

Stories of Strength: Lived Experiences of Female Coconut Farmers

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Abstract

This phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of female coconut farmers in Barangay Alvar, Caraga, Davao Oriental, to uncover the essence of empowerment as reflected in their experiences. Despite their substantial contributions to agriculture, female coconut farmers remain underrepresented in research and often experience limited recognition. Guided by Zimmerman's Psychological Empowerment Theory (1995), particularly its intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral components, the study employed purposive sampling and involved twelve female coconut farmers who participated in in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method. Findings revealed that empowerment is manifested through maintaining hope despite low coconut prices, participating in shared economic responsibilities, recognizing their capabilities in farm labor and leadership roles, acquiring farming knowledge through training, actively engaging in barangay meetings and community initiatives, performing labor-intensive farm work, adapting financial coping strategies during economic hardships, and making key household and farm-related financial decisions. The study further revealed that psychological empowerment and economic vulnerability coexist. These findings highlight the important but often overlooked contributions of female coconut farmers and the need for livelihood diversification and greater access to agricultural training and support services.

Keywords: stories of strength; lived experiences; female coconut farmers; psychological empowerment; Caraga, Davao Oriental, Philippines

Introduction

The Problem and Its Setting

Women have been contributing significantly to the agricultural sector. In fact, according to Mugion et al. (2026), women are predicted to compose roughly 43% of worldwide agricultural labor; however, their roles and contributions are often overlooked. For instance, their contributions in producing food for household and community consumption, which are essential for food security, are not reflected in the statistics (FAO, 2023).

In multiple regions of the globe, particularly in South Asia, women actively participate in and contribute to agricultural work; however, their contributions are not recognized as much as those of men, and the resources necessary for them to live and thrive are not fully granted. They are discriminated in terms of earning adequate pay, owning land, and participating in local farmers' associations and organizations. (Kaur & Kaur, L., 2024).

Furthermore, Bello et al. (2021) stated that despite the active involvement of women in wide range of agricultural production activities, their access to productive farming is constrained, and their ability to participate in decision-making is also limited. Parallel to this, a study conducted in Colombia, revealed that women still encounter significant challenges regarding equitable participation, decision making, and autonomous action (Albornoz-Arias et al., 2025).

In my country, the Philippines, notwithstanding the enactment of laws and policies that acknowledge and safeguard women's rights in terms of the right to land, their participation in agrarian reform initiatives remains limited due to instances such as the equation of men's and women's interests, alongside the biased belief that peasantry is for men (Bejeno, 2021). Furthermore, women's land rights are considered subordinate and often neglected in the processes of land redistribution, as they often become entitled only when they become widowed, if their husband is absent, and if their husband is

ineligible to receive an agrarian benefit. This reality makes women's land rights dependent on men. Moreover, according to Rosero and Vargas (2021), female farmers do not have access to the information and skills of controlling agricultural machinery. This may imply that there is a disparity in the participation between men and women in farm work.

In Davao Region, a study was conducted and concluded that women's contributions to fisheries, a sub-sector of agriculture, are still disregarded, minimized, and undervalued (Maynawang et al., 2021). Moreover, in the 2022 Philippine Statistics Authority Consensus of Agriculture and Fisheries, the data revealed a significant gender disparity in the agricultural sector regarding benefits and recognition of contribution. It was evident in the data that women had a low percentage of full ownership of agricultural land. Sadly, among all the provinces in the Davao Region, Davao Oriental had the lowest percentage of women, 18 years old and above, with full land ownership. In addition, in 2022, 153,874 agrarian reform beneficiaries were holding Emancipation Patents and Certificates of Land Ownership Award in Davao Region. Of this number, 33.5% were women and 66.5% were men (Women and Men in Davao Region | Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025).

Numerous studies have examined the challenges that women farmers continue to experience in the agricultural sector (Dunne et al., 2021; Msosa, 2022; Morata & Salapa, 2024), but there is a limited existing literature focusing on women in coconut farming. Valleser et al. (2020) explicitly noted that local information on the role of women in coconut-based multi-storey cropping was not available. Furthermore, recent scholarship has continued to emphasize the need for greater attention to women's experiences and empowerment within the coconut value chain (Maglunsod et al., 2025). This suggests that women in the coconut sector remains underrepresented in scholarship despite their significant contribution.

This lack of attention to female coconut farmers' lived experiences call for a deeper exploration into their realities. My research aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth, phenomenological understanding of the lived experience and self-empowerment processes of female coconut farmers. Understanding women's experience in their participation in the agricultural sector is essential, as it may shed light on their often-invisible contributions in agriculture. This exploration may illuminate the experiences of female farmers as they participate in various agricultural activities.

Significance of the Study

My study is pivotal because the insights it generates may serve as a guiding compass in developing gender-responsive initiatives that support women's empowerment and leadership in the agricultural sector, promoting gender equality in the sector. Practically, my study provides valuable information for policymakers, local government units, and agricultural agencies in designing more inclusive and gender-sensitive programs. By giving voice to the experiences of female farmers, my study promotes greater recognition of their contributions, and advocates for better support systems, training opportunities, and access to resources. Moreover, my study supports the vision-mission of Holy Cross and Davao College of being engaged in building a more humane world and attentive to the needs of the less fortunate by fostering inclusivity, social justice, equity, and compassion through research that highlights marginalized women in agriculture.

Furthermore, my study is significant as it contributes to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Gender Equality by advancing knowledge that may inform efforts to strengthen the welfare and empowerment of women in agricultural communities. Beyond contributing to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality, my study also supports SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by generating insights into the lived experiences of female coconut farmers whose agricultural activities contribute to household income, rural livelihoods, and economic participation.

Research Question

My research seeks to explore the lived experiences of the female coconut farmers. To be precise, it aims to answer the question:

What are the lived experiences of empowerment among female coconut farmers in relation to their intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral dimensions?

Assumptions

My study will operate on four assumptions. Firstly, female coconut farmers have unique lived experiences and perceptions that shape their influence in their occupational-agricultural lives. Secondly,

the female coconut farmers have distinct experiences as they navigate interactions within the coconut farming industry. Thirdly, female coconut farmers take actions that influence the outcomes of their occupational-agricultural lives. Finally, the insights shared by the female coconut farmers provide valuable information for formulating national and local government policies and programs that support gender equality.

