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### Animism and Environmentalism in an Upland Rural Community in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines

<sup>1</sup> Joeffrey C Latayan, <sup>2</sup> Jimel Felicia B Latayan

<sup>1,2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Laguna State Polytechnic University, College of Arts and Sciences, Los Baños, Philippines

Corresponding Author: Joeffrey C Latayan

#### Abstract

This research explored animism as a holistic and ethical framework for addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Against the backdrop of the Western anthropocentric worldview's contribution to environmental degradation, the study argued for the potential enrichment of environmentalism through animistic perspectives. Animism which attributes spirit, sentience, and personhood to non-human entities, offers a promising alternative, rooted in a profound reverence for nature observed in animistic societies worldwide. Conducted in an upland rural community in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, the research employed a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between animism and environmentalism. Findings revealed the existence of animistic customs and practices mostly unique to Filipinos alongside high attribution of animistic essence to animals, and moderate attributions to plants and other objects. Environmentalism, measured in terms of concern, action for nature, and the overall, was notably high among respondents. The research established significant relationships between some animistic

customs and practices and environmentalism. Moreover, it also established significant relationships between some attributions of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism. Though some of the animistic customs and practices and some attributions of animistic essence to objects correlated positively with environmentalism, all indicated low correlations. Such conditions might have been due to factors associated with the dominant religion, westernization, and or secular views and values. The research recommends for the creation of a culture-based environmentalist values enhancement program to preserve relevant animistic traits and further strengthen environmentalism in the community. However, the study acknowledges the complexity of the animism-environmentalism relationship and suggests exploration of moderating factors. By illuminating the intricate dynamics between variables, future research may contribute to strengthening animistic values for the benefit of both cultural identity and environmental preservation.

**Keywords:** Animism, Environmentalism, Customs, Practices, Attribution

#### Introduction

In an era of unprecedented environmental challenges, humanity is grappling with the profound consequences of its relationship with the natural world. The dominant Western worldview, characterized by anthropocentrism and a mechanistic understanding of nature, has contributed to the rampant exploitation and degradation of the environment (Muradian & Gómez-Baggethun, 2021; Pearce, 2021) <sup>[27, 32]</sup>. As a result, there is an urgent need for alternative perspectives that can foster a more harmonious and sustainable coexistence between humans and the natural world (Harvey, 2019; Makonen, 2020; Ochoa, 2021; Pearce, 2021) <sup>[16, 25, 30, 32]</sup>.

Animism is a worldview that attributes spirit, personhood and sentience to entities such as animals, plants, inanimate objects, forces of nature, places and, even, words. It assumes that these non-human things can influence human actions and events (Naidu, 2011; Park, 2021; Pearce, 2021; Swancutt, 2019; Waldrep, 2018) <sup>[28, 31, 32, 41, 45]</sup>. Though animistic societies worldwide possess common features such as the attribution of animistic essence and the belief in interconnectedness, animism is not a single, unified belief system, but rather a diverse sets of beliefs and practices (Harvey, 2019; Park, 2021; Pearce, 2021; and Swancutt, 2019) <sup>[16, 31, 32, 41]</sup>. Animism offers a promising alternative to the prevailing Western paradigm on the relationship of human and the environment (Van Eyghen, 2023; Enstedt & Moberg, 2023; Perdibon, 2019) <sup>[42, 12, 33]</sup>. Animistic societies have

long held a deep respect for the natural world, recognizing its intrinsic value and the bond between all things. This profound reverence for nature has guided their practices and maintained a delicate balance between human needs and environmental sustainability (Harvey, 2019; Kunchambo *et al.*, 2021; Mumcu & Yilmaz, 2018) <sup>[16, 22, 26]</sup>.

In the Philippines, the ancient worldview of animism perceives spirits as inherent in all aspects of the natural world. This deep-rooted belief system, prevalent in pre-colonial Filipino societies, holds that spirits, known as anitos, reside in natural elements, from towering trees to flowing rivers, and even in the unseen realm of dreams and omens (Acac, 2020; Cervantes, 2023; Eslit, 2023; Vicerra & Javier, 2013) <sup>[1, 7, 13, 44]</sup>.

