RESEARCH ON TALENTS' BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS TO PARTICIPATE COLLABORATIVE TALENT CULTIVATION IN CHENGDU-CHONGQING ECONOMIC CIRCLE

Zijun Yi
School of Management, Xihua University, China.
E-mail: zijunyi@mail.xhu.edu.cn

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Abstract

This research intends to examine the determinants of talents' behavioral intentions to participate universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle. A conceptual framework is developed to propose six hypotheses, which includes perceived benefits, perceived usefulness, effort expectancy, self-efficacy, subjective norms, attitude and behavioral intention. Quantitative method was adopted to distribute questionnaires to 480 participants. The sampling techniques were judgmental, stratified random and convenience samplings. Before the data collection, Item Objective Congruence (IOC) Index and Cronbach's Alpha were applied to confirm validity and reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were used to analyze the results and test the proposed hypotheses. The results show that perceived usefulness and self-efficacy significantly impact on attitude. Additionally, subjective norms and attitude significantly impact behavioral intention. On the other hand, perceived benefits and effort expectancy have no significant impact on attitude. In conclusion, more emphasis should be put on talents' attitude and subjective norms in order to increase their behavioral intention to participate universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle.

Keywords: Higher education, Collaborative talent cultivation, Subjective norms, Behavioral intention, Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle.

Introduction

Chengdu is the capital city of Sichuan Province, whereas Chongqing is one of the four municipalities, but the only one municipality located in western China. Both cities are under the direct administration of Chinese government, and are economic hubs of finance, commerce, culture and transportation (Kuo & Wang, 2018). The government aims to build the economic circle as a high ground for opening-up and use it to integrate people and economic

development in the western China (Li et al., 2012). "Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle" was founded in January 2020. The project is the 20 universities' alliance to implement an effective talents' trainings and knowledge exchange. These universities intend to promote friendly cooperation for talent cultivation, scientific research, social services, cultural heritage, innovation, and international exchange and cooperation (Tan & Deng, 2020).

The collaborative talent cultivation has been designed to target faculty members of 20 universities (Chen, 2020). One important part of the collaborative talent cultivation is to allow lecturers and academic members of 20 universities to be exchanged and co-hired. Besides, members can transfer its knowledge, research works and laboratories among each other (Tan & Deng, 2020). Apart from that, faculty members are allowed to apply for research and other cooperated projects, so that they can have opportunities to undertake national and international projects. In addition, various research exchanges and cooperation are promoted among member universities (Wang, 2020). Therefore, this study examines the determinants of talents' behavioral intentions to participate universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle

Literature Review

1. Perceived Benefits

Rosenstock (1974) mentioned that perceived benefits are people's perception about advantages they can get from certain objects. In addition, Chandon et al. (2000) noted that perceived benefits determine people's belief about making a certain decision can lead to desired result. Kim et al. (2008) indicated that people tend to accept a new product or service when their judgement towards those perceived benefits exceed perceived costs. O'Driscoll et al. (2013) has also proven the positive relationship between perceived benefits and attitude toward renewable energy systems. According to previous researches, this research develops a hypothesis:

H1: Perceived benefits significantly impact attitude.

2. Perceived Usefulness

Huang and Duangekanong (2022) defined perceived usefulness as people's expectation about product or service can improve their work's ability. Similarly, Davis et al. (1992) regarded perceived usefulness as a judgement made by people towards what benefits he or she get from the use of a certain technology, and can drive behavioral intention. Kumar Sharma and Madhumohan Govindaluri (2014) pointed out that people's attitude towards online banking adoption is influenced by their perceived usefulness. Huang et al. (2007) stated that perceived usefulness has a positive influence on people's attitude towards using mobile learning. Synthesizing the prior literatures, this research proposes a hypothesis:

H2: Perceived usefulness significantly impacts attitude.

