation initiatives, and the ethical and quality-assurance measures that supported research rigor (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

Research Design

This research adopted an embedded mixed-methods case study of the pawikan conservation initiative. The case was instrumental in that it was examined to illuminate the phenomenon of sustained volunteerism in a conservation initiative and the role of communication strategies and support systems in sustaining it over time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). The design was embedded because a quantitative strand (survey) described indicators of sustained volunteerism among volunteers, while the qualitative strand (one focus group discussion) provided interpretive depth on how communication practices were experienced, interpreted, and enacted. Brief

open-ended survey responses also supplied supplementary qualitative evidence that helped contextualize the quantitative patterns.

Framed as an applied development communication study, the inquiry links environmental communication with participatory and empowerment-oriented approaches, recognizing volunteers as co-creators of meaning and action in conservation work (Flor, 2004; Freire, 2005; Servaes, 2008).

Philosophical and Theoretical Orientation

The study was aligned with a post-positivist mixed-methods orientation. The survey strand was used to estimate patterned tendencies among operationalized variables, while the focus group discussion was used to explain how and why those tendencies emerged in context. In this view, knowledge claims were provisional and context-bound, and combining quantitative patterns with qualitative explanations offered a stronger account of how volunteerism was sustained than either strand alone.

Theoretical Tradition and Research Questions

The study was anchored in symbolic interactionism, which treated meaning, identity, and commitment as produced through interaction with significant others and through shared symbols in everyday practice (Blumer, 1969). This lens helped examine how volunteers interpreted organizational messages, recognition rituals, mentoring, and coordination practices, and how these interpretations related to commitment and continued participation. Framing was used as an analytic tool to describe how pawikan conservation and volunteer roles were packaged in the organization's stories, recognition routines, and everyday communication (Goffman, 1974; Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What communication strategies and support systems (e.g., mentoring, recognition, feedback, coordination, storytelling) are used to sustain volunteerism over time?
2. How do volunteers interpret these communication practices, and how do these meanings relate to sustained volunteerism (e.g., commitment, continued participation, intention to remain)?
3. How do organizational values (stewardship, resilience, empathy, perseverance) shape the framing and enactment of sustaining practices?
4. What challenges and opportunities affect sustained volunteerism, and how are these addressed communicatively?

Research Methodology

This study used an embedded mixed-methods approach within a single-case design. The quantitative strand was a short anonymous survey that described the level of sustained volunteerism and the perceived quality of communication practices and support systems among volunteers. The survey also included brief open-ended items that captured motivations and suggested improvements. The qualitative strand consisted of one focus group discussion that explained how volunteers interpreted these practices and how they related them to continued participation, role identity, and everyday support.

The survey was administered first to map the patterned tendencies that then informed the focus group prompts. Quantitative analysis consists of descriptive

statistics, internal consistency checks for the composite scales, non-parametric correlational analysis using Spearman's *rho*, and a volunteer-only sensitivity check. Brief open-ended survey responses were coded as supplementary qualitative material. Integration was conducted through a joint display and narrative weaving, using focus group themes to explain the quantitative patterns and to refine practical recommendations.

Sampling

Sampling was purposive and feasibility-oriented, aimed at capturing perspectives of adults involved in ongoing volunteer work in the *pawikan* conservation initiative. Recruitment was conducted in coordination with the organization's focal person and existing volunteer networks.

Survey respondents. The target is 30 active volunteers within the organization, with at least three months of involvement. The questionnaire was administered anonymously to all available volunteers who met the inclusion criteria.

Focus group discussion participants. One focus group discussion was conducted with six volunteers, selected with the assistance of the organization to reflect variation in tenure and participation profiles. The focus group served as the main qualitative source for explaining how communication support was experienced within the case.

Language. The focus group discussion was conducted primarily in Filipino/*Taglish*, depending on participants' preference. Key points were clarified during the session where needed, and the transcript was later reviewed for consistency in interpretation.

Conceptual sufficiency. The qualitative strand was designed for explanatory depth rather than breadth. Within the bounded single case, one focus group

discussion, together with the open-ended survey responses, was treated as sufficient once the major themes needed to explain the survey patterns became coherent and recurrent (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018).

Concepts and Indicators

Consistent with the conceptual framework and the post-positivist mixed-methods orientation of this study, the variables below serve as the primary guides for both the survey instrument and qualitative thematic coding. Storytelling, mentoring, and recognition are operationalized as the fundamental communication strategies and support systems; role identity functions as the central interpretive pathway; and commitment and continuance are the two defining outcome dimensions of sustained volunteerism. Furthermore, organizational values and practical conditions are integrated as contextual factors that clarify how relationships among these variables are either bolstered or limited.

- **Storytelling.** The strategic use of narratives, updates, and messages that infuse *pawikan* conservation with meaning, allowing volunteers to align their contributions with ecological purpose, local pride, and intergenerational legacy.
- **Mentoring.** The interpersonal guidance and practical support provided by experienced members to newer volunteers to facilitate the learning of technical tasks, group norms, and core values.
- **Recognition.** The visible acknowledgment of effort through praise, formal certificates, or feedback, ensuring that volunteers feel seen and valued for their contributions to the initiative.

- **Commitment.** The internal psychological attachment and personal willingness of volunteers to remain dedicated to the initiative's long-term conservation goals.
- **Continuance.** The persistence and intent to maintain active involvement over time, even when faced with competing professional, academic, or personal obligations.
- **Role Identity.** The degree to which individuals internalize their status as conservation actors and feel affirmed by the organization and their peers in that specific capacity.

Data Gathering Procedures

Evidence was generated through two complementary sources to support triangulation within the single case: the survey and the focus group discussion. The brief open-ended survey responses were treated as supplementary qualitative material that enriched, but did not replace, the focus group discussion (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

- Short anonymous survey (in-person and online) to map indicators of sustained volunteerism (commitment and continuance/persistence), perceptions of communication support and support systems, and brief open-ended reflections on motivations and needed supports.
- Focus group discussion to capture collective sense-making about communication practices, volunteer identity, motivations for staying, and recommendations for sustaining volunteerism.
- All evidence will be catalogued in an evidence log to support auditability and systematic within-case analysis (Yin, 2018).

Fieldwork proceeded right after securing organizational permission and appropriate ethics clearance as required by UPOU/FICS (e.g., faculty-level review or UPOU IREC, depending on the classification of the study). Standard consent, confidentiality, and data-security protocols were also followed. For focus group discussions, participants were reminded to respect the confidentiality of shared experiences, and the limits of confidentiality in group settings were clearly communicated. For reporting, participants were de-identified, and organizational identifiers (including the organization name) and locality details will be generalized (e.g., province level or broader), as required by the ethics review.

