



# An Investigation of the Academic Elderly Rationale and Qualifications to Work after Retirement: A Case Study at Silpakorn University

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**Abstract:** *The purposes of this study are to investigate the reasons why elderly who retire from one academic institution wish or do not wish to pursue their careers after retirement, and what qualifications, perspectives, and experiences they need in order to do so. Moreover, the purpose of this research is also to ascertain what is expected of elderly academics in general. Research questions were set Why do elderly teachers who have reached retirement age in an academic institution wish to pursue their careers after retirement?, 2) Why do elderly teachers who have reached retirement age in an academic institution not wish to continue to work after retirement? and 3) What are the perspectives of those who are working that contribute to the academic field?*

*Constructivism paradigm and socially constructed knowledge are used in this research. This research is a qualitative research by case study which explains about the process of conducting the research and the knowledge from it. In-depth data collection and open-ended interviews are used, as a result it is important to describe and explain everything in detail in this research.*

*All the data from the interviews were coded and divided into 10 themes They are pride, personal character, features of good teacher, elderly character, reasons for teaching, impact of technology, reasons for not teaching, motivation and inspiration, types of teacher, and duties and function of a lecturer.*

**Key Words:** Academic, Elderly, Qualification, Rational

## Introduction

The aging of the world's population has continued on its transition path from the state of high birth and death rates. Out of every ten persons now, one is 60 years or older. By 2050, one out of five will be 60 years or older; and by 2150, one out of three persons will be 60 years or older. Many of the aging are women comprising about 55 percent. The impact of population aging is increasingly evident in the old-age dependency ratio, the number of working age persons (age 15 - 64 years) per older persons (65 years or older) that is used as an indicator for the dependency burden on potential workers. From 2000 to 2050, the old-age dependency ratio will double in more developed regions and triple in less developed regions. The potential socioeconomic impact on society that may result from an increasing old-age dependency ratio were an area of growing research and public debate (International Federation on Aging, 2001).

In looking at the current population structure, along with the growing number of elderly in Thailand, it is safe to conclude that the numbers will continue to grow through 2030. The older population will increase due to the advances in medicine, technology, and nutrition. Along with



advances in certain fields that are sure to increase life expectancy, people have become more educated and aware of what steps need to be taken to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, the birth rate has decreased because people get married much later in life. According to Global Action on Aging almost the entire population waits to marry after 35 years. This has caused a decline in the economy and high stress at work (National Service Statistical Office Thailand, 1997)

There is much evidence to support the idea that globally, men and women can continue working well past the current retirement age of 60 years. Many of the elderly feel they have the energy and ability to continue working. Some contest that the elderly can become burdensome of their children. As more seniors work past the average retirement age they are disproving that theory by leading long, healthy, and happy lives. The elderly continue to show their resolve and resourcefulness by taking responsibility for themselves even as they get older. At present the economy force the elderly to work to afford the many expenses that are necessary in today's society. With advances in technology comes good health so many older citizens feel they can and should continue working. The elderly in an academic institution have high value, quality intelligence, and vast experience. Why do they need to stop working?

## Statement of the Problem

The researcher found in a preliminary inquiry that elderly who had retired from academic institutions do not want to be a social burden. Another finding was they wanted to be responsible for themselves. Further there is the question of how to keep an elderly retiree in an academic institution that lacks academic staff.

To investigate the situation of hiring elderly retirees in an academie, the researcher needed to study rationale and qualifications to work after retirement.

The researcher found that the elderly play a vital role in today's society. The Nation Economic and Social Development has no plan to cope with the situation yet (Economic and Social Development Plan National 10). The article discusses why this topic is worth attention and thoroughly researched.

## Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate the reasons why elderly who retire from one academic institution wish or do not wish to pursue their careers after retirement, and what qualifications, perspectives, and experiences they need in order to do so. Moreover, the purpose of this research also aims to find out what is the expectation of society of the elderly in general.

## Research Questions

1. Why do elderly teachers who have reached retirement age in an academic institution wish to pursue their careers after retirement?
2. Why do elderly teachers who have reached retirement age in an academic institution not wish to continue to work after retirement?
3. What are the perspectives of those who are working that contribute to the academic field?