To this day, animism manifests in a myriad of practices, rituals, and traditions, each reflecting the unique cultural identity of various Filipino ethnic groups. From offerings and prayers to sacred groves and ancestral veneration, animism permeates the lives of many Filipinos, shaping their understanding of the link between all things (Cabas, 2017; Del Castillo *et al.*, 2023; Nelmidia-Flores, 2021; Quilo *et al.*, 2015) <sup>[4, 11, 29, 36]</sup>. While Christianity and other belief systems have influenced the landscape of Filipino spirituality, animism remains a vibrant force, woven into the fabric of everyday life (Casiño, 2013, Macaranas, 2021) <sup>[5, 24]</sup>.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the potential of animistic perspectives to enrich environmentalism. Scholars have highlighted the resonance between animistic values and contemporary environmentalist principles, such as respect for nature, holistic thinking, and interconnectedness (Allison, 2019; Cassar, 2023) <sup>[2, 6]</sup>. Animism's emphasis on the spiritual and relational dimensions of nature offers a valuable counterpoint to the often technocratic and instrumentalist approaches of Western environmentalism (Pierce, 2021; Quijada, 2022; Selby, 2017; Sponsel, 2014) <sup>[32, 35, 38, 39]</sup>.

Environmentalism, at its core, represents a dual commitment of concern and action for the environment (Armstrong, 2019; Davies, 2020; Funk and Kennedy, 2016) <sup>[3, 10, 14]</sup>. It begins with a profound sense of responsibility and care for the well-being of the planet. This concern arises from an understanding of the harmony of ecosystems and the recognition that human activities can have far-reaching consequences on the environment. Individuals who embrace environmentalism as a concern prioritize the health of the planet, acknowledging the delicate balance that sustains life. This concern extends beyond personal interests to encompass a broader perspective that values the preservation of biodiversity, the mitigation of climate change, and the overall protection of nature's intricate web (Cruz and Manata, 2020; Gnansounou and Pandey, 2017; Weyler, 2018) <sup>[9, 15, 46]</sup>.

Crucially, environmentalism is not confined to a passive concern but necessitates active, tangible efforts to address the challenges facing the environment. This action-oriented aspect involves a spectrum of initiatives, ranging from individual behaviors like reducing carbon footprints and waste to collective endeavors such as advocating for environmental policies, participating in conservation projects, and supporting sustainable practices (Kumar *et al.*, 2021; Leicht *et al.*, 2018; Prastio *et al.*, 2023) <sup>[21, 23, 34]</sup>. Environmental activism becomes an integral part of translating concern into meaningful change, with individuals

and communities collaborating to tackle pressing issues like deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction. As concern and action intersect, environmentalism emerges as a dynamic force that drives positive transformations in the way societies interact with and protect the natural world (Chu & Karr, 2016; Iqbal, Ahmad, & Halim, 2020; Kiper, 2013; Strand *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[8, 18, 19, 40]</sup>.

Animism-inspired conservation efforts recognize the spiritual and cultural importance of nature and make use of the intrinsic connections between the cultural and spiritual values of stakeholders. Sustainable governance integrates diverse cultural perspectives about land and resources, people and society, together with all living and non-living components of protected areas. Understanding the cultural and spiritual importance of nature is vital for the success of any environmental program. The incorporation of cultural values into strategies for managing and protecting the natural environment reflects a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to conservation. A balanced and culturally sensitive approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of nature, culture, and spirituality ensures the sustainability and success of conservation initiatives (Verschuuren *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[43]</sup>.

The central argument of the research is that animism provides a holistic and ethical framework for understanding and responding to environmental challenges. By recognizing spirit, sentience, and personhood and the interconnectedness of all things, animism fosters a sense of kinship and responsibility towards the natural world. This deep respect for nature motivates animistic societies to live in harmony with their environment, adopting sustainable practices that maintain ecological balance (Honegger, 2015; Kopnina, 2019; Sadowski, 2020; Zhu *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[17, 20, 37, 47]</sup>. Drawing inspiration from previous studies suggesting a link between animistic beliefs and environmental values, this research aimed to examine, in a quantitative manner, the existence of the significant relationship between animism and environmentalism.

Specifically, this research sought to answer the following questions: 1. What is the animism of respondents in terms of customs and practices? 2. What is the animism of respondents in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects such as animals, plants, non-living natural objects, natural places, forces of nature, manmade objects, manmade places, and words? 3. What is the environmentalism of respondents in terms of concern for nature, action for nature, and overall environmentalism? 4. Is there a significant relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices and environmentalism? 5. Is there a significant relationship between animism in terms of attribution of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism?

Consequently, in relation to the aforementioned research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated: 1. there is no significant relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices and environmentalism. 2. There is no significant relationship between animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism.