Data Analysis

Analysis proceeded in three stages that correspond to the embedded mixed-methods design: (1) quantitative analysis of survey data, including descriptive statistics, reliability checks, and nonparametric correlational analysis; (2) qualitative analysis of the focus group discussion and brief open-ended survey responses using reflexive thematic analysis; and (3) integration through within-case synthesis to explain how volunteerism is sustained (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yin, 2018).

Survey data were analyzed in three quantitative steps. First, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to profile respondent characteristics, volunteer activities, support practices, and the composite indicators. Second, internal consistency was checked for the broader composite scales. Third, nonparametric correlational analysis using Spearman's rho was used to examine monotonic associations among the key constructs because the composite variables were based on ordered Likert-type responses and the sample

size was small. A volunteer-only sensitivity check was also conducted to see whether the main patterns remained stable when the analysis was restricted to self-identified volunteers.

Qualitative data from the focus group discussion and the brief open-ended survey responses were organized and coded using reflexive thematic analysis. Coding was guided by sensitizing concepts from symbolic interactionism while remaining open to emergent patterns from the data. The analysis focused on recurrent themes related to communication practices, values, identity, participation, and the practical conditions that shape volunteer continuity. Rather than seeking inter-coder agreement, the study relied on reflexive memoing and a clear audit trail of coding decisions.

Findings were integrated using a joint display and narrative weaving. This triangulated integration linked survey patterns with the qualitative mechanisms that explained them, for example, how recognition rituals, mentoring, coordination routines, and culturally embedded meanings shaped commitment and continuance within the case.

To enhance research rigor, the study employed triangulation across data sources, reflexive memoing, and an audit trail of analytic decisions. Where feasible, member checks were conducted for key interpretations, and thick description was provided to support transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018).

Chapter IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the mixed-methods data gathered from the *pawikan* conservation initiatives, consisting of a survey of all currently active volunteers (N = 30), brief open-ended survey responses, and one focus group discussion with six participants.

The findings are organized according to the study's four research questions and interpreted through the lens of development communication and symbolic interactionism.

Survey Dataset and Analytic Sample

After removing the two nonresponse Qualtrics header rows, the survey dataset yielded 30 usable responses. All 30 respondents registered consent, and all were recorded by Qualtrics as finished responses. The scaled sections of the instrument had no missing values, while the second open-ended item had 3 blank responses. The raw export also contained metadata such as nicknames, IP addresses, geolocation, timestamps, and Qualtrics response IDs. These fields were excluded from the analysis workbook and from this write-up to protect confidentiality.

Given the case-study design, the findings are interpreted as descriptive and explanatory within the single case rather than statistically generalizable. This chapter integrates the survey strand, including the brief open-ended survey responses, with the focus group discussion.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	20	66.7
	Female	10	33.3
	LGBTQIA+	0	0
	Rather not say	0	0
Role in the organization	Organizer or Staff	3	10
	Partner Community Member	2	6.7
	Volunteer	24	80
	Other	1	3.3
Length of involvement	3-5 months	2	6.7
	6-11 months	3	10
	1-2 years	18	60
	3+ years	7	23.3
Typical participation frequency	Less than monthly	6	20
	1-2x per month	0	0
	3-4x per month	0	0
	Weekly or more	24	80

Most respondents identified as volunteers (80.0%), with smaller numbers of organizer/staff, partner community members, and one respondent who selected another role. The respondent pool was also relatively established in the initiative: 60.0% reported 1-2 years of involvement and 23.3% reported 3+ years. Four out of five respondents described their typical participation frequency as weekly or more. These patterns suggest that the survey captured respondents who were embedded in the everyday routines of the initiative rather than only occasional participants.

Research Question 1: Communication Strategies, Support Systems, and Volunteer Exposure

Objective 1 sought to identify the communication strategies and support systems used to sustain volunteerism. The survey indicates that respondents were involved in multiple activity types and were also exposed to several recurring communication routines and support practices.

Table 2. Main Activities Participated In

Main activity participated in	n	%
Patrols/nest protection	20	66.7
Hatchling release	27	90
Orientations/training	25	83.3
Community outreach	18	60
School talks	5	16.7
Fundraising/advocacy	4	13.3
Social media support	24	80
Logistics/operations	21	70
Coastal cleanup	29	96.7
Other	0	0

The activity profile suggests that volunteer participation extends beyond direct conservation labor. Coastal cleanup (96.7%), hatchling release (90.0%), orientations/training (83.3%), social media support (80.0%), and logistics/operations (70.0%) were especially common. This mix indicates that the initiative relies on both field-based and communicative forms of participation, which is important for understanding how volunteerism is sustained in practice.

Table 3. Communication/Support Practices Personally Experienced

Communication/support practice experienced	n	%
Orientation/training	24	80
Mentoring/buddy system	23	76.7
Public recognition posts/certificates	22	73.3
Private check-ins/feedback	18	60
Regular updates on conservation outcomes	27	90
Organized group chats/briefings	29	96.7
Storytelling/testimonials	25	83.3
Other	0	0

Among the support practices listed, organized group chats or briefings (96.7%) and regular updates on conservation outcomes (90.0%) were the most widely experienced. Storytelling or testimonials (83.3%), orientation/training (80.0%), and mentoring or buddying (76.7%) were also common. Private check-ins or feedback were the least widely experienced practice, though they were still reported by 60.0% of respondents. Taken together, these frequencies suggest that the case organization already sustains volunteer participation through recurrent coordination, outcome-sharing, mentoring, recognition, and meaning-making practices.

Research Question 2: Sustained Volunteerism, Meaning, and Their Relationship to Communication Support

The survey results for this section are presented in two steps. First, descriptive statistics summarize the levels of sustained volunteerism and perceived communication support. Second, Spearman's rho is used to examine the monotonic relationships among the key support dimensions and volunteerism outcomes.

Descriptively, sustained volunteerism and perceived communication support were both very high in the case organization. The overall sustained volunteerism composite (8 items) had a mean of 4.875 (SD = 0.261), while the overall communication support composite (18 items) had a mean of 4.754 (SD = 0.285). Both broader composites also showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.862$ and $\alpha = 0.860$, respectively).

At the subscale level, storytelling and meaning-making produced the highest support mean ($M=4.950$), while participation or volunteer voice was the lowest of the communication-support dimensions ($M=4.417$), even if that score still indicated generally positive assessments. This pattern is important for a development communication reading of the data: the organization appears strong in message framing, encouragement, and day-to-day support, but there is still comparatively more room to deepen participatory voice and co-decision spaces.

