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Exploring the Behavioral-Psychological Structure of Students' Intention to Retain Part-time Jobs: An EFA Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the behavioral-psychological factors influencing university students' intention to retain part-time employment in Hanoi, Vietnam. Building on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the model includes attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC), and extends the framework with financial motivation (FM) and schedule flexibility (FLEX). A total of 330 valid responses were collected through an online survey conducted between October 2024 and January 2025. Data were analyzed using SPSS, with Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis confirming reliability and validity, followed by multiple regression to test hypotheses. Findings indicate that all five factors significantly predict intention, with attitude being the most influential, followed by perceived behavioral control, financial motivation, schedule flexibility, and subjective norm. The results provide practical implications for universities, employers, and policymakers in supporting students to balance academic and work demands while ensuring sustainable employment experiences.

Keywords: Part-time jobs; TPB; Student employment; Financial motivation; Schedule flexibility; Vietnam.

1. Introduction

Currently, Vietnam has nearly 900,000 students enrolled in universities and colleges nationwide, and this number continues to increase each year (Vuong et al., 2015). A large proportion of these students come from provinces outside major cities, facing significant financial burdens as their monthly living costs often exceed the average household income of their families. This pressure has driven many students to take part-time jobs as a way to cover tuition fees and living expenses while simultaneously gaining practical experience.

In Hanoi, the country's largest educational hub, part-time employment among students has become increasingly prevalent. These jobs are typically seasonal, require little professional expertise, and offer flexible working hours, such as tutoring, waitressing, sales, or online collaboration. Beyond the financial benefits, part-time work enables students to become more independent, develop time management and soft skills, and apply classroom knowledge in real-world contexts (Staniewski & Szopiński, 2015; Yaghi & Alabed, 2021). Employers today also value such practical experience when evaluating graduates, alongside academic performance

(Abaddi, 2024).

However, part-time employment is not without risks. It may negatively impact academic performance, health, or long-term career orientation if students prioritize short-term income over skill development (Duong, 2024). These outcomes highlight differences in motivations and intentions to sustain part-time work among students. Furthermore, factors such as field of study, academic year, and life experience may lead to variations in behavioral and career-related decisions (Staniewski & Szopiński, 2015).

While previous research has widely applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine entrepreneurial and career intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009), empirical studies focusing specifically on students' intention to retain part-time jobs remain limited, especially in the context of Hanoi. This research gap indicates the need for empirical evidence exploring the behavioral-psychological structure underlying students' decisions to continue part-time employment. Gaining such insights will provide valuable implications for universities, families, and policymakers in offering appropriate guidance and support, ensuring students' academic success while promoting skill development and labor market adaptability.

2. Literature Review

Part-time work and student development: In Vietnam, several empirical studies have examined the impact of part-time employment on students' academic outcomes and career decisions. A comparative study in Ho Chi Minh City highlighted differences in academic performance between students with part-time jobs and those without, noting that evening and off-schedule work may negatively affect learning outcomes (Sinh viên Kinh tế TP. HCM, 2006). More recent research by Vu Xuan Tuong et al. (2021) explored the determinants of part-time work decisions among Business Administration students at Van Lang University, identifying financial needs and skill acquisition as primary drivers. Similarly, Le Long et al. (2015) investigated factors influencing the employment choices of Can Tho University students, while a study at An Giang University (2020) emphasized the role of both financial pressure and the desire for experience in shaping students' decision to work part-time. Collectively, these studies confirm that part-time employment has become a widespread phenomenon among Vietnamese students, motivated by both economic necessity and aspirations for personal development.

International evidence on part-time employment: International research has long investigated the dual role of part-time work in shaping students' academic performance and employability. Robinson (1996, 1999) provided early evidence on how part-time work influenced high school students, showing both benefits in responsibility and risks of academic distraction. Fang et al. (2004) identified critical factors affecting job offers for new graduates, underscoring how part-time work experience may enhance employability signals. More recently, Kamp (2021) compared study outcomes of students with irregular part-time hours against those with no work commitments, suggesting that irregular schedules are more disruptive to academic success.

