



# Social Well-Being Elements Through the Lens of Low-Income Group among Malays in Malaysia After 14th General Election: A Systematic Literature Review

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**Abstract:** Social well-being is a condition where a community feels safe and comfortable living their lives without any constraints from anyone. Hence, it is vital to discover the main elements contributing to a community's social well-being in a multi-ethnic country. It will become the main guideline of how they want to be treated and helped. This systematic review aims to discover the social well-being elements through the lens of the Malay low-income group in Malaysia after 14th general election. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method, thirteen related studies were identified from the Web of Science, Scopus databases and snowballing technique of related sources. Further review of the articles through qualitative analysis resulted in eight core themes on social well-being elements of Malay low-income group after GE-14, namely housing, religion, ethnic composure, health, management, environment, income, and education. These findings contribute to the enhancement of the field of social well-being, especially in a multi-ethnic democratic nation.

**Keywords:** Social well-being, Malaysia 14th general election, low-income, Malays, systematic literature review

## 1. Introduction

A human, in its nature, just wants to live a happy life with complete needs and desires. On the other hand, no human would want to live a miserable life; thus, well-being is a crucial subject familiar in the human dictionary. The phrase 'well-being' has had various yet broad meanings since it came into existence. The research of well-being has its own story that revolves around different religions, territories, and academic fields. Before the existence of the phrase 'social well-being', this subject has encountered several types of research under the subject of 'well-being'.

The history of well-being research started with the foundation of previous philosophers from the sociologist perspective that used the term 'well-being' as 'happiness' interchangeably. Questioning how one with power could control one's life to live well and flourish made Socrates looked into a detailed study about the necessary conditions for happiness (McMahon, 2006). According to Socrates, in Plato's symposium, happiness was what God possessed (Griffith, 1989). Meanwhile, Plato believed that happiness was not a pursuit of pleasure (hedonism) but relied on a lifelong learning and did not desire physical beauty but put a higher value on the beauty of the mind. Through this process of learning self-control, Plato believed that humans could acquire wisdom that contributed to humans' well-being (Griffith, 1989).

Aristotle proposed that the purpose of life was to achieve eudemonia (happiness). In Aristotle's words, he used well-living and well-acting to explain achieving well-being or happiness. Satisfactory of life or happiness lied in the well-living and well-acting of a human being, and excellent performance done through the well-living and well-acting would lead to happiness (Barnes, 2004). From the perspective of Aristotle, there were sources of goods that would contribute to happiness which were goods of the soul, goods of the body, and external goods such as wealth and good reputation.

By the end of the fourth century B.C.E, the meaning of happiness was widely defined by Greek philosophers. The definition of well-being or happiness became a goal for a peaceful and free state. It was no longer for personal satisfaction as described by Plato and Aristotle. The founder of Epicureans believed that well-being was a private state and, therefore, was ours to control. This message arose due to the political changes that happened in Greece (McMahon, 2006). Later, in the enlightenment era around the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, a new approach was created to define well-being. Enlightenment thinkers preached social progress through knowledge, creating a picture of a world that could be understood and governed by discernible laws (Reill, 2003).

By the mid of 18th century, there was a sudden increase of interest in the field of well-being, whether in the form of treaties, discourses, or sketches. Artists such as Jean-Baptiste Joseph Pater created an artwork named "The Golden Age" to reflect the fantasies of happiness. In this artwork, he had shown the fantasies of happiness by painting children as the subject, playing happily in the garden with hobbyhorses and a windmill pinwheel in the scene (Baetjer, 2019).

Meanwhile, Francois-Jean de Chastellux attempted to write the world's first history of happiness by conducting comparative sociology to determine happiness levels in different populations at different times (McMahon, 2006). He stated that this study required knowledge of complex variables such as level of taxation, daily and annual total working hours, leisure time or off day for the workers, and calculations of the hour individually could labour. Chastellux used a more accessible approach by using the measure of slavery and war as the vital impediments to public happiness followed by religious superstition. Not only that, public happiness was also related to the levels of population and the productivity of agriculture (McMahon, 2006).

Looking at the thinkers and artists in the enlightenment era, it shows that the thinkers used science and measurement, and personal well-being was one of the conditions to develop a healthy society. This aspires to explain human behaviours according to natural laws during the enlightenment era that continued to have a powerful impact on modern society by taking rational pleasure of maximizing individual as the primary context.

Later, the term well-being was used by economists such as Adam Smith. He stated that true happiness happened in 'tranquility and enjoyment'. Despite that, he thought that virtues like civic education and public schooling could solve alienation among labour due to the workers' ignorance and lack of connection over the goods they produced.

In the 19th century, the term well-being was used to explain different subjects, people, and situations. Likewise, the definition also varied from the definition of well-being in the 17th and 18th centuries. When the French government sent Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831 to research the criminal justice system, he discovered and wrote about the evolution of freedom and democracy in developing a new nation. Alexis acknowledged that many American citizens believed that it was essential to pursue their happiness through the freedom of attempting to create a better life for themselves and their families and enjoying their production of labour, also called the pursuit of wealth. However, Alexis believed that two significant factors prevented America from becoming a hedonistic society. First was the norm to fit mainstream society over their interest and second was religion acting as a necessary check on the desire for physical pleasure (De Tocqueville, 1838).

