

## The Effects of Malaysian Older People's Participation and Engagement in the Local Labour Market

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### ABSTRACT

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Given the increasing rise of the world's older population and the quick alteration of the socioeconomic landscape, many countries, Malaysia included, recognise the necessity to protect the economic security of the older people. This country's alarmingly ageing population will transform it into an aged nation by the year 2030. However, several issues and challenges experienced by them, such as the inadequacy of financial savings, living in poverty, and being censured by family issues, may prevent Malaysia from attaining its 2020 ambition of becoming a developed nation and aged friendly country. Thus, this study believed it was necessary to implement effective methods to tackle these issues and challenges along with maximising the health and wellness of the older population. One alternate approach proposed by this study is to increase the participation of healthy and capable older people in the labour force. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of labour force participation and engagement on older people, their family members, society, and the country in support of the alternate approach proposed. Following this aim, this study obtained the data from qualitative research for the doctoral degree of one of the authors. This study found that older people's employment favourably impacted themselves on (i) an individual level, (ii) their families and coworkers on an interpersonal level, and (iii) society on a societal level. This study also demonstrates that the employment of older people can positively impact the (iv) country. The majority of the positive impacts on older people's employment can contribute to their wellbeing, as outlined in the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#).

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**Contribution/Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature on gerontology, particularly regarding the economic dimension as well as participation and engagement of older people in Malaysia's labour market.

## 1. Introduction

Despite the rapid growth of the world's older population and the rapid transformation of the socioeconomic landscape, many nations acknowledge the need to ensure the economic security of the older people. The alarming ageing population in Malaysia will change the country into an older people nation by 2030. Even though this growing population demonstrates effective governance in the health care system, additional attention is required to maximise the economic wellbeing of the older population. The issues and challenges such as the inadequacy of financial savings (Adnan, 2017; Harun, 2017; Abdul Hamid, 2015; Mohd Hashim, 2014; Melissa, 2015; Yusof & Zulkifli, 2014; Zawawi, 2013; Jamaluddin & Foo, 2013; Kong, 2012; Doris, Idris, & Abu Bakar, 2010; Chan et al., 2010; Masud et al., 2006), living in poverty (Mohd Hashim, 2014; Masud, Abdul Hamid, & Haron, 2014; Abd Samad & Mansor, 2013; Doris, Idris, & Abu Bakar, 2010; Masud et al., 2006; Omar, 2000), and censured by family issues (Zawawi, 2013; Gwee & Fernandez, 2010; Nordin, 2009) frequently receive attention from the government.

According to Yusof and Zulkifli (2014), these issues are concerning since they may prevent Malaysia from attaining its 2020 ambition of becoming a developed nation. However, despite the fact that an ageing global population poses social and economic issues, the appropriate set of policies can enable people, families, and societies to overcome these challenges and reap the benefits of an ageing population (UNFPA, 2017). In addition to maximising the health and wellbeing of the older people, therefore, it is necessary to implement effective measures to combat these concerns. Satici, Uysal, and Akin (2013) defined thriving as the psychological and social success of an individual. This study suggests encouraging healthy and capable older people to engage in the labour force as one of the alternative solutions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of labour force participation and engagement on older people, their family members, society, and the country in support of the alternative solution indicated.

### 1.1. The Aim of this Study

This study intends to examine the effects of labour force participation and engagement on older people, their family members, society, and the country. This study focused primarily on the labour force participation and engagement of older people, and it must reveal the repercussions of their employment. This is due to the fact that employment outcomes may be one of the most important factors that may be used to measure the value of older workers, the need to encourage them to continue working, and the types of measures that must be applied based on the outcomes.

## 2. Research Methodology

The data was obtained from qualitative research for the doctoral degree of one of the authors that was conducted within a six-month period from April 2017 to November 2017. The research involved twelve working older people in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. The semi-structured in-depth interview has been used as the main method for data collection. The respondents have been selected through both purposive and snowball sampling techniques. An expert in labour economics has validated the research instruments. This study received ethical approval from the Universiti Teknologi MARA Research Ethics Committee (REC) (Reference Number: REC/401/17).

### 3. Findings and Discussion

This study found that older people's employment favourably impacted themselves on an individual level, their families and co-workers on an interpersonal level, and society on a societal level. This study also demonstrates that the employment of older people can positively impact the country. While the composition of a country is derived or created from the mix of a person, family members, and society, the benefits garnered at all three levels result in a successful, ageing country. Based on the responses of this study's respondents, [Figure 1](#) depicts how labour force involvement and engagement positively affect these four levels.