Additional empirical evidence strengthens this picture. Zampetakis (2021) demonstrated that students often prioritize financial gains from part-time jobs over long-term occupational safety considerations. Gbadamosi et al. (2015) argued that part-time employment, coupled with high self-efficacy, positively influences graduate employability. Teng and Chan (2022) further showed that students' engagement in part-time work is positively related to resilience, adaptability, and the development of soft skills. Meanwhile, a systematic review by Maheshwari et al. (2022) confirmed that behavioral and cognitive factors derived from part-time employment significantly affect students' entrepreneurial and career intentions.

Research gaps

Although the literature consistently demonstrates that part-time jobs provide both opportunities and challenges, gaps remain. Most studies emphasize financial and skill-related motivations, while fewer explore the behavioral-psychological structure underlying students' intention to retain part-time jobs. In the Vietnamese context, existing studies have predominantly focused on identifying determinants of taking a part-time job, rather than sustaining such work over time. Given the increasing prevalence of part-time work among students in Hanoi, understanding the psychological and behavioral mechanisms that drive their intention to continue part-time employment is essential. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as a framework to explore the latent factors that influence students' intention to retain part-time jobs.

3. Methodology

3.1. Hypotheses Development

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) are the core psychological components that predict behavioral intention (INT) (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009). In the Vietnamese context, existing studies show that financial motives, the need for practical experience, and social support strongly influence students' decisions to engage in part-time jobs (Ho Chi Minh City Economics Students, 2006; Le Long et al., 2015; Vu Xuan Tuong et al., 2021; An Giang University, 2020). At the same time, international research emphasizes the dual role of part-time work in enhancing employability, adaptability, and self-efficacy, while also noting potential academic conflicts when schedules are irregular (Fang et al., 2004; Gbadamosi et al., 2015; Kamp, 2021). Based on this theoretical and empirical background, five hypotheses are proposed.

H1 (ATT → INT). *A positive attitude toward part-time jobs has a positive effect on students' intention to retain part-time employment.*

According to TPB, individuals who evaluate a behavior as useful, enjoyable, and valuable are more likely to form stronger intentions to pursue it (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009). In the case of students, perceived benefits such as real-world experience and transferable skills foster favorable attitudes that strengthen the intention to remain in part-time work (Vu Xuan Tuong et al., 2021; An Giang University, 2020).

H2 (PBC → INT). *Perceived behavioral control positively influences students' intention to retain part-time employment.*

Students who believe they have sufficient skills, resources, and time to balance study and work are less likely to be deterred by barriers and are more willing to continue part-time employment (Ajzen, 1991). Evidence on self-efficacy derived from part-time experiences supports the positive link between PBC and intention (Gbadamosi et al., 2015).

H3 (SN → INT). *Subjective norm positively influences students' intention to retain part-time employment.*

Support and expectations from family, peers, and instructors, especially in collectivist cultures create social pressure that reinforces students' decisions to sustain part-time work (Ajzen, 1991). Both local and international findings indicate that social approval strongly shapes students' learning-work choices (Ho Chi Minh City Economics Students, 2006; Staniewski & Szopiński, 2015).

H4 (FM → INT). *Financial motivation positively affects students' intention to retain part-time employment.*

The need to cover tuition fees and living expenses remains a crucial driver of part-time work, particularly for students from provincial backgrounds studying in metropolitan areas (Vuong et al., 2015; Le Long et al., 2015). From a labor market signaling perspective, stable income from part-time jobs may also serve as evidence of diligence and discipline, further reinforcing the motivation to continue (Fang et al., 2004).