3. Effort Expectancy

Effort expectancy can be explained as people's judgement about how easy it is to use a system or adopt a certain technology (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Talukder et al. (2019) stated that effort expectancy is defined as people's judgement that little effort is required to operate e-government service. Many studies showed that effort expectancy can predict people's attitude (Dwivedi et al., 2017; Alshare et al., 2019). Chatterjee et al. (2019) figured out that effort expectancy has an influence on people's attitude towards Airbnb. Therefore, this research emphasizes a hypothesis:

H3: Effort expectancy significantly impacts attitude.

4. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as how confident a person is for his/her capability to accomplish a certain task (Bandura, 1982; Bandura, 1997). According to Compeau and Huff (1999), self-efficacy is people's evaluation about their ability to operate computer and other complex information technology. Numerous scholars expressed that self-efficacy is an influential factor of attitude (Ajjan et al., 2014). Hu and Zhang (2016) identified that Chinese university students' behavior intentions to use m-library apps are driven by self-efficacy and attitude. Thus, a following hypothesis is assumed:

H4: Self-efficacy significantly impacts attitude.

5. Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are described as people's behavior can be influenced by others (Hegner et al., 2017). It is also seen as the social pressure that forces people to perform a particular behavior (Rhodes & Courneya, 2003). Kim (2010) indicated that subjective norms are regarded as key elements that drive user's adoption. Ha and Janda (2012) stated that subjective norms have a positive impact on behavioral intention. Hu and Zhang (2016) confirmed that subjective norms positively influenced university students' behavioral intention towards using m-library apps. Base on the previous studies, researcher hypothesizes as follows:

H5: Subjective norms significantly impact behavioral intention.

6. Attitude

Attitude refers to a mental disposition, which shows people's positive or negative feeling about a certain object (Nwagwu & Famiyesin, 2016). Al-Debei et al. (2015) noted attitude as the total judgement of a particular technology. If a person holds favorable attitude towards a program, he/she is more likely to express behavior intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Wang et al. (2008) confirmed the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention. Lee and JinMa (2012) added that attitude positively affects people's intention to use a product. Referred to the previous studies, a hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Attitude significantly impacts behavioral intention.

7. Behavioral Intention

According to Talukder et al. (2019), behavioral intention refers to people's willingness to adopt a technology. It is also defined as the possibilities for a person to conduct a particular behavior (Benjangjaru & Vongurai, 2018). Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) pointed out that people's attitude is the most important driver for behavioral intention. Others acknowledged that there are many more crucial influencers of behavioral intention based on technology adoption models such as TAM and UTAUT (Almuraqab et al., 2017).

Research Framework

Five previous studies were adopted to build a conceptual framework of this study as of Figure 1. Leon and Uddin (2016) proved the influence of subjective norms and attitude towards on behavior intention. Kim and Nah (2018) confirmed the relationship between perceived benefits and attitude. Joo and Kim (2017) verified that perceived usefulness has an impact on attitude. Rai et al. (2020) studied the effect of effort expectancy on attitude. In addition, Zhu et al. (2010) revealed the relationship of self-efficacy and attitude.