This research posits that animistic perspectives can enrich and revitalize contemporary environmentalism. By integrating animistic values and insights, environmentalism can move beyond a purely anthropocentric focus and embrace a more holistic and respectful approach to nature. This integration can lead to more effective and sustainable

environmental policies and practices. This is an attempt to demonstrate the profound significance of animism in understanding and addressing environmental challenges. By illuminating the harmonious relationship between humans and nature that animism cultivates, it offers a valuable contribution to the quest for environmental sustainability and a more respectful coexistence with the natural world.

### Methodology

This research employed the quantitative approach of research utilizing the descriptive and correlational methods. The descriptive method was utilized to determine animism in terms of customs and practices and the attribution of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism in terms of concern, action for nature, and the overall. The correlational method was instrumental in determining the existing relationships between animism and environmentalism. Out of the population of 575 adult individuals in Barangay Bagong Silang, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, the research came up with the sample size of 236. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. A survey interview was conducted to collect the data. The research instrument was a self-made survey interview questionnaire divided into three parts. The first part was intended to determine animism among respondents in terms of customs and practices. The second part was intended to ascertain animism among respondents in terms of the attribution of essence to objects such as animals,

plants, non-living natural objects, natural places, forces of nature, manmade objects, manmade places, and words. The third part was intended to ascertain environmentalism in terms of concern, action for nature and the overall. Frequency, percentage count, and ranking were utilized to determine animism in terms of customs and practices. The mean level of agreement was computed and translated as the mean level of animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects, and as the mean level of environmentalism. The levels of animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects and the levels of environmentalism had the following range: very low (1.00-1.49), low (1.50-2.49), moderate (2.50-3.49), high (3.50-4.49), and very high (4.50-5.00). Point Biserial correlation was utilized to determine if there was significant relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices and environmentalism. Pearson correlation was used to determine if significant relationship existed between animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism. The strength of correlation was established using the following range: very weak ( $\pm 0.00$  to  $\pm 0.19$ ), weak ( $\pm 0.20$  to  $\pm 0.39$ ), moderate ( $\pm 0.40$  to  $\pm 0.59$ ), strong ( $\pm 0.60$  to  $\pm 0.79$ ), and very strong ( $\pm 0.80$  to  $\pm 1.00$ ).

### Results

The statistical treatment of data, in relation to the research questions, yielded the following results:

**Table 1:** Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 1-5)

Rank No.	Custom and Practice	Frequency	Percentage
1	Uttering "tabi-tabi po, nuno" ("excuse me, old man"), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature	235	99.58
2	Asking permission or forgiveness from unseen beings in the environment	210	88.98
3	Consulting and getting treatment from an albularyo or folk healer	207	87.71
4	Praying to and worshipping statues or images	205	86.86
5	Considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one	187	79.24

Table 1 shows animism in terms of customs and practices from rank 1 to rank 5 with corresponding frequencies and percentages of responses. Among the animistic customs and practices of the respondents, "uttering 'tabi-tabi po, nuno' ('excuse me, old man'), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature" was ranked number one due to the highest frequency of responses at 235 which was 99.58% of the total number of respondents. Ranked 2 was "asking permission or

forgiveness from unseen beings in the environment" with a frequency of 210 (88.98%). Ranked 3 was "consulting and getting treatment from an albularyo or folk healer" with a frequency of 207 (87.71%). Ranked 4 was "praying to and worshipping statues or images" with a frequency of 205 (86.86%). Ranked 5 was "considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one" with a frequency of 187 (79.24%).

**Table 2:** Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 6-10)

Rank No.	Custom and Practice	Frequency	Percentage
6	Turning clothes inside out whenever lost in the wilderness to evade mischievous spirits	186	78.81
7	Pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to ward off evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)	184	77.97
8	Refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits	181	76.69
9	Blowing of horn whenever driving thru places inhabited by spirits as a sign of respect or to avoid hitting them	179	75.85
10	Burning incense to drive away evil spirits	178	75.42

Table 2 shows animism in terms of customs and practices from rank 6 to rank 10 with the corresponding frequencies and percentages of responses. Among the animistic customs and practices of the respondents, "turning clothes inside out whenever lost in the wilderness to evade mischievous spirits" was ranked number 6 with a frequency of 186 which was 78.81% of the total number of respondents. Ranked 7 was "pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to ward off evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)" with a

frequency of 184 (77.97%). Ranked 8 was "refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits" with a frequency of 181 (76.69%). Having a frequency of 179 (75.85%), "blowing of horn whenever driving thru places inhabited by spirits as a sign of respect or to avoid hitting them" was ranked 9. Ranked 10 was "burning incense to drive away evil spirits" with a frequency of 178 (75.42%).

