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To stay or not to stay? The causal effect of interns' career intention on enhanced employability and retention in the hospitality and tourism industry

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how the career intention and enhanced employability following an industry internship can affect the career choice of students in Hospitality and Tourism departments. The results of 918 valid questionnaires were tested and supported proposed conceptual models of 9 hypotheses and 5 regression models. The research findings of this study indicated that, in the case of Taiwan's Hospitality and Tourism Education, interns' career intention positively influenced their employability, and both career intention and enhanced employability had a positive impact on students' retention in the H/T industry after graduation. This study contributes to the H/T literature by confirming the mediating effect of employability on the relationship between career intention and retention in the H/T industry. It indicates stakeholders should work to build up students' career planning and confidence and to cultivate interns' positive work attitude.

1. Introduction

Internship programs have been recognized as one of the most efficacious ways to bridge the gap between school training and employment requirements and to satisfy stakeholders' expectations (Ansonitou, 2015; Busby, 2001; Inui, Wheeler, & Lankford, 2006; Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016; Kay & DeVeau, 2003; Robinson, Ruhanen, & Breakey, 2016; Ruhanen, Robinson, & Breakey, 2013b; Tribe, 2001; Zopiatis, 2007). A successful tourism program places the internship in the curriculum to enhance the quality of the education and to provide graduates with good abilities and skills to meet the industry's needs (Beggs, Ross and Goodwin, 2008; Lam & Ching, 2007). Many studies have shown that a students' employability is one of the desirable goals from the addition of an internship in a tourism program (Beaumont, Gedye, & Richardson, 2016; Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016; Yang, Cheung, & Song, 2016).

Meeting the needs of industry is of importance not least because as Robinson et al. (2016) indicated the hospitality and tourism (H/T) industry is experiencing problems of attracting and retaining quality employees. Farmaki (2018) points out there is a need to understand student's career intentions and that this will assist in advancing the needs of the interns and the employer. Several papers indicate internships are considered to be crucial for influencing graduates' career decision to stay in the H/T industry or to shift to other occupations (Busby, 2003; Chen & Shen, 2012; Chen, Shen, & Gosling, 2018; Kim & Park, 2013; Ko, 2008; Lee & Chao, 2013;

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Robinson et al., 2016; Wang, 2014; Zopiatis, 2007; Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013).

Studies have examined students career intention and retention in the H/T industry and studies have explored the connections of internships with enhancing employability. However, this interesting connection between career intention, employability and resulting outcomes is understudied in the literature.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating, in the case of Taiwan's Hospitality and Tourism Education, the influence of interns' career intention on employability, and the relationship of career intention and enhanced employability on students' retention in the H/T industry after graduation. In order to examine this viewpoint, we used a survey questionnaire and investigated a sample of students who had finished their internships from the hospitality programs of 21 universities in Taiwan. More specifically, this paper argues that following an internship, students' career intention will influence the students' employability enhancement. In addition, students' career intention and enhanced employability will positively influence their retention in the hospitality industry and that their intention will be moderated by enhanced employability.

2. Literature review

2.1. Internships, career intention and employability

Studies in H/T have indicated that many graduates, commonly in excess of 30%, do not intend to enter the field of their study (Chang & Tse, 2015; Lu & Adler, 2009). Studies have shown that students lack confidence in their decision to enter the industry (Norman & Hyland, 2003; Song, 2008; Wan et at., 2014). Chuang, Lee, and Kwok (2020) also suggested this may in part be due to the difficulties students face in career decision making. Internships may increase confidence and decision making toward a career in H/T and also positively impact employability.

Farmaki (2018) found that internship expectations and experiences had a big influence of the career intention for H/T students in Cyprus due to an interplay of several factors. Kim and Park (2013) suggested better communication and collaboration among students, faculty, and industry leaders through industry internships, and several studies indicated that the quality of internship program design will assist the results in career intention (Chen & Shen, 2012; Robinson et al., 2016; Wan, Wong, & Kong, 2014; Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013). Chen and Shen's (2012) study on internship satisfaction showed that students believed their own commitment and attitude was most significant in their internship experience.

