



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Transforming Public Policies to Enhance Elderly Employment Participation through Inclusive Approaches

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ABSTRACT

This study examines factors influencing elderly individuals' decisions not to participate in the labor market in Bangkok, Thailand, with particular emphasis on understanding barriers to workforce reentry. A quantitative methodology employing a cross-sectional research design was utilized, with data collected through structured questionnaires from 400 elderly participants, selected through quota sampling across Bangkok's six administrative zones. The study employed descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis to examine relationships between variables including age, gender, education level, income, health status, and government support dependency. The findings reveal three significant patterns: First, there was no statistical difference between genders in workforce participation preferences ($X^2=0.015$, $df=1$, $p=0.903$). Second, a critical age threshold was identified at 65-66 years, where work participation desire decreased dramatically from 74.5% to 24.2%. Third, contrary to traditional economic assumptions, individuals with lower income and reliance on government support showed reduced inclination to return to work, with 79.2% of those earning below 5,000 baht monthly and 87.3% of government support recipients choosing not to participate in the labor market. This research contributes to understanding elderly workforce participation by challenging conventional assumptions about financial necessity as a primary motivator for employment. The findings suggest that effective policy interventions should focus on addressing multiple barriers simultaneously, including health concerns, skill development, and workplace adaptation, particularly for those currently choosing not to work. These insights are valuable for policymakers developing targeted interventions in rapidly aging societies.

INTRODUCTION

Global demographic changes are leading societies into a new era known as the "Global Aging Society," representing a significant and unprecedented challenge in the 21st century. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in Asia, where both developed nations like Japan and South Korea, and developing countries like Thailand are experiencing rapid demographic transitions. Projections indicate that by 2050, the elderly population in Asia will constitute 18% of the total population (Kikkawa & Gaspar, 2023), presenting significant challenges to economic systems, healthcare, and social welfare services across all levels. Thailand is experiencing a particularly accelerated transition to an aged society. According to the National Statistical Office, Thailand's elderly population reached 18% of the total population in 2022, with projections indicating a dramatic increase to 28% by 2030

(National Statistical Office, 2020). This rapid acceleration poses immediate challenges for policy adaptation and implementation within a compressed timeframe.

The demographic shift has far-reaching implications at both national and global levels, particularly regarding economic resource allocation for an expanding elderly population amid a declining workforce. This situation creates significant challenges for governments and organizations in managing limited resources (Krause & Sawhill, 2017). Japan, with its robust social welfare system, has demonstrated promising approaches through initiatives supporting elderly labor market participation, including retirement age extensions and development of age-appropriate job positions (Nagase & Brinton, 2017).

The declining working-age population directly impacts economic growth, particularly evident in developed nations like Japan, where workforce reduction significantly affects labor productivity and economic sustainability. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projects potential GDP growth deceleration due to demographic imbalances (Kikkawa & Gaspar, 2023). This situation is particularly acute in developing countries, where rural elderly often rely on informal employment or agricultural income, typically lacking adequate pension or social welfare protection (Nagase & Brinton, 2017). While encouraging elderly employment can reduce government welfare burdens and enhance quality of life for those wanting to work (Krause & Sawhill, 2017), previous research has predominantly focused on employment promotion policies. A significant research gap exists in understanding elderly individuals who choose not to work post-retirement. This study addresses this gap by examining the characteristics and factors influencing elderly decisions not to participate in the labor market, particularly concerning health status, education levels, and economic conditions (Raghupathi & Raghupathi, 2020).

The research aims to provide insights for developing targeted policies and support measures specifically for elderly individuals who prefer not to work. This understanding is crucial for developing comprehensive, balanced policies that effectively respond to the diverse needs of aging populations. By examining the factors influencing decisions not to work, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of elderly employment preferences in urban contexts, particularly in rapidly aging Asian societies like Thailand. This knowledge is essential for creating more inclusive and effective elderly policies that acknowledge and accommodate varying preferences and needs within aging populations.