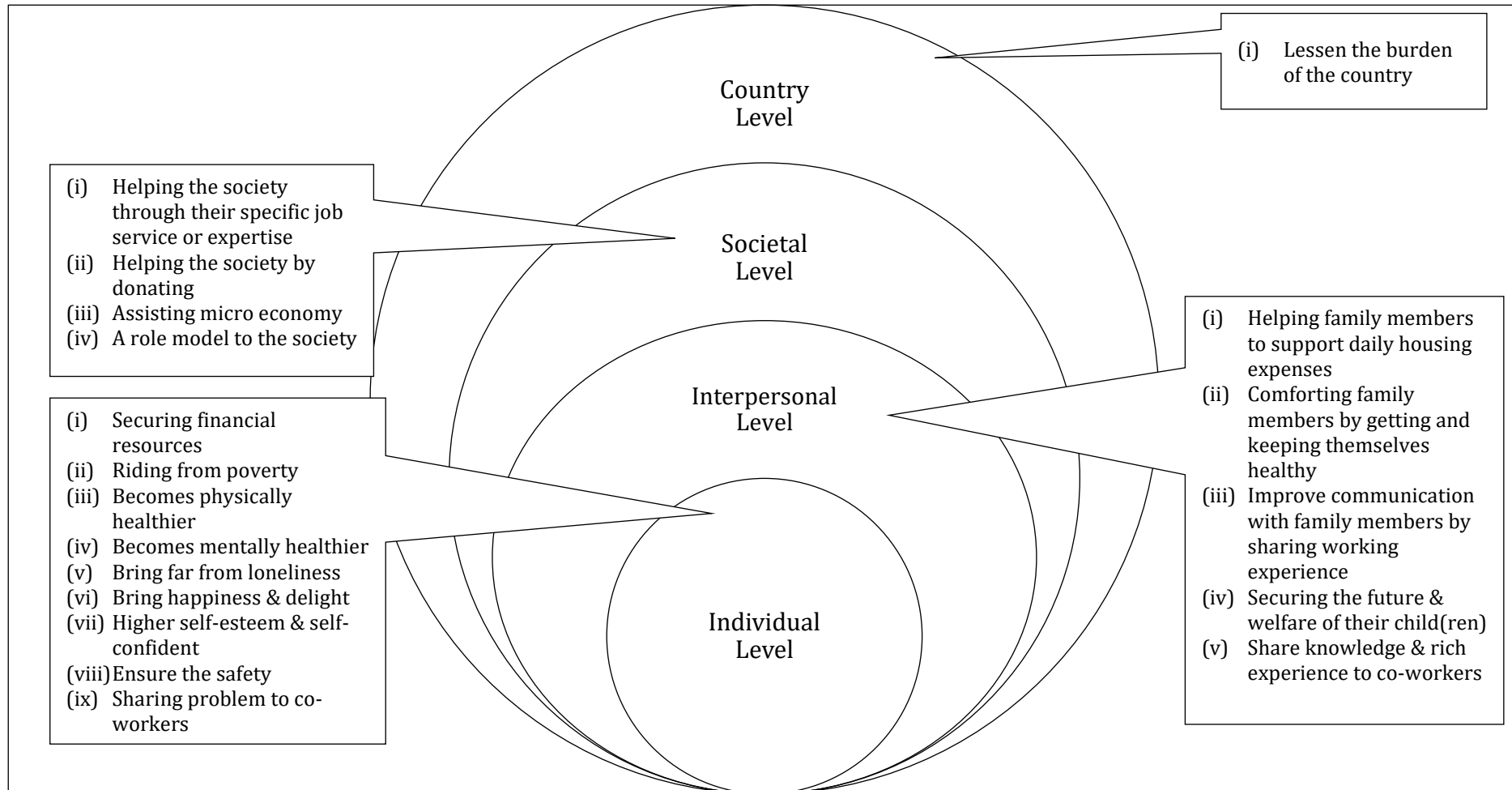
#### 3.1. Individual Level

At the individual level, this study identified nine positive effects of people's employment, which can also contribute to their optimal wellbeing. This study discovered that employment helps older people secure their financial resources. In other words, older people have a reliable source of financial support to continue sustaining themselves as they pursue professional or non-professional employment. A reliable monthly income source can meet the personal demands and necessities of the older people. As endorsed by the [International Labour Organization \(2014\)](#) and [Sulaiman and Masud \(2012\)](#), financial security can be enhanced when people have access to suitable, flexible, or part-time work with adequate compensation and self-employment options.

Therefore, this situation illustrates the importance of encouraging and providing opportunities for eligible and able older people to continue working in order to secure their financial resources without relying on other family members or third parties such as the government or a non-governmental organisation. This is because the longer people are able to remain active and care for themselves, the less expensive long-term care is for their families and for society as a whole ([World Health Organization, 2011](#)). This study also concludes that relying financially on the government or non-governmental organisations is not a viable long-term solution, especially as the older population grows annually. According to [Park, Lee, and Mason \(2012\)](#), providing more resources to older people reduces the amount of resources available to the remainder of the population. According to the [National Institute on Aging and National Institute of Health \(2007\)](#), the ageing of the population will strain the budgets of several nations. Countries with significant social programmes aimed at the older people, namely health care and income assistance programmes, have discovered that the expenses of these programmes are rising. This is due to the increase in the number of eligible recipients and the lengthening of eligibility periods.

According to the [World Health Organization \(2011\)](#), the increasing share of older people exerts upward pressure on total health care expenditures in the industrialised world. However, other factors, such as wealth growth and technological breakthroughs in treatment, typically have a considerably larger impact. In addition, a recent study conducted by [Mohd Aznan et al. \(2019\)](#) indicated that unemployment imposes a financial cost on older people because they must rely on others. Therefore, surviving initiatives, such as giving adequate employment opportunities to talented and suitable older individuals, should be viewed as one of the options for relieving the financial load on both the country and older people.

Figure 1: The Employment of the Older People Positively Affecting the Individual, Interpersonal, Societal and Country Level



According to the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#), economic wellbeing of older people could be achieved indirectly through productive ageing. In addition, the employment of older people demonstrates the optimal use of local human capital without excessive reliance on foreign labour. According to [Asli \(2017\)](#) and [Yusof and Zulkifli \(2014\)](#), an excessive number of foreign workers is damaging to the country's economic progress, as it creates more problems in the future and permits a greater outflow of capital.