Another European sociologist, Max Weber, was sent to America in 1904 to encourage the theory of the 'spirit of capitalism' after looking into the phenomenon between the Protestants and Catholics. He believed that the Protestants' anxiety over individual salvation's fate had inspired people to accumulate capital, one of God's blessings. Moreover, the Protestant faith had brought together the essential values of capitalism, which were the restriction of consumption in favour of the accrual of capital, a religious ethic of discipline, industry, and delayed gratification (Weber, 1930). Thus, by having a spirit of capitalism, people can pursue wealth and happiness.

However, in Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx's thoughts, communism was seen to achieve well-being. This is because communism would deliver community and purposeful labour and a more equitable distribution of the fruits of that labour. Thus, it would lead to a more meaningful life, indeed spiritual and satisfaction. Furthermore, a communist value like abolishing private property would also help pursue well-being (Marx & Engels, 2009). It was later argued by socialists that equality was unsuitable to be applied because people's needs and abilities are wildly varied, instead proposing the need to match personality types to them was the best way to achieve well-being (Christensen & Levinson, 2003). However, by the end of the 19th century, a new field of psychology began to develop its theory about well-being. John Locke imposed that different thing made different people happy, and the attempt to satisfy them using the same means was impossible. As a result, psychologists began to think about the internal rather than the external drivers of well-being.

Friedrich Nietzsche recognised that religion, specifically Christianity, was a source of well-being, and those who had difficulty in life were seen as 'God's elect'. The test given by God was said to be a preparation to face some point of life in the future. On the other hand, Sigmund Freud, a psychoanalyst, believed that to pursue a good life, there were two sides attached to it: positive and negative. The negative side was the suffering part, and the positive side was the

experience of intense feelings of pleasure (Freud, 2002). According to Freud, becoming a member of the human community and working for the good were ways to pursue well-being. They were working hard which include 'professional profession' that included physical and intellectual work. In addition, erotic love was seen as a closer goal to well-being than any method. However, as imperfect human beings, he imposed that humans should not seek out complete satisfaction from any single source.

Moving towards the 20th century, welfare economists started to study the field of economic well-being using 'hedonometer'. Hedonometer is an indicator to measure the level of well-being of an individual (Edgeworth, 1881). In addition, the rise of social indicators by statisticians by imposing gross national product was seen as a helpful tool to improve the economic growth. However, it was criticized by John Kennedy who stated that this measurement was worth only for the short term (Kennedy, 1968). Later, large-scale national quality of life surveys was included in assessing subjective well-being to improve the quality of the well-being indicator (Andrews & Withey, 1976).

The research of economic well-being has gained researchers' attention to study social well-being as they correlate with each other. Moreover, social well-being revolves around various aspects, including economic, interdisciplinary history, policymaking, health, and income. Thus, from this point, the future of well-being research seems likely to be as rich as its history since Aristotle until the early 20th century.

From the history of well-being, it is clear that the research of well-being used many approaches from theology, psychological, economic, political, and social perspectives. The outcome of each well-being research also varies due to different subjects and contexts of the study. Therefore, this paper intends to find the main elements of social well-being of Malays from the perspective of the low-income group. A systematic literature review is conducted in this paper to answer the research question of this paper.

## 2. Problem statement

Bottom 40% or B40, a low-income group categorised in Malaysia's income group, becomes a particular focus in this study because among the three largest ethnic groups in Malaysia, the B40 in 2019 was comprised of about 2.45 million Malays. Meanwhile, the Chinese and Indian ethnics classified to the B40 group were around 1.0 million and 338 thousand, respectively (Economic Planning Unit, 2020). This indicates a significant total difference among these three ethnics.

The B40 or low-income group was chosen because it often becomes the primary focus of national development policy. Furthermore, Malays hold the largest population in Malaysia, and hence, the community social welfare and well-being of Malays from the perspective of B40 should be given attention.

Notwithstanding, there were several issues regarding Malays that were brought up by many parties after the 14th general election (GE-14). Firstly, we could see religious issues rose as Pakatan Harapan imposed to ratify the ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination) if they won the 14th general election (Saat, 2018). The result of the GE-14 in May 2018 showed that the winning party that held the majority vote from the citizens was Pakatan Harapan. Therefore, by accepting the norm of ICERD, everybody in Malaysia is equal regardless of their race and religion. Therefore, the nation's wealth would be shared equally among the Bumiputeras, Orang Asli, Chinese, Indians, and other races (Ramli et al., (2018).

