

Effect of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention Among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70118/ajbam-03-2025-130>

Abstract

This study examines the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students, particularly ABU Business School Zaria, and the extent to which Entrepreneurial Perceived competence, Entrepreneurial Perceived persistence and Entrepreneurial Perceived control affect Entrepreneurial Intention. The study used a survey method to reach a total of 365 students who participated in the study. The analysis made use of structural equation model (SEM) and SmartPLS software was used to assess the data collected. The results of the analysis indicate that Entrepreneurial Perceived competence and Entrepreneurial Perceived persistence has significant effect entrepreneurial intention. While, Entrepreneurial Perceived control has an insignificant effect on entrepreneurial intention. The study concludes that a major factor influencing entrepreneurial intention is perceived competence. Entrepreneurship is more likely to be pursued by people who think they have the requisite abilities and expertise. Students' entrepreneurial inclinations are not much impacted by their perception of control over external business conditions. The study recommends that universities should promote business mentorship programs, improve hands-on entrepreneurship training through real-world projects, internships, and business simulations and create competency-based curricula emphasising leadership, creativity, problem-solving, financial literacy, and decision-making. Also, investigate how technology-based entrepreneurship education affects entrepreneurial intention.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial, Self-Efficacy, Competence, Persistence, Control

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial intention is the desire to launch a new firm and the appropriate activity to follow through on that desire (Bazkiaei et al., 2020; Chang et al., 2016; Shinnar et al., 2012; Thompson, 2009). According to Engel et al. (2017), entrepreneurial intention is the desire a person has to work for themselves, launch a firm, or take part in and complete an entrepreneurial endeavour. Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is crucial since it is the first step in becoming an entrepreneur and is even necessary to launch a firm. According to the study Kong et al. (2020), entrepreneurial intention influences future company performance. Entrepreneurial intention is therefore referred to as the "core heart" of entrepreneurship. The idea of entrepreneurial intention has sparked several

studies in numerous nations and continents since it first appeared in literature. Scholars' increasing interest in the topic is shown in the size of the studies (Doanh & Bernat, 2019; Lai & To, 2020; Saraih et al., 2018). According to Mirjana et al. (2018), the several lines of research on entrepreneurial intention identify two sets of elements influencing entrepreneurial behaviour: institutional factors and personal traits of the individual and the economic environment, such as industry trends. The study's definition of entrepreneurial ambition is a gauge of students' preparedness to launch and run their own company in the electrical and/or electronics trades. Stronger entrepreneurial intents are more likely to emerge in people who have greater levels of self-efficacy because they are more assured of their entrepreneurial skills.

Nguyen et al. (2022) define self-efficacy as the conviction that one can affect one's own motivation, behaviour, and social environment. Self-efficacy is a person's assessment of his or her capacity to overcome challenges and accomplish goals (Mouton et al., 2013; Uzunboylu & Selcuk, 2016). It involves an individual's belief in his capacity to perform particular tasks or reach predetermined objectives. Self-efficacy belief, as it relates to entrepreneurship, is the belief that one can engage in and succeed in an entrepreneurial endeavour (Saraih et al., 2018). According to Pihie and Bagheri's (2013) research, students' entrepreneurial intention is improved by self-efficacy because it increases their attitude towards entrepreneurship, sense of control over the entire entrepreneurial activity, and ability to manage the process. A self-evaluation of one's capacity to perform particular tasks and accomplish predetermined objectives is known as self-efficacy belief, or perceived self-efficacy (Rivers & Ross, 2018). Three aspects of perceived self-efficacy were distinguished by Dullas (2018): perceived competence, perceived persistence, and perceived control. This study used Dullas' three-factor model of self-efficacy belief because it was straightforward and had a suitable measure with proven psychometric qualities.

