# The Effect of Media and Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Intention and Behaviour: Does Gender Really Matter?

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**Abstract:** High unemployment rates have increased the importance of entrepreneurship. As a result, encouraging individuals to become self-employed is considered a viable solution for job creation. Since entrepreneurial activity is driven primarily by individuals' intentions, it is vital to identify and assess the drivers of entrepreneurial intention and behaviour. This will help policymakers to develop and implement support programmes that could assist individuals to start their own businesses. This study examined how media, social capital, and gender influence the key determinants of entrepreneurial intention and intention among university of technology and TVET college students in Gauteng, South Africa. Additionally, the study investigated the effects of perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention on entrepreneurial behaviour. Data were collected from 496 final-year TVET and university of technology students using a structured, self-administered online questionnaire. Partial least squares structural equation modelling was applied to test the hypotheses. Media and social capital were positively related to all the three determinants of entrepreneurial intention: attitude towards entrepreneurship, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms. While the media directly and significantly influences entrepreneurial intention, social capital does not. Gender was negatively related to both attitude towards entrepreneurship and perceived behavioural control but showed no significant impact on subjective norms. Attitude towards entrepreneurship and perceived behavioural control significantly influenced entrepreneurial intention, while subjective norms showed no significant effect. Entrepreneurial intention and perceived behavioural control had a direct, positive relationship with entrepreneurial behaviour. Attitude towards entrepreneurship and perceived behavioural control partially mediated the effects of the media on entrepreneurial intention. Perceived behavioural control partially mediated the effects of social capital on entrepreneurial intention. These findings suggest that leveraging both the media and social capital while accounting for gender differences could have a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial activity. These findings are valuable for entrepreneurship educators and policymakers in their efforts to implement interventions aimed at encouraging the youth to pursue entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Theory of Planned Behaviour, Media, Social Capital, Gender, Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurial Behaviour

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital contributor to economic growth around the world (Al-Ghani et al., 2022; Bowmaker-Falconer et al., 2023). Consequently, many governments, especially those grappling with unemployment challenges, continue to promote entrepreneurship as a strategy to combat rising joblessness and poverty (Bowmaker-Falconer et al., 2023). South Africa, like many other developing countries, is contending with a persistently high unemployment rate (Statistics South Africa, 2025), while on the other hand the country's total entrepreneurial activity rates and entrepreneurial intentions (EIs) have declined (Bowmaker-Falconer et al., 2023). This problem is worsened by a notable gender disparity in early-stage business participation, with women at 9.7% compared to men at 12.7% (Bowmaker-Falconer et al., 2023) and lower EIs of women compared to men (Malebana and Vhukeya, 2023). In response, policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurship educators, and the government continue to make concerted efforts to understand the factors influencing EI and behaviour (Bowmaker-Falconer et al., 2023). An understanding of these influencing factors could guide the formulation of policies and the design of interventions aimed at facilitating entrepreneurship development (Mothibi and Malebana, 2019; Malebana, 2021).

Prior research suggests that the establishment of new ventures is driven by individuals' intentions (Joensuu-Salo et al., 2020; Nergui, 2020; Krueger et al., 2000). EIs can be shaped by the social circumstances (Liñán and Santos, 2007; Malebana, 2016). This implies that one's intention to behave entrepreneurially is influenced by dominant factors such as cultural norms and beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and attitudes concerning entrepreneurship in a particular society (Adekiya and Ibrahim, 2016; Ataei et al., 2020). Media and social capital can play a vital role in influencing societal norms, beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and attitudes. Media communications shape the behaviour of individuals by informing, enabling, motivating, and guiding them, thereby influencing public opinion, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes (Bandura, 2001). Surprisingly, a limited number of studies have investigated the role of the media in fostering EIs and behaviour (Adekiya and Ibrahim, 2016; de Pillis and Reardon, 2007; Levie et al., 2010; Mothibi and Malebana, 2019).

