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傳播實習對傳播學系學生的生涯決策自我效能及職涯選擇的影響

Influence of internship on the career decision-making self-efficacy and  
career choice among communication students

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## 摘要

為了跟上行業不斷發展的步伐，培養未來的專業人才，傳播教育一直強調學習實踐經驗，因此傳播專業的學生往往被鼓勵參加校外實習，以儘早接觸和了解傳播產業的工作，累積實務經驗；而業界和學術界以往的討論主要集中在培訓和實習項目的設計上，希望這些項目能促使學生在畢業後留在傳播領域工作。

本研究考察了實習設計和實習滿意度與傳播專業學生生涯決策自我效能和職業選擇之間的實證聯繫，以 Hackett 和 Betz (1981) 的生涯決策自我效能為理論基礎，對台灣傳播專業的大學生進行問卷調查。研究結果表明，實習對培養學生的生涯決策自我效能和影響他們未來加入傳播產業的職業選擇具有重要價值；此外研究還發現，實習項目設計中的導師指導是學生對實習體驗滿意度的重要促進因素。最後此研究在分析結果的基礎上，討論了設計傳播實習項目的相關意義和建議。



## ABSTRACT

To stay up with the ever-evolving industry and to nurture future professionals, communication education has been emphasizing the learning of practical experiences. In particular, communication students are often encouraged to participate in off-campus internships to gain an early exposure to the industry and to develop real-world experiences. Previous discussion by the industry and academia centered on the design of trainings and internship programs in hopes that these would lead to students' intentions to stay in the field of communication after graduation.

The current study examined the empirical link between internship design and internship satisfaction on career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice of communication majors. Using Hackett and Betz's (1981) career decision-making self-efficacy as the theoretical foundation, a survey was conducted among college students with communication-relevant majors in Taiwan. The findings demonstrated the value of internship on building students' career decision-making self-efficacy and influencing their prospective career choice to join the industry. Additionally, it was found that mentorship in the design of internship programs is a significant contributing factor to students' satisfaction with their internship experience. Based on the findings, relevant implications and recommendations for the design of communication internship programs were discussed.

**Keywords:** Communication education, internship, internship satisfaction, career decision-making self-efficacy, career choice

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	7
1.1 CURRENT SITUATION OF TAIWAN UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATION PROGRAM.....	7
1.2 CURRENT SITUATION OF INTERNSHIP IN TAIWAN COMMUNICATION EDUCATION.....	9
1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY .....	11
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
2.1 INTERNSHIP .....	13
2.2 PRACTICAL EDUCATION IN COMMUNICATION .....	21
2.3 CAREER DECISION-MAKING SELF-EFFICACY .....	26
2.4 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....	31
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY .....	32
3.1 RESEARCH STRUCTURE .....	32
3.2 SAMPLES .....	32
3.3 MEASURES .....	34
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS .....	40
4.1 GENERAL FINDINGS ON INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE .....	40
4.2 HYPOTHESES TESTING.....	44
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	48
5.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS ON COMMUNICATION INTERNSHIP IN TAIWAN.....	48
5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS ON COMMUNICATION INTERNSHIP IN TAIWAN.....	50
5.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.....	51
ENGLISH REFERENCES .....	53
CHINESE REFERENCES .....	61



## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In light of the constantly evolving communication and media industry, communication educators have been thinking on the significance of combining theory and practice in communication work throughout years. Some questions were therefore raised regarding the relationship between academia and practice: can academic and practical training in communication education equip students for future communication work environments? How does the communication internship experience, as a link between academia and practice, enable students to reflect on their learning? Do internships truly equip communication graduates for the challenges of the real world?

The ability to be “competitive” has become a criterion for judging the overall competence of communications students in today's increasingly competitive communications industry, and this “competitiveness” includes not only the mastery of professional knowledge, but also the ability of students to handle matters and a sense of responsibility for their work (Hume, 2007). Internship appeared to be more of a catalyst for students to reconsider their future path than a pre-employment training activity to increase their competitiveness and prepare them for the workplace. As a result, this study sought to investigate the impact of students' internship design to their career development, as well as how the communication internship experience, in addition to providing a path for practical experience in the field, has contributed to the career decision-making self-efficacy for students in the communication school, as well as the clarification of their own learning and future.

### 1.1 Current Situation of Taiwan University Communication Program

Taiwan's higher education has become more focused on adaptive learning and admissions in recent years, with the goal of reducing the number of cases where students' studies do not match their career aspirations, and thus encouraging universities to use selection rather than examination-based admissions to increase students' autonomy in choosing their disciplines (Kuo, 2022) [In Chinese]. In recent years, communication disciplines remain popular aspirations in Taiwanese university admission examinations. In this regard, the study believe it is important to investigate how the communication

curriculum might be designed to better suit students' aspirations to work as communication professionals after graduation.

In addition to the conventional communication disciplines of journalism and advertising, communication schools in Taiwan have grown in terms of both students and scales, as well as the range of communication disciplines, throughout the years. According to the Ministry of Education's "List of Universities and Colleges for the 111th Academic Year" (2022) [In Chinese], 24 departments (12.8%) have the department named "communication" and "mass communication," while other common department names include "journalism" and "public relations and advertising." In response to technology advancements and the maturation of digital technology, there are also a number of communication technology-related departments, such as "information communication," "graphic communication" and "digital multimedia communication." Sub-disciplines such as "communication management," "speech communication and social media," "radio, television and film" have arisen in response to the rising division of labor in the media sector.

Due to the educational objective of preparing journalists for print media in the past, such as newspapers and magazines, editing and interviewing classes were initially positioned at the center of Taiwan's communication curriculum, and this is still the case today. Professional technology courses in communication departments have evolved along with how communication is now conducted. Thus, schools have gradually introduced fundamental courses in audio-visual production, multimedia production, as well as related disciplines like digital narratives and news curation. Chen (1999) [In Chinese] argued that, in order to prepare students for careers in particular industries, many Asian institutions sometimes over-specialize their communication programs in terms of departmental structures and the difficulty of professional courses. The rapid advances in contemporary information technology, the communication sectors, and professions, however, are at odds with this over-specialization. Since before and after the 1990s, communication departments have been developed in Taiwan, indicating a strong academic concentration, but the ongoing preference for practical skills in the curriculum seems to highlight the conflict between the two (Ha, 2002) [In Chinese].



Given the overemphasis on practice in the communication curriculum, Chen (1999) [In Chinese] proposed that educators actively experiment with various teaching approaches, including problem-based teaching, in order to improve the level and efficacy of practical education. Chung, Tsang, and Chen (1996) [In Chinese] believed that while communication education has historically placed a greater emphasis on the dissemination of "expository information," students' practical experience is still insufficient to fulfill the demands of the real world. After all, there is a significant practical focus in communication education. The university-industry collaboration, in addition to the fixed theoretical foundation courses taught by teachers, is a crucial "bridge" in university communication education (Hsu, 2007) [In Chinese]. It not only enables students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned to practical workplace skills in a "similar" setting, but it also encourages them to think creatively and strengthens the repetitive thinking training philosophy. In recent years, communication schools in Taiwan encourage students to take an internship in order to apply what they have learned in the classroom, develop valuable network, make sure career choices, and enrich resumes and portfolios.

## **1.2 Current Situation of Internship in Taiwan Communication Education**

To implement the theoretical and practical components of communication education, the communication schools frequently integrate a variety of practical training mechanisms into its theoretical courses. This includes on-campus media labs, cooperative education and off-campus internship program. To highlight the concepts of this study, a quick comparison of the various programs that bridge theory and practice is provided below.

The media lab created by the communication schools are typically run and managed by the university or student organizations themselves. This enables the schools to use the media labs to arrange organized educational programs in line with the academic objectives (Tsang et. al, 2001). Because the main goal of media internships on campus is to help educate, environmental factors are frequently controlled and students are not under pressure to make profits or take political positions, allowing students to enjoy the greatest amount of freedom, which can be considered the ideal working

environment for media. Despite integrating theoretical and practical training, the media lab is still a long way from the real media work environment for students (Tsang et. al, 2001).

On the other hand, the main objective of cooperative education is to foster collaboration between academia and industry in education and training, with a focus on the creation of economic value. As a result, the focus of cooperative education research is frequently on quantitative criteria such as the rate of actual employment and the growth in economic value. The practical value of industry-academia collaborations for students is significantly bigger than the development of academic skills (Wilson, 1970).

Internship serves as a bridge between academic study and real-world application in the educational sense. Because internship is the main focus of this study, the definitions and benefits of internship will be addressed further in the literature review chapter.

Internship programs, whether in journalism, integrated marketing communication, or multimedia, advance the knowledge and abilities of communication education (Daugherty, 2011). The most significant advantage of using internship as part of the learning process for communication students is that it allows them to become independent learners return to school from internship, regardless of how communication departments organize their internship programs or how the communication industry evolves. Through the practical experience of the internship, students reflect on what they have learnt and reinterpret the meaning and direction of learning in order to promote self-directed learning (Tsang et. al, 2001) [In Chinese].

