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Educational Profile of Singapore Resident Non-Students, 2002 - 2012

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Introduction

This article looks at the distribution of the Singapore resident non-student population in terms of the highest qualification attained. It examines the trends in educational profile in 2012 and over the past decade for males and females as well as across different age groups. It also looks at educational attainment in terms of mean years of schooling.

The data for 2005 and 2010 used in this paper are from the General Household Survey 2005 and Census of Population 2010 conducted by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

Data for other years are based on the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey conducted by the Ministry of Manpower.

The data cover the Singapore resident population aged 25 years and over who are

not attending educational institutions as full-time students. Singapore residents who are upgrading their qualifications through part-time courses while working are included in the data. The Singapore resident population refers to Singapore citizens and permanent residents.

The Singapore Standard Educational Classification (SSEC)¹ is used to classify persons by their highest qualification attained. Highest qualification attained refers to the highest grade or standard of formal education a person has passed or the highest level of education where a certificate, diploma, or degree is awarded.

The educational qualification may be attained through full-time or part-time study in a structured educational programme.

¹ SSEC 2010 is used to classify the data from 2010 onwards. For data prior to 2010, the SSEC 2000 is used. More information on the SSEC is available on the SingStat website at: http://www.singstat.gov.sg/methodologies_and_standards/standards_and_classifications/SSEC.html

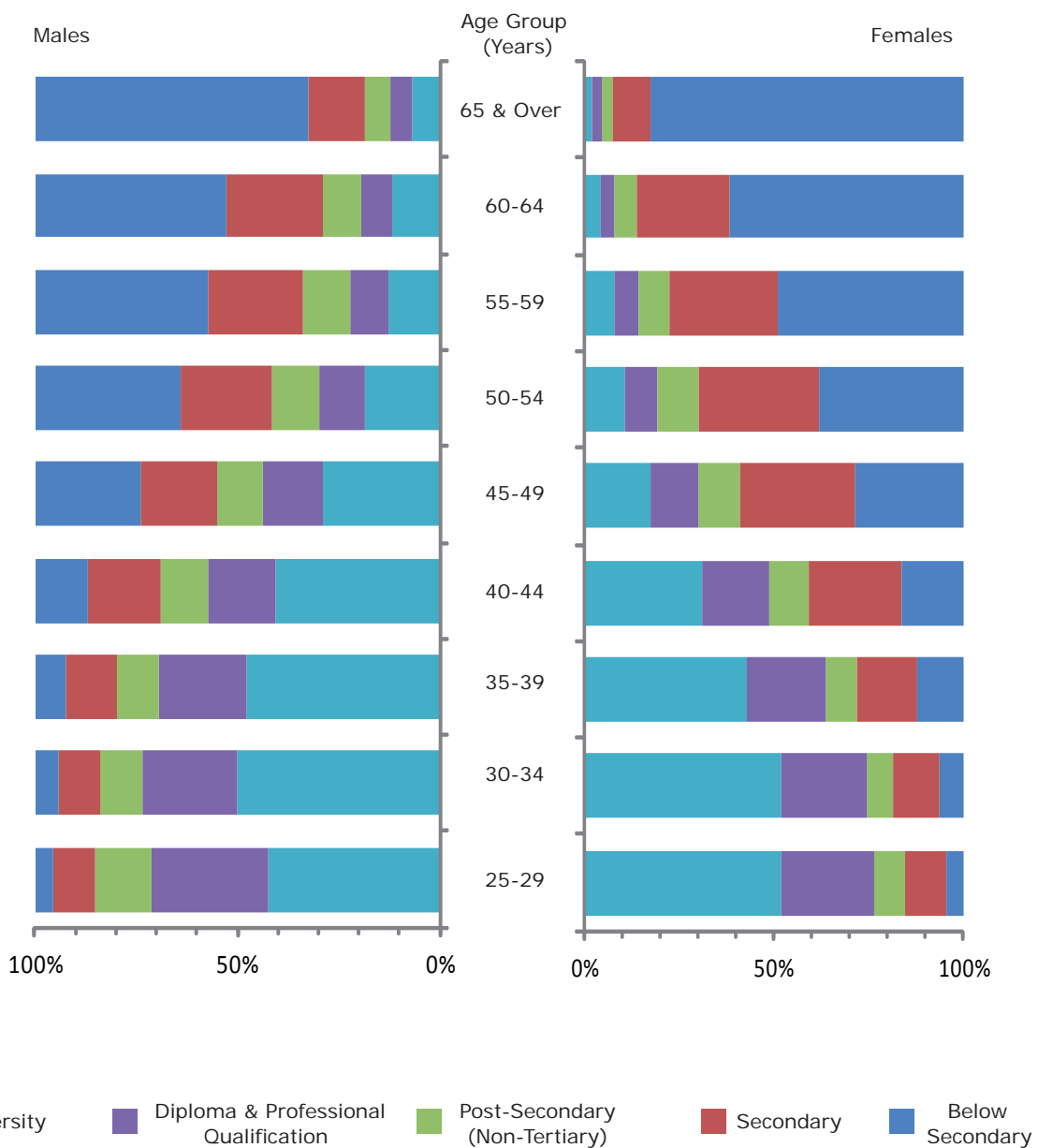
The educational qualifications exclude skill certifications, certificates of course attendance and honorary qualifications which are not the result of formal learning and examination by a formal educational institution or professional body.