Many entrepreneurship scholars emphasise the important role of social capital in fostering EIs (Ha et al., 2020; Malebana, 2016) and entrepreneurial behaviour (EB) (Babajide et al., 2022). Previous studies show that individuals who believe that their social networks will provide them with the resources and support they need when starting business are more likely to develop strong intentions of becoming entrepreneurs (Ramírez-Lemus et al., 2023). Given that the efforts exerted towards setting up a new venture can be risky (Anwar and Saleem, 2019), social networks enhance entrepreneurs' confidence in their ability to cope with uncertainty and their willingness to take risks associated with opportunity exploitation (Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2020), thereby reducing the likelihood of failure.

While extensive research has explored the role of social capital and gender in shaping the antecedents of EIs and the venture performance, the interplay between media, social capital, gender and EI and EB remains underexplored.

Thus, this study examined how media, social capital and gender impact EI and its antecedents. Additionally, the study explored the direct effects of media and social capital on EB, and the influence of EI and perceived behavioural control (PBC) on EB.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

### 2.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Ajzen's (1991) TPB has been extensively applied in various fields to predict intention and human behaviour (EI) (Ajzen, 1991, Ilomo and Mwantimwa, 2023; Krueger et al., 2000). The theory suggests that the intention to perform any behaviour is influenced by attitude towards behaviour (ATB), PBC, and subjective norms (SN) (Ajzen, 1991). The theory postulates that an individual's intention to perform any behaviour is driven by their favourable evaluation of the behaviour, judgements of personal ability, and the perceived societal pressure to do so (Ajzen, 1991).

Most of previous studies provide full support for the TPB, indicating that EIs can be significantly explained by ATB, PBC, and SN (Mothibi and Malebana, 2019; Shahriar et al., 2024). However, in some studies, the TPB has been partially supported, demonstrating that EI can be significantly explained by ATB and PBC, but not SN (Blanco-Mesa et al., 2023; Duong, 2022; Ilomo and Mwantimwa, 2023). Studies by Amrouni and Azouaou (2024) and Kurniawan et al. (2024) reported the positive influence of SN on EI, but no effect of ATB or PBC. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

**H1:** EIs of students are significantly influenced by their ATB.

**H2:** EIs of students are significantly influenced by their PBC.

**H3:** EIs of students are significantly influenced by their SN.

### 2.2 The Effect of Media on the Antecedents of Entrepreneurial Intention and Intention

According to Bandura (2001), media significantly shapes societal attitudes, beliefs, behavioural intentions, and actions. Mass communication channels, such as newspapers, TV, radio, and films, are major outlets that can influence a wide range of attitudes and behaviours, including entrepreneurial behaviour, among those exposed to them (Bandura, 2001; ul Haq et al., 2020). Therefore, positive portrayals of entrepreneurs in mass media and favourable discussions within society can significantly enhance EIs and their key antecedents (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016; Laguía and Moriano, 2021; ul Haq *et al.*, 2020).

Findings from previous research indicate the positive influence of the media on EIs and their key antecedents (Adekiya and Ibrahim, 2016; Aparicio et al., 2021; de Pillis and Reardon, 2007; Laguía and Moriano, 2021; Levie et al., 2010; Mothibi and Malebana, 2019; ul Haq *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

**H4:** Media significantly influences the ATB of students.

**H5:** Media significantly influences the PBC of students.

**H6:** Media significantly influences the SN of students.

**H7:** Media has a direct and significant influence the EI of students.

**H8:** Media has a direct and significant influence the EB of students.

### 2.3 The Effect of Social Capital on the Antecedents of Entrepreneurial Intention and Intention

Entrepreneurial activity is a socially embedded behaviour that is facilitated by social exchanges of various resources and support necessary for entrepreneurial ventures to succeed (Hassan et al., 2024 Burt, 2019). Social networks are deemed instrumental in generating and preserving social capital (Hassan et al., 2024; Malebana, 2016). Social capital refers to different tangible and intangible resources that can be accessed by individuals through their connections with others (Burt, 2019; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). It is suggested that individuals with broad and diverse social networks are more likely to access valuable resources, information, entrepreneurial role models, market opportunities, and support for starting a business (Hassan et al., 2024; Malebana, 2016; Fernández et al., 2021).

