



## **Antecedent Factors Influencing Adult Learners' Entrepreneurial Intention at Institute of Adult Education in Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the antecedent factors influencing adult learners' entrepreneurial intention (EI) at the Institute of Adult Education in Tanzania. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), it examines the effects of personal attitude (PA), subjective norms (SNs), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) on EI. Adopting a quantitative research approach grounded in the post-positivist paradigm, data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 245 respondents selected via convenience sampling from a population of 1,726 adult learners enrolled in entrepreneurship modules. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS 20.0 was applied to test the hypothesised relationships. The findings revealed that personal attitude had a direct, positive, and statistically significant effect on EI ( $\beta = 0.368$ , CR = 3.212,  $p < 0.05$ ). Conversely, subjective norms ( $\beta = 0.124$ , CR = 4.021,  $p = 0.201$ ) and perceived behavioural control ( $\beta = -0.342$ , CR = 3.321,  $p > 0.05$ ) exhibited no significant influence on EI. These results suggest that strengthening entrepreneurial intention among adult learners requires addressing positive attitude towards entrepreneurship among students through experimental learning and showcasing entrepreneurial success stories, initiatives for promoting entrepreneurial attitude development, practical incubation facilities as well as prevailing values and beliefs that shape personal attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The study offers valuable implications for curriculum development and policymakers, highlighting the need for an attitude-focused approach that integrates practical and technical elements to strengthen entrepreneurial mindsets and innovation capacity among adult learners in Tanzania.

***Keywords:*** antecedents, entrepreneurial intention, adult learners, Tanzania, theory of planned behaviour

## Introduction

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is widely documented as an essential construct in understanding why and how individuals initiate business ventures. It reflects the cognitive and motivational processes through which psychological preparedness is translated into entrepreneurial behaviour. Recent studies show that factors such as emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived control are closely linked with EI, helping to explain why some individuals are more inclined than others to visualise and initiate business ventures (Nwibe & Ogbuanya, 2024). From a wider socio-economic standpoint, EI is increasingly regarded as a lever for innovation, job creation and economic resilience, particularly in emerging economies where formal employment opportunities remain scarce (Aluthge, 2022). Within higher education and adult learning, EI is therefore not simply an academic construct; it serves as a practical indicator of how effectively education, mentorship and institutional support convert latent aspirations into entrepreneurial action (Qin et al., 2023).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as suggested by Ajzen (1991) provides a robust theoretical framework for explaining EI. According to Ajzen (1991), entrepreneurial intention is primarily determined by three antecedents: personal attitude (PA) towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms (SNs) and perceived behavioural control (PBC). Attitude reflects the individual's overall evaluation of starting a business, whether they see it as desirable, enjoyable or beneficial (Bošnjak, 2020; Mbowe, 2023). Subjective norms capture perceived social pressures or support from significant others such as families, peers and community members, and tend to be more influential where group identity is strong or perceived control is low (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020; Nayak et al., 2024). Perceived behavioural control encompasses beliefs about one's capability and the availability of resources such as skills, finance and opportunities and directly predicts EI while also moderating the effects of attitude and norms (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020; Heredia-Carroza et al., 2024). Strengthening entrepreneurial self-efficacy and addressing contextual barriers through education are therefore critical for narrowing the gap between intention and behaviour.

A substantial empirical literature confirms the importance of TPB antecedents. Studies conducted in diverse higher education settings consistently identify personal attitude as a powerful predictor of EI. For instance, research in Brazil and Botswana has shown that favourable attitudes towards entrepreneurship are often the most influential determinant of students' entrepreneurial intentions (Paiva et al., 2020;

Agolla et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial attitudes are shaped by perceived benefits, passion, psychological factors and, in some contexts, religious beliefs, and can act both directly and indirectly on EI (Rodrigues et al., 2023). Similarly, Kurata et al. (2025) demonstrate that attitudes and self-efficacy significantly influence EI, with differences observed across academic years, underscoring the dynamic nature of these constructs.

