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## **Analytical Statistics for the Situation of the Thai Elderly 2017 - 2022**

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**Abstract.** The research objectives are (1) to analyze the situation of the Thai elderly from 2017 to 2022, using appropriate statistical analysis, and (2) to present the situation of the Thai elderly from 2017 to 2022 using descriptive and inferential statistics. In this research, the Thai elderly data from 2017 to 2022 in four dimensions: economic, environment, health, and social, from the Department of Older Persons (DOP), the Minister of Social Development and Human Security, is analyzed and presented. The research results were summarized as follows: 1. The number and percentage of the Thai elderly from 2017 to 2022 increased. 2. The report on the situation of the Thai elderly from 2017 to 2022 has different issues each year, for example, in 2017, there was active ageing, in 2018, there was Thai elderly work, in 2019, there was social welfare, and in 2020, there was on the impact of COVID-19, etc.

**Keywords.** analytical statistics, situation, Thai elderly

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Population aging is a phenomenon occurring worldwide in this millennium. The global population is aging due to declining birth rates and increased life expectancy. By 2020, the world's population was aging rapidly. Our world had a population of 7.795 billion people, with 1.05 billion "elderly" individuals aged 60 and over, accounting for 14% of the total population. The "late elderly" population, those aged 80 and above, numbered as many as 146 million, or 2% of the total population. Regarding the elderly population in ASEAN, in 2020, ASEAN had a total population of 664 million. The elderly aged 60 and over numbered 73 million, or 11% of the total population. The "late elderly" aged 80 and above numbered 7.6 million, or 1% of the total population. Among ASEAN member countries, six have already become aging societies, meaning they have an elderly population aged 60 and over of at least 10%. These countries are Singapore (21%), Thailand (18%), Vietnam (12%), Malaysia (11%), Indonesia (10%), and Myanmar (10%) (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2021) [5].

In 2020, Thailand had a total population of 66.5 million people. The elderly population has increased very rapidly. Fifty years ago, there were fewer than 2 million elderly people (aged 60 and above), but by 2020, the number had risen to 12 million, accounting for 18% of the total population. Thailand is on the verge of becoming a "complete-aged society" in 2022. The "Million-Birth" generation, born between 1963 and 1983, a demographic tsunami for Thailand, is about to become a large elderly population group. In the next 20 years, Thailand's total

population will grow very slowly, with the growth rate decreasing to the point of becoming negative. However, the elderly population will increase rapidly, with those aged 60 and above growing at an average rate of 4% per year and those aged 80 and above increasing at an average rate of 7% per year (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2020) [4].

Due to the continuously increasing number of elderly people in Thailand, both public and private agencies responsible for managing and caring for the elderly must work diligently to improve their quality of life in terms of economy, environment, health, and society. This can be seen from the COVID-19 situation, which began in Thailand in early 2020. In the initial phase, Thailand was able to control the outbreak effectively. Throughout 2020, the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Thailand did not exceed 7,000, which is relatively low compared to Western countries. Among these, less than 10% were elderly, and by the end of 2020, only 29 elderly patients had died from COVID-19, which is very few. However, the second wave of COVID-19 at the end of 2020 harmed the overall economy and society, significantly affecting the daily lives of Thais, especially the elderly population. This included economic, health, and social aspects, such as elderly workers facing obstacles due to the pandemic, elderly individuals experiencing at least one mental health issue during COVID-19, and a decrease in outdoor activities among the elderly, among others (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2021) [5].

In addition to the various measures continuously implemented by the government and the private sector, as well as agencies involved in elderly care, studies and research related to Thai seniors serve as valuable information to support the more appropriate and comprehensive management of elderly care in Thailand. This research provides insights into the analysis of the situation of Thai seniors from 2017 to 2022 through various appropriate statistical analyses and presents the study results using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study of the situation of Thai seniors this time will benefit government and private agencies involved in planning, policy-making, and providing services to the elderly in Thailand, as well as agencies related to elderly care and the general public interested in this field.

## **B. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research conducted in this study used data on the Thai elderly from 2017 to 2022 in four dimensions: 1. Economy 2. Environment 3. Health 4. Society from the Department of Older Persons (DOP), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The data were analyzed using various appropriate statistical methods and presented the study results through descriptive and inferential statistics, including presenting data through descriptive explanations, graphs, and basic statistical values, frequency, percentage, average, estimation, and hypothesis testing.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The overview of the elderly situation in Thailand from 2017 to 2022 shows that the number and percentage of the elderly have increased each year. In 2017, the number of the elderly was 11.3 million, accounting for 17.1% of the population, and in 2022, the number of the elderly was 12.7 million, accounting for 19.2%. The number of the elderly in Thailand from 2017 to 2022 is presented in Table 1 and illustrated in the bar chart in Figure 1.

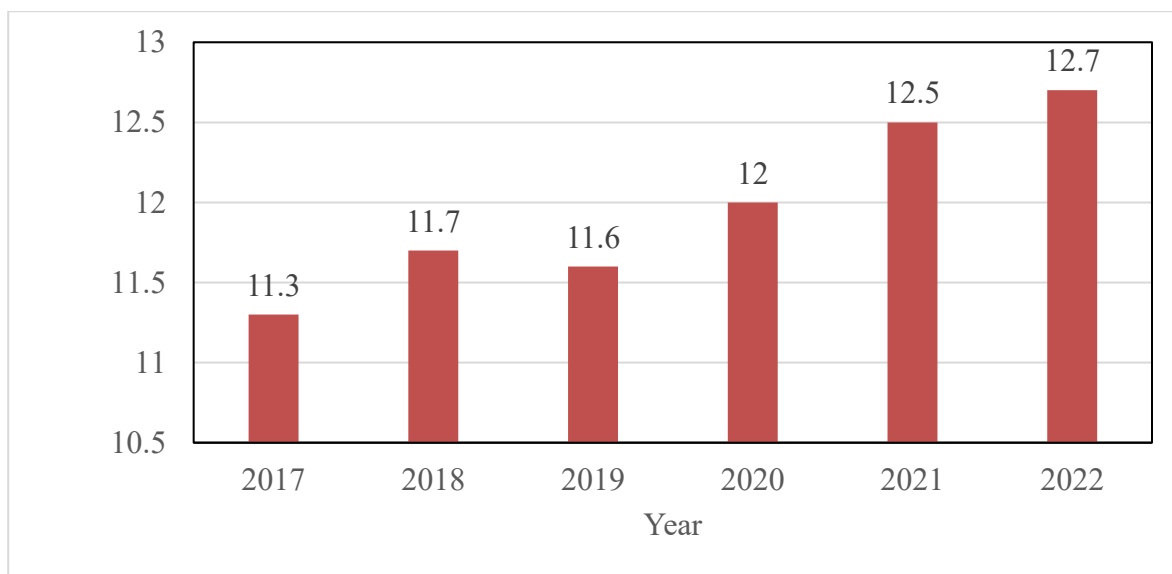
### The Situation of the Elderly in Thailand in 2017

The happiness scores of the elderly in 2017, where the elderly rated their happiness on a scale from 0 to 10, were as follows: (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2017) [1].

Age (years)	Average Happiness Score
60 – 69	7.1
70 – 79	6.8
80 and above	6.6
Total	6.9

**Table 1.** The frequency of the Thai elderly and the percentage from 2017 to 2022

Year	Frequency (million)	Percentage
2017	11.3	17.1
2018	11.7	17.6
2019	11.6	17.5
2020	12.0	18.1
2021	12.5	18.8
2022	12.7	19.2



**Figure 1.** The bar chart of the Thai elderly from 2017 to 2022.

**Table 2.** The percentage of the Thai elderly with health conditions is classified by age

Health Conditions	60 – 69 Years	70 – 79 Years	80 Years and above	Total
Diabetes	15.2	19.3	16.3	16.5
Hypertension	29.1	39.6	40.2	33.6
Visible without glasses	58.3	45.1	34.6	51.2
Hear clearly without wearing headphones	92.9	80.7	58.4	84.7
wearing dentures	19.9	26.9	28.0	23.0

For the health of the elderly, it is a crucial factor that contributes to a good quality of life. Table 2 shows the percentage of elderly individuals with various health conditions categorized by age. It was found that the percentage of elderly individuals with diabetes and hypertension increases with age. Regarding health related to the eyes, ears, mouth, and teeth, it is evident that as age increases, the ability to see clearly without glasses and to hear clearly without hearing aids decreases. The use of dentures increases with age.

Regarding the main sources of income for the elderly, the top three are from children, from work, and spouses, including the main source of income from savings, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The percentage of the top 3 main sources of income for the elderly and from savings

Main Sources of Income	Percentage
Children	34.9
Work	30.9
Spouses	19.9
Savings	2.3

#### The Situation of the Elderly in Thailand in 2018

For plans and policies for the elderly, the Cabinet approved the issue of an elderly society as a national agenda on December 4, 2018. For social participation and development of the elderly, in 2018, Thailand had 28,422 elderly clubs (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2018) [2].

Regarding the employment of the elderly, there are three approaches:

##### 1. Promoting and expanding work opportunities for the elderly

The Department of Employment and the Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labor, are responsible for driving the expansion of opportunities and promoting employment for the elderly. They coordinate with all sectors to distribute work to homes and communities, extend retirement age, promote continuous employment, and create a labor market database for the elderly.

##### 2. Extension of retirement age

The Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, issued the Civil Servants in Higher Education Institutions Regulation 2004, which allows university civil servants holding academic positions from Associate Professor and above to extend their working age until they reach 65 years.

##### 3. Encourage the private sector to hire the elderly

In 2017, a public-private partnership task force was established to encourage the private sector to employ the elderly, allowing them to deduct expenses at twice the rate of salary and wage expenses for tax purposes. In terms of income security, social protection/social insurance, and poverty reduction, it includes

##### 1. Monthly pensions for all elderly people

Since 2012, the government has increased the monthly pension for the elderly in a tiered manner based on their age. Individuals aged 60-69 receive a monthly pension of 600 baht, those aged 70-79 receive 700 baht, those aged 80-89 receive 800 baht, and those aged 90 and over receive 1,000 baht per month. In 2018, the government disbursed 66,407 million baht in pensions to senior citizens.

#### 2. Old-age insurance

Since 1999, the Social Security Office, Ministry of Labor, has initiated an increase in old-age insurance under the social security system. Workers who are insured will be guaranteed to receive an old-age pension after retirement or when they reach the age of 55.

#### 3. Government Pension Fund

Civil servants who are members will save money monthly while still working, with the government contributing to the fund. In 2018, there were approximately 1,076,000 civil servants as members.

#### 4. Provident Fund

A fund established jointly by employers and employees to ensure income stability in retirement. The Securities and Exchange Commission is responsible for registering and managing this fund. In 2018, there were 380 funds and approximately 1 million employees as members.

#### 5. National Savings Fund

The Fiscal Policy Office, Ministry of Finance, administers the National Savings Fund Act 2011. Its purpose is to provide income security through retirement savings for working-age citizens who do not yet have income security after retirement. Members contribute to the fund monthly, with the government matching their contributions. Once members reach the age of 60, they will receive a monthly pension for life. The National Savings Fund opened for membership in 2015, and by 2018, it had approximately 1.6 million members and a total fund amount of around 3.8 billion baht.

### The Situation of the Elderly in Thailand in 2019

Social welfare for the elderly refers to the implementation of projects, benefits, and services organized by the government, private sector, and the public to protect and enhance the well-being of the elderly. Interesting social welfare information for the elderly in 2019 is as follows: (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2019) [3].

1. There are 1,555 senior citizen schools nationwide.

2. The performance in caring for the elderly with dependency nationwide is 219,518 cases (exceeding the operational target for 2019, which was set at 152,800 cases).

3. The improvement of the environment and facilities for the elderly to be appropriate and safe has reached 3,200 locations, and the number of elderly residents in the 12 elderly welfare development centers under the Department of Elderly Affairs totals 1,532 people.

4. The Elderly Quality of Life and Career Promotion Centers (Elderly Centers) are mechanisms for developing the potential of the elderly in the community. They serve as venues for activities and services for the elderly and support their employment and the transmission of elderly wisdom to the general public, enabling the elderly to benefit more from their wisdom for employment. In 2019, there were 1,489 Elderly Centers with a total of 988,265 participants, and the goal is to establish 7,776 Elderly Centers by 2024.

5. The Elderly Fund has supported vocational loans for 8,991 people, and approximately 9.09 million elderly individuals receive a pension, totaling a budget of about 71.9 billion baht.

6. The Second National Senior Sports Competition, known as the "Rom Buri Games," in Buriram Province from August 25 to 31, 2019.

7. The number of elderly people who received services from justice clinics nationwide is 413.

8. Assistance to the elderly in difficult situations, 16,670 people, and assistance with traditional funeral arrangements for the elderly, 10,402 people.

#### The Situation of the Elderly in Thailand in 2020

In 2020, it was the first time that the number of births fell below 600,000 (587,368 people), and the number of deaths exceeded 500,000 (501,438 cases). Women live longer than men, and among the elderly, there are more women than men. In 2020, the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, which may have impacted the elderly in various ways. According to the data from the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, there were a total of 6,879 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Thailand. Among these, 543 were elderly (aged 60 and above), accounting for 7.9% of the total confirmed cases. This included 353 men and 190 women. Additionally, 29 elderly patients died, resulting in a COVID-19 mortality rate of 5.3% among the confirmed elderly cases. (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2020) [4].

