

A Conceptual Review and Methodological Design on College Students Attitude Towards Aging Workforce: A Case Study of Southern Thailand[†]

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Abstract

In an increasing number of countries, including Thailand, the aging population is a growing concern. As the population ages, understanding attitudes toward aging workers becomes increasingly important, including among college students who will eventually work with and become older workers. Thus, it is crucial to understand college students' attitudes toward aging workers and their willingness to continue working as the population ages. In Southern Thailand, college students' attitudes are especially important for the region's socioeconomic future. This paper presents the conceptual and methodological framework of the study, which aims to explore the attitudes of college students in Southern Thailand toward aging workers and to identify the socio-demographic factors that influence these attitudes and their willingness to continue working in later life. Using an online quantitative survey, data will be collected from approximately 400 college students enrolled at 3 universities namely, Walailak University in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, Prince of Songkla University (Hatyai campus) in Songkla Province, and Princess of Naradhiwas University in Narathiwat province, Southern Thailand. The result will shed light on how college students view older workers and their propensity to work beyond the current retirement age as well as providing policymakers, employers, and other stakeholders with recommendations to enhance attitudes toward older workers among college students in Southern Thailand.

Keywords: Aging workforce, Attitudes, Behavioral planned theory, College students, Older workers

Introduction

As life expectancy rises and fertility rates fall, the global population is swiftly aging, and this demographic shift is anticipated to continue (World Health Organization, 2022). With the rising number of older adults, the median age of the labor force - which includes persons of working age who are either employed or jobless but are interested in finding employment - has risen from 37.6 years in 2010 to 38.9 years in 2019 (International Labor Organization, 2020). Numerous studies indicate that population ageing will negatively impact the economy due to increased labor market exits and decreased productivity (Cylus & Al-Tayara, 2021). A substantial majority of older adults will live longer and healthier lives in the future (Beard et al., 2016) and nations are facing a formidable workforce challenge from this demographic group (Christensen et al., 2009).

In consequence of the aging population transition, there will be a shift in the labor supply. Many industries will need to respond by recruiting a larger proportion of older workers. International Labour Organization (2011) Thus, recognizing and respecting the range of attitudes on aging and older workers is critical for developing an inclusive and supportive environment for this population. The attitudes regarding an aging workforce are particularly essential to benefiting the older workers because they may have far-reaching ramifications for future professional training, how older people are treated and incorporated into society, and how policies are modified for this age group (Ybema et al., 2010). According to research, there are mixed attitudes toward older workers among employers, younger and middle-aged employees, and the general public. Both positive and negative attitudes toward older workers have been documented in the

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literature (Finkelstein et al., 2013; Truxillo et al., 2012; Helmes, 2015; Kluge & Krings, 2008). However, studies focusing on positive attitudes indicate that younger and middle-aged workers view older workers positively. For instance, Helmes (2015) discovered that attitudes toward older workers were typically positive among employed individuals in general, whereas (Finkelstein et al., 2013) discovered that younger and middle-aged workers held predominantly positive opinions of their older counterparts. Similarly, Truxillo et al. (2012) reported that older workers were viewed more favorably in terms of crystallized intelligence and conscientiousness dimensions. In addition, Kluge and Krings (2008) discovered that attitudes toward older employees were becoming more positive, with younger employees displaying positive attitudes toward their older peers.

In contrast, studies indicated that employers, younger and middle-aged workers, and the general population hold negative attitudes toward older workers. Malinen and Johnston, 2013; McCann and Keaton, 2013; Harrist et al. 2017, among others, have demonstrated such negative attitudes toward older workers. Malinen and Johnston (2013) discovered that, despite the absence of age bias in explicit attitudes, results revealed the existence of negative, stable implicit attitudes toward older workers. Moreover, McCann and Keaton (2013) reported that younger workers perceive older workers to be less comfortable with new technology, less flexible, and more cautious on the job, whereas younger Thai workers are more likely to concur with negative stereotypes about older workers than younger American workers. In addition, Harris et al. (2017) noted that the reviewed research provides evidence of ageist stereotypes and perceptions that negative attitudes toward older workers were more prevalent than positive attitudes and were observed in numerous employment domains, including hiring, training, and retirement decisions.