Previous research suggests that social capital plays a crucial role in shaping the antecedents of EI and EI (Doanh and Bernat, 2020; Fernández et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2024; Malebana, 2016; Raevskaya and Tatarko, 2022). Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

**H9:** Social capital significantly influences the ATB of students.

**H10:** Social capital significantly influences the PBC of students.

**H11:** Social capital significantly influences the SN of students.

**H12:** Social capital has a direct and significant influence the EI of students.

**H13:** Social capital has a direct and significant influence the EB of students.

### 2.4 The Effect of Gender on the Antecedents of Entrepreneurial Intention and Intention

Past research has found a positive association between gender and entrepreneurial intentions and participation in entrepreneurship (Ramírez-Salinas et al., 2024; Malebana and Vhukeya, 2023; Hill et al., 2024).

Earlier research shows that gender had varying effects on the antecedents of EI and EI (Gomes et al., 2021; Maes et al., 2014; Malebana, 2015; Santhanamery et al., 2022) and EI. Similarly, other studies found the positive influence of gender on ATB and PBC but not on SN (Gomes et al., 2021; Maes et al., 2014).

As a result, the following hypotheses are formulated:

**H14:** Gender significantly influences the ATB of students.

**H15:** Gender significantly influences the PBC of students.

**H16:** Gender significantly influences the SN of students.

### 2.5 The Effect of Entrepreneurial Intention and Perceived Behavioural Control on Entrepreneurial Behaviour

According to the TPB, behavioural intention and PBC are the two main factors that can directly influence any behaviour, including EB (Ajzen, 1991; Joensuu-Salo et al., 2020). EB refers to actions undertaken in starting and growing a new business (Ben-Hafaïedh and Ratinho, 2019; McAdam and Cunningham, 2019). The findings of some previous studies support Ajzen's (1991) assertion, indicating a positive association between EI and EB (Bouarir et al., 2023; Cui and Bell, 2022; Neneh and Dzomonda, 2024) and between PBC and EB (Kautonen et al., 2015; Nergui, 2020). In contrast, Joensuu-Salo et al. (2020) reported the effect of PBC on EB to be insignificant. It is thus evident from the findings that both EI and PBC play an important role in explaining EB. Thus, the following hypotheses are formulated:

**H17:** Students' EB is significantly influenced by their EI.

**H18:** Students' EB is significantly influenced by their PBC.

The hypothesised relationships are depicted in Figure 1 below.

