

Navigating Poverty and Pedagogy: Lived Experiences of Elementary Teachers in a Fishing-Dependent Coastal Community

Genevie I. Villegas¹, Rezy V. Mendaño^{2*}, Joy B. Araza³, Beverly I. Villegas⁴, Jemuel I. Villegas⁵, Richel V. Doblón⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5}Graduate School, Samar State University, Catbalogan City, Philippines, 6700

⁶Tigdaranao Elementary School, Tarangnan Smar, Philippines, 6704

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1026EDU0311>

Received: 17 May 2026; Accepted: 22 May 2026; Published: 10 June 2026

ABSTRACT

Teaching in fishing-dependent coastal communities involves complex educational realities shaped by poverty, unstable livelihoods, and limited access to resources. This study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers teaching in a fishing-dependent coastal community under the Department of Education, Catbalogan City Division. Specifically, the study examined how teachers navigated poverty-related challenges, adapted pedagogical practices, managed emotional demands, and viewed education as a source of hope and transformation for learners living in economically vulnerable environments. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design, in which seven elementary teachers were purposively selected as participants based on their direct teaching experience in a coastal community. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework. The findings generated four major themes: (1) Confronting Poverty as a Daily Classroom Reality, (2) Adapting Pedagogical Practices to Learners' Economic Realities, (3) Navigating Emotional Burdens Through Compassion and Resilience, and (4) Viewing Education as a Pathway to Hope and Transformation. The findings revealed that teachers continuously navigated challenges associated with poverty, absenteeism, limited resources, and emotional demands while remaining committed to sustaining learner participation and engagement. Teachers demonstrated adaptability through contextualized instruction, instructional improvisation, and compassionate teaching practices responsive to learners' lived realities. The study further highlighted the important role of education in empowering and transforming marginalized coastal communities. The study concludes that teaching in fishing-dependent coastal communities extends beyond instructional responsibilities and requires continuous pedagogical, emotional, and social engagement with learners and their families. The findings provide insights for strengthening contextualized educational programs, learner support initiatives, and teacher support mechanisms in marginalized coastal communities.

Keywords: coastal communities; elementary teachers; fishing-dependent communities; lived experiences; pedagogy; phenomenology; poverty; thematic analysis

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in promoting personal development, social mobility, and community transformation. Schools are important institutions that provide learners with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary to improve their quality of life and prospects. However, educational access and participation remain unequal across many communities, particularly among populations experiencing poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage. Learners living in marginalized areas often encounter barriers such as limited educational resources, unstable household income, food insecurity, and limited access to supportive learning environments (Kumar, 2025). These conditions may negatively affect learners' attendance, academic engagement, and overall educational experiences.

Poverty remains one of the major factors influencing educational participation and academic achievement among children in disadvantaged communities. Mishra et al. (2023) emphasized that socioeconomic inequality

significantly affects learners' access to quality education, particularly in economically vulnerable areas. Children from low-income homes are also disadvantaged with respect to education due, in part, to the poor quality of schools they attend and unstable family income (Johnson & Markowitz, 2018); food insecurity may further exacerbate these challenges. These challenges often contribute to absenteeism, interrupted learning continuity, and reduced academic performance among learners living in poverty-affected environments.

In coastal and marine-based communities, educational challenges become more complex because many families rely heavily on fishing as their primary source of livelihood. Household income and daily survival are often dependent on fishing activities, weather conditions, and seasonal marine resources. Consequently, economic instability and livelihood uncertainties may directly influence learners' educational participation and continuity of schooling. Ahmad et al. (2025) emphasized that poor socioeconomic conditions, limited access to education, and cultural values that prioritize fishing over formal schooling remain significant barriers to educational participation among children in fishing communities. Their qualitative findings further revealed that livelihood demands and community realities often shape learners' educational engagement and long-term academic opportunities.

Samar is one of the coastal areas in Eastern Visayas where many communities primarily depend on fishing and marine-related livelihoods for economic sustenance. Samareños heavily rely on coastal resources, particularly fishing and shellfish gathering, for income and daily survival (Echapore et al., 2023). Roa et al. (2016) noted that Eastern Visayas has long experienced high poverty incidence, limited employment opportunities, low agricultural productivity, and vulnerability to disasters, which significantly affect the living conditions of coastal families. These conditions also influence learners' educational experiences. Children in coastal communities may experience absenteeism, limited access to school materials, and interrupted learning continuity due to poverty and fishing-related family responsibilities. As a result, teachers continuously navigate difficult educational realities while sustaining learner participation and classroom engagement.

