

When Are Teachers Motivated to Work Beyond Retirement Age? The Importance of Support, Change of Work Role and Money

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Abstract

This article investigates the factors influencing the motivation to continue working after retirement among a sample of Dutch teachers. Based on previous research, it was proposed that teachers will be motivated to work after their legal retirement age when organizational support, possibilities to change work roles and financial needs are high. Moreover, based on conversation of resources theory, it was expected that these factors would interact with each other, with the strongest effects for combinations of high support, high change of work role and high financial needs. A survey was distributed among 123 teachers working in a high school in the Netherlands. Moderated hierarchical regression analysis showed that organizational support and change of work role were positively related to motivation to continue working. However, contrary to hypothesis, organizational support and change of work role interacted negatively, such that organizational support was only positively related to motivation to continue working for those who wanted to conduct the same kind of work after their retirement. This article shows that organizations should focus on offering support to their teachers in their decisions for working after retirement, and on offering possibilities for changes in the tasks they conduct.

Keywords

aging, continue working, older workers, retirement

Introduction

The proportion of older workers relative to younger workers is growing rapidly in North America and Europe (Brooke and Taylor, 2005; European Commission, 2005). Birth rates have decreased,

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resulting in a workforce that will increasingly be composed of older workers (Fouad, 2007). Therefore, organizations will have to put more effort into retention of older workers. Consequently organizational policies, which were traditionally focused on younger workers, will have to be tailored to older workers (Hedge et al., 2006).

The demographic development of a graying baby boom generation combined with a substantially smaller younger generation complemented with a trend of early retirement has led to the current situation of the highest old dependency ratio (age 65+ / age 20–64 or the number of younger workers for each retired person) than ever before (Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel, 2009). As the demographic developments progress over the years, significant pressures will be put on organizations: recruitment (attracting new workers) and retention (keeping workers within the organization for longer) will play a more and more important role to facilitate organizational growth and to fill in the gaps that retired employees leave behind.

While various studies have examined the motivation of employees to enter retirement (Beehr et al., 2000; Shultz et al., 1998) few studies have been conducted on the motivation of teachers to continue working beyond retirement age (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Moreover, recent studies have focused on why people want to stay or leave after their legal retirement age (Von Bonsdorff et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2008), but there are virtually no studies investigating the different factors interact in predicting motivation to continue working. This article will therefore focus on how older workers are motivated to work beyond retirement age. More specifically, we examine how motivation to continue working can be enhanced through organizational support, the possibilities for change of work role and financial inducements. The current study contributes to existing literature by (1) offering a theoretical perspective on motivation to continue working after retirement, (2) investigating the actual motivation among teachers to work beyond retirement age and (3) considering the factors that support teachers' motivation to continue working and possible interaction effects of these factors.

Continue Working after Retirement

Retirement can be defined as 'the exit from an organizational position or career path of considerable duration' (Feldman, 1994). Motivation to continue working after retirement is concerned with the expectations and preferences towards staying employed beyond retirement age (Atkinson, 1964). Teachers' decision whether or not to work after retirement age is influenced by both work-related and non-work-related factors (Beehr et al., 2000). However, since most research to date has focused on the factors that lead people to retire early, there is little empirical evidence of the antecedents of motivation to continue working after retirement (see, for exceptions, Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). According to a recent Dutch study, teachers in the Netherlands have several options for working after retirement (Van der Linden et al., 2006). These include mentoring, possibilities to work in self-managed work teams that are formed based on diversity of competencies of the members of the team, and employment outside of education. Therefore, continuing working after retirement becomes a more integrated option within life and career planning of older people (Bal et al., 2010). We propose that three main types of work-related factors have an impact on teacher motivation to continue working. These are organizational support, possibilities to change the work role and financial inducements.

