

Bridging the Financial Gap: A Financial Literacy Model for Geriatrics in Negros Oriental

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Abstract. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of geriatrics in Negros Oriental regarding the importance of retirement preparedness practices and financial literacy. Specifically, it sought to develop a financial literacy model tailored to the needs of individuals preparing for retirement, focusing on investment, emergency funds, debt management, income protection, healthcare, and the overall significance of financial literacy. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire to collect data. The findings revealed a significant relationship between respondents' profiles and retirement preparedness ($r = 0.806$, $p = 0.034$, at 0.05 significance level), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, the relationship between financial practices and retirement preparedness ($r = 0.594$, $p = 0.291$, at 0.05 significance level) was insignificant, failing to reject the null hypothesis. The study underscores the importance of strengthening financial literacy and education campaigns to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective retirement planning.

Keywords: Financial literacy; Financial planning; Geriatrics; Investment; Retirement preparedness

1.0 Introduction

Life for most of us is full of challenges; for many, money or personal finance is very challenging. There are no shortcuts to achieving a stable financial future. It must begin with understanding the financial concepts that will help make decisions. An essential indicator of people's ability to make financial decisions is their level of financial literacy (Lusardi, 2019). Financial literacy is not only the knowledge and understanding of financial concepts and risks but also the skills, motivation, and confidence to apply such knowledge and understanding to make effective decisions across a range of financial contexts to improve the financial well-being of individuals and society, and to enable participation in economic life. Thus, financial literacy refers to knowledge and financial behavior (OECD).

Financial planning and retirement planning are two separate entities, but they must go hand in hand to provide the lifestyle you want during retirement (Duckworth, 2019). A financial plan is a comprehensive document that includes details about your cash flow, savings, debts, investments, insurance, and other elements of your financial life. A good financial plan takes the stress of setting and prioritizing goals and maps out clear strategies for achieving them (Voigt & Yochim, 2020). Understanding these concepts, how they work together, and their impact is vital in laying the groundwork for financial security.

While several studies have explored the importance of financial literacy and retirement preparedness, much of the existing literature focuses on younger individuals or working adults in urban settings. There is a lack of research specifically addressing the unique challenges, perceptions, and needs of geriatrics in rural or provincial areas, such as Negros Oriental, Philippines. Furthermore, existing studies rarely integrate the development of a tailored financial literacy model that accounts for local cultural, economic, and social contexts. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of geriatrics' perceptions of retirement preparedness and financial literacy and for developing a practical, culturally sensitive model to address their specific needs and promote long-term financial security. Your study aims to fill this gap by focusing on geriatrics in a provincial context and designing a model suited to their unique circumstances.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to effectively present and analyze the facts as they existed at the time of the study. The descriptive method was chosen because it provides a systematic approach to understanding and documenting existing conditions. According to Penwarden (2014), descriptive research is conclusive, setting it apart from exploratory methods. Penwarden also highlighted that descriptive research collects quantifiable data, which allows for statistical analysis and inferences about the target population through thorough data examination.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in Negros Oriental, a province in Central Visayas, Philippines. The pre-test was carried out in Bayawan City. At the same time, the actual data collection took place in several municipalities, including Dauin, Bacong, Valencia, and Sibulan, as well as in various barangays within Dumaguete City, the capital of Negros Oriental. Additionally, some respondents were from other parts of the province, such as Bais City, Tanjay City, and Ayungon, ensuring a broader representation of the target population.

2.3 Research Respondents

The primary respondents of this study were geriatrics in Negros Oriental, aged 60 to 75 years, encompassing both male and female participants. Data collection was conducted from the first week of January to the first week of February 2020. The respondents represented diverse backgrounds, including both professionals and non-professionals. Due to the specific characteristics of the geriatric population, participation was limited to individuals who were personally approached by the researcher and willingly consented after the study's objectives were thoroughly explained to them.

