

Strategizing for the Future: A Mixed Method Approach to Department of Education Employees Retirement Readiness and Lifestyle Planning

¹Flor Angelie M. Tolondon, ²Gaudy C. Ortizo

¹Department of Education, Division of South Cotabato,
Koronadal City 9506, Philippines,

²Notre Dame of Dadiangas University
Marist Avenue, General Santos City 9500, Philippines

Abstract:

This study determines the relationship between the level of retirement readiness and the extent of the lifestyle of DepEd employees to come up with a retirement readiness program. This is an explanatory sequential mixed-method study, comprising a cross-sectional survey and interviews was undertaken. Retirement Readiness in terms of health, financial, and contingency planning was examined and the extent of the lifestyle of DepEd retired employees in terms of health, spending habits, and recreational activities were also explored. Survey data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS using non-parametric statistics and qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Statistical results show that indicators in retirement readiness have a moderate level in terms of obtaining emergency funds and a moderate extent of lifestyle in terms of spending for their needs. This indicates that retirees need to strengthen their ability to establish savings for emergencies and prioritize their personal needs. Qualitative data shows that in the event of an emergency, essential resources to rely on include dependable communication channels, emergency substances, and the right of entry to emergency services some of these are having financial support from children and finding ways and means to generate funds.

The results indicate the need for a retirement readiness program that moves beyond merely raising awareness and provides information on a positive health approach, good financial management, and improving socialization skills to provide a holistic approach to the retirement readiness of DepEd Employees.

Keywords: Retirement Readiness, Retirement Lifestyle, Retired Employee, Retirement Preparation, Lifestyle

1. Introduction

Retirement is a big life transition that occurs in late adulthood and may have a negative impact on healthy lifestyles. As per Skerrett (2022), retirement is a significant payoff for decades of everyday work, it is a chance to unwind and go exploring. While for others, retirement is a source of frustration due to deteriorating health capacity and increasing restrictions. However, for teachers who painstakingly spent their entire lives instructing Filipino learners, retirement is an award because it frees them from demanding daily tasks. Others, who are not physically and financially prepared, find it frustrating.

Mudugo (2013) states that there are four things to consider before retirement, having (a) financial stability; (b) good health; (c) a willingness to continue working; and (d) full government support will help retirement go more smoothly.

Many retirees nowadays are concerned about their income, health, the fact that they have no one to look out for them, alienation, disassociation, decreased sexual activity, impotence, lack of significance, and demise (Cabarrubias, 2017). Inadequate antecedent retirement planning and the necessary social provisions can lead to deteriorating health conditions, retirement anxiety, and poor quality of life (Wildman, 2018).

Based on the study of the East Asia Retirement Survey (2015) suggests that in the Philippines, 90% of Filipinos are currently frightened of being penniless when they retire. It is because the typical retirement packages that a retiree might expect include a lump sum of their retirement income, Social Security System (SSS) benefits for private-sector employees, PhilHealth benefits (for hospitalization), and Pag-IBIG dividends. However, with rising life expectancy, would these sums of money last till the person's death? As a result, if a retiree wants to retain their present lifestyle, proper retirement planning is required (Gallardo, 2017). Among ASEAN nations, 65% of retired teachers in the Philippines (Alliance of Attention Teachers, 2015) do not enjoy their retirement life due to a lack of government attention and apprehension over outstanding loans to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

According to Mateo (2017), around 23,000 public school teachers retired without getting pensions in 2018, owing to outstanding loans to GSIS and other private lending organizations, as cited by Bangao (2020). His study on the life trajectory of public-school indigenous people retired teachers revealed that retirement is dreadful when retirement benefits are lost due to financial fraud, a zero-pension due to debts, and other related health risks. The study also discovered that early retirement is rewarding, and that retirement planning leads to a happier life for retirees.

DepEd's retirement directives are clear to preserve rights in a vigorous economy and recognize teachers' vital role in nation-building. Teachers are among the lowest-paid professionals in the country, and their scarce pension may not be enough to save for retirement. Secretary Briones in Cepeda (2017) stated that due to poor financial literacy, many DepEd retirees could not enjoy their retirement. Noting that over 23,000 of the department's retirees - including teachers and non-teaching workers - cannot benefit from their retirement claims due to outstanding loans. However, the DepEd focuses on teachers' welfare and continuing development, including helping them achieve financial stability. Before, the processing of retirement benefits used to take months, if not years, because required documents were not readily accessible. The agency obtains and aggregates data from all DepEd employees (Hernando-Malipot, 2017).

A study conducted in Tantaran, South Cotabato, shows that as teachers reach the age of 41- 50 they start to save their finances to prepare for their retirement. Study also shows that teachers have a high level of budgeting practices, yet, this budget was not being followed, as a result, spending soars beyond of what is planned, affecting the investment, savings, and preparation for retirement. (Delmo et al., 2023)

This research explores the retirement readiness and lifestyle of government employees of the Department of Education (DepEd) as our country's basic education frontlines. Furthermore, there is a need to be more knowledgeable about retired government employees' readiness and the extent of their lifestyle after their retirement.