By contrast, the influence of subjective norms on EI is more ambiguous and context-dependent. Some studies report that SNs have little or no effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions (Paiva et al., 2020; Mawardi & Baihaqi, 2020; Agolla et al., 2019), while others find a significant, albeit sometimes weak positive relationship (Nguyen et al., 2019; Chin et al., 2024) or even a negative one (Balgiu & Simionescu, 2024). In several cases, subjective norms exert their influence indirectly through attitude and PBC rather than acting as a strong independent predictor (Nessel et al., 2024; Pham, 2023; Ngonda & Ngonda, 2023). These mixed findings suggest that the role of social expectations in shaping EI is culturally nuanced and may vary according to educational context, age group and the strength of individual control beliefs.

Perceived behavioural control is generally found to be a stronger and more consistent predictor of EI. Studies from Jordan, Ethiopia, Romania, Indonesia, Botswana, South Africa and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges across Africa report that higher PBC is associated with stronger entrepreneurial intentions and, in some cases, with actual entrepreneurial behaviour (Majd et al., 2024; Aga, 2024; Balgiu & Simionescu, 2024; Mawardi & Baihaqi, 2020; Agolla et al., 2019; Nkosinathi & Mmakgabo, 2025; Ngonda & Ngonda, 2023). PBC also mediates the impact of entrepreneurship education on EI, highlighting the importance of confidence and perceived control in the translation of learning into action. However, some research indicates weak, insignificant or even negative relationships between PBC (or closely related constructs such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy) and EI in particular contexts (Shah & Soomro, 2017; Amofah et al., 2020; Cynthia et al., 2020; Gelaw et al., 2025). This suggests that control beliefs may interact with other structural or psychological factors in complex ways.

Most of the empirical studies, however, focused on traditional university students, with relatively limited attention given to adult learners. This is a significant omission, because adult learners often face distinct challenges and opportunities. In both developed and developing countries, adult learners commonly display modest or inconsistent entrepreneurial intentions. Although awareness of entrepreneurship and

favourable attitudes may be widespread, they do not necessarily translate into concrete start-up activity (Nabi et al., 2018; Hill & Coduras, 2023). Adults frequently confront heightened risk aversion, a preference for income stability, limited access to finance, time constraints due to work and family responsibilities, and low institutional support (OECD, 2021; Mbowe, 2023; Biney, 2023). Under-resourced adult education systems, gendered responsibilities and informal labour markets can further constrain both intention and action on venture formation (Anubhav et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2023).

Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) illustrates these intensions for venture creation clearly. While many adult learners report strong awareness of entrepreneurship and express interest in self-employment, actual business creation remains limited. Entrepreneurship education can enhance EI primarily by strengthening entrepreneurial self-efficacy, especially when programmes are practical, contextually grounded and delivered through non-formal or community-based initiatives (Mbowe, 2023; Biney, 2023; Adeniyi, 2024). Yet systemic barriers including restricted access to finance, weak institutional support and persistent socio-cultural norms continue to inhibit the conversion of intention into action (Zwane & Osuigwe, 2024). Women, in particular, may be constrained by gendered expectations and responsibilities.

Tanzania reflects many of the regional patterns (restricted access to finance, weak institutional support and persistent socio-cultural norms). Tanzania, adult learners' entrepreneurial intentions are generally high in principle but constrained in practice (Mbowe, 2023). Entrepreneurship education programmes have been shown to enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention, but the scale and sustainability of actual venture creation remain modest and highly dependent on the relevance and practical orientation of the curriculum (Mbowe, 2023a; Mbowe, 2023b). Persistent challenges such as limited finance, weak institutional support, regulatory hurdles and gendered responsibilities undermine the realisation of entrepreneurial projects (Mpambije, 2023). Digital skills are increasingly important for accessing markets and resources, yet they are often weakly integrated into adult learning provision (Leger, 2025).

Within broader context, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in Tanzania plays a strategic role as a provider of entrepreneurship education to adult learners. Existing studies at IAE indicate that such education enhances entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention, nonetheless, relatively few graduates proceed to establish and sustain business ventures (Mbowe, 2023a; Ramadhani, 2022). Structural and institutional

barriers notably restrict access to finance, gendered responsibilities and weaknesses in programme design which constrain start-up readiness, echoing findings from other African contexts (Naegels, 2018; Mpambije, 2023). Courses are often short, theoretical and insufficiently experiential, with limited integration of digital skills and minimal opportunities for mentorship, incubation or network-building (Leger, 2025). As a result, entrepreneurship education at IAE appears conceptually effective in raising awareness and intention but less successful in enabling practical entrepreneurial engagement after graduation (Mbowe, 2023a; Ramadhani, 2022).

