

## UNRAVELING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CASINO GAMING: A CASE OF CASINO REFERENDUM IN PENGHU

**ABSTRACT.** By integrating the social exchange theory (SET) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB), this study unravels the factors associated with residents' intention to support casino gaming development in Penghu in future referenda. Residents' attitudes toward casino gaming development in their community were examined in the SET framework while their intention to support such development was investigated in the TPB framework. Despite that partisan difference did not have a significant interaction with TPB variables, past behavior exerted moderating effects determining residents' intention to support casino gaming development through two TPB variables: subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. Implications are provided.

**KEYWORDS.** Social exchange theory, theory of planned behavior, casino referenda, casino gaming, support intention

### ***1. INTRODUCTION***

Casino gaming development in Taiwan has become a subject of debate since it was first introduced in the Legislative Yuan (i.e., the Taiwanese parliament) in 1994 (Tsai & Gu, 2004). Nevertheless, prior to September 2009, the debate had never come to an agreement and the subject was brought up again and again whenever there's a major election in Taiwan. The failure for reaching an agreement has been attributed by many to ongoing political wrestling, particular between the two major political parties, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progress Party (DPP), which is evident and observed in news media and legislative sessions.

Since the turn of the century, Taiwan's economy has deteriorated dramatically as a result of inappropriate political orientation, political schism, and economic depression. Casino gaming was once again hailed by many as a new source of finance and tax revenue for the Taiwan government that had been under fiscal pressure and facing a high unemployment rate. In 2009, the subject became a realized public issue and Taiwan's Executive Yuan (i.e., the cabinet) approved Penghu's bid to be the first offshore island to hold a referendum on whether to authorize the development of integrated casino gaming resorts. To the surprise of many, of 17,359 voters a majority of 56% Penghu residents opposed casino gaming in the local referendum held on September 26, 2009 (Taipei Times, 2009). Our study intends to uncover factors determining residents' intention to support casino gaming development ("support intention" herewith) if there were another referendum held in the future.

In casino development research, social exchange theory (SET) (Homans, 1974) often underlies residents' attitudes toward economic, social and environmental impacts (Perdue, Long, & Kang, 1999) and thus their intention to engage in a particular behavior. Nevertheless, Chen and Raab (2009), and Carmichael (2000) argue that SET alone does not sufficiently link or explore the relationship between other determinants of intention such as social norms and volitional control which are main elements of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). In addition, although TPB is considered powerful in predicting the validity of intentions, many researchers criticize its rather narrow focus on only constructs of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control without considering variables external to the full model (Bagozzi, 1981). In our study, we add one more variable of interest—perceived personal benefit to the model to further enhance its ability to explain the variation of intention.

For most Taiwanese, vote choice is considered to be dictated by a partisan or ideological disposition rather than a reasoned process (Tsai, 2007). Partisanship has long been considered one of the most important determinants of political behavior in democratic systems (Brader & Tucker, 2008) and its effect on voting has increased markedly within the electoral or referenda procedure in the modern Taiwanese political environment (Huang, 2007). Whether the interplay between partisanship and voting outcome is evident in the case of casino referendum in Penghu is a question worth exploring. Therefore, we hypothesize that partisanship might have exerted certain effect on the residents' support intention in a referendum. Besides, previous behavioral researches (Kidwell & Jewell, 2008; Ouellette & Wood, 1998) have suggested that past behavior may moderate the strength of the relationship between the major components of TPB and intention. Past behavior (i.e., support or oppose in the last referendum vote held on September 26, 2009) is thus included in the study model to examine its possible moderating effects on the relationship magnitude between the TPB variables and support intention in future casino referenda in Penghu.

Therefore in this study, a broader approach is employed in combining SET and TPB to unravel determinants to Penghu residents' support intention in future casino referenda. The overall research goals are threefold. First, this study investigates how the perceived economic, social, and environmental impacts of casino gaming may shape residents' attitudes toward casino gaming development under SET. Second, drawing on TPB we explore the impacts of attitudes toward casino gaming development, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and perceived personal benefit on Penghu residents' support intention in future casino referenda. Last, this study examines the potential moderating effect of partisanship and past behavior on the hypothesized relationships between TPB variables and support intention in future casino referenda.

## ***2. LITERATURE REVIEW***

## ***2.1 Impacts of Casino Gaming in the SET Framework***

Numerous studies have applied SET to explain perceived impacts on individuals' attitude toward casino development (Fong, Fong, & Law, 2015; Ham, Brown, & Jang, 2004; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Lee & Back, 2006; Lee, Kang, Long, & Reisinger, 2010; Stitt, Nichols, & Giacomassi, 2005; Vong, Lai, & Li, 2015; Yoo, Zhou, Lu, & Kim, 2015). The main argument of SET is that individuals who view something as offering some benefit are more likely to display positive and supportive attitudes toward it. While Vong et al. (2015) did not find a direct relationship between casino benefit/cost perception and support for casino development, a general consensus is that support for casino development is based on an evaluation of the benefits and costs generated by the casinos (Chhabra & Gursoy, 2012).