Understanding the attitudes towards older workers is important as it can influence their willingness to continue working in later life (Oude et al., 2012), which could lead to a better country's productivity (International Labour Organization, 2011). Nonetheless, young individuals may be less inclined to choose fields in which they would deal with older workers if they have a negative attitude about the aging workforce (Rathnayake et al., 2016). These circumstances can carry consequences for the makeup of the workforce and its inclusivity, along with the possibility of fostering collaboration and the exchange of knowledge between different generations. Likewise, the decision of older employees to continue working may be influenced by the attitudes of their co-workers which include younger individuals. According to Samorodov (1999), young people's unfavorable sentiments regarding the aging workforce might lead to an unfavorable work environment for older employees (Samorodov, 1999). When younger coworkers display unfavorable attitudes or engage in age-related discrimination towards their older counterparts, it can result in a decline in job contentment, diminished drive, and a heightened likelihood of considering early retirement (McConatha et al., 2022). This highlights how the mindsets of younger individuals hold the potential to influence the social and interpersonal aspects within the work environment, consequently affecting the choices made by older employees regarding their ongoing participation in the workforce. According to a prior study, the capacity and willingness to retire are important predictors of actual retirement or the decision to continue working. Ybema et al. (2010) Therefore, to ensure the sustainable employability of workers during and beyond the official retirement age, it is essential to formulate policies and intervention programs that encourage both the capacity and the willingness to stay employed. In light of current trends, it is recognized that a sizable component of the current labor force is leaving their employment prior to the official retirement age (Romans, 2007; Van Nimwegen et al., 2005). This phenomenon raises concerns that younger generations, such as college students, may opt out of the labor market in their later years.

The general attitudes of older individuals can profoundly influence different facets of society, such as how people interact in the workplace, the relationships between generations, and the overall welfare of society (Weiss & Zhang, 2020). Negative attitudes can fuel age-related biases, resulting in unfair treatment, limited opportunities and the marginalization of older individuals within employment settings (McConatha et al., 2022). Identifying and addressing attitudes toward older workers among college students is important to resolve negative attitudes toward older workers among college students. Early identification of their attitudes can inform policymakers of the need to progressively implement policies aimed at persuading younger generations to continue working voluntarily, as opposed to being forced to do so by law. Given

that lasting, meaningful attitude change is a lengthy process that occurs incrementally over the course of weeks, months, or even years (Briñol et al., 2015). Early identification of negative attitudes can facilitate the development of targeted policies to combat them. In addition, comprehending college students' perspectives on the aging workforce can promote workforce diversity and increase future labor market participation. A positive attitude toward an aging workforce, on the other hand, might result in a more varied and experienced staff, as well as aid to minimize age discrimination in the workplace (Yáñez-Yáñez et al., 2022) and keeping workers in the workforce to maintain the overall country's productivity.

Studies have explored the attitudes of college students towards older adults in general, results indicated positive attitudes towards the aging population (Çamur et al., 2015; Huang, 2013). Yet, research on college students' attitudes toward older workers has shown varied findings, with some studies discovering positive attitudes toward older workers (Truxillo et al., 2012; Helmes, 2015) and others discovering negative implicit attitudes against older workers that can be modified by intervention (Malinen & Johnston, 2013). College students as younger workers perceive older workers as less adaptable to new technology but more loyal to the organization, according to cross-cultural research, with disparities between American and Thai workers' perceptions of older workers (McCann & Keaton, 2013). Nonetheless, as the boomer boom generation approaches retirement, (Bravo, 2017) suggests that younger workers such as college students may experience a rise in negative attitudes in the coming years. Because a substantial portion of the workforce has aged and is nearing retirement, negative attitudes may have increased among younger workers who anxiously anticipate this group's retirement (Bravo, 2017).

