Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO LIFESPAN FINANCIAL PROTECTION: DEVELOPING A SIX-PILLAR RETIREMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR MALAYSIAN MILITARY FAMILIES RAISING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Hafizah Mat Nawi[1*]
Zarina Kassim[2]
Salwa Muda[3]
Asma' Rashidah Idris[4]

[1] Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia, Kem Sungai Besi, 57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (hafizah.matnawi@upnm.edu.my)
[2] Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia, Kem Sungai Besi, 57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (zarina.kassim@upnm.edu.my)
[3] Facultyof Accounitng Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seremban Campus, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. (salwa542@uitm.edu.my)
[4] Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Rembau Campus, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia (asmar440@uitm.edu.my)
*Corresponding author: hafizah.matnawi@upnm.edu.my

Article history
Received date : 24-10-2026
Revised date : 25-10-2026
Accepted date : 6-11-2026
Published date : 9-11-2026

To cite this document:
Mat Nawi, H., Kassim, Z., Muda, S., & Idris, A. R. (2026). From fragmentation to lifespan financial protection: Developing a six-pillar retirement planning framework for Malaysian military families raising children with special needs. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB),* 11 (70), 63-83.

Abstract: *Conventional retirement planning generally assumes that dependent children will eventually become financially independent. For families raising children with special needs (SNC), however, dependency may continue across the life course and beyond the caregivers' retirement or death. This study develops and validates an integrated retirement-planning framework for Malaysian military families with SNC dependants. This study employed a qualitative framework-development design to synthesise evidence from an earlier multi-stage research programme, including institutional mapping, financial-instrument analysis, household-level qualitative findings, international benchmarking, community engagement, and evidence on the transition to adulthood. A structured gap analysis identified six recurring weaknesses: fragmented institutional coordination, conventional retirement assumptions, underutilisation of financial and estate-planning instruments, discontinuity during transition to adulthood, caregiver financial and psychological strain, and limited long-term policy protection. These gaps were translated into a three-level, six-pillar framework and refined through stakeholder engagement with military welfare institutions, social welfare authorities, Islamic religious institutions, trust management organisations, and financial planning professionals. The final framework comprises Household Financial Readiness; Estate and Inheritance Planning; Insurance and Takaful Solutions; Institutional Support Mechanisms; Benchmarking and Best Practices; and Policy and Governance Reform, with financial literacy and retirement awareness operating as cross-cutting foundations. The study contributes by*

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

integrating military financial readiness with disability-sensitive future planning and continuity of lifespan care. It further proposes implementing an architecture centred on coordinated case navigation, special-needs trust mechanisms, early estate planning, and policy recognition of lifelong dependency. The framework provides a context-specific policy instrument that may inform reforms to retirement, disability, and social protection in Malaysia.

Keywords: *disability-sensitive retirement planning; financial readiness; military families; special-needs children; future care planning; special-needs trust; Malaysia*

Introduction

Retirement planning is often framed as accumulating and managing the resources needed to sustain an individual or couple after leaving paid employment. This conventional model embeds an implicit life-course assumption: children are temporary dependants who progressively move toward education, employment, and financial independence. This assumption becomes problematic for families raising children with intellectual, developmental, physical, or multiple disabilities whose support requirements may continue into adulthood. International research consistently shows that families of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face substantial uncertainty about future care, housing, legal arrangements, guardianship and financial provision, while many families delay formal planning despite persistent concern about what will happen when primary caregivers can no longer provide support (Lee & Burke, 2020; Lindahl et al., 2019; Anderson-Kittow et al., 2024).

The financial dimension is especially important. Parents of children with IDD report anxiety about their children's financial futures but often have limited engagement with formal financial-planning mechanisms, including special-needs trusts and dedicated savings vehicles (Agarwal et al., 2023). Barriers are not only financial; they also include limited service availability, uncertainty about future caregivers, lack of information, emotional difficulty and fragmented institutional pathways (Burke et al., 2018; Brennan et al., 2020). The transition to adulthood further intensifies vulnerability because service systems frequently become less coordinated after school-based or child-focused support ends, creating discontinuities in employment, independent living, and social participation (Beadle-Brown et al., 2023; Senevirathna et al., 2025).

These concerns have particular implications for military households. Military financial readiness is shaped not only by income and personal financial behaviour but also by organisational culture, retirement awareness, mobility, service conditions and the structure of military benefits. Recent Malaysian evidence has strengthened the measurement and behavioural understanding of financial readiness among military personnel (Nawi et al., 2025a, 2025b). However, existing military financial-readiness models remain largely centred on the service member as an individual financial decision-maker and do not explicitly incorporate a dependant who has financial and caregiving needs that may extend indefinitely. This creates a conceptual and policy gap between military retirement planning and disability-sensitive future-care planning.

Problem Statement

The study addresses the problem as four interlocking gaps. Each operates at a different point in the planning system, and each is necessary but not sufficient to explain why military families raising SNC retire without durable protection for their dependants.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Gap 1: Retirement planning does not sufficiently integrate lifelong dependency. The life-cycle model on which most retirement planning rests assumes that household consumption needs and dependency ratios decline once children leave the household (Modigliani & Brumberg, 1954). The standard personal financial-planning process defines its horizon around the client's own life expectancy and goals (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2005). For SNC households, these assumptions do not hold. Malaysian cost-of-care studies estimate the annual economic burden of raising a child with autism spectrum disorder at approximately RM35,366 (Kamaralzaman et al., 2018) and of raising a child with cerebral palsy at a median of RM52,540 (Ismail et al., 2022). Many of these costs, particularly developmental support and lost caregiver earnings, do not end at the age of majority. However, Malaysian military financial-readiness models remain anchored to the service member as an individual decision-maker (Nawi et al., 2025a, 2025b). The planning horizon that matters for these families is therefore the dependant's lifetime, not the retirees, and existing retirement-planning tools are not designed to model it.

Gap 2: Estate, insurance, Takaful and trust mechanisms are often treated separately. In Malaysia, the instruments that could secure a dependant's future are governed by distinct statutes, regulators and providers. Wills fall under the Wills Act 1959 and, for Muslims, wasiyyah and faraid under state Islamic law; intestate distribution falls under the Distribution Act 1958 and the Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955; private trusts fall under the Trustee Act 1949; public trusteeship falls under the Public Trust Corporation Act 1995; Takaful and insurance are regulated under the Islamic Financial Services Act 2013 and the Financial Services Act 2013; and the management of property belonging to a person who lacks capacity falls under the Mental Health Act 2001. Families therefore receive advice instrument by instrument rather than as an integrated protection plan. The consequence is not merely inefficiency. An outright inheritance or a Takaful benefit paid to an adult dependant who lacks decision-making capacity may require a court-appointed committee before it can be used; a Hibah or nomination may be made without a trustee to administer it; and a trust may be created without a funding source. The scale of planning failure in the general population is already visible: AmanahRaya has reported approximately RM65 billion in unclaimed assets, largely attributable to absent or incomplete estate planning (Malay Mail, 2025). For SNC families, the same failure carries a higher cost because the beneficiary may be unable to claim, manage or protect the assets at all.

Gap 3: Families must navigate fragmented welfare and financial systems. Support for a military SNC household is distributed across agencies with separate mandates, eligibility rules, and documentation. The Department of Social Welfare (JKM) administers disability registration and welfare assistance under the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, which establishes registration and a national council but does not create an enforceable entitlement to lifelong income support. Assistance such as the care allowance for bedridden persons with disabilities, raised from RM500 to RM600 per month in Budget 2027, remains needs-tested and separately administered (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2026). Military savings and pensions are administered through the Armed Forces Fund Board (LTAT) under the Armed Forces Fund Act 1973 and through the public pension system; veterans' affairs through the Department of Veterans Affairs (JHEV) under the Armed Forces Veterans Act 2012; and Islamic social finance through state Islamic religious councils (MAINs). Malaysian caregivers describe both financial difficulty and an inadequate special-needs support system as core challenges (Goh et al., 2025) and perceive government assistance as insufficient relative to actual costs (Ismail et al., 2022). The caregiver often bears the burden of coordination, often when care demands are

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

at their peak, raising planning costs and increasing the likelihood that long-term arrangements are deferred.

Gap 4: Military retirement policy does not explicitly accommodate caregiver succession and lifelong dependent support. Malaysian military and public-service arrangements do recognise disability in limited ways. A permanently disabled child who is unable to work may receive a derivative pension for life, subject to committee approval (Government of Malaysia, n.d.). JHEV's definition of a veteran's dependant extends eligibility for life to a child with a physical or brain-related disability (Department of Veterans Affairs Malaysia [JHEV], n.d.). These provisions, however, are survivor income entitlements rather than a succession architecture. They do not specify who administers the payment when both parents have died or lost capacity, how it interacts with inheritance and trust arrangements, or how care responsibilities are transferred. They also leave non-pensionable personnel, whose retirement wealth is received largely as lump sums, dependent on nomination and estate rules that distribute assets outright. By contrast, United States military retirement law was amended in 2014 to allow Survivor Benefit Plan annuities for a disabled dependant to be paid into a special-needs trust (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, 2014), which explicitly links military survivor income with professional trust administration. Publicly available Malaysian guidance does not indicate an equivalent mechanism, and pre-retirement programmes are not structured around caregiver succession.

Taken together, these gaps mean a military SNC household may be financially literate, eligible for several schemes, and in possession of relevant financial products, yet still lack a coherent plan that carries income, assets, decision-making authority, and care across the dependant's lifetime. These four gaps define the problem at the planning-system level. Section 4.1 shows how they were elaborated empirically into six structural gaps, and Table 5 shows how each was translated into a framework pillar.

Research Question and Contributions

This study addresses that gap by converting cumulative evidence from a broader Malaysian research programme into an integrated policy framework refined with stakeholders. Rather than treating financial literacy, estate planning, disability services, adult transition and social protection as separate domains, the study conceptualises them as interdependent components of retirement security. The central research question is: How can the fragmented financial, caregiving, institutional and policy needs of Malaysian military families raising SNC be integrated into a coherent retirement-planning framework that remains relevant across the dependant's life course?

The study makes three contributions. First, it extends military financial-readiness research by incorporating lifelong dependency and caregiver succession into retirement planning. Second, it connects financial planning with the future-planning literature in disability studies, where housing, legal arrangements, financial provision, care coordination and future caregivers are understood as interrelated rather than independent decisions (Lindahl et al., 2019; Lee & Burke, 2020). Third, it translates these insights into a Malaysian institutional architecture that incorporates conventional and Islamic financial instruments, stakeholder coordination, international benchmarking and governance reform.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Literature Review

Military Financial Readiness and the Limits of Conventional Retirement Planning

Financial readiness refers to the capacity to prepare for and respond to expected and unexpected financial demands through knowledge, behaviour, resources and access to appropriate financial mechanisms. In the Malaysian military context, recent empirical work has identified financial literacy, retirement awareness, military culture, and related behavioural factors as key components of financial readiness and financial planning (Nawi et al., 2025a, 2025b). These studies provide an important foundation because military personnel face distinctive employment structures, benefit systems and retirement trajectories. However, conventional financial-readiness models generally assume that household dependency declines over time. For SNC families, that assumption may not hold. Retirement, therefore, cannot be treated solely as a transition from employment income to a pension or accumulated assets; it must also be understood as a transfer of lifelong caregiving responsibility, decision-making authority, and financial stewardship.

This distinction is conceptually significant. When dependency continues into adulthood, retirement adequacy becomes partly a question of whether the household has established mechanisms that survive the parent-caregiver: a reliable future caregiver, legally recognised decision-making arrangements, adequate housing and support, protected assets, and institutions capable of administering resources in accordance with the dependant's needs. A retirement-planning framework for SNC families must therefore move from a narrow wealth-accumulation model to a lifespan financial-protection model.

Future Care Planning, Financial Planning and Caregiver Succession

Future planning is well established in the IDD literature as a multidimensional process. A systematic review by Lee and Burke (2020) found that relatively few families complete comprehensive plans despite the benefits of planning for individuals with disabilities and their families. Empirical work further shows that future planning encompasses interconnected domains such as housing, legal arrangements, identifying future caregivers, financial planning, day-to-day support, healthcare, and transportation (Lindahl et al., 2019). Importantly, the financial domain is not separable from the caregiving domain: a trust or savings account has limited protective value if no viable care arrangement exists, while a future caregiver may be unable to assume responsibility without adequate funding and legal authority.

Delayed planning also persists and is well documented. Burke et al. (2018) identified barriers including financial constraints, limited service availability, lack of time, family reluctance, emotional difficulty and uncertainty regarding who will provide future care. Brennan et al. (2020) similarly concluded that systematic approaches to future planning remain scarce even though structured planning interventions can produce positive outcomes. More recent studies reinforce the same concern. Anderson-Kittow et al. (2024) showed that families recognise the need to plan for parental ageing and death but often lack adequate support to translate concern into actionable arrangements, while Vibulpatanavong et al. (2026) found that financial insecurity, limited planning knowledge and reliance on informal family care continue to constrain future planning in an Asian context.

These findings are directly relevant to retirement policy. If a caregiver reaches retirement age without an integrated plan, financial vulnerability may emerge at several levels simultaneously: the parent's own retirement income, the dependant's lifelong support costs, the capacity of

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

siblings or substitute caregivers, and the availability of institutional services. The appropriate unit of analysis is therefore not only the retiree but the interdependent caregiving household.

Transition to Adulthood and the Service-Continuity Problem

Transition to adulthood is a critical point in the life course of people with disabilities. Research on transition-support quality emphasises that successful adulthood cannot be reduced to a single outcome such as employment. Instead, it involves opportunities for self-determination, community participation, independent or supported living, social inclusion and quality of life (Beadle-Brown et al., 2023). Service providers and decision-makers also report substantial access barriers during transition, including fragmented systems, eligibility changes and weak coordination across child and adult services (Senevirathna et al., 2025).

For retirement planning, this transition matters because caregivers' financial responsibilities do not necessarily decline when schooling ends. They may instead change form: from education-related expenditure to vocational support, transport, supported employment, therapy, day programmes, residential planning and adult social care. A framework that begins only when the parent approaches retirement therefore intervenes too late. Disability-sensitive retirement planning should commence earlier and incorporate the dependant's adulthood pathway as a core financial-planning variable.

Malaysian Evidence on Disability, Caregiving and Financial Planning

Malaysian evidence on the financial dimension of raising a child with special needs is growing but remains concentrated on the cost of care rather than on long-horizon planning. Kamaralzaman et al. (2018), surveying 245 parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, estimated a total annual cost of approximately RM35,366, with developmental costs (therapy, special education and related services) forming the largest component. Ismail et al. (2022), in a mixed-methods study of families of children with cerebral palsy, estimated a median annual burden of RM52,540, of which indirect costs arising from lost parental productivity formed the largest share; household income was the only significant predictor of burden, and most families earned below the national average. Qualitative work similarly identifies financial difficulty, caregiver burnout and inadequacies in the special-needs support system as recurrent challenges for Malaysian parents, alongside strong parental aspirations for the child's future independence (Goh et al., 2025).

Three features of this evidence base matter for the present study. First, the cost estimates are cross-sectional and child-focused; they do not model how costs evolve after the transition to adulthood or after the caregiver retires. Second, the literature documents caregiver strain and service inadequacy but rarely examines the instruments through which families might secure resources for the dependant's adult life, such as wills, Hibah, trusts and Takaful. Third, military households are largely absent. Malaysian military financial-readiness research has established the roles of financial literacy, retirement awareness and military culture (Nawi et al., 2025a, 2025b), but it has not yet incorporated lifelong dependency. The Malaysian evidence therefore confirms the severity of the financial burden while leaving open the question this study addresses: how that burden should be planned for across the dependant's life course.

Legal and Policy Architecture in Malaysia

Any retirement-planning framework for SNC families must operate within the legal and policy architecture governing income, assets, capacity, and care. In Malaysia, this architecture is extensive but distributed across instruments designed for different purposes and administered

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

by different authorities. Table 1 summarises the instruments most relevant to lifespan financial protection and identifies the limitation each presents for military SNC families.

Table 1: Malaysian Legal and Policy Instruments Relevant to Lifespan Financial Protection for Military SNC Families

Domain	Instrument	Relevance to SNC families	Limitation for lifespan protection
Disability rights and welfare	Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 (Act 685); JKM assistance schemes	Registration (OKU card); access to welfare assistance, care allowance and worker allowance	Rights-based but not an enforceable lifelong income entitlement; schemes are needs-tested and administered separately
Military savings and pensions	Armed Forces Fund Act 1973 (Act 101); Pensions Act 1980 (Act 227) and armed forces pension arrangements	Retirement savings (LTAT) and pension; derivative pension for life for a permanently disabled child unable to work, subject to approval	Survivor income only; no mechanism linking payment to trust administration, decision-making support or care succession
Veterans' affairs	Armed Forces Veterans Act 2012 (Act 740); JHEV	Registration and assistance; lifetime dependant status for a child with physical or brain-related disability	Welfare-oriented; does not address asset stewardship or substitute caregiving.
Wills and intestacy	Wills Act 1959 (Act 346); Distribution Act 1958 (Act 300); Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955 (Act 98); faraid under state Islamic law	Determines how parents' assets pass at death	Default rules distribute outright shares; a dependant lacking capacity may be unable to receive or manage them.
Trusts and trusteeship	Trustee Act 1949 (Act 208); Public Trust Corporation Act 1995 (Act 532); Trust Companies Act 1949 (Act 100)	Enables assets to be held and administered for a beneficiary; Amanah Raya as public trustee	No dedicated, affordable special-needs trust vehicle comparable to Singapore's SNTC.
Capacity and guardianship	Mental Health Act 2001 (Act 615)	Court appointment of a committee to manage the person or property of a person lacking capacity	Reactive, court-based and costly; limited scope for advance planning
Insurance and Takaful	Financial Services Act 2013 (Act 758); Islamic Financial Services Act 2013 (Act 759)	Life, medical and disability protection; nomination of beneficiaries	Products sold and advised separately from estate and trust planning; benefits may be paid outright to a beneficiary lacking capacity

Source: Authors' compilation from Malaysian legislation and official agency sources

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Three observations follow from Table 1. First, the architecture is rich in instruments but poor in connections. Military survivor income, inheritance rules, trust law and capacity law each address part of the succession problem, but none is designed to ensure that a dependant's income and assets are administered together after the caregiver's death. Second, the capacity regime is reactive. Under the Mental Health Act 2001, the management of property belonging to a person who lacks capacity is typically addressed through a court process after the need arises, whereas families planning for an adult child with intellectual disability require anticipatory arrangements. Third, the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 and successive national action plans establish a rights-based orientation, but they operate mainly through registration, accessibility and programme provision rather than through guaranteed lifelong financial security. The policy problem is therefore one of integration and continuity rather than the absence of law.

Trusts, Estate Planning and Islamic Financial-Planning Principles

Long-term financial protection also requires mechanisms that remain operational when parents die or lose decision-making capacity. Special-needs trusts are one mechanism for managing assets for the benefit of a person with an intellectual disability while reducing the expectation that a sibling or other relative should administer all financial affairs personally. Comparative legal scholarship has highlighted the policy value of government-supported special-needs trust structures in making professional trust administration affordable for families (Ho & Lee, 2017, 2019). Singapore's non-profit Special Needs Trust Company, in particular, has been identified as a useful reference model for jurisdictions seeking to establish such arrangements (Tang, 2014).

In Malaysia, financial and estate planning also operates within a dual conventional-Islamic environment. Instruments such as Takaful, Hibah, Amanah and Waqf are therefore relevant to any framework intended for broad national application. Islamic financial planning emphasises aligning financial decisions with Maqasid al-Shariah, including protecting life, family, and wealth (Abdullah & Muhammad, 2013). Applied to SNC families, this principle supports a shift from transactional product selection to stewardship: evaluate financial instruments based on whether they protect the dependant's welfare, continuity of care, and dignity across the life course.

Comparison with Existing Financial-Planning and Future-Planning Frameworks

The proposed framework enters a field with several established models. To clarify its contribution, Table 2 compares it systematically with five families of existing frameworks: life-cycle and conventional personal financial-planning models; military financial-readiness models; disability future-planning frameworks; special-needs trust models; and Islamic financial-planning principles. A United States military survivor-benefit model is included because it is the closest existing example of a military retirement system that explicitly links survivor income with trust administration for a disabled dependant. The comparison uses five criteria derived from the four problem-level gaps: the unit and horizon of planning; the treatment of lifelong dependency; the integration of financial, estate and protection instruments; institutional coordination; and fit with the military context.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Table 2: Comparison of Existing Frameworks with the Proposed Six-Pillar Framework

Framework (key sources)	Unit and planning horizon	Lifelong dependency	Instrument and institutional integration	Limitation for military SNC families
Life-cycle model and personal financial-planning process (Modigliani & Brumberg, 1954; ISO, 2005)	Individual or couple; to end of retiree's life	Not modelled; dependency assumed to decline	Instruments selected to meet client goals; no institutional coordination	Horizon ends before the dependant's needs do
Military financial-readiness models (Nawi et al., 2025a, 2025b)	Service member; career to retirement	Not explicitly modelled	Behavioural and organisational determinants; limited instrument integration	Omits caregiver succession and dependant's adult life
Disability future-planning frameworks (Heller & Caldwell, 2006; Lindahl et al., 2019; Lee & Burke, 2020)	Family and person with disability; across adulthood	Central	Housing, legal, financial and caregiving domains treated as interdependent; weakly linked to retirement systems	Not embedded in occupational or military benefit structures; little attention to Islamic instruments
Special-needs trust models (Tang, 2014; Ho & Lee, 2017, 2019)	Beneficiary with disability; lifetime	Central	Strong asset stewardship; limited links to income planning and care coordination	Addresses stewardship only; no equivalent vehicle in Malaysia.
US military Survivor Benefit Plan to special-needs trust provision (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, 2014)	Military retiree and disabled dependant; after retiree's death	Recognised for survivor annuity	Links military survivor income to a trust	Single legal mechanism, not a planning framework; not transferable without local legal adaptation
Islamic financial planning and Maqasid al-Shariah (Abdullah & Muhammad, 2013)	Household; life and afterlife obligations	Implicit in protection of family and wealth	Normative guidance across Hibah, Wasiat, Waqf and Takaful	Lacks an institutional delivery pathway
Proposed six-pillar framework (this study)	Caregiving household and dependant; dependant's lifetime	Central design premise	Household, institutional and policy levels integrated; conventional and Islamic instruments	Requires pilot testing and inter-agency adoption

Source: Authors' compilation

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

The comparison shows that each existing framework addresses part of the problem, but none addresses it whole. Life-cycle and conventional financial-planning models provide the accumulation and decumulation logic but assume declining dependency. Military financial-readiness models capture the occupational determinants of planning but centre on the service member. Disability future-planning frameworks recognise that housing, legal, financial and caregiving decisions are interdependent (Heller & Caldwell, 2006; Lindahl et al., 2019), but they are generally not embedded in a retirement-income or occupational-benefit system. Special-needs trust models solve the stewardship problem but not the funding, coordination or care problems. The US Survivor Benefit Plan reform demonstrates that military survivor income can be routed into a trust, yet it is a single legal provision rather than a planning framework. Maqasid-based Islamic financial planning supplies a normative rationale for protecting life, family and wealth but does not specify an institutional pathway. The six-pillar framework is therefore positioned as an integrating architecture: it combines the accumulation logic of retirement planning, the multidomain logic of future planning and the stewardship logic of trust models, and embeds them in Malaysian military, welfare and Islamic-finance institutions.

Research Gap and Conceptual Proposition

The literature provides strong evidence for four separate propositions: military financial readiness requires more than income alone; families of people with IDD need multidomain future planning; transition to adulthood creates service continuity risks; and protected financial/estate mechanisms are important for long-term care. What is missing is an integrated framework that joins these propositions in the Malaysian military context. The present study therefore proposes that disability-sensitive retirement security is produced through interaction across three levels: (1) household preparedness; (2) institutional protection and coordination; and (3) policy and governance. The study treats financial literacy and retirement awareness as enabling capacities that operate across all three levels, rather than as stand-alone interventions.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative framework-development design. The purpose was not to estimate population parameters or test a causal model, but to synthesise previously generated empirical evidence into an actionable policy framework and subject that framework to stakeholder refinement. The approach aligns with the Framework Method, which provides a systematic structure for comparing categories across heterogeneous qualitative evidence while retaining a clear audit trail between source material, analytical categories, and higher-order themes (Gale et al., 2013).

The unit of synthesis was the body of evidence produced by the broader research programme on retirement planning for Malaysian military families raising SNC, funded under the Islamic Economics Research and Innovation Fund (IERIF). That programme generated seven evidence strands: institutional mapping, financial-instrument analysis, household-level qualitative interviews, international benchmarking, community and NGO engagement, transition-to-adulthood evidence, and stakeholder refinement and validation. This paper makes no new population-level prevalence claims; its purpose is framework development and policy guidance.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Six-Stage Framework-Development Process

Table 3: Framework-Development Stages and Analytical Outputs

Stage	Analytical task	Output used in framework development
1. Evidence synthesis	Consolidation of recurring findings from earlier institutional, household, financial-instrument, benchmarking and transition components.	Cross-source evidence matrix.
2. Structured gap analysis	Comparison of the Malaysian evidence base across recurring problem domains and relevant international practice.	Six structural gaps.
3. Framework construction	Translate each gap into an intervention domain and allocate it across household, institutional, and policy levels.	Preliminary three-level, six-pillar model.
4. Stakeholder refinement	FGDs and consultations with military welfare actors, social-welfare stakeholders, Islamic institutions, NGOs and financial-planning experts.	Practical integration points and implementation modifications.
5. Technical validation	Iterative presentation and revision with relevant welfare and military-linked institutions, including JKM and LTAT.	Refined operational structure and feasibility considerations.
6. Final synthesis	Integration of analytical and stakeholder feedback into the final policy framework.	Final disability-sensitive retirement-planning framework.

Source: Authors' own

Analytical Procedure

Analysis integrated qualitative findings from the broader IERIF research programme using a framework-oriented synthesis approach informed by Gale et al. (2013). The household interview component comprised 20 participants, whose interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim. The original qualitative analysis employed ATLAS.ti Version 23 and generated 54 inductive codes, organised into nine primary themes and 43 subthemes. For this framework-development study, these findings were considered alongside institutional documents, financial-instrument reviews, international benchmarking evidence, community engagement, and stakeholder consultations. Evidence was organised by recurring financial, caregiving, institutional and policy concerns to identify structural gaps and inform the proposed six-pillar framework.

The analysis followed three linked steps. First, the team coded recurring problems at the level of substantive meaning rather than by institutional source. For example, repeated administrative procedures, unclear referral pathways and siloed responsibilities were grouped under institutional coordination rather than being treated as separate organisation-specific problems. Second, the research team compared the resulting categories against the demands of lifespan planning identified in the disability and future-care literature. Third, each final gap was

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

converted into a design requirement: the framework had to specify who should act, at which level, using what type of financial, institutional or policy mechanism.

Table 4 presents the summarised framework matrix. We retained a gap as a distinct structural gap only when it was supported by at least three evidence strands, including at least one primary-data strand, and when its consequences for lifespan protection could not be absorbed by another gap.

Table 4: Summarised Framework Matrix: Structural Gaps by Evidence Strand

Structural gap	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	Strands
G1. Institutional coordination	●		●	●	●	●	●	6
G2. Retirement-planning assumption		●	●	●	●		●	5
G3. Financial-instrument utilisation		●	●	●	●		●	5
G4. Adult transition and independent living	●		●	●	●	●		5
G5. Financial stress and psychological support			●		●	●	●	4
G6. Legislative and policy protection	●	●		●	●		●	5

Note. ● = category charted from that strand. (S1. Institutional mapping; S2. Financial-instrument analysis; S3. Household qualitative interviews; S4. International benchmarking; S5. Community and NGO engagement; S6. Transition-to-adulthood evidence; S7. Stakeholder refinement and technical validation)
Source: Authors' analysis

Stakeholder feedback served as practical validation rather than statistical validation. The draft framework was presented to institutions with direct or adjacent responsibilities for military benefits, disability welfare, estate/trust administration, Islamic social finance and financial planning. Feedback focused on institutional fit, duplication risk, feasibility, referral pathways and the practicality of integrating the proposed pillars into existing structures. The framework was iteratively revised when feedback revealed ambiguity, overlap or implementation constraints.

Stakeholder feedback in strands 5 and 7 was documented through session notes taken by two members of the research team and a framework revision log recording each proposed change, its source and the team's decision (accepted, modified or rejected, with reasons). Two substantive revisions were made across four rounds. This log provides an audit trail from stakeholder input to the final framework presented in Section 4.

Trustworthiness and Scope

Credibility was strengthened through triangulation across evidence types and stakeholder categories. The explicit gap-to-pillar mapping described below supported dependability by preserving the analytical link between identified problems and framework components. Transferability is necessarily bounded: the framework was developed for Malaysian military families and reflects Malaysia's welfare, military-benefit and Islamic-finance ecosystem.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Nevertheless, the underlying architecture, household readiness, institutional protection and policy continuity may be relevant to other settings in which a dependant's needs continue beyond parental retirement.

The charted matrix, revision log, and analytical memos supported confirmability, allowing an external reader to trace each pillar back to its source evidence. Reflexivity was addressed by recognising that members of the research team are affiliated with a defence university; to limit institutional bias, the team cross-checked findings from military-linked institutions against household and NGO evidence.

Results

Six Structural Gaps

The six structural gaps elaborate the four problem-level gaps set out in Section 1.1. The retirement-planning assumption gap and the financial-stress gap specify how the failure to integrate lifelong dependency (Gap 1) is experienced by households; the financial-instrument utilisation gap corresponds to the separation of estate, insurance, Takaful and trust mechanisms (Gap 2); the institutional coordination gap and the adult-transition gap specify the fragmentation of welfare and financial systems (Gap 3); and the legislative and policy-protection gap corresponds to the absence of explicit provision for caregiver succession in military retirement policy (Gap 4). Table 4 shows the evidence strands supporting each gap.

The synthesis identified six structural gaps that were sufficiently recurrent and consequential to warrant distinct framework components. The first was an institutional coordination gap. Families encounter multiple organisations with different mandates for military benefits, disability welfare, healthcare, trust administration, religious assistance and community support. The central problem was not the complete absence of institutions but fragmentation across them: unclear navigation, repeated administrative requirements, inconsistent referral pathways and limited case continuity.

The second was a gap in retirement-planning assumptions. Conventional planning models do not adequately represent households in which dependency continues indefinitely. Caregivers described retirement not as the end of financial responsibility but as a period in which their own earning capacity may decline while the dependant's support requirements remain. The planning horizon therefore extends beyond the retiree's life expectancy to the dependant's lifetime.

The third was a gap in financial-instrument utilisation. Savings, Takaful, insurance, Hibah, Amanah, Waqf and trust-related mechanisms exist. However, caregivers do not necessarily understand how these instruments should be combined to protect a dependant after parental incapacity or death. The gap is therefore one of integration and application, not merely awareness of product names.

The fourth was an adult transition and independent living gap. Earlier evidence from the research programme indicated an 18+ support discontinuity, in which child- and school-centred support does not automatically translate into a clear pathway into adulthood. This creates uncertainty around vocational preparation, supported employment, independent or supported living, day programmes, transport and long-term care arrangements.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

The fifth was a financial-stress-and-psychological-support gap. Long-term caregiving affects financial decisions through stress, fatigue, uncertainty and perceived lack of future options. This finding aligns with international evidence that the emotional nature of future planning can become a barrier to action (Burke et al., 2018). Financial education alone is therefore unlikely to produce adequate planning if caregiver stress and decision avoidance go unrecognised.

The sixth was a legislative and policy-protection gap. Support is distributed across schemes and administrative structures, but no single retirement-planning architecture explicitly recognises lifelong dependency and caregiver succession for military SNC families. The absence of a durable policy architecture creates uncertainty about continuity across institutional or administrative change.

The Three-Level, Six-Pillar Framework

Table 5: Gap-To-Pillar Architecture of the Proposed Retirement-Planning Framework

Level	Pillar	Problem addressed	Core mechanisms
Household	1. Household Financial Readiness	Retirement-assumption and financial-stress gaps	Budgeting, debt management, emergency reserves, retirement entitlements, projected lifelong SNC costs, caregiver contingency planning.
Household	2. Estate and Inheritance Planning	Caregiver succession and asset-transfer risk	Will, Hibah, Amanah/trust arrangements, beneficiary planning, guardianship/decision-support preparation, documentation of care wishes.
Institutional	3. Insurance and Takaful Solutions	Income and care-continuity risk	Life protection, medical/disability coverage where applicable, Takaful/insurance review, funding for care after caregiver incapacity or death.
Institutional	4. Institutional Support Mechanisms	Fragmentation and navigation burden	Coordinated referral pathway, one-stop navigation/case coordination, special-needs trust mechanism, integration across LTAT/JHEV/JKM/MAINS and relevant financial institutions.
Policy & benchmarking	5. Benchmarking and Best Practices	Static policy design and international-practice gap	Periodic review of international models, especially special-needs trust and transition-support arrangements, with contextual adaptation.
Policy & benchmarking	6. Policy and Governance Reform	Legislative and continuity gap	Formal policy recognition of lifelong dependency, governance standards, fiduciary accountability, sustainable financing, monitoring and inter-agency responsibility.

Source: Authors' own

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

At the household level, Pillar 1 reframes financial readiness around the cost profile of lifelong caregiving rather than standard retirement expenditure alone. Pillar 2 extends the household horizon beyond the caregiver's death by requiring early estate, inheritance, and care succession arrangements. These pillars are deliberately paired: accumulating adequate assets without a legally and operationally viable succession mechanism does not guarantee continuity of care.

At the institutional level, Pillar 3 addresses protection against mortality, morbidity and medical-cost shocks through appropriate insurance and Takaful solutions, while Pillar 4 addresses the coordination failure that prevents families from converting available schemes into a coherent plan. The proposed institutional mechanism is not intended to duplicate existing organisations. It will navigate, coordinate cases, and integrate services, including a pathway to an affordable special-needs trust structure informed by regional practice.

At the policy and benchmarking levels, Pillar 5 introduces continuous learning to keep the Malaysian framework from becoming static. Pillar 6 provides the governance architecture required to make protection durable rather than dependent on discretionary programmes. Maqasid al-Shariah provides an ethical design lens across relevant Islamic finance components by emphasising the protection of life, family, and wealth (Abdullah & Muhammad, 2013).

Financial literacy and retirement awareness function as cross-cutting foundations. They are not presented as a seventh pillar because they enable rather than define sector-specific roles: families need them to budget and use financial instruments; institutions need them to communicate entitlements and planning options; and policy systems need them to ensure beneficiaries can understand and access formal protection.

Stakeholder Refinement and Implementation Logic

Stakeholder engagement shifted the model from a conceptual list of needs towards an implementation architecture. Consultations emphasised that a new framework would be impractical if it created another stand-alone agency or duplicated existing mandates. The model was therefore refined to coordinate existing actors, clarify referral pathways, and target institutional innovations where a genuine gap exists. In practical terms, the framework positions military-linked institutions as entry points for early identification and financial-readiness education, welfare authorities as coordinators of disability-related support, trust and estate institutions as custodians of long-term financial arrangements, and relevant religious/financial institutions as complementary providers of Islamic social-finance and protection mechanisms.

The validation process also reinforced the need for phased implementation. Rather than immediate nationwide institutional restructuring, the framework is suitable for pilot implementation in a defined military community, where referral pathways, case-management functions, financial-planning modules and trust mechanisms can be tested before broader adoption.

Discussion

From Retirement Adequacy to Lifespan Financial Protection

The framework's central theoretical contribution is redefining retirement adequacy. For households without long-term dependency, retirement planning primarily concerns whether accumulated resources can sustain the retiree's expected consumption. For SNC families, adequacy must also answer a second question: can resources, legal authority, and care

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

arrangements continue to protect the dependant when the parent can no longer provide direct support? This transforms retirement planning from an individual life-cycle problem into an intergenerational and institutional continuity problem.

The broader literature on future planning supports the argument. Lindahl et al. (2019) demonstrate that financial, legal, housing, caregiving and medical decisions are interrelated, while Lee and Burke (2020) show that comprehensive future planning remains uncommon despite its importance. The present framework extends that evidence into military financial planning by treating these domains as determinants of retirement security rather than as issues that begin only after retirement or parental death.

Why Financial Literacy Alone Is Insufficient

A second contribution concerns the role of financial literacy. Financial literacy is necessary, but it cannot resolve structural fragmentation. A caregiver may understand budgeting, Takaful or estate planning yet still face uncertainty about which institution to approach, how benefits interact, who will administer assets after death, or what services remain available when the child becomes an adult. Agarwal et al. (2023) similarly report a gap between parental concern about the child's financial future and actual use of formal planning mechanisms. The framework therefore positions literacy as a cross-cutting capacity operating within an enabling institutional environment.

This has direct programme-design implications. Financial education for military SNC families should not be delivered as generic retirement seminars. It should be scenario-based and life-course-specific: projecting adult care costs; identifying beneficiary and inheritance implications; comparing protection instruments; documenting care preferences; preparing substitute caregivers; and navigating disability and welfare services. Such an approach makes financial literacy operational rather than informational.

The Adulthood Transition as a Retirement-Planning Event

The framework also makes an important temporal adjustment by treating the dependant's transition to adulthood as a retirement-planning event. Research increasingly conceptualises successful transition in terms of quality of life, participation, employment, autonomy, and community living outcomes rather than the simple termination of schooling (Beadle-Brown et al., 2023). Nevertheless, service access commonly becomes more fragmented during this period (Senevirathna et al., 2025). If adult pathways remain unresolved, parents may reach retirement age with no reliable estimate of future support costs or care arrangements.

Accordingly, the framework implies that SNC retirement planning should begin well before parental retirement. A structured trigger could be introduced during late adolescence, requiring families and relevant institutions to review financial projections, adult-service pathways, vocational prospects, care succession, trust/estate documentation and insurance/Takaful coverage. This would shift planning from crisis response to anticipatory governance.

Special-Needs Trust and Coordinated Case Navigation

The special-needs trust concept is particularly relevant because it addresses a recurring weakness in family-based future planning: the assumption that siblings or relatives can inherit money and take on caregiving responsibilities. International research cautions that caregiver succession is complex, emotionally sensitive and dependent on family capacity (McCausland et al., 2019; Anderson-Kittow et al., 2024). A professionally administered trust can separate

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

asset stewardship from informal family expectations, although affordability and accessibility are critical. Ho and Lee (2017) note the policy significance of government-supported special-needs trust arrangements in making professional trust services more accessible.

For Malaysia, the framework does not prescribe direct replication of another jurisdiction. Instead, it recommends contextual adaptation: a trust mechanism that can interact with Malaysian inheritance law, Islamic estate-planning options, disability welfare and military benefits. Such a mechanism should include case navigation, because a trust alone cannot determine housing, healthcare, employment, or caregiver arrangements.

Policy Relevance and the Malaysian Institutional Context

The framework's policy value lies in using existing institutional strengths rather than assuming protection must be built from scratch. Malaysia already has military retirement and welfare institutions, social welfare agencies, trust management organisations, Islamic religious institutions, and a mature Islamic finance ecosystem. The study identifies a weakness: the absence of a single planning logic that connects these resources across the life course of an SNC dependant. The proposed model therefore prioritises interoperability, referral and governance.

Maqasid al-Shariah adds a contextually relevant normative layer to this integration. Islamic financial planning treats wealth protection as part of a wider ethical responsibility rather than a purely technical optimisation exercise (Abdullah & Muhammad, 2013). In this framework, Maqasid is particularly relevant in protecting life, family continuity, and wealth through arrangements that preserve the dignity and welfare of a vulnerable dependant. This principle strengthens the rationale for integrating Takaful, Hibah, Amanah and Waqf where appropriate, while retaining a framework that can also serve non-Muslim families through conventional equivalents.

Practical and Policy Implications

The framework suggests five immediate policy actions. First, embed disability-sensitive retirement planning in existing military financial-readiness and pre-retirement programmes, with earlier triggers for families identified as having long-term caregiving responsibilities. Second, test a pilot one-stop navigation or case-coordination function in a defined military community, connecting military benefits with disability welfare, adult transition services, trust/estate planning, and financial counselling. Third, policymakers should assess the feasibility of an affordable special-needs trust mechanism, including both conventional and Shariah-compliant pathways, as well as possible co-funding or fee-support arrangements for lower-income families. Fourth, adulthood transition planning should be formally linked to financial planning so that retirement projections inform future employment, housing, transport, care, and support needs. Fifth, inter-agency protocols should specify governance responsibilities, monitoring indicators, and periodic benchmarking rather than relying only on informal collaboration.

For practitioners, the framework provides a structured assessment template. Financial planners working with SNC families should move beyond retirement corpus calculations and ask about future caregivers, legal authority, adult service pathways, housing, expected care costs, beneficiary structures, and asset administration after parental death. Welfare practitioners, in turn, should recognise that service planning and financial planning are mutually dependent.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations. First, the framework is a synthesis and policy-development output from a broader research programme; it does not constitute a new representative survey of all Malaysian military SNC families. The framework should therefore be interpreted as an empirically informed model that requires implementation testing, rather than as evidence that every family experiences each gap to the same degree. Second, stakeholder validation establishes relevance and feasibility but does not demonstrate effectiveness. Future research should pilot the framework and evaluate measurable outcomes, including planning completion, uptake of estate/trust instruments, service navigation time, financial stress, retirement confidence, and continuity of adult support.

Third, the framework was developed within the Malaysian military and social protection contexts. Comparative research with civilian SNC families, veterans and other occupational groups would clarify which elements are military-specific and which are broadly transferable. Fourth, future studies should include the perspectives of adults with disabilities themselves wherever communication and consent arrangements permit. Recent disability research has emphasised the need to avoid future-planning systems in which family or professional voices eclipse the preferences of the person with disability (Belperio et al., 2024). Finally, longitudinal research is required because the needs of SNC families evolve across childhood, transition to adulthood, parental retirement, caregiver ageing and eventual succession.

A further limitation concerns documentation. Because the framework synthesises evidence from several strands of a broader programme, detailed findings for individual strands appear in companion publications; this paper presents the charted matrix (Table 4) so the synthesis can be audited, but readers should consult the companion outputs for strand-level findings.

Conclusion

Retirement planning for families raising children with special needs cannot be adequately represented by a model that ends with retirement. The central planning problem is continuity: continuity of income, care, decision-making, housing, institutional support and asset stewardship across the dependant's lifetime. By synthesising evidence from Malaysian military financial-readiness research, disability future-planning literature, transition-to-adulthood evidence and stakeholder consultation, this study develops a three-level, six-pillar framework for disability-sensitive retirement planning.

The framework links Household Financial Readiness and Estate and Inheritance Planning at the household level; Insurance and Takaful Solutions and Institutional Support Mechanisms at the institutional level; and Benchmarking and Best Practices and Policy and Governance Reform at the policy level. Financial literacy and retirement awareness cut across all six pillars. Its principal contribution is to shift retirement planning from a narrow accumulation model towards lifespan financial protection, in which the caregiver's retirement security and the dependant's future security are planned together. The next step is implementation research: piloting the framework, testing its institutional pathways and evaluating whether it improves concrete planning and long-term protection for families.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network
- All rights reserved

This work is licensed under
CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Acknowledgements
This work was supported by the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia, through the Islamic Economics Research and Innovation Fund (IERIF) [grant number: I-RISE/IERIF/AWARD/2025/BATCH 2/237 @ Q0020-UPNM/IDRG/2025/SS/1] and the National Defence University of Malaysia. The authors thank the participating families and stakeholder institutions.

References

Abdullah, A., & Muhammad, J. (2013). Ethical values in Islamic financial planning. *Jurnal Pengurusan*, *38*, 133–140. https://doi.org/10.17576/pengurusan-2013-38-13

Agarwal, R., Heron, L. M., & Burke, S. L. (2023). Financial planning among parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, *61*(3), 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-61.3.211

Anderson-Kittow, R. J., Keagan-Bull, R., Giles, J., & Tuffrey-Wijne, I. (2024). 'There's a timebomb': Planning for parental death and transitions in care for older people with intellectual disabilities and their families. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, *37*(2), e13174. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13174

Beadle-Brown, J., Šiška, J., & Káňová, Š. (2023). Mapping frameworks and approaches to measuring the quality of transition support services for young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences*, *4*, 1043564. https://doi.org/10.3389/fresc.2023.1043564

Belperio, I., Walker, R., Bigby, C., Wiesel, I., Rillotta, F., & Hutchinson, C. (2024). Whose voice is it anyway? Adults with intellectual disabilities and future planning: A scoping review of qualitative studies. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, *49*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2023.2293334

Brennan, D., McCausland, D., O'Donovan, M. A., Eustace-Cook, J., McCallion, P., & McCarron, M. (2020). Approaches to and outcomes of future planning for family carers of adults with an intellectual disability: A systematic review. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, *33*(6), 1221–1233. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12742

Burke, M., Arnold, C., & Owen, A. (2018). Identifying the correlates and barriers of future planning among parents of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, *56*(2), 90–100. https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-56.2.90

Department of Veterans Affairs Malaysia [JHEV]. (n.d.). *Dependant definition*. Retrieved November 4, 2026, from https://jhev.gov.my/en/assistance-for-veteran/dependant-definition

Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *13*(1), 117. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-117

Goh, E. X. Y., Aroyewun, T. F., & Perveen, A. (2025). The challenges faced by parents and their expectations towards their special needs children. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *9*(17), 198–213.

Government of Malaysia. (n.d.). *What is a derivative pension*. MyGovernment portal. Retrieved November 4, 2026, from https://www.malaysia.gov.my/en/topics/what-is-a-derivative-pension

Heller, T., & Caldwell, J. (2006). Supporting aging caregivers and adults with developmental disabilities in future planning. *Mental Retardation*, *44*(3), 189–202. https://doi.org/10.1352/0047-6765(2006)44[189:SACAAW]2.0.CO;2

Ho, L., & Lee, R. (2017). Introducing the special needs trust to Hong Kong. *Trusts & Trustees*, *23*(10), 1111–1121. https://doi.org/10.1093/tandt/ttx156

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Ho, L., & Lee, R. (Eds.). (2019). *Special needs financial planning: A comparative perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

International Organization for Standardization. (2005). *Personal financial planning — Requirements for personal financial planners* (ISO Standard No. 22222:2005).

Ismail, A., Sk Abd Razak, R., Suddin, L. S., Mahmud, A., Kamaralzaman, S., & Yusri, G. (2022). The economic burden and determinant factors of parents/caregivers of children with cerebral palsy in Malaysia: A mixed methods study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(1), 475. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010475

Kamaralzaman, S., Toran, H., Mohamed, S., & Abdullah, N. (2018). The economic burden of families with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) children in Malaysia. *Journal of ICSAR*, *2*(1), 71–77. https://doi.org/10.17977/um005v2i12018p071

Lee, C. E., & Burke, M. M. (2020). Future planning among families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A systematic review. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, *17*(2), 94-107. https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12324

Lindahl, J., Stollon, N., Wu, K., Liang, A., Changolkar, S., Steinway, C., Trachtenberg, S., Coccia, A., Devaney, M., & Jan, S. (2019). Domains of planning for future long-term care of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: Parent and sibling perspectives. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 32*(5), 1103–1115. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12600

Malay Mail. (2025, February 23). Stuck in limbo: Cash, real estate among RM65b in unclaimed assets in Malaysia, highlighting need for estate planning, says AmanahRaya. *Malay Mail*. https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2025/02/23/stuck-in-limbo-cash-real-estate-among-rm65b-in-unclaimed-assets-in-malaysia-highlighting-need-for-estate-planning-says-amanahraya/167713

McCausland, D., Brennan, D., McCallion, P., & McCarron, M. (2019). Balancing personal wishes and caring capacity in future planning for adults with an intellectual disability living with family carers. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, *23*(3), 413-431. https://doi.org/10.1177/1744629519872658

Ministry of Finance Malaysia. (2026). *Budget 2027 speech*. Ministry of Finance Malaysia. https://www.mof.gov.my/portal/en/news/speech/speech-the-fifth-madani-budget-2027

Modigliani, F., & Brumberg, R. (1954). Utility analysis and the consumption function: An interpretation of cross-section data. In K. K. Kurihara (Ed.), *Post-Keynesian economics* (pp. 388–436). Rutgers University Press.

Nawi, H. M., Ahmad, M. Y., Ismail, A., Ariffin, Z. Z., & Jusoh, M. A. (2025a). Determinants of financial readiness of Malaysian military personnel: Questionnaire development and validation. *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review, 5*(3), e04848. https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n03.pe04848

Nawi, H. M., Ahmad, M. Y., Tanaraj, K., Ismail, A., Abdullah, M. N., & Jusoh, M. A. (2025b). Financial readiness, combat readiness: Factors influencing the financial planning of military personnel. *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review, 5*(3), e05140. https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n03.pe05140

Senevirathna, A. M., Basualto, P., Seth, A., Dimitropoulos, G., & Zwicker, J. D. (2025). Service access for youth with neurodevelopmental disabilities transitioning to adulthood: Service providers' and decision-makers' perspectives on barriers, facilitators and policy recommendations. *Frontiers in Public Health, 13*, 1612509. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1612509

Tang, H. W. (2014). Setting up a non-profit trust company: The special needs trust company in Singapore. *Elder Law Journal, 2014*(4), 419–424.

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Volume: 11 Issues: 70 Special Issue [November, 2026] pp. 63-83
International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)
eISSN: 0128-1844
Journal website: www.academicinspired.com/ijafb
DOI: 10.55573/IJAFB.117006

Vibulpatanavong, K., Sirirak, C., Saardaium, A., & Sittichan, K. (2026). Future care planning for ageing adults with intellectual disabilities: Family caregiver perspectives in Thailand. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 39*(1), e70204. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.70204

Legislation

Armed Forces Fund Act 1973 (Act 101) (Malaysia).
Armed Forces Veterans Act 2012 (Act 740) (Malaysia).
Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, Pub. L. No. 113-291, 128 Stat. 3292 (2014) (United States).
Distribution Act 1958 (Act 300) (Malaysia).
Financial Services Act 2013 (Act 758) (Malaysia).
Islamic Financial Services Act 2013 (Act 759) (Malaysia).
Mental Health Act 2001 (Act 615) (Malaysia).
Pensions Act 1980 (Act 227) (Malaysia).
Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 (Act 685) (Malaysia).
Public Trust Corporation Act 1995 (Act 532) (Malaysia).
Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955 (Act 98) (Malaysia).
Trust Companies Act 1949 (Act 100) (Malaysia).
Trustee Act 1949 (Act 208) (Malaysia).
Wills Act 1959 (Act 346) (Malaysia).

Copyright © Academic Inspired Network - All rights reserved

This work is licensed under CC BY 4.0