The Taipei City Employment Services Office (2016) [In Chinese] conducted a survey on youth between the ages of 15 and 29 with internship intention. More than half (57.69%) of participants who majored in communication had internship experience, placing them third overall among departments and under "medicine and health" and "education," where internships were required for graduation. Only 17.31% of them completed an internship as a prerequisite for graduation. The survey result indicated that many communication students complete internships voluntarily.

For most students, internships are the only opportunity to get industry work experience before

stepping into the workforce. Internship effectively enhance students' practical skills so that they can obtain a grasp of how the communication-related work operates and pave the path for their eventual entry into the communication industry. However, students are frequently required to return to school to complete their studies after completing their internships, so the experience gained during the internship is not only relevant to their future career choices, but also a key guide for them to adjust the direction of their studies in school. If students feel incompetent or lacking in knowledge in a particular area as a result of their experience in the communication industry, they should be able to strengthen their earlier weaknesses when they return to school, so that they are fully equipped before entering the workforce.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

Communication students' internship experiences are integrated with their learning path as they study at a higher education institution. If the main objective of communication education is to develop graduates who will become the future talents of the communication industry, this study intends to investigate how the current academic and practical curriculum design may be improved, as well as what function off-campus internship programs, which give students first-hand exposure to practical communication work, play in the learners' knowledge landscape.

Since there is limited communication research on how internship design influences students' career choice, this study endeavor to concentrate on communication students' career decision-making self-efficacy as well as their career choice to enter the communication industry after internship, with an emphasis on the design of off-campus communication internship program by conducting quantitative research with the communication students in Taiwan. This study's research objectives are as follows.

1. To investigate communication students' internship experiences.
2. To discover whether communication students intend to pursue a career in communication following their internship.
3. To investigate how internship design (salary and mentorship) influences internship experience and career choices of communication students.
4. To investigate the role of internships in the career choice making process of communication students with the use of career decision-making self-efficacy.



## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Internship

Internships have been increasingly popular among universities in recent years, since they are regarded as an integral part of university education. In general, internship is a short-term position intended to fill the gap between possible employment and education and allow students to engage with and learn from professionals in the industry (Kapareliotis et. al, 2019). The National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIIEE) defines an internship as a carefully thought-out, mentored, and supervised job or service that allows students to accomplish and apply learning objectives through the experience (Giannopoulou et. al, 2020). Students can bridge the knowledge gap between what they have learnt in school and how to use it in the workplace by taking part in an internship (Coco, 2000).

Internship education is becoming increasingly significant in the design of higher education programs, particularly in disciplines such as medicine, nursing, architecture, and accounting, which demand a high level of professional skills and frequently require students to learn about real-life job through practical employment. There are other fields that demand experience as well, including business, education, and hotel services. These fields all require internship to give students the chance to gain experience before taking on these responsibilities themselves and to identify their own weaknesses so they can strengthen and become more competent in their future professional applications (Coco, 2000; Gault et. al, 2000).

This study defines internship as the process of students' involvement in workplace learning in off-campus organizations (including the public, private, and nonprofit sectors) during their study period.

#### **Internship and Professional Training**

The "learn from doing" characteristic of internship can help students learn effectively. Learning is a fundamental process in human life, particularly in today's fiercely competitive world, where ongoing education is necessary to stay current with social change and preserve one's competitiveness.

When it comes to the most effective method of learning, American educationalist John Dewey (1938) was the one who put the greatest emphasis on learning by doing, who emphasized that real knowledge must be applied because it is the transforming experience of solving problems and that the interaction between people and their environment is the source of knowledge. Dewey (1938) used the term "experience" to describe both what men do and how they act, as well as the notion that while acting, one also reviews and makes changes, increasing the reflective thought process and resulting in the initial unreflective experience. The simple, non-reflective experience is transformed into a richer, more reflective one that the students choose to have rather than the teacher forcing it on them. Therefore, the goal of internship education is to allow students to validate what they have learned, recognize their own professional constraints, and reflect on what they are lacking when they return to school. Students will be able to confirm their knowledge, recognize their professional constraints, and reflect on them in order to return to school and make up for their weaknesses (Coco, 2000).

It is also critical to put internship experience and abilities to use, because that is where the true value of education lies. According to D'abate et. al (2009), students attending business schools have studied a lot of theory but lack practical experience and are therefore unable to perform work successfully. Internship is regarded as a link between academic theory and the real world, which helps students build professional competence. They also have a good effect on students returning to school, for example, stronger communication skills and confidence are reflected in their performance at school (Taylor, 1988). Previous studies have revealed that case studies and standard lecture courses do not have the same motivational impact on students as internship (Hite & Bellizzi, 1986). It also encourages students to acquire an interest in certain fields of study, giving them the option of continuing their studies or switching tracks (Gamboa et. al, 2013), which raises the grade point average of students who have internship experience (Coco, 2000). Therefore, internship provides students with real-world learning experience that they can apply to their future studies and jobs (Gault et. al, 2000).

Internship, on the other hand, allow students to identify their career interests, ultimately leads to a higher employability after graduation. The human capital theory (Schultz, 1961) suggests

that gaining more professional knowledge through education and job-related training, like internship, is beneficial not only for knowledge satisfaction but also for building up productive stock for the future, which advances one's career prospects as well as potential employment. In the tertiary education sector, it is frequently more motivating and engaging for students to firsthand experience the workplace, and internship is structured to take into account both work and learning, so that interns can learn and connect with what they have learned, both on and off the job (Gault et. al, 2000). Additionally, internship has a beneficial effect on a person's social and personal effectiveness. Students are also concerned that the internship will expose them to the job market more, and that by studying the job market, they will become more competitive in the workplace and have more job satisfaction since they will be well-suited and adjusted for it (D'abate et. al, 2009).

Internship assists students with career planning, which further explains the usefulness of internship in boosting students' employability. Although there are many other factors that influence how beneficial internship is, it is evident from numerous debates that career identification is internship's main objective (Neapolitan, 1992; Parilla & Hesser, 1998). Hite and Bellizzil (1986) discovered that interaction with industry professionals helped students establish their career goals, had a big impact on their decision about future career path, and reduced their anxiety about the future. Those who are just starting to explore their interests have the chance to get exposed to many workplace elements, including a variety of organizational kinds and job descriptions, which not only helps them grow professional knowledge but also helps them to develop vocational self-concept and work values (Taylor, 1988). For those who have already set their goals, internship serves as a method to put what they have learned to use, gain practical experience, establish their aspirations, as well as make the most of their education by gaining practical experience and making professional connections (O'Neill, 2010). This assists students in achieving their short- and long-term career goals, as well as, in some circumstances, entering industries to which they have never been exposed before and changing their career path entirely.

Therefore, the first hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H1: Internship experience is positively related to career decision-making self-efficacy.

When it comes to the data from the real world on how internship assists students find graduate jobs, NACE (2014) studied university students with internship experience and discovered that those with internship experience obtained jobs faster on average, with a difference of at least 12-15 percent between graduates with and without internship experience from 2011 to 2014. This trend is much more prevalent in US business schools, where as many as 30% to 50% of graduates go on to work for their former internship company. Those with no internship experience are less likely or take longer to land a permanent position, and are often rejected during the first round of interviews. Those having internship experience are significantly more likely to get hired than the average graduate, and they are more likely to be promoted to a permanent position and receive a higher starting wage. This makes finding a suitable internship and future career opportunities an increasingly delicate challenge in the race for youth employment.

Internship has become a popular topic in education research fields regarding their characteristics as well as impact on students' professional development. Ocampo et. al (2020) studied whether internship participation enhances career adaptability over time and whether interns' conscientiousness promotes faster career adaptability development in China. Analysis of growth mixture modeling data found that all career adaptability variables rose linearly over time following internship involvement, providing direct evidence for the long-term and favorable effects of internship participation on career adaptability. Gamboa et. al (2013) used a longitudinal approach to investigate the association between work experience quality and students' vocational development in a sample of Portuguese high school students. The findings imply that students' vocational development is influenced by the quality of their work experience. All other internship characteristics were single significant predictors of career exploration during the internship term, with the exception of supervisor training.



## **Internship (job) Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a positive emotion that arises from the work experience and considers various job components such as job variability, job characteristics, feedback, collegiality, job opportunities, and so on (Weiss, 2002). Additionally, it is a comprehensive evaluation of the employee's job that is influenced by the employee's roles, motivation system, work environment, and management system (D'abate et. al, 2009)).