Despite the existing arguments on EI enhancement, the prevailing situation points to important gaps in existing knowledge and practice. Much of the research in SSA and Tanzania in particular, has concentrated on the existence or level of EI and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. However, they may focus rather on the specific mechanisms through which TPB antecedents interact with structural conditions and curriculum design features in adult education settings. The inconsistent evidence on the influence of subjective norms and PBC across different contexts further underscores the need for context-specific, theory-driven studies focused on adult learners rather than traditional students.

Contrary to afore mentioned backdrop, this study applies the Theory of Planned Behaviour to examine the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention among adult learners at the Institute of Adult Education in Tanzania. It seeks to understand how personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control jointly shape entrepreneurial intentions within a setting characterised by both rising entrepreneurial awareness and persistent structural barriers. By doing so, the study aims to generate evidence that can inform the design of more responsive, practice-oriented and digitally inclusive entrepreneurial learning interventions for adult learners. The study is guided by two main research questions:

1. What roles do the TPB antecedents—personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control play in enhancing adult learners’ entrepreneurial intentions at IAE?
2. What are the relationships between these antecedents and entrepreneurial intention in this context?

In line with these questions, the study tested the following hypotheses:

H<sub>1</sub>: Personal attitude significantly influences adult learners’ entrepreneurial intention.

H<sub>2</sub>: Subjective norms significantly influence adult learners' entrepreneurial intention.

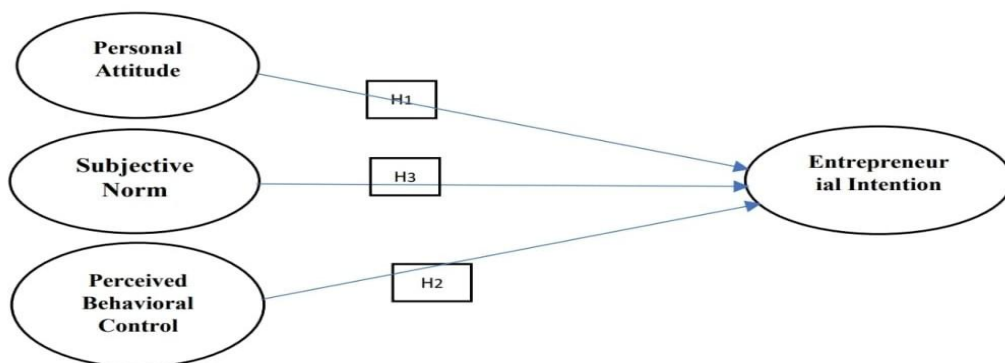
H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived behavioural control positively influences adult learners' entrepreneurial intention.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was adapted to examine the individual influence of each antecedent on EI. Accordingly, Hypotheses H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>3</sub> were formulated to test the relationships between PA and EI, SNs and EI, and PBC and EI, respectively. These hypotheses were evaluated using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework illustrating the direct relationships between the antecedents of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)—namely Personal Attitude (PA), Subjective Norms (SNs), and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)—as independent variables, and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) as the dependent variable. Empirical evidence consistently highlights these TPB antecedents as among the most significant predictors of EI.

The constructs of PA, SNs, PBC, and EI were operationalised and measured following the methodologies adopted by Dinc and Budic (2016) and Paiva et al. (2020). It is important to acknowledge that the strength of the direct influence of TPB antecedents on EI may vary over time, with predictive power potentially increasing or decreasing depending on contextual and individual factors. Various studies (Costa & Mares, 2016; Kautonen et al., 2015; Liñán & Chen, 2009) has reinforced the ongoing relevance of the TPB framework in explaining and predicting entrepreneurial intention through these three core antecedents. Overall, this conceptual model provides a robust foundation for analysing entrepreneurial behaviour among adult learners in higher education institutions, as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of TPB antecedents on EI**



## Methodology

This study is grounded in the philosophical assumptions of the post-positivist paradigm, entails the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, and causal linkages between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It employed quantitative research approach commonly used in entrepreneurship research to explore predictive relationships and generate hypotheses for further investigation, social sciences, education and psychology (Saunders et al., 2019). The study employed a correlational research design as of one quantitative research designs types used to examine the statistical relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. The researcher measures variables as they naturally occur to determine whether changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. The design is effective for identifying patterns, strengths, and directions of relationships (positive, negative, or zero correlation) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this context, the design was considered appropriate as it facilitated the measurement on how the independent variables—Personal Attitude (PA), Subjective Norms (SNs), and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)—influenced the dependent variable, Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