**Table 3:** Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 11-15)

Rank No.	Custom and Practice	Frequency	Percentage
11	Refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits	174	73.73
12	Refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits	145	61.44
13	Offering food and other useful things to the dead or unseen beings	135	57.20
14	Communicating or interacting with the dead	133	56.36
15	Carrying some amount of salt to protect self from aswangs (supernatural monsters)	124	52.54

Table 3 shows animism in terms of customs and practices from rank 11 to rank 15 with the corresponding frequencies and percentages of responses. “Refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits” had a frequency of 174 which was 73.73% of the total number of respondents and was ranked number 11 among the animistic customs and practices. Ranked 12 was “refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits” with a frequency of 145 (61.44%). Ranked 13 was “offering food and other useful things to the dead or unseen beings” with a frequency of 135 (57.20%). Having a frequency of 133 (56.36%), “communicating or interacting with the dead” was ranked 14. Ranked 15 was “carrying some amount of salt to protect self from aswangs (supernatural monsters)” with a frequency of 124 (52.54%).

**Table 4:** Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 16-20)

Rank No.	Custom and Practice	Frequency	Percentage
16	Asking nature spirits to bring about bountiful harvest or catch	117	49.58
17	Praying to nature spirits	107	45.34
18	Worshipping Mariang Makiling, a goddess-like mountain spirit	105	44.49
19	Using amulets	68	28.81
20	Using holy cards, religious medallions or similar paraphernalia to protect self and others from sickness and evil spirits	67	28.39

Table 4 shows animism in terms of customs and practices from rank 16 to rank 20 with the corresponding frequencies and percentages of responses. Among the animistic customs and practices of the respondents, “asking nature spirits to bring about bountiful harvest or catch” was ranked number 16 with a frequency of 117 or 49.58% of the total number of respondents. Ranked 17 was “praying to nature spirits” with a frequency of 107 (45.34%). Ranked 18 was “worshipping Mariang Makiling, a goddess-like mountain spirit” with a frequency of 105 (44.49%). Having a frequency of 68 (28.81%), “using amulets” was ranked 19. Ranked 20 due to the lowest frequency of 67 (28.39%), “using holy cards, religious medallions or similar paraphernalia to protect self and others from sickness and evil spirits” came out last among the animistic customs and practices.

**Table 5:** Animism in Terms of the Attribution of Animistic Essence to Objects

Objects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Animals	3.76	High
Plants	3.42	Moderate
Non-Living Natural Objects	3.19	Moderate
Natural Places	3.29	Moderate
Forces of Nature	3.13	Moderate
Manmade Objects	2.96	Moderate
Manmade Places	3.09	Moderate
Words	3.27	Moderate

Table 5 shows animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects with the corresponding means and verbal interpretations. Attribution of animistic essence to animals had a mean of 3.76 which was interpreted as high. Attribution of animistic essence in terms of plants had a mean of 3.42 which was interpreted as moderate. In terms of non-living natural objects, attribution of animistic essence yielded a mean of 3.19 which was regarded as moderate. In terms of natural places, attribution of animistic essence exhibited a mean of 3.29 which was interpreted as moderate. In terms of forces of nature, attribution of animistic essence had a mean of 3.13 which was interpreted as moderate. In terms of manmade objects, attribution of animistic essence had a mean of 2.96 which was interpreted as moderate. Attribution of animistic essence in terms of manmade places had a mean of 3.09 which was interpreted as moderate. Finally, in terms of words, attribution of animistic essence had a mean of 3.27 which was also interpreted as moderate.

**Table 6:** Levels of Environmentalism

Environmentalism	Mean	Interpretation
Concern for nature	4.11	High
Action for nature	4.44	High
Overall	4.27	High

Table 6 shows the levels of environmentalism among respondents. Environmentalism in terms of concern for nature exhibited a mean of 4.11 which was interpreted as high. Environmentalism in terms of action for nature had a mean of 4.44 which was interpreted as high. High level of environmentalism was found among respondents as indicated by the overall mean of 4.27.