Within these contexts, teachers perform important roles not only as facilitators of learning but also as emotional supporters, motivators, and responsive educators who address learners' diverse needs. Teachers assigned in disadvantaged communities are often expected to adapt instructional practices, contextualize lessons, and provide emotional support despite limited resources and difficult socioeconomic conditions. Horn et al. (2025) explained that teachers' capacity for responsive instruction is shaped by contextual resources, relationships, and challenging teaching situations, which influence how educators adjust pedagogical practices and provide support to learners. In coastal and poverty-affected communities, these realities require teachers to continuously modify their teaching approaches while remaining responsive to learners' lived experiences and educational needs.

Teaching in poverty-affected environments also involves emotional and professional demands. Teachers are frequently exposed to learners' experiences of hunger, absenteeism, financial hardship, and difficult living conditions, which may contribute to emotional strain and professional exhaustion. At the same time, these experiences may strengthen teachers' compassion, adaptability, and commitment to serving disadvantaged learners. Villegas et al. (2026) noted that teacher resilience develops through emotional adaptability, sustained commitment, and meaningful engagement with learners despite challenging professional conditions.

Although previous studies have extensively examined poverty and educational inequality, limited research has explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers teaching in fishing-dependent coastal communities, particularly within the local educational context. Existing literature has largely focused on learners' academic difficulties and socioeconomic disadvantages. At the same time, less attention has been given to how teachers interpret, navigate, and respond to poverty-related realities in coastal school settings. Moreover, studies of fishing communities have primarily focused on fisherfolk's livelihoods and learners' experiences rather than on teachers' perspectives and lived realities in marginalized coastal educational environments.

Addressing this gap is important because teachers serve as frontline educational practitioners who directly experience the effects of poverty and socioeconomic inequality within classroom settings. Exploring their lived experiences may provide deeper insights into the realities of teaching in coastal communities and contribute to

the development of responsive educational programs, contextualized instructional practices, and institutional support systems that address both instructional and socioeconomic challenges.

Thus, this study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers teaching in a fishing-dependent coastal community under the Department of Education City Division. Specifically, the study examined how teachers navigated poverty-related challenges, adapted pedagogical practices, managed emotional demands, and viewed education as a source of hope and transformation for learners living in economically vulnerable environments. Through a phenomenological approach, the study sought to contribute to the growing body of literature on poverty, coastal education, and teachers' lived experiences in marginalized communities.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers teaching in a fishing-dependent coastal community. Phenomenology, developed by Husserl and further expanded by Moustakas (1994), focuses on understanding how individuals interpret and give meaning to their lived experiences. The design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine how teachers experienced poverty-related challenges, adapted pedagogical practices, managed emotional demands, and viewed education as a source of hope and transformation within coastal school settings. Phenomenological studies commonly utilize small, purposively selected samples to allow in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences. In this study, participants shared common experiences related to teaching in a fishing-dependent coastal community, making phenomenology well-suited to capturing the essence and meaning of these experiences.

The study employed thematic analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis involved familiarization with the data, generation of codes, identification of themes, review of themes, and interpretation of meanings derived from the participants' narratives.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in one of the public elementary schools located in a fishing-dependent coastal community under the Department of Education (DepEd), Catbalogan City Division, Province of Samar, Philippines. The community is situated in a coastal area where many families primarily depend on fishing and marine-related livelihoods for economic sustenance. Like many coastal communities in Eastern Visayas, the area faces socioeconomic challenges, including poverty, unstable income, environmental vulnerability, and limited access to resources.

Participants of the Study

The participants in the study were seven elementary teachers teaching at one of the elementary schools in a coastal community under the Department of Education City Division. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) currently teaching in a fishing-dependent coastal community, (2) with direct experience teaching learners affected by poverty-related conditions, and (3) willing to participate in the study. These participants were considered appropriate sources of information because of their firsthand experiences in navigating the realities of teaching in marginalized coastal communities. Although the study involved a limited number of participants from one coastal community, phenomenological research emphasizes depth of lived experiences rather than breadth of representation, making the selected participants appropriate for exploring the phenomenon under investigation.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in the study was a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses regarding teachers'

experiences, instructional practices, emotional challenges, coping mechanisms, and perspectives about education in fishing-dependent coastal communities.

