

## **Dependency, Disengagement, and Life Satisfaction: The Challenges Confronting the Elderly of Maramag, Bukidnon, Philippines**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Filipino values and traditions say that the family's elderly have to be taken-care of at home, be loved, respected, and valued. But modernization tends to over-run this ideal way. In fact, the Filipino elderly has become one of the most marginalized sectors. This study was conducted to describe the life, problems, challenges, and pressing issues of the Filipino elderly. Three groups of the elderly of Maramag, Bukidnon were considered: An Indigenous People's (IP) Community, a group of retired government employees, and a community of farmers. The study focused on financial and physical dependency, disengagement, life satisfaction, challenges, and on issues confronting the elderly. The study is descriptive using survey, in-depth interview, and a key informant interview. This study revealed that the Filipino elderly are confronted with poverty and other pressing issues. Nevertheless, they are happy. It is also revealed that intermarriages have altered the once strong kinship of the indigenous peoples (IP) community. Likewise, is apparent that among the three sectors (IPs, farmers, and retirees), the IPs are the most marginalized.

**Keywords:** *elderly, dependency, life satisfaction, challenges, Filipino culture*

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## INTRODUCTION

Aging, though considered a natural process, is one of the most profound puzzles of human life. Hence gerontology studies have become one of the most important fields of inquiry in Sociology today. There is a call to study the life of the elderly that will describe their life and present their concerns, problems, challenges, and pressing issues. Be it noted that in the Philippines there is a dearth of systematic studies concerning this group (Villegas, 2014) because most sociological studies are focused on the younger age groups.

Asian societies are known to have a warm and kind environment for the elderly. They occupy a higher social rank and are revered as a reference of wisdom and dignity. They are also considered as keepers of customs and traditions (Carlos, 1999). In the Philippines, *lolas* and *lolos*, as the elderly are popularly called are treated with warmth and affection. Traditionally, they are being taken- cared of by their children and close relatives. Times may have changed, but still, most Filipino communities do value their elderly. This culture finds support in the 1987 Constitution that laid down the principles concerning the elderly to promote their welfare and guard them against social fraud.

Section 9 of Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states, "The state shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all." The elderly is a part of this Filipino vision. While section 11 of Article 13, in particular, mandates the government and its agencies to extend priority services to the elderly. It states, "The state shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and social services available to all people at affordable cost. There shall be a priority to the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The state shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers." More so, because Filipino families value their elderly, the constitution mandates the family to be warm and cordial to their olds. Article XV, section 4 states "the family has to take care of its elderly members although the state may also do so through just programs of social security" (De Leon, 2002).

Practically, as individuals grow old, they become weak, are prone to diseases, physical impairments, and are likely to suffer disengagement from family, work, and social life. This statement is giving us an idea that the elderly is vulnerable and perhaps, in some cases, helpless. They are considered to be one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Hence, the Philippine society established

agencies that will give social security protection and promote the welfare of the elderly. The Social Security System (SSS) was organized in 1957. It affords cash benefits to members who can no longer work due to old age. There is also the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) that was established on May 31, 1937. It provides the needs, benefits, and services to its members. It affords social security services, loans, economic empowerment, pre-need plans, and general insurance. However, this agency limits its services to government employees only (Carlos, 1999). Be it noted however, that GSIS and SSS give services only to their members. They do not extend to the rest of the elderly population who happens to be the most marginalized, the unemployed and those who are working in the informal sector. Ubalde (2011) found out that majority of the unemployed are the most vulnerable. Hence they have to be prioritized in government programs particularly by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

On the other hand, DSWD is mandated by the Philippine government to deliver public services to the elderly. The department believes in the principle that it is the "individual elderly's right to have access to services and opportunities that will help him/her achieve a productive, wholesome and satisfying life". The department runs homes for the aged but is limited to the abandoned elderly only. It runs three residential facilities, the Golden Acres in Bago, Bantay, Tagum Home for the Aged in Tagum, Davao and the home for the elderly at Talon, Zamboanga City (Carlos, 1999). However, these homes are too few to house the number of poverty-stricken and abandoned elderly.

While some senior citizens are viewed to be dependent, there are those who have remained "resources." Cruz (1999) found out that some elderly continue to support even their grown-up children despite their very meager resources and declining health. This statement finds support in the study of Sorita (2004) that describes the elderly to be willing to support their children. Some extend financial assistance while some give services as care-givers to their grandchildren. These contributions, however, give them a "high regard" for themselves.