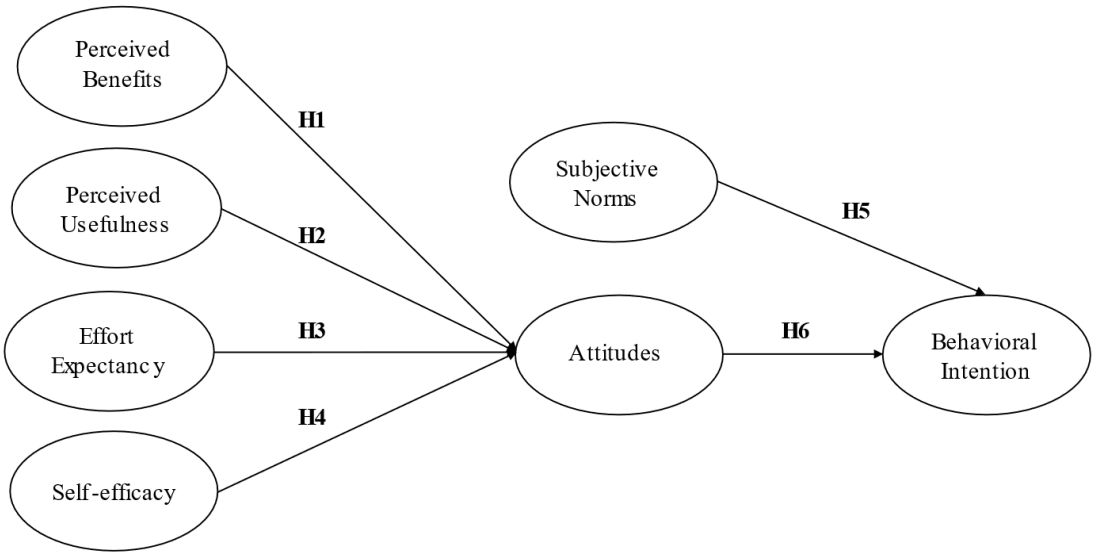

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This research applied quantitative method to distribute online surveys to the target group. The questionnaire is composed of three sections which are screening questions, Five-point Likert Scale, and demographic information. Before the data collection, Item Objective Congruence (IOC) Index was applied to measure scores from three experts for content validity .The results were that all measuring items were reserve at a score 0.67 or above. Pilot test was carried out to distribute surveys to 50 participants. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values show all constructs are acceptable at a score 0.70 or above (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were used to analyze

the results and test the proposed hypotheses.

1. Population and Sample Size

Since full-time faculty members are eligible to participate collaborative talent cultivation of Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle, researcher decided per judgmental sampling technique to select members from two universities which are Southwest University and Southwest University of Political Science & Law. The minimum sample size was recommended to be 425 (Soper, 2022). Nevertheless, researcher intended to collect the data from 480 participants to ensure the effective structural equation model analysis.

2. Sampling Techniques

This research adopts multistage sampling of non-probability and probability samplings. Firstly, judgmental sampling was used to identify full-time faculty members who are eligible to participate collaborative talent cultivation of Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle form two universities, which are Southwest University and Southwest University of Political Science & Law. Next, stratified random sampling was used to divide strata per two subgroups. Southwest University has 3,058 faculty members in total, which was calculated to be 285. Southwest University of Political Science & Law has 2,088 faculty members in total, which was calculated to be 195. Finally, online questionnaires were distributed to 480 participants via WJX website between October to December 2021

Results and Discussion

1. Demographic Information

The demographic results were that 58.14% are females, whereas 41.86% are males. For age group, the largest group is 30-39 years old representing 41.68%, followed by 40-49 years old, 20-29 years old 50-59 years old and over 60 years old, accounted 26.09%, 20.67%, 11.38% and 0.18% respectively. Most participants have work experience between 7 to 25 years, accounting 46.06%, following with 28.72% of less than 3 years, 17.34% of 4-6 years, and 7.88% of over 25 years. In terms of educational level, there are 48.69% of master's degree, followed by doctoral degree of 36.78%, bachelor's degree of 13.66%, and others of 0.87%. For academic title, lecturers/Instructors represent 35.38%, followed by associate professors (29.95%), others (25.39%), and professors (9.28%).

2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was applied to verify the measurement model by SPSS AMOS. The results were acceptable as of Table 1, representing Cronbach's Alpha values of greater than 0.70, factor loading of above 0.30, t value of greater than 1.98, p-value of less than 0.50, composite reliability (CR) of above 0.70, and average variance extraction (AVE) of higher than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, CFA approved the convergent validity and discriminant validity of this study. Additionally, goodness of fits results of measurement model was acceptable fit, including CMIN/DF = 4.376, GFI = 0.857, AGFI = 0.820, CFI = 0.933, TLI = 0.922, IFI = 0.933 and RMSEA =

