

# Factors Affecting the Preference for Living Arrangement of the Overseas Filipino Workers in Bahrain

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the factors affecting the preference for living arrangement of the Overseas Filipino Workers in Bahrain as they age. Data were from 35 respondents using descriptive, self-administered questionnaire. They were chosen using a non-probabilistic sampling.

The study found out that respondents agree to live independently and they prefer to live independently rather than to live with the children. Further, they agree that they need in-home care when incapable of independent living but disagree on both variables; “don’t want to leave the assets behind” and “willing to give up my properties to the children”.

Moreover, data suggests that income is highly significant in making decision on to live independently. It can be viewed that respondents have average monthly income of Php123,571.00 (\$2,360.39) and majority of them have pension plan. The respondents’ average age and civil status have significant relationship to live independently. Most of them are still young couples with an average age of 40.

The study then concludes that income, age and civil status are the compelling factors to decide to live independently. Pre-retirees strive to for a more financially secure retirement by planning and preparing for it. The findings conform to the U-shaped pattern of life movement wherein parents are living with the children, then become independent, and in later, in their late life, co-reside back with the children or relatives for in-home care.

**Keywords--** Independent Living, Late-Life movement, Living Arrangement, Living with Children, OFWs, Retirement

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ageing is inevitable that one has to recognize and to be prepared of. Social policies for the later stages of should be an integral part of the plans and programs of the government and the society as whole. Plans and programs differ among countries considering the well-being of the increasing number of older persons. The Madrid International Plan of Action (MIPAA) highlighted that older person should be able to participate and benefit equitably from the fruits of development in advancing their well-being and environment that are suitable for them [1].

The high regard for the older person is a distinct

trait of Filipino. Leaving behind their elders is an unacceptable socially and morally. Currently, children work in a highly competitive environment and the demand of their own family. Some prefers to work abroad leaving behind their elders to be taken cared by unskilled caregiver or by family members. Some are experiencing difficulty in coping up with the filial obligations to the elders. Elders sometime co-reside with family members. However, young generations prefer to live independently.

Overseas Filipino Workers’ income was usually sent financial resources to family and relatives for personal consumptions or for investment. Least is provided for their future needs such as living arrangement as they age, except that they are looking forward from the fruits of investment or the family support.

The living arrangement may be by living alone, shared living or by assisted living. These housing options are dependent on factors that motivate, enable and inhibit them [2]. Any person, as he aged, aimed to maintain his/her wellness, comfort in life, safe living, live independently and to have continued active lifestyle. However, the realization of the motivation to live independently depends on the support of the family members and the society as a whole; resources available; understanding of having an option to live independently; and life experiences [3]. Needlessly, one needs to eliminate impending factors such as the social, financial, and financial to enable to move in to housing options.

In most East Asian countries, the retirement prospects of today’s working-age adults are brighter than those of today’s retirees. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the Philippines. Around 69% of today’s working-age adults believe that the government should encourage workers to save more for their own retirement by offering them tax breaks. Around 82% of the Filipino respondents, meanwhile, believe that the government should require workers to save more for retirement. [16]

Life Care and Retirement home are becoming a necessary forms of living arrangements, be it with spouse or alone. Health and the capacity for independent living are two important considerations in understanding the needs of the elderly and the support services required to respond to their desire to remain in their own home or at least in housing situated in their community. Real estate developers and life care providers are interested in this study to provide the services needed by the elders.

The study was limited to Overseas Filipino

Workers working in Bahrain. Bahrain does not provide permanent residency to OFWs, thus, the later have to go home to retire.

The study primarily dealt with the Overseas Filipino Workers' preference for independent living. OFWs are contract-based workers working outside the Philippines. They received monthly income from their employers and their earnings were sent to the Philippines to support the family. Another source of income is the service gratuity which they can receive at the end of the contract.

Seemingly, most Filipinos don't have a concrete financial plan for their future retirement. BSP showed that retirement or insurance plans cover only one out of four Filipinos, and majority of it are purely work-based programs. While people aspire for financial security, there remains a huge gap between how much they're saving and how much they actually need to cover

their years in retirement. For a lot of Filipinos, day-to-day expenses, major life events, and untoward incidents take priority over preparing for their retirement. [17]

The social and financial status of older adults and support systems accorded to them can be viewed as indicators of their living arrangement and level of well-being. Filipinos tend to work abroad for better earnings and good providers of the family and immediate family. Some OFWs have been working until retirement and as a consequence of retirement, they will be going back home.

