Potential signals promoting behavior for coastal conservation: Conformity in small-scale fishing communities in the Philippines

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Abstract

Conservation and sustainable use of coastal resources is essential to sustain people's lives, all the more so with small-scale fishermen whose livelihoods depend on those resources. In the course of pursuing conservation and sustainable use of coastal resources, participation of stakeholders is vital. This study aims at exploring any potential signals which might influence the pro-environmental behavior of residents, especially regarding marine and coastal conservation, taking small-scale fishing communities in the Philippines as a case study. Face-to-face questionnaires were conducted in two communities, which resulted in a total of 267 responses valid for analysis. Principal component analysis and multiple regression analysis were conducted to explore relationships between the potential signals and pro-environmental behavior regarding conservation of the coastal environment. This study found potentials that: i) the higher the conformity of residents to the communities, the more frequent their joining activities for coastal conservation might be, ii) positive perception of the current coastal environment and willingness to join coastal conservation activities tend to coexist, and iii) non-conformity could work on either side, i.e., not joining or regularly joining in coastal conservation activities. The importance of this study lies in having found that conformity exists and it might promote behavior for coastal conservation, though not strongly. An insight gained from this research, was that to promote residents' joining activities for coastal conservation in fishing-communities, conformity of the residents to the communities might be utilized. At the same time, it should be noted that some residents with high non-conformity could be core actors for coastal conservation.