



## FIFTEEN SHADES OF GREEN: A CULTURAL PORTRAIT OF EMPOWERED FILIPINO ELDERLY VERTICAL GARDENERS

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**ABSTRACT** – This ethnographic study intends to describe the culture-sharing group of empowered Filipino senior citizens in a neighborhood-initiated vertical gardening engagement. Guided by the empowerment framework, the descriptive characteristics and the empowering attributes were cultivated from the emic (vertical gardeners) and etic (researcher) perspectives through a 20-month immersion as a participant observer. Photographs of their gardens and their gardening engagements substantiate the richness of the description. Findings of the study highlights the fifteen shades of green represented by the different facets of Filipino elderly vertical gardeners, their vertical gardens, and their resonating cultural values. Empowering attributes that fosters sustainable vertical gardening engagements include: Grounding on values, beliefs and language; Growing desire to create vertical green space and a sense of place; and Grasping for knowledge, skills and sustainable practices. The cultural portrait elucidates understanding on the value of contextualization and inclusion for empowering the elderly in community greening. Further research could be undertaken to identify other attributes that could enhance the propensity of the senior citizens to engage in vertical greening.

*Keywords: empowerment, ethnography, senior citizens, vertical gardening*



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