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ARTICLE

Media Perspectives on Ageing in Malaysia

Investigating Vulnerability and Responsibility in Newspaper Discourses

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Media representations of older adults shape public understandings of ageing and may reinforce or challenge ageism. In the context of Malaysia's multi-ethnic and multilingual society, this study examines how narratives on ageing-related vulnerabilities and responsibility are constructed across four news outlets: *Harian Metro* (Malay), *Sin Chew Daily* (Chinese), *The Star* (English), and *Malaysiakini* (online). Guided by the theories of framing and vulnerability, the content analysis investigates the vulnerabilities that are highlighted, the use of episodic and thematic frames, and the attribution of responsibility for addressing older adults' vulnerabilities. Material and physical vulnerabilities appeared most frequently, while all outlets except *Malaysiakini* predominantly used episodic framing. Healthy lifestyles emerged as a major individual-level response, whereas government was most frequently identified as responsible at the societal level. Theoretically, the findings show that episodic framing does not necessarily produce the attribution of individual

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responsibility; episodic coverage can coexist with societal responsibility. Integrating the two theories demonstrates how editorial and cultural contexts complicate conventional frame–responsibility relationships.

Keywords: ageing, media representation, vulnerability, responsibility attribution, Malaysian newspapers, content analysis

Introduction

Our understanding of ageing is shaped by cultural values, religious traditions, and social expectations concerning family responsibility, independence, and care (Imran, 2025; Zhang & Liu, 2021). In Malaysia's multi-ethnic society, perceptions of older adults are informed by diverse cultural frameworks, including Islamic teachings within Malay communities, Confucian ideals of filial piety among Chinese Malaysians, and more individualised or institutional perspectives common among urban, English-speaking populations. These orientations shape how older adults are valued, how vulnerability is interpreted, and who is perceived as being responsible for care and support in later life.

Malaysia's population has been ageing steadily over recent decades. Under the widely used demographic classification, a country is considered to be an *ageing* society when people aged 65 years and above constitute at least 7% of its population and an *aged* society when this proportion reaches 14% (United Nations, 1982). Malaysia crossed the 7% threshold in 2020 and was therefore classified as an ageing society (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024).

Despite this demographic shift, research consistently shows that older adults remain underrepresented in Malaysian media relative to their share of the population. When older adults do appear, they are often portrayed negatively, reinforcing age-based stereotypes and prejudice (Yang et al., 2025; Imran, 2024, 2025; Imran & Bowd, 2023; Imran & Budarick, 2023; Selvaraj & Sandaran, 2024). They are frequently depicted as frail, ill, dependent, lonely, incompetent, and unproductive (Oostlander et al., 2022; Skoss et al., 2024), while ageing is commonly framed in terms of decline, burden, or diminished social worth (Selvaraj & Sandaran, 2024).

Scholars have therefore emphasised the importance of monitoring media portrayals of older adults in order to address ageism and its social consequences (Kline et al., 2024; Zelalem et al., 2023). Media representations shape how older adults interpret their own ageing, influencing self-perception, ageing anxiety, health outcomes, and life satisfaction (Bernhold, 2021; Xu, 2022). At the same time, media messages affect the attitudes of younger generations' toward older adults, shaping intergenerational relations and social inclusion. Beyond attitudinal effects, the media also plays a key role in agenda-setting, influencing public and policy discussions related to healthcare, employment, housing, and social welfare for older adults (Caskie et al., 2025; Ghosh, 2025).

Malaysia offers a distinctive context for examining media representations of ageing due to its multi-ethnic, multi-faith, and multilingual population. As of July 2025, Malaysia's population stands at 34.3 million, comprising 70.5% *Bumiputera* (primarily Malays and indigenous peoples), 22.2% Chinese, 6.5% Indians, and 0.8% others (Department of Statistics

Malaysia, 2025). Each group maintains strong cultural and religious identities. Most Malays are Muslim, most Indians practice Hinduism, and Chinese Malaysians are influenced by a mix of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucian values, with some identifying as Christians (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). The category 'other *Bumiputra*' includes indigenous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia *(orang asli)* and Sabah and Sarawak, who hold diverse religious beliefs.

Reflecting this diversity, Malaysian newspapers are published in multiple languages to serve ethnically segmented audiences. These vernacular newspapers adopt different editorial approaches shaped by cultural norms, religious values, and socio-economic contexts (Yang & Veeraiah, 2024). Despite this media plurality, existing research has paid limited attention to how ageing is represented across ethnic and linguistic media in Malaysia, particularly from a comparative or multi-ethnic perspective (Yang et al., 2025).

To address that gap, this study examines how ageing and older adults' vulnerabilities are constructed in Malaysian newspapers through the lenses of framing theory and vulnerability theory. The analysis focuses on five dimensions of vulnerability in later life and explores how responsibility for addressing these vulnerabilities is framed, particularly in terms of individual versus societal roles. The study sheds light on the media's role in shaping public understanding of ageing and the social organisation of care and support by examining how newspapers depict the vulnerabilities of older adults and assign responsibility in mitigation. Specifically, this study poses the following research questions:

RQ1: What specific types of vulnerabilities experienced by older adults are highlighted in Malaysian newspapers coverage?
RQ2: In what ways do Malaysian newspapers frame their coverage of ageing (and is their approach episodic or thematic)?
RQ3: Who do Malaysian newspapers identify as being primarily responsible for addressing the vulnerabilities of older adults?
RQ4: What strategies for reducing the vulnerabilities of older adults are reported in Malaysian newspapers?

Framing ageing and responsibility

Framing theory provides a central lens in communication research for understanding how news media construct social problems by emphasising certain aspects of reality while downplaying others. Entman (1993, p. 52) defined framing as the selection of aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicative text to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or recommendation for treatment.

Iyengar's (1990, 2023) distinction between episodic and thematic framing has been widely applied to examine the way news coverage shapes public attributions of responsibility. *Episodic frames* emphasise isolated cases and personal experiences, whereas *thematic frames* locate issues within broader structural, historical, and policy contexts (Iyengar, 2023). Episodic framing often encourages attribution of responsibility at the level of the individual by suggesting that social problems result from personal shortcomings and should be addressed through changes in the individual's behaviour (Adiprasetio et al., 2024; Upshaw et al., 2026).

By contrast, thematic framing promotes societal responsibility by highlighting systemic factors such as economic inequality, inadequate access to education and healthcare, and discrimination. From this perspective, solutions require broader interventions, including policy reform, advocacy, and institutional collaboration (Boukes, 2022; Marttila & Koivula, 2025).