Objectives

This study aims to examine

- 1) Analyze factors influencing elderly individuals' decisions to return to the labor market in Bangkok, Thailand.
- 2) Develop a policy framework to enhance elderly workforce participation and address socio-economic challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global demographic shifts toward aging societies present significant challenges, particularly in developing countries like Thailand. Under Thai law (Elderly Act B.E. 2546), individuals aged 60 and above are classified as elderly and entitled to various benefits, including monthly allowances ranging from 600 baht (17 USD) for those aged 60-69 to 1,000 baht (29 USD) for those over 90. Thailand entered its aging society phase in 2005, with elderly populations exceeding 10.5% of the total population (United Nations, 2022). However, the country faces significant challenges, including insufficient retirement savings and fiscal sustainability concerns (Meemon, 2019; Khongboon et al., 2016; Vorachat, 2024).

Research examining factors influencing elderly labor market participation has identified several key variables: gender, age, education level, health status, income, and income sources. Recent studies by Atipokaboon et al. (2024) highlight significant gender differences in elderly employment patterns, with males showing higher post-60 workforce participation rates. These findings align with earlier research by Gustman and Steinmeier (1984) and Lazear (1983), who found that even among males with private pensions, the probability of working between ages 58-63 decreased by only 18%, reflecting strong gender-role influences on employment decisions.

The relationship between education and economic necessity reveals compelling patterns, particularly among those with primary education. Limited educational attainment often restricts access to high-income employment and quality benefits, forcing continued workforce participation for survival (Anxo & Ericson, 2023). This educational disparity reflects broader social inequalities significantly impacting elderly quality of life and emphasizes the need for policies promoting lifelong learning and skill development opportunities (Poonpolkul, et. al., 2022; Wasi, et. al., 2020).

Health status emerges as a critical factor in elderly employment decisions. Research demonstrates that healthy elderly individuals not only maintain work capabilities but also show stronger desires to maintain socio-economic roles through employment (Gonzales, et al., 2020). This finding underscores the importance of preventive healthcare during working years to maintain employment capacity and quality of life in later years (Zacher, et al., 2021).

Government support adequacy presents a significant challenge in Thailand's context. The current social welfare system, providing modest monthly allowances based on age brackets, often fails to meet basic needs comprehensively. This inadequacy forces many elderly individuals to continue working despite reaching retirement age, highlighting urgent needs for more efficient and sustainable social welfare systems (United Nations, 2022).

Urban contexts like Bangkok present unique challenges and opportunities for elderly employment. The city's diverse economic landscape offers various employment possibilities but also creates barriers for those with limited education or declining health (Phijaisanit, 2020). This urban dimension adds complexity to understanding elderly employment decisions and policy development needs. The intersection of multiple factors – health, education, income, and support systems – creates complex patterns influencing elderly employment decisions. Research suggests that successful aging and work participation are closely linked to the quality and accessibility of support systems throughout the life course (White, 2015). This understanding reinforces the importance of examining not just current circumstances but also cumulative effects of lifetime opportunities and constraints (Jantavongso, 2022). Thailand's rapid transition to an aged society adds urgency to understanding these relationships. With projections indicating continued growth in elderly populations, developing effective policies requires comprehensive understanding of factors influencing work decisions. This includes recognizing both barriers to employment and reasons for choosing not to work, an often-overlooked aspect in existing research (Sirima Samuensai, 2023; Donrudee Suwankiri, 2022).

The literature reveals significant gaps in understanding the complex interactions between various factors affecting elderly employment decisions, particularly in developing country contexts. While existing research provides valuable insights into individual factors, less attention has been paid to how these factors interact within specific cultural and economic contexts like Thailand's urban environments (Thapwat, 2018). This review suggests that analyzing elderly labor market participation requires considering multiple interconnected factors while acknowledging local contextual influences. Understanding these relationships is crucial for developing effective policies that support elderly well-being while respecting individual choices regarding work participation in later life (Shen & Tanui, 2012). Such understanding becomes particularly relevant as Thailand moves toward becoming a complete aged society, requiring balanced approaches to elderly employment and social welfare policies. These insights support the study's hypotheses regarding relationships

between demographic factors and elderly employment decisions while highlighting the need for nuanced understanding of local contexts and individual circumstances in policy development.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative methodology with a cross-sectional design to examine factors influencing elderly individuals' desire to return to or abstain from the labor market in Bangkok, Thailand. Bangkok was selected as the study area due to its status as having the largest elderly population in Thailand (1,251,808 elderly residents) (Department of Provincial Administration, 2023) and its diverse economic, social, and employment opportunity landscape.