The study was conducted at the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in Tanzania, focusing on adult learners who were enrolled in the entrepreneurship education module. A total of 245 adult learners were selected through convenience sampling from a population of 1,726 students enrolled in entrepreneurship modules. This sample size was considered adequate for quantitative analysis, aligning with recommendations for social science research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kothari, 2014).

The study utilised a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to measure the dimensions of the research model (see Figure 1). The instrument was developed with reference to the theoretical framework and incorporated validated scales derived from previous empirical and conceptual studies. To capture respondents' perceptions of Personal Attitude (PA), Subjective Norms (SNs), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), the study adapted six, five, three, and six items respectively, based on the instruments developed by Paiva et al. (2018) and Dinc and Budic (2016). The questionnaire was further refined in accordance with the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Participants were instructed to indicate their levels of agreement with each statement by selecting the corresponding number on the scale.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main data collection, involving 70 questionnaires distributed to adult learners at the IAE. Fifty-eight valid responses were obtained, representing an 83% return rate. Based on Corrected Item-Total Correlations (CITCs), five items with correlation coefficients below 0.50 were removed, resulting in a final instrument of 24 closed-ended items derived from the original 29. Three eliminated items related to Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) were adapted from Dinc and Budic (2016) and Paiva et al. (2018). Data collection took place between June 2022 and January 2023 through online surveys (email and WhatsApp) for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) students and self-administered paper questionnaires for conventional learners, ensuring optimal convenience and participation.

Reliability and validity of the four constructs—Personal Attitude (PA), Subjective Norms (SNs), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)—were assessed using AMOS 20.0. Internal consistency was confirmed through Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and Composite Reliability (CR), with all values exceeding the 0.70 benchmark recommended by Hair et al. (2013, 2020). Specifically,  $\alpha$  values for PA, SNs, PBC, and EI were 0.826, 0.792, 0.885, and 0.985 respectively, while CR values were 0.853, 0.964, 0.924, and 0.898, demonstrating robust reliability and consistency (Ringle et al., 2014).

Convergent validity was established as all factor loadings ranged from 0.662 to 0.991 ( $p < .001$ ), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.578 to 0.724, exceeding the 0.50 threshold (Afthanorhan, 2013; Ringle et al., 2014). Discriminant validity, assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (1981), confirmed that the square roots of AVE values exceeded inter-construct correlations, indicating construct distinctiveness. Collectively, these results demonstrate that all variables met the required reliability and validity standards, confirming the robustness of the measurement model (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

**Table 2: Reliability and Validity Analysis**

Constructs	Cronbach’s $\alpha$	AVE	Composite Reliability (CR)	PA	SNs	PBC	EI
PA	0.826	0.628	0.853	<b>0.861</b>			
SNs	0.792	0.692	0.964	0.412	<b>0.968</b>		
PBC	0.885	0.724	0.924	0.168	0.312	<b>0.864</b>	
EI	0.985	0.578	0.898	0.652	0.648	0.622	<b>0.941</b>

Source: Field Data (2023)

EI: Entrepreneurial Intention, PA: Personal Attitude, SNs: Subjective Norms, PBC: Perceived Behavioural Control and Values with diagonals are the square root of AVE, Value under diagonals are correlations: ( $p < 0.001$ )

The collected data were initially cleaned, coded, and prepared for quantitative analysis. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was performed using AMOS version 20.0, employing 5,000 bootstrap samples to test the proposed hypotheses. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was first conducted to validate the measurement model and assess construct adequacy. Subsequently, SEM was applied to evaluate the structural relationships among the variables and to determine whether the hypothesised paths were supported or rejected (Hair et al., 2020; Kline, 2016).