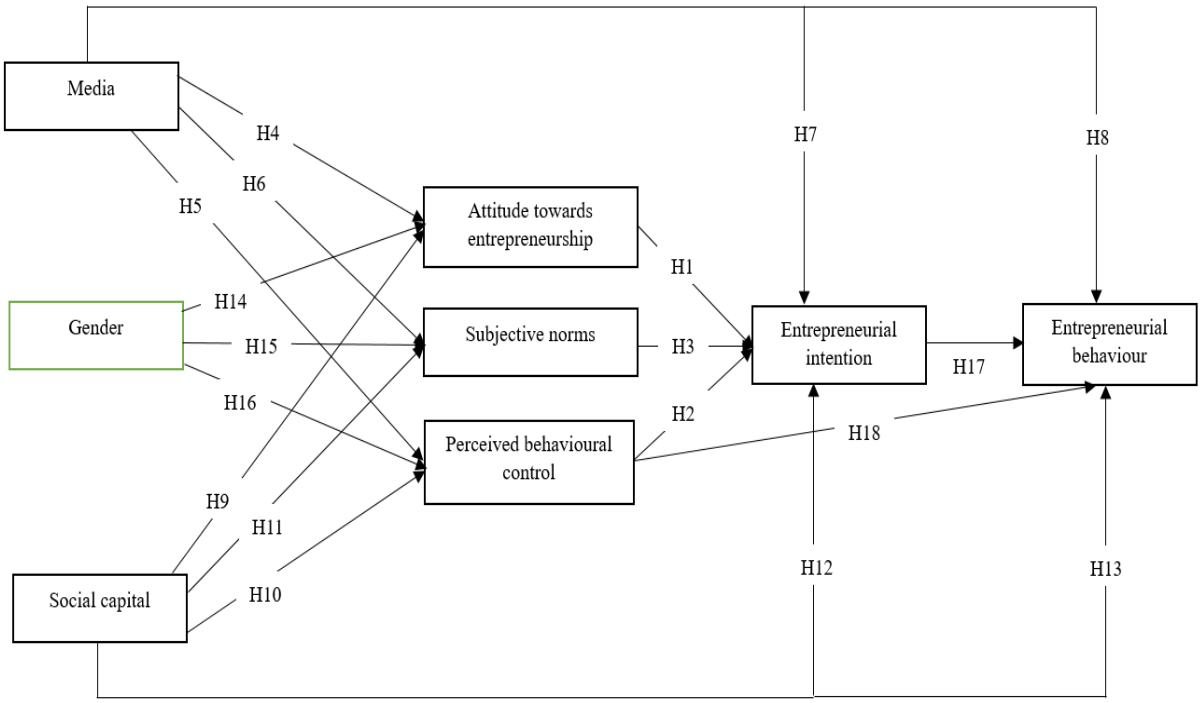


**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study.**

**Source**: Developed by the researchers.

## 3. Methodological Approach

### 3.1 Sample and Procedure

The study initially aimed to conduct a census of all 702 final-year diploma students from the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and Tshwane North TVET College, using institutional databases. As some students were not available, a convenience sampling approach was adopted. Consequently, a total of 496 final-year diploma students who were willing to participate were included in the study. Of these, 271 were from Tshwane North TVET College, while 225 were from TUT, as presented in Table 1. In terms of age distribution, most respondents (80.4%) fell within the 18-24 age group, followed by 18.2% aged 25-34, and 1.4% aged 35-44. Regarding gender representation, females constituted 59% of the sample, whereas males made up 41%.

**Table 1: Demographic overview of respondents**

| Variables | Description | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 203 | 41 |
| | Female | 293 | 59 |
| | **Total** | **496** | **100** |
| **Age** | 18-24 years | 399 | 80.4 |
| | 25-34 years | 90 | 18.2 |
| | 35 years and above | 7 | 1.4 |
| | **Total** | **496** | **100** |
| **Institution** | Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) | 225 | 45 |
| | Tshwane North TVET College | 271 | 55 |
| | **Total** | **496** | **100** |

Data collection was carried out following ethical approval from the Tshwane University of Technology Research Ethics Committee and the Department of Higher Education and Training. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose and invited to take part voluntarily, with full assurances of anonymity.

### 3.2 Data Collection Instrument

This study employed an online structured questionnaire, adapted from the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaires (EIQ) developed by Liñán and Chen (2009) and validated by Malebana (2012). For social capital, the study applied the measurement scales proposed by Liñán and Santos (2007), which were later validated by Malebana (2012, 2016). Questions relating to media perceptions were derived directly from the works of Levie et al. (2010) and Laguía and Moriano (2021), and were subsequently validated by Mothibi (2018). A five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) was employed to measure media perceptions, social capital, EI, and its antecedents. Nominal-type questions requiring "yes" or "no" responses were used for measuring EB based on a scale adapted from Kautonen et al., (2015).

## 4. Research Results

### 4.1 Analysis of the Measurement Model

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) based on SmartPLS4 software (version 4.0.8.3) was applied to evaluate the measurement model. Following Hair and Alamer's (2022) suggested threshold of 0.7, items with a factor loading below 0.5 were excluded from the model. As shown in Table 2, all factor loadings exceed the 0.5 threshold, with values ranging from 0.527 to 1.00, in line with Hair et al. (2019).

Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) scores were checked to ensure the internal consistency reliability of the constructs. As shown in Table 2, the PLS-SEM results reveal that both Cronbach's alpha (α) were between 0.771 and 0.922 while composite reliability (CR) values were between 0.853 and 0.938 which exceed the 0.60 threshold, as suggested by Sarstedt et al. (2017). These findings show that the survey questions represented an accurate measure of the constructs in the study.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all items of the constructs were examined to ensure convergent validity. As presented in Table 2, the AVE values for all constructs exceeded the 0.50 threshold (Hair et al., 2019) and ranged between 0.553 and 0.706. These results demonstrate satisfactory convergent validity, confirming that each construct effectively captures the variance in its respective items.

**Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity assessment**

| Constructs | Items | Factor loading | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude towards the behaviour | ATB2 | 0.651 | 0.805 | 0.866 | 0.566 |
| | ATB3 | 0.789 | | | |
| | ATB4 | 0.792 | | | |
| | ATB5 | 0.841 | | | |
| | ATB6 | 0.670 | | | |
| Social capital | SC10 | 0.750 | 0.882 | 0.907 | 0.553 |
| | SC3 | 0.518 | | | |
| | SC4 | 0.717 | | | |
| | SC5 | 0.758 | | | |
| | SC6 | 0.706 | | | |
| | SC7 | 0.782 | | | |
| | SC8 | 0.826 | | | |
| | SC9 | 0.843 | | | |
| Media | MD1 | 0.816 | 0.916 | 0.935 | 0.706 |
| | MD2 | 0.747 | | | |
| | MD3 | 0.863 | | | |
| | MD4 | 0.894 | | | |
| | MD5 | 0.900 | | | |
| | MD6 | 0.811 | | | |

| Constructs | Items | Factor loading | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | GN | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| Perceived behavioural control | PBC1 | 0.692 | 0.844 | 0.885 | 0.561 |
| | PBC2 | 0.765 | | | |
| | PBC3 | 0.765 | | | |
| | PBC4 | 0.743 | | | |
| | PBC5 | 0.783 | | | |
| | PBC6 | 0.742 | | | |
| Entrepreneurial intention | EI1 | 0.783 | 0.922 | 0.938 | 0.682 |
| | EI2 | 0.749 | | | |
| | EI3 | 0.885 | | | |
| | EI4 | 0.848 | | | |
| | EI5 | 0.818 | | | |
| | EI6 | 0.863 | | | |
| | EI7 | 0.830 | | | |
| Entrepreneurial behaviour | EB11 | 0.813 | | | |
| | EB2 | 0.642 | 0.771 | 0.853 | 0.595 |
| | EB8 | 0.849 | | | |
| | EB9 | 0.765 | | | |

Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to evaluate discriminant validity. As indicated in Table 3, the AVE values were greater than all inter-construct correlations, further confirming the discriminant validity of each construct (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

**Table 3: Assessment of discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion**

| | ATB | EB | EI | GN | MD | PBC | SC | SN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ATB | **0.752** | | | | | | | |
| EB | 0.381 | **0.771** | | | | | | |
| EI | 0.676 | 0.452 | **0.826** | | | | | |
| GN | -0.129 | -0.129 | -0.153 | **1.000** | | | | |
| MD | 0.419 | 0.358 | 0.488 | -0.031 | **0.840** | | | |
| PBC | 0.615 | 0.480 | 0.707 | -0.163 | 0.410 | **0.749** | | |
| SC | 0.328 | 0.362 | 0.398 | -0.126 | 0.532 | 0.426 | **0.744** | |
| SN | 0.463 | 0.140 | 0.341 | -0.061 | 0.258 | 0.280 | 0.233 | **0.782** |

## 4.2 Analysis of the structural model

The structural model of the study was evaluated based on the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) to determine the model's explanatory power. Figure 2 indicates that the combined influence of MD, gender, and SC on ATB, SN, and PBC was 0.201, 0.080, and 0.243, respectively. This implies that MD, gender, and SC account for 20.1% of the variation in ATB, 8.0% in SN, and 24.3% in PBC. Further analysis reveals that the cumulative effect of MD, SC, ATB, SN, and PBC on EI is 0.616, signifying that these factors collectively account for 61.6% of the variation in EI. Lastly, the combined effect of MD, SC, EI, and PBC on EB is 0.286, which suggests that these factors explain 28.6% of the variation in EB.