**Table 7:** Significant Relationships between Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 1-5) and Environmentalism

Animism Custom and Practice	Environmentalism		
	Concern	Action	Overall
1. Uttering "tabi-tabi po, nuno" ("excuse me, old man"), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature	.220**	.303**	.298**
2. Asking permission or forgiveness from unseen beings in the environment	-0.096	-0.041	-0.083
3. Consulting and getting treatment from an albularyo or folk healer	0.033	0.012	0.027
4. Praying to and worshipping statues or images	0.612	0.856	0.674
5. Considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one	-0.016	-0.048	-0.035
	0.801	0.461	0.587
	.174**	0.105	.166*
	0.007	0.108	0.011

\*\* highly significant if p-value ≤ .01  
\* significant if p-value ≤ .05

Table 7 presents the significant relationships between animism in terms of customs and practices (ranks 1-5) and environmentalism. “Uttering ‘tabi-tabi po, nuno’ (‘excuse me, old man’), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature” and environmentalism in terms of concern for nature exhibited a highly significant relationship at p-value .001 with a weak positive correlation of .220. The aforementioned custom and environmentalism in terms of action for nature, and overall environmentalism indicated highly significant relationships both at p-value .000 with weak positive correlations of .303 and .298 respectively. “Considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one” and environmentalism in terms of concern for nature indicated highly significant relationship at p-value .007 with a very weak positive correlation of .174. The same custom and overall environmentalism had a significant relationship as indicated by a p-value of .011 with a very weak positive correlation of .166. No significant relationship was found between environmentalism and “asking permission or forgiveness from unseen beings in the environment”, “consulting and getting treatment from an albularyo or folk healer”, and “praying to and worshipping statues or images”.

**Table 8:** Significant Relationships between Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 6-10) and Environmentalism

Animism Custom and Practice	Environmentalism		
	Concern	Action	Overall
6. Turning clothes inside out whenever lost in the wilderness to evade mischievous spirits	-0.004	.144*	0.072
	0.954	0.027	0.272
7. Pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to drive away evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)	0.063	.207**	.147*
	0.334	0.001	0.024
8. Refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits	-0.063	.131*	0.027
	0.335	0.045	0.680
9. Blowing of horn whenever driving through places inhabited by spirits as a sign of respect or to avoid hitting them	-0.092	0.055	-0.031
	0.158	0.398	0.639
10. Burning incense to drive away evil spirits	-0.009	0.015	0.002
	0.888	0.813	0.975

\* Significant if p-value ≤ .05

Table 8 presents the significant relationships between animism in terms of customs and practices (ranks 6-10) and environmentalism. “Turning clothes inside out whenever lost in the wilderness to evade mischievous spirits” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature exhibited a significant relationship at p-value of .027 with a very weak positive correlation of .144. “Pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to drive away evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature had a highly significant relationship as indicated by a p-value of .001 with a weak positive correlation of .207. The same custom and practice was found to be significantly related to overall environmentalism at p-value .024 with a very weak positive correlation of .147. “Refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits” was found to be significantly related to environmentalism in terms of action for nature at p-value .045 with a very weak positive correlation of .131. No significant relationship was found between environmentalism and “blowing of horn whenever driving through places inhabited by spirits as a sign of respect or to

avoid hitting them” and “burning incense to drive away evil spirits”.

**Table 9:** Significant Relationship between Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 11-15) and Environmentalism

Animism Custom and Practice	Environmentalism		
	Concern	Action	Overall
11. Refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits	-0.027	.233**	0.103
	0.675	0.000	0.115
12. Refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits	0.028	.181**	0.111
	0.670	0.005	0.088
13. Offering food and other useful things to the dead or unseen beings	-0.044	0.002	-0.027
	0.499	0.977	0.675
14. Communicating or interacting with the dead	-0.095	-0.005	-0.064
	0.145	0.944	0.331
15. Carrying some amount of salt to protect self from aswangs (supernatural monsters)	-0.125	0.108	-0.025
	0.055	0.099	0.705

\*\*highly significant if p-value ≤ .01  
\*significant if p-value ≤ .05

Table 9 presents the significant relationships between animism in terms of customs and practices (ranks 11-15) and environmentalism. “Refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature indicated a highly significant relationship at p-value .000 with a weak positive correlation of .233. “Refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature indicated a highly significant relationship at p-value .005 with a very weak positive correlation of .181. No significant relationship was found between environmentalism and “offering food and other useful things to the dead or unseen beings”, “communicating or interacting with the dead”, and “carrying some amount of salt to protect self from aswangs (supernatural monsters)”.

