

Habit Turns Into Livelihood Program: Senior Citizen Preference in the Province of Laguna, Philippines

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Abstract

This study focused on the different habits of the senior citizens and the most dominant among them as the basis for the livelihood program. The program will empower senior citizens with a particular focus on enhancing their well-being and social inclusion. A quantitative research methodology was used in the study, using a researcher-made questionnaire that included the demographic profile of the respondents, identified dominant habits, and their willingness to conduct a livelihood program. Based on the findings, the majority of the respondents were aged 66-70, and most of them were married. Their economic status is as follows: they need 5,000 pesos or below to meet their monthly expenses. The majority of them have no source of income. In determining the habits, the following were highlighted: sewing, cooking, and planting. Most respondents answered planting as their enjoyable habit. Most respondents want to earn money using their habits, particularly in planting. The researcher recommended that the Department of Agriculture be the primary contributor of the seedlings and the provision of an expert trainer/ lecturer in agricultural guidelines and practices. The Negosyo or Business Center will conduct an orientation for the business owners to help the senior citizen sell their harvested crops, which can be business-to-business (B2B) transactions or business-to-consumer (B2C). This will be the source of the livelihood program to meet the personal needs of the senior citizens, and socialization through community involvement that promotes a sense of achievement.

Keywords: livelihood program, habit, senior citizen

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Introduction

In the Philippines, a senior citizen can be considered and legally accepted by the law as any resident citizen who is at least sixty (60) years old. This is based on Republic Act No. 7432, as amended by Republic Act No. 9994, also known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act. They are entitled to various benefits and privileges, including discounts on goods and services, and are covered by the national health insurance program. This act focuses on the maximization of the contribution of senior citizens to nation building, granting benefits and special privileges, and for other purposes. The constitutional principles declared policies from the Act: a) To motivate and encourage the senior citizens to contribute to nation building; b) To encourage their families and communities they live with to reaffirm the valued Filipino tradition of caring for the senior citizens. Odong (2025) stated that in Los Banos, Laguna a major milestone in elderly care has been achieved as the National Commission for Senior Citizens (NCSC), in collaboration with the local government, they official launched its Senior Citizens Community Care Center (SC3C). This will cater skills development program for those who are still interested in working.

This study aimed to provide the intervention needed for the senior citizens to provide them with meaningful assistance in engaging and positively influencing the lives of communities. The goal is to foster empowerment among individuals, with a particular focus on enhancing the well-being and social inclusion of senior citizens in the province of Laguna, particularly in the city of Santa Rosa. By providing them with livelihood opportunities, social engagement activities, and essential skills training. The program seeks to improve their quality of life, promote active aging, and strengthen their sense of belonging within the community. The Information Management (2025) explored a potential strategic partnership to enhance livelihood opportunities and agricultural training programs for senior citizens. These include home-based gardening kits, organic farming, mushroom cultivation, poultry, aquaponics, and container farming.

The study would like to recommend an improvement regarding the preferred habit that can turn into a livelihood program for the overall quality of life for senior citizens. This will help in reducing their burden of daily living expenses and ensuring their well-being. The habit addresses the physical, emotional, social, and financial needs of seniors, promoting independence, self-sufficiency, and a sense of community. By achieving its expected outcomes and long-term impacts, the study has the potential to make a meaningful difference in the lives of senior citizens, enabling them to live healthier, happier, and more fulfilling lives. This study can provide them with livelihood opportunities, social engagement activities, and essential skills training. The livelihood program can improve seniors' financial decision-making, promote financial independence, and enhance their overall quality of life. The program fosters greater independence and dignity among seniors while strengthening community ties and promoting social equity. Overall, it represents a commitment to supporting the elderly population and serves as a model for similar initiatives in other communities.

Literature Review

Senior Citizen

Carandang et al. (2019) discussed on their study that the Philippine government faced a burden of improving health and social services for both the growing elderly and young

population. The extent of discussion on aging issues and concerns, however, is minimal at best. Their study aimed to examine the perceptions of unmet needs and to explore the coping mechanisms of senior citizens across local stakeholders in an urban area in the Philippines including the province of Laguna. Senior citizen can benefit from various livelihood initiatives through national and local government partnership. The National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) is intensifying efforts for seniors with new partnerships to provide practical, income-generating skills, and the Provincial Government of Laguna offers training in areas like food processing and handicrafts. Furthermore, the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) are national programs that can also be accessed by senior citizens to sustain businesses and improve socio-economic status (Bacelonia, 2025).

