UNDERSTANDING SHARED PROSPERITY VISION 2030 FROM THE MALAYSIAN GRASSROOTS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV2030) aims to achieve sustainable economic growth alongside fair, inclusive, and equitable development for the nation. Since independence, Malaysia has endeavoured to continuously strike a balance in aligning economic growth, moving ahead in the value chain as well as bridging development gaps in a multi-racial society. Previous research

has commonly approached shared prosperity (SP) at a quantitative and macro level. This study fills the lacuna of knowledge in suggesting that it is imperative to understand the perceptions of the grassroots (individuals) at a micro level for policy implementation. This qualitative study employs a combination of focus groups and interviews. The extraction of themes was carried out using the Gioia methodology guided by the three dimensions stipulated in the SPV2030 policy document. They are: (1) development for all; (2) addressing wealth and income disparities; and (3) fostering a united, prosperous, and dignified nation. Generally, the respondents embrace inclusive growth. They hope that development will lead to greater social mobility and that a needs-based approach is adopted in areas such as education and healthcare. In addition, enhanced governance and sense of togetherness are perceived as major drivers in promoting a united, prosperous, and dignified nation. As part of the a priori findings, the respondents also identified major enablers of SPV2030 are better living standards, revamping of education, skills enhancement, technological empowerment, responsible citizenship and community participation, and government effectiveness. The conceptual framework of this study can be used as platform to spur future studies within the Asia Pacific region which share similar developmental settings as Malaysia in fostering future financial and social well-being through SP.

Keywords: Well-being, equality, economic development, education, health, government policy

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has promoted trade and financial liberalisation changing the wealth of nations though unprecedented economic growth since the 1970s. Internationally, the growth momentum has further been fuelled by technology and movement of manpower. These developments have connected the world culturally and geopolitically. However, the integration of trade, labour, capital, and technology has not always promoted equitable growth across different nations. In Asia, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth of countries such as Singapore and South Korea, have consistently outpaced other developing countries for example Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines (International Monetary Fund 2000). Past research indicates that as GDP growth rises, income inequality between the rich and the poor may have widened. In this respect, the Gini coefficient/index (Gini) is used by economists as a measure of income inequality (Hasell 2023). The closer the Gini is to 100%, the higher the level of inequality is. Figure 1 shows that Malaysia has higher Gini than ASEAN countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia,

and Thailand. In comparison to developed nations, Malaysia's Gini is also higher than China, Sweden, and Norway (Figure 2). Malaysia's Gini of about 40% is similar to the US. However, since the US is a developed nation, this indicates that the inequality issue in Malaysia is relatively greater.

Figures 1 and 2 moreover show that globalisation does not always lead to reduced poverty and inequality. Shared prosperity (SP) promotes sustainable development, which embraces broad economic, social, and environmental pillars commonly propagated as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) advocated by the United Nations Development Programme (2021). In this respect, SP can be aligned to the reduction of social inequalities (SDG1 and SDG10), protection of social rights including access to education (SDG4), healthcare (SDG3), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), and promotion of social solidarity (SDG16). SP strives to promote equitable distribution of income and opportunities for all members of society to secure a healthy and meaningful life (Korten 2011). While macroeconomic analyses and policy outcomes are well researched, the personal narratives and experiences of citizens on SP in developing nations such as Malaysia remain unexamined, particularly at the grassroots level, where ordinary citizens conduct their daily activities, and where policies can be effectively targeted and meaningfully implemented.
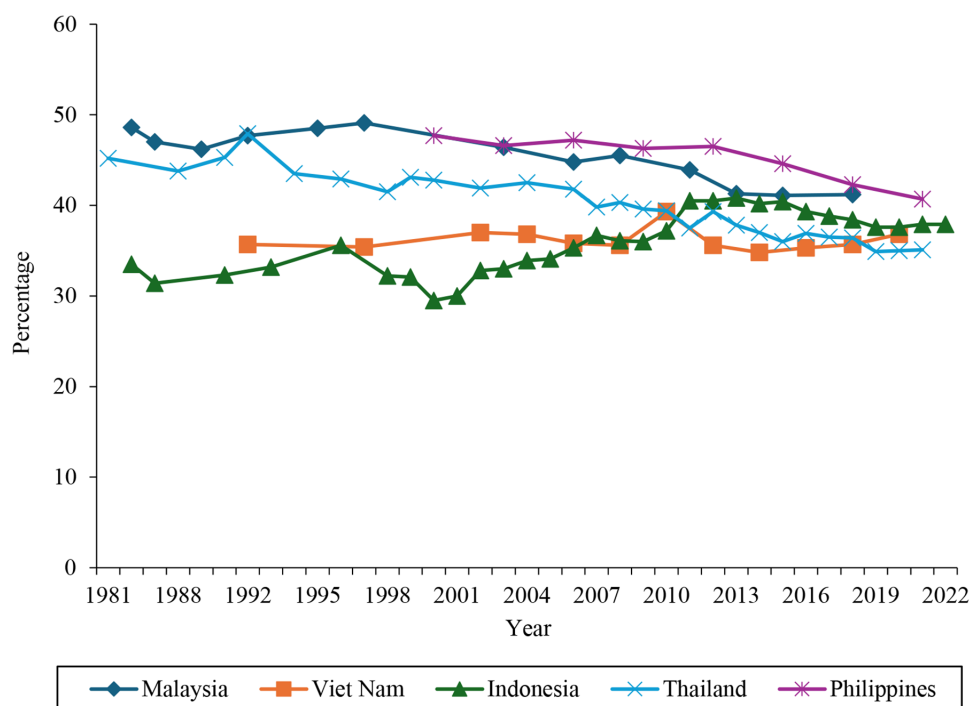

Figure 1: Comparison of Gini coefficient of selected ASEAN countries (1981 to 2022). *Source*: World Bank (2024).
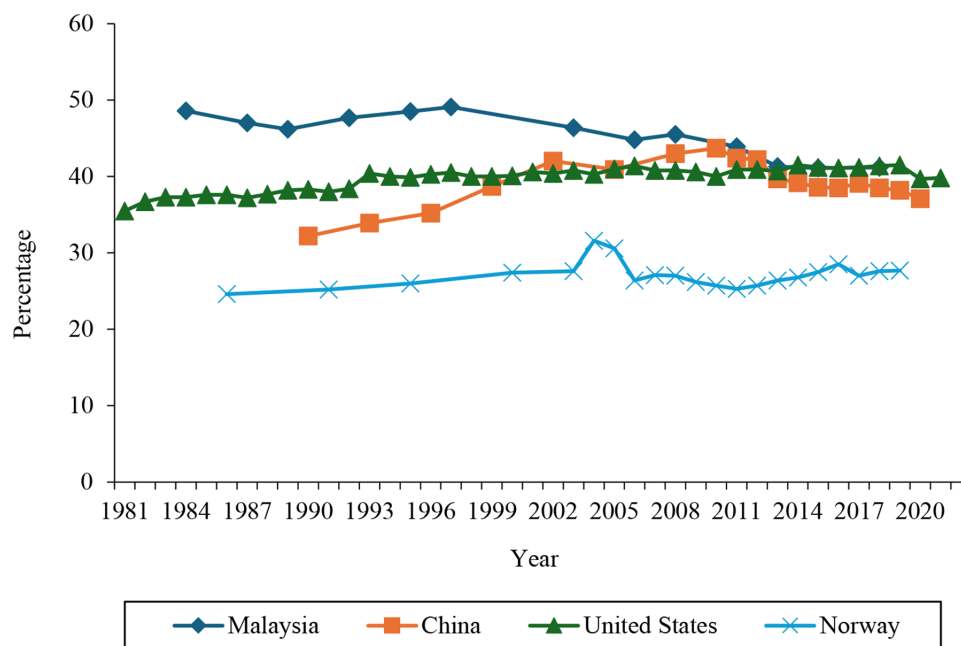
Figure 2: Comparison of Gini coefficient between Malaysia and selected developed countries (1981 to 2022).
Source: World Bank (2024).