The semi-structured format allowed participants to freely express their experiences while enabling the researchers to probe for clarification and deeper reflection. Follow-up questions were also utilized to explore significant experiences, emotions, and teaching realities encountered by the participants.

Validation of the Research Instrument

The interview guide underwent content validation by experts in education and qualitative research. The validators reviewed the instrument for clarity, relevance, organization, alignment with the study's objectives, and appropriateness of the questions.

Suggestions provided by the validators were incorporated to improve the wording, sequencing, and clarity of the interview questions. Necessary revisions were made to ensure the instrument effectively elicited rich, meaningful descriptions of participants' lived experiences.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate school authorities. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of the information gathered.

Data were collected through individual in-depth interviews conducted at scheduled and convenient locations for the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' permission to ensure accuracy of responses. Field notes were also taken to document relevant observations and nonverbal cues during the interview.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and served as the primary data source for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis involved several phases, including familiarization with the data, coding, identification of recurring patterns, theme development, and interpretation of meanings. Interview transcripts were carefully reviewed multiple times to identify significant statements and meaningful units related to the participants' experiences. Similar codes were grouped into categories, yielding themes that reflected the participants' shared lived experiences.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researchers observed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through careful review of interview transcripts, validation of participants' responses during the interview process, and member checking to ensure the accuracy and consistency of participants' shared experiences. Peer debriefing was also employed through consultation with qualitative research experts to strengthen theme interpretation and minimize researcher bias. Transferability was addressed through detailed descriptions of the research setting and participants' experiences. Dependability was ensured by maintaining systematic documentation of data collection and analysis procedures. Confirmability was strengthened by grounding interpretations directly on participants' narratives and supporting evidence from the transcripts.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Participants were informed of the research's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning participant codes instead of using real names. All interview recordings, transcripts, and collected data were securely stored and made accessible only to the researchers. The study ensured respect for the dignity, privacy, and well-being of all participants throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Confronting Poverty as a Daily Classroom Reality

One of the major themes that emerged from the interviews was the persistent visibility of poverty in teachers' everyday classroom experiences in fishing-dependent coastal communities. Teachers described how economic hardships directly affected learners' attendance, participation, readiness to learn, and overall classroom engagement. Poverty became visible through learners' lack of school supplies, worn-out uniforms, hunger, absenteeism, and the need to help their families earn a living.

Vignettes:

"Learners often come to school without a uniform or worn-out uniforms, wearing slippers instead of shoes, and lacking basic school supplies."-**Teacher Participant 02**

"Some pupils come to school without uniforms or school supplies."; "Irregular attendance because some children are affected by fishing schedules and weather conditions."-**Teacher Participant 01**

"Some learners are often absent because they help their families or experience financial difficulties, which affects their learning and participation."-**Teacher Participant 07**

"There are difficult days too, like some students cannot attend class because they need to help earn a living."; "One morning, I noticed a learner sitting quietly in the corner... he told me that he hadn't eaten dinner and breakfast because they had no food at home."-**Teacher Participant 05**

The participants' narratives revealed that poverty was not merely an external socioeconomic condition but a lived classroom reality that continuously shaped learners' educational experiences. Teachers observed that learners frequently arrived at school physically exhausted, emotionally burdened, and academically unprepared due to household responsibilities and unstable family income resulting from seasonal fishing activities. These findings demonstrate how poverty directly influences learners' capacity to participate meaningfully in classroom instruction and maintain consistent school attendance.

The findings further suggest that learners' educational participation is deeply intertwined with the economic rhythms of coastal communities. Fishing seasons, weather disturbances, and livelihood instability significantly affected attendance patterns and the continuity of learning. In many cases, learners were compelled to prioritize livelihood responsibilities over school participation, leading to absenteeism, fatigue, reduced classroom engagement, and academic difficulties. These experiences closely mirror the findings of Agandao and Tunac (2026), who examined the lived experiences of senior high school fisherfolk during the goby fry ("ipon") season in Laoag City. Their study revealed that students' involvement in fishing during peak seasons often disrupted learning continuity and negatively affected academic participation, due to economic and family obligations.