2.4 Research Instruments

The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire as the primary data collection tool to gather data for this study. This method was chosen for its cost-effectiveness, ease of analysis, and familiarity to most respondents. The questionnaire was reviewed and approved by the research adviser, statistician, and members of the defense panel. It was divided into three sections: the demographic profile of the respondents, their perceived level of importance of various factors, and their level of financial literacy. A 5-point Likert scale was used to analyze responses to Problem Statement 4. Respondents were also asked to provide reasons for their answers regarding retirement preparedness practices to ensure a deeper understanding and validate the data. For better comprehension, the questionnaire was translated into the Visayan language. The tool's reliability was assessed during the pretest, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.800, indicating a moderately acceptable level of reliability.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought guidance from the Chairman of the Graduate Program in Business Administration, who also serves as the Vice President for Academic Affairs of Saint Paul University Dumaguete, to discuss the proposed research problem. The research proposal was presented to the graduate defense panel after this consultation and received approval. A self-administered survey questionnaire was then prepared and reviewed by the panel for approval. The researcher ensured that all information collected would remain confidential and used solely for analysis. After approval, the questionnaire was pretested with 10 geriatrics, and adjustments were made as necessary. The researcher then collected the actual data, personally interviewing respondents who consented to participate.

Follow-up interviews were conducted to gather more in-depth insights and validate the data. The researcher visited various locations frequented by senior citizens, including the Mother of Perpetual Help Church, Dumaguete Cathedral Church, Freedom Park, Rizal Park, Rizal Boulevard, McDonald's, Robinsons Place, banks, and barangays within the city. Engaging with senior citizens proved challenging, requiring patience and persistence to gain their attention and trust, as many were initially hesitant or in a hurry.

2.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The results of the statistical computations guided the researcher in the interpretation and analysis of the data. Various statistical tools were employed in the study to address specific research problems. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to analyze Problems One and Three, determining the proportional relationship between a subset of respondents and the entire population. Graphical presentations, including bar graphs and scatter plots, were also used for Problem Three to visually represent the data. Weighted Mean was applied to Problem Four to calculate the overall average of respondents' perceptions. For Problem Five, an independent sample t-test was conducted to identify any statistically significant differences between the means of two unrelated groups. Lastly, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used for Problem Six to measure the strength and direction of the association between two variables on an interval scale. These tools collectively enabled a comprehensive analysis of the data.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher diligently adhered to ethical standards throughout the study. Key principles such as transparency, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the well-being of participants were strictly observed. All ethical considerations and protocols were meticulously followed for the entire duration of the research. Confidentiality of all data, including the identities and ratings of support personnel, was rigorously maintained. Additionally, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the University Research Office's Ethical Committee.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of elderly respondents in the Philippines highlights significant trends in age, gender distribution, marital status, educational attainment, and income sources. According to Abalos (2020), older Filipinos often display lower educational attainment levels than the general population, though there has been gradual improvement. Interestingly, many of these individuals rely on pensions from the Social Security System (SSS) and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) as their primary sources of income, typically receiving monthly pensions of PHP 10,000 or less. Gender and marital status also play a role in shaping the experiences of the elderly. Palmes, Trajera, and Ching (2021) found that factors such as gender distribution and marital status influence resilience and social participation among senior citizens, with many of the elderly being married. Moreover, the Philippine Statistics Authority (2019) reported that two out of ten Filipinos aged 60 and over benefit from retirement pensions, with average monthly pensions amounting to PHP 5,123 for SSS members and PHP 18,525 for GSIS retirees. Collectively, these studies underscore the socioeconomic realities and demographic composition of the elderly in the Philippines, reflecting key characteristics such as age, income sources, and education that align closely with the findings in Table 1.

Table 1. *Description of the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics*

Variables	Frequency
Age	
60 - 64	19
65 - 69	20
70 - 75	24
Sex	
Male	30
Female	33
Civil Status	
Single	4
Married	38
Widow/widower	20
Separated	1
Educational attainment	

Elementary Level	9
Elementary Graduate	7
High School Level	5
High School Graduate	9
College Level	10
College Graduate	21
Master's Degree	3
Source of Income	
GSIS/SSS Pension	24
Small Business	9
Dependents	12
Wage/Salary	12
Farming	3
Senior Citizen Aid	3
Monthly Income	
10,000 and below	30
10,001 - 20,000	16
21,000 - 30,000	6
31,000 - 40,000	2
41,000 - 50,000	3
51,000 and above	6

3.2 Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness Practices

In this retirement preparedness practice, the respondents who answered yes chose the level of importance, while respondents who answered no stated their reasons for not making investments, having an emergency fund, how they manage their debt, and not availing of income protection and healthcare. Table 2 presents the perceived importance of the Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness on "investments." The highest, with a percentage of 38.10%, is "real estate," followed by "pension fund," with a percentage of 36.98%, 8, and "jewelry," with a percentage of 9.52. Other investments made by three ((3) respondents are in small businesses each, such as computer shops, swine (piggery) raising, and a tricycle operator, i.e., one (1) livelihood project with a percentage of 1.59 each, respectively. The result further shows that 26.98% of geriatric respondents are engaged in "pension funds," while 38.10% are involved in "real estate," which is quite a big majority of the respondents. The respondents claim that the pension funds they invested are the Social Security System among the private sector and the Government Security Insurance System among government employees. This pension plan is a defined contribution plan where the employee and employer contribute to the employee's retirement savings. On the other hand, "real estate" investment was mostly in land acquisition, wherein the respondents used to build their houses.