H5 (FLEX → INT). *Schedule flexibility positively affects students' intention to retain part-time employment.*

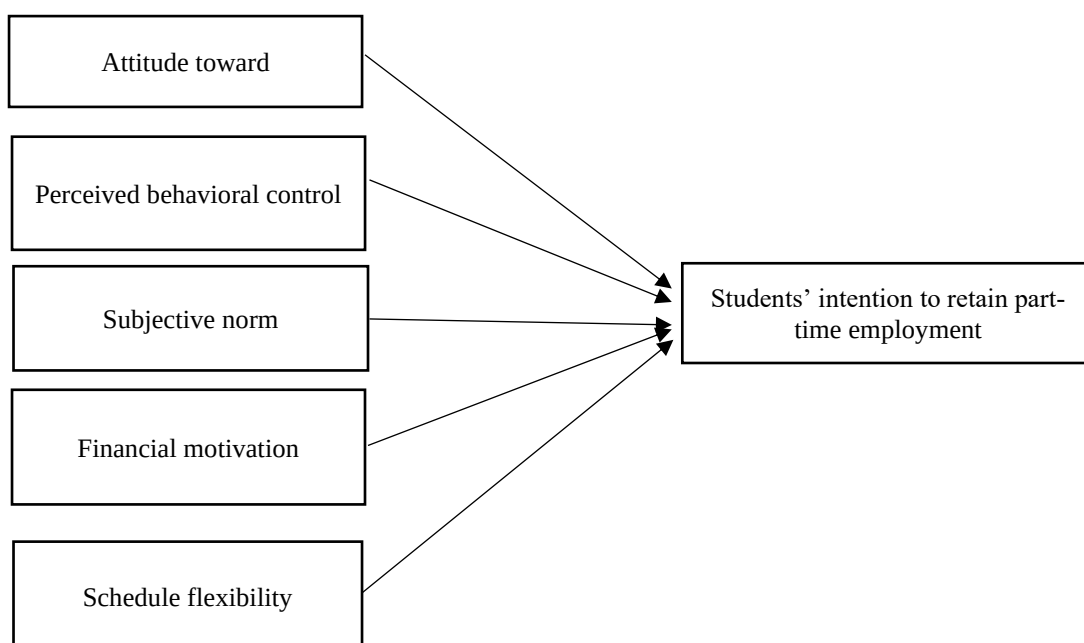
The ability to adjust work hours to fit academic timetables reduces study-work conflict, thereby enhancing perceived fit and the likelihood of retaining employment (Kamp, 2021). In Hanoi, where a variety of part-time opportunities exist, flexible scheduling is often considered a key condition for sustaining employment across semesters.

3.2. Model

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this study develops a framework to explain students' intention to retain part-time employment. The model integrates three core constructs—attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC)—as predictors of intention (INT). In addition, two context-specific factors are introduced: financial motivation (FM), reflecting the economic necessity to cover living and study expenses, and schedule flexibility (FLEX), capturing students' perceived ability to align work commitments with academic responsibilities.

The conceptual model assumes that favorable attitudes, strong social support, higher self-efficacy, financial incentives, and flexible scheduling will positively influence students' intention to remain in part-time jobs. This extended TPB framework not only builds on established behavioral theory but also contextualizes it within the lived experiences of students in Hanoi, where part-time employment has become a common strategy for financial independence and skill development.

Fig 1. Study model



3.3. Data collection and sampling

This study employed a survey method to collect primary data from undergraduate students at universities in Hanoi. The data collection was conducted between October 2024 and January 2025, yielding 403 responses, of which 330 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. A convenience sampling approach was adopted due to the accessibility of respondents and their willingness to participate.

The questionnaire was distributed online via email and social media platforms to maximize coverage within the student community. It included both closed-ended questions and items measured on a five-point Likert scale, along with demographic information such as age, gender, and academic year to examine variations across subgroups.

To ensure content validity, a pilot test was carried out with a small group of students prior to the full survey administration. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine and clarify the wording of the items. After data collection, responses were screened for completeness and consistency before proceeding with further statistical analysis. The characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of the survey sample

Indicator	Characteristic	Number	Rate (%)
n = 330			
Giới tính	Male	159	48.18
	Female	171	51.82
Number of Schooling	First year	61	18.48
	Second year	132	40.00
	Third year	108	32.73
	Fourth year	29	8.79
Major	Language	60	18.18
	Mechanical	21	6.36
	Electronics	27	8.18
	Information Technology	36	10.91
	Accounting	55	16.67
	Business Administration	99	30.00
	Agriculture	7	2.12
	Textile and Garment Technology	25	7.58

Source: Author

3.4. Data analysis

The dataset was analyzed using SPSS software. Initially, scale reliability was tested through Cronbach's Alpha, where values above 0.65 were considered acceptable for exploratory research. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was then conducted to examine construct validity. Sampling adequacy was confirmed with a KMO value greater than 0.70 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.01$). Items with factor loadings of at least 0.55 were retained for further analysis.