Headed by Laguna Federation of Senior Citizens Association (LASCA) President Mrs. Leticia Cabiedes, four hundred (400) officers of senior citizen associations within the province joined the celebration, where representatives from each district of the province showcased their talents in dancing and singing. Featured during the event were gift giving, exchange gifts, parlor games, and raffle courtesy of Gov. Hernandez and Congresswoman Ruth Mariano Hernandez, made livelier when the couple added more raffle prizes at stake. The event was organized by the Laguna Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office. The National Commission of Senior Citizens (2025) promote the advocacy and collaboration between different stakeholders and senior citizens (SCs) to ensure the effective implementation of various programs and services, particularly on the development of SCs and advancing their health, well-being, and ensuring a supportive and enabling environment for the elderly. Senior citizens in Laguna, particularly in Santa Rosa, Laguna, are entitled to various benefits, including a monthly social pension for indigent seniors, mandatory Philhealth coverage, discounts on goods and services, and other social safety nets. The city government, through its Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA), also provides additional support through local programs.

Habits of the Senior Citizen

Juachon (2024) assessed the elderly availment of benefits and privileges in terms of health, social, financial, education and employment. The common benefits and privileges enjoy by the elderly adult include: free health check up and medicines, and discounts in private services. Free movie and access to recreational facilities; access to basic education and being offered with job opportunities fitted to their skills and talents lead to employment. One of the determined habits mentioned is to travel, based on the study of (Pasion & Abad, 2024), Senior citizen frequently possesses a plethora of life experience and insight. Asking individuals about their travels allows the exchange of experiences, thoughts, and insights acquired over time, thus promoting intergenerational understanding and communication. With the study of Streimikiene et al. (2021), governments and tourism companies across many developed nations have expanded their target markets in response to global demographic shifts and the increasing participation of seniors in leisure travel. There are significant changes in demographics occurring across the world, including a growing number of people becoming older. More individuals are reaching retirement age as well as beyond, owing to rising life expectancy. Scholars have been inspired by this shift in the population to look at the different facets of aging, such as older individuals' travel and leisure selections.

Livelihood Program

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2019) evaluated that the projected increase in the number of senior citizens entails greater support needed in terms of health care and income security for the elderly. The government intervention provides various legislation and implementing various social protection programs for senior citizens. The article by Acosta and Avalos (2018), stated that the Philippines Department of Social Welfare and Development has taken the lead in providing opportunities for income generating activities/livelihood development through the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). The task of this group is to reduce poverty and inequality by generating employment among poor households and by moving highly vulnerable households into sustainable livelihoods and toward economic stability. This note described the design and core processes of the SLP and reflects on the opportunities that the program has to improve and complement other Social Protection programs to make an impact on households' welfare, and provides recommendations to maximize its impact.

According to the Department of Budget and Management of the Republic of the Philippines, the Secretary Mina F. Pangandaman said that the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will continue to ensure that the public will benefit from government programs that provide livelihood and help ensure employment to Filipinos by allocating a total of P32.720 billion for the current year. Based from General Appropriations Act (GAA).

To fulfill the President's directive to empower our workforce, we remain committed to supporting programs that will continue to provide quality jobs and employment opportunities. The livelihood programs, educational initiatives, and safety nets we've put in place will not only provide immediate relief but also pave the way for sustainable growth.

Budget Secretary Mina Pangandaman emphasized. The allocated fund includes programs being implemented by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The TUPAD program is a community-based safety net initiative that provides temporary employment to workers in the informal sector. It specifically targets the underemployed or workers who do not receive sufficient wages in their current jobs; the self-employed individuals who work for themselves; and the displaced, marginalized workers, or those who have lost their jobs or experienced reduced income due to the pandemic.