Prior permission was obtained from IAE to access information from adult learners at IAE. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, and made aware that no material or academic incentives were associated with participation. These measures ensured adherence to standard ethical guidelines for social science research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this study address the three hypotheses derived from two key research questions, which sought to examine the influence of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) antecedents on enhancing adult learners' entrepreneurial intention (EI), as well as the interrelationships among these variables. Results from the structural equation model indicate an acceptable model fit, as evidenced by the goodness-of-fit indices. As illustrated in Figure 2, the fit indices were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 854.620$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.234$ , GFI = 0.968, CFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.974, NFI = 0.952, RFI = 0.981, NFA = 0.942, RMSEA = 0.046, and SRMR = 0.039.

According to Hair et al. (2019), a Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.90 or higher signifies a good model fit, while a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.05 or less indicates a close fit, with values up to 0.08 still regarded as acceptable. Based on these established benchmarks, all fit indices obtained in this study meet the recommended thresholds, confirming the adequacy of the measurement model for subsequent structural model analysis. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to assess the influence of the TPB antecedents—namely, Personal Attitude (PA), Subjective Norms (SNs), and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)—on entrepreneurial intention. The results, presented in Table 3, display the factor loadings and reliability coefficients for the four construct

dimensions, all of which were within acceptable ranges, thereby supporting the validity and reliability of the measurement model.

**Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

Constructs	Items	Measurements	<i>std. β</i>	SE	Z	P
<b>Entrepreneurial Intention</b>	EI1	I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	0.884	-	-	-
	EI2	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	0.863	0.631	20.406	***
	EI3	I will make every effort to start and run my own firm.	0.962	0.681	22.221	***
	EI4	I am determined to create a firm in the future.	0.916	0.511	18.201	***
	EI5	I have very seriously thought of starting a firm	0.814	0.516	19.362	***
	EI6	I have a serious intention to start a firm someday.	0.816	0.481	18.780	***
<b>Personal Attitude</b>	PA1	In my opinion, being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages.	0.869	-	-	-
	PA2	A career as an entrepreneur seems attractive	0.919	0.522	17.030	***
	PA3	If I had the opportunity and the necessary resources, I would like to start a company	0.891	0.531	17.871	***
	PA4	Being an entrepreneur would make me very satisfied	0.826	0.042	19.701	***
	PA5	I would prefer to become an entrepreneur, even if I consider other options.	0.860	0.431	21.682	***
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	SNs1	My friends would approve of my decision to become an entrepreneur	0.924	-	-	-
	SNs2	My family would approve of my decision to become an entrepreneur.	0.924	0.034	22.865	***
	SNs3	My college classmates would approve of my decision to become an entrepreneur.	0.866	0.365	19.640	***