Job satisfaction is a key concern that has been extensively researched by many scholars in a variety of work-related topics, including turnover intention (Bartol, 1979; Ghiselli et. al, 2001; French et al, 2020), mental health (Haar et. al, 2014), and performance (Bowling, 2007; Hochwarter et. al, 1999; Norris & Niebuhr, 1984). As a result, the researchers found that enhancing job satisfaction may assist organizations minimize turnover, increase employee mental health, and improve job performance. Mirvis and Lawler (1977) studied staff attitudes toward work using the concept of cost accounting and discovered that increasing the job satisfaction of bank cashiers could save banks up to US\$125,000 per year, demonstrating a positive correlation between increased job satisfaction and improved organizational effectiveness.

Job satisfaction in internship is correlated with how well it prepares students for the job market and assists in accurately predicting career choices following graduation (Chen et. al, 2018). D'abate et. al (2009) concluded that the main indicators of internship satisfaction were job characteristics (particularly, task relevance and feedback) and work environment characteristics (such as training and mentorship). Rogers et al. (2021) utilized human resource management and volunteering theories to suggest that unpaid interns have poorer internship satisfaction than paid interns because unpaid interns have lower levels of job design. The study by Beebe et al. (2009), however, showed that when rating their internship satisfaction, public relations students agreed acquiring work skills, having a positive connection with supervisor, and having the opportunity to advance higher rankings than pay. Moreover, the research by Liu (2021) affirmed that job design is highly connected with students' internship satisfaction and is thereafter positively correlated with intentions to retain at the current job.

## **Internship: Salary**

Compensation for student interns in the communication field is a frequently debated topic, both in academics and in industry. With a survey of Journalism students' attitudes after finishing an internship, Basow and Byrne (1992) found that receiving salaries in an internship increases students' sense of educational preparation. With a survey of 290 public relations students, Beebe et al. (2009) discovered that participants self-reported greater levels of satisfaction with paid internships than with unpaid ones. Senat et. al (2020) conducted a study on the attitudes and practices regarding unpaid student internships from the perspective of communication programs. Advisors for bachelor's degrees are more likely to consider academic credit as a suitable substitute for monetary remuneration. Regarding students' thoughts on unpaid internship in general, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) completed a student survey in 2014 and discovered that unpaid internships provided minimal advantage over no internships, and that graduates without internships had somewhat higher starting salary than those with unpaid internships. Furthermore, respondents to the NACE survey in 2010 believed that unpaid internships were an indication of employers were taking advantage of students and that they were discriminatory towards underprivileged students who could not afford to work for nothing. This research will examine the outcomes of both paid and unpaid communication internships in terms of career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice to see if communication students who have completed internships in Taiwan have the same opinions as the survey results. Consequently, the second hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H2: Communication students are more satisfied with a paid internship than with an unpaid one.

## **Internship: Mentorship**

Mentorship, on the other hand, was explored by some previous studies, whether in internship or at the junior stage of communication career. Eby et al. (2013) suggested that there are various types of mentorships depending on the circumstances: youth mentoring, academic mentoring and workplace mentoring. This study particularly looks into workplace mentoring, which refers to the mentor

assisting the apprentice in integrating into the organization's culture, offering opportunities for career development, counseling and aiding in problem-solving, and serving as a role model for the apprentice. The mentor typically offers the apprentice support and encouragement and acknowledges the trainee's good attitude toward work, which improves the apprentice's career development and lessens the intention to quit (Eby et al., 2013). The research by Rose et al. (2014) of 303 intern-supervisor dyads provides proof that the interactions between the two influenced the interns' performance, learning opportunities, and job satisfaction.

Professional organizations for media and communication education, such as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), frequently offer professional development programming opportunities, which including mentoring and training, whereby students can establish connections with the communication profession outside of their schools (Crawford et. al, 2020). Somani and Tyree (2021) suggested that mentorship is the key of African American broadcast journalists' career success by providing psychological and vocational support. There is, however, no research analyzing the influence of mentoring in communication internship to students' career choice. Thus, the third hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H3: Communication students are more satisfied with internships that offer mentoring than those that do not.

### **Internship: Related Studies in Communication**

In the communication discipline, Daugherty (2011) indicated that beginning in the mid-1970s, studies on the importance of internship programs for communication students began to appear frequently in academic journals. Some topics include recommended guidelines for internship (Ware, 1977), internship contract (Ware, 1975), the importance of a rigorous screening process for internship (Fedler & O'Keefe, 1977), the merits of requiring internship (Femmel, 1978), and credit for internship courses (Cowdin, 1978). Researchers have also looked into how communication internship affect students. Bourland-Davis et al. (1997) examined the internship experience of public relations students

by studying 102 student and discovered that students needed a variety of skills, including interpersonal, technical, and planning skills. Beard & Morton (1998) surveyed 193 students majoring in public relations and concluded that positive attitude of treating internship as real jobs is highly correlated to successful internships. Daugherty (2011) sought to identify the underlying expectations and perspectives of the internship experience for two groups of participants: 223 public relations interns and 183 site supervisors, arguing that students desired greater skill development and hands-on training, whilst site supervisors regarded their role as more holistic by introducing students to the public relations field.

The effect of communication education on students' employment choices has been studied in Taiwan among students. According to research by Zhang et. al (2015) [In Chinese], course satisfaction was a significant predictor of students' intention to pursue communication as a career for the rest of their lives. This finding raises the possibility that communication education influences students' career perceptions and career decisions on various levels. Tsang et. al (2001) [In Chinese] investigated the internship courses in school publications at National Chengchi University and discovered that the internship experience in school publications influenced students' career plans through practical learning. Although there is presently no Taiwanese study that focuses on how do internship influence the career planning process of communication students, these results imply that the field of communication education has a role in encouraging students to consider their future career objectives.

In summary, students with internship experience had more direction in their job search, were more capable of finding employment prior to graduation, had prior knowledge of the labor market as well as their own interests and abilities, and had immediate access to resources for the job that allowed them to demonstrate their problem-solving skills to potential employers, which resulted in higher career opportunities as well as going on to have more successful careers and higher salaries. However, prior studies have not comprehensively investigated the extent to which internship design influences communication students' learning and career development process, so this study aims to fill the gap of literature regarding the influence of communication internship design to student's career choice.

## 2.2 Practical Education in Communication

Communication education, which is already oriented toward practice, has been driven to emphasize the application of practical skills due to market pressure. Previous research in journalism and public relations has indicated that communication schools have historically existed with the explicit goal of training practitioners. Although communication theories are taught in great depth in communication education, academic knowledge does not always reflect the needs of the actual world. The researchers, therefore, suggested that in addition to the technical aspects of the subject matter, communication education should also cover the theories, values and framework (Reese & Cohen, 2000). Communication educators are continuously striving to strike a balance between academia and practice because, while communication education aims to develop students' analytical and critical thinking capabilities, they must also be trained in communication work skills (Chan, 1996). As a result, communication schools offer a number of courses to develop professional knowledge and work skills, allowing students interested in working in professional communication to connect with the market and hope to be qualified for entry-level positions in the sector after graduation (Holmes et. al, 2022).

In order to discover how communication education could well be improved to solve the existing challenges with university-based learning, Hume (2007) conducted a worldwide study on the present condition of media and journalism education. He claimed that no single educational paradigm is used in Asia or Africa, despite the fact that enrollment rates in media institutions are rising quickly. Communication instructors face a dual challenge, according to Tapsall (2007, as cited in Hume, 2007): first, keeping up with the quickly changing media landscape; and second, explaining the world's significant changes to their students. The challenge facing by communication teachers is how to educate young communication practitioners for an industry that is undergoing rapid transition (Pavlik, 2000).

From a practical perspective, communication education is commonly based on the goal of preparing future communication professionals and comprises both practical and fundamental theoretical courses in communication (Deuze, 2006; Chan, 1996). It is typical for communication

schools to indicate that their' educational goals and objectives include nurturing modern communication professionals, providing both theoretical and practical communication training, and striving to attract students interested in a career in communication and media as a cradle for communication practitioners, demonstrating their significant practical application (Blom & Davenport, 2012). Students pursuing that specific communication field must take relevant practical courses in addition to communication theories and research related courses, which is in line with the goals of communication institutions to develop and hone students' practical skills (Blom & Davenport, 2012). Furthermore, as technology has altered the way communication is delivered, professional technology courses in communication departments have followed suit, with institutions establishing basic courses in audio-visual and multimedia production, as well as coursework in digital creativity and design, and new media fields. Therefore, the emphasis on "learning by doing" in communication schools has shifted from newspaper publishing to new television and radio stations and, more recently, to internet media in order to educate students for a media convergence environment (Holmes et. al, 2022).

In addition to practical coursework, it is common for communication schools to establish media labs, hire teachers to teach, or foster industry-academia collaboration to cultivate talents. These media labs demonstrate the communication school's objective that "learning by doing" is an essential part of the curriculum. Situated learning, which is an extension of "learning by doing," was proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991). This situational learning theory emphasizes that learning comes first in the classroom and that students actively participate in exploration in the outside world while also interacting with the people, places, and objects there in order to create meaningful cooperative learning and ultimately benefit the society. The scholars believed that students build their own knowledge while in the environment, either by direct participation or manipulation of the situation.