However, while Filipino society claims to be kind and warm to the elderly, some studies show that many senior citizens are neglected and are victims of physical, psychological and financial abuses. Physical abuse includes hitting, sexual assault, and burning. Some also experienced psychological abuse through verbal assaults, threats, humiliation, and ridicule. Financial abuse includes misuse of property or money, theft, or forcing to sign legal documents. Nevertheless, abuse of the elderly does not only happen at home. Many senior citizens experience not being well-treated in hospitals. They are led to many people before they are given attention. Some are also refused to be given medications. Physical abuse and psychological

abuse are also experienced by those who are housed in residential institutions. There are even issues on euthanasia on terminally ill elderly (Carlos, 1999).

The Philippine government, in trying to uplift the lives of the elderly passed RA 7432 otherwise known as the Senior Citizens Act. It stipulates the construction of Senior Citizens Center, Senior Citizens Assistance Center, and the Senior Citizens Day Care Center. In 2003, RA 7432 was amended to RA 9257 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act and later amended into RA 9994 in 2010. It aims to recognize the rights of senior citizens to take their proper place in society and make it a concern of the family, community and government, motivate and encourage the senior citizens to contribute to nation-building, provide comprehensive health care, and provide 20% discount and exemption from value-added tax on the sale of goods and services like medicines, transportation, physician's professional fees, laboratory fees, hospital facilities and clinics, and in leisure and amusement like cinema houses, concert malls, circuses, etc. (Biron, 2010).

Filipino traditions and values say, our elderly are to be taken-cared of, be loved, valued and be respected. However, it has been observed that some of our elderly are in abject conditions. They are stricken with economic and physical dependency while experiencing disengagement from family and social life. Some are not even treated fairly by their families. Does growing old mean to be alone, to be detached, deprived and lonely? What is the condition of our elderly? Are they contented and satisfied? Has modernization overrun our traditional way of caring our elderly?

There is a need to study the life of the elderly that would describe their life, problems, challenges, and pressing issues. Hence, this study was conducted. The findings may provide information to different institutions and agencies of the Philippine government and its LGUs and maybe a good basis for their activities and programs. The results of this study could also be a potent benchmark on extension programs.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study is descriptive. It describes the dependency of the elderly and how disengaged they are from their families, work, and social organizations. The study also presents the levels of satisfaction of the elderly, correlating it with dependency and disengagement. It also digs on their needs, concerns, and challenges. It is quantitative and qualitative in approach. The researcher used a triangulation method of survey, in-depth interview, and key-informant Interviews (KII). The study was conducted in the Municipality of Maramag, Bukidnon. Three sectors were considered in the study: a group of farmers, retirees, and an Indigenous People's (IP) community. The top three farming barangays of Maramag were picked to

represent the farming community. These were South Poblacion, Base Camp, and Dagumbaan. The retirees of CMU represented the retiree's sector, and the IP community of Panadtalan represented the IP Community. The survey had seventy-four respondents: 22 IPs, 22 retirees, and 30 farmers.

The survey used interview method since it was seen to be more feasible than questionnaires with the assumption that most of the respondents have eye-defects because they are already old. Some also do not have the ability to read because they have not gone to school. Likewise, the presidents of the Senior Citizens Organizations of South Poblacion, Dagumbaan, Base Camp, Panadtalan and the Senior Citizens Federation president were considered as key informants.

The study obtained quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, while the quantitative data on dependency, disengagement, and life satisfaction were presented through frequency count and percentages. The relationship between dependency and life satisfaction and between disengagement and life satisfaction were determined through Cross-tabulation Method.

The study observed research ethics and protocols. It secured the consent of the mayor of Maramag, Bukidnon, the federation president of the Senior Citizens organization, the respective presidents of the Senior Citizens Organization of South Poblacion, Dagumbaan, Base Camp and Panadtalan, and the president of Central Mindanao University.

Table 1  
*Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	36	48.6
	Female	38	51.4
	Total	74	100.0
Civil Status	Married	53	71.6
	Widow/widower	19	25.7
	Separated	2	2
Religion	Catholic	61	82.4
	Non- Catholic	13	17.6
	Total	74	100.0
Educational Attainment	No Education	7	9.5
	Elementary	38	51.4
	High School	10	13.5
	College	19	25.7
	Total	74	100.0
Age	Minimum	60	
	Maximum	83	
	Average	70	
No. of years of Residence	Minimum	1	
	Maximum	70	
	Average	36.83	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With 74 respondents coming from three different sectors, the study describes the financial and physical dependency of the elderly. It describes how disengaged they are from their families, work, and social organizations. Their levels of satisfaction as correlated with dependency and disengagement, and their needs, concerns, and challenges are also presented.

