

## LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG FILIPINO OLDER ADULTS LIVING IN THE COASTAL AREA

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### Abstract

Perhaps an all-encompassing aspiration of everyone who has ever walked the earth is to have lived his/her life to the fullest. However, the life experiences of each individual are the products of the decisions they make. This study aimed to investigate the relationship of older adults in Cabulijan, Tubigon, Bohol, Philippines' self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people to the level of their life satisfaction. Specifically, it sought to address the following queries: Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people, and relationships with other people and the level of life satisfaction of older adults? Which of the factors of self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people significantly contribute to the level of life satisfaction of older adults? Fifty respondents 65 years and older comprised the respondents of this research. The method used was cross-sectional explanatory design. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Spearman's rank correlation were the statistical tools applied in this study. The findings indicate support for the research hypotheses advanced in this study that posited the existence of a significant relationship between social provisions received from other people and relationships with other people, respectively, tended to manifest higher life satisfaction. This implies that the research respondents with higher ratings of each of the social provisions received from other people and relationships to other people tend to maintain higher life satisfaction whereas self-esteem has been found out to be of no significant relationship with life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** life satisfaction, older adults, relationships, self-esteem, social provisions

### Abstrak

*Kepuasan Hidup Lansia Filipina yang Tinggal di Wilayah Pesisir.* Kehidupan yang berkualitas merupakan dambaan semua orang. Namun, kesempatan tersebut tidak dapat dirasakan oleh semua orang karena pada hakikatnya, kehidupan yang berkualitas sangat bergantung pada pilihan hidup tiap individu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan antara self-esteem pada lansia di Cabuljan, Tubigol, Bohol, Filipina, dukungan, dan hubungan sosial terhadap tingkat kepuasan hidup pada lansia. Penelitian ini juga berfokus menjawab beberapa pertanyaan penelitian sebagai berikut: apakah terdapat hubungan yang bermakna antara self-esteem, dukungan sosial, dan hubungan sosial serta tingkat kepuasan hidup pada lansia? Manakah di antara faktor-faktor, seperti self-esteem, dukungan, dan hubungan sosial yang sangat berpengaruh terhadap tingkat kepuasan hidup pada lansia? Sebanyak 50 responden dengan rentang umur 65 tahun ke atas bersedia untuk menjadi responden pada penelitian ini. Metode yang digunakan ialah penelitian eksplanatori dengan desain cross-sectional. Kemudian, instrumen statistika penelitian yang digunakan ialah seperti frekuensi, persentase, rata-rata tertimbang, dan Spearman's rank correlation. Pada penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa hasil penelitian mendukung hipotesa penelitian yang menyebutkan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang bermakna pada dukungan dan hubungan sosial dengan kepuasan hidup yang tinggi. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa para responden dengan dukungan dan hubungan sosial yang tinggi memiliki kepuasan hidup yang tinggi juga, namun ditemukan juga bahwa self-esteem tidak memengaruhi tingkat kepuasan hidup pada lansia.

**Kata Kunci:** dukungan sosial, hubungan sosial, kepuasan hidup, lansia, self-esteem

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### Introduction

“Satisfaction is not always the fulfillment of what one wants; it is the realization of how bless-

ed that person is for what he has” (Ackerman, 2020). Accordingly, satisfaction with life involves a total scoring of one's existence that incorporates attitudes and feelings at a certain point,

which range from positive to negative. There are three indicators of well-being, namely positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction (Gilmar, et al, 2000).

When a person is satisfied with his life, happiness follows. One can ascertain that someone's life is well spent by assessing how that person experiences life in accordance to what he went through and on how he engages with particular life scenarios; he can either be happy or the other way around. The world population is aging rapidly as reported in the news and reflected in statistics. Based on The United States Census Bureau's report, the older adult population was 7% or more of the total population in many countries and this number will increase more than 60% in 15 years (He et al., 2016). This celebrated issue places the well-being of older people in the limelight, wherein the conceptualization that being "old" is a blessing, a gift, and a triumph has blossomed. Older adults are believed to have an edge in dealing with what life has to offer based on the journey that they have gone through. Addressed as senior citizens about their chronological age, older adults can best assess their lives through retrospection. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory states that motivations in the achievement of needs occur at certain times and that some needs take precedence over others (McLeod, 2020). At this point, it is worth mentioning that older adults have trod the path upon which the specific needs shared by Maslow through his theory have been experienced.

Worldwide records showed that there are 893 million people who are aged 60 years and older, and it is estimated that a rise in the number of this population will happen in the year 2050 (Cire, 2016). At that time, there will be a tremendous increase in economic and social demands worldwide for this age group. Governments all over the world, therefore, have to formulate workable strategies, implement programs, and enact policies to contribute positively to the life quality of this baby boomer generation (Knickman & Snell, 2002).