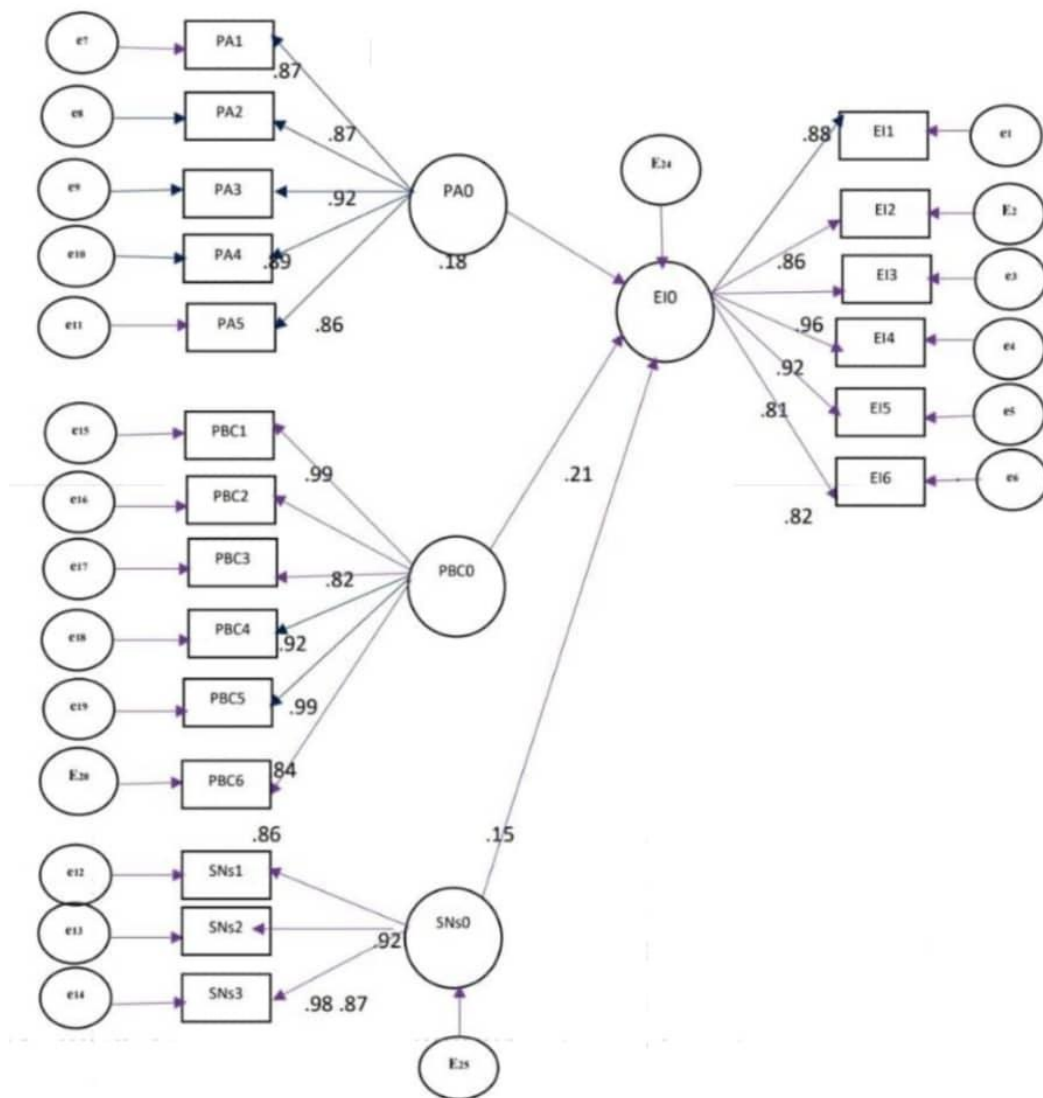
<b>Perceived Behaviour Control</b>	PBC1	To start a firm and keep it working would be easy for me.	0.986	-	-	-
	PBC2	I am prepared to start a viable firm	0.821	0.042	22.615	***
	PBC3	I can control the creation process of a new firm.	0.922	0.056	21.987	***
	PBC4	I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project (a business plan, for example).	0.991	0.069	22.985	***
	PBC5	I know the necessary practical details to start a firm.	0.842	0.043	22.019	***
	PBC6	If I tried to start a firm, I would have a high probability of succeeding	0.859	0.051	23.801	***

\*\*\* Significant ( $p < 0.001$ )

Source: Field Data (2023)

The structural model was assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples at a 5% significance level, conducted through the AMOS 20.0 software package. As illustrated in Figure 2, the results confirm that the model exhibits satisfactory levels of reliability and validity across all latent constructs, alongside an acceptable overall model fit. These findings suggest that the measurement and structural components of the model are statistically robust and suitable for hypothesis testing, consistent with established recommendations for structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016).




**Figure 2: Structural model**



$\chi^2 = 854.620, \frac{\chi^2}{df} = 2.234, GFI = 0.968, CFI = 0.956,$   
 $TLI = 0.974, NFI = 0.952,$   
 $RFI = 0.981, NFA = 0.942, RMSEA = 0.046$  and  $SRMR = 0.039$

Table 4 presents the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) entailed using AMOS 20.0 demonstrating the path coefficients for hypotheses testing.

**Table 4: Direct Effects – Path coefficients for Hypotheses Testing**

Hypotheses	Relationships	Unstandardized Estimate	SE	Critical-ratio (CR)	P-value	Standardizes estimate ( $\beta$ )	Decision
H1	PA  EI	0.264	0.001	3.212	0.000	0.368*	Accepted
H2	SNs  EI	0.174	0.052	4.021	0.201	0.124	Rejected
H3	PBC  EI	0.251	0.009	3.321	0.062	- 0.342*	Rejected

PA: Personal Attitude, EI: Entrepreneurial Intention, SNs: Subjective Norms, SE: Standard error, PBC: Perceived Behavioural Control. Significant \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Data (2023)

The proposed hypotheses were tested using the results presented in Table 4 and Figure 2. Each hypothesis was evaluated based on the corresponding  $p$ -values, with a significance threshold set at 0.05, indicating statistical significance at the 5% level (Hair et al., 2019). The standardised path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) were interpreted as regression estimates, representing the strength and direction of the relationships among the constructs within the structural model. Specifically, these coefficients reflect the influence of Personal Attitude (PA), Subjective Norms (SNs), and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) on Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). This analytical approach is consistent with the methodological standards of structural equation modelling, which emphasise the interpretation of standardised paths to evaluate hypothesised causal relationships in behavioural research (Kline, 2016; Awang, 2015).