### Physical Dependency

Physical dependency refers to the elderly's physical condition, describing their health and their capacity to do things by themselves independently using the Katz Index of Independence in Activities in Daily Living (ADL). It is a standardized instrument that measures one's independence in bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, continence and feeding. ADL claims to be the most appropriate instrument that assesses the functional status of the elderly in performing daily activities and is widely used in clinics and home environments.

Table 2  
*Level of Physical Dependency*

Type of Respondent	Physical Dependency					High (very independent)	Total
	low (very dependent)	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0		
IP	0	2	1	1	1	17	22
Retirees	2	0	0	1	0	19	22
Farmers	0	0	0	0	0	30	30
Total	2	2	1	2	1	66	74

Table 2 shows that 100% of the farmers have a high level of physical independency while only 86 % of the retirees and 77.3% of the IPs fall to the same level. These respondents can bathe and dress very independently. They can go to the toilet alone, can transfer themselves independently, can control urination and defecation and can get food from the plate into mouth very independently. However, there are few IP and Retiree respondents who are physically dependent. They need the assistance of other family members.

This independence, however, does not mean they are totally free from sickness and diseases. The respondents complain about hearing impairments, and chronic illnesses like arthritis, diabetes, cough, colds, etc. They see themselves to have deteriorated physically. This information finds support in the work of Maciones (2009) who calls the elderly as the final stage of life, which begins around mid-sixties. At this stage, the energy of the elderly starts to decline, gray hairs and wrinkles are becoming apparent too. Their bones become weaker, and injuries take longer to heal. Chronic illnesses as arthritis and diabetes and life threatening diseases like heart diseases and cancer are also manifested. There is also a decline in sensory abilities like taste, sight, touch, smell. However, amidst physical limitations,

older persons are not discouraged (Maciones, 2009). This statement is true among the respondents of this study. They said, "dawat na namu ang among kahimtang" (We have accepted our fate).

### **Independence on Activities of Daily Living**

The study also measures the elderly's independence in performing the activities of daily living. Using the Lawton Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale (IADL), the study described the ability of our elderly to shop or go to market, prepare food, do the housekeeping, do the laundry, the capability to travel, responsibility to take medications, ability to handle finances, and ability to operate cellphones. IADL describes how a person is functioning at present.

Same with the findings on physical dependency, the farmers are seen to have a high level of independence on activities of daily living at 66.7%, followed by the retirees having 59.09% and IPs with 54.5%. These data means that the farmers are more able in performing the daily activities than retirees and IPs. These activities include going to the market alone, preparing food, performing housekeeping, doing the laundry, traveling alone, taking medications alone, and managing financial matters independently like paying bills personally.

Table 3  
*Level of Independence on Activities*

Type of Respondent	Function/Independence on Activities of Daily Living								Total
	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	
IP	0	1	4	2	3	4	8	0	22
Retirees	1	0	2	2	4	5	2	6	22
Farmers	0	0	2	3	5	5	11	4	30
Total	1	1	8	7	12	14	21	10	74

### **Financial Dependency**

Table 4 shows that 95% of the retirees and 76.7% of the farmers have a regular income, while only 45.5% of the IPs have. The IP is financially poorer than the other two sectors. This study finds support in the findings of Villegas (2004) from where she concludes that despite the efforts of the Philippine government and the favorable culture of Filipinos, many of our elderly are found to be in abject conditions. Most of them live in misery. They are stricken with economic dependency. The population

of the elderly ranked eight among the nine sectors with the highest poverty incidence. While the well-off elderly rely on their savings and investments, the poor depends on pensions and state subsidies on health expenditures. However, the country's pension scheme does not cover the unemployed and those who worked in the informal sector.

Table 4  
*Financial Dependency*

Type of Respondent	Regular Income		Total
	No	Yes	
IP	12	10	22
Retirees	1	21	22
Farmers	7	23	30
Total	25	49	74

### **Earnings**

The retirees are far better-off compared to the farmers and IPs. The study reveals that 22.7 % of them have an income ranging from 15,001-20,000 pesos, 18% have an income of 10,001-15,000 pesos, 18% have an income of 5,001-10,000 pesos, 18% have an income of 1,000 and below. For the farmers, 13% have an income between 10,001-15,000 pesos, 6% have an income ranging from 5,001-10,000.00 and 76% have an income of 1,000-5,000 pesos.