At one time, the public associated casino gaming with crime and immorality (Eadington, 1999a). It has gradually become the fastest-growing yet most controversial and influential form of tourism. In recent years, numerous jurisdictions have legalized casino gaming and it is inevitable that more will consider following suit. Studies focusing on community attitudes toward tourism as well as casino gaming most commonly approach the question by measuring the positive and negative impacts perceived by community residents and are often categorized as economic, social and environmental ones (Lee & Back, 2003, 2006; Long, 1996; Perdue et al., 1999) to be taken into account when determining the level of support for a casino development in the context of SET.

One reason to legalize casino gaming is a positive impact on the economy of the region (Lee, 2010) as a promising source of economic development and revenue for governments dealing with budget shortfalls (Park & Stokowski, 2009). Its proponents believe that legalizing casinos will stimulate the inflow of huge investment capital from outside agencies, increase the volume of

economic activities and jobs, lead the generation of financial receipts to diversify the economic base (Eadington, 1999b; Korn, Gibbins, & Azmier, 2003), enhance the associated tourism-supply industry (McCartney, 2005) and provide much-needed funds for social and infrastructure construction through the taxes collected from casinos and related establishments (Eadington, 1998). Lee and Back (2006) reported that positive economic consequences are the most significant predictor of individual support. Perdue et al. (1999) also investigate individuals' support for casino gaming in Colorado and show that personal economic benefit is perceived as the primary positive impact. Above all, the argument is that in the long term, the economic impact of introducing casino gaming will be positive (Ross, 1998).

Nevertheless, claims of economic benefits are sometimes countered by arguments of economic “cannibalization” which suggest that casino gaming simply involves a reallocation of consumer spending from other activities (Basham & White, 2002). Additionally, local governments and residents may experience difficulty reaping their share of benefits, as the revenue generated by casinos may be largely dissipated in the host community (Freitag, 1994). Moreover, it is contended that in some circumstances, the residents of the host community may be excluded from the job opportunities offered by casinos because they lack the knowledge and skills required (Park & Stokowski, 2009, 2011). In allowing respondents to evaluate economic benefit/cost unidimensionally (Jurowski et al., 1997; Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo, & Alders, 2013; Stylidis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014; Yoon, Gursoy, & Chen, 2000) and drawing on previous studies that the domain of economic impacts are likely perceived more favorably by residents, in the case of Penghu we therefore hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived economic impacts and residents' attitudes toward casino gaming development.

The social impacts of casino gaming have also been the subject of debate as the development of casino gaming has caused controversies relating to its social costs and its serious social ramifications (Ibrahim, 2005). As such, casino gaming has been considered degenerate and sinful and is persistently opposed by groups that fear its disruptive and disorderly effects on the population and on social cohesion as a whole. In particular, casino gaming has been associated with possible negative social consequences such as increased violence, divorce, bankruptcy, drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution and, most notably, problem gambling (Chhabra & Gursoy, 2007; Kang, Lee, Yoon, & Long, 2008; Lee & Beck, 2003; Park & Stokowski, 2009; Reith, 2006; Vong, 2009).

Although the focus has been on direct negative impacts, the literature also acknowledges that casino gaming can also bring positive social benefits to host communities (Giacopassi, Nichols, & Stitt, 2006). For example, gaming taxes levied on casinos can help fund and provide public services to the host community such as building schools and public facilities, and supporting charity work (Lo, 2005). It is also reported that casino complexes increase the availability of recreational and entertainment facilities for the locality which services and engenders a better community image and sense of pride (Lankford, Williams, & Knowles, 1997). Nevertheless, these positive social benefits are likely supported and funded by positive economic contribution of casino development and therefore, they are apt to be viewed as byproduct and overshadowed by negative social costs. Since the casino issue was first proposed in Taiwan, Yeh (1999) and Chen and Lin (2011), along with other anti-gambling groups, had advocated casino gaming's detrimental social costs to Taiwan and may have drawn people's attention to casino gaming's negative social impact to some extent. Drawing on previous studies that the domain of social impacts are likely perceived more unfavorably by residents, in the case of Penghu we therefore hypothesized that:

H2: There is a negative relationship between perceived social impacts and residents' attitudes toward casino gaming development.

Lastly, it is no secret that increased casino development will affect the natural environment within the surrounding communities (Chazin, Goldman, McAuliffe & Onuzo, 2012). The growing public awareness of environmental problems has brought with it increased opposition to casino development. Thus, one's attitudes toward the environment can be a determinant of one's perception of the impact of tourism development including casinos (Green, Hunter, & Moore, 1990). Research indicates that level of environmental concern is a strong predictor of an individual's attitude toward developing tourism (Gursoy, Jurowsky, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski et al., 1997). Likewise, the arguments for and against casino development also have an environmental dimension. Carmichael et al., (1996) show that the environmental effects of casino gaming are a significant determinant of individuals' intention to support future tourism development. If a casino resort is to be located on a small offshore island, where residents are dependent on the marine and coastal environment to sustain their living, such development can have a direct impact on individuals' livelihoods and quality of life, which clearly can shape their attitudes toward similar projects (Jones et al., 2000). Penghu is characterized by very high biodiversity which includes the richest and most fragile coral reefs in the region symbiotic algae. Many residents felt that the casino would attract a large number of tourists, which would not only put serious pressure on already scarce natural resources such as energy, land, and water, but might also incur the irreversible destruction of the islands' natural environment (Lee & Back, 2003). Drawing on previous studies that the domain of environmental impacts are likely to be perceived unfavorably, in the case of Penghu we therefore hypothesized that:

H3: There is a negative relationship between perceived environmental impact and residents' attitudes toward casino gaming development.