Therefore, communication schools encourage students to take advantage of a variety of off-campus internship to augment their study by offering credit courses even requiring internship as part of the graduation requirement. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) passed a decision in 1978 approving academic credit for internship, up

to 10% of the total amount of academic credit that may be acquired for the major (Basow & Byrne, 1992). When analyzing the policies and practices of such programs, early authors usually concentrated on an academic sequence at their own schools (Fedler & O'Keefe, 1977). Afterward, researchers broadened the scope of their research to include institutions other than their own, but they frequently concentrated on internship issues specific to particular academic programs, such as public relations (Gibson, 1998), advertising (Kendrick et. al, 2010; Yoo & Morris, 2015), and broadcasting (Meeske, 1988).

The popularity of internship was further supported by a recent study of 10,482 alumni from 22 renowned journalism schools in the United States, which revealed that 70% had participated in at least one internship while an undergraduate (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). Moreover, numerous employer surveys and task force reports have shown the significance of students doing a communications-related internship while enrolled in college (Folkerts, 2014). Gaining professional experience through internship has the opportunity to propel a recent graduate's CV to the top of the pile because media employers in the United States frequently look for candidates for full-time positions who have previous work or internship experience (Hilt & Lipschultz, 1996; Gault et. al, 2000). Internship in the discipline of communication expose students to the field and help them build transferable skills like writing, editing, and technology use (Daugherty, 2011). Additionally, they develop their critical thinking, creative thinking, and independent working skills as well as become accustomed to the fast-paced working environment in real-world work settings (Daugherty, 2011). These are all beneficial industry experiences that are challenging to obtain in the classroom or through school media.

In conclusion, communication education is more applicable than other fields such as humanities and social science, therefore the connection to the real world is a crucial topic that is frequently discussed and argued (Blom & Davenport, 2012). Although with strong industry-academia collaboration, learning about communication in a classroom setting will always differ from doing it in the real world. As the pace of curriculum development is inevitably too slow to keep up with the rapid changes in technology, a practically focused curriculum not only calls into question the status of

communication in university education but also turns it into the main topic of academic debate (Holmes et. al, 2022). In addition to the rapid changes in the communication industry driven by technology and the evolving economic and social environment, communication education will be unable to keep up, thus it is crucial to evaluate the objectives of communication education in this new era (Deuze, 2006; Gillmor, 2016).

### **The Professionalism of Communication**

This session will investigate the debate over the professionalism of communication practitioners, which is raging in both communication education research and industry.

Professionalism is evaluated from the standpoint of occupational sociology over years, according to Larson (1977), and is "considered as a significant component determining the image, performance, and evolution of an occupation." Therefore, the idea of "professionalism" is consistent with the historical development of society and the community's value perception system; that is, the "profession" recognized by society must be in line with the society's value consensus, meaning that a person is a "professional" if they have specialized knowledge or skills in a field that are in line with the prevailing opinion of the society.

Whether communication practitioners are true professionals or merely semi-professionals are a topic of significant debate. The emergence and popularity of mass media has shaped the history of the communication profession, with journalism initially being an occupation and steadily evolving toward professionalism. Since communication education has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on practical skills, it is difficult to describe than professions like medical and law due to the diversity of the industry and the uncertainty of the knowledge system (Donsbach, 2014; Tumber & Prentoulis, 2005). This further implies that those who work in communication are not actually professionals because "professions are vehicles for specific types of scientifically fixed practices" (Brante, 2011). In other words, the communication profession can only be viewed as a relative profession (Donsbach, 2014). Although communication schools have been formed in universities around the world to train



practitioners, communication still lacks the prestige of traditional professions in terms of professional competence.

Much of the discussion about communicators' work has focused on journalism professionalism, such as the study of journalists' professionalism in order to comprehend practitioners' professional values and their performance. Folkerts (2014) argued that the journalism schools seek to accomplish two goals: to develop the critical thinking skills necessary of future journalists and to provide a concrete vision of what journalism should look like. Journalism, a field that places a strong emphasis on contingency, teaches as much about what journalism should be as it does about what journalism is because practitioners are expected to adhere to a rigid set of professional norms, including journalistic ethics and principles, in order to perform their responsibilities thoroughly. Reese (2001) suggested that there are still many professional qualities of journalism despite the fact that it differs from the traditional "profession" that calls for a license, such as the practice of ethical behavior expected of journalists and the respect of journalism for universal human values such as dignity and privacy. Following the growth of professionalism in the West, journalism study has turned its attention to the concept of "professionalism," which has changed along with the evolution of professional practice (Singer, 2003).

There are many various ways to define professionalism, but there is no denying that it has a strong idealistic practice and a consensus on a set of ideals. Professional journalists are required to possess a certain level of expertise in reporting and writing, which must be developed over time through sufficient experience to how journalists manage factual and critical information. This type of education and knowledge is not at all similar to that required for professions like law and medicine. Over 100 journalism education departments and professional groups in the United States agree, according to a survey of journalists and journalism students, that technical training and education are essential to the discipline's professionalism (Singer, 2003).

As discussed in previous sections, the primary goal of communication education around the world is to train future communication professionals, so incorporating both practical communication and

basic theoretical courses in the curriculum is common (Deuze, 2006), which is consistent with the survey results stating that technical training and education are essential to the discipline's professionalism. Since the purpose of an internship is to help students develop their practical skills so they can better understand how communication practitioners work and prepare for their eventual entry into the industry, schools are encouraged to include internship credits in the communication curriculum to encourage students to apply for (Zheng & Bluestein, 2021).

The perception of professional roles has influenced the connotations of professionalism for journalists, as well as those in the communications industry. This study intends to investigate the effects of internship on the career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice of communication students and analyze whether internship should be a required component of the communication curriculum in order to assess the significance and relevance of internship to communication studies.

### **2.3 Career Decision-making Self-efficacy**

The application of self-efficacy to the field of career is referred to as career decision-making self-efficacy, and Hackett and Betz (1981) were the first to apply the concept of self-efficacy to career choice and career development. Self-efficacy is based on Bandura's (1978) social cognitive theory, which contends that self-efficacy refers to a person's capacity, expectations, perceptions, and judgments about the course of action that he or she will take to successfully implement and achieve a specific goal, forming a preconception of self. Derived from self-efficacy, career decision-making self-efficacy refers to an individual's perceptions, beliefs and expectations of his or her ability to successfully complete a task during career development (Hackett & Betz, 1981), and emphasizes the interaction between environment, personal factors and individual behavior. It is believed that through the cognitive processes of individuals, their career-determining behavior can be moderated or adjusted. Taylor and Betz (1983) go on to state that career decision-making self-efficacy refers to a person's level of confidence in their ability to perform five job-related tasks, including appropriate self-assessment, career data collecting, goal selection, future plan building, and problem solving. This

suggests that one's level of confidence in handling and making decisions when presented with job challenges can be used to anticipate their own career based on a self-test (Luzzo & Day, 1999).

Because self-efficacy is the level of confidence in accomplishing a specific task or behavior and is the key to behavioral emergence and change, its value in career choice making lies in recognizing and anticipating the behaviors that will evolve during career development (Hackett & Betz, 1981). There are three basic approaches to examine how career decision-making self-efficacy affects the career decision (Diegelman & Subich, 2001; Lent et al., 2003; Pinguart et. al, 2003).

1. Career choice

Refers to decisions made about career-related activities. Career decision-making self-efficacy can influence people to pick or avoid particular career topics. For instance, while picking a course or career, individuals who are unconfident in their language ability may intentionally ignore these disciplines in favor of others.

2. Career performance

Refers to performance following selection. People who have strong career decision-making self-efficacy in a given area are less likely to have anxiety when dealing with that field and do better in work than those who have low efficacy. They perform better than individuals with lower levels of efficacy and are less likely to feel nervous.

3. Career persistence

Perseverance in the face of challenges or failures. When faced with challenges in their career development, people with high career decision-making self-efficacy are able to persevere and overcome them.

It is apparent that career decision-making self-efficacy has a substantial impact on an individual's career development, including the decisions they make regarding their future job, their performance after making those choices, and their persistence in the face of challenges. People who have a high sense of career decision-making self-efficacy are less anxious about their job decisions, perform better at work, and are more likely to stay when things become tough than those with low self-efficacy.

Therefore, enhancing a person's career decision-making self-efficacy in making career decisions will enable them to alter their career choices, performance, and persistence (Choi & Kim, 2013).

While the concept of "self-efficacy" is frequently brought up in the literature when discussing student learning outcomes and is common in the fields of arts education and sports education, literature examining the effectiveness of internships is more frequently found in the teaching placement of education studies. This study investigates the learning effects of communication internship education by using career decision-making self-efficacy to investigate how different internship designs influence communication students, with an aim to fill the gap in the literature on communication internship. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H4: Communication students who are more satisfied with their internships have a higher level of career decision-making self-efficacy.

