

# A Study for Leisure and Sport Majored Students' Off-campus Internship Behavioral Intention in Taiwan

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to verify leisure and sport majored students' off-campus internship behavioral intention based on planned behavior theory. Questionnaire was employed for data collection and subjects were students in the major relevant to leisure and sport in Taiwan. Among the questionnaires distributed, 420 (93.3%) were returned effectively. AMOS19.0 was adopted to analyze the Structural Equation Modeling. The results revealed that students' fake attitude and behavioral intention to off-campus internship were significantly different, students' subjective norm and behavioral intention to off-campus internship were significantly different, and students' perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention to off-campus internship were significantly different. It is hoped that the findings of this study would provide meaningful information for schools and industries when making policy on off-campus internship.*

**Keywords:** *Leisure and sport related department, Off-campus internship, behavioral intention*

## INTRODUCTION

Off-campus internship has been served a bridge between college and industry. The mechanism provides a real world experience and is helpful for college graduates to smoothly adapt themselves at work. Targeting on employment right after the graduated from school, the Ministry of Education (2009) implemented the "College Graduates Practice at Work Place Project" to connect academic learning to practical experience. The implementation of off-campus internship has different benefits including internship effectiveness, internship quality, sense of identification, ability to be employed, and work competence (Tsao, Rong & Liu, 2000). Most of the literatures in the field of off-campus internship published in Taiwan were focused on constructing the core competence index for internship or off-campus internship mechanism (Lin & Hsu, 2011; Lin, Hao & Pang, 2012) or the mechanism for off-campus internship (Lee & Chao, 2008; Tsai & Lin, 2009). A few focused on off-campus internship satisfaction (Hsu, 2012; Pai, Huang & Chang, 2012). However, not many researches paid attention to students' subjective will on the choices of internship. In fact, the differences on individual's information, competence, technique, and opportunity may influence student's will to the participation of off-campus internship. Hsu & Wen (2011) was the only article found in the discussing of off-campus internship from the perspective of behavioral intention. Furthermore, many of the studies in discussing off-campus internship were targeting on students in the field of food catering and restaurant management. Along with the prosperous development of leisure related industry, the authors saw the needs of off-internship for students in the field to simulate real world work. This study intended to construct off-campus internship model from the perspective of planned behavior theory for students in the leisure and sport related departments to verify the fitness of this modeling.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Behavioral Intention has been served an index to measure future behavior. Ajzen & Driver (1991) suggested that behavioral intention was quite an accurate index to predict one's behavior. That is to say that behavioral intention is a must procedure to a behavior. From the perspective of behavior theory, behavioral intention has been proved to be highly related to actual behavior (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh & Agarwal, 2006). Behavioral intention was based on the theory of reasoned action that involves social cognition. The major purpose of the theory was to understand the procedure of the completion of an action. Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) saw the reasoned individual a premise of the theory of reasoned action and proposed the following two assumptions: That most of human beings' action was under their control and reasonable and that behavioral intention is the immediate element deciding if an action would be occurred. However, the decision-making procedure involved in the proposition was too simplified to explain the human beings' decision-making behavior. Individual difference, information, technology, willpower, emotion, coerciveness, memory loss, timing, opportunity and dependence on others were other possible elements to influence the controlled procedure of an individual's behavioral intention (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Accordingly, Ajzen (1991) added perceived behavioral control to extend the appropriateness of the theory of reasoned action. In other words, one would pay more effort to accomplish an action if individual cognition and behavior were under one's control.