First, organizational support is likely to positively influence motivation to continue working. Organizational support is concerned with removing the various organizational and psychological

barriers for working after retirement by for instance offering retirement planning policies (Gustman and Steinmeier, 1983). Organizational support is defined as the support offered by the employing organization in planning the retirement process. Retirement planning policies aim at addressing the uncertainty faced by the older worker when it comes to the retirement decision. Other examples of support in retirement planning may include health improvement initiatives, volunteering opportunities, access to training and availability of flexible working schemes (Von Bonsdorff et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2008). Helping teachers in planning their retirement may increase motivation to continue working (Fretz et al., 1989). Assisting teachers in their decision will not only reduce their anxiety but will also allow them to make a well thought-out decision and in doing so, organizations could point out various beneficial aspects of bridge working within the organization employment (Fretz et al., 1989). By assisting in retirement planning organizations can take away various negative emotions of teachers and at the same time influence the decision-making process of the individual when deciding whether to continue working beyond retirement age.

Second, the extent to which people are able to conduct different tasks in their job may enhance their motivation to continue working after retirement. Therefore, a change of work role may enhance motivation to continue working. Change of work role is defined as the possibilities for teachers to conduct different tasks, based on their personal preferences, after their official retirement age. Employment after retirement age (full-time, part-time, temporary or self-employed) is called bridge employment (Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). The word 'bridge' refers to the bridge from pre-retirement to full retirement by extending the teacher's work-life by staying employed (Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). Continuity theory proposes that work preferences, preferred activities and attitudes do not change dramatically after retirement (Atchley, 1989; Beehr, 1986: 35). Research has shown that attachment to a job would increase the odds of taking a career-related bridge job: the preferences remain the same. Stability as a person in terms of likes, dislikes, perceptions and inclinations supports the continuity theory and provide organizations with the argument of treating the teacher the same way after retirement age as the personal characteristics of the teacher will remain constant. Developing incentives to motivate teachers to work beyond retirement age can therefore be based on the wishes and experiences of the employees before entering retirement age (Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). Bridge employment is an important part of the transition into the world of retirees by providing opportunities for reduced participation in terms of flexible work arrangements with respect to for example work location and working hours. Bridge employment fulfills psychological function as it allows older workers to slowly adapt to the lifestyle of retirement (Weckerle and Shultz, 1999). In addition, the notion of bridge employment provides organizations with opportunities to fill up the gaps that the large group of retiring baby boomers leaves behind. These bridge employees tend to show lower absenteeism and turnover rates and can function as mentor for the younger workers within the organization (Weckerle and Shultz, 1999). Possibilities for bridge employment (that is, a change of the type of work one conducts) will therefore be positively related to motivation to continue working after retirement.

Finally, research on decisions to retire has shown that financial inducements may play an important role: an individual will be more likely to exit the workplace if the individual can afford it (Adams, 1999). Financial inducements are referred to as any compensation and/or financial bonus offered to an teacher for working after retirement. Conversely, financial incentives may stimulate employees into postponing their retirement as well (Beehr et al.,

2000). Indeed, research has shown that people with low satisfaction about their retirement income, are more likely to retire later (Adams, 1999). From the teacher's perspective the question whether he or she is able to maintain the current lifestyle is the biggest factor in the retirement decision (Brown et al., 1996). Bridge employment is often accompanied by a lower level of working hours with, as a consequence, a lower level of remuneration. Making continued working beyond retirement attractive with its related lower level of working hours requires financial rewards to become really interesting for teachers. Financial rewards are monetary compensations representing a monetary value. Examples of financial rewards are base salary, bonuses, profit sharing and stocks (Hijazi et al., 2007). For teachers, especially remaining levels of income after their official retirement may be important. Making these financial benefits available for teachers when they continue working beyond retirement age will make this decision a lot more attractive (Brown et al., 1996); filling up possible pension gaps, compensating for the income loss as a consequence of working fewer hours and providing 'seniority stocks' are all considered measures to motivate teachers to continue working. The first hypothesis is:

H1: Organizational support, change of work role and financial rewards are positively related to motivation to continue working beyond retirement age.