Correlation analysis was subsequently employed to identify the direction and strength of associations among the variables. To evaluate the effect of the independent variables on students' intention to retain part-time employment, a multiple regression analysis was performed. Model performance was assessed through adjusted R^2 , the F-test ($p < 0.01$), and diagnostic criteria such as the Durbin-Watson statistic (close to 1.8–2.2). In addition, model fit was evaluated, with RMSEA values below 0.07 indicating an acceptable level.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity

The results of the reliability test and factor loadings demonstrate that the independent and dependent constructs in this study meet the required standards. For the independent variables, Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.703 to 0.872, indicating strong internal consistency. Specifically, the scales of Attitude toward part-time jobs (ATT), Subjective Norm (SN), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), Financial Motivation (FM), and Schedule Flexibility (FLEX) all exceed the acceptable threshold. Among these, ATT shows the highest factor loading at 0.861, while PBC reaches 0.829. Factor loadings for all observed items fall between 0.512 and 0.835, with most surpassing the 0.50 benchmark, confirming the convergent validity of the measurement model.

For the dependent construct—Intention to Retain Part-time Jobs (INT)—the factor loadings are also satisfactory, ranging from 0.742 to 0.807, and Cronbach's Alpha achieves 0.823, reflecting high reliability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for the dependent variable is 0.821 with Sig. = 0.000, confirming sampling adequacy. The KMO value for the group of independent variables is 0.691, while the total variance explained reaches 67.214% for the independent factors and 69.508% for the dependent factor. These results confirm the robustness of the dataset and the validity of the constructs for subsequent analyses.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

The regression results presented in Table 2 show that most hypotheses are supported, as the p-values of the relationships are smaller than 0.05, confirming statistical significance. Specifically:

Attitude (ATT) has a positive and significant effect on students' intention to retain part-time jobs, with an estimated coefficient of 0.218 ($p = 0.000$), confirming its key role in shaping behavioral intention.

Subjective Norm (SN) also exerts a significant influence, with a coefficient of 0.162 ($p = 0.001$), suggesting that social approval and peer/family support play an important role in students' decisions.

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) shows a positive and significant relationship with intention, with a coefficient of 0.194 ($p = 0.000$), consistent with prior studies emphasizing the role of self-efficacy.

Financial Motivation (FM) positively affects intention, with a coefficient of 0.177 ($p = 0.004$), highlighting the importance of economic needs in sustaining part-time work.

Schedule Flexibility (FLEX) also contributes significantly, with a coefficient of 0.169 ($p = 0.003$), reflecting the importance of adaptable working hours in enabling students to balance academic and work commitments.

4.3. Model Fit

The explanatory power of the model is reflected in an R^2 of 0.631 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.659, meaning that approximately 63% of the variance in students’ intention to retain part-time jobs is explained by the five independent factors. The F-statistic is 15.028 with $p < 0.05$, confirming overall model significance. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.041, indicating no serious autocorrelation in the residuals. The RMSEA value of 0.059 falls within the acceptable threshold, suggesting a good model fit.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses	P-values	Estimate	Decision
ATT → INT	0.000	0.218	Accepted
SN→ INT	0.001	0.162	Accepted
PBC →INT	0.000	0.194	Accepted
FM→ INT	0.004	0.177	Accepted
FLEX → INT	0.003	0.169	Accepted
Model fit	$R^2 = 0.631$		
	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.659$		
	$F = 15.028$		
	Durbin-Watson = 2.041		
	RMSEA = 0.059		

Source: Calculated by author

Overall, the empirical results provide strong evidence supporting the proposed hypotheses. The findings confirm that attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, financial motivation, and schedule flexibility are significant predictors of students’ intention to retain part-time employment. The proposed model demonstrates good reliability, validity, and explanatory power, thereby offering meaningful insights into the behavioral-psychological determinants of part-time job retention among university students in Hanoi.

