The Impact Of Organizational Culture & Gender Awareness On Women's Involvement In The Blue Economy

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Abstract: This study investigates the factors influencing women's involvement in the blue economy in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Despite significant growth in the fishing industry, women's participation remains limited due to barriers such as non-inclusive organizational cultures and low gender awareness. Using a survey of 30 women from Langkat's coastal areas, the research explores the roles of organizational culture, gender awareness, and economic welfare in promoting women's engagement in marine sectors. The study proposes five hypotheses, testing the direct and indirect effects of these variables on women's involvement. Findings show that organizational culture and gender awareness have a positive and significant impact on women's participation, while economic welfare acts as an intervening variable, strengthening these effects. The results underscore the need for inclusive organizational cultures and heightened gender awareness to enhance women's participation in the blue economy. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring that economic benefits are equitably shared. The study concludes that fostering inclusive environments and improving household welfare are key strategies for maximizing women's contributions to the blue economy. Future research with broader data coverage is recommended.

INTRODUCTION

The blue economy refers to the sustainable use and management of marine and coastal resources to support economic growth and community well-being (Lee et al., 2020). For Indonesia, this sector presents vast opportunities, with an estimated economic potential of USD 1.33 billion and the potential to create 45 million jobs (Bappenas, 2022). In Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, the blue economy holds considerable potential to drive local economic growth and improve community welfare, particularly for the fishing community. However, despite a significant increase in capture fisheries production from 16,461 tons in 2019 to 33,634 tons in 2021, women's participation in the blue economy

remains limited. Barriers like a non-inclusive organizational culture and low gender awareness hinder women's involvement (Errighi et al., 2016; Kamberidou, 2020). These challenges are reflected in a survey of 30 women from various backgrounds in Langkat's coastal areas, which found that while some respondents support women's involvement in ocean-related activities, only 36.36% participate in blue economy sectors, such as marine tourism, and just 25% report any economic improvement from their engagement.

The findings highlight three main issues: the limited participation of women in the blue economy, cultural and gender awareness barriers that constrain their involvement, and minimal economic benefits resulting from participation. Addressing these issues requires understanding the factors that can promote women's participation, including organizational culture, gender awareness, and household welfare.

An inclusive organizational culture plays an essential role in encouraging women's engagement in the blue economy by fostering supportive behaviors, structures, and communication that create a conducive environment for women in marine sectors (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2014). Gender awareness is another critical factor, as it encompasses equal access, decision-making participation, and benefits, allowing women to more actively engage in the blue economy (Stromquist, 2014). Additionally, household welfare, including resources like housing, education, and transportation, provides women with the support needed to participate in economic activities (Atkinson & Bourgugnon, 2014).

Inclusive organizational cultures not only support women directly but may also enhance household welfare, indirectly promoting their involvement in the blue economy. Similarly, heightened gender awareness in the community can improve household welfare, providing women with more opportunities to participate. Based on these factors, the study proposes five hypotheses:

a. Organizational culture positively influences women's involvement in the blue economy.
b. Gender awareness positively influences women's involvement in the blue economy.
c. Household welfare positively influences women's involvement in the blue economy.
d. Organizational culture positively influences women's involvement in the blue

economy, with household welfare as an intervening variable.

e. Gender awareness positively influences women's involvement in the blue economy, with household welfare as an intervening variable.

These findings suggest that fostering inclusive organizational cultures, improving gender awareness, and enhancing household welfare are key to supporting women's active engagement in the blue economy and optimizing its potential for economic and community development in Langkat Regency.