There have not been sufficient studies that investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention just but few such as (Nwibe & Bakare, 2022; Roberts, Uye, Stephen & Olapegba, 2023). Other studies have used entrepreneurial self-efficacy as either a moderator or a mediator (Nwibe & Ogbuanya, 2024; Edigbonya, Edokpolor, Odibo & Sun, 2024; Otache, Edokpolor, Sani & Umar, 2024; Ezech, Nkamnebe, & Nkamnebe, 2024). Studies on the relationship between an individual's entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention are, however, scarce, especially in Nigeria (Nwibe & Ogbuanya, 2024). Also, Nigerian geographical and cultural circumstances may influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention. The study might extrapolate results without taking into account differences between states or colleges (Obschonka et al., 2019). The previous studies have not taken into consideration sociocultural influences, government regulations, and finance availability, all of which have an impact on entrepreneurial intention (Urban, 2020).

This research therefore examines the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students in Nigeria, particularly Northern Nigeria and the extent to which opportunity identification, risk management and tolerance and innovation and creativity predict such intention. In practical terms, this study advances knowledge about programs that aid in the process of reducing the threat of youth unemployment in developing nations like Nigeria in particular. The results of this study should shed light on how much youth entrepreneurial intention are predicted by opportunity identification, risk management and tolerance and innovation and creativity. The findings give counsellors and entrepreneurship educators the information they need to coach and advise students who express interest in entrepreneurship. The findings could also be used by policymakers to enhance the intervention in entrepreneurship education programs for better results, especially wealth and employment among young people. The rest of this article presents a literature review, methodology, results and discussion and concludes with policy recommendations.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study adopts the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to underpin the study. According to the cognitive version of social learning theory known as "social cognitive theory," human behaviour is the result of a dynamic interplay between environmental effects, personal characteristics, and behaviour. It combines ideas from behaviour modification theories that are cognitive, behaviouristic, and emotional. It also highlights how crucial self-efficacy, self-control, reinforcement, and observational learning are in shaping behaviour. This idea can be extended to various areas of behaviour change, including nutritional interventions for managing and preventing disease (Bandura, 1977). The researcher believed SCT is the most appropriate theory for this research because it provides a comprehensive framework for analysing how one's actions and results relate to behavioural, cognitive, individual, and environmental aspects. According to Biraglia and Kadile (2016), SCT can be used to determine students' intention to start business, which may be influenced by a combination of personal characteristics, behavioural outcomes, and environmental inputs. According to SCT (Bandura, 1986) people act in ways that further

their goals. Researchers look into the students' plans to launch their own business after graduation in order to examine behavioural effects. SCT holds that an individual's inputs, environment, and past experiences interact in a three-way reciprocal fashion to produce behaviour (Bandura, 1986).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurial Intention

The propensity of people to engage in entrepreneurial activities, work for themselves, or launch a new company is referred to as entrepreneurial intention (Dohse, 2010; Dhose and Walter, 2012). According to (Krueger et al., 2000; Salawudeen and Shuaibu, 2025), one of the main indicators of future entrepreneurial conduct is entrepreneurial intention. A person's competence and self-efficacy may indicate that they have the ability to become an entrepreneur, but their lack of desire may prevent them from taking the leap. Quan (2012) made a distinction between intentional and spontaneous entrepreneurial intention. While the latter shows a person's readiness to enter the business world with a prepared attitude, the former explains the intention without practical management of business resources.

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) could be defined as a situation or state of an individual that piques interest, attention, and a decision to take a specific action (Cai et al, 2022). A number of things, such as exposure to pertinent training, losing one's employment, and having access to venture capital facilities, can cause this. Business students exhibited a more favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship than students from other departments, according to an empirical study on entrepreneurial intention among final-year students conducted by Fatoki (2014). Muhammad et al. (2015; Abdullahi and Lawal, 2023) used an adapted TPB as the primary framework in their study on entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian university students, and they found similar results. Using data from the Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Student's Survey. Gubik (2021) found that family entrepreneurial background was a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intentions among Hungarian students. Ilevbare, Ilevbare, Adelowo and Oshorenua (2022) their findings indicated that the

students had a strong desire to start their own business. Key drivers of students' inclination to pursue entrepreneurship include push factors such as perceived family social support, risk-taking tendencies, and prior business experience. The degree of entrepreneurial intention was also significantly correlated with the father's age and occupation. Furthermore, Ediagbonya, Edokpolor, Odibo and Sun (2024) their finding also revealed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a significant predictor of business education students' entrepreneurial intention.

Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy beliefs (also known as expectancies) are the convictions that one can carry out the actions that one considers essential to achieving desired outcomes. He advocated self-efficacy theory as a unifying theory for all forms of behaviour change, including the results of psychological therapies and psychotherapy, and suggested that self-efficacy beliefs are among the most significant drivers of human behaviour. He made a distinction between outcome expectancies, which are focused on the anticipated outcomes of one's actions, and self-efficacy expectancies, which are focused on one's capacity to carry out behaviours. According to Bandura, the most significant and potent of the two factors influencing people's decisions to try or not try particular activities and to persevere in the face of setbacks are self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura argued that self-efficacy beliefs originated from four primary sources: (1) performance attainments and failures, which involve what one is trying to do and how successful or unsuccessful one is; (2) vicarious performances, which involve what one observes other people doing; (3) verbal persuasion, which involves what one hears about one's abilities or limitations; and (4) imaginal performances, which involve what one imagines oneself doing and how well or poorly one imagines oneself doing it.

The degree or quality of one's confidence in one's ability to fulfil obligations and accomplish goals is known as self-efficacy (Ormrod, 2006). Psychologists have examined self-efficacy from a variety of angles, observing various methods for enhancing it, the components of self-efficacy and its absence in a wide range of contexts, the connections between self-efficacy and self-concept, and attributional behaviours that either

enhance or diminish self-efficacy. The use of self-efficacy in entrepreneurship research is known as entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), and it refers to how confident entrepreneurs are in their ability to carry out different tasks and projects (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994; Chen et al., 1998). Entrepreneurs must possess strong psychological traits because the process is fraught with setbacks. A common trait of entrepreneurs, ESE stands for their mindset and belief in overcoming obstacles and succeeding as an entrepreneur (Gist and Mitchell, 1992; Chen et al., 1998). Previous research has demonstrated that self-efficacy has a significant role in predicting entrepreneurial intention and fostering entrepreneurial performance (Hmieleski and Corbett, 2008; Caines et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy is a psychological resource that influences conduct in a favourable way. According to research, the relationship between multiple network embedding and entrepreneurial intention may be mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Li et al., 2019). Additionally, it has the ability to modulate the association between entrepreneurial purpose, emotional stability, openness, and extraversion (Jin and Huang, 2019). The research in the literature shows that there is a strong correlation between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and the performance of a company founded by an entrepreneur. Farashah (2015) examined the institutional normative environment of 54 countries (regions) and found that adults' entrepreneurial self-efficacy positively impacted individual entrepreneurial intentions. Also, Odedokun (2023) result showed that self-efficacy, perceived relational support and entrepreneurial

education positively and significantly correlated with entrepreneurial intention. Ediagbonya et al. (2024) showed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy were significant predictor of business education students' green entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. Nwibe and Ogbuanya, (2024); Salawudeen and Shuaibu, (2025) also found that Out of the three dimensions of self-efficacy, perceived competence and perceived persistence had significant partial mediating effects. Thus; the following hypotheses were formulated:

- HO¹ Entrepreneurial Perceived competence has no significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria
- HO² Entrepreneurial Perceived persistence has no significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria
- HO³ Entrepreneurial Perceived control has no significant effect on Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria

Conceptual Framework

The author of this study developed a research model, which serves as the foundation for all of the postulated propositions regarding the study variables. Figure show the link between Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intention was explained by the model.

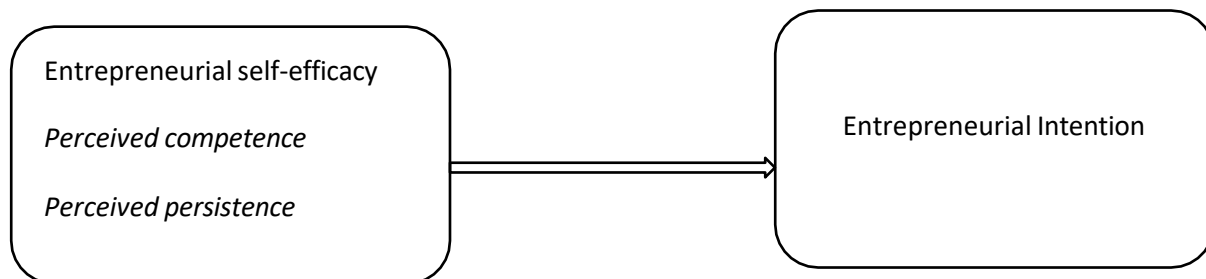


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study used a correlational survey methodology since its primary goal was to determine the effect of Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention among