The household status, such as co-residence or co-sharing, indicates the living arrangement options for elders. As cultural belief, it is morally right that children provide better living arrangement to the parents but it becomes also a burden to the children. Individual are given the opportunity to choose the household arrangement, in this study, it is considered as the goods.

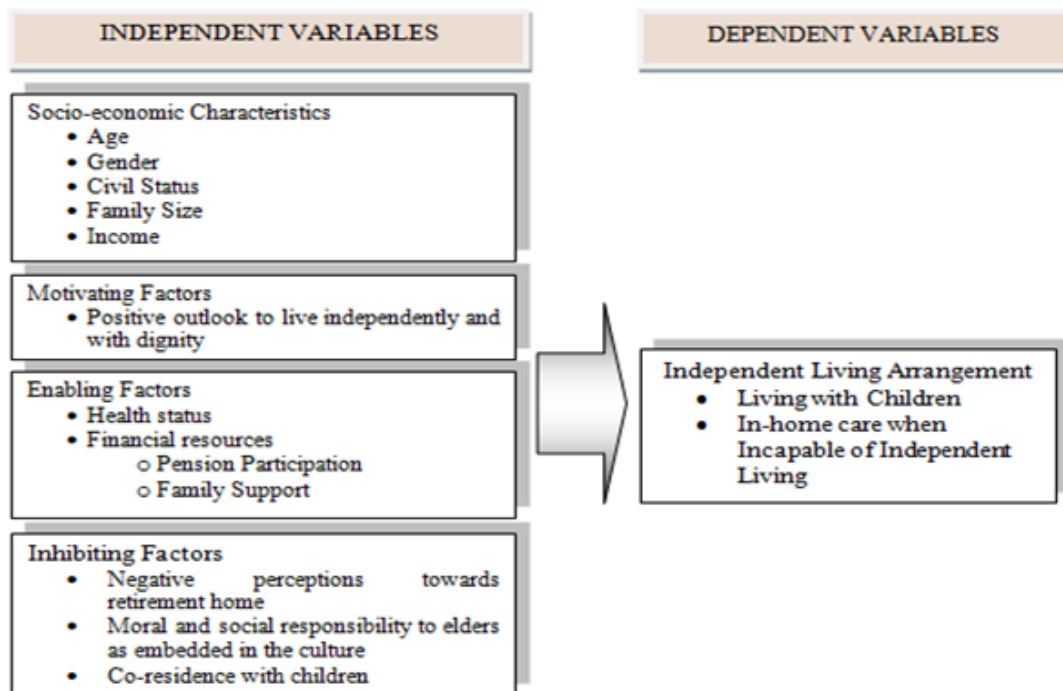


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework and Research Flow of the Study

Motivating variables include positive attitudes toward independent living arrangement and long-term care options. Retiring, losing spouse, disability and even immediate family's decision cause movement. The factors that enable movement include health status, resources available, support from the family and the society, and clear understanding of housing options.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The population is ageing which is estimated to increase by 13 per cent in 2020 [5]. Several researches had been made over the years in western countries to

determine factors that influence for housing option when one will age. These housing options are dependent on factors that motivate, enable and inhibit them. Any person, as he aged, aimed to maintain his/her wellness, comfort in life, safe living, live independently and to have continued active lifestyle. However, the realization of the motivation to live independently depends on the support of the family members and the society as a whole; resources available; understanding of having an option to live independently; and life experiences. Needlessly, one needs to eliminate impending factors such as the social, financial, and financial to enable to move in to housing options [2].

The residential arrangements can be based on the gender and marital status of the elderly. Men tend to

live in household intended for couple-only, than women, while for older women are much more willing to live with the child. In general, married older persons tend to live with children than the unmarried which can be categorically reflect that those who are married tend to be relatively younger and have dependent children still living with them [5].