This triggered the Bumiputeras, especially Malays, as they are given special rights under Article 153 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. Islam as the religion of the federation, Malay language as the first language, and other special rights for Bumiputera are recorded under Article 153. Also, this matter has been mentioned within the 'Social Contract' framework that defined citizenship issues and rights for the non-natives, while granting special rights to the natives. Thus, there was some protest from Malaysians, especially Bumiputeras, to stop the government from implementing the ICERD because it would breach the Federal Constitution. Amending the supreme law of Malaysia is seen as a significant matter to Malays who originated from Malaya (The Star, 2018). Therefore, this has threatened the social well-being of Malays.

Besides, in education, the situation after GE-14 has affected the low-income group as borrowers of National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loan who made a late payment are blacklisted by the bank. PTPTN is a loan given by the government to students who pursue their studies at a higher level. This new regulation became a hot issue after GE-14 because it contradicted the manifesto of PH in which they promised to postpone the loan payment for those who are incapable of making a prompt payment. They were intended to reduce the student loan burden (Aun, 2018). However, a different regulation was made where the government would blacklist those who made late payment of the loan (Astro Awani, 2019). The reason why the Malaysian government made this decision was to reduce the debt of the nation.

This caused an uneasiness among the B40, a low-income group that consisted of a majority of Malays as they were already struggling to fulfil their basic needs such as food, clothes, houses, and other bills. Though many different well-being conceptualizations exist, the fulfilment of human needs, capabilities, and functioning matter the most in a well-being definition of majority people (Kangmennaang & Elliot, 2018). Thus, this is seen as a serious issue to the low-income group that consists of a majority of Malays.

### 3. Methodology

The method used to retrieve articles related to the social well-being of Malays of low-income group is by using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method. Web of Science and Scopus databases were used to find related articles to be reviewed systematically and to decide whether those articles are eligible as the data for this systematic literature review, while snowballing sample picking technique was used. It is helpful to generate ideas and guide the author to produce a suitable systematic literature review in the context of the research question.

#### 3.1 Research question

The formulation of the research question for this study was based on the Population, Interest, and Context (PICO) method. It is a tool that would assist the author in forming a research question for this systematic literature review. Based on this method, this review has included three main aspects, namely low-income among Malays (Population), elements of social well-being (Interest), and post Malaysia's 14th general election (Context), which led this study to formulate its main research question. The research question for this study is what are the main elements of social well-being among low-income Malays after the 14th general election?

#### 3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The main characteristic of choosing the articles is the inclusion and exclusion criteria table (Table 1). The review process steps of PRISMA, including identification, screening, and eligibility, were also carried out, followed by data abstraction and analysis.

PRISMA was used because it allows a review to be conducted systematically. In addition, it has three advantages, which are: (a) clarifies research questions, which enables systematic research; (b) identifies the inclusion and exclusion criteria; and (c) enables examination through large databases of scientific literature promptly (Sierra-Correa & Kintz, 2015).

**Table 1 - Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Criterion	Eligibility	Exclusion
Literature type	Indexed Journal (research articles)	Non-indexed journals, systematic review journals, chapter in a book, conference proceeding
Language	English, Bahasa Malaysia	Non-English (Non- Bahasa Malaysia)
Timeline	Between 2018 and 2021	<2017
Indexes	Social Science Citation Index	Science Citation Indexed Expanded

The selection criteria were set by referring to the refined results section on the left side of the database (referring to Scopus and Web of Science). The criteria were based on the keywords (Table 2) social well-being, Malays, post Malaysia's general election of 14<sup>th</sup>, and low-income group. Meanwhile, the timeline chosen was between 2018 and 2021 because this paper intended to look into the situation after the phenomenon of Malaysia's 14<sup>th</sup> general election in 2018. Therefore, related articles published after that phenomenon would be a potential review in this paper. Only relevant and related articles that fit the keywords were displayed in the database using this method. Thus, only related articles were found in the options.

**Table 2 - Keywords and information searching strategy example**

Database	Keywords used
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Social Well-being* SWB*" OR "social well-being* OR " social-well-being* AND swb* " OR " social well-being * AND general election 14th* " OR " GE-14 AND General Election Fourteenth* OR *14 <sup>th</sup> *" AND "*Malays* OR Malays*" AND "low-income" OR "Below 40" OR "B40")
Web of Science	TS = (("Social-well-being*" OR "Social-happiness*" OR "social-well-being*" OR "social- comfort*" OR "social well-being- variability*" OR "social well-being- uncertainty*" OR "happiness*" OR "SWB*" OR "social-inclusion*" OR "community-well-being" OR "community-happiness") AND (Malays* OR Malays))

#### 3.3 Systematic Review Process

The process of producing this systematic literature review consisted of four stages. In the first stage, keywords were identified using search strings through the databases (Table 2). Before searching for related keywords in the databases, similar and related keywords to social well-being were searched based on previous studies and thesaurus. A total of 110 articles were identified through this process. Additionally, an article related to the social well-being of low-income

group among the Malay race from a local university journal was also included due to its relevance to this study. The snowballing method was used because it allows relevant material to be selected directly. Finally, Google Scholar was also used to obtain some of the articles.