Table 4. Composite Indicators of Sustained Volunteerism, Support, and Barriers

Scale	Items	Mean	SD	Agree or strongly agree (%)
Commitment	3	4.933	0.161	100
Continuance/Persistence	3	4.878	0.309	100
Role Identity	2	4.783	0.468	96.7
Recognition	3	4.756	0.349	100
Mentoring & Peer Support	3	4.878	0.283	96.7
Coordination & Clarity	3	4.733	0.621	93.3
Feedback & Learning	2	4.75	0.45	96.7

Storytelling & Meaning-Making	2	4.95	0.201	100
Values-in-Action / Value Congruence	3	4.744	0.312	100
Participation / Volunteer Voice	2	4.417	0.574	93.3
Challenges	4	3.575	0.686	30
Overall Sustained Volunteerism	8	4.875	0.261	100
Overall Communication Support	18	4.754	0.285	96.7

Note. Means are based on a 1-5 scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

At the item level, the strongest endorsements were attached to personal meaning, pride in the initiative, intention to continue supporting the initiative, and the inspiring role of organizational stories/messages. By contrast, the comparatively lowest means were found on the two volunteer voice items, although these still remained above 4.40. This suggests that respondents generally feel heard, but that participatory communication remains the least fully developed part of the support environment.

Table 5. Spearman Correlations Between Support Dimensions and Sustained Volunteerism Indicators

Predictor	Commitment	Continuance	Role Identity	Overall SV
Recognition	0.703***	0.503**	0.614***	0.655***
Mentoring & Peer Support	0.787***	0.616***	0.477**	0.585***
Coordination & Clarity	0.491**	0.392*	0.714***	0.599***

Feedback & Learning	0.559**	0.401*	0.750***	0.780***
Storytelling & Meaning-Making	0.238	0.274	0.242	0.203
Values-in-Action / Value Congruence	0.200	0.129	0.582***	0.411*
Participation / Volunteer Voice	-0.004	0.167	0.484**	0.321
Challenges	-0.121	-0.017	-0.116	-0.020
Overall Communication Support	0.491**	0.370*	0.703***	0.640***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The Spearman correlation results show that perceived communication support mattered more than simple exposure. Overall communication support was positively associated with overall sustained volunteerism ($\rho = 0.640$, $p < .001$), whereas the count of support practices merely experienced showed almost no relationship with the same outcome ($\rho = 0.085$, $p = .654$). In other words, the data suggest that quality, credibility, and felt usefulness of support matter more than the mere number of practices present.

Among specific dimensions, feedback and learning showed the strongest positive association with overall sustained volunteerism ($\rho=0.780$, $p<.001$). Recognition, mentoring, and coordination also showed moderate to strong positive relationships. A closer reading of the matrix suggests that mentoring and recognition are especially tied to commitment, while coordination, feedback, and values-in-action are especially tied to role identity. This is analytically meaningful from a symbolic interactionist perspective: repeated interactional cues, updates, and affirmations

appear to help volunteers not only stay involved but also see themselves - and feel seen by others - as committed conservation actors.

The breadth of volunteer participation also mattered. The number of activity types a respondent joined was positively related to commitment ($\rho=0.476$, $p=.008$) and continuance/persistence ($\rho=0.461$, $p=.010$). This does not establish causality, but it does suggest that deeper involvement in the initiative and stronger attachment to it may reinforce one another.

A sensitivity check limited to self-identified volunteers ($n=24$) produced broadly similar patterns. Notably, participation or volunteer voice became positively associated with overall sustained volunteerism in that restricted sample ($\rho=0.489$, $p=.015$), which suggests that participatory spaces may matter even more clearly once the analysis is focused on respondents whose primary role identity in the organization is volunteer.

Research Question 3: Values, Meaning, and Volunteer Identity

Objective 3 concerned how organizational values shape conservation messaging and volunteer mobilization. The scaled items already pointed in this direction: values-in-action/value congruence had a high mean ($M=4.744$), while storytelling and meaning-making had the highest support mean in the survey ($M=4.950$).

The short open-ended responses further clarified what these high ratings actually meant to respondents.

Table 6. Brief Coded Themes From Responses to “What keeps you volunteering?”

Theme	f	% of 30 comments
Conservation purpose / ecological impact	19	63.3
Personal values, pride, and fulfillment	13	43.3
Belonging, camaraderie, and teamwork	9	30
Legacy / intergenerational continuity	8	26.7

Note. A response could be coded into more than one theme, so percentages do not total 100.

The brief comments indicate that volunteerism is sustained not only by support routines but also by interpretive frames. Many respondents referred to the ecological importance of *pawikan* protection, the community benefits of conservation, and the moral worth of the advocacy itself. Others foregrounded pride, fulfillment, passion, or a sense of inherited responsibility. A smaller but still meaningful cluster emphasized belonging, trust, teamwork, and family-like relationships. These findings support the study assumption that values-based and interactionally grounded communication helps sustain volunteerism by giving it meaning beyond task completion alone.

An interesting nuance is that storytelling and values were rated extremely highly, yet storytelling did not significantly differentiate overall sustained volunteerism in the correlation analysis. A plausible interpretation is that storytelling may already function as a shared baseline condition in the case organization: nearly everyone endorsed it, so there was little variation left for it to explain statistically. In practical terms, this means the organization should preserve storytelling because it helps

anchor shared meaning, even if other dimensions such as feedback, coordination, and mentoring explain more of the differences across respondents.

Research Question 4: Challenges, Opportunities, and Suggested Improvements

Objective 4 examined the challenges and opportunities affecting sustained volunteerism and the communicative responses attached to them. The challenge items reveal that the main difficulties are not primarily ideological or message-related. Instead, the stronger barriers are time, labor, and material conditions.

Table 7. Challenge Items

Item label	Mean	SD	Median	Agree or strongly agree (%)
Time/work/school constraints make consistent volunteering difficult.	4.133	0.73	4	96.7
Costs/logistics make continued volunteering challenging.	3.433	1.357	4	56.7
Physical demands/safety concerns sometimes limit participation.	4.033	1.45	5	80
Communication/coordination issues sometimes discourage participation.	2.7	1.317	2	43.3

Note. Means are based on a 1-5 scale, where higher values indicate stronger agreement that the issue is a barrier.

The strongest barrier was time/work/school constraints (M=4.133), followed closely by physical demands and safety concerns (M=4.033). Costs and logistics were a more moderate but still relevant barrier (M=3.433). Communication or coordination problems, by contrast, had the lowest mean (M=2.700). This is consistent with the strong ratings for coordination and with the high prevalence of group chats/briefings and outcome updates in the support-practice inventory. Put differently, the initiative seems to communicate reasonably well, but volunteers still face difficult practical conditions that communication alone cannot solve.

