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Community in Seafood Fishing Activities of the Fishers: A Case Study in The Central Region, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the community in the fishing activities of fishermen in Thanh Hoa to point out the social and cultural characteristics of the community here, provide more documents and scientific arguments for promoting positive aspects, overcoming some shortcomings in fishing activities so that fishermen can continue to stick to the sea, develop family economy, and contribute to protecting the sovereignty of the sea and islands of the Fatherland. Researchers approached 300 fishing boat owners in Hau Loc District, Hoang Hoa District, Quang Xuong District, and Nghi Son Town in Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam, to conduct a questionnaire survey. They visited each household and distributed questionnaires to 300 representatives to conduct the assessment. The results of this study show that the fishing activities of fishermen include many stages of hard work, always facing harsh environments, many unexpected factors, and the dangers and risks of boats, so it is necessary to rely on collective strength. This is the premise for the emergence of fishing relationships, linked by blood relations and villages. Therefore, it is essential to increase the community spirit in the fishing activities of fishermen in the research area to overcome some shortcomings in seafood exploitation activities so that fishermen continue to stick to the sea, develop their family economy, contribute to protecting the sovereignty of the sea and islands of the Fatherland. The findings of this study provide insights and recommendations that will contribute to the development orientation of the community in the fishing activities of fishermen in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam, in the coming time. This study's findings contribute to the existing theoretical basis on community involvement in fishing activities of fishermen in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam.

Keywords: Community, Fishing, Fishermen, Central Region, Vietnam.

Introduction

A community is a group of people living in the same territory, with a sense of unity and the ability to participate in collective activities (Nguyen Duc Chien, 2019; Mohammad et al., 2025c). Because depending on the “sense of unity” and “the ability to participate collectively”, there can be many different types of communities, depending on the division, such as division by interests (volunteer community, a community of animal lovers,...), by professional activities (business community, a community of teachers, ...), by blood relationships (family community, clan, ...), by field of political activity (party, political - social organizations, ...), etc. Nowadays, in the new social context, with the expansion of human interaction space due to the impact of globalization and information technology, individuals can join many different and more diverse types of communities, including internet communities (Facebook, zalo, Twitter, ...). From the Internet community, it can be divided into interest communities, professional communities, etc. Researchers believe that in Vietnam, community groups were formed early and closely associated with traditional political, economic, and social characteristics, playing an essential

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role in the development process and creating the identity and community of each locality (Nguyen Duc Chien, 2021; Mohammad et al., 2025a).

Community culture is the core identity that has been maintained for thousands of years in Vietnamese villages, mentioned by many researchers in their research works (Mai Van Hai, 2000; Nguyen Duc Chien, 2015; Nguyen Van Huyen, 2003; Phan Dai Doan, 2006; Tran Dinh Huou, 1996; Mohammad et al., 2025d). This is also a classic topic in the research community of Vietnamese history, politics, culture, and society from tradition to modernity. When discussing community culture, the group authors Do Long and Tran Hiep said that "Community is a social psychological characteristic of the group, demonstrating the ability to coordinate and combine in the unity of members in action, making the interactions of activities take place most rhythmically" (Do Long et al., 2000; Mohammad et al., 2025b). Researcher Tran Ngoc Them also believes that community is the number one characteristic of each Village in Vietnam. He emphasized that people living close to each other tend to be closely connected, and the product of this connection is the Village, the hamlet. He explained: "Firstly, to meet the needs of coping with the natural environment, the needs of seasonal rice cultivation requiring a large number of people, traditional Vietnamese people not only gave birth to many children but also needed to be closely connected (working in exchange for labor). Second, to deal with the social environment (theft, robbery,...), the whole Village must join forces to be effective" (Tran Ngoc Them, 2001; Mohammad et al., 2025e).

Some recent authors, when studying community culture, focus on understanding the internal factors of that community (internal) such as marriage, funerals, and worship, ... These aspects are expressed in daily culture, beliefs, and rituals from traditional to modern. In particular, studies on the content of community culture often clarify the changes of that factor in the community or its current status. Each study will have specific contributions to the general research (Bui Thi Kim Chi, 2022; Mohammad et al., 2025f).

