



# **Comprehensive Socio-Demographic Analysis on the Institutionalization of a Senior Welfare Program in Northern Samar**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study endeavors to propose the establishment of an institutionalized care system for the elderly in the Province of Northern Samar. The overarching objective is to comprehensively document the socio-demographic profiles of family members and elderly individuals within the province. This includes capturing critical factors such as age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, annual income, family size, presence of elderly family members, and the relationship dynamics among family members and the elderly.

The study reveals that a significant proportion of family member-respondents fall within the age range of 35 to 59 years, predominantly female, married, and possess college degrees. The majority of these family members are engaged in teaching professions and report an annual income ranging from P 150,000 to P 249,000. Additionally, these family units often consist of a substantial number of members, with seven (7) or more individuals. Furthermore, one (1) elderly family member typically resides with them, often being their elderly parents.

Examining the elderly population, the study highlights that a considerable portion of this demographic group falls between the ages of 66 to 70 years, with a prevalent majority being females. Among the elderly, a notable number are widowed, have attained college degrees, and have a history of government employment. Their reported annual income commonly ranges from P 250,000 to P 499,999, with retirement pensions serving as their primary source of income. Notably, a significant proportion of the elderly have been afflicted by heart-related ailments.

This study's findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-demographic landscape in Northern Samar, shedding light on the feasibility of instituting an effective care program for the elderly. By considering the profiles of both family members and the elderly, this research contributes valuable insights to the formulation of policies and programs that cater to the unique needs of this demographic.

**Keywords:** Elderly, Institutionalization, Educational Attainment, Elderly Care, Relationship dynamics

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The recognition of old age varies across international organizations. The United Nations (UN) adheres to the convention that 60+ years signifies old age, as stipulated by the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual (2009). This marks the initial attempt at establishing a global definition for old age. Conversely, the World Health Organization (WHO) designates 50 as the onset of old age, defining it not

by years but by the assumption of new responsibilities, relinquishment of previous roles, or incapability to actively contribute to society.

In the Philippines, the elderly hold a distinct place as invaluable human resources. Their role in fostering the growth of families and communities is pivotal in a society that esteems the family as the fundamental unit. Hence, the country acknowledges the necessity of formulating policies and initiatives that guarantee not only sufficient social services for the elderly, bolster their employment prospects, and enhance their quality of life, but also create avenues for continuous and active involvement in national progress.

Examining the province of Northern Samar, the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (CPH) disclosed a populace of 589,013 as of May 1, 2010. Among these, 77.23 percent comprised the young, 15.67 percent the adults, and 7.10 percent the elderly. Notably, the elderly count increased from 23,227 in 2007 to 41,833 in 2010, signifying a 0.5 percent growth over three years. Among the towns, Catarman (capital) led with 4,949 elderly residents, followed by Laoang with 4,749, Palapag with 2,717, Catubig with 2,532, Las Navas with 2,286, Lavezares with 2,140, Mondragon with 2,064, Pambujan with 2,023, Allen with 2,018, and Gamay with 1,915.

The traditional Filipino esteem for their elders remains steadfast. Yet, addressing essential necessities such as healthcare, housing, economic security, and other social services becomes imperative. The establishment of an institution for the elderly is vital to identify their requirements, offer training and opportunities, introduce productive endeavors and work schemes to supplement their earnings, and cultivate connections with governmental and non-governmental entities for healthcare provision, advice services, volunteer training, and community self-reliant initiatives.

Driven by this backdrop, the researcher embarked on this study to ascertain the level of acceptance among family members concerning the institutionalization of senior citizens. The proposed institution aims to elevate the well-being of the elderly populace in Northern Samar through comprehensive socio-demographic analysis and the establishment of a Senior Welfare Program.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study were formulated to comprehensively investigate the proposed institutionalization of the elderly in the province of Northern Samar within the context of a Senior Welfare Program. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Evaluate the prevailing level of acceptance among family members concerning the institutionalization of the elderly as a component of the Senior Welfare Program.
2. Identify and analyze the psychological, emotional, social, and cultural factors influencing the level of acceptability of family member-respondents towards the institutionalization of the elderly.
3. Examine whether a significant relationship exists between the socio-demographic characteristics of family member-respondents and their level of acceptability towards the institutionalization of the elderly within the framework of the Senior Welfare Program.
4. Investigate the potential correlation between the socio-demographic profile of the elderly individuals and the level of acceptability demonstrated by family members towards their institutionalization within the Senior Welfare Program context.

By addressing these objectives, the study aimed to offer a comprehensive socio-demographic analysis that informs the proposed Senior Welfare Program's institutionalization efforts in Northern Samar, aligning the program with the unique needs and perceptions of the local community.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted within the province of Northern Samar, one of the constituent provinces of the Samar Island. The geographical positioning of Northern Samar places it to the north and west, bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the east, the San Bernardino Strait to the north, and the Samar Sea to the east. The southern boundaries are shared with the provinces of Samar and Eastern Samar.

Northern Samar holds the classification of a second-class province and is geographically segmented into three distinct regions: the Balicuatro Area, the Central Area, and the Pacific Area encompassing the vital Catubig Valley, recognized as the province's granary. The province is further demarcated into two (2) congressional districts, encompassing 24 towns or municipalities, and a total of 569 barangays, highlighting the administrative subdivisions within the province.

The selection of this location provides a contextual backdrop for the comprehensive socio-demographic analysis conducted as part of this study, enabling a focused examination of the proposed Senior Welfare Program's institutionalization within the unique setting of Northern Samar.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The increasing number of retirement homes in the United States, with a rise from almost 11,000 in 2005 to 12,000 in 2010, reflects the growing emphasis on elderly care. Simultaneously, the market size for retirement homes experienced substantial growth, escalating from \$13.5 billion in 2005 to \$17 billion in 2010, with California emerging as the state with the largest market size. The evolution of such facilities highlights the shifting dynamics of elderly care and the recognition of the elderly population's diverse needs.

The historical context of institutionalization during the industrial revolution in Europe is worth noting. This period marked a significant expansion of government's role within society, often encroaching into areas previously considered private. The notion of institutionalization has also been pivotal in the modernization process of developing countries, entailing an enhanced organization of governmental structures to cater to societal needs.

Within the realm of institutionalization, the UK's historical establishment of various institutions aimed at providing housing, healthcare, education, and support for individuals in need serves as an illustrative example. These institutions, though initially founded with noble intentions, often deviated from their original ideals and turned into total institutions, offering housing, occupation, and social control. Such systems exhibited characteristics like communal facilities, hierarchical management, compulsory religious attendance, and strict rules, which ultimately limited personal freedom.

The adverse consequences of institutionalization have prompted efforts to prevent or delay nursing home placement, driven by the realization that most elderly individuals prefer to remain within their homes to sustain their social connections, preserve their environment, and maintain their quality of life. The behavioral model of health service use, developed by Andersen, serves as a conceptual framework for understanding the factors influencing the utilization of health services or nursing home placement. This model underscores the significance of predisposing variables such as demographics, social traits, and

health beliefs, enabling variables including personal, familial, and community resources, and the need component, encompassing perceived and evaluated health status.

In the context of the Comprehensive Socio-Demographic Analysis on the Institutionalization of a Senior Welfare Program in Northern Samar, this discussion elucidates the global evolution of institutionalization and its implications for elderly care. It emphasizes the significance of understanding the behavioral factors impacting elderly care service utilization, underscoring the need for a holistic approach to address the multifaceted needs of the elderly population in Northern Samar.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this Comprehensive Socio-Demographic Analysis on the Institutionalization of a Senior Welfare Program in Northern Samar, the following conclusions and implications have been drawn:

In Northern Samar, family members exhibit characteristics of adulthood, predominantly comprising females who are married and possess sufficient educational qualifications, ongoing employment, sustainable income, large family sizes, and a significant presence of older generations such as parents, grandparents, and relatives within their households. This underscores that family members possess the requisite personal and professional attributes to actively contribute to society. Moreover, the evident value placed by Norte Samareños on the presence of family members, especially the elderly, reflects a deep-rooted appreciation for traditional family bonds, persevering despite modern influences.

The acceptance of institutionalizing the elderly in Northern Samar is profoundly influenced by psychological, emotional, social, and cultural factors. This finding highlights that even as family members may agree to the notion of institutionalization, the deep-seated closeness among Norte Samareño families, particularly involving the elderly members, remains a paramount consideration. The elderly's inclination to remain in their familiar homes, surrounded by their children and grandchildren, signifies a preference for familial care rather than confinement in elderly facilities.

In light of these conclusions, a comprehensive senior welfare program in Northern Samar should prioritize preserving and strengthening the cherished family ties that underlie the societal fabric. While considering the practical aspects of institutionalization, it is crucial to acknowledge the emotional and cultural dimensions that influence family members' attitudes towards caring for their elderly relatives. This study underscores the need for a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to senior welfare that respects the intrinsic values of family bonds and promotes a balanced coexistence of institutional and familial care for the elderly in Northern Samar.