Undergraduate Students in Nigeria. The population of the study consists of all business school at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. There were a total of 3,387 students in the study. The Krejcie and Morgan sample size table was used to ascertain the sample size, and based on the Krejcie and Morgan

sample size table, 365 samples from selected from the student of business school at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was applied to the research (Krejcie & Morgan 1970). The median population size in the range of 3,000 to 3,500 [(341) and (350)] is 365 (341+350/2). The convenience sampling method was used in reaching a total of 365 students who participated in the study. A standardized questionnaire served as the study's main tool. Information was obtained from the respondents using a questionnaire with the following title: effect of Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria. The questionnaire was structured with the following which made up of fifteen (15) opinion statements designed in a Likert Scale showing: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The two components that made up the entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and entrepreneurial intention (ETI). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Entrepreneurial Perceived competence (EPC), Entrepreneurial Perceived persistence (EPP) and Entrepreneurial Perceived control (EPL) five questions were assessed with a modified version of the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, which was created by Dullas (2018). The Thompson (2009) individual entrepreneurial intent scale was used to measure entrepreneurial intention. There are four distracting items and six primary items on the scale. According to Thompson (2009), the distracter items were not intended for use in scale analyses, hence only the five primary questions were used for data collection. The researcher examined the test's face and content validity. It was distributed to business education specialists, and the final version of the questionnaire that was distributed incorporated their feedback on the draft instrument. After the instrument was given to 30 business administration students at Kaduna State University, who were not included in the study sample, its reliability was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha. The coefficient in the results was 0.82. The researcher obtained 293 questionnaires from the respondents, representing 80.27 percent of the population. The analysis made use of SmartPLS version 4, hypotheses 1 – 3 were analyzed using structural equation model (SEM).

Nexus between Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intention

Validity & Reliability Measurement model assessments

Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings of each measurement are evaluated in order to determine the validity and reliability of the measurement model for this study. The validity of a measurement model is established when the AVE is greater than 0.5, the CR and CA values are greater than 0.7, and the factor loading value is equal to or greater than 0.7, according to Hair Jr et al. (2021). Table 1 shows that the item loadings for each construct fall between 0.709 and 0.885.

The measurement model's discriminant validity was evaluated by additional analysis. HTMT, or the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations, was used to assess discriminant validity. When the computed HTMT values are less than 0.85, a measurement model is said to have discriminant validity (Kline, 2016). Every computed HTMT value in our investigation was less than 0.85, only one computed HTMT gone above the threshold which (EPL-EPC). Tables 3, 4, and 5 shows the correlation values, which ranged from 0.544 to 0.927. By guaranteeing that the constructs are unique and precisely measured, this rigorous validation procedure strengthens the measurement model's robustness. As a result, the research findings' trustworthiness and dependability are greatly increased, strengthening the study's methodological rigour and offering a strong basis for additional analysis.

Structural model

The correlations between the latent variables, P values, T statistic values, and the values of all path coefficients are shown in Fig. 2 and Table 6. The analysis indicates that Entrepreneurial Perceived coAmpetence (EPC) ($\beta = 1.615$, $p = 0.046$) have a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (ETI). Meanwhile Entrepreneurial Perceived control (EPL) ($\beta = -1.138$, $p = 0.168$) has an insignificant effect on entrepreneurial intention (ETI). The result shows that Entrepreneurial Perceived persistence (EPP) ($\beta = 0.282$, $p = 0.000$) have a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention (ETI). Furthermore, the results reveal that EPC, EPL and EPP collectively account for 48 % of the variance in ETI. Additionally, following the execution of the Q2 predict, the values was 0.250 higher than 0. This indicates that the model is predictively relevant. The variance inflation factor (VIF) values of the inner and outer models were evaluated. Multicollinearity is not a problem

because the criterion requires the variance inflation factor values to be less than 5. Table 1 below displays the values of our model, which vary from

1.313 to 2.669, which is within the 5 requirement (Cohen, 2003). Consequently, there is no potential of multicollinearity difficulties.