The Malaysian Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV2030) in 2019 was launched by Tun Mahathir Mohamad, during his term as the seventh Prime Minister from 2018 to 2020. In 2022, the estimated population of Malaysia was 32.7 million, with the Bumiputera as the majority (69.9%). Based on Article 160/161(A) of the Federal Constitution, a Bumiputera is a person who is a Malay Muslim or a person who him/herself, parents or grandparents were born in Malaysia or Singapore before 31 August 1957 and/or a native of Sabah or Sarawak. The composition of Chinese, Indians, and other ethnicities at 22.8%, 6.6%, and 0.7%, respectively (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2022) make up the rest of Malaysia's population. The major objective of the Malaysian government is to provide all Malaysians with a decent standard of living by committing to sustainable growth and incorporating fair and equitable practices across all income and ethnic groups (Ministry of Economic Affairs 2019). However, this is a challenge for Malaysia, being a multi-ethnic and developing nation. Since independence, Malaysia has had three major phases of development policies, namely the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1971–1990), Vision 2020 (1991 to 2020), and New Economic Model (NEM) (2010 to 2020), which were operationalised via 12 national plans (Table 1). The thrust of the NEP was to address inter-ethnic economic differences inherited from British colonisation and to eradicate poverty. However, the NEP was intermingled with issues pertaining to inter-ethnic income

inequality, particularly Bumiputera ownership (Jomo 2004). Subsequently, Vision 2020 and NEM were mooted to promote nation-building and elevate Malaysia to a high income, inclusive, and sustainable nation. While Malaysia grew economically in the 1980s, it failed to attract as much value-added foreign direct investments, increase labour productivity, or to build and retain talent. Furthermore, there were perceptions that the non-material aspects of well-being, i.e., quality of work and life, were somehow not fully addressed (Leong 2000). Besides that, Malaysia has continued to be affected by race-based equity issues, nepotism, and lack of alignment between vision and political reforms. As a result, SPV2030 was launched to address these issues. SPV2030 recognises that a nation divided among itself will not prosper economically. It aims to ensure the country's sustainable development, and strives to unite citizens by considering their real needs. Previous policies have been mainly race-based but SPV2030 purports to ensure no one is left behind in tandem with the SDGs (Ministry of Economic Affairs 2019). However, SP can mean different things to different stakeholders, as discussed below.

The motivation of this study is to understand the concept of SP (based on SPV2030) at a national level from different socio-economic levels and ethnicity within Malaysia. This individual-centric analysis is fundamental in evaluating economic development, social progress, and social inclusion among citizens (Stiglitz et al. 2009; Sachs 2012). Hence, this study fills the gap in literature of equitable development in an Asia Pacific nation by focusing on the granular level, where policy meets the people, and where its true impact is felt. The following section will elaborate on the three pillars stipulated in SPV2030, namely: (1) development for all; (2) addressing wealth and income disparities; and (3) fostering a united, prosperous, and dignified nation.

SHARED PROSPERITY (SP) IN MALAYSIA

SPV2030 is premised upon three major pillars, namely development for all, addressing wealth and income disparity, as well as building a unified, prosperous, and dignified nation (Economic Planning Unit 2019). The SPV2030 aims to provide a more inclusive and socially equitable pathway based on needs rather than ethnicity. Table 1 compares the goals, main trusts and potential issues of the NEP, Vision 2020, NEM and SPV2030. SPV2030 differs from the previous policies in that its emphasises the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) by United Nations (UN), and purports to be a needs-based policy rather than a race-based policy. SPV2030 was introduced in 2018 as Malaysia embraced a new era of political transition in government.

Prior to the introduction of SPV2030 in 2018, the Malaysian economy had been showing signs of decline. For instance, in the 1990s, the World Bank indicated that Malaysia's economic growth was about 8% per annum but had decreased to 4% by 2018. Although a decline was reflected in Malaysia's income inequality over the period of the 1980s to 2018, when the previous policies were in place, Malaysia's income inequality was nevertheless still relatively high among the ASEAN counterparts (Figure 1). Another issue face by the Malaysian economy since the 1980s was that the regional and global economic as well as geopolitical landscape were much more susceptible to external shocks (e.g., wars, natural disasters, pandemics and global sovereign government changes). Finally, there was the continued brain drain from Malaysia to countries like Singapore, Australia, US, and United Kingdom, which has further hampered Malaysia's economic development. As such, a new approach was introduced through SPV2030 to address development, inequality, and social inclusion issues.

First Pillar: Development for All

Based on the Malaysian Economic Planning Unit (2019), "development for all" assumes that the product of economic growth will eventually reduce inequality and promote economic prosperity for all. In Malaysia, this involves efforts in promoting a more progressive economy that encompasses a knowledge based and high value workforce that will be able to sustain the trickle-down effect to the Malaysian grassroots.

The following universal legacy theories of economic growth, namely neo-classical theory and the Kuznets curve explain the first pillar of SPV2030 through the role of government, technology, labour/human capital and quality of growth in Malaysia and globally. Firstly, neoclassical theorists (such as Robert Solow), argue that economic growth can be achieved by improving production efficiency via technological advancements and accumulation of capital, rather than just through government intervention (Sharipov 2015). Newer theories focus on economic growth encompassing investment in technological innovations, human capital enhancement (via education and healthcare) and organisational learning in an imperfect market. These new growth theories posit that governments play a mediating role in providing a favourable environment for investments and the development of higher value-added technologies (Aghion et al. 1999). Furthermore, economic growth, promoted by technology and structural transformation, often ignore social issues in less developed countries (Kuznets 1973). Kuznets growth curve assumes that as a society progresses,

Table 1: Developmental policies in Malaysia

	NEP (1971–1990)	Vision 2020 (1991–2020)	NEM (2010–2020)	SPV2030 (2020–2030)
Malaysia Plan	2nd to 5th	6th to 11th	10th to 11th	12th onwards to the year 2030
Overarching goal	• Foster national unity	• Nation building	• High income, inclusive and sustainable nation	• Better and more inclusive standard of living to all
Main thrusts	• Social restructuring to address inter-ethnic economic differences • Reduction of poverty	• Achieving the fully developed nation status	• Achievement of a Malaysia as high-income nation (USD15,000 to USD20,000) per capita income by 2020 • Sustainable inter-generational nation development	• Development for all • Address wealth and income disparities • United, prosperous, and dignified nation
Potential issues	• Human capital emigration • Foreign capital flight • Perceived deterioration of inter-ethnic relations in the 1970s to 1980s • Decreased income inequality between ethnic groups could not be sustained after the NEP	• Disconnect between the vision and strategies • In 2020, Malaysia is still lagging behind ASEAN neighbours in terms of FDI and GDP growth of 7% not achieved • High reliance on imported capital and foreign labour • Lack of political reform • Perception of cronyism and nepotism linked to "Malaysia Incorporated" strategies • Non-material measures of well-being ignored (Leong 2000)	• Low value adding investments (e.g., ICT and R&D) • Price risk due to high reliance on petroleum and gas-based commodities • High reliance on low/semi-skilled workers and foreign workers in sectors such as manufacturing and construction • Decline in labour productivity growth. • Increasing income disparities (e.g., urban-rural, T20-B40, ethnic groups) • Perception of corruption • Middle income trap due to low value-added output	• The ability of Malaysia to compete and sustain value added economic development • Moving towards a needs-based approach in reducing income gaps • Challenges in meeting The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) by UN
Source	Williamson (2002), Jomo (2004)	Mahathir (1991), Williamson (2002)	National Economic Advisory Council (2010), Lee (2019)	Economic Planning Unit (2019)

Note: ICT = information and communication technology; R&D = research and development; FDI = foreign direct investment.

there would be migration of labour from agriculture to greater industrialised sectors that would promote higher-paying jobs and urbanisation. Initially, the structural transformation widens the rural-urban gap due to the greater weight on urban populations. Over time, these inequalities stabilise and eventually decrease as the trickle-down effects of industrialisation and technologies will reduce wage inequalities. The Kuznets curve posits that the relationship between economic growth and inequality can be represented by an inverted U-curve.

