

Building Resilience: A SWOT and TOWS Analysis of LPPKN's Role in Enhancing Population Quality and Family Well-being in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) plays a crucial role in shaping Malaysia's demographic landscape, but there are challenges to be tackled. This article conducts a thorough SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of LPPKN, exploring its impact and effectiveness in promoting population and family well-being. Additionally, a TOWS (Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Strengths) analysis refines our understanding of LPPKN's strategic positioning. The research employs a dual-method approach, combining web-based desk review and structured interviews. Seven central themes emerge from the SWOT analysis, including legislative framework and policy environment; integrated educational programs; comprehensive reproductive healthcare services; innovative research; information sharing and public awareness; skilled and dedicated personnel; technological innovation and digitalization. The TOWS matrix identifies 28 potential key strategies aligning internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats. The study identifies Malaysia's legislative frameworks and policies as strengths in promoting family well-being and population management, despite ongoing challenges from evolving societal demands and international integration. Opportunities in leveraging technology for education and establishing a National Subfertility Centre are noted, countered by threats from rapid socio-economic-political changes and governance issues, requiring strategic adaptation. By integrating SWOT and TOWS analyses, this study provides recommendations for LPPKN's strategic development, aiming to foster a resilient environment that supports Malaysia's population well-being and family dynamics.

1. Introduction

Strengthening the family institution and effectively managing population dynamics are crucial for fostering resilient communities, driving sustainable economic growth, and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities [1,2]. This approach addresses both local and global challenges, while

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amplifying efforts, initiatives, and policies, thereby contributing to social stability and inclusive prosperity [2]. The literature has an extensive amount of evidence regarding the critical role that family institutions play in the process of nation-building. A society's strength and character are shaped by the fundamental units known as family institutions [3,4]. They support a country's stability and well-being in a variety of complex ways. Families are the main institutions that act as furnaces for passing down social norms, cultural values, and traditions from one generation to the next, creating a common identity that unites communities [5,6]. Strong family structures also contribute to a resilient and healthy populace by offering a caring environment for people's psychological, emotional, and physical growth. Additionally, families act as the fundamental units of social support in communities, fostering unity and coherence. As the main social units in charge of education, skill development, and the dissemination of work ethics, families are economically significant to the development of human capital [7]. All things considered, the health of family structures is fundamental to the basis of a strong and peaceful country, impacting its social cohesion, economic growth, and general welfare of its people.

Despite the extensive literature on the vital role of family institutions in nation-building, understanding specific strategies to strengthen family structures amidst population dynamics and resilience challenges remains limited. This study delves into Malaysia's commitment through the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) using SWOT and TOWS analyses spanning from 1984 to 2023. It thoroughly explores LPPKN's historical trajectory, accomplishments, challenges, and strategic adaptations, aiming to align internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats. The findings provide valuable insights and actionable recommendations to enhance LPPKN's impact on Malaysian society.

1.1 Overview of Current Family Landscape of Malaysia

In Malaysia, the landscape of families is evolving due to various socio-economic factors, leading to delayed family formation and a preference for smaller nuclear family structures [8]. Challenges persist in balancing elderly care and family responsibilities exacerbated by economic concerns such as rising living costs and gender disparities in economic participation [9-11]. Additionally, health concerns, including non-communicable diseases and mental health issues, are on the rise, while work-life balance remains a challenge due to long working hours [12,13]. Access to technology is widespread but not fully utilized, especially among younger children, leading to issues like cyberbullying [14]. Disparities in well-being between different family types, such as single-parent households, highlight the need for inclusive initiatives to promote economic stability, health, housing conditions, and digital literacy [15]. To address these challenges and enhance population and family well-being in Malaysia, a comprehensive approach is required. This approach should prioritize economic stability, health promotion, improved housing conditions, and enhanced digital literacy initiatives. By focusing on these aspects, Malaysia can work towards building resilient and self-determining families that embody inclusiveness and equality, aligning with the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 [16].

Based on Figure 1, The Malaysian Family Well-Being Index (FWBI) for 2019 is 7.72 out of 10, with the Family Relationship Domain scoring the highest at 8.35. The study shows that FWBI 2019 scores increased with household income and were higher in rural areas. Nuclear and blended families also had higher scores. Across the eight domains, the Role of Religion and Spiritual Practices Domain scored the second-highest at 8.25, followed by Family and Community Involvement (8.00) and Family Safety (7.86). The FWBI 2019 score has risen by 0.39 points since 2016, indicating an overall increase

in family well-being. The scores varied by state, with Putrajaya recording the highest and Perak the lowest.