Study Population and Sampling

The study population comprised individuals aged 60 years and above residing in Bangkok. Sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, with population variance set at 0.50 and acceptable error margin at 0.05, yielding a sample size of 400 participants at 95% confidence level. Quota sampling was employed across Bangkok's six administrative zones to ensure representative geographical distribution.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires examining demographic characteristics, health status, economic conditions, and work preferences. Statistical analysis employed both descriptive and inferential approaches. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to characterize the sample population and work preferences. Inferential analysis utilized chi-square tests to examine relationships between various factors and elderly work preferences, with significance level set at 0.05.

Research Hypotheses

This study tested six primary hypotheses regarding factors associated with elderly's desire to return to the labor market in Bangkok:

H1: Male gender is positively associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

H2: Being in the 60-65 age group is positively associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

H3: Having primary education as the highest educational level is associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

H4: Good health status (absence of chronic conditions) is positively associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

H5: Monthly income below 5,000 baht (144 USD) is associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

H6: Receiving government support as primary income source is associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

This methodological approach enables comprehensive examination of factors influencing elderly work preferences while accounting for Bangkok's unique urban context. The findings aim to inform policy development for elderly labor market participation, particularly considering those who choose not to work - an often overlooked demographic in existing research.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The study sample comprised 400 elderly respondents representing Bangkok's elderly population of 1,251,808 individuals. Demographic analysis revealed a predominantly female sample (58.8%,

n=235), with males constituting 41.3% (n=165). Age distribution showed the largest concentration in the 60-65 years bracket (36.3%, n=145), followed by 66-70 years (22.8%, n=91) and 71-75 years (20.8%, n=83), with fewer respondents in older age groups (76-80 years: 14.5%, n=58; over 80 years: 5.8%, n=23). Educational attainment analysis indicated that the vast majority of respondents had completed primary education (91.0%, n=364), with significantly smaller proportions having secondary (7.5%, n=30) or higher education (1.5%, n=6). Regarding health status, more than three-quarters of respondents reported having chronic health conditions (77.8%, n=311), while only 22.3% (n=89) reported no chronic conditions. Economic indicators revealed that most respondents (66.0%, n=264) had monthly incomes below 5,000 baht, with 30.3% (n=121) earning between 5,000-10,000 baht. Only a small fraction earned higher incomes, with 2.8% (n=11) in the 10,001-15,000 baht range and 1.0% (n=4) earning above 15,000 baht monthly. Government support emerged as the primary income source for most respondents (55.3%, n=221), followed by business/employment income (25.3%, n=101) and family support (17.0%, n=68), with pension benefits being the least common source (2.3%, n=9). Notably, the majority of respondents (64.8%, n=259) expressed no desire to work, while only 35.5% (n=142) wanted to work or were currently employed. These demographic characteristics provide important context for understanding elderly employment preferences in Bangkok's urban setting.

Factors Influencing Elderly's Labor Market Return Decisions

This study investigated the relationships between demographic factors and elderly's desire to return to the labor market in Bangkok through comprehensive chi-square analyses. In the context of Thailand's rapidly aging urban society, understanding these multifaceted relationships is crucial for developing appropriate labor policies that address the unique characteristics of Bangkok's elderly population.

H1: Male gender is associated with desire to return to the labor market

Gender analysis, presented in Table 1, revealed an intriguing pattern where both males (64.8%, n=107) and females (64.3%, n=151) demonstrated remarkably similar preferences against returning to work ($X^2=0.015$, $df=1$, $p=0.903$, $C.C.=0.006$). This finding contrasts with traditional Asian social norms and previous research suggesting gender-based differences in work preferences among elderly populations. The similarity in work preferences between genders in Bangkok's context might reflect evolving social attitudes or the unique characteristics of urban elderly populations in Thailand.