Based on the benefits and costs discussed above, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the economic, social, and environmental impact of casino gaming can be important factors influencing individuals' attitudes and intention to support or oppose such developments in a referendum vote.

## ***2.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior***

TPB is one of the best-supported social psychological theories with respect to predicting human behavioral intention (Sommer, 2011). Whether the person is in favor of doing something (attitude); how much the person feels a social pressure to do it (subjective norms); and whether the person feels in control of the action in question (perceived behavioral control) are the three major components forming an individual's intention to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1985). Applying TPB to the context of this study, intention may be assumed to be the function of attitudes, which is in turn affected by the perceived economic, social, and environmental impact of casino gaming. In line with the underlying concepts of TPB, the behavioral intention proposed in this study is individuals' support intention in future casino referenda.

First, attitude plays a crucial role in an individual's behavioral intentions beneath the concept of TPB. Attitudes toward behavior refer to the positive or negative evaluation of carrying it out, including an assessment of the likely favorable or unfavorable consequences in the prevailing conditions (Ajzen, 1991). An individual who strongly expect positive (negative) outcomes resulting from performing a particular behavior will generally tend to have positive (negative) attitudes toward it (Bagozzi, 1992). Adapting this to the casino gaming context, positive attitudes



are likely to encourage support for casino gaming development, and negative attitudes otherwise (Yoo et al., 2015). Hence, in this study, attitudes toward behavioral intention denote individuals' feelings and opinions about the impact they think casino gaming development will have on their community. So if an individual has a positive attitude toward casino gaming development, he /she is more likely to intend to support it in future referenda.

Second, subjective norms denote the influence of individual perceptions of how people who are important in one's life feel about one performing certain behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). A number of studies report that subjective norms are a significant factor in the formation of behavioral intention in the TPB framework (Baker et al., 2007). In general, the opinions of people who are important may constitute useful information about the appropriateness or rightness of a specific behavior, even if an individual may feel under pressure to conform to the views of such people to guide his/her own attitudes and overt behaviors. Lee et al., (2007) show that individuals consider their referents' opinions when purchasing travel-related products. Lee and Back (2008) show that others' opinions influence participants' intention to attend professional meetings. Armitage and Conner (2001) affirm that if an individual perceives significant others endorsing (or disapproving of) a behavior, they will be more (or less) likely to intend to perform it. This means that subjective norms have a strong and positive direct effect on intention.

Third, the concept of perceived behavioral control refers to the individual's perceptions of the ease or difficulty of performing a given behavior. Perceived behavioral control is thought to influence intention, and to the extent that it accurately reflects the person's actual control over behavioral performance and directly influences behavior (Ajzen, 1991). As a nonvolitional dimension, perceived behavioral control is also considered an imperative factor in behavioral intention (Conner & Armitage, 1998): when an individual has high perceived behavioral control,

a behavior will be regarded as easy to perform whereas it will be considered difficult when perceived behavioral control is low. Thus, perceived behavioral control may be thought of as reflecting the perceived ease or difficulty of a behavior and the confidence an individual has in his/her ability to perform it (Armitage & Conner, 1999). A number of studies show that perceived behavioral control has the most significant impact on intention of seniors' casino visitation (Phillip & Jang, 2010) and of gambling in Macao (Wu, Lai, Tong, & Tao, 2013).

Lastly, perceived personal benefit can be defined as one's beliefs about the positive outcomes associated with a behavior (Stern, 2000) and has been shown to be one of the major factors encouraging engagement in particular behaviors (Kankanhalli et al., 2005). Schaffer and Ajzen (1985) points out that intention to engage in a behavior increases when the individual's benefits are maximized and deprivations (costs) minimized. In other words, perceived personal benefit is linked to the degree to which people intend to engage in a given behavior. Stitt et al. (2005) stated that "those who benefit most from the casino should show the greatest support for it" (p. 189) in studying the impact of casinos on communities and Perdue et al. (1990) reported that an individual who derives a personal benefit from casino gaming will be more likely to support the presence of gambling facilities in his/her own community. Additionally, Beach (2009) argues that perceived personal benefit affects an individual's intention to adopt a policy proposal, as well as intention to vote in any referenda to be held on the issue. Accordingly, perceived personal benefit is proposed as an additional determinant of behavioral intention in the framework of TPB in this study.