Table 8. Brief Coded Themes from Responses to “What would make it easier to stay involved long-term?”

Theme	f	% of 27 nonblank comments
Financial and material assistance	16	59.3
Welfare, healthcare, and safety/equipment support	13	48.1
Government / LGU backing	5	18.5
Stronger teamwork and communication climate	5	18.5
Training and capacity building	3	11.1

Note. Percentages are based on the 27 non-blank responses and do not total 100 because comments could be coded into more than one theme.

The most common suggestions focused on financial and material assistance, followed by welfare, healthcare, safety, and equipment support. A smaller set of comments explicitly called for stronger government or LGU backing, stronger communication climate/team unity, and continuing training or refresher activities.

These suggestions reinforce one of the study's key assumptions: coupled support matters. For this case, communication strategies are valuable, but they appear most sustainable when paired with practical supports that reduce the burdens of volunteering.

This point is especially important for the discussion. The survey suggests that the initiative does not mainly suffer from a lack of meaning, weak values, or absent coordination. Rather, the pressure points lie in volunteers' material realities: earning a living, covering costs, protecting health and safety, and balancing volunteer work with family or livelihood obligations. Thus, the challenge is not to replace communication with welfare support, but to connect them more deliberately. In development communication terms, the strategic task is to design communication systems that also mobilize resources, partnerships, and institutional backing.

Preliminary Implications for Strengthening Communication Strategy

Based on the survey strand alone, the five preliminary implications can already be drawn for the case organization and for similar community-based conservation initiatives. These implications are as follows:

1. Keep the recurring coordination backbone. Organized chats/briefings and regular outcome updates were widely experienced and appear to provide the basic infrastructure that lets volunteers stay informed and involved.
2. Systematize mentoring, recognition, and feedback. These dimensions were consistently linked with stronger sustained volunteerism, especially commitment and role identity. They should therefore be treated as core retention mechanisms rather than optional extras.

3. Strengthen participatory voice. Volunteer voice posted the lowest support mean and became more salient in the volunteers-only sensitivity check. More structured spaces for suggestions, debriefing, and co-improvement would align well with a development communication orientation.
4. Pair communication with practical support. The strongest barriers were time, physical demands/safety, and costs/logistics, while the most common suggestions centered on allowances, welfare, food support, healthcare, and protective equipment. Communication strategies will likely be more effective when linked to resource mobilization and volunteer welfare support.
5. Preserve values-based storytelling, but do not rely on it alone. Meaning, ecological purpose, pride, and legacy clearly matter to volunteers. At the same time, values-framing needs to be backed by concrete support systems if volunteerism is to remain sustainable over the long term.

Synthesis for the Survey Strand

Overall, the survey results indicate that volunteerism in the case organization is sustained through a combination of strong meaning-making, interpersonal support, and everyday coordination. Respondents reported very high commitment, continuance, and role identity, alongside very positive views of recognition, mentoring, feedback, coordination, storytelling, and values-in-action. The stronger statistical relationships were found not with the sheer number of support practices but with the perceived quality of communication support, especially feedback and learning, recognition, mentoring, and coordination.

At the same time, the survey also shows that sustained volunteerism is constrained by practical burdens that lie partly outside communication itself. Time

pressure, safety demands, and costs/logistics remain real barriers, and respondents repeatedly pointed to material and welfare support as the most pressing improvement area. The survey strand therefore, supports a discussion in which communication is necessary but not sufficient: it sustains volunteerism most effectively when it is dialogic, values-based, and closely linked to the practical conditions that make continued participation possible.

The survey strand presented above is interpreted alongside the focus group discussion in the following sections.

Focus Group Discussion Themes Explaining the Survey Patterns

To explain the survey patterns more deeply, the three-part transcript of one focus group discussion (FGD) was analyzed thematically. The session involved six volunteers representing a mix of newer and more established roles. Five closely linked themes emerged, namely:

1. Intergenerational and invitation-based entry into volunteerism.
2. Family-like belonging and volunteer identity.
3. Mentoring, recognition, and coordination as everyday support routines.
4. Values-in-action expressed through stewardship, unity, and respect.
5. Commitment; the psychological attachment to the initiative and the willingness to keep contributing to it.
6. Material constraints that limit long-term participation.

First, entry into volunteerism was rarely narrated as a purely individual decision. Several participants said they were continuing the work of a parent, older relative, or earlier generation of volunteers, while others were invited by respected

pioneers or were influenced by repeated orientations. These accounts suggest that recruitment in the case organization is relational, values-laden, and often intergenerational. The volunteer role is inherited, modeled, and legitimized through prior ties, not simply accepted through a one-time call for volunteers.

Second, the strongest explanation for staying was the combination of ecological purpose and social belonging. Participants spoke of protecting an endangered species, seeing more hatchlings and nesting activity, and helping the wider community understand why pawikan conservation matters. At the same time, they repeatedly described the group as “*parang isang pamilya lang kami*,” indicating that belonging and solidarity were central to retention. In qualitative terms, sustained volunteerism was anchored in meaning and membership: volunteers stayed not only because the cause mattered, but because the group gave them a place, a role, and a sense of dignity.

Third, the FGD strongly clarifies why feedback/learning, recognition, mentoring, and coordination were the survey dimensions most closely linked to sustained volunteerism. Newer volunteers emphasized that they first learned from pioneer volunteers, especially in how to guide tourists, explain conservation issues, handle hatchlings, and understand the proper conduct of conservation work. Recognition also mattered. Participants said that compliments from tourists, public acknowledgement during meetings or events, certificates, IDs, and being known as authorized volunteers boosted morale and made their work feel worthwhile. Coordination routines were likewise practical and immediate: monthly meetings, direct conversations with the chairman or manager, and cellphone-based requests for backup enabled volunteers to respond quickly when sea turtles nested or hatched.

Fourth, the FGD adds nuance to the survey's comparatively lower rating for participation or volunteer voice. Participants said that they could raise concerns during meetings and directly report needs to the general manager, chairman, or group leaders. However, these channels appeared more informal and problem-centered than fully institutionalized. Voice existed, but it was exercised mainly through meetings, operational reporting, and ad hoc conversations rather than through a consistently structured feedback system. This helps explain why volunteer voice was positively present in the survey but still weaker than the other support dimensions.

Fifth, organizational values were described less as abstract slogans than as lived practices. Participants linked volunteerism to love of nature, care for family, unity, respect, and responsibility. These values were said to be modeled by leaders and older volunteers and then carried into daily life through coastal cleanups, guiding guests, teaching others, and applying conservation-minded habits at home and at work. In this sense, values-in-action helped transform volunteering from a temporary activity into an identity and a way of life.