Similarly, Godfrey (2016) emphasized that poverty, food insecurity, and unstable household income substantially affect learners' concentration, school participation, and academic performance, particularly among learners in economically marginalized communities. The findings also align with studies indicating that children from low-income households are more likely to experience absenteeism, poor academic performance, and limited access to educational resources due to socioeconomic hardships. Reardon (2019) emphasized that educational opportunities and academic outcomes are significantly shaped by geographic and socioeconomic inequalities, particularly among disadvantaged communities. Likewise, Cooper and Stewart (2021) found that household income directly influences children's cognitive development, school participation, and academic achievement, suggesting that poverty-related conditions create substantial barriers to meaningful learning experiences.

The convergence of these findings implies that coastal and fishing-dependent communities experience unique educational disruptions shaped by seasonal livelihood practices and economic instability. Learners' participation in income-generating activities may unintentionally compromise academic engagement, continuity of learning, and classroom readiness. This suggests that conventional educational structures and attendance expectations may not fully accommodate the realities of learners living in fishing communities. Consequently, there is a need for context-responsive educational interventions, including flexible attendance policies, localized academic support programs, seasonal learning adjustments, school-based feeding programs, and strengthened collaboration between schools and coastal families. Addressing these contextual realities may help minimize learning disruptions while ensuring that economically vulnerable learners remain engaged in education despite livelihood-related challenges.

Theme 2: Adapting Pedagogical Practices to Learners' Economic Realities

Another major theme that emerged from the interviews was the teachers' continuous adaptation of pedagogical practices to address the economic realities and learning needs of learners from fishing-dependent families. Teachers described becoming flexible, resourceful, and creative in designing instructional approaches that accommodated learners who lacked school supplies, experienced irregular attendance, and faced financial difficulties.

Vignettes:

"I minimize the need for expensive school supplies by using contextualized materials from the community." ; "I implement a flexible attendance policy for students who need to help their parents." -**Teacher Participant 02**

"I adjust my strategies by using low-cost and improvised materials for our lessons." -**Teacher Participant 01**

"Contextualized learning. I connect lessons to the daily lives and environment of learners." -**Teacher Participant 04**

"I often connect topics to the students' real-life experiences, like fishing, marine life, or weather patterns, so lessons become more relatable and engaging." -**Teacher Participant 06**

"I provide activities that can be done using a simple pen and paper, or even orally." -**Teacher Participant 05**

"I use simple and affordable materials and make activities flexible so all learners can still participate and learn." -**Teacher Participant 07**

The participants' accounts demonstrated that teachers intentionally modified their instructional approaches to ensure learning remained accessible despite learners' socioeconomic constraints. Classroom instruction was frequently linked to learners' environments, livelihood practices, and daily experiences within the coastal community. By integrating familiar contexts such as fishing activities, marine resources, and local environmental conditions into lessons, teachers made learning more relevant and understandable for their students.

The narratives also revealed that teachers relied on improvisation and innovation due to limited access to instructional resources. Instead of depending on expensive materials or technology-based activities, participants utilized indigenous materials, recycled objects, and locally available resources to facilitate classroom instruction. Such practices reflected teachers' commitment to sustaining learner engagement while reducing the financial burden placed on families experiencing poverty.

In addition, instructional flexibility emerged as an important response to the realities faced by learners in fishing-dependent households. Teachers adjusted classroom requirements, modified activities, and provided alternative ways for learners to complete tasks when household responsibilities or livelihood-related obligations disrupted attendance. These practices reflected an awareness that conventional instructional expectations may not always align with learners' realities in economically vulnerable communities.

The present findings align with the work of Baddane and Ennam (2023), who emphasized that contextualized, learner-centered teaching approaches enhance learners' comprehension and engagement by connecting instruction directly to their lived experiences and community realities. Their study highlighted that contextualized instruction enables learners to construct understanding more meaningfully by relating academic concepts to familiar situations and environments. In the present study, teachers similarly contextualized lessons using fishing activities, environmental conditions, and local community experiences to make learning more responsive and relevant to learners' realities.