Table 2. *Perceived level of importance of the Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness on "investments"*

Investments	Yes (%)	Remarks	No (%)
Real Estate	38.1	Low Importance	61.9
Pension Fund	26.9	Low Importance	73.0
Jewelry	9.52	Very Low Importance	90.4
Computer Shop business	1.59	Very Low Importance	98.4
Piggery business	1.59	Very Low Importance	98.4
Tricycle operator	1.59	Very Low Importance	98.4
Legend (in percentage): 78.00 - 100.00 = Very High Importance, 52.00 - 77.00 = High Importance, 26.00 - 51.00 = Low Importance, 1.00 - 25.00 = Very Low Importance			

Ferrer (2018) found that respondents showed low participation in high-yield investment options such as Mutual Funds, Unit Investment Trust Funds (UITFs), and stocks. This was attributed to their limited awareness and understanding of these financial instruments, which hinders their ability to generate passive income, build wealth, and achieve financial security for a comfortable retirement. Reyes (2019) found that a great percentage of senior citizens (32.1%) lack access to any of the government's social protection programs. Particular focus should be given to females, given that they are significantly disadvantaged, particularly regarding access to retirement or old age pensions, compared to males. This is because of females' low labor participation rates since retirement pensions for GSIS and SSS require prior employment experience in the public and private sectors, respectively. Furthermore, Reyes concludes that social protection programs must be directed towards improving the access of sectors with lower access. The laws and programs currently in place to provide health and income protection to senior citizens and intended beneficiaries must be made aware of the existence or guidelines for accessing these programs. Promoting women's employment in the labor force may improve their access to these social protection

programs when they reach the age of 60 since contributory government pensions are only accessible to previously employed people.

Respondents who answered no did not select the level of importance; however, they gave their reasons for not having any investment. Most of the respondents in their younger but productive years were unable to invest in any of the financial products because they claimed that their income was just enough to cover their daily expenses. Their priorities were expenses intended for their children's education, food, and other basic needs. The respondents engaged in small businesses also claimed that their income was just enough for the business's capital and basic needs. Employees in the government and private sector invest only in pension funds. This is because it is mandatory during the productive employment years. Some respondents also invested in real property because they said it was necessary when building their house. However, few respondents invested in computer shops, swine-raising projects, and tricycle operators because they are using these as their other sources of income right now. Few respondents also invest in jewelry because this could provide them with a better opportunity to help them during unlikely events or emergencies.

Table 3 takes cognizance of the highest percentage, 46.03, which were respondents who claim that their savings are kept with the cooperative. Thus, these concerned respondents are members of cooperatives. The respondents who "invest in time deposits in banks" have a percentage of 33.33, i.e., of "low importance" for the respondents. Savings intended for medical bills or any allocation for medical needs have a percentage of 31.75. These respondents have realized that as geriatrics today, setting aside money for health concerns is of primordial importance. In another vein, less than one-third of respondents, or 26.98% of them, indicate that they save money intended for shelter repairs and upkeep or maintenance of vehicles. For "home savings," with a percentage of 6.35, a few respondents preferred to keep their money at home, maybe because they do not have any bank account or are non-members of any development cooperative.

Table 3. *Perceived level of importance of the Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness on "emergency fund"*

Investments	Yes (%)	Remarks	No (%)
Savings in cooperative	46.0	Low Importance	53.9
Time deposits in banks	33.3	Low Importance	66.6
Savings for medical needs	31.7	Low Importance	68.2
Savings for shelter and vehicle upkeep or maintenance.	26.9	Low Importance	73.0
Home Savings	6.35	Very Low Importance	93.6

An emergency fund is money set aside for unforeseen expenses. There is no fixed rule on how much it should be, but somehow, it should be able to cover your major expenses for three to six months. This pool of money can spell the difference between a small bump in your finances and a total wreckage on your monetary situation and probably your entire life. The survey conducted by the Federal Reserve in 2019 found that nearly four in ten Americans would not be able to pay an unexpected expense of just \$400 with cash or savings. More than 63% of African Americans and more than 69% of Latinos have not even designated one penny for retirement. Those two racial groups within the United States will form more than 50% of the population by 2050. Then, it will not be a brown or a black problem; it will be an American crisis.