As noted by students in Farmaki's (2018) study the desire to enhance their employability is one of the biggest draws to engage in an internship experience and play a critical factor to enhance students' ability and employability (Chen et al., 2018; O'Connor & Bodicoat, 2017). Beggs et al. (2008) indicated that both students and practitioners strongly believed and rated very highly that internships should develop job skills. O'Connor and Bodicoat (2017) also stated internships are now recognized as a valuable means of enhancing graduate employability. Van Hoff (2000) also indicated students completing internship programs will be better prepared for employment and be more marketable. Ruhanen, Robinson, and Breakey (2013a) also assert that internships equip students with a broader set of knowledge and skills to complement what students learn in the classroom. Binder, Baguley, Crook, and Miller (2015) stated internships have been treated as career boosters and researchers have found positive associations between internships and career variables. The authors also showed that internships have a crucial effect on academic outcomes. Thus, the argument that students might gain confidence after an internship.

However, it is not clear if this is enough to overcome detractions to a career in H/T. In Taiwan, as in many other areas, these detractions may include a lower starting pay, shift work, and a profession still held in lower esteem. These possible detractions may influence students if not to stay in the industry, then to consider switching sectors, still with effects on H/T retention. It may be that positive career intentions may not translate into positive career retention in the industry.

2.2. Dimensions of employability

How to prepare students for their employment is an emerging topic for higher education literature (Anderson & Sanga, 2019; Andrews & Higson, 2008; Singh, Jaykumar, 2019; Teng, Ma, Pahlevansharif, & Turner, 2019; Tymon, 2013; Yang et al., 2016). Hillage and Pollard's (1998) well-accepted definition of employability is the ability of the individual to gain the first employment, maintain it and move between positions within the same organization, transfer to other jobs if required and obtain a sustainable job.

Examining employability as a measure of outcomes Gault, Redington, and Schlager (2000) investigated interns' career success after graduation by examining 13 career skills under 4 categories: communication skills; academic skills; interpersonal skills and job acquisition skills. Further Knight and Yorke (2002) suggested a mode, USFM, where employability is influenced by four domains: understanding (of the subject material), skills (discipline-based and generic), efficacy beliefs (personal qualities) and metacognition (self-awareness). This was expanded upon by Pool and Sewell (2007) to a model termed Career EDGE, to include Career development learning, Experience, Degree subject knowledge, Generic skills and Emotional intelligence.

Required employability skills have been approached from that of the employer (Jones, 2013), but Tymon (2013) asserted that in definitions of employability a missing opinion was that of the students themselves. He surveyed students' perspectives and found the most commonly cited employment skills were communication, team working, information technology, and planning and organizing. Students included personal attributes of flexibility, adaptability, hard work, commitment and dedication.

Scholars have indicated there is a serious gap of soft skills that practitioners and educators should work harder to shorten (Teng et al., 2019; Singh & Jaykumar, 2019). Teng et al. adopted the Goldsmiths soft skills inventory to show skills for employment to include self-management, communication, team-working; interpersonal, working under pressure, imagination, critical thinking, willingness to

learn, attention to details, planning, responsibility, insight, professionalism, maturity, and emotional intelligence.

In Taiwan, Liu, Qiu, and Hu (2006) proposed an instrument to examine Taiwan university graduates' employability, which consisted of 3 categories: (1) Work attitude; (2) Career planning and management; (3) Applied professional knowledge. Also in Taiwan, Wang and Tsai (2014) examined employability looking at students' personal competencies related to career planning, development skills and core employability and job competencies looking at specific skills in the hospitality industry. For a better understanding, the dimensions and variables in terms of employability are categorized and shown in Table 1.

After summarizing employability, several common themes can be seen in survey instruments of general skills, professional competency, career development skill and self-reflection. Following the intention to be country specific according to the advice from several researchers (Chen et al., 2018; Huang, Turner, & Chen, 2014), we adopted Liu's et al. (2006) employability instrument which examines the above skills commonly raised in other approaches. In addition, this instrument is tailor-made for Taiwanese graduates and has been well applied as a government funded survey in every Taiwan university to investigate the employability of graduates. With the target industry in mind, one dimension was added specific to the professional ability for Tourism and Hospitality. The construct of the questionnaire will be explained in below in the Research instrument section.

Table 1
Comparison of employability construct/variables.