Likewise, Al (2024) stressed that culturally relevant pedagogy enables teachers to create more inclusive and responsive learning environments by recognizing learners' backgrounds, experiences, and social contexts. The teachers in this study demonstrated culturally responsive practices by integrating coastal livelihood experiences and community-based examples into classroom instruction. These approaches helped bridge the disconnect between prescribed curricular content and learners' everyday experiences.

The findings also parallel the observations of Villegas et al. (2026), who noted that adaptive teaching practices and responsive instructional adjustments significantly improve learner engagement and academic participation, especially among students facing socioeconomic and educational barriers. Teachers' capacity to modify instruction according to learners' needs reflects professional responsiveness and pedagogical sensitivity in resource-constrained educational settings.

Taken together, these findings indicate that teachers in fishing-dependent coastal communities serve not only as facilitators of learning but also as instructional innovators who continuously recalibrate their teaching practices to reflect contextual realities. Their adaptability underscores the importance of responsive pedagogy in addressing the educational inequalities faced by marginalized learners.

The findings underscore the importance of stronger institutional support for contextualized instruction, localized learning materials, and professional development initiatives that equip teachers with strategies for inclusive and community-responsive teaching. Strengthening these support systems may improve learner participation, instructional accessibility, and continuity of learning among students living in economically vulnerable coastal communities.

Theme 3: Navigating Emotional Burdens Through Compassion and Resilience

Another significant theme that emerged from teachers' transcripts was the emotional burden they experienced while teaching learners affected by poverty, alongside the development of compassion, patience, and resilience. They described how constant exposure to learners' struggles emotionally affected them, yet these experiences also strengthened their commitment to teaching and serving the community.

Vignettes:

"It has taught me to be more patient and celebrate small victories like students simply completing the five-day classes." **-Teacher Participant 02**

"Emotionally demanding, often causing stress, fatigue, and potential burnout." **Teacher Participant 03**

"It inspires me to be more patient, compassionate, and dedicated in helping them learn." **Teacher Participant 01**

"Teaching in this setting strengthens adaptability, creativity, and problem-solving skills." **Teacher Participant 04**

"It can be physically and emotionally demanding, but I feel fulfilled knowing that I am helping shape the learners' future." **Teacher Participant 06**

“That day, I realized that teaching here is not just about reading and writing. It is about being a parent, a provider, and a source of strength.” “Seeing them struggle with hardships makes me feel concerned and sad... but seeing them learn, smile, and persevere fills me with immense joy and pride.” **Teacher Participant 05**

“It can be emotional seeing learners struggle, but it also made me more compassionate, patient, and dedicated as a teacher.” **Teacher Participant 07**

The narratives showed that teaching in a fishing-dependent coastal community involves considerable emotional strain. Teachers became deeply affected by learners' experiences of hunger, absenteeism, poverty, and difficult living conditions. Such circumstances often resulted in stress, sadness, concern, and emotional exhaustion. Amid these challenges, participants viewed their experiences as opportunities for personal and professional growth. They described becoming more patient, understanding, compassionate, and resourceful in addressing learners' needs. Even small signs of learner participation and perseverance became meaningful sources of encouragement, reinforcing their sense of purpose as educators.

The accounts likewise indicated that teachers frequently assumed responsibilities beyond classroom instruction. Many participants served as emotional supporters, motivators, and sources of stability for learners facing poverty-related difficulties. These experiences deepened their connection with both the learners and the wider community.

This perspective is consistent with Horner et al. (2020), who explained that educators assigned to marginalized and high-poverty communities often experience emotional labor because of continuous exposure to learners' socioeconomic hardships. In the same way, Lee (2024) emphasized that teachers' emotional competence plays a vital role in sustaining supportive classroom relationships within challenging educational settings. The accounts also support the work of Villegas et al. (2026), which explained that teacher resilience develops through sustained commitment, emotional adaptability, and meaningful relationships with learners despite persistent professional demands. In the present study, participants demonstrated resilience by remaining compassionate and committed despite the emotional pressures associated with teaching in economically vulnerable coastal communities.

These observations indicate that emotional resilience is an essential component of teaching in poverty-affected coastal communities. Educators continuously managed emotional pressures while sustaining compassion, patience, and professional commitment despite limited resources and difficult socioeconomic conditions.

The discussion underscores the importance of institutional mechanisms that support teacher well-being, mental health, emotional resilience, and long-term professional sustainability, particularly for educators assigned to marginalized communities. Psychosocial interventions, mentoring programs, and wellness initiatives may help teachers cope with emotional demands while maintaining dedication to learners experiencing socioeconomic adversity.