The study's findings by Ferrer (2018) reveal that regular saving is not a habit for many public school teachers. For many, the underlying cause is not having enough excess money after expenses. The inability of the teachers to manage forced many of these teachers into a situation where they could hardly save money for the future. As to emergency fund respondents who answered no, they shared that most of them have no savings because they claimed that their income was just enough for their daily expenses and basic needs. Their priorities were their day-to-day needs and the education expenses of their children.

The analysis of Table 4 highlights the debt management practices of geriatrics in Negros Oriental, demonstrating a high level of financial prudence among the respondents. All five indicators of debt management were rated with a 100% scale of "very high importance." These indicators include "paying off debt with high interest," "spending based on needs," "settling debt early to avail rewards," "spending within a cash budget," and a "mindset that debt could be detrimental." Among these, the emphasis on a mindset shift regarding the detrimental effects of debt was

particularly notable. This indicator, also rated at 100%, implies that all respondents recognized the critical importance of viewing debt as a potential distraction rather than a solution.

Table 4. *Perceived level of importance of the Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness on “debt management”*

Investments	Yes (%)	Remarks	No (%)
Pay off debt with high interest	100.00	Very High Importance	0.00
Spending based on needs	100.00	Very High Importance	0.00
Settlement of debt ahead with rewards	100.00	Very High Importance	0.00
No debt, spending within cash budget	100.00	Very High Importance	0.00
A mindset that debt could be detrimental	100.00	Very High Importance	0.00
Full payment of debt on time	98.41	Very High Importance	1.59

Research underscores the importance of effective debt management, particularly among older adults, as a component of financial stability and independence. Lusardi and Mitchell (2011) emphasized that financial literacy significantly impacts individuals' ability to manage debt and avoid financial pitfalls, especially during retirement. Their findings align with the observed practices of the geriatrics in Negros Oriental, who exhibit strong financial literacy in managing their debts effectively. Additionally, Abalos (2018) reported that older Filipinos tend to adopt conservative financial behaviors, such as avoiding unnecessary debt and focusing on living within their means, due to concerns about the adequacy of retirement income. Similarly, Palmes, Trajera, and Ching (2021) highlighted that senior citizens' financial preparedness and prudent spending habits contribute to higher resilience and quality of life in retirement.

The data suggests that geriatrics in the region prioritize efficient debt management practices, as evidenced by their consistent responses. Many respondents admitted to being wary of incurring debt, particularly in the past, due to concerns about their ability to meet future financial obligations. This sentiment aligns with their belief that debt might hinder their financial stability, especially during retirement. Most reported living within their means and avoiding credit as a financial strategy, particularly in their old age. Furthermore, respondents exhibited strong retirement preparedness in terms of debt management practices. Most indicated that they avoided taking on debt during their productive years due to fears of being unable to repay it in retirement. This cautious approach underscores their commitment to maintaining financial independence and stability, particularly as they aged.

Table 5 Under the income protection practices, “Term Life Insurance” with a percentage of 26.98, “Universal Life Insurance” and “Final Expense Insurance” with a percentage of 3.17, Whole Life Insurance” and “Group Life Insurance” with a percentage of 1.59. 17 respondents have practiced “Term Life Insurance” because they claim they are members of a cooperative and can easily avail themselves of the said insurance once an emergency happens or when they pass away, their family can get the burial benefits.

Table 5. *Perceived level of importance of the Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness on “income protection”*

Investments	Yes (%)	Remarks	No (%)
Term Life Insurance	26.98	Low Importance	73.02
Universal Life Insurance	3.17	Very Low Importance	96.83
Final Expense Insurance	3.17	Very Low Importance	96.83
Whole Life Insurance	1.59	Very Low Importance	98.41
Group Life Insurance	1.59	Very Low Importance	98.41

A study by Canada Life Group Insurance (2017), which surveyed 1,010 full- and part-time employees in the UK, revealed that few individuals have a financial safety net for serious illnesses. Only 18% of respondents reported having critical illness or income protection insurance to support them in case of a health condition affecting their earning capacity. Alarming, 72% admitted they would struggle financially if their income decreased by £570 per month. When a household's primary income earner faces a serious illness, having an appropriate critical illness or income protection insurance policy can serve as a crucial financial safeguard, providing support during challenging times.