Although, there is currently no clear measure (yet) to expand the retirement age in Thailand. The Social Reform Committee, appointed by the Office of the Prime Minister in July 2020, is responsible for examining additional issues related to extending the retirement age from 60 to 63 years, with the exception of agencies requiring physical ability (Suwannasun, 2020). Understanding the attitudes of college students toward the aging workforce and their propensity to become older workers would allow policymakers to develop effective policies aimed at encouraging the younger generations to continue working beyond (current) retirement age. Thus, a lack of competent employees in certain professions and a lack of diversity in the workforce could result from college students' pessimistic attitude toward continuing to work in later life.

It is apparent that no prior research on college students' attitudes toward older workers using the Behavioral Planned Theory (BPT) as a conceptual framework has been conducted in Thailand or elsewhere. Given that college students will be the future workforce responsible for caring for and working alongside older members of society, understanding their attitudes towards aging workers and their willingness to continue working in later life is of utmost importance. By examining the attitudes of Southern Thai college students toward older workers, this study aims to explore college students' attitudes towards aging workers and assess their willingness to continue working in later life.

Literature review

Population aging

According to its etymology, the Latin word "vetus" and the Greek word "etos" both of which signify "years" are the roots of the term "old". In general, the accumulation of time is used to quantify old age, with each year that passes adding to the total. The sense of time passing and the progressive accumulation of years is intimately related to this concept of aging (Parales et al., 2002). Population Ageing is a growing phenomenon across the world, with populations in many countries aging faster than ever before. It is likely to continue in the next decades. By 2030, it is projected that 1 in 6 people worldwide will be 60 years or older, with the population of that age group rising from 1 billion in 2020 to 1.4 billion. This number is expected to double by 2050, with a total of 2.1 billion older adults across the globe accounting for 25 % of the overall population. The number of people aged 80 and more is expected to reach 426 million by 2050, accounting for 5 % of the total population. (United Nations, 2019).

Thailand has a population of 66.5 million in 2020, a pace of growth that is moderating. Prior to the year 2020, the number of Thai seniors (those aged 60 or over) had increased to 12 million, representing approximately 1 - 5 of the nation's population. It is anticipated that Thailand will become a "fully aged

society” in 2022 due to the Million Birth Cohort (those born between 1963 and 1983), a demographic tsunami that would progressively overrun Thai society. In the meanwhile, the global population growth rate is projected to reach zero over the next 2 decades, and for the first time in recorded history, it may even become negative. However, the number of persons aged 60+ is anticipated to climb at a pace of 4 % each year, while the rate of increase for the oldest-old adults (aged 80+) will be 7 % per year. (Department of Older Person, 2020). This has profound implications for the country’s workforce, as the aging population is likely to reduce the number of available workers and increase the number of retirees. Nonetheless, in the past few decades, the number of aging workforce in Thailand has increased significantly due to the country’s improved economic position and the rise in life expectancy. Around 55.5 % of Thai adults aged 60 - 64 and 41.4 % of those aged 65 - 69 are currently in the Thai workforce (Department of Older Person, 2020).

Behavioral planned theory (BPT)

The Behavioral Planned Theory (BPT) or Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theory that explains how intentional, deliberate, and logical decision-making processes lead to human behavior. This theory states that attitudes toward a certain behavior, perceptions of social norms, and perceived behavioral control can all be used to predict an individual’s intention to engage in a particular conduct, which in turn influences their actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The BPT has undergone extensive testing and has been successfully used to comprehend a range of behaviors (Conner & Sparks, 2015; Armitage & Conner, 2001; McEachan et al., 2011). The theory takes into account a number of significant cognitive factors, including intents, expectancy-values, and perceived behavioral control/self-efficacy, that seem to influence such behaviors. Moreover, the model includes subjective norms to account for the influence of social pressure from others. BPT has been used extensively in environmental research, health promotion, and education (Ajzen, 1991), but there is little research on its usage in examining college students’ attitudes on the aging workforce and determining their willingness to be older workers in their later years.