Finally, the FGD strongly confirms the survey's barrier pattern. Participants repeatedly cited time and livelihood pressures, especially when night duties reduced their ability to work the next day; financial strain, especially for fisherfolk and household providers; physical risk and exhaustion during patrols; irregular incentives; and the need for food, equipment, healthcare, and stronger logistical support. One additional qualitative barrier was discouraging talk from outsiders who questioned why volunteers continued working with limited material return. These accounts show that the weak point in sustained volunteerism was not lack of meaning but the heavy material cost of continuing to serve.

When asked what should be improved, participants did not ask for salary-like compensation. Rather, they proposed modest but regular support: season-based or monthly incentives, livelihood opportunities, food support, stronger healthcare or medical assistance, and better internal communication and unity. These recommendations closely mirror the survey's open-ended suggestions and make them more concrete for practice.

Joint Display Linking Survey and FGD Results

Table 9 summarizes how the focus group discussion explains, deepens, or qualifies the major survey findings.

Table 9. Joint Display Linking Survey and FGD Results

Survey Result	FGD Explanation and Mixed-method Implication
Very high sustained volunteerism overall (M=4.875).	Participants tied staying to ecological purpose, pride, intergenerational duty, and family-like belonging. The high mean is therefore best read as a lived sense of meaning plus membership, not as attitude alone.
Overall communication support was high (M=4.754) and strongly related to sustained volunteerism ($\rho=0.640$, $p<.001$).	Volunteers explained that support mattered when it made them feel guided, recognized, trusted, and able to act. The quality of support, not simple exposure, appears to be the retention mechanism.
Feedback and learning showed the strongest positive association with sustained volunteerism ($\rho=0.780$, $p<.001$).	The FGD showed that learning occurs through pioneer volunteers, hands-on guidance, tourist interaction, meetings, and updates about actual conservation work. Mentoring is effective because it teaches both skill and identity.

Recognition, mentoring, and coordination were also among the strongest positive correlates.	Recognition came through tourist praise, meetings, events, certificates, IDs, and public visibility. Coordination came through monthly meetings, direct access to leaders, and cellphone-based backup requests. These routines make commitment socially reinforced and practically manageable.
Participation or volunteer voice had the lowest support mean, although it became more salient in the volunteers-only sensitivity check.	The FGD indicates that voice exists but is still semi-formal and problem-centered. Volunteers can speak in meetings and directly report concerns, but the process is less structured than recognition, mentoring, or coordination. A stronger feedback loop is therefore a realistic improvement area.
The strongest barriers were time/work/school constraints, physical demands/safety concerns, and costs/logistics. Open-ended suggestions emphasized allowances and material support.	The FGD vividly confirmed these barriers through stories of night patrol fatigue, missed work or fishing time, illness risk, poacher threats, and pressure to provide for one's family. Participants specified the kinds of support they need: regular modest incentives, livelihood projects, food assistance, health support, and stronger internal communication.

Integrated Discussion Across the Survey and FGD

Across Research Questions 1 and 2, the combined evidence shows that communication support matters not simply as exposure, but as a socially meaningful experience.

For Research Question 3, both strands indicate that values are central to volunteer mobilization.

For Research Question 4, the qualitative accounts deepen the survey finding that material burdens are the major constraint on continuity.

Taken together, the integrated evidence suggests that a retention-oriented communication strategy should prioritize five moves: structured mentoring for new volunteers; regular and two-way feedback or debrief spaces; recognition routines that are fair and visible; streamlined coordination for schedules, backups, and equipment; and externally supported welfare mechanisms such as allowances, food support, healthcare, or livelihood linkages. These are not separate from communication. In this case, they are part of how care, participation, and sustainability are communicated in practice.

Supplementary Cultural Insights and Integrated Interpretation

Taken together, the survey and focus group discussion show that sustained volunteerism in the case organization is relationally produced, morally framed, and materially constrained. Volunteers remain involved because they experience conservation work as meaningful, because they are socialized into the role through mentoring and shared stories, and because they feel anchored in a family-like community of service. At the same time, sustained volunteerism is threatened less by weak advocacy than by livelihood pressure, fatigue, risk, and insufficient welfare support.

As a supplementary cultural insight, these patterns resonate with familiar Filipino relational values such as *Bayanihan* and a family-like ethic of collective care. Participants repeatedly described the organization as family, emphasized helping one another when nesting events required urgent response, and narrated conservation work as a legacy passed from older members to newer volunteers.

While the participants did not always name these cultural concepts directly, the patterns suggest that mutual aid, intergenerational ties, and a shared sense of obligation deepen the staying power of communication support within the case.

This integrated interpretation sharpens the study's main contribution. Communication sustains volunteerism not only through messages but through recurring practices that make volunteers feel seen, guided, heard, and connected to impact. In the case organization, those practices are strengthened by culturally resonant forms of belonging, mutual aid, and intergenerational continuity. Even so, strong communication cannot substitute for the practical conditions that allow volunteers to keep showing up. The most credible implication, therefore, is to pair values-based communication with realistic support systems that reduce the everyday cost of continued service.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study examined how volunteerism is sustained in a community-based pawikan conservation initiative, with emphasis on the role of communication strategies and support systems in supporting continued participation. Using an embedded mixed-methods single-case design, the study combined an anonymous survey of all currently active volunteers (N = 30), brief open-ended survey responses, and one focus group discussion with six participants. The inquiry was guided by a post-positivist mixed-methods orientation, symbolic interactionism, and a development communication perspective.

Across the survey and focus group discussion, the study found that volunteerism is sustained through a cluster of recurring support routines, especially organized chats and briefings, regular updates on conservation outcomes, orientation and training, storytelling, mentoring, and recognition. The findings also showed that quality of support mattered more than mere exposure, that values and role identity anchored long-term involvement, and that the strongest barriers were material rather than ideological.

The mixed-methods design made it possible to move from patterned tendencies in the survey to richer explanations in the focus group discussion. In this way, the study was able to answer not only what kinds of support were present, but also how these were interpreted, why they mattered, and under what conditions they became insufficient.

The chapter that follows draws the conclusions in direct relation to each research question, then derives recommendations for the organization and for future research.

Conclusions

Research Question 1: Which communicative tactics and institutional support frameworks serve to preserve long-term volunteer engagement?

The study shows that sustained volunteerism is supported by a recognizable cluster of communication practices and support systems. These include organized chats and briefings, regular updates on conservation outcomes, orientation and training, storytelling, mentoring, and recognition. Among these, feedback and learning, mentoring, recognition, and coordination emerged as the most influential because they did not merely circulate information; they made volunteers feel guided, valued, competent, and able to act at the right time.