**Table 10:** Relationship between Animism in Terms of Customs and Practices (Ranks 16-20) and Environmentalism

Animism Custom and Practice	Environmentalism		
	Concern	Action	Overall
16. Asking nature spirits to bring about bountiful harvest or catch	-0.094	-0.011	-0.066
	0.151	0.866	0.313
17. Praying to nature spirits	-0.095	0.106	-0.006
	0.145	0.104	0.921
18. Worshipping Mariang Makiling, a goddess-like mountain spirit	-0.084	0.100	-0.002
	0.198	0.125	0.971
19. Using amulets	0.002	0.094	0.050
	0.979	0.148	0.446
20. Using holy cards, religious medallions or similar paraphernalia to protect self and others from sickness and evil spirits	0.009	-0.009	0.001
	0.891	0.892	0.986

Table 10 shows the relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices (ranks 16-20) and environmentalism. No significant relationship was found between environmentalism and “asking nature spirits to bring about bountiful harvest or catch”, “praying to nature spirits”, “worshipping Mariang Makiling, a goddess-like mountain spirit”, “using amulets”, and “using holy cards, religious medallions or similar paraphernalia to protect self and others from sickness and evil spirits”.

**Table 11:** Significant Relationships between Animism in Terms of the Attribution of Animistic Essence to Objects and Environmentalism

Animism	Environmentalism		
	Concern for Nature	Action for Nature	Overall
Objects			
Animals	.245**	0.037	.176**
	0.000	0.571	0.007
Plants	.238**	-0.023	.141*
	0.000	0.727	0.030
Non-living Natural Objects	0.124	-0.101	0.028
	0.057	0.123	0.671
Natural Places	0.069	-0.123	-0.019
	0.293	0.060	0.770
Forces Of Nature	0.072	-.145*	-0.028
	0.268	0.026	0.664
Manmade Objects	-0.108	-0.063	-0.102
	0.098	0.333	0.118
Manmade Places	-0.025	0.032	0.001
	0.708	0.628	0.993
Words	0.071	0.103	0.099
	0.278	0.116	0.131
Overall	236	236	236
	0.097	-0.051	0.036

Table 11 shows significant relationship between animism in terms of objects and environmentalism. Relationship between attribution of animistic essence to animals and concern for nature was highly significant at p-value .000 with a weak positive correlation of .245. Relationship between attribution of animistic essence to animals and overall environmentalism was also highly significant at p-value .007 with a very weak positive correlation of .176. Relationship between attribution of animistic essence to plants and concern for nature was highly significant at p-value .000 with a weak positive correlation of .238. Relationship between attribution of animistic essence to plants and the overall was significant at p-value .030 with a very weak positive correlation of .141. Relationship between forces of nature and action for nature was significant at p-value .026 with a very weak correlation of -.145. No significant relationship was found between environmentalism and non-living natural objects, natural places, manmade objects, manmade places, and words.

## Discussions

In relation to the research question “What is the animism of respondents in terms of customs and practices?”, the following customs and practices were found among respondents and were arranged according to the number of responses from the highest frequency to the lowest: “uttering ‘tabi-tabi po, nuno’ (‘excuse me, old man’), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature”; “asking permission or forgiveness from unseen beings in the environment”; “consulting and getting treatment from an albularyo or folk healer”; “praying to and worshipping statues or images”; “considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one”; “turning clothes inside out whenever lost in the wilderness to evade mischievous spirits”; “pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to ward off evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)”; “refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits”; “blowing of horn whenever driving thru places inhabited by spirits as a sign of respect or to avoid hitting them”; “burning incense to drive away evil

spirits”; “refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits”; “refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits”; “offering food and other useful things to the dead or unseen beings”; “communicating or interacting with the dead”; “carrying some amount of salt to protect self from aswangs (supernatural monsters)”; “asking nature spirits to bring about bountiful harvest or catch”; “praying to nature spirits”; “worshipping Mariang Makiling, a goddess-like mountain spirit”; “using amulets”; and “using holy cards, religious medallions or similar paraphernalia to protect self and others from sickness and evil spirits”.

The findings on the existence of animistic customs and practices among respondents were similar to the articulations of various authors such as Mumcu and Yilmaz (2018) [26], Harvey (2019) [16], Naidu (2011) [28], Park (2021) [31], Pearce (2021) [32], Swancutt (2019) [41], and Waldrep (2018) [45] that regard such cultural traits as integral parts of animism. However, most of the mentioned animistic customs and practices were unique to Filipinos like those cultural elements in the works of Acac (2020) [1], Cabas (2017) [4], Cervantes (2013) [7], Eslit (2023) [13], Casiño (2013) [5], Del Castillo *et al.* (2023) [11], Macaranas (2021) [24], Nelmida-Flores (2021) [29], Vicerra & Javier (2013) [44], and Quilo *et al.* (2015) [36].

In relation to the research question “What is the animism of the respondents in terms of attribution of animistic essence to objects?”, the following findings were obtained: attribution of animistic essence to animals was high, and attributions of such essence to plants, non-living natural objects, natural places, forces of nature manmade objects, manmade places, and words were moderate.

