

An Investigation of Psychological and Spiritual Wellbeing among Coastal Community in Terengganu, Malaysia

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Abstract

Community wellbeing is a positive situation in which individuals in the community as a whole can fulfil their needs and aspirations. Numerous studies have been investigated the wellbeing among the peripheral community in term of the economic aspect. However, the current study considers the psychological factor in measuring the community wellbeing. Thus, this study investigates coastal communities' wellbeing and the influence of motivation and social support on the wellbeing (psychological wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing) of Kuala Nerus, Terengganu. This study is designed using a quantitative approach with cross-sectional data conducted to 185 coastal communities through cluster-random sampling. The data analysed using descriptive (e.g. mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (e.g. multiple regression analysis). By using descriptive statistics analysis, this study found that the mean value of spiritual wellbeing ($M=7.28$) is higher than psychological wellbeing ($M=6.88$). Besides that, applying the multiple regression analysis, we found that the proposed models explained 23.9 percent and 13.8 percent of the variance in psychological and spiritual wellbeing, respectively. The result of this study indicated that social support and motivation have significantly affected psychological wellbeing. At the same time, only social support has a significant effect on spiritual wellbeing. In conclusion, this study has successfully identified and investigated the factors that influence coastal community wellbeing. The implications of the study and suggestions for future researchers are also discussed.

Keywords

Wellbeing; community, coastal, psychological wellbeing, spiritual wellbeing

1. Introduction

Malaysia has undergone rapid social and economic development and transformation since its independence in 1957. However, apart from the development and modernization agenda, there are some issues that need to be addressed, especially well-being. Well-being is an important aspect of an individual's life. 2020 inspired by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad also stressed the importance of the family institution and social communal k at prosperous. Prosperous individuals in their lives are the pillars of a country's success. Human well-being from there is a necessary psychological perspective emphasized where it encompasses the cognitive and affective aspects of positive or negative feelings towards their lives (Wan Norhayati, 2014). Coastal communities are groups of communities that inhabit coastal areas. Coastal communities are considered as heritage communities from the past, but still exist in modern times and contribute their own role from socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects (Nor Hayati Sa'at, 2011). The dependence of most of the coastal community population on nature makes this group of individuals unique and different compared to other communities in Malaysia.

Most previous studies that involve coastal community, especially on the East Coast (Ayesha Ali Dara Nor Hayati Putih & Sa'at, 2015; Mohd Shaladdin, Wan Abdul Aziz Nik Wan, 2006; Zulkifri Abd. Wahab, 2015) studied from a community socioeconomic perspective. For example, a study by Zulkifri (2015) examines social problems such as unemployment, poverty, drug abuse and the use of delusional pills. While the study by Mohd Shaladdin et al., (2006) is more focused on the role of local government and community on community well-being. In

contrast to previous studies, the focus of this study was to examine the psychosocial and well-being of coastal communities from a psychological perspective. This study focuses on psychological constructs such as motivation, social support, psychological wellbeing as well as spiritual well-being. Many efforts from various parties have been implemented to improve the living standards and socio-economy of the coastal community, especially fishermen. For example, the existence of the Diesel Subsidy Scheme, Subsistence Assistance, Farmer Resolution and Fishermen Transformation Program. Therefore, despite various efforts made by the government through the scheme of financial facilities and subsidies to fishermen, but their socio-economic status is still unsatisfactory (Norhayati, 2011). Study by Mohd Shaladdin, Wan Nik Abdul Aziz and Wan (2006) also focuses on the role of government and the respondent (income, savings, housing, etc.) in contributing to their well-being of fishermen, especially in improving their socio-economic.

Although among the criteria of the coastal community is said to have a dependence on nature, the focus of this study is not only on fishermen as in previous studies (Mokhtar Jaafar & Ahmad Norakmal Sarkawi, 2013; Dara Aisyah Ali Puteh & Nor Hayati Sa'at, 2015), but includes coastal communities from a variety of employment sectors. This is in line with the findings of Nor Hayati Sa'at (2011) who concluded that the jobs of the coastal community began to move inland (27.7% of traders, 15% of labor and 15% of public and private sector workers). There is no denying that extrinsic (external) factors such as socioeconomics can change the level of well-being of individuals but the extent to which intrinsic (internal) factors have the strength in influencing personal well-being is poorly studied. According to Kasser (2002), many studies have proven that individuals do not achieve well-being in terms of life satisfaction, positive mood and psychological adjustment if they place more emphasis on extrinsic goals. Literary studies have also shown that the extrinsic goals that an individual wants to achieve are more difficult to drive well-being than the intrinsic goals (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). Therefore, this study would like to examine whether psychosocial aspects contribute to the well-being of coastal communities. Intrinsic factors such as motivation and social support that need to be focused on so that individuals are able to maintain and manage excellent personal well-being. Furthermore, previous studies on wellbeing has been conducted involving secretaries, academics and groups of professionals (Noor, 1999; Noor, 2002; Noor, 2006). Thus, this study investigates coastal communities' wellbeing and the influence of motivation and social support on the wellbeing (psychological wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing) of Kuala Nerus, Terengganu.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Well-being

