Journal of Management Research, Entrepreneurship and Strategy
Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,
University of Jos, P.M.B. 2084, Nigeria.
ISSN: 0189-1480 | Vol. 1, No. 2, 2026

ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND VENTURE-CREATION BEHAVIOR OF FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF JOS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxx

Keywords:
entrepreneurial intention; social capital; venture-creation behaviour; mediation; female undergraduate students; PLS-SEM.

Article History:
Received: 8 August 2026
Revised: 28 September 2026
Accepted: 30 September 2026
Published: 7 November 2026

Article Info:
Homepage:
https://jmres.org.ng
Volume: 1, No. 2, 2026
Pages: 383-398

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour among female undergraduate students of the University of Jos, with particular attention to the mediating role of social capital. Although entrepreneurial intention is widely recognised as an important antecedent of entrepreneurial behaviour, intention does not necessarily translate into concrete entrepreneurial action. The study therefore examined the direct association between entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour, the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and social capital, the relationship between social capital and venture-creation behaviour, and the indirect relationship between entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour through social capital. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and primary data were obtained from 392 female undergraduate students using a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples for significance and mediation assessment. Entrepreneurial intention was positively associated with social capital ($\beta = 0.585$, $t = 10.635$, $p < .001$), social capital was positively associated with venture-creation behaviour ($\beta = 0.588$, $t = 10.402$, $p < .001$), and entrepreneurial intention was positively associated with venture-creation behaviour ($\beta = 0.210$, $t = 3.215$, $p = .001$). The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.344$, $t = 8.148$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.263, 0.430]), supporting partial complementary mediation. The study contributes by positioning social capital as a relational mechanism that helps explain how entrepreneurial intention is associated with concrete venture-creation activities, particularly among female university students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is increasingly regarded as an important avenue through which young people can pursue economic participation, self-employment and venture creation. However, the development of an

entrepreneurial intention does not necessarily result in concrete entrepreneurial action. A person may desire to establish a venture, express readiness for self-employment and intend to become an entrepreneur without taking the practical steps required to develop, mobilise resources for or initiate a venture. This difference between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action represents an important issue in entrepreneurship research. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) identifies intention as an immediate antecedent of planned behaviour, but also recognises the importance of perceived behavioural control in the translation of intention into action (Ajzen, 1991).

The present study focuses on venture-creation behaviour rather than equating entrepreneurial activity exclusively with completed business ownership. Venture-creation behaviour is defined here as concrete actions undertaken towards establishing or initiating a venture, including opportunity identification, business planning, consultation and networking around a business idea, resource mobilisation, early informal commercial activity and steps towards venture launch. This operationalisation is consistent with the questionnaire used in the study and is more appropriately understood as nascent or venture-creation activity than as evidence that every respondent had already established a formally registered and operating business (Mackiewicz, 2023).

Entrepreneurial intention represents an individual's conscious desire, readiness and commitment to engage in entrepreneurial activity. The entrepreneurial-intention literature has established intention as an important construct for explaining planned entrepreneurial behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Nevertheless, intention alone provides an incomplete explanation of whether entrepreneurial aspirations become concrete action. The transition from intention to action can involve information seeking, relationship building, access to advice, resource mobilisation and interaction with people who can provide practical assistance.

This issue may be particularly relevant to female undergraduate students. Students may possess entrepreneurial aspirations but still encounter practical difficulties associated with limited financial resources, restricted access to entrepreneurial networks, limited mentoring opportunities and inadequate institutional connections. Consequently, explaining venture-creation behaviour among female students requires attention not only to individual motivation but also to the relational environment within which entrepreneurial action occurs.

Social capital provides a useful perspective for addressing this issue. Social capital refers to resources embedded in relationships and networks that individuals can access and mobilise to achieve objectives (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 2000). In entrepreneurship, relationships may provide information, advice, encouragement, mentoring, customer connections and other resources that support the start-up process. Evidence from nascent entrepreneurship also indicates that bonding and bridging social capital can be associated with progression through the venture-creation process (Davidsson & Honig, 2003).