### The Influence of Personal Attitude on Entrepreneurial Intention

Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> examined the contribution of Personal Attitude (PA) as one of the key antecedents within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework in predicting adult learners' Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant effect of PA on EI ( $\beta = 0.368$ , CR = 3.212,  $p < .05$ ), thereby supporting H<sub>1</sub>. This indicates that as adult learners' favourable attitudes towards entrepreneurship strengthen, their intention to establish business ventures also increases. These results are consistent with previous empirical evidence (Agolla et al., 2019; Paiva et al., 2020), which similarly identified PA as a significant determinant of students' EI.

Within the Tanzanian context, this finding underscores the importance of embedding curriculum components that cultivate positive entrepreneurial attitudes, experiential learning, and opportunity recognition skills among adult learners. Such educational

strategies can help reinforce venture creation readiness and entrepreneurial self-belief. Further analysis of H<sub>1</sub>, in response to the second research question, revealed that PA exerted the strongest influence on EI ( $\beta = 0.713$ ), confirming its central role within the TPB model. A substantial proportion of respondents expressed agreement with PA-related items, suggesting that they regard entrepreneurship as both a desirable and attainable career pathway.

These findings are in line with those of Kurata et al. (2025), Agolla et al. (2019), Rodrigues et al. (2023) and Balgiu and Simionescu (2024), who each reported that PA is a primary predictor of EI. For instance, Agolla et al. (2019) found that PA accounted for approximately 49% of the variance in EI ( $R^2 = 0.49$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Collectively, the present results reaffirm that PA—representing an individual’s favourable evaluation of entrepreneurial outcomes—plays a critical factor in shaping entrepreneurial intention among adult learners.

### **Influence of Subjective Norms on Entrepreneurial Intention**

As with H<sub>1</sub>, Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> was evaluated in relation to the study’s two research questions. The analysis revealed no significant effect of Subjective Norms (SNs) on adult learners’ Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $CR = 4.021$ ,  $p = .201$ ), leading to the rejection of H<sub>2</sub>. This indicates that external social pressures—such as expectations from friends, family, or peers—do not significantly influence the entrepreneurial intentions of adult learners. Respondents generally disagreed with SN-related survey items, suggesting that social norms are too weak to exert a meaningful impact on EI. Consequently, these findings imply that adult learners in Tanzania trust more heavily on personal beliefs and attitudes rather than societal expectations when forming intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activity.

This outcome corroborates prior research demonstrating the limited predictive power of SNs in entrepreneurship contexts (Chin et al., 2024; Liñán et al., 2013; Mawardi & Baihaqi, 2020; Paiva et al., 2020). Similarly, Agolla et al. (2019), Balgiu and Simionescu (2024) and Nessel et al. (2024) reported weak, negative, or statistically insignificant correlations between SNs and EI, indicating that their influence may often be indirect rather than direct ( $R^2 = -0.07$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Conversely, the current results contrast with studies by Arroyo et al. (2017), Nguyen (2019), and Riess et al. (2024), which identified SNs as significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention. These discrepancies may be attributable to contextual or cultural variations, highlighting the role of socio-cultural norms, educational environments, and national entrepreneurial ecosystems in shaping the relevance of social influence on EI.

## Perceived Behavioural Control and Entrepreneurial Intention

Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>, guided by the same research questions, revealed a negative and non-significant effect of Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) on adult learners' Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) ( $\beta = -0.342$ ,  $CR = 3.321$ ,  $p > .05$ ), resulting in the rejection of H<sub>3</sub>. Contrary to theoretical expectations, the findings suggest a negative relationship between perceived behavioural control (PBC) and entrepreneurial intention, challenging the assumption that PBC uniformly enhances intention formation within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). This counterintuitive outcome in adult education contexts, heightened perceptions of control may reflect abstract confidence rather than task-specific competence, particularly as learners become more aware of resources or institutional support constraints associated with entrepreneurship. This increased realism may prompt more cautious self-assessment, thereby dampening entrepreneurial intention, consistent with prior research on overconfidence and feasibility appraisal (Krueger et al., 2000; Zhao et al., 2005).