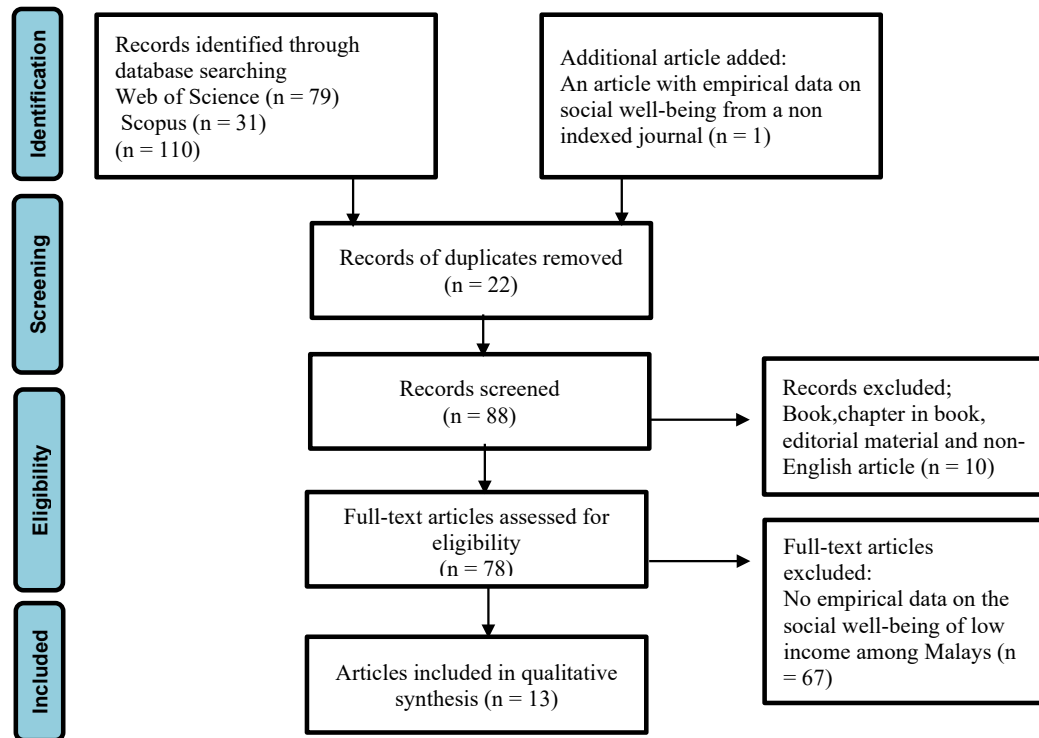


Fig. 1 - Flow diagram of the systematic review process (adapted from Moher et al., 2009)

The second stage was screening. After the relevant articles were identified based on the keywords specified, a total of 22 similar articles from the two different databases, Web of Science and Scopus, were removed. After careful screening, the articles that met the inclusion criteria were included (Table 3). Out of 88 identified resources, 10 were removed, including books, chapters in a book, editorial materials, and non-English articles. The third stage was eligibility. In this stage, the contents of the articles were assessed. Through careful examination, a total of 67 articles were removed for discussing social well-being in general without specific empirical data on Malays of low-income group.

Due to a lack of comprehensive empirical articles on the social well-being of low-income Malays, articles that had a subtopic on the social well-being of Malays with empirical data were also included in this review. Finally, the fourth stage was the review of 13 identified articles related to the social well-being of low-income Malays through a qualitative approach using thematic analysis.

## 4. Results

This study emphasised the main elements that contributed to the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays in Malaysia after the 14<sup>th</sup> general election. Descriptive analysis and data analysis according to suitable themes based on the selected articles were performed. Extraction of the articles made using a qualitative synthesis of quantitative studies whereby articles using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches were reviewed and analysed according to the themes.

### 4.1 Analysis Descriptive

Based on the findings using a snowballing technique, only 13 articles were eligible to be reviewed. All the articles focused on the contributing factors of social well-being of low-income group among Malays after Malaysia's 14<sup>th</sup> general election happened in 2018. Thus, it is crucial to filter the right timeline as it tells the situation at that particular moment.

Two articles out of 13 were published in Singapore, while the rest were published in Malaysia. Since GE-14 occurred in Malaysia, majority of the articles were published in Malaysia as it required the researcher to closely observe and understand deeply the local situation instead of observing this issue from a milestone away. As for the articles published in Singapore, Singapore is just located 22 kilometres away from the southern tip of peninsular Malaysia. In addition, Singapore and Malaysia have historical affiliations related to politics, land, and culture. Thus, closer observation can be performed by Singaporean researchers. Those two articles were conducted by Lee (2019) and Dettman (2020).

In terms of the methods used in the articles, six articles used quantitative method to perform their scope of studies. These include Nadiah et al. (2021), Chen & Yi (2021), Fazlina & Jia (2020), Mahdzan et al. (2021), Thangiah (2020), and Sharifah et al. (2019). All of these six articles used questionnaires as their source to collect data, except for Mahdzan et al. (2021) that used the InCharge Financial Distress/Financial Well-Being (IFDFW) Scale as the primary source of data. Mahdzan et al. (2021) collected data from 1,867 respondents using IFDFW as guidelines and index to measure financial well-being across low, middle, and high-income groups in Malaysia.