### **Career Decision-making Self-efficacy: Related Studies**

Many prior studies have found a positive association between career decision-making self-efficacy and employability as well as career performance. Jantzer, Stalides, and Rottinghaus (2009) found that in a sample of 820 students, career decision-making self-efficacy improves career identification and the intention to continue in the target industry. To put it another way, students who have high levels of career decision-making self-efficacy in their ability to make career decisions exert more effort in the decision-making process, keep trying to overcome obstacles, and take a more active role in determining their career decisions, which increases their chances of success in the long run (Miller et. al, 2009).

In order to investigate the motivational factors that influence career choice, Rogers et al. (2011) employed a total of 631 high school students in grades 10 through 12 with the use of social cognitive career theory to confirm career planning and development. The study's findings indicate that career decision-making self-efficacy, career goals, and career support have a significant impact on career planning and growth. Personality and social environment also have an impact on career support, which

in turn influences the motivation for choosing a career. Students that are more outgoing, receive social support, are adaptable, have job experience, and have greater career planning and development tend to have higher career goals and confidence.

Ranta et. al (2020) conducted a study on 182 students active in student-run organizations to assess students' career decision-making self-efficacy (confidence) in performing 23 communication activities. It measures the amount of credit respondents give their student-run agency experiences for helping them reach that conclusion. The study reveals that by participating in student-run organizations, students polled said that their SRAs do/did well in promoting self-efficacy across a wide range of hard and soft abilities. For students seeking employment and once employed, a positive, career decision-making self-efficacy is a beneficial quality in figuring out how to accomplish the job more effectively and with better outcomes.

In conclusion, career decision-making self-efficacy refers to an individual's perception and assessment of his or her abilities in the organizational workplace, including whether they are able to solve problems appropriately when they arise, whether they are persistent and courageous in facing challenges, learning from successful experiences and failures in the process, and being ready to set work goals and handle more demands in the workplace. Because career decision-making self-efficacy is widely used in empirical studies in a variety of fields, this study employs the same concept to investigate its mediating effect of students' internship in career choice.

### **Self-efficacy and Career Choice**

Career choices are those that a person takes throughout their life while taking into account their skills, interests, and personality traits. The process of choosing a career is complicated and comprises a variety of work and career-related decisions that take into account a person's overall background. Additionally, the outcome of each career choice is influenced by both past and present employment decisions. Individuals must make job decisions based on the talents they possess and other characteristics that qualify them to enter the sector, and understanding students' career choices is

important not only for individual career development, but also for the competitiveness of society as a whole (Gianakos, 1999; Lent et al., 2003).

The association between a person's self-efficacy judgment and potential career choices is strong, with self-efficacy directly influencing a person's choice of goals and activities (Betz, 2004; Lent et al., 2000; Taylor & Betz, 1983). Self-efficacy has the greatest influence on profession choices in terms of predictability, scope, and initiative. In terms of predictability, self-efficacy can accurately predict a person's career choices (Bandura, 1986; Lent et al., 2008). In terms of scope, people with high self-efficacy have a positive attitude toward problem solving, a higher tolerance for overcoming obstacles, and a broader range of options; conversely, people with low self-efficacy doubt their ability to do the job and avoid careers that they do not believe they are capable of, which tends to narrow the range of career options (Bandura, 1986). In terms of initiative, self-efficacy influences an individual's propensity to put in more effort and persistence in overcoming career challenges (Bandura, 1986).

In general, people associate "I am good at this thing" with "I also like doing this thing." These thoughts about their own skills and aspirations for benefits in the future. It will encourage people to keep investing, which will lead to interest developing and a tendency for them to select the job they are interested in (Lent et al., 1999; Jin et. al, 2009). On the other hand, low self-efficacy and negative outcome beliefs will let people be averse to and avoid certain activities, which will cause them to exclude those activities from their range of employment options (Brown & Lent, 1996).

In short, career decision-making self-efficacy is widely discussed by a wide range of studies with its positive influence on career choices. Hence, the last hypothesis is delineated as follow:

H5: Communication students with stronger career decision-making self-efficacy are more likely to choose a job in the communication industry.

## 2.4 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review chapter describes the current state of communication education in general and in Taiwan in particular, as well as the definition and categories of internship and the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice.

In the past, studies on career decision self-efficacy centered mostly on university majors that require internship as a graduation requirement, for example medical and hospitality professions. Despite the fact that the association of internship with career decision-making self-efficacy as well as career choice have undergone extensive studies, there are still some unexplored areas of study. In particular, internship in the communication field has received little attention in the previous literature, so it would be valuable to study internship in the communication field to provide more insights for academia and industry to improve the internship experience, which is closely related to students' intention to enter the industry, where companies are looking for talented communication graduates who are highly skilled and have practical experience.

The purpose of this study is to examine communication students' future career choices in relation to their career decision-making self-efficacy after their internships. The variables in this study on internship include whether it is paid and whether mentorship is offered in order to identify what would be the ideal internship design for communication students' development of career decision-making self-efficacy and making career choices. It also sought to determine whether those with high self-efficacy have more clearly defined career options and whether those options are more compatible with their current studies. The performance and continuity of the participants' careers after making a career decision will be further studied in a subsequent study and will not be included in this study because the participants were asked to imagine their future career choices.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Structure

This study aims to investigate the relationship between internship design, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career choice to communication industry among communication students in Taiwan. Based on the literature, this study will be designed using internship experience (salary and mentorship) as an independent variable, while internship satisfaction, career decision making self-efficacy and career choice as dependent variables. The framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 3-1.

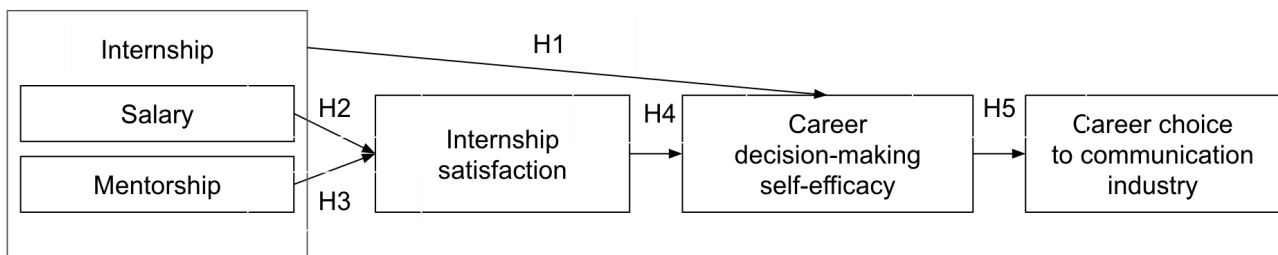


Figure 3-1

### 3.2 Samples

This study employs internet survey to describe the career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice of communication students in Taiwan, with the purpose of generalizing to the larger communication intern population. According to the Taiwan Network Information Center's 2022 Taiwan Internet Report, 100% of the 12-24-year-old group uses the Internet, which implies that Taiwanese young people utilize the internet in a regular basis. Because the purpose of this study is to analyze the age of college students in Taiwan, it is more convenient to gather research data in the form of online survey.

The study sampled students major in communication field from universities in Taiwan. Given the massive number of communication students at various levels of universities across Taiwan (a combined enrollment of 1,107,510 students as reported by the Ministry of Education's Census and Statistics Department in 2022), this study primarily samples students from the major communication schools in Taiwan based on the ranking of communication student number, in order to reach the target



demographics in a focused and effective way:

**Table 3.1 List of the major communication schools**

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University
1. Shih Hsin University
2. Chinese Culture University
3. Ming Chuan University
4. National Chengchi University
5. Fu Jen Catholic University
6. Tamkang University
7. National Taiwan University of Arts

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Convenience sampling was used to gather the study sample in the following methods:

1. Posted the survey URL to Dcard forum school board and the Facebook social media community.
2. Contacted teachers of compulsory courses at target communication schools with the highest number of students attending through email and request their help in distributing the survey to students.
3. Visited the classroom in person to explain the study's purpose and seek participation from the students in conducting the survey.

The data was collected from April 10 to April 30, 2023, with a total of 380 responses taken throughout a 20-day period. After careful examination, 313 valid samples were utilized to develop the study results, with an effective response rate of 82%. 67 replies were considered ineligible because they did not come from communication students or had an extremely comparable and continuous response pattern.

### 3.3 Measures

A survey was conducted in this study by transforming the variables into indicators based on the research framework outlined above. Referring to the measurement scale created or used in previous research, it is adjusted to design a measurable survey that suits the theme of this research. This survey includes five sections: demographic information, internship experience, internship satisfaction, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career choice.

Before beginning the survey, participants were asked if they are communication major students in Taiwan to verify whether the participants match the target demographic.