Theoretical Lens

My study is anchored in the Psychological Empowerment (PE) Theory conceptualized by Zimmerman (1995). Psychological empowerment pertains to empowerment experienced at the personal or individual level. This theory highlights the three interrelated components of psychological empowerment: intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral. The intrapersonal component refers to how people think of themselves. On the other hand, the interactional component refers to how people understand their environment, including the issues that surround them. It also reflects individuals' awareness of the behavioral options available to them and their ability to decide on actions that align with the personal goals they consider acceptable. Finally, the behavioral component pertains to how individuals act in order to directly impact outcomes. These three components of PE, according to Zimmerman (1995), are fused to create an image of a person who believes that he or she can influence his or her environment (intrapersonal component), who understands how the system operates (interactional component), and who exerts effort and takes actions to change outcomes (behavioral component).

In the context of my study, Psychological Empowerment (PE) Theory is a valuable lens in navigating challenges and opportunities within the lived experiences of the female coconut farmers. By employing the three components of PE Theory, this research will unveil the internal processes through which female coconut farmers construct empowerment in their personal and occupational-agricultural lives.

Figure 1 illustrates the three interrelated component of Psychological empowerment by Zimmerman (1995), the intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral components.

Conceptual Framework

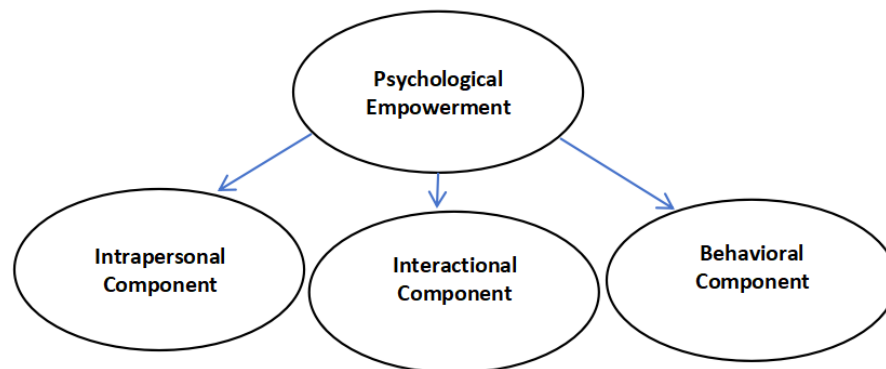


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Method

This chapter describes the processes and strategies that I employed to meet the study's objectives. The research design, locale of the study, research participants, data gathering procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are all part of this.

2.1 Research Design

I employed a descriptive phenomenological research design. Rooted in Husserl's philosophy, descriptive phenomenology focuses on describing the common meaning of participants' lived experiences regarding a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, Moustakas (1994) explained that phenomenological research seeks to understand and describe individuals' lived experiences in order to uncover the essence of a shared phenomenon. Therefore, the design was utilized because it can provide valuable insights into how female coconut farmers in Alvar, Caraga, Davao Oriental, perceive and experience empowerment, which is the main goal of this study.

2.2 Locale of the Study

My study is conducted in Barangay Alvar, municipality of Caraga, in the province of Davao Oriental, Philippines. The barangay is predominantly agricultural, with coconut farming serving as the primary source of livelihood for many households. I purposely selected Alvar as the locale of my study because it provides access to female coconut farmers whose experiences are relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. As women actively participate in coconut farming, the locale enables me to gain an in-depth understanding to their lived experiences in the essence of empowerment within the coconut farming sector.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

My qualitative research involved 12 participants. Colaizzi (1978, as cited in Lopes et al., 2025) suggested that 12 participants may be considered an average sample size in phenomenological research. This is supported by Guest et al. (2006), who found that data saturation frequently occurs within the first 12 interviews, indicating that this sample size is sufficient to generate rich and meaningful data. Moreover, I employed purposive sampling, a non-probability method that facilitates the selection of individuals most relevant to the research objectives. As explained by Creswell and Poth (2018), this method allows researchers to intentionally select participants who have specific knowledge or experiences relevant to the research topic, thereby facilitating the collection of rich and in-depth insights.

To ensure that the participants of the study are relevant to the research questions, the following inclusion criteria were established: a.) female coconut farmers for more than five years; b.) residents of Barangay Alvar for more than five years; c.) above 18 years old; and d.) must be able to communicate in a language the researcher can understand (Filipino, Bisaya, or English). The exclusion criteria were: a.) female coconut farmers and residents of Brgy. Alvar for more than five years but were unable to understand and speak Bisaya, Filipino, or English; and b.) those who were unwilling to provide informed consent.

2.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in my study is a self-made semi-structured interview guide. This instrument was validated by experts to ensure its alignment with the objective of my study. According to Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021), semi-structured interviews provide a structured framework while allowing researchers the flexibility to explore emerging ideas and ask additional probing questions during the interview process. This is well-suited for my studies as it requires a few open-ended, follow-up queries to gather data on the lived experiences of female coconut farmers.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

I complied with the proper protocols prior to data gathering. First, I sought an endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of Holy Cross of Davao College (HCDC). Second, I secured a certificate from the Society of Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics (SMILE). The next step involved obtaining signed consent forms from the participants, outlining the purpose of the study, potential risks, potential

benefits, data privacy and confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw. The research participants were given sufficient time to review the document before signing it. After obtaining their consent, the interview schedules were arranged at the most convenient time of the research participants.

During the interviews, audio recording was secured with the participants' permission and were transcribed for data analysis. Finally, after the gathering procedure, I transcribed the recorded interviews in verbatim and reviewed to ensure accuracy of the information gathered. To protect the confidentiality of my research participants', codes were used in place of their names, and the audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored. Upon the completion of the study, the audio recordings will be permanently deleted.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study through in-depth interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method. This method involved familiarizing myself with the data by reading the transcripts repeatedly; identifying and extracting statements that are significant to my study; formulating meanings from the significant statements through careful interpretation of the underlying meaning of the statements while remaining faithful to the participant's perspective; clustering formulated meanings into themes by grouping similar formulated meanings into categories; integrating results into an exhaustive description; reducing the description to the essential structure and; returning to the participants for final validation.

2.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure trustworthiness and mitigate potential harm, I secured a certificate from the Society of Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics (SMILE), which affirms that researchers like me understand and commit to moral integrity, honesty, and responsible conduct throughout the research process. Furthermore, I followed the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for the trustworthiness of qualitative research. They indicated the concepts that increase research's trustworthiness.