Another study by Zurich Insurance Group (2018), the global insurer, on ‘income protection gaps’ (IPGs) based on a survey of over 11,000 respondents in 11 countries, has found significant demand for income protection insurance.

More than half (52 percent) of respondents without insurance say they would be willing to buy it. Failure to protect income in the event of disability or illness poses a significant challenge, both in traditional and emerging economies. For families, the impact of illness or disability on income can be devastating. The need for such protection is rising. In the developed world, demand for government support – the traditional source of relief – is rapidly outpacing supply. At the same time, disability levels are rising due to an aging population, tighter labor markets, and improved medical diagnosis, which can confirm illnesses and disabilities.

Most respondents did not practice income protection during their productive years. They claimed that their priorities were their daily basic needs and their children's education and that their income could not afford any insurance products. A few respondents also claimed that they were unaware of any insurance products and didn't have any idea. Respondents who are members of cooperatives like DCCCO and PHCCI were the ones who availed themselves of term life insurance. One cooperative member-respondent claimed that he availed of life insurance for his protection.

Table 6 presents the healthcare practices of the geriatrics. The result reveals a percentage of 100 for Philhealth. Most of the geriatrics respondents claim that Philhealth is the only healthcare they have availed themselves of because when they became Senior Citizens, they became automatic members of this health insurance. The respondents also claim that they availed themselves of PhilHealth during their employment period and continued during their retirement since their membership was already in their lifetime when they reached 60. It is worth noting that geriatrics need health insurance because it is a big help when they are sick. For “Long Term,” with a percentage of 3.17, and “Short Term Healthcare,” with a percentage of 1.59 with a scale of “very low importance.” All 63 respondents were members of Philhealth. Few respondents availed of “Short Term Healthcare” and “Long Term Healthcare”. Philhealth asserts that it is of “very high importance” to the respondents.

Table 6. *Perceived level of importance of the Geriatrics Retirement Preparedness on “healthcare”*

Investments	Yes (%)	Remarks	No (%)
Philhealth	100.00	Very High Importance	0.00
Long Term Healthcare	3.17	Very Low Importance	96.83
Short Term Healthcare	1.59	Very Low Importance	98.41

Reyes et al. (2019) reveal that most senior citizen members and dependents enjoy free healthcare insurance coverage from Philhealth. Most Filipinos indeed have only one health insurance, which is Philhealth, and in most cases during hospitalization, Philhealth benefits are insufficient to cover hospitalization expenses. One of the respondents availed himself of short-term care. The company provided this healthcare plan to which the respondent is currently connected. The respondent is 60 years old now and is currently processing retirement papers. Upon retirement, the benefits enjoyed by short-term care will be terminated. One respondent also availed of the critical illness. According to the respondent, this will greatly help when the respondents need it.

According to the article written by LaPonsie (2019), “Long Term Health Care” insurance is a coverage that will pay for assisted living, nursing home care, or home health care if you cannot care for yourself because of a chronic condition or disability. “Long-term healthcare” insurance can be a smart purchase when you consider that 70% of those turning age 65 today will need some long-term care, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, this will provide healthcare needs and finances when you retire or stop working. Most respondents have had Philhealth since they were 60, and they became automatic members of this health insurance. Only a few have availed themselves of short-term, long-term, and critical illness healthcare plans. The main reason for not availing themselves of other healthcare products is that they cannot afford them and do not know about these services or products.

3.3 Level of Importance of Financial Literacy

The respondents' uniform perception of financial literacy as extremely important highlights the growing recognition of its relevance across demographic groups. Financial literacy is essential for informed decision-making, effective budgeting, and financial stability (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2011). Studies have consistently shown that financial literacy reduces the likelihood of poor financial decisions, such as overspending or incurring unmanageable debt, and enhances the ability to save for future needs, including retirement (Hastings et al., 2013). Research by Hung et al. (2009) further emphasizes that both men and women benefit equally from financial

literacy, with gender-specific barriers diminishing as access to financial education increases. These findings align with the current study’s data, where both male and female respondents recognize financial literacy as extremely important, highlighting the universal relevance of financial education in diverse contexts (see Figure 1).