Well-being is a very important thing to achieve the development of a country. Even scholars are of the view that the economic development of a country can be achieved when there is prosperity in society. Welfare is an important indicator in determining the status of developing countries. Islam also outlines a policy to ensure well-being by taking care of five things, namely taking care of religion, intellect, life, property and lineage. Without well-being, a government can be considered a failure in its governance. Failure, on the other hand, can affect the political, social and economic stability of a country. (Sharifah Hayaati, 2009) According to Gasper (2002), scholars have discussed the meaning of human well-being with various meanings. Travers and Richardson (1997) have discussed the meaning of well-being as a concept or abstract used to refer to anything used to assess a person's life situation and circumstances. Well-being is a way of life towards achieving optimal levels of health and personal well-being encompassing physical, mental and spiritual integrated by individuals for quality life in society (Myers, Sweeney & Wittmer, 2005).

2.2 Motivation and well-being

Research to identify triggers to motivation is important. It is important to understand the motivating factors and processes that motivate a person to act, think and grow. From a practical point of view, research in this field can help certain parties to outline significant factors and environments that can contribute to society to achieve maximum potential and better well-being. Motivation-related studies typically focus on conditions, processes that contribute to consistency, performance, healthy development and human life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Motivation theories such as *Maslow's hierarchy of needs* (Maslow, 1943) explain that every individual is born with the motivation or desire to meet some level of need in life including needs for food, safety, love and appreciation.

The level of *self-actualization* that involves motivation to achieve the best potential in oneself is the highest level and explains the positive human nature towards achieving well-being. In general motivation can be divided into 2 forms; intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation causes a person to do something because the activity attracts interest and gives spontaneous satisfaction to the individual (Deci & Ryan, 2008). An intrinsic motivator will perform an activity due to the positive feelings that result from the activity, interested in what they are doing, showing curiosity,

exploring new stimuli and striving to face challenges optimally (Deci, 1975). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves the implementation of an activity to obtain certain results that are usually material in the form of material such as rank, money, gifts and so on, rather than involving satisfaction from doing the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Self Determination Theory emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in helping a person to achieve well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000). Based on this theory, the welfare of a better life can be obtained when a person is able to meet the psychological needs of three of freedom, efficiency and communication so s ial. This is because intrinsic motivation is seen as a form of motivation that allows one to achieve all those needs. This theory also suggests the importance of these two types of motivation to differentiate whether an individual has his or her own freedom and desire to do something or feels compelled to do the activity. The findings of the study of Salinas-Jiminez, Artes and Salinas-Jiminez (2010) involving a sample of 10,800 from 10 developed countries support the theory. When variables such as gender, age, religion and education are controlled, the study shows that motivation has a significant impact on well-being. They found that extrinsic motivation showed a negative effect on life satisfaction, while intrinsic motives further led an individual to enjoy higher satisfaction in life. Past studies have also shown that individuals who are overly concerned with extrinsic outcomes rather than intrinsic are associated with lower well-being (Sheldon & Kesser, 1995). For example, Kasser (2002) study explains that those who are more wealthy, attractive appearance and want to be popular or famous tend to be associated with negative effects such as anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms , risky behavior, low self-esteem and problems in social functions.

2.3 Social Support and Well-being

Several studies have tested social support and its relation to psychological well-being, emotions and even life satisfaction. Social support is generally defined as "*the availability of helping relationships and the quality of those relationships*" (Leavy, 1983, p. 5). Cobb (1976) states that social support is the equality of information that drives individuals to believe that they are cared for, valued and loved, and that they "*belong to a network of communication and mutual obligation*" (p. 300). Social support refers to the variety of material and emotional support received from others (Brannon & Feist, 2004). It can also be seen based on social relationships or social networks that see the number of people interacting with individuals. Dunst et al. (1998) stated that social support includes emotional, physical, information, equipment and even certain materials. It includes assistance provided by people as well as other institutions. This is to strengthen the state of well-being and good health, improve adaptation to life.

