

## **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to explore and know the perception of elderly individuals towards Home for the Aged. the participants for this study was purposely selected based on the following criteria, elderly individuals with age ranging from Sixty (60) years old and above, must communicate clearly and have the ability to answer a question diligently. The respondent's nationality will all be exclusive for Filipinos. The instrument used in gathering the data is a Focus group discussion, it was used to clearly define the topic, and as a result the researcher may gain intensive knowledge and gain the understanding of the participants regarding the said study. The researcher used self made questionnaires, the questions will flow from general to specific, and it was used to further stimulate the discussion among the participants.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study is about the perceptions of elderly individuals towards being institutionalized. Specifically, the researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What characteristics define those Filipinos who are Sixty (60) years old and over in terms of:
  - a) Marital Status
  - b) Educational Attainment
2. What are the perceptions of the participants regarding elderly institutions like Home for the Aged?

3. What are the perceptions of the participants on elderly institutions as regards to their demographic profile such as marital status?

### **Scope and Limitations**

The participants will be chosen based on the following criteria; elderly individuals with age ranging from 60 years old and above. This is the range of age to be considered as “old age”. (Domingo, 1992) The participants must communicate clearly and have the ability to answer the questions diligently. The respondent’s nationality should be exclusive for Filipinos. This study will be conducted in a Filipino setting since the participants are all Filipino and the culture factor is also being considered. The living arrangements of the elderly will also be included in the study.

This study would not include the family’s perceptions and attitudes toward institutionalization and their idea about their elderly companion will not be taken into consideration.

### **Research Design**

The researcher will use a descriptive, focus group discussion interview, it is a structured group process used to obtain a particular topic. It is important to draw out precise issues or attitudes or feelings of the respondents. First process is to clearly define the purpose of the discussion, 2<sup>nd</sup> process is to conduct the actual discussion and lastly interpreting and analyzing the data gathered. A focus group is comprised of Six (6) to Nine (9) participants who were brought together to discuss a clearly defined topic (<http://clearinghouse.missouriwestern.edu/manuscripts/359.asp>). As a result the

researcher may gain information and understanding of the perception of elderly individuals towards elderly institution, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research. The researcher will attempt to analyze and understand the perception of the elderly and, on how they came to be through the focus group discussion.

### **Research Respondents**

The respondents of the study are comprised of male and female elderly individuals, ranges from Sixty (60) years old and above. The respondents are specifically chosen from the following criteria: they can answer diligently the questions and they must have the ability to communicate clearly. The respondent's nationalities are all Filipino.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher will use self made questionnaires that will help the researcher in the focus group discussion. The questionnaires will flow from general to specific; it will be simple, unbiased and focused on the issue at hand. The questions are to stimulate the discussion; it will be merely be a guide because further discussion will elicit more questions. The focus group consists of homogenous people, all representing a segment of the population, a focus group session should last about 1 ½ hour with two (2) hours being the maximum time. The researcher will be the group facilitator keeps track of the discussion by asking a series of open minded questions to stimulate discussion.

## **Research Procedure**

In conducting the research the following procedures will be followed:

The researcher will secure a letter from the University signed by the thesis adviser, department head and college dean, it will be given to the elderly participants in order for the researcher to conduct the study and acquire some of the personal data that can help in the conduction of the study. The researcher will secure the confidentiality of all data. Upon approval, the methods of gathering data will implement.

The respondents will have an interview to build a good rapport. In the focus group discussion there are structured steps in conducting the discussion, first is to clearly define the purpose, identify the issues the researcher would like to understand better. The objectives should be as specific as possible. Second step, prepare the interview questions; develop a set of questions to provide an over all direction for the discussion. The questions should flow from general to specific and also, the questions should be simple, unbiased and focused to the issue at hand. The purpose is to stimulate the discussion. The respondents will be informed of the time and place of the discussion. The meeting place will be quiet, comfortable and free from outside distractions. The participants will all sit around so that they can see each other. Refreshments will be served as long as it cannot distract the respondents. The researcher will conduct the discussion without being a part of it. The researcher will not express his own opinion and will not make judgements on the opinions of the respondents. The researcher will ask a number of unbiased questions ranging from specific to general. The

questions should not get in the way of the participants own suggestions, opinions or experiences. All members of the group will be encouraged to participate and one member cannot dominate the discussion. The session will be tape recorded and transcribe after the meeting.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, the researcher will focus on the behavior and answers of the respondents during the focus group discussion. The observation of the researcher will integrate in every data that has been gathered. The researcher will have a descriptive statistics in tabular form and the researcher shall also make a documentary, based on the data during the focus group discussion. After the whole discussion is transcribed, the researcher will look for key words or concepts that re occur during the discussion. Then the key words or phrases will be grouped into categories, each category may have Four (4) to Nine (9) key words or phrases. After the key words or phrases have been grouped to categories, the interpretation will begin; central themes or perception will emerge. The relative weight of each theme will be reported. Both quantitative and qualitative results will be reported.

Elderly individuals have a different perception of the Home for the Aged. It is important to know and understand the position in the society, cultural attitudes, expectations from the society and also the interactions of the elderly to determine the factors on how they perceive Home for the Aged.

In the Filipino culture, the elderly are given the highest respect mainly because of their wisdom and experience. Traditional norms dictate that the

children repay their old aged parents by taking care of them. Giving them support, love and care during their old aged period. This is certainly the case in the Philippines where the family or immediate relatives have the primary care for the elderly (Lopez, 1991).

The major perception of the respondents towards Home for the Aged is that when an elderly is neglected by the family or immediate relatives, Home for the Aged is the alternative living arrangement. This perception of the participants regarding Home for the Aged may be influenced by the culture in which they grew familiar to. The culture in which they expect that their children will be taking care of them when they reached their old aged. According to Medina (2001) the closeness of a Filipino family can be seen with the preferred residence of the elderly in which they much prefer to live with their family for support, care and security instead of alternative residence like Home for the Aged.

The relationship of the elderly in the society plays an important role in influencing their perception on Home for the Aged as an alternative residence. According to Cumming and Henry (1961) on their Disengagement theory, the main premise of disengagement is that there is a loss of roles and energy due to aging that makes people want to be dismissed from their social expectations of productivity. Disengagement allows the elderly individual of maintaining a sense of worth and dignity. Disengaging is an orderly way of transferring power from an elderly generation to a younger generation. The elderly relinquishes the power and in this way it will be both beneficial to the individual and society. For men,



disengagement begins at retirement and the equivalent for women is during widowhood.

The elderly in the Philippines tend to just stay in the household and take on lesser roles as caretaker of the house, taking care of the young children and not being active in the society (Medina, 2001). Another meaning of old age in the Filipino context according to Domingo (1992) is that the perception of being old was relative to the age of the perceiver. The elderly Filipino did not perceive themselves as “old” individual, only the frail and weakened perceived as “old” and thus they can still do minor duties like maintaining the cleaning of the house, taking care of the children and other minor duties in the house.

According to Falscesco (1997) many people tend to perceive an elderly individual as not productive and dependent on the children, but it is the other way around, old people has an important role to play in the Philippine society, the truth is that majority of old people are healthy and contributing to the well being of others.

Another perception of the elderly is that the Home for the Aged is not yet accepted in the Philippine society, in developed Western society it is certainly accepted but in the Philippines, whereas living arrangement is concerned, knowing the Filipino culture of having a close knitted family ties, it is hard to think that old aged parents are sent in a Home for the Aged. Older people have a great value on the society because of their experience in handling different kinds of situation. A Filipino value of filial, respect and debt of gratitude towards the aged parents still continues. That is why the respondents are quickly to distinguish

that elderly institutions are not accepted in the Philippines. The traditional norms of taking care of the elderly by the family or immediate relatives still carries on.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results obtained and analysis on the discussion, the elderly participants perceived a Home for the Aged institution in the following criteria. The perception of the majority of respondents towards Home for the Aged revolves around that it is where the elderly individuals are taken into when there family or immediate relatives refused or neglected to take care of them. This perception of the participants regarding Home for the Aged may be influenced by the culture in which they grew familiar to. The culture in which they expect that their children will be taking care of them when they reached their old aged. They still do not consider Home for the Aged institutions as an alternative living arrangement.

Another perception of the participants of the study is that Home for the Aged is not thoroughly accepted in the Filipino culture whereas the traditional norm of strong family ties still continues. Among the other perception is that it is only for those underprivileged elderly individuals, it is only applicable for developed Western countries and lastly it is a suitable place for the elderly with regards to the quality of care that the elderly will receive.



## **Recommendation**

The Researcher recommends the following:

1. A similar study be conducted using a Correlational design to measure if there is a possible relationship between two or more variables.
2. Investigate if there is a difference between male and female with regards to their perception regarding Home for the Aged institutions
3. A study focused directly on the family of the elderly individuals. It is said that the relationship of the elderly towards the family constitute the adjustment towards the problem.