## Significance of the Study

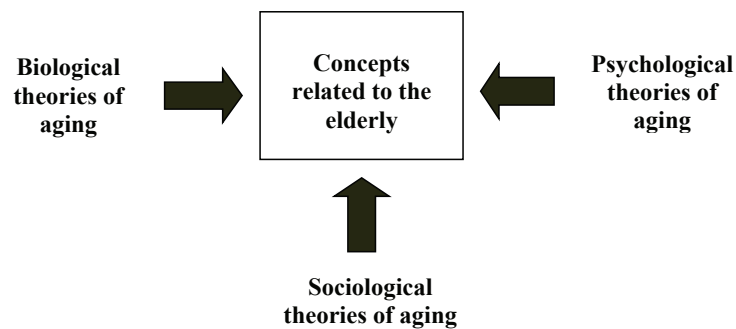
The people who can benefit directly from this study include the elderly teachers themselves, the government, and relevant agencies that can actively develop a potential for the elderly teachers , especially, those who have already retired. Organizations and academic institutions still need them. This is because these people can be guides for the younger generations who are new at work because the efficacy of these individuals appears to have knowledge and skills. This research may not



benefit only those who work in academic institution, but also retirees in different fields. The results of this study could be beneficial to policy makers to prepare for an aging society which is clearly approaching.

## Literature Review

This research is a qualitative study. It discusses the theoretical foundations of aging that explain the types of elderly, increasing problems concerning the elderly, aging society that acknowledges trends associated with the number of elderly, theoretical foundations of human resource development, the similar role of HRD and the elderly, and discussion about elderly life after retirement. The particular concern is academic institutions.



**Figure 1** Connection among theories related to aging from biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives (Ratanawong, 2007).

**Biological theories** of aging confirm the fact that our body mechanisms decline and that everyone has to experience this by the age of 60. The decline of the body is natural. Not a single person can escape the inevitable breakdown of the human body. These theories have interested many researchers to study about retirees because the meaning of elderly or older, in this study as defined in the introduction is a person who is older than 60 years.

**Psychological theories** describe the process of aging changes in the mentality and in relation to society and how they affect each other. The theory talked about personality structure, family status, cultural attitudes, and social activities. Psychosocial aging is the result of the disuse and defined transformation of the human organism, such as, experience, and skills (Cherry, 1994). Psychological theory talks about a change in personality and the behavior of the elderly is adaptative conceptual knowledge and understanding of the motivation to change their body. It also talks about the elder's social condition (Erikson, 1963; Ratanawong, 2007).

**Social theory** is a theory that discusses the potential role of social relationships and adaptation in the elderly. This theory tries to analyze the reasons why an elder needs to change their social status and tries to find a way to help the elderly live happily in society (Aging Care, 2001; Ratanawong, 2007).

### Problems Concerning the Elderly

Samanwongthai (2011) stated in his website love4home.com, that problems of aging come from changes in the body, changes in mentality and emotion and change in relation to the society. Diseases affect the aging in drastic ways. The so-called "premature aging" is related to this concept. On the other hand people who take care of themselves age slower than others. Proper diet and exercise



benefit the aging process. Also, a healthy lifestyle free from the common abuses could make one look younger and healthy. When people get old, it will naturally result in sensory impairment. Nerve function associated with vision, hearing, sense of smell, and taste become inferior compared to the younger ones. Appetite in the elderly also decreases.

### **The Situation of an Aging Society**

This research considers the situation of an aging society from an overall picture as dependent on population policies, data of population, demographic data, and changes in the composition, changing population structure, the advancement of medical science, the demographic characteristics, economic, and social aspects.

The situation of aging society is not happening only in Thailand, United States, Germany and Japan. Cutler and Poterba from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Sheine and Summers (1990) from Harvard University mentioned this in "An Aging Society: Opportunity or Challenge?"

### **The Role of HRD and the Role of the Elderly**

Human Resource Development is a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development (OD) personnel training, and development (T&D) for the purpose of improving performance (Swanson & Holton III, 2001).

The role of HRD, as well as HRD of older persons, has been reduced in society. These two roles are not different from the role of retirees because they share the part within an aging society. The elderly are a human resource that can give innovative ideas for human development for the next generation. An elder can be an excellent advisor because he/she has a lot of experience. Older people can help design a decent way of living; how to make the best out of life and live to the fullest. At the same time, older people can be an agent for change while providing guidance as how to work efficiently. Sometimes older people are wise and have valuable counsel to offer. Older people could be a specialist working with a team and guide the team in the right direction because an older person has acquired skills that younger people are not able to possess. Older people are instructors who do not just teach or coach as a profession, but they can guide you and act as a career counselor.