Bacelonia (2025) report found in Philippines News Agency stated that NCSC rolls out livelihood, training programs for senior citizens. This involves the collaborations with the Department of Tourism, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and private group SM Cares to provide work and entrepreneurial opportunities to senior citizens across the country. The President stated that senior citizens, as pillar of our nation, should continue to be productive and must be part of the country's economic revolution.

Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture (DA) promotes agricultural development and growth. In pursuit of this mandate, the DA provides the policy framework, helps direct public investments, and, in partnership with local government units, provides the support services necessary to make agriculture and agribusiness enterprises profitable and help spread the benefits of development to the poor, particularly in the rural areas. The Department of Agriculture (DA) logo shows a

bundle of freshly harvested stalks of rice. The golden grains symbolize the goal that the Department seeks to attain for the sector - a bountiful harvest, manifested in agricultural productivity, food security, and self-sufficiency. The green stalks tied together represent the various agencies and offices of the Department covering its commodity and functional concerns, i.e., crops, livestock, fisheries, alongside the provision of production support, research and development, product standards, sector policy and planning, credit, marketing support, extension, training, information and education tied together in a spirit of unity and cooperation to effectively deliver the package of services essential to attain this “bountiful harvest” (https://www.dbm.gov.ph/wpcontent/uploads/OPCCB/opif_2008/OPIF/da-FINAL.pdf).

Department of Trade & Industry / Negosyo Center

Tipon et al. (2023), on their study resulted the themes on golden years, socially connected, and unknown journey. These themes highlighted the experiences and challenges faced by the senior citizens. Also, it is highly suggested that local government agencies enhance and strictly monitor the existing program that alleviates mental and physical health concerns and senior citizens’ safety and financial assistance. Garibay, H. (2024) mentioned that as the primary government agency championing consumer rights and responsibilities, the DTIs are committed to promoting fair trade practices, ensuring product safety, and empowering Filipino consumers to make informed choices. Their role is to ensure a market that is more receptive to the standards of conduct of business and industry, that allows the efficient distribution of basic commodities, and the speedy resolution of consumer concerns.

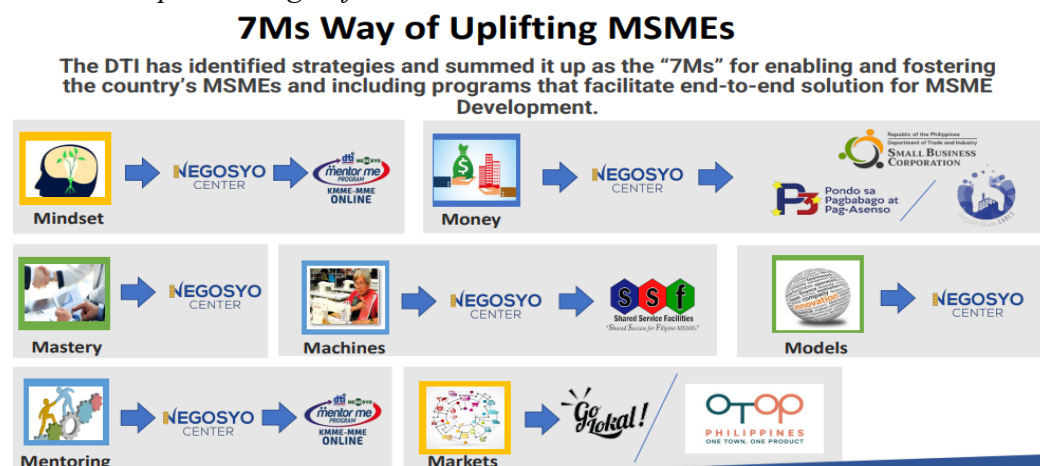
DTI (Kagawaran ng Kalakalan at Industriya) is the executive department of the Philippine government responsible for the advancement, promotion, governance, regulation, management, and growth of industry and trade. The department laid out the organizational structure of the department into the following functional groups: Competitiveness and Innovation Group (CIG); Consumer Protection Group (CPG); Industry Development and Trade Policy Group (IDTPG); Management Services Group (MSG); Regional Operations Group (ROG); and the Trade Promotions Group (TPG). Its hierarchical organization includes 27 foreign trade service posts, 17 regional offices (including Negros Island Region), 87 provincial/city/area offices, 12 bureaus, 4 attached agencies, 7 attached corporations, and 8 service offices. The department is headed by a Secretary (equivalent to Minister) and assisted by Undersecretaries (equivalent to Deputy Minister) who take charge of a certain sub-department each, and Assistant Secretaries which serve as specialized assistants of the Secretary.

