

Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities

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Abstract:

Small-scale fishing plays a vital role in the culture, identity, and social life of rural coastal communities. Despite its significance, there is limited understanding of how fishing impacts the subjective well-being of fisherfolks. This study aimed to assess the well-being of fisherfolks in selected rural coastal areas for the Calendar Year 2025. A descriptive method was used, employing a validated self-made questionnaire distributed to 56 respondents. Results showed most respondents were older females with relatively high family income and varied fishing experience. Overall, well-being levels in areas such as positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments were very high. However, positive emotions had the lowest mean score, signaling underlying challenges. These may include economic uncertainty, environmental issues, and emotional fatigue. To address this, programs that enhance financial stability and promote social support are recommended. Training on sustainable fishing and community-based activities can boost morale and skills. Improving these factors can make fishing a more fulfilling and sustainable livelihood.

Keywords: Fisherfolk well-being, rural coastal communities, livelihood sustainability

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

The well-being of fisherfolks in small-scale coastal communities is crucial to their cultural identity, socialites, and way of life. While fish catches are the primary resource sustaining their livelihoods, there is limited understanding of how fishing impacts their level of well-being (Minarro et al., 2021). In the Philippines, fishing plays a major role in rural economies and food security, but the sector faces persistent challenges. Declining fish stocks, illegal fishing, and natural disasters often disrupt their livelihoods (Israel, 2016).

These issues contribute to food security, financial strain, and disrupted community stability. Limited access to essential services such as healthcare and education further intensifies their vulnerability (Bello, 2018). It is important to explore how economic conditions, social roles, and access to resources affect the daily lives of fisherfolks. Understanding both their sources of happiness and their difficulties offers insight into the state of their well-being.

This study aims to assess the well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities, focusing on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. As someone who works closely with fishing communities, the researcher was motivated to investigate the factors influencing their emotional and mental state. Fisherfolks often endure hardships, but small successes can bring deep satisfaction. Failure to recognize these emotional dynamics may increase stress and diminish well-being. The findings of this research will provide valuable input for academics, policymakers, and development practitioners seeking to improve the lives of fisherfolks in underserved coastal areas.

Current State of Knowledge

The well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal areas is shaped by various factors including livelihood practices, environmental shifts, and socio-economic conditions. Eshun (2018) emphasized that fishers adopt diverse livelihood strategies based on positive, mid, and negative—to improve their health, income, and food security, highlighting the importance of investing in these strategies to build capacity. Psychological aspects such as emotions and values also play a crucial role in how fisherfolks respond to environmental and policy changes (Andrews et al., 2020). Positive emotions, like optimism and satisfaction, enhance resilience and adaptive capacity (Andrews et al., 2021), while social bonds further support mental health and collective well-being (Filaments, 2024; Tietze et al., 2020). Community engagement fosters empowerment and social integration, improving both personal and communal well-being (Eshun et al., 2019). However, socio-economic barriers may hinder participation. Climate change contributes to psychological stress among small-scale fishers, affecting emotional stability and decision-making (Shaffril et al., 2020), and NOAA indicators affirm the role of social cohesion in sustaining coastal communities. Well-being extends

beyond economics to encompass mental, physical, and cultural dimensions (Weeratunge et al., 2018; Bene et al., 2016), with cultural identity and a sense of purpose strengthening resilience (Allison et al., 2020). Fishing also promotes mental well-being by fostering mindfulness and connection to nature (Davidson, 2022; Maynou et al., 2018), though younger generations often lack awareness of sustainable practices critical to ocean health (Hailstone, 2025). Ultimately, fisherfolks find meaning and accomplishment through their ties to the sea, traditional roles, and contribution to food security and cultural heritage (Fabinyi et al., 2022; Maynou et al., 2018).

