



## Research Article

# FACTORS INFLUENCING LECTURERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORKING AT UNIVERSITIES AFTER RETIREMENT AGE

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## ABSTRACT

*Policies for retired employees have emerged as a hot issue for governmental bodies, employers, and financial organizations. Retired lecturers at public university intend to move to private ones to continue working. This research was conducted to identify psychosocial factors of lecturers' attitudes to working after the retirement age. To address this problem, this study surveyed academic staff in Vietnamese universities followed by the statistical analysis of factors affecting lecturers' attitudes. The findings from the study showed that five out of six hypotheses were accepted. The results can be used as a reference for university managers so that they could establish a deliberate policy on the retirement issues. This study has contributed to the decision-making process related to human resources management policies to improve the quality of education, promote a healthy development and then achieve sustainable competitive advantages.*

**Keywords:** factors; working attitudes; retirement age; lecturers; universities

## 1. Introduction

At the present time in Vietnam, the number of old employees continuing working after the regulated retirement age is noticeably increasing. Old workers' attitudes to and preferences for retirement vary widely across the spectrum of employment intentions. Another important point is that recent demographic shifts have dramatically changed the characteristics of retirement. Work and retirement have been traditionally regarded as distinct states that reflect an automatic change in a life cycle from full-time employment to non-work in a specific career. The changing mindset of retirement results in the demand for interdisciplinary perspectives on later career. The "significance of the work-to-retirement transition in the life course vary considerably between individuals" (Davies & Jenkins, 2013). Therefore, the issues around the labour force and retirement age are inextricably referred to the country's social insurance and pension system (Iams & Purcell, 2013). While the United States abolished mandatory retirement policies with the final piece of legislation

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in 1986 (Warren & Kelloway, 2010) and while in the UK mandatory retirement ages were largely lifted in 2011 (Davies & Cartwright, 2010), Vietnam has only begun disputes over changes in the nature and age of retirement. Next, the old employees' feelings about and attitudes to retirement appear to be varied. In line with this, Shultz and Henkens (2010) have affirmed that "retirement is connected to not only the availability of financial resources and health, but also to the work content and environments, and the psychological processes that precede late career employment and retirement decisions." These determinants differ in magnitude across professional fields and between personality and demographic realities (Turner, 2005). Therefore, an insight into these determinants can help understand these people's multifaceted attitudes towards the retirement transition. Also, a better understanding of a mutual match between the expectations of older employees and their relevant organizations also helps to build retirement programs that can facilitate prior planning by both the older employee and the organization (Shen, 2009).

This study focuses on identifying their attitudes towards working after the regulated retirement age in Vietnam, and hence seeks to answer the following research questions:

Research question 1: What are the determinants of retired lecturers' attitudes to working?

Research question 2: How do these factors influence the overall results?

## **2. Literature review and Methodology**

### **2.1. Literature review**

#### *2.1.1. Some basic concepts*

Retirement theories have naturally evolved through the industrial and technological advancements over the past two centuries. It would be more appropriate to state that "retirement is plural" (Beehr & Adams, 2003). It is hardly ever defined who is retired and who is not because the notion of retirement itself is hard to identify. An individual's retirement may be defined in the aspects of full retirement and part-time retirement.

- Self-reported retirement (Anderson & Burkhauser, 1985)
- Receiving pension income (Boaz, 1987)
- Decrease in income (Gustman & Steinmeiner, 1986).

Another theory often discussed by researchers in the area of retirement is the theory of planned behaviour (Beehr, 2003). The theory of planned behavior, developed by Ajzen (1991), indicates that "intentions to perform behaviors of different kinds can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; and these intentions, together with perceptions of behavioral norms, and perceived behavioral control, account for considerable variance in the actual behavior" (p.179).

In addition, retirement is a complicated and crucial transitional process for Vietnamese academic employees. In higher education, the definition of retirement is no longer perceived

as a straightforward process. In other words, retirement is not “a point in time” or “cliff edge” (Davies & Cartwright, 2011), rather than a “boundaryless” flow of work life (Harley et al., 2004). Thus, like other countries, retirement in Vietnam itself must be understood in the way that individual lecturers go between work and non-work at an organization.