Meanwhile, seven articles used qualitative method, and all of them used secondary data as their source of data except for Lee (2019), Shahar (2019), and Leng (2018). These three articles took data from Merdeka Center of Opinion Research, Ministry of Finance, Consortium of B40 Research, and Leng (2018) performed an interview. This shows that Malaysia lacks qualitative research studies that employ interview as primary data in social well-being research about low-income groups in Malaysia. On the other hand, most qualitative articles used secondary data and primary data derived from other government or research organisations. The references of all the articles are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 - Article references**

No	Authors	Publication Year	Location	Publication Journal	Research Approach	Source of Data
1	Nadiah et al.	2021	Malaysia	Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government	Quantitative	Questionnaire
2	Leng et al.	2018	Malaysia	Kajian Malaysia	Qualitative	Interview
3	Chean & Yi	2021	Malaysia	Kajian Malaysia	Quantitative	Questionnaire
4	Ashyikin & Azlin	2020	Malaysia	Intellectual Discourse	Qualitative	Secondary data
5	Lee	2019	Singapore	Asian Economic Policy Review	Qualitative	Merdeka Center of Opinion Research, Ministry of Finance, Malaysia
6	Fazlina & Jia	2020	Malaysia	International Journal of Consumer Studies	Quantitative	Questionnaire
7	Shahar et al.	2019	Malaysia	BMC Public Health	Qualitative	A consortium of B40 Research
8	Mahdzan et al.	2021	Malaysia	Emerald Insight	Quantitative	Financial Well-being (IFDFW) Scale by Prawitz et al.
9	Thangiah et al.	2020	Malaysia	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	Quantitative	Questionnaire
10	Sharifa et al.	2019	Malaysia	BMC Public Health	Quantitative	Semi-guided self-administered questionnaire
11	Dettman	2020	Singapore	Research Collection School of Social Sciences	Qualitative	Secondary data

12	Mohd Anuar et al.	2018	Malaysia	Penyelidikan Serantau Islam dan Alam Melayu	Qualitative	Secondary data
13	Besar	2020	Malaysia	Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities	Mixed method	Interview and questionnaire

## 4.2 Themed Analysis

After analysing the articles descriptively, this study then analysed each of the articles under specific themes. There were several elements of social well-being of low-income group among Malays after GE-14, and this study categorised those elements in Table 4. Then, this study classified those elements into different themes: education, income, environment, management, health, ethnic composure, religion, and housing (see Table 5).

**Table 4 - Sub-Themes of social well-being elements through the lens of low-income group among Malays in Malaysia after 14<sup>th</sup> general election**

Authors	Results of the study
Nadiah et al. (2021)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Higher household income will lead to an increase in consumption.</li> <li>2. Low-income group has lower purchasing power compared to other income classes.</li> <li>3. The higher the education level, the higher the earnings.</li> <li>4. 67% of the low-income group did not receive assistance from the government because the restriction made is tighter.</li> <li>5. This caused some pressure on the low-income group due to the higher cost of living in a significant city.</li> <li>6. Level of education influences the income rate.</li> </ol>
Leng et al. (2018)	<p>Strategies to alleviate poverty in the perspective of Malays of low-income group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education as a strategy to escape poverty.</li> <li>2. Self-readiness of recipient groups (donors should identify the right target group).</li> <li>3. Financial capital and product technology for business start-ups.</li> <li>4. Motivation, guidance, and development of mental strength.</li> </ol>
Chean & Yi (2021)	<p>Factors of voting among low-income Malays:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cost of living</li> <li>2. Economy</li> <li>3. Islam</li> <li>4. Malay rights and status</li> </ol>
Ashyikin & Azlin (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guarantee people's basic food needs and taking care of the welfare of farmers after GE-14.</li> <li>2. Modern agricultural technology increases rice, vegetables, raw materials, poultry, meat, and fisheries.</li> <li>3. Environmental issues, such as deforestation and the usage of agricultural land for the industrial and residential areas, had challenged the farming industry to maintain its production.</li> </ol>
Lee (2019)	<p>Concerns of low-income Malay group after GE-14:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inflation</li> <li>2. Malay rights</li> <li>3. Job opportunities</li> <li>4. Housing</li> <li>5. Worsening race relations</li> <li>6. Political instability</li> </ol>
Fazelina & Jia (2020)	<p>Non-Malays (Chinese and Indian) decrease the risk of making partial payment settlement compared to Malays because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor inflow and outflow of funds</li> <li>2. Aware of the amount I owe</li> <li>3. Monitor financial statements</li> <li>4. Put aside money to pay bills first</li> <li>5. Pay bills on time</li> <li>6. Have a detailed budget for expenses</li> <li>7. Spend according to budget</li> <li>8. Finances are always organized</li> <li>9. Good in handling money matters</li> </ol>