According to the Behavioral Planned Theory (BPT), behaviors can be predicted from intentions (Ajzen, 1987). According to BPT, human behavior is impacted by a persons’ view of a behavior (attitude), perceived social pressure to engage in a behavior (subjective norms), and perceived ability to engage in a behavior (perceived behavioral control). As shown in **Figure 1**, when attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control all combine altogether, they constitute a behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). In light of this, this theory can help forecast college students’ propensity to continue working in their older years.

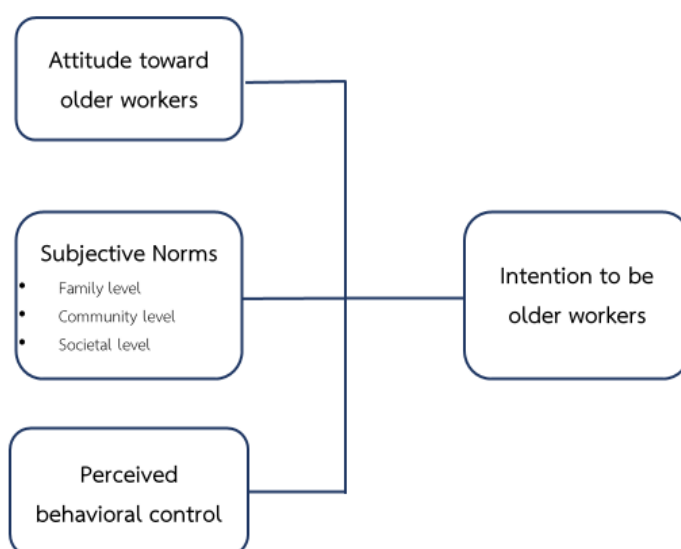


Figure 1 Adaptation from Ajzen (1991).

The behavioral intention is the main focus of the theory of planned behavior, according to (Ajzen, 1991). As a result, it is presumably that behavioral intention covers the motivating elements that can affect behavior. It is a signal that the person is ready to engage in the desired behavior. The effort made by a person to plan out their actions was explained by behavioral intention. The likelihood of doing an action generally increases with behavioral intention, or how strongly 1 intends to perform a specific action (Ajzen, 1991). It is well recognized that behavioral intention can only lead to behavioral performance if the behavior in issue is within the domains of volitional control, that is, if the individual may freely choose whether or not to carry out the activity (Ajzen, 1991). Despite the fact that a substantial number of behaviors may fulfill this criterion, the performance of the vast majority of behaviors will depend on non-motivational factors such as critical resources and possibilities (for instance time, money, skills, influence of others). However, collectively, these factors indicate an individual's genuine behavioral control. Therefore, the individual will have access to all the opportunities and resources that will motivate him to engage in the desired behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Consequently, the propensity to be older workers and continue working in later life is derived from the previously mentioned concept. In accordance with the BPT standing rule, the greater the degree of positive attitude toward older workers, perceived social pressure to engage in being older workers, and perceived ability to work in later life, the greater the likelihood of becoming older workers and continuing to work.

Attitude towards older adults and older workers

As society evolves, so too does the image it has of itself. Various historical, social, political, and cultural settings, as well as socioeconomic class, affect this portrait, producing a complex and ever-changing tapestry. Strong, permanent social stereotypes are developed as a result of this tapestry. Though the concepts of 'elderly' and 'old age' differ by society, they are often associated with negative characteristics such as frailty, rigidity, and reliance. However, these adjectives are often connected with positive attributes like wisdom, longevity, experience, and personal success (Cuddy et al., 2005; Hummert, 1990).

The concept of attitude is defined as the aggregate result of an individual's favorable or adverse feelings in carrying out a particular behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitudes regarding aging and the older adults may be complicated and multifaceted. They include sentiments, cognitions, and actions that are influenced by an individual's own experiences as well as social influences. People's physical and mental capacities, social roles, and living circumstances all change as they age, and this may affect how they perceive and interact with the world around them (Hess, 2006).

Consistently, studies have shown that attitudes toward older adults may differ significantly depending on the population under study. Some individuals have a typically optimistic view, whereas others have a pessimistic outlook. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in understanding younger populations' attitudes toward the older adults. Prior studies demonstrates that university students, professionals, and society as a whole exhibit negative, discriminating, and judgmental views toward the older adults (Gallo, 2019; Chen et al., 2015).