This study generates valuable information to propose a retirement readiness program, especially for the government agencies as the main employer of government employees, policymakers, and further research in this area, as well as to suggest how this can be applied in both private and public sectors.

2. Research Problem

Generally, this study determines the relationship between the level of retirement readiness and extent of lifestyle of DepEd employees to come up with retirement readiness program. It answers the following questions:

1. What is the level of retirement readiness of DepEd Employees in terms of:
 - 1.1 Health;
 - 1.2 Financial;
 - 1.3 Contingency Planning?
2. What is the extent of lifestyles of retired employees in terms of:
 - 2.1 Health;
 - 2.2 Spending Habits;
 - 2.3 Social?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of retirement readiness and the extent of lifestyle of retired DepEd Employee.
4. Based on the findings of the study, what retirement readiness program can be designed?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the level of retirement readiness and extent of lifestyles of retired employees.

3. Scope and Delimitation

This study determined the retirement readiness and lifestyles of government employees from the Department of Education specifically from Division of South Cotabato (DepEd – South Cotabato). The study focused on the retirement readiness of the DepEd Employees in terms of their quality of life through financial, health, and social aspect. This study also explored their lifestyle from financial, health, social and leisure activities. Obtaining information pertaining to these areas will assist employer in better serving their employees on retirement readiness information for those considering retirement in the near future.

The locale of the study is the Province of South Cotabato where it covers ten(10) municipalities which includes, Tantaran, Tampakan, Tupi, Polomolok, Banga, Norala, Surallah, Sto. Nino, Tboli and Lake Sebu. The locale of the study is under the umbrella of DepEd – South Cotabato where the retired personnel was previously employed. It is conveniently located within the proximity and access of the researcher and availability of respondents.

This study is limited to the identified retired employees of DepEd – South Cotabato who still have the capability to answer the questionnaire and the interview. The only employees to consider are the retirees during the 5-year period from 2018 to 2022.

4. Research Design

The study employed the Explanatory Sequential Research design. An explanatory sequential design collects quantitative data first, then qualitative data to assist explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Subedi, 2016). The rationale for this strategy is that quantitative data and results provide a broad image of the study, additional analysis specifically qualitative data collecting is required to improve, extend, or explain the broader picture. The purpose of the second qualitative phase is often to explain the results discovered in the first quantitative phase, and to explain outliers that are not entirely consistent with the collected data. Since the analysis of qualitative data is used to explain the quantitative phase's results, thus the term 'explanatory' (Toyon, 2021).

5. Selection of Respondents/Participants

The respondents of the study are the selected retirees from DepEd-Schools Division of South Cotabato (DepEd-SDSC) teaching and non-teaching personnel. For the Calendar Year of 2019 to 2023, a total of 412 retirees were accounted, sources of this data are DepEd- SDSC Personnel Section.

The study design lends itself to a form of non-probability sampling called Random sampling. Random sampling is the most common nonprobability sampling strategy used within developmental science (Bornstein et al., 2013). The qualified respondents for this study were the 412 retirees that were accounted from the year 2019 to 2023. Using a random sampling, the data was collected from 207 retired DepEd employees who were dispersed around the municipalities of South Cotabato. The individuals included in this study were the retired staff members, both teaching and non-teaching, of the Department of Education in South Cotabato from the year 2019 to 2023. This selection was deemed suitable for the purposes of this research.

A purposeful sampling approach was used in qualitative phase of this research. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that purposeful sampling requires three essential elements. First, the selection of participants, or the site, the size of the sample, and the specific sampling strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this research, the researcher used a purposeful sampling strategy with the following criteria:

Eligible participants for the qualitative phase of this study must previously work as a government employee (in teaching or non-teaching roles) at the DepEd-South Cotabato and must have retired between the years 2019 to 2023. Out of the total group of 412 individuals, the researcher chose ten (10) participants for in-depth interviews, two of whom were retired non-teaching personnel while the remaining eight were retired teaching staff. The selected participants were previously stationed in Polomolok, Tupi, T'boli, Lake

Sebu, Tantangan and Division Office. This study employed multiple participants to construct a collective story of the human experience with preparation for retirement and the planning of one's lifestyle.

6. Research Instrument

Two data gathering instruments was used in this study, first is the survey questionnaire that were used for the data gathering in quantitative phase and interview guide questionnaire for the qualitative phase. These research instruments were administered to the respondents/participants of the study. The questionnaire administered was through paper or electronic form.