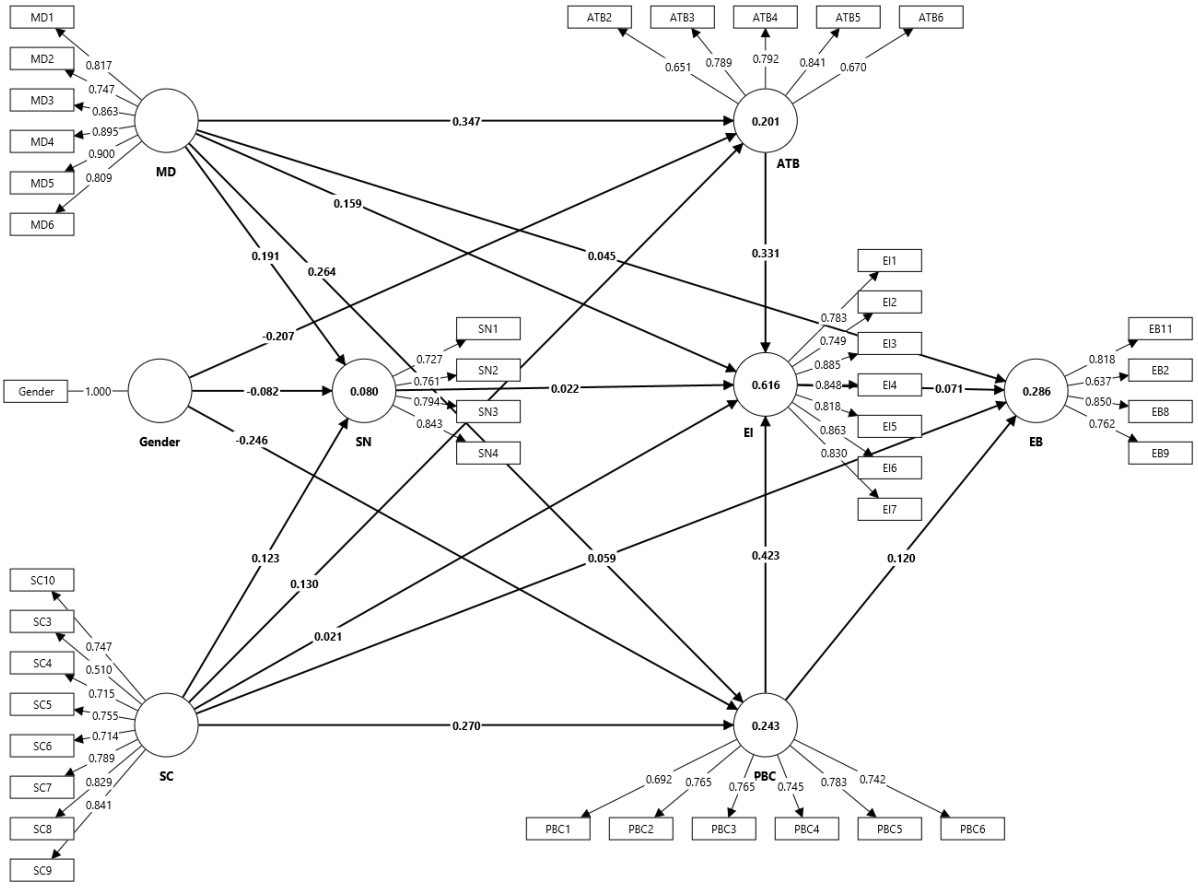


**Figure 2: Results of the structural model analysis.**

### 4.3 Assessment of Collinearity Issues

Collinearity was examined to prevent biased results. Since the VIF values were between 1.000 and 3.309, collinearity was not a significant concern and was therefore unlikely to affect the reliability of the findings (Hair et al., 2019).

### 4.4 Hypotheses Testing Results

The PLS-SEM results in Table 4 indicate that ATB ($\beta = 0.331$, $p < 0.000$) and PBC ($\beta = 0.423$, $p < 0.000$) were positively associated with EI, while SN was not ($\beta = 0.022$, $p < 0.520$). These findings support H1 and H2, while no support was found for H3.

MD was positively related to ATB ($\beta = 0.346$, $p < 0.000$), PBC ($\beta = 0.263$, $p < 0.000$), SN ($\beta = 0.189$, $p < 0.000$) and EI ($\beta = 0.159$, $p < 0.000$) but had no effect on EB ($\beta = 0.045$, $p < 0.077$). MD had the strongest effect on ATB, followed by its influence on PBC, and the least impact on SN. These results support H4, H5, H6 and H7.