The well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities in the Philippines is closely tied to their socio-economic conditions and the sustainability of their fishing practices. Balisco et al. (2019) analyzed fishing gear and catch patterns in Palawan, emphasizing the need for sustainable methods and engagement in fisheries management to ensure long-term economic and resource stability. Similarly, Belardo et al. (2023) found that socio-economic factors significantly influence the educational aspirations of fisherfolk in the Bicol region, affecting overall community well-being. The negative impact of plastic pollution on catches and financial stability further demonstrates the vital connection between environmental health and fisherfolk livelihoods (Greenpeace, 2024). Engagement in fisheries management fosters a sense of purpose and accomplishment, enhancing well-being (Balisco et al., 2019). Additionally, while fishing experience contributes to life satisfaction, Puspita et al. (2023) noted that it does not guarantee higher well-being, indicating that adaptability and meaningful work are key factors in sustaining long-term satisfaction among small-scale fishermen.

The well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities can be better understood through theoretical frameworks like Self-Determination Theory by Deci et al. (2018), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential elements for human well-being, particularly relevant to control overfishing practices, skill mastery, and community support. Steger (2018) also underscores the importance of meaning and purpose in life, helping explain how fisherfolks derive fulfillment from their connection to the sea and their cultural roles. Empirical studies support these ideas; for example, Eshun et al. (2019) highlight how diversified livelihoods and community networks enhance economic stability and resilience, while Andrews et al. (2020, 2021) found that personal values, social bonds, and environmental perceptions significantly shape fisherfolks' behaviors and well-being. Gender dynamics also play a critical role—Frangoudes et al. (2018) and Lawless et al. (2023) reveal how traditional norms restrict women's roles and recognition, reducing their sense of belonging and limiting social connections. Additionally, Levin (2021) emphasizes that community well-being is intertwined with environmental health, advocating for inclusive, value-driven fisheries management to ensure sustainability and resilience in coastal communities.

The welfare of fishermen in rural coastal areas of the Philippines is shaped by gender dynamics, socio-economic factors, environmental conditions, and community support systems. Ocampo et al. (2022) highlight gender inequalities in Lagonoy Gulf, where women, though active in harvest marketing and savings programs, are often excluded from decision-making roles due to male-dominated norms, necessitating gender-focused governance reforms. Balisco et al. (2019) emphasize the need for sustainable fishing practices to ensure economic and environmental stability, while Belardo et al. (2023) demonstrate how socio-economic challenges affect educational aspirations and reveal fisherfolk parents' reluctance to pass down fishing due to its perceived hardships, suggesting low job satisfaction. Community support also plays a crucial role; Lakilak (2015) and Baco (2024) found that strong family ties and collective efforts foster well-being. Similarly, Labayo et al. (2023) stress that livelihood asset ownership significantly influences household resilience and living standards, particularly during crises like the pandemic. Castro et al. (2023) further support this by showing how tailored livelihood programs in Occidental Mindoro can boost the economic well-being of small-scale fishers, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored in the PERMA Theory of Well-Being by Dr. Martin Seligman (2011), which identifies five core elements of well-being: Positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. These dimensions offer a holistic lens for understanding the lives of fisherfolks. Positive emotions may arise from successful fishing trips, strong community ties, and cultural practices. Engagement is seen in the skilled and demanding nature of fishing, while relationships thrive in close-knit, supportive coastal communities. The meaning of life is deeply rooted in their traditional way of living, their connection to the sea, and the security they provide for their families. A sense of accomplishment is achieved through mastery of their craft and their contributions to family and community well-being.

By applying the PERMA framework, this study explores the multifaceted nature of well-being among fisherfolks in rural coastal communities. It goes beyond economic indicators to include psychological and social dimensions that shape a fulfilling life. This theoretical lens enables a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and challenges these communities face, ultimately providing a more nuanced assessment of their overall well-being.