Credibility. Credibility was established in my research by accurately transcribing participants' responses and repeatedly reviewing the interview transcripts throughout the data analysis process. The use of Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method further enhanced credibility by ensuring that themes and interpretations were grounded in the participants' actual narratives and experiences.

Transferability. Transferability was achieved by providing thick descriptions of the participants, locale, and procedures. Younas et al. (2023) emphasized that thick description is essential for improving transferability because it allows readers to assess whether findings are applicable to other contexts.

Dependability. Dependability refers to the degree of results' consistency if the study is replicated. It is established in my study by making sure that the process is logical, traceable, and well-documented. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), dependability requires researchers to document and justify methodological decisions throughout the study.

Confirmability. This refers to the extent of neutrality in the conclusion drawn. According to Amin et al. (2020), confirmability ensures that findings are grounded in participants' perspectives rather than researcher biases. In my research, I preserved interview transcripts and documented the analytical process from extracting significant statements to developing themes following Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method. This systematic process helped ensure that the findings reflected the participants' lived experiences rather than my personal perspectives.

Results

In this chapter, I presented the succeeding narration, which comprises results based on the thematic analysis of the lived experiences of female coconut farmers. The results are organized according to the components of Psychological Empowerment by Zimmerman (1985), namely: intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral.

3.1 Intrapersonal Component

According to Zimmerman (1995), the intrapersonal component of Psychological Empowerment refers to how people think of themselves, and these includes perceived control, self-efficacy, perceived competence and motivation to control.

3.1.1 Keeping hope despite low coconut prices

In my study, it was found that participants remain hopeful despite experiencing the declining prices of coconut. Their ability to remain hopeful reflects the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment because their narratives reveal internal motivation and belief in their own ability to endure difficulties amid financial instability.

During my interviews, one of my participants mentioned that ...

Pero yung pagbaba ng presyo (kopras), yan. Pero di porket mababa yung presyo, di da kaw laban. Laban gihapon. Laban lang. Tuloy lang gihapon ang laban. (But the price of copra drops. But not because of the price crash, you won't fight. Continue fighting. The fight continues.) (P6L79PG2)

As I listened to her share her experience when the buying price of copra crashed down, I could still see the hope in her eyes. I also saw this hope in another participant who, despite the hardships, still clung to hope born of faith.

Wala nay mangopras kay bagsak presyo man. Dili mawad og paglaom kay naa man tay Ginoo nga naglantaw sa atoa. Mao man jod ang atong kuan... Ginoo, dili man jod ta pasagdan. (No one will work to produce copra because of the declining price. I won't lose hope because there is God who sees us. That is our...God, He won't forsake us.) (P12L20PG1)

The same weight of hope was visible in the eyes of another participant who wholeheartedly shared...

Limitado ang panginabuhian (atong pandemic) di ka basta -basta makagawas kay tungod pandemic lagi. Higpit masyado. Para sa mga anak, dili lang mawadan ng paglaom. (The livelihood during the pandemic was limited; we can't easily go outside because of the pandemic. Too strict. For my children, I didn't lose hope.) (P7L26PG1)

I was deeply moved by the sense of hope expressed by the participants. I witnessed how persevere they were, and I heard in their voices their commitment to coconut farming that, although tested by low prices, they remain hopeful because of their personal determination, faith, and love for their children, which are their internal sources of motivation. Thus, keeping hope despite low coconut prices demonstrates their intrapersonal empowerment

3.1.2 Participating in shared economic contribution

My research participants actively participate in a shared economic contribution. They are involved in farming, which proves their perceived competence and self-efficacy. Their actions reflect the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment.

In my interviews, one of the participants shared that...

Sa panginabuhi ko, isa man lang ang kanak trabaho... sabay ako lang nang mag-uma. Kung unan ang trabaho ng bana ko, maghagbas, sabayan ko. (In my livelihood, I have one role...to accompany my husband in farming. Whatever he's doing, cutting off tall grasses, I would do the same.) (P5L190PG4)

During our conversation, I realized that this woman was so determined that she engaged herself in physically demanding farm work alongside her husband. She did not let her husband work alone on the farm. Instead, she chose to accompany and support him in their farming activities. For me, this just shows not only a wife's commitment but a reflection of willingness to share responsibilities traditionally assigned to men. This story is similar to several other participants who said that...

Dili isalig sa bana ang responsibilidad. Kinahanglan bisag babae, naa gihapon katungod nga moalalay sa bana. (Do not rely the responsibility on your husband. It is a must that, even though we're women, we still have the right to support our husbands.) (P9L5PG1)

Para kanak, daghan kaayo kog experience. Di gyod nako pabayaang akong partner. Trabaho siya, trabaho pod ko. (For me, I have layers of experience. I won't forsake my partner. He works; I work too.) (P12L6PG1)

I was truly amazed by the diligence they showed based on their sharing. To me, their words are a reflection of their desire to work as well on the farm and not just be left at home. Our conversation brought me to think that these women consider farm work as a shared responsibility with their husbands or partners, and accompanying them at work is not forced but voluntary in their desire to contribute to the family's income and not just dependent on them. This reflects their conscious decision to share economic responsibilities with their husbands. Likewise, this shows their sense of agency and partnership in sustaining family income.

3.1.3 Acknowledging ability and taking on roles

As I spoke with my research participants, I witnessed how they recognize their abilities in leadership roles and farm management. Their recognition of their own abilities and their confidence in taking roles reflect the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment, as it reveals self-efficacy and competence. One participant explicitly expressed her sense of empowerment by emphasizing equality in capability between spouses:

Empowered gyod ko kay siyempre kuan, kanang...kaya ni mister, kaya pod ni misis. Kung unsay trabaho ni mister, motrabaho man pod ko. (I am empowered because...what a husband can do, a wife can do it too. Whatever my husband works, I work too.) (P4L672PG20)

The participant delivered those words with full confidence, reflecting her strong enthusiasm for taking physically demanding and decision-oriented tasks. From this, I realized that women's role in coconut farming is not limited to planning, handling finances, and light farm work, because some are capable of performing labor-intensive farm work just like their husbands. Another participant emphasized the value of women's work:

Siyempre makuan gayod ing bubay na awon income maam, awon pang adlaw-adlaw na trabaho. Deperensya gayod agaw maam yang may trabaho ang bubay kaysa ng way trabaho gayod. (Of course, women who have their own income and daily job hit differently. There really is a difference between a woman who has her own job and those who don't.) (P5L590PG11)

The participant's remarks reveals her perception that working creates a meaningful difference in the lives of women, particularly in enhancing their sense of independence and value.