Thomas W. H. Ng and Daniel C. Feldman assessed the cumulative empirical data on 6 frequently held age stereotypes in their 2012 study. These stereotypes, namely that older workers are less motivated, less willing to participate in training and career development, less willing to change, less trusting, less healthy, and more vulnerable to work-family imbalance, were investigated in a meta-analysis of 418 empirical studies with a total sample size of 208,204. According to the study's findings, the sole stereotype validated by facts is that older workers are less eager to engage in training and career development activities. The authors finished by discussing the ramifications of their results and recommending further research and management practices.

In addition, previous research has disclosed a mixture of positive and negative attitudes towards the elderly. The purpose of the study by (Rathnayake et al., 2016) was to investigate the attitudes and willingness of undergraduate nursing students in Sri Lanka to interact with older adults. Included in the study were 98 1 to 4-year undergraduate nursing students who self-administered a questionnaire containing socio-demographic variables, Kogan's Attitudes Towards Older People Scale, and questions regarding

willingness to work with older people. About fifty percent of respondents held slightly positive sentiments toward older individuals, while 45 % held slightly negative attitudes. In addition, only a small percentage of respondents (5.1 %) favored working with older people as their first choice, and nearly 30 % of respondents ranked the seniors as their least preferred category for their future careers. The study discovered a significant correlation between attitudes and a willingness to work with older people. Living with older adults was also associated with more positive attitudes towards older adults, according to the research.

For a positive view, (Çamur Duyan et al., 2015; Chance et al., 2021) examined the attitudes of undergraduate social work and pre-licensure nursing students towards older persons. According to the findings of both studies, students held largely positive views of the elders. Çamur Duyan et al. (2015) discovered no statistically significant correlation between the academic year, gender, and age of students and their attitudes toward older adults. However, they did find a positive correlation between urban living and longevity. Chance et al., (2021) discovered that fifty percent of the individual items revealed significant cultural differences. The authors of both studies emphasized the significance of recognizing cultural differences and similarities in student attitudes toward older adults.

In contrast, research indicates that college students have a predominantly negative attitude toward older adults, regardless of their gender, academic program, or academic year (Cooney, 2021; Lun, 2010). Negative perceptions in areas such as character, disposition, and social motivation are prevalent, and negative preconceptions frequently associate the older adults with mental rigidity and a lack of vitality (Moret & Rodríguez, 2019).

Using the theory of planned behavior as a framework, (McKinlay & Cowan, 2006) aimed to examine the attitudes of student nurses toward working with geriatric patients. Using quantitative research methodologies, 172 student nurses from the United Kingdom were surveyed. Positive intentions and attitudes have a significant relationship with subjective norms ($p = 0.01$) and subjective norms ($p 0.05$). These findings indicate that attitudes and social norms substantially affect nursing students' intentions to work with older patients. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing negative attitudes and nurturing positive attitudes toward older patients among nursing students. It also revealed that the context and participants of such studies can influence attitudes toward older adults.

In this study, attitudes toward older workers are defined as the positive or negative attitudes of college students toward older workers, which will influence their propensity to become older workers in the future. Empirical research based on the theory of planned behavior indicates that individual intentions to perform or refrain from performing a behavior can be predicted with a high degree of accuracy when attitudes toward the behavior are taken into account (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1987).

Subjective norms

Subjective norm is defined as the social pressure exerted on an individual by the perceptions of influential referent groups regarding what the individual should or should not do. Important referents groups include family members, coworkers, colleagues, and acquaintances who can influence a person's decision. (Ajzen, 1991; Wood & Hayes, 2012) The theory of planned behavior theorizes that an individual's behavioral intention is more likely to be influenced by significant referents' opinions, particularly when individuals are more willing to accept influence from these specific referent groups (Ajzen, 1991). Multiple studies indicated that subjective norms are likely to affect attitudes regarding the behavior in question (Fulk, 1993; Schmitz & Fulk, 1991). While, several empirical studies have shown that attitudes regarding behavior are greatly influenced by subjective norms (Ryu & Jang, 2006; Han & Kim, 2010; Shin & Hancer, 2016).