Attributions of responsibility matter because they can shape public opinion, social interactions, and policy responses (Kim, 2015). Iyengar (1990) found that television news frequently presented national problems such as unemployment, poverty, and terrorism episodically, encouraging attributions of responsibility to individuals while downplaying the roles of governments and political leaders. Studies of health, poverty, and social welfare similarly demonstrate the way that episodic framing can individualise structurally rooted problems (Boukes, 2022; Kim, 2015). However, limited research has examined ageing through episodic and thematic frames, particularly in multicultural media environments where cultural values may influence understandings of responsibility and care.

Media frames do not emerge in isolation. Decisions about which events are covered and how they are presented are shaped by legal, economic, political, cultural, racial, and organisational considerations, as well as power relations and journalistic routines (Aziz, 2022; Paul & Sui, 2023). Wiedicke et al. (2024) identified three levels of influence on frame building in health coverage: *individual factors,* including journalists' role perceptions, educational backgrounds, routines, and personal experiences; *organisational factors,* such as editorial policies, time and space constraints, and newsroom structures; and *external factors,* including news sources, audience interests, newsworthiness, and social norms. These influences may help explain variations in how media outlets frame ageing-related vulnerabilities and attribute responsibility for addressing them.

Individual responsibility

In discussing vulnerability in later life, Grundy (2006) identified healthy lifestyles, coping skills, strong family and social relationships, meaningful interests, and financial security across the course of life as important contributors to resilience. Similarly, Rowe and Kahn (1997) conceptualised successful ageing as comprising three elements: maintaining physical and cognitive function, avoiding disease and disability, and remaining actively engaged through social relationships and productive activities. The absence of any of these elements may shift an individual from successful toward impaired ageing.

The successful ageing framework emphasises personal resilience, self-determination, and individual responsibility for health and financial planning (Campbell & Lichtenberg, 2021). Amid concerns about healthcare expenditure and the economic implications of population ageing, this framework has become influential in research and public debate (Mortimer et al., 2008). Related concepts, including active, positive, healthy, and optimal ageing, similarly emphasise the efforts of individuals to maintain their health, independence, and social participation (Bülow & Söderqvist, 2014).

This emphasis on individual responsibility has also supported the growth of anti-ageing technologies – scientific, medical, and biotechnological interventions intended to

slow, prevent, or reverse aspects of ageing and extend healthy lifespans (Duan et al., 2024; Martinson & Berridge, 2015). For example, Mak (2021) found that 'anti-ageing functional milk' had become popular among older consumers in Hong Kong, although many had not consumed milk regularly prior to their retirement and evidence supporting the alleged health benefits remained limited. More broadly, the successful ageing approach has shifted the focus of biomedicine from treating illness to preventing age-related decline, thereby expanding the scope and influence of medicine (Bülow & Söderqvist, 2014).

This development raises concerns about the medicalisation of ageing, whereby personal, social, and behavioural conditions are redefined as medical problems requiring professional intervention. Kaufman (1994) observed that older adults and their families often regarded the healthcare system as the primary source of expertise and solutions when coping with chronic illnesses, functional limitations, and age-related disabilities. Media narratives emphasising health maintenance, financial preparation, and medical intervention may therefore reinforce the view that individuals are principally responsible for managing their vulnerability in later life.

Societal responsibility

In the social sciences, vulnerability is frequently examined in relation to social inequality and exclusion (Cole, 2016). From this perspective, critics argue that the successful ageing framework raises questions of fairness and social justice. Dividing ageing into 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' categories may reinforce ageism and blame older adults who do not meet prescribed standards of health, independence, or productivity (Martinson & Berridge, 2015). This distinction may also obscure broader determinants, including healthcare infrastructure, access to recreational facilities, education, socioeconomic and minority status, social policies, and opportunities accumulated in the course of life (Stowe & Cooney, 2015).

Successful ageing has also been criticised for reflecting neoliberal ideals that prioritise self-reliance over collective welfare and public support (Bernhold, 2021; Martinson & Berridge, 2015; Mortimer et al., 2008). Stephens et al. (2015) have argued that the model is overly narrow, may exclude people with disabilities, and does not sufficiently reflect the perspectives of older adults themselves. Research indicates that older adults define a good later life in diverse ways, valuing emotional and spiritual well-being, self-acceptance, humour, autonomy, and safe and pleasant neighbourhoods, in addition to physical health and productivity (Ehni et al., 2018). A societal-responsibility perspective therefore directs attention beyond individual choices to the institutional, socioeconomic, and environmental conditions that shape vulnerability and resilience in later life.

Mapping vulnerability in scholarship of ageing

Vulnerability is "the outcome of complex interactions among discrete risks, namely exposure to threats and the lack of defences to deal with difficulties or challenges in major life domains" (Shin et al., 2021, p. 1362). Central to vulnerability theory is the argument that vulnerability

is not an individual failing but a condition produced through the interaction between exposure to threats and access to protective resources and institutional support (Cole, 2016). Accordingly, Fineman (2008) emphasises the responsibility of the state and its institutions to address structural inequality, shifting attention from individualised responsibility toward collective accountability.

Scholarly attention to vulnerability in later life has increased in recent years, particularly during the Covid–19 pandemic (Imran, 2025). Ageing scholarship has also long recognised that vulnerability is multidimensional rather than confined to physical decline. Gerontological studies have examined how financial insecurity after retirement creates material vulnerability (Grundy, 2006; Shin et al., 2021), while research on frailty and disability identifies physical vulnerability as a central concern in ageing populations (Cliggett, 2005). Other studies demonstrate how shrinking family networks, urbanisation, and social isolation can produce social vulnerability (Barnes et al., 2022; Imran, 2024). Meanwhile, growing attention is being given to depression, cognitive decline, and psychosomatic conditions as forms of mental vulnerability among older adults (Campbell & Lichtenberg, 2021; Spini et al., 2017).

More recently, scholars have recognised that rapid digitalisation introduces another potential source of exclusion for older adults, producing what may be understood as technological vulnerability (Ciarli et al., 2021; Harvey et al., 2019). Although these dimensions are well established in gerontology, social policy, and public health research, they have rarely been systematically applied to media representations of ageing. Existing media studies tend to focus on stereotypes, ageism, or narrative portrayals of frailty (Oostlander et al., 2022; Xu, 2022) without examining how news discourse frames different domains of vulnerability or how these frames relate to questions about responsibility.

Drawing on Shin et al.'s (2021) multidimensional model and extending it with a technological dimension identified inductively from the data, this study operationalises these domains as an analytical framework for examining how Malaysian newspapers construct narratives of ageing-related vulnerability. Importantly, vulnerability should not be treated here as an inherent or universal characteristic of older age given that it is relational and dynamic, emerging when exposure to risk exceeds the personal, social, material, and institutional resources available to address it. Older adults may experience vulnerability in one domain while retaining substantial agency, competence, and resilience in others. Protective factors such as financial security, supportive social networks, access to healthcare, digital skills, and responsive public institutions may mitigate vulnerability and enable adaptation to changing circumstances (Pardo, 2026; Skoss et al., 2024).