In line with this, women also take initiative in farm operations, demonstrating involvement beyond economic contribution. One participant shared that...

Sa farmers ma'am...ako man god isip kauban, asawa, partner sa kinabuhi...ang ginabuhat jod nako, ako mismo ang moplaster. Moplano jod unsay buhaton, kinsay mo karet. Usahay ako na gyod mismo ang manguna, maglead mo adto didto sa bukid para matrabaho. (To farmers ma'am, I consider myself a companion, a wife, and a life partner...What I usually do is make arrangements. I plan on what to do and who will do the labor. Sometimes, it is I who takes the lead, leading him to go to the farm to work.) (P7L43PG1)

The participant was smiling while sharing this. I could feel from her sharing that she was proud and happy in her role of planning and leading the farm. Here I saw how important it is for every woman to acknowledge her abilities, because, like the participants who shared their stories, farming brings them joy because they can show what they are capable of. They can uplift and empower themselves.

3.2 Interactional Component

Zimmerman (1995) explained that the interactional component of psychological empowerment assesses how people understand and relate to their social environment.

3.2.1 Acquiring farming knowledge

My research participants participated in seminars and training within their access to broaden their knowledge and enhance their skills in coconut farming. Their effort and willingness to learn are a manifestation of their understanding of how external resources and knowledge can help improve their livelihood, reflecting the interactional component of psychological empowerment.

One participant shared that...

Diri ra sa barangay kay naa man mga time na naay mga seminar mga training. Nakatabang sa amoa na dungagan ang among mga kalam. (Right here in the barangay because there are times when there are seminars and training. It helps us gain additional information.) (P3L161PG5)

To me, her words reflect how she values learning that is within reach. In the same vein, another participant affirmed the practical value of these seminars, emphasizing how they provide concrete guidance in farming activities:

Usahay man god awon magseminar ngani sa agriculture...unsay buhaton paras anang mag-abono tapos mag-tanom. Maghatag man yaan sila ng guide sa mag-uuma. (Sometimes there are seminars here from agriculture...what needs to be done, for instance, in fertilizing and in planting. They provide guidance to farmers.) (P4L261PG8)

This suggests that knowledge gained from these training is not abstract, but deeply practical—serving as a compass that guides their decisions in the field. Further illustrating this, another participant recalled what she learned from the seminar she attended:

Naa, taga munisipyo agriculture. Ila gitudlo nga dapat ang one hectare equivalent sang 100 kapunuan para mabunga ang niyog gayod. Kung dili pa tig kopras, dili pa lawigon kay masayang lang. (There is, from municipal agriculture. They taught us that one hectare should be equivalent to 100 coconut trees so that the trees will really bear fruit. If it's not yet time for copra, then it should not be harvested prematurely because it will be wasted.) (P10L48PG1)

The participants expressed the importance of seminars, as they know that access to knowledge enhances competence and informed decision-making.

3.2.2 Participating during barangay meetings and assemblies

Participating in barangay meetings and assemblies is an example of community activities where my participants engaged, where they could represent the women's sector, and where they could contribute to community development. This reflects the interactional component of psychological empowerment, as it reveals participants' awareness of community structures, their understanding of the importance of social participation, and their engagement to community that influence their livelihood and well-being.

A participant said that...

Naga attend ko ug meeting. Ang babae kinahanglan mag participate sa barangay aron nay marepresent ang mga kababaihan, makatabang sa kalambuan sa komunidad. (I attend meetings. A woman should participate in the barangay to represent women and contribute to community development.) (P9L129PG3)

Another participant added that...

Aktibo ka sa tanan, kintahay magpatawag ang barangay og mga seminar, asembliya, siyempre kung magpatawag...naa gyod ka dihaa kay dili pwede nga... miyembro man ka sa komunidad. Tanan kuan, kung para sa kaayohan, maapil gyod ka, updated ka permi. (You're always active in everything: for instance, if the barangay calls for a seminar or assembly, of course, you should be present because you are a member of the community. Everything, if it's for the betterment, you should participate; you should always be updated.) (P7L141PG3)

Hearing her words, I couldn't help but appreciate the participant's awareness of the importance of being involved in community activities, and I was in awe of how she emphasized the need to participate, especially if it is for the betterment of the community. For me, she embodies a woman who

truly knows and cares about the environment she lives in. The idea of being involved was further elaborated by another participant who expressed that...

Sang mga meeting, iyan (present.) Kadtong kuan, ma'am, walay marentahan og sound system diri sa gym sa Christmas party. Ang among sound system akong gipahiram. (During meetings, I am present. When no one rented a sound system here at the gym for the Christmas party, I lent them our sound system.) (P10L61PG2)

As the participant spoke, I saw a sparkle in her eyes that showed she was proud of what she had done. Her action demonstrated that women's involvement in the community does not end with just participating in meetings but also with cooperation and volunteering to help in times of need.

3.3 Behavioral Component

According to Zimmerman (1995), the behavioral component of Psychological Empowerment refers to actions taken to directly influence outcomes.

3.3.1 Engaging in Labor-Intensive Farm Work

Women in the coconut farming sector also perform labor-intensive work. Their actions influence the sustainability of their farming. Thus, participants involvement in labor-intensive work reflects the behavioral component of psychological empowerment.

One participant shared that:

Mag-alsa ako ng mga lubi. Yang mga lubi na mga buo, ginabutang lang nami sang hurnohan. Kaya ko yaan maam. Madyaw usahay magbuak ng kuan lagi agaw...kaya ko yaan tanan. Di lang kaya ang magbunot ng lubi. (I used to carry coconuts. Those whole coconut, we would just place them in the furnace. I can do it, ma'am -I even split coconuts...I can do everything, except husking.) (P5L320PG6)

As the participant shared her experience, I also had a change of perspective on the abilities of female coconut farmers. Lifting and splitting coconuts is a tough job. I thought only men did it, but other women can do it too. I couldn't help but wonder, why is she performing this when it can be done by her husband? Is she doing this to prove that she can do what her husband can do, or because she has no choice but to do it because of the hardships of life?

One of the participants said that....

Sa pag-uma...Bisag sa kalisod, nakaya ang tanan. (In farming...despite the hardships, I endured everything.) (P6L213PG4)

As she spoke these words, two ideas struck me. First, her resilience as a farmer. Second, the hardships she endures as a farmer. Women in coconut farming are indeed resilient, but behind this resiliency lies a hidden hardship that only they can fully understand.