Knight and Yorke (2002)	Gault et al. (2000)	Liu et al. (2006)	Pool and Sewell (2007)
Theoretical model	Career Success	Core employability of university graduate	The key to employability Career EDGE
Understanding (of the subject material) Skills, Efficacy beliefs (personal qualities) Metacognition (self-awareness)	**Academic skills** (Analytical skills; Computer applications; Creative thinking; Informational search; Problem solving) **Job acquisition skills** (Job interviewing; Job networking; Resume writing) **Interpersonal skills** (Leadership and teamwork; Relationship building) **Communication skills** (Oral presentation; Proposal writing; Written communication)	**Work attitude** Good attitude Stress management Teamwork Work ethics **Career planning and management** Willingness to learn Understanding of industry Finding job Innovation Leadership **Applied professional knowledge** Communication Problem solving Professional knowledge/skill Basic IT skill Language (English) Applied theory to practice	Career development learning Experience – work and life Degree subject knowledge understanding & skills Generic skills Emotional intelligence Reflection and Evaluation Self-efficacy Self-confidence Self-esteem
Jones (2013)	**Tymon (2013)**	**Wang, Tsai (2014)**	**Teng et al. (2019)**
Key skill requirements of employers **Self-sufficiency** Self-awareness Initiative and enterprise Willingness to learn Planning and organizing Integrity Commitment/ motivation Problem-solving Flexibility Self-management **People skills** Team working Communication skills Foreign language Networking Leadership Customer service Interpersonal skills Intercultural skills	Skills and Personal attributes **Skills** communication, team working, information technology, and planning and organizing. **Personal attributes** flexibility, adaptability, hardworking, commitment and dedication.	Hospitality students' employability **Personal competency** Career planning Development skills Core skills **Job Competency** leadership, professional management skills, technical skills, and core competency (i.e., work attitude and personal attributes).	Goldsmiths soft skills inventory 15 variables Self-management Communication Team-working Interpersonal Working under pressure Imagination Critical thinking Willingness to learn Attention to details Planning Responsibility Insight Professionalism Maturity Emotional intelligence

3. Methodology

3.1. Conceptual model and hypothesis

Based on the literature, nine hypotheses are proposed for this study. It is hypothesized that students' career intention will influence their employability (including general competencies, professional competencies, attitude towards work and career planning and confidence). Career intention will also have a direct and positive effect on the retention in the H/T industry. In addition, the student's dimensions of employability will have a direct and positive effect on their retention in the industry. The conceptual model and research hypotheses are as follows (Fig.1):

During an internship, students have a chance to learn more about the real world and will gain skills which are necessary for work employment. From this viewpoint, internships are important to the learning path and are proposed to have a positive effect on employability. Accordingly, we propose that students' career intention will positively influence students' employability after the internship. The employability variables include four competency dimensions: general competency, professional competency, work attitude, and career planning and confidence. Therefore, H1 to H4 propose that students' career intention has a direct and positive effect on enhanced employability.

H1. Students' career intention has a direct and positive effect on general competency.

H2. Students' career intention has a direct and positive effect on professional competency.

H3. Students' career intention has a direct and positive effect on work attitude.

H4. Students' career intention has a direct and positive effect on career planning and confidence.

Also, since students will have a chance to know more about the real world of the H/T industry, we propose students' career intention will influence their retention in the H/T industry and reduce the desire to switch to other sectors. Previous research indicated that many interns tend to shift to other occupations after internship due to their awareness of H/T job characteristics (Richardson, 2008; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). However, Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) stated students are more likely to pursue careers in the H/T industry when they have witnessed the industry demonstrating the work values they expected. Therefore, we assume that interns' retention in the H/T industry can be expected if they feel positive value or working quality in the H/T industry. Furthermore, if the working value in the H/T industry in the internship is what they expected, and if students would like to be employed, then they will choose to work in the hospitality industry after graduation. Thus, we propose hypothesis 5, as the following:

H5. Students' career intention has a direct and positive effect on retention in the H/T industry.

Several studies have shown that employability can be built and gained after an internship (McKechnie, Hobs, & Lindsay, 1999; O'Connor & Bodicoat, 2017; Ring, Dickinger, & Wober, 2009; Wang & Tsai, 2014; Yang et al., 2016). Wang and Tsai (2014) found that students lack confidence in their employability and confidence to develop their career. They also declared that hospitality education