Research Question 2: How do volunteers interpret these communication practices, and how do these meanings relate to sustained volunteerism?

Volunteers interpreted communication support as evidence that they belonged, were trusted, and were part of something larger than a series of activities. Mentoring taught them not only tasks but also how to inhabit the role of a responsible conservation volunteer. Recognition confirmed that sacrifices were seen. Storytelling and values-based messages gave ecological purpose, pride, and legacy to the work. These meanings translated into stronger commitment, continuance, and role identity. In short, volunteers stayed because support was interpreted as care, competence, and shared purpose, not simply as information transfer.

Research Question 3: How do organizational values shape the framing and enactment of sustaining practices?

Organizational values shaped both the framing of volunteer work and the way sustaining practices were enacted. Storytelling, updates, and recognition practices framed conservation as stewardship, service, pride, and continuity. In the focus group discussion, participants described the organization as family-like and emphasized respect, care, and shared responsibility. These patterns suggest that values were not merely spoken; they were embodied in routines, relationships, and expectations. This consistency made the organization's communication credible and helped transform volunteerism from a temporary role into an ongoing moral commitment.

Research Question 4: What challenges and opportunities affect sustained volunteerism, and how are these addressed communicatively?

The main barriers to sustained volunteerism were practical rather than ideological. Volunteers identified time pressure, physical demands and safety concerns, and costs or logistics as the strongest challenges. Communication or coordination problems were the least severe barrier. This means the initiative communicates relatively well, but communication alone cannot remove the burdens of continued service. Opportunities for stronger retention therefore lie in pairing communication with modest but regular support, such as food, equipment, allowances, healthcare, clearer coordination, and more structured spaces for volunteer voice and feedback.

Overall, the study concludes that sustained volunteerism in this pawikan conservation initiative is relationally produced, values-laden, and materially

conditioned. Communication matters because it helps volunteers feel seen, guided, heard, and connected to impact. Yet it is most effective when linked to practical support and to culturally resonant forms of collective care, mutual aid, and intergenerational continuity.

Recommendations

First, the organization should formalize a structured mentoring and onboarding system so that technical skills, expectations, and organizational values are transmitted consistently to newer volunteers.

Second, regular two-way feedback and debrief spaces should be institutionalized after activities. Short reflection sessions, check-ins, and clear channels for concerns would strengthen volunteer voice and help identify problems before they affect retention.

Third, recognition should remain fair, visible, and routine. Public acknowledgment during meetings, certificates, online appreciation, and regular sharing of conservation outcomes can continue to reinforce volunteer dignity and commitment.

Fourth, communication systems should be linked more deliberately with volunteer welfare and external resource mobilization. Coordination plans will be more effective if they are paired with support for food, safety equipment, transportation, healthcare, or allowances, especially during demanding conservation periods.

Fifth, the organization should preserve its values-based storytelling and intergenerational continuity. Stories of ecological purpose, local pride, and legacy,

together with family-like and Bayanihan-like forms of collective care, appear to be strong anchors of meaning and should remain central to orientations, updates, and volunteer recognition.

Finally, the organization should receive a brief return-of-results summary so that the findings can inform practice, while future research may build on this case through longitudinal or comparative designs that examine how sustained volunteerism changes across conservation seasons and across different conservation organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Final Survey Instrument

Survey | Communication for Sustained Volunteerism

Informed Consent Statement

This is an informed consent statement for the study, tentatively titled, "Communication for Pawikan Conservation."

Name of Principal Researcher: Kayaban, John Wilfred Pastoral

Name of Organization: University of the Philippines - Open University (UPOU)

Name of Sponsor: N/A

Name of Project and Version: Communication for Pawikan Conservation: How Volunteerism Is Sustained (v2)

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by John Wilfred Pastoral Kayaban, a Master of Development Communication Program student from the University of the Philippines - Open University (UPOU).

USE, PROCESSING, AND DISCLOSURE OF DATA

Data will be used only for thesis writing, academic evaluation, and related scholarly requirements (e.g., proposal/defense outputs). No commercial use will be made of the data. Results will be reported in aggregated form or using de-identified quotes. Access to raw data will be limited to the researcher and the thesis adviser. If

required for academic review, only de-identified extracts may be shared with panel members.

For this study, you will be presented with information relevant to how volunteerism is sustained over time in a pawikan conservation initiative and the role of communication strategies and support systems (e.g., mentoring, recognition, feedback, coordination, storytelling, and values framing) in sustaining volunteer commitment and continued participation. The study is conducted for academic purposes as part of DEVC 300 (Master's Thesis). Then, you will be asked to answer some questions about it. Your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The study should take you around **5-10 minutes to complete**. **Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study.** The Principal Researcher of this study can be contacted at jpkayaban@up.edu.ph / +63 977 675 9553.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge: Your participation in the study is voluntary. You are 18 years of age. You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time for any reason.

☐ I consent, begin the survey.

☐ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate.

Response scale for Sections B–D: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Survey Intro/Consent (to be shown on the first page in Qualtrics XM)

This survey is part of a UPOU master's thesis. Participation is voluntary. The survey is designed to be anonymous; please do not enter your name, contact details, or any identifying information in any response.

If the survey is administered online, it will be configured to anonymize responses (e.g., no IP address/location metadata retained). In the thesis manuscript and related

outputs, the organization and study site will be anonymized and the locale will be described only in generalized terms (province level or broader).

If you agree to participate, please proceed. You may skip any item you are not comfortable answering.

A. Eligibility & Profile

1. I am 18 years old or above. (Yes/No)
2. My alias is:
3. Gender: Male/Female/LGBTQIA/Rather not say
4. Role: Volunteer / Organizer or Staff / Partner Community Member / Other
5. Length of involvement: 3–5 months / 6–11 months / 1–2 years / 3+ years
6. Typical participation frequency: Less than monthly / 1–2× per month / 3–4× per month / Weekly or more
7. Main activities participated in (check all that apply): patrols/nest protection; hatchling release; orientations/training; community outreach; school talks; fundraising/advocacy; social media support; logistics/operations; coastal cleanup; other.

B. Outcome Construct: Sustained Volunteerism

Commitment (psychological attachment / willingness to keep contributing):

- C1. I feel a strong sense of belonging to this initiative/organization.
- C2. Being involved in pawikan conservation here feels personally meaningful to me.
- C3. I feel proud to be associated with this initiative/organization.