However, Kuznets curve has been critiqued for its over-generalisability across countries at different development stages, as well as its failure to consider the within and between sector components. In particular, economic growth due to movement of workers from agriculture to manufacturing sectors was found to decrease income inequality, whereas movement from agriculture to service sectors resulted in greater income inequalities (Baymul and Sen 2020). Thus, the Malaysian government needs to be cognisant of the quality and type of growth and that it trickles down in an equitable manner at the grassroots in a multi-ethnic developing nation.

Second Pillar: Addressing Wealth and Income Inequalities

In the context of leaving no one behind in Malaysia, the mere emphasis on economic growth and the expectation that the trickle-down effect will address extreme poverty and ensure social equity is naive (Stuart and Samman 2017). Mainstream economic theory often ignores the interconnections between economic behaviour, social developments, and morality that have an impact on the livelihoods of grassroots communities (Acemoglu and Robinson 2002; Katselidis et al. 2020). While past policies in Malaysia (Table 1), such as the NEP, Vision 2020, and the NEM have shown results in eliminating poverty and alleviating living standards, there is still much to be done in addressing wealth and income inequalities (Naguib and Smucker 2009; Rodrigo 2016; Khalid and Yang 2021). As such, any political reforms made by the Malaysian government would only be effective when civil society is engaged and highly mobilised to counter rising inequalities brought about by uneven inter-ethnic economic growth. This raises an important question of the social contract and legitimacy of the government in fulfilling their duties to ensure the well-being of the Malaysian grassroot citizens.

In terms of the Malaysian SPV2030, the integrative social contract theory (ISCT) would suggest that macro (e.g., governments) and micro institutions (local communities and individuals) have ethical obligations

that require reciprocation (Douglas 2000; Phillips and Johnson-Cramer 2006). As such, the overarching principle for social efficiency is to provide the least fortunate members of society with essential health, food, housing, education, and justice (Donaldson and Dunfee 1999). In maintaining the social contract, SPV2030 purports to be a needs-based social development approach to ensure more equitable distribution and inclusivity across all races across the Peninsula and East Malaysia. A needs-based policy focusses on eradicating poverty and improving the livelihood of all Malaysians regardless of race and political identity. In contrast, race-based policy emphasis prior to SPV2030 relate to protecting the special privileges of the Bumiputera (Federal Constitution of Malaysia). The Bumiputera is defined as a Malay Muslim, aborigine and natives of East Malaysia as described under Article 160 and 161(A) of the Malaysian Federal Constitution. The legacy issues from the NEP arising from the affirmative action Bumiputera policies are embedded in the Federal Constitution (Article 153). The privileges granted are in terms of special education quotas, corporate shareholdings, and the award of government contracts, cast doubt on its legitimacy (Tajudin and Yusoff 2020). However, expectations of handouts and affirmative action could create a sense of entitlement and social discord in the long run (Tzagkarakis et al. 2017). Furthermore, the special rights of Sabah and Sarawak meted under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) have also provided them with a certain degree of autonomy in matters relating to immigration, civil service, and finance. However, the development of Sabah and Sarawak especially in the interiors is often perceived to be sidelined and unfulfilled (*Bernama* 2023).

If social contracts are broken, Malaysian taxpayers will find their rights and social welfare violated. Certain groups (racial and Malaysian B40) may be sidelined in terms of distribution of essential goods and services for example, jobs, education, and health. The question of what constitutes fair and equitable distribution remains unanswered. Inequality encompasses a broader scope of capabilities and opportunities beyond just income equity (Sen 1980). Basic equality enables individuals to thrive on a level playing field regardless of their race, gender, and family background. However, inequality in job opportunities can be caused by a lack of initial endowments (for example, education and healthcare), including innate capabilities and social networks, which exacerbates the ability to fully realise intergenerational social mobility (Duncan and Murnane 2011; Brunori et al. 2013; Corak 2013). Therefore, the political will of the government and efficient delivery systems are required to ensure the proper diffusion of knowledge and skills. These commitments

are critical in fostering equitable growth, rather than relying solely on market mechanisms (Piketty 2014). The legitimacy of a democratic government, such as Malaysia is secured through the trust in fulfilling the social contracts as discussed above, as well as the general will of the Malaysian grassroots.

Third Pillar: United, Prosperous and Dignified Nation

The social identity theory states that ethnic and national identity are two group identities that an individual assumes as a citizen. These self-categorisations are implied but can be held concurrently or be assigned different levels of importance in different situations. To promote a cohesive nation, national identity needs to prevail over ethnic identities (Liu et al. 2002). Furthermore, social identity and leadership has been found to be influential in shaping the shared identity of a group (Liu and Hilton 2005). In this respect, a united nation emphasises social identity as social cohesion, which includes social relations, the sense of belonging, and orientation towards a common good within a social entity (Schiefer and van der Noll 2017). Social cohesion addresses how societies network, trust, and embrace diversity to address inequality and foster better quality of life for all. In addition, social cohesion assumes a collective identity, safe space, and inclusiveness that promote inter-ethnic tolerance and cultural diversity (Fonseca et al. 2019). A cohesive society promotes social inclusiveness, increases social capital, and social mobility, which will cooperate to survive and prosper equitably (Enderle 2018). In the absence of social cohesion (i.e., inter-ethnic tensions), the state of fragility will hinder social and economic progress (Seyoum 2021).

A dignified nation is one that preserves the universal human rights of its citizens, is respected for the virtuous conduct, and provides opportunities for all to flourish (Mattson and Clark 2011). In addition, dignified leaders are often described as behaviours deserving of honour and respect of the public office, he/she holds (McCrudden 2008). On the other hand, acts of corruption, involving abuse of power and misallocation of resources will result in loss of public trust and political instability (Jain 2011). Corruption also affects basic human rights and a betrayal of human dignity (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime n.d.; Katts 2020).