The second finding of this study is that employment aids older people in escaping poverty. According to the [World Bank \(2005\)](#), a lack of money is the primary cause of poverty. Those whose income falls below the minimum level required to meet basic human requirements are termed poor. A subset of older Malaysians have adequate financial resources in retirement. Several Malaysian studies demonstrate, as discussed in the preceding chapter, that a subset of this same population lives in poverty and has a variety of difficulties in old age. Living without children or a spouse presents many problems and difficulties. Their children no longer live with them, or their children lack the financial means to maintain them. The lack of quality employment for older people has exacerbated the situation. Therefore, the [United Nations \(2016\)](#) proposed a number of strategies that might be applied to eradicate poverty among the older people, particularly among women. These initiatives include enhancing the participation of older people in formal labour markets; expanding opportunities based on their skills, expertise, and experience; and recognising and rewarding them for unpaid services rendered.

However, the existence of decent work for older people in Malaysia is controversial. This is claimed to have caused people to be impoverished by causing them to have disproportionately lower wages ([Irish Aid & HelpAge International, 2016](#); [United Nations, 2016](#); [International Labour Organization, 2014](#); [United Nations Population Fund & HelpAge International, 2012](#); [United Nations, 2007](#)). According to the [International Labour Organization \(2018\)](#), decent employment is defined as providing chances for productive labour, a fair salary, workplace security, and social safety for families. Previously, [Rahimi et al. \(2015\)](#) did a study among Malaysian older people and identified financial issues as one of the stresses contributing to suicide. The typical age of the victims was 73 years. According to this study, hanging was the most common form of suicide among older people, followed by jumping from a height, exposure to unidentified chemicals, jumping or lying in front of a moving object, exposure to pesticides, and self-inflicted sharp object wounds. In order to alleviate stress or contribute to a sense of pessimism and alleviate poverty or financial problems among Malaysian older people, it is imperative that job possibilities be made available to all capable and qualified older individuals.

Thirdly, this study indicated that the employment of older people aids in their physical wellbeing. In other words, older individuals can continue to contribute to society by maintaining and enhancing their physical health through employment. [Connidis and Willson \(2011\)](#), [Moody \(2010\)](#), [McPherson \(1990\)](#), and [Turner \(1989\)](#), as well as Activity Theory and Continuity Theory, support this circumstance. They felt that older people's participation in social activities, like employment, would improve their physical and cognitive health. Indirectly, these settings lead to enhanced health and wellbeing through preserving functional health ([Choi et al., 2016](#)). Additionally, [Waddell and Burton](#)

(2006) discuss significant evidence for the advantages of pursuing physical fitness. Working at a later age may improve a person's mental sharpness and provide them with a sense of purpose (Axelrad, Malul, & Luski, 2018). The World Health Organization (2011) concurred that older workers' physical abilities may not decline as rapidly as is usually believed.

Fourthly, this study revealed that the employment of older people contributes to their mental health. Thus, mental health can also be referred to as cognitive health (National Institute on Aging, 2020). According to Yaffee et al. (2010; 2006), cognitive decline in old age is connected with loss of independence, functional deterioration in activities of daily living, placement in a nursing home, and mortality. Due to the fact that the mind governs the precision of the movement of the human body's parts, maintaining and preserving great physical function necessitates strong mental health regardless of age, particularly among older people. Work is typically beneficial for the mental health and wellbeing of people of all ages, while the absence of work is related to poor mental health and wellbeing (Waddell & Burton, 2006).

Staying in employment after age 55 is associated with slower cognitive decline, possibly due to the stimulation of the workplace and accompanying social interaction, according to the World Health Organization (2011). According to Choi and Bohman (2007) and Aquino et al. (1996), the benefits of employment for older people also extend to their mental health, such as an increase in life satisfaction and a decrease in depression (Hao, 2008). Older people can also preserve mental health, avoid psychological suffering (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003), and contribute to the activation of both the brain and social networks (Farrell, 2017). Thus, working later in life benefits both older workers and society by minimising the costs associated with health care and mental health (Choi et al., 2018).

Fifthly, this study indicated that the employment of older people individuals helps to alleviate their loneliness. Some Malaysian older people are stigmatised because of family issues, such as living alone without children or a spouse, and because their children have moved away from living together to live separately, even far away. This familial issue affects one in three Malaysian older people (Zawawi, 2013; Gwee & Fernandez, 2010; Nordin, 2009) and happens in the majority of nations (National Institute on Ageing and National Institute of Health, 2007). The shift from large families with shorter lifespans to smaller families with longer lifespans (Abdul Hamid, 2012; National Institute on Aging and National Institute of Health, 2007) and the increase in the number of people who do not marry are among the possible causes of loneliness in old age.

According to the Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics Report for 2010, there were 59,688 unmarried Malaysian older people in 2010, and Christina and Yuen (2017) predict this number will rise in the near future, particularly among older women. Consequently, this disease drives the majority of older people to live alone, without their children and spouse, thereby defying them in the future. If the extended family will not take in the unmarried or childless widows or widowers, they will have little assistance and no place to live in old age.

Additionally, loneliness in old age can correspond with social isolation among older people (Malcolm, Frost, & Cowie, 2019; Wenger et al., 1996). Masoom (2016) defines social isolation as a lack of social interactions and contacts and links with people, relatives, companions, or even acquaintances on a micro- and macro-society scale. Nicholson

(2012) also highlighted the negative impacts of social isolation on health, such as cognitive decline and mental health issues including depression and dementia (Cacioppo et al., 2011). According to Buz et al. (2014), networks of people in general tend to shrink as people age due to loss of work, loss of social roles or loss of health, and sometimes, through the purposeful choice of older person. Participation and employment might therefore be one of the measures taken to prevent social isolation and loneliness among older people. When older people work, it can help them build social and environmental networks that work for them. This promotes a culture of supportive ageing in a society that is tolerant and caring.

