

# Understanding Socio-demographic Patterns and Wellbeing Dimensions of the Elderly in Malaysia: The Way Forward in Reaching an Age Nation by 2030

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## Abstract

While most of the dominant countries in the world such as Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America are experiencing the increasing number of the elderly, the issue of the ageing population becomes a global phenomenon. In the meantime, Malaysia is also among the countries which is located in the Asian region which is a contributor to the overall world ageing population. Previously in the 1950s and 1990s, the population of the elderly in Malaysia has been recorded to be lower and has fluctuated in trend. However, since the year 2000 until recent years, the elderly population in this country has been observed to drastically increase, reaching 2.653 million in the year 2014, as compared to only 386.6 thousand in 1960. As forecasted by the United Nations, this increment will transform Malaysia into an aged nation by 2030. While the elderly population is growing yearly, extra attention needs to be given to the elderly in ensuring their wellbeing at an optimum level. Only then, may this country evolve and prosper into a better place for all, especially the elderly. Hence, the understanding of socio-demographic patterns of the elderly is highly needed to obtain a profound understanding of their demands. For this reason, the primary objective of this concept paper is to analyses four patterns of the socio-demographic of Malaysian elderly namely in terms of their age group, gender, geographical area and level of education. Furthermore, this paper scrutinises the applicability of these socio-demographic patterns in attaining five wellbeing dimensions of the elderly which are the economy, environment, health, social and on spiritual terms. Hence, this paper concludes that a thorough understanding of socio-demographic patterns and wellbeing dimensions of the elderly are important for the government and all relevant parties to develop necessary actions precisely for this age group alongside also strategising on ways to propel forward to be a prosperous aged nation by 2030.

Keywords: *age nation, Malaysian elderly, socio-demographic pattern, wellbeing dimensions*

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## INTRODUCTION

Countries all around the globe are currently experiencing the alarming number of the ageing population (He, Goodkind & Kowal, 2016, McDonald & Donahue, 2011; McDaniel & Rozanova, 2011; Brown, 2011; Cooke, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2006; UNFPA, 2002; Auer & Fortuny, 2000); and without exclusion, Malaysia is also facing the similar trend (Hamid, 2015; Doris, Idris, & Abu Bakar, 2010; United Nation, 2009;

Mat & Md. Taha, 2000; Atrokiasamy, 1997). Therefore, to be aligned with the growing number of the elderly\*, greater efforts need to be taken and implemented in managing their well-being. All unique characteristics of the elderly, accordingly based on the variation of their socio-demographic pattern, require thorough and holistic understanding. Different elements of socio-demographic demand different approaches when dealing with this particular issue. For example, the level of education (either high and low) is one of the important factors to be considered in dealing with work opportunities for the elderly. Understanding the socio-demographic aspects allow specific and accurate approaches or measures to be taken in dealing with employment, retirement, social and health care issues involving the elderly. This paper argues that the present one-size-fits-all approach is less relevant and ineffective. Thus, it is proposed for designing measures tailored to the socio-demographic pattern of the elderly.

There are four prominent socio-demographic characteristics of Malaysian elderly which pertains to their age group, gender, geographical area (rural vs. urban) and level of education. Statistical evidences from the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016) are used to support the discussion of each of the socio-demographic pattern. Furthermore, the socio-demographic patterns are aligned with five wellbeing dimensions of the Malaysian elderly alligned with the government efforts to empower the elderly through enrichment and fulfilment of their wellbeing. As proposed in the National Policy for Older Person Malaysia 2011, the wellbeing dimensions include the economy, environment, health, social and spiritual – in each dimension, a critical analysis of aligning the socio-demographic patterns and optimising the wellbeing of the elderly are performed and several recommendations are proposed. This analysis is one technique to understand socio-demographic patterns and optimising the wellbeing of Malaysian elderly as the way forward to be a prosperous aged nation by 2030.