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Discussion

The results of this study shed light on the determinants of students’ intention to retain part-time jobs in Hanoi. Hypothesis testing confirms that all five factors—attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, financial motivation, and schedule flexibility—have significant effects on intention, although with varying levels of influence.

First, attitude (ATT) has the strongest predictive power. Students who view part-time employment as beneficial for gaining practical experience, improving soft skills, and enhancing career prospects demonstrate a stronger intention to remain employed. This finding supports earlier studies highlighting the role of perceived usefulness and positive evaluation in shaping behavioral choices (Liñán & Chen, 2009; Vu Xuan Tuong et al., 2021).

Second, subjective norm (SN) proves to be another important factor. In collectivist contexts such as Vietnam, approval and encouragement from family, peers, and lecturers strongly influence student decisions.

When social support is high, students feel more confident and motivated to continue working (Staniewski & Szopiński, 2015).

Third, perceived behavioral control (PBC) demonstrates a clear positive effect. Students who believe they can manage time, balance commitments, and overcome difficulties are more likely to sustain their part-time jobs. This aligns with the TPB framework and prior evidence showing that self-efficacy is central to the translation of intention into behavior (Gbadamosi et al., 2015).

Beyond the original TPB constructs, this study incorporated two additional variables. Financial motivation (FM) is confirmed as a strong driver. Income from part-time work helps students cover tuition fees, living expenses, and personal needs, which reinforces their decision to remain employed. These findings echo domestic research that identified financial pressure as a key factor behind student employment (Vuong et al., 2015; Le Long et al., 2015). Schedule flexibility (FLEX) also significantly influences intention. Flexible working hours allow students to better align work with study, reducing potential conflicts and increasing retention. This supports international studies stressing the importance of flexible arrangements in sustaining student work (Kamp, 2021).

Taken together, these findings highlight both psychological and contextual factors shaping student employment decisions. By extending TPB with financial and contextual dimensions, this study provides a more comprehensive explanation of student behavior, particularly in the Vietnamese context of rapid digital and economic change.

5.2. Implications

Theoretical implications. This research contributes to the literature by extending TPB. While attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control remain fundamental, the integration of financial motivation and schedule flexibility improves the explanatory power of the model in the student employment context. These results broaden the scope of TPB applications beyond entrepreneurship and career choice, showing its relevance to part-time job retention.

Practical implications. Several stakeholders can benefit from these findings. For universities, the study suggests the need to strengthen student support services. Career centers should offer guidance on how to balance work and study and integrate training on financial literacy and time management into curricula. For employers, the findings highlight the importance of flexible scheduling and supportive workplace environments, which not only improve student retention but also enhance their productivity. For policymakers, the study underscores the need for regulations that ensure fair wages, safe conditions, and reasonable working hours for students, thus protecting their well-being while enabling them to gain valuable experience.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the behavioral-psychological structure of students' intention to retain part-time employment, applying and extending the Theory of Planned Behavior. The results show that attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, financial motivation, and schedule flexibility all significantly predict intention, with attitude as the most influential factor.

The findings indicate that students' decisions are shaped by both individual perceptions and contextual conditions. While positive attitudes, social approval, and self-efficacy strengthen behavioral intention, economic needs and flexible job arrangements provide the external support necessary for retention. These

insights confirm the validity of TPB while adding new dimensions that are highly relevant in the Vietnamese setting.

Although limited by its sampling method and geographic scope, this study offers a solid basis for further research. Future work could extend the analysis to other regions, compare different job types, or examine moderating factors such as academic performance, stress, or resilience. Overall, the study contributes both theoretical and practical value by clarifying the determinants of part-time job retention and offering guidance for universities, employers, and policymakers in supporting students' academic and professional development.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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