# Conjoining the concepts of visitor attitude and place image to better understand casino patrons' behavioral intentions

*Suosheng Wang*

**Abstract**

Visitor attitude and place image are both referred to one's emotional perceptions about visiting a place in tourism literature. However, studies of the two concepts have often been amalgamated; the different roles and interrelationships of the two concepts seem to be rarely discussed. To fill this gap, this study investigated visitor attitude from two different aspects – one's generic attitude toward a visit behavior (e.g., casino gaming) and one's specific attitude toward a visit behavior which is associated with a visiting place (e.g., a specific casino). A conjoined conceptual model based on theories of planned behavior and place image was developed and tested in the context of casinos in Central Indiana. The results of this study indicates that 'generic attitude,' 'specific attitude' and 'cognitive image' are all playing significant and distinctive roles in the process of formulating visitor's behavioral intention. The theoretical and practical implications of this study are discussed.

*Keywords*: Visitor Attitude; Place Image; Visit Intention; Casino Gaming

Suosheng Wang
Associate Professor
Department of Tourism, Conventions, and Event Management
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Email: suwang@iupui.edu

## Introduction

Both the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the cognitive-affective-conative place image model (CAC) have been broadly applied in analyzing visit motivation and behavioral intention in the field of tourism and hospitality studies. Apart from the components of subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, TPB's primary component is attitude (Ajzen, 1985). TPB assumes that a positive attitude toward casino gaming would lead to more participation. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), an attitude is an index of the degree to which a person likes or dislikes an object, where "object" is used in the generic sense to refer to any aspect of the individual's world. In contrast, CAC uses two image components – cognitive image and affective image – to predict people's visit intention, i.e., conative image (Gartner, 1996). According to Mercer (1981), place image is the signal or symbol presented to the individual by a site or region; it is the aggregate sum of beliefs about each place attribute. Place image plays an important role in determining visitors' decision-making process by triggering their choices and preferences (Fakeye & Crompton 1991).

While the roles of TPB and CAC components have both been emphasized in tourism and hospitality literature in examining visitor's behavioral intention, the conceptual difference between attitude and image does not seem to be explicitly clarified, and the application of the two concepts seems to be amalgamated in previous studies. For instance, in Huang's (2009) study, attitude was conceptualized as another term of place image and the concept of place image was recommended to substitute the one-dimensional concept of attitude when applying the theory of planned behavior. Given that both visitor's attitude and place image are considered to be important indicators of visitor's behavior intention (Ajzen, 1991, Gartner, 1996), there is a need to examine the inter-relationships of the two concepts in terms of their distinctive roles and marketing implications. This study is designed to fill this gap, to distinguish the distinctive roles of the two concepts in assessing visitor's behavioral intention. Specifically, this study aims to explore how visitor's attitude and place image are inter-related, and act together in influencing one's behavior intention in the context of casino gaming.

## Conceptual Background

*Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): Generic versus Specific Attitude*

The main concept of TPB is that most human behavior is under volitional control; people engage in actions because they want to act in a certain behavioral way, and their conscious motives trigger them to engage in that action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). TPB explains human behaviors based on behavioral intention predicted by three key core determinants - attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. TPB claims that attitude toward a behavior is, at the most basic level, a function of behavioral beliefs and outcome evaluations. Attitude toward a behavior refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991). Based on TPB, attitude is populated to be the first and most important antecedent of behavioral intention. Attitude is an individual's positive or negative belief about performing a specific behavior. Once an attitude is formed about an action or event, the attitude leads to the formation of behavioral intention with respect to that action. TPB assumes that attitude has a direct effect on behavioral intention. For instance, Ajzen and Driver (1992) suggested that leisure choice intention is predicted with considerable accuracy from attitude toward behavior. Tourism and hospitality researchers stress that an individual holding a positive attitude toward casinos more likely intends to visit a casino (Moore & Ohtsuka, 1999; Oh & Hsu, 2001).

In terms of one's attitude, according to Zajonc (2000), affect is often the driving force behind responses to social stimuli, and perhaps the primary dimension of all interpersonal; affective attitude indeed functions as an independent, primary, and often dominant force in determining people's responses and dispositions to social situations. A majority of theory of planned behavior studies have measured attitude using only the affective component, a major portion of the attitude construct to predict behavioral intentions in the field of social psychology and psychology (e.g. Bamberg, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2003). Likewise, the term 'attitude' as well as the measurement of attitude in this study mainly refers to its affective component.

It is debated that one's attitude toward participating in a visit may involve two sub-concepts – attitude toward a general visit behavior (which is labeled as 'generic attitude') and attitude toward a visit behavior in a specific place (which is named as 'specific attitude'). In other words, a person's attitude toward a visit may be subject to one's general feeling of the type of visit behavior ('generic attitude') or the feeling of the specific place where the visit behavior takes place ('specific attitude'). For example, an international visitor with a positive attitude toward casino gaming may prefer casino gaming in Las Vegas rather than Atlantic City. This example indicates that a person may possibly have a positive generic attitude toward casino gaming, but his or her specific attitude has actually impacting the person to decide where to go. This example indicates that the person may actually hold two layers of attitudes (generic and specific attitudes) and the two layers of attitudes may not be perceived consistent and can therefore interact together to influence one's visit intention. Another case could be that a person, whose specific attitude toward Las Vegas as a casino gaming paradise is positive, may have no visit intention due to the reason of his negative generic attitude toward casino gaming. Therefore, it is argued that both generic and specific attitudes should be assessed in order to capture the holistic meaning of one's attitude toward a visit intention. Unfortunately, few studies have ever clearly indicated which of or whether both of the two layers of attitudes should be measured when assessing its impact on visitor's behavioral intention.

*Cognitive-Affective-Conative Model (CAC): Cognitive versus Affective Image*

Assael (1984) defined place image as the total perception of a place that is formed by processing information from various sources over time. The importance of place image has been widely acknowledged in tourism literature. Image is the most important aspect of a tourist attraction from a marketing point of view (Echtner and Ritchie 1993). Tourism attractions often compete on nothing more than the images held in the minds of potential visitors (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). According to Gartner (1996), destination image is made up of three distinctly different but hierarchical interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative. Cognitive image means that the place image is evaluated by the attributes of its resources and attractions (Stabler, 1995) which motivate people to visit that destination (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia, 2002); Affective image refers to feelings and emotions raised by tourist destinations (Keller, 1993). A cognitive image is more related to functional aspects while an affective image is more associated with psychological aspects (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001). The third image component, conative image, is analogous to behavioral intent because it is the action component. The interrelationship of these components ultimately determines predisposition for visitation (Gartner, 1996).

Nevertheless, controversy exists among the scholars about which image component, cognitive or affective, is a more important antecedent to people's behavioral intention. For instance, previous studies of place image have mainly focused on tourists' cognitive perceptions, i.e. tangible physical attributes, as indicated by Pike's (2002) based on a review of 142 destination image papers published in the literature during the period

1973-2000. However, it is argued that a place is probably best understood by focusing on its symbolic meaning rather than on the sum of its physical attributes (Williams et al. 1992, Gallarza, Saura et al. 2002); what a person is consuming or experiencing may not be a destination (or reality), it may represent the symbolic meaning with the destination (Ko & Park, 2000). Therefore, it is important to note that the cognitive component of the image has a considerable impact on the affective component (Ryan and Cave, 2007). One significant finding of Lin et al.'s (2007) study is that cognitive image significantly impacted affective image and affective image mediated cognitive image's effects on overall destination image.

*Conjoining TPB and CAC: Specific Attitude versus Affective Image*

According to Schiff (1970), attitude and perception are different in regards to behavioral components, due to the difference in the scope of the two concepts; the distinction between attitude and perception lies not only in the immediacy of the stimulus but also in the generality of the stimulus, i.e., a class of stimulus versus the specific stimulus (Schiff, 1970). Notably, what Schiff (1970) explained about 'attitude' is identical to the term of 'generic attitude' as defined in this study. Further, it is deemed that affective image by definition stands for visitor's overall emotional perception of a specific place, which is identical to the term of 'specific attitude.' Therefore, it is stressed that measurement of the variable of attitude in TPB should better reflect the two layers of generic attitude and specific attitude, and the affective component of place in CAC can be considered to be equivalent to the term of 'specific attitude.'

Given the important roles of attitude and place image in examining people's visit intention as well as their interrelationships, it is suggested that a comprehensive research framework should be able to reflect the different layers and components of attitude and image, where generic attitude, affective image (specific attitude) and cognitive image can be simultaneously assessed. With regards to the relationships between generic attitude and affective image, Schiff (1970) observed that attitude and perception are related, with the former one impacting the latter one, that is, one's generic attitude tends to impact his or her affective image. For instance, a person, with a positive generic attitude toward casino gaming, may perceive a casino-related crime in the city less seriously than the one who has a negative generic attitude toward casino gaming, and this perceptual gap with regards to affective image may result from their different generic attitudes toward casino gaming. It is therefore construed that, when considering the impacts of the variables simultaneously, generic attitude and affective image (or specific attitude) may act as the primary factors influencing visitor's behavioral intention, while generic attitude, and cognitive image, may also act as important antecedents to affective image in the process of visit intention formation.

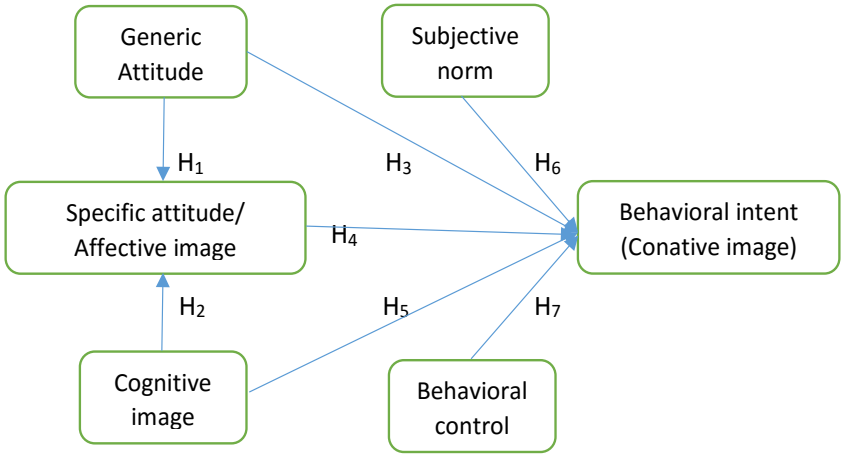
*Subjective Norm and Perceived Behavioral Control*

TPB's other two important components are subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure from important others to perform or not to perform a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). People are more likely to perform a behavior when they get support from their referents than when they do not (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Interpersonal communications have long been recognized as influential in the tourism and hospitality industry (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008), and found to be related to an individual's personal values, norms, attitudes, and perceptions (Hsu, Kang, & Lam, 2006). Perceived behavioral control is the degree to which an individual feels that the performance or nonperformance of the behavior in question is under his or her volitional control (Ajzen, 1985, 1988), which is more or less related with or influenced by the constraints or inhibitors often discussed in tourism and hospitality literature. The constraints are such as time, accessibility, disposable income; in terms of casino gaming, constraints may

refer to and skills, abilities, and volitional control. Oh and Hsu (2001) once studied the role of perceived behavioral control and found that time availability, self-control and gaming skills significantly affected casino gaming visit intentions.

As a result, this study posits that visitor's generic attitude, affective image (or specific image), cognitive image, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control are all important factors influencing visitor's behavioral intention, either directly or indirectly. Based on this, a comprehensive predicting model about visitor's behavioral intention is proposed (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. A Conjoined Model to Predict Visit Behavioral Intention**




As shown in Figure 1, seven hypotheses are formulated to guide the empirical testing in the context of casino gaming:

$H_1$: 'Generic attitude' is a significant antecedent of one's 'affective image';
$H_2$: 'Cognitive image' is a significant antecedent of one's 'affective image';
$H_3$: 'Generic attitude' has a significant impact on one's 'behavioral intention';
$H_4$: 'Affective image' has a significant impact on one's 'behavioral intention';
$H_5$: 'Cognitive image' has a significant impact on one's 'behavioral intention';
$H_6$: 'Subjective norm' has a significant impact on one's 'behavioral intention';
$H_7$: 'Perceived behavioral control' has a significant impact on one's 'behavioral intention.'

In addition to the TPB and CAC factors, literature review shows that past experience has often been considered as an important factor affecting people's perceptions (Wang & Huang, 2014). For instance, previous studies show that college students' perceptions of a tourism and hospitality career trend negatively based on the existence of work experience in a sector (e.g., Richardson, 2010). In contrast to these studies, a study by King and Hang (2011) did not verify the correlation between students' work experience and their career perceptions of the gaming industry. About the relationship between gaming experience and participation intention, Conner and Armitage (1998) stressed that adding the component of past gaming experience would improve the predicting power for more habitual behaviors, but not for novel behaviors. Even so, Phillips & Jang (2012) failed to identify the moderating effect of past gaming experience when studying casino gaming visit intention. Obviously more empirical studies are needed to test if and how gaming experience may moderate the casino gaming visit intention process. This study will examine the role of past gaming experience as a moderating factor.

## Methodology

*Place of Study*

A survey was conducted in Indianapolis, Indiana. A major state and local tax contributor, Indiana's nearly 20-year-old casino industry is facing declining revenues and growing out-of-state competition. Indiana's casino tax revenues are falling faster than expected over the past six months, plunging nearly 15 percent amid more out-of-state competition and lagging admissions as consumers try to shake off the aftereffects of the recession (Associated Press, 2014). Nevertheless, the potential for the neighboring states' (e.g. Illinois and Ohio) new casinos is threatening to compete for consumers from Indiana (Indy Star, 2014). Consequently, it becomes a challenge for the state to retain the competitiveness and attractiveness of its casino gaming facilities. This study is helpful to identify reasons as to how casino gaming in Indiana is perceived by the local visitors who are the major demand market of the casino gaming industry.

*Questionnaire Design and Measurement Scale*

A cross-sectional questionnaire was designed, consisting of three sections. The first section contains items measuring the constructs of cognitive and affective image; the second section includes the items of the constructs of generic attitude, subjective norm and behavioral control; and the third part provides information about respondents' demographic characteristics as well as casino gaming experience.

The cognitive image items were adopted from Pfaffenberg and Costello (2002). Since the targeted population were local visitors, some of the variables prepared for overnight visitors were removed such as location, guest room available, secure guest room, etc. The remaining nine items are such as 'variety of casino games available around central Indiana,' 'casino promotions and/or advertisements around central Indiana,' 'customer service in central Indiana's casinos,' 'value for money,' 'chance to win, better odds,' etc., reflecting cognitive image's multi-dimensionality. The affective image and generic attitude used to be measured with bipolar items in tourism and hospitality literature. Typical measures are unpleasant/pleasant, sleepy/arousing, distressing/elating, and gloomy/exciting (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001). These items were adopted into this study. Respectively, the affective items ask about one's perception of casino gaming in the casinos in Central Indiana, and the generic attitude items refer to one's perception of casino gaming in general.

Multiple items were employed to measure the construct of 'subjective norm.' Song et al. (2002) used one single item - 'most people who are important to me' – to measure 'subjective norm,' which, however, did not specify the type of people considered to be important. Armitage and Conner (2001) argued that, due to their single-item measures, subjective norm is a weak predictor of behavioral intentions; the way in which norm is conceptualized within the theory of planned behavior fails to tap important facets of social influence. This study separated referent groups, specifying three groups of people who may have significant impact on one's visit intentions, i.e. parents, relatives, friends/colleagues. The items used to measure 'perceived behavioral control' were adopted from Song et al. (2012) such as "I have enough resources (e.g., money and time) to gamble in casinos." Three items were used to measure 'behavioral intention.' One example is "I intend to visit or revisit central Indiana's casinos in the near future." All the TPB and CAC items are measured on a five-point scale, with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree." The third section contains demographic variables (gender, age, race, income and education) and the variable of casino gaming experience.

*Data Collection and Analysis*

A convenience sampling technique was used for data collection in the city of Indianapolis. The target subjects were people living in Indianapolis who are at least 21 years old. Data were collected by student research assistants in October 2015. Only those who expressed willingness of participation were asked to do the survey. As a result, a total of 432 usable surveys were collected.

Of the 432 participants, 53.3% are male and 46.7% are female. The majority of the respondents accepting and completing the survey are young people, younger than 31 (52.7%); 33.7% are middle aged (31 – 50 years old), and others (13.6%) are older than 50. Thirty-four percent of the respondents reported a household income of less than $30,000, 25.2% between $30,000 - $60,000, 27.2% between $60,001 - $90,000, and 13.6% above $90,000. Most of the respondents were Caucasian/white (75.5%), followed by African American (11.8%) and Hispanic (3.6%). With regards to level of education, about half of the respondents reported four-year college or above. Among them, 70% have casino gaming experience before.

The data were screened for violations of underlying assumptions by conducting descriptive statistics, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23). Outliers with out of range values due to mistyping were identified and corrected; each of the univariate distributions has skew and kurtosis within reasonable ranges (Skew < 3, Kurtosis < 10), the values falling within the guidelines and being regarded fairly normal for further structural equation modeling analyses (Kline, 2005). The data were then analyzed by LISREL (8.80), which is a statistical analytic software, to test the research model proposed in the study. The goodness of fit indicators demonstrating a good fit for the structural model was inspected, based on the indices of $\chi 2/df$, p-value, comparative fit index (CFI), normative fit index (NFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Further, independent samples t-tests were conducted with SPSS to examine the effect of gaming experience on the TPB and CAC factors; the correlational effect size analysis was conducted with Fisher r-to-z transformation, to explore the moderating effect of casino gaming experience on the relationships between the construct of behavioral intention and other constructs.

## Results

*Measurement Model*

Based on the mean score of each item, the summated mean scores of the constructs, from the highest to the lowest, were Perceived Behavioral Control (3.67), Generic Attitude (3.54), Subjective Norm (3.52), Affective Image (3.43), Behavioral Intention (3.40), Cognitive Image (2.87) (see Table 1). The summated mean scores indicate that, generally, the respondents' attitude toward casino gaming, affective image of casinos around Indianapolis, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm and behavioral intention are all mildly positive, each mean score between 3.0 and 4.0, except for cognitive image which mean score is below the midpoint of 3, negatively perceived by the respondents.

Table 1. Measure Correlations, Discriminant Validity (Squared Correlations < AVE)

| Measures | Att | Cog | Aff | Con | Nor | Int | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Att | 1.00 | .39(.15) | .76(.58) | .52(.27) | .40(.16) | .79(.62) | .72 |
| Cog | .39(.15) | 1.00 | .57(.33) | .48(.23) | .46(.21) | .57(.27) | .49 |
| Aff | .76(.58) | .57(.33) | 1.00 | .48(.23) | .40(.16) | .83(.69) | .86 |
| Con | .52(.27) | .48(.23) | .48(.23) | 1.00 | .51(.26) | .62(.38) | .63 |
| Nor | .40(.16) | .46(.21) | .40(.16) | .51(.26) | 1.00 | .57(.33) | .63 |
| Int | .79(.62) | .57(.27) | .83(.69) | .62(.38) | .57(.33) | 1.00 | .81 |
| *mean* | 3.54 | 2.87 | 3.43 | 3.67 | 3.52 | 3.40 | |
| Reliability (alpha) | .909 | .887 | .953 | .825 | .826 | .930 | |

Note: Att.= generic attitude, Cog.= cognitive image, Aff. = affective image, Con. = behavioral control, Nor. = subjective norm, Int. = behavioral intent, AVE = average variance extracted. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, CFI = comparative fit index, NFI = normative fit index. Model measurement fit: = 1127 (df = 237, p < .001), RMSEA = 0.079, CFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.91.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the six constructs - attitude toward casino gaming in general (ATT), affective image of casino (AFF), cognitive image of casino (COG), subjective norm (NOR), perceived behavioral control (CON), and behavioral intention (INT) - was conducted. The fit indices were: (237) =1127, p < .0001, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = .079. Overall, the measurement model showed a good fit for the data (MacCallum, Brown, & Sugawara, 1996). Convergent validity was assessed by the significant loadings between the observed variables and each latent variable. All the observed variables were loaded above .40 on their delegated latent variables and were statistically significant (p<.01). As shown in Table 1, all the average variance extracted (AVE) values were .40 or higher, ranging from .49 to .86, which supported adequate internal consistency. Next, the composite reliabilities of all constructs exceeded the cutoff value of .70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs are 0.953 (affective image), 0.930 (behavioral intention), 0.909 (generic attitude), 0.887 (cognitive image), 0.826 (subjective norm), and 0.825 (perceived behavioral control). Thus, the multiple item scales were acceptable for measuring each of the constructs. To compare the AVE with the squared correlations between constructs for discriminant validity testing (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), the squared correlations between each pair of constructs were all less than the AVE values. Thus, discriminant validity was satisfied. Overall, the measurement model shows a good fit to the data.

*Structural Model*

The structural model was estimated to examine the hypothetical relations. The results showed that the goodness-of-fit indices (goodness-of-fit statistics: $x^2$= 1324.12, (df = 239, p < .001), RMSEA = 0.079, CFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.91) were all within their acceptable level, suggesting that the model is adequate. The constructs of 'Cognitive Image' and 'Generic Attitude' explained 66% of the variance in 'Affective Image.' The predictor variables of 'Generic Attitude,' 'Cognitive Image,' 'Affective Image,' 'Behavioral Control,' and 'Subjective Norm' explain 81% of the variance in the construct of 'Behavioral Intention,' indicating a good fit of the proposed model.

Table 2 shows the paths' standardized coefficients and the corresponding t values. The significant paths include both the Gamma paths (relationships between exogenous constructs and endogenous constructs) and the Eta paths (relationships between endogenous constructs) in the model. All the paths proved to be significant except the path from 'Cognitive Image' to 'Behavioral Intention,' and all these paths indicate positive relationships. Therefore, all the hypotheses are accepted except Hypothesis Five. The results indicate that,

- Generic attitude toward casino gaming positively impact affective image; a person with a positive generic attitude toward casino gaming is more likely to hold a positive affective image of a casino than a person with a less positive generic attitude;

- Cognitive image positively impact affective image; a person with a favorable perception of the physical features of a casino is more likely to hold a positive affective image of the casino than a person with a less favorable cognitive image of the casino;

- Generic attitude toward casino gaming positively impacts one's casino gaming intention; a person with positive generic attitude toward casino gaming is more likely to visit a casino than a person with a less positive generic attitude;

- Affective image positively impacts one's casino gaming intention; a person who thinks it is fun to play in a casino is more likely to visit the casino than a person without feeling the same fun;

- Perception of behavioral control positively impacts one's casino gaming intention. For instance, a person who feels more familiar with a casino's games may be more likely to visit the casino than a person who is less familiar with the games;

- Subjective norm positively impacts one's casino gaming intention. For instance, a person is more likely to visit a casino which is frequently patronized by his or her friends, and less likely to visit a casino which is less visited by his or her friends.

Table 2. Standardized Maximum Likelihood Parameter Estimates (N= 432)

| Paths | | | Standardized Solutions | T Value | Results of hypothesis testing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ATT | → | AFF | .63 | 14.61 | $H_1$: supported |
| COG | → | AFF | .32 | 8.21 | $H_2$: supported |
| ATT | → | INT | .30 | 8.21 | $H_3$: supported |
| AFF | → | INT | .43 | 8.27 | $H_4$: supported |
| COG | → | INT | .06 | 1.67 | $H_5$: not supported |
| NOR | → | INT | .16 | 5.16 | $H_6$: supported |
| CON | → | INT | .14 | 3.90 | $H_7$: supported |

Note: Att.= generic attitude, Cog.= cognitive image, Aff. = affective image, Con. = behavioral control, Nor. = subjective norm, Int. = behavioral intent.

The Sobel test (Sobel, 1986) was employed to further test the significance of the mediating effects of 'Affective Image' on the relationship between the 'Cognitive Image' and 'Behavioral Intention,' and on the relationship between 'Generic Attitude' and 'Behavioral Intention.' The mediating effects of 'Affective Image' are significantly noticeable on 'Cognitive Image' (p=0.01) and 'Generic Attitude' (p=0.01) (see Table 3). As a result, 'Affective Image' plays an important role in governing the relationships between 'Cognitive Image' and 'Behavioral Intention,' and between 'Generic Attitude' and 'Behavioral Intention.' On one hand, the results indicate that 'Cognitive Image' and 'Generic Attitude' act as antecedents to 'Affective Image's' impact on casino gaming intention; on the other hand, though no direct effect on visit intention was observed from 'Cognitive Image,' 'Cognitive Image' can exert an indirect influence on 'Behavioral Intention' through the mediating variable of 'Affective Image.' For instance, one's cognitive image of a grand casino hotel (e.g., Venetian or MGM in Las Vegas) might be more impressive than a local casino in Central Indiana, to a person whose generic attitude toward casino gaming is neutral or negative, the experience in a Las Vegas's grand casino may incur more fun or excitement than from a small-scale local casino, which, in turn, makes it more likely to visit this type of casinos, disregarding the impact of other factors. Hence, all the TPB and CAC related constructs – Generic Attitude, Affective Image, Cognitive Image, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control prove to be significant in influencing visitors' casino gaming behavioral intention, either directly or indirectly.

Table 3. Results of Indirect-effect Tests (Sobel Test)

| Independent V. → Mediator V. → Dependent V. | | | | | Sobel test statistics | Two-tailed P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COG | → | AFF | → | INT | 5.86 | 0.01 |
| ATT | → | AFF | → | INT | 7.55 | 0.01 |

Note: Att.= generic attitude, Cog.= cognitive image, Aff. = affective image, Int. = behavioral intent

*Moderating Role of Casino Gaming Experience*

To further explore how the perceptions of the constructs may differ between people with and without casino gaming experience, independent-samples t-tests were conducted and the results were listed in Table 4. The results of the t-tests show all to be significant. The perceptual differences all follow the same pattern, that is, people with casino gaming experience perceived these constructs more positively than the ones without casino gaming experience.

Table 4. Results of Group Comparisons (between 'experienced' and 'not-experienced')

| Dependent Variable | N | Mean | | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | With experience | w/o experience | | |
| att | 296/120 | 3.74 | 3.04 | 8.36 | .000 |
| cog | 284/100 | 3.05 | 2.41 | 8.34 | .000 |
| aff | 292/112 | 3.66 | 2.63 | 9.76 | .000 |
| con | 284/108 | 3.86 | 3.33 | 5.06 | .000 |
| nor | 288/104 | 3.65 | 3.26 | 3.80 | .000 |
| int | 300/120 | 3.64 | 2.89 | 7.46 | .000 |

Note: Att.= generic attitude, Cog.= cognitive image, Aff. = affective image, Con. = behavioral control, Nor. = subjective norm, Int. = behavioral intent.

Then the relationships between the predictor constructs (i.e. Generic Attitude, Cognitive Image, Affective Image, Perceived Behavioral Control and Subjective Norm) and the criterion variable (i.e., Behavioral Intention of casino gaming) were examined. The correlation coefficients between the two groups are recorded in Table 5 for further paired comparison. To detect if casino gaming experience exerts a significant moderating role in the relationships between the predictor variables and criterion variable, correlational effect-size analysis was conducted to compare the difference of the paired groups' correlation coefficients (Spearman's *rho*), by using the Fisher r-to-z transformation. The results of the comparisons indicate that the strengths of relationships of 'Generic Attitude' versus 'Behavioral Intention' ($p<0.05$), 'Subjective Norm' versus 'Behavioral Intention' ($p<0.05$), and 'Perceived Behavioral Control' versus 'Behavioral Intention' ($p<0.10$); no significant difference was noted for the other paired comparisons. The results of the effect size analysis imply that casino gaming experience can moderate the relationships between 'Generic Attitude' and 'Behavioral Intention,' 'Subjective Norm' and 'Behavioral Intention,' and 'Perceived Behavioral Control' and 'Behavioral Intention.' No such moderating effects were observed on the relationships between place image components and 'Behavioral Intention.'

Table 5. Difference between Correlation Coefficients (Fisher r-z Transformation)

| Correlations | Rho1 (with exp.) | Rho2 (w/o exp.) | Fisher's Z | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Att-Int | .718 | .612 | 1.93 | 0.05* |
| Cog-Int | .350 | .498 | -1.51 | 0.13 |
| Aff-Int | .784 | .716 | 1.37 | 0.17 |
| Con-Int | .478 | .302 | 1.8 | 0.07** |
| Nor-Int | .355 | .552 | -2.13 | 0.03* |

Note: Att.= generic attitude, Cog.= cognitive image, Aff. = affective image, Con. = behavioral control, Nor. = subjective norm, Int. = behavioral intent;

*: tests are significant at 0.05, **: tests are significant at 0.10.

## Discussions and Conclusion

In the context of casino gaming, this study confirmed that one's generic attitude toward a visit and affective image of a specific place to be visited both significantly influence visitor's behavioral intention. In other words, a person's participation in a tourism or leisure activity can be influenced by one's generic attitude and affective image. A person can be driven to go casino gaming by either one's positive attitude toward casino gaming and or the positive affective image of a specific casino; It is reasoned that a person holding both positive generic attitude and positive affective image may become more likely to participate in casino gaming than a person whose generic attitude and or affective image is less positive, given other constraints equal. It is inferred that, one would be more determined as to whether or not to go casino gaming when one's generic attitude and affective image are consistent, rather than when one's generic attitude and affective image are erratic.

Results of the study show that generic attitude could exert its influence on visit intention indirectly through affective image; generic attitude can serve as an antecedent to affective image in impacting one's visit intention; generic attitude and affective image can interactively influence one's visit intention. No direct impact of cognitive image was observed on visitor's behavioral intention; however, this study verifies that cognitive image may exert significant impact on visit intention indirectly through affective image. For instance, a person feeling a casino's facilities and environments attractive, may be more likely to accept casino gaming as something fun, and more likely to enhance his or her visit intention. If a person dislikes the physical appearance of a casino, its services or environment, the negative cognitive image may weaken his or her affective image of the casino, which further diminishes his or her desire or interest in visiting the casino.

The importance of generic attitude and cognitive image as antecedents to affective image may well define Indiana casino industry's big challenge with the increasing competition from the newly built casinos in the neighboring states (Indy Star, 2014). The newly built casinos, which are better equipped with new attractions, located in the same region and targeting at the same demand market segment, might be more fancied and patronized by visitors from the same region with positive attitudes. People will simply choose to visit the casinos with better cognitive and affective image, and affective image will play a key role to influencing the people's visit intention.

The result about the interactive roles of the cognitive and affective image echoes the findings of the previous studies (e.g. Gallarza, et al., 2002), that visitors are mainly motivated by affective image, not cognitive image. This study further indicates that cognitive image exerts its influence indirectly through affective image. This implies

that, to improve a leisure brand's or a product's attractiveness, management organizations should not only think of what attractive features to create, but more importantly, what emotional benefits could be delivered. Given cognitive image's multi-dimensionality, it is suggested that marketing researchers should further identify the cognitive image dimensions which contribute most to the association with the component of affective image, and which should be the areas to improve by the management.

This study demonstrated that 'subjective norm' and 'behavioral control' are important indicators of one's visit intention, hence it is verified that TPB as well as its implications can be applied to the studies of casino gaming behaviors. Given that the casinos around Central Indiana mainly target at nearby visitors, the local culture and media on casino gaming may play a key role in affecting people's 'subjective norm' perceptions. Unlike other leisure and recreational activities, the development and social impact of casino gambling may possibly be more seriously censured in one place over the other by the public and social media, people's attitude toward casino gaming may therefore vary greatly. Casinos may think of providing free introductory and educational training sessions about the services provided by the casinos, how to play and how to be a responsible casino gaming player.

Casino gaming experience proved to be an important factor in augmenting people's perceptions, in terms of attitudes toward casino gaming, images of the casinos, subjective norm and behavioral control. This implies that casino manages and marketers should think of offering 'bonus money' or other freebies to attract non-experience visitors, as the experience is important to augment people's positive perceptions of casino gaming in the casinos. In addition, casino experience is shown to be a significant moderator for the relationship between one's attitude and casino gaming visit intention. What the management needs to do is to steadily increase the with-experience population in the region, whose positive attitude toward casino gaming make it more likely to visit the casinos.

The concept of attitude toward a travel/leisure behavior and place image are often amalgamated in tourism and hospitality research. Few studies have ever discussed the links of the concepts. Attitude has been used as a primary antecedent of people's visit intention in the theories of reasoned behavior and/or planned behavior, and place image has been studied separately in understanding people's visit behavior. This study represents its first attempt to combine the two theoretical models to better understand people's visit intention. This study contends that, to better understand one's visit intention, one's attitude toward a visit should be better analyzed based on attitude's two sub-concepts – attitude toward one's general visit behavior (e.g., casino gaming) and attitude toward a specific place for the visit behavior (e.g., casino gaming in Indianapolis), with the latter one identical to one's affective image of the specific place.

One benefit of integrating the TPB and CAC models to analyze one's visit intention is that, the attitude and image components can be simultaneously considered and examined, their roles and implications explicitly discussed; in addition, the interactive relationships between generic attitude, affective image and cognitive image are better demonstrated and understood in the comprehensive model. This study intends to provide an important cue for future studies that, when applying the theory of planned behavior in tourism and hospitality studies, the denotation of 'attitude' should be specified in the study, which should include both generic attitude and specific attitude. Likewise, studies based on the CAC model should consider the impact of one's generic attitude toward a leisure behavior in addition to one's specific attitude (i.e., affective image).

This study suggests that a combined predicting model, incorporating the TPB and CAC factors, would provide researchers and practitioners a more comprehensive understanding of visitor's leisure choice intention in the context of casino gaming. According to Schiff (1970), one of the major differences between attitude and perception is one of scope - the term perception or image should be used when the stimulus is or has been physically present; but people can hold generic attitudes toward something even without the stimulus being present. The results of this study affirms that both attitude components and image components are significant predictors of visitors' behavioral intentions; their distinctive and interrelated roles should be examined simultaneously and highlighted separately in a casino gaming context. What is emphasized in this study is, unlike other tourism/hospitality organizations, casino management should be more aware of the different marketing implications of attitude and image when exercising effective casino gaming marketing. The other difference between image and generic attitude is that image is more short-lived than attitudes (Schiff, 1970), meaning less stable and more subject to change with an environmental alteration. This difference between image and attitude implies that, to change one's image of a casino seems to be relatively easier than to one's generic attitude. A practical implication for casinos around Indianapolis is that, a priority management and marketing task may start from improving the images of the casinos, as one's generic attitude may be affected by a broader scope of elements, which is therefore harder to alter.

In summary, this study simultaneously examined the roles of 'attitude' and 'image' in the context of responsible casino gaming, in an effort to better understand their interactive effects on people's visit intention. This study made an initial effort to integrate the two behavioral intention predicting models – the TPB and CAC in the context of responsible casino gaming, in a hope to highlight the importance of differentiating and incorporating place image and visitor's attitude to better understand visitor's behavioral intention. Meanwhile, it is recommended that the findings and implications should be applicable to the other tourism and hospitality settings where visitor's attitude and place image are deemed to be important.

When interpreting the findings of this study, one caution is that this study focused on behavioral intention, which is one step away from an actual behavior. Behavioral intention is an individual's decision or commitment to perform a given behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to Young and Kent (1985), although the high connection between behavioral intention and actual behavior is generally accepted that behavioral intention could predict actual behavior, a high connection between behavioral intention and actual behavior may not always be attained; it is possible that behavioral intentions may change after they have been measured but before the overt behavior has been observed. Given the difference between behavioral intention and an actual behavior, it is recommended that, researchers and industry practitioners should be aware of the difference when applying the findings into marketing strategies; at lease more marketing and management efforts are required to convert people's behavioral intention to an actual behavior. If conditions allowable, future studies should apply the research model to measuring visitor's actual casino gaming behavior.

**References**

Ajzen, I. (1985). "From Intentions to Action: A Theory of Planned Behavior" In *Action Control: From Cognition to Behavior*, edited by J. Kuhl and J. Beckman. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, pp. 11-39.

Ajzen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior*. Chicago: Dorsey Press.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes,* 50(2), 179-211.

Ajzen, I., & Driver, B. (1992). Application of planned behavior to leisure choice. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 24(3), 207-224.

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hill.

Armitage, C. J., & M. Conner (2001). "Efficacy of the Theory of Planned Behavior: A Meta-Analysis Review." *British Journal of Social Psychology,* 40: 471-99.

Assael, H. (1984). *Consumer Behavior and Marketing Action*, Boston: Kent Publishing Co.

Associated Press (2014). Indiana casino taxes falling faster than anticipated. Retrieved on 2014/01/27, from: http://www.wthr.com/story/24499668/2014/01/20/indiana-casino-taxes-falling-faster-than-anticipated.

Baloglu, S., & M. Mangaloglu (2001). "Tourism Destination Images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as Perceived by U.S.-Based Tour Operators and Travel Agents." *Tourism Management,* 22: 1-9.

Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. (1999). A model of destination image formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), 868-897.

Bamberg, S., I. Ajzen, & P. Schmidt (2003). "Choice of Travel Mode in the Theory of Planned Behavior: The Roles of Past Behavior, Habit, and Reasoned Action." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology,* 25 (3): 175-87.

Belsley, D. A. (1991). *Conditioning Diagnostics: Collinearity and Weak Data in Regression*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Chhabra, D. (2007). Gendered social exchange theory variations across the life span in casino settings. *Anatolia, 18*(1), 145–152.

Conner, M., & C. J. Armitage (1998). "Extending the Theory of Planned Behavior: A Review and Avenues for Future Research." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28 (15): 1429-64.

Fakeye, P., & Crompton, J. (1991). Image difference between prospective, first-time and repeat visitors to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(2), 10-16.

Fishbein, M., & I. Ajzen (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research Reading*, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 18 (1), 39-50.

Gallarza, M. G., Saura, I. G. & Garcia, H. C. (2002). Destination Image towards a Conceptual Framework. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *29(1):* 56-78.

Gartner, W. (1986). "Temporal Influences on Image Change." *Annals of Tourism Research,* 13: 635-44.

Gartner, W. C. (1996). *Tourism Development - Principles, Processes and Policies*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 454-499.

Hair, J. F. Jr., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis, (5th ed.)*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall.

Hsu, C. H. C., S. K. Kang, & T. Lam (2006). "Reference Group Influences among Chinese Travelers." *Journal of Travel Research*, 44 (4): 474-84.

Huang, Y. (2009). *Examining the Antecedents of Behavioral Intentions in a Tourism Context*, Unpublished dissertation, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

King, P. W. Y., & Hang, F. K. W. (2011). Career Perceptions of Undergraduate Gaming Management Students. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 11, 367-391.

*Indy Star* (2014). Indiana casinos lose millions to Ohio competitors, retrieved October 10, 2014, from http://www.indystar.com/story/money/2014/06/14/casinos-luck/10534623/.

Keller, K. L. (1993) Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity, *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-22.

Kinnear, T. C., & Taylor, J. R. (1987). *Marketing Research*, New York: McGraw – Hill, 307 – 326.

Kneesel, E., Baloglu, S., & Millar M. (2010). Gaming Destination Images: Implications for Branding. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(1), 68-78.

Lin, C., Morais, D. B., Kerstetter, D. L., & Hou, J. (2007). Examining the Role of Cognitive and Affective Image in Predicting Choice Across Natural, Developed, and Theme-Park Destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46, 183-194.

Litvin, S. W., R. E. Goldsmith, & B. Pan (2008). "Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Hospitality and Tourism Management." *Tourism Management*, 29 (3): 458-68.

MacCallum, R. C., Brown, M. W., & Sugawara, H., M. (1996). Power Analysis and Determination of Sample Size for Covariance Structure Modeling. *Psychological Methods*, 1(2): 130-49.

Mercer, D. (1981). The role of perception in the recreation experience: A review and discussion. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 3(4), 261-176.

Moore, S. M., & Ohtsuka, K. (1999). The prediction of gambling behavior and problem gambling from attitudes and perceived norms. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 27, 455-466.

Oh, H., & Hsu, C. (2001). Volitional degrees of gambling behaviors. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(3), 618-637.

Pfaffenberg, C., & Costello, C. (2002). "Items of Importance to Patrons of Indian and Riverboat Casinos." *UNLV Gaming Research and Review Journal*, 6 (1): 33-41.

Phillips, W. J. & Jang, S. (2012). Exploring Seniors' Casino Gaming Intention. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 36: 312-334.

Pike, S. (2002). Destination image analysis - a review of 142 papers from 1973 to 2000, *Tourism Management*, *23 (5):* 541-549.

Richardson, S. (2010). Generation Y's Perceptions and Attitudes towards a Career in Tourism and Hospitality. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*, 9, 179-199.

Ryan, C. & Cove, J. (2007). Structuring Destination Image: A Qualitative Approach, *Journal of Travel Research*, 44 (2), 143-150.

Schiff, M. R. (1970). Some Theoretical Aspects of Attitudes and Perception, Natural Hazard Research. Retrieved on 2014/11/04 from: www.colorado.edu/hazards/publications/wp/wp15.pdf.

Song, H., Lee, C., Norman, W. C., & Han, H. (2012). The Role of Responsible Gambling Strategy in Forming Behavioral Intention: An Application of a Model of Goal-Directed Behavior. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(4) 512–523.

Stabler, M. J. (1988). The Image of Destination Regions: Theoretical and Empirical Aspects, in *Marketing in the Tourism Industry: the Promotion of Destination Regions*, B. Goodall and G. Ashworth, eds., 133-161, London; New York: Croom Helm.

Vong, F. (2009). Changes in residents' gambling attitudes and perceived impacts at the fifth anniversary of Macao's gaming deregulation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(3), 388–397.

Wang, S., & Huang, X. (2014), College Students' Perceptions of Tourism Careers and Implications for the Industry and Education Providers, *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*, 13 (3), 211-233.

Young, R. A., & Kent, A. T. (1985). Using the theory of reasoned action to improve the understanding of recreation behavior. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 17(2), 90-106.

Zajonc, R. B. (2000). Feeling and thinking: Closing the debate over the independence of affect. In: Joseph P. Forgas (ed.), *Feeling and Thinking: The Role of Affect in Social Cognition*. Cambridge University Press.