The survey questionnaire is prepared in two forms, using Google Forms where it is distributed using the online link and using the traditional printed survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire is composed of two parts, Part I of the questionnaire is about the level of retirement readiness of DepEd Employees in terms of health, financial, and contingency planning. The questions were answered on a five-point Likert scale. The following is the rating of five-point Likert scale that interprets the level of retirement readiness of DepEd employee: 5 – Very high, 4 – High, 3 – Moderate, 2 – Low and 1- Very Low. (See Appendix – J Mean Range and Scale Value). Part II of the instrument is the extent of lifestyles of retirees, which are regarding healthy lifestyle, spending habits, and recreational activities. The questions were answered by the respondents using the five-point Likert Scale. The following is the rating of five-point Likert scale that interprets the level of retirement readiness of government employee: 5 – Very high extent, 4 – High extent, 3 – Moderate extent, 2 – Low extent and 1- Very low extent. (See Appendix – J Mean Range and Scale Value)

The questions for the survey questionnaire and the interview guide questions are validated to ensure that the instruments used to evaluate research data must be valid and precise. For a research instrument to be considered valid, the content selected and included must be relevant to the need or gap established. Before the actual study, the instruments were discussed with validators and a statistician. The feedback from the experts was gathered using a Validation Tool which has helped in modifying the instruments. Feedback from the experts above was reflected on the research instruments and the results were consolidated.

Pilot testing of the questionnaire is conducted to ensure the clarity of the test instructions and level of difficulty of the questions asked. For the pilot testing of the research instrument, it is distributed to the fifty (50) employees who will be retiring in a few years. These employees are currently employed in the Department of Education – Division of South Cotabato aging from 55 years old to 64 years old. Respondents in the field test were informed by detailing the expectations of the pilot test; however, no data was collected from the pilot test. The pilot test concentrates on the way questions are posed in relation to the research topic, research questions, and projected sample. The responses from the pilot testing were gathered to undergo reliability test.

The survey questionnaire has undergone a reliability test using the Cronbach Alpha to evaluate the quality of the tool during the design phase before deploying it fully. Cronbach's alpha coefficient measures the internal consistency, or reliability, of a set of survey items. The use of this statistic is to help determine whether a collection of items consistently measures the same characteristic (Taber, 2017). The final questions for the survey questionnaires were prepared based on the result of the validation and the reliability test.

Moreover, the results gathered from the survey were validated using a secondary data gathering instrument. An interview guide questionnaire is used by the researcher to conduct an in-depth interview with the selected participants. There were follow-up questions that is asked is to clarify answers and explore the details of the participant's answers . In some areas, the researcher asked an open-ended question for clarification.

7. Data Analysis

The study has undertaken in three phases: Phase 1 involves gathering, analyzing, and evaluating quantitative data; Phase 2 involves preparing, conducting, and analyzing qualitative data; and phase 3 qualitative data contextualizes the quantitative results.

The responses that were gathered from the respondents are tallied in Microsoft Excel software to obtain a computer-generated analysis. Descriptive statistics like weighted means, and inferential statistical tools such

as T-test correlation, and Spearman rho were employed.

Weighted means were employed to assess the level of readiness and the extent of lifestyles of the retired government employees and were used to describe the responses of the respondents which answers the statement of the problem number 1 and statement of the problem number 2.

Spearman rho was used to test the significant relationship between the two variables between preparedness and lifestyles of retired government employees which answers statement of the problem number 3. The scale of values of Spearman (p), and its corresponding adjectival equivalence was adapted from Manyage et-al, (2015) will be used in this study. A significant level (p) was set at 5% in all statistical computations. Microsoft Excel Software was utilized to calculate the data.

The transcribed data from the in-depth interview was analyzed using the Thematic Analysis. The researcher systematically organizes and analyzes large, complicated data sets using the qualitative research method known as thematic analysis. Finding themes that can include the narratives present in the account of data sets is the goal. It entails carefully reviewing and rereading the transcriptions of the data to identify themes (Dawadi, 2020).

Analyzing the qualitative part of a study using Creswell and Creswell (2018) involves several systematic steps to extract meaningful insights from textual data. Approach in analyzing the data began with data familiarization, coding, and theme development. Data were reduced and interpreted, then validated the emerging themes and interpretations through iterative rounds of analysis.

Qualitative data were triangulated with quantitative data to enhance the robustness of the analysis. Triangulating quantitative findings with qualitative data provides a deeper understanding of how participants understood the experiences behind the statistics, and how their understanding may have shifted over time (Ruark & Fielding-Miller, 2016).

8. Results

A. Presentation of Quantitative Findings

Table 1. Level of Retirement Readiness in terms of Health

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Before I retire, I ensure that I eat healthy food, drink my medicine (maintenance), and have enough sleep.	4.52	Very High
I take vitamins, minerals, and supplements to help boost my immune system.	4.51	Very High
I maintain proper diet based on advice from experts and knowledgeable informants.	4.36	Very High
I ensure I have healthy lifestyle while working through personal discipline like avoiding foods and other activities that is harmful to my health.	4.19	High
I avoid smoking and drinking liquors.	4.65	Very High
I visit the doctor regularly for medical checkups.	3.94	High
Overall Mean	4.36	Very High

The total mean (M=4.36) of retirees demonstrates a very high level of health readiness, indicating they are adequately prepared. It means that retirees lead a healthy lifestyle and practice self-discipline. They have a very high result in terms of eating healthy food, drinking medicines and having an adequate sleep. Retirees also demonstrate very high level in maintaining proper diet based on the advice of the experts and avoid smoking and drinking liquors. Meanwhile, the mean score is high on ensuring having a healthy lifestyle while working through personal discipline and visiting the doctor regularly.