Based on the above, the measurement variables were adopted to examine the relationships between the four hypothesized predictors - attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and perceived personal benefit – and support intention under the theoretical framework of the TPB model as follows:

H4: Attitudes toward casino gaming development are positively related to residents' support intention in future casino referenda.

H5: Perceived behavioral control is positively related to residents' support intention in future casino referenda.

H6: Subjective norms are positively related to residents' support intention in future casino referenda.

H7: Perceived personal benefit is positively related to residents' support intention in future casino referenda.

### ***2.3 Potential Moderating Effects of Partisanship and Past Behavior***

Existing studies have presented a wide range of successful applications of TPB; however, significant concerns have arisen over the lack of examination of the moderating effects in TPB (Conner & Armitage, 1998; Lam, 1999). In our study, we examined potential moderating effects of partisanship and past behavior.

Partisanship denotes an ingrained personal and psychological attachment to a political party (Zuckerman, 2007) and has been shown to correlate with attitudes, behavioral intention, and behavior (Gerber & Huber, 2010; Miller & Ratner, 1998). Wilcox (1989) argues that partisanship has a powerful effect on the relationship between attitude and behavior and research on voting behavior shows that partisanship is a primary motivating force in decisions about policy opinions (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012). Merolla, Stephenso, & Zechmeister (2008) investigated the moderation influence of partisanship on how individuals form behavioral intentions on a range of political issues; their results imply that individuals rely heavily on partisanship for decisions. Carsey and Layman (2006) suggested that if an individual showed strong partisanship with a party,

he/she will be likely to express an opinion consistent with the policies of that party, whereas someone with a weaker partisan identity is more likely to express a contrary view. In recent decades, partisanship has played a crucial role in referendum voting. For example, Galligan and Wright (2002) point out in their study of constitutional referenda in Australia that votes have often been determined more by partisanship than by the actual content of the proposal when political parties have taken a stand on the issues. Similarly in the U.S. partisanship is identified by researchers as the single most important force in shaping citizens, and voters' political attitudes and behavior (Wagner, 2012).

Taiwan's political landscape is dominated and defined by the "Pan Green, the DPP" versus "Pan Blue, the KMT" ideological schism (Lin, 2011). As noted by Tan et al. (2000), partisanship is an extreme factor affecting referendum or election outcomes, and the majority of Taiwanese's vote is affected by partisan politics and reflects their political polarization rather than their position on substantive policy issues (Huang, 2010). This study thus investigated the moderating role of partisanship (i.e. Pan Green and Pan Blue) between each of the TPB variables and residents' support intention in the context of a local-level casino referendum in Penghu as follows:

H8: The relationship between residents' attitudes toward casino gaming and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by their partisanship.

H9: The relationship between residents' perceived behavioral control and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by their partisanship.

H10: The relationship between residents' subjective norms and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by their partisanship.

H11: The relationship between residents' perceived personal benefit and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by their partisanship.

On the other hand, despite the growing body of research on the effect of past behavior on intention and behavior, key questions remain as to whether specific predictors of intentions are enhanced or diminished when past behavior is included as a moderator in the TPB model (Orbell, Hodgkins, & Sheeran, 1997). Previous behavioral research has suggested that past behavior may moderate the strength of the relationship between the TPB variables and intention. Ajzen (1988) suggested that prior behavior should moderate the effects of perceived behavioral control on future behavior through the creation of a sense of control over performance of the behavior. Ouellette and Wood's (1998) meta-analysis of habits has shown the direct influence of past behavior on formation of intentions and moderated relationships among variables within the TPB model. Sheeran, Orbell, and Trafimow (1999) and Conner, Sheeran, Norman, & Armitage (2000) both found that past behavior was associated with stability of intention in the TPB model. Kidwell and Jewell (2008) have tested the predicted moderating effects of past behavior on attitude, subjective norms and perceived internal and external control with respect to behavioral intention and their findings suggested past behavior having moderating effect on the variables within TPB. Hagger, Chatzisarantis and Biddle (2002) indicated that inclusion of past behavior as a moderator is an important addition to the model in a meta-analytic review of TPB in physical activity. Therefore, our study examined whether or not past behavior (i.e., individuals' vote choice in 2009 casino referendum: "Yes" or "No") moderates the TPB variables and residents' support intention in the context of a local-level casino referendum in Penghu as follows:

H12: The relationship between residents' attitudes and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by past behavior.

H13: The relationship between residents' perceived behavioral control and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by past behavior.

H14: The relationship between residents' subjective norms and their support intention in future casino gaming referenda is moderated by past behavior.

H15: The relationship between residents' perceived personal benefit and their support intention in future casino referenda is moderated by past behavior.

