

Chinese Therapeutic Massage: Patient’s Demands and Behavioral Intention

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Abstract: Purpose of the study was to investigate the purpose of visitors to the Chinese Therapeutic Massage (CTM) shops and factor that affecting such visiting. Base on the theory of planned behavior, we collected 248 valid questionnaires to assess the hypotheses. The results showed that: (1) Main purpose of CTM shop visiting are pain relief and fatigue relief. (2) Respondent’s attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control jointly affect the behavioral intention of taking CTM with 47% of variance explained. (3) Perceived behavioral control was the most powerful predictor for CTM behavioral intention, and followed by the subjective norm. The results were consistent with those of the previous studies. The CTM business operator shall pay good attention on the patient’s social network such as family members, friends in work places for the possible impacts on their choice of this kind.

Keywords: Chinese Therapeutic Massage; Traditional Physical Massage, Theory of Planned Behavior; Pain relief

INTRODUCTION

Massage therapy or physical massage has been used as a method for disease treatment and health enhancement since ancient times. In 2012, the Ministry of Health and Welfare of Taiwan named the industry as the “Traditional Physical Management Industry”, under the supervision of the Department of Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy. The number of workers in the industry has reached 100,000 so far [1]. Purpose of this research is to adopt the theory of planned behavior to explore how the patient’s attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control affect patient’s behavioral intentions of using physical massage as alternative medicine for healthcare and health improvement.

CHINESE THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

Chinese Therapeutic Massage (CTM) is also termed as Traditional Physical Management by Taiwan government. It is widely accepted as one of major alternative medicines in Chinese communities [2]. In Taiwan, CTM providers generally offer four categories of services. Pain relief comes as the first and major category people in Taiwan had long realized [1]. People visit the CTM shop with a need to relieve sports injuries, long-term strain, tendons and sores [3]. Other than pains, people also pay visit to the shops for fatigue relieve or to relieve the tension of bones. The third category aims to lose weight through continuous massage. Improve physical fitness is the last category the industry generally served to the customers, especially for those people demands for general health improvement [2].

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

Base on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), Ajzen [4] developed the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by adding a new construct of perceived behavior

control (PBC) to better fit into the theory and the studies on behavior. TRA and TPB are both widely adopted in understanding human behaviors in multiple disciplines and contexts. Unlike health belief model that is used to predict human’s disease related behavior, TRA and TPB has been adopted in a much wider areas of human behavior.

Taking CTM services is one of health improvement behaviors, and may not be a disease treatment but disease prevention or alternative treatment behavior. According to the TPB, people’s attitude (AT) or value judgement on the CTM services, and people’s subjective norms (SN) or effects of significant other’s opinion on CTM services will have positive impacts on their intentions of taking CTM along with their perceptions on the self-confidence on CTM. In other words, AT, SN, and PBC are the three major variables that influence the intention of taking CTM [5], and highly possible the associated actual actions. The research framework is illustrated as in figure 1.