To the question earlier about why women coconut farmers do labor-intensive labor, another participant shared her experience that answers this question:

Paras niya kay pulis ang bana, hayahay. Pero kung sa parehas namo nga walay trabaho, panghurnal lang. ako mounay ko og trabaho para makatipid sa labor. Sayang man pod sa 500 kung maka-adto pa sa uban. (Like her, since her husband is a policeman, life is easy. But for people like us who don't have a job, just relying on labor, I personally work to save money on labor costs. It would be a waste of 500 if it were to go to other hands.) (P11L17PG1)

The participant expressed that one of the reasons why she personally works on her coconut farm is to save on labor costs. Therein lies her regret about the money she would lose if she paid. In her story, I began to wonder how many women there are who are like her who do intensive labor work just to save money. Would they do the same if they had sufficient finances? However, whatever the answer to those questions, one thing is clear to me: female coconut farmers have the ability to perform labor-intensive work in order to help sustain their farming.

3.3.2 Adapting financial coping behavior

There are times when participants are short of money; because of this, they take steps or actions to address their financial problems. This reflects the behavioral component of psychological empowerment because it shows how participants take concrete actions and develop strategies amidst financial difficulties. One of the participants shared that...

Kintahay tanaw ko na gamitonon ko ing kwarta bisan usahay way presyo or dili pa ting copras, mapugos gyud ako saan pagpa copras kay kinahanglanon man ing kwarta kay dili kaw man makautang kung dili pakaw maga copras. (Example I see that I needed the money, even if the price is low or it's not yet copra season, I am forced to make copra because the money is needed because you can't borrow money if you haven't started the process of copra making yet.) (P2L163PG5)

This story is very similar to the experience of another participant. She shared that...

Di sa iyan kalikayan ma'am (magkopras na dili schedule). Usahay, awon agaw time na... kawalad-on agaw, ma'am... balay, tapos palitonon, estudyante, sinemana isab (CARD Loan), dili sa kalikayan na maipit kaw. (It can't be avoided, ma'am (having to do copra even if it's not yet its schedule). Sometimes, there really are times when we run out of money...for household expenses, groceries to buy, students' needs, weekly payments for a CARD loan—it really can't be avoided that you end up in a difficult situation.) (P4L243PG7)

As I listened to these participants' stories, it was a manifestation for me that in times of difficulties, female coconut farmers adapt, and one of their coping behaviors is premature harvesting to meet their financial needs. The story behind this coping behavior became even clearer to me after another participant highlighted and backed her reasons for prematurely harvesting coconuts. According to her sharing...

Pakopras na kay kinahanglan na nato. Naa nay panginahanglan...naa nay bayronon, pang-tuition, naa nay nangobra (nangingil). Nangingil na ang giutangan. (We have to copra because we need to. We are in need...we need to pay the tuition, and the creditor is collecting our debt payment.) (P1L26PG1)

With their sharing, it becomes evident to me that the root cause of why participants opt to harvest coconut prematurely is because coconut farming is their primary source of income and they have limited alternative sources of income. The participant said that...

Oo, daan sa iyan na ipadayon nami (ang pagniyogan). Na alangan di nami ipadayon, unan sang ikasuporta nami sang kanami mga anak? (Yes, we continue coconut farming. Of course, because if we will not sustain it, how can we support our children?) (P5L101PG2)

Another participant added...

Gikan lang gayod yaan sang pag niyog kay ing niyog amo salang ing pyagakamangan kada trimestre. (It all comes from coconut farming because coconuts are our only source of income every trimester) (P2L230PG7)

Although I was amazed by the participants' ability to adapt in times of need, I also wondered what other sources of income they could have aside from coconut farming while I listened to them. I marveled at the bigger income they could have earned during the coconut harvest if they had not done the premature harvest. Personally, I observed the vastness of the lands, which I believed could be used to rear livestock and to grow corn, bananas, cacao, fruits, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and legume crops that could be intercropped with coconut to become an additional source of income for the participants.

3.3.3 Making financial decisions

It appears that the main role of female coconut farmers is to make financial decisions, both in farming and household. Their active implementation of financial plans and household decisions demonstrates behavioral empowerment through concrete participation and leadership in managing household and farming operations.

One participant said that...

Kay ako naggunit (sa kwarta), ako pod naga-budget. Siyempre, ako pod ang masunod. Kung unsa may kinahanglan, budgeton pod. Dili pod sobra-sobra. (Because I am the one handling the money, I also do the budget. Of course, I will be the one to follow. Whatever the need is, it has to be budgeted. It shouldn't be too much.) (P6L333PG7)

This reveals the active involvement of the participant from planning to making decisions as to how finances, both in farming and household, will be spent. This is supported by another participant who said that...

Ako magdesisyon (sa pagpangutang) kay kung hutdon da lagi agaw, di da sa kita ganahan magkuan ng kalobin-an, pagkopras, aw wa day kanato madawat. Amo yaan pigakontrol ko yaan. (I am the one who decides about loan applications, because if everything is used up, we no longer want to go to our farm land, because we won't be receiving anything. That's why I control it.) (P5L158PG3)

The participants sharing reveals that she plans loan applications carefully because if, after harvest, all their income will be used up in paying their debt, they will not be motivated to sustain farming. Listening to both participants, I learned that these participants were making financial decisions to sustain farming. They knew that if they didn't manage and make wise financial decisions, their livelihood would be affected.

Another participant proves that women are the ones who makes financial decisions by saying that...

Siyempre ako nagaplano ana...nagadesisyon kay ang bana nako, sus... trabaho ray iyaha. Walay pakialam Basta siya nilihok, basta siya motrabaho lang gyod. (Of course, I am the one who plans for that... I decide because my husband, tsk...he'll only do the labor. He doesn't care as long as he works; he only does the work.) (P12L29PG1)

The participant revealed that she is the one who does the planning for their farm because her husband only works. As I listened to her, I didn't sense in her voice that she was disappointed, but rather I sensed that she was saying that planning and decision-making were her main roles and that labor was her husband's role.

In relation to this, another participant shared that...