In general, researchers have different perspectives, but all agree that "community culture" is the identity and core value of each Vietnamese village community, whether in the delta or coastal areas. Notably, the formation of this unique culture originates from the historical conditions and survival of thousands of years of each village community that is not easily assimilated by any external forces and has been adapted and maintained to this day. Throughout history, Vietnamese residents from hamlets - villages - and countries have always united into communities to make a living and deal with risks, ensuring safety in daily life. Each individual in the community or social group participates and demonstrates the ability to coordinate and unify members in actions to make the interactions of activities take place most rhythmically, reflected in all aspects of the activities of the Hamlet community, such as in economic activities for a living, social organization in hamlets, cultural activities and activities to control nature, prevent foreign invaders, ensure community security, etc.

Literature Review

Community spirit in general, in economic activities in particular, is one of the outstanding characteristics of Vietnamese ethnic groups. This issue has been discussed in many research works on ethnology, history, and cultural studies. Research has affirmed that Vietnamese people's community spirit originates from the element of "village" - the most basic and complete residential unit. Community spirit is expressed differently in each residential community, depending on the history of residents and the way of making a living based on the characteristics of natural geographical conditions...

The book *"The Fishermen's Community in Vietnam"* by Nguyen Duy Thieu is also a rich document about the life of the Vietnamese fishing community (Nguyen Duy Thieu, 2002; Mohammad, 2025). In this work, the author pointed out the fishing efficiency of fishermen and the rules of movement, finding prey, and fishing season... of each fish species. Summarizing this source of knowledge, the author created a table of fish moving by season in a year in the Ha Tinh Sea area. This is a valuable source of material for many different research fields and the author of the thesis.

In studies on coastal residents, the field of fishing-related beliefs is of most interest, such as the *Vietnamese fishing community in the South* (Tran Hong Lien, 2004; Ekanayake et al., 2024). The author pointed out some fishing beliefs such as the worship of the sea god Nam Hai Tuong Quan (Whale/Whale Ong), associated with Dinh Nam Hai worshipping whale bones, the annual Nghinh Ong ceremony for fishermen to pray for luck and safety. Ton That Binh with Some beliefs and customs of coastal residents from Binh Tri Thien to Binh Thuan", *Journal of Ethnology* No. 2 (Nguyen Duong Binh, 2003; Chen et al., 2024). In this research, the author presented the rituals of the residents of the Central Coastal region, such as the water god, the jellyfish god, and aquatic species that can harm humans. The article also mentioned the custom of whale worship in Binh Thuan. The author affirmed that this worship custom exists this worship custom existed from Binh Tri Thien to Binh Thuan. At the same time, he believed that the custom of worshipping the tutelary god of Thai Duong Ha village - Thua Thien, most of the residents here are initially from Thanh Nghe Tinh region, so the customs of Thanh Nghe Tinh region influence them.

Notably, research on Ngu Loc commune, Hau Loc district, Thanh Hoa province, has been conducted very early. In 1925, Diem Pho-Ngu Loc village was mentioned by Pierre Gourou in his research (Pierre Gourou, 2015; Al-Oraini et al., 2024). Then, in 1990, the Hau Loc Geographical Record was published (Hau Loc District Party Committee and colleagues, 1990). In 1992, the Diem Pho - Ngu Loc Geographical Record was published, introducing quite fully the history and natural characteristics, socio-economics of the residents here (Dao Phung, 1992). Notably, the Hau Loc Geography mentions some precious and famous seafood in the locality. The book also records folk songs about the fishing season and the value of some seafood and creates a table to calculate the tide calendar and the day of the Ngu Loc sea. In 2002, Trinh Thi Lan also researched fishing village of Ngu Loc commune, Hau Loc district, Thanh Hoa province. However, this research only revolved around the issue of fishing by fishermen,, similar to Diem Pho - Ngu Loc Geography presentation presentation and some small data about fishing tools. In 2005, the beliefs of the Ngu Loc commune were collected through the article Cau Ngu Festival by Hoang Minh Tuong (Hoang Minh Tuong, 2005). In particular, in 2007, the PhD thesis in anthropology, "Traditional Social Organization Structure of coastal Vietnamese villages in Hau Loc district, Thanh Hoa Province" (Pham Van Tuan, 2007; Ayyalsalman et al., 2024), took Ngu Loc commune as a research point for villages and communes to compare with other communes in Hau Loc district with many valuable documents. Also, choosing Ngu Loc commune to carry out the topic of the Master's thesis on the cultural life of the residents here, the author presented an overview of the entire material and spiritual life of Ngu Loc residents but ignored the community spirit in catching seafood in the locality (Nguyen Thi Thuy, 2008; Galdolage et al., 2024).