It is very apparent that the IP sector is the most economically-stricken. Data shows that 45% of them have an income of 1,000-5,000 pesos, while 55% claim to have an income below 1,000.00. One male respondent said “*Abi nimu, lisod gayud among kahintang sa imung nanay. Wala nami lain panginabuhian. Maglisod nami sa pang adlaw-adlaw na pagkaon. May gani kay makadawat pami ug pension nga 500 kada bulan. Pero kulang ra gyud kini kaayo.*” (You know, our situation is hard. We do not have others sources of income. We even could hardly provide our food. Good and we receive a pension of 500 pesos a month. But the amount is not enough). The pension of 500 pesos referred by the respondent is a state subsidy for the indigent elderly.

The president of the senior citizen’s organization realized the plight of their fellow elders. “*Bisan sa pagkaun galisod. Gamay ra ang 500 na pension, kulang pa sa tambal. Dili pud tanan naay pension.*” (They could not even sustain for their food. The pension is too minimal. Not even enough for medicines. Not all have

pensions). A key informant also said "*Ge antos ra jud nila ang mga problema. Ug walay magpaguna, wala jud kita*" (They just bear the problem. If no one asks their services to labor in the farms, they have no income). This picture gives us an idea that the situation of our elderly in Maramag is very different with the situation of the elderly in Europe and America whose graying population enjoys a better standard of living. Their elderly have more food and have better health conditions. Their governments afforded better health services. (Henslin, 2005).

Table 5  
*Earnings of the Respondents*

Type of Respondent	Earnings					Total
	Below 1,000 Php	1,000-5,000 Php	5,001-10,000 Php	10,001-15,000 Php	15,001-20,000 Php	
IP	12	10	0	0	0	22
Retirees	3	4	6	4	5	22
Farmers	1	23	2	4	0	30
Total	16	37	8	8	5	74

### Disengagement

As one gets old, he/she has the tendency to loosen his interaction with society. There is a mutual withdrawal between him/her and the society (Kunkel, 1981). Likewise, according to Villegas (2014), the stage of the elderly is also considered the stage of retreat. This stage is the time when one is disengaged from work and social life. At this point of time also, their children are already married or are already having their independent careers, a situation that contributes more to disengagement of the elderly. On the context of this study, disengagement refers to the elderly's detachment from their families, work, and social life.

### Time Spent with Family Members

The retirees spent much time with their family members compared to the farmers and IPs. The study reveals that 31.8 % of them spent very much time while 50% spent quite a bit with their family members. On the other hand, 6.7 % of the farmers spent very much time while 50% of them spent quite a bit for their families. Whereas, only 6 (28.6%) of the IPs spent "quite a bit" and 7(33.3%) spent "some" and 7 (33.3%) spent "little" time for their families. In general, 43.8% of the elderly spend "quite a bit" and 26% spent "some" with their families.

Table 6

*Time Spent with Family Members*

Type of Respondent	Time Spent with Family Members (in %)					Total
	Very Little	Little	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much	
IP	4.8	33.3	33.3	28.6	0.0	100.0
Retirees	4.5	45.0	9.2	50.0	31.8	100.0
Farmers	0.0	10.0	33.3	50.0	6.7	100.0
Total	2.7	15.1	26.0	43.8	12.3%	100.0

**Closeness with Family Members**

All the three sectors are close with their families. The retirees show to be closest. More than half (59.1 %) say they are very much close, while 36.4% say they are quite a bit close. Followed by the farmers that has 30% very much close and 63.3% quite a bit close. The IPs are the least close with their family members. Only 14.3% say "very much," while 42.9% say quite a bit and 28.6% say some. This data is surprising. The IPs are conventionally believed to be closest to their families. They are conceived to be a very intact community. What happened? In the interviews, it came out that the children of the IPs have intermarried with the non-IPs, making the parents hesitant to come or live with them. Some children also are no longer in the community. They live in other places. The IP parents, being poor, could not visit them. They also do not have cellular phones. Hence they could not talk to their children. Intermarriage, poverty, and distance hamper the traditional close family ties of the IPs. The data in Table 7 on correspondence will support this claim.

Table 7

*Closeness with Family Members (in %)*

Type of Respondent	Very Little	Little	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much	Total
IP	0.0	14.3	28.6	42.9	14.3	100.0
Retirees	4.5	0.0	0.0	36.4	59.1	100.0
Farmers	0.0	3.3	3.3	63.3	30.0	100.0
Total	1.4	5.5	9.6	49.3	34.2	100.0

Likewise, the data shows that the children of the retirees can visit them compared to the children of the farmers and the IPs because the children of the retirees are financially stable compared the children of the farmers and the IPs. None of the children of the IPs has finished college, and so jobs and income for them are limited.