Material vulnerability

Material vulnerability refers to financial difficulties and unmet needs related to healthcare, food, and housing. Although most people experience reduced income after retirement, their material vulnerability may originate in low earnings during their working lives (Shin et al., 2021). Female retirees are also more financially vulnerable than their male counterparts, particularly when widowed or divorced (Ghosh, 2025).

Financial exploitation and scams targeting older adults have attracted increasing attention from researchers and governments because of their substantial personal and societal costs (Campbell & Lichtenberg, 2021). According to the *New Straits Times* (Scam Prevention, 2024), perpetrators frequently employ sophisticated, technology-based tactics involving phone calls, social media, and online banking, often impersonating government officials, law enforcement officers, or bank representatives.

Physical vulnerability

Physical vulnerability refers to an increased risk of adverse health outcomes, including falls, reduced mobility, diminished independence, hospitalisation, disability, and death (Shin et al., 2021). Although women have lower mortality rates than men, they face a greater risk of disability in later life, particularly from musculoskeletal impairments, and consequently spend a larger proportion of later life with functional limitations (Grundy, 2006).

Understanding the health of older adults is important because it has a reciprocal relationship with socioeconomic status and social support (Cliggett, 2005). Grundy (2006) noted that low income, inadequate social support, and health problems can undermine the independence, autonomy, and agency of older adults. These factors may consequently reduce their quality of life, particularly among those who value individualism and self-determination.

Social vulnerability

Social vulnerability encompasses disadvantages related to social networks, living arrangements, frequency of interpersonal contact, and opportunities for social participation (Shin et al., 2021). Changes in family structure, urbanisation, migration, and declining family size may weaken traditional sources of support and increase the risk of isolation, abandonment, or abuse among some older adults (Imran, 2024).

However, living alone or having a smaller family network does not necessarily indicate social vulnerability. Older adults may maintain meaningful relationships and develop alternative sources of support through friendships, neighbourhood networks, religious organisations, community associations, senior centres, and digital communication. Strong formal and informal networks and opportunities for social participation can therefore serve as protective resources that promote belonging, autonomy, and resilience (Yoon & Jee, 2026)

Mental vulnerability

Mental vulnerability refers to increased susceptibility to psychosomatic symptoms or psychological distress, with potentially significant consequences for health and quality of life (Shin et al., 2021). Although some older adults experience depression, cognitive impairment, bereavement, or anxiety, these conditions are neither universal nor inevitable consequences of ageing. Many older adults demonstrate effective emotional regulation,

coping capacity, and psychological resilience (Spini et al., 2017). Supportive relationships, meaningful social participation, contact with the natural environment, access to mental healthcare, spirituality, and a sense of autonomy and purpose may further protect mental well-being in later life (Jarosz, 2023; Samefors et al., 2025; Wadsworth et al., 2025).

Technological vulnerability

As digital technologies increasingly shape access to information, healthcare, financial services, and social participation, older adults' digital engagement has become an important dimension of later life. Recent research indicates that many older adults are adopting smartphones, social media, digital health services, and other online tools, with the Covid–19 pandemic accelerating this engagement (Scarfe et al., 2022). Digital technologies can support autonomy, access to information, social connectedness, and continued participation in everyday life. Older adults can also be active learners who may develop strategies for incorporating technology into their daily routines (Burholt et al., 2024; Hänninen & Tiihonen, 2026).

Nevertheless, digital engagement remains uneven. Access and sustained use are influenced by income, education, health, prior experience, perceived usefulness, interface design, and the availability of family or institutional support. Technological vulnerability therefore arises not simply from abilities of older adults but from the interaction between individual circumstances and inaccessible technologies, inadequate training, weak infrastructure, or the digital-by-default provision of essential services. It may contribute to social isolation, financial disadvantage, exposure to online fraud, and reduced access to healthcare and public services (Lyu & Forsyth, 2024).

Methodology

Publication selection and data collection

This study used content analysis to examine how four Malaysian news publications portrayed ageing-related vulnerabilities and assigned responsibility for addressing them: *Harian Metro* (Malay), *Sin Chew Daily* (Chinese), *The Star* (English), and *Malaysiakini* (English). Articles were retrieved from the official websites of the publications; thus, the analysis focused on online content rather than material obtained directly from print editions.

Harian Metro, Sin Chew Daily, and *The Star* are legacy newspapers with print and online editions and were selected because they were among the most widely circulated publications in their respective languages. Their reported daily circulations were 149,253, 338,568, and 248,559, respectively (adQrate, s. a.). *Malaysiakini,* an influential independent digital-native news platform (Murudi & Ting, 2019), had an estimated 2.5 million daily desktop and mobile readers (SimilarWeb, 2020).

The publications represent different language-based news environments and editorial orientations. *Harian Metro* primarily serves Malay-speaking readers, *Sin Chew Daily* predominantly serves Chinese-speaking readers, and *The Star* targets a largely urban,

multi-ethnic English-speaking audience. *Malaysiakini* is associated with alternative and critical reporting and reaches a politically engaged, multi-ethnic readership.

Only the English-language section of *Malaysiakini* was examined although it publishes in English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil. The findings should therefore not be generalised to its other language sections. Tamil-language newspapers were also excluded because the research team lacked the proficiency required for reliable retrieval, culturally sensitive interpretation, and consistent coding. Accordingly, the sample represents a multilingual comparison of four selected publications rather than Malaysia's entire ethnolinguistic media environment.

The study covered articles published from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023, the earliest complete 12-month period of data collection available. This continuous period provided a substantial but manageable dataset and captured possible seasonal variations in coverage.

Search terms were selected through theoretically informed and empirically grounded procedures. Terms commonly used in previous English-language media studies – including 'ageing', 'older adult', 'older people', 'older person', 'senior', 'elderly', and 'senior citizen' – provided the initial reference points (Imran, 2025; Oostlander et al., 2022; Selvaraj & Sandaran, 2024; Zhang & Liu, 2021). Functionally equivalent Malay and Chinese terms were then identified based on their use in Malaysian journalistic and public discourse rather than literal translation. These included *warga emas* and *orang tua* in Malay and 老人, 长者, and 银发族 in Chinese.

Research instruments and coding

A codebook was developed from the theoretical framework, previous research, and the research questions. It provided definitions for article type, vulnerability type, framing approach, attribution of responsibility, and individual- and societal-level strategies for reducing vulnerability. Complete operational definitions are presented in the Appendix.