### **Life after Retirement**

Hemwachirawarakorn (2009) wrote an opinion in "Bangkokbiznews online on October 13, 2009 about how to live life after retirement. He stressed the topics of money and work. Money is still important to live and so it is important to keep working and earning, but it should be noted that the workload should not be too heavy and the kind of work should bring about value and happiness in return.

### **Academic Institutions**

Silpakorn has become a full-grown University, offering degree programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels in all major fields of art and design, science, technology, health science, social sciences and humanities. In addition, it also maintains a Graduate School, Art Galleries, an Art and Culture Center, a Computer Center, and a Research and Development Institute.

The fact that Silpakorn University has been able to provide quality education in various fields makes it one of the most well-known universities in Thailand and among the ASEAN. Silpakorn University now ranks 12th among Thailand's universities and 37th among ASEAN universities. The university has become well-known because of its capability to produce quality graduates that are successful in society. Professors and lecturers are one of the most powerful tools an institution has at their disposal.



## Research Methodology

Qualitative research by a case study is used in this research. The researcher used participants from Silpakorn University after interviewing participants in the first pilot study. After that, the researcher used documentation and did in-depth interviews. The information from the in-depth interviews came from three groups. During each interview, the researcher observed the body language and behavior of the interviewees. The research involved three steps: 1) Background of the participants 2) Process of data analysis and 3) Analysis of basic data.

The theoretical framework behind the research questions is a constructivist paradigm because research is used for management of ideas.

### Study Site

The participants for this study have been selected from Silpakorn University.

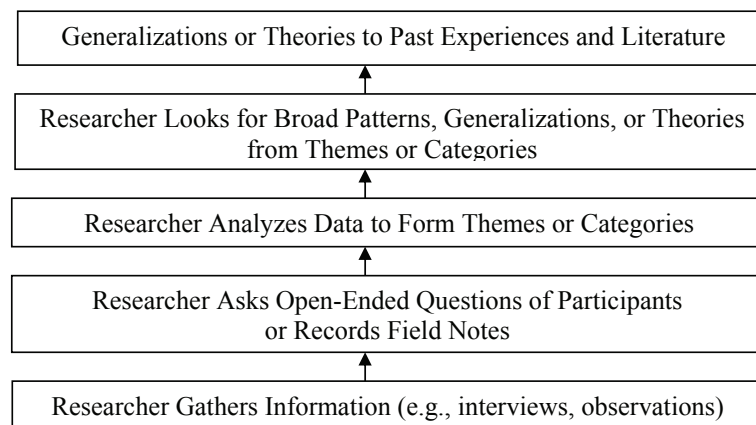
- research design
- research strategy
- rational to select a case study (reason to select a case)
- data collection; data analysis
- coding
- criteria for trustworthiness to build trust in this research; triangulation; audit trail, follow up and recheck data, investigator
- ethical protocol.

### The Regulations of Silpakorn University

The regulations of Silpakorn University about criteria, methods, conditions and extending work contract decision specify time for extending work contract for 5 years (Silpakorn University Regulations, 2011). These regulations helped the researcher to review documents and know the types of lecturers employed.

### Synthesis of findings phase

Analyze qualitative data from all the documents and interviews, also the recommendations used in the preparation of the report presented in a complete study.



**Figure 2** The Inductive Logic of Research in a Qualitative Study  
(Source: adopted from Creswell, 2009, p.63)



This figure is a guide that the researcher followed step by step from the beginning to the end of inductive. If these steps are followed correctly and accurately, the research would be effective and interesting for the reader and stake holders to follow and engage.

This shows the overall picture on how the information was processed and explains how and why each methodology was selected. It starts from the research paradigm (constructivism), knowledge claims (What about knowledge claims from the paradigm?). Research strategy by case study on qualitative research was chosen because the group was selected from a small population, research design, participants, data collection, coding, criteria for trustworthiness, triangulation, audit trail, member check and ethical protocol. Ethical protocol is something that the researcher never forgot once the researcher satisfied the demands of the human subject of research conducted.

## Data Analysis Process

In step one; the researcher used a theoretical approach to produce the framework for analysis. In step two, the researcher identified the available data for the current audience. Step three involved data entry and indexing, and led in to step four where temporary summaries were produced and some data was eliminated. Step five involved bringing all the results together and developing the final summary. The researcher used a temporary summary to test and connect the answers to the research questions. The summary was developed from the data on the frequency of behavior and situation, then group data was managed by involving gathering similar situations to develop connections supported by details of the variables and a logical sorting of the data. Survey summaries were checked with each interviewee and any disagreements on interpretation of the original interview were clarified and then data triangulation was carried out.