Based on the research of Garibay (2024), Businesses are the engines that fuel the economic growth of every nation, democratic or not. The reason businesses are crucial to the economy is that they produce the goods and services that people use every day, the clothes to wear, the food to eat, the transportation to ride, and so on. Businesses also generate jobs. They are the largest employer, bigger than the government. When employment is healthy because of sufficient job opportunities, certainly the economy becomes healthy. Businesses are also the biggest source of tax revenue for the government to support its programs, projects, and services. From taxes, the government pays the salaries of the teachers, soldiers, police officers, and all other government employees working to provide public services. And when we say businesses, it is not only about the large business corporations that usually operate in international settings, but more so on small businesses that operate locally, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

The Negosyo Center Program is responsible for promoting ease of doing business and facilitating access to services for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Republic Act No. 10644, otherwise known as the “Go Negosyo Act,” seeks to strengthen MSMEs to create more job opportunities in the country. The Program has five centers established in the islands of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Since then, more centers have been set up nationwide, bringing ease of doing business closer to MSMEs in all regions. Negosyo Centers help stimulate entrepreneurship development as MSMEs contribute substantially in driving the Philippine economy.

Figure 1

DTI Developed Strategies for MSMEs



Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=department+of+trade+and+industry+philippines&rlz=_e

Negosyo Centers are found in strategic areas convenient for the existing and would-be entrepreneurs, such as DTI offices, Local Government Units (LGU), academe, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and malls.

Figure 2

Negosyo Center’s Skills Training and Development Programs



Source: <https://www.dti.gov.ph/good-governance-program/gad-program/>

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=department+of+trade+and+industry+philippines&rlGCC>

The study of Locquiao (2024) suggested recommendations for improving the quality of life for senior citizens in rural communities. These include providing healthcare accessibility through mobile clinics or telemedicine, establishing social support programs, collaborating with local organizations, encouraging financial security and social inclusion, and implementing a survival kit and infographics to enhance their quality of life. These measures aim to improve the overall quality of life for these elderly residents.

Methodology

Research Design

A research design is the plan or framework used to conduct a research study. It involves outlining the overall approach and methods that will be used to collect and analyze data in order to answer research questions or test hypotheses. A well-designed research study should have a clear and well-defined research question. It is a detailed plan for collecting data and a method for analyzing and interpreting the results. A well-thought-out research design addresses all these features (Singh, 2023). The study's design establishes the primary and secondary study types and, if necessary, the data-gathering techniques and statistical analysis strategy. This study's methodology used a quantitative descriptive design.

Population and Sampling

This study was conducted through convenience sampling. This is a practical and efficient method for collecting data when time, resources, or access to a population are limited. It encompassed the sixty (60) senior citizens in a selected barangay in Santa Rosa, Laguna.

Instrument

The use of a survey questionnaire in gathering data includes a demographic profile of the respondents, an identified list of habits enjoyed by the respondents, and a possible livelihood program from identified habits and preferences of the respondents regarding the habits that can be turned into a livelihood program. Some parts were modified as the source of information to answer the research questions. Filipino translation of the questionnaire was also used to get appropriate answers, considering that not all senior citizens can understand the English language.

Data Collection

In gathering data, the use of a printed form of the survey questionnaire is recommended. House-to-house distribution of the instrument employed to gather data. Each question is explained to ensure understanding, attain accuracy, and truthfulness of the response.

Data Analysis

After the data has been gathered, descriptive statistics are used to analyze the frequency distribution of tables, percentiles, and rankings.

Ethical Considerations

The research procedures were followed, met, and respected by the researchers to convey the idea of making certain that something is of a certain standard or level of excellence, results can be depended upon to be consistent and accurate, both within the study itself and in future applications. It generally refers to the information obtained or determined through a research process. The participants are eager to contribute, inclined to participate, and amenable to the study. The highlights of the data were intentionally kept hidden from others. All participants received documents that permitted them or indicated that their agreement would be suitable.