- For RQ1, vulnerability categories were adapted from the four dimensions proposed by Shin et al. (2021), with an additional category developed inductively. The final categories were material, physical, social, mental, technological, and not mentioned. Multiple categories could be coded within an article to reflect the multidimensional nature of ageing-related vulnerability.
- For RQ2, framing was classified as episodic, thematic, or a combination of both.
- For RQ3, responsibility attribution was classified, following Iyengar (2023), as individual, societal, a combination of both, or not mentioned.
- For RQ4, individual- and societal-level strategies were developed inductively through constant comparison during the initial analysis. Individual-level strategies comprised healthy lifestyles, coping skills, strong social connections, active interests and charity work, and financial stability and literacy. Societal actors comprised family; the general public; employers; civic organisations, NGOs, and corporate social responsibility initiatives; businesses; technological research institutes or companies; aged-care and healthcare infrastructure or health research centres; and government. All applicable strategies or actors were coded when multiple categories appeared in an article.

Coder training and intercoder reliability

Two coders participated in training and pilot coding. The first author and a communication graduate independently coded 50 randomly selected articles. Disagreements were discussed, and ambiguous coding definitions were refined to improve the clarity of the codebook.

After training, the first author coded the full dataset. The second coder independently coded a randomly selected subsample of 41 articles for the assessment of intercoder reliability. This exceeded the minimum 10% proportion and fell within the 10%–25% range recommended by Wimmer and Dominick (2014). Cohen's kappa was .94 for vulnerability type, .97 for framing approach, .94 for responsibility attribution, .91 for individual-level strategies, and .89 for societal-level strategies, indicating strong agreement.

Statistical analysis

Frequencies and within-publication percentages were calculated for all categories. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was used to assess whether the retrieved articles were equally distributed across the four publications. Chi-square tests of independence examined associations between publication and the mutually exclusive variables of article type, framing approach, and responsibility attribution.

For vulnerability categories, which permitted multiple responses, each category was treated as a binary variable indicating its presence or absence, and a separate test was conducted for each category. For the individual- and societal-level strategies reported in Tables 6 and 7, the coded strategy or actor instance was the unit of analysis; the tests therefore compared the distributions of coded strategies and actors across publications rather than the proportions of articles containing them.

Pearson chi-square tests were used when expected cell frequencies met conventional assumptions. Otherwise, Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact tests with Monte Carlo estimation were applied. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. Microsoft Excel was used to organise and summarise the data, and inferential analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 25.

Findings

This section first presents general results from the study, including the number and types of articles on ageing published by the Malaysian newspapers. Next, it presents the results for each of the aforementioned research question, focusing on the types of vulnerabilities, frames (episodic or thematic), attribution of responsibility (individual or societal), and strategies for reducing the vulnerability in ageing.

Volume of reporting

Table 1 shows that the ageing-related articles were unevenly distributed across the four publications, $\chi^2(3, N = 408) = 165.08$, $p < .001$. *Sin Chew* contributed the largest proportion of the retrieved articles (45.34%, $n = 185$), followed by *The Star* (35.54%, $n = 145$), *Harian Metro* (11.76%, $n = 48$), and *Malaysiakini* (7.35%, $n = 30$). Although this distribution may partly reflect differences in the volume and editorial salience of ageing-related coverage, it may also have been influenced by differences in archive accessibility, indexing, and search functions.

Table 1:
Number of ageing-related articles by publication

	Number of articles	**Percentage**
Harian Metro	48	11.76
Sin Chew Daily	185	45.34
The Star	145	35.54
Malaysiakini	30	7.35
Total	408	100.00

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Straight news was the predominant article type across all four publications, although the proportion varied from 95.83% in *Harian Metro* to 60.00% in *Malaysiakini* (Table 2). The assumptions of the Pearson chi-square test were not satisfied because several article categories contained low frequencies. A Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact test showed a statistically significant association between newspaper and article type (Monte Carlo $p = .003$), indicating that the distribution of journalistic genres varied across the four publications. Descriptively, *Harian Metro* had the highest proportion of straight-news articles (95.83%), while *Malaysiakini* had the largest combined proportion of non-straight-news formats (40.00%), comprising feature articles, columns, and letters. *Sin Chew* was the only publication to include an editorial and an advice column, although each represented only 0.54% of its coverage.

Table 2:
Types of ageing-related articles by publication

	Harian Metro (n = 48)	*Sin Chew Daily* (n = 185)	*The Star* (n = 145)	*Malaysiakini* (n = 30)
Straight news	95.83	78.92	71.03	60.00
Editorials	0	0.54	0	0
Feature articles	4.17	11.35	17.93	26.67
Column articles	0	8.65	4.14	6.67
Letters	0	0	6.90	6.67
Advice columns	0	0.54	0	0

Source: Compiled by the authors.

The article-type categories reflect journalistic genres commonly used in Malaysian newspapers. Straight news refers to brief, event-focused reporting that generally follows an inverted-pyramid structure, whereas feature articles provide greater background, contextual detail, and narrative development. Editorials represent the institutional position of a newspaper, while columns are recurring opinion pieces authored by individual writers. Detailed operational definitions of all article-type categories are provided in the Appendix.

Types of vulnerabilities

Aging-related vulnerability is multidimensional, so articles could be coded under more than one type of vulnerability. Each vulnerability was therefore analysed separately according to whether it was present or absent in an article. As shown in Table 3, the prevalence of material vulnerability differed significantly across the four publications, $\chi^2(3, N = 408) = 29.81$, $p < .001$. Descriptively, material vulnerability appeared most frequently in *The Star* (46.90%), followed by *Malaysiakini* (36.67%), *Harian Metro* (31.25%), and *Sin Chew* (18.92%).

Physical vulnerability also varied significantly across the publications, $\chi^2(3, N = 408) = 9.75$, $p = .021$. It was identified in approximately half of *The Star*'s articles (51.03%), compared with 37.84% of *Sin Chew,* 36.67% of *Malaysiakini,* and 29.17% of *Harian Metro.* Significant associations with newspaper were also found for social vulnerability (Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact $p = .001$) and technological vulnerability (Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact $p = .001$). Descriptively, *The Star* recorded the highest proportions of both social (25.52%) and technological vulnerability (8.97%).

Table 3:
Types of vulnerability reported in ageing-related articles by publication

	Harian Metro (n = 52)	*Sin Chew Daily* (n = 222)	*The Star* (n = 228)	*Malaysiakini* (n = 34)
Material	28.85	15.77	29.82	32.35
Physical	26.92	31.53	32.46	32.35
Social	3.85	9.91	16.23	8.82
Mental	13.46	10.81	10.09	2.94
Technological	0	0.90	5.70	0
Not mentioned	26.92	31.08	5.70	23.53

Source: Compiled by the authors.