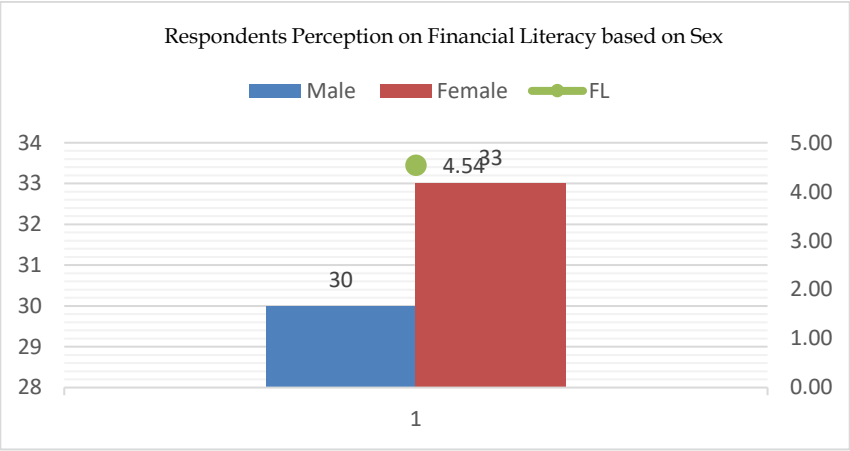


Figure 1. Respondents' perceptions on financial literacy based on sex

The implications of this finding are significant, suggesting that initiatives to improve financial literacy should continue to target both genders equally. Policymakers and educators can leverage this insight to design inclusive financial literacy programs that address men's and women's needs, fostering financial empowerment across communities. For instance, workshops and seminars tailored to various demographic groups could enhance individuals' capacity to manage finances effectively, regardless of gender. Moreover, this shared perception could serve as a foundation for encouraging household financial planning, where both partners actively participate in budgeting and financial decision-making, thereby improving overall financial well-being.

Figure 2 highlights respondents’ perceptions of the importance of financial literacy, grouped according to their educational attainment. The distribution shows that the elementary level constitutes 14.29%, elementary graduates account for 11.30%, high school level 8%, high school graduates 13%, college-level 16%, college graduates 33%, and those with a master’s degree comprise 4%. Despite the variations in educational attainment, all respondents unanimously agree that financial literacy is critical.

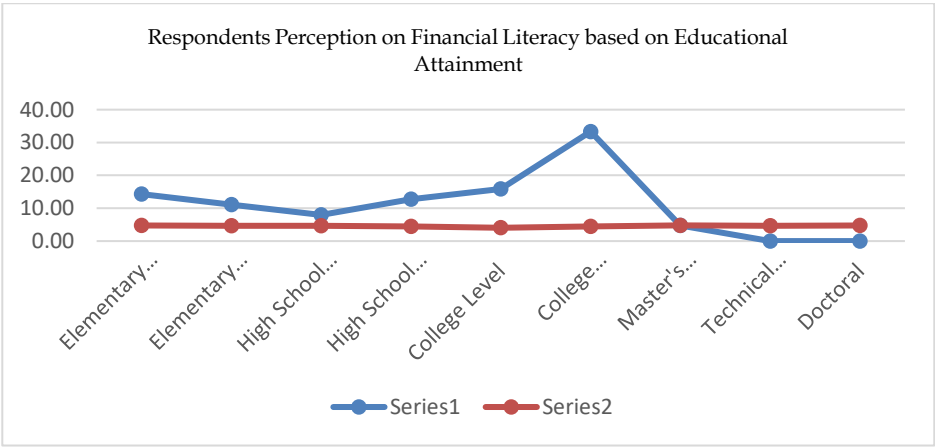


Figure 2. Respondents' perceptions of financial literacy based on educational attainment

This finding aligns with existing research emphasizing the critical role of financial literacy across different educational backgrounds. Lusardi and Mitchell (2011) found that while higher educational attainment often correlates with better financial literacy, even individuals with lower levels of education recognize its value in managing personal and household finances. Additionally, Hung et al. (2009) observed that targeted financial

education can benefit individuals at all educational levels, equipping them with the knowledge to make informed financial decisions. It suggests that educational interventions should be inclusive, catering to individuals across all educational levels. Tailored workshops or seminars addressing diverse audiences can ensure that financial literacy concepts are accessible and relevant, regardless of educational background. For instance, practical, scenario-based training for less-educated groups and advanced financial planning modules for highly educated individuals could maximize the impact of financial education efforts.

Figure 3 illustrates respondents' perceptions of the importance of financial literacy across various income levels, with a significant proportion earning between Php 5,000 and Php 20,000. Notably, those in lower income brackets perceive financial literacy as 'Extremely Important,' suggesting a heightened awareness of its role in effective financial management.