Kung dili mi maka-kopras man god, walay motrabaho manguha og lubi, walay ikasuplay sa pamilya labi na estudyante. Sa mga desisyon, ako gyod ang nagapanguna. (If we are not able to make copra, no one will work to gather coconuts, and there will be nothing to provide for the family, especially for the students. In making decisions, I am the one who takes the lead.) (P7L47PG2)

Based on the participants' sharing, this demonstrates the ability of women to lead not only at home but also on their farm by planning and making decisions that affect the sustainability of their farming.

3.4 Summary of findings

This study explored the lived experiences of empowerment among female coconut farmers in relation to their intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral dimensions. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method. The findings revealed key sub-themes in each component of Psychological Empowerment which are discussed below. Findings also highlighted that psychological empowerment may coexist with economic vulnerability.

3.4.1 Intrapersonal Component

The sub-themes under the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment are keeping hope despite low coconut prices, participating in shared economic contribution, and acknowledging ability and taking on roles.

Keeping hope despite low coconut prices

Female coconut farmers remained hopeful despite being tested by low copra or coconut prices. Their hope is deeply anchored both in their personal determination, deep sense of familial responsibility, and faith. This reveals internal motivation and belief in their own ability to endure difficulties amid financial instability.

Participating in shared economic contribution

Female coconut farmers consider farm work as a shared responsibility with their husbands or partners. They actively engage in farming as co-providers, reflecting their conscious decision to share economic responsibilities with their husbands as well as a growing sense of agency and partnership in sustaining family income.

Acknowledging ability and taking on roles

The participants recognize and assert their capabilities in both farm labor and leadership roles. They challenge traditional gender expectations by performing tasks typically associated with men and by taking initiative in farm planning and management. This acknowledgment of their abilities strengthens their sense of self-efficacy and empowerment.

3.4.2 Interactional Component

The sub-themes under the interactional component of psychological empowerment are acquiring farming knowledge and participating during barangay meetings and assemblies.

Acquiring farming knowledge

Participants acquired farming knowledge from agricultural training and seminars conducted at the barangay level. Their effort and willingness to learn are a manifestation of their understanding of how external resources and knowledge can help improve their livelihood, reflecting the interactional component of psychological empowerment.

Participating during barangay meetings and assemblies

Women demonstrate active community engagement by attending barangay meetings and participating in local initiatives. Their involvement reflects awareness of their role not only as farmers but also as contributors to community development and their willingness to represent the women's sector. This reflects the interactional component of psychological empowerment, as it reveals participants' awareness of community structures, their understanding of the importance of social participation, and their engagement to community that influence their livelihood and well-being.

3.4.3 Behavioral Component

The sub-themes under the behavioral component of psychological empowerment are engaging in labor-intensive farm work, adapting financial coping behavior, and making financial decisions.

Engaging in labor-intensive farm work

Some female coconut farmers actively perform labor-intensive work. Their involvement in labor-intensive work is often driven by necessity, particularly to reduce labor costs and sustain farm operations. This behavior reflects their capacity to endure hardship while contributing significantly to agricultural productivity and farming sustainability.

Adapting financial coping behavior

In response to financial constraints, participants adopt adaptive strategies such as premature copra production to meet urgent needs. This coping mechanisms highlight their resourcefulness in managing economic pressures, but it also shows their dependence on coconut farming. As the researcher, I saw the potential of integrated farming and intercropping to become an additional source of income for the participants to avoid harvesting coconut prematurely.

Making financial decisions

Women take primary responsibility for planning, budgeting, and making financial decisions, both at home and in farm operations. Their leadership in financial matters ensures the sustainability of household and farming activities. This demonstrates a high level of control, accountability, and behavioral empowerment in managing their livelihoods.

Discussions

In this chapter, I presented the findings of my study. The sub-themes under the intrapersonal component were keeping hope despite low coconut prices, participating in shared economic contribution, and acknowledging ability and taking on roles. For the intrapersonal component, the sub-themes were acquiring farming knowledge and participating during barangay meetings and assemblies. Finally, for the behavioral component, the sub-themes were engaging in labor-intensive farm work, adapting financial coping behavior, and making financial decisions. I also presented the implication for theory, implication for practice, and future directions in this section.

4.1 Keeping hope despite low coconut prices

In my study, I discovered that female coconut farmers remained hopeful despite facing hardships caused by low coconut prices. This reflects the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment because hope demonstrate internal motivation, perseverance, and belief in one's ability to overcome financial difficulties. This is consistent with Zimmerman's (1995) conceptualization intrapersonal empowerment, which encompasses self-efficacy, perceived competence, and agency. While hope emerged from the lived experiences of my research participants, the finding aligns with Dibakoane et al. (2022), who found that female farmers demonstrated resilience by adopting coping and adaptation strategies amid agricultural challenges. Furthermore, Bhullar et al. (2023) highlighted that smallholder farmers with stronger perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, and future-oriented thinking tend to demonstrate more adaptive and progressive farming behaviors, suggesting that internal psychological resources play an important role in sustaining agricultural engagement despite uncertainties.

Moreover, my findings support the work of Hong et al. (2021), whose work suggested that hope functions as an empowering internal resource amid economic difficulties. Likewise, Jimenez-Solomon et al. (2022) unveiled that hope, particularly its agency component, mediated the effects of financial hardship, indicating that hope strengthens individual's capacity to persist despite financial hardship.

While my study shows that hope fuels female coconut farmers' resiliency, some scholars challenge the idea that hope drives resilience. Ong et al. (2023) argued that the question of whether hope is a source of resilience is far from resolved. Likewise, Jalasvuori and Pihlstrom (2025) said that hope may enable inaction and the evasion of responsibility. Thus, my present finding opposes this existing literature.

My research finding also diverge from those of Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen (2025), who challenge the role of hope as an internal motivation to psychological empowerment. According to them, hope may prevent transformation rather than promote empower. In this sense, hope may represent adaptation to existing circumstances instead of manifestation of intrapersonal empowerment.

4.2 Participating in shared economic contribution

I discovered that my research participants actively assume the role as co-providers, reflecting a conscious decision and sense of agency to share economic contribution with their husbands. Recent studies suggest that women's participation in economic activities is associated with enhanced empowerment outcomes, particularly in terms of agency, self-efficacy, and decision-making power. However, such empowerment is not automatic and is shaped by household dynamics, social norms and access to resources (Quisumbing et al., 2021; Malapit et al., 2020). These findings imply that women's contribution may strengthen their intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment when accompanied by perceived control and active participation in household decision-making.