Furthermore, findings revealed the positive influence of SC on ATB ($\beta = 0.132$, $p < 0.035$), PBC ($\beta = 0.271$, $p < 0.000$), SN ($\beta = 0.133$, $p < 0.038$) and EB ($\beta = 0.059$, $p < 0.015$) but not on EI ($\beta = 0.021$, $p = 0.594$). These findings H9, H10, H11 and H13 while H12 is rejected.

Gender was negatively related to both PBC ($\beta = -0.206$, $p < 0.017$) and ATB ($\beta = -0.245$, $p < 0.003$) but had no effect on SN ($\beta = -0.081$, $p = 0.384$). The findings provide support for H14 and H16, while no support was found for H15.

Additionally, both EI ($\beta = 0.100$, $p < 0.000$) and PBC ($\beta = 0.143$, $p < 0.000$) were positively related to EB, supporting H17 and H18.

**Table 4: Path coefficients.**

| Path | Original sample (O) | Sample mean (M) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | P values | Significance level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ATB -> EI | 0.331 | 0.330 | 0.065 | 5.078 | 0.000 | *** |
| PBC -> EI | 0.423 | 0.423 | 0.057 | 7.460 | 0.000 | *** |
| SN -> EI | 0.022 | 0.023 | 0.035 | 0.644 | 0.520 | ns |
| MD -> ATB | 0.346 | 0.346 | 0.056 | 6.216 | 0.000 | *** |
| MD -> PBC | 0.263 | 0.263 | 0.055 | 4.770 | 0.000 | *** |
| MD -> SN | 0.189 | 0.191 | 0.049 | 3.860 | 0.000 | *** |
| MD -> EB | 0.045 | 0.044 | 0.025 | 1.768 | 0.077 | ns |
| MD -> EI | 0.159 | 0.159 | 0.043 | 3.691 | 0.000 | *** |
| SC -> ATB | 0.132 | 0.132 | 0.062 | 2.108 | 0.035 | * |
| SC -> PBC | 0,271 | 0,272 | 0,061 | 4,455 | 0.000 | *** |
| SC -> SN | 0.133 | 0.134 | 0.064 | 2.071 | 0.038 | * |
| SC -> EB | 0.059 | 0.061 | 0.024 | 2.424 | 0.015 | ** |
| SC -> EI | 0.021 | 0.020 | 0.040 | 0.533 | 0.594 | ns |
| Gender -> ATB | -0.206 | -0.207 | 0.087 | 2.380 | 0.017 | * |
| Gender -> PBC | -0.245 | -0.247 | 0.083 | 2.953 | 0.003 | ** |
| Gender -> SN | -0.081 | -0.085 | 0.093 | 0.871 | 0.384 | ns |
| EI -> EB | 0.100 | 0.099 | 0.026 | 3.906 | 0.000 | *** |
| PBC -> EB | 0.143 | 0.144 | 0.025 | 5.684 | 0.000 | *** |

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001 (levels of statistical significance).

## 5. Discussion of Findings

This study examined how social capital, media and gender influence the antecedents of EI among TVET college and university students. The study tested the impact of SC and MD on EI and EB, as well as the impact of EI and PBC on EB. Findings showed that MD is positively related to ATB, PBC and SN. These results concur with those of Levie et al. (2010) and Mothibi and Malebana (2019). However, the findings partially contradict those of Laguía and Moriano (2021) who found that MD had a positive influence on ATB and PBC but not on SN. These findings suggest that positive media content or reporting about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs can stimulate EI by fostering favourable attitudes, boosting confidence in entrepreneurial capabilities, and strengthening the perception of societal support for entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, the findings revealed that MD had a direct influence on EI. These results are in line with Adekiya and Ibrahim (2016); Aparicio et al. (2021) and de Pillis and Reardon (2007).