Table 1: Gender and Desire to Return to Labor Market Among Elderly in Bangkok

Desire to Return to Labor Market	Gender	
	Males	Females
Want to work	35.2% (58)	35.7%(84)
Do not want to work	64.8%(107)	64.3%(151)
Total	100.0% (165)	100.0% (235)

$X^2 = 0.015$, $df = 1$, $Sig = 0.903$, $C.C. = 0.006$

H2: Being in the 60-65 age group is positively associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

Age emerged as a powerful predictor of work preferences, as detailed in Table 4 and visualized in Figure 1 ($\chi^2=159.947$, $df=4$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.534$). The data reveals a distinct inverse relationship between age and work desire. A critical transition point (Point A) occurs around age 65-66, where work preferences shift dramatically from desire to non-desire to work. Analysis shows two distinct phases: Phase 1 (60-65 years) exhibits high work desire at 74.5% (n=108), while Phase 2 (>66 years) demonstrates a sharp decline with an exponential decay pattern ($R^2=0.967$), dropping to 24.2% (n=22) in the 66-70 age group, and continuing to decrease until reaching zero among those over 80

years. The visualization in Figure 1 demonstrates this clear age-threshold effect through intersecting trend lines, where y1 represents the percentage wanting to work (blue line) and y2 shows the percentage not wanting to work (orange line). The intersection point A marks the 50% threshold where work preferences reverse, suggesting a crucial policy-relevant transition period.

Table 4: Age Group Distribution and Desire to Return to Labor Market Among Elderly in Bangkok

Desire to Return to Labor Market	Age Group				
	60-65 years	66-70 years	71-75 years	76-80 years	Over 80 years
Want to work	74.5% (108)	24.2% (22)	12.0% (10)	3.4% (2)	0.0% (0)
Do not want to work	25.5% (37)	75.8% (69)	88.0% (73)	96.6% (73)	100.0% (56)
Total	100% (145)	100.0% (91)	100.0% (83)	100.0% (58)	100.0% (23)

$X^2 = 159.947$, $df = 4$, $Sig = 0.001$, $C.C. = 0.534$

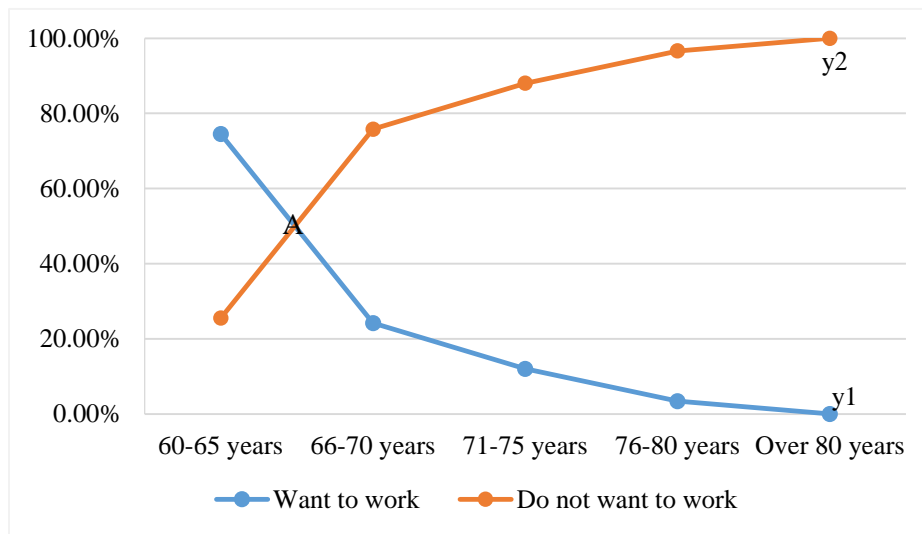


Figure 1: Age-Related Trends in Elderly's Desire to Return to Labor Market in Bangkok Metropolitan Area

H3: Having primary education as the highest educational level is associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

The influence of educational attainment, shown in Table 5, demonstrated significant correlation with work preferences ($X^2=16.782$, $df=2$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.201$). While only 32.4% ($n=118$) of those with primary education expressed interest in working, this proportion doubled among those with secondary or higher education (66.7%, $n=24$). This relationship likely reflects both capability and opportunity factors in Bangkok's urban labor market, where higher education might provide access to less physically demanding and more rewarding work opportunities. This finding notably contradicts our initial hypothesis (H3), which posited that having primary education as the highest educational level would be associated with a higher desire to return to the labor market. Instead, the data reveals an inverse relationship, suggesting that lower educational attainment may actually serve as a barrier to workforce reentry, possibly due to the physically demanding nature of available jobs and limited access to positions that offer both appropriate compensation and suitable working conditions for elderly individuals. This unexpected result challenges traditional assumptions about

the relationship between education levels and workforce participation among the elderly, particularly in urban contexts where job opportunities increasingly require higher levels of education and specialized skills.