The theory of planned behavior suggested that individual action comes from behavioral intention which mainly influenced by behavioral attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral control cognition (Ajzen, 1991). In his frame, Ajzen suggested that attitude was employed to assess behavior, whether positive or negative, which was measured by the product of the belief and the results of assessment on the action. For instance, if the students in the leisure and sport related department see off-campus internship was interesting, pleasant, and attractive, they would thirst for the internship opportunity. Students then would see off-campus internship with positive belief and attitude. Subjective norm is the cognition on the activity that one sees it important but otherwise by others. It usually is measured by the product of one's norm belief on the activity and the motivation to follow prevailing social norm. In other words, a student would have higher willingness to choose off-campus internship if his or her teachers, parents, peers, and important others that believe it could be beneficial to the student. Behavioral intention emphasizes on the subjective willingness an individual would want to engage in certain behavior. That is to say that the more a student in leisure and sport related major sees off-campus internship a major portion in his curriculum and would strongly recommend it his peers, the more he one would want to participate in the activity. Behavioral control cognition is level one expects to control during the participation in an activity, which reflects the level of opportunity and resources the individual could hold up and affects the level of barrier the individual could predict. Behavioral control cognition usually is measured by the product of the level one believes he could control his performance in an activity and the strength of cognition on what might impede one's performance. In other words, student in leisure and sport related major has stronger control cognition if the student believes that he has the professional knowledge, physical ability, or work-study experience to devote in the off-campus internship activity. The review of literature provides sufficient evidence that planned behavior theory could be employed to study the off-campus internship behavior for students in leisure and sport major.

Planned behavior theory has been extensively adopted in various fields including tourism, sport, leisure, and product marketing, of which application has been employed to predict and further understand human being's behavior. This has verified what Yang (2008) suggested that the theory of planned

behavior has been applied in three fields: exploring and verifying fundamental theory and construct, whether or not human beings accept new technology or have the competence to apply the theory in practice, and exploring issues including exercise with mediator. Off-campus internship helps students not only explore possible career development but also acknowledge their own advantages and disadvantages in the area of their specialty in advance. To school and industry, the internship increase the possibility of industry-school cooperation, which not only creates special features for schools but also reserves human capitals for industry. Studies relating to internship were mostly focusing on the result of off-campus internship (Lin, 2009; Chiu, 2011; Wang, 2011; Hsu, 2011; Lin, 2012). Not many explored the reasons why students chose to conduct off-campus internship. The intent of this research, therefore, was to further understand the behavioral intent of off-campus internship subject to students in leisure and sport relating majors.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The structure of the research frame was illustrated in the Fig. 1.

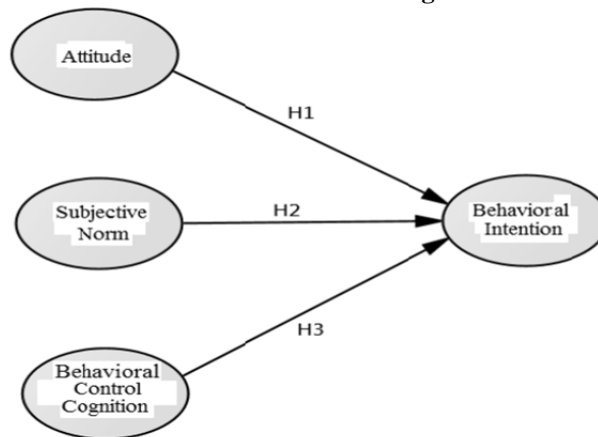


Figure 1: Research Structure

This study also, according to the literature review, suggests the research hypotheses below:

**Hypothesis 1:** Attitude has significantly influence on behavioral intention;

**Hypothesis 2:** Subjective norm has significant influence on behavioral intention;

**Hypothesis 3:** Behavioral control cognition has significant influence on behavioral intention.

Subjects were 450 college students in leisure and sport relating majors in Taiwan selected with judgmental sampling. Effective returned questionnaires were 420 at 93.3%. The measure adopted in this study was modified from the one employed by Wu (2008) for studying the influence of off-campus internship to career planning on vocational high school students in culinary art and the questionnaire adopted by Hsu, Pan & Huang (2011) for the study of students' behavioral model in aquatic sport and tourism. There are 18 questions categorized in four constructs which are attitude, subjective norm, cognitive behavioral control, and behavioral intention in the questionnaire.

AMOS Structural Equation Statistics software was employed to explore the fitness of the model constructed for this study and examine the relations between variables.