#### 3.3.1 Demographic Information

Demographic information questions include education level, communication major, age and sex. Among the 313 valid samples, there were 242 (77.3%) female respondents and 71 (22.7%) male respondents. The average age of the respondents was 21.74. In terms of education level, 258 (82.4%) were bachelor's degree students, followed by 55 (17.5%) master's degree students. Mass communication majors accounted for 45.4% of the total, with 142 students, followed by public relations and advertising majors, with 142 students, accounting for 32.9%.

**Table 3.2 Data analysis of demographic information**

Scale	Item	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%) / M
Gender	Male	71	22.7%
	Female	242	77.3%
Age (Mean)		21.74	-
Education	Bachelor Year 1	23	7.3%
	Bachelor Year 2	109	34.8%
	Bachelor Year 3	66	21.1%
	Bachelor Year 4 or above	60	19.2%
	Master	55	17.6%
Communication major	Mass communication	142	45.4%
	PR/Advertising	103	32.9%
	Radio & TV	28	8.9%
	Journalism	31	9.9%
	Other	9	2.9%

### 3.3.2 Internship Experience

Internship experience questions include how many internships they have completed, the overall length of internship experience, communication discipline of internship experience, whether it is paid, and whether it provides mentorship. Because some participants may have multiple internship experiences, this study will only focus on the credit-bearing internship experience, which is expected to be the most organized experience of students. Additionally, whether the internship experience includes salary and mentorship are surveyed in this category to evaluate how the internship design would influence participants.

**Table 3.3 Question items for internship experience**

---

Question items
1. How many internships have you done so far?
2. How long were you an intern?
3. How many hours do you work every week?
4. What communication field is your internship in?
5. Is your internship paid?
6. Do you have a mentor assigned to you for your internship?

---

### 3.3.3 Internship Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a positive emotion that arouse from the work experience and considers various job components such as job variability, job characteristics, feedback, collegiality, job opportunities, and so on (Weiss, 2002). Given that job design is strongly linked to students' internship satisfaction and is thus positively correlated with intentions to stay at the current job (Liu, 2021), this study used internship satisfaction as a dependent variable to better understand the relationship between internship design and career choice. On a five-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, average, agree and strongly agree*), positive questions are scored in the order of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, the greater the score of the responses, the more strongly the participants satisfied with their internship experiences.

**Table 3.4 Question item for internship satisfaction**

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Question items
1. How satisfied are you with your internship?

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### 3.3.4 Career Decision-making Self-efficacy

Career decision-making self-efficacy refers to an individual's perceptions, beliefs and expectations of his or her ability to successfully complete a task during career development (Betz & Hackett, 1981), and emphasizes the interaction between environment, personal factors and individual

behavior. The first standardized measure of career decision-making self-efficacy to evaluate people's assurance in their adherence to career decisions was created by Taylor and Betz in 1983. Taylor and Betz (1983) used five competing career choice behaviors from the Crites model of career maturation (1971) to create the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSE). These behaviors included accurate self-assessment, gathering career-related information, goal selection, future planning, and problem solving. The CDMSE scale has a 10-point scale, with 10 representing a high level of confidence and 0 representing a lack of confidence at all. The overall score is the average of the results from the 50 questions. The greater the overall score, the more assured the person is in their career choices.

Later, Betz et. al (1996) recompiled the short version of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form (CDMSE-SF) using the original Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale developed in 1983 in order to simplify the content and reduce confusion. The CDMSE - SF also focuses on five factors, which are the ones that have been translated and discussed the most in relation to the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale: evaluating self-efficacy, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making future plans, and problem solving. With the same confidence continuum as the previous version, it has been shortened to match the measurement duration and the questions' content. CDMSE- SF has been extensively tested and used in a variety of investigations in different demographic groups, for example, hospitality students (Choi & Kim, 2013), Chinese graduates (Jin et. al, 2009), first-year university students (Luzzo & Day, 1999), Portuguese secondary education students (Miguel et. al, 2013) and Italian high school students (Presti et. al, 2013).

Following a review of the literature, career decision-making self-efficacy related studies in recent years were measured based on the CDMSE - SF (Table 3) used by Betz et. al (1996), amended and altered according to different research aims. As a result, the survey for this study is designed based on the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale - Short Form (Betz et. al, 1996). The scale initially had 25 questions, but 14 were eliminated prior to the survey in this study since they did not contribute to the overall reliability of the scale. Consequently, the questionnaire of this study consists of 11

questions with a reliability-checked Cronbach's alpha of .888, indicating that the samples are highly reliable. On a five-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, average, agree and strongly agree*), positive questions are scored in the order of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The greater the score of the responses, the more strongly the participant agrees with the question.

**Table 3.5 Reliability test of the career decision-making self-efficacy questions**

Scale & Items	Corrected Item-total correlation
1. Accurately assess your abilities.	.60
2. Determine what your ideal job would be.	.57
3. Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live.	.63
4. Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals.	.65
5. Choose a career that will fit your interests.	.44
6. Identify employers relevant to your career possibilities.	.51
7. Talk with a person already employed in the field you are interested in.	.56
8. Prepare a good resume.	.59
9. Successfully manage the job interview process.	.66
10. Make a plan of your goals for the next five years.	.74
11. Find out the employment trends for an occupation in the future 10 years.	.67

### 3.3.5 Career Choice

Career choice is described as students' intentions to participate (or not participate) in communication-related activities throughout their careers (Gianakos, 1999). This study asked students whether they intended to work in the field of communications following their internship experience to discover if internship experience influenced communication students' choices to work in the industry. One question is asked and evaluated by 3 options: Yes, No, and Uncertain.

*Table 3.6 Question item for career choice*

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Question item
1. Do you plan to work in the communications industry after you graduate?

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## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between internship design, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career choice to the communication industry among Taiwanese communication students. This chapter presents the demographic data and statistical analysis results of the five hypotheses.

### 4.1 General Findings on Internship Experience

Within the 313 valid samples included in this study, 130 participants—who made up 41.5% of the overall sample—had internship experience, while 183 respondents—representing 58.5% of the entire sample—did not.

**Table 4.1 Data analysis of whether students had internship experience**

Scale	Item	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%) / M
Internship experience	Yes	130	41.5%
	No	183	58.5%

Among the samples with internship experience, those who had engaged in internship courses accounted for a greater proportion of the sample in this survey, with a total of 96 respondents (73.8%), whereas 34 respondents (26.1%) had not participated in internship courses. The samples' average internship experience duration is 5.2 months, and the average weekly working hours are 22.6 hours. The samples' communication internships were primarily categorized into public relations and advertising, broadcasting, journalism, marketing, and others, including design, tourism, and communication policy research. Marketing had the highest proportion with 45 respondents, accounting for 34.6%, followed by public relations and advertising with 29 respondents and journalism with 35 respondents, accounting for 22.3% and 26.9%, respectively. 82 (63.1%) were paid internships and 48 (36.9%) were unpaid internships; on the other hand, 72 participants (55.4%) had a designated mentor,



yet the remaining 58 (44.6%) did not.

The average internship satisfaction rating for all samples with internship experience was 3.78 out of 5. When asked if they wished to work in the communication industry after graduation, 72 respondents answered 'Yes,' followed by 'Uncertain' (N=51) and 'No' (N=7), accounting for 39.2% and 5.4%, respectively.

**Table 4.2 Data analysis of students' internship experience**

Scale	Item	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%) / M
Internship course	Yes	96	73.8%
	No	34	26.2%
Duration (Month)		5.2 month	-
Working hours (In a week)		22.6 hours	-
Scope of communication internship	PR/Advertising	29	22.3%
	Radio & TV	13	10.0%
	Journalism	35	26.9%
	Marketing	45	34.6%
	Other	8	6.1%
Whether it is paid	Yes	82	63.1%
	No	48	36.9%
Whether it offers Mentorship	Yes	72	55.4%
	No	58	44.6%
Internship satisfaction (Mean)		3.78	-
Career choice to join the communication industry	Yes	72	55.4%
	No	7	5.4%
	Uncertain	51	39.2%

Chi-square statistics were used to examine association between communication major and internship field. According to table 4.3, there is a significant association between communication major and internship field,  $\chi^2(16, N = 130) = 93.02, p = < .001, \text{Phi} = .846$ . The majority of students in PR/advertising major participated in marketing internship (60.5%), followed by PR/advertising internship (36.8%); the majority of students in Radio & TV major participated in Radio & TV internship (50.0%), followed by journalism internship (35.7%); the majority of students in Journalism major participated in journalism internship (84.2%); the majority of students in mass communication major participated in marketing internship (32.1%), followed by journalism internship (35.7%); students in other communication majors engaged in marketing internship (66.7%) and PR/advertising internship (33.3%), respectively.