My study is consistent with the recent literatures on women being an active co-providers, which emphasizes that husbands and wives increasingly share economic responsibilities and jointly contribute to their families' well-being (Ji & Jung, 2021; Yoo, 2022). Moreover, my study supports the findings of Pleños (2022) Akbar et al. (2024), who collectively suggest that women in agricultural households extend beyond traditional domestic roles by contributing to household income generation and supporting family livelihoods. Pleños (2022) reported that women in agricultural households contribute beyond traditional domestic roles by participating in farming-related decisions, marketing activities, and income management, underscoring their role in supporting family livelihoods. While Akbar et al. (2024) revealed that farmers' wives engage in income-generating activities to assist their husbands in meeting household needs. Together, these findings highlight women's significant role as co-earners who share economic responsibilities with their spouses and contribute to household welfare.

My research findings contrast with those of Asadullah and Kambhampati (2021), who noted that women's increasing participation in agriculture and economic contributions do not necessarily translate into empowerment because women continue to encounter structural and sociocultural barriers that limit their access to resources and decision-making opportunities.

4.3 Acknowledging ability and taking on roles

I discovered in my study that female coconut farmers demonstrate psychological empowerment through their active recognition and assertion of their capabilities in both farm labor and leadership roles. They perform farm tasks associated with men, and they take initiative in planning and

managing coconut farms. This reflects the intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment, as it demonstrates perceived control, competence, self-efficacy, and agency in managing farm-related responsibilities.

This finding aligns with Othman et al. (2021), who reported that women's engagement in farming groups increases their participation in agricultural decision-making and reinforces their ability to influence farm-related responsibilities. Similarly, Okonya et al. (2021) found that women's decision-making power in agricultural activities is associated with empowerment outcomes, emphasizing the role of agency and self-efficacy in farm management.

Furthermore, my study supports Ressler et al. (2022), who reported that women aspired to broaden their participation in the agricultural sector, pursue leadership positions, and obtain greater recognition for their contributions. Similarly, Surendran Padmaja et al. (2023) found that women's participation in agricultural groups enhances their influence within the household. Together, these studies align with my research finding that female coconut farmers recognize their capabilities and actively assume leadership and decision-making roles in agriculture.

In contrast, my findings oppose Sahito et al. (2021) and Oktoria & Suharyani (2021), who reported that women farmers have limited authority in farming. Sahito et al. (2021) revealed that women farmers have limited decision-making authority. Similarly, Oktoria & Suharyani (2021) argued men still make the final decision and that they are considered the main subject in managing a farm.

4.4 Acquiring farming knowledge

I discovered in my study that the participants acquired knowledge from seminars and training conducted at the barangay level and facilitated by the municipal agriculture office. They applied their acquired insights to improve their farming practices. This reflects the interactional component of psychological empowerment because it demonstrates their ability to acquire, utilize, and mobilize knowledge and resources to effectively manage their farming activities.

This finding corroborates with Hari et al. (2024), who found that agricultural training programs significantly improved female farmers' knowledge of crop cultivation and strengthened their understanding of improved agricultural techniques. Similarly, Manuben et al. (2023) reported that training interventions enhanced farmers' knowledge and encouraged the adoption of safer and more effective farming practices. Together, these findings reinforce the importance of agricultural training as a means of improving farmers' competencies and promoting better farm management practices.

However, my findings contrast with those of Lecoutere et al. (2023), who argued that access to agricultural information and advisory services does not automatically benefit women equally because these services are often directed toward male household members, limiting women's ability to make informed decisions and exercise bargaining power. Similarly, Lecoutere et al. (2023) emphasized that lasting empowerment requires an enabling environment that addresses inequalities in access to productive resources, services, technology, and leadership opportunities. Together, these studies suggest the need for a supportive structural conditions.

4.5 Participating during barangay meetings and assemblies

It was also found in my study that the participants demonstrated active engagement by participating in barangay meetings and assemblies. Their involvement reflects an awareness of their role not only as farmers but also as contributors to community development and representatives of the women's sector. This reflects the interactional component of psychological empowerment because it demonstrates their understanding of and ability to engage with their social environment through participation in collective and community decision-making processes.

This finding aligns with Mahato and Jha (2024), who found that participation in community-based groups strengthened women's psychological empowerment by enhancing their self-efficacy, autonomy, and social participation. Similarly, Quisumbing et al. (2023) emphasized that women's empowerment extends beyond agricultural production and encompasses group participation, collective action, and engagement in broader community spaces. Together, these findings support my observation that female coconut farmers recognize their role as active contributors to both agricultural and community development.

However, my findings contrast with Hibbs (2022), who argued that civic participation alone does not automatically indicate psychological empowerment because meaningful empowerment develops through supportive environments that foster confidence, agency, and opportunities for influence.

Similarly, Lecoutere et al. (2023) emphasized that participation in collective spaces does not necessarily translate into empowerment when structural inequalities continue to limit women's influence and access to opportunities. These contrasting findings suggest that community participation reflects interactional empowerment only when individuals are able to meaningfully exercise agency and contribute to community processes.

4.6 Engaging in labor-intensive farm work

It was revealed in my study that some participants engage in labor-intensive farm work such as coconut splitting, carrying, and slashing. Their involvement in these physically demanding activities is often driven by necessity to sustain farm operations amid economic challenges. This reflects the behavioral component of psychological empowerment because the participants intentionally translate their agency into concrete actions by directly participating in farm labor to address the needs of their households and maintain agricultural productivity. This finding aligns with Timsina et al. (2023), who found that necessity often drives women to undertake agricultural roles traditionally performed by men, demonstrating how economic and household circumstances can reshape gendered divisions of labor in farming systems. Similarly, Pleños (2022) reported that women actively participate in various stages of agricultural production, highlighting their substantial contribution to agricultural work beyond traditional domestic responsibilities. Together, these findings support my observation that female coconut farmers actively engage in labor-intensive agricultural activities to sustain farming operations and support their households.

Contrary to this finding, Asadullah and Kambhampati (2021) argued that increasing women's involvement in agricultural labor should not automatically be interpreted as empowerment because participation in farming alone has not necessarily transformed women's lives or improved their power within households and communities. They emphasized that genuine empowerment requires broader changes in social norms, economic recognition, and bargaining power.

