

**KUNG MAPUTI NA ANG BUHOK KO: STORIES OF
ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING ALONE**

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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7. Abstract:

7.1 Rationale/Background

The Philippines has a relatively young population base but with sustained advances in longevity and declining fertility, the demographic landscape is projected to gradually shift to an aging population. Research on aging in the Philippines still has large gaps in literature that deals with promoting longevity among the elderly population especially with highly at-risk groups. This prompts extensive research studies on OPs living alone in order to create policies that would anticipate the challenge of ensuring the well-being of the new demographic.

7.2 Summary

This study tells the stories of elderly Filipinos who are living alone. Specifically, this describes the characteristics of elderly Filipinos living alone, ADL, IADL, feelings associated with living alone, common health concerns, health maintenance practices, and social support. This investigation followed a qualitative approach with a narrative research design. This study was conducted at Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Philippines. Purposive sampling technique was used to select key informants. Snowball or referral sampling method was used to identify OPs living alone. An in-depth interview was used to tell the stories of OPs living alone. To analyze the gathered data, a thematic analysis was employed.

7.3 Major Findings

The study found that the elderly Filipinos living alone in Cabanatuan City are living in poverty. The most common reason for living alone is bereavement and children moving out. Respondents are functionally independent in all ADL and IADL except telephoning and paying bills. Their feelings associated with living alone are dynamic with potential significance depending on being chosen or circumstantially imposed. Their feelings are also characterized by heterogeneity involving attitudes towards being alone, relationship with children and other kin, God, and friends/neighbors. Seniors living alone represent a more vulnerable group due to fall-related and age-related forgetfulness accidents. OPs

living alone maintain their health through mindful diet and exercise. OPs living alone receive both social support and social assistance.

7.4 Conclusions

The elderly Filipinos living alone without disability exhibit complete ADL independence while those with disabilities exhibit modified independence. Those living near their children receive help in all IADL while those without kin receive assistance from their neighbors in completing tasks such as paying bills and preparing meals. Their ADL and IADL are largely influenced by their living environment and sociodemographic characteristics. Overall, living alone for seniors was attached to the concepts of privacy, independence, and not being a burden to their children.

7.5 Recommendations

The following are policy recommendations that can aid in the impending demographic shift: a) Expansion of the Social Pension Program for indigent senior citizens, b) Generating livelihood opportunities for senior citizens, c) Intensive implementation of the Neighborhood Support Services for Older Persons Project, d) Promoting elderly care with elderly institutions, e) Promoting elderly self and social enhancement with senior citizen centers, f) Expansion of Health Insurance for the Elderly, g) Free counseling services for the elderly and h) Home improvement assistance for seniors living alone.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACIP : Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

ADL : Activities of daily living

AHA : Active and healthy aging

CHO : Cabanatuan City Health Office

CSWDO : City Social Welfare and Development Office

DOLE : Department of Labor and Employment

DTI : Department of Trade and Industry

IADL : Instrumental activities of daily living

LGU : Local Government Unit

LSAHP : Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in the Philippines

NGA : National Government Agencies

NSSOP : Neighborhood Support Services for Older Persons

OP : Older persons

SEP : Socioeconomic position

SPISC : Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens

TLRC : Technology and Livelihood Resource Center

USPSTF : United States Preventative Services Task Force

WHO : World Health Organization

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