**Table 4.3 Chi-square analysis of the association between communication major and internship field**

Communication Major		Internship field					Total
		PR/Advertising	Radio & TV	Journalism	Marketing	Other	
PR/Advertising	N	14	0	1	23	0	38
	%	36.8%	0%	2.6%	60.5%	0%	100%
Radio & TV	N	0	7	5	1	1	14
	%	0%	50.0%	35.7%	7.1%	7.1%	100%
Journalism	N	2	0	16	1	0	19
	%	10.5%	0%	84.2%	5.3%	0%	100%
Mass communication	N	12	6	13	18	7	56
	%	21.4%	10.7%	23.2%	32.1%	12.5%	100%
Other	N	1	0	0	2	0	3
	%	33.3%	0%	0%	66.7%	0%	100%
Total	N	29	13	35	45	8	130
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Crosstabulation was used to examine association between education level and whether students have internship experience. According to table 4.4, more than 40% of the participants had internship experience in the communication industry, with 75% of year 4 bachelor's student respondents having internship experience, followed by master's students (72.7%) and year 3 bachelor's students (43.9%).

**Table 4.4 Internship experience and education level crosstabulation**

			Do you have internship experience?		Total
			Yes	No	
Education level	Bachelor Year 1	N	4	19	23
		% within internship experience	17.4%	82.6%	7.3%
	Bachelor Year 2	N	18	91	109
		% within internship experience	16.5%	83.5%	34.8%
	Bachelor Year 3	N	29	37	66
		% within internship experience	43.9%	56.1%	21.1%
Bachelor or above	Year 4	N	45	15	60
		% within internship experience	75.0%	25.0%	19.2%
Master		N	40	15	55
		% within internship experience	72.7%	27.3%	17.6%
Total		N	130	183	313
		% within internship experience	100%	100%	100%

## 4.2 Hypotheses Testing

### 4.2.1 Internship Participation and Career Decision-making Self-efficacy (H1)

The 130 participants who had internship experience ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = .653$ ) compared to the 183 those did not ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = .594$ ) demonstrated significantly stronger career decision-making self-efficacy,  $t(311) = 7.357$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.5 Internship experience and career decision-making self-efficacy**

	Mean (St. Dev.)	df	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experienced (N = 130)	3.70 (.653)			
Not experienced (N = 183)	3.18 (.594)	311	7.357	< .001

The 96 participants whose internship experience was credit-bearing ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = .452$ ) compared to the 34 those was not ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .379$ ) demonstrated significantly stronger career decision-making self-efficacy,  $t(279) = 7.428$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.6 Credit-bearing internship course and career decision-making self-efficacy**

	Mean (St. Dev.)	df	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Credit- bearing (N = 96)	3.64 (.452)			
Not credit- bearing (N = 34)	3.32 (.379)	279	7.428	< .001

### 4.2.2 Whether the Internship is Paid Influences Internship Satisfaction (H2)

H2 suggested that communication students are more satisfied with a paid internship than with an unpaid one. This study includes a general job satisfaction rating to assess participants' general satisfaction with their internships. Questions are scored in the order of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on a five-point

Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, average, agree, and strongly agree). The higher the response score, the more strongly the participant agrees with the question. There was no significant effect for whether the internship was paid,  $t(128) = 1.115$ ,  $p = .267$ , despite the fact that participants with paid internships ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.825$ ) had higher internship satisfaction than those with unpaid internships.

**Table 4.7 T-test between whether the internship is paid and internship satisfaction**

	Mean (St. Dev.)	df	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Paid (N = 82)	3.85 (.891)	128	1.115	.267
Unpaid (N = 48)	3.67 (.975)			

#### 4.2.3 Whether the Internship Provides Mentorship Influences Internship Satisfaction (H3)

H3 suggested that communication students are more satisfied with internships that offer mentoring than those that do not. This study includes a general job satisfaction rating to assess participants' general satisfaction with their internships. Positive questions are scored in the order of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, average, agree, and strongly agree). The higher the response score, the more strongly the participant agrees with the question. The 72 participants who received mentorship in internship ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = .825$ ) compared to the 58 those did not ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.021$ ) demonstrated significantly higher internship satisfaction,  $t(128) = 1.636$ ,  $p = .013$ .

**Table 4.8 T-test between whether the internship provides mentorship and internship satisfaction**

	Mean (St. Dev.)	df	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Mentorship (N = 72)	3.90 (.825)	128	1.636	.013
Without mentorship (N = 58)	3.64 (1.021)			

#### **4.2.4 Internship Satisfaction and Career Decision-making Self-efficacy (H4)**

H4 suggested that communication students who are more satisfied with their internships have a higher level of career decision-making self-efficacy. Career decision-making self-efficacy is measured based on the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale - Short Form (Betz et. al, 1996) consisting of 10 questions. The scale mean is 34.03.

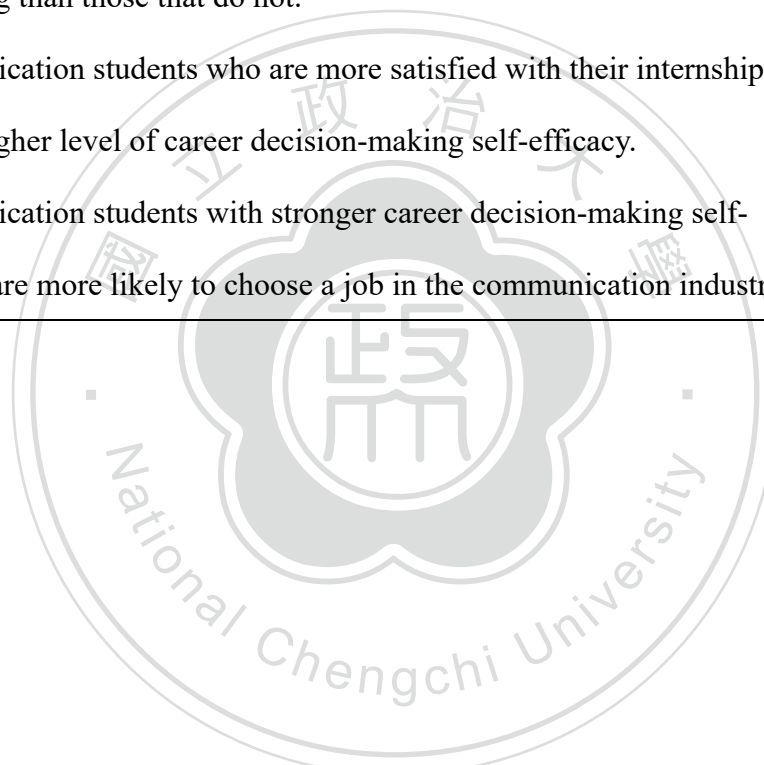
The relationship between internship satisfaction and career decision-making self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be significant, with a high positive correlation between the two ( $r = .388$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates the more satisfaction with one's internship, the greater one's career decision-making self-efficacy.

#### **4.2.5 Career Decision-making Self-efficacy and Career Choice (H5)**

H5 suggested that communication students with stronger career decision-making self-efficacy are more likely to choose a job in the communication industry. The relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and career choice to join the communication industry has been demonstrated to be significant, with a high positive correlation between the two ( $r = .264$ ,  $p = .002$ ). This indicates the higher one's career decision-making self-efficacy, the greater one's motivation to join the communication industry after graduation.

**Table 4.9 Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results**

	Hypothesis	Results
<b>H1</b>	Internship experience is positively related to career decision-making self-efficacy.	Supported
<b>H2</b>	Communication students are more satisfied with a paid internship than with an unpaid one.	Not supported
<b>H3</b>	Communication students are more satisfied with internships that offer mentoring than those that do not.	Supported
<b>H4</b>	Communication students who are more satisfied with their internships have a higher level of career decision-making self-efficacy.	Supported
<b>H5</b>	Communication students with stronger career decision-making self-efficacy are more likely to choose a job in the communication industry.	Supported



## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the relationship between internship design, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career choice to the communication industry among Taiwanese communication students. This chapter consolidates and analyzes the study's findings and limitations, as well as proposes specific recommendations for improvement in light of the study's limitations, in order to serve as a reference for future researchers exploring communication internship and education challenges.

### 5.1 Theoretical Implications on Communication Internship in Taiwan

Internships have grown to be an essential learning element in Taiwan communication schools. According to the findings of this study, more than 40% of the participants had internship experience in the communication industry, with 75% of year 4 bachelor's student respondents having internship experience, followed by master's students (72.7%) and year 3 bachelor's students (43.9%). Communication students preferred to seek internship opportunities that were related to their majors, while marketing (34.6%) being the most popular internship field. The growing trend of communication students taking internships has revealed that students in communication schools in Taiwan are taking internship as part of their practical learning journey, which aligns with the popularity of communication internships in the United States found in Rosenstiel et al.'s (2015) study. In addition, the majority of communication students (73.8%) enrolled in the internship course offered by the school, and more than 80% of the students who took internship courses wrote a closing report for their internship experience. It is evident that communication schools are actively encouraging students to take advantage of a variety of off-campus internships to further their studies by giving credit courses with the introduction of credit-bearing internship courses at schools, which is significantly impactful to students' learning in their internship.