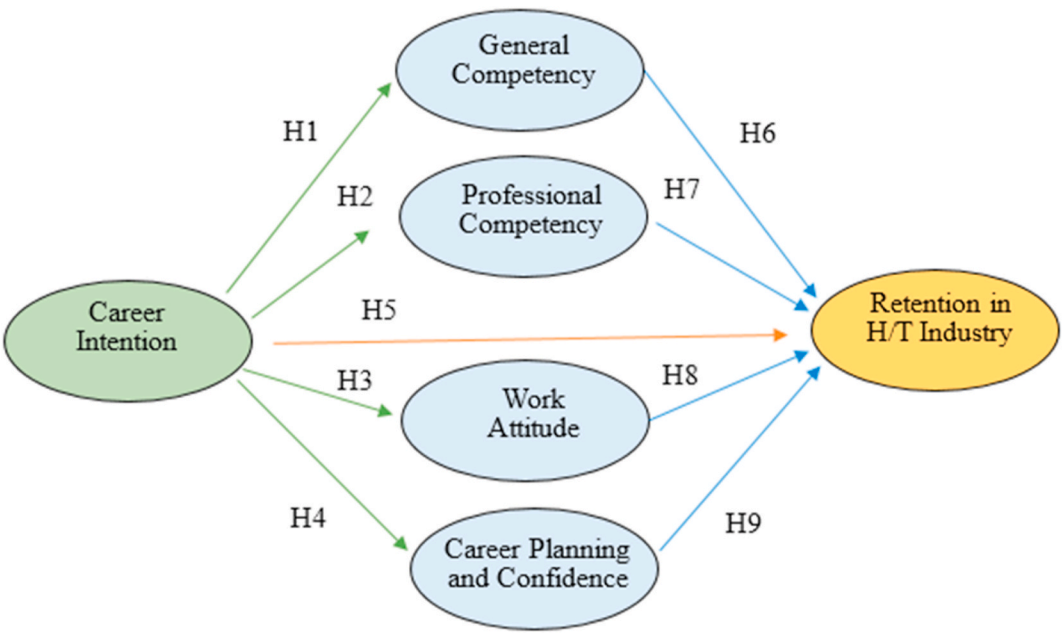

Fig. 1. Conceptual model and research hypotheses.

should not only pay attention to cultivate students' technical skills but should also emphasize personal employability including self-efficacy to meet industry's requirements. Hence, we propose that students' enhanced employability, including general competency, professional competency, work attitude and career planning and confidence will have a positive effect on students' retention in the H/T industry (see H6-H9).

H6. General competency has a direct and positive effect on the retention in H/T.

H7. Professional competency has a direct and positive effect on the retention in H/T industry.

H8. Work attitude has a direct and positive effect on the retention in H/T industry.

H9. Career planning and confidence have a direct and positive effect on the retention in H/T industry.

3.2. Research instrument

This research adopted the same employability construct of questionnaire used by Chen et al. (2018) which is well tested both in validity and reliability, with slight revision. Although we used the same employability instrument, the conceptual framework for this study is different from Chen's et al. research. Thus, we of added career intention and retention questions to the employability instrument to test our conceptual model and hypothesis as explained in 3.1. Also, this study followed Chen's el al. (2018) research suggestion to expand the scope of data collection and gathered the response from 21 different universities to offer better interpretation of the results.

The employability instrument originally comes from Liu et al. (2006) and their study was used as a reference to design the appropriate instrument for Taiwanese University graduates. It includes 18 occupational skills which are then divided into four major dimensions: 1. General Competencies; 2. Professional Competencies; 3. Work attitude; 4. Career planning and Confidence. All the variables are carefully checked with the literature to confirm the suitability for this study (see Table 2). Cronbach's Alpha was 0.93 indicating strong test reliability for the instrument as a whole. Of the four employability dimensions, Cronbach alpha was 0.845 for General Competency; 0.677 for Professional Competency; 0.857 for Work Attitude; and 0.676 for Career Planning and Confidence (see Table 2).

At the end of the questionnaire, two questions investigate respondents' career intention and retention in the H/T industry. The questions are 1. After finishing the internship, what is your career intention? And 2. I will continue to stay in the hospitality industry after graduation. Each item in the instrument was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale. The first question above was evaluated as 5 represents "work in the internship company; 4 represents "work in another H/T company; 3 represents "not decided yet"; 2 represents "work in non-H/T industry"; 1 represents "pursue further study". The second question was evaluated as 5 represents highly agree and 1 represents highly disagree.

3.3. Data collection and analysis method

The Hospitality and Tourism Departments that were selected all included an internship experience as part of the undergraduate

Table 2
Variables for employability (N = 918).