Objectives

The study aimed to determine the level of well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities during the Calendar Year 2025. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms of the following variables: age, sex, average family monthly income, and years of experience as a fisherman; 2) the level of well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities according to the following areas of positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, accomplishments; and 3) the significant difference in the level of well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Methodology

This chapter explains the research design. It identifies the subject and the respondents of the study, discusses the data gathering and data processing procedures, including its validity and reliability, and presents the analytical schemes and statistical tools to be used.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design to assess the well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities during the calendar year 2025. As defined by Creswell (2018), descriptive research aims to systematically and accurately portray characteristics of a population without manipulating variables or establishing cause-and-effect relationships. This approach was deemed appropriate for the study, as it allowed researchers to gather data through surveys, interviews, and observations on various aspects of fisherfolks' lives, including their socio-economic conditions, health, living standards, social networks, and access to resources.

Study Respondents

The study involved 56 fisherfolks from rural coastal communities as respondents to assess their well-being based on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievements. A purposive sampling technique was used, wherein participants were deliberately selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. As Creswell (2018) explains, purposive sampling is a non-probability method that allows researchers to use their judgment in choosing individuals who can provide valuable and relevant insights. This approach was effective for gathering in-depth information from fisherfolks most capable of contributing to the understanding of their well-being.

Instruments

A self-made questionnaire was used to collect the needed data on the well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part I of the research instrument contained the respondents' profiles, including their age, sex, average family monthly income, and years of experience as a fisherman. Part II of the questionnaire focuses on the well-being of fisherfolks. The 7-item test was based on Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments. The obtained scores for the well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities were rated on a scale of 1-5, with five interpreted as Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Not at all. It was subjected to validity (5.0- excellent) and reliability (0.771- acceptable). All of them were interpreted as worthy and good.

Data Gathering Procedure

Once the validity and reliability of the instrument had been confirmed, the researcher sought approval from local barangays and coordinated with fisherfolk associations to conduct the study. A self-made questionnaire, designed specifically for this research, was used to gather accurate and relevant data from fisherfolks in rural coastal communities. The questionnaire was carefully crafted to ensure clarity, objectivity, and alignment with the study's objectives. After data collection, the responses were converted into numerical codes following a coding manual, and the data were processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 used the descriptive-analytical scheme and frequency and percentage scoring to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of variables: age, sex, average family monthly income, and years of experience as a fisherman.

Objective No. 2 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities in the following areas: Positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, and achievements.

Objective No. 3 utilized a comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U test to determine whether significant differences exist in the well-being of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to ethical research protocols by ensuring participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the study with full informed consent, understanding the purpose, potential risks, and benefits. Confidentiality was strictly maintained by not disclosing participants' names and securely deleting data after use. As emphasized by Israel (2015) and Resnik (2018), voluntary participation is vital, particularly for vulnerable individuals who may feel pressured to participate. To uphold participants' autonomy, the researcher ensured that each individual was fully informed of the research procedures and signed a consent form before taking part in the study.

Results and Discussion

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data that were gathered consistent with its predetermined objectives.

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Younger (Below 50 years old)	27	48.2
	Older (50 years old and above)	29	51.8
	Total	56	100.0
Sex	Male	25	44.6
	Female	31	55.4
	Total	56	100
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower (Below Php15,000)	26	46.4
	Higher (Php15,000 and above)	30	53.6
	Total	56	100.0
Years of Experience as a Fisherman	Shorter (Below 33 years)	27	48.21
	Longer (33 years and above)	29	51.79
	Total	56	100.0

Table 1 presents the profile of the 56 fisher folk respondents. Of these, 51.8% were aged 50 and above, while 48.2% were younger. In terms of sex, 55.4% were female and 44.6% were male. Regarding family income, 53.6% came from higher-income households, and 46.4% from lower-income ones. Respondents were evenly split in terms of fishing experience, with half having shorter and half having longer years in the industry, indicating a balance of experience that may impact knowledge transfer and fishing practices.