Sixthly, this study revealed that the jobs of older people help them experience happiness and joy. Happiness and contentment are essential life goals for all individuals, regardless of age, including older people. This study also concludes that the happiness and satisfaction of older people received from their participation and engagement in employment are related to their employment capacity in removing them from loneliness, as previously established. In other words, employment enables older people to engage in social interaction, feel occupied, and participate in society. Older people are being integrated into typical social networks, bringing them happiness and joy despite the fact that family concerns may inhibit some.

As noted earlier, the family concerns frequently criticised by Malaysian older people include living alone without children or a spouse, which requires them to be emotionally and financially independent. Consequently, providing Malaysian older people with suitable employment opportunities can be one of the steps taken to promote their pleasure and joy. This situation is being contributed to by co-workers and employers who are supportive. Aside from that, good contentment can also help the spiritual health of older people, which is an important part of the culture of positive aging.

Seventhly, this study revealed that the employment of older people contributes to their increased self-esteem. Notably, having higher self-esteem in life is essential for a person's complete functioning as an active and effective family and societal member. Having a stronger self-esteem in old age is necessary, just as it is for children and young adults. This is due to the fact that better self-esteem will assist older people to appreciate themselves, resulting in a thriving culture of good ageing. In 2010, Orth, Trzesniewski, and Robin (2010) conducted a personality and psychology study in which they discovered that self-esteem improves during early and middle life, peaks at about age 60, and drops in old age due to unfavourable changes in income and employment position. Tavares et al. (2016) were also concerned with the connection between low self-esteem and the cessation of professional activity and the onset of retirement. Tavares et al. (2016) noted that quitting the workforce can result in discontent, decreased social participation, and increased financial concerns for older people. Therefore, qualified listening and reintegration of the older people into society, including employment, must be acknowledged as an essential strategy for enhancing their quality of life (Lopes & Burgardt, 2013).

According to Liu et al. (2014), the reduction in self-esteem may help to deregulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis functioning, which can result in unfavourable health consequences for older people, such as social isolation and a poor quality of life score. According to Kyrou and Tsigos (2005), HPA is a crucial component of the stress system and mediates numerous adaptive responses to threatening stressors. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance to support older people in maintaining a healthy sense of self-worth. As previously mentioned, Orth, Trzesniewski, and Robin

(2010) reported that changes in income and work status produced a decline in the self-esteem of older people. Therefore, possibilities for older individuals to have a solid income and a job should be provided on a broad scale across the nation. Therefore, by the year 2030, the culture of positive ageing, which enables older people to possess an optimistic spiritual development that enhances their self-worth, can be successfully applied to the advancement of an aged nation in the next decade.

Eighthly, this study discovered that the employment of older people helps to ensure the safety of older people, particularly those who live alone. For instance, the occurrence of 'kodokushi' in Japan can also be avoided. According to Tamaki (2014), "kodokushi" occurs when a person dies alone and goes unreported for a period of time. This phenomenon was originally believed to be the outcome of an ageing society in which older people living alone became the leading cause of unattended deaths. Tamaki (2014) further noted that these individuals were not discovered for a number of months after their deaths or were discovered after neighbours reported a foul odour to the landlords.

According to Soble (2015), this condition has led to an increase in the number of abandoned residences in varying levels of disrepair in Japan, sometimes known as "ghost homes." Therefore, a similar occurrence of 'kodokushi' and 'ghost homes' can be avoided in Malaysia if the capable and eligible older people, particularly those living alone, are given a sufficient opportunity to participate and engage in employment. In a recent example recounted by Ahmad (2019), a 90-year-old woman living alone was discovered dead in her home in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, one week after she was last seen alive.

Lastly, this study indicated that older workers are more likely to discuss their problems with their coworkers when they are employed. According to Zawawi (2013), Gwee and Fernandez (2010), and Nordin (2009), one in three Malaysians has familial troubles that discriminate against older people. Other than that, 59,688 older Malaysians were unmarried in 2010 (Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics Report, 2010), and this number is expected to rise in the near future, particularly among older women (Christina & Yuen, 2017). Thus, the likelihood of opportunities for older people to voice their feelings of helplessness and despondency is concerning. This study indicated that the participation and engagement of older people in the workplace enables them to discuss their issues with co-workers; the government, employers, and society should not find it difficult for them to continue working.

### 3.2. Interpersonal Level

This study identified five positive effects of older people's employment on their family members and co-workers at the interpersonal level. Firstly, the outcomes of this study demonstrate that older people's jobs enable them to assist family members with daily housing costs. According to the World Health Organization (2011), older individuals serve as a resource for younger generations, and their absence may place an additional load on younger family members. Involving older individuals in the labour sector can help them earn a stable monthly income and contribute to their family's day-to-day needs. This study suggests that the ability of older people to help their family members financially can boost the spiritual dimension in Malaysia by helping older people develop a culture of positive aging.

Remarkably, positive ageing has been sustained because older people are financially able to support their families. It is possible to overcome feelings of despondency and poor self-

esteem. [Albertini, Kohli, and Vogel \(2007\)](#) and [Litwin et al. \(2008\)](#), for instance, suggest that the net flow is likely to remain negative because parents frequently make financial transfers to their children, particularly as they age. Flow reversal may also fail since the demand for support by children may not decrease throughout the course of their lives. All of these later life-course adjustments, including unemployment, divorce, and relocation, are accompanied by an ongoing need for practical and emotional support from parents ([Seltzer, Lau, & Bianchi, 2012](#); [Timonen, Doyle, & Dwyer, 2011](#)).