Continuance / persistence (intention to continue + continued participation):

- V1. I intend to continue volunteering with this initiative/organization in the next 6 months.
- V2. Even when I am busy, I try to remain involved in activities of this initiative/organization.
- V3. I see myself still supporting this initiative/organization a year from now.

Role identity (symbolic interactionism bridge):

- R11. I see myself as a committed conservation volunteer (e.g., a “pawikan steward/patroller”) in this initiative.
- R12. People in this initiative (organizers/peers) see me as a committed volunteer.

C. Perceived Communication Support Systems

Recognition

- R1. My efforts are acknowledged in ways that make me feel valued (e.g., shout-outs, messages, certificates).
- R2. Recognition is given fairly and consistently to volunteers.
- R3. Recognition motivates me to continue volunteering.

Mentoring & Peer Support

- M1. Experienced volunteers/organizers guide or mentor newer volunteers.
- M2. I feel supported by fellow volunteers when I need help or clarification.
- M3. Peer relationships in the group encourage me to stay involved.

Coordination & Clarity

- K1. Instructions and schedules are communicated clearly (what to do, where to be, what to bring).
- K2. Communication channels (e.g., group chats, briefings) are responsive when volunteers have questions.
- K3. Coordination makes it easy for me to participate without confusion.

Feedback & Learning

- F1. I receive feedback or updates that help me learn and improve as a volunteer.
- F2. The organization shares outcomes/updates (e.g., nest outcomes, releases, community results) that help me see progress.

Storytelling & Meaning-Making

- S1. Stories or messages shared by the organization inspire me to continue volunteering.
- S2. Communication materials help me understand why pawikan conservation matters to communities and ecosystems.

Values-in-Action / Value Congruence

- VC1. The organization's values (e.g., stewardship, resilience, empathy, perseverance) are communicated clearly.
- VC2. These values are practiced consistently in how volunteers are treated and how activities are conducted.
- VC3. The organization's values align with my personal values.

Participation / Volunteer Voice (DevCom alignment)

- P1. Volunteers are encouraged to share suggestions or concerns, and these are taken seriously.
- P2. I feel I have a voice in improving volunteer activities or decisions related to conservation work.

D. Challenges (Brief)

- CH1. It is difficult to volunteer consistently due to time/work/school constraints.
- CH2. Costs/logistics (travel, food, equipment) make continued volunteering challenging.
- CH3. Physical demands/safety concerns sometimes limit my participation.
- CH4. Communication or coordination issues sometimes discourage me from participating.

E. Open-Ended Questions

- OE1. What keeps you volunteering in this initiative? (1–3 sentences). Please do not include names of people, exact locations, or any identifying details.
- OE2. What communication practice or support would make it easier for you to stay involved long-term? Please do not include names of people, exact locations, or any identifying details.

Appendix B: FGD Guide

Group size: 6–8 participants • Duration: 45–60 minutes • Mode: in-person •
Recording: with consent.

FGD aim: To explain how volunteerism is sustained (or not sustained) and how communication strategies/support systems enable or hinder continuance, commitment, identity, and persistence.

Opening Script (Briefing)

- Thank participants; explain purpose; emphasize voluntary participation and the right to skip questions/withdraw.
- Explain confidentiality: the researcher will anonymize data, but confidentiality in a group setting depends on everyone's cooperation; request participants to keep shared stories private. Please use pseudonyms/initials only and avoid mentioning names of people or exact locations. In the thesis manuscript and related outputs, the organization name will be anonymized and the locale will be described only in generalized terms (province level or broader).
- Request permission to record (audio/video, depending on mode).
- Ground rules: one speaker at a time; respect; no right/wrong answers; speak from experience.
- Feel free to speak in *Taglish*. Make the participants comfortable.

Warm-up

- Please introduce yourself using a pseudonym or initials only (e.g., “Yukito”), how long you’ve been volunteering here (range only), and one type of activity you often join. Please avoid mentioning names of people or specific sites.

Core Questions

- **What made you join this initiative in the first place? What message or invitation influenced you most?**
 - Probes: who invited you; what platform/channel; what story/value framing; what expectations were set.
- **What keeps you coming back? What makes you stay involved over time?**
 - Probes: meaning; belonging; relationships; perceived impact; community connection.
- **What does being a volunteer here mean to you? How did you learn what it means to be a “good volunteer” in this initiative?**
 - Probes: mentoring interactions; group norms; recognition rituals; shared language/symbols; role expectations.
- **Think of a moment when you felt most motivated to continue volunteering. What happened and how was it communicated?**
 - Probes: recognition; feedback; updates; storytelling; mentoring; peer encouragement.
- **What support systems help you sustain your participation?**
 - Probes: orientations; mentoring; group chats; clear schedules; resource support; coordination routines.

- **How do recognition practices (public or private) affect your commitment and willingness to continue?**
 - Probes: what kinds of recognition matter; fairness; frequency; unintended effects.
- **How do the organization's values (stewardship, resilience, empathy, perseverance) show up in communication and practice?**
 - Probes: values-in-action examples; how values shape roles and expectations; "walking the talk."
- **What challenges make it harder to stay involved (time, cost, burnout, coordination, safety)? How does the organization communicate or respond to these challenges?**
 - Probes: adjustments; empathy; flexibility; reminders; debriefing; conflict handling.
- **In what ways are volunteers invited to share feedback or influence improvements in activities? What communication practices make you feel heard (or not heard)?**
 - Probes: feedback loops; consultation; decision-making spaces; responsiveness; digital channels.
- **If you could improve one communication practice or support system to help volunteers stay involved long-term, what would it be and why?**
 - Probes: onboarding; scheduling; feedback loops; recognition; mentoring; storytelling; volunteer voice.
- **Is there anything else you would like to add about what helps sustain volunteerism in this initiative?**

Closing Remarks

- Thank participants; explain next steps (analysis and possible validation/member checking where feasible).
- Remind participants of the confidentiality request and provide contact details for follow-up questions.

Appendix C: Survey Codebook and Scoring Guide

This appendix presents the codebook and scoring rules for the survey instrument as analyzed in Chapter 4. It includes item-level variable names, response coding, composite scales, derived variables, and the open-ended coding scheme. The aliases below are recommended analytic variable names for the cleaned dataset and do not need to match the raw Qualtrics field IDs exactly.

E.1 Response Coding Rules

- Likert items (Sections B–D): 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
- Binary checklist items: 1 = checked/experienced; 0 = not checked/not experienced.
- No reverse-coded items were used.
- Composite scores are computed as the mean of constituent items so that all scales remain on the 1–5 metric.

E.2 Profile, Eligibility, and Checklist Variables

This section covers the survey’s screening/profile items and the binary checklist variables for main activities and communication/support practices experienced.