The conceptual model based on the SET and TPB is depicted in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

### ***3. METHODOLOGY***

#### ***3.1 Questionnaire***

In reaching the research goals of this study, we employed a quantitative approach by using a self-administered questionnaire to collect data and test the proposed model. To ensure that the survey questionnaire items used genuinely measured what they were intended to measure, the measurement items used in this study were mostly drawn from previous studies on residents' perception of the impact of tourism and casino gaming using SET and on attitude-intention-behavior studies using TPB in the tourism domain (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Gursoy et al., 2002; Kang, Long, & Perdue, 1996; Kang et al., 2008; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Lee & Beck, 2003; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Vong & McCartney, 2005; Wang & Pfister, 2008; Yen, 2007; Yoon et al., 2000). A translation-back-translation method was used to prepare a bilingual version of questionnaire in both English and traditional Chinese. To ensure content validity and wording clarity, the measurement items were reviewed by three hospitality and tourism professors who are fluent in both Mandarin and English. Feedback on appropriateness of items was discussed and the comments were incorporated. The pilot tested was conducted with 80 Penghu respondents of age above 20. The levels of agreement were indicated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from (7)

strongly agree, (6) agree, (5) somewhat agree, (4) neutral, (3) somewhat disagree, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree.

The first section included three screening questions to identify the target respondents who had participated in the last casino referendum in 2009, their vote (yes or no) and whether currently an eligible voter. The second section comprised 27 items measuring the three main areas of impact, namely the economic (10 items), social (11 items), and environmental consequences (six items) of casino developments. For the economic impact, the statements put to respondents were related to employment opportunities, the generation of tax revenue, attracting outside investment, improving living standards, benefits to local business, and capital outflow. In terms of social impacts, they were associated with increasing attractiveness to tourists, encouraging gambling, increasing the crime rate, affecting way of life, and stimulating political corruption. For the environmental impacts, the focus was on traffic congestion, noise, pollution, destruction of the natural environment, the contribution of social benefits, improving utilities, infrastructure, and public facilities. The third section captured responses on 26 items measuring attitudes (seven items) adopted from Yen (2007), subjective norms (six items) from Ajzen (1985, 1991), perceived behavioral control (three items) from Ajzen (1991), Kielty (2010) and Song (2010), perceived personal benefit (five items) from Ko and Stewart (2002) and Yen (2007) and support intension in future casino referenda (five items) from Phetvaroon (2006) and Phillips (2009). The final part of the questionnaire collected the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents relating to age, gender, marital status, education, income, occupation and profession.

### ***3.2 Data Collection***

Considering the number of measurement items (i.e., 53) and the rule of thumb of 10 cases to one observed variable, we aimed to collect 600 questionnaires from the target population. There were 84,904 eligible voters in the city of Makung and the five townships of Husi, Baisha, Siyu, Wang-an and Cimei as of 2012 (Penghu Statistics, 2012). In particular Wang-an and Cimei townships were excluded from data collection because of their accounting for very little (4% and 3% respectively) of Penghu's population, remoteness, related travel difficulties and time constraints. From the remaining four areas we used quota sampling by considering the number of eligible voters in Makung and each of the three townships. For example, 64% of eligible voters resided in Makung City and therefore, 384 (i.e.,  $600 \times 64\%$ ) questionnaires were distributed to target respondents in the city. With the help of trained student helpers, questionnaires were then distributed using convenience sampling in downtown areas and collected during January 15, 2013 and February 28, 2013 on both weekdays and weekends. To increase response rate, a token of appreciation was given to each respondent after the survey. After data screening for incomplete responses, 546 out of 600 questionnaires were retained for subsequent data analyses.

## **4. RESULTS**

### ***4.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics***

Among the 546 valid respondents, 468 (85.7%) were Penghu-born and 78 (14.3%) were non-native. Gender distributions showed that 250 respondents (45.8%) were female and 296 (54.2%) were male. The results also revealed that the respondents were predominantly aged between 30 and 59 (76.3% of the sample) and 11.2% were between 20 and 29, the remaining 8.4% being aged 60 or older. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the respondents had been educated to high school (33.5%). Nearly 40% had attained a middle and elementary school level of



education (21.4% and 18.3%, respectively). Furthermore, 22.7% were college degree holders, while graduate school or above accounted for only about 4%. Among the respondents, 56.2% were married, whilst 33.9% were unmarried (single) and 6.5% divorced. Occupations varied: the majority were workers (14.5%) and business people (11.5%), followed by civil servants, tourism workers, and homemakers (9.2%, 9.5%, and 9.3%, respectively). Household income varied among respondents: only 10 persons (1.8%) had monthly household incomes in the range of NT\$100,001 or above; 21.8% had monthly incomes below NT\$20,000. The remainders lie within the following ranges: NT\$20,001–NT\$40,000 (33.5%), NT\$40,001–NT\$60,000 (15.4%), NT\$60,001 – NT\$80,000 (6.6%), and NT\$80,001–NT\$100,000 (3.1%); however, 17.8% reported having no income.

#### ***4.2 Assessment of Normality and Outlier***

Mardia (1974) proposed tests of multivariate normality based on sample measures of multivariate skewness and kurtosis. Mardia's coefficient of multivariate kurtosis critical values was 152.326 which showed the presence of significant non-normality at the multivariate level according to the critical ratio criterion. Given this situation, the Bollen-Stine bootstrap method was used as an ideal means to tackle the problems of non-normality. A measure of Mahalanobis distance ( $D^2$ ) divided by degree of freedom was used to detect outliers. There were nine cases exceeding the  $D^2/df$  threshold value of three and were thus removed leaving a final sample size of 537 (546 minus 9) datasets for further analysis.