## Findings of the Study

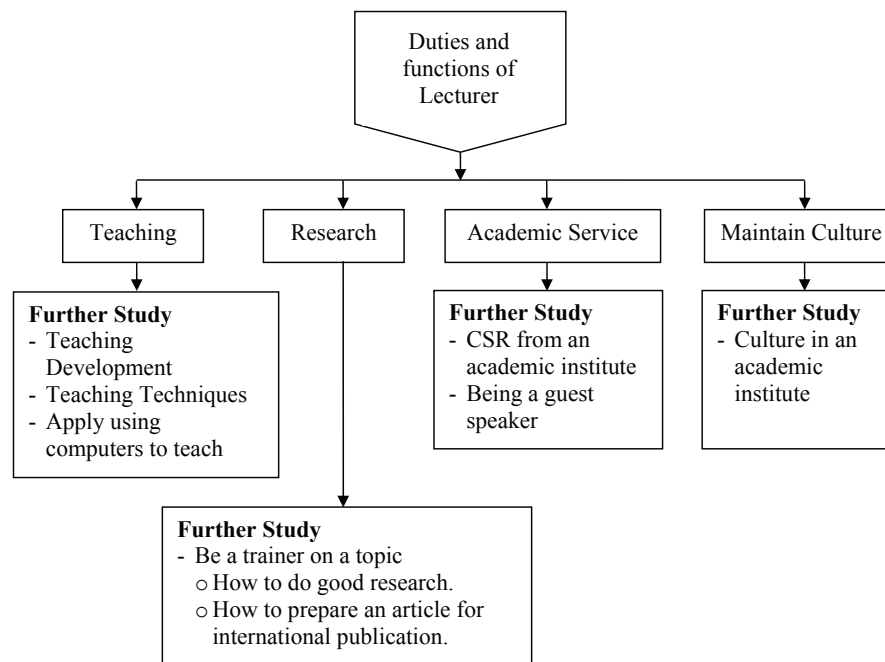
### 1. Background of the participants

Table 1 Participants in focus groups

Interviewee	Group	Gender	Age	Education	Academic Position
P1	1st	Female	65	Master Degree	Lecturer
P2	1st	Female	63	Master Degree	Lecturer
P3	1st	Male	65	Ph.D.	Associate Professor
P4	1st	Male	65	Ph.D.	Associate Professor
P5	1st	Female	63	Master Degree	Assistant Professor
P6	2nd	Female	45	Ph.D.	Head of Education Dept.
P7	2nd	Female	40	Master Degree	Head of Finance Dept.
P8	3rd	Male	20	Student	Faculty of Pharmacy
P9	3rd	Female	21	Student	Faculty of Sciences
P10	3rd	Female	20	Student	Faculty of Education
P11	1st	Male	72	Master Degree	Associate Professor
P12	2nd	Female	42	Bachelor Degree	Staff at Post Office
P13	1st	Male	68	Ph.D.	Associate Professor
P14	1st	Male	78	Ph.D.	Associate Professor
P15	1st	Female	75	Master Degree	Lecturer



The information from the in-depth interviews came from three focus groups. Group one was retired elderly people from an academic institution. Group two was colleagues who were still working in an academic institution. Group three was students who studied with the first group. The reason that participants came from three groups is because this interview is 360 degrees. This method helped the researcher to get the triangulation information.



**Figure 3** A Conceptual Framework for the Design Process.

It shows the design the procedure in process stages.

From this study the researcher can get a conceptual framework for the design process that made the researcher understand the rational and qualifications of the elderly in academic institutions, and why they make such decisions and choose to live their way of life after retirement. Three factors from biological theory; the theory describes changes in the biological process that occur with all types of living creatures when they become older (Hayflick, 1996). Three factor theories are built; motivation and inspiration come from internal and external factors, then they would select two choices which are: 1) to continue teaching or 2) to stop working which resulted from such reason. For the choice of continue working they still have to choose to continue working in the old institution or to continue working in a new institution. Under the old institution, there are two types of lecturers; one is a temporary lecturer and the other is a permanent lecturer. Both temporary and permanent lecturers must perform the duties of a lecturer if they still continue working. There are four duties: teaching; doing research; doing academic service; and maintaining culture. All of those duties help them visualize a clear idea of what they can do in their academic field.