Interactive Effects of Antecedents on Motivation to Continue Working

Finally, we propose that combinations of organizational support, change of work role and financial inducements will contribute above their main effects to motivation to continue working. According to the conservation of resource theory, people are motivated to protect, replenish and invest in resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). They experience distress and anxiety when facing the potential or actual loss of resources and seek actively to gain resources by investing current resources. To become more highly motivated to work after retirement, people thus are actively looking for resources that enhance the possibilities for working after retirement, such as being able to conduct a different type of job, help from the organization in order to make the choice for a prolonged career and financial stimuli for working longer. Therefore, it is likely that when all of these factors are high, motivation to work after retirement will be significantly higher than when these are low. Previous research on the Conservation of Resource theory, has shown that high resources are related to higher resources over time (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Xanthopoulos et al., 2009). Based on conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) we propose that people are motivated to collect resources to be able to cope with possible stressors in the future. For instance, social support has been shown to serve both instrumental goals and has a self-defining function in the long run (Hobfoll et al., 1990). In other words, people strive to collect resources such that they will be able to work longer if needed. Thus, combinations in which people are motivated through organizational support, possibilities to change their work role and financial inducements will be related to significantly higher motivation to continue working after retirement, in line with conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2002). Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

H2: Organizational support, change of work role and financial inducements interact in relation to motivation to continue working, such that the strongest relations are found when organizational support, change of work role, and financial inducements are high.

Method

Procedure

In April 2009, an anonymous online questionnaire was distributed to all teaching faculty of a high school in the Netherlands. To investigate motivation of teachers, only the teaching staff was invited to participate in the study. The school included four locations in middle-sized cities in the north-western part of the Netherlands. The school provided secondary education, ranging from pre-vocational schooling to pre-university schooling. The school had a Roman-Catholic background and religious groups among the students were represented as follows: 24.2 percent Roman-Catholic, 3.3 percent Protestant-Christian, 4.0 percent Muslim and 68.5 percent non-religious. Over the four locations, the school included about 3000 pupils. The questionnaire was completed by 123 teachers, resulting in a response rate of 44 percent (of a total of 281 teachers). Their mean age was 47 years ($SD = 12$ years) and the mean expected retirement age was 63 years. One-half of the participants were male. The participants had an average organizational tenure of 12 years.

The teaching population in the school was distributed as follows: they were on average 47 years old, 52 percent was male, and the average organizational tenure was 12 years. Thus, the sample can be regarded as representative for the school (see also [http://tkrtp.owinsp.nl/PdfServlet?odk_id=36645andrSoort=Oandschoolnaam=Petrus+Canisius+College+\(havo+percent2fvwo+en+vmbo\)+percent2c++HAVO](http://tkrtp.owinsp.nl/PdfServlet?odk_id=36645andrSoort=Oandschoolnaam=Petrus+Canisius+College+(havo+percent2fvwo+en+vmbo)+percent2c++HAVO)). Furthermore, the school is comparable with the total number of secondary schools in the Netherlands in term of demographic features. We found few differences in terms of age distribution (<http://www.stamos.nl/index.bms?verb=showitemanditem=5.2.2>), and male-female distribution (<http://www.stamos.nl/index.bms?verb=showitemanditem=5.2.1>), with slightly fewer men than the average Dutch school.

Measures

The items were answered on a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The measure of motivation to continue working after retirement we currently used was based on previous studies on this topic (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel, 2009). In this article, we were primarily interested in *general* motivation to work after retirement, rather than preferences for a specific type of work. Since some of the teachers in the current study may be highly motivated to teach, and may still want to teach after retirement, they may also be different in their preference of type of work they would like to conduct after retirement, when compared to other teachers who may be more highly motivated to conduct another type of work after retirement, such as mentorships or managerial tasks. Because this study is one of the first studies in the field of education, we have chosen for general measures and predictors of general motivation rather than motivation for specific type of work. In the survey we explained to the participants that several options for continuing working exist for teachers nowadays. These include mentoring, possibilities to work in self-managed work teams that are formed based on diversity of competencies of the members of the team, and employment outside of education. These options were mentioned in the introduction of the survey. Motivation to continue working was measured with the three-item scale from Armstrong-Stassen (2008; Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel, 2009). Before answering the extent to which the statements were applicable to their situation, respondents were instructed to answer the items with respect to their motivation to continue working after their retirement. An example item is 'I expect to continue working as long as I can'. Armstrong-Stassen (2008) reported a coefficient alpha of 0.85. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.92.