Employability Variables (Cronbach Alpha)	Sources
General Competency (0.845)	
(1) Ability to express myself and to communicate with others	Yorke and Knight (2006)
(2) Ability to manage time	Liu et al. (2006)
(3) Leadership capabilities	Gault et al. (2000)
(4) Ability to innovate	Jones (2013)
(5) Ability to work with others as a team	Tymon (2013)
(6) Native language proficiency	Qenani, MacDougall, and Sexton (2014)
(7) Foreign language proficiency	Teng et al. (2019)
(8) Emotional control and tolerance of pressure	
Professional Competency (0.677)	
(9) Professional hospitality knowledge and skills	Yorke and Knight (2006)
(10) Basic computer application skills	Liu et al. (2006)
(11) Ability to adapt to changes	Pool and Sewell (2007)
(12) Ability to discover and solve problems	
Work Attitude (0.857)	
(13) Willingness to learn	The Pedagogy for Employability Group (2006) Liu et al. (2006)
(14) Ability to adapt to changes	Tymon (2013)
(15) Dedication to work	Wang, Tsai (2014)
Career Planning and Confidence (0.676)	
(16) Understand and plan career	Gault et al. (2000)
(17) Further understand and plan career	Liu et al. (2006)
(18) Ability to land a job in the future	Pool and Sewell (2007)
	Wang, Tsai (2014)

curriculum in Taiwan. After a call to the department chair from 21 universities around Taiwan to get permission, one assistant went directly to the university, and questionnaires were completed in class in various courses. Students who had finished an internship were selected to answer the questionnaire. The data collection duration is one month after their internship in October. All participants were given the same instruction explaining the research and were assured of data confidentiality. After deleting incomplete questionnaires, a total of 918 out of 1000 useable responses remained with 91.8 as the effective response rate. Students were asked to report how confident they were about their employability after the internship, and also answer the demographic information and other career-related questions.

After the data collection, we use descriptive analysis and reliability analysis to analyze the employability dimension. Linear regression analysis was used to test the causal effects among career intention, employability and retention in the H/T industry.

3.4. Sample profile

The main socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 3. About 70% of the total respondents were female, which is similar to the population of most H/T major programs. The largest group (92.9%) were seniors in their school year of a four-year program. Most of the students took their internship in their third year of school. Approximately 80% of the respondents were Hospitality majors, 16.8% reported they were Tourism majors and 5.2% majored in other hospitality areas. Some 64.4% had a one-year internship experience, 24.6% completed a 6-month internship and 10.4% had a different duration. Some 57.6% worked as an intern in a chain hotel, 15.4% worked in restaurants, 7.8% worked in the transportation industry and 16.9% spread in other H/T related industries, for example, travel agency and clubs.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis

Table 4 shows the findings of a descriptive analysis of the dimensions used in this study. The average mean of the four competencies from highest to lowest is as follows: Career Planning and Confidence (3.97); Work Attitude (3.91); General Competency (3.78) and Professional Competency (3.70). The mean of Career Intention is 3.32, and the mean of Retention in the H/T Industry is 3.58.

Reliability analysis of the factors in employability showed Cronbach's Alpha ranging from 0.676 to 0.857. As for career intention, the mean is 3.32, and the percentage of each item was as follows: work in the internship company (11.6%); work in another H/T company (27.6%); not decided yet (48.7%); work in non-H/T industry (7.8%) and pursue further study (4.4%). The percentage for each item for retention in the H/T industry was: Strongly agree (18.0%); agree (34.2%); neutral (37.9%); disagree (5.6%) and strongly disagree (5.6%), and the mean is 3.58.

4.2. Analysis and testing of hypotheses

Four simple-linear regression models (models 1–4) were conducted to test the causal effects among career intention and the dimensions of employability (general competency, professional competency, work attitude, and career planning and confidence) and a multiple regression model was conducted (model 5) to test the causal effects of career intention and the dimensions of employability on retention in the H/T industry. The details of the β coefficient, t value, and the p-value are shown in Fig. 2.

From the analysis, the effect sizes in order of the four dimensions of employability were professional competency ($\beta = 0.127$; $t = 3.835$; $p < 0.001$), general competency ($\beta = 0.115$; $t = 3.468$; $p < 0.01$), work attitude ($\beta = 0.110$; $t = 3.303$; $p < 0.01$) and career

Table 3
Profile of respondents (N = 918).

Item	Characteristic	No.	Percentage (%)
Gender	male	276	30.3
	female	636	69.7
Year	freshman	6	0.7
	sophomore	11	1.9
	junior	47	7.1
	senior	842	92.9
Education Track	2-year program	43	4.7
	4-year program	851	92.7
Department	Hospitality related	717	78.1
	Tourism-related	154	16.8
	Language related	47	5.2
Internship duration	6 months	226	24.6
	1 year	581	64.4
	other	94	10.4
Internship venue	Chain Hotel	529	57.6
	(Chain) Restaurant	141	15.4
	Transportation	72	7.8
	Others (club, travel agency)	155	16.9

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for employability (N = 918).