This demographic spread reflects diverse levels of financial stability and experience, potentially influencing livelihood sustainability. Additionally, research by Ocampo and Binondo (2022) highlights gender disparities in fishing communities, where women, despite their significant economic and support roles, often lack recognition and decision-making power. This points to a need for gender-sensitive policies that empower women in fisheries governance and improve equity in community development.

Table 2

Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Positive Emotions

Positive Emotions Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a fisherman in a coastal community, I ...		
1. feel happy and cheerful when I see wildlife while fishing.	4.64	Very high level

2. look forward to going to fishing each day.	4.43	High level
3. feel relaxed and calm even when I'm busy being out on the water.	4.61	Very high level
4. experience moments of joy and laughter with other fishermen.	4.61	Very high level
5. feel a sense of pride while fishing	4.62	Very high level
6. often smile or feel good about my accomplishments at the end of a successful fishing day.	4.71	Very high level
7. feel hopeful about my future in this coastal work	4.84	Very high level
Overall Mean	4.64	Very high level

Table 2 presents the well-being of fisher folks in rural coastal communities in the area of positive emotions. The overall mean score of 4.64, which is interpreted as a very high level. The highest mean score of 4.84, interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 7, "Feel hopeful about my future in this coastal work."

On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 4.43, interpreted as a high level, is on item number 2, "Look forward to going to fishing each day."

This implies that despite economic uncertainty and environmental issues, fishermen obtained an overwhelming sense of purpose and satisfaction from their everyday activities. The study by Coulthard et al. (2021) states that daily anticipation of fishing can also be related to the social aspects of the job, where shared experiences and community relationships reinforce positive emotions. According to Brymer et al. (2021), the environmental attachment and the beneficial effects of being in nature may significantly contribute to positive effects.

Furthermore, the natural independence and expertise required for fishing can generate a sense of mastery and success, leading to higher job satisfaction (Bennett et al., 2020).

Table 3

Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Engagement

Engagement Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a fisherman in a coastal community, I ...</i>		
1. feel fully focused and involved when I am fishing.	4.68	Very high level
2. enjoy finding ways to improve or be creative in my fishing skills.	4.62	Very high level
3. feel energized and excited to go fishing.	4.73	Very high level
4. lose track of time because I am actively involved in all aspect of my fishing activities.	4.54	Very high level
5. feel that my skills and talents are being used effectively while fishing.	4.54	Very high level
6. feel motivated to perform at my best while fishing.	4.91	Very high level
7. feel a strong sense of purpose while fishing.	4.82	Very high level
Overall Mean	4.69	Very high level

Table 3 shows the level of well-being of fisher folks in rural coastal communities in the area of Engagement. The overall mean score of 4.69 is interpreted as a very high level. The highest mean score of 4.91, interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 6, "Feel motivated to perform at my best while fishing."

The lowest mean score of 4.54, interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 4 and 5, "lose track of time because I am actively involved in all aspect of my fishing activities," and "feel that my skills and talents are being used effectively while fishing."

This implies that fisher folks participate in fishing activities and are satisfied that their abilities and expertise are fully utilized. Also, participating in activities that match one's skills while providing an awareness of responsibility can lead to a higher level of well-being (Seligman, 2021).

Additionally, according to the study of Ryan and Deci (2020), one's feeling of effectively using skills creates a sense of competence and mastery, which are essential psychological needs.

Table 4

Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Relationship

Relationship Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a fisherman in a coastal community, I ...</i>		
1. feel supported and appreciated by other fishermen.	4.77	Very high level
2. can easily talk to other fishermen when I need help.	4.70	Very high level
3. feel a sense of belonging to the fishing community.	4.77	Very high level
4. enjoy collaborating with other fishermen on fishing activities and events.	4.79	Very high level
5. have a strong connection with other fishermen in the community.	4.73	Very high level
6. feel valued and respected by other fishermen.	4.68	Very high level
7. feel comfortable sharing my fishing experiences with my family and friends.	4.77	Very high level
Overall Mean	4.74	Very high level

Table 4 shows the level of well-being of fisher folks in rural coastal communities in the area of relationship. The overall mean score of 4.74, interpreted as a very high level. The highest mean score of 4.79, interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 4, "enjoy collaborating with other fishermen on fishing activities and events."