Graham and Rosén's (2020) examined the elements that impact young adult college students' desire to work with older workers. Quantitative research methodologies were used to evaluate the participants. Subjective norms were shown to be significant predictors of the desire to work with older persons, accounting for the highest amount of variation. The findings imply that other people's perspectives and opinions, such as family members and coworkers, have a significant impact on young individuals' attitudes regarding working with older adults. These findings underscore the necessity of encouraging positive attitudes about older workers among college students, as well as the impact of social effects on their decision-making process.

Moreover, McKinlay and Cowan (2006) used the theory of planned behavior as a framework for their study with 172 student nurses from the United Kingdom. The study discovered that subjective norms play an important role in nursing students' decisions to deal with older patients. Participants believed that their social network, which included relatives, social workers, physicians, coworkers, and acquaintances, expected them to behave positively and take care of older adults. The correlation between these subjective norms and the students' intentions to work with older patients was significant. Understanding the influence of subjective norms is therefore essential for addressing negative attitudes and fostering positive attitudes towards older individuals among nursing students. Thus, it can be suggested that the influence of significant referent groups, such as family, friends, co-workers, or others whose opinions are of great significance to the worker, can have a negative or positive effect on the worker's willingness to become older workers in the future. (Ajzen, 1991).

Perceived behavioral control

Perceived Individual belief in one's capacity to carry out the targeted conduct is referred to as behavioral control. It is dependent on several motivating elements including time, abilities, resources, and influence of influential individuals whose opinions are valued (Ajzen, 1991). As a result, perceived behavioral control comes from the willingness to become older workers in the future. It is therefore described as the individual's determination and motivation to be older workers in their later life but it is subjected to their availability of time, finances, and the knowledge and influence of their subjective norms which are their significant others and those who are of importance to their decision making. According to the notion of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control was crucial to the model as it directly predicts behavioral intention, and when paired with behavioral intention, it indirectly predicts or influences actual behavioral performance (Ajzen, 1991). However, according to the theory of planned behavior, individuals who possess the necessary resources, such as time, money, and awareness, to perform a behavior may not necessarily develop strong intentions to engage in that behavior. This is due to the belief that the approbation or disapproval of significant others, such as friends, family, and coworkers, can influence one's behavioral performance, even if the individual has positive attitudes toward the behavior. In accordance with this view, perceived behavioral control can be associated with attitude and subjective norm, which can independently influence behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991).

Graham and Rosén's (2020) and Peng and Min's (2020) research, respectively, employed the theory of planned behavior as a conceptual framework to study the factors affecting individuals' intentions to work with older adults and engage in post-retirement employment planning (willingness to continue working after retirement). According to Graham and Rosén's research, attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are all significant predictors of young adult college students' intention to work with older adults, with subjective norm proving to be the strongest predictor. Nevertheless, Peng and Min's study found that while attitude and subjective norm were positively associated with older employees' intents to engage in post-retirement work planning, perceived control was not. Both studies emphasize the necessity of encouraging individuals to engage in these actions through fostering favorable attitudes and social norms toward older adults and post-retirement work planning, respectively.

In conclusion, BPT is a well-established theoretical model used to explain and predict human behavior in social psychology. The model posits that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are critical determinants of behavioral intention, which subsequently predicts actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, examining college students' attitudes towards aging workers through the BPT framework is crucial for understanding their willingness to continue working in later life and identifying the factors that influence their attitudes towards the aging workforce.

Methodology

Study design

The study is a quantitative cross-sectional utilizing an online survey based on theory of planned behavior.

Ethical considerations

The study protocol has been approved by the Walailak University ethics committee (WUEC-23-080-01). It has been made clear that participation will be voluntary, participants' names will not be used, and confidentiality would be maintained by the researchers. Informed consent was obtained when they were willing to participate in the study.