	M	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
General Competency (GC)	3.78	.605	
(1) Ability to express myself and to communicate with others	3.94	.735	.845
(2) Ability to manage time	3.77	.770	
(3) Leadership capabilities	3.70	1.260	
(4) Ability to innovate	3.57	.813	
(5) Ability to work with others as a team	3.97	.755	
(6) Native language proficiency	3.68	.856	
(7) Professional hospitality-related foreign language proficiency	3.54	.922	
(8) Emotional control and tolerance of pressure	4.06	.767	
Professional Competency (PC)	3.70	.758	
(9) Professional hospitality knowledge and skills	3.89	.789	.677
(10) Basic computer application skills	3.33	.948	
(11) Ability to adapt to changes	3.75	1.546	
(12) Ability to discover and solve problems	3.83	.778	
Work Attitude (WA)	3.91	.681	
(13) Willingness to learn	3.78	.819	.857
(14) Ability to adapt to changes	4.00	.719	
(15) Dedication to work	3.94	.779	
Career Planning and Confidence (CPC)	3.97	.854	
(16) Understand and plan career	3.94	.815	.676
(17) Further understand and plan career	4.03	1.515	
(18) Ability to land a job in the future	3.95	.803	
Career Intention (CI)	3.32	.922	
Retention in H/T Industry (RI)	3.58	.967	

planning and confidence ($\beta = 0.083$; $t = 2.488$; $p < 0.05$). As a result, it was indicated that career intention had significant and positive influence on the four dimensions of employability. Thus, Hypothesis 1 to 4 were supported.

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the causal paths and effects on retention in the H/T industry and the causal paths are presented in Fig. 2 (model 5). The independent variables in the model are career intention and the four dimensions of employability. Tests were conducted to ensure the variables were independent (Table 5). For general competency, $F = 12.030$, $p = 0.001$, significant; DW (Durbin-Watson) = 1.844 > DU = 1.825, compliance with independence test. For professional competency, $F = 14.708$, $p = 0.000$, significant, DW = 1.884 > DU = 1.825, compliance with independence test. Work attitude, $F = 10.910$, $p = 0.001$, significant; DW = 1.838 > DU = 1.825, compliance with independence test. Career planning and confidence, $F = 6.188$, $p = 0.013$, significant; DW = 1.962 > DU = 1.825, compliance with independence test. The result indicated significance with $F = 104.749$, $p = 0.000$; DW = 1.836 > DU = 1.825, compliance with independence test.

Also, VIF is 1.019, 2.719, 1.977, 2.666 and 2.205 (Table 5), which were all below 10 which showed no issues with collinearity in this study model.

To test H5, career intention as an independent variable with retention in the H/T industry as a dependent variable was employed to predict the causal effect. The result$\beta$is 0.259, t value 9.567, and $p < 0.001$, indicated career intention had a significant and positive influence on retention in the H/T industry. Thus, H5 was highly supported.

To test H6 to H9, we used the four dimensions of employability as independent variables and retention in the H/T industry as a dependent variable to predict the causal effect. The result showed that the employability dimensions had a significant and positive impact on retention in the H/T industry. Thus, H6 to H9 were all supported. The effect sizes of H6 to H9 in order were career planning and confidence ($\beta = 0.304$; $t = 7.641$; $p < 0.001$), work attitude ($\beta = 0.134$; $t = 3.075$; $p < 0.01$), general competency ($\beta = 0.084$; $t = 1.905$; $p < 0.05$), and professional competency ($\beta = 0.074$; $t = 1.975$; $p < 0.05$).