One of the factors that influences in making decision is the level of spouse's health problem [8] and the gender of the individual [9]. The health of one spouse has significant effects on the decision of the couples [10].

However, the older married couple decides to retire at the same time [11]. The behavior of men on retirement found that they are more likely to follow after their wife's retirement [12]. Women, who are pre-occupied with household chores, are less financially prepared for retirement than men [13].

Income is increasingly important to assess their prospects for retirement security. The influence of having financial resources in deciding for plan for retirement decision improves the possibility of early retirement through increased ability to self-support [14]. Later years life is a personal responsibility and needs careful planning, though, one can reliance on social security supports from the government and family members.

Filial piety is common in the Philippines. Children are obligated to take care and or provide support to the parents and elderly, thus the quality of life the later depend on them. This can be viewed that older person has to be accorded with respect, even veneration and children have moral obligation to take of their old ones. The vulnerable elder may relies from the support of the spouse and other family members for care-giving activities and maintaining the living facility. These activities, particularly for working family members, difficult to fulfill, thus resorted to leaving the work or to hire incompetent care-giver. Currently, there were reported cases that elders were disregarded and miserable, and/or put to non-government charitable institutions.

Recent studies reveal that the idea of co-residence changes, the young generation and elders now changes in preference to live independently with dignity [2]. There are sequential factors influence the perception of young adult regarding retirement home and life care such as their exposure to such facility; the interpretation of what has seen and observed; and its relevance. Awareness of retirement home and life care as an option as those who are familiar with the concepts of retirement home and life care are indicative of an interest later life housing option where there is dignity and available support system and services.

The negative perception for later life housing options can be based on cultural filial beliefs, depending on children, and co-residency with family members. Co-residency is considered as a sign of solidarity with elderly [17] and respect to elders. However, co-residency housing option is changing to due to changing environment.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to determine the preference for living arrangement of the pre-retirees as they age in terms of living with children and in-home care when incapable for independent living. This study observes the effect of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their attitudinal factors relative to independent living preference.

The research aims to determine the factors that affect the preference of the pre-retirees for living arrangement as they age using the push-pull models. These factors are classified into factors that motivate, enable and inhibit them to live independently with dignity. The researcher would like to observe whether the said factors will have an effect on the OFW's choice on living arrangement as they age.

### IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter introduces the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the gathered data on determining the preference for living arrangement of Overseas Filipino Workers working in as they age. It specifically looked into the socio-economic characteristics of pre-retirees and the attitudinal factors as predictors of preferences regarding independent living. It contains tabular presentation of the findings and the statistical results that prompted the researcher to make conclusions and recommendations on the preference for independent living of the OFWs as they age.

#### *Socio-economic Profile of Respondents*

Table 1. Frequencies of Respondent Demographics

Variables	F	%	Variables	F	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Health Status</b>		
Male	18	51	Good	14	40
Female	17	49	Very Good	21	60
<b>Family Size</b>			<b>House Ownership</b>		
1-2	4	11	Not Owned	9	26
3-4	16	36	Owned	26	74
5-6	15	43			
<b>Civil Status</b>			<b>Availability of Pension Plan</b>		
Married	26	74	Yes	18	51
Unmarried	9	26	No	17	59
<b>Familiarity of Retirement Home</b>			<b>Financial Supports</b>		
Yes	26	74	Yes	2	6
No	9	26	No	33	98

The results of the study show that, of the total respondents (n=35), majority were male (51%), with an average age of 40, married (74%), of good health (60%), and having 5 to 6 members of the family (43%).

Majority of the respondents owned a house (74%), with pension plan (51%) and do not expect

financial supports (98%). Most of them also were familiar with retirement home as they age.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Socio-economic Status

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age	40	10.41
No. of Years as OFW	8	6.05
Month Income	128,571	79,713

The study shows that majority of the respondents were working as OFWs in Bahrain for an average of 8 years with the highest length of working years was 26 years and the lowest was 1.5 years. The lowest monthly income was Php 36,000 and the highest was Php 360,000 and the average monthly income of P128,571. The respondents' range of age was 26 to 55 years old and the average of 40 years old.