Fig. 1. Malaysia Family Well-being Index 2019

1.2 Background of LPPKN

The National Family Planning Board (LPPKN) was established in 1966 under the Family Planning Act 1966 (Act 42/1966) to implement family planning programs in Malaysia. In 1984, it was renamed the Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) and expanded to include population and socio-economic development, aligning with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD-POA) agenda in 1994. In 2001, it was placed under the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development. LPPKN's vision is to be a leader in family well-being, driving the agenda of population, marriage, and family through innovative research, services, and programs towards shared prosperity [17]. It practices common values such as teamwork, integrity, compassion, and professionalism. LPPKN's authority, functions, and responsibilities include advising the government on population, family development, and human reproduction policies and programs in Malaysia, planning, implementing, and coordinating programs, and serving as a knowledge and education dissemination agent. They also provide training and foster technical cooperation networks among countries, ensuring skill development and information technology sharing. LPPKN also conducts research and studies in population, family development, and human reproduction, and maintains monitoring and evaluation systems for programs.

LPPKN has implemented a series of initiatives to bolster family well-being and create a supportive environment for families to thrive. Central to these efforts are family-friendly policies, including the National Family Policy and its Plan of Action, which prioritize family values such as caring, honesty, justice, and equality. These policies serve as a catalyst for stakeholders to emphasize the "family

perspective," ensuring accessibility to family-oriented programs, services, and facilities. Additionally, Malaysia offers a range of family support services, including counselling, therapy, parenting and marriage workshops, and financial assistance programs. Family education programs equip parents with essential knowledge and skills for raising healthy children, covering topics such as parenting techniques, child development, and family communication. Community engagement initiatives, such as family resource centres and support groups, foster a network of assistance for families in need. Advocacy and awareness campaigns further promote the importance of family well-being, while strategic collaborations with Non-Governmental Organizations expand the reach of programs and services aimed at strengthening family ties across Malaysia.

1.3 Aim of Study

This article aims to investigate and analyze the journey of LPPKN from 1984-2023, incorporating both SWOT and TOWS analyses. By reflecting on its history and achievements, the study aims to understand the changes and adaptations made to address current challenges. SWOT analysis becomes relevant in the context of LPPKN to identify strengths to be reinforced, weaknesses to be addressed, opportunities to be seized, and threats to be confronted. Additionally, the TOWS analysis will help align the internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, thereby formulating more effective strategies and recommendations to propel LPPKN to the next level in achieving the goals of social and family development for the nation. This dual analysis serves as a strategic foundation for LPPKN and contributes to critical thinking in enhancing its positive impact on Malaysian society [18].

2. Methodology

Strategic analytical tools like SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and TOWS analyses are crucial in the strategic planning process, especially in the dynamic fields of population and family development. Figure 2 illustrates the SWOT-TOWS Analysis Diagram, these frameworks facilitate an in-depth assessment of both internal and external factors impacting organizational goals, aiding policymakers, and stakeholders in understanding the complexities and opportunities within the population and family well-being sectors. The SWOT analysis identifies key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, while the TOWS matrix further explores strategic options to leverage strengths, address weaknesses, seize opportunities, and mitigate threats, enhancing decision-making and strategic direction.

The initial phase of this study involved a meticulous web-based desk review to comprehensively understand the initiatives of the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN). A systematic examination of available offerings, such as reports, strategic plans, and publications, was conducted as shown in Table 1. These materials were cataloged and categorized based on key descriptors and program qualities, including geographical focus, program objectives, target demographics, and implementation strategies. The desk review aimed to establish a foundation for the subsequent analysis and to identify relevant areas for the structured interviews.