The lowest mean score of 4.68, interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 6, "feel valued and respected by other fishermen." The quality of their interpersonal relationships usually influences the well-being of fisher folks in rural coastal communities. Individuals who feel a lack of respect and recognition from other fishermen may have feelings of isolation, low self-worth, and work dissatisfaction, all of which hurt their overall well-being. The study's findings conform with Abdullah et al. (2022), who states that when fishermen feel undervalued or disrespected by other fishermen, their sense of community fails, resulting in separation from society and more vulnerability to stress. This lack of social support can worsen the difficulties connected with the fishing sector, such as economic uncertainty and environmental concerns, resulting in decreased subjective well-being.

Table 5

Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Meaning

Meaning Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a fisherman in a coastal community, I ...</i>		
1. feel that fishing gives my life a purpose and direction.	4.71	Very high level
2. feel a deep connection to the ocean and the environment while fishing.	4.64	Very high level
3. feel that fishing is an important part of my cultural heritage.	4.87	Very high level
4. understand how fishing allows me to contribute to the sustainability of marine resources.	4.75	Very high level
5. feel proud to tell others about my work as fisherman.	4.79	Very high level
6. believe that fishing is a valuable and meaningful profession.	4.91	Very high level
7. feel a sense of responsibility to protect and conserve marine ecosystems.	4.96	Very high level
Overall Mean	4.81	Very high level

Table 5 presents the well-being of fisher folks in rural coastal communities in the area of meaning. The overall mean score of 4.81 is interpreted as a very high level. The highest mean score of 4.96, which is interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 7, "feel a sense of responsibility to protect and conserve marine ecosystems."

The lowest mean score of 4.64, which is interpreted as a very high level, is on item number 2, "feels a deep connection to the ocean and the environment while fishing."

This implies that fishermen in remote coastal communities depend on an intense connection to the ocean and the environment for their well-being. This connection gives people a sense of purpose and can promote cultural identity and support environmental responsibility. Also, the connection signifies an intense feeling of purpose and belonging instead of an additional means of income.

In conformity to the study by Richardson et al. (2020) which emphasizes nature's connection to mental and emotional well-being, particularly in communities that rely on natural resources. In addition, according to Howell et al. (2021),

daily interactions with the marine environment may stimulate a feeling of delight and amazement, boosting their sense of purpose.

Table 6

Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Accomplishments

Accomplishments Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a fisherman in a coastal community, I ...</i>		
1. feel a sense of achievement when I have a successful fishing trip.	5.00	Very high level
2. feel proud of the quality of the fish I catch.	4.62	Very high level
3. feel a sense of accomplishment when I overcome challenges while fishing.	4.77	Very high level
4. feel satisfied with my contributions to the fishing industry.	4.82	Very high level
5. feel a sense of pride in providing for my family through fishing.	4.66	Very high level
6. feel recognized and respected by other fishermen for my skills and knowledge.	4.75	Very high level

Table 6 shows the level of well-being of fisher folks in rural coastal communities in the area of accomplishments. The overall mean score of 4.80 is interpreted as a very high level. The highest mean score of 5, which is interpreted as a very high level, on item number 1 and 7, "feel a sense of Achievement when I have a successful fishing trip," and "feel a sense of accomplishment when I share my knowledge and skills with others."

The lowest mean score of 4.62, interpreted as a very high level, is on item number "feel proud of the quality of the fish I catch." This implies that a sense of accomplishment is essential for the well-being of fishermen in remote coastal communities. When individuals feel proud of the value of their catch, it increases their job satisfaction and personal fulfilment. On the other hand, low well-being caused by not being proud of the quality of their catch can lead to low self-esteem and drive. This can create a cycle of discontent, where diminished morale affects their fishing practices and overall productivity. To counteract this, support systems and recognition programs celebrating their hard work and successes are crucial in fostering a positive environment.