Table 1: Item loadings, CA, CR and AVE values.

Items	Items loading	VIF	CA	CR	AVE
EPC1	0.816	2.144	0.901	0.927	0.717
EPC2	0.877	2.827			
EPC3	0.810	2.031			
EPC4	0.842	2.305			
EPC5	0.885	2.866			
EPL1	0.816	2.136	0.901	0.904	0.717
EPL2	0.878	2.840			
EPL3	0.812	2.038			
EPL4	0.842	2.296			
EPL5	0.883	2.853			
EPP1	0.778	1.663	0.825	0.835	0.587
EPP2	0.799	1.786			
EPP3	0.747	1.714			
EPP4	0.745	1.721			
EPP5	0.760	1.689			
ETI1	0.789	1.582	0.792	0.801	0.544
ETI2	0.735	1.588			
ETI3	0.709	1.446			
ETI4	0.718	1.607			
ETI5	0.735	1.423			

Source: Smart-PLS Output (2025)

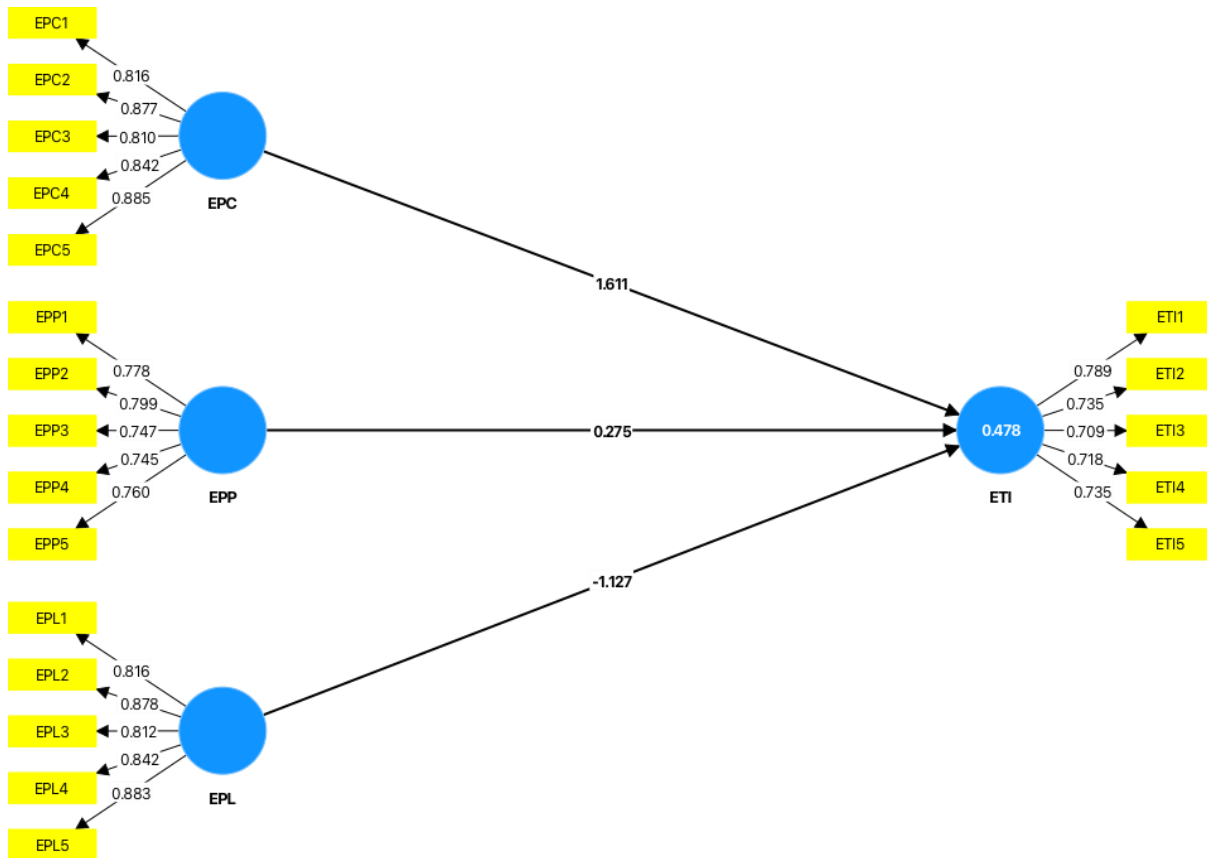


Fig. 1. Measurement model.