In Malaysia, debates on political economy, elections, and the ability to invoke meaningful social change continue to be dominated by ethnicity and class (Embong 2018). Over the past six decades, the government's social development policies such as NEP in 1971, Vision 2020, and NEM have met with mixed measures of success. While Malaysia prospered economically, the Malaysian incorporated strategies gave rise to perceptions of nepotism

and cronyism while promoting the Malay elite class. After the post-2008 elections, the right-wing United Malay National Organisation (UMNO)/ Barisan Nasional (BN) gained a strong power base and emphasised Malay supremacy, making the promise of *Bangsa Malaysia* (Malaysian nation) elusive. Since 2016, the One Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal and kleptocracy charges against the Najib Razak (former sixth prime minister of Malaysia) regime have raised questions about transparency and corruption in Malaysia. This led to a civil uprising and the historic victory of the *Pakatan Harapan* in 2018 as the first non-ruling coalition. However, political manoeuvrings among the Malay quartered parties (*Perikatan Nasional* and UMNO) have already caused two changes in government between 2020 and 2022. Thus, Malaysia remains in a stalemate in terms of political reform and social change (Embong 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methods have been used in the social policy field to comprehend intricate behaviour, requirements, systems, and cultures. Investigations in this area provide insights, explanations, and theories based on the experiences and views of those who are likely to be impacted by the policy decision or are deemed affected by an issue (Ritchie and Spencer 2002). In this study, a combination of interviews and focus groups were employed to explore the meanings and codes to develop a conceptual framework on the SPV2030 from the perspective of Malaysian individuals. Past studies posit that saturation typically occurs within nine to seventeen interviews or four to eight focus groups (Guest et al. 2006; Hammersley and Atkinson 2019; Hennink and Kaiser 2022). In qualitative research the objective of the study and the quality of the data are more critical than the sample size (Morse 1995).

Based on the above, 12 in-depth interviews and eight focus groups were conducted with 33 Malaysian respondents in total from different age, income, and backgrounds. Past research has suggested that the stopping criterion may be established if up to six interviews and two to three focus groups do not highlight any more emerging codes (Francis et al. 2010; Hagaman and Wutich 2017; Guest et al. 2020; Hennink and Kaiser 2022). Saturation can be assumed if each code is repeated within two to five instances. This study also adopts a systematic approach to articulate a grounded theory based on the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al. 2013). The study also explores the contextual and strategic aspects of the phenomenon of interest, namely SPV2030. The contextual aspect provides an in-depth understanding of what

SPV2030, and its dimensions imply, as well as the respondents' perceptions of its achievements and gaps. The purpose is to develop a conceptual model of the SPV2030 from the perspective of individual respondents. *A priori* findings will further explain other emerging theme concerning the implementation of SPV2030 (such as enablers).

Table 2 highlights the descriptive statistics of the respondents. The data were gathered via a combination of eight focus groups and twelve in-depth interviews. Purposive and convenience sampling was adopted in selecting respondents from different age groups, genders, ethnicities, and income levels. Moreover, four experts from academic, development agencies, and private sector associations were interviewed to seek triangulation and complementarity (Greene et al. 1989).

This study took place between August 2021 to February 2022. Due to COVID-19, the interviews were conducted online. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted with five interviewees from the B40 community, especially those engaged in manual jobs, with strict adherence to the COVID-19 social distancing guidelines. Interviews were conducted in both English and bahasa Melayu (the official language of Malaysia).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Public	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others
Age (year)				
18–29	3	2		
30–39	6	3	2	
40–49	5			3
50 and above	3	2	4	
Total		33 respondents		
Income group				
B40	7	2		
M40	5	2	3	3
T20	5	3	3	
Total		33 respondents		

At the initial stage, the working definition of SPV2030 was not revealed to the interviewees as the intention was to uncover the respondents' true understanding and reflection of the phenomenon of interest. The interview protocol was submitted for prior ethics approval from the university. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and written voluntary consent was obtained prior to the interviews and focus groups.

The descriptive statistics provided illustrate a diverse age distribution among the respondents, with a total of 33 participants spanning from the age range of 18 years to 50 years and above. This age spread suggests a rich variety of life experiences and generational perspectives, offering a broad spectrum of insights.

By tapping into the perspectives of the B40 (bottom 40%), M40 (middle 40%), and T20 (top 20%) income earners, ethnicity and ages, the study ensures that the narrative around SPV2030 is not one-dimensional. Each group offers insights shaped by their economic realities, which collectively paint a multifaceted picture of the nation's economic health. It is this diversity that lends credibility and depth to the study, enabling it to provide a holistic view of the socioeconomic conditions and yielding findings that are robust, relevant, and representative of Malaysia's complex economic landscape.

To ensure inter-rater reliability, theme-based coding was performed independently by more than one researcher and subsequently compared to existing theories and consolidated to avoid losing a higher-level perspective for informed theorising (Gioia et al. 2013). The Gioia methodology systematically organises qualitative data into a clear framework consisting of first-order themes, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions. First-order themes are direct labels derived from the raw data, representing participants' own views as shown in Figure 3. This step is to ensure the authenticity and qualitative synthesis is based on a bottom-up approach where themes emerge directly from the data itself (Thomas and Harden 2008). These are then abstracted into second-order themes that synthesise similar first-order themes into broader conceptual categories. The second-order themes represent the stage where the researcher(s) engage deeply with the data, grouping the initial codes into thematic clusters that begin to tell a story that is transparent and replicable (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Patton 2015). Finally, these categories are aggregated into even broader dimensions which encapsulate the overarching insights or phenomena being studied. This methodology allows researchers to extract detailed, qualitative data into structured, theoretical insights, making it based on grounded theory.

This study adopted the Gioia method of coding, whereby the first-order informant-centric terms were analysed and organised into second-order theory-centric themes surrounding the three key domains, which formed the overarching aggregated dimensions namely, development for all, addressing wealth and income disparities, and fostering a united, prosperous, and dignified nation based on the SPV2030 policy document (Economic Planning Unit 2019), as shown in Figure 3. A similar approach was applied to deduce the key enablers.
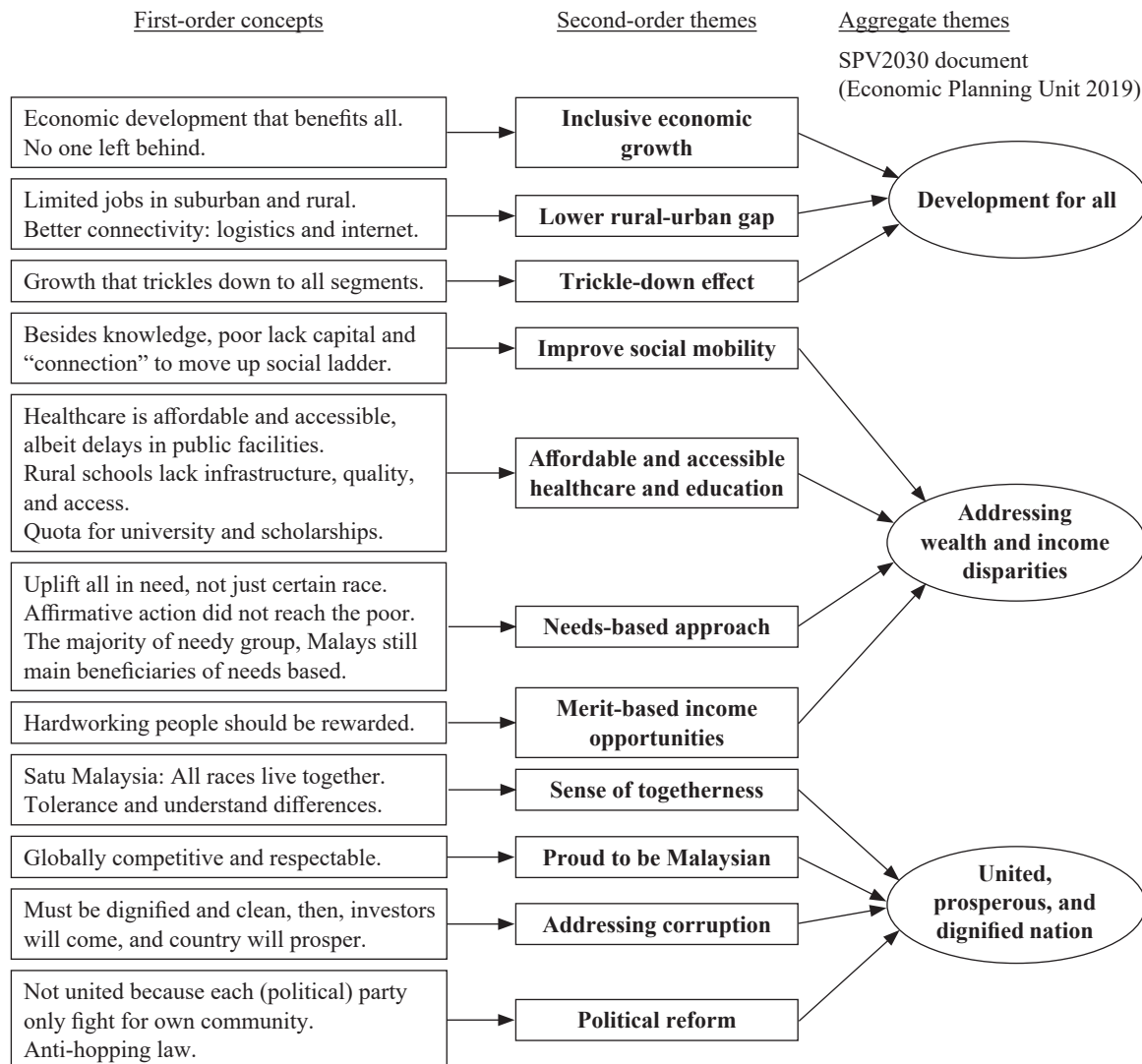
First-order concepts   Second-order themes   Aggregate themes