## **AN AGEING WORLD**

Since decades ago, the world population continues to grow older rapidly and the growth of the world's older population will continue to outpace the younger population over the next 35 years (He, Goodkind & Kowal, 2016). Led by Japan, most of the countries such as Singapore and the United States have undergone an upward trend of the ageing population since a few decades back. Meanwhile, the United Nations (2009)

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\* Referring to the definition proposed at the United Nations World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in year 1982, Malaysia denotes the word “elderly” as those who have reached the age of 60 and above (National Policy for Older Person, 2011).

disclosed the population of those aged 60 and over in most of the developed regions in the year 2010 surpassed the population of children aged 14 years old and below. This number is expected to be more than double in 2050. The decision made by couples to have smaller families, low level of fertility rates and higher life expectancy are among the underlying reasons for turning this world into an ageing place. This demands the country to provide higher concerns toward the elderly. Table 1 shows the growing population of elders aged 60 years old and above in six major world areas in the year 2010 and 2050. Several factors such as choosing to have smaller families by many couples (National Research Council, 2012), very low levels of fertility rates and higher life expectancy (He, Goodkind & Kowal, 2016) have widely contributed to the statistics. Notably, due to longer life expectancy, the population of elders aged 80 years old and above is also expected to increase approximately 73% in 2050. The growing number of elderly is due to longer life expectancy which can particularly seen in Asia region.

Table 1: *World population of the elderly (The year 2010 and 2050)*

Major Area	Population of 60 years old and above (million)		Population of 80 years old and above (million)	
	2010	2050	2010	2050
<b>World</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>395</b>
Africa	55	213	4	21
<b>Asia</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>1236</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>228</b>
Europe	161	236	31	66
Latin America and the Caribbean	59	186	9	40
Northern America	65	125	13	36
Oceania	6	12	1	3

Source: United Nation (2009).

## **MALAYSIA AS AN AGED NATION BY 2030**

While undergoing robust economy development since independence in the year 1957, the change in terms of social structure and the decline in fertility, mortality rates (Hamid, 2015; Atrokiasamy, 1997) and the demographic transitions in Malaysia are evidently affected. The alarming number of the elderly population is one of the main concerns of these demographic transitions. The number of the people aged 60 years old and above has been reported to increase yearly. Figure 1 shows the percentage of the population aged 65 and older in Malaysia from 1950 until 2050 and Figure 2 illustrates the growth rate of the elderly against the growth rate of Malaysia population in total.

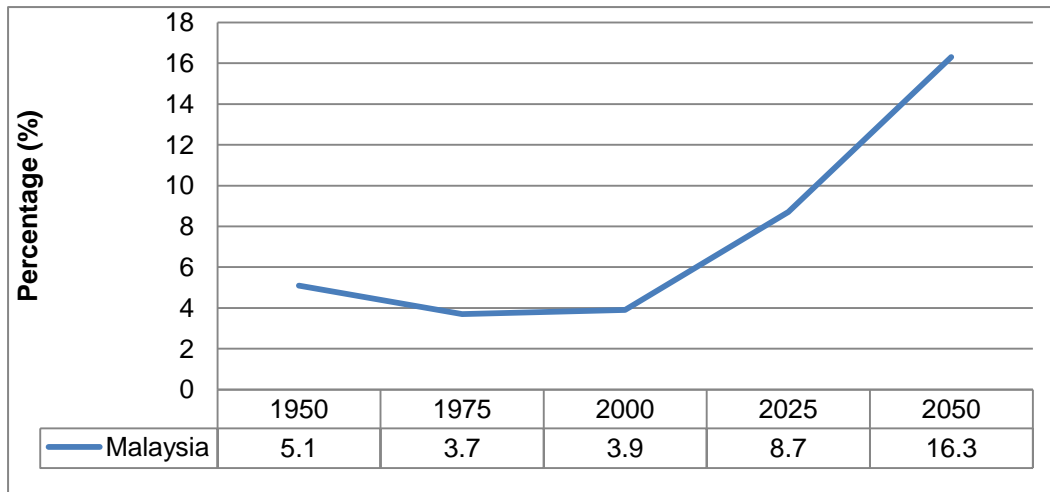


Figure 1: Percentages of shared population aged 65 and older in Malaysia (Year 1950 – 2050)

Note: This line graph was developed by referring to statistical data from the United Nations (2009).

Based on Figure 1, the shared population of those aged 65 and older in Malaysia since 2000 has risen and is expected to stagnantly increase until the year 2050. Meanwhile, the the elders growth rate (as illustrated in Figure 2) is observed to be higher as compared to the growth rate for total Malaysian population since the year 1991.