## RESULTS

Among the 420 subjects who responded to the survey effectively, 211 (50.2%) of them were male students and 209 (49.8%) were female students. Categorized by the Year at college, there were 73 (17.4%) freshmen, 326 (77.6%) sophomores, 12 (2.9%) juniors, and 9 (2.1%) senior students responded to the survey effectively. Among the 420 subjects, 272 (64.8%) of them had work experience and 148 (35.2%) of them were without any work experience. Detailed distribution was listed in Table 1.

It appeared that most of the college students have off-campus work experience despite of the pro and con to the phenomena in the society (Graduate School of Education and Assessment Center for the National Taiwan Normal University, 2007; Peng, 2008). Students with off-campus work experience not only have positive influence on their ability to adopt themselves to future career (Wu, 2011) but also tended to face problems and frustration and meet the challenge (Fang, 2005). It seemed to explain why college students sought for off-campus work experience. This explained why students with off-campus work experience were more willing to choose off-campus internship as they did not expect much hinder during the internship.

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulated Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	211	50.2	50.2
	Female	209	49.8	100.0
Year	Freshman	73	17.4	17.4
	Sophomore	326	77.6	95.0
	Junior	12	2.9	97.9
	Senior	9	2.1	100.0
Off-campus Work Experience	Yes	272	64.8	64.8
	No	148	35.2	100.0

The error variances in the model for this study were in between .01 and .04 and standardized regression coefficients falls in the range of .84 to .95, none is more than 0.95 (see Table 2). This shows that offending estimate was not occurred in the model employed in this study.

**Table 2: Results of Offending Estimate Test**

Item Number	Standardized Regression Coefficient	Error Variance
1. Attitude 1	0.93	0.02
2. Attitude 2	0.92	0.02
3. Attitude 3	0.94	0.02
4. Attitude 4	0.95	0.01
5. Attitude 5	0.93	0.02
6. Attitude 6	0.89	0.02
7. Subjective 1	0.88	0.03
8. Subjective 2	0.91	0.02
9. Subjective 3	0.92	0.02
10. Subjective 4	0.91	0.02
11. Cognition 1	0.93	0.02
12. Cognition 2	0.92	0.02
13. Cognition 3	0.92	0.02
14. Cognition 4	0.87	0.03
15. Intention 1	0.93	0.02

16. Intention 2	0.94	0.02
17. Intention 3	0.93	0.02
18. Intention 4	0.84	0.04

Standardized coefficient and modification index (MI) value resulted from confirmatory factor analysis was used to delete items in the questionnaire. The MI value for items Attitude 1, Attitude 6, Subjective 1, Subjective 4, and Intention 3 were greater than 50 (see Table 2) and therefore were deleted from the analysis (Hsu, 2012).

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for constructs attitude, subjective norm, behavioral control cognition, and behavioral intention to verify convergent validity. Loadings for all constructs were in between .84 and .96, composite reliability were in between .91 and .96, and average variance extracted were in between .81 and .87 (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Construct	Index	STD loading	Non-STD loading	S.E.	C.R. (t-value)	P	SMC	C.R.	AVE
Attitude	ATT 2	0.91	1.00				0.83	0.96	0.87
	ATT 3	0.94	1.11	0.03	34.82	***	0.89		
	ATT 4	0.96	1.14	0.03	37.00	***	0.93		
	ATT 5	0.92	1.08	0.03	31.80	***	0.84		
Subjective Norm	SUB 2	0.91	1.00				0.84	0.91	0.84
	SUB 3	0.92	1.09	0.04	29.65	***	0.84		
Behavioral Control Cognition	BCC 1	0.93	1.00				0.86	0.93	0.81
	BCC 2	0.92	0.99	0.03	32.42	***	0.84		
	BCC 4	0.85	0.92	0.03	26.71	***	0.73		
Behavioral Intention	BI 1	0.93	1.00				0.87	0.95	0.83
	BI 2	0.94	1.00	0.03	37.58	***	0.88		
	BI 3	0.93	1.02	0.03	36.01	***	0.87		
	BI 4	0.84	0.90	0.03	26.78	***	0.71		

\*ATT: Attitude; BCC: Behavioral Control Cognition; BI: Behavioral Intention

Discriminant validity was examined with the bootstrap relevant coefficients in 95% zone for the attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral control cognition of off-campus internship (Chen & Wang, 2010). Please see Table 4 for details.