Shahar et al. (2019)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Socioeconomic problems, health, and food insecurity continue to trouble the low-income group or B40.</li> <li>2. Various government agencies and corporate sectors have implemented strategic plans and policies targeting the B40 groups through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. However, relatively little empirical data exists in assessing their effectiveness.</li> <li>3. Physical health, mental health, health behaviour, literacy and financing, and nutrition are involved among B40.</li> <li>4. The low-income group has been identified as vulnerable to mental health problems, as shown by workplace bullying and psychological distress among employees from this group.</li> <li>5. They are also more likely to be absent from work due to lower income, divorce or separation, chronic diseases such as kidney disease, diabetes, and migraine.</li> </ol>
Mahdzan et al. (2021)	<p>B40 voted least with the statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Satisfied with personal finances.</li> <li>2. Never worry about meeting monthly living expenses.</li> <li>3. Never wait eagerly for the next payday.</li> </ol>
Thangiah et al. (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. M40 and T20 income groups had a better quality of life in all domains (physical, psychological, social, and environmental) compared to the B40 community.</li> <li>2. B40 with a majority of Malays experience a much slower income growth in rural areas because of:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) under-investment in infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>b) limited job opportunities</li> <li>c) high dependency on declining agricultural</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. The lack of income also inhibited people from procuring health-related equipment, products, and services.</li> <li>4. B40 group often experienced stress and anxiety problems when their income status was compared to those at higher rungs of the ladder, thus resulting in low scores in the psychological domain.</li> <li>5. B40 had a low-quality housing area.</li> </ol>
Sharifa et al. (2019)	<p>B40 common problems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Higher risk of having poor health</li> <li>2. Lower education</li> </ol> <p>Factors challenging quality of life of B40 among Malays:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic challenges and stability of the developing country.</li> <li>2. Rising cost of living including the cost of food, housing, and childcare.</li> <li>3. People with lower socioeconomic levels were the most affected group by NCDs (Non-Communicable Diseases).</li> </ol>
Dettman (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political power wielded by the Malay ethnic monarchy.</li> <li>2. Preservation of the political power of the country's hereditary Malay monarchy.</li> <li>3. There are some threats that Malaysia's minority groups posed to Malay Muslim supremacy.</li> <li>4. The new government was seen as a threat to the special rights of Malays and Islam.</li> </ol>
Mohd Anuar et al. (2018)	<p>Sensitive issues about Malays that arose after GE-14:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The status of Islam as the official religion of the federation.</li> <li>2. Challenging Malay rights in the constitution.</li> <li>3. Questioning the position of the monarchical institution.</li> <li>4. Open MARA to non-Bumiputeras.</li> <li>5. Challenging the position of Bahasa Melayu as the national language.</li> <li>6. Distribution text in Mandarin and Tamil.</li> </ol>
Besar (2020)	<p>Malay low-income priorities in Johor, Malaysia:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide ten cubic meters of water for free.</li> <li>2. Launching of 'Kad Sihat Johor' - an exclusive health card worth RM500 per year.</li> <li>3. Provide incentives worth RM1,000 to children who are pursuing higher education.</li> <li>4. Develop the Johor housing sector.</li> </ol>

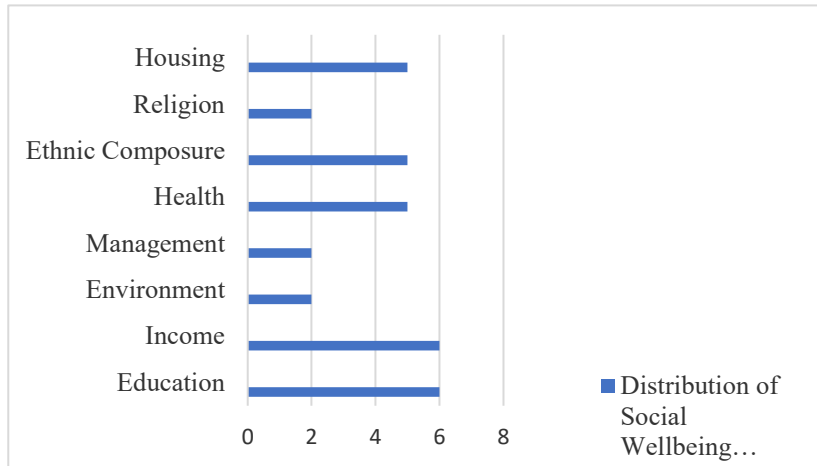


**Table 5 - Themes of social well-being elements through the lens of low-income group among Malays in Malaysia after 14<sup>th</sup> general election**