SPV2030 document
(Economic Planning Unit 2019)

Economic development that benefits all. No one left behind.	→	**Inclusive economic growth**	
Limited jobs in suburban and rural. Better connectivity: logistics and internet.	→	**Lower rural-urban gap**	**Development for all**
Growth that trickles down to all segments.	→	**Trickle-down effect**	
Besides knowledge, poor lack capital and "connection" to move up social ladder.	→	**Improve social mobility**	
Healthcare is affordable and accessible, albeit delays in public facilities. Rural schools lack infrastructure, quality, and access. Quota for university and scholarships.	→	**Affordable and accessible healthcare and education**	**Addressing wealth and income disparities**
Uplift all in need, not just certain race. Affirmative action did not reach the poor. The majority of needy group, Malays still main beneficiaries of needs based.	→	**Needs-based approach**	
Hardworking people should be rewarded.	→	**Merit-based income opportunities**	
Satu Malaysia: All races live together. Tolerance and understand differences.	→	**Sense of togetherness**	
Globally competitive and respectable.	→	**Proud to be Malaysian**	**United, prosperous, and dignified nation**
Must be dignified and clean, then, investors will come, and country will prosper.	→	**Addressing corruption**	
Not united because each (political) party only fight for own community. Anti-hopping law.	→	**Political reform**	

Figure 3: Data structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Meanings of the Three Pillars of SPV2030

In addressing the research question "What does shared prosperity mean to individual Malaysians?", this section highlights and discusses the meanings of the three pillars of SPV2030 based on themes that have emerged from the study with the example of verbatim responses obtained. Most of the respondents, except for the experts, initially reported unfamiliarity with SPV2030. When probed further, they freely provided their comments. Many identified SPV2030 as a continuation of Vision 2020, with a shift from a pure focus on economic development to a more holistic agenda aligned with the

SDG. Some respondents also highlighted that SPV2030 is "more granular", with more specific targets as compared to previous developmental goals, which provides a new direction for Malaysia.

Pillar 1: The Meaning of Development for All

Overall, respondents associated "development for all" to economic and financial improvement with the hope that Malaysia will achieve developed nation status where the bounties prosperity of the nation can be enjoyed inclusively so that no one is left behind. In this respect, SP is meant to propel Malaysia from the developing/emerging upper middle-income status by World Bank to a high-income nation. High income nation status will enable Malaysians to enjoy better living standards, infrastructure inclusiveness and human capital development to promote overall human flourishing (Lebel and Lebel 2019). An example quote is:

> The SP vision actually anchors on how inclusive growth can be pursued. I mean the goal to achieve so called high income developed nation status. (Male, 60s, Chinese, T20)

Generally, pro-growth policies will lead to reduction in poverty and inequality especially in the case of emerging nations such as India and China (Škare and Družeta 2016). In line with the basic tenets of trickle-down theory, the respondents of this study hope that when the country prospers, the economic rewards will bring benefits to individuals in society. They believe that economic growth is good for the marginalised group. An example of response is:

> One of the important so-called trickle-down effects is that when economy is growing at a high rate, we should see so called the trickle down, in a sense of income and business opportunities are being spread to all segments irrespective of the hierarchy or the level...it could be an underlying fundamental issue of market economy, of a liberal, free market capitalist system. (Male, 60s, Chinese, T20)

In terms of infrastructure development, respondents highlighted that modern infrastructure in terms of internet and logistics are needed to equip communities to better accommodate them to engage in the government's development agenda. Infrastructure development has the potential to promote more inclusive growth across all state borders through trade, logistics, investments, and tourism (Srinivasu and Rao 2013). If successfully implemented, this can reduce the rural-urban development gap by providing

access to critical services such as schools and hospitals. Additionally, information technology infrastructure will raise the knowledge gap and provide opportunities for value-added job opportunities for all. Many respondents have highlighted their expectations for better connectivity and infrastructure for development in Malaysia. Examples of responses are:

> Uh, uh, migration from rural area to the urban area is still huge because there is not much development in the rural area. (Male, 40s, Malay, T20)

> Uh, equal opportunity for education, jobs, these are the key factors that we need to address so that we can achieve equal development in all areas. (Female, 50s, Indian, M40)

> Like internet connectivity. Like roads, like even electricity. Because I know that some schools in Sarawak, it doesn't have...24 hours electricity. Often times, they use generators. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

Based on the above the second order themes extracted were inclusive economic growth, lower rural-urban gap, and trickle-down effect.

Pillar 2: The Meaning of Addressing Wealth and Income Disparities

The major second order themes in this pillar of addressing wealth and income disparities are improving social mobility, affordable and accessible healthcare and education, and needs and merit-based approach.

First of all, social mobility is the enhancement of individuals' ability to improve their socio-economic status via better access to education and employment opportunities [Corak 2013; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2022]. With social mobility, it is hoped that the intergenerational wealth gap will be addressed and reduced. Upward social mobility is viewed by respondents as critical to build their capacity to uplift themselves from their wealth situation through their lifetime. They hope SPV2030 will provide more opportunities to enable the bridging of the wealth gap between the higher and lower income groups. Some verbatim quotes are:

> If they have income opportunities, they'll be equal with others, hence close gap. (Male, 40s, Others, M40)

> So, when you find those who have is actually a combination of network, of capital, of endowments and all that, and the way that they are able to leverage on those endowments and resources to actually become richer, you see... (Male, 60s, Chinese, T20)

Secondly, the respondents highlighted that Malaysia has achieved affordable and accessible healthcare with adequate subsidies and access for underserved communities. Some respondents mentioned that even in inaccessible areas in East Malaysia, helicopters were deployed to evacuate critical patients, and healthcare teams visit remote areas to provide medical check-ups to vulnerable groups. Access to quality healthcare however differs among income groups where those who can afford it go to private hospitals for faster treatment, more comfort, and privacy. Broadly, the respondents agreed that basic and affordable healthcare needs are available in Malaysia, even though some suggested the need for improving response time in certain areas in East Malaysia (SDG3). Examples of verbatim quotes are:

> Overall healthcare Malaysia is the cheapest. I think because you only need to pay one ringgit, and everyone can go. Can access...even in Sarawak. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

> Uh, ok, healthcare wise I would say that every Malaysian is accessible to governments medical centre. (Female, 50s, Chinese, T20)

> So, in terms of health, I don't see personally a big disparity. (Female, 30s, Malay, M40)

> *Klinik-klinik dan* hospital *di luar bandar tidak mempunyai ubat-ubatan*, expertise *yang mencukupi*...mostly *dia orang pakai* helicopter... *Kalau ada masalah*, you have to wait...*2 ke 3 hari untuk rawatan* [Clinics and hospitals in rural areas do not have enough medications, expertise...mostly they use helicopters...If there is a problem, you have to wait...2 to 3 days for treatment]. (Male, 40s, Others, M40)

On the issue of education, inequality issues highlighted include rural-urban inequality gap, household incomes and parents' education level, and access to tertiary education. In terms of the rural-urban inequality gap, it was highlighted that while schools are generally available in rural areas, some are located far away from students' homes and are difficult to access due to poor logistics (lack of transportation). There may also be a lack of infrastructure (internet) which was experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of responses are:

The infrastructure of the school itself, that might be in Sarawak left behind. But don't forget also some places in *Semenanjung* [Peninsular Malaysia], like, in remote areas of Pahang, where it doesn't access to the Internet. So, because we have to catch up with the whatever development. So, although they provide school but that infrastructure to enable school, in order to operate like what in city they can't do it. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

Most important...we need more schools in rural [areas]. (Male, 40s, Others, M40)

Furthermore, on the household incomes and parents' education level, some respondents expressed the importance of family background in children's education, similar to that posited by Duncan and Murnane (2011). In particular, during COVID-19, some parents could not afford smart devices for their children's online learning. Furthermore, due to their own background, some parents may place less emphasis on education and not put as much effort into supervising their children's learning at home. A few respondents mentioned differences in language exposure, stating that rural kids cannot speak English and continued to be marginalised.

The views above are in line with past research which suggest the centrality of healthcare and education reforms in development programmes to improve their quality of life and empower lower income group to achieve upward social mobility and freedom (Sen 1999; Stiglitz et al. 2009).

Thirdly, respondents had different views regarding the need, race versus merit-based issue. Need based policies address inequalities to promote social inclusion for all citizens regardless ethnicity, religion, and gender. Race-based policies promote social agendas by aiming to fulfil the development of specific ethnic groups due to historical racial discrimination (Lee 2024). Generally, respondents indicated that needs and merit-based policies to be more inclusive as they address inequality based on considerations of basic needs and fair competition among all citizens for income and opportunities. Examples of race-based viewpoints are:

If that company is a Chinese company, then they maybe will give Chinese locals more salary and then maybe Malay, they will give less a bit. And then in Malay company, maybe they will give more to Malays, and then Chinese less. (Female, 20s, Chinese, B40)

> [The] rich among Malays...due to political patronage and windfalls and 30% Bumi shareholdings...not doing more due to greed and capitalistic mindset. (Female, 50s, Malay, M40)

Despite some respondents stating that they lacked detailed knowledge of the NEP, many of them commented on the race-based affirmative action and how it had affected them. Several experts explained the uncertainty in shifting from a race-based to a needs-based policy in SPV2030. These respondents highlighted that a different approach is needed, as the previous affirmative actions did not fully uplift the intended Bumiputera groups. Some Malay respondents believe that even with a needs-based policy, the main beneficiaries will still be Bumiputera. Nevertheless, others felt that it is important to identify "who really needs help" rather than targeting a specific community. The issue of Bumiputera privileges is seen as a persistent challenge. In this context, there would not be much difference between needs and race-based policies in Malaysia. Examples of verbatim responses are as follows:

> Even if we look at SPV, it has turned into, uhm, how do you say this ethnic blind...But if you see the recent data, the gap is still huge...And if that's the case then we have to see the proportion and it's still going to be very heavy on the Malays. (Male, 30s, Malay, M40)

> So...for the SPV...I think the objective is better in the sense that we are looking at, let us put aside the sort of racial agenda and look at who actually needs help in our country. (Male, 30s, Indian, M40)

> At the end of the day, ultimately, to me, it's the Malays, their needs you know, boils down to the Malays right...So, to cater to each and every single one needs despite of race is very difficult. (Male, 30s, Malay, M40)

In contrast, an expert respondent highlighted that wastage could be reduced if tenders are awarded based on merit, which would promote a more transparent and equitable way to uplift disadvantaged groups. Other respondents emphasised that income opportunities should be given to those who work hard and are deserving. Examples of respondents' views on merit-based policies are:

> For me, I am going on a very merit-based kind of a take. I think if you give people equal opportunities to education, you give them equal opportunities to jobs, eventually the gap will close. (Male, 40s, Malay, T20)

> For me, like the current government likes to give out handout, so be honest. Yeah, kind of give handout to B40 and M40...But I think the mentality has to change to work hard, I mean I'm telling these to myself also. I mean, take on opportunities handed to you... (Male, 30s, Chinese, B40)

Furthermore, it was highlighted that the quota system for tertiary education and scholarships based on different ethnicities is a point of concern for many respondents. Some non-Bumiputera respondents perceived that race plays an important role in getting scholarships and in gaining access to desired courses at public universities. On the contrary, some Bumiputera believed that only those with connections could gain access. Two examples of responses are as follows:

> I think all of us can agree that the moment we stepped into tertiary education. I don't think there's any fair treatment anymore because probably the policy, is more to race based...like friends of mine who have gotten really good results in SPM [Malaysian Certificate of Education], the kind like straight As, but did not get any of the scholarships by the government...on the other hand, you can see that the other races where you don't even get straight As and you still get all kind of opportunity to go into medicine, to go overseas. (Female, 40s, Chinese, M40)

It appears that the Bumiputra affirmative based action remains a contention (*Bernama* 2023). The merit-based thrust in SPV2030 will not be fulfilled if doubts of race-based thrusts remain in the perception of the grassroots (Navaratnam 2020). It is apparent that the clarity and delicate balance of needs, race-based affirmative action, and merit-based policies is important in ensuring the sustainability of SPV2030 in the perspective of the grassroots.

Pillar 3: The Meaning of a United, Prosperous and Dignified Nation

The dominant themes extracted in this pillar are sense of togetherness, proud to be Malaysian, the necessity in addressing corruption and political reform.

There were some differing comments by respondents on their pride of their Malaysian identity. Internationally, national identity is critical in a democratic society in ensuring physical security, inspires good governance and economic development (Fukuyama 2018). Conversely, in countries where national identity is low, individuals lack the obligation to serve the community and to participate in the nation's development and were more likely to engage in corrupt practices. In Malaysia, ethnic identity and national identity have been found to be correlated (Liu et al. 2002).