Path analysis was applied as in Fig. 1 and the data is shown in Table 6. The results indicated five causal paths under the influence of career intention, and employability on retention in the H/T industry. The overall impact effect is 0.319, and among the five paths, the highest impact is career intention on retention in the H/T industry at 81.19% of the overall effect. The other effects in order were career intention on career planning and confidence in retention in H/T industry (7.84%), career intention on work attitude on retention in the H/T industry (4.56%). The results proved that career intention had a strong and significant impact on retention in H/T industry. Furthermore, the results indicated employability mediated the impact of career intention on retention in the H/T industry and of the employability dimensions, career planning and confidence, work attitude had a stronger effect than general competency and professional competency.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

All the hypotheses were supported in this study. We showed that student's career intention will positively influence the extent of

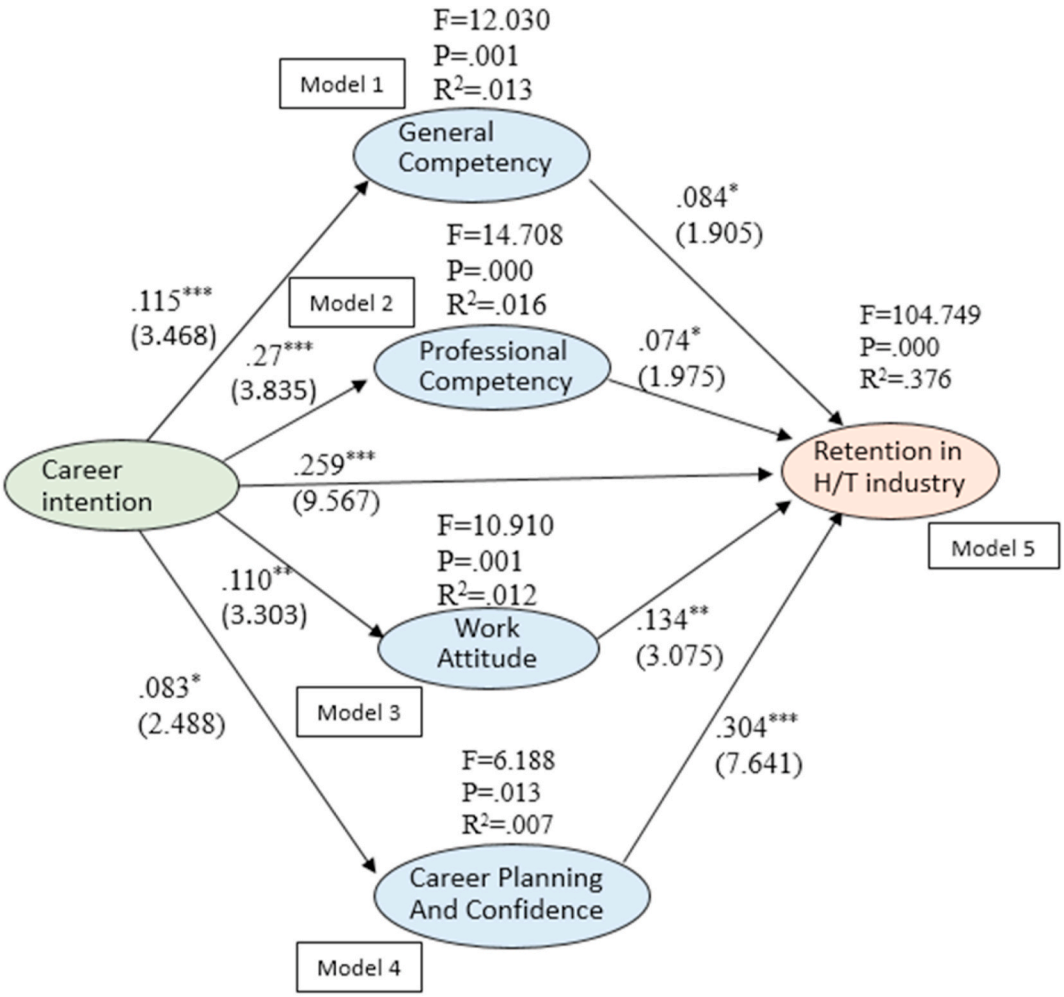

Fig. 2. Analysis data of Hypotheses and Regression Model.

Table 5
Analysis data of Regression Model 5.

Model	unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	β	Standard Error	β			Tolerance	VIF
(constant)	-.499	.186		−2.681	.007		
CI	.270	.028	.259	9.567	.000	.981	1.019
GC	.133	.070	.084	1.905	.057	.368	2.719
PC	.094	.048	.074	1.975	.049	.506	1.977
WA	.189	.062	.134	3.075	.002	.375	2.666
CPC	.401	.053	.304	7.641	.000	.454	2.205

a. DV: retention in H/T industry

Table 6
Path analysis of career intention on retention in H/T industry.