### *2.1.2. Related studies*

Previous research has identified factors determining retirement decisions. They consist of passion for work and commitment to work. Typical research of this kind was conducted by Barnes et al. (2003), Hair et al. (2004), and Patrickson and Ranzijn (2004). Some other factors such as social interests, quality of social relationships, and leisure activities have positive impacts on the decisions to retire (Phillipson & Smith, 2005). Still some other research considered the factors such as status, gender, age, income, health and family responsibilities to determine their magnitude of influence on the retirement decision-making process (Smeaton & McKay, 2003). However, most of these studies have focused only on examining factors related to decisions to retire early or to retire at the legal pre-defined age as of Zappalà et al. (2008), but not on the intention to continue working past the retirement age. Common findings and initial discussions are often on the extremes of the work-nonwork continuum, seldom saying at what point along the continuum the retirement attitudes become a taxonomic hierarchy. Therefore, there is a clear need for an interdisciplinary emphasis on retirement transition. This focus will help to adequately understand how retirement is linked to not only the demographic factors, but also to the social attachment at work and at home, and the psychological and psychosocial factors that predict retirement attitudes and work plan after the retirement age.

Shacklock and Brunetto (2011) have followed and extended parts of the Meaning of Working (MOW) theoretical model (MOW International Research Team, 1987; Westwood and Lock, 2003). The research implemented a cross-sectional, survey-based, self-reported strategy to collect data on 1,000 older employees' retirement attitudes. The authors then developed a clear picture about the impact of work-related variables on the meanings of working to older employees. Shacklock et al. (2011) also included the factors related to financial circumstances in their study because this factor has a decisive impact upon retirement attitudes (to reduce or stop working, or retiring). The research found that not only previously tested (health and financial) but also of four work-related variables such as the importance of working, the environment of work, and the flexibility of working arrangements, and interests outside of work have much influence on older employees' attitudes to continue paid working.

### *2.2. Research methodology*

This research was conducted in universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The survey investigated the psychological and psychosocial factors affecting the the retirement transition of Vietnamese lecturers. The criterion to select participants in this study was that

they are academic staff “eligible to retire”. The potential respondents were from several universities and institutes in Ho Chi Minh City.

In addition, six prominent lecturers including three female and three male academics staff were invited and joined the study. Through relationship, the researcher knows four lecturers. The other two were invited using a snowballing technique. These lecturers were teaching, or they were working as a lecturer and a researcher or manager. They were different in age, gender, financial health, academic rank, and managerial status. They had been told about the research and the objectives of study before interviews were conducted face to face. Each interview lasted on average 45 minutes.

In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the contexts of lecturers’ attitudes to working after the regulated retirement age and to identify what factors affecting their attitudes to continue working. A survey was then used. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) affirmed that this approach used numbers, statistical methods, and numerical measurements to seek a general description or analyses that were easily replicable for other researchers. The questionnaire was piloted with 30 lecturers. Some scales were modified after this pilot.

In this research, all valid survey responses from respondents were used. After identifying unidimensionality, reliability, and validity for the scale, all items were confirmed applying a common factor analysis.

A total of 424 responses (with a response rate of over 90.4 percent) were used for further analysis. With 35 items for factor analysis, and a sample of 424 responses, the ratio between cases to variable is 12.11: 1, satisfying the requirement specified by Hair et al. (1995), Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), and Naunnally (1978). The 35-item questionnaire was administered to 424 lecturers at universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Of these items, five items were then used as dependent variables in the analysis. Respondents answered each question with a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire also included questions related to the background characteristics of the respondents.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. An overview of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

As previously noted, convenience sampling was implemented. The responses were gathered within a day or a week later. A total of 452 responses were collected and collated among 500 questionnaires sent out. After screening and a validity check, 28 responses were removed from further analysis. The response rate is 90.4%.