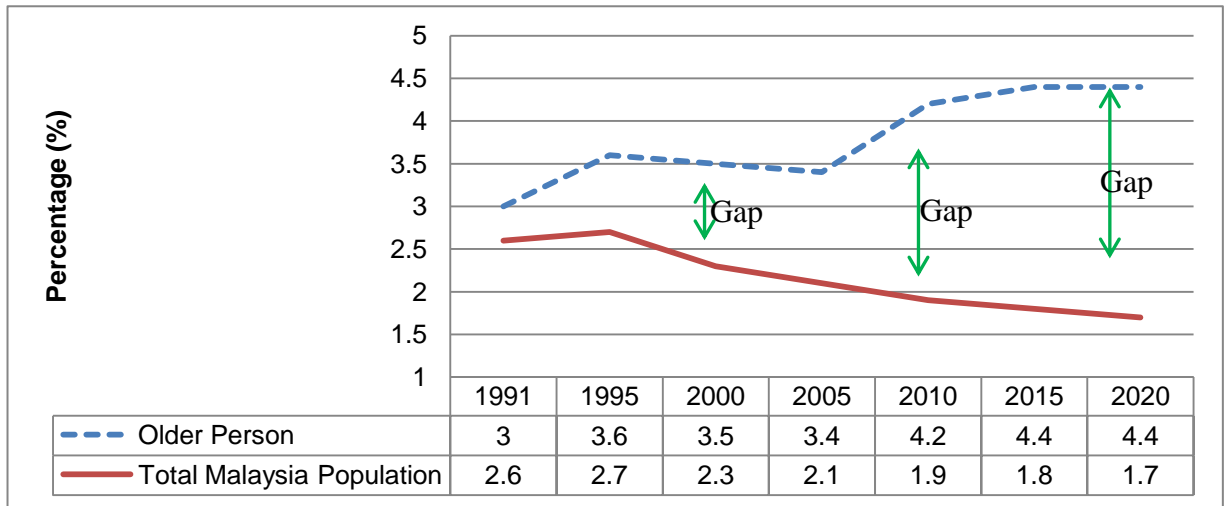


Figure 2: Growth rate percentages for the elderly population versus total Malaysian population Source: Doris, Idris, & Abu Bakar (2010).

Notably, Figure 2 also illustrates the “gap between these growth rates”. Remarkably, the gap (as illustrated by this arrow  $\updownarrow$ ) between the growth rate of the elderly population and for total Malaysian population is wider for every decade since the 1990s until 2020s. Therefore, this wider gap contributes to a higher number of citizens aged 60 years old and above due to low mortality rate while the birth percentage is shrinking due to low fertility rates (Hamid, 2015; Atrokiasamy, 1997).

Consequently, this situation has increased the ageing flux in this country (Wan Ahmad & Ismail, 2014) and as expected by the United Nations (2009), this situation will transform Malaysia to be an aged nation by 2030 – a condition where the population of the elderly reaches 15% of the overall population of the country. Unfortunately, if this situation continuously occurs for another few decades, it will definitely trigger and stimulate unhealthy demographic transitions of the country which may lead to unstable population that might surpress the country’s development as an aged nation. Even though ageing is a natural and inevitable process, but according to Mullan (2002), elders thereby incur greater and possibly socially harmful costs when their life expentancy increases. Hence, this situation may challenge a country’s ability in managing the elderly and extra attention needs to be given in maintaining as well as optimising their wellbeing. Therefore, immediate and efficient approaches need to be taken to overcome this critical situation in an attempt to control the ageing index and reduce old-age dependency ratio. The ageing index can be reduced if the gap between

the growth rate of the elderly and overall Malaysia population decreases due to improved fertility rates among the citizens. Meanwhile, the old age dependency ratio also can be reduced by increasing the number of the working generation.

## **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS OF MALAYSIAN ELDERS**

According to Atchley (1991), the public is oftenly opinionated that the older population is a relatively homogeneous category, but nothing is further from the truth. Atchley added that there are wide variations in age, racial, gender, ethnic, education and income; wide variations in living arrangements and other differences. Hence, in gaining a thorough understanding of their needs, characteristics and nature, the overall concept of the heterogeneous category of the elderly is paramount to be acted upon. A comprehensive understanding of the characteristics, needs and nature of the elderly allow the optimisation of their wellbeing via the accuracy and precision in development approaches or measures. In other words, the understanding of elderly variations is useful for policy makers to critically develop necessary approaches or measures such as in terms of employment, retirement, social and health care to suit with their characteristics, needs and nature. Thus, the assumption of *one-size-fits-all approach* can be avoided.

In this paper, the variations of the elderly are highly affiliated to their socio-demographic. Notably, Beatson (2014) defines demography as a scientific study of human populations. Particularly, A. Guillard used the word 'demography' for the first time in the year 1855 in his book entitled '*Elements de Statistique Humaine ou Demographie Comparee*' (Sociology Guide, 2016). While there are numerous elements of socio-demographic, only four elements will be discussed in this paper. These elements are pertaining to the elder's age group, gender, geographical areas (strata) and level of education. Following subsections will provide further explanation of these elements by providing relevant survey data from the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016).

### ***Age group***

Notably, the elderly in this country can be classified into two groups; young-old and old-old. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2003) and Thorson (1995), elders who are classified as young-old are those aged between 60 to 74 years old. Meanwhile elders who belong to the old-old category are those aged 75 years old and above. Since decades ago, young-old elders have dominated the overall population of the elderly in Malaysia. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2005), the majority of the elderly population in this country (81.3%) comprise young-old elders and this situation prolonged up until today. In 2014 *per se*, from the overall elderly population in this country, the percentage of young-old elders was reported to

reach 84.7% and only 15.3% out of the pool are old-old elders. Table 2 provides details on the number and percentage of the elderly based on these two groups.

**Table 2: Age group of the elderly in Malaysia (Year 2014)**

Age group	Age	Number	Percentage (%)	Total Percentage (%)
Young-old	60-64	1,001,481	39.0	84.7
	65-69	735,949	28.6	
	70-74	439,941	17.1	
Old-old	75 and above	392,929	15.3	15.3

Source: National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016)

As mentioned earlier, most elders in this country belong to the young-old category, that is, those who are aged 60 to 75 years old. There is one possible explanation to justify this situation. According to the Department of Statistics of Malaysia (2015), the total life expectancy in Malaysia in the year 2014 was only 74.7 years. Therefore, this situation portrays that, statistically, the maximum age for Malaysians to live is 74.7 years. Hence, this age limit is within the age group of young-old. Thus, this situation has resulted in a higher population of the elderly in the young-old group in comparison to them who belong to the old-old group.

### ***Gender of the Elderly***

Other than classifying the elderly according to their age group, they also can be classified in terms of gender; male or female. In Malaysia, the percentage of the elderly varies according to gender. A study conducted by Hamid (2012) found that the percentage of elderly females in Malaysia is higher than elderly males. This information is also aligned with a survey conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016). The survey found that the percentage of elderly females is higher than elderly males; 54.5% female (1,400,237 million) and 45.2% male (1,170,063 million). Hence, the difference between life expectancy of males and females can be one of the possible explanation to justify this phenomenon.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2015), the life expectancy of Malaysians is increasing yearly. However, this life expectancy differs between genders as it is longer for a female than a male. In 2015, life expectancy for average female citizens was 77.4 years, but only 72.5 years for male citizens. This situation portrays that, statistically, the maximum years for a male to live is only 72.5 years. On average, females live approximately five years longer than male. Therefore, as also supported by Mafauzy (2000), the ability of elderly females to live longer has caused the population of elderly females to be higher than elderly males.

### ***Geographical Area***

Malaysian elders can also be differentiated based on their living area. According to the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016), the living areas of the elderly can be divided into two; urban and rural. The 'Fifth Malaysian Population and Family Survey Year 2014' conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia found that a majority of the elderly in this country live in urban area; 69.9% or 1,796,699 million. Meanwhile, 30.1% of the elderly live in rural areas; 773,601 thousand. There are two possible explanations to justify this situation. Firstly, the actual number of the population distribution in urban Malaysia is always higher compared to rural areas. Therefore, a higher number of the elderly is reported to live in urban areas. Secondly, it is mainly attributed from the globalisation process where many people in rural areas have migrated and started their new life in cities (internal migration). Therefore, this situation has caused the population of the elderly to be lower in rural areas and higher in an urban areas.

### ***Level of education***

The population of the elderly also varies based on their education level. A survey conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016) disclosed different education backgrounds of the elderly. Table 4 shows seven different educational levels of the elderly in this country. Elders who did not receive formal education and only studied at primary and secondary schools are classified as possessing low education level whilst elders who embarked in pre-university and above are classified as highly educated. Thus, in reference to Table 3, the majority of the elderly in Malaysia possess low levels of education with only 7.5% of them who embarked in tertiary education. The low awareness level on the importance of pursuing studies to tertiary platforms among Malaysians decades ago is one of the possible explanation for this situation. Other than that, the inexistence of financial assistances such as The National Higher Education Fund and Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) scholarship or loan is the ultimate reason as to why they did not pursue their studies. However, the current trend of Malaysian citizens pursuing their studies at higher levels (university level) might change this scenario in the future.



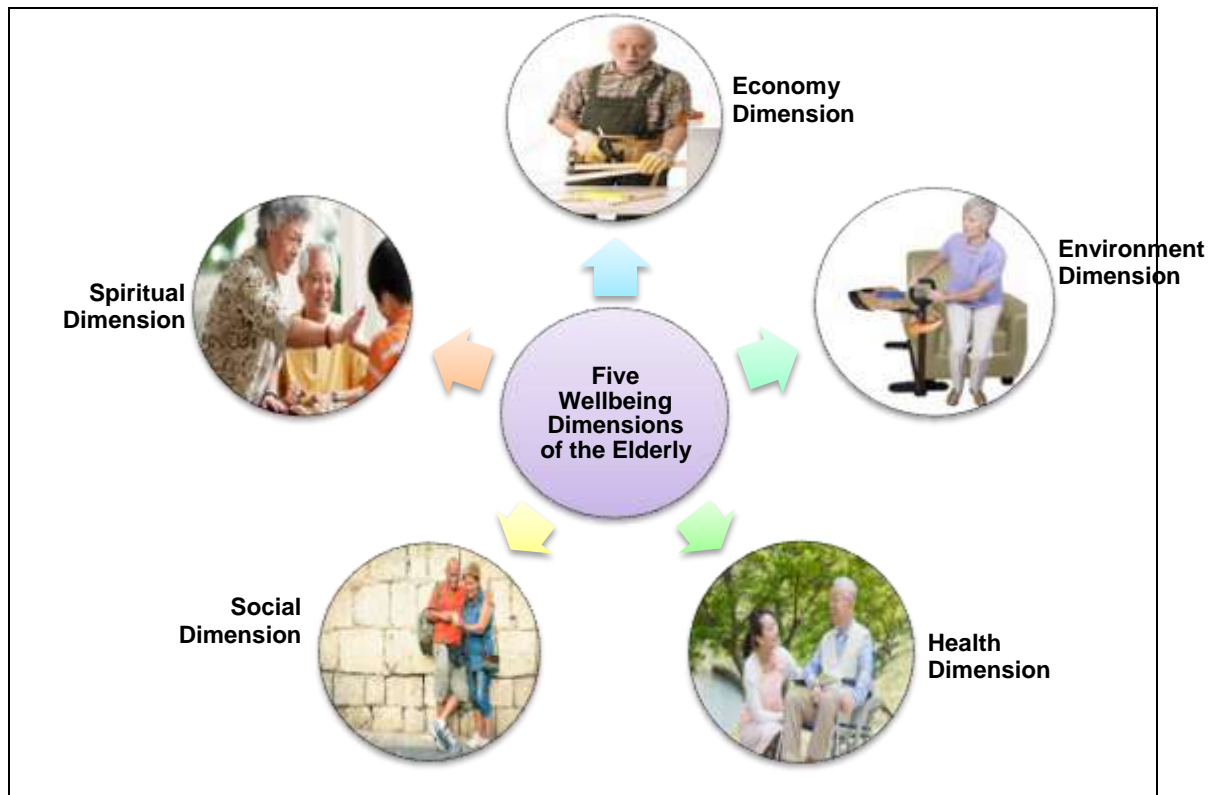
Table 3: *Level of education of the elderly in Malaysia (Year 2014)*

Education Level	Number	Percentage (%)	Total Percentage (%)
No formal education	452,393	17.6	92.5
Primary school	1,206,987	47.0	
Secondary school (lower)	352,975	13.7	
Secondary school (upper)	365,025	14.2	
Pre-university	41,630	1.6	
Tertiary	143,168	5.6	7.5
Others	8,121	0.3	

Source: National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016).

## THE APPLICATION OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC IN OPTIMIZING THE WELLBEING OF THE ELDERLY

According to Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (2011) through National Policy for Older Person Malaysia, there are five wellbeing dimensions of the elderly proposed by the government and in an attempt to optimise the well-being of the elderly, these five dimensions need to be fulfilled equally. Figure 3 presents the five wellbeing dimensions which are economy, environment, health, social and spiritual. Following subsections provide a brief explanation on these dimensions and elaborate on how four elements of socio-demographic (age group, gender, geographical area and level of education) should be utilised in promoting these dimensions. As mentioned earlier, the application of socio-demographic elements in empowering wellbeing dimensions of the elderly is necessary to allow the creation of specific and accurate approaches or measures that suit the characteristics, needs and nature of the elderly. Employment, retirement, social and health care are among the examples of approaches and measures that should be considered in terms of the socio-demographic patterns of the elderly.



*Figure 3* Five Wellbeing Dimensions of the Elderly  
 Extracted from the National Policy for Older Persons Malaysia (2011).

### ***Economy Dimension (Productive ageing)***

The first wellbeing dimension is economy. While encouraging the elderly to be more productive, this dimension underlies and acts as a basis for the concept of productive ageing. The National Policy for Older Person Malaysia (2011) defines productive ageing as the participation of elders in both paid and unpaid activities that give meaning and satisfaction to them. Elders who continue to be involved in the labour market and engaged with faith-based organisations are those who participate in both paid and unpaid activities. Hence, in encouraging them to age productively, the socio-demographic elements of the elderly (age group, gender, geographical area and level of education) should be considered. In other words, the government efforts should be tailored to the right group of the elderly.

As a proposition, to encourage the elderly to be more productive, they can engage in the labour market (Ramey, Ahmad, & Mohamed Harith, 2016). However, their level of education needs to be considered. This is because in suggesting lifelong employability for the elderly, assigning a proper job that is aligned with their education

level is important. Any elder who is uneducated are suggested to participate in society by engaging in unskilled work and activities.

### ***Environment Dimension (Supportive ageing)***

The second wellbeing dimension is environment. This dimension stimulates one of the aspects that is required in fulfilling the wellbeing of the elderly; environment. The environment is affiliated to a supportive environment which can help the elderly to function more effectively. Therefore, this aspect is alligned with the concept of supportive ageing. According to the National Policy for Older Person (2011), supportive ageing can be defined as the internal and external of friendly environments that allow the elderly to function effectively and independently. Supportive family members, the advancement of information technology such as user interface design on smartphones, tablet and computers as well as modern infrastructures such as lifts installed with braille and sound systems and wheelchair ramp slopes are among the examples for both internal and external supportive environments that are necessary for the elders.

In promoting supportive ageing, elements of the socio-demographic of the elderly also need to be considered. For example, the budget allocation for a age-friendly city needs to consider the geographical area of the elderly. A survey conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia (2016) shows that a majority of the elderly in this country live in urban areas. Therefore, higher budgets need to be allocated especially for those living in urban areas but also not neglecting those who live in rural areas.

### ***Health Dimension (Healthy ageing)***

The third dimension of elderly wellbeing is health. This dimension encourages healthy routines among the elderly and this determination is alligned with the concept of healthy ageing. According to the National Policy for Older Person Malaysia (2011), healthy ageing can be referred as the fortitude in promoting a healthy lifestyle, the development of a better health system and the existence of a healthy environment and local community that surround the elderly. The participation of the elderly in community health activities such as *Ironman Malaysia 2016* and *MySihat Run 2016* and special fees rate for health care services provided by government hospitals are examples of empowering healthy ageing in Malaysia. Thus, in encouraging the elderly to age healthily, the elements of socio-demographic of the elderly need to be considered. For example, the impact of health towards gender need to be considered.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2015), the life expectancy of Malaysians is differs between gender whereby life expectancy for a female is longer than male. Therefore, in improving the level of health among Malaysian elders, extra attention needs to be given to Malaysian males, regardless of age besides also trying to retain and improve on females. This is because, in promoting healthy ageing, necessary actions need to be implemented from the beginning while the health level at later life is started since young. Hence, the consideration of the elements of socio-demographic is important in promoting healthy ageing.

### ***Social Dimension (Active ageing)***

The fourth wellbeing dimension is social. This dimension stresses that one of the crucial aspects to optimise the wellbeing of the elderly is through the social participation and inclusion of the elderly in society. For this purpose, this wellbeing dimension proposes that the elderly have to actively participate in society. Hence, this aspect falls under the concept of active ageing. Notably, active ageing can be defined as the optimisation process of the involvement of the elderly in family and community in empowering the wellbeing of the elderly (National Policy for Older Person Malaysia, 2011). The example for active ageing in Malaysia is the involvement of the elderly in lifelong learning programmes in the University of Third Age in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The establishment of this university have received full support by the Malaysian government and the United Nations Population Fund (UPM, 2016).

In order to encourage active ageing among the elderly, the elements of socio-demographic need to be considered. For example, while encouraging the elderly to actively participate in society, the consideration of their age group is also circumstantial. According to Phua (2007), young-old elders tend to be relatively healthier as compared to those who belong to the old-old group. Therefore, the involvement of old-old elders in society needs to be observed and controlled so that their safety and health can be preserved.

### ***Spiritual Dimension (Positive ageing)***

The fifth wellbeing dimension for the elderly is spiritual. This dimension propels the elderly to possess optimistic spiritual development that undignifies their self-value and self-esteem even at old age. Hence, this dimension urges the elderly to retain a positive mindset and for society to exude good perception towards them. Therefore, this aspect falls under the concept of positive ageing. The National Policy for Older Person Malaysia (2011) defines positive 'ageing' as the belief and positive value that become their life root and self-identity as well as possessing positive attributes and decent views on ageing. An elderly can be said to age positively if he or she always possess high self-esteem towards him or herself and feel valuable to their family and society.

In optimising the wellbeing of the elderly in the context of the spiritual dimension, the application of four socio-demographic elements (age group, gender, geographical area and level of education) in stimulating positive ageing is immensely important. For example, while encouraging the elderly to feel valuable to their family and society, the consideration on their level of education is equally pertinent. As most elders are uneducated and poor, they may feel useless in their later life, a profound mechanism such as looking into another self-potential need to be taken in restoring their self-value to be aligned with those who are highly educated.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the ageing index is increasing, further attention needs to be given to the aged nation status that is currently approaching the country. By reducing the gap between the growth rate of the elderly and overall Malaysian population that is by focusing and triggering the birth rate, it is believed that this effort can narrow the gap and harmonise this demographic transition. Even though ageing is a natural and inevitable process, but having too many elders in a country bring about challenges for the government, especially in managing their wellbeing and quality of life. As mentioned by Mullan (2002), elders incur greater and possibly more socially harmful costs the longer they live. Hence, by trying to create a lively and inclusive country that is age-friendly, the proportion of the elderly needs to be balanced with the overall population.

Meanwhile, in empowering the elderly through the improvement and optimisation of their wellbeing, the heterogeneity category of the elderly also needs to be taken into account. This is aligned with the philosophy of the National Policy for Older Person Malaysia (2011) imposed and proposed by the government.

*“The National Policy on Older Person acknowledges elders as citizens with **varied backgrounds** and experiences who have the right to enjoy a comfortable and respected life and contribute to the development of a nation.”*

– Philosophy of National Policy for Older Person Malaysia 2011 (Zawawi, 2013)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Remarkably, the application of socio-demographic in attaining the wellbeing dimensions of the elderly is paramount and needs to be deliberated by policy makers. Figure 4 promotes the wellbeing of the elderly by tailoring with their socio-demographic patterns (heterogeneous category). The socio-demographic patterns of the elderly such as their age group (young-old and old-old), gender (male and female), geographical area (rural and urban), as well as their education level (high and low) definitely need to be included in fulfilling all of their wellbeing dimensions.

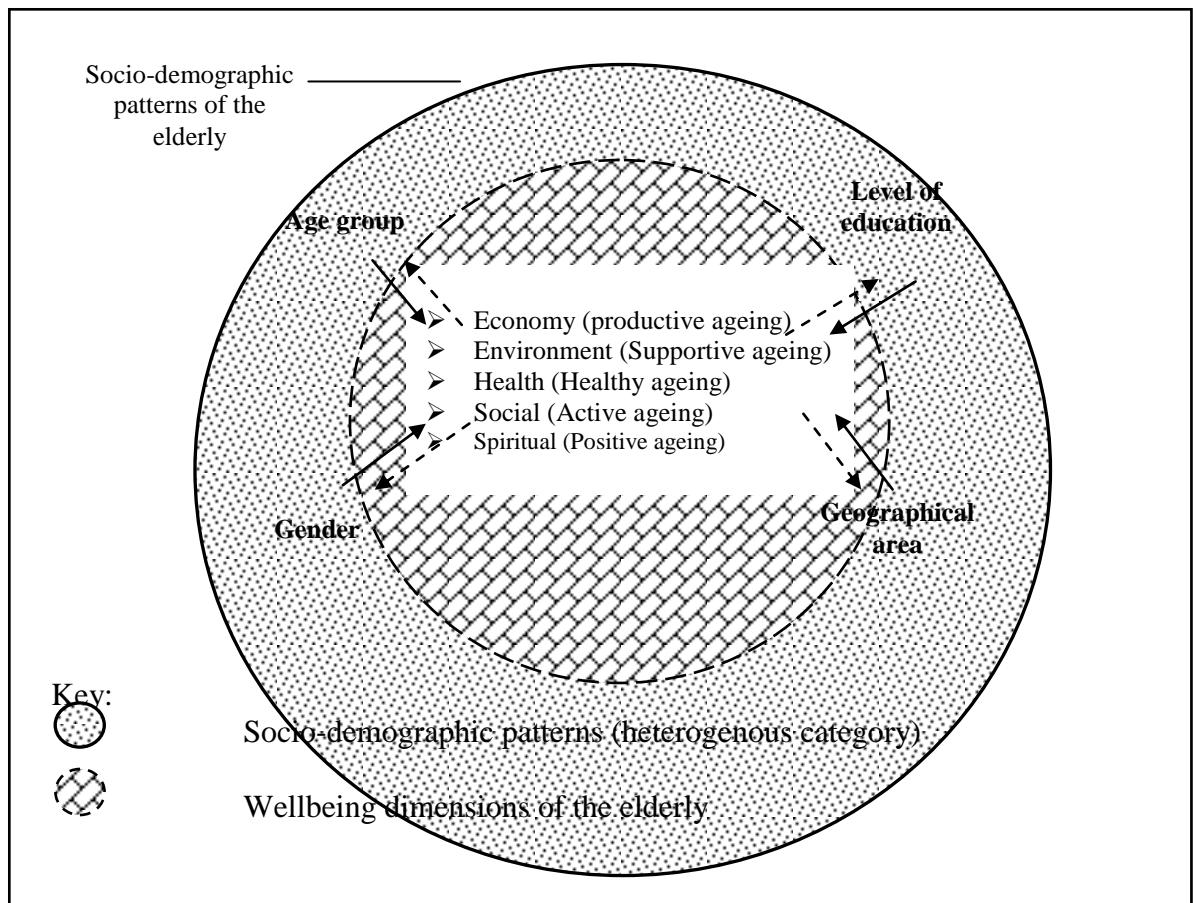


Figure 4: *Proposed framework in promoting and optimising elderly wellbeing dimensions by tailoring with socio-demographic patterns*

As discussed earlier, listed below are the examples of social-domographic patterns (to list a few) that can be considered in promoting five wellbeing dimensions of the elderly.

- 1) Economy dimension (productive ageing): In enhancing the **economy wellbeing** of the elderly, good promotion of productive ageing needs to be implemented by considering their **education level**. For example, uneducated elders are suggested to be productive by engaging in unskilled work and educated elders are suggested to be productive by involving in any occupation that aligned with their qualification such as part-time or full-time financial advisors.
- 2) Environment dimension (supportive ageing): While promoting supportive ageing that underlies the **environment wellbeing**, the consideration on **geographical areas** of the elderly is also necessary. For example, in creating an

age-friendly city that satisfies the elderly in terms of the infrastructure, proper and adequate budget need to be allocated to living areas which comprise highest number of elders; urban areas. In doing so, age-friendly infrastructures such as lifts installed with braille and sound systems as well as wheelchair ramp slopes will not only meet the demand of elders in that area but are also helpful in promoting supportive ageing.

- 3) Health dimension (healthy ageing): Meanwhile, in inspiring the society and the elderly to be more concern and cognizant of healthy living at old age, the promotion of healthy ageing aligned with **health wellbeing** is essential. For example, the differences between life expectancy among different **genders**. In 2015, the life expectancy for females was 77.4 years and 72.5 for males. Hence, additional attention needs to be given to males in terms of disease prevention besides also considering on how to improve the quality and expectancy of life for females.
- 4) Social dimension (active ageing): In enhancing the **social wellbeing** of the elderly, the **age-group** of the elderly (young-old and old-old) also needs to be considered. Phua (2007) states that young-old elders are healthier to engage in society as compared to those in the old-old group. Even though old-old elders might not be healthier, but the declining of their health cannot be seen as a solid reason to isolate them from society and families. Further approaches are required to optimise the participation of old-old elders in society such as encouraging them to partake in community activities and interact or visit them at old-folks homes, that is, an attempt to boost their participation by bringing society to them.
- 5) Spiritual dimension (positive ageing): In empowering the elderly to age positively, their **spiritual wellbeing** need to be optimised successfully. For this purpose, the **education levels** of the elderly are of utmost importance. As most elders are uneducated and poor, they may feel useless in their later life, a profound mechanism such as looking into other self-potential needs that have to be focused on in an attempt to restore their self-value and to be aligned with those who are highly educated.

Finally, it is immensely hoped that specific approaches and measures such as in terms of employment, retirement, social and health care can be suit with the characteristics, needs and nature of the elderly. These efforts can be taken after considering their socio-demographic patterns. Only then, Malaysia can be propelled forward to become a prosperous aged nation by 2030.



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