Myers, Sweeney and Wilmer (2000) describe well-being as the ability of a person to achieve optimal levels of health and well-being including physical, mental and spiritual integrated by individuals for quality life in society which includes psychological well-being or mental health (Levy & Futman , 1975). Ryff (1989) has formulated several dimensions that can be related to psychological well-being. Among them is social support. He expressed positive relationships with others that include friends and family are capable of leading to psychological well-being. Daviz (1998) in his study also stated that individuals who receive social support have high psychological well-being. This social support often comes from spouses, family, colleagues and even social organizations. Emotional well-being began to gain the attention of many researchers and was seen as an important aspect in the community environment.

Emotional well-being has a huge influence on human relationships because the existence of emotions determines the behavior of an individual. Shanas (1979) (in Lemme, 1995) states that the family is a support system that has several basic functions such as protecting members, the place of children through the process of socialization and also the shelter of the elderly. Individuals raised in a good social support system are able to achieve satisfaction in their lives. This clearly shows that good social support is able to provide satisfaction in one's life. On the other hand, individuals who do not have good social support will feel uncomfortable establishing relationships with their own families and unable to adapt in society.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted using quantitative methods where questionnaires were distributed to the study sample. In this study, the use of surveys is considered appropriate because the information required from the respondents is related to their perceptions of predictive factors to their well-being (Neuman, 1997). In addition, surveys are considered the best method for social science researchers who make data collection from large populations (Barbie, 2007).

3.2 Population and Sample Study

This study involved communities from various employment sectors in the coastal area of Kuala Nerus, Terengganu. Using the probability sampling method, a total of 250 respondents were involved in this study from several villages located near Universiti Malaysia Terengganu including Kampung Batin, Kampung Telaga Daing, Kampung Seberang Takir, Kampung Ulu Takir, Kampung Teluk Ketapang, Kampung Bukit Tok Beng, Kampung Pengkalan Maras and Kampung Batu Rakit.

3.3 Instruments

All instruments have been translated into Malay version (Brislin, 1970). The process of translation involves translation into Malay by the first translator, back into English by another translator and discussion among researchers in avoiding any discrepancies between translation and the original content. The questionnaire divided into several sections, namely; Section A: Demographic profile of the respondents. Among the demographic information are gender, age, race, level of education, marital status, number of children, employment and total income. Section B: *Work Preference Inventory* (WPI) instruments used to measure motivation were developed by Arnabile, Hill, Hennessey and Tighe (1994). In line with the of Georgeanna et al., (2014)'s recommendation, short version (10 items) has been used in this study. An example of an intrinsic item is "The harder a problem is, the more I enjoy solving it" and the example of an extrinsic item is "I want others to know the extent of my ability in performing a task". The higher the mean score obtained, the higher the level of motivation.

Section C: *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support* (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) was adapted to measure social support from families (eg: I can talk to family about my problems), friends (eg: I have friends who can share joy) and someone special (eg: I always have someone to share grief) while additional 5 items has been added represents support from community. The mean score of composite social support indicates the higher the score obtained, the higher the social support received by the respondents. Section D: *The Mental Health Continuum Short Form* (MHC SF) (Keyes, 1998). For this study, only the dimensions of psychological well-being (eg: that you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person) have been adapted in line with the study by R Zirwatul Aida (2012). Respondents who are able to get high scores have high psychological wellbeing. Section E: 20 items measure spiritual well-being using the *Spiritual Wellbeing Scale* (SWBS) (Imam et al., 2009); Mazidah, 2012; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). Two domains in scale WBS are existential wellbeing (eg: I feel unsettled about my future) and religious wellbeing (eg: life does not have much meaning). The higher the score obtained indicates the higher the spiritual well-being of the respondents.

3.4 Data analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using *Statistical Packages for Social Sciences* (SPSS) software version 27. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean score were used to analyse demographic profile as well as the level of psychological as well as spiritual wellbeing. While inference statistics such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression are used to test hypotheses related to motivation and social support relationships to wellbeing and determine the most dominant factors contributing to wellbeing.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic profile

Out of 250 respondents, only 185 respondents (74%) completed the questionnaires. 85 respondents (45.9%) were male and 100 respondents (54.1%) were female. The highest percentage of respondents in this study is aged between 20 to 30 years (n = 69, 37.3%) and only one respondent is in the category 19 years and below. The oldest age category is (8.1%) respondents aged 61 years and above. While the rest were aged between 51 to 60 years (n = 18, 9.7%), 41 to 50 years (n = 42, 22.7%) and 31 to 40 years (n = 40, 21.6%). The majority of respondents have income in excess of RM2501 (n=42, 25.4%) followed by respondents who have income of RM501 to RM1000 (n=42, 22.7%). A total of 40 respondents have an income of RM500 and below (21.6%), 27 respondents have an income of RM1001 to RM1500 (14.6%), 19 respondents have an income of RM1501 to RM2000 (10.3%) and 10 respondents have an income of RM2001 to RM2500 (5.4%). Most of the respondents (35.68%) of the study chose to be self-employed such as businessmen, fishermen, mechanics, carpenters and batik makers. In addition, 34.05% (n = 63) were housewives, 22.16% (n = 41) were government employees and the rest were private employees (8.11%, n = 15).