The findings on the attribution of animistic essence to objects confirmed the articulations of Naidu (2011) [28], Park (2021) [31], Pearce (2021) [32], Swancutt (2019) [41], and Waldrep (2018) [45] that maintain animism as a worldview that considers objects as possessing spirit, sentience, and personhood. The present research, however, went beyond the qualitative descriptions by delving on quantitative measures to determine attribution.

In relation to the research question “What is the environmentalism of the respondents in terms of concern, action for nature, and the overall?”, it was found that environmentalism on each of its dimensions were high.

These findings on environmentalism were similar to the articulations of Allison (2019) [2], Cassar (2023) [6], Selby (2017) [38], Sponsel (2014) [39], and Quijada (2022) [35] on how animists tend to care and protect the environment. But unlike the previous studies, the present research dealt with environmentalism in quantitative terms to ascertain the levels of its dimensions instead of presenting mere qualitative descriptions of the social phenomenon.

With respect to the research question “Is there a significant relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices and environmentalism?”, the following findings were established: “uttering ‘tabi-tabi po, nuno’ (‘excuse me, old man’), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature” and environmentalism in terms of concern for nature had a highly significant relationship with a weak positive correlation; the aforementioned custom and environmentalism in terms of action for nature and the overall both indicated highly significant relationships with weak positive correlations; “considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one” and

environmentalism in terms of concern for nature showed highly significant relationship with a very weak positive correlation; the same custom and overall environmentalism had a significant relationship with a very weak positive correlation; “turning clothes inside out whenever lost in the wilderness to evade mischievous spirits” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature exhibited a significant relationship with a very weak positive correlation; “pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to drive away evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature had a highly significant relationship with a weak positive correlation; the same custom and practice was found to be significantly related to overall environmentalism with a very weak positive correlation; “refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits” was found to be significantly related to environmentalism in terms of action for nature with a very weak positive correlation; “refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature indicated a highly significant relationship with a weak positive correlation; “refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits” and environmentalism in terms of action for nature indicated a highly significant relationship with a very weak positive correlation. No significant relationship was found between environmentalism and “asking permission or forgiveness from unseen beings in the environment”, “consulting and getting treatment from an albularyo or folk healer”, “praying to and worshipping statues or images”, “blowing of horn whenever driving through places inhabited by spirits as a sign of respect or to avoid hitting them”, “burning incense to drive away evil spirits”, “offering food and other useful things to the dead or unseen beings”, “communicating or interacting with the dead”, “carrying some amount of salt to protect self from aswangs (supernatural monsters)”, “asking nature spirits to bring about bountiful harvest or catch”, “praying to nature spirits”, “worshipping Mariang Makiling, a goddess-like mountain spirit”, “using amulets”, and “using holy cards, religious medallions or similar paraphernalia to protect self and others from sickness and evil spirits”. Only seven out of 20 animistic customs and practices were significantly related to the dimensions of environmentalism. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices and environmentalism was partially upheld.

The findings on the significant relationship between animism in terms of customs and practices and the dimensions of environmentalism conform with the articulations of Allison (2019) [2], Enstedt and Moberg (2023) [12], Cassar (2023) [6], Harvey (2019) [16], Honegger (2015) [17], Kopnina (2019) [20], Mumcu and Yilmaz (2018) [26], Perdibon (2019) [33], Quijada (2022) [35], Sadowski (2020) [37], Selby (2017) [38], Sponsel (2014) [39], Van Eyghen (2023) [42], and Zhu *et al.* (2022) [47] on animistic societies revering nature and maintaining balance between human needs and environmental sustainability. Notwithstanding the significant relationships, however, most of the identified animistic customs and practices were not significantly related to the dimensions environmentalism. Moreover, animistic customs and practices that were significantly related to the dimensions of environmentalism had weak to very weak correlations. The low correlation levels might have been due to factors such as dominant religion,

westernization, and secular views and values. These factors are somewhat related to forces affecting animism as articulated by Acac (2020) [1], Casiño (2013) [5], Del Castillo *et al.* (2023) [11], Macaranas (2021) [24], Pierce (2021) [32], Quijada (2022) [35], Selby (2017) [38], Sponsel (2014) [39], and Vicerra & Javier (2013) [44].

The partial upholding of the hypothesis and the low correlation levels between animistic customs and practices and the dimensions of environmentalism revealed a nuanced connection between animism and environmentalism. Nevertheless, the existence of significant relationships between variables suggests that the observance of certain animistic customs and practices could have fostered environmentalism.