Table 3. Indicators for Living with Children

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
In-home care, I would be a burden.	2.1429	1.06116
My children need my support.	2.1714	.85700
Children are dependent on me.	2.3143	.79600
In-home care creates conflict with my children's family.	2.1143	.90005
Age gaps among family members will create problem.	2.3429	.83817
I don't want to be involved with my children's (relatives) problem.	2.0000	.76696
Overall Weighted Mean	2.1810	.43230

The study revealed that living with children variable has a mean of 2.18 and standard deviation of .4323. It implied that respondents agree that in-home care is a burden, can create conflict with the children's family, being involved with children's (relatives) problem, and age gaps among family members will create problems. Further, respondents agree that children need their support.

In this vein, the study found out that respondents prefer to live independently rather than living with their children.

Table 4. Indicators for Desire for In-home Care When Incapable of Independent Living

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
My children want me to live with them.	2.4286	.69814
I want to be cared for at home.	1.7143	.57248
Living with my children will make me proud.	1.8571	.60112
I will be lonely without my family.	1.8857	.63113

I want to live with my children because it is less costly.	2.2571	.65722
I don't want to leave my assets behind.	2.9143	.78108
I am not willing to give up my properties to my children.	2.9714	.74698
Total	2.2898	.39121

The overall indicator for desire for in-home care when incapable of independent living has a mean of 2.2898 and standard deviation of .39121. It indicates that respondents agree for in-home care when incapable of independent living. The results show that respondents strongly agree to be cared for at home (mean=1.7143) but disagree on both variables; "don't want to leave the assets behind" and "will give up my properties to the children".

Retirement is associated with "the beginning of the end." Increasing numbers of people view retirement as a continuation of what life was or even as an opportunity for a new chapter in life, and, overwhelmingly, people have positive views of retirement such as there is more than one key to happiness in later life. Moreover, people want more flexibility; retain their dignity and freedom in the way they retire.

Respondents strongly agree that they will be cared at home; living with children makes them proud; and, will be lonely without the family. Filial piety and strong sense of obligations towards parents and elderly alike are still widespread and dominant in Asian countries (Palloni, A, 2001). Abandoning parents is an act deserving condemnation. The young generation plan to fulfill its filial obligations by sharing a home with their parents or to their extended families and to provide for them during their later years. Studies revealed that expressions and manifestations of bonds of solidarity with the elderly are changing, respect remains a central value. While strict obedience is on the decline, focus group participants acknowledge that deference and respect are embedded in many other behaviors

**Relationship of Socio-economic Factors and Enabling Factors for Living Arrangement**

Table 5. Test on the Effect of Socio-economic Factors for Living Arrangement Preferences

Socio-economic Factors	Living with Children	In-home Care
Age	Pearson r = -.350* sig. = .039	Pearson r = .107 sig. = .542
Gender	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=4.898 sig. =.089	Corrected Chi-square=.000 sig. =1.0
Civil Status	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=6.993* sig. =.03	Corrected Chi-square=.016 sig. =.90
Family Size	Likelihood ratio of	Corrected Chi-

	chi-square=8.214 sig. =.608	square= 5.168 sig. =.396
Income	Pearson r =-.510** sig. = .002	Pearson r = -.069 / sig. = .695
Months/years	Pearson r =-.108 sig. = .538	Pearson r = .002 / sig. = .993

\*\* highly significant at .01 \*Significant at .05 level

The results of the study indicate that income has highly significant relationship on living with children since  $r = -.510$ ,  $p = .002$  at significant level of .01 and age and civil status are significant since  $r = -.350$ ,  $p = .039$  and  $r = 6.993^*$ ,  $p = .03$ , respectively at significant level of .05. There was no significant relationship on socio-economic factors and in-home care if incapable of independent living variable.

The study found that respondents to live independently, income is important factor to assess the prospects for living independently particularly for retirement security. It confirmed the previous study that the influence of having financial resources in deciding for plan for retirement decision improves the possibility of retirement through increased ability to self-support [14]. Later years life is a personal responsibility and it needs careful planning, though, one can rely on social security supports from the government, family members and from the income generating investments but sufficiency of it is one factor to consider.

The study revealed that age is also a significant factor in making decision to live independently or co-reside with the children. Majority of the respondents were still in their productive years (mean=40 years), means they can harness their income potential capabilities to prepare for their late-life movement.