In terms of a sense of togetherness, respondents generally had the desire to see social cohesion fully embraced in Malaysia. Respondents emphasise the importance of collective progress, where all citizens grow, struggle, and flourish together. Broadly, respondents shared similar ideas that a united nation would be one where all races live together in harmony, without clashes and distrust. Slogans such as *Satu Malaysia* (One Malaysia) promote a sense of togetherness have become part of the Malaysian culture. Examples of responses are:

> I suppose dignified united, big words there. Uhm, I think it's just simple as, all for one, one for all. It will flourish, if one flourish, we all should flourish together. If we struggle, then we should all struggle together. Simple as that. (Female, 30s, Malay, M40)

> Ok, definitely a sense of togetherness. I think we have that and it's very much you can see during the COVID pandemic. We help each other during the white flag movement, during the white flag, you know, so we help regardless of race or religion. Alright, so in that sense we have no problem united. (Female, 40s, Others, B40)

In addition, some respondents highlighted that to become a prosperous and dignified nation in the eyes of the world, Malaysia needs to be competitive and efficient, with its leaders being respected and measuring up to the standards of global leaders. When leaders fail to keep up to social expectations, the nation's dignity may be questioned. An example is:

> When you go overseas, how do we dignify? Look at some of ministers who go there cannot speak, like the previous government, that minister...because he cannot speak English with the EU [European Union] people, he doesn't want to deal with them...when you want to grow...you have to engage with the world... (Male, 50s, Malay, T20)

Some respondents felt that Malaysians are respectable and dignified abroad and have achieved a unique national identity. However, other respondents express concern that national identity is rhetorical and is still a work in progress. Example of responses are:

> Uh, patriotism is very high. Nationalism is very high. We are proud of the country. And the country more or less be respectable, uh, across the globe...why that means that, we are, in a nutshell, I would say that we are proud to be Malaysian. (Male, 40s, Malay, T20)

> Ok, once upon a time, united and dignified Malaysia, but now, it's not, we are not united even though we talk about One Malaysia and all that. Segregation, I don't think...maybe we can talk about it but in the heart, we are not united. (Female, 50s, Indian, T20)

Corruption is also a key concern discussed by respondents. This is in line with the lower Corruption Perception Index trend from 2019 to 2022 (Transparency International 2023). In this context, political scandals such as the 1MDB. This scandal had involved RM43.8 billion of Malaysian government resources, contributed to the increase in sovereign debt as well as eroded the nation's image globally (Jones 2020). However, the indirect incentives for corruption can hinder its curtailment (Marquette and Pfeiffer 2018). In this study, respondents expressed concern of the ability of Malaysia to attract foreign investors and develop further economically which could hinder the SPV2030. They also express the perception that corruption can cause the loss of public dignity of citizens if the problem of corruption is not arrested. Examples of responses are as follows:

> I just told you like 50% of Malaysia's problem is corruption, or maybe more...How you want to be a country with dignity if you didn't address this. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

> Have to be clean, then only can be *makmur* [prosperous], then investors come back to us. (Female, 50s, Malay, B40)

> To achieve zero corruption is difficult, and also, foreign investors, they're also pulling out because they are losing confidence in investing in Malaysia. (Male, 30s, Chinese, T20)

> How you become dignity, how you want to be a country with dignity if you didn't address this [corruption]. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

By and large, respondents highlighted the need for political reforms for SPV2030 to be successful. Not only that, but respondents also feel that the government would need to be more committed to the implementations of policies. The political reforms mentioned by respondents were implied in the form of anti-hopping laws, fairer and cleaner elections, and national anti-corruption plans. Example of quotes are:

> My worry now is with these new fellows [new governments]...(if) it is not in the interest, so they may abandon the National Anti-Corruption Plan. So, the only way to do it is actually to have reforms. Cut off the corruption, you know, plough back the money, you know, have good healthcare system, good education system and things like that. (Male, 50s, Malay, T20)

> I think the SP vision, the root cause of it, they say that why we're having all these inequalities is because one of them was like corruption, right...if we are able to combat that, to reduce corruption or to make it even to zero. (Female, 30s, Chinese, M40)

A priori findings: Key Enablers for Progress in Malaysia

Based on the *a priori* findings, Figure 4 shows a summary of the themes surrounding the enablers to the achievement of SPV2030 that are highlighted by the respondents. This section is important as it adds credence to the understanding and future implementation of the pillars of SPV2030 discussed above.
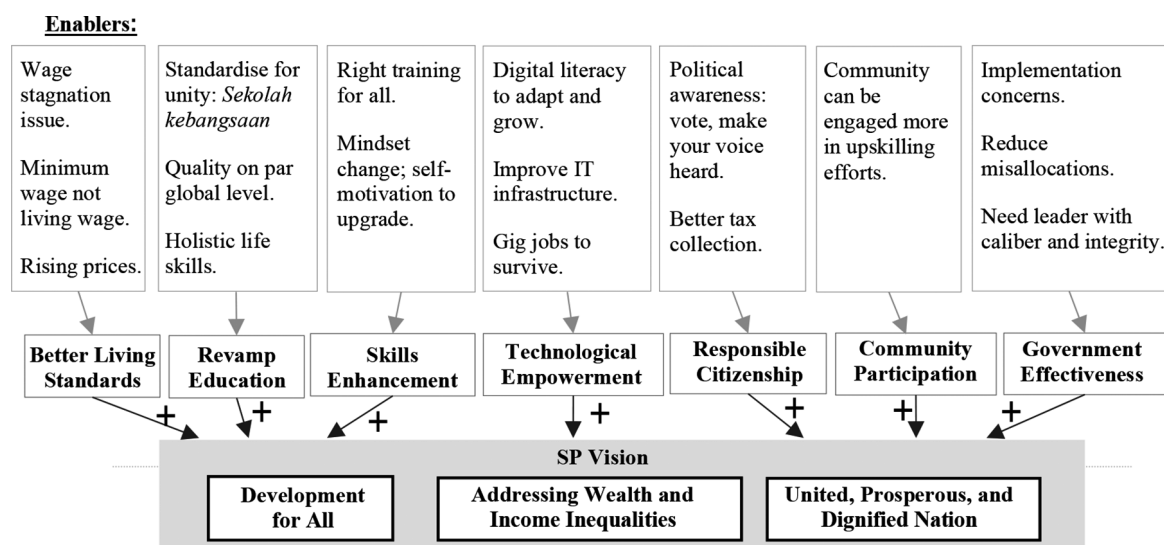

Figure 4: Key enablers of SPV2030.

Better Living Standards, Revamp Education, and Skills Enhancement

Many respondents cited challenging living conditions due to low wages and rising prices in Malaysia. An expert highlighted the critical challenges of wage stagnation among the M40 (skilled and semi-skilled), as well as the competition from foreign workers faced by B40 unskilled workers, which have resulted in low-income levels among both B40 and M40 groups. Some responses are as follows:

> I think we need to look more closely into the extent to which their living standard, the real income levels of those who have not, which can be defined even among the M40s, extend their income and wage level have stagnated, you see...Their wages and income have been affected severely by the influx of cheap foreign labour. (Male, 60s, Chinese, T20)

> There are jobs with very different income levels, the lowest one only gets RM1,200 per month, very difficult to survive in big cities like this. (Male, 20s, Malay, B40)

In addition to these livelihood challenges, it is also imperative to improve the skillsets of Malaysians, enabling them to access high-income jobs and build necessary life skills such as financial literacy to improve financial well-being, language, and communication skills are also highly demanded by the job market.

Many respondents view schools as a place to develop national unity. The idea of instilling multiculturalism raised the potential of standardising *Sekolah Kebangsaan* (national schools) for all ethnic groups to replace vernacular schools. Examples of quotes are:

> When it comes to school, for example, what I wish to see is that, there is a structural revamp, in terms of the entire education system to have a singular schooling system that does not represent race but represent Malaysians, where Malaysians still can keep their mother tongue or whatever they want, like Jawi or Mandarin or Tamil, but in same school under one roof without segregating, just like old days... (Male, 50s, Malay, T20)

> I feel we should abolish vernacular schools, uhm, there shouldn't be a reason why you have to have one school that just focuses on either Tamil language or Mandarin language. So, we have a *Sekolah Kebangsaan* (national school) and so everyone should be inclusive. (Female, 30s, Malay, M40)

Respondents also emphasised that continuous learning and personal drive to upgrade and acquire new skills are necessary to secure new opportunities via formal education. Access to skills upgrading is also essential.