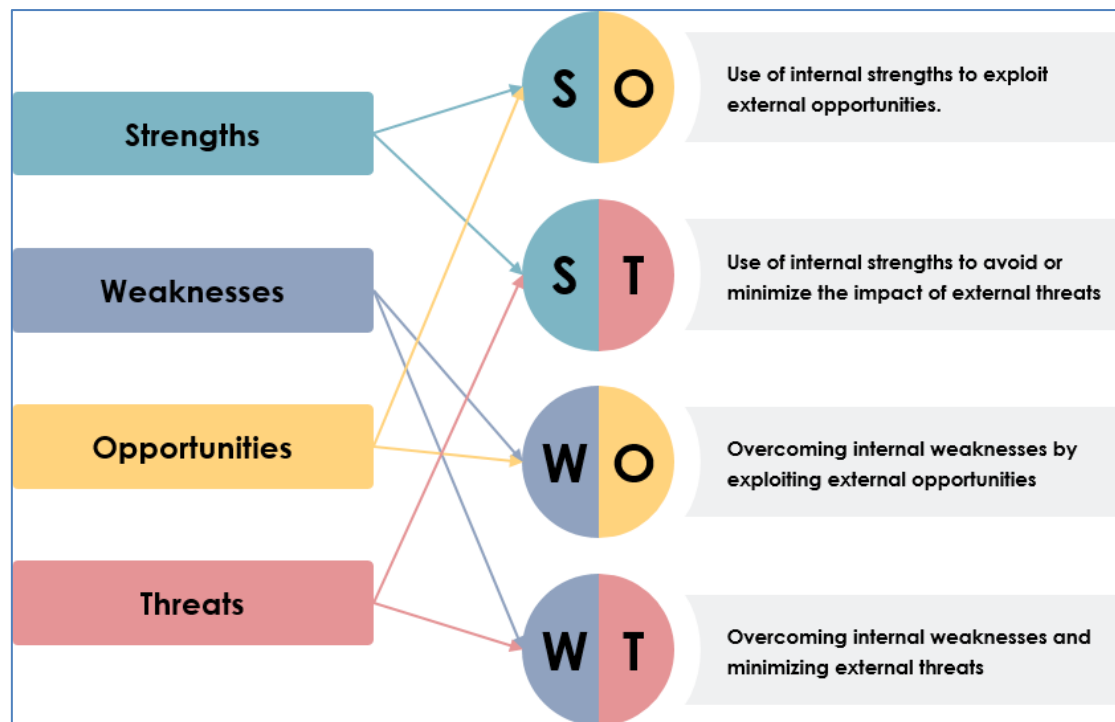


Fig. 2. SWOT-TOWS Analysis Diagram [19]

Table 1

Documents for Desk review

No.	Documents	Year
1	Act and Policy	1984-2023
2	Country Statement	2017-2023
3	Annual Report (2016-2021)	2016-2021
4	Modules	2000-2023
5	Programmes and Services	2016-2021
6	Academic research articles published in Web of Science and Scopus:	Until February 2024
	Web of Science	Web of Science n=17
	("Lembaga Penduduk dan Pembangunan Keluarga Negara" OR "LPPKN" OR "National Population and Family Development Board")	Scopus n=18
	Scopus	
	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Lembaga Penduduk dan Pembangunan Keluarga Negara" OR "LPPKN" OR "National Population and Family Development Board"))	

Building upon insights from the desk review, structured interviews were conducted with key informants from various stakeholders including LPPKN board member, and internal staff with over 15 years of service, as well as representatives from NGOs closely collaborating with LPPKN. Table 2 highlights the diverse expertise and experience of the interview participants, ranging from LPPKN board members to internal staff and NGO representatives. This qualitative approach aimed to capture nuanced perspectives and insights not fully revealed through desk research, enriching understanding beyond the review's scope.

Table 2
Interview Participants

No.	Interview Participant	Years of experience with LPPKN
1	Board Member	21
2	Internal staff A	20
3	Internal staff B	15
4	Internal staff C	20
5	Internal staff D	21
6	NGO Representative	8

The data collected from both the desk review and structured interviews were analyzed and triangulated using qualitative software, NVivo. This robust approach allowed for systematic organization, coding, and comparison of the data, facilitating a comprehensive examination of themes, patterns, and relationships. NVivo's user-friendly interface enabled efficient data management and enhanced the rigor of the analysis process, ensuring reliability and validity in the findings, contributing valuable insights to the high-impact journal article on population and family well-being in Malaysia.

3. Results

3.1 SWOT Analysis Findings

The research identified seven (7) central themes within the SWOT analysis, encompassing legislative framework and policy environment; integrated educational programs; comprehensive reproductive healthcare services; innovative research; information sharing and public awareness; skilled and dedicated personnel; technological innovation and digitalization (Table 3).