In contrast, mental vulnerability did not differ significantly across the four publications (Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact $p = .328$). The proportion of articles that did not mention any form of vulnerability differed significantly by newspaper, $\chi^2(3, N = 408) = 34.79$, $p < .001$. This category was most prevalent in *Sin Chew* (37.30%) and least prevalent in *The Star* (8.97%).

In their reporting on material vulnerability, both pensions and life after retirement were key concerns in all newspapers except *Harian Metro.* In a letter published by *The Star,* the writer wrote

> "despite the importance of pension funds, they are often underutilised, and many individuals do not have sufficient savings to support themselves in old age. The EPF [Employees' Provident Fund] has warned Malaysians that they will need at least RM600,000 to retire comfortably in major cities. However, research shows that around 70% of retirees have less than RM50,000 in their EPF accounts" (Mydin, 2023).

In a one column article, *Sin Chew* discussed physical vulnerability among older adults by highlighting the long-standing shortage of geriatric specialists in hospitals, a problem that remains unresolved. The writer emphasised that

> "ageing and disease are fundamentally distinct concepts. The physical issues experienced by older adults are not always diseases; some may simply be natural signs of ageing. However, in hospitals lacking geriatric specialists, patients are routinely referred to disease-specific clinics, where ageing is often treated as a medical condition. This practice has likely led to significant unnecessary costs and inefficiencies" (Su et al., 2023).

Additionally, *Malaysiakini* reported that 2,144 older adults were abandoned in hospitals across Malaysia from 2018 to June 2022. While these individuals had family members on record, including spouses, children, or siblings, some relatives refused to provide care when contacted by social welfare workers (Carvalho et al., 2022). Notably, *Harian Metro* was the only newspaper to cover 'silver romance' and also highlighted stories of older adults making efforts to vote in elections.

The Star addressed the issue of mental vulnerability and reported that depression is common among the older adults in Malaysia, but they rarely seek help. Globally, older adults have a higher suicide rate than younger individuals, and they are more likely to succeed in their attempts because they are more determined and less impulsive. Due to their frailty, they often die before they can be discovered and rescued (Murugappan, 2022).

A feature article published by *Sin Chew* highlighted how the widespread use of smartphones, along with the impact of the Covid–19 pandemic and staff shortages, has accelerated the shift toward digitalisation in Malaysia, particularly in restaurants and public services like parking. Some older interviewees described struggling with QR menus due to "poor connections, frozen screens, and unreadable fonts" (Su et al., 2023).

Episodic and thematic framing

An episodic frame focuses on individual experiences of ageing, including personal stories, human-interest narratives, everyday challenges, and personal strategies for managing ageing-related issues. This category also includes health talks or workshops offering practical advice

to older adults and scientific discoveries concerning diet, exercise, or therapies that may influence individual approaches to ageing.

In contrast, a thematic frame situates ageing within broader societal, economic, and policy contexts, including demographic trends, government policies, healthcare infrastructure, social security systems, workforce changes, retirement policies, and the costs of long-term care. Scientific discoveries were also coded as thematic when they contributed to a broader understanding of ageing processes and their population-level implications.

A chi-square test of independence showed a statistically significant association between the newspaper and framing approaches, $\chi^2(6, N = 408) = 16.61, p = .011$. As shown in Table 4, episodic framing was the predominant category in *Harian Metro* (75.00%), *Sin Chew* (61.62%), and *The Star* (49.66%). In contrast, *Malaysiakini* employed thematic framing most frequently (56.67%), while 40.00% of its articles used episodic framing. The combination of episodic and thematic framing was relatively uncommon across all four publications, ranging from 0% in *Harian Metro* to 6.21% in *The Star.*

Table 4:
Framing approaches used in aging-related articles, by publication

	Harian Metro (n = 48)	*Sin Chew Daily* (n = 185)	*The Star* (n = 145)	*Malaysiakini* (n = 30)
Episodic	75.00	61.62	49.66	40.00
Thematic	25.00	34.59	44.14	56.67
Combination of both	0	3.78	6.21	3.33

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Attribution of responsibility

Although episodic framing was prevalent in the analysed coverage, societal responsibility was the most frequently identified form of responsibility attribution in three of the four publications. A chi-square test of independence showed a statistically significant association between newspaper and attribution of responsibility, $\chi^2(9, N = 408) = 18.22, p = .033$. This indicates that the distribution of responsibility attribution varied across the four publications.

As shown in Table 5, *Harian Metro* attributed responsibility equally to individuals and society, with each category accounting for 41.67% of its articles. In contrast, societal responsibility was the most frequent category in *Sin Chew* (43.78%), *The Star* (62.76%), and *Malaysiakini* (56.67%). Among the four publications, *The Star* recorded the highest proportion of societal-responsibility attribution, whereas *Harian Metro* recorded the highest proportion of individual-responsibility attribution. Articles combining individual and societal responsibility were comparatively uncommon, ranging from 6.67% in *Malaysiakini* to 15.14% in *Sin Chew.*

Table 5:
Attribution of responsibility in ageing-related articles, by publication

	Harian Metro (n = 48)	*Sin Chew Daily* (n = 185)	*The Star* (n = 145)	*Malaysiakini* (n = 30)
Individual	41.67	31.89	22.76	33.33
Societal	41.67	43.78	62.76	56.67
Combination of both	8.33	15.14	9.66	6.67
Not mentioned	8.33	9.19	4.83	3.33

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Individual responsibilities

Table 6 presents the distribution of individual-responsibility strategies identified across the four publications. Because several categories contained low frequencies, the expected-frequency assumptions of the Pearson chi-square test were not satisfied. A Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact test showed that the distribution of coded individual-responsibility strategies varied significantly across the four publications (Monte Carlo $p = .012$).

Table 6:
Individual-responsibility strategies reported, by publication

	Harian Metro (n = 25)	*Sin Chew Daily* (n = 122)	*The Star* (n = 63)	*Malaysiakini* (n = 16)
Healthy lifestyle	36.00	31.15	30.16	56.25
Coping skills	0	9.02	4.76	0
Strong social connections	28.00	18.03	11.11	6.25
Active interests and charity work	16.00	31.15	22.22	12.50
Financial stability and literacy	20.00	10.66	31.75	25.00

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Descriptively, healthy lifestyle was the most frequently coded strategy in *Harian Metro* (36.00%) and *Malaysiakini* (56.25%). *Harian Metro* also gave considerable attention to strong social connections (28.00%), while financial stability and literacy constituted the second-largest category in *Malaysiakini* (25.00%). In *Sin Chew,* healthy lifestyle, active interests and charity work were equally prominent (31.15% each). In *The Star,* financial stability and literacy was the largest category (31.75%), followed by healthy lifestyle (30.16%) and active interests and charity work (22.22%).