4.2 Levels of community wellbeing

The level of well-being of coastal communities. Mean community well-being scores have been used as indicators of community well-being levels. The details of the level of community well-being are as reported in Figure 1. It shows

having a higher level of spiritual well-being of the coastal community (M = 7.28, SD = 1.28) compared to psychological well-being (M = 6.88, SD = 1.49).

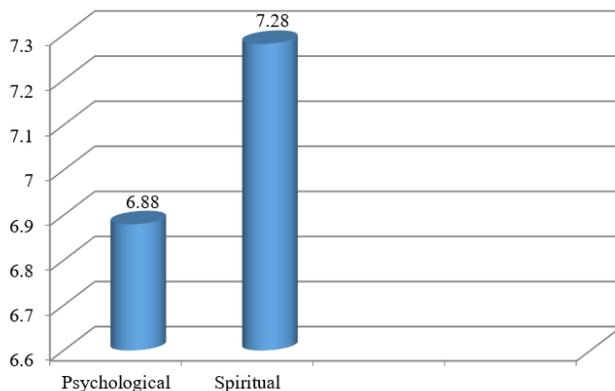


Figure 1. Result of the level of well-being of coastal communities

4.3 Bivariate Analysis

Table 1 below reports the relationship between the study variables. Overall the study variables are related to each other in the appropriate direction. This correlation test is to prove that no very strong relationship ($r > .90$) exists between the variables leading to *multicollinearity* problems .

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha (α) and correlations between studies variables

No	Variable(s)	α	1	2	3	4
1	Motivation	0.78	-	0.30**	0.35**	0.09
2	Social Support	0.94	0.30**	-	0.44**	0.39**
3	Psychological Well-being	0.84	0.35**	0.44**	-	0.48**
4	Spiritual Well-being	0.87	0.09	0.39**	0.48**	-

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

4.4 Predictors of Coastal Community Wellbeing

Table 2 shows the regression model predicting the psychological well-being of coastal communities. The results of the study found that all control variables consisting of demographic factors such as gender, education, marital status and income are not significant contributors to psychological well-being. Combination of the predictor of motivation and social support have contributed to an increase of 23.9% of variance in explaining the psychological well-being of the community ($F(6,177) = 9.37, p < 0.001$), which is the dominant predictor of social support ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.001$) followed by motivation ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.01$).

Table 2 :Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Wellbeing from Motivation and Social Support

Variable(s)	Standardised Coefficient β	
	Step 1	Step 2
Control Variables		
Gender	-0.007	-0.025
Education	-0.006	0.053
Marital Status	0.058	0.076
Income	-0.166	-0.183*
Predictor Variables		
Motivation		0.181*
Social Support		0.380***
R-Square	0.031	0.270
ΔR - Square	0.031	0.239***

F-Change	1.46	19.31***
df	4,180	2,177

Note: * p <0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 3 below displays the results of regression analysis showed that demographic variables (gender and marital status) significantly [F (4,180) = 3.41, p <0.01] contributed to the spiritual well-being of the community. When these variables were controlled, study data showed that social support scores ($\beta = 0.38$, p <0.001) had a significant effect [F (6,177) = 6.66, p <0.001] and contributed an increase of 13.8% variance in explaining spiritual well-being community.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Predicting Spiritual Wellbeing from Motivation and Social Support

Variable(s)	Standardised Coefficient β	
	Step 1	Step 2
Control Variables		
Gender	0.175*	0.144*
Education	-0.015	0.040
Marital Status	-0.157*	-0.108
Income	-0.147	-0.184*
Predictor Variables		
Motivation		-0.045
Social Support		0.372***
R-Square	0.070	0.209
ΔR - Square	0.070*	0.138***
F-Change	3.41*	10.30***
df	4,180	2,177