Authors	(Theme) Social Well-being Elements							
	Education	Income	Environment	Management	Health	Ethnic Composure	Religion	Housing
Nadiah et al. (2021)	\	\						
Leng et al. (2018)	\			\	\			
Chean & Yi (2021)		\				\	\	
Ashyikin & Azlin (2020)			\					
Lee (2019)		\				\		\
Fazelina & Jia (2020)	\	\						
Shahar et al. (2019)				\	\	\		
Mahdzan et al. (2021)		\						
Thangiah et al. (2020)		\	\		\			\
Sharifa et al. (2019)	\				\			\
Dettman (2020)						\		\
Mohd Anuar et al. (2018)	\					\	\	
Besar (2020)	\				\			\
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

## 5. Discussion

Based on the analysis, it was found that eight main elements contributed to the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays after GE-14. Those eight elements consist of education, income, environment, management, health, ethnic composure, religion, and housing. Out of these elements, education and income were the elements that became the subject of this study. This is because six out of 13 articles had related these elements with the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays after GE-14.



**Fig. 2 - Distribution of social well-being elements**

Education was the most highly discussed element of social well-being among low-income Malays because higher education guarantees a better pay. Especially since Pakatan Harapan had taken over the government, many new education policies were made. One of those policies was to use the English language frequently in formal education in Malaysia. For the parents from the low-income group, it was worrisome to them as most of them did not possess a high educational background and used native language in their daily conversation. Thus, they might need to seek for additional tutors to equip their children to quickly adapt to the competitive education system under the government of Pakatan Harapan. However, coming from the low-income group makes it hard for them to provide better education for their children. Education opportunities are essential for the low-income group of Malays to actively participate in the social and civic life of the wider community and, in doing so, to become contributing citizens of their country (Correa-Velez et al., 2010). Therefore, the prioritizing and targeting policies and services that aim to ensure easy access to education for all citizen classes are critical strategies for promoting the well-being and reasonable settlement of the low-income group.

Apart from that, the element of education was the most concerned aspect because learning Jawi writing in vernacular schools continued to culminate when the Federation of Malaysian Chinese School Board Associations (Dong Zong) submitted a memorandum rejecting the learning after GE-14 (Hayin, 2020). The Malays felt uncomfortable because Jawi is a script for the Malays. In the federal constitution, Article 152 states that Malay language is the national language of this country. National language implies that Malay language is the primary and official language that must be used in government affairs as well as public statements. There are two writings in the Malay language, namely Jawi and Rumi. Therefore, these two writings are used interchangeably. Earlier, Jawi script was used in the Malay language because when this language was developed as a language of knowledge, the first script was introduced as Jawi script. This writing was developed in line with the development of Islam (Hayin, 2020). Therefore, these caused the education element to be the highest element of social well-being of the low-income group among Malays after GE-14.

The second element, income, was as high as the education element because six out of 13 articles mentioned income as a contributing element of social well-being among Malays from the B40 group. This is because low income had caused some pressure on the B40 group due to the higher cost of living, especially in a big city (Nadiah et al., 2021). Moreover, the Sales and Service Tax (SST) imposed by Pakatan Harapan after GE-14 had somewhat burdened the low-income group due to monopoly suppliers for some essential goods and services. This caused suppliers to put a higher price on their products, especially essential products such as rice and pharmaceuticals (Lee, 2019). This burdened the low-income group as they were already struggling with their essential spending.

Furthermore, the low-income group had difficulties in socialization due to a lack of cultural capital from their early familial socialization. As a result, they found themselves socially isolated or excluded from certain activities. They usually illustrate how they perceived differences in wealth to be determined by social position, making social engagement challenging because of the different lifestyles of low-income and high-income groups (Browne-Yung et

al., 2013). Thus, their social well-being had been reduced due to the lack of activities that they could do as much as the high-income group could.

Three elements had the same distribution of number of articles. Five articles mentioned housing, ethnic composure, and health. Five articles that mentioned housing element are Lee (2019), Thangiah et al. (2020), Sharifa et al. (2019), Besar et al. (2020), and Dettman et al. (2020). Housing is an element of social well-being of the low-income groups because living in better quality houses would expose them to a healthier environment, safety, and better psychological condition (Thangiah et al., 2020). After GE-14, the government acknowledged how important it was to help the low-income group that consisted of majority of Malay. Thus, they promised to build a million affordable house units within 10 years (Hasnan, 2019).

Next, five articles discussed the ethnic composure element. Chean & Yi (2021), Lee (2019), Shahar et al. (2019), Dettman (2020), and Anuar et al. (2018) discussed the topic of ethnic composure of the low-income group among Malays after GE-14. The issues of ethnic composure arose due to Malays feeling threatened with their special rights. Furthermore, they also felt like their rights as a native ethnic were challenged post GE-14. Sensitive issues like the status of Islam as the official religion of the federation, Malay special rights in the constitution, position of the monarchical institution, intake of non-Bumiputeras into MARA, and position of the Malay language were debated right after GE-14 (Anuar et al., 2018). The social well-being of the low-income group among Malays had been affected because of the feeling of threat and unpleasantness caused by the issues raised by some parties. Thus, they felt insecure and unsafe as they needed assistance to reduce their hardships.