[Karpinska et al. \(2016\)](#) also discovered that parents tend to assist disadvantaged children. For instance, [Karpinska et al. \(2016\)](#) reported that the possibility of older people providing financial assistance increases when non-coresiding children are unemployed and encounter family breakdown episodes such as divorce or separation. Consequently, the young definitely profited from the opportunity to live with their parents when they were unable to buy a place of their own. When their attempt to live independently failed, some of them were able to return to their parents' house. [Karpinska et al. \(2016\)](#) emphasise that co-living with older people is likely to promote intergenerational resource sharing. During the recession, the retirees' favourable economic situation may have improved the financial standing of younger household members. However, according to this study, younger family members should limit their dependence on older people, including neither their parents nor older siblings. Compared to older relatives, younger relatives should also be financially responsible.

Secondly, the findings of this study demonstrate that the employment of older people enables them to soothe family members by achieving and maintaining physical and mental health. Involvement as a member of the labour force, for instance, contributes to the health of older people and the satisfaction of their family members regarding their health status. Notably, employment activities can improve a person's health through physical activity and mental stimulation. [Connidis and Willson \(2011\)](#), [Moody \(2010\)](#), [McPherson \(1990\)](#), and [Turner \(1989\)](#) felt that older people's participation in social activities, such as employment, would improve their physical and mental health. In addition, substantial data supports the advantages of striving towards physical health and preserving functional health ([Waddell & Burton, 2006](#); [Choi et al., 2016](#)).

Therefore, this situation refers to the maintenance of positive ageing by a healthy aspect of the older people. According to the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#), healthy ageing is the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, the development of a better health system, and the maintenance of a healthy environment and local community surrounding the older people. Meanwhile, [Manasatchakun, Roxberg, and Asp \(2018\)](#) define healthy ageing as the desire to do everything on one's own and avoid ceding authority or requesting family support, and as a two-part category. Included in these two divisions are executing activities independently and not being a burden on others.

Thirdly, the findings of this study indicate that older people's employment improves their communication with family members through the sharing of their job experiences. By gaining employment, older people include their daily experiences into their conversations. As was previously said, working older people are typically associated with beneficial ageing. According to the [National Policy for Older Persons \(2011\)](#), positive ageing may be defined as the belief and positive value that serve as one's life's foundation, one's self-identity, and the possession of positive characteristics and respectable attitudes toward ageing. Positive ageing occurs when older people are financially able to support a family member and when sentiments of despondency and low self-esteem diminish.

Indirectly, a high level of self-confidence among the older people led to effective communication with family members and a healthy emotional state. Additionally, his bond with his family members can be reinforced, and his sense of isolation can be diminished.

Fourthly, this study's findings demonstrate that older people's employment enables them to ensure their child's future and wellbeing (ren). As noted previously, the findings of this study indicate that the employment of older people has a favourable effect on themselves and their family members in terms of financial security and the ability to cover daily housing expenses. The future of their children, particularly those who are still in school, will be assured if their older parents have a strong financial reserve. In addition, the employment of older people assisted their unemployed children in some way. However, according to this study, younger family members should limit their dependence on older individuals, including neither their parents nor older siblings.

Compared to older family members, younger family members should also be financially responsible. According to a study by [Karpinska et al. \(2016\)](#), parents tend to assist disadvantaged children. [Karpinska et al. \(2016\)](#) noted that the chance of older people providing financial assistance rises when non-coresiding children are unemployed and encounter family breakdown episodes such as divorce or separation. Consequently, the young definitely profited from the opportunity to live with their parents when they were unable to buy a place of their own. When their attempt to live independently failed, some of them were able to return to their parents' house.

Lastly, this study's findings demonstrate that the employment of older people helps them to impart knowledge and rich experience to their subordinates. For instance, the employment of older people might have a favourable impact on subordinates when the older employee shares their vast knowledge and expertise. [Kuhn and Hetze \(2007\)](#) also advocate the transmission of knowledge from older and retiring workers to younger ones. According to [Slagter \(2007\)](#), tacit knowledge must be passed from senior to junior employees because senior employees have accumulated a wealth of experience and organisational expertise. The combination of knowledge among the senior employees and their subordinates can also assist the organisation. By emphasising learning and education, according to [Slagter \(2007\)](#), new knowledge is developed and can assist a company in generating innovative ideas. [Slagter \(2007\)](#) concurs that knowledge is exchanged and individuals can learn from one another during the learning process. This initiates a process of bonding between the senior and junior employees. [Burmeister et al. \(2018\)](#) found that age-inclusive human resource practises were positively connected with knowledge sharing and receiving in an age-diverse environment.

### 3.3. Societal Level

At the societal level, this study identified four positive effects of older individuals' employment. Firstly, this study concluded that the employment of older people has a good impact on society due to their specialised job services or expertise. In other words, their employment allows them to contribute to the community. Older people have the education, skills, and experience to perform successfully in a variety of critical jobs, and [Znidarsic and Dimovski \(2009\)](#) concur, stating that the skills of older people can provide many businesses with a sustainable source of competitive advantage. For instance, many older people believe that the continuation of their position as medical doctors since their youth would improve the quality of life in society. It is contingent on the occupation of a

medical doctor, but the other sorts of employment of the older people also serve society. This involves their duty as security guards to assist the community with everyday chores by ensuring that the situation is under control.