Table 3
Summary of SWOT Analysis

Key Themes			Opportunities	Threats
Legislative framework and policy environment	Anchors family well-being and population management effectively.	Require continuous revision to align with evolving societal demands.	Integrating international best practices with consideration for Malaysian cultural norms	Challenged by rapid socio-economic-political changes and resource limits.
Integrated educational programs	Focused, comprehensive and innovative education programs, modules and advocacy.	Limited access for target groups and assessment of its effectiveness.	Technology integration enhances content delivery and accessibility.	Negative influence of mass media and external cultures.
Comprehensive reproductive healthcare services	Trusted and affordable reproductive health clinical services with subsidies	Limited access to subfertility clinical services.	Establishment of a National Subfertility Centre.	Offers from unsafe external services or treatments.
Innovative research	Smart collaboration network with agencies, communities and	Communication challenges and cultural diversity.	Collaboration with corporate and industrial sectors.	Unmonitored collaboration networks, integrity risks, and data security.

	educational institutions.			
Information sharing and public awareness	Empowering research with grants and disseminating knowledge through various platforms.	Underutilization of research findings and publications by the public.	Production of high-impact and competitive research outputs.	Governance of research and integrity in knowledge dissemination.
Skilled and dedicated personnel	Dedicated and competent.	Work-life-health balance challenges.	Become icons leading family well-being.	Risks of declining physical and mental health.
Technological innovation and digitalization	Strong digitalization capabilities boost operational efficiency and public service effectiveness.	Need for literacy and competence in digitalization and social media.	Leveraging social media for broader access.	World Shifts: Uncertainties in geopolitics, societal views on marriage, and changes in family structures.

3.2 TOWS Analysis Findings

Drawing from the outcomes of the SWOT analysis, the TOWS matrix presents various strategic options. This matrix serves as a valuable instrument for devising strategies by aligning internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats. Consequently, Figure 3 illustrates 28 potential key strategies.

3.2.1 Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategies

In the Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategies, LPPKN can harness its internal strengths to capitalize on external opportunities for enhancing family well-being and population management. By integrating international best practices into Malaysian cultural norms, the nation can adapt global strategies to align with local values, fostering greater acceptance and effectiveness within the community. Additionally, leveraging technology to enhance education programs presents a unique opportunity to improve accessibility and delivery, empowering individuals with knowledge and skills crucial for navigating contemporary challenges [20]. Furthermore, the establishment of a National Subfertility Centre, as announced by the Women, Family and Community Development Minister, Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri, addresses a critical gap in reproductive health services. The center, estimated to cost RM171 million and scheduled to commence operations in 2029, aims to provide trusted and affordable care. It will offer comprehensive fertility treatment services and family well-being support while also functioning as a research coordination hub. Minister Nancy Shukri emphasized that the existing subfertility treatment services at the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) subfertility clinic are insufficient to meet current demand [21].

Collaborating with corporate sectors through a smart network not only drives innovation but also amplifies the impact of family well-being initiatives by tapping into external expertise and resources. By empowering research and disseminating knowledge effectively, Malaysia can drive informed decision-making and policy formulation, leading to more impactful interventions and outcomes. Moreover, by harnessing the dedication of the workforce and utilizing digital platforms for wider information distribution, LPPKN can foster a culture of responsibility and engagement, reaching a broader audience and driving community participation in family well-being initiatives. Overall, these SO strategies present valuable opportunities for LPPKN to enhance its population management efforts, fostering resilience and prosperity for the nation.