Antecedents. Participants responded to a list of items, and filled out the extent to which continued working would be likely for them when the following factors were available in their work. *Organizational support* measured the extent to which the organization provides support to the teacher in retirement planning. A four-item scale by Fretz et al. (1989) was used, an example being 'organizational support in planning my retirement'. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.85. *Change of work role* was measured with an adapted scale from Weckerle and Shultz (1999). Four items measured the availability for people to change their work role after their retirement. An example is: 'The possibilities to carry out another type of job.' The reliability of this scale was 0.85. *Financial incentives* measure the extent to which people perceive that working after retirement has positive financial consequences. This scale is developed for this study and consists of three items, and the reliability of this scale was 0.84. An example is 'financial compensation for continuing working'. The items under study are listed in the Appendix.

Control Factors. Gender, age, years working in the current organization and job satisfaction were selected as control measures as they have often been found to be related to the retirement decision (Beehr et al., 2000). Job satisfaction was measured with seven items from Nagy (2002; reliability $\alpha = 0.68$), indicating the extent to which respondents were satisfied with their job content, working atmosphere, work pressure, development opportunities, freedom in their work, their supervisor and support from the organization (scale from 1 = 'not at all' to 5 = 'to a very great extent').

Analysis

Hypotheses were tested by means of moderated hierarchical regression analysis. Independent variables were centered to avoid multicollinearity (Aiken and West, 1991). In the first step, we entered the control variables in the analysis. In the next step, main effects were included. In line with recommendation of Cortina (1993), squared independent variables were included in step 3, to check for the possibility of curvilinear effects. Finally, interactions were added to the model in step 4. Significant interactions were plotted following the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991). Simple slopes were also calculated (Aiken and West, 1991). Table 1 shows the correlations of the variables under study. Gender, age and organizational tenure were not significantly related to motivation to continue working. None of the control variables were significantly related to motivation to continue working. Women tend to prefer a change of work role to continue working more important than men ($r = 0.18, p < 0.05$). For older workers, change of work role and financial stimuli were less important in motivating them to work longer. The three conditions for working after retirement were positively related to motivation to continue working after retirement (correlations ranged from $r = 0.41$ to $r = 0.53$).

Results

The results of the moderated regression analysis are presented in Table 2. Organizational support ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.05$) and change of work role ($\beta = .35, p < 0.05$) were significantly related to motivation to continue working. However, financial incentives were not significantly related to motivation to continue working ($\beta = 0.11, ns$). Thus, the first hypothesis is supported for organizational support and for change of work role, but not support for financial incentives.

In line with expectations, no curvilinear effects were found for the independent variables. Finally, the interaction effect between organizational support and change of work role was a

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlations of the study variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Gender	0.50	0.51	–							
2 Age	47.13	12.01	–0.39**	–						
3 Organizational tenure	12.29	11.22	–0.31**	0.57**	–					
4 Job satisfaction	3.57	0.46	–0.02	–0.10	–0.03	–				
5 Support from organization	3.08	0.86	0.14	–0.18	–0.07	0.20*	–			
6 Change of work role	3.44	0.95	0.18*	–0.30**	–0.17	0.16	0.68**	–		
7 Financial incentives	2.78	0.86	0.14	–0.34**	–0.18*	0.06	0.59**	0.65***	–	
8 Motivation continue working	2.67	1.05	0.11	–0.13	–0.16	0.17	0.47**	0.53***	0.41**	–

Notes: *N* = 123; values in bold along the main diagonal are coefficient alphas for scaled variables; gender: 0 = male, 1 = female.

Table 2. Results of moderated hierarchical regression analysis

Variable	Motivation to continue working			
	β	β	β	β
Step 1: Demographics				
Gender	0.06	0.01	–0.01	0.01
Age	–0.02	0.15	0.12	0.13
Organizational tenure	–0.12	–0.14	–0.13	–0.14
Job Satisfaction	0.16	0.07	0.07	0.07
Step 2: Main effects				
Support organization		0.17	0.19	0.30*
Change work role		0.46***	0.47***	0.35*
Financial incentive		0.06	0.10	0.11
Step 3: Squared terms				
Support organization ²			–0.08	0.07
Change work role ²			0.07	0.05
Financial incentive ²			0.12	–0.03
Step 4: Two-way interactions				
Support * change				–0.66*
Support * financial				0.10
Change * financial				0.17
<i>F</i>	1.74	12.47***	8.91***	7.45***
<i>R</i> ²	0.06	0.43	0.44	0.47