#### ***4.3 Testing for the Measurement Model and Its Validity***

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to confirm the underlying dimensions and test the validity of measurement model (Table 1). Goodness-of-fit indices ( $\chi^2=1,436.11$ ,  $df=436$ ,  $RMSEA=0.06$ ,  $CFI=0.95$ ,  $NNFI=0.94$ ) suggest that the proposed measurement model fits the data well. Convergent validity (Table 2) was supported by average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Factor loadings also showed the acceptable level of convergent validity because all loadings in Table 1 were significant at  $p<0.05$  (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The AVE for each construct was higher than the squared correlation coefficients under corresponding inter-constructs (Table 2), thereby showing discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, all dimensions showed an acceptable level of reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

The CFA results in Table 1 also showed that the domain of perceived economic impacts was reflective of economic benefits while social and environmental costs dominated the domains of social and environmental impacts, respectively, as we had expected.

[Insert Tables 1 and 2 here]

#### ***4.4 Testing for the Structural Model***

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to identify the relationships within a proposed conceptual model. According to goodness-of-fit indices ( $\chi^2=1,783.35$ ,  $df=442$ ,  $RMSEA=0.07$ ,  $CFI=0.93$ ,  $NNFI=0.92$ ), a proposed structural model was found to fit the data as well. SEM results indicate that all of the relationships are statistically significant. Specifically, perceived economic impact ( $\gamma_{11} = 0.55$ ,  $t = 14.94$ ) positively affected attitude, whereas perceived social ( $\gamma_{11} = -0.31$ ,  $t = -5.36$ ) and environmental impacts ( $\gamma_{11} = -0.14$ ,  $t = -2.45$ ) were negatively related to attitude. Also, attitude ( $\beta_{21} = 0.73$ ,  $t = 22.71$ ), perceived personal benefit ( $\gamma_{24} = 0.16$ ,  $t = 4.84$ ), and subjective norms ( $\gamma_{25} = 0.11$ ,  $t = 3.25$ ) were found to positively influence support

intention in future casino referenda. However, perceived behavioral control ( $\gamma_{26} = -0.06$ ,  $t = -1.99$ ) was shown to be negatively related to support intention. As a result, the hypotheses H1~H7 were all supported, except that the sign for H5 was unexpected.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

#### ***4.5 Testing for the Moderating Role of Partisanship and Past Behavior***

To investigate the moderating influence of partisanship, residents were dichotomized into Pan Green ( $n = 249$ ) and Pan Blue ( $n = 288$ ). According to the testing of structural invariance ( $\Delta\chi^2 (4) = 1.91$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) in Table 3, the proposed paths were not significantly different between Pan Green and Pan Blue, suggesting that partisanship did not play a moderating role in the conceptual model. Thus, hypotheses H9, H10, H11, and H12 were rejected. In examining the moderating role of past behavior, residents were dichotomized into a “Yes” voting group, representing the respondents supporting the casino development in the 2009 referendum ( $n = 221$ ) and a “No” voting group, representing the respondents opposing the casino development in the same 2009 referendum ( $n = 316$ ). The testing of structural invariance ( $\Delta\chi^2 (4) = 64.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) suggested the moderating effect of past behavior; “Yes” group statistically differed from “No” group within the conceptual model (Table 4). Hence, the hypotheses H13, H14, H15, and H16 were supported.

[Insert Tables 3 and 4 here]

SEM was conducted simultaneously between “Yes” and “No” groups to examine structural relationships (Figure 3 and 4). For “Yes” group, attitude ( $\gamma_{11} = 0.63$ ,  $t = 10.81$ ), perceived personal benefit ( $\gamma_{21} = 0.15$ ,  $t = 2.09$ ), and perceived behavioral control ( $\gamma_{14} = 0.35$ ,  $t = 5.68$ ) were all positively related to support intention. However, subjective norms ( $\gamma_{31} = -0.13$ ,  $t = -1.63$ ) showed non-significant relationship with support intention. For “No” group, attitude ( $\gamma_{11} = 0.51$ ,  $t = 10.48$ ), perceived personal benefit ( $\gamma_{21} = 0.22$ ,  $t = 4.47$ ), and subjective norms ( $\gamma_{13} = 0.25$ ,  $t = 5.04$ )

positively affected support intention, whereas perceived behavioral control ( $\gamma_{14} = -0.25, t = -4.93$ ) was negatively related to support intention.

[Insert Figures 3 and 4 here]

Chi-square difference tests were conducted to examine whether differences in corresponding paths were statistically significant across the two groups. Table 5 shows that the chi-square difference between the baseline model and the nested model, which was computed for one degree of freedom, allows the test of a significant difference in path coefficient across the two groups (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989). The tests show that two paths were statistically different between the two groups. Specifically, “Yes” group showed a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and support intention, whereas “No” group exhibited a negative relationship. Also, subjective norms were positively related to support intention in “No” group. However, such relationship was not statistically significant in “Yes” group.