Educational Profile

Younger Population Are Better Educated

The increased schooling opportunities over the years are reflected in the distribution of educational attainment by age.

CHART 1 HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED OF RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, 2012



Note: For the age group of 25-29 years, some males could be still pursuing higher education after performing national service at an earlier age.

In 2012, the proportions of Singapore resident non-students with tertiary education² were generally higher for younger males and females than for the older cohorts (Chart 1).

For example, more than 70 per cent of Singapore resident non-students aged 25-29 years and 30-34 years were tertiary educated. In contrast, less than 20 per cent among those aged 60-64 years, and 65 years and over had tertiary qualifications.

Growth in Tertiary Educated Population

At the same time, the educational profile of the Singapore resident non-student population has improved over the last decade.

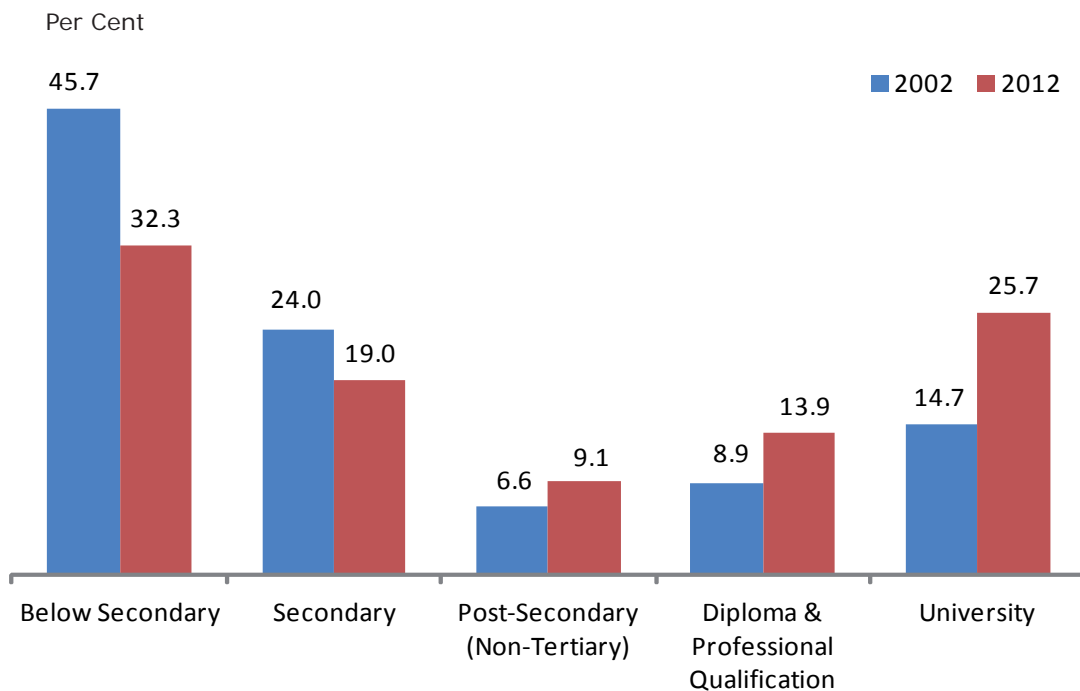
Between 2002 and 2012, there was a marked increase in the proportion of the population with tertiary qualifications.

University graduates constituted 26 per cent of the resident non-student population aged 25 years and over in 2012, up from 15 per cent a decade ago (Chart 2).

Persons with diploma and professional qualifications also accounted for a larger share of the resident non-student population at 14 per cent in 2012, up from 8.9 per cent in 2002.

Overall, the tertiary educated accounted for 40 per cent of the resident non-student population aged 25 years and over in 2012, up from 24 per cent in 2002.