Table 5: Educational Level and Desire to Return to Labor Market Among Elderly in Bangkok

Desire to Return to Labor Market	Educational Level		
	Primary	Secondary	Higher Education
Want to work	32.4% (118)	66.7% (20)	66.7% (4)
Do not want to work	67.6% (246)	33.3% (10)	33.3% (2)
Total	100.0%)364(100.0%)30(100.0%)6(

$X^2 = 16.782$, $df=2$, $Sig = 0.001$, $C.C.= 0.201$

H4: Good health status (absence of chronic conditions) is positively associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

Health status emerged as a particularly influential factor, as illustrated in Table 6 ($X^2=135.910$, $df=1$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.504$). The stark contrast between those without chronic conditions (87.6% wanting work, $n=78$) and those with health issues (20.6% wanting work, $n=64$) underscores health's crucial role in determining work capacity and desire. This finding is especially relevant in Bangkok's urban environment, where work opportunities often require good physical condition and mobility.

Table 6: Health Status and Desire to Return to Labor Market Among Elderly in Bangkok

Desire to Return to Labor Market	Health Status	
	No Chronic Conditions	With Chronic Conditions
Want to work	87.6% (78)	20.6% (64)
Do not want to work	12.4% (11)	79.4% (247)
Total	100.0% (89(100.0% (311(

$X^2 = 135.910$, $df=1$, $Sig = 0.001$, $C.C.= 0.504$

H5: Monthly income below 5,000 baht (144 USD) is associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

Monthly income revealed complex patterns, as shown in Table 7 ($X^2=76.204$, $df=3$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.400$). Surprisingly, those earning less than 5,000 baht showed relatively low work desire (20.8%, $n=55$), while those in the 10,001-15,000 baht range demonstrated the highest interest (90.9%, $n=10$). This finding significantly contradicts our initial hypothesis (H5) which posited that monthly income below 5,000 baht would be associated with a higher desire to return to the labor market. Instead, the data reveals that 79.2% ($n=209$) of those in the lowest income bracket chose not to work, with only 20.8% ($n=55$) expressing interest in workforce participation. This non-linear relationship challenges conventional economic theories suggesting that financial necessity drives work preferences among elderly populations. The pattern indicates that other factors, such as job satisfaction, social engagement, or work-life balance considerations, may play more significant roles in determining workforce participation decisions.

Table 7: Monthly Income and Desire to Return to Labor Market Among Elderly in Bangkok

Desire to Return to Labor Market	Monthly Income (Baht)			
	Below 5,000	5,000-10,000	10,001-15,000	Above 15,000
Want to work	20.8% (55)	61.2% (74)	90.9% (10)	75.0% (3)

Do not want to work	79.2% (209)	38.8% (47)	9.1% (1)	25.0% (1)
Total	100.0% (264)	100.0% (121)	100.0% (11)	100.0% (4)

$X^2 = 76.204$, $df = 3$, $Sig = 0.001$, $C.C. = 0.400$

H6: Receiving government support as primary income source is associated with the desire to return to the labor market.

The strongest association was found with primary income source, as presented in Table 8 ($X^2=202.058$, $df=4$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.579$). This finding significantly contradicts our initial hypothesis (H6), which postulated that receiving government support as a primary income source would be associated with a higher desire to return to the labor market. Instead, the data reveals a striking inverse relationship: government support recipients showed the lowest work interest (12.7%, $n=28$), with an overwhelming 87.3% ($n=193$) choosing not to participate in the labor market. This stands in sharp contrast with those earning from business/employment, where 91.1% ($n=92$) expressed interest in continuing work.

This unexpected pattern challenges conventional assumptions about welfare dependency and work motivation, particularly in the context of Thailand's social welfare system. The finding suggests that government support, even at modest levels, may provide a form of financial security that reduces the perceived necessity of workforce participation among elderly individuals. This highlights a complex interaction between social welfare policies and labor market participation decisions, where the stability and predictability of government support might be valued more highly than potential additional income from employment.