Variable name	Label / question	Coding / values
CONSENT	Consent to participate	1 = Yes, 0 = No
AGE18	I am 18 years old or above	1 = Yes, 0 = No
GENDER	Gender	1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = LGBTQIA+, 4 = Rather not say
ROLE	Role in the initiative	1 = Volunteer, 2 = Organizer/Staff, 3 = Partner Community Member, 4 = Other

INVOLV	Length of involvement	1 = 3–5 months, 2 = 6–11 months, 3 = 1–2 years, 4 = 3+ years
FREQ	Typical participation frequency	1 = Less than monthly, 2 = 1–2×/month, 3 = 3–4×/month, 4 = Weekly or more

Main activities participated in (binary checklist)

Variable name	Activity / practice	Coding
ACT_PATROL	Patrols / nest protection	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_RELEASE	Hatchling release	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_ORIENT	Orientations / training	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_OUTREACH	Community outreach	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_SCHOOL	School talks	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_FUNDADV	Fundraising / advocacy	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_SOCMED	Social media support	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_LOGISTICS	Logistics / operations	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_CLEANUP	Coastal cleanup	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
ACT_OTHER	Other activity	1 = checked, 0 = not checked

Communication / support practices experienced (binary checklist)

Variable name	Activity / practice	Coding
PR_ORIENT	Orientation / training	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
PR_MENTOR	Mentoring / buddy system	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
PR_PUBLIC	Public recognition posts / certificates	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
PR_PRIVFB	Private check-ins / feedback	1 = checked, 0 = not checked

PR_UPDATE S	Regular updates on conservation outcomes	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
PR_BRIEF	Organized group chats / briefings	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
PR_STORY	Storytelling / testimonials	1 = checked, 0 = not checked
PR_OTHER	Other support practice	1 = checked, 0 = not checked

E.3 Scale Items and Composite Scoring

Construct / scale	Item codes	No. of items	Scoring rule	Interpretation
Commitment	C1, C2, C3	3	COMMIT_MEAN = mean(C1:C3)	Higher scores = stronger psychological attachment and willingness to keep contributing
Continuance / Persistence	V1, V2, V3	3	CONT_MEAN = mean(V1:V3)	Higher scores = stronger intention to remain and actual persistence orientation
Role Identity	RI1, RI2	2	ROLEID_MEAN = mean(RI1:RI2)	Higher scores = stronger identity as a committed conservation volunteer
Recognition	R1, R2, R3	3	RECOG_MEAN = mean(R1:R3)	Higher scores = more positive experience of recognition practices
Mentoring & Peer Support	M1, M2, M3	3	MENTOR_MEAN = mean(M1:M3)	Higher scores = more supportive mentoring / peer environment
Coordination & Clarity	K1, K2, K3	3	COORD_MEAN = mean(K1:K3)	Higher scores = clearer, more responsive coordination
Feedback & Learning	F1, F2	2	FEED_MEAN = mean(F1:F2)	Higher scores = more useful feedback and learning support

Storytelling & Meaning-Making	S1, S2	2	STORY_MEAN = mean(S1:S2)	Higher scores = stronger inspirational / meaning-making communication
Values-in-Action / Value Congruence	VC1, VC2, VC3	3	VALUES_MEAN = mean(VC1:VC3)	Higher scores = stronger alignment between communicated and practiced values
Participation / Volunteer Voice	P1, P2	2	VOICE_MEAN = mean(P1:P2)	Higher scores = stronger sense of voice, participation, and being heard
Challenges	CH1, CH2, CH3, CH4	4	CHAL_MEAN = mean(CH1:CH4)	Higher scores = stronger barriers / challenges to sustained volunteerism
Overall Sustained Volunteerism	C1:C3, V1:V3, RI1:RI2	8	SV_OVERALL = mean(C1:C3, V1:V3, RI1:RI2)	Higher scores = stronger overall sustained volunteerism
Overall Communication Support	R1:R3, M1:M3, K1:K3, F1:F2, S1:S2, VC1:VC3, P1:P2	18	SUP_OVERALL = mean(R1:R3, M1:M3, K1:K3, F1:F2, S1:S2, VC1:VC3, P1:P2)	Higher scores = stronger overall perceived communication / support environment

Scoring note. To mirror Chapter 4, item- and scale-level reporting may include Mean, SD, and Agree/Strongly Agree (%). For composites, Agree/Strongly Agree (%) may be computed as the percentage of respondents whose composite mean is greater than or equal to 4.00.

E.4 Derived Variables Used in Analysis

Derived variable	Construction	Purpose in analysis
ACTIVITY_COUNT	Sum of all checked activity variables	Measures breadth of volunteer participation across activity types

	(ACT_PATROL to ACT_OTHER)	
SUPPORT_COUNT	Sum of all checked support-practice variables (PR_ORIENT to PR_OTHER)	Measures breadth of support practices merely experienced
ROLE_VOL	Recode ROLE: 1 = Volunteer; 0 = non-volunteer roles	Used for the volunteer-only sensitivity check reported in Chapter 4

Interpretation note. Chapter 4 found that ACTIVITY_COUNT was positively related to Commitment and Continuance / Persistence, whereas SUPPORT_COUNT showed little relationship with Overall Sustained Volunteerism, suggesting that the quality of support mattered more than the sheer number of support practices present.

E.5 Open-Ended Items and Coding

Variable	Prompt	Coding approach	Themes used in Chapter 4
OE1	What keeps you volunteering in this initiative/organization?	Brief inductive coding; multiple coding allowed	Conservation purpose / ecological impact; Personal values, pride, and fulfillment; Belonging, camaraderie, and teamwork; Legacy / intergenerational continuity
OE2	What communication practice or support would make it easier for you to stay involved long-term?	Brief inductive coding; multiple coding allowed	Financial and material assistance; Welfare, healthcare, and safety/equipment support; Government / LGU backing; Stronger teamwork and communication climate; Training and capacity building

In Chapter 4, a single response could receive more than one code/theme; percentages therefore do not total 100%.

E.6 Coding and Cleaning Notes

- Exclude responses where consent was not given or the respondent is under 18.
- Keep the raw export separate from the clean analysis file.
- Remove metadata fields such as IP address, location, nicknames, timestamps, and response IDs from the analysis workbook.
- Because the scaled sections in the analyzed dataset had no missing values, composite scoring was straightforward. If missing data occur in a re-run, document whether listwise deletion or mean-of-available-items scoring is used.

E.7 Note for the Final Manuscript

Note. This codebook reflects the survey as actually analyzed in Chapter 4. The variable groupings and composite definitions are aligned to the reported descriptive statistics, reliability checks, and correlation analyses.