**Table 4: Bootstrap Relevant Coefficient**

Parameter	Estimate d	Bias-corrected		Percentile method	
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Attitude <--> Subjective Norm	0.85	0.75	0.91	0.76	0.92
Attitude <--> Behavioral Control Cognition	0.86	0.76	0.92	0.76	0.92
Attitude <--> Behavioral Intention	0.85	0.75	0.91	0.75	0.91
Subjective Norm <--> Behavioral Control Cognition	0.85	0.77	0.91	0.77	0.91
Subjective Norm <--> Behavioral Intention	0.89	0.84	0.94	0.84	0.94
Behavioral Intention <--> Behavioral Intention	0.86	0.80	0.91	0.80	0.91

Cross validity was employed to verify the stability for the model adopted in this study. Samples were randomly divided into two groups and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) for the groups was examined. As listed in Table 5, TLI between the two groups was less than .05, which reveals the cross validity between the two models adopted in this study (Little, 1997).

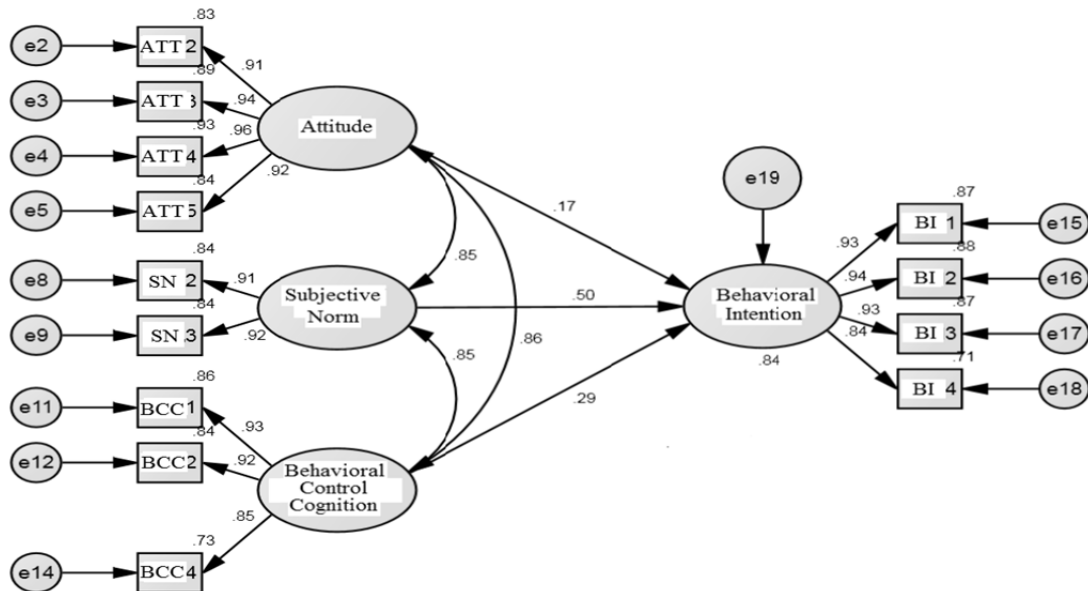
**Table 5: Invariance Comparison**

Model	Degree Of Freedom	$\chi^2$	P	NFI Delta-1	IFI Delta-2	RFI rho-1	TLI rho2
Measurement weights	9	12.511	0.186	0.002	0.002	-0.002	-0.002
Structural weights	12	16.963	0.151	0.002	0.002	-0.002	-0.002
Structural Covariances	18	39.749	0.002	0.005	0.005	-0.001	-0.001
Structural residuals	19	48.830	0.000	0.007	0.007	0.000	0.000
Measurement residuals	32	83.623	0.000	0.011	0.012	0.000	0.000

The model fit analysis was conducted and the results were listed in Table 6. It is clearly seen that the ratio of  $\chi^2$  and the degree of freedom is 2.85, less than 3. And, GFI · AGFI · RMSEA · CFI · PCFI is 0.94, 0.91, 0.07, 0.98, and 0.74 respectively. The results reveal the model fit (Hsu, 2010).