## ***5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION***

### ***5.1 Theoretical Perspective***

From a theoretical perspective, our study contributed to the body of knowledge by providing an alternative research framework incorporating SET from a community perspective and TPB from a personal perspective to predict residents’ support intention in future casino referenda.

Under the SET framework, the study’s results indicated that perceived economic, social and environmental impacts were statistically significant predictors of residents’ attitudes toward casino development, which echoes prior research (e.g., Gursoy et al., 2002; Jurowski et al., 1997; Lee & Back, 2003, 2006; Perdue et al., 1999; Vong, 2009). Our study found that the perceived economic impact, which is reflective of economic benefits, exerted the most influence on residents’ attitude

toward casino gaming development, echoing Lee and Back (2006) and followed by the perceived social and environmental impacts.

In the TPB model, while attitude, subjective norms, perceived personal benefit and perceived behavioral control were all significant variables in predicting residents' support intention in future casino referenda, our study found that attitude (perceived behavioral control) accounted for the most (least) variance in residents' support intention in future casino referenda, which disagrees with the argument of a number of researchers (Hansen & Jenson, 2007; Netemeyer, Burton, & Johnston, 1991; Peterson, 2012; Sheeran & Taylor, 1999) that perceived behavioral control is a strong predictor for behavioral intention. In a similar manner, it also disagreed with Sheeran et al.'s (1999) findings that the path between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention accounted for the vast majority of the variance in behavioral intentions. Our study also added perceived personal benefit as an extra construct in significantly explaining the residents' support intention in the TPB framework.

It was surprising to see that, in the case of Penghu's casino development, partisanship did not exert significant moderation effect on causal relationships in the TPB model. Wang (2010) had argued that, depending on the context of the referendum, Pan-Blue and Pan-Green partisans' views may be strongly divided on questions of constitutional policies, but do not take different positions on local development, environmental, and economic issues. In other words, in the case of Penghu's casino development, partisanship has no influence on residents' support intention in referenda on local issues such as casino establishment, which affects only a limited number of residents. Consequently, residents supporting a party do not necessarily support what the party stands for, and the choice between "Yes" or "No" in a referendum was plausibly made on a rational assessment of the policies rather than demonstrating political ideological differences.

Past behavior was assessed by an examination of its moderating effect on intention within the context of the TPB model and found to be statistically significant in discriminating between the “Yes” and “No” groups in predicting via subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, respectively. The finding was inconsistent with the argument of Ajzen (1988) that it is very unlikely that one would repeat the same choice or behavior in the near future just because one made or performed it in the past. However, the results of this study indicated that previous voting choice did influence residents’ support intention in future casino referenda.

## ***5.2 Practical Implications***

The 2009 casino referendum was challenged by a spectrum of political, academic, religious, and community groups who criticized the government for failing to identify and assess the impacts which influenced residents’ overall attitudes toward the permitting of casino development in their hometown. Residents had to vote on approving casinos without first knowing how much money derived from casino profit would annually be allocated to their community and whether there were foreseeable financial benefits for individuals. Our study results plausibly showed that economic contribution of casinos such as the case of Macau probably reflects what most residents of Penghu want. It is worth pointing out here that the legislatures, the central and the local government shall assure residents of what economic benefits the host communities and Penghu residents can expect to receive. It seemed that Penghu would not endorse the idea of casino gaming development unless the anticipated economic benefits, such as outside investment, tourism revenue, additional revenue for local businesses, and additional tax revenue for local government, as reflected in the perceived economic impacts from our study, are clearly stipulated by law and /or attached in the development Act. It is critically important that governments and all relevant stakeholders strategically cooperate

with industrial operators to work out a feasible and reasonable profit distribution plan to decide how much profit as well as tax revenue are to be contributed and allocated to the local community by the casinos on an annual basis.

While significant benefits flow in from casino development, there is also a need to identify and evaluate the negative social and environmental impacts associated with casinos which affect local people adversely. Residents looked at casinos as the drivers of societal and environmental problems which would negatively affect their daily lives. This study found that residents worried that their precious traditional culture and environment would be endangered if there were a casino. High-spending casino guests are thought to negatively affect the residents' life style and the gaming development could lead to an increase of gambling addicts and environmental destructions. Traditional culture consists of the beliefs and practices held or observed by specific human groups that have been passed down from their ancestors through their grand-parents, parents and the society around them. It is possible to ease the worry about losing traditional culture by conducting culture-related activities and practices either by stakeholders or by the local governments to create and to promote meaningful works to help preserve traditional culture.

Of all the social impacts, the link between casinos and crimes has received the most attention. It was believed that casinos would impose on the community the fear of crime and of being victimized, which was particularly related to problem gambling behavior. Assuming that this is likely to be the case under most circumstances, sensible law enforcement and regulation are needed to overcome the communal fear or sense of unease associated with casino-related crimes. The increase in crime may or may not be related to the availability of gambling. Nevertheless, effective control of casino-related crimes is inevitable and it depends on a high standard of integrity and regulations as evident in many established gaming jurisdictions such as Nevada and Macau.