Categories	Demographics	Frequency	Percent
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND	Natural sciences	76	17.9
	Social sciences and Humanities	87	20.5
	Technology	58	13.7
	Information technology	66	15.6

	Business – Management	98	23.1
	Health care	35	8.3
	Others	4	0.9
TIMEWORK	< 5 years	48	11.3
	5 - 10 years	83	19.6
	11 - 15 years	80	18.9
	16 - 20 years	119	28.1
	> 20 years	94	22.2
SENIORITY	< 5 years	21	5.0
	5 - 10 years	20	4.7
	11 - 15 years	28	6.6
	16 - 20 years	86	20.3
	> 20 years	269	63.4
GENDER	Female	189	44.6
	Male	235	55.4
AGE	36 - 45 years old	56	13.2
	46 - 50 years old	48	11.3
	51 - 55 years old	160	37.7
	56 - 60 years old	154	36.3
	Over 60 years old	6	1.4
MARITAL STATUS	Single	35	8.3
	Married with children	378	89.2
	Married with no children	11	2.6
INCOME	< 9 million	40	9.4
	9 - < 15 million	210	49.5
	15 - < 20 million	144	34.0
	20 - < 25 million	29	6.8
	> 25 million	1	0.2
DEGREE	Bachelor degree	13	3.1
	Master degree	228	53.8
	PhD degree	164	38.7
	Post doctorate Degree	16	3.8
	Others	3	0.7
ACARANK	Lecturer	129	30.4
	Senior lecturers	187	44.1
	Associate professor	86	20.3
	Professor	20	4.7
	Others	2	0.5
TASK	Teaching	209	49.3
	Researching	4	0.9
	Managing	22	5.2

Teaching and researching	107	25.2
Teaching and managing	82	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that that the majority of the responding lecturers were from 51 to 60 years old which meets the initial requirements. However, the percentage of lecturers under and equal 50 years old is 24.5 percent, 51-55 years old is 37.7 percent, and over 55 years old is 37.7 percent. The reason why the 36-45 age group was included in the data since the study concentrated on the determinants affecting the lecturers when they were expected to be at the age of retirement. This matches the initial purpose of the investigation. Regarding their career age and the amount of time they have been working for their current university, 373 lecturers (84.36 percent) of total 424 have spent more than 10 years teaching. Besides, 293 of total 424 lecturers (69.2 percent) have committed to their current university for over ten years. Their age and amount of time at the current university can help confirm a correlation between their organizational commitment and their older age.

As regards their tasks at the universities, 209 lecturers (49.3 percent) worked as a full-time lecturers (only teaching), while 107 lecturers (25.2 percent) did both teaching and researching. Eighty-two lecturers were academic staff and manager (program coordinator, deans, or center head). The number of lecturers working as a manager only is 22. Four lecturers identified themselves as researchers.

### 3.2. The distribution of factors toward the attitudes of the respondents

#### 3.2.1. Regression analysis to the attitudes of retirement

Multiple regression analysis was done with the dependent variables, namely attitudes to working after normal retirement age and two types of the independent variables: positive relationship (Organizational commitment, Retirement anxiety, Intrinsic motivation, Social interaction), and inverse relationship (Financial comfort, Leisure orientation). The results of regression analysis were presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Summary of regression testing*

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.646a	.418	.409	.68681	1.450	

a. Predictors: (Constant), SOCINT, LEIORI, FICOMF, RETANX, INTMOT, ORGCOM

b. Dependent Variable: CONWOR

*Table 2. Analysis of standard deviation*

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	141.069	6	23.511	49.844	.000b
	Residual	196.700	417	.472		

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Total	337.769	423
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a. Dependent Variable: CONWOR

b. Predictors: (Constant), SOCINT, LEIORI, FICOMF, RETANX, INTMOT, ORGCOM

**Table 3. Regression Analysis**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				Collinearity Statistics		
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	-4.049E-017	.033		.000	1.000		
ORGCOM	.104	.042	.110	2.442	.015	.684	1.462
LEIORI	-.103	.045	-.108	-2.305	.022	.633	1.579
1 RETANX	.175	.039	.187	4.510	.000	.811	1.233
FICOMF	-.062	.037	-.066	-1.671	.096	.899	1.112
INTMOT	.286	.044	.293	6.509	.000	.688	1.453
SOCINT	.357	.045	.335	7.974	.000	.790	1.265

a. Dependent Variable: CONWOR

Adjusted R Square (R2) of the research model is 40.9%. This means 40.9% revealed that the percentage of variation explained by only the independent variables influencing the attitudes to working. Besides, F-test showed Sig = .000, so the proposed research model was confirmed with the data set.