In most developed countries in the world, 65 years is the accepted chronological age to be considered an "elderly"-which is also approximately the same period when older adults begin to receive pension benefits. However, there is no criterion set by the United Nations as the standard numerical age for this population. Nonetheless, the consensus has been that 60 years and up is the cut-off age for one to be referred to as an older adult (The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018).

This study is anchored primarily to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. He introduced this concept in 1943 in his paper entitled "A Theory of Human Motivation," which was modified from his book that was originally called "Motivation and Personality." In his work, he explained how people are motivated to fulfill their basic longings and wants before advancing to the next level. Maslow attempted to determine what made people happy and how this happiness came to be realized based on the actions of people. He asserted that before reaching the peak which is self-actualization, a person must first fulfill the lowest level of the pyramid. The lowest level constitutes the most basic needs of humans, such as water, food, sleep, and warmth. Once the lowest level has been satisfied, the second level, which comprises love and belonging, must be met. Thereafter, one can step up to the third level, which is allocated for safety and security. The fourth level of the pyramid comprises self-esteem and self-actualization, the topmost of Maslow's theory (Cherry, 2020).

Meanwhile, Hildegard Peplau's interpersonal relations theory puts the spotlight on the individual who tries to reduce the anxieties brought about by his wants and needs, the environment which comprises forces outside of the person, including his/her culture and health, symbolizing the positive flow of personality and some other production processes, constructive, creativity, personal growth, and development and how he thrives in his community. Peplau's theory mainly highlights the interpersonal relationships of the geriatric while simultaneously des-

cribing the different roles exercised by the professional nurse while assisting. The nurse and the patient work hand-in-hand to identify and resolve the latter's health problems. The nurse, in general, should use effective tools for communication and provide answers to clarifications. He/she must be accepting. The nurse has to remember the six key nursing roles, namely, advisor, substitute leader, stranger, resource provider, and teacher, all of which need to be adopted by the nurse when relating to the patients/clients (Arkansas State University, 2018).

A literature review on a study of life satisfaction stated, "Authentic happiness sprouts from the satisfaction of deeds which are thoroughly performed and of seeing things to be beautifully crafted" – Antoine de Saint-Exupery. In 1960, the term "quality of life" came into existence, which introduced the idea that material gratifications cannot equate to life happiness but there are many factors that can be considered contributors to one's happiness and life satisfaction (Ackerman, 2020).

Ruut Veenhoven states that life satisfaction is synonymous with happiness and subjective well-being. However, the term "satisfaction of life" has a great advantage over the two terms as the former does not only measures subjective emotions but also looks at the overall evaluation of life (Veenhoven, 2012). This study aimed to investigate the relationship of older adults in Cabulijan, Tubigon, Bohol, Philippines' self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people to the level of their life satisfaction. Specifically, it sought to address the following queries: Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people, and the level of life satisfaction of the older adults? Which factors among self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people significantly contribute to the level of life satisfaction of older adults? The research hypothesis is that life satisfaction is affected by self-esteem, social provisions

received from other people, and relationships with other people.

## Methods

The method was a cross-sectional explanatory design. Ethics clearance was obtained from the institutional ethics reviewer. Multiple forms were accomplished to ensure safety and confidentiality for the respondents. For almost a month, the ethics reviewer scrutinized the study until approval was finally issued for its conduct. This study gathered data at a single period and explained the relationship between three independent variables and one dependent variable. The scope of the study was limited to *Purok 3*, Sitio Redland of Barangay Cabulijan, Tubigon, Bohol, the Philippines for accessibility to both the researcher and the respondents.

The whole population was utilized as the sample. Barangay Cabulijan of Tubigon, Bohol, Sitio Redland, Purok 3 was the setting of the study. This was also the location where the respondents were chosen. Barangay Cabulijan consists of six *Purok* with a total land area of 157.4208 hectares. It is situated 2.037 kilometers away from the town proper. Mater Dei College is in Sitio Redland. Many great landmarks could be seen here. In 2019, it had a total actual population of 2,540 and an actual total household of 598. Fifty respondents aged 65 years and above were the targeted respondents in this study. Nineteen of the respondents were males and 31 were females. Their names were taken from the official census of the Barangay Health Center's logbook. The chosen tools were adopted from related studies where they were utilized as research instruments. The Index of Life Satisfaction (LSIA) measures the feeling of satisfaction on well-being to identify "successful" aging in older people. The authors of this instrument are Franchignoni, Tesio, Ottonello, and Benevolo (Neugarten et al., 1961). The Self-Esteem Questionnaire was created by Dr. Morris Rosenberg (1965), the Social Provisions Scale was advanced by Carolyn E. Cutrona and Daniel W. Russell (1987), and the Relationship

Scale Questionnaire was authored by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). After the approval of the barangay captain of Cabulijan, Tubigon, Bohol to conduct this study among the aged constituents of his jurisdiction was obtained, the questionnaires was distributed to 50 respondents aged 65 years old and above who are residents of Tubigon, Bohol. They were chosen for accessibility reasons, and they represented the whole population of this age group in the community.