Secondly, this study found that the employment of older people has a positive impact on society through their financial and non-financial contributions. As noted previously, the outcomes of this study indicate that the employment of older people has a positive effect on their own financial security and freedom from poverty. In addition to their years of professional experience and knowledge, they are also experts in their industry. According to [Kanfer and Ackerman's \(2004\)](#) research, there is a strong positive correlation between adult age and knowledge level. Therefore, these advantages can benefit society while allowing older workers to make both monetary and non-monetary contributions to the community. For example, financial contribution can apply to any monetary payment for any reason. A non-monetary donation might be addressed to an individual's unpaid service to society based on their expertise.

Thirdly, this study indicated that the employment of older people favourably affects society by contributing to the expansion of the micro economy. A Department of Social Welfare (DSW) spokesman has highlighted and expounded upon this effect. A DSW representative indicated that older people workers might contribute to the income generation through their everyday expenditures. For example, when the number of older people in Malaysia increases, so does the number of older consumers. Consequently, the target market for older customers is expanding at the same rate as their spending, particularly among working older people with a stable financial base. In general, society benefits from prolonged workforce participation. Older workers continue to pay income taxes, thereby supporting public investments, contributing to tax-supported pension plans for retirees, and delaying the time at which they begin receiving tax-supported retirement benefits. In addition, [Choi et al. \(2018\)](#) emphasise that working later in life provides benefits not only for older workers but for society as a whole by reducing health care and mental health costs.

Fourthly, this study indicated that the employment of older people favourably impacts society by serving as a role model. This is due to the favourable attitude of older people towards continuing to engage in useful activities and remaining productive in their later years through participation and work. According to [Jopp et al. \(2017\)](#), older people's role models were selected primarily based on their good health, the most important sign of healthy ageing, followed by their high activity participation and extensive social networks. In addition, [Jopp et al. \(2017\)](#) noted that positive attitudes, quality of life, independence, and life management or coping are other often cited reasons for older people to become role models. Those older people who participate in and engage in employment and meet the aforementioned criteria might serve as role models for other members of society in terms of employment and other life characteristics, such as positively perceived life.

### 3.4. Country Level

This study also indicated that the employment of older people decreases the burden on the country. As previously noted, the results of this study demonstrate that the employment of older people is advantageous not only to the older people themselves, but also to their family members, coworkers, and society as a whole. While the composition of a country is derived or created from the mix of a person, family members, and society,

the benefits garnered at all three levels result in a successful, ageing country. In other words, the participation and engagement of older people has a good effect on the nation when it also benefits the older adults themselves, their families, and society as a whole. Indirectly, the participation and engagement of older people benefits the country as a whole. According to earlier sources, the participation and engagement of older people have benefits at the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels, including securing financial resources, assisting society, and much more.

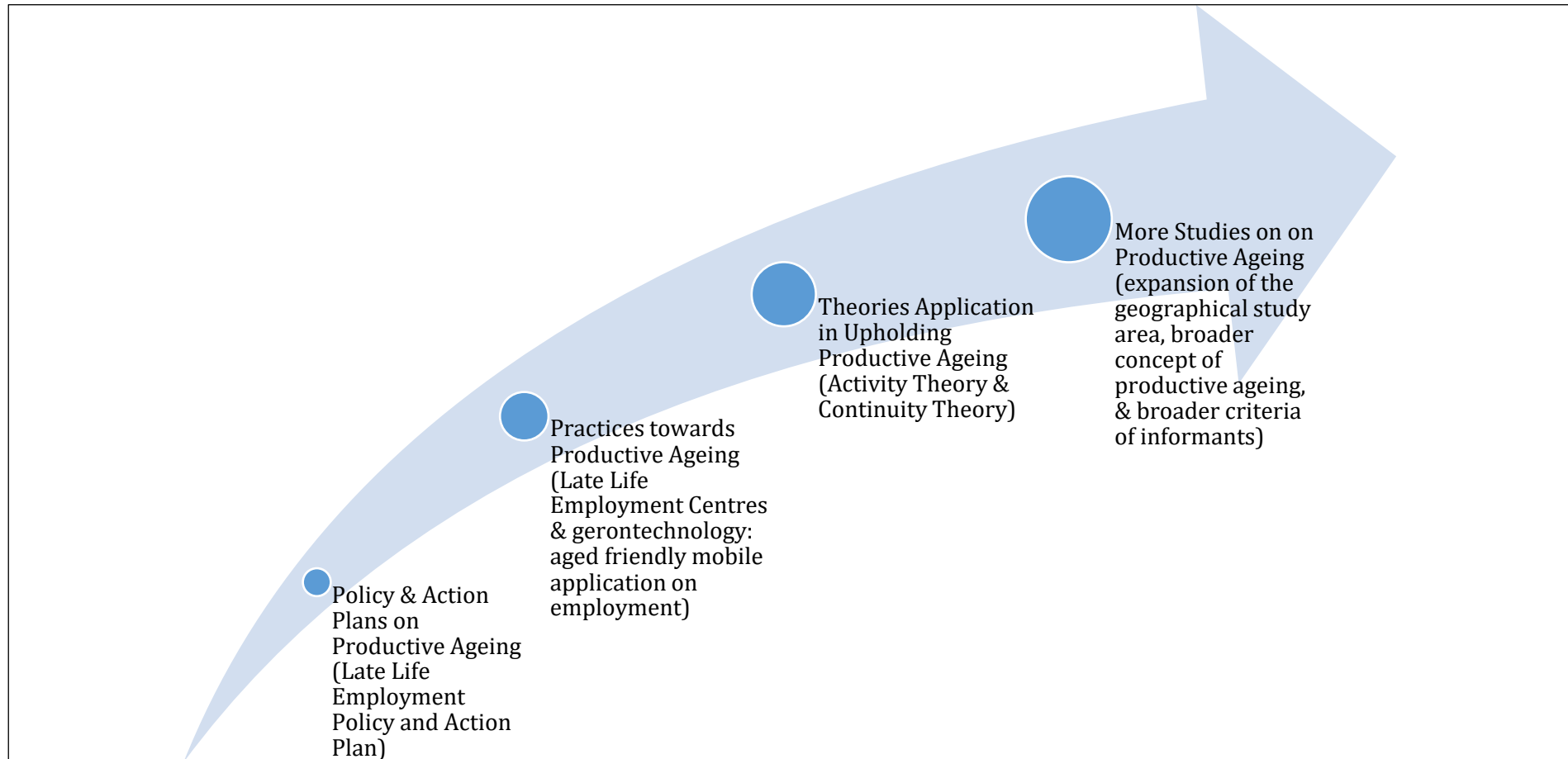
The positive impacts (benefits) addressed by both Activity Theory and Continuity Theory are therefore consistent with the findings of this study. Nevertheless, the pattern of employment effects can be shown to be most pronounced at the individual level. This study's respondents, for instance, noted that employment can assist older people in safeguarding their financial resources, escaping poverty, getting physically healthier, becoming psychologically healthier, avoiding loneliness, experiencing joy and pleasure, and boosting their self-esteem. The results of this study are consistent with those of prior research ([Hsin-Yen & Li-Jung, 2018](#); [Magnavita, 2017](#); [Gonzales, Matz-Costa & Morrow-Howell, 2015](#); [International Labour Organization, 2014](#); [Yusof & Zulkifli, 2014](#); [Sang-Lum, 2013](#); [Versey & Newton, 2013](#); [Sulaiman & Masud, 2012](#); [Doris, Idris, & Abu Bakar, 2010](#); [UNFPA, 2002](#); [World Health Organization, 2002](#); [Abdul Aziz, 2001](#)).