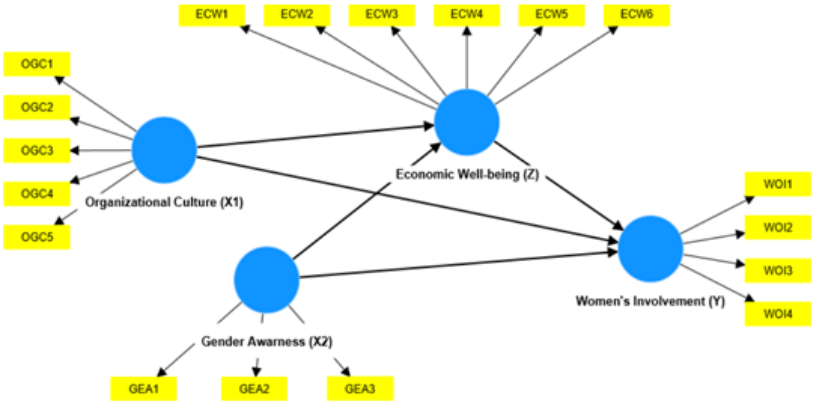

Figure 2. Research conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach using associative analysis to examine the causal relationship between organizational culture (X1) and gender awareness (X2) as independent variables and women's involvement in the blue economy (Y) as the dependent variable, with household economic welfare (Z) acting as an intervening variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). Data collection was conducted through geographic quota sampling, focusing on adult women living and working in the coastal areas of Langkat Regency. From an estimated population of 394,863 adult women in 2023, the target sample was refined to 15,000 individuals in coastal communities. A sample size of 375 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan Table, applying a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, which allows for the selection of respondents based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives (Dhivyadeepa, 2015).

Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to women in Langkat Regency, alongside interviews with key stakeholders, including

government officials, members of the fishing community, and relevant NGOs. Survey responses provide quantitative data on the study variables, while interviews offer qualitative insights into the local context, challenges, and opportunities for strengthening women's involvement in the blue economy.

Data analysis is conducted in three main stages using SmartPLS software. The first stage, Outer Model Analysis, involves testing the validity and reliability of each questionnaire item to ensure they accurately measure the targeted variables and provide consistent results (Jensen & Shumway, 2010). The second stage, Inner Model Analysis, builds a structural model by linking organizational culture (X1) and gender awareness (X2) to women's involvement in the blue economy (Y), with household economic welfare (Z) as an intervening factor. This stage reveals the relationships between variables and assesses their impact on women's participation in the blue economy. Finally, hypothesis testing is performed to generate findings that can inform future policy and strategy development, with the goal of increasing women's participation in the blue economy and improving economic welfare in North Sumatra.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analisa SEM PLS (Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares)

Outer Model

Outer Model Analysis, a validity test will be carried out to ensure that each question item in the questionnaire research instrument can measure the variables under study. Furthermore, an item reliability test will be carried out to ensure a high level of reliability in measuring the construct under study.

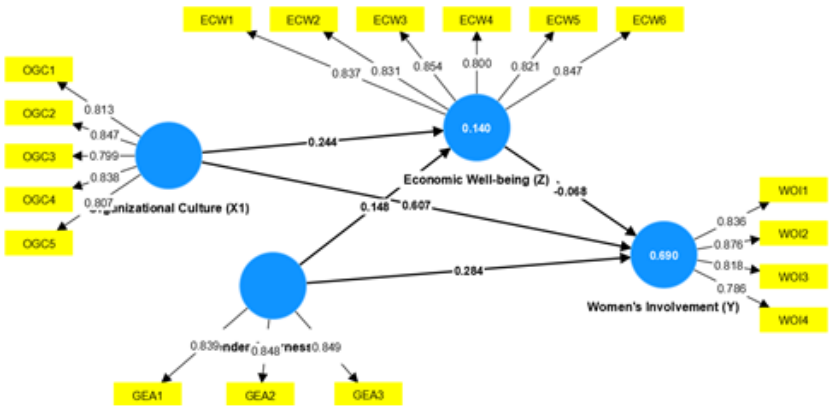

Figure 2. Outer Model Output Graph Results

Source: Research Results, 2024 (SEM PLS 4.0))

The results of the model output in this study have been achieved through two rounds of analysis to ensure that the data is thoroughly examined (initial indicators such as gender awareness "GEA4" and economic well-being "ECW7" were removed). The subsequent testing focused on validity and reliability tests, which include:

Outer Loading

The purpose of the outer loading test is to evaluate how well the indicators represent the relevant latent variables. In this study, the indicators are considered valid as they have an outer loading value greater than 0.7 for the examined latent variables.