OFWs as they age or retire, reside to their invested houses with the family or children and then become independent as the children are moving out to have their own lives. However, in their late life, co-reside back with children or relative/s. Researcher made dominant emphasis on the fragility of the elders whose capability to live independently diminishes that requires special housing options fitted for them.

The study revealed the civil status of the respondents has significant impact in their living preference arrangements. Married older persons, in general, are more likely than the unmarried to live with children. This may mainly reflect the circumstance that those who are married tend to be relatively younger, and the younger old are more likely to have dependent children still living with them.

The study found out civil status has significant relationship with living of children variable. Previous researches indicate that for married individuals, the health of the spouse has an influence on the retirement decision, but the amount of influence is affected by both level of the spouse's health problems (Coile, 2003) and the gender of the individual.

Table 6. Test on the Effect of Enabling Factors for Living Arrangement Preference

Enabling factors	Living with children	With home care
Health Status	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=2.688 sig. =.261	Corrected Chi-square= .250 sig. =.617
Home owner	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=8.169* sig. =.017	Corrected Chi-square= .000 sig. =1.0
Pension	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=7.817* sig. =.02	Corrected Chi-square= .689 sig. =.407
Family support	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=1.23 sig. =.541	Corrected Chi-square= .134 sig. =.714
Familiarity	Likelihood ratio of chi-square=1.228 sig. =.541	Corrected Chi-square= 2.176 sig. =.14

\*Significant at .05 level

The results of the study shown in Table 6, living with children, the likelihood ratio of the chi-square for house owner ( $r = 8.169$ ,  $p = .017$ ) and pension ( $r = 7.817$ ,  $p = .02$ ) at significant level of .05. It can be viewed that personal savings accounts and pensions are most common forms for later year life financial security. The decision to live independently is due to the availability earnings (mean of Php128,571) they have currently. Further, the study indicates the respondents are not depending on the financial supports from other members which negates previous studies that children are obligated to take care and or provide support to the parents and elderly, thus the quality of life the later depend on them.

The quality of life of older persons depends largely on the family support system. However, the study revealed that family support has no correlation with living with children or in-home care when incapable of independent living. It is worthy to note that the respondents are currently earning well.

HSBC research reflects that there is a changing trend in developing countries. Older respondents in Hongkong and Mexico expect their families to support them in their retirement, less than a third of younger respondents have similar expectations. While in Japan, 57% of older people expect care-giving support from their families but only 40% of younger Japanese expect the same. South Korean baby boomers entering retirement with sufficient financial resources prefer to independent living arrangement (Gibler, K and Lee, E, 2004).

## V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the researcher has drawn to therefore infer the following:

1. Respondents agree that they prefer to live independently rather than to live with the children.
2. Respondents agree they need in-home care when incapable of independent living but disagree on both variables; “don’t want to leave the assets behind” and “willing to give up my properties to the children”.
3. For living with children correlation with the socio-economic factors; income is highly correlated and age and civil status were correlated.
4. The socio-economic factors have no correction with the in-home care factors

Individual members of families often serve different roles in decisions that ultimately draw on shared family resources particularly in-home care incapable of independent living. Pre-retirees strive to for a more financially secure retirement by planning and preparing for it.

There are sequential factors influence the perception of young adult regarding living arrangement and life care such as their exposure to such facility; the interpretation of what has seen and observed; and its relevance. Awareness of retirement home and life care as an option, as those who are familiar with the concepts of retirement home and life care are more likely to express interest in living in. Those who intend to live in prefer to do so because they perceive it offers them the ability to obtain needed support services in a dignified manner and they are less likely to want children to provide in-home care as they age.

Saving is needed to encourage the majority of Filipinos to save for their retirement years; otherwise, elders may result to shared living arrangement. However, further study is needed to determine the adequacy of the savings or financial resources needed in the late-life movement.

In business perspective, the late-life movement of the Filipinos is influenced by four major factors; cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. These factors cause the business to develop product and services preferences that will fit the needs of the late-life movement of Filipinos. Although many of these factors cannot be directly controlled by business, understanding of their impact is essential as marketing mix strategies can be developed to appeal.

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