Thus, Thanh Hoa province has been chosen for research in many different aspects, from social organization structure to cultural life. However, the above studies have not approached much about the community of coastal fishermen that the research direction of the research group is to study. However, these documents are the basis and theoretical foundation of this research group.

Research Design

Sampling Method

The study selected a stratified random sampling method by geographical area (communes and villages in Thanh Hoa province). Primary data were collected through a direct survey of 300 boat owners who are fishermen in Hau Loc district (Ngu Loc communes; Hoa Loc communes), fishermen in Hoang Hoa district, fishermen in Quang Xuong district; fishermen in Nghi Son town (Nghi Son commune; Hai Binh commune; Hai Thanh commune) Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam to conduct a questionnaire survey. The researchers visited each household and distributed questionnaires to 300 representatives for the assessment.

Data Collection Method

To complete this article, the author used many different research methods. In addition to the methods of reading and inheriting secondary documents, statistics, and comparison, the method used throughout the article is ethnographic fieldwork. This is the primary and most crucial method to collect field documents. The primary skills implemented in the topic are participant observation and in-depth interviews. Observation skills are used to observe and recognize the research area. From this observation, it is possible to see the economic, cultural, and fishing activities in the locality.

Accordingly, the author conducted many field trips to learn about the research area, retrospectively investigated the elders the history of the island's residents, the village organization, traditional forms of fishing, as well as related taboos and rituals... The author also participated in some of the fishermen's production work, such as some forms of fishing, and interviewed fishermen working in near and far fishing grounds to understand better the profession and the community nature in the fishermen's fishing activities.

Through documents and research results from published books and magazines, results of research programs and projects conducted by domestic and international agencies and organizations, and statistical documents at all levels (commune, district, province, central), students inherit and combine these results into their research to further clarify the issues that the research aims to address.

Results

Research Sample

Regarding gender, 205 of the 300 fishing boat owners were male, accounting for 68.3%, and 95 were female, accounting for 31.7%.

In terms of age, among the 300 fishing boat-owner households surveyed, the 26 to 35 year old and 36 to 45 year old age groups accounted for the largest proportion, at 79.0%; the remaining 21.0% of the sample were between 18 and 25 years old and 46 and 60 years old.

Regarding household living standards, among the 300 fishing boat-owner households, the number of households with average income accounted for the highest proportion, 50.0%. Households with well-off income accounted for 35.0%, while the lowest proportion in the research sample was poor households, 15.0%.

Regarding marital status, among 300 households of fishing boat owners surveyed, the proportion of those with families accounted for the highest percentage, 85.0%; the remaining were

unmarried, widowed, or divorced/separated, at 15.0%. Regarding educational level, among 300 households of fishing boat owners surveyed, primary, secondary, and high school education accounted for 83.0%; the rest of the sample had university and postgraduate degrees, at 17.0%.