Construct Validity and Reliability

Construct validity was tested using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. An AVE value above 0.5 indicates that more than 50% of the variance in the indicators can be explained by the construct, suggesting good validity. Reliability is assessed through Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA). A CR value above 0.7 shows high reliability, while a CA value above 0.6 is acceptable, and above 0.7 indicates good reliability. The results are summarized as follows:

a. Economic Well-being (Z) Cronbach's Alpha: 0.911 (Excellent), CR: 0.914 (High consistency), AVE: 0.692 (Good validity).
b. Gender Awareness (X2) Cronbach's Alpha: 0.801 (Adequate), CR: 0.883 (Good consistency), AVE: 0.715 (Good validity).
c. Organizational Culture (X1) Cronbach's Alpha: 0.879 (Good), CR: 0.880 (Good consistency), AVE: 0.674 (Good validity).
d. Women's Involvement (Y) Cronbach's Alpha: 0.848 (Good), CR: 0.849 (Good consistency), AVE: 0.688 (Good validity).

Table 1. Construct Validity and Reliability Results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Economic Well-being (Z)	0.911	0.914	0.931	0.692
Gender Awarness (X2)	0.801	0.802	0.883	0.715
Organizational Culture (X1)	0.879	0.880	0.912	0.674
Women's Involvement (Y)	0.848	0.849	0.898	0.688

Overall, all constructs demonstrate Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.7 and AVE values above 0.5, indicating that all indicators are valid and reliable.

Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to test discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct correlates more with its own indicators than with others. The results show that all constructs have good discriminant validity, with AVE square roots being higher than the correlations between constructs, confirming that the constructs are distinct and supporting the validity of the proposed model.

R-Square

The R^2 value reflects the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results show:

a. Economic Well-being (Z): $R^2 = 0.140$ (weak relationship, only 14% of the variability is explained).
b. Women's Involvement (Y): $R^2 = 0.690$ (strong relationship, 69% of the variability is explained).

Model Fit

The model fit was evaluated based on SRMR, d ULS, d G, and NFI values, which indicate a good fit of the model to the data.

c. SRMR: 0.056 (good fit, below 0.08).
d. d ULS: 0.545 (good fit).
e. d G: 0.324 (good fit).
f. NFI: 0.846 (acceptable fit, close to the desired 0.90).

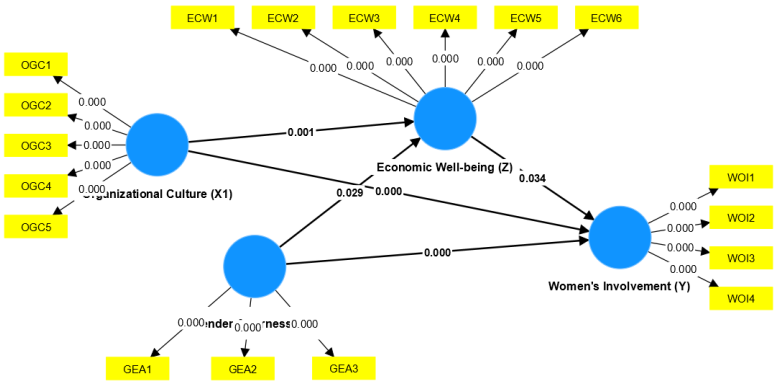

Figure 2. Inner Model Output Graph Results

Source: Research Results, 2024 (SEM PLS 4.0)

Inner Model

The inner model testing focuses on analyzing the effects between variables and testing hypotheses based on significance.