Across the four publications, recommendations for maintaining a healthy lifestyle included regular exercise, routine health examinations, balanced diets, and the use of supplements or health products. Discussions of coping skills encouraged older adults to make practical and psychological adjustments to the physical, mental, and social changes

associated with ageing. These included adaptive thinking and emotional regulation when facing retirement, bereavement, and health-related difficulties.

The newspapers also promoted the development of strong social connections by encouraging older adults to participate in local clubs, interest groups, community activities, and charity work. They also advocated for continued employment after retirement as a way to maintain social engagement. Through stories of older adults pursuing active interests, the newspapers featured individuals involved in learning English, playing soccer, dancing, singing, creating art, or pursuing higher education (e.g. bachelor's, master's, or PhD degrees). They also showcased older adults' contributions to charity and their volunteering efforts.

In terms of financial stability and literacy, the newspapers encouraged older adults to continue working after retirement and urged readers to focus on increasing real wages, saving more, and seeking higher returns on savings to ensure a dignified retirement. They also emphasised the importance of financial planning, featuring reports on pension plans, savings programs, and financial education workshops designed to help older adults manage their finances. Importantly, they reminded older adults to remain vigilant against financial scams.

This study found that all newspapers generally supported working after retirement, but *Sin Chew* explored the complexities of raising the retirement age. While some experts advocated extending it to 65 due to rising living costs, others, like the Malaysian Employers Federation and Trades Union Congress, opposed it, citing concerns about youth unemployment. *Sin Chew* also highlighted research suggesting that early retirement (at 50 or 55) may lead to longer lifespans, while working until 65 could shorten life expectancy (Xu, 2023; Li, 2023).

Societal responsibilities

Table 7 presents the distribution of societal actors identified as responsible for reducing the vulnerabilities of older adults. Because several categories contained low frequencies, the expected-frequency assumptions of the Pearson chi-square test were not satisfied. A Fisher–Freeman–Halton exact test showed that the distribution of coded societal-responsibility actors varied significantly across the four publications (Monte Carlo $p < .001$).

Descriptively, the government was the most frequently identified societal actor in all four publications. Government responsibility was particularly prominent in *Malaysiakini* (89.47%), followed by *Harian Metro* (64.29%), *The Star* (53.13%), and *Sin Chew* (33.55%). Nevertheless, *Sin Chew* distributed responsibility across a broader range of actors, comparatively giving more substantial attention to civic organisations, NGOs, and corporate social responsibility initiatives (23.23%), as well as the general public and aged-care and healthcare institutions (12.26% each). Family responsibility appeared only in *Sin Chew* (10.32%) and *The Star* (3.91%).

In an editorial published by *Sin Chew,* the editor examined the role of family through the lens of Confucian teachings. The editor referenced a quote from Confucius: "Today's notion of filial piety is the ability to provide for one's parents. But even dogs and horses can be cared for. Without respect, what sets this apart?" This statement showed how contemporary interpretations of filial piety often focus solely on providing material support. The editorial

Table 7:
Societal actors identified as bearing responsibility, by publication

	Harian Metro (n = 28)	*Sin Chew Daily* (n = 155)	*The Star* (n = 128)	*Malaysiakini* (n = 19)
Family	0	10.32	3.91	0
General public	17.86	12.26	9.38	5.26
Civic organisations, NGOs and CSR	3.57	23.23	13.28	0
Businesses	3.57	6.45	10.94	5.26
Aged care and healthcare infrastructure/health research centres	10.71	12.26	4.69	0
Government	64.29	33.55	53.13	89.47
Others	0	1.94	4.69	0

Source: Compiled by the authors.

emphasised that older adults need not only financial assistance but also respect and emotional care (Zeng, 2022).

Additionally, in a feature article *Sin Chew* underscored that both family members and professional caregivers must respect the dignity of older adults at all times. The article warned that "caregivers should avoid premature interventions that could unintentionally undermine the independence of older adults" (Ye, 2022). Notably, *Sin Chew* dispelled the misconception that "sending older adults to nursing homes equates to abandonment". Instead, it argued that with the specialised care provided in nursing homes, the quality of life for older adults can improve (Li, 2023).

Furthermore, a *Sin Chew* editorial mentioned that the issue of population ageing in Malaysia involves a severe shortage of social resources, healthcare services, and long-term care personnel. Importantly, the Chinese newspaper emphasised the urgency of these issues, noting that despite public concern, the government's response has been slow and ineffective (Zeng, 2022). Additionally, *Sin Chew* also expressed hope that Chinese organisations would step up to lead efforts in raising community awareness and addressing issues concerning older adults (Zhang, 2022).

The Star highlighted the urgent need to address neglect and abuse of older adults, worsened by post-pandemic pressures. Despite studies on ageing, proposals to tackle mistreatment often face delays, with little government action. For example, the Senior Citizens Bill announced in 2019 stalled after a government change. The writer urged involving not just the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, but also NGOs, civil society, and low-income representatives. They noted that the Social Welfare Department, with limited resources, often prioritises women, children, and youth over older adults (Fu, 2023).

Discussion

This study demonstrates that ageing-related issues were not equally salient across Malaysia's multilingual news environment. *Sin Chew* and *The Star* published substantially more articles on ageing than *Harian Metro* and *Malaysiakini,* suggesting that ageing occupies different positions on the news agenda according to the editorial priorities, target audiences, and institutional orientations of the publications. Such uneven visibility matters because media attention influences which issues enter public discussion and are recognised as requiring policy intervention.

Across all four publications, ageing was reported predominantly through straight news. While this format does provide timely information about events, announcements, and individual experiences, the space it offers for examining the structural complexities of population ageing may be limited. The relative scarcity of features, columns, editorials, and letters suggests that issues such as retirement security, long-term care, healthcare capacity, digital exclusion, and changing family structures were not consistently subjected to sustained public deliberation. More interpretive genres could situate these concerns within Malaysia's demographic transition and provide greater space for older adults, professionals, civil society organisations, and policymakers to discuss possible responses.