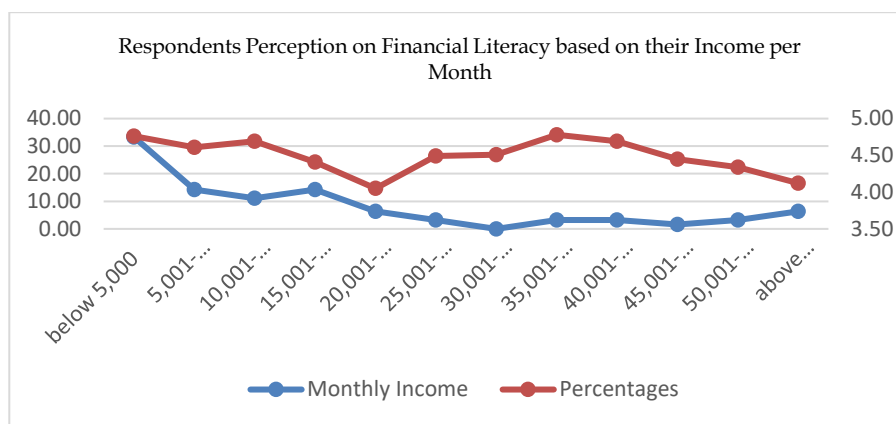


Figure 3. Respondents' perceptions of financial literacy based on income per month

This observation aligns with findings from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP, 2024), which indicate that financial literacy is crucial for individuals across all income levels to make informed financial decisions and achieve economic well-being. These findings have significant implications for policymakers and financial educators. Tailored financial literacy programs targeting lower-income groups could enhance their financial decision-making skills, improving financial stability and resilience. By addressing the specific needs and challenges these individuals face, such initiatives can reduce financial vulnerability and promote inclusive economic growth.

3.4 Perceptions on the Importance of Financial Literacy

The finding in Table 7 highlights the respondents' perceptions of the importance of financial literacy. The results indicate that the first nine indicators exhibit a weighted mean from 4.41 to 4.78 with a scale of "extremely important." Financial literacy may greatly impact as it manifests as "extremely important" in perceived importance. The indicator "it helps people become self-sufficient and achieve financial freedom" has the highest weighted mean of 4.78. Such an indicator signifies that when a person is financially literate, it may follow that they are self-sufficient and, therefore, may achieve financial freedom.

In the follow-up interview by the researcher, most respondents claimed that they could not attend financial literacy seminars or lectures in their whole life. However, they enthusiastically say that "attending financial literacy seminar is extremely important" because it will help them manage their finances." Those respondents who claim to be cooperative members stated that they only attended lectures for membership. This implies that cooperative management could need to include financial literacy and financial education for their members to understand better how to manage their finances when they reach retirement age.

Table 7. *Perceptions on the importance of financial literacy*

Indicators	Level of Importance					Mean	Remarks
	5	4	3	2	1		
Self-sufficiency and financial freedom.	53	12	2	1	0	4.78	Extremely Important
Understanding the value of money and sound financial decisions.	54	13	0	1	0	4.76	Extremely Important
Wise investment decision,	53	11	4	0	0	4.72	Extremely Important
Financial preparedness for emergencies.	51	13	4	0	0	4.69	Extremely Important
A lifestyle that is financially balanced, sustainable, ethical, and responsible.	52	12	3	1	0	4.69	Extremely Important
Freedom from too many debts	49	12	7	0	0	4.61	Extremely Important
Knowledge and skills to manage money effectively,	41	21	6	0	0	4.51	Extremely Important
Sharing financial knowledge with the young generations.	43	16	8	1	0	4.49	Extremely Important
Savings to create income streams.	40	16	9	3	0	4.41	Extremely Important
Help boost the country's economy.	29	19	15	5	0	4.05	Very Important

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 - Extremely Important, 3.41 – 4.20 – Very Important, 2.61 – 3.40 – Neutral, 1.81 – 2.60 – Important, 1.00 – 1.80 – Not Important

However, the 10th perceptual statement, which the geriatrics respondents were asked to cite their level of importance, indicates only “very important” that financial literacy “allows helping boost our country’s economy” as compared to all the other above-stated established indicators whereby each one gets a verbal description of “extremely important” The finding further emphasizes the need for all government instrumentalities and private educational institutions to venture into financial education scheme to raise awareness of the entire Filipino citizenry to undergo a sustaining financial literacy program for everyone. Thus elevating the quality of life or standard of Filipinos in taking care of their finances while they are still in their young age as they prepare themselves for life beyond the threshold of retirement age.