Therefore, this situation demonstrates the significance of allowing healthy and capable older people to constantly participate in the workforce. For example, encouraging productive ageing is advantageous for the economy and society ([Magnavita, 2017](#); [World Health Organization, 2002](#)). Thus, working later in life benefits older workers and the community by reducing expenditures associated with health care and mental health ([Choi et al., 2018](#)). [Morrow-Howell et al. \(2017\)](#) concur that productive ageing allows employees to preserve economic security, social links, and a sense of purpose in their later years. In the meantime, [UNFPA \(2002\)](#) stated that older people would continue to contribute to society when labour market, employment, health, and social policies and programmes promote their full involvement in all activities based on their abilities, needs, and choices. In addition, [Abdul Aziz \(2001\)](#) emphasised that productive ageing stimulates the employment of older people, enabling the government to cut expenditures for older people such as services, social security, and welfare assistance.

## 5. Recommendations Based on the Findings of the Study

In light of the fact that Malaysia will be an aged nation by 2030, this study makes a number of recommendations for boosting the economic wellbeing of older people by promoting productive ageing through work. These recommendations pertain to future policy and action plans, future practises, the implementation of the theories, and future study recommendations. The recommendations described are simplified in [Figure 2](#).

Figure 2: Proposed Initiatives to Enhance Productive Ageing through Employment



## 6. Conclusion

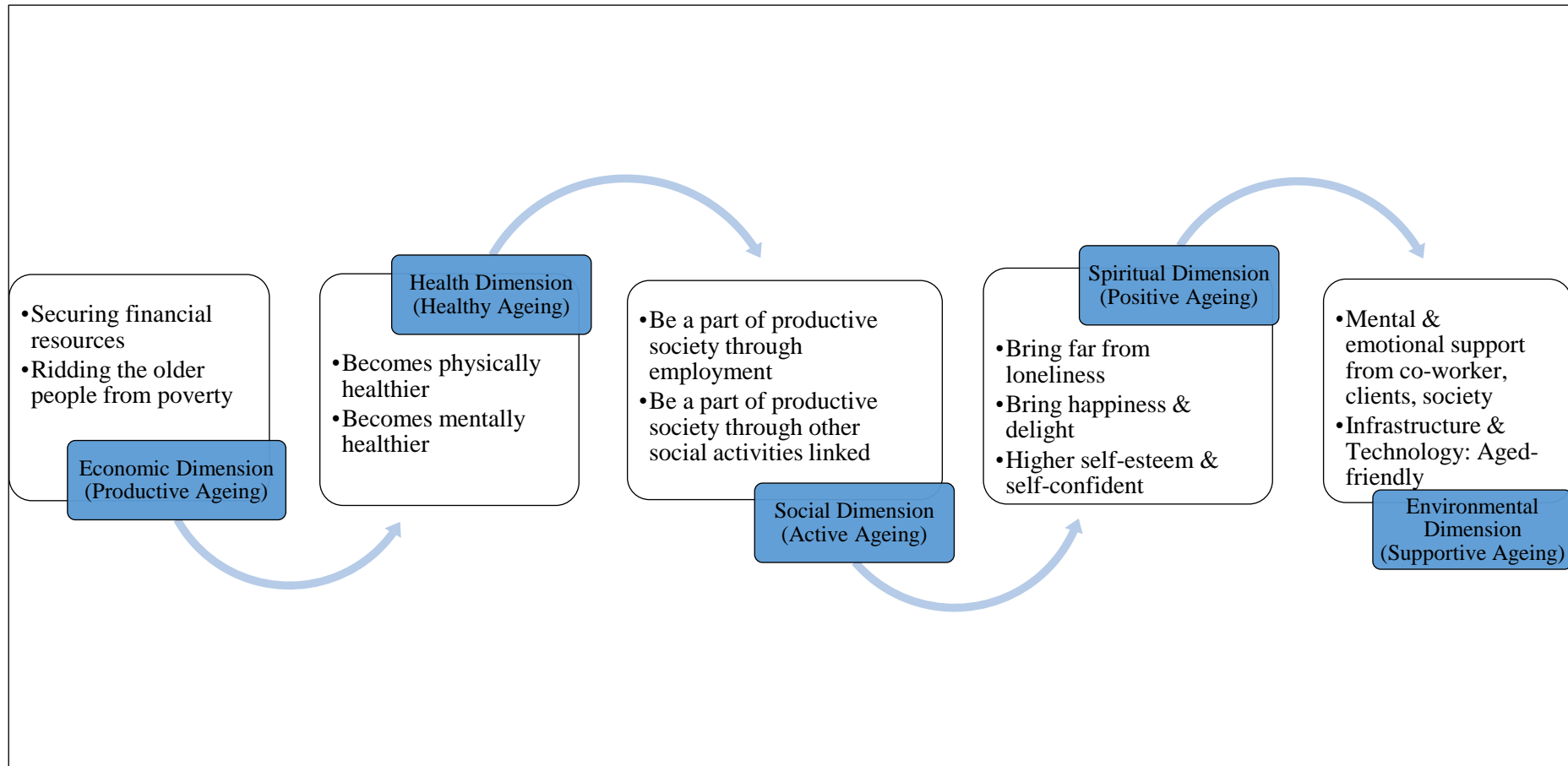
This study concluded that the majority of the positive impacts on older people's employment can contribute to their wellbeing, as outlined in the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#). According to this policy, maintaining the welfare of older people requires five dimensions of wellbeing. The relationships between the aspects of wellbeing and the beneficial employment effect on older people are depicted in [Figure 3](#). The first dimension of the wellbeing of older people is the economic dimension. The economic aspect underpins the concept of productive ageing, which encourages seniors to be more productive.