Table 2: Discriminant matrix of factors.

CONSTRUCTS	EPC	EPL	EPP	ETI
EPC				
EPL	1.108			
EPP	0.688	0.689		
ETI	0.753	0.747	0.684	

Source: Smart-PLS Output (2025)

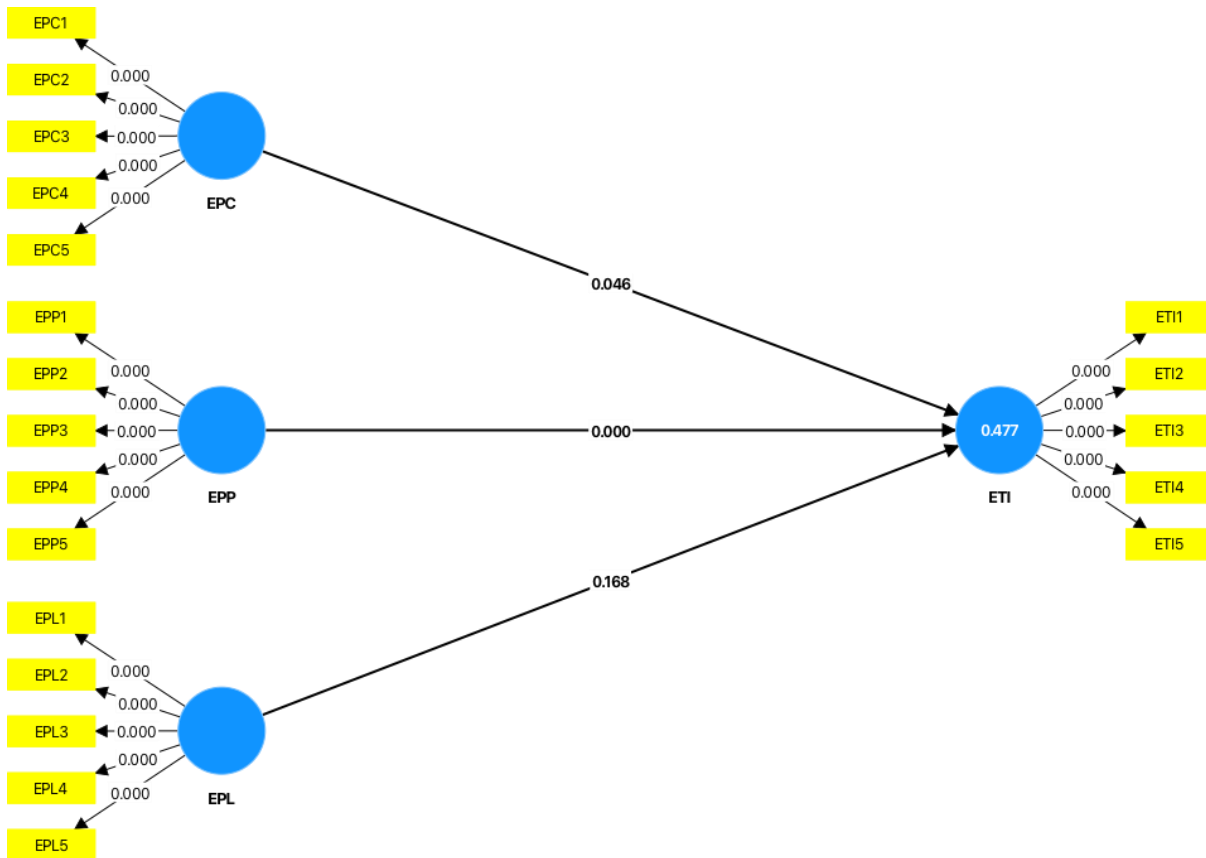


Fig. 2. Structural model.