Path analysis	Impact effect
Career intention → general competency → retention in H/T	.010
Career intention → professional competency → retention in H/T	.010
Career intention → work attitude → retention in H/T	.015
Career intention → career planning and confidence → retention in H/T	.025
Career intention → retention in H/T	.259
Total	.319

their enhanced employability. The higher the career intention, the greater the extent of improvement in the interns' employability. In addition, interns' enhanced employability will positively influence student's retention in the H/T industry. Among the four employability dimensions, career planning and confidence, and work attitude have a stronger effect than general competency and professional competency. This shows that the internship can facilitate student's employability enhancement.

Moreover, the study shows the importance of career intention. The students in the H/T program mostly come from vocational universities in Taiwan, however this study we found 49% of the graduates had not yet decided whether to work in the H/T industry. Results indicated only 12% of the respondent agreed to work in their place of internship. In contrast, 28% of graduates choose to work in other H/T companies and 8% of the respondents claimed they would no longer work in the H/T industry. The result also echoes Yang's et al. (2016) and Chung's et al. (2020) viewpoint that students have difficulties in making a career decision. The study's result indicates career planning and confidence will positively infect the retention in the H/T industry. This draws our attention, as Wang and Tsai (2014) argue that students lack confidence in career planning. The result also echoes Farmaki (2018)'s insight and adds to it with further with quantitative investigation. From this argument, universities must work with industry and emphasize more on career development activities to improve students' retention in the industry.

In addition, students' work attitudes will be trained and informed from the internship. This explains the result found in this study. Students' enhanced work attitude positively infected their retention in the H/T industry. According to this result, we can conclude that students can improve their work attitude from the internship experience, and the more positive the work attitude is, the more possible that students will be retained in the H/T industry. Thus, the university and industry should focus more on the cultivation of work attitude. If supervisors and HR departments enhance positive work attitude and commitment during the students' internship period, students may develop a good work attitude and possibly be more likely to stay in H/T industry after graduation. As Chang and Tse (2015) have stated the H/T industry not only competes within the same industry but also with other industries. To retain talent with good work attitude and commitment, H/T managerial boards should offer equivalent work compensation and benefit to influence the intern's dedication to work and overall work attitude.

In addition, this study contributes to the H/T literature by confirming the mediating effect of employability on the relationship between career intention and retention in the H/T industry. As analyzed by model 5 (see Fig. 2), students' employability was found to mediate the relationship between career intention and students' retention in the H/T industry. We strongly suggest the industry provide better working environment quality to facilitate the retention of students. Keeping good employees can reduce company costs. Collins (2002) stated interns require less training and less time adjusting than non-interns after they have been employed, Also, during the internship, training interns by offering good examples or training for their career path and cultivating the interns' work attitude and competency is a good practice to keep the interns in the H/T industry.

5.2. Research recommendations

This study indicated interns' career intention positively affect their employability. To universities, most of the H/T programs have designed internships as part of the curriculum in Taiwan. Before successfully placing students in different internship venues administrators will hold a variety of career development activities, for example: property and company introductions, interview process, industry guest speakers' lectures, career mentor's system and communication skill training. Also, following government policy, overseas internships have been encouraged and promoted to facilitate students' cultural adaptation and language skills. All these experiences strongly build up students' confidence in career planning.

To practitioners, this study indicated interns' positive attitude influence their retention in the industry. To this point, we encourage H/T practitioners, supervisors, and HR departments to work together to train interns and offer a better environment to help interns gain employability, especially cultivating work attitude and build up their confidence in working in H/T industry. By doing so, a company will not only train the future practitioners but also save training cost for the company.

To students, this study's result pointed out that among employability dimensions, work attitude and career planning confidence play an important role for their future career. Students should not only put their effort on gaining general and professional employability. Through their academic career, students are also required to cultivate themselves with positive attitude to work and to get involved in career planning activities in order to build up stronger career confidence after graduation.

6. Limitations

Although the hypotheses are supported and the regression models showed effects, there are still some limitations regarding the sample and research design that should receive attention in future research. First, the sample size is large and from Hospitality and Tourism major students of 21 universities in Taiwan, however, the convenience sampling approach might not represent the national or worldwide sample. Cautions are encouraged when interpreting the results for different majors and countries. Second, the two constructs of the research conceptual model, career intention, and retention in the H/T industry, are based on one question item. We suggest both constructs may increase question items according to the literature. Third, the data came from students' self-administered questionnaire, and a self-report bias might occur due to the overconfidence of their employability. Future research may invite educators or industry supervisors to participate in the investigation.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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