Table 2. Level of Retirement Readiness in terms of Financial

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I have accumulated savings that is enough to sustain my needs for at least 6 months.	3.94	High
5 years before retiring, I avoid availing loans.	4.08	High
I have list of my monthly expenses so I can prepare my budget and religiously follow it.	3.84	High
I have other source of income other than my prospected pension.	3.84	High
I have enough savings to sustain all my needs.	3.51	High
I do not need other job after retirement because my income/pension is already enough	3.27	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.75	High

The overall mean (M=3.75) of retirees has a high level of financial readiness, which is defined as fair enough because they can save and plan their budget. The results were high saving, avoiding loans before retiring, having a monthly budget and having other source of income. They were financially aware of their cash flows and invested and saved for retirement. However, the findings indicate that a significant proportion of retirees do not find it necessary to seek additional employment post-retirement, as their income or pension adequately covers their daily expenses and financial obligations.

Table 3. Level of Retirement Readiness in terms of Contingency Planning

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I have acquired health insurance in case I need it for my medication or hospitalization.	3.61	High
I have built an emergency fund.	3.19	Moderate
I know where my important papers are.	4.23	Very High
I ensure that I have enough resources or support to enjoy my retirement life.	4.03	High
I have family and relatives to support me in times for crisis (financial or health)	3.92	High
Overall Mean	3.80	High

The average contingency planning score of 3.80 among retirees was high, indicating that they were adequately prepared. They have health insurance to cover their medication and hospitalization, as well as enough resources to sustain their retirement. They are aware and mindful of where their important documents are, and they have help from family and relatives in times of financial or health crises. However, others have made limited preparations for their emergency funds, indicating that it is not their top priority as a contingency. The result shows that retirees have moderate level of retirement readiness for contingency in terms of building an emergency fund.

Table 4. Extent of Lifestyle in terms of Health

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I visit the doctor for my health care	4.03	High Extent
I buy my vitamins and medicines needed for my body.	4.29	Very High Extent
I have adequate sleep	4.19	High Extent
I choose to eat healthy foods	4.35	Very High Extent
I watch my weight and my diet.	4.03	High Extent
Overall Mean	4.18	High Extent

With a mean score of 4.18, the result demonstrates a high degree of retirees' lifestyle in terms of health. The indicator of this shows that they have a very high extent of lifestyle as retirees give importance to buying vitamins and medicines needed for their body and choosing to eat healthy food. Retirees also give high importance to regularly visiting the doctor, having adequate sleep and watching their weight and their diet.

It demonstrates that most retirees eat healthily and engage in age-appropriate physical activity. They purchase vitamins and medications as needed for their bodies and they see the doctor for a health consultation. They are watching their weight and diet, and they are making sure they get enough sleep. The result shows that retired government workers are continuing to lead wholesome lives.

The indicators for the extent of lifestyle in terms of health generate a high extent of lifestyle. Retirees were very much aware of their health and wellness.

Table 5. Extent of Lifestyle in terms of Spending Habits

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I buy clothes, groceries, and other needs for my family members.	3.35	Moderate Extent
I pay bills in the household.	3.79	High Extent
I can sustain the needs and wants for myself and my family	3.79	High Extent
I decide on what to do with my finances.	4.21	Very High Extent
My earning (pension and others) is enough for my needs	3.84	High Extent
Overall	3.80	High Extent

The mean score of 3.80 indicates a high extent of lifestyle spending habits among retirees, indicating an average lifestyle. The lowest indicator on the extent of lifestyle in terms of Spending Habits is buying clothes, groceries and other needs of the family members resulting to the mean score of 3.35. Meanwhile the highest indicator of this is the liberty on what to do with the finances having a mean score of 4.21 which means that they have a very high extent this indicator. Result also shows that they have high extent on spending habits because they can pay the bills of the household, sustain the personal needs and wants and of the family and states that their pension is enough for their needs.

Most DepEd employees follow their budgetary principles, monitor their income and expenses, and pay for household bills, education, credits, and other financial obligations. Retirees are happy with their financial situation as long as it allows them to support their family's needs and desires.

Table 6. Extent of Lifestyle in terms of Recreational Activities

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I identified personal goals or what leisure activities to do after retirement.	4.22	Very High Extent
I can do my hobbies when I retire in order not to keep me bored, and the things that I cannot do because I am busy or do not have time.	4.24	Very High Extent
I develop other interests in areas of new learning.	4.21	Very High Extent
I attend retirement preparation programs or seminars on social planning, like community involvement, travel, and interpersonal endeavors.	3.94	High Extent
I take care of the maintenance of the house, such as cleaning, fixing and other houseworks	3.91	High Extent
Overall Mean	4.10	High Extent

As seen in the table, retirees had a high level of recreational activity, indicating an average lifestyle with a mean score of 4.10. Most have identified their personal goals and recreational hobbies after retirement. They have plenty of time for their hobbies and have become interested in various areas of learning. Some of them attended retirement preparation programs or seminars on social planning topics such as community service, travel, and interpersonal relationships. In their spare time, they enjoy caring for their home.