Moreover, disagreement with PBC items related to applied competencies suggests a misalignment between conceptual confidence and practical capability, suggesting that PBC may function as a reflective rather than motivational construct among adult learners. These findings imply that PBC should be conceptualised as context-dependent and multidimensional, and that adult entrepreneurship education should prioritise experiential, skills-based pedagogies to align perceived control with actionable entrepreneurial competence.

These findings align with prior studies reporting weak or negative associations between PBC and EI, including Shah and Soomro (2017), Ng Kim-Soon et al. (2016), and Cynthia et al. (2020). For instance, Cynthia et al. (2020) found that PBC accounted for only 6.3% of the variance in EI, with other factors exerting stronger influence. Similarly, Gelaw et al. (2025), Amofah et al. (2020), and Paiva et al. (2020) reported weak or statistically insignificant effects of PBC across different contexts. Conversely, other studies have reported significant and positive relationships, including Majd et al. (2024), Aga (2024), Balgiu and Simionescu (2024), Mawardi and Baihaqi (2020), Ngonda and Ngonda (2023), Nkosinathi and Mmakgabo (2025), and Agolla et al. (2019). These inconsistencies may be attributable to differences in methodological approaches, sample characteristics, or contextual factors such as educational programmes, cultural norms, and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study confirms that, among adult learners, PA exerts the strongest influence on EI. PA enables learners to recognise both the advantages and challenges associated with pursuing an entrepreneurial career, thereby fostering motivation, opportunity-seeking behaviour, and satisfaction in entrepreneurial endeavours. Given its predictive strength, curriculum and module developers are encouraged to design practical and experiential content that cultivates positive personal attitudes and nurtures innovative thinking, ultimately promoting venture creation (Agolla et al., 2019; Kurata et al., 2025).

In contrast, SNs were found to have no significant effect on EI, indicating that social pressures from family, peers, or classmates do not substantially influence adult learners' entrepreneurial decisions in the Tanzanian context. Consequently, SNs may not be a reliable mechanism for fostering entrepreneurial intention in this setting. This outcome also highlights that TPB antecedents, while widely applied in Western contexts, may not always be fully transferable to diverse cultural and educational environments. The study recommends that strategies for promoting EI should incorporate adult learners' socio-economic realities, lived experiences, and the specific challenges of local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

On the other hand, PBC exhibited a negative relationship with EI, suggesting that higher confidence in one's entrepreneurial capabilities does not automatically translate into greater intention to start a business. This finding may reflect unrealistic expectations, overconfidence, or insufficient practical skills. Although participants reported confidence in their ability to undertake entrepreneurial tasks, did not translate into actionable intention. These findings underscore the importance of embedding hands-on learning opportunities in entrepreneurship curricula, such as business planning exercises, incubation programmes, and practical start-up simulations, to ensure that learners' confidence can be translated into meaningful entrepreneurial action

In summary, the study reinforces the relevance of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour for examining EI, particularly the roles of PA, SNs, and PBC. Applied within the Tanzanian adult learner context, the research demonstrates that PA represents the most effective lever for fostering entrepreneurial aspirations, while SNs and PBC require more nuanced, context-sensitive engagement through curriculum design. By emphasising attitudinal development, practical skill-building,

and context-aware learning strategies, educators can more effectively cultivate entrepreneurial intention and readiness among adult learners.

The study recommends that practitioners prioritise attitude-shaping interventions and experiential learning opportunities, such as mentorship and business clinics, to help adult learners realistically assess entrepreneurial opportunities and risks. Curriculum developers should emphasise practice-oriented, context-based learning through simulations, projects, and activities that foster positive entrepreneurial attitudes. Lecturers are encouraged to use hands-on approaches, including start-up simulations and field-based projects, to translate perceived behavioural control into actionable intention. Policymakers should support practice-based entrepreneurship education through funding for incubation centres and innovation hubs. Overall, these recommendations highlight a shift toward attitude-focused, experiential, and context-sensitive entrepreneurship education aligned with adult learners lived realities in Tanzania.

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