Notes: *N* = 123; three-way interactions between support, change, and financial incentives were analyzed but no significant effect was found in predicting motivation to continue working: **p* < 0.05; ***p* < 0.01; ****p* < 0.001.

significant predictor of motivation to continue working ($\beta = -0.66, p < 0.05, \Delta R^2 = 0.03$). According to the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991), for significant interaction effects, we calculated the strengths of the effects for two groups of the moderator (here: possibilities to change the work role). We calculated the effect of organizational support for continuing working after

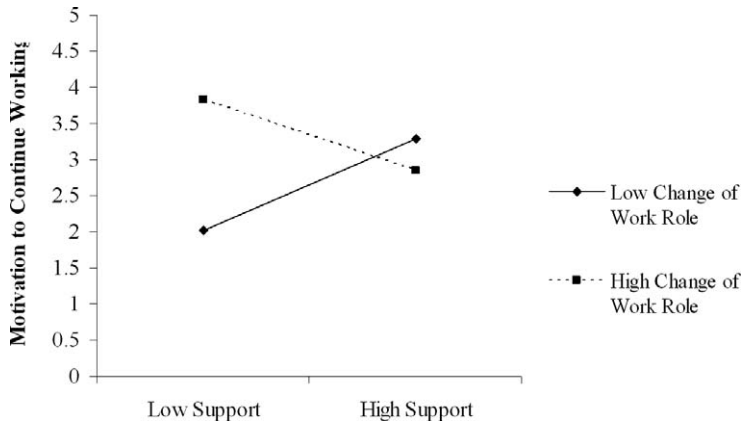


Figure 1. Interaction effect of support with change of work role in relation to motivation to continue working

retirement one standard deviation below the mean of change of work role, and one standard deviation above the mean of change of work role. Figure 1 shows the interactive effects of organizational support and change of work role. The unit of measure for motivation to continue working was based on the mean score of motivation to continue working. We averaged the score of each participant over the three items constituting the measure (scores ranged from 1–5). Simple slope analysis revealed that the slope for teachers low on change of work role (1 SD below the mean) was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.89, p < 0.05$), whereas the slope for teachers who scored high on change of work role (1 SD above the mean) was negative ($\beta = -0.22, p < 0.05$). The interaction effect can be interpreted such that the effect of organizational support on motivation to continue working is positive for those who score low on change of work role, and negative for those who score high on change of work role. Whereas organizational support was positively related to motivation to continue working after retirement for those who had low needs for change in work role, the relation was negative for teachers with high change of work role. Thus, the second hypothesis is not supported. There was no combined positive effect of the antecedents on motivation to continue working after retirement.

Discussion

The main focus of this article was on determining how organizations can motivate their teachers to continue working beyond retirement age. The study clearly showed that financial reasons are not the key driver for teachers to continue working after retirement. Instead, organizational support and possibilities for change of work role were significantly related to motivation to continue working. However, these contributing factors for motivation to continue working did not strengthen each other: for people who have a high level of desire to conduct a different type of job after retirement, organizational support hinders their motivation to continue working. It may be that for the people who want to conduct a different type of job after their retirement, organizational support might be seen as a pressure to continue working in the same job as they are currently involved in (that is, teaching [Van der Linden et al., 2006]).

Creating a supportive and appreciative climate will stimulate teachers in their sense of being able to choose for themselves in a free and supported manner; a feeling of the organization supporting you no matter what you might decide: continued working or entering retirement, has a significant positive influence on the motivation to continue working. Teachers are more inclined to continue working as long as they get the feeling that their participation adds value to the organization and as long as they have the feeling they can cope with the changing environment. The dimension organizational support is positively related to motivation to continue working.