Table 7. Results of Correlational Analysis Between the Level of Retirement Readiness and the Extent of Lifestyles of DepEd Employees

Variables	Coefficient r	Remarks
Level of Retirement Readiness X Extent of Lifestyle of DepEd Employees	0.626	Significant

Table 7 reveals a significant relationship between the level of retirement readiness namely on health, financial, geographic-retirement place, wealth, and contingency planning and the extent of the lifestyle of the retired DepEd employees of South Cotabato. Such a relationship was construed as moderate where $r=0.626$, has a p – the value of 0.0 where the p -value is lesser than the level of significance of 0.05. Thus, it indicate that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis resulting to a significant relationship between readiness and lifestyle.

B. Presentation of Qualitative Findings

This section presents the result of the in-depth interview and focused group discussion on the preparation of the DepEd Employee in terms of their health, financial, and contingency planning.

Table 8. DepEd employee prepare their health for retirement

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Regular Check Up Undergoing Laboratory Examination Taking Medicines and Supplements Healthy Diet Exercise Quitting of Vices Managing Stress Health condition before retirement	Medical Intervention Personal Care Existing Condition

Table 8 represents the health preparation of DepEd Employees for retirement. The participants of the study had shared their means and ways on preparing their health for retirement. Based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted, analysis of the findings gave rise to the theme shown above.

Three emergent themes were derived from the thematic analysis. These were Medical Treatment, Personal Intervention and Existing Conditions. Result shows that medical conditions embody a large array of health issues that can influence a retiree across diverse components of their lives. Retiree undergo medical treatment strategies vary depending on the character and severity of their condition and might encompass remedies, surgery, therapy, lifestyle modifications, or a mixture of those methods. Moreover, retirees avail medical intervention such as Regular Check Up, Undergoing Laboratory Examinations, Taking Medicines and Supplements in which play a critical role in reducing the risk of developing certain medical situations or coping with current ones.

Retiree personal care is planned and considered as a proactive steps to address or prevent on toward illnesses and diseases. Retiree display personal care that includes having a healthy diet, exercise, quitting of vices and managing stress, as they become aware of areas in their health that require attention or improvement.

Existing conditions confer pre-current fitness troubles or clinical situations that retiree may additionally have prior to any new diagnosis or remedy. Their health conditions before retirement vary and can significantly influence the transition into retirement. Some of them may enter retirement with relatively good health, free from chronic conditions or significant medical concerns, enabling them to approach this life stage with optimism and vitality.

Table 9. DepEd employee prepare their finances for retirement

Clusthered Themes	Emergent Themes
Budgeting Practice Eliminating Liabilities Saving Exploring Alternative Sources of Income Children have graduated. Financial Support Influence on Decision-Making Contentment	Strategies in Managing Finances Family Factor in Financial Decision Way of Life

Table 9 was drawn up to address the second variable outlined in the Statement of the Problem for Retirement Readiness regarding financial readiness. It signifies the financial readiness of DepEd employees. The survey participants discussed how they prepared their finances for retirement. The theme presented above emerged from the analysis of information obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

From the table above it shows the strategies in managing finances of DepEd Employees, effective financial management is essential as they prepare for retirement, encompassing a range of strategies aimed at maximizing savings, minimizing debt, and exploring alternative source of income that ensures the financial security by in their later years. Result shows that DepEd employees often create budgets to track income and expenses, identifying areas where they can reduce spending and increase savings. Budgeting practices are integral to effective financial management for DepEd employees preparing for retirement, offering a systematic approach to allocating income, managing expenses, and achieving long-term financial goals.

Family factors play a significant role in the financial decision-making process of DepEd employees as they prepare for retirement, influencing their saving, spending, and investment behaviors. The data suggests that family considerations often shape financial decisions, with participants prioritizing the well-being and security of their loved ones when planning for retirement. Financial support is a crucial aspect of family dynamics, often involving the provision of economic assistance, resources, or funding from one family member to another. This support can take various forms, ranging from financial contributions towards education, healthcare, housing, or daily living expenses to loans, gifts, or inheritances provided to family members in need.

The concept of "way of life" encapsulates the deeply ingrained habits, values, beliefs, and practices that shape individuals' daily routines, interactions, and overall worldview. It encompasses not only tangible aspects such as daily activities, occupation, and living arrangements but also intangible elements like cultural heritage, social norms, and spiritual beliefs. Retiree shows contentment as their state of profound satisfaction and inner peace that transcends material wealth or external circumstances, rooted in gratitude, acceptance, and a deep sense of fulfillment. It arises from aligning one's values, aspirations, and actions with their authentic self, finding joy and purpose in the present moment while embracing life's inevitable ups and downs with equanimity.