0.077

Table 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Result, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Latent Variables	Source of Questionnaire	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Factors Loading	CR	AVE
Perceived Benefits (PB)	Kim and Nah (2018)	4	0.929	0.860-0.916	0.930	0.769
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	Joo and Kim (2017)	4	0.919	0.823-0.881	0.920	0.741
Effort Expectancy (EE)	Rai et al. (2020)	4	0.916	0.803-0.909	0.917	0.735
Self-efficacy (SE)	Zhu et al. (2010)	4	0.835	0.544-0.911	0.829	0.561
Subjective Norms (SN)	Leon and Uddin (2016)	3	0.931	0.874-0.916	0.923	0.801
Attitudes (ATT)	Zhu et al. (2010)	4	0.934	0.697-0.962	0.937	0.792
Behavioral Intention (BI)	Leon and Uddin (2016)	4	0.890	0.694-0.919	0.906	0.710

Source: Created by the author.

By comparing the value of square root of AVE and coefficient of intercorrelated construct, discriminant validity can be confirmed (Fornell & Larcker,1981). Table 2 illustrated that the square root of AVE for all constructs at diagonal line were greater than the inter-scale correlations. Therefore, discriminant validity of variables was verified.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity

	PB	PU	EE	SE	SN	ATT	BI
PB	**0.877**						
PU	0.796	**0.861**					
EE	0.438	0.483	**0.857**				
SE	0.380	0.411	0.682	**0.748**			
SN	0.582	0.647	0.385	0.520	**0.895**		
ATT	0.582	0.628	0.510	0.548	0.737	**0.890**	
BI	0.542	0.613	0.530	0.608	0.745	0.787	**0.843**

Note: The diagonally listed value is the AVE square roots of the variables.

3. Structural Equation Model (SEM)

SEM was used to test model fit, hypotheses and relationships between variables of the conceptual framework. The initial model was not in harmony with empirical data, so the adjustment was required. As of Table 3, structural model after adjustment shows satisfactory fit, including CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, IFI and RMSEA, values were 4.881, 0.852, 0.818, 0.921, 0.910, 0.921 and 0.083 respectively

Table 3 Goodness of Fit for Measurement and Structural Model

Index	Acceptable Values	Statistical Values Before Adjustment	Statistical Values After Adjustment
CMIN/DF	≤ 5.0 (Wheaton et al., 1977)	9.641	4.881
GFI	≥ 0.85 Sica and Ghisi (2007)	0.709	0.852
AGFI	≥ 0.80 Sica and Ghisi (2007)	0.654	0.818
CFI	≥ 0.90 Hair et al. (2006)	0.818	0.921
TLI	≥ 0.90 Hair et al. (2006)	0.799	0.910
IFI	≥ 0.90 Bollen (1989)	0.819	0.921
RMSEA	≤ 0.10 (Hopwood & Donnellan, 2010)	0.123	0.083
Model summary		**Not in harmony with empirical data**	**In harmony with empirical data**

Note: CMIN/DF = The ratio of the Chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = Goodness-of-fit index, AGFI = Adjusted goodness-of-fit index, CFI = Comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, IFI = Incremental fit index, and RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation.

4. Hypothesis Testing Result

According to Table 4, the hypothesis results were assessed by SEM, representing standardized path coefficient (**β**) and t-value with the significant value criterion of $p<0.05$ to confirm a structural pathway. As a result, four hypotheses were supported , whereas two were not.

Table 4 Hypothesis Results of the Structural Equation Model

Hypothesis	(β)	t-value	Result
H1: PB → ATT	0.042	0.563	Not Supported
H2: PU → ATT	0.480	5.818***	Supported
H3: EE → ATT	0.019	0.332	Not Supported
H4: SE → ATT	0.313	5.552***	Supported
H5: SN → BI	0.546	12.921***	Supported
H6: ATT → BI	0.429	10.372***	Supported

Note: *** p<0.001

Source: Created by the author

H1 reflects the relationship between perceived benefits and attitude was not supported, according to the standardized path coefficient value (β) of 0.042, t-value=0.563, and p-value 0.5. A possible explanation of this result was that the collaborative talent cultivation has been launched not long ago, and the benefits has been not yet visible or well-known to talents. Academic outcomes and personal development have not yet been realized.