Table 6: Path coefficient, T statistics, P values and hypothesis results.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	(STDEV)	T statistics	P values
EPC -> ETI	1.615	1.628	0.809	1.997	0.046
EPL -> ETI	-1.138	-1.151	0.826	1.378	0.168
EPP -> ETI	0.282	0.284	0.054	5.246	0.000

Source: Smart-PLS Output (2025)

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 proposes significant effect of Entrepreneurial Perceived competence on entrepreneurial intention. The study aligned with the studies of Wibowo et al. (2020); Karimi et al. (2016) whom found significant effect, while, it was not in line with the studies of Bazkiaei et al. (2020); Rauch and Hulsink (2015); Fayolle and Gailly (2015). The results indicates that students are more likely to have entrepreneurial goals if they believe they possess the necessary entrepreneurial skills. People are more likely to attempt entrepreneurship when they believe they possess the skills,

information, and talents needed to launch a business. This implies how crucial it is to cultivate entrepreneurial intention via education, training, and practical experience. The finding is in line with the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which holds that human behaviour is significantly influenced by self-efficacy. In this instance, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial perceived competence are in line, indicating that those who have confidence in their entrepreneurial skills are more inclined to act. Students' entrepreneurial intents are strengthened when they believe they are competent and gain confidence in their capacity to succeed as business owners.

The acceptance of H2 also shows that entrepreneurial perceived control has an insignificant effect on entrepreneurial intention (ETI). The study aligned with the studies of Roy, Akhtar, and Das (2017) and Fayolle & Linan (2014) they found insignificant effect, while, it was not in line with the studies of Kautonen, van Gelderen, and Fink (2015); Yurtkoru et al. (2014) whom found significant effect. The finding implied students place a higher value on their own abilities and perseverance than on outside factors, which makes them feel powerless over regulatory obstacles and unstable economies and powerless over environmental risks. Social cognitive theory places a strong emphasis on how behaviour, environmental circumstances, and individual characteristics interact. In this instance, the results imply that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by persistence and self-efficacy (competence), but not by perceived control over outside variables. This is consistent with SCT's understanding that personal beliefs about one's abilities rather than perceived environmental control are a stronger predictor of behaviour because external surroundings can occasionally be out of an individual's control.

Hypothesis 3 being not accepted suggests entrepreneurial perceived persistence has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. The study aligned with the studies of Munoz, Kibler, and Dyer (2019); Fatoki (2019) they found significant effect, while, it was not in line with the studies of Entrialgo and Iglesias (2016); Bae et al. (2014). The result shows that students are more likely to have entrepreneurial intention if they believe they are tenacious in conquering business obstacles. Entrepreneurial perseverance entails dedication, fortitude, and the capacity to move forward in the face of setbacks. This implies that people are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship if they have faith in their capacity to persevere through challenges. The result is in line with the Social cognitive theory which emphasises how important self-control and tenacity are to reaching objectives. In the realm of entrepreneurship, those who are persistent are more likely to stick with their plans despite obstacles. This supports SCT's view that one of the main factors influencing success is the capacity to persevere in the face of adversity. Students' desire to launch and maintain a firm is strengthened by entrepreneurial perseverance, which acts as an internal motivator.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that perceived competence, control and perseverance significantly influence entrepreneurial intention among students. Students are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship if they believe they possess the necessary skills and knowledge, rather than being influenced by external factors.

The study recommends that universities should enhance entrepreneurship training through mentorship programs, real-world projects, internships, and simulations, and create competency-based curricula focusing on leadership, creativity, problem-solving, financial literacy, and decision-making. This will lead to increase in entrepreneurial self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students.

Suggested Areas for Further Study

Based on your findings that entrepreneurial perceived competence (EPC) and entrepreneurial perceived persistence (EPP) significantly affect entrepreneurial intention (ETI), while entrepreneurial perceived control (EPL) has an insignificant effect, the following areas for further study are recommended: Assess the effectiveness of entrepreneurial role models and networking **opportunities** in increasing entrepreneurial intention. Also, investigate how technology-based entrepreneurship education affects entrepreneurial intention.

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