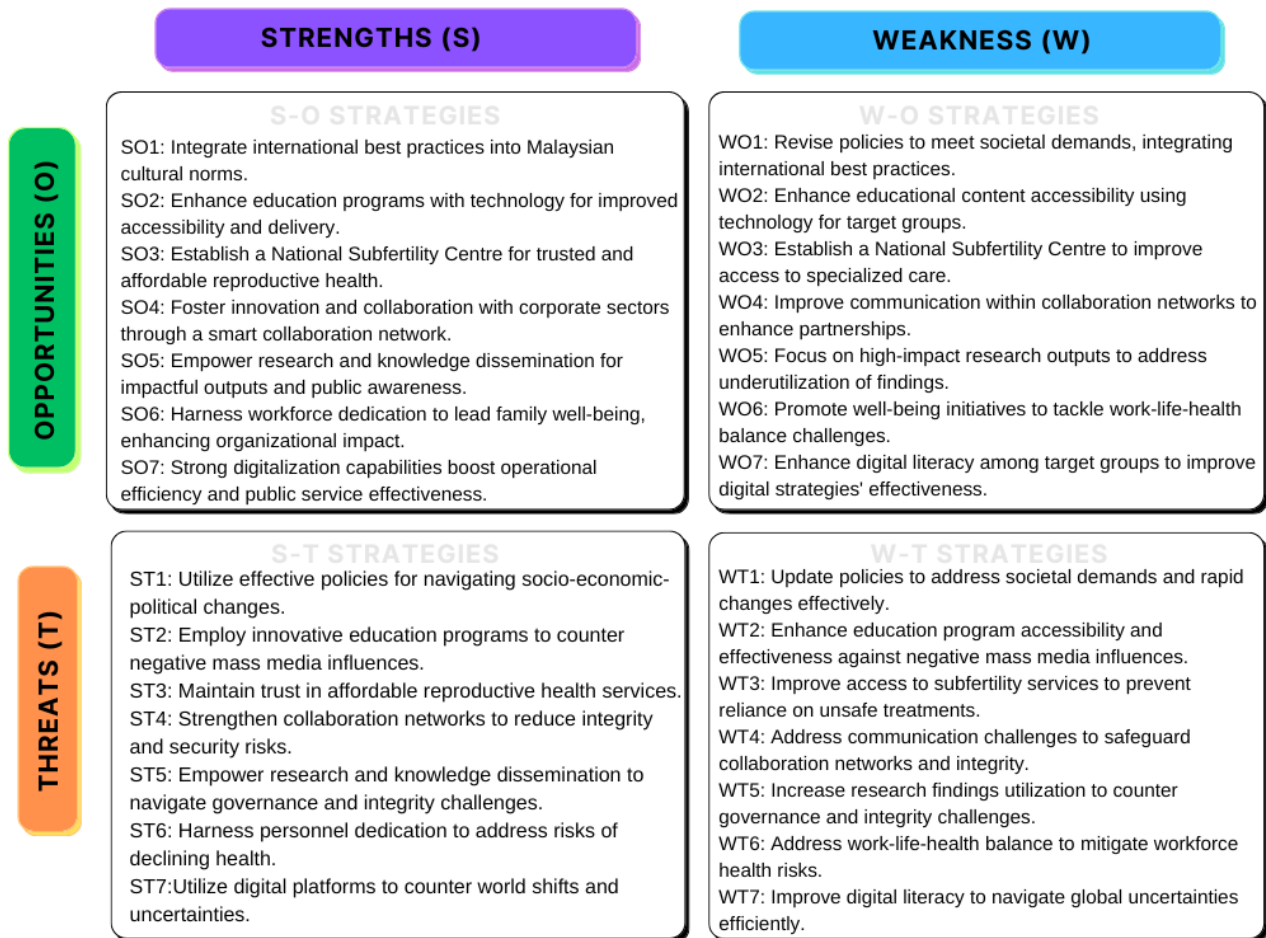


Fig. 3. TOWS Analysis Matrix for LPPKN Roles in Enhancing Population and Family Well-being in Malaysia

3.2.2 Weakness-Opportunity (WO) strategies

In revising policies to align with societal demands, Malaysia and LPPKN can integrate international best practices to meet evolving needs effectively. Furthermore, enhancing educational content accessibility through technology will empower target groups with vital knowledge and skills. Additionally, establishing a National Subfertility Centre will address the lack of access to specialized care, ensuring comprehensive reproductive health services for all [20]. Improving communication within collaboration networks is essential to foster stronger partnerships with corporate sectors and other stakeholders. Moreover, prioritizing high-impact research outputs will combat the underutilization of findings, driving informed decision-making and policy formulation. Promoting well-being initiatives is crucial to addressing work-life-health balance challenges and fostering a healthier and more productive workforce [12,21].

To complement these efforts, LPPKN should also invest in community engagement initiatives to ensure that the population is actively involved in the decision-making process regarding their well-being. Additionally, strengthening regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms will uphold standards of care and protect the rights of individuals accessing reproductive health services. These measures, combined with enhanced digital literacy among target groups, will amplify the effectiveness of digital strategies and ensure equitable access to information and resources for all segments of society. Through comprehensive and inclusive approaches, Malaysia can truly transform its population management efforts and foster a resilient and prosperous future for all its citizens.