Table 2. Path Coefficient Results (Direct Effect) & Specific Inderect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Economic Well-being (Z) -> Women's Involvement (Y)	-0,068	-0,068	0,032	2,118	0,034
Gender Awarness (X2) -> Economic Well-being (Z)	0,148	0,152	0,068	2,187	0,029
Gender Awarness (X2) -> Women's Involvement (Y)	0,284	0,283	0,053	5,369	0,000
Organizational Culture (X1) -> Economic Well-being (Z)	0,244	0,245	0,072	3,370	0,001
Organizational Culture (X1) -> Women's Involvement (Y)	0,607	0,607	0,057	10,735	0,000

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Organizational Culture (X1) -> Economic Well-being (Z) -> Women's Involvement (Y)	0,317	0,316	0,069	5,794	0,000
Gender Awarness (X2) -> Economic Well-being (Z) -> Women's Involvement (Y)	0,210	0,211	0,057	3,347	0,001

a. Path Coefficients: All relationships between variables are positive and significant, with T-statistics (|O/STDEV|) greater than the original sample and p-values less than 0.05.
b. Specific Indirect Effects: The indirect effects of Organizational Culture and Gender Awareness on Women's Involvement in the Blue Economy through Economic Well-being show significant results, with T-statistics greater than the original sample and p-values less than 0.05.

In summary, the analysis confirms that the model is valid, reliable, and a good fit, demonstrating strong relationships between the variables and supporting the hypotheses regarding the blue economy in Langkat Regency. The following are the hypotheses and discussions in this study.

a. Hypothesis 1: Organizational Culture positively and significantly affects Women's Involvement in the Blue Economy in Langkat Regency
b. Hypothesis 2: Gender Awareness positively and significantly affects Women's Involvement in the Blue Economy in Langkat Regency
c. Hypothesis 3: Economic Well-being positively and significantly affects Women's Involvement in the Blue Economy in Langkat Regency
d. Hypothesis 4: Organizational Culture positively and significantly affects Women's Involvement in the Blue Economy in Langkat Regency with Economic Well-being as an intervening variable
e. Hypothesis 5: Gender Awareness positively and significantly affects Women's Involvement in the Blue Economy in Langkat Regency with Economic Well-being as an intervening variable

The results suggest a complex interplay between organizational culture, gender

awareness, economic well-being, and women's involvement in the Blue Economy in Langkat Regency. Organizational culture and gender awareness directly enhance women's involvement in the Blue Economy, showing that fostering supportive environments and raising awareness of gender issues are crucial strategies for increasing female participation (Parissi & Bardi, 2021).

The economic well-being variable presents a mixed result, with a slightly negative but significant relationship to women's involvement (Lee et al, 2020). This may imply that while economic prosperity is essential, the challenge lies in ensuring that women continue to participate actively in the economy as other factors, such as social roles and opportunities, influence their decisions (Jindal, 2014). Economic well-being also serves as an important intervening variable. It strengthens the positive effects of both organizational culture and gender awareness on women's involvement in the Blue Economy (Kabeer, 2005). This indicates that economic improvements make organizational culture and gender awareness more effective in encouraging women's active participation in economic activities (Voyer et al, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This research shows that organizational culture, gender awareness, and economic welfare have a significant influence on women's involvement in the blue economy in Langkat District. An inclusive organizational culture was shown to play an important role in increasing women's participation. Gender awareness also contributes positively to their involvement, although there are still challenges that need to be overcome. In addition, economic welfare acts as an intervening variable that strengthens the influence of organizational culture and gender awareness on women's involvement in the blue economy. These results emphasize the importance of supporting an inclusive environment and improving household welfare to maximize the potential for women's participation in this sector.

This study has several limitations, including the focus on Langkat Regency limiting the generalizability of the results to other regions. The limitations of longitudinal data also reduce understanding of changes in the dynamics of women's involvement over a longer period of time. Further research with broader coverage and more in-depth data is needed to strengthen these findings.

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