

# Why Do Students Involve in Leisure-Sport Industries?

## Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model to Understand Career Engagement in Leisure-Sport Industries <sup>†</sup>

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**Abstract:** Leisure sports is an important industry that promotes the physical and mental health of the human body, so it is very important to train professionals. The purpose of this study is to explore the "stimulus-mechanism-response model" to explore the relationship between students' learning engagement, department identification, career self-efficacy, and career engagement in Taiwan's sports and leisure industry-related disciplines. This study adopts the questionnaire survey method to meet the purpose of this research. The research questionnaire is compiled with reference to the relevant literature in the past, and the third and fourth grade college students of Taiwan's public and private universities and colleges in the sports and leisure industry are selected as the research objects. This study uses physical questionnaires to collect data. A total of 142 valid questionnaires were obtained during the period, and the effective questionnaire rate was 91.6%. The collected data are analyzed by descriptive statistics and partial least squares structural equations. This study found that the learning engagement of students in Taiwan's sports and leisure industry related departments has no direct and significant impact on career engagement; but learning engagement has an indirect and significant impact on career engagement through department identification and career self-efficacy, which is recognized by the department. Department identification and career self-efficacy are completely mediating variables of learning engagement and career engagement. Conclusion: It is the most important factor to improve the department identification and career self-efficacy of students in Taiwan's sports and leisure industry related departments.

**Keywords:** stimulus-mechanism-response model; sports and leisure industry; sport management; career planning

### 1. Introduction

The sport-leisure industry has gradually become a vital economic contributor in advanced countries. The industry not only improves the people's quality of life but also dedicates a huge economic contribution to the country. Following the global trend, Taiwan is actively promoting the development of the sport-leisure industry. The government has formulated guidance and invested funds for the development strategies of the sport-leisure industry as well as encouraging private enterprises to involve in the industry Sports Administration 1. The sport-leisure industry in Taiwan has significantly grown in the past six years. According to Sports Administration 1, Ministry of Education sport-leisure industry annual report, the industry's total revenue in 2018 was 34.62 billion USD, an increase of 615% compared to 4.84 billion USD in 2015. Furthermore, the number of employees in the sport-leisure industry has also grown significantly from 64,054 to

173,913, the employment growth rate is 172%. Therefore, the demand for professionals in the sport-leisure industry is increasing. To address the professionals' demand and advance the competitive capability, thirty-six universities in Taiwan have funded sport-leisure departments to design related courses and provide an intern opportunity for students interested in the sport-leisure industry 2. For industry owners, cultivating professionals in schools can not only save the cost of business but also shorten the time for cultivating professionals 3. Therefore, it is important to understand students' intention of career engagement in sport-leisure industry in the future.

Career engagement refers to an employee establishing a voluntary engagement in their career 4. It can contribute to work efficiency and the economic prosperity of the industry 5. Furthermore, a high level of career engagement is beneficial to setting up work goals, enhancing work skills and abilities, accumulating work experience, and developing potential personal capability 6. Previous studies have devoted to identifying the antecedents that influence individuals' career engagement, including career attitude 7, self-identity 5, self-efficacy 8, career satisfaction 9, industry identity 10, personal interest 10, learning involvement 11. Major identity, career self-efficacy, and learning involvement would significantly affect college students' career development. For example, Su 10 study found that college students' interest in the marine industry and major identity significantly influence their career engagement in the marine industry. The research results of Ho, Yang 8 show that if the students, who are studying Department of Food and Beverage Management, can improve their career self-efficacy in the internship, their career engagement would be positively influenced. Another study conducted by Chen, Zeng, Hu, Zeng, Wang 11 indicates that the higher students' learning involved in the department of medical management, the stronger their career engagement in the future. Therefore, this study regards learning involvement, major identity, and career self-efficiency as the antecedents to identify the relation with students' career engagement in the department of sport-leisure.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response model (SOR) is used to explore the effects of personal emotions and environmental factors on stimulating consumers' perception and consumption behavior 12. The concept of SOR model is that the external environment would influence people's internal emotions, and then generate the behavioral response. For example, the business owner will use packaging, advertising, and marketing to deliver information to consumers (stimulations). The information would trigger consumers' desire for consumption (mechanism). Finally, the consumer would generate purchase behavior (response). The previous studies using SOR model are focused on consumer behavior. For instance, digital reading 13 and green marketing 14. However, there is a lack of study exploring career engagement by SOR model. Accordingly, the present study uses SOR model to understand whether learning involvement (stimulations) would influence career self-efficiency (mechanism) and major identity (mechanism), and further affect career engagement (response) from sport-leisure major students' perspectives. The findings expect to provide insight into cultivating professionals in the sport-leisure industry.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficacy, and career engagement from sport-leisure major students' perspectives in Taiwan. The SOR model was used as the foundation of the framework. Questionnaire survey method was used to address the research topic. The scales of learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficacy, and career engagement were developed based on the previous studies. Person-administered survey was used to collect data. The collected data was analyzed by descriptive analysis and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Finally, the research findings were written according to the results of data analysis.