> Yes, just some more of development in terms of advancing education. You know lifelong learning. (Male, 30s, Malay, M40)

> I suppose when you are human capital you need to keep on developing yourselves...there must be a recognition on our part that the learning doesn't stop the moment you graduated and so on, even when you are working. You will still have to keep on striving to become better in terms of developing your skills. (Female, 30s, Malay, M40)

Cultivating a self-improvement mindset and making opportunities available to enhance skills are both necessary to enable Malaysians to become a more competitive workforce, access higher-paying jobs, and subsequently upgrade their living standards.

Technological Empowerment

In this digital age, respondents emphasised the importance of technology, particularly in bridging the rural-urban gap, participating in the gig economy, and securing higher-paying jobs. Examples of such responses include:

> Create more high-income jobs in inner area, improve communications infrastructure and internet. If they have income opportunities, they'll be equal with others, hence close gap; infrastructure should come first to give them the exposure. (Male, 40s, Others, M40)

> During COVID many people start business. Online is good, can do from home, no need to invest physical stores, deliver through Grab/ Food Panda. (Male, 40s, Malay, B40)

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies, with individuals and firms, including SMEs, needing to up-skill and adapt to survive.

> I guess adaptability is...digitalisation of how things are going to be done, there need to be initiatives to help SMEs...digitalisation of their businesses. So yeah, it's not just brick and mortar anymore... (Male, 30s, Malay, M40)

> Is a new opportunity, but now already too much of these. Online selling, and some well, not really is selling stuff, maybe somehow some just want to earn your money without selling a right thing [due to competition some may resort to dubious schemes to survive]. (Female, 20s, Chinese, B40)

However, while technology opens new opportunities, it brings new challenges to the quality of inclusion and the need to have proper implementation of labour protection and data privacy laws.

Promoting Responsible Citizenship and Community Participation

Other than a state-led approach, a governance system that emphasises democratisation and inclusive political participation can be a good way to address intercultural and inequality concerns (Villalobos et al. 2021). Some respondents also acknowledged the role of individuals in participating in the democratic process. Examples of responses are:

> I think above all is to educate the citizens. Regardless of whoever on the top, if the people know who they choose...the power lies on people. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

> I think moving forward for this country, the people have to raise up. That means we must have a community; we must have a movement. Ok, uh, civil society is there...Unless you come out the streets and protest and bring down the government, which in 2018, through electoral process it was done. (Male, 50s, Malay, T20)

Expert respondents highlighted the importance of responsible citizens to pay taxes to generate income for the authorities to assist the under-privileged. In this regard, respondents highlighted that it is critical to improve the tax system as the problem of a narrow tax base resulting in only a small number of companies and individuals paying taxes.

Government Effectiveness

Respondents have underscored that for the successful realisation of SPV2030, consistent implementation of initiatives is essential to drive policy progress and ensure equitable distribution of the benefits. Hence, there must be mechanisms in place that guarantee resources reach the targeted groups. The government is encouraged to establish long-term subsidies, which would not only provide immediate relief but also alleviate the problems at their root. Some responses are as follows:

> The policy is there, but the problem is that the implementations. (Male, 40s, Malay, T20)

> For instance, [officers] giving siblings preference for training offered. Should make this "public" and handle this as a responsible person in promoting more transparency in institutions. At the end of the day, should go through the normal process to make the system more competitive. (Female, 40s, Others, M40)

> You see, they have subsidies, PRIHATIN, or PEMULIH...all these assistance programme but, if you look at it as a bigger scale, it doesn't help much, it will just alleviate temporarily. (Female, 30s, Malay, M40)

While respondents also showed strong emphasises on the need of leader with calibre and integrity.

> So, to unite, uh, you need a leader, a strong leader. (Male, 50s, Malay, T20)

> I think for the past few years especially we have seen like because I think the SP vision, you need like a very good leader to bring us along the way, right? (Female, 30s, Chinese, M40)

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Theoretically, this is a nascent study in developing the conceptual model to add to discussion in literature on SP from an individual perception perspective in Malaysia, a developing nation. By applying and potentially refining theories of economic growth, social justice, and inclusive policymaking, this research contributes to a broader conversation about equitable development.

Practically, the study adds to the understanding of the trickle-down effect of government policies and how it will capture the buy-in of the grassroots. By identifying the enablers and barriers to SP as experienced by Malaysian citizens, this research can inform more precise policy interventions. It is apparent that SPV2030, requires the joint effort of the government, institutions, and society to garner the trust and momentum in ensuring stability and smooth implementation.

Empirically, this study uses consistent past qualitative methods by exploring themes and meanings used. Future research can explore the conceptual model by developing measurement scale(s) for SP and investigating the trickle-down effect on individual financial well-being and personal human development further and in different cultural settings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study fills the lacuna in literature in exploring SP from a qualitative, individual grassroot perspective, adding meaning and credence to existing secondary data based quantitative research done on a macro scale in incorporating individual perceptions. The findings show that SPV2030 is seen as a catalyst for inclusive growth, with expectations that its implementation will stimulate a trickle-down effect, fostering greater social mobility. Participants expressed a strong desire for the adoption of a needs-based approach that is equitable, particularly in critical domains such as education and healthcare. The consensus underscores a collective aspiration for development that is not only widespread but also well-targeted to uplift the most vulnerable in society.

Moreover, the study reveals that robust governance, and the reduction of corruption are viewed as pivotal elements in achieving a united, prosperous, and dignified nation. Participants articulate a vision of governance characterised by transparency, accountability, and integrity, emphasising that these qualities are essential for fostering national unity and prosperity.

Drawing from the rich insights provided by respondents, this study delineates key areas for reform. The clarion call for the enhancement of education quality, an elevation of workforce skillsets, and an increase in income levels to bridge the widening socio-economic divide. Additionally, technological empowerment emerges as a critical enabler for development, with particular attention to mitigating the rural-urban divide that persists as a

significant challenge. This study also contends that the government requires political determination in confronting and resolving deep-seated legacy issues, such as race-based affirmative action policies and the spectres of perceived corruption. These issues are considered paramount in restoring public trust and cohesion, thereby fortifying the social fabric and national dignity. Also, despite commendable efforts in upgrading education and workforce skills, and embracing technological advancements to empower rural communities, there is an imperative to assess the effectiveness of these policies from the perspective of Malaysians, ensuring that policy reforms translate into tangible improvements in their quality of life (Sachs 2012). Additionally, the findings from this study should inform policymakers, guiding strategic and targeted policy development, particularly as Malaysia seeks to enhance its global competitiveness and close developmental gaps relative to its ASEAN counterparts (Stiglitz et al. 2009).

The findings provide a clarion call for action towards refining policy mechanisms to ensure that the goals of SPV2030 are not just aspirational but achievable, resonating with the needs and hopes of the Malaysian people. The research herein lays a foundation for subsequent empirical studies to further investigate and monitor the progress of SPV2030, ensuring that the vision for SP becomes an attainable reality for all Malaysians. The theoretical, practical, and empirical implications for future research have also been highlighted.

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COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

The interview protocol was submitted for prior ethics approval by the Sunway University Research Ethics Committee under SUREC 2021/001. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and written voluntary consent was obtained prior to the interviews and focus groups.

NOTES

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