According to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (2022), environmental damage, such as pollution and overfishing, may impact fish quality, affecting fisherman's pride in their work. The Lambaklad project in Occidental Mindoro has shown that community-based livelihood programs may increase fish production and quality, improving fisher folks' sense of accomplishment.

Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the areas of Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishments When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables.

Table 7

Differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Positive Emotions When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Positive Emotions Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p- value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	27	28.20	383.50	0.05	0.891	Not Significant
	Older	29	28.78				
Sex	Male	25	26.60	340.00		0.415	Not Significant
	Female	31	30.03				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	26	31.15	321.00		0.238	Not Significant
	Higher	30	26.20				

Years of Experience as a Fishermen	Shorter	28	29.88	353.50	0.511	Not Significant
	Longer	28	27.12			

Table 7 shows differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of positive emotions when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Based on the table, the computed mean score in terms of age obtained a p-value of 0.891. As for sex, with a p-value of 0.415, the average family monthly income obtained a p-value of 0.238, and as for years of experience as a fisherman, which has a p-value of 0.511, is greater than the 0.05 significance level. The outcome showed that there is no significant difference.

The result of the study shows that age, sex, average family monthly income and years of experience as a fisherman do not influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of positive emotions when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is accepted.

It can be said that the fisher folks' profile does not influence the well-being of fisher folks in the area of positive emotions. This suggests that fisher folks felt joy and contentment with their work. According to a study by Pollnac et al. (2018), cultural components of fishing—such as specialized expertise, skills, and the particular demands of the job—help fishermen establish a strong sense of group identity and a positive self-image, improving their general well-being.

Furthermore, fishermen's perceptions and experiences— influenced by social dynamics in their communities and environmental uncertainties—are closely connected to their well-being. It has been revealed that these psychological factors have a more significant impact on their behavior and general well-being than certain demographic traits (Andrews et al., 2021)

Table 8

Differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Engagement When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Engagement Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	27	29.65	360.50	0.05	0.598	Not Significant
	Older	29	27.23				
Sex	Male	25	21.22	205.50		0.002	Significant
	Female	31	34.37				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	26	23.10	249.50		0.017	Significant
	Higher	30	33.18				
Years of Experience as a Fishermen	Shorter	28	29.16	373.50		0.753	Not Significant
	Longer	28	27.84				

Table 8 shows the differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of Engagement when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

In terms of age, the younger category has a mean rank score of 29.65, while the older categories have a mean rank score of 27.23; both have a p-value of 0.598 and a 0.05 significant level interpreted as not significant. As for years of experience as fishermen, the shorter category has a mean rank score of 29.16, while the longer category has a mean rank score of 27.84; both have a p-value of 0.753 and a significant level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant.

The result of the study suggests that age and years of experience as a fisherman do not influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of engagement when grouped according to the variables.

Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is accepted.

However, in terms of sex, the male category got a mean rank score of 21.22, while the female category got a mean rank score of 34.27; both have a p-value of 0.002 and a significant level of 0.05, interpreted as significant. Regarding average family monthly income, the lower category has a mean rank score of 23.10, while the higher category obtained a mean rank score of 33.18; both have a p-value of 0.017, with a significance level of 0.05 interpreted as significant. The result of the study implies that sex and average family monthly income do influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of engagement when grouped according to the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is rejected.

Fisherfolk in rural coastal communities experience significant differences in their engagement based on sex and average family monthly income, indicating socio-economic and gender factors that impact their well-being.