CHART 2 HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED OF RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION AGED 25 YEARS & OVER, 2002 AND 2012



2 In this article, the tertiary educated refer to persons with diploma and professional qualifications, or university qualifications.

Improved Educational Profile across All Age Groups

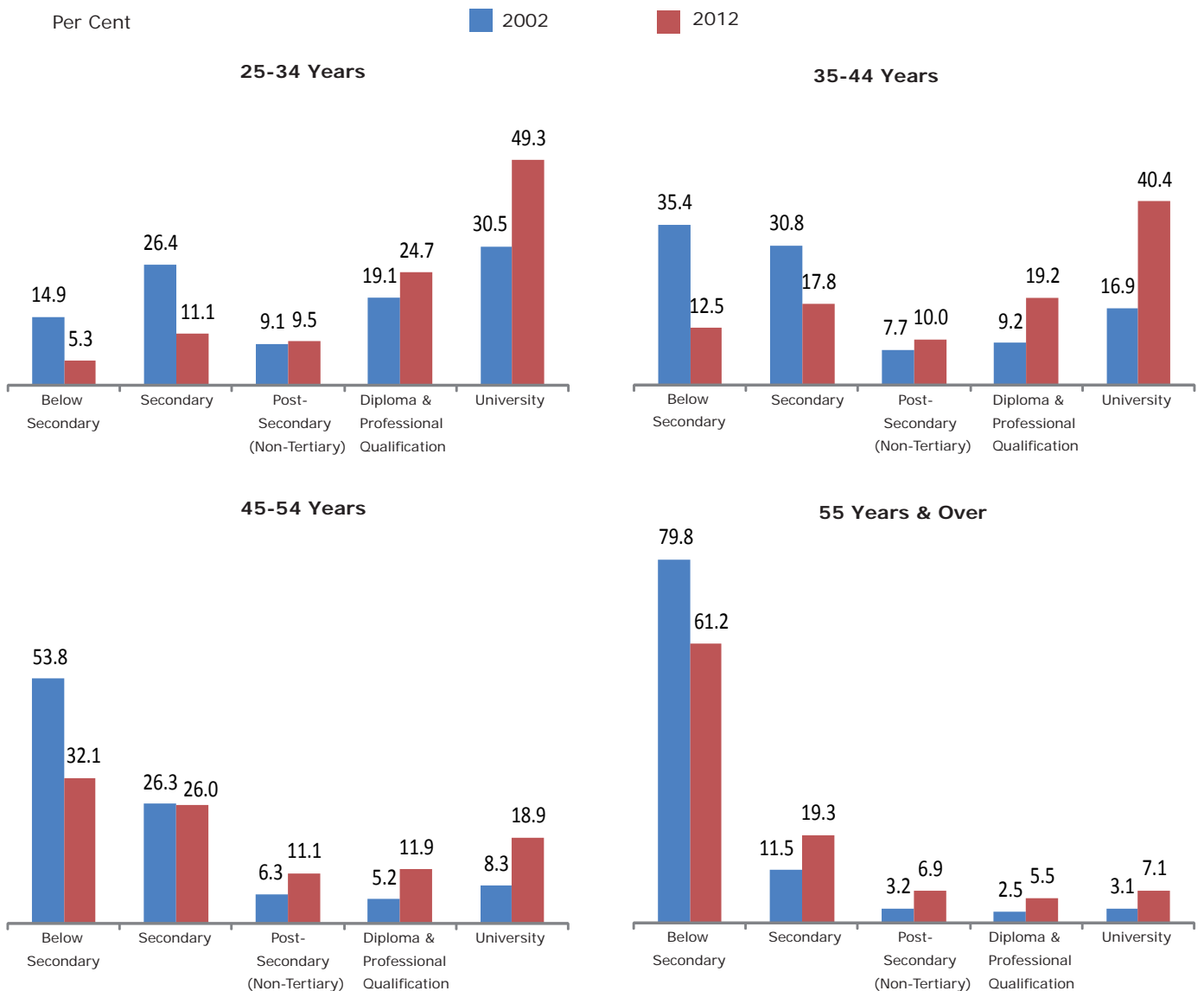
Compared with 2002, all age groups saw an increase in the proportion with tertiary qualifications in 2012. The tertiary educated made up 74 per cent of Singapore resident non-students aged 25-34 years in 2012, up from 50 per cent in 2002 (Chart 3).

The increase was largely due to the rise in the proportion of university graduates from 30 per cent to 49 per cent.

The proportion with diploma and professional qualifications rose by a smaller extent, from 19 per cent to 25 per cent.