The regression result was presented in Table 3. For the hypothesis 1: Intrinsic motivation has a positive relationship with attitudes to working after normal retirement age. The independent predictor in Hypothesis 1 contributed significantly to the variation in the dependent variable, meaning that intrinsic motivation predicted older lecturers' attitudes to working after normal retirement age with  $p < .05$  (sig=.000) and  $\beta = .187$ . For the Hypothesis 2, organizational commitment has a positive relationship with attitudes to working after normal retirement age. The independent predictor in Hypothesis 2 contributed significantly to the variation in the dependent variable, meaning that organizational commitment predicted older lecturers' attitudes to working after normal retirement age with  $p < .05$  (sig=.015) and  $\beta = .110$ . For the Hypothesis 3, retirement anxiety has a positive relationship with attitudes to working after normal retirement age. The independent predictor in Hypothesis 3 contributed significantly to the variation in the dependent variable, meaning that retirement anxiety predicted older lecturers' attitudes to working after normal retirement age with  $p < .05$  (sig=.000) and  $\beta = .187$ . For the Hypothesis 4, social interaction has a positive relationship with intentions to continue working past normal retirement age. The independent predictor in Hypothesis 4 contributed significantly to the variation in the dependent variable, meaning that social interaction predicted older lecturers' attitudes with  $p < .05$  (sig=.000) and  $\beta = .335$ . For the Hypothesis 5, leisure orientation has a negative

relationship with the attitudes to working. The independent predictor in Hypothesis 5 contributed to the variation in the dependent variable, meaning that leisure orientation predicted older lecturers' attitudes with  $p < .05$  ( $\text{sig} = .022$ ) and  $\beta = -.108$ .

### *3.2.2. Psychosocial and psychological factors to the overall attitudes*

For the psychosocial factors, after EFA, the variables that establish the psychosocial predictor of attitudes to working after normal retirement age are intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment. The former influences the attitudes to working more strongly than the latter. Regarding intrinsic motivation, the most predictive role of intrinsic motivation found in this research is in line with the findings by Shacklock (2008). This is also in accordance with Ekert and DeViney (1993)'s study which showed the attachment to work and love of job have been influential. The core nature of intrinsic motivation focuses on the meaning of passion for work, as in the item My work (as a lecturer) is more than a job to me; it is a passion. Intrinsic and passion are defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as an essential nature of and a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement about doing a job. Some previous studies have revealed that young employees and older employees are different in the way they perceive the importance of work. Older employees have been described to be more intrinsically attached to the work for which they are passionate (Rhodes, 1983, Riodan et al., 2003). In academia in Vietnam, despite a career of low pay, the number of lecturers backing at the teaching career has not been as many as that of other industries, ("Teaching career draws new crowds" in Vietnam News, 2013). A possible explanation involves in lecturers' love for teaching (Tuoitre, 2013). For the organizational commitment, like previous research in the literature, organizational commitment has been found to have a positive correlation with intentions to work beyond normal retirement age (Chen et al.; Mowday et al.; 1982). Organizational commitment is closely related to Ashforth's (2001) role theory, which describes that work role is vital to employees. It is both a self-concept and a personal identity. Where there is a passion for work, there is a sense of identity and self-concept, and therefore, there is an organizational commitment. The contral aspect of work lies on these characteristics. These are supported in other research such as the study by Schmidt and Lee (2008). Taylor and MacFarlane Shore (1995) also pointed out that the more attached employees were to an organization, the more likely they are to stay longer in their career. Teaching is no exception. It is the work of heart.