Data collection was conducted as follows. First, the respondents were asked to give their voluntary consent for their participation in the study. An explanation about the study was shared with the respondents. Then, the questionnaires were distributed to elicit the needed responses. The data gathered were sorted, analyzed, and interpreted. Thereafter, the data were presented in a table using frequencies and percentages. Spearman's rank correlation was used to determine the relationship between each of the factors of self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people, and life satisfaction.

## Results

The respondents' demographic profiles consisted of male and female older adults aged 65 years and above, coherent, and residents of Baran-

gay Cabulijan. Table 1 shows that 78% of the respondents indicated that they have life satisfaction, and 88% have self-esteem. On the social provisions from other people, 58% stated that they received such provisions, while 42% did not. A slight difference was noted on Relationship With Other People, as 52% indicated having relationships with other people while 48% did not, showing that the number of respondents who have relationships with other people is almost equal to those without relationships with other people.

Table 2 shows the positive correlation coefficients of each of the independent variables of self-esteem, social provisions, and relationship with others when pair-wise correlated with the dependent variable life satisfaction. Self-esteem has weak a positive correlation coefficient with Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.24, which is within the critical value interval of  $\pm 0.28$ . This results in the non-rejection of the null hypothesis of the non-existence of a significant relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction. On the other hand, each of the independent variables of social provisions and relationship with others has a moderate positive correlation with life satisfaction. Moreover, since a Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.51 for social provisions and a Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.35 for relationships with others are beyond the critical value interval of  $\pm 0.28$ , the null hypotheses of the non-existence of a significant relationship

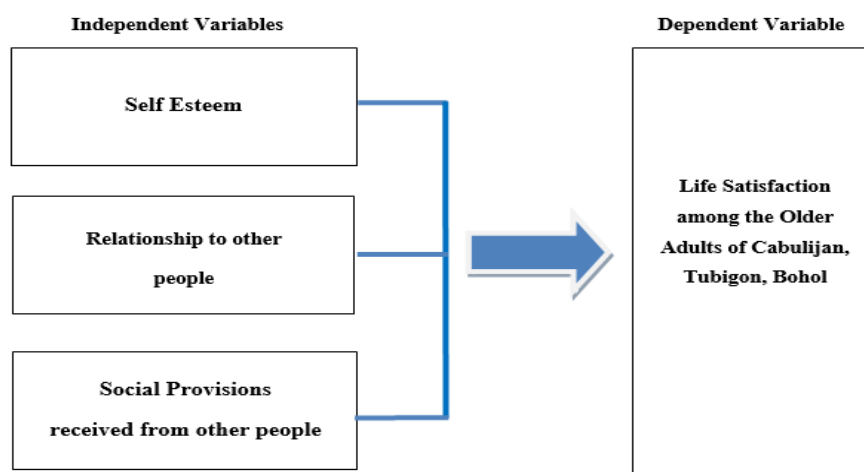


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram Showing the Relationship of the Independent and Dependent Variables

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Among the Four Variables

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Life Satisfaction		
Strongly Agree	1	2
Agree	39	78
Disagree	10	20
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Self-Esteem		
Strongly Agree	1	2
Agree	44	88
Disagree	5	10
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Social Provisions from Others		
Strongly Agree	0	9
Agree	29	58
Disagree	21	42
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Relationships with Others		
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	26	52
Disagree	24	48
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 2. Pairwise Correlation Summary of Self-Esteem, Social Provisions Received from Other People, and Relationship with Other People on Life Satisfaction

Independent Variables	Critical Value Intervals	Spearman's $\rho$	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Decision on H0	Relationship Significance
Self-Esteem	$\pm 0.28$	0.24	-0.04	0.54	Do not Reject	Not Significant
Social Provisions	$\pm 0.28$	0.51	0.36	1.04	Reject	Significant
Relationships with Other People	$\pm 0.28$	0.35	0.07	0.52	Reject	Significant

between social provisions and life satisfaction and between the relationship with others and life satisfaction are rejected. In light of the foregoing, the amount of evidence is sufficient to support the research hypotheses advanced in this study that a significant relationship exists between social provisions and life satisfaction and between the relationship with others and life satisfaction. This implies that the respondents with higher ratings in each of the factors of social provisions and relationship with others tend to manifest higher life satisfaction.