3.2.3 Strength-Threat (ST) strategies

In navigating Malaysia's evolving socio-economic-political landscape, the implementation of effective policies stands as a critical cornerstone. These policies must possess adaptability and foresight to respond to dynamic changes while capitalizing on emerging opportunities. Flexibility in policy formulation ensures resilience against uncertainties, contributing to the nation's stability and progress amidst shifts in various sectors. Complementing policy measures, innovative education programs serve as robust tools for countering negative influences propagated by mass media. By instilling critical thinking skills and resilience against misinformation, these programs empower individuals to make informed decisions and foster positive societal attitudes. Through interactive and engaging methodologies, education becomes a catalyst for shaping a well-informed and discerning citizenry.

Maintaining trust in affordable reproductive health services is paramount for ensuring the overall well-being of the populace. Upholding quality standards and accessibility fosters confidence among individuals seeking such services, mitigating concerns regarding safety and reliability. By prioritizing accessible and trustworthy reproductive healthcare, Malaysia addresses crucial public health needs, ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes nationwide. Moreover, strengthening collaboration networks and promoting transparency are pivotal for mitigating integrity and security risks. By fostering a culture of cooperation and accountability, Malaysia can leverage collective expertise and resources more effectively to address complex challenges. Empowering research and knowledge dissemination further enhances governance and integrity, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and driving progress across diverse sectors. Through these multifaceted approaches, Malaysia fortifies its resilience and capacity to navigate uncertainties, ensuring sustainable development and prosperity for its citizens.

3.2.4 Weakness-Threat (WT) strategies

As Malaysia adapts to societal demands and rapid changes, updating policies is paramount. These updates should prioritize flexibility and responsiveness, enabling the nation to address evolving challenges effectively. By aligning policies with current needs, Malaysia can navigate shifting dynamics and seize opportunities for progress. In tandem, enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of education programs is crucial. Leveraging technology and innovative teaching methods empowers individuals with critical thinking skills, countering the negative impacts of mass media. Ensuring widespread access to quality education fosters a more informed population capable of navigating societal complexities confidently.

Improving access to subfertility services is equally vital for safeguarding reproductive health. Establishing specialized centers and promoting affordable care options can mitigate risks associated with unsafe treatments. Prioritizing access and affordability ensure comprehensive reproductive healthcare for all Malaysians, promoting equity and well-being. Additionally, addressing communication challenges within collaboration networks is essential for maintaining integrity and trust. Clear and transparent communication channels foster cooperation and accountability, enhancing collective progress towards shared goals. Strengthening communication protocols fortifies collaboration efforts, driving societal advancement and resilience.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, Malaysia's journey towards enhancing family well-being and population management is illuminated by a comprehensive SWOT analysis. While the nation's legislative frameworks and policy initiatives stand as strengths, the dynamic evolution of societal demands and integration of international practices pose ongoing challenges. However, amidst these hurdles, opportunities emerge, notably in leveraging technology for education and establishing a National Subfertility Centre. Yet, these prospects are countered by threats from rapid socio-economic-political changes and governance issues. Drawing from the SWOT analysis, the TOWS framework provides strategic insights for LPPKN to fortify population management efforts. Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategies advocate leveraging internal strengths to seize external opportunities, including integrating international practices and enhancing education. Concurrently, Weakness-Opportunity (WO) strategies aim to address shortcomings while capitalizing on opportunities, such as policy revisions and improved educational accessibility. Moreover, Strength-Threat (ST) strategies prioritize effective policy implementation and maintaining trust in health services, while Weakness-Threat (WT) strategies focus on updating policies and improving services. By implementing these initiatives, Malaysia can navigate complexities effectively, ensuring citizen well-being and prosperity amidst evolving landscapes.

5. Recommendations

Moving forward, strategic policymaking and community engagement are essential to capitalize on strengths and address weaknesses, while seizing opportunities and mitigating threats. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of proposed strategies and exploring the role of digital literacy and stakeholder collaboration in advancing population management efforts. By fostering innovation and resilience, Malaysia can progress towards inclusive prosperity and sustainable development. Such insights will be invaluable for future policymaking and program development endeavours.

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