Material and physical vulnerability received the greatest attention across the four publications, consistent with research showing that media representations frequently associate older age with physical decline, dependency, frailty, and economic burden (Imran, 2025; Imran & Bowd, 2023; Oostlander et al., 2022). These concerns reflect genuine challenges, including inadequate retirement savings, chronic illness, disability, healthcare needs, and financial exploitation. However, their repeated prominence may encourage audiences to understand ageing primarily through loss and dependence, reinforcing age-based stereotypes and obscuring the diversity of later-life experiences (Kline et al., 2024; Xu, 2022). Conversely, social, mental, and technological vulnerabilities received comparatively limited attention. This is significant because vulnerability in later life is multidimensional, and disadvantage in one domain may intensify difficulties in others (Shin et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the coverage was not uniformly deficit-oriented. Some articles portrayed older adults as socially engaged, politically active, capable of forming intimate relationships, and able to protect their wellbeing. *Sin Chew*'s coverage of Chinese associations and NGOs also illustrated how community networks facilitate healthcare support, social participation, and collective resilience. These portrayals align with research showing that older adults may retain considerable agency, coping capacity, and psychological resilience despite experiencing disadvantages in particular domains (Spini et al., 2017; Stephens et al., 2015). Vulnerability should therefore be understood not as an inherent characteristic of old age but as relational and domain-specific, arising from interactions among individual circumstances, available resources, institutional arrangements, and the wider social environment. Recognising that vulnerability and agency can coexist also challenges the binary distinction between dependent older adults and those who meet normative expectations of 'successful ageing'.

The framing analysis further reveals how ageing-related vulnerability was constructed. *Harian Metro, Sin Chew,* and *The Star* relied predominantly on episodic framing, whereas *Malaysiakini* used thematic framing more frequently. This difference may partly reflect

journalistic genre: the first three outlets relied heavily on event-focused straight news, while *Malaysiakini* published a comparatively larger proportion of opinion-oriented material. Previous research indicates that episodic frames may individualise social problems by focusing on particular people or events without adequately explaining structural causes (Boukes, 2022; Iyengar, 1990, 2023). Stories centred on illness, inadequate savings, or difficulties adapting to technology may consequently present these experiences as unavoidable consequences of ageing while overlooking employment histories, income inequality, pension coverage, healthcare infrastructure, digital design, and social protection.

Such narratives may also reinforce the neoliberal expectation that individuals should achieve 'successful ageing' through healthy lifestyles, financial planning, and self-reliance (Martinson & Berridge, 2015; Mortimer et al., 2008). Although these practices can support wellbeing, excessive emphasis on individual preparedness risks blaming those who are unable to attain this ideal because of structural disadvantages accumulated across a lifetime (Stowe & Cooney, 2015). Importantly, however, episodic framing did not consistently produce attribution of individual responsibility. In *Harian Metro,* the publications frequently identified government agencies, institutions, communities, and families as responsible for addressing ageing-related vulnerabilities. This finding complicates the conventional association between episodic framing and individualised responsibility (Iyengar, 1990; Kim, 2015). An article may use an individual experience as its narrative entry point while still identifying structural causes or collective solutions. Narrative format and the attribution of responsibility should therefore be treated as related but distinct dimensions.

The emphasis on societal responsibility also differs from Imran's (2024) observation that the Malaysian media frequently construct ageing as a micro-level concern centred on individuals and families. Calls for government action on retirement security, healthcare, long-term care, elder abuse, and social services indicate greater recognition that population ageing is a public issue requiring institutional and policy responses. This is theoretically important because it acknowledges that vulnerability can be reduced through public policy, institutional resources, and inclusive environments, challenging models of successful ageing that place disproportionate responsibility on individuals while overlooking unequal access to the resources necessary for wellbeing.

Harian Metro was an exception, giving comparatively greater attention to individual coping while offering limited criticism of government policies or institutional arrangements. Its combination of episodic framing and individual responsibility may depoliticise vulnerability by presenting difficulties as matters for personal management rather than structural intervention. This pattern may relate to Malaysia's media environment: *Harian Metro* is published by New Straits Times Press, part of Media Prima, a conglomerate historically associated with political and commercial interests (Loheswar et al., 2019). Nevertheless, as this study did not examine newsroom decision-making, this explanation remains interpretive rather than offering evidence of editorial intent.

Cultural orientations were particularly visible in *Sin Chew*'s emphasis on family responsibility, reflecting the continuing importance of filial piety and intergenerational solidarity in Chinese approaches to caring for older family members (Zhang & Liu, 2021). However, its coverage did not simply reproduce the expectation that families should bear complete responsibility. Discussions of professional caregivers, residential care, NGOs, and

Chinese community organisations presented care as shared across familial, professional, community, and institutional settings. By challenging the assumption that residential care necessarily constitutes abandonment, *Sin Chew* reflected the negotiation of traditional values amid changing family structures and increasingly complex care needs. Its attention to community associations also showed that such organisations can provide social participation, practical assistance, and collective resilience rather than merely substitute for inadequate state or family support.

This study contributes to the literature in three respects. First, it conceptualises ageing-related vulnerability as multidimensional rather than treating older adults as a uniformly vulnerable group. Second, it demonstrates that episodic framing and attribution of individual responsibility do not necessarily coincide because event-centred reports may still identify societal causes and solutions. Third, its cross-language design shows how ageing discourse varies within a national media system according to the cultural, editorial, and institutional positioning of publications, underscoring the importance of examining multilingual media environments rather than generalising from a single outlet.

Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations. First, it examined four Malaysian news publications over 12 months, and while these represent Malay-, Chinese-, and English-language news environments and include a digital-native outlet, they do not capture Malaysia's full media system or ethnolinguistic diversity. Tamil-language newspapers were excluded because the research team lacked the proficiency required for reliable retrieval, culturally sensitive interpretation, and consistent coding. The findings should therefore be understood as a comparison of four selected publications rather than a comprehensive representation of Malaysian media. Future research should include Tamil-language and other community media.

Second, keyword searches of the websites or archives of the publications may have omitted articles that discussed ageing without using the selected terms. Differences in search functions, archival access, and indexing may also have affected retrieval.

Third, content analysis identifies textual patterns but cannot establish why frames were adopted or how audiences interpreted them. Explanations based on editorial orientation, ownership, readership, and cultural values are therefore theoretically informed interpretations rather than evidence of newsroom intentions or media effects. Future studies could combine longitudinal content analysis with interviews and audience research to examine the production and reception of ageing-related narratives.

Conclusion

This study examined how four Malaysian news publications constructed ageing-related vulnerability and attributed responsibility for addressing it. Ageing coverage varied substantially across the publications, reflecting differences in their editorial orientations, target audiences, journalistic formats, and cultural contexts. Straight news and episodic

framing predominated in most outlets, while *Malaysiakini* employed thematic framing more frequently. Material and physical vulnerabilities received the greatest attention, whereas social, mental, and technological vulnerabilities were comparatively underrepresented. At the individual level, maintaining a healthy lifestyle was the most frequently proposed strategy, while the government was consistently identified as the principal societal actor responsible for addressing ageing-related vulnerabilities.