With respect to the research question “Is there a significant relationship between animism in terms of attribution of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism?”, the following findings were established: relationship between animals and concern for nature and overall environmentalism were highly significant with weak positive correlation and very weak positive correlation respectively; relationship between plants and concern for nature was highly significant with a weak positive correlation; relationship between plants and the overall was significant with a very weak positive correlation; and relationship between forces of nature and action for nature was significant with a very weak negative correlation. No significant relationship was found between the dimensions of environmentalism and non-living natural objects, natural places, manmade objects, manmade places, and words. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between animism in terms of attribution of animistic essence to objects and environmentalism was partially upheld.

The findings on the significant relationships between animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to objects in the case of animals and plants and the dimensions of environmentalism conform with the articulations Naidu (2011) [28], Park (2021) [31], Pearce, (2021) [32], Swancutt (2019) [41], and Waldrep (2018) [45] concerning animism being seen as a worldview that attributes spirit, personhood, and sentience to non-human entities and the idea that these things can influence human actions and events. Notwithstanding the significant relationships, however, most of the attributions of animistic essence to objects were not significantly related to the dimensions of environmentalism. Also, the attributions that were significantly related to the dimensions of environmentalism had weak to very weak correlations.

The no significant relationship and the low correlation levels between most of the attributions of animistic essence and environmentalism might be explained by influences associated with the dominant religion, westernization, and secular perspectives and values. These influences are somewhat similar to those affecting animism as reflected in the works of Acac (2020) [1], Casiño (2013) [5], Del Castillo *et al.* (2023) [11], Macaranas (2021) [24], Pierce (2021) [32], Quijada (2022) [35], Selby (2017) [38], Sponsel (2014) [39], and Vicerra & Javier (2013) [44]. Moreover, it was also found that forces of nature and action for nature though significantly related were negatively correlated. This meant that an increase in the degree of animism in terms of the attribution of animistic essence to forces of nature would result to the decrease in the degree of action for nature or vice versa. The animist might have viewed forces of nature as beyond

human control and had the ability to maintain themselves in the face of destructive human activities. Thus, the more the respondent attributed animistic essence to forces of nature, the less he would attempt to conserve or protect such elements. Such a view conforms with how animists view objects as having varying animistic traits as implied by Harvey (2019)<sup>[16]</sup>, Park (2021)<sup>[31]</sup>, and Swancutt (2019)<sup>[41]</sup>. The partial upholding of the hypothesis and the low correlation levels between the attributions of animistic essence to some objects and the concern, action for the environment, and the overall showed the complexity of the relationship between animism and environmentalism. While some animistic beliefs clearly foster ecological concern and action, others might have a more nuanced or even negative influence. Overall, however, the research revealed that attributing animistic essence to specific objects, particularly living beings, was linked to increased environmentalism. This underscored the valuable role animistic beliefs played in shaping a more respectful and responsible relationship between humans and nature as mentioned by Harvey (2019)<sup>[16]</sup>, Makonen (2020)<sup>[25]</sup>, Mumcu & Yilmaz (2018)<sup>[26]</sup>, Ochoa (2021)<sup>[30]</sup>, Pearce (2021)<sup>[32]</sup>, and Kunchambo *et al.* (2021)<sup>[22]</sup>.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, the observance of certain animistic customs and practices may further be strengthened among the residents of Barangay Bagong Silang to further enhance environmentalism. These animistic customs and practices may include “uttering ‘tabi-tabi po, nuno’ (‘excuse me, old man’), an invocation to avoid offending spirits in nature”, “considering a moth or a butterfly that enters the house as a departed loved one”, “pinning on house walls blessed palm leaves to drive away evil spirits or aswangs (supernatural monsters)”, “refraining from making noise in certain places to avoid offending spirits”, “refraining from pointing at things in the wilderness to avoid mishaps or offending spirits”, and “refraining from disrespecting food to avoid offending vindictive spirits”. The attribution of animistic essence to animals and plants may also be fostered to further enhance environmentalism. In relation to strengthening the observance of animistic customs and traditions and attribution of animistic essence to animals and plants, a culture-based environmentalist values enhancement program may be established by a concerned agency or organization. The development of such program has the potential to not only strengthen the community's identity but also contribute significantly to the conservation and preservation of the natural environment. Future researchers may explore the nuanced conditions existing between animism and environmentalism by searching for factors that significantly moderate such relationship. In doing so, they may understand further the complexities existing between variables and, in the process thereof, come up with better ways on how to strengthen the animistic traits that promote the health and abundance of nature.

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