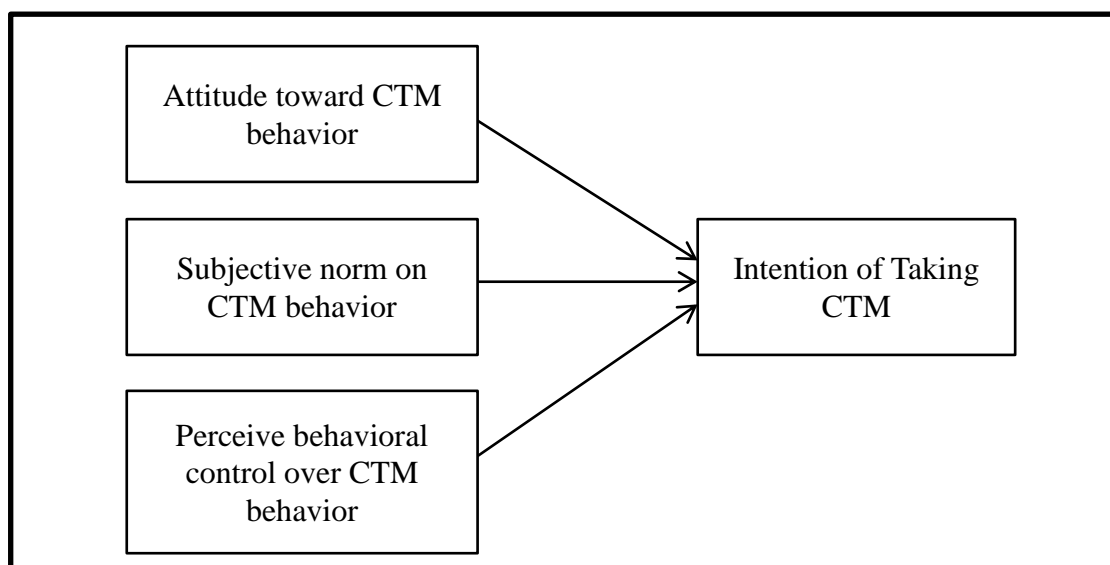


Fig-1: Research framework

METHODS

Samples: Samples are taken from visitors to the CTM service shops in several cities in the northern, central, and southern parts of Taiwan, of which roughly consistent to the population distribution of the nation. Total number of valid responses is 248. Statistical techniques applied in the analyses are descriptive, independent t-test and regression analysis.

RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

There are 248 valid responses, of which male is the majority at 55.24%, around 70 percent of respondents are aged 45 or above, 90 percent of respondents have at least high school diploma, and most responses are from the south (56.05%), as shown in table1.

Table-1: Profile of respondents

Var.	Cat.	n	%
Gender	1. Female	111	44.76
	2. Male	137	55.24
Age	1. 34-	26	10.48
	2. 35-44	47	18.95
	3. 45-54	71	28.63
	4. 55-64	74	29.84
	5. 65+	30	12.10
Edu.	1. Jr. High	26	10.48
	2. High School	86	34.68
	3. College	88	35.48
	4. Bachelor +	48	19.35
Marital	1. Single	92	37.10
	2. Married	156	62.90
Area	1. Northern	35	14.11
	2. Central	74	29.84
	3. Southern	139	56.05
	Sum	248	100.00

The study enquired as well the major purposes for a visitor to the CTM shop, as the statistical result that is shown in table 2. Main category is not surprising the pain relief. There are 67.8 percent of patients visited for this purposes, followed by the fatigue relief (42.7%). The first two categories represent more than

65 percent of the entire responses. This has also indicated that people are highly inclined to use CTM as alternative medicines to relief pain that was generally cause by certain health problems such as cancers, orthopedic, and chronic diseases [6].

Table-2: Categories of purposes

Purposes of visit	Responses		Observation%
	n	%	
Pain relief	101	40.73	67.80
Fatigue	62	25.00	42.70
Fitness	57	22.98	37.80
Weight-loss	28	11.29	5.50
Sum	248	100.00	153.80

The model that applying attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control can explain 47 % variance of dependent variable, i.e. the intention of taking CTM. The regression analysis results, as shown

in table 3, that the PBC and SN are jointly affect the respondent's behavioral intention in taking CTM with significant coefficients of 0.362 and 0.183 respectively, and the effect of attitude is not significant .

Table-3: Regression analysis

IV	Non-standardized B	SE	Standardized β	<i>t</i>
constant	.085	.236		.361
AT	.058	.077	.071	.749
SN	.229	.069	.183	4.230***
PBC	.391	.072	.362	6.221***
<i>D.V.: BI; R=.68; R²=.47; A. R²=.43; F=125.269, d.f.=3/232, ***p<0.001</i>				

CONCLUSION

The test results have shown that more than half of the respondents visit the CTM shop for pain relief. We conclude that the major function of such CTM shops is supplying an effective alternative other than painkiller medication for pains [6]. Since the dispute and debates for the position of CTM, it is the government's responsibility to create a reliable system to include CTM in national healthcare system, and accordingly provide effective management over the system, ideally in the National Health Insurance System, to assure the availability of quality CTM service to the national.

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