Among the resident non-student population aged 35-44 years, the proportion with tertiary qualifications also increased significantly from 26 per cent in 2002 to 60 per cent in 2012. About 40 per cent held university qualifications and 19 per cent held diploma and professional qualifications in 2012, an increase from the corresponding proportions of 17 per cent and 9.2 per cent respectively a decade ago.

CHART 3 HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED OF RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2002 AND 2012



For the older age groups, the increase in the proportion with tertiary qualifications was comparatively smaller.

Between 2002 and 2012, the proportion with tertiary qualifications rose from 14 per cent to 31 per cent for those aged 45-54 years, and from 5.6 per cent to 13 per cent for those aged 55 years and over.

Improved Educational Profile for Males and Females

The educational profiles of both males and females improved. Among male resident non-students aged 25 years and over, the proportion with tertiary qualifications rose from 28 per cent in 2002 to 43 per cent

in 2012 (Table 1). Among females, the corresponding proportion rose from 20 per cent to 36 per cent.

While the proportion with tertiary qualifications was higher for males than females among resident non-students aged 25 years and over, it was the reverse among younger residents within the group.

Among those aged 25-34 years in 2012, 76 per cent of females held tertiary qualifications, compared to 72 per cent of males (Table 2).

However, for those aged 35 years and over, the proportion of males in each age group with tertiary qualifications was larger than that of the females.

TABLE 1 RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION AGED 25 YEARS & OVER BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED AND SEX, 2002 AND 2012

	Per Cent			
	Males		Females	
	2002	2012	2002	2012
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Below Secondary	42.9	29.2	48.4	35.1
Secondary	22.6	17.3	25.4	20.6
Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary)	7.0	10.5	6.2	7.8
Diploma & Professional Qualification	10.4	14.9	7.6	13.0
University	17.2	28.1	12.4	23.5

TABLE 2 RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED AND AGE GROUP, 2012

	Per Cent							
	25-34 Years		35-44 Years		45-54 Years		55 Years & Over	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Below Secondary	5.2	5.4	10.5	14.3	30.9	33.2	54.2	67.6
Secondary	10.5	11.7	15.3	20.1	20.9	30.9	19.7	18.9
Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary)	11.9	7.4	11.0	9.2	11.3	10.8	8.8	5.1
Diploma & Professional Qualification	26.0	23.6	19.0	19.4	13.2	10.7	7.1	4.0
University	46.4	51.9	44.2	37.0	23.7	14.3	10.1	4.4

Note: For the age group of 25-34 years, some males could be still pursuing higher education after performing national service at an earlier age.

Mean Years of Schooling

Mean Years of Schooling Rose over Time and across All Age Groups

With more Singapore residents attaining higher levels of educational qualifications,

the mean years of schooling of the population has also risen over time.

Among resident non-students aged 25 years and over, the mean years of schooling rose from 8.7 years in 2002 to 10.3 years in 2012 (Chart 4).

CHART 4 MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING AMONG RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION AGED 25 YEARS & OVER, 2002-2012