**Table 6: Model Fit Analysis**

Fit Indices	Allowance	Modified Model	Model Fit Judgment
$\chi^2$ (Chi-Square)	Smaller the better	168.23	
$\chi^2$ / DOF Ratio	<3	2.85	Fit
GFI	>0.90	0.94	Fit
AGFI	>0.80	0.91	Fit
RMSEA	<0.08	0.07	Fit
CFI	>0.90	0.98	Fit
PCFI	>0.50	0.74	Fit



**Figure 2: Path Diagram for Model Test Result**

The results of the analysis, shown in Table 7, reveals that attitude has significantly influence on behavioral intention, subjective norm has significant influence on behavioral intention, and behavioral control cognition has significant influence on behavioral intention. The results agreed with the hypotheses proposed in this study.

**Table 7: The Results of the Hypotheses**

Hypothesis	Path Direction	Path Value	Truth/False
1	Attitude→ Behavioral Intention	0.17	Truth
2	Subjective Norm→ Behavioral Intention	0.50	Truth
3	Behavioral Control Cognition → Behavior Intention	0.29	Truth

\* $p < .05$

By applying the planned behavior model with the verification of the research hypotheses proposed in this study, it was found that the willingness of students in leisure and sport relating majors to participate in off-campus internship was influenced by attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral control cognition. Wan, Yang & Fu (2009) came up with similar conclusion in their report. In the same report, they suggested that there were three factors influenced student's decision as which organization to choose for employment interview, which are family, senior students, and personal competence in their specialty. Targeting on vocational high school students in culinary art, Wu (2009) concluded that internship satisfaction, identification, subjective norm, cognition behavioral control, and attitude are factors influencing students' perception on off-campus internship. Although student group in her study is different from the one targeted in this study, the results were quite agreed.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the theory of planned behavior, this study explored the off-campus internship behavior on students in leisure and sport relating departments. Demographic information was analyzed in the first stage. In the subjects effectively responded to the survey, the number of male and female was quite close, the majority of the subjects regardless of gender were sophomore students (77.6%), and most of the respondents (64.8%) have work experience.

In Stage II, offending estimate test was conducted. The results revealed that all the error variances were positive and none of the all standardized coefficients were greater than .95 (see Table 2). Offending estimates were not problematic. Data analysis was conducted with SEM model in Stage III. Five items, Attitude 1, Attitude 6, Subjective 1, Subjective 4, and Cognition 3, were deleted according to the value of modification index (MI). In the final stage, the measure and structural model was analyzed. With the test of convergent validity, the loading of all constructs, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted meet with criteria (see Table 3). Furthermore, the test for discriminant validity revealed that the model employed in this study meets the required validity (see Table 4). The stability of the model adopted in this study was tested with cross validity and the results revealed that Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) between the two random selected groups was less than .05 (see Table 5). The results of the analysis for the whole model shows that all indices were in accepted range (see Table 6). The final results showed that all the three hypotheses were accepted with significantly difference (see Table 7).

#### Recommendations

Recommendations for different groups were made in this study:

##### 1. To Students in Leisure and Sport Relating Concentration

The path coefficients revealed that subjective norm was highly related to behavioral intention. Whether or not students were willing to participate in off-campus internship were influenced by prevailing social norm such as the advice made by family and senior students. Therefore, students need to well communicate with their family or senior students for what they were looking for which including

location, natures, and relevance to their major. In the same time, students could acquire necessary information, such as working hours and academic credits, from school and the department in charge of off-campus internship. On the other hand, students should widely collect information from different sources rather than simply taking advices from senior students. The bottom line is to select the right opportunity for internship that meets personal needs and career development.