The results show that SC positively influences ATB, PBC and SN. These results corroborate those of Hassan et al. (2024). These findings suggest that SC can shape attitudes toward entrepreneurship, enhance one's perceived ability to start a business and increase perceived social pressure to start a business. However, the results do not align with those of Doanh and Bernat (2020) and Raevskaya and Tatarko (2022) who reported a nonsignificant relationship between SC and ATB, and Fernández et al. (2021) regarding the nonsignificant relationship between SC and PBC. SC did not have a direct relationship with EI. These findings align with those of Doanh and Bernat (2020), but contradict those of Hassan et al. (2024).

The findings showed the negative effect of gender on ATB and PBC, but no impact on SN. While the results were negative, they support those of previous studies that have shown that gender influences ATB and PBC, but not SN (Gomes et al., 2021; Maes et al., 2014). These findings suggest that gender significantly affects how people evaluate entrepreneurship and perceived PBC but has no significant effect on SN.

The findings of the study partially supported the TPB as a model for predicting EI of TVET college and university students. The results indicate that among the three antecedents, EI is significantly influenced by ATB and PBC, but not SN. These findings align with previous studies that also found ATB and PBC to have a positive influence on EI, while SN did not (Blanco-Mesa et al., 2023; Duong, 2022; Ilomo and Mwantimwa, 2023). These findings suggest that EI is determined more by favourable attitudes towards entrepreneurship and confidence in the ability to engage in entrepreneurship than societal expectations or the influence of others. However, the results of this study are in contrast with earlier research that found a statistically significant relationship between EI and SN, but not with ATB or PBC (Amrouni and Azouaou, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024).

Additionally, the results in this study have shown EI and PBC positively influence EB. These results corroborate previous studies on the positive influence of EI (Bouarir *et al.*, 2023; Cui and Bell, 2022; Neneh and Dzomonda, 2024) and PBC on EB (Kautonen et al., 2015; Nergui, 2020). These results suggest that, among TVET college and university students, a strong intention to pursue entrepreneurship and confidence in one's perceived ability are significant factors determining their actual entrepreneurial behaviour.

### 5.1 Implications

Policymakers and entrepreneurship educators should design and implement interventions that foster and support the development of EIs and facilitate their translation into EB. To achieve this, firstly, collaboration between the government and media houses is vital to promote entrepreneurship and cultivate an entrepreneurial culture in South Africa. The collaboration should result in the development of television programs highlighting the economic benefits of entrepreneurship and radio interviews with entrepreneurs portraying both successes and challenges in starting and managing a new business. Such initiatives would offer valuable insights into the entrepreneurial journey, and ultimately enhance positive entrepreneurial attitudes and boost PBC, and strengthen the perception of societal support for entrepreneurial activities among young people. Secondly, policymakers and entrepreneurship educators should collaborate to create and fund initiatives that build and strengthen social networks for aspiring entrepreneurs. These initiatives could include networking events, mentorship programs, and industry connections, providing students with valuable resources, advice, support, and opportunities to interact with local entrepreneurs and business leaders. This approach will help to foster positive ATB, enhance perceptions of social support, and boost students' PBC. Thirdly, the positive influence of PBC on EI and EB indicate the need to provide hands-on, practical, student-centred learning to enhance PBC. There is a need for targeted interventions to help enhance PBC and ATB among female students, which may include tailor-made financial and non-financial support and exposure to social networks for women entrepreneurs, and media programmes showcasing successful women entrepreneurs.

### 5.2 Conclusion, Limitations and Areas for Further Research

Entrepreneurial activity is essential for cultivating a dynamic economy with reduced unemployment rates. Therefore, concerted efforts are needed to understand the factors that drive new venture creation and performance. An understanding of the impact of these factors would help policymakers and entrepreneurship educators in designing targeted interventions that foster a supportive environment that enables aspiring entrepreneurs to convert their intentions into entrepreneurial actions.

The limitations of this study are the use of cross-sectional data, which provided a snapshot of variables at a specific point in time which precluded a longitudinal analysis. Additionally, the study was based on a convenience sample of TVET college and university students in Gauteng, limiting the generalisability of the findings to all TVET college and university students across South Africa. Future studies should consider conducting similar studies in other provinces and comparing results across different regions and participant types.

## Ethics Declaration

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Tshwane University of Technology Research Ethics Committee.

## AI Declaration

No AI tools were used in the creation of this paper.

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