The next element that was mentioned in five articles was health. Those five articles are Leng et al. (2018), Shahar et al. (2019), Thangiah et al. (2020), Sharifa et al. (2019), and Besar (2020). Health became an element of social well-being among the low-income groups because they had a higher risk of developing poor health (Sharifa et al., 2019). The lack of income inhibited people from procuring health-related equipment, products, and services. The low-income group often experienced stress and anxiety problems when their income status was compared to those at higher rungs of the ladder, thus resulting in low scores in the psychological domain (Thangiah et al., 2020). Post GE-14, the government introduced a healthcare scheme called "Skim Peduli Sihat Nasional". Various options were made available under this scheme, including health takaful coverage to give the B40 group more benefits and access to health interventions, treatment, medicines, and equipment (Samiah, 2018).

Finally, the elements that were least discussed in two articles each were religion, management, and environment. Chean & Yi (2021) and Anuar et al. (2018) found that religion contributed to the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays after GE-14. On the other hand, Anuar et al. discovered that the status of Islam as the official religion of the federation had become a controversial issue after GE-14. This could have caused the social well-being of low-income Malays to become dysfunctional.

In terms of the management element, informants suggested that the government should identify the right target group for the aid purposes (Leng, 2018). This is necessary to avoid giving aid to people who were not eligible to receive the aid. In addition, there were a lot of strategic plans and policies to assist the low-income group, especially among Malays, but relatively little empirical data existed in assessing its effectiveness (Shahar, 2019).

The last element that contributed to the social well-being of the Malays was environment as discussed in articles by Ashyikin & Azlin (2020) and Thangiah (2021). A better environment could create better social well-being among the low-income group of Malays as common health problems can be reduced. Furthermore, environmental issues like deforestation and toxicity to aquatic habitat can be solved by substituting modern agricultural technology to increase rice, vegetables, raw materials, poultry, meat, and fisheries. Thus, people can get these essentials at a lower price as the production has become massive and more accessible.

This could benefit the low-income group to ensure their basic needs, especially food, are sufficient for living and ensure their food security. Food insecurity has been linked to lower life satisfaction or social well-being. The prevalence of severe food insecurity was significant because people were envious when they saw other people possessed something they wanted but could not have. Their concern was about having access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food (Elgar et al., 2021). In regard to this issue, the government expected green technologies to replace existing technologies to solve environmental problems after GE-14, as clearly stated in their manifesto. In addition, the manifesto also proposed the use of green technologies throughout the social system, including the transport system, which would provide a mechanism to identify data for targeted gasoline subsidies and upgrade the e-hailing system technology on agricultural systems to maximize production of agricultural products.

Most of the technological substitutions in the manifesto were part of a socio-technological approach, as Mol & Sonnenfeld (2000) proposed, which consisted of replacing the curative role of technology with a more preventive role. For example, the technologies used to improve public transport system would hypothetically reduce public vehicles; thus, this would reduce CO2 emissions. Therefore, this would help increase the social well-being of Malays from the low-income group as the government had indicated several solutions to serve a better environment after GE-14.

Based on the author's observation, there are several elements that some articles did not cover. For example, none of the articles explored the social relationship with other races, cultures, families, and social participation to date. However, these elements could contribute to the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays. This is because well-being consists of social acceptance which is the acceptance of others as they are, social actualization

which includes positive comfort level with society, social contribution that refers to a feeling that one has contributed to the society, social coherence that understands the social world as predictable and comprehensible, and lastly social integration which is a feeling of being a part of the community (Keyes & Lopez, 2002). Thus, the well-being principles of Keyes & Lopez (2002) have shown that a state of well-being consists of social dimensions that are mostly related to social acceptance and social integration.

Therefore, it is recommended the elements of social relationships with other races, cultures, families, and social participation should be studied in discussing the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays after GE-14 as Malaysia has various races. In addition, many have viewed that Malaysia has a double standard policy that is unfair to others because it always prioritizes the Malay community. Thus, the aforementioned elements could lead to an exploration of the social well-being of a community.

The limitation of this systematic literature review is that it relied on a relatively limited number of databases to identify potentially eligible studies. This is because the studies about social well-being, specifically among Malays from the low-income group after GE-14, are minimal. Due to the limitation, this paper could only review 13 articles systematically. More relevant findings could be discovered if this paper reviewed more articles from the database.

## 6. Conclusion

Social well-being is a condition where a community feels safe and comfortable living their lives without any constraints from anyone. Therefore, it is vital to discover the main elements that contribute to the social well-being of a community in a multi-ethnic country as it will become the main guideline of how they want to be treated and helped. Setting these guidelines can ensure that a society can be mutually respectful. Based on this review, the social well-being of the low-income group among Malays falls into eight elements: housing, religion, ethnic composure, health, management, environment, income, and education. Nonetheless, there are still many elements of social well-being of the low-income group among Malays that have not been explored, and if they are studied, various findings can be traced and learned from this subject. Therefore, this study hopes future studies could cover that dimension to support the social well-being research subject.

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