Table 8  
*Parents Visited by Children (in %)*

Type of Respondent	Visited by Children		Total
	No	Yes	
IP	9.5	90.5	100
Retirees	0.0	100	100
Farmers	10	90	100
Total	6.8	93.2	100

### **Disengagement from Work**

More than half (52.45%) of the IPs still engage in their occupation which includes small-scale farming and labor/services in the neighboring farms. On the other hand, 36.7% of the farmers are still active in their profession, while 100% of the government employees have totally retired from their professions either as staff or as faculty members of Central Mindanao University. The IPs and the farmers find it important to work to survive. Unlike government employees, they have no pensions to depend on.

Table 9  
*Disengagement from Work*

Type of Respondent	Disengagement from Work			Total
	Yes	No	Retired	
IP	11 ( 52.45)	10 (47.6%)	0	21 (100%)
Retirees	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	22 (100%)	22 (100%)
Farmers	11 (36.7%)	19 (63.3%)	0 (0.0%)	30 (100%)
Total	22 (30.1%)	29	22	73 (100%)

### Socialization with other People

The retirees spend more time interacting with other people. It reveals that 27.3% of them say very much, 22.7% say much, 36.4% say some. On the other hand, only 6.7 % of the farmers say they spend "very much" with other people, while 46.7% spend "much." None of the IPs said they spend "very much time" with other people. Most of them (61.9%) spend "little time." This is because they are busy earning a living, compared to the government employees who are totally retired from service. The retirees have ample time, and so they have the privilege to socialize with other people of their choice.

Table 10  
*Socialization with Other People (in %)*

Type of Respondent	Seeing/ Socialization with other People					Total
	Very Little	Little	Some	Much	Very Much	
IP	14.3	61.9	19.0	4.8	0.0	100.0
Retirees	9.1	4.5	36.4	22.7	27.3	100.0
Farmers	0.0	23.3	23.3	46.7	6.7	100.0
Total	6.8	28.8	26.0	27.4	11.0	100.0

Likewise, it is interesting to note that the farmers and the IPs are more active in civic and political activities. They are more responsive to the programs and meetings called by the government and civic organizations. This is because they believe they can gain something from the membership, which may include giving of dole-outs like food, goods, farm inputs, or availment of pensions.

### Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is defined as an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive (Diener, 1984). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) of Diener et al. was used to describe the life satisfaction of the respondents.

The study reveals that most respondents are slightly satisfied, satisfied and extremely satisfied. The retirees are seen to be more satisfied compared with the farmers and IPs. It is revealed that 67% of them are extremely satisfied, 40.9 % are satisfied and 18.2% are slightly satisfied. Only 13.6% of the retirees are dissatisfied. On the other hand, 10% of the farmers are extremely satisfied, 50% are satisfied,

and 36.7% are slightly satisfied. Only 3.3% of the farmers are dissatisfied. Among the IPs, 19% are extremely satisfied, 14.3% are satisfied, 42.9% are slightly satisfied. It is worthwhile noting that 23.9% of the IPs are dissatisfied with their lives.

Table 11  
*Level of Life Satisfaction (in %)*

Type of Respondent	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Total
IP	4.8	4.8	14.3	42.9	14.3	19.0	100.0
Retirees	0.0	4.5	9.1	18.2	40.9	27.3	100.0
Farmers	0.0	0.0	3.3	36.7	50.0	10.0	100.0
Total	1.4	2.7	8.2	32.9	37.0	17.8	100.0

### Dependency and Life Satisfaction

The findings suggest a correlation between physical dependency and life satisfaction. The lower the level of independency, the lower is the level of satisfaction. The higher the independency, the higher is the life satisfaction. This finding conforms to previous studies that objective life conditions like physical health affect life satisfaction (Ardelt, 1997). On the other hand, the findings suggest no relationship between income and life satisfaction. Some (14.6%) are extremely satisfied. Most (75%) are satisfied and slightly satisfied. However, even those with no regular income are still satisfied (36%) and extremely satisfied (24%).

Despite their conditions, the elderly in the locality of Maramag are satisfied and are content with their life. One respondent said "Oo, malipayun. Unsaun taman ra man jud ta ani, pobre man jud ta. Mahatagan gamay malipay na mi" (Yes, we are happy. We are only up to this. We were born poor. When we receive even just a little graces, we are already happy). This statement is supported by one respondent who also said: "*Independent ang kalipay sa income*" (Income has nothing to do with happiness). A key informant also said, "*lipay man japon bisag lisod na, dawat man ang ka pobrehun sa kinabuh*" (We are happy despite poverty. We have accepted our situation

### Disengagement with Family and Life Satisfaction

The theory on disengagement suggests that withdrawal and disengagement from personal and social activities give high morale to the elderly, thereby

influencing their life satisfaction. The findings of this study will tell us how the theory works in the rural areas of the Philippines.

The findings of the study suggest that the closer the respondents are with their families, the more satisfied they are. Data shows that less than half (36%) of those who are very close with their families are extremely satisfied and 44% are satisfied. Whereas, 100% of those who are much less close with their families are slightly dissatisfied. This data truly portrays a typical Filipino culture. Filipinos are closely attached to their families. It is valued and treasured. Disengagement from them certainly affects life satisfaction.

### **Disengagement from Work and Life Satisfaction**

The data suggest no relationship between disengagement from work and life satisfaction. The study reveals that 40% of those who are still engaged in their work are slightly satisfied, 36.4 % are satisfied and 13.6% are extremely satisfied. The situation is almost the same with those who are already disengaged from their work. 29.4% of them are slightly satisfied, 37% are satisfied, and 19.6 % are extremely satisfied. Likewise, the data suggest no relationship between social disengagement and life satisfaction. It is revealed that 15.8% of those who are active in socio-civic-political activities are extremely satisfied, 15.8% are satisfied, e inactive in socio-civic-political activities of which 18.5% of them are extremely satisfied, 44.4% are satisfied and 25.9 satisfied.

### **The Needs and Challenges Confronting the Elderly**

Food is their primary problem among the elderly. Be it noted that in the previous discussion it was revealed that 50% of the respondents had an income of 1000-5000 pesos only, while 21.6% have an income below 1000 pesos only. This income is too minimal for a person to live with decency. Our elderly is poverty-stricken.

Livelihood is also an issue. The elderly have no sustainable source of income which complicates into the need for clothing, inadequate shelter and the need for medicine. Also, the elderly do not have enough money for these. While it is true that there are health centers in the barangays, its services, and medical supplies are insufficient. The elderly are compelled to buy the medicines on their own.

Aside from poverty, the elderly is also challenged by the changes in the dynamism of a Filipino family. A key informant claims that in general, the relationship of the elderly towards their family members is not good. He said the traditional close family ties among Filipino family members had reduced significantly. Some children are no longer taking care of their parents. Some elderly are unattended

and abandoned and are in grave conditions. That is why he is for putting up a home for the aged in the province.

Grand-parenting is also found as an issue. Some grandparents are acting as parents over their grandchildren because the parents are irresponsible. *“Akong anak kay dili musuporta sa iyang mga bata. Nabilin sa ako ang ilang unom (6) ka anak. Grabe ka irresponsible gyud ni akong anak, wala man lang konsensya, sa ako gipa atiman na tigulang na baya ko intawun”* (My son is not supporting his children. His six children are with us. He is a very irresponsible son. He is not even guilt-stricken. He left his children with me without considering that I am already old), a lament of one female respondent who finds taking care of her grandchildren a burden. Many Filipino grandparents are serving as yayas, attendants or guardians of their grandchildren whose parents are busy at work.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper concludes that the Filipino elderly have a high level of physical independency but are poverty stricken the IPs and farmers particularly. The study also reveals that income is not related to life satisfaction. The Filipino elderly are satisfied with their life though they are struggling with poverty. It is not money that positively affects their life satisfaction but their solidarity and good relationship with their family. Disengagement from work and social life do not affect life satisfaction, but disengagement from family does. The study as well concludes that intermarriages have altered the once strong kinship of the indigenous peoples (IP) community with non-IPs.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is very apparent that among the three sectors (IPs, farmers, and retirees), the IPs are the most marginalized and are more poverty-stricken. It is recommended that they are prioritized in health services and livelihood programs. Likewise, the conduct of more civic and social activities for the elderly is proposed. The Local Government Units may facilitate these in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Senior Citizens Organization Federation. Lastly, this paper proposes the institutionalization of homes for the aged in the municipalities of Bukidnon. While it is true that most elderly are in good situation, some are abandoned and are extremely poor to survive. The intervention of the government is highly needed.

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