For the psychological factors, three psychological factors of attitudes are social interaction, retirement anxiety, and leisure orientation. For the social interaction, this factor was also well-explained in Shacklock's (2006) research with  $\beta = .264$ ,  $p < .001$ . One of the most attractive activities to older lecturers was interacting with others while at work. Moreover, interpersonal relationships at work and social relationships they built at work proved to be a crucial factor in the working life, especially more crucial later life (Smeaton & McKay, 2003; Choo, 1999). Continuing to work after retirement age is value for older

lecturers. They can work with younger lecturer generations, share knowledge and experience, and even avoid being left behind the new. Teaching is characterised as an intensively human job. Lecturers always meet and work with a large number of students. A sudden exit from teaching at the retirement age is somehow frustrating. For leisure, it has a negative relationship with attitudes to continue working. For many employees, retirement is a “new beginning” or “beginning of an end” (Horstern & Warpner, 1985). They will prioritize leisure activities. However, this finding suggests that lecturers are not leisure - oriented activity.

#### **4. Conclusion**

##### **4.1. Some major points**

The identified predictors of attitudes to working after normal retirement age contributed greatly to university leaders’ decisions on human resources policies such as on retention of experienced and qualified older lecturers. Through effective actions, the quality of teaching and training can be improved and accordingly helps universities promote a healthy development and then achieve sustainable competitive advantages.

The result of regression analysis indicated the significant differences between male lecturers and female lecturers. As of the female group, there were four factors such as organizational commitment, leisure interaction, intrinsic motivation, and social interaction that influence their attitudes to working after normal retirement age. As of the male group, there were three factors including retirement anxiety, intrinsic motivation, and social interaction that impact their attitudes to working after normal retirement age. On the one hand, it can be interpreted that female lecturer will continue working beyond normal retirement age if they feel attached to their university and if the organizational environment and management are encouraging. On the other hand, when female lecturers wish to have more spare time after retirement for their favorite activities or family caring, they tend to retire early. For male lecturers, two factors including organizational commitment and leisure interaction did not impact their attitudes to working after normal retirement age, whereas retirement anxiety did. This can be explained that male lecturers traditionally are “bread-winner” or the people that are supposed to support their family. Therefore, they are worried about retirement and find it difficult to adjust to a new non-work pattern. Also, they are afraid of becoming a burden in the family. Overall, despite differences in attitudes to retirement intentions between male lecturers and female lecturers, both groups shared two factors: social interaction and intrinsic motivation.

##### **4.2. Managerial implications**

In the current situation at universities located in Ho Chi Minh City, the severe shortage of qualified and experienced lecturers is facing the university management board. More and more qualified lecturers have been invited by different universities. In the field of higher education, lecturers are regarded as the back bone of a university. Of the valuable assets such

as modern facilities and equipment, the teaching staff is always the most valuable. Brain drain at a university means it is in obvious danger in terms of loss of reputation and decrease in teaching and training quality. Possible solutions to this challenging problem can be based on the findings of this research. It is necessary for universities to frame a policy on older lecturers. Keeping experienced and qualified lecturers who also share the culture of the university is much more profitable than merely nourishing young lecturers. The fact that older lecturers work and share knowledge with young lecturers is the best way of investing in the next generation. This unique characteristic only exists in higher education. To be successful in retaining and encouraging older lecturers to stay longer with their university, the following factors must be taken into consideration.

Enhancing the interaction between older lecturers and young lecturers. The first factor is older lecturers' needs for social interaction. As discussed, social interaction strongly influences older lecturers' attitudes to working after normal retirement age. Activities such as training session, seminars, and projects for older lecturers to share would be one of the ways of pulling them back to the organization. The result showed their commitment to the university. This is a supportive factor that needs taking into account.

The second factor is older lecturers' intrinsic motivation. As a saying, "love always keep you back," intrinsic motivation means "my work is more than just a job to me. It is a passion. This factor is like a sufficient condition for their attitudes to working after normal retirement age. Teaching is the work of the heart. Any genuine lecturer has a deep love for teaching.