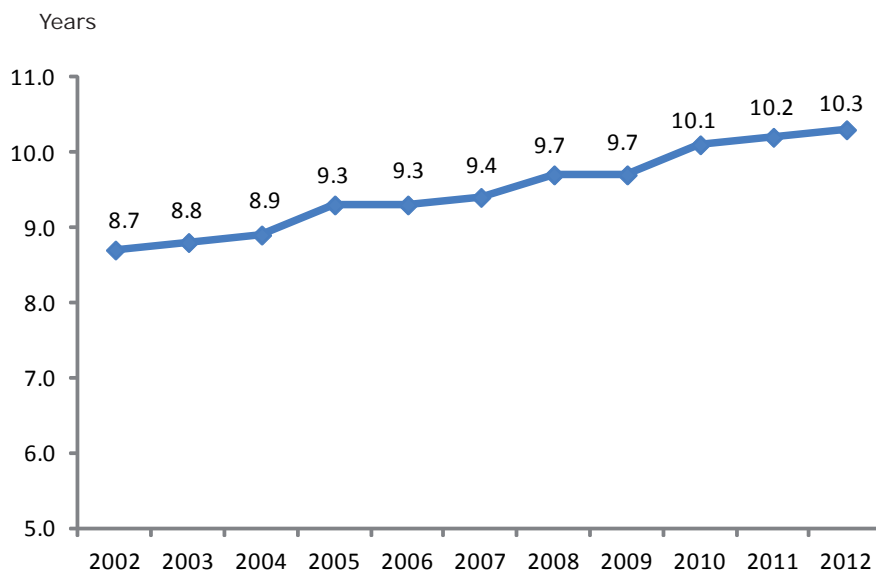
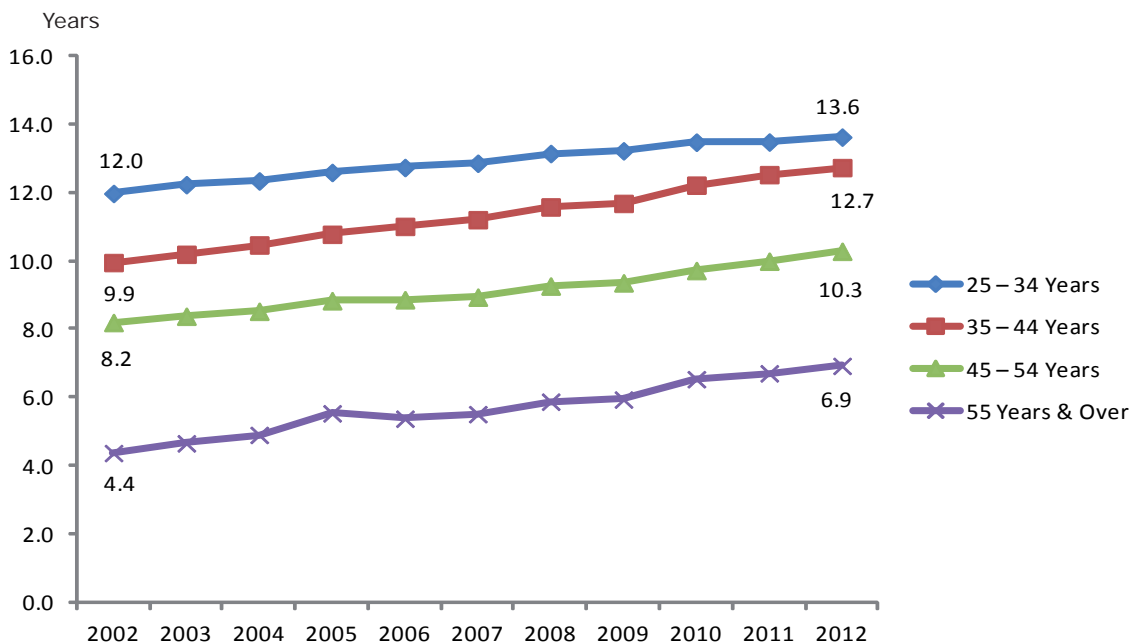


CHART 5 MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING AMONG RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2002-2012



Over the last decade, the mean years of schooling rose for every age group, reaching 13.6 years for the age group of 25-34 years, 12.7 years for the age group of 35-44 years, 10.3 years for the age group of 45-54 years and 6.9 years for the age group of 55 years and over in 2012 (Chart 5).

Narrower Difference between Males and Females in Mean Years of Schooling

Females are catching up with their male counterparts in the attainment of higher educational qualifications, especially among the younger age groups.

The difference between male and female non-students in mean years of schooling was narrower in 2012 compared to 2002 (Table 3).

In particular, for the younger cohort aged 25-34 years, the mean years of schooling for females (13.7 years) was marginally higher than that of their male counterparts (13.5 years) in 2012.

Concluding Remarks

In tandem with increasing schooling opportunities, the educational attainment of the resident non-student population aged 25 years and over improved over the last decade.

Between 2002 and 2012, there was a significant increase in the proportion of the population with tertiary qualifications. The improvement was reflected across all age groups, with the younger age groups showing a comparatively larger increase. The educational profiles of both males and females also improved over the last decade, with females catching up with their male counterparts in the attainment of higher educational qualifications.

During the same period, the mean years of schooling of the resident non-student population rose at the overall level as well as across all age groups. At the same time, the difference between males' and females' mean years of schooling also narrowed over the past decade.

TABLE 3 MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING AMONG RESIDENT NON-STUDENT POPULATION BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, 2002 AND 2012

Age Group (Years)	Years					
	2002			2012		
	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
Total	9.3	8.1	1.2	10.9	9.9	1.0
25-34	12.1	11.8	0.3	13.5	13.7	-0.2
35-44	10.3	9.6	0.7	13.1	12.4	0.7
45-54	8.9	7.5	1.4	10.7	9.8	0.9
55 & Over	5.6	3.3	2.3	7.9	6.0	1.9

Note: For the age group of 25-34 years, some males could be still pursuing higher education after performing national service at an earlier age.