Internship design is important in influencing communication students' practical learning in the field, as well as their motivation to join the industry. Thus, this study investigated the two major



components of internship design, which are compensation and mentorship, to discover if whether the internship is paid or provides mentorship would influence students' internship satisfaction. In this study, more than half of the respondents' internships were paid (63.1%) and offered mentorship (55.4%), and they are more satisfied with internships that are paid and offered mentorship in terms of internship satisfaction rating.

Compensation for student interns was hotly debated in academia. Participants in paid internships self-reported higher levels of satisfaction than those in unpaid ones, according to Beebe et al. (2009), while advisors for bachelor's degrees are more likely to view academic credit as an appropriate replacement for monetary compensation (Senat et al., 2020). When it comes to communication internships in Taiwan, this study found that compensation during an internship had no apparent impact on students' satisfaction, yet, students with paid internships had a greater satisfaction rate than those who did not receive any compensation on average. On the other hand, this study demonstrated that mentorship has a favorable impact on students' internship satisfaction. Although mentorship is frequently offered in professional organizations for media and communication education in the United States (Crawford et al, 2020), no research has been conducted to determine whether or not mentorship in communication internships affects students' satisfaction and motivation to join the industry. This study revealed that mentorship has an empirically significant impact on students' internship satisfaction, which contributes to the field of internship design.

Previous research concluded that communication students with internship experience had more direction in their job search, which resulted in more career opportunities as well as more successful careers and higher salaries, but there is no quantitatively proven link between internship and career choices. As a result, this study employed career decision-making self-efficacy to investigate the relationship between internship and communication students' career choice to join the industry, indicating that the higher the internship satisfaction, the higher the career decision-making self-efficacy. When students have a more positive internship experience, they are more likely to appropriately choose or avoid career-related activities, or to make a specific career choice in the near future. Furthermore,

career decision-making self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be significantly connected with respondents' career choice to join the communication industry, implying that a positive internship experience may increase students' intention to join the industry after graduation, which is an intriguing application in the practical education research field of communication studies. In addition, this study investigated the significant impact of internship on students' career decision-making self-efficacy, regardless of education level. Consequently, internships in general improve communication students' capacity to choose an acceptable job in the industry.

To summarize, internships have a positive impact on communication students' ability to choose a career. Mentorship, a main indicator of internship satisfaction (D'abate et al., 2009), was proven to be strongly correlated with students' internship satisfaction and is positively associated with intentions to join the communication industry. If students are more satisfied with their internships, it may raise their career decision-making self-efficacy and their desire to work in the communication industry in the future. Therefore, the key challenge for the communication education and industry will be to increase the motivation of communication students to participate in internships and to improve internship design to increase their satisfaction with the internship experience.

## **5.2 Practical Implications on Communication Internship in Taiwan**

Given the benefits of internships to communication students' career choices in the industry, this study strongly recommends that the communication industry focus more on developing internship programs and structuring effective internships. Internship design has been recognized as an important predictor of communication students' career choice of working in the communication industry after graduation, so this study also suggests that the communication industry, either the industry or the academia, collaborate to review current internship design in the industry and figure out the best internship practice to encourage students to pursue a career in their professions.

Mentorship is a key component in the internship experience that enhances communication students' satisfaction, according to the research findings. Skilled and experienced mentors would help

the communication industry attract interns to stay on board by sharing and educating practical work experiences. Given that the majority of students applying for internships expect to acquire practical experience in the workplace, providing interns with ample learning opportunities, for instance technical expertise to handle tasks and workplace communication skills, will undoubtedly boost the positive impression of the communications industry in the minds of interns. As a result, in addition to providing mentorship in the workplace while students are interning, this study would recommend that communication schools establish a mentorship program on campus by inviting experienced communication professionals from the industry to be students' mentors and offering opportunities for students to get to know the industry in advance.

On the other hand, companies may be considering about leveraging internship programs to retain and attract more communication students to work in the field of communication. For example, companies can offer scholarships to high-performing and potential students at the end of an internship so that students are aware of potential employment opportunities and feel valued, which will boost the communication industry's attractiveness to these interns. In conclusion, a well-designed internship program may enhance the possibility of attracting top young talent to the communication industry.

### **5.3 Research Limitations and Suggestions**

The primary target demographic for this study was students from Taiwan's major communication schools. Due to limited personnel and material resources, this study was only able to take a convenience sample of a few communication schools with a significant number of students, which is not able to generalize the results of the whole Taiwanese communication students. While internship design has many more aspects, including internship length, training opportunities, and job allocation, only salary and mentorship were examined in this study. Furthermore, this study solely focused on communication students in Taiwan, using a quantitative approach to investigate the association between internship design and career choice, whereas educators and industry professionals' perspectives were ignored.

To enhance the level of generalizability, future research should expand the study samples with the help of communication school teachers, as well as include other important stakeholders in the communication industry with both qualitative and quantitative approaches to better understand current internship practice. Additionally, future research could investigate extensively into what type of internship design will best suit the demands of the communication business and students, as well as advise ways to begin improving internship programs. Last but not least, the relationship between different internship components can be further studied, for example, whether the influence of providing mentorship can waive the impact of not offering compensation for the internship.



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## APPENDIX A. SURVEY

### 「傳播學系學生實習修課」之問卷調查

這是一份有關於探討「傳播學系學生實習修課」的學術研究問卷，希望招募全台大專院校傳播學系大學生/研究生參與填寫。本問卷採匿名方式進行，且問卷作答內容僅供學術參考使用，個人資料不會對外公開，請放心填答。非常感謝您撥冗填寫本問卷！

在正式開始填寫問卷前，想請問您的背景。

1. 請問您是傳播學系大學生/研究生嗎？ 是 不是（結束問卷）
2. 請問您有傳播相關的實習經驗嗎？（實習定義：僅限於校外機構實習）  
有 沒有（直接跳至第二部分）
3. 請問您修過傳播相關的實習課程嗎？ 有（填答「第一部分：一」） 沒有（填答「第一部分：二」）

#### 第一部分

（一：上過實習課程的填答者）

請根據您修課的實習經驗，填寫以下問題。

1. 您實習工作的時間共約多長：\_\_個月（請填數字）
2. 您一週上班時數為：\_\_小時（請填數字）
3. 您的實習屬於哪一個傳播領域？ 新聞 公關/廣告 廣電 行銷  
其他: \_\_\_\_\_
4. 您的實習支薪嗎？ 有 沒有
5. 您的實習有專屬導師嗎？ 有 沒有
6. 您在實習結束後有撰寫實習心得報告嗎？ 有 沒有
7. 您對這份實習的滿意度是？ 非常不滿意 不滿意 普通 滿意 非常滿意
8. 您打算畢業後進入傳播產業嗎？ 打算 沒有打算 不確定

(二：沒有上過實習課程、有實習經驗的填答者)

請根據您修課的實習經驗，填寫以下問題。

1. 請問您共有幾次實習經歷？1次 2次 3次 4次或以上

請依據您時間最長的實習經驗，填答下列的問題。

9. 您實習工作的時間共約多長：\_\_個月（請填數字）

10. 您一週上班時數為：\_\_小時（請填數字）

11. 您的實習屬於哪一個傳播領域？新聞 公關/廣告 廣電 行銷

其他：\_\_\_\_\_

12. 您的實習支薪嗎？有 沒有

13. 您的實習有專屬導師嗎？有 沒有

14. 您對這份實習的滿意度是？非常不滿意 不滿意 普通 滿意 非常滿意

15. 您打算畢業後進入傳播產業嗎？打算 沒有打算 不確定

## 第二部分

有關您的職涯規劃，請問下列敘述您是否同意：(1-5分，1=非常不同意，5=非常同意)

題目	非常 不同 意	不同 意	普通	同意	非常 同意
1. 我能夠準確地評估自己的能力。	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我能夠確定想過的生活型態。	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我能夠確定心目中理想的工作。	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我了解自己是否已準備好投入生涯目標。	1	2	3	4	5

有關您對職涯的準備，請問下列敘述您是否同意：(1-5 分，1=非常不同意，5=非常同意)

題目	非常 不同 意	不同 意	普通	同意	非常 同意
1. 我能夠指出目標產業的相關公司。	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我會向目標產業的從業人員請教。	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我能夠準備一份應徵履歷。	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我能夠掌握工作的面試過程。	1	2	3	4	5
5. 我能夠規劃出往後五年內的職涯計畫。	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我了解目標產業未來十年內的工作趨勢。	1	2	3	4	5

問卷差不多結束了，最後需要請問您的資訊，以幫助分析。

1. 請問您的年齡：\_\_\_\_\_歲
2. 請問您的生理性別：男 女 不願意透露
3. 請問您的學生身分：大一 大二 大三 大四或以上 碩士生 博士生
4. 請問您的傳播專業是：大眾傳播 新聞 公關/廣告 廣電 尚未確定  
其他: \_\_\_\_\_

本問卷到此結束，非常感謝您的耐心填答!