Table 10. DepEd Employees Contingency Planning for retirement.

Clustered Categories	Emergent Themes
Having a Child Support Methods to get funds for unforeseen circumstances. Acquiring Insurance Saving for Medication saving for uncertainties	Essential resources to depend on in the event of an emergency Saving to establish an Emergency Fund

Table 10 was intended to answer the fifth problem in Statement of the Problem for Retirement Readiness in terms of Contingency Planning. It represents the preparation of DepEd Employees in terms of their Planning for Contingency. The participants of the study had shared their means and ways of Planning for

Contingency. Based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted, analysis of the findings gave rise to the theme shown above.

Contingency planning plays a critical role in the retirement preparation of DepEd employees, serving as a proactive strategy to mitigate potential risks and uncertainties that may arise in the future. The data reveals that participants adopt various measures to prepare for potential health problems and financial crises during retirement. Regarding health, participants prioritize maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise, proper nutrition, and preventive healthcare measures to minimize the risk of illness and medical expenses.

In the event of an emergency, essential resources to rely on include dependable communication channels, emergency substances, and the right of entry to emergency services some of this is having a child support and ways and means to generate fund. Having support from children gives important financial help and ensures the proper well-being of retiree, particularly in situations where parent might not be able to fully afford their personal need. The child generally includes monetary contributions to parents to cover prices associated with the parent’s comfortable living including meals, clothing, healthcare, and recreational activities.

In the face of unforeseen circumstances, people can also employ diverse methods to maintain stable finances to deal with instantaneous wishes or emergencies. One technique is to tap into private financial savings or emergency finances that have been set aside for such conditions, offering an effortlessly available supply of monetary support. Another option is to try to find help from buddies or family members who may be willing to lend cash or offer support during tough times.

Results also shows that retiree acquire insurance as a proactive step to take to mitigate financial dangers and shield themselves against unforeseen events. Insurance regulations offer insurance for various elements of existence, such as health, assets, and liability, supplying financial repayment or help in the event of injuries, ailments, natural screw-ups, or other emergencies.

Some retirees established an emergency fund through savings as a prudent monetary approach that allows them to put together funds for sudden expenses or monetary hardships. By placing an element in their income on a normal basis, individuals can accumulate a budget especially earmarked for emergencies, including medical bills, car maintenance, or activity loss. By allocating a component of their profits toward a committed remedy fund, retirees can proactively prepare for the prices related to pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter medicinal drugs, or clinical elements. Moreover, by setting aside a price range specifically for unexpected instances, retirees can mitigate the impact of sudden economic demands, including scientific emergencies, vehicle upkeep, or activity loss.

II. Lifestyle of Retired DepEd Employees

This section presents the result of the in-depth interview and focused group discussion on the lifestyle of the DepEd Employee in terms of their health, spending habits, Social Life, wealth, and Recreation.

Table 11. Retired DepEd Employee lifestyle in terms of Health

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Healthy Diet Taking Medicines as supplement	Optimal dietary choices for enhancing bodily functions.
Exercise	Essential physical activity required for optimal bodily function.
Proper Rest Eliminating Stress Regular Check Up	Caring for Mental Health Regular Self Assessment

Table 11 was intended to answer the first question in Statement of the Problem for the lifestyle of the retired DepEd Employees terms of Health. It represents the experiences of DepEd Employees with regards to their lifestyle. The participants of the study had shared their means and ways of taking care of their health. Based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted, analysis of the findings gave rise to the theme shown above.

Health remains a paramount concern for retirees from the Department of Education (DepEd), who prioritize maintaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being to enjoy a fulfilling retirement lifestyle. Many retirees engage in regular exercise routines tailored to their abilities and preferences, including

activities like walking, swimming, yoga, or tai chi, which not only promote physical fitness but also alleviate stress and improve overall mood. Additionally, retirees pay close attention to nutrition, opting for balanced and wholesome diets rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains to support optimal health and vitality. Regular medical check-ups and preventive screenings are also common among retirees, enabling early detection and management of any health issues that may arise. Moreover, retirees prioritize mental and emotional health by engaging in activities like meditation, mindfulness practices, or pursuing hobbies and interests that stimulate cognitive function and foster a sense of purpose and fulfillment. By maintaining a holistic approach to health, DepEd retirees strive to enjoy an active, vibrant, and fulfilling retirement lifestyle for years to come

Optimal nutritional picks play a vital role in enhancing bodily features, mainly for retired DepEd employees seeking to maintain their fitness and well-being. These people regularly prioritize nutrient-dense meals that offer critical vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants to support universal physical capabilities. Emphasizing a diet rich in fruits, veggies, entire grains, and lean proteins can help optimize energy ranges, help immune function, and promote healthy digestion. Additionally, staying hydrated by consuming an adequate quantity of water at some stage in the day is vital for proper physical function. Regular exercise not only facilitates improving cardiovascular fitness, fortifying muscle tissue, and holding a healthy weight, but also contributes to mental clarity, emotional balance, and stress reduction. Proper rest is crucial for the well-being of retired DepEd personnel because it permits their bodies to get better, recharge, and function optimally. Adequate sleep plays an essential role in supporting bodily health, cognitive function, and emotional stability. Retirees ought to aim for a constant sleep schedule, ensuring they get the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep every night.