This implies that gender differences have a significant impact on engagement. Females in these areas frequently face physical obstacles that prevent active involvement in fishing operations. Mishra et al. (2020) emphasize that women fishermen are among the most disadvantaged populations, depending primarily on natural resources for their livelihood, which are increasingly endangered by climate change. These environmental obstacles, and societal limits, may reduce their engagement and general well-being.

Socio-economic factors, especially income levels, have a considerable influence on engagement. Lower-income fishermen sometimes encounter financial difficulties that limit their capacity to invest in better equipment or enter more profitable markets, resulting in diminished motivation and involvement. Conversely, individuals with higher incomes may have more resources to improve their fishing techniques, resulting in more involvement and satisfaction. Baco's (2024) study underlines the relevance of community preparation and cooperative involvement in supporting long-term economic development and boosting collective well-being among fishermen.

Table 9

Differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Relationship When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Relationship		N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Variables	Categories						
Age	Younger	27	28.13	381.50		0.866	Not Significant
	Older	29	28.84				
Sex	Male	25	33.52	262.00		0.033	Significant
	Female	31	24.45				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	26	26.15	329.00		0.302	Not Significant
	Higher	30	30.53				
Years of Experience as a Fishermen	Shorter	28	28.29	386.00		0.919	Not Significant
	Longer	28	28.71				

Table 9 shows the differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of Relationship when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Regarding age, the younger category has a mean score of 28.13, while the older category obtained a mean rank score of 28.84; both have a p-value of 0.866 and a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. On average monthly income, the lower category has a mean score of 26.15, while the higher category has a mean score of 30.53; both have a p-value of 0.302 and a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. Likewise, on years of experience as a fisherman, the shorter category got a mean rank score of 28.29, while the longer category has a mean rank score of 28.71; both have a p-value of 0.919 and a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. The result of the study shows that age, average family monthly income, and years of experience as a fisherman do not influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of Relationship when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Based on the foregoing, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is accepted.

However, in terms of sex, the male category got a mean rank score of 33.52, while the female category got a mean rank score of 24.25; both have a p-value of 0.033 and a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as significant. The result of the study suggests that sex influences the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of relationship when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is rejected. Gender roles and social norms considerably influence fisher folks' well-being in rural coastal communities, especially regarding relationships and support structures.

According to the study, traditional gender norms typically restrict women to specialized activities in the fisheries industry, limiting their potential for broader societal involvement. Frangoudes et al. (2018) found that women's contributions to small-scale fisheries are typically devalued, resulting in limited recognition and support from male coworkers. This feeling of exclusion can lead to fewer social networks and a weaker sense of belonging among women, thereby impacting their overall well-being.

Furthermore, social norms and rules might hinder women's participation in social decision-making, reducing their potential to build meaningful professional connections. Lawless et al. (2023) examine how gender-specific restrictions in coastal fishing communities promote stereotypes and inequities, limiting women's involvement and integration into the larger fishing community.

Table 10

Differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Meaning When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Meaning Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	27	28.07	380.00	0.05	0.845	Not Significant
	Older	29	28.90				
Sex	Male	25	28.66	383.50		0.945	Not Significant
	Female	32	28.37				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	26	31.75	305.50		0.149	Not Significant
	Higher	30	25.68				
Years of Experience	Shorter	28	28.23	384.50		0.898	Not Significant

as a Fishermen	Longer	28	28.77
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Table 10 shows the differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of meaning when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Regarding age, the younger category got a mean rank score of 28.07, while the older category got a mean rank score of 28.90; both have a p-value of 0.845, with a significance level of 0.05 interpreted as not significant. On sex, the male category has a mean rank score of 28.66, while the female category has a mean rank score of 28.37; both have a p-value of 0.945, with a significance level of 0.05 interpreted as not significant. Moreover, on average family monthly income, the lower category has a mean rank score of 31.75, while the higher category has a mean rank score of 25.68; both have a p-value of 0.149, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant.