In this regard, Dwiastanti (2015) supports the study's finding that “if the individual has a good background in financial literacy, then he/she will be smarter in managing finances to achieve prosperity.” The study further states that “to achieve the individual condition, someone has a good level of literacy, there is the need for changes in behavior so that individuals will have the skills and confidence in using knowledge to be able to identify financial products and services.” Furthermore, the study of Surendar and Sarma (2018) reveals that most higher education teachers have a high level of financial literacy regarding financial knowledge, financial behavior, and financial attitude. Financial literacy generally increases with education level and the aggressiveness of the individual. Financial literacy is the start of an individual’s journey toward financial freedom. The possession of skills allows people to make smart decisions with their money. In the Philippines, there are a lot of financial educators who share their knowledge and help Filipinos to be financially literate. With proper knowledge, everyone can make the right decision, take action, and achieve the desired result.

3.5 Significant Relationship between Profile and Practices on Retirement Preparedness

Table 8 shows that the correlation coefficient for profile and practices on retirement preparedness is $r = .806$, which is significant at $p = .034$ @ 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between practice and profile. Based on the results, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis since the p-value of .034 is less than 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is a positive relationship between retirement preparedness and profile. The more income the respondents earn, the more they practice retirement preparedness. The higher education they attain, the more likely they will prepare for retirement. This further means that an increase in one variable will increase the others.

Table 8. *Significant relationship between profile and practices on retirement preparedness*

Test Variables	r	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Profile and Practices of Retirement Preparedness	0.806	0.034	Reject the null hypothesis	Significant

However, a strong correlation of 0.806 between profile and practices in preparing for retirement exists. This means that the profile of respondents, such as education, income, family size, and monthly expenditure, can affect their

practices and preparation for retirement. Most respondents claimed that their income is just enough for their daily needs, and they prioritize their children's education. That is why it is difficult for them to implement the practices since retirement planning is not a priority. No matter how high their education level, how small or big the family size is, and how high or low the monthly expenses greatly impact preparing for their retirement.

Table 9 shows that the correlation coefficient for practices on retirement preparedness and financial literacy is $r=0.594$ and is not significant at $p=.291$ @ 0.05 significance level. Therefore, there is no statistically significant relationship between practices on retirement preparedness and financial literacy. Based on the results, the decision fails to reject the null hypothesis since the p-value of .291 is higher than the 0.05 significance level. However, there is a correlation of 0.594 between financial literacy and practices in preparing for retirement, but they are statistically not significant. This means that financial literacy has no bearing on their practices in retirement planning. Most respondents claimed that financial literacy is extremely important, but they could not implement their retirement preparedness practices. Some factors affect their practices, such as their income being just enough for their daily needs and unaware of any investment vehicles or financial products.

Table 9. Significant Relationship between financial literacy and practices on retirement preparedness

Test Variables	r	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Practices on Retirement Preparedness vs. Financial Literacy	0.594	.291	Fail to Reject the null hypothesis	Not Significant

4.0 Conclusion

Most geriatrics aged 60 to 75 recognize the importance of financial literacy and emphasize the need to teach these concepts during adolescence. Regardless of sex, respondents unanimously view financial literacy as crucial for financial well-being. Many are married, hold higher education qualifications, and rely on pensions from GSIS or SSS, with a significant portion earning below ₱5,000 monthly. Retirement preparedness practices include mandatory pension funds, savings in cooperatives for higher returns, and strong debt management, though investment in life insurance is limited. Healthcare planning is evident with universal membership in PhilHealth. Despite the perceived importance of financial literacy, there is no significant correlation between financial literacy and retirement preparedness practices. Early financial education should be integrated into school curricula to address this gap and teach budgeting, saving, and investing. Retirement planning must also be prioritized through the establishment of emergency funds and investment in diverse financial instruments. Promoting debt management, income protection through life insurance, and long-term healthcare planning is essential. Accessible financial literacy programs through training, seminars, and academic initiatives can enhance financial knowledge across all ages, enabling individuals to secure their financial future and achieve long-term stability.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Marites A. Andres, Lovely R. Tinguha, and Mary Monette W. Diputado were primarily responsible for gathering and encoding the results. Romario P. Ybañez conducted the data analysis and interpretation, ensuring accurate insights from the collected data. Editing and finalizing the manuscript was a collaborative effort among all the researchers, reflecting their shared contributions to the completion of the study.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest.

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