4.7 Adapting financial coping behavior

It was revealed in my study that participants engaged in early copra production as an adaptive response to urgent household financial needs. Rather than waiting for the usual production schedule, they intentionally accelerated copra production to generate immediate income and address pressing economic demands. This finding reflects the behavioral component of psychological empowerment because the participants translated their agency into purposeful actions to solve practical household problems. According to Zimmerman (1995), behavioral empowerment is manifested through actions and behaviors that individuals undertake to exert influence over circumstances affecting their lives. Moreover, Asadullah and Kambhampati (2021) noted that economic and household demands increasingly shape women's participation in agricultural activities. Together, these findings suggest that the participants actively employed context-specific strategies to navigate financial challenges and sustain their households.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Kemboi et al. (2024), it was revealed that their female farmer respondents from Nigeria develop coping behaviors such as borrowing money, selling assets, and reducing health expenses when faced with financial challenges. Parallel to this, my study found that female coconut farmers engage in premature coconut harvest as their coping behavior when faced with urgent financial needs. However, engaging in premature coconut harvesting to adapt to financial needs may suggest that they are highly dependent on coconut farming as a source of income. Sumalde (2023) highlighted that the heavy dependence of over 3.4 million coconut farmers for their economic sustenance.

In contrast, my study diverge from those of Dibakoane et al. (2022), whose evidence suggests that despite women's active involvement in agriculture, structural constraints such as limited access to financial resources, inputs, and agricultural support systems continue to restrict their ability to fully develop and implement coping strategies.

4.8 Making financial decisions

It is found in my research that the participants are the ones who make financial decisions, both at home and in farm operations. Quisumbing et al. (2023) conceptualize women's empowerment in agriculture as multidimensional, emphasizing agency as a central component. They highlighted that instrumental agency includes productive decision-making, control over income, access to financial

resources, and ownership of assets, indicating that women's empowerment is reflected in their ability to make and control financial and farm-related decisions.

Likewise, Quisumbing et al. (2021) conceptualize women's empowerment in agriculture as multidimensional, with instrumental agency including participation in decisions related to agricultural production, control over income use, and access to financial resources. These decision-making indicators form part of a broader framework used to assess women's empowerment in agricultural households. This supports Galang-Ones and Vargas (2022), who mentioned that wives do not just wait for their husbands to give them farming income, but they started to come into the process of handling the produce. Wives also are the ones who make more of the decision-making in relation to financial matters.

My study opposes Peralta (2022) who found that although women actively participate in agricultural production, men continue to dominate key decisions related to farm income allocation, crop sales, and household financial management. Similarly, my study opposes Mgalamadzi et al. (2024), who found that men predominantly control decisions regarding crop sales, income use, and household expenditure in smallholder farming households, while women's participation in agricultural activities does not necessarily translate into control over financial decision-making.

4.9 Implication for Theory

My research findings contribute to Psychological Empowerment Theory by demonstrating how its intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral dimensions are manifested in the lived experiences of female coconut farmers. My study shows that psychological empowerment is reflected not only in confidence, self-efficacy, and awareness of community resources, but also in active participation in farming, household financial management, and community involvement.

My research findings further suggest that psychological empowerment and economic vulnerability may coexist. Although my research participants exhibited agency, decision-making power, and adaptive coping behaviors, they continued to face financial constraints that let them to engage in premature coconut harvesting. This indicates that empowerment does not necessarily remove structural and economic barriers but may influence how individuals respond to such challenges.

Moreover, my study highlights the interconnected nature of the three components of psychological empowerment. Participant's confidence in their abilities encouraged them to seek agricultural knowledge and engage in community activities, which subsequently informed their farming practices and financial decisions. These findings suggest that psychological empowerment operates as a dynamic process in which intrapersonal beliefs, interactional awareness, and behavioral actions continuously influence one another within the context of rural agricultural livelihoods.

4.10 Implication for Practice

The findings of my study indicate that female coconut farmers demonstrate psychological empowerment through self-reliance, active participation in farm and household decision-making, acquisition of farming knowledge, community involvement, and the adoption of coping strategies during financial difficulties. However, their reliance on coconut farming as their primary source of income often compels them to engage in premature harvesting during periods of financial hardship. These findings suggest the Municipal Agriculture Office of Caraga, in collaboration with Agricultural Training Institute and Philippine Coconut Authority, may strengthen barangay-level training programs, particularly in Barangay Alvar, focusing on coconut-based intercropping, integrated farming systems, and agribusiness development. By leveraging existing initiatives under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan, these agencies may help coconut farmers, not just the female coconut farmers, diversify their income sources, improve livelihood resilience, and reduce the need for premature harvesting during economic difficulties.

My research findings also highlight the value of agricultural training and knowledge acquisition in enhancing farmers' confidence and decision-making capabilities. Since participants identified seminars and training programs as important sources of farming knowledge, higher education institutions may complement existing government initiatives through community extension programs and farmer education activities. Institutions such as Davao Oriental State University may contribute by providing technical assistance, research-based agricultural information, and capacity-building programs that respond to the needs of coconut-farming communities. Initiatives such as the Coco-HULIP Project demonstrate the potential of academic institutions to bridge agricultural research and local farming

practices, thereby supporting the development of more sustainable and resilient coconut-based livelihoods.

4.11 Future Directions

Future research may further examine the findings of this study using quantitative and mixed-methods approaches to validate and expand the sub-themes identified, particularly those related to financial coping behaviors, decision-making, and psychological empowerment among female coconut farmers. Since my study focused on the lived experiences of participants from a specific locality, future studies may include a larger and more diverse sample of coconut farmers from different communities and regions to determine whether similar patterns of empowerment, financial management, and coping behaviors are observed across varying contexts.

Future researchers may also investigate the influence of factors such as income level, farm size, access to agricultural services, educational attainment, and availability of alternative livelihood opportunities on farmers' coping strategies, financial decision-making, and participation in household, livelihood, and community activities. Particular attention may be given to understanding the conditions that contribute to premature harvesting and the extent to which livelihood diversification may reduce dependence on such coping mechanisms.

In addition, future studies may develop and validate standardized instruments for measuring psychological empowerment, resilience, financial decision-making, and adaptive coping strategies among women farmers. Longitudinal research designs may likewise be employed to examine how these dimensions evolve over time in response to economic challenges, agricultural market fluctuations, and changes in livelihood conditions.

Given the findings of this study, future research may also explore the relationship between psychological empowerment and economic vulnerability among women farmers. Further investigation may help determine how empowered individuals continue to navigate structural and financial constraints despite demonstrating agency, self-efficacy, and active participation in agricultural and household decision-making.

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