## Discussion

The respondents agreed that they are satisfied

with their lives, and the majority credit this to their relationships with other people and social provisions received from other people who have been present in their journey through life. In a study on older individuals, older adults perceive time as limited because of their relative proximity to death. Thus, their ultimate goals are focused around social relationships that seem more gratifying and enjoyable, as well as activities that are more meaningful, consistent with the prevailing motive to improve one's life experiences (Gana et al., 2013). Table 1 presents these two variables as almost always concurrent with each other because, in most studies, life satisfaction reflects how a person perceives and evaluates himself/herself. Likewise, the people

who attested that self-esteem was of great value found life to be not as satisfying as they enjoyed it. Social provisions received from other people and relationships with other people were almost equal in their percentages, as most of the respondents agreed to have savored these factors. The findings from the study “Self-esteem and Life Satisfaction among University Students of Eastern Uttar Pradesh of India: A demographical perspective” showed that the effect of self-esteem level on satisfaction is important because high self-esteem reflects an elevated satisfaction with life. Self-esteem is the reflection of a person's overall evaluation of his/her worth. It is a booster of life satisfaction. Higher self-esteem indicates more satisfaction in a person's life (Patel et al., 2018). However, in this study self-esteem was not directly related to life satisfaction among the older adult respondents.

The independent variables presented in Table 2, namely, self-esteem, social provisions from others, and relationships with others demonstrated that they contribute holistically to the well-being of a person. These three serve as constructs that can be used to gauge a person's satisfaction with life. They are significant variables that measure how a person lives a life of enthusiasm and fulfillment. Previous studies that support these findings include a study on the self-esteem and social relations of adolescents with learning disabilities, where 78 percent of the respondents felt that they were understood well by their friends; the research also indicated that 82 percent of the respondents felt that they were understood better by their parents because of a good relationship between their parents and their teachers (Abraham, 2010). These studies obtained results that were consisted of the views expressed by the respondent in the present research.

Social provisions received from other people and relationships with other people constitute the two variables that were significantly related to life satisfaction. This means that the elderly find that social provisions received from others and relationships with other people are two

springboards from which they obtain strength and confidence as they journey through life.

In a study on social provisions, Weiss posited six types of social provisions as follows attachment, which he considers emotional support; social integration, in which a person belongs to a group with common interests; opportunity for nurturance or being a provider of care to others; the reassurance of worth by examining one's value; reliable alliance, which refers to access to assistance in times of need and guidance for the provision of advice when wanted (Chiu, et al., 2016). According to Weiss's theory, each type of support provision is embedded in a network of social connections, and multiple types of social provisions may occur in a single connection. Weiss further asserted that all six types of social provisions are crucial because if one is lacking, people may become at risk for social and/or emotional loneliness. This could lead to poor concentration, distress, tension, disturbed sleep, and disengagement, along with depression and generalized dissatisfaction.

Likewise, a study on life satisfaction related to relationships with other people concluded that strong support for the role of interpersonal relations in life-satisfaction had been observed among the Chinese elderly. Life satisfaction can vary substantially based on one's values and priorities, consequentially patterned by gender and one's place in the life course (Cheng, 2006). Self-esteem is not significantly related to life satisfaction, as it has a weak positive correlation coefficient with a Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.24, which is within the critical value interval of  $\pm 0.28$ . This results in the non-rejection of the null hypothesis of the non-existence of a significant relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction (Suzanna, 2016).

This study is restricted in terms of the sample, namely, the elderly aged 65 years and above, and the location of the study, which is limited to the nearest Barangay for accessibility. The time frame was also narrowed down to a specified period to ensure the timely accomplishment

of the endeavor. However, this finding provides the understanding for the care providers how to create an environment where the people, especially older adults can achieve their satisfaction in their life.

## Conclusion

The older adults of Cabulijan, Tubigon, Bohol, Philippines derive their level of life satisfaction from the social provisions that they receive from other people and their relationships with other people. Taken together, although the three independent variables are positively related to life satisfaction, social provisions received from other people and relationships with other people demonstrated significant relationships with life satisfaction. Spearman's rank correlation underscored the positive correlation coefficient of each of the independent variables of self-esteem, social provisions received from other people, and relationships with other people when pair-wise correlated with the dependent variable life satisfaction.

The learning from this evidence-based research is conclusive; this special age group required multiple interactions and socialization with people from all walks of life. Significant others, such as the elderly's family, relatives, and friends play a crucial role in fostering satisfaction in this age group. It is believed that older adults will continue to feel satisfied with their lives if they are consistently assured of being cared for by people whom they can lean on. Thus, it is recommended that a special recreational program with specific activities be formulated for them, including therapeutic communication sessions. This study may be replicated using a bigger sample size with variables that are more related to life satisfaction. Another avenue of research would be caregivers' experiences and attitudes in caring for the elderly.

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