Our findings are in line with research on non-financial rewards (Hijazi et al., 2007). Our findings support the argument that financial inducements do not contribute to teacher retention and that the effects of non-financial rewarding, in terms of for example appreciative behavior, are underestimated by organizations. Non-financial rewarding might even become more important when the teacher becomes older and thus increasingly becomes a tool for motivating teachers to work beyond retirement age (Bal et al., 2008). Giving older teachers a sense of belonging and appreciation by treating them in the same way when it comes to for example training seems to fit within current writings on this topic (Sullivan and Duplaga, 1994). The same holds for providing options to change the job role within the organization. Allowing teachers to change jobs positively influences the motivation to continue working. Our study has shown that teachers are interested in staying employed within the same organization beyond retirement but they would like to stay employed within a different context with respect to job role. Examples are becoming a manager or mentor for less experienced staff at a school instead a teacher. In this way the knowledge and experience of the older worker stays within the organization while the teacher can operate in a different job role. Organizations are therefore advised to create policies and practices aimed at facilitating teachers in changing their job-role when they enter retirement age. These findings support the writings of Gobeski and Beehr (2009) and Weckerle and Schultz (1999) as the option of entering a different job role is already mentioned by these authors as a method to motivate employees to continue working. By offering such 're-employment' options within the same organizations the teachers can, besides the positive effects mentioned earlier, slowly enter the world of retirement by slowly decreasing their workload and responsibilities but at the same time stay employed and contribute to the organizational success.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this study might be the overall generalizability. This study was conducted in a Dutch high school. The extent of generalizability across other sectors, nations and cultures can therefore not be determined and must be left to future research to be supported and falsified. For instance, our findings support the argument that financial inducements do not contribute to teacher retention and that the effects of non-financial rewarding, in terms of, for example, appreciative behavior, are underestimated by organizations. However, these rules apply in an affluent society and not necessarily in less privileged societies or among people with a low retirement pay.

Another limitation is the relative narrow scope of the study on three types of antecedents of motivation to continue working. It should be kept in mind that the process of motivating teachers to work beyond retirement age consists of more than the factors identified by our research. Adopting the two factors that were found significant is no guarantee for success.

Organizational factors such as, for example, culture and personal factors such as health conditions have not been a part of our research. More specifically, we measured general preferences for continue working after retirement. These preferences might depend on specific characteristics of the work that is available after retirement. Therefore, future research should also focus on these more specific work characteristics.

In our research we have identified two factors which significantly influence the motivation to continue working. First of all more factors might play an important role in this continue-working decision. Factors such as health condition, organizational culture or specific job characteristics have not been part of our research. Further research into extending the model we presented in terms of identifying other relevant factors that play a role in this decision is therefore recommended. Further, the measure currently used to measure motivation to continue working was aimed at general motivation to continue working without differentiating among several types of bridge employment (Feldman, 1994). Therefore, we recommend future research to investigate antecedents of specific bridge employment types, such as self-employment, type, frequency and duration of the job.

Moreover, a comparative study across different sectors or across different nations or cultures would greatly enhance the generalizability of our study as our study has only been preformed within an organization operating within the education sector in the Netherlands. A cross-national or cross-sector comparative study testing our model would therefore be recommended.

Conclusion

An increasingly aging and dejuvinating workforce have resulted into one of the biggest challenges of modern western organizations. As the baby-boom generation now reaches retirement age, organizations are faced with difficulties replacing these retiring teachers. Not only does this large group of retiring baby-boomers leave a large physical gap behind, they also take a significant amount of knowledge and skill with them when they leave the organization. Retention will have to be the one of the answers to this demographic challenge as there is just not enough inflow of younger workers to compensate for the large group of retiring teachers. Furthermore, retention practices will allow organizations to counteract the brain-drain effects by teachers entering retirement. Retaining teachers would therefore be very relevant to schools. This study showed that people will be motivated to continue working after retirement when organizational support and possibilities for a change of work role are available. However, these contributing factors may be conflicting as well. Therefore, educational institutions should focus on individual needs of teachers in enhancing their motivation to continue working.

Appendix: Items under study

Organizational support

- Assistance of the organization in planning my retirement
- Recognition of my organization for continuing working
- Organizational support in planning my retirement
- Help from the organization in finding meaning in life after my official retirement age

Change of work role

- The possibilities to carry out another type of job
- A gradual decrease of the activities I carry out in my work
- Adaptation of the content of my job to my personal wishes
- Bridge employment to full retirement

Financial incentives

- Financial compensation for continuing working
- Financial bonuses for continuing working
- If my retirement income is threatened

Motivation to continue working

- I expect to continue working as long as I can
 - Barring unforeseen circumstances, I would remain in this organization indefinitely
 - If I were completely free to choose, I would prefer to continue working in this organization
-

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