The following considerations were employed in the study: Informed Consent: This will ensure that all research participants fully comprehend the study's purpose and potential applications. They will provide a clear explanation of data usage and emphasize participants' right to withdraw their consent at any time. Another is Confidentiality: This is a dedication to the preservation of confidentiality in participants' personal information and responses. Followed by Respect for Diversity: this will encompass a wide range of participants, reflecting diverse ethnicity, genders, ages, and backgrounds. Another is the Responsible Data Handling: this will consistently and securely manage research data, adhering to data protection regulations. They will take measures to anonymize and encrypt data when necessary. To consider also the Truthful Reporting: This will ensure that the reporting or research findings are accurate and honest, devoid of exaggeration or manipulation to fit preconceived expectations or interests. And lastly, Public Interest: This will prioritize the well-being of the public and society, striving to make a positive contribution to the broader discussion on beauty standards, products, and their societal impacts.

Conclusion

This study provides the following information about the profiles of the respondents, 50% of the participants were aged 60-65 years, 27% of them were aged 66-70 years, 12% were aged 71-75 years, 5% of them were aged 76-80 years and only 3% were aged 81-90 years. This means that most of the senior citizens were in the early stages of their retirement. On the other hand, 58.33% of the senior citizens were female and 41.67% were male. This means that most of the respondents were female. Meanwhile, based on the respondents' civil status, most of them, or 67% were married, followed by 15% were single, 15% were widowed, and 3% were separated. In terms of the highest educational attainment of the senior citizen, 43% of them were high school level, followed by elementary level of 32%, 10% were college level, 8% and the least number of respondents, 7% were college graduates. The source of income of the respondents, most of them, or 82% answered none, and 18% answered through a pension. Among the senior citizens, 83% their monthly expenses were below P5,000, and 17% of them incurred P5,001 above. Finally, in the area of their health, 63% of the senior citizens have mild sickness, 35% of them have no sickness, and 2% have a serious health condition. The different habits identified here, 52% of the respondents chose gardening, 18% chose cooking, 17% of them have the habit of sewing, 8% chose cleaning, and 2% or the least answered, were painting and carpentry. All the senior citizens have the desire to earn money and identified that earning money through planting can be their possible livelihood program. The respondents also chose plants as source of income 20% of them answered pechay or snow cabbage, 18% answered talong or eggplant, meanwhile, 17% of them chose lettuce & okra or ladies fingers, 13% answered mushroom, 10% spinach, 3% mustasa or mustard leaves and the least number got 2% which was sayote or pear-shaped gourd.

Based on the gathered data, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the respondents were in the ages ranging 60-65.
2. Majority of the respondents are female.
3. The respondents' civil status, most of them or 67% were married.
4. The highest educational attainment of the senior citizen, 43% of them were high school level.
5. The source of income of the respondents, most of them or 82% answered none.
6. Among the senior citizens, 83% their monthly expenses were P5,000 below.
7. Among the senior citizens, 83% their monthly expenses were P5,000 below
8. The different habits identified that majority or 52% of the respondents chose planting.

9. The respondents also chose plants as source of income 20% of them answered pechay or snow cabbage, 18% answered talong or eggplant.

Recommendation

The researchers would like to recommend the following:

1. After identifying senior citizens preferred habit, the researchers can collaborate or have partnership with the Department of Agriculture. The following activities can be requested to their office:
 - 1.1 To be a contributor of seedlings identified in the survey results.
 - 1.2 To provide an expert trainer/ lecturer in agricultural guidelines and practices.
2. Researchers can have business linkages through the Negosyo in facilitating selling the harvested crops. The following activities can be requested to their office:
 - 2.1 Orientation for the formation of cooperative groups intended for the senior citizens.
 - 2.2 The office can mediate between the business owners in relation to the output of the program.
3. The activity is sustainable through the government agencies intervention, extension program is highly recommended to reach out more barangays in Santa Rosa Laguna and it can be extended to the province of Laguna in Philippines.

Limitations

This is a quantitative study that covers the selected barangays. The coverage of the study is limited to the habits only; other areas, such as talents and skills, are not included. The number of respondents can be expanded to more than sixty senior citizens.

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