The impact of COVID-19 on the elderly in Thailand in terms of economy, health, and society is as follows:

#### Economic aspect

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a decline in economic activities across the country. Many people have lost their jobs and experienced a decrease in income. Including the elderly, before the COVID-19 crisis, 47.2% of the elderly were still working to earn a living. 81.0% of elderly workers faced obstacles in their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as 4.0% losing their jobs, 16.0% having no space to sell their goods, and 9.0% having their salaries/wages reduced, among others. Moreover, elderly people living in urban areas faced more work-related problems than those living in rural areas. The income of the elderly from work decreased from 40.0% during normal times to only 22.0% during the pandemic.

#### Health aspect

Thai elderly people (across all income groups) experienced significant health impacts during the COVID-19 pandemic, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The percentage of the elderly who experienced significant health impacts during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

Significant Health Impacts	Percent
Anxious	57.2
No appetite	47.3
Feeling lonely	25.0
Unhappy	23.3

From Table 4, it was found that the major health impacts on the elderly are anxiety, with the top three concerns during the COVID-19 period being: 1) Financial impacts on themselves and their families, 2) Fear of contracting the virus themselves or family members, and 3) Deteriorating health due to missed medical appointments.

#### Social aspect

Most of the elderly are aware of and adhere to the disease prevention measures promoted by the government quite well. The group of elderly aged 60 - 75 tends to follow the measures better than those over 75. The adherence of the Thai elderly to the prevention measures during the COVID-19 pandemic is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** The percentage of the elderly who adhered to preventive measures during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

Preventive Measures	Percentage
Wearing a mask when going out	92.3
Washing hands frequently with soap and alcohol gel	86.1
Having food with a serving spoon	77.9
Keeping a distance while waiting in line	75.4

From Table 5, it was found that 92.3% of the elderly wear masks when going outside. Moreover, the elderly individuals living with their grandchildren are more likely to adhere to COVID-19 prevention measures and methods compared to those living alone or with other elderly individuals.

For the government's assistance measures through the collaborative efforts of relevant agencies for the elderly affected by COVID-19, including economic, health, and social aspects, they are as follows:

#### Economic aspect

The government has implemented several relief payment programs for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing the elderly to access income assistance. The assistance is divided into different programs for two groups of the elderly: the general elderly and the low-income elderly. The programs for the general elderly include the "Half-Half" program, while the programs for the low-income elderly include income compensation measures for employees of affected businesses or others impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, measures to support vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19, and programs to increase purchasing power for holders of the state welfare card.

#### Health aspect

To prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, the National Health Security Office (NHSO) has implemented a drug delivery service for beneficiaries under the National Health Security system. The postal drug delivery service was an additional health measure implemented specifically to cope with the lockdown situation. However, once the city reopened, this service significantly decreased.

#### Social aspect

The role of volunteers in caring for the elderly became more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, both for village health volunteers (VHV) in rural areas and Bangkok health volunteers (BHV). This included checking on physical and mental well-being and distributing food to the homes or communities near the elderly. In addition to social assistance from the government, the role of providing support to the elderly by the private sector, local administrative organizations, and civil society has also increased significantly. For example, establishing the Royal Patronage of the Thai Red Cross Society's Deputy Director's Kitchen. The establishment of "Sharing Happiness" boxes includes implementing food bank projects to improve the situation during COVID-19, reducing boxed meal prices by private companies, and delivering meals to the elderly homes by some local administrative organizations.

### The Situation of the Elderly in Thailand in 2021

In 2021, Thailand had more deaths than births for the first time in history. The number of deaths increased to 563,650. The number of births decreased to only 544,570 people, resulting in a negative population growth rate of -0.02%. In 2021, COVID-19 continued to spread, significantly impacting the lives of the elderly in terms of health, economy, and society. The number of elderly infected with COVID-19 was 182,950, accounting for 11% of all infections in Thailand. Meanwhile, the number of the elderly who died from COVID-19 reached 14,597, which is 69.8% of all COVID-19 deaths. The mortality rate of the elderly in each age group is shown in Table 6 (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2021) [5].

**Table 6.** The percentage of the elderly in each age group who died from COVID-19 infection in 2021

The Elderly Age Group	Percentage
Early elderly (60 – 69 years old)	4.3
Middle-aged elderly (70 – 79 years)	9.8
Lately elderly (80 years and above)	21.6

From Table 6, it is found that the lately elderly (80 years and above) have the highest mortality rate (21.6%) compared to the middle-aged elderly (70 - 79 years) and the early elderly (60 - 69 years), who have mortality rates of 9.8% and 4.3%, respectively.

When considering the coverage of COVID-19 vaccination among the elderly, it was found that the population aged 60 and above nationwide, totaling 10,906,142 people (according to the civil registration data as of March 2021), had received a total of 16,304,713 doses of vaccines for the first to third doses. As shown in Table 7, the elderly received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine the most, accounting for 75.4%. The second dose followed at 67.7%, and the third dose was the least at 6.5%.

**Table 7.** The number of doses and the percentage of the elderly who received the COVID-19 vaccine in 2021

Receiving the COVID-19 Vaccine	The Number of Doses	Percentage
The first dose	8,221,153	4.3
The second dose	7,378,815	9.8
The third dose	704,745	21.6

The top three reasons why the elderly are not ready to get vaccinated are:

1. Not confident in the safety, 16.3%.
2. Afraid that getting vaccinated might cause an allergic reaction, 12.1%.
3. Think it might affect underlying health conditions, 11.8%.

For government agencies, efforts to promote a good quality of life for the elderly continue. Additional policies have been implemented to assist the elderly who have been directly and indirectly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional policies during the COVID-19 situation are as follows:

1. Economic and financial aspects.
2. Mental health care.
3. Social welfare and promoting lifelong learning,
4. Prevention and screening,
5. Care and treatment.

### The Situation of the Elderly in Thailand in 2022

In 2022, it was another significant year in terms of demographics, as it marked the second consecutive year with a lower number of births than deaths. Additionally, 2022 was the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, which saw its first reported case in late 2019. The emergence of the new pandemic, COVID-19, has impacted the overall economic and social conditions, and has also affected the quality of life for the elderly, particularly those who are vulnerable. Overall, the proportion of Thai elderly who rely on primary income sources from work and government transfers or welfare, especially pensions, has been increasing. Meanwhile, reliance on income from children or family support has been decreasing. The dependence on savings and assets among the elderly in Thailand remains low (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2022) [6].

The concept of "economic security in the elderly" refers to a situation where elderly individuals (60 years and above) have stable and sufficient income or economic resources from various sources, enough for living, including expenses for food, health, housing, and other necessary consumption expenses. The sources of income or economic resources that are essential conditions and components of economic security include income from work, savings and assets, family support, and government transfers.

For the Thai government's policy to prepare and create economic security for the elderly in Thailand, which must be prepared, planned, and managed by individuals, as well as agencies involved in supporting them, starting from the pre-elderly period, especially when individuals are still in the workforce, having jobs and incomes that can be used to plan their lives and prepare for a good quality of life and sufficient income when they reach aging society. It is called the Third Phase Elderly Action Plan (2023 - 2037), which was approved by the Cabinet on May 17, 2022. This is a national plan that sets the framework and guidelines for important elderly care activities in Thailand for the next 15 years. The vision for driving this plan is "Elderly people have a good quality of life, stable security, and are a driving force for societal development," along with four sub-action plans.

1. Prepare the population before the elderly (25 – 59 years) with the following guidelines under this action plan:

(1) Reform the old-age pension system to make it integrated and sustainable, ensuring it adequately and fairly covers the elderly.

(2) Accelerate the development of a multi-tiered national pension system.

(3) Extend the retirement age and encourage continuous employment for the working-age population.

2. Enhance the quality of life for the elderly across all dimensions comprehensively and fairly, implementing the following practices under this action plan:

(1) Promote saving for old age.

(2) Encourage employment for the elderly in both formal and informal sectors.

(3) Enhance skills and job opportunities by increasing learning channels for early-stage seniors.

3. Reform and integrate management systems to support an aging society with quality.

4. Enhance the potential for research, technology development, and innovation to support an aging society.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This paper presents the situation of the elderly in Thailand between 2017 and 2022 across four dimensions: economic, environmental, health, and social. An overview of the situation of the elderly in Thailand from 2017 to 2022 showed that the number and percentage of the elderly have increased every year. The report on the situation of the elderly in Thailand focused on different issues each year. In 2017, the focus was on aging with vitality. In 2018, the focus was on the work of Thai seniors. In 2019, the focus was on social welfare for the elderly. In 2020, the focus was on the impact of COVID-19 on the elderly in Thailand. In 2021, the focus was on the ongoing situation and impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on Thai elderly, which is a continuation from the situation of Thai elderly in 2020 and 2022, the focus is on the economic security of Thai seniors and the realities in the economic dimension of Thai seniors, including sources of income, the economic security situation in old age, and policies for preparing Thai people to be the elderly.

This research is a study of various aspects of Thai elderly people between 2017 and 2022. This research will benefit both the public and private sectors involved in planning, policy-making, and providing services to the elderly in Thailand, as well as agencies related to elderly care and the general public interested in this topic. The study and research related to Thai elderly people will provide information that supports the appropriate and complete management of elderly care in Thailand.

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