On Years of Experience as a Fisherman, the shorter category has a mean rank score of 28.23, while the longer category has a mean rank score of 28.77; both have a p-value of 0.898, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. The result of the study shows that age, sex, average family monthly income, and Years of Experience as a Fishermen do not influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Meaning When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is accepted.

According to research, the fishing industry gives specific satisfactions that contribute to overall well-being. Smith (2018) discovered that fishing provides non-monetary advantages such as a strong feeling of fulfillment and identity, both of which are strongly created in the social and cultural foundations of fishing communities. Fisher folks experience a high sense of significance regardless of demography.

Table 11

Differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the Area of Accomplishments When Grouped According to the Aforementioned Variables

Accomplishment Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p- value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	27	31.33	315.00	0.05	0.177	Not Significant
	Older	29	25.86				
Sex	Male	25	29.62	359.50		0.620	Not Significant
	Female	31	27.60				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	26	29.06	375.50		0.798	Not Significant
	Higher	30	28.02				
Years of Experience as a Fishermen	Shorter	28	33.12	262.50		0.022	Significant
	Longer	28	23.88				

Table 11 shows the differences in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of accomplishments when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

On age, the younger category has a mean rank score of 31.33, while the older category has a mean rank score of 25.86; both have a p-value of 0.177, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. On sex, the male category got a mean rank score of 29.62, while the female category has a mean rank score of 27.60; both have a p-value of 0.620, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. Likewise, on average family monthly income, the lower category has a mean rank score of 29.06, while the higher category has a mean rank score of 28.02; both have a p-value of 0.798, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. This study result suggests that age, sex, and average family monthly income do not influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks

in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of accomplishments when grouped according to the aforementioned variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is accepted.

Moreover, on years of experience as a fisherman, the shorter category has a mean rank score of 33.12. The longer category has a mean rank score of 23.88, with a p-value of 0.022 and a significance level of 0.05 interpreted as significant. The result of the study shows that years of experience as a fisherman influence the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities in the area of accomplishments when grouped according to the aforementioned variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in the Level of Well-Being of Fisher Folks in Rural Coastal Communities when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables," is rejected.

This implies that in rural coastal communities, fisher folk's well-being varies significantly based on their years of experience, emphasizing the complicated relationship between work tenure and personal contentment. Longer-experienced fisher folk frequently have a thorough awareness of maritime habitats and developed abilities, resulting in higher efficiency and perhaps larger catches. This proficiency might boost their sense of accomplishment and job satisfaction. However, the physical demands and occupational dangers connected with long-term fishing jobs may have a negative impact on their overall health. Galbraith et al. (2021) found that while larger fish catches can improve subjective well-being, the advantages are subtle and impacted by various factors, including personal values and environmental conditions.

In contrast, shorter-experienced fisher folk may confront difficulties with skill development and acquiring resources, perhaps leading to emotions of dissatisfaction and poor achievement. However, they may endure fewer physical pressures and be more adaptable to other livelihoods, benefiting their general well-being. According to Charles Reed Cagle's (2024) research, the fishing industry provides several benefits, including physical and mental health advantages, that can contribute to personal well-being regardless of expertise level.

Conclusions

The study found that the majority of fisherfolks in rural coastal communities were older females with varying years of fishing experience and higher average monthly family income. Overall, their well-being—measured through positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments—was rated very high. When grouped by age, sex, income, and experience, the well-being levels remained consistently high. However, significant differences were noted in engagement based on sex and income, in relationships based on sex, and in accomplishments based on years of experience. These results suggest that despite external challenges, fisherfolks have developed strong coping mechanisms, derive intrinsic satisfaction from their work, and benefit from robust social support systems. The study concludes that emotional and interpersonal factors are vital to sustainable fisheries management and recommends integrating well-being into fisheries policy, promoting traditional practices, enhancing community engagement, and improving mental health support. Further research is also advised to explore the factors sustaining high well-being amid environmental and policy changes.

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