Factors Affecting Community in Fishing Activities

Based on the theoretical framework analyzed in the studies of Olale and Henson (2012, 2013), Garoma et al. (2013), Al Jabri et al. (2013), Hoang Hong Hiep (2016), we propose a research model for groups of factors affecting community in fishing activities in Thanh Hoa as follows:

$$Y_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 \text{Occupation factors} + \beta_2 \text{Social factors} + \beta_3 \text{Demographic} + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

In there: ε_i = Model residuals; i = second fishing household; $i = 1, 2, \dots$

First, we performed the variance inflation factors (VIF) test according to Kennedy (2008) to check for multicollinearity among the independent variables of the estimated models. The test results showed that the models did not have multicollinearity among the explanatory variables. Then, we continued to perform the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test (Greene, 2000) to check for heteroscedasticity. The test results presented in Table 1 show that all models violate the heteroscedasticity assumption, which allows us to estimate the ordinary least squares (OLS) method with the adjustment for heteroscedasticity in the model. The regression results by the OLS method are presented in Table 1 on the reliability of the groups of factors affecting the community in fishing activities in Thanh Hoa as follows:

Scale	Outer loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVG
Occupational Factors	0.934	0.851	0.910	0.753
Social Factors	0.953	0.817	0.823	0.529
Demographics	0.939	0.824	0.904	0.846

Table 1. Reliability and Convergent Validity Results of the Scales

Source: Survey data processing results

The results showed that occupational factors have positively impacts the community in seafood fishing, at a statistical level of 1%. The forms of seafood fishing by fishermen are very dependent on natural factors (weather of each season, each day, wave regime, tide, clouds, moonlight, especially storms). The unusual elements of nature require fishermen to have a high sense of community to cope with natural disasters while fishing and to overcome the consequences of natural disasters both offshore and onshore. Fishermen often face many unexpected and dangerous factors, such as storms and high-intensity waves... Many storms and waves have caused heavy damage to people and property for fishermen. Many fishermen have lost their loved ones, the pillars of their families, and all their property after natural disasters and storms.

Similarly, occupational and demographic factors also have a statistical value of 1%, which continues to confirm that customary factors also greatly impact on social relations and community in fishermen's fishing activities. When men go fishing for long periods offshore, their wives, children, and parents at home are always worried about their safety. The fact that people in the same Village and relatives go fishing together is an excellent psychological and spiritual support for them; on the contrary, their wives, children, and parents at home have

the conditions to care for, encourage, and help each other in difficult times of life,... In short, earning a living at sea, especially in the open sea, requires fishermen to have forms of association to maintain production and related activities. The trust between boat owners and the village community is the basis for ensuring the tightness and durability of that association. Blood relations and village ties are the most solid factors ensuring the association.

For discriminant validity, previous studies often used the Fornell-Larcker criterion to assess discrimination. However, Henseler et al. (2015) used simulation studies to demonstrate that discriminant validity is better measured by the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) index they developed. Therefore, this study used the HTMT index to assess discrimination between scales/constructs. The HTMT criterion of construct pairs to achieve discriminant validity is 0.85 (≤ 0.85).

	Occupational Factors	Social Factors	Demographics
Occupational Factors	0.537		
Social Factors	0.824	0.516	
Demographics	0.823	0.726	0.832

Table 2. Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio

Source: Survey data processing results

The results in Table 2 show that the values of the HTMT index are all less than 0.85. Therefore, the constructs in the model achieve discriminant value.

Community of Fishermen in Seafood Fishing

The community spirit of fishermen in seafood fishing is assessed based on the relationship of sharing boat - sharing tools, boat owner - fellow boatmen, and the village's community spirit. Village in the interrelationship. Which the relationship of sharing boat - sharing net is the type of relationship in which fishermen contribute capital to jointly own a means of transport, together fish, and share products. This form of business association is suitable for the wishes of fishermen in the area because a family does not have enough money to buy equipment, tools, boats, and equipment, so they are forced to coordinate to cooperate. However, depending on the economic conditions of each family, they have different ways of contributing capital; they can contribute one part or many parts, and the more they contribute, the more they get, in the spirit of equality for mutual benefit.