The study's central theoretical contribution is its finding that episodic framing did not necessarily lead to attribution of individual responsibility. Although *Harian Metro* did place more emphasis on individual coping, the other publications also frequently used event-centred reporting while assigning responsibility to governments, families, communities, and other institutions. Episodic and thematic framing should therefore be treated as related to, but analytically distinct from, individual and societal responsibility attribution. The findings also demonstrate the value of conceptualising vulnerability as multidimensional and context-dependent rather than as an inherent condition of old age.

More balanced ageing coverage requires journalists to connect individual experiences with broader conditions such as retirement security, healthcare provision, long-term care, digital accessibility, and inequalities accumulated across the course of a lifetime. Greater attention should also be given to the perspectives of older adults themselves and to their resilience, agency, achievements, and social contributions. By representing ageing as both a personal experience and a collective policy concern, the media can contribute to a more inclusive public understanding of later life and encourage shared responsibility among governments, families, civil society organisations, communities, and businesses.

Appendix

Operational Definitions

Types of Articles:

- *Straight news:* Articles that inform readers about the basic elements of a story, including who, what, when, where, why and how. They have a simple and concise format, often laid out in the form of an inverted pyramid, and all the information should be attributed.
- *Editorials:* Articles written by an editor-in-chief that give an opinion on a topic or issue.
- *Column articles:* Articles that are recurring, where a writer expresses his/her opinions in the space allotted by the newspaper.
- *Feature articles:* Articles that offer special attention and in-depth analysis on a subject. It might not be recurring although it might be published as a series.
- *Letters:* Articles in the form of letter that are sent to a newspaper organisation about an issue of concern to readers.
- *Advice columns:* Articles that offer advice to readers who write to a newspaper organisation asking for help with a problem. The advice is usually provided by an expert or professional.

Frames:

- *Episodic framing:* Focuses on individual experiences of ageing, including personal stories, human-interest narratives, daily challenges, family caregiving, and personal strategies for coping with ageing. This includes health talks or workshops that offer practical advice for older adults, as well as strategies for managing ageing-related health issues. Additionally, it also includes scientific discoveries related to diet, exercise, or therapies that slow ageing and may influence an individuals' personal approach to ageing.
- *Thematic framing:* Refers to broad societal, economic, and policy-level discussions about ageing, such as ageing-population trends, government policies, healthcare infrastructure, social security systems, and national or global ageing issues. It also covers the economic impact of an ageing population, including workforce changes, retirement age policies, and the cost of elder care; including, moreover, scientific discoveries about ageing that contribute to a broad, systemic understanding of ageing processes and their implications at the population or societal level.

Individual Responsibility:

- *Healthy lifestyle:* Reports various methods to reduce the risk of illness, including regular exercise, routine health check-ups, maintaining a balanced diet, and the use of supplements or health products. This includes encouragement for older adults to receive Covid–19 or influenza vaccinations or booster shots, seek medical attention when necessary, and improve health literacy.
- *Coping skills:* Encourages older adults to make practical adjustments to adapt to the physical, mental, and social changes that occur with ageing. It discusses the importance of adaptive thinking and emotional regulation, such as developing the cognitive flexibility needed to handle changes like retirement, the loss of loved ones, or health issues. It also highlights the need to acquire digital skills (e.g. using smartphones, social media, and video conferencing), ways to prevent falls and injuries, means to safeguard against financial scams, and the importance of early preparation for old age.
- *Strong social connections:* Reports that the resilience of the older generation can inspire admiration from younger family members. Encourages participation in local clubs, interest groups, community activities, charity, etc. It also promotes continued work after retirement to maintain social connections, and highlights that older adults are actively participating in elections, fostering a sense of belonging in society, and engaging in romantic or companionship relationships.
- *Active interests and charity work:* Features stories of older adults involved in passions like learning English, playing soccer, dancing, singing, creating art, or pursuing higher education (e.g. bachelor's, master's, or PhD degrees). It also reports on older adults' active involvement in charity and volunteering.
- *Financial stability and literacy:* Encourages older adults to work after retirement. It also encourages the public to increase real wages, save more, or seek higher returns on savings to ensure a dignified retirement. It stresses the importance of financial planning and literacy, reporting on pension plans, savings programmes, and financial

education workshops that help older adults manage their finances. It also reminds older adults to be cautious of financial scams.

Societal Responsibility:

- *Family:* Encourages family members to respect and treasure older adults. It also encourages family members to safeguard older adults' wellbeing by ensuring a balanced diet, adequate rest, and involvement in daily life. It stresses the importance of visiting older relatives, especially those living alone, and supporting them in avoiding problematic internet use (e.g. online scams). It also advises family members to avoid rearranging furniture to reduce fall risks.
- *General public:* Urges society to reject ageism and discrimination, to acknowledge older adults' contributions, and to create an age-inclusive environment. It encourages local Malaysians to become professional caregivers and to reduce reliance on foreign manpower. It also emphasises reporting suspected elder abuse, assisting those in need, and encouraging the younger generation to reach out to lonely older adults.
- *Employers:* Urges employers to provide equal employment opportunities to older adults and to continue hiring them to extend their income stream in an ageing society.
- *Civic organisations, NGOs, and CSR:* Reports various activities by civic organisations, NGOs, and businesses that promote the welfare of older adults. These include educational sessions on healthy ageing, providing nursing home provisions, organising social and cultural events, and offering mobile medical units. It highlights efforts like offering transport solutions, helplines, and counselling for older adults, and supporting technology training and job placement services for older individuals.
- *Businesses:* Reports that developers offer age-friendly, multi-generational homes, and businesses are urged to improve customer service for older adults. It also reports that bank staff are trained to spot suspicious transactions to prevent financial scams, and businesses offer discounts to older customers.
- *Technological research institutes or companies:* Reports collaboration among researchers, engineers, and clinicians to invent robots that enable independent living for older adults. It urges businesses and tech companies to design age-friendly products and include older adults in AI datasets. It also stresses the need for day-care coverage by insurance companies, and the creation of e-learning platforms designed for older users.
- *Aged care and healthcare infrastructure/health research centres:* Reports hospitals preparing older adults for surgery by considering nutrition and post-op rehabilitation. It urges healthcare providers to recognise nutrition's role in preventive care and calls for improvements in age-care services.
- *Government:* Reports the Malaysian government's proposal for a Senior Citizen Act to protect the social security, benefits, and wellbeing of older adults. It urges the government to collaborate with civil society, raise the retirement age, provide vocational training, and improve elderly care services. It also calls for tax exemptions for health coverage for parents, better digital inclusion for older adults, and more specialists in geriatrics and other medical fields. The government is also encouraged to combat fraud and abuse targeted at older adults.

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