Table 8: Primary Income Source and Desire to Return to Labor Market Among Elderly in Bangkok

Desire to Return to Labor Market	Primary Income Source				
	Pre-retirement Savings	Family Support	Government Support	Business/Employment Income	Pension/Retirement Benefits
Want to work	100% (1)	20.6% (14)	12.7% (28)	91.1% (92)	77.8% (7)
Do not want to work	0% (0)	79.4% (54)	87.3% (193)	8.9% (9)	22.2% (2)
Total	100% (1)	100.0% (68)	100.0% (221)	100.0% (101)	100.0% (9)

$X^2 = 202.058$, $df = 4$, $Sig = 0.001$, $C.C. = 0.579$

The findings reveal complex patterns in elderly employment preferences in Bangkok's urban context. While gender showed no significant association with work preferences ($p=0.903$), age emerged as a powerful predictor with a critical transition point at age 65-66, where work desire drops dramatically from 74.5% to 24.2%. Educational attainment demonstrated significant correlation ($p<0.001$), with higher education levels associated with greater work interest. Health status proved particularly influential, as 87.6% of those without chronic conditions desired work compared to only 20.6% of those with health issues. Income patterns revealed unexpected relationships, with those earning 10,001-15,000 baht showing the highest work interest (90.9%). The strongest association was found with primary income source ($C.C.=0.579$), where government support recipients showed the lowest work interest (12.7%) compared to business/employment income earners (91.1%). These findings highlight the intricate interplay between demographic factors and work preferences, suggesting the need for nuanced policy approaches that consider multiple socioeconomic factors in supporting elderly employment decisions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This investigation reveals statistically significant correlations between multiple socioeconomic factors and elderly individuals' decisions not to participate in the labor market in Bangkok's urban context. While various factors demonstrate statistical significance, this discussion specifically focuses on the key determinants influencing elderly non-participation in the workforce, as understanding these factors is crucial for government agencies to develop targeted interventions. The findings can inform policy development in two important ways: first, by identifying strategies to support and potentially reintegrate elderly individuals currently choosing not to work, and second, by strengthening confidence and capabilities among those already interested in workforce participation. This dual approach ensures efficient resource allocation while addressing the diverse needs of Bangkok's elderly population in relation to labor market participation. The analysis focuses particularly on understanding the complex interplay of factors leading to workforce non-participation among the elderly, as this knowledge is essential for developing effective policy interventions. By concentrating on those currently disinclined to work rather than those already motivated to participate, this study aims to provide insights that can help government agencies develop more targeted and efficient support mechanisms. This approach recognizes that while supporting currently employed or job-seeking elderly individuals remains important, the greater challenge—and potential impact—lies in understanding and addressing the barriers faced by those who have chosen to remain outside the labor market.

The analysis demonstrates complex interrelationships between variables affecting the elderly's choices to abstain from workforce reentry, with several findings warranting particular attention. Statistical analysis indicates no significant gender differentiation ($X^2=0.015$, $df=1$, $p=0.903$) in employment preferences among the elderly population. This suggests substantial social transformation regarding occupational equality, reflecting improved educational access and diminished workplace discrimination (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2020; Foster & Walker, 2015).

This represents a significant departure from traditional gender-role expectations in employment settings (North & Fiske, 2015). Contrary to the study's initial hypotheses, factors such as low educational attainment, low income, and reliance on government support were associated with a reduced willingness to participate in the labor market among the elderly. This challenges conventional assumptions that financial necessity is the primary driver for workforce reentry in this demographic. The data indicates that factors such as physical capability, past work experiences, and the adequacy of government assistance may play a more significant role in shaping the elderly's employment decisions.

These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive, multi-faceted policy approach that addresses the interconnected physical, economic, and sociocultural dimensions influencing the elderly's decisions not to work. The insights generated by this study contribute to the theoretical understanding of elderly employment dynamics in developing urban contexts and offer crucial guidance for policymakers in crafting inclusive strategies to support the well-being of aging populations. Age and health status emerged as statistically significant predictors of employment decisions ($X^2=159.947$, $df=4$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.534$). The analysis identified a critical transition threshold at age 65-66, characterized by a significant decline in employment preference from 74.5% to 24.2%. This pattern demonstrates both physiological limitations (Muis et al., 2020) and societal norms regarding retirement timing (Rissanen & Ylinen, 2014). Health status findings corroborate this relationship, with 79.4% of individuals with chronic conditions demonstrating strong disinclination toward employment (Leijten et al., 2014).