Meanwhile, maintaining a state of mental well-being is essential for retired DepEd personnel to navigate the demanding situations and transitions associated with retirement efficiently. Adopting strategies to improve mental health, inclusive of staying socially linked, accomplishing meaningful sports, and working towards self-care, can help retirees preserve a fantastic outlook and cope correctly with life changes. Retirees can also benefit from support from buddies, family, or mental fitness professionals if they revel in feelings of loneliness, tension, or depression.

Results revealed that eliminating strain is essential for retired DepEd employees to beautify their average well-being and revel in a satisfying retirement. Implementing powerful pressure management techniques, consisting of practicing rest, sporting events, mindfulness, and deep respiratory physical activities, can help retirees lessen stress levels and improve rest.

Retirees undergo regular check-ups which are vital for retired DepEd employees to ensure their continued health and well-being during retirement. These check-ups allow retirees to monitor various aspects of their health, including physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and detect any potential issues early on. By scheduling routine appointments with healthcare providers, retirees can undergo essential screenings, such as blood pressure checks, cholesterol tests, and cancer screenings, to assess their health status.

Table 12. Retired DepEd Employee lifestyle in terms of Spending Habits

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Proper Budgeting practice	Method on Budgeting
Allocating fund for personal and household expenses Financing for House Repair	Spending for Expenditure on personal and household costs
Purchasing property to be inherited by heirs	Acquiring Asset
Investing to have other source of income Saving	

Table 12 was intended to answer the second question in Statement of the Problem for the lifestyle of the retired DepEd Employees in terms of spending habits. It represents the experiences of DepEd Employees with regards to their lifestyle. The participants of the study had shared their means and ways of spending their finances. Based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted, analysis of the findings gave rise to the theme shown above.

As retirees, individuals exhibit varied spending habits reflective of their financial priorities, lifestyles, and personal circumstances. Some retirees adopt conservative spending practices, prioritizing frugality and mindful budgeting to ensure financial stability and longevity of savings. They may limit discretionary spending, carefully tracking expenses, and avoiding unnecessary purchases.

Budgeting is a technique employed by retired DepEd personnel to effectively control their finances and ensure long-term monetary stability. This method includes meticulously monitoring income and costs, categorizing fees, and determining financial desires. Retirees may additionally make use of various budgeting gear and techniques, together with spreadsheets, budgeting apps, or traditional pen-and-paper methods, to create a complete budget that aligns with their retirement objectives.

Results revealed that spending for personal and household expenses is a important element of financial management for retired DepEd personnel. This expenditure class encompasses various crucial prices, which include groceries, utilities, transportation, healthcare, and family preservation. Properly allocating budgets for those expenses ensures that retirees can meet their basic needs and hold a comfortable preference for residing at some point in their retirement.

Theme on Financing for house restoration arise which is an important consideration for retired DepEd personnel, as maintaining a safe and snug dwelling environment is important for their well-being at some stage in retirement. This financing may involve placing aside a portion of their retirement financial savings, in particular for home preservation and repairs or exploring opportunity funding options such as non-public loans or domestic equity loans.

Retired DepEd personnel shows that acquiring property, as they are trying to secure their monetary destiny and probably generate extra earnings during retirement. This process may additionally involve making an investment in numerous asset classes, such as real estate properties, shares, bonds, or retirement debts. Retirees might also strategically allocate a portion of their retirement savings towards obtaining assets that offer long-term growth capacity or passive income streams, thereby diversifying their investment portfolio and reducing typical financial hazards.

Meanwhile, results revealed that savings play a pivotal role within the financial planning of retired DepEd employees, serving as a buffer in opposition to sudden prices and offering a supply of budget for their desires. By constantly setting apart a component of their income, retirees can increase their financial savings over time, growing an economic safety net that gives them peace of mind during retirement.

Table 13. Retired DepEd Employee lifestyle in terms of Social Life

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Constant communication through Social Media Attending Social Gathering Good and Peaceful Community Strong family support Good Relationship with friends	Socialization Activities Surrounded by good people

Table 13 was intended to answer the third question in Statement of the Problem for the lifestyle of the retired DepEd Employees terms of spending habits. It represents the experiences of DepEd Employees with regards to their lifestyle. The participants of the study had shared their means and ways of spending their finances. Based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted, analysis of the findings gave rise to the theme shown above.