Strengthening the affective commitment and reducing the working time for woman lecturers. The regression analysis results for gender differences with the attitudes indicated that interrelationship with colleagues (social interaction) and love for teaching career (intrinsic motivation) determine both man lecturers' and woman lecturers' attitudes. On the other hand, woman lecturers tend to work after retirement age because they are attached to their university. They are willing to work after retirement age when they still have time for leisure activities.

Landing a psychological contract with men lecturers. For man lecturers, they work after retirement age because they are worried about retiring. A psychological contract will make them feel being cordially invited to make longer contribution to the university. When they find it safe and respectful to remain in the university, they will work after retirement age in the same university that they have been part of it for a long time.

Establishing a retirement planning program for older lecturers. Regarding career seniority, both groups of lecturers indicated that they loved their career, tended to socialize, and are worried about retirement (or do not feel happy with retirement). However, with those lecturers whose career seniority is more than 20 years are emotionally attached to their university and want to work less. They want to spend time for their leisure activities. This

group of 20-year seniority is highly representative of lecturers in general. What they prefer in retirement is a gradual retirement transition. This is similar to what was discussed in the literature: retirement is a long and sophisticated process. Therefore, a wide-ranging recommendation as well as an optimal managerial solution is establishing a retirement planning program in the university. Only with this program will lecturers who are close to retirement age be able feel in control with retirement. Also, retirement will not be as heavy.

The identified predictors of attitudes to working after normal retirement age contributed greatly to university leaders' decisions on human resources policies such as on retention of experienced and qualified older lecturers. Through effective actions, the quality of teaching and training can be improved and accordingly helps universities promote a healthy development and then achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

#### 4.3. *Limitations of the research*

Parallel with key findings, this research has its own shortcomings.

First and foremost, the main limitation of this research is that this research was conducted with convenience sampling. The sample were taken from 26 universities located only in Ho Chi Minh City, so the sample is not representative to generalize to a wider population. Besides, later research could focus on those who are blue-collar, because white-collar people like lecturers could differ the blue-collar people in attitudes to working beyond normal retirement age.

Secondly, this research used multiple regression analysis to explore the correlation between the variables which are believed as independent variables and the dependent variables. Therefore, this approach did not reveal the correlation between the independent variables of the research model.

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## CÁC NHÂN TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN THÁI ĐỘ CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN ĐỐI VỚI VẤN ĐỀ VIỆC LÀM Ở TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC SAU TUỔI NGHỈ HƯU

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### TÓM TẮT

*Chính sách dành cho người nghỉ hưu đang là vấn đề được các cơ quan thuộc Chính phủ, người sử dụng lao động, các tổ chức tài chính và người lao động quan tâm. Các giảng viên về hưu thuộc các trường đại học công lập có xu hướng chuyển sang công tác tại các trường tư thục để được tiếp tục làm việc. Bài viết này nghiên cứu các yếu tố tâm lý và xã hội về thái độ làm việc của giảng viên lớn tuổi sau khi nghỉ hưu. Để giải quyết vấn đề này, bài viết xem xét đội ngũ giảng viên trong các trường đại học Việt Nam bằng cách phân tích sự khác biệt mang tính thống kê của các nhóm ảnh hưởng đến thái độ của giảng viên lớn tuổi. Kết quả nghiên cứu định lượng đã chỉ ra 5 trong số 6 giả thuyết của mô hình nghiên cứu được hỗ trợ, đóng vai trò là tài liệu tham khảo cho các nhà quản lý trường đại học để có thể thiết lập một chính sách cân nhắc về vấn đề nghỉ hưu. Kết quả này có thể góp phần giúp lãnh đạo trường đại học trong việc đưa ra những quyết định hợp lý về chính sách quản lý nguồn nhân lực nhằm nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy và đào tạo; từ đó, thúc đẩy sự phát triển lành mạnh, đạt được những lợi thế cạnh tranh bền vững ở các trường đại học.*

**Từ khóa:** nhân tố ảnh hưởng; thái độ làm việc; tuổi nghỉ hưu; giảng viên; trường đại học