For H2, perceived usefulness significantly impacts attitude with β = 0.480, t-value = 5.818, and p-value <0.001. Per the study of Joo and Kim (2017), H2 reveals when talents believe collaborative talent cultivation can improve their work ability, they tend to generate positive attitude towards it.

H3 is not supported as effort expectancy has no significant impact on attitude, regarding to β of 0.019, t-value=0.332, and p-value 0.5. The reason might be that talents are not fully aware of the necessity due to the implement of collaborative talent cultivation is still in a very short period of time, or the requirements and measurements are not clear (Dwivedi et al., 2017; Alshare et al., 2019).

H4 proves the support relationship between self-efficacy and attitude in this research with β = 0.313, t-value=5.552 and p-value <0.001. Since attending collaborative talent cultivation always requires certain level of talents' ability, confidence and determination, which leads to their positive attitude towards the participation (Ajjan et al., 2014; Hu & Zhang, 2016).

H5 reveals that subjective norms significantly impact attitude with β = 0.546, t-value=12.921 and p-value <0.001. This result suggested that positive judgement from talents' families, friends, colleagues and other relevant people can encourage talents' positive attitude to participate collaborative talent cultivation (Rhodes & Courneya, 2003; Kim, 2010).

Finally, H6 shows talents' attitude has a significant impact on their behavioral intention to participate collaborative talent cultivation, representing β = 0.429, t-value=10.372 and p-value <0.001. Positive attitude of talents towards collaborative talent cultivation can influence their decision to participate the program (Nwagwu & Famiyesin, 2016; Al-Debei et al.,

2015).

Conclusions, Recommendations, Limitations and Future Research

1. Conclusions

This research accomplishes its mission to explore determinants of talents' behavioral intention to participate in universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle. A conceptual framework with seven variables was proposed and led to six hypotheses which were proven that perceived usefulness and self-efficacy significantly impact attitude. Furthermore, the relationship between subjective norms and attitude on behavioral intention is evidenced to be supported. On the other hand, there is no significant impact of perceived benefit and effort expectancy on attitude.

2. Recommendations

Recommendations are proposed according to the results of this research which can contribute to government and universities to improve the efficiency of universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle. Firstly, since subjective norms and attitude play significant roles on talents' behavioral intention to participate collaborative talent cultivation. Measurements need to be identified to generate subjective norms such as referrals, seminars and conferences to build positive attitude among prospective talents. Specifically, more publicity needs to be amplified to the whole society to know the advantages of universities' collaborative talent cultivation, and create a better public opinion environment.

Secondly, in order to improve talents' attitude towards universities' collaborative talent cultivation, government and universities should enhance perceived usefulness and self-efficacy to talents. For example, public relations can cascade remarkable achievements and outstanding representatives of universities' collaborative talent cultivation, and raise wider awareness of the usefulness and advantages brought by such program. Besides, more attractions should be promoted to strengthen talents' confidence towards the participation, including removing unnecessary policy hinders, providing training courses, offering certification and other incentivize schemes.

Lastly, although perceived benefits and effort expectancy have no significant impact on attitude in this research, a large amount of research confirmed its importance for further development. The reason could be that the establishment of universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle is still very short for not more than two years. Talents need more time to realize and figure out benefits and results associated with the program. Apart from that, talents also need to assess how much time and effort they need to sacrifice for the participation. Governments and universities should promote achievements, benefits and requirements to increase talents' behavioral intention to participate collaborative talent cultivation.

3. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations to be guided for the future study. Firstly, more variables based on TAM and UTAUT can be further explored for the determinants of talents' behavioral intention to participate universities' collaborative talent cultivation in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle such as facilitating conditions, social influence, trust and actual behavior. Next, as the program has been launched not long ago, talents' recognition and attitude towards it can change over time. Therefore, long-term observation for the subject may propose different results. Lastly, due to the widespread of COVID-19, this study limits to quantitative online survey due to the travel and social distancing restrictions. Future study should consider to conduct face-to-face discussion with participants to generate more meaningful insights and implications for practices.

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