In retirement, individuals often experience a rich and fulfilling social life characterized by strong familial bonds, close friendships, and active community engagement. Family plays a central role in retirees' social lives, with many expressing gratitude for the support and companionship provided by their children and relatives. Regular visits from children and grandchildren bring joy and a sense of connection, while shared activities like family dinners and outings foster a deeper bond. Additionally, retirees maintain close ties with friends, treating them like family and regularly participating in social gatherings, meetings, and reunions. These social interactions not only provide companionship but also contribute to retirees' emotional well-being and sense of belonging. Moreover, retirees actively participate in community activities such as church meetings, volunteer work, and neighborhood gatherings, further enriching their social lives and strengthening their connections with others who share similar interests and values. Technology also plays a

crucial role in retirees' social lives, enabling easy communication and coordination of social activities through platforms like Facebook and mobile phones.

In summary with all the findings, a concrete retirement readiness program is essential to ensure individuals are financially secure, prepared for the challenges of retirement, and able to enjoy a fulfilling and comfortable retirement lifestyle.

The retirement readiness program could include the following components:

Financial Education Workshops. DepEd should offer workshops or seminars focused on financial literacy and retirement planning. These sessions could cover topics such as budgeting, saving for retirement, investing, and creating emergency funds. Tailor the content to the specific needs and concerns of DepEd personnel, emphasizing the importance of setting aside funds for unexpected expenses.

Emergency Fund Establishment. DepEd should provide guidance on how to establish and maintain an emergency fund. Educate participants on the purpose of emergency funds, the recommended amount to save, and strategies for building this fund over time. Encourage proactive savings habits and provide resources for setting up automatic contributions to emergency savings accounts.

Contingency Planning Resources. Develop resources and tools to help DepEd personnel assess their potential risks and develop contingency plans. This could include guidance on identifying potential emergencies, prioritizing financial goals, and creating actionable plans for managing unexpected expenses. Encourage participants to consider various scenarios, such as medical emergencies, home repairs, or job loss, and develop strategies for addressing each one.

Family and Community Support Networks. Facilitate discussions and networking opportunities for DepEd personnel to share their experiences and learn from one another. Encourage the formation of support networks within the DepEd community, where retirees can exchange tips, advice, and resources related to retirement planning and contingency preparedness. Emphasize the importance of building a support system to lean on during times of financial need.

Access to Financial Advisors. Provide access to financial advisors or counselors who can offer personalized guidance and support to DepEd personnel. Offer one-on-one consultations to help retirees assess their financial situation, set achievable goals, and develop customized retirement plans. Encourage ongoing communication and follow-up to ensure that retirees have the resources they need to navigate their retirement journey successfully.

By implementing a retirement readiness program that addresses both financial preparedness and contingency planning, DepEd personnel can better equip themselves to navigate the uncertainties of retirement with confidence and security.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study highlights the significance of preparing for retirement, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of this transition. It underscores the importance of health, financial preparedness, social engagement, and contingency planning in ensuring a fulfilling retirement. Findings indicate that retirees prioritize health maintenance through preventive measures and lifestyle choices, while financial preparedness requires further attention. Contingency planning is also deemed crucial, considering unforeseen challenges. Social engagement plays a vital role in retirees' well-being, with active social networks contributing to a fulfilling lifestyle. The correlation between retirement readiness and lifestyle underscores the importance of comprehensive retirement planning. A proposed retirement readiness program tailored to retired DepEd employees aims to address these aspects by providing financial literacy education, promoting health and wellness, fostering social engagement, and offering contingency planning support. Ultimately, the goal is to empower retirees to embrace retirement confidently and lead fulfilling lives.

The study suggests several recommendations to enhance retirement readiness and lifestyle among DepEd employees. Firstly, DepEd should establish a retirement readiness program focusing on financial preparedness, health, social engagement, contingency planning, and emotional well-being. This program can include workshops, counseling sessions, and initiatives tailored to retirees' needs. Additionally, DepEd should prioritize financial literacy, health, social engagement, and contingency planning among its employees through workshops, access to advisors, wellness programs, and community involvement opportunities. Retirees themselves can improve their lifestyle by prioritizing health, maintaining social connections, pursuing hobbies, and managing finances effectively. For private sectors, similar approaches

focusing on financial education, health promotion, social engagement, and flexible work arrangements can support employees' retirement preparation. Future research should aim for diversity in participant recruitment, explore retirees' challenges, and engage stakeholders for comprehensive insights. Overall, implementing these recommendations can empower DepEd employees and retirees to navigate retirement successfully and enjoy a fulfilling lifestyle.

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Author Profile



Flor Angelie M. Tolondon, is a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering graduate from Notre Dame of Marbel University in 2006 and pursued her Master degree in Public Administration from Mindanao State University in 2021 and currently finishing her Doctor of Management major in Human Resource Management in Notre Dame of Dadiangas University. Since 2016 she is connected in Department of Education, Division of South Cotabato for three (3) years she is assigned in the Personnel Section where she handles compensation and benefits of the employees of the organization, on the year 2020 she was promoted as Administrative Officer II where she handles Human Resource Management, Compensation and Benefits, Financial Administration and Property Custodianship. With her service she has been awarded as one of the most outstanding Administrative Officer II of the organization. She also contributed many innovations and initiatives to improve the system and processes of the organization.