#### Analysis basic data

Prior to addressing the aspects of the research question, an overview of "An Investigation of the Academic Elderly Rational and Qualifications to Work after Retirement" is presented to provide the context of the real reasons to continue working or stop working. Thus, this part is composed of themes and sub-categories; show in table 2



In this case study, there were 302 initial codings found from data information. Then, after grouping the issues 50 sub-categories emerged from the initial coding.

Table 2 Themes and Sub-categories

Theme	Sub-category
1. Pride	Pride in their career Pride in the institution Pride of their achievements Pride of their ability
2. Personal character	Strict about regulations Love to read Free spirit Habits
3. Features of good teachers	Knowledgeable Education and research teaching/instruction Honorable and reliable Ability to answer questions Morality and ethics Used teaching techniques, such as humor and illustrations Knowledgeable in teaching
4. Elderly character	The memory, auditory and visual systems State of mind Talkative Consulting
5. Reasons for teaching	Experience and skill Knowledge transfer Participate with the organization University employment Love teaching Socializing Emotional Plan to teach Higher compensation Family support Lack of instructors
6. Impact of technology	The advantages of technology The disadvantages of technology





Theme	Sub-category
7. Reasons for not teaching	Have a good feeling To relax Already transferred knowledge Has a private business Family (not supported). Low compensation Health Terminate a Contract Efficiency No plan
8. Motivation and inspiration	Internal and External
9. Types of teachers	Permanent Temporary or special
10. Duties and functions of a lecturer	Teaching, evaluation, testing, and consulting Research Academic services Maintain culture

## Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

The findings reported here correspond to each research question. From research question one the researcher found that motivation and inspiration based on biological factors, sociological factors, and psychological factors made an elderly person in an academic institution have feelings. The findings of the study can answer this question with two main themes. The first is pride which is combined in the four sub-categories; pride in the profession, pride in the institution, pride of achievements, and pride of their ability. The second is reason for teaching is combined in eleven sub-categories; experience and skill; knowledge transfer; participate with the organization; university of employment; like and love teaching; being a part of society; emotions and feelings; planning to continue teaching; higher compensation; family (support); and teach on a subject that lacks teachers.

From research question two, the researcher found the impact factors that affect the elderly in academic institutions who do not wish to continue to work after retirement. There are reasons for not teaching combined ten sub-categories of themes: having a good feeling toward each other during work, to relax; already transferred knowledge; has a private business, family (not support); low compensation; health; stop contract; efficiency; and no plan.

From research question three, the researcher found that the perspectives of working that affected the elderly in academic institutions who contributed to the academic field continue working after retirement. The retired academics confirm that they do four duties and functions of a lecturer: teaching (performing the best teaching and technique), doing research (benefit research to develop an academic), doing academic services (response and turn back to social), and maintaining culture (keeping traditional and folkway).

## Implication of theories

The results of the exploration of the retired elderly in academic institutions found that the motivation and inspiration of the participants are according to biological, psychological, and social theories.



Motivation and inspiration are from internal and external effects which are included in three theories related to the elderly (Ratanawong, 2007). Biological theories mention about the prompt of the body to be strong and having power. This implies that it is important for organizations to provide motivation and inspiration for the retired elderly.

### **Implication for the Retired Elderly in Academic Institutions**

The implications drawn from the findings of the research were divided into three sections: continue working; stop working; and responsibility of duties. The results of this study can help the retired elderly in academia recognize the qualifications that allow them to continue working. Regarding academic institutions, they would find this useful if they use this information to develop their organizations and keep a good lecturer to continue

Duties and functions of a lecturer, all types of lecturers must have responsibility; they cannot avoid the four duties as long as they work as lecturers in academic institutions. The results of this study can be adapted to all academic institutions, not only to Silpakorn University.