The influence of students' behavioral control cognition to off-campus internship behavioral intention was verified in this study. Students really need to be aware of the required resources and opportunity for off-campus internship. Of which includes relevant competence, work ethics, foreign language skill, and the spirit of teamwork. The more competences students equipped with the better chance students could reduce the barriers in the off-campus internship and showed personal niche or uniqueness. Hong (2012) suggested that every position one assumed has his or her unique meaning. Everyone needs to create his or her uniqueness and niches to avoid being replaced unexpectedly.

## **2. To Relevant Department in School**

The study verified that the attitude of students in leisure and sport relating concentration influences students' behavioral intention. That is to say relevant departments in school and teachers played a major role in off-campus internship. Providing students with right ideas and necessary consultation about off-campus internship has become an immediate need. Assigning a department with appropriate number of teacher and staff specifically for students' off-campus internship is an urgent matter. Other than serving the channel for communication with students, it also serves as the window to be contacted by the internship organizations. The academic departments also need to assign teachers to provide consultation to students and to visit students at their internship place.

Teachers need to realize that traditional interaction between advising teacher and students has been different. It was because many of the college students spent more time in off-campus work and that these students may have different attitude from traditional full-time students. The Graduate School of Education and Assessment Center at the National Normal University (2007) has advices that work-study has been a popular phenomenon for a good percentage of students in higher education institutions. Practically speaking, those students with off-campus work are no longer full students in a way despite of their status of being full-time student on campus. Therefore, teachers need to understand that teaching and counseling strategy need to be adjusted to meet those students' needs. Providing the necessary skills for preparing resumes, more information about relevant industry, mock activities and situations at work place, and arranging interview for students may help students build their self-confidence to off-campus internship. Establishing a better mechanism for off-campus internship is what those work in higher education institutions need to look into.

## **3. To Future Research in the Field of Off-campus Internship**

The contribution this study made could be viewed from theoretic and practical perspectives. Majority of the research concerning internship were focused on the "result" of off-campus internship (see introduction). This study explored the issue of internship from the causes why students chose to participate in off-campus internship. On the other hand, employing the theory of planned behavior to explore off-campus internship was seldom seen domestically. The model proposed in this study was based on the planned behavior theory, which fulfills the shortage regarding internship. By mingling the fundamental theory with the exploration and verification of the model construct, the authors see it a contribution to the practice of internship. Other than offering human resources for industry and studying



the effectiveness of off-campus internship, this study further provides guidance for students in selecting the course of internship. It could help students find the right attitude to off-campus internship, the right competences required for the internship, and right advice from the right people. The authors see it a major contribution to the field of off-campus internship.

The data adopted in this study was collected through internet. However, the results were quite reasonable and logical. To those who would like to conduct further study in off-campus internship, it is recommended to appropriately enlarge sample size. For example, questionnaire may be distributed at the place where researcher could meet with those subjects personally. It would make the sample more representing. Furthermore, future study could emphasize on the following subjects:

- A. If off-campus work experience would influence students' intention to off-campus internship or not?
- B. If off-campus work experience would influence students' attitude on off-campus learning or not?
- C. If off-campus work experience would influence students' behavior control cognition or not?

## Conclusion

Lately, entrepreneurs kept on emphasizing college graduates' core competence at work. In the meantime, the society in Taiwan was arguing the 22K low monthly salary. Both students and colleges concern about how to help students cultivate their capability for job and career development. Off-campus internship has become the media integrating resources from industries and schools. The internship would help students learn ethics and right attitude at work. Through the idea of "learning from doing and doing to learning", students would enhance their own competence. Off-campus internship indeed influences both schools and students, which is the initiative for the authors to conduct this study. The results of this study would also be a direction, and reference as well, for both industry and school.

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