Note: * p <0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

4.5 Discussion

The objective of this study is to identify the level of well-being of coastal communities (psychological well-being and spiritual well-being). Specifically, this study examine the relationship between psychosocial constructs (motivation and social support) with the well-being of coastal communities and identify the most dominant psychosocial constructs contribute to the well-being of coastal communities. The findings show that the percentage of the level of coastal community is high, especially spiritual well-being and psychological well-being. This finding is in clear by the demographic profile and cultural factors respondents. According to Veenhoven (1996), demographic factors play an important role in the well-being of life. In addition, eastern cultures are found to be happier than western societies (Headey & Wearing, 1992). This is related to the group of study respondents who are mostly low-income and have an impact on the well-being of coastal communities which is also supported by Mina Daraei and Artmiz Mohajery (2012) and Gloria, Henry and Cicilia (2015). According to Kahneman and Deaton (2010), an individual's assessment of the life he or she goes through is closely related to the rate of income earned. While high income can not buy a happiness, it can buy a satisfaction in life (Kahneman & Deaton).

In addition, the findings of the study found a significant relationship between motivation and psychological well-being. Regression analysis also found that motivation was an important predictor of respondents' psychological well-being. This indicates that high motivation is closely related to better psychological well-being. This finding is explained by the view of Maslow (1943) where each individual has a natural tendency and motivation to meet certain needs in life. In turn, one's ability or success to meet those needs produces a positive impact on psychological well-being. In line with the findings of Emmons (1996) study shows that a person's involvement to achieve the main motives in life has a direct relationship with well-being. In short, the analysis of this study gives the impression that the level of psychological well-being and life satisfaction of society is a manifestation of self-motivation as a whole. However there are studies that show that various forms of motivation should be taken into account in the study of well-being. For example, recent studies in the West (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000; Salinas-Jiminez, Artes & Salinas-Jiminez, 2010) argue that two forms of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic have different impacts on a person's well-being. Uchida, Norasakkunkit and Kitayama (2004) also show that personal motivation and motivation that involves meeting social needs have different implications on well-being. Thus, further studies are needed to identify the types of motivations that may affect the well-being of coastal communities.

The results of the study found that social support has a significant positive correlation with psychological well-being. The findings of this study support the previous study conducted by Daviz (1998). According to him, individuals who receive social support have high psychological well-being. This support often comes from his own family members such as spouses and co-workers as well as social organizations. This also coincides with the lives of respondents in this study where the majority of respondents are coastal residents. They still maintain a strong family bond and still live the life of the village community who care about each other. This is because the coastal communities hold the values of Malay tradition that still exists and is intact. In addition, unsubstantiated gan social play an important role in reducing stress and conflict, generating physical health and stability of psychology and also contribute to the positive development among individuals (Oswald & Suss, 1994; Siti Aisyah & Azlina, 2006).

This is also supported by the study of Norhayati (2011) who stated that poor living among fishermen causes them to need social support from the local community. Social support from family is seen to have a significant influence on the well-being of society. Rozali (2003) found that there is indeed a relationship between social support and community well-being in terms of academic success among students in Kuala Terengganu. In Slovakia, the findings of previous studies indicate that the well-being of adolescents is related to social support especially from family (Veselska et al., 2006) . In addition, other studies in the USA by Laible, Carlo and Scott (2004) are also in line with the findings of this study. They said that social support from members has a strong influence there is the well-being of individuals as well as communities. In addition, Asian communities themselves are found to practice a culture of *ethnocentrism* where they prefer to live in groups and families where when difficulties arise they can help each other (Mahmood & Ghaffar, 2014).

5. Conclusion

From the findings of the study and the discussions that have been made, this study can contribute from the scientific aspect to understand the well-being of the coastal community from the aspects of psychological well-being and spiritual wellbeing. The focus of the study expands previous coastal community wellbeing studies that that are related to socio - economic to the internal aspects of the community that can give a significant impact to the field of social science research. The results of this study can also be used as a basis by academics and community leaders to generate changes in thinking (transformation of mind) in society. This can be done by taking into account the factors that contribute to the well-being of the community. This can realize the vision of the country in order to maintain the prosperity and well-being of the community. This study shows the importance of psychosocial aspects such as motivation and social support in the well-being of coastal communities. In addition, Malaysian society is still not exposed and does not have sufficient knowledge on the issue of psychological well-being and therefore the findings of the study can provide exposure about it to individuals and related parties. While there is no denying the importance of material needs such as financial assistance, the findings show the importance of psychosocial factors to individual well-being. For example, there needs to be psychological programs such as motivation and ongoing community activities to help them integrate positive attitudes to create a healthier and progressive psychological well-being (Wan Norhayati Wan Othman). From a practical point of view, research in this field can help certain parties to outline significant factors and environments that can contribute to society to achieve maximum potential and better well-being.

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