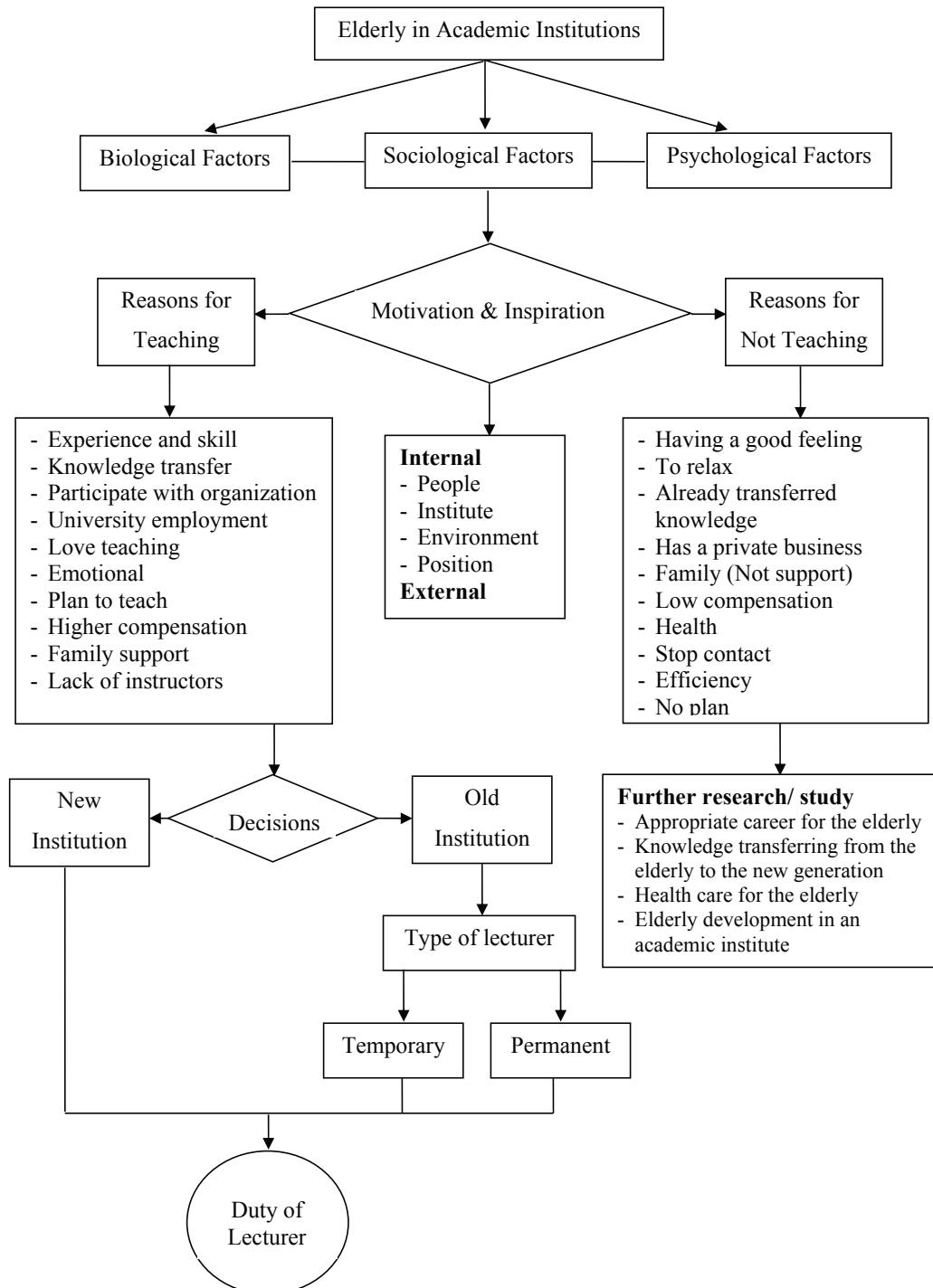
### **Recommendations**

One is a recommendation for the government. The government can use the results of this study and the problems in this study as a case study for preventing any problems that might happen in the future. The example of the problem that will happen can be the academic institutions lose quality or do not qualify for some standards. Services, welfare or compensation that the elderly get after retirement should come from the government.

Although a single case is not strong enough to form the base for generalization, people can still learn that it is general for the single-case investigation. Thus, the potential implications of this study would spark more interest in conducting research about the duties of a lecturer in academic institutes in the future. Reasons for not teaching should have further research as follows: appropriate career for the elderly; knowledge transfer from the elderly to the new generation; health care for the elderly and elderly development in an academic institute. Reasons for teaching should have further research for the duties of a lecturer as follows: teaching; doing research; doing academic service and maintaining culture.

### **Conclusions**

From the study, the researcher found that teachers eligible for retirement still have the ability to work after retirement, whether working in academic institutions or another career. They still have a lot of knowledge that can be transferred to the new generation. The experiences that they posed can help new generation learn. Many factors affect their decision to continue working in academic institutions; such as willingness to perform duties as lecturers. These duties made them realize what they have potential to contribute to their academic field. This study made suggestion for those researchers who are interested in conducting further research in another topic concerning the elderly in academic institutions which is the place where brains and knowledge are collected or it can be said that it's a human library. The reasons for teaching or to stop working at academic institutions are highly useful for readers who are interested in developing human resources.

**Summary from this study**



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