The key conceptual distinction in the present mediation argument is therefore between possessing, developing and mobilising social capital. Entrepreneurial intention does not literally create a person's pre-existing family or friendship ties. Rather, intention can be associated with purposeful activation and mobilisation of those relationships for entrepreneurial purposes. An individual who is strongly committed to starting a business may be more likely to discuss a business idea with others, seek advice from experienced people, join entrepreneurial associations, approach mentors, contact potential customers and request support from family or peers. These actions can make existing relational resources more

accessible and useful in the entrepreneurial process. Social capital, in this sense, represents not only the existence of social ties but also the resources available through and mobilised from those ties. This interpretation is consistent with social-capital perspectives that view networks as channels through which information and other resources become available for action (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Davidsson & Honig, 2003).

The relationship between intention and social capital should consequently be interpreted as an association between entrepreneurial motivation and the entrepreneurial use or mobilisation of relational resources, rather than as a claim that intention generates social relationships de novo. This distinction is important for the mediation model because it identifies a plausible behavioural-resource pathway: entrepreneurial intention may encourage proactive engagement with relevant relationships; those relationships may make information, support and other resources more accessible; and these resources may be associated with greater engagement in venture-creation activities. Related research on the intention-behaviour link also shows that social context can shape how individual entrepreneurial intentions are translated into start-up activities (Weiss et al., 2019).

1.1 Research Gap and Contribution

The study addresses four interrelated gaps. First, an intention–action gap exists because a substantial proportion of entrepreneurship research focuses on factors that explain entrepreneurial intention rather than examining the extent to which intention is translated into concrete entrepreneurial behaviour. The formation of entrepreneurial intention and the enactment of entrepreneurial behaviour should not be treated as identical processes (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Weiss et al., 2019).

Second, a female entrepreneurship gap remains important. Female students may experience particular challenges when attempting to convert entrepreneurial aspirations into action. Consequently, findings derived from general student or entrepreneur populations may not adequately explain the processes through which female undergraduates move from intention to venture-creation behaviour.

Third, a relational-resource gap concerns the mechanism through which entrepreneurial intention is connected with action. While social capital has been recognised as an important entrepreneurial resource, the role of its mobilisation as a pathway linking intention with concrete venture-creation behaviour requires further examination.

Fourth, a theoretical gap exists in explanations that treat entrepreneurial intention primarily as an individual cognitive phenomenon. Although individual intention is important, entrepreneurial action is also socially embedded. The ability to act may depend partly on relationships through which individuals access information, encouragement, mentoring, opportunities and other resources. Integrating TPB with Social Capital Theory therefore provides a broader account of how entrepreneurial aspirations may become entrepreneurial action.

Accordingly, the principal contribution of this study is not simply the confirmation of three significant relationships. Rather, it is the positioning of social capital as a relational mechanism that helps explain the intention-action transition among female university students. The study therefore connects an individual-level intention construct with socially embedded resources and a behavioural venture-creation outcome, providing a more process-oriented explanation of how entrepreneurial aspirations may be associated with concrete entrepreneurial activity.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour provides an important foundation for understanding entrepreneurial intention. The theory explains that intention represents an immediate antecedent of planned behaviour and reflects an individual's willingness and commitment to perform that behaviour. Within entrepreneurship, intention is therefore relevant to understanding an individual's desire and readiness to pursue venture creation (Ajzen, 1991).

However, intention does not guarantee action. Individuals may have strong entrepreneurial aspirations but encounter barriers during implementation. For this reason, TPB is useful for explaining the motivational foundation of entrepreneurial behaviour but may require complementary perspectives when examining the resources and social conditions through which intention is translated into concrete action. In the present study, entrepreneurial intention represents the cognitive and motivational starting point of the model, while venture-creation behaviour represents concrete actions associated with moving towards venture establishment.

2.2 Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory explains how relationships and networks provide access to resources that facilitate individual and collective action. Social capital may provide entrepreneurial actors with information, advice, encouragement, mentoring relationships, customer connections and other forms of support (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

The study conceptualises social capital through three interrelated relational domains. Bonding social capital refers to support available through close relationships, particularly family members and trusted friends. Bridging social capital refers to connections beyond an individual's immediate social circle, through which new information, entrepreneurial ideas, potential customers and broader networks may be accessed. Linking social capital refers to vertical or institutional relationships involving actors with access to authority, knowledge or resources, including mentors, lecturers, alumni and relevant institutions.

These dimensions are not modelled as separate latent constructs in the empirