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Retirement Planning Behavior Among SSS Members in Borongan City, Eastern Samar

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ABSTRACT

Retirement planning requires members to understand their pension entitlements, monitor contributions, save, and prepare for expenses after employment. This study examined retirement planning behavior among Social Security System (SSS) members residing or working in Borongan City, Eastern Samar. It described respondents' profiles, their combined SSS retirement-benefit knowledge and financial-literacy score, access to retirement information, planning behavior, and perceived preparedness. It also examined associations among the study variables and differences in planning behavior across selected profile groups. A descriptive-correlational design was employed. Printed questionnaires were personally distributed and collected from 33 eligible members selected through convenience sampling on September 30, 2026. The researcher-developed instrument underwent review by two experts and preliminary try-out with five individuals who were excluded from the final sample; no statistical reliability coefficient was computed. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson correlation, Welch's independent-samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance, with a .05 significance level. The mean combined knowledge/literacy score was 74.55 percent correct. Access to retirement information was low, while planning behavior and perceived preparedness were moderate. Savings behavior was the strongest planning domain. Planning behavior was strongly and positively associated with perceived preparedness ($r = .876$, $p < .001$), but was not significantly associated with the combined knowledge/literacy score or information access. No statistically significant differences in planning behavior were detected across the tested profile groups. These exploratory findings suggest that practical retirement-planning support may complement information dissemination, particularly through assistance with contribution monitoring and retirement-income preparation. Because the sample was small and non-probabilistic, the findings are limited to the respondents and do not establish causal relationships or population-wide estimates.

Keywords: *SSS members, retirement planning behavior, financial literacy, retirement-benefit knowledge, retirement information access, savings behavior, perceived preparedness, Borongan City*

INTRODUCTION

Retirement planning is a process through which individuals prepare for the financial and personal demands of life after regular employment. It may involve estimating future needs, setting savings goals, monitoring pension entitlements, accumulating assets, preparing additional sources of income, and considering health-related and other later-life expenses. These activities are particularly important where individuals depend on a combination of public pension benefits and personal resources to maintain their standard of living after leaving work.

In the Philippines, the Social Security System (SSS) provides retirement benefits to qualified members through a monthly pension or a lump-sum benefit. Under the Social Security Act of 2018, a member generally needs at least 120 monthly contributions before the semester of retirement to qualify for a monthly pension and must meet the applicable age and employment conditions. Members who do not meet the contribution requirement may receive a lump-sum benefit, subject to the governing rules (Republic Act No. 11199, 2018; Social Security System, n.d.). Understanding these requirements is important because membership alone does not necessarily mean that a member will qualify for a monthly pension at retirement.

The responsibility for maintaining contributions and preparing additional resources may be especially important for self-employed and voluntary members, whose contribution patterns may not be managed through a regular employer payroll. Employed members may also need to understand their contribution records and estimate whether their expected pension and other resources will be adequate for their retirement needs. In each case, retirement planning requires both knowledge of the social insurance system and decisions about personal saving, budgeting, and income preparation.

Financial literacy is relevant to these decisions because individuals must understand basic financial concepts and apply them when planning for the future. Lusardi and Mitchell (2011) reported that individuals with higher financial literacy were more likely to plan for retirement in the United States. Their findings support the relevance of financial knowledge to retirement decisions, although the relationship may vary across institutional and socioeconomic settings. In a Philippine context, Mendoza et al. (2022) examined financial literacy and retirement planning among employees of a higher educational institution and reported that the relationship between knowledge and actual planning behavior is not necessarily straightforward. Their findings also point to the importance of examining actual planning practices rather than assuming that awareness automatically results in action.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

The life-cycle hypothesis of saving provides one perspective for understanding retirement preparation. Modigliani and Brumberg (1954) explained that individuals make consumption and saving decisions across different stages of life, including saving during working years to support consumption during retirement. This framework highlights the importance of sustained saving over time. However, the ability to save may be constrained by income, household obligations, employment conditions, and unexpected expenses. Consequently, observed retirement planning behavior cannot be understood solely as a matter of individual knowledge or intention.

The theory of planned behavior also offers a useful perspective. Ajzen (1991) proposed that behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Applied to retirement planning, an individual may recognize the value of preparing for retirement, receive encouragement from family or peers, and believe that planning is manageable. Yet these factors do not guarantee that the person will be able to save consistently or access relevant information. Financial capacity and practical access to services may affect whether intentions are translated into behavior. In this study, the frameworks are used as interpretive perspectives rather than as causal models tested by the survey.

Research Problem

National financial-inclusion reporting by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas includes measures of access to financial services and financial literacy, reflecting the importance of these issues in the Philippine setting (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2019). Nevertheless, national-level findings cannot substitute for information about the circumstances and practices of SSS members in a particular locality. Local evidence can help identify which retirement-planning dimensions may warrant additional attention, while recognizing that a small local sample cannot represent all members in the area.

The present study addresses this local information need by examining retirement planning behavior among active SSS members residing or working in Borongan City, Eastern Samar. It focuses on respondents' profiles; their combined score on SSS retirement-benefit knowledge and financial-literacy items; their access to retirement information; their retirement planning behavior; and their perceived retirement preparedness. It further examines whether the combined knowledge/literacy score and access to information are associated with planning behavior, whether planning behavior is associated with perceived preparedness, and whether planning behavior differs across selected profile groups.

Assumptions of the Study

The study proceeded on the practical assumption that eligible participants understood the questionnaire items sufficiently to provide responses and that their answers represented their own reported knowledge, access, practices, and perceptions. Because the measures were self-reported and the instrument was researcher-developed, these assumptions do not establish the objective accuracy of responses or the psychometric validity of the measures.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective was to examine retirement planning behavior among active SSS members in Borongan City, Eastern Samar. Specifically, the study described respondents' profiles; determined their combined SSS retirement-benefit knowledge and financial-literacy score, access to retirement information, retirement planning behavior, and perceived preparedness; examined the relationships of the combined knowledge/literacy score and information access with planning behavior and of planning behavior with

perceived preparedness; and tested whether planning behavior differed across age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, SSS membership type, and monthly income.

The study is guided by three null hypotheses: (1) the combined SSS knowledge and financial-literacy score and access to retirement information are not significantly related to retirement planning behavior; (2) retirement planning behavior is not significantly related to perceived retirement preparedness; and (3) retirement planning behavior does not significantly differ when respondents are grouped by age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, SSS membership type, and monthly income. The findings are intended to inform practical discussion of retirement information and planning support in Borongan City, not to establish causal effects or population-wide estimates.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and setting

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component summarized the respondents' demographic and membership profiles and described their scores on the study measures. The correlational component examined associations among the combined knowledge/literacy score, access to retirement information, retirement planning behavior, and perceived retirement preparedness. Group comparisons were also conducted to examine whether planning behavior differed across selected profile categories. Because the design was cross-sectional and non-experimental, the analyses do not establish temporal order or causal relationships.

The study was conducted in Borongan City, Eastern Samar. Eligible participants were active SSS members who were residing or working in the city and belonged to the employed, self-employed, voluntary, or overseas Filipino worker membership categories.

Respondents and sampling

The final sample consisted of 33 active SSS members selected through convenience sampling. Participants were approached based on accessibility and availability and were included if they met the study's eligibility conditions and were willing to participate. The confirmed eligibility criterion was an age of at least 20 years, together with active SSS membership and residence or work in Borongan City. Convenience sampling is a non-probability method; therefore, each eligible member did not have a known or equal probability of selection. The sample should not be treated as statistically representative of all SSS members in Borongan City or Eastern Samar.

Research instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed printed questionnaire with five parts: (1) respondent profile; (2) SSS retirement-benefit knowledge and financial-literacy items; (3) access to retirement information; (4) retirement planning behavior; and (5) perceived retirement preparedness. Part II consisted of ten true-or-false statements and was scored one point for each correct response and zero for each incorrect response. The total score was converted to a percentage. Parts III to V used five-point response scales. Access and perceived preparedness items used agreement anchors, while retirement planning behavior items used frequency anchors ranging from never to always.

The knowledge and financial-literacy items were treated as a combined measure in the analysis. The available questionnaire and analysis do not establish separate, independently validated subscales for SSS knowledge and financial literacy. Accordingly, the results are reported as a combined knowledge/literacy score rather than as two distinct scale scores. The Likert-type sections were summarized using item and domain means. The interpretation ranges applied in the study were 4.21–5.00 (very high/always), 3.41–4.20 (high/often), 2.61–3.40 (moderate/sometimes), 1.81–2.60 (low/rarely), and 1.00–1.80 (very low/never). The knowledge percentage bands were retained as a descriptive guide; however, no verbal category was assigned to the overall 74.55 percent result in the findings table.

Instrument review, pilot testing, and reliability

The researcher-developed questionnaire was reviewed by two experts before the main data collection to assess clarity and relevance. A preliminary try-out was conducted with five individuals who were not included among the 33 final respondents to identify possible problems in wording, clarity, and administration. No Cronbach's alpha or other statistical reliability coefficient was calculated. The five-person try-out is therefore reported as preliminary instrument testing only; it does not establish internal consistency or construct validity. The expert review is described as a content and clarity review, not as a formal psychometric validation study. The resulting scores are treated as exploratory measures generated by the researcher-developed instrument.

Data collection and ethical considerations

The researcher personally distributed printed questionnaires to eligible SSS members in Borongan City and collected the completed forms on September 30, 2026. Before participation, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Informed consent was obtained before each respondent answered the questionnaire. Respondents were advised that their answers would be treated confidentially and used for academic research, consistent with the principles of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, 2012). Participation was voluntary, and respondents could decline to answer or discontinue participation without penalty.

Data analysis

Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize respondent profiles. Means and standard deviations were used to describe the combined knowledge/literacy score and the Likert-type measures. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationships between the combined knowledge/literacy score and retirement planning behavior, access to retirement information and retirement planning behavior, and retirement planning behavior and perceived preparedness. Welch's independent-samples t-test was used for the sex comparison. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparisons involving age, civil status, educational attainment, SSS membership type, and monthly income. All tests used a .05 significance level. A p-value below .05 was treated as statistically significant; otherwise, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

For the SSS membership-type comparison, the overseas Filipino worker category contained one respondent and was not included in the one-way ANOVA, which compared the employed, self-employed, and voluntary groups. The analysis workbook also indicates very small category sizes for some civil-status and educational groups. These group

comparisons are therefore exploratory and should be interpreted cautiously. No correction for multiple comparisons is reported in the supplied analysis. Statistical values reported below were checked against the supplied respondent-level analysis workbook; the raw original questionnaires were not independently re-entered for a separate audit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent profile

The 33 respondents represented several age, sex, civil-status, educational, SSS membership, and income categories. Table 1 summarizes the profile distribution. The largest age group was 20–30 years (33.33%), followed by 41–50 years (21.21%). Female respondents represented 54.55 percent of the sample. Most respondents were married (57.58%) and had attained college education (63.64%). Self-employed members formed the largest SSS membership group (48.48%), while the most common monthly income category was ₱5,000–₱10,000 (33.33%).

Table 1. Profile of the respondents (n = 33)

Profile variable	Category	n	%
Age	20–30 years	11	33.33
	31–40 years	5	15.15
	41–50 years	7	21.21
	51–60 years	6	18.18
	61 years and above	4	12.12
Sex	Male	15	45.45
	Female	18	54.55
Civil status	Single	12	36.36
	Married	19	57.58
	Widowed	2	6.06
	Separated	0	0.00
Educational attainment	Elementary	2	6.06
	High school	8	24.24
	College	21	63.64
	Postgraduate	2	6.06
SSS membership type	Employed	10	30.30
	Self-employed	16	48.48
	Voluntary	6	18.18
	OFW	1	3.03
Monthly income	Below ₱5,000	7	21.21

Profile variable	Category	n	%
	₱5,000–₱10,000	11	33.33
	₱10,001–₱20,000	6	18.18
	Above ₱20,000	9	27.27

Note. Percentages may not total exactly 100 because of rounding. The profile describes only the convenience sample.

The profile indicates that the sample included a substantial proportion of self-employed members, alongside employed and voluntary members. This mix is relevant because members may encounter different practical responsibilities in maintaining contributions and preparing for retirement. However, the small number of OFW respondents and the non-probability selection method limit comparisons across membership categories. The distribution should be understood as a description of the respondents who participated, not as an estimate of the composition of the city's entire SSS membership.

Combined SSS retirement-benefit knowledge and financial-literacy score

The respondents obtained a mean score of 7.455 out of 10, equivalent to 74.55 percent correct responses (SD = 0.754 on the ten-point scale, or approximately 7.54 percentage points after conversion to a 100-point scale). This result indicates that, on average, respondents answered about three-fourths of the combined true-or-false items correctly. The score is reported numerically rather than assigned a verbal label because the manuscript's final results do not establish a validated cutoff for classifying the combined measure.

Table 2. Combined knowledge and financial-literacy score

Measure	Mean score	SD	Percentage correct
Ten-item combined score	7.455 / 10	0.754	74.55%

Note. The standard deviation of 0.754 is on the 0–10 score metric; 7.54 is the corresponding standard deviation in percentage points.

An item-level review of the knowledge responses provides additional context for the overall score. All 33 respondents answered correctly the item concerning the optional retirement age of 60 years under the condition stated in the questionnaire. High correct-response rates were also observed for the item on regular saving (32 of 33, 96.97%), the role of a budget (32 of 33, 96.97%), and the 120-contribution requirement for a monthly pension (31 of 33, 93.94%). In contrast, only 7 respondents (21.21%) answered correctly the statement concerning the total cost of paying only the minimum amount on a loan, and 10 respondents (30.30%) answered correctly the item about the contribution shares paid by self-employed and voluntary members. The cash-at-home item was answered correctly by 19 respondents (57.58%). These differences suggest that respondents performed better on some basic SSS and saving concepts than on selected borrowing and contribution-payment concepts. The item results should be read with care because a true-or-false response format can encourage guessing and does not reveal the reasoning behind an answer.

The result provides a descriptive indication of respondents' performance on the ten items, but it should not be interpreted as proof that all respondents understood every aspect of SSS retirement benefits or personal finance. A true-or-false format also limits the depth of information that can be obtained about respondents' reasoning. In addition, the items combine SSS benefit knowledge with general financial-literacy statements. The combined score therefore cannot identify whether a respondent's stronger or weaker performance arose from one domain rather than the other. This limitation is important when considering targeted educational interventions.

Access to retirement information

Access to retirement information had an overall weighted mean of 2.36 (SD = 1.02), interpreted as Low using the study's five-point scale. This suggests that respondents, on average, reported limited exposure to or access to the information covered by the questionnaire. The items addressed attendance at retirement-benefit seminars, familiarity with the My.SSS portal, access to printed information, discussion of retirement planning within the family, and knowledge of where to verify contribution records.

Table 3. Access to retirement information

Measure	Weighted mean	SD	Interpretation
Overall access to information	2.36	1.02	Low

The individual access items were consistently rated in the low range. The mean for knowing where to verify the number of paid SSS contributions was 2.61, the highest among the five access items but still at the lower boundary of the moderate interval when interpreted using the stated scale. Family discussion of retirement planning had a mean of 2.49. Familiarity with the My.SSS portal averaged 2.30, attendance at an SSS retirement-benefit seminar averaged 2.21, and access to printed retirement-benefit materials averaged 2.18. These item means suggest that the information-access issue is not limited to one channel. Both digital and non-digital information opportunities may need attention. The findings do not establish whether the respondents lacked information because of availability, awareness, access barriers, or personal preference; those explanations require further inquiry.

This finding identifies information access as an area that may warrant practical attention. Members may need clear guidance on eligibility requirements, contribution records, retirement application procedures, and available official channels. The result does not establish why access was low, because the study did not use interviews or follow-up questions to identify barriers such as internet connectivity, distance, work schedules, or awareness of available services. It does, however, provide a basis for proposing accessible information activities and evaluating whether they reach members who are less exposed to retirement information.

Retirement planning behavior

The overall weighted mean for retirement planning behavior was 3.34 (SD = 0.80), interpreted as Moderate. Savings behavior received the highest domain mean (3.92, SD = 1.05), interpreted as High. SSS contribution monitoring (3.29), retirement goal setting (3.13),

retirement-income preparation (3.08), and future financial preparation (3.25) were interpreted as Moderate. Table 4 presents the domain-level results.

Table 4. Retirement planning behavior by domain

Domain	Weighted mean	SD	Interpretation
Savings behavior	3.92	1.05	High
SSS contribution monitoring	3.29	1.11	Moderate
Retirement goal setting	3.13	0.97	Moderate
Retirement-income preparation	3.08	1.01	Moderate
Future financial preparation	3.25	0.88	Moderate
Overall retirement planning behavior	3.34	0.80	Moderate

The relatively higher means for savings behavior suggests that respondents reported more frequent saving-related practices than the other measured planning activities. However, the moderate overall score indicates that retirement planning was not consistently high across all domains. The lower domain means for retirement-income preparation and goal setting suggest that estimating future income needs, identifying additional income sources, and setting a target retirement age or savings target may be areas for further support. Contribution monitoring was also moderate, indicating room to strengthen members' regular review of their posted contributions and understanding of their contribution history.

At the item level, the strongest reported saving practice was avoiding withdrawal of retirement savings for non-emergency expenses (WM = 4.09), followed by tracking savings (WM = 3.94). Within contribution monitoring, paying contributions regularly and on time had a mean of 3.58, while checking the contribution record at least once a year averaged 2.94. In the goal-setting domain, identifying a target retirement age averaged 3.58, whereas estimating the monthly income needed after retirement averaged 2.61. For retirement-income preparation, having savings or investments intended for retirement averaged 2.67. In future financial preparation, preparing without reminders averaged 3.94, while having health or life insurance in preparation for old age averaged 2.46. These item-level results help explain why a relatively high savings-domain mean coexisted with a moderate overall planning score. They also point to practical activities—such as contribution-record checks, retirement-income estimation, and planning for health-related costs—that could be included in information sessions.

These findings are consistent with the idea that retirement preparation is multidimensional. Saving is important, but it is only one part of planning. Members also need to understand their likely pension entitlement, monitor contribution records, estimate future expenses, and consider additional sources of income. The results should not be read

as an objective audit of financial behavior: the questionnaire captures respondents' self-reported practices, which may be affected by recall and social-desirability bias.

Perceived retirement preparedness

The overall weighted mean for perceived retirement preparedness was 3.24 (SD = 0.81), interpreted as Moderate. Respondents therefore rated their perceived readiness at a moderate level on the five-point scale. Because the supplied analysis reports only the overall score for this variable in the summary table, the interpretation is limited to the overall level and does not identify specific preparedness statements as relatively stronger or weaker.

Table 5. Perceived retirement preparedness

Measure	Weighted mean	SD	Interpretation
Overall perceived retirement preparedness	3.24	0.81	Moderate

Perceived preparedness is a subjective assessment and should not be equated with a verified financial projection of retirement income, savings, assets, or pension entitlement. The study did not calculate replacement rates, estimate future pension amounts, or verify respondents' contribution records. Accordingly, the result describes how prepared respondents felt rather than whether their actual resources would be sufficient to meet future needs.

Relationships among study variables

The combined knowledge/literacy score had a weak negative correlation with retirement planning behavior ($r = -.274$, $p = .124$). The relationship was not statistically significant at the .05 level. Access to retirement information had a negligible positive correlation with retirement planning behavior ($r = .004$, $p = .982$), which was also not statistically significant. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected for these two tests. These results do not demonstrate that knowledge or information access is unimportant; rather, the sample did not provide sufficient statistical evidence of an association under the analyses conducted.

Table 6. Correlations of knowledge/literacy and information access with retirement planning behavior

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision
Combined knowledge/literacy score and planning behavior	−0.274	.124	Not significant; fail to reject H_0
Access to retirement information and planning behavior	.004	.982	Not significant; fail to reject H_0

Note. Two-tailed Pearson correlations; significance level = .05.

The absence of statistically significant relationships may reflect the small sample size, the limited range of measures, or the fact that planning behavior is shaped by several factors not measured in this study. For example, income adequacy, household responsibilities, debt, employment stability, and access to savings products may influence the ability to act on financial knowledge. These factors were not directly assessed. The combined nature of the knowledge/literacy score also limits the ability to identify distinct associations for SSS knowledge and financial literacy. Future research with a larger probability-based sample and separate, well-tested measures could examine these relationships more precisely.

In contrast, retirement planning behavior was strongly and positively correlated with perceived retirement preparedness ($r = .876$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis of no relationship was rejected. Respondents who reported stronger planning practices also tended to report higher perceived preparedness. This result is consistent with the practical expectation that people who save, monitor contributions, set goals, and prepare additional income may feel more ready for retirement. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design does not establish whether planning behavior increases perceived preparedness, whether people who feel prepared are more likely to report planning behavior, or whether both are influenced by other factors.

Table 7. Correlation between retirement planning behavior and perceived preparedness

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision
Retirement planning behavior and perceived preparedness	.876	< .001	Significant; reject H_0

Note. Two-tailed Pearson correlation; p-value from the respondent-level analysis workbook was 2.35×10^{-11}.

Differences in retirement planning behavior by profile variables

The analyses did not detect statistically significant differences in retirement planning behavior across the profile variables tested. The p-values were .156 for age, .713 for sex, .445 for civil status, .220 for educational attainment, .336 for SSS membership type, and .858 for monthly income. Since each p-value exceeded .05, the null hypothesis was not rejected for each comparison. Table 8 summarizes the results.

Table 8. Differences in retirement planning behavior by profile variables

Profile variable	Test	p-value	Decision
Age	One-way ANOVA	.156	Fail to reject H_0
Sex	Welch's t-test	.713	Fail to reject H_0
Civil status	One-way ANOVA	.445	Fail to reject H_0
Educational attainment	One-way ANOVA	.220	Fail to reject H_0
SSS membership type*	One-way ANOVA	.336	Fail to reject H_0

Profile variable	Test	p-value	Decision
Monthly income	One-way ANOVA	.858	Fail to reject H_0

*Note. *The OFW category (n = 1) was not included in the SSS membership-type ANOVA; the test compared employed, self-employed, and voluntary members. Some other categories also had very small group sizes.*

The results indicate that the analyses did not identify statistically significant differences in this sample; they do not prove that the groups are equivalent. The small sample and uneven group sizes limit the statistical power of the comparisons. In particular, the civil-status and educational-attainment categories include groups with only two respondents, while the OFW category includes one respondent and was omitted from the corresponding ANOVA. The group-comparison findings should therefore be regarded as exploratory and should not be generalized beyond the sample.

Overall interpretation and practical implications

Taken together, the findings show a sample in which self-reported retirement planning behavior and perceived preparedness were moderate, saving behavior was comparatively stronger, and access to retirement information was low. The strong positive association between planning behavior and perceived preparedness suggests that practical planning activities may be relevant to how members assess their readiness. However, the non-significant correlations involving knowledge/literacy and information access caution against assuming that information provision alone will immediately translate into stronger planning behavior. Educational activities may need to be paired with practical assistance, such as helping members review contribution records, estimate retirement needs, and identify feasible saving steps.

For local SSS information efforts, the findings support considering accessible activities that explain retirement eligibility, the 120-contribution requirement, contribution monitoring, and the use of official service channels. Barangay-based sessions, printed information, and demonstrations of My.SSS functions may help reach members who have limited exposure to retirement information. For local government units and community partners, retirement education may be integrated into existing assemblies or livelihood activities. These are proposed applications of the findings, not interventions whose effectiveness was tested by this study.

For members, practical retirement planning may include periodically checking posted contributions, clarifying their expected benefit eligibility, setting realistic savings goals, and considering other sources of retirement income in line with their financial capacity. Members should be encouraged to obtain current benefit information directly from official SSS channels because contribution rules and benefit details may change. For researchers, a larger study using probability sampling, more robust instrument development, and a broader set of financial and socioeconomic variables would provide stronger evidence about the factors associated with retirement planning behavior in Eastern Samar.

The pattern of results can be considered in relation to the theoretical perspectives guiding the study. The life-cycle hypothesis emphasizes the importance of allocating resources across working and retirement years. The relatively high means for saving behavior is consistent with the presence of some saving practices among respondents,

while the moderate scores for income preparation and goal setting indicate that saving behavior alone may not capture the full process of retirement preparation. In practice, individuals may save without estimating how much they will need or may intend to prepare but lack stable income or sufficient financial capacity to do so. The present study did not measure consumption smoothing or household wealth over time, so the life-cycle hypothesis serves as a conceptual lens rather than a model empirically tested by these data.

The theory of planned behavior also suggests that favorable attitudes and perceived social expectations are not sufficient unless individuals believe that they can perform the behavior and have the practical means to do so. The low information-access score may reflect a gap between the availability of information and members' actual exposure to or ability to use it. The study did not directly measure attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived behavioral control as separate constructs; therefore, it cannot test the theory as a complete explanatory model. Still, the theoretical perspective reinforces the value of pairing information campaigns with practical guidance that helps members take manageable steps, such as reviewing contribution histories, identifying a retirement goal, and considering feasible savings options.

The strong association between planning behavior and perceived preparedness is also substantively important, but it should be interpreted cautiously. The two measures are conceptually related and both were obtained from the same questionnaire at the same point in time. This shared method and conceptual overlap may contribute to the size of the observed correlation. The result is useful as evidence that respondents who report doing more planning also tend to feel more prepared, but it should not be interpreted as an independent validation of either measure or as evidence that planning behavior alone determines actual retirement security. A future study could strengthen this analysis by using objective indicators, such as verified contribution histories, savings amounts, retirement-income projections, or follow-up data collected over time.

The proposed local applications should be viewed as practical options for consideration rather than as tested program recommendations. A first step could be to map the information questions most frequently raised by members and determine which official channels they currently use. A second step could be to provide short, targeted sessions that combine SSS benefit information with demonstrations of contribution-record checking and basic retirement-income planning. A third step could be to evaluate participation and learning using attendance records and short pre- and post-session questions. These steps would allow the service office and local partners to assess whether the proposed activities improve reach and understanding before expanding them. Because the current study did not evaluate an intervention, no claim is made that these activities will necessarily improve retirement outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Among the 33 active SSS members who participated in this convenience sample, the largest respondent groups were aged 20–30, female, married, college-educated, and self-employed. The mean score on the combined SSS retirement-benefit knowledge and financial-literacy items was 74.55 percent correct. Respondents reported low access to retirement information, moderate overall retirement planning behavior, and moderate

perceived retirement preparedness. Saving behavior was the strongest reported planning domain, while contribution monitoring, goal setting, retirement-income preparation, and future financial preparation were moderate.

The analyses did not identify statistically significant relationships between retirement planning behavior and either the combined knowledge/literacy score or access to retirement information. A strong positive association was found between retirement planning behavior and perceived retirement preparedness. No statistically significant differences in planning behavior were detected across the tested profile variables. These conclusions apply to the respondents and the measures used; the small convenience sample does not support population-wide generalization. The observed association between planning behavior and perceived preparedness should not be interpreted as causal.

Recommendations

First, SSS members may be encouraged to check their contribution records regularly through official SSS channels, clarify their eligibility for retirement benefits, and maintain a realistic retirement savings goal. Members may also consider their expected expenses and possible sources of income beyond the SSS pension, according to their financial capacity.

Second, the SSS service office serving Borongan City may consider strengthening retirement information activities. These may include short seminars or barangay-based sessions on retirement benefit eligibility, contribution requirements, contribution monitoring, and retirement application procedures. Printed materials and demonstrations of official online services may complement face-to-face activities, particularly for members who have limited access to digital information.

Third, local government units and barangay officials may coordinate with SSS to disseminate verified retirement information through existing community programs. Such coordination may be especially useful for self-employed and voluntary members who are responsible for managing their own contribution payments.

Fourth, future research should involve a larger and, where feasible, probability-based sample from Borongan City or other municipalities in Eastern Samar. Researchers should consider separate and more thoroughly validated measures of SSS knowledge and financial literacy, assess instrument reliability using an appropriate sample and method, and include factors such as income stability, debt, household responsibilities, employment security, and participation in financial education. Qualitative interviews may also help explain barriers to accessing retirement information and translating knowledge into planning practices.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. First, the sample consisted of only 33 respondents selected through convenience sampling, limiting representativeness and generalizability. Second, the study was cross-sectional and relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may be affected by recall or social-desirability bias. Third, the combined knowledge/literacy items did not yield separate domain scores, and no statistical reliability coefficient was computed. The five-person pilot try-out and two-expert review are reported transparently but do not establish psychometric reliability. Fourth, some profile groups were very small; the OFW category was excluded from the membership-type ANOVA because it

contained one respondent. Finally, the study did not verify SSS contribution histories, savings, assets, or projected retirement income against records. The findings should therefore be treated as preliminary local evidence.

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