Statistical analysis revealed unexpected patterns challenging conventional assumptions regarding education, income, and state dependence variables. Contrary to established economic theories, individuals with primary education, income below 5,000 baht, and those receiving government

support demonstrated statistically significant preferences against labor market participation ($X^2=202.058$, $df=4$, $p<0.001$, $C.C.=0.579$). This finding contradicts traditional hypotheses suggesting financial necessity as a primary employment motivator (Department of Older Persons, 2022; Shetty, 2012). The data indicates complex adaptation mechanisms within Thailand's developing context, where employment decisions transcend purely economic considerations. Analysis reveals several significant contributing factors: First, elderly individuals demonstrate adaptive behaviors aligned with fixed government benefits (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002; Chang, 2019) exhibiting preference for stable, albeit modest, income over variable earnings potential. This preference intensifies when employment income might affect benefit eligibility (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 2019). Previous employment experiences, particularly in labor-intensive, low-compensation positions, correlate significantly with negative attitudes toward late-life employment (Suwan & Hardnaulee, 2022). The data suggests accumulated physiological and psychological fatigue significantly influences labor market reentry decisions (Axelrad et al., 2013). Additionally, statistical evidence indicates institutionalized acceptance of welfare reciprocity within Thai society (Hasenfeld & Rafferty, 1989; Department of Older Persons, 2022) particularly in developing economy contexts where welfare support, though modest, provides basic subsistence (Kritmanassila & Nopnathawongsakorn, 2024).

These findings necessitate a hierarchical policy implementation framework prioritizing immediate health interventions, intermediate welfare system modifications, and long-term educational development initiatives. The analysis indicates that successful policy implementation requires addressing interconnected physical, psychological, and sociocultural variables while maintaining sensitivity to Thailand's specific developmental context.

The empirical evidence supports implementation of a three-phase policy framework. The immediate priority phase necessitates development of preventive healthcare systems and rehabilitation services, supported by the finding that health concerns deter 79.4% of elderly from workforce participation. Analysis indicates community-based rehabilitation centers and preventive health programming represent critical initial interventions, as health status significantly correlates with employment capability and preference.

The intermediate phase requires systematic reformation of welfare structures to integrate employment incentives while maintaining benefit accessibility. The data indicates 87.3% of government support recipients demonstrate strong disinclination toward employment, suggesting current welfare systems may inadvertently discourage labor market participation. Statistical analysis supports implementing flexible benefit structures incorporating transportation subsidies and specialized employment funds. Concurrent implementation of Universal Design principles in workplace modifications and flexible employment arrangements demonstrates potential efficacy in accommodating age-related physical limitations.

Long-term strategic interventions require development of comprehensive lifelong learning systems and skill enhancement programs. Statistical correlation between educational attainment and employment preference suggests significant potential impact from digital literacy programs, vocational training, and intergenerational knowledge transfer initiatives. Analysis indicates successful implementation of long-term initiatives depends fundamentally on establishing effective health and welfare support systems in earlier phases.

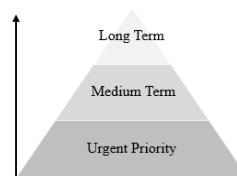


Figure 2: Three-Phase Policy Implementation Framework

This three-phase framework emerges from empirical analysis demonstrating interconnected relationships between health status, welfare support, and educational attainment in determining elderly employment preferences. The findings contribute to theoretical understanding of elderly employment dynamics in developing economies, suggesting effective interventions must address multiple interconnected variables while maintaining sensitivity to specific sociocultural contexts (Vallerand & O'Connor, 1989; Laszkiewicz & Bojanowska, 2017).

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This research was conducted with ethical approval from the Center for Ethics in Human Research, Khon Kaen University, Thailand, under Institutional Review Board Number IRB0001279. The study adhered to established ethical guidelines for human subject research. All participants were provided with detailed information about the study and gave their informed consent before participation. Data collection and storage procedures ensured complete confidentiality of all participant information throughout the research process.

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