According to the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#), productive ageing can be defined as the participation of older people in meaningful paid and unpaid activities. The findings of this study also indicate that older people are capable of securing their financial resources and escaping poverty after gaining employment. This situation demonstrates that older people's participation in the labour market contributes to their economic dimension. Therefore, productive ageing can be enhanced by employing capable and qualified older workers from the local labour market.

The second wellbeing dimension of older people is the health dimension. This dimension encourages healthy behaviours among the older people, and this determination is consistent with the notion of healthy ageing. According to the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#), healthy ageing can be characterised as the tenacity to promote a healthy lifestyle, construct a better health system, and create a healthy environment and local community for older people. While the outcomes of this study revealed that the participation and engagement of older people in employment can improve their physical and mental health, this circumstance demonstrates that productive ageing through employment can enhance the health and wellbeing of older people. In other words, the participation of older people in the labour market will help them improve their health while also enabling them to fulfil their roles as family members and members of society.

The third wellbeing dimension of older people is the social dimension. This dimension supports the social participation and inclusion of older people in society as one of the most important factors for maximising their wellbeing. Therefore, the social dimension argues that older people must actively participate in their communities. In contrast, the findings of this study indicate that the participation of older people in the labour market helps them participate in productive society through employment and other social activities associated with their firm or employment. Therefore, according to the findings of this study, the effective work of older people can improve their wellbeing on a social level. Indirectly, a culture of active ageing can be developed by allowing older people to participate actively in society via employment.

Figure 3: Five Wellbeing Dimensions of the Older people Contented by Positive Employment Effects of the Older people



The fourth wellbeing dimension of the older people is the spiritual dimension. This dimension encourages older people to have an optimistic spiritual development that enhances their self-worth and self-respect even in old age. Therefore, this dimension encourages older people to maintain as many positive attitudes as possible and for society to emanate a positive perception. This dimension relates to the concept of healthy ageing. According to the [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#), positive ageing may be defined as the belief and positive value that serve as one's life's foundation, one's self-identity, and the possession of positive characteristics and positive attitudes about ageing. For instance, older people are said to age positively if they have good self-esteem and a sense of contribution to family and community. This study's findings demonstrate that the participation and engagement of older people in the workforce can assist in alleviating their loneliness, provide them with happiness and joy, and boost their self-esteem. This study concludes that a culture of positive ageing was successfully promoted. Consequently, the spiritual dimension of this circumstance is capable of enhancing the wellbeing of the older people.

The fifth wellbeing dimension of older people is the environmental dimension. This dimension stimulates one of the aspects necessary for the wellbeing of older people living in a supportive environment, which can help them perform more efficiently. This element is consistent with the notion of age-friendly ageing. According to the Malaysian government's [National Policy for Older Person \(2011\)](#), supportive ageing can be described as the internal and external conditions that enable older people to function efficiently and freely. On the other hand, the results of this study demonstrate that the participation and engagement of older people in the workforce enables them to receive exceptional mental and emotional support from their coworkers, clients, and society. In addition, comfortable infrastructure and technology facilitate older people's participation and engagement in the workplace. Consequently, this situation exemplifies the optimization of the wellbeing of older people through the environmental component by means of an exceptional culture of supportive ageing.

In conclusion, the good impacts derived from the work of older people can improve the health of older people. Therefore, this study proposed that the employment of healthy and eligible older people should be one of the practical measures taken to ensure and maximise the wellbeing of older people. As a result, Malaysia will be transformed into a country that is more age-friendly and where the wellbeing of the older population is maximised.

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### **Conflict of Interests**

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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