Theme 4: Viewing Education as a Pathway to Hope and Transformation

Another important theme that emerged from the interviews was the teachers' shared belief that education serves as a pathway toward hope, empowerment, and social transformation for learners living in poverty-stricken coastal communities. Teachers viewed their profession not merely as instructional work, but as a meaningful mission that could help learners overcome poverty and build better futures.

Vignettes:

"Seeing students from this community who successfully finished college and are professionals proves that education provides a bridge to new opportunities." ; "It has taught me that education is not just about textbooks and curriculum; it is about survival and resilience."; "Showing the children that the world beyond the horizon is also accessible to them through education." -**Teacher Participant 02**

"Teaching in this community has helped me realize that education is not only about academics but also about understanding the learners' background and needs." -**Teacher Participant 01**

“It is more than a profession — it is a calling and a commitment to help learners succeed.” -**Teacher Participant 04**

“It strengthened my belief that education is a tool for equity.” -**Teacher Participant 06**

“Education here is the key to help the children break the cycle of poverty and build a future for themselves and their families.” -**Teacher Participant 05**

“Teaching here means serving with compassion and helping learners build a better future for themselves and their families.” -**Teacher Participant 07**

The accounts revealed that participants perceived education as a powerful means of improving the lives of learners and their families. Despite difficult socioeconomic conditions, teachers believed that schooling could provide opportunities for personal development, upward mobility, and long-term stability. Their perspectives reflected optimism that education could help learners overcome the cycle of poverty commonly experienced in fishing-dependent communities. Participants also attached profound meaning to their profession. Teaching was frequently described as a calling, a form of service, and a commitment to improving others' lives rather than simply a source of income. Many educators expressed fulfillment in helping learners develop confidence, resilience, values, and aspirations for a more secure future. In this context, teachers perceived themselves as contributors to positive social change through the transformative potential of education.

The narratives further emphasized that learning in coastal communities should extend beyond academic instruction alone. Participants stressed the importance of understanding learners' realities, recognizing their cultural backgrounds, and providing emotional encouragement alongside academic support. Such perspectives reflect a broader view of education that encompasses both intellectual growth and social development.

These perspectives align with Strikwerda (2021), who explained that education can become a practice of hope and empowerment when educators recognize learners' lived experiences and social realities. Similarly, Aguirre et al (2025) emphasized that care, empathy, and supportive relationships are essential elements of meaningful learning, particularly among learners experiencing adversity. In the present study, teachers demonstrated these principles by combining instruction with compassion, encouragement, and community-oriented support.

These insights suggest that educators play a significant role in sustaining hope and aspirations among learners facing socioeconomic difficulties. Their belief in the transformative power of education reinforced their dedication despite the challenges of teaching in marginalized coastal communities. The discussion underscores the importance of educational programs and policies that promote equitable access to quality education, culturally responsive learning environments, and sustained support systems for disadvantaged communities. Strengthening these initiatives may help reduce educational inequalities while enabling learners to pursue more stable and meaningful futures.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching in fishing-dependent coastal communities involves realities that extend beyond instructional responsibilities and require continuous pedagogical, emotional, and social engagement with learners and their families. Teachers in these communities serve not only as facilitators of learning but also as sources of support, encouragement, and stability for learners experiencing socioeconomic difficulties. Despite the challenges associated with poverty, unstable livelihoods, and limited resources, teachers remain committed to sustaining learner participation and promoting meaningful educational experiences. The study further highlights the importance of education as a source of hope, empowerment, and social transformation within marginalized coastal communities.

Based on the study's conclusions, educational institutions and policymakers may strengthen learner support programs, including feeding initiatives, school supply assistance, and community-based interventions that address poverty-related barriers to education. Schools may also promote contextualized and community-responsive instructional practices that recognize learners' lived realities and cultural backgrounds. Professional

development programs focusing on responsive pedagogy, emotional resilience, and inclusive teaching practices may further support teachers assigned to disadvantaged communities. In addition, institutional mechanisms that promote teacher well-being and psychosocial support may help educators manage emotional demands and sustain professional commitment. Future studies may further explore the perspectives of learners, parents, school leaders, and fisherfolk families to enrich understanding of educational realities in fishing-dependent environments.