Those who contribute capital to the ship choose a person with prestige, experience at sea, or a favorable family situation to be the captain. The ships are upgraded to modern, and to be able to steer the boat, one must have a certificate of completion of the captain and chief engineer training course. The captain decides the direction, location, and form of fishing, assigns work to members, resolves, and takes full responsibility for internal and external relationships of the trip. The captain also deals with the government on related issues such as registering to practice, paying taxes, buying insurance, contributing to village community ceremonies according to local customs, etc. Although there are many responsibilities, the captain only enjoys the same benefits as the crew members, according to the contributed shares and labor. Usually, if the ship is profitable, the captain is trusted to continue; however, another captain must be elected if the fishing boat is ineffective.

The relationship between boat owners and boatmates shows as a form of relationship between boat owners and their employees. Boat owners have economic conditions, buy or build new boats, and buy fishing gear; they may or may not directly participate in fishing. In the research area, most boat owners directly participate in fishing. They call their boatmates to go fishing together and share the catch according to an agreement, usually according to the fishing methods and common local customs. The village community, people from the same VillageVillage, and people from the same age contribute capital to buy boats together. In addition to sharing capital, the relationship between neighbors and friends is also shown when fishing. The boat owners not only call their boatmates to be relatives, but also primarily people from the same neighborhood and VillageVillage, because these forms of fishing require a lot of workforce.

The study by Chin & et al. (1996) analyzed the impact of independent variables on dependent variables. In addition to considering the relationship and whether it is significant or not, the study also had to explore the intensity of the impact of the relationships to serve as a basis for resource allocation. At the same time, to be able to extrapolate the research results to the whole, the model needs to be re-tested for reliability using the Bootstrap method with a repeated sample size of 5000 observations.

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	t-value	2.5%	97.5%	Conclusion
C → SBST	0.526	0.525	6.322**	0.211	0.329	Accept
C → BOFB	0.806	0.805	7.878**	0.324	0.468	Accept
C → NR	0.801	0.800	7.632**	0.458	0.522	Accept

Table 3. Research Test Results

Note: *: 5% significance level; **: 1% significance level

Source: Survey data processing results

The results in Table 3 show that the original weights are significant with the average bootstrapping weights because all weights are within the 95% confidence interval. Thus, the estimates in the model can be concluded to be reliable. In addition, there are three important factors affecting the community of fishermen in seafood fishing in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam, in a positive direction at the statistical significance level of 5% and 1%. Of which, Boat owner - boat mate has the strongest impact on changing relationships in the coastal fishing community ($\beta = 0.806$), the second is the village community ($\beta = 0.801$), and finally, sharing a boat - sharing tools ($\beta = 0.526$).

The model can be written as **Logit Y = 0.806* SBST + 0.801* BOFB + 0.526* NR**.

Conclusion

The community spirit of fishermen in seafood fishing is expressed in organizing community life, of which the coastal fishing community is a typical example. Community spirit has positive impacts on social life, especially coastal fishermen. Because of community spirit, coastal residents always have a collective spirit and sense of responsibility. In every behavior, lifestyle, and way of thinking, people always think of the community as the collective, ention to surrounding relationships, and avoid doing things that harm the collective. Because of the collective spirit, Vietnamese people and coastal residents are always full of compassion, solidarity, and sharing. Fishermen who depend on each other are open and sociable. Therefore,

they treat each other with great affection, valuing the village spirit, "mutual love," "love others as you love yourself," "the whole leaf covers the torn leaf" full of compassion and sharing. Thanks to that, it has limited personal indifference and selfishness. Because people who are connected to the community will not accept an indifferent and irresponsible lifestyle, all problems that arise are resolved with the flexible affection of relatives, neighbors, and neighbors, creating a culture that values affection. Because of the emphasis on community, in traditional Vietnamese society, there is unity (similarity, equality with each other), which is also the source of a democratic and egalitarian lifestyle revealed in the principle of organizing the countryside according to the place of residence, occupation, and faction... Thus, it can be seen that the positive aspect of community spirit is to create consensus and high unity in the community, helping to gather and mobilize the strength of the majority, creating a united and cohesive group to achieve the highest common goal. Developing a healthy community spirit is the basis for nurturing patriotism and national pride.

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