Participants and data collection

The survey sample size would be calculated using the Taro Yamane method; $n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$ (Yamane, 1973), where; n signifies the sample size, N signifies the finite population under study, and e signifies the 0.05 margin error. The inclusion criteria are; a) studying undergraduate at Walailak University, Prince of Songkhla University, and Princess of Naradhiwas University; b) ≥ 18 years of age; c) being Thai literate. Foreign or part-time students are to be excluded. An online survey are currently distributed in 3 universities located in southern regions of Thailand, namely, Walailak University in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Prince of Songkla University in Songkla, and Princess of Naradhiwas University in Narathiwat. Data are collected by convenient sampling technique through an online survey system (Google Forms). The self-administered survey are currently taken from May to July 2023. In order to ensure the validity and accuracy of collected data, on-site data collectors are employed. These trained individuals would personally administer the questionnaires and provide comprehensive instructions and information to participants at each university prior to data collection. All participants would be informed of the purpose of the survey and consents would be obtained online before they started answering the questions. The survey tool automatically verified that all questions had to be filled out completely before submission and could not be submitted twice.

Instrument

The survey includes 4 types of demographic information (gender, age, educational year, name of university, type of school, and the individual's experiences with older adults), as well as 4 sections including attitude towards older workers (individual's positive or negative attitude), subjective norm (individual's societal perception towards being older workers), perceived behavior control (individual's perception of ability to be an older worker), and their intention to be older workers. Responses to each of items were scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire was checked and validated by 3 experts. The Item Objective Congruence (IOC) Index is used as the basis for screening. Qualified items should have an IOC equal to or greater than 0.50 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). A pilot study of 30 randomly chosen participants from Walailak University will be conducted for readability, relevancy, reliability, and processing times. These 30 students will not be included in the original study sample size. Before sending the questionnaire to the population sample, modifications will be made where needed in regards to language understanding and item structures. The reliability of the questionnaires will be tested using Cronbach alphas. According to Cronbach's alpha, when the coefficient is greater than 0.7, it indicates that the study tool is consistent and suitable for large-scale data collection (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Statistics

The collected data were managed and analyzed using SPSS software version 27 for Windows (IBM Corp. in Armonk, NY). Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to achieve the study's purposes. After handling the missing values and outliers, the descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation will be used to describe the profile of the respondents. Bivariate analyses using Pearson's Chi-square test and Independent Samples T-test were conducted in inferential statistics. Ordinal logistic regression was used to investigate the factors affecting result's item. The p -value of 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Conclusions

In conclusion, based on the conceptual and methodological framework presented in this study, it is evident that understanding college students' attitudes toward aging workers is of significant importance. This research objective was to explore the attitudes of college students in Southern Thailand toward older workers and to identify the socio-demographic factors that influence these attitudes and their propensity to continue working in later life.

In hopes of understanding college students' behavioral intentions to be older workers and to explore their attitudes toward older workers, the study use the Behavioral Planned Theory (BPT) as a conceptual framework. The BPT assumes that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes toward the conduct, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This study will offer insightful information on the attitudes and behavioral intentions of college students about the aging workforce by utilizing this paradigm. Understanding college students' attitudes toward older workers is essential given the rising concerns about the aging population in many nations, including Thailand. Once they enter the workforce, college students will have to work with older workers and will eventually be older workers in the future. Furthermore, it's critical to pinpoint the socio-demographic factors that could affect their attitudes and willingness to continue working in later life.

Three universities in Southern Thailand-Walailak University, Prince of Songkla University (Hatyai campus), and Princess of Naradhiwas University-are the settings of this study. With an online quantitative survey, data from approximately 400 college students will be collected. Study's findings will provide policymakers, employers, and other stakeholders with recommendations to enhance attitudes towards older workers among college students in Southern Thailand.

Overall, this study emphasizes the significance of understanding college students' attitudes towards older workers and their willingness to work in their later years. It is anticipated that the study's findings will help shape policies and initiatives that improve attitudes of the aging workforce and foster a more varied and inclusive workplace.

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