REFERENCES

1. Agandao, R. J., & Tunac, P. E. (2026). INTAYON AG-IPON: Lived experiences of senior high school fisherfolk during the goby (IPON) fry season in La Paz, Laoag City. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100300004>
2. Aguirre, K. C., Patosa, F. B., & Mendaño, R. V. (2025). Implementation of the child protection program and its correlates: Basis for a SAFE school-based intervention plan. *International Journal of Open-Access, Interdisciplinary & New Educational Discoveries of ETCOR Educational Research Center (iJOINED ETCOR)*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.63498/etcor442>
3. AHMAD, R. I. A., ATIKAH, S., & TAMSIK, U. (2025). Pendidikan anak nelayan di Desa Eretan Wetan: Pendekatan berbasis komunitas untuk mengatasi tantangan dan mendorong pemberdayaan masyarakat. *CONCEPT: JOURNAL OF SOCIAL HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION* Учредители: Politeknik Pratama Purwokerto, 4(1), 01-13.
4. AL, G. (2024). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Promoting Inclusivity and Equity in the Classroom.
5. Baddane, K., & Ennam, A. (2023). Contextualization strategies and reading comprehension: An investigation among IELTS test-takers. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 6(11), 148-156.
6. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
7. Cooper, K., & Stewart, K. (2021). Does household income affect children's outcomes? A systematic review of the evidence. *Child Indicators Research*, 14(3), 981-1005.
8. Echapare, E. O., Mendaño, R. V., Cabaguing, A. M., Gal, M. B., Tenedero, E. Q., Parrocho, M. R. M., & Alcantara, M. A. F. Understanding The Knowledge, Beliefs, And Practices Of Samareños On Red Tide Phenomenon: Implications For Sustainable Management.
9. Godfrey, S. M. (2016). Challenges impacting community participation and their effect on teaching and learning: A case study of rural areas. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(25).
10. Horn, I. S., Aggöl, Y. G., Li, S., & Hood, C. E. (2025). Teachers' subjectivities in responsive instruction: when ambitious practice encounters challenging teaching situations. *Instructional Science*, 53(6), 1889-1909.
11. Horner, C. G., Brown, E. L., Mehta, S., & Scanlon, C. L. (2020). Feeling and acting like a teacher: Reconceptualizing teachers' emotional labor. *Teachers College Record*, 122(5), 1-36.
12. Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy* (D. Carr, Trans.). Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1936)
13. Johnson, A. D., & Markowitz, A. J. (2018). Associations between household food insecurity in early childhood and children's kindergarten skills. *Child Development*, 89(2), e1-e17.
14. Kumar, V. K. P. D. V. (2025). Education and Social Inequality: Bridging the Gap in Access and Opportunities for Marginalized Communities. *Scholar's Digest: Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 1(1), 144-163.
15. Lee, J. (2024). The role of teachers' social and emotional competence in implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum in Malawi. *School Psychology International*, 45(6), 681-698.
16. Mishra, A., Mishra, A., & Pandey, G. (2023). Spatial inequality and education: unraveling the geographical dimensions of educational disparities. *Techno Learn*, 13(1), 29-43.
17. Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. SAGE Publications.
18. Nazari, A., Soleimani, N., & Shafizadeh, H. (2024). Identifying and Evaluating Factors Affecting Poverty and Academic Achievement of Poor Students in Hormozgan Province. *Iranian Evolutionary Educational Psychology Journal*, 6(3), 277-302.



19. Reardon, S. F. (2019). Educational opportunity in early and middle childhood: Using full population administrative data to study variation by place and age. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 5(2), 40-68.
20. Roa E, J. C., Bertuso, A., & Villaber, D. (2016). Root and tuber Crops: Production-use systems and food resilience in Agri-aqua and Agro-forestry Ecosystems in Central Philippines: Results of a Scoping Study.
21. Strikwerda, H. L. (2021). Educators as Agents of Hope: Hopeful Possibilities Found in Hopeless Realities.
22. Beverly I. Villegas, Genevie I. Villegas, Jemuel I. Villegas, Rezy V. Mendaño, Joy B. Araza (2026). Stories of Hope: Teachers' Narratives of Commitment in Remote Upland Schools., 10(4), <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100400113>.