However, somewhat ironically, policymakers always wait for failure to determine on how to effectively manage casino gaming and how to reduce potential harm to society (Hayward & Colman, 2004) and environmental degradation caused by casinos. In this regard, the government authorities and casino operators could take necessary and appropriate measure to impose regulations on entry levy, excessive gaming of citizens, casino-related loan shark, prostitutions and environment protection. Through law and regulatory enforcement, casino-related crimes shall be kept at a lowest possible level and the casino industry will become the most highly regulated industries in the Island.

Casino development projects can also have unintended detrimental effects on the environment. Although social and economic impacts were thoroughly debated, the environmental impacts of the casino rarely appeared on the list of primary concerns, nor was there in-depth discussion of the subject during the referendum process in Penghu. On various occasions, the destruction of natural resources, coastline pollution, and traffic problems received attention from environmentalists, who protested against environmental degradation caused by casinos (*Taipei Times*, September 27, 2009). Thus, it is necessary to implement laws regulating mitigation measures and identify the coordination necessary to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts on the environment, protected resources, and communities. It is also important to define the responsibilities and actions required to maintain compliance with environmental regulations during construction and respond to problem situations or public concerns within the project area.

It is also important to note that attitude was the most significant factor in determining residents' support intention in future casino referenda and shall be paid the most attention in gaining support from residents. The idea is quite simple: people will vote yes if they perceived more benefits than the costs or, conversely, they would vote no if they did not (Clarke, Kornberg & Stewart, 2004).



Besides, residents' perception of personal benefits, including increased job opportunities, economic benefits, and improvement of living conditions, were closely associated with their support for casino gaming development. After all, in the Penghu casino case, the referendum was not decided purely by government bodies or specific interest groups; on the contrary, the residents were in a position to make the final decision. As stated by Andereck, Valentine, Vogt and Knopf (2007), residents who benefit from and are knowledgeable about the positive impacts of casinos are willing to learn about the industry and, ultimately, support its development in a community. Therefore, personal benefits and societal wellbeing resulting from casinos shall be communicated to and fairly distributed among all community members (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Determining residents' perception of the impacts and their needs and wants required the participation of local residents in the decision-making procedure, enabling the legislators, authorities, and both central and district governments not only identify the economic, social, and environmental impacts, and personal benefits locals want, but also put in place suitable institutional, organizational, and industrial-specific mechanisms for allowing thoughtful judgments and fair representation of opinions about the casino development.

In the case of casino development in Penghu, the moderation effect of partisanship on residents' support intention across parties did not approach statistical significance. This finding indicates that partisanship is not the major means of influencing residents' support intention in the minds of most Taiwanese. When examining whether residents would repeat the same choice on future referenda for casino development, 74.6% indicated that they will vote the same while 25.4% stood neutral. This result indicated that the main driving force could focus on changing neutral stance to enhance support in future casino referenda, as the "Yes" and "No" groups showed significant differences in their subject norms and perceived behavioral control regarding their support for casino gaming

development in Penghu. Particularly, the findings of the study provide something clear and specific to which stakeholders can respond and have a thorough understanding of what stakeholders have to offer to the community and to the individuals. It helps stakeholders grasp both the possibilities and constraints of the decision making process so that they understand the effort to which they are being asked to contribute. Moreover, the study helps focus stakeholders' attention on what are practically adaptable solutions in developing future casino gaming policies, particularly there has been some call for another referendum for casino gaming development in Penghu in the future (Taipei Times, 2015).

### ***5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study***

Limitations to the study should be noted. First, the location of this study limited the generalizability of the results to the small and offshore island only. However, the findings of residents' perception can be used to understand the approval of casino development in future referenda as a whole. Second, in the questionnaire survey, response bias is difficult to avoid (Watt & van der Berg, 2002). To compensate for the potential response bias, the for/against ratio of the actual vote in 2009 was compared with the study survey results. It was found that the ratio was quite similar. Third, this study used only residents lived in Penghu at time of survey as respondents. In fact, there were eligible voters residing in Island of Taiwan who turned out to vote in the referendum. The study's result may have been different had these voters not been excluded from the sampling. Last, regretfully, this study could not consider media influence due to the unavailability of the relevant information more than three years after the casino referendum.

Directions for future studies are provided. It is suggested that the qualitative technique could adopted for future research as it could offer additional insight to understand resident perceptions

to casino development. Furthermore, media content could also play a critical role in providing information in shaping voters opinion and beliefs. In this sense, the effects of media exposure must be analyzed during the campaigning period before a referendum vote is held. Finally, although TPB variables predict behavioral intention, intention does not necessarily reflect actual behavior. It is therefore suggested that future studies could also examine residents' support intention before a referendum and the actual vote cast, to identify the possible reasons for the discrepancy between the intended and the actual vote.

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