## 2.2. Eligible Respondents and Data Collection

The study adopted purposive sampling to select junior and senior college students studying at the Department of Sport Management and Department of Recreational Sport Management, National Taiwan University of Sport. Freshman and sophomore college students were excluded from this study. The collective questionnaire method was adopted. Researchers personally distributed questionnaires into classrooms with the teachers' assistance. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed in this study, and 155 questionnaires were collected. Thirteen questionnaires were deleted because of entirely consistent answers, and 142 valid questionnaires were obtained. The valid rate was 91.6%.

## 2.3. Measurement

The scales of learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficacy, and career engagement were developed based on definitions from related research. The scale of learning involvement was developed twelve items and three dimensions based on Ye, Wang, Ye 15 definition, including behavioral involvement (four items), emotional involvement (four items), and cognitive involvement (four items). Nine items established the scale of major identity according to Wang, Yueh, Huang, Kang 16 and Chen, Zeng, Hu, Zeng, Wang 11 definition. The scale of career self-efficacy included twenty-one items and five dimensions based on Chan 17 definition, namely, self-awareness assessment (five items), problem-solving skills (five items), job searching (four items), future plans (four items), and career goal (three items). The nine items of career engagement were designed based on Su 10 definition. All scales were used a seven-point for measurement with "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" representing 7 to 1 points, respectively.

## 2.4. Ethical Consideration

In order to follow the ethical principles, this study used an anonymous questionnaire survey to ensure that respondents' personal information cannot be identified. Furthermore, the respondents' age is above twenty years old that have the discretion of participating questionnaire survey. This study asked the teachers in class to assist questionnaire distribution. the respondents' rights and research purposes were informed before the distribution. Respondents agreed to participate in the survey voluntarily when they understood the informed consent. There is no interesting conflict between teachers and students. Respondents' rights in school will not be derogated if they do not participate in the survey or withdraw from the study. The collected data is only reviewed and analyzed by researchers and will not be used for any purpose other than academic research. The data will be destructive after publication.

## 2.5 Content Validity

The study questionnaire was reviewed by two experts, who were the professors in the department of sport-leisure industry in National universities. The experts were invited and delivered the questionnaire by email. Each item of the questionnaire was reviewed with its applicability within four scores. One score means "very inapplicable"; two scores represent "not applicable"; three scores are "application," which means the item can be applicable after slightly modified; four scores mean the item has "high applicability." Questions with a score of three or more will be used. On the other hand, experts would be asked to provide revised suggestions for the items with a score of less than two scores. Finally, the study kept all items, merely slightly modifying the descriptions.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

This study used descriptive statistics in SPSS18.0 statistical software to analyze respondents' demographics. Partial least squares structural equation modeling in SMART-PLS 3.0 was adopted to analyze the scales reliability and validity, and results of the structural model of the present study.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Demographics

The respondents' demographics indicate that female students (57.6%) are slightly more male students (42.4%). Fourth-year students (52.5%) are more than third-year students (47.5%). Around a quarter of students are applications for school admission (23.9%). The majority of students have intern experiences (68.3%). Two-thirds of students' major expertise are sport management.

#### 3.2. Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficacy, and career engagement ranged from 0.464 to 0.928, which are indicating a good internal consistency. The all variables' construction reliability is between 0.919 and 0.965, which means the items of the variables are highly correlated. Of the average extraction variation, learning involvement (0.511), major identity (0.559), career self-efficacy (0.536), and career engagement (0.846) are higher than 0.500, which represent that more than 50% of the variance explained comes from the observation variables. Moreover, the factor loadings of all observation variables of learning involvement (0.643 to 0.782), major identity (0.643 to 0.848), career self-efficacy (0.642 to 0.801), and career engagement (0.911 to 0.928) are all higher than 0.500, which indicates that the observation variables arrive at a good convergent validity. In terms of discriminant validity, the correlation coefficients between the variables (0.493 to 0.659) in this study are all less than the square root of the average extracted variation of each variable (0.715 to 0.920). That is, the variables in this study have discriminant validity.

#### 3.3. Model Fit

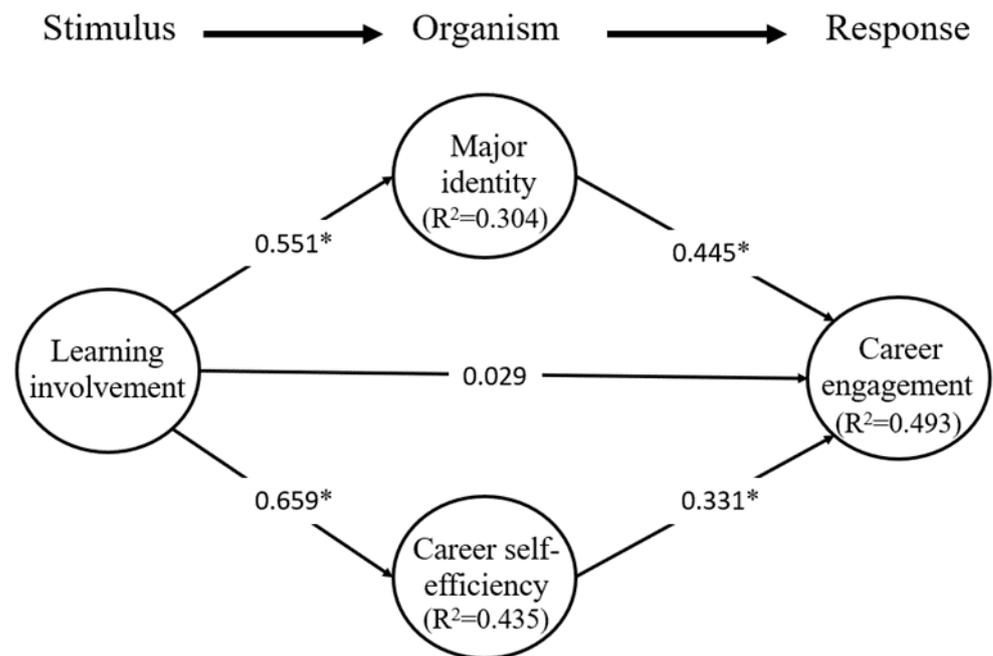
Goodness of Fit (GoF) is an important model fit index for partial least squares structural equation models. The calculation formula of GoF is as follows:

$$\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\text{average AVE} \times \text{average R}^2}, \quad (1)$$

When the GoF is above 0.36, the model has a high level of model fit; while a GoF between 0.25 and 0.35 is a moderate level of model fit, and a GoF between 0.10 and 0.24 is an acceptable level of model fit. However, if GoF is below 0.10, the model fit is rejected. The GoF of the model is calculated to reach 0.763. Accordingly, this study has an excellent model fit.

#### 3.4. Structural Model Analysis

The structural model of learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficiency, and career engagement from students' perspectives show that (Figure 1) show that learning involvement has significant effects on major identity ( $\beta=0.551^*$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and career self-efficiency ( $\beta=0.659^*$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Major identity ( $\beta=0.445^*$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and career self-efficiency ( $\beta=0.331^*$ ;  $p<.05$ ) significantly influence career engagement. However, students' learning involvement does not directly affect their career engagement ( $\beta=0.029$ ;  $p>.05$ ). Furthermore, students' learning involvement would indirectly influence career engagement through major identity ( $\beta=0.245^*$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and career self-efficiency ( $\beta=0.218^*$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Accordingly, major identity and career self-efficiency are both playing full mediators in this study. Finally, the explained variance of major identity is 30.4%, career self-efficacy is 43.5% and career engagement is 49.3%.



**Figure 1.** The model of learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficiency, and career engagement based on SOR model.

#### 4. Conclusion

The SOR model can use to explain the relationship between students’ learning involvement, major identity, career self-efficiency, and career engagement. Students’ high learning involvement would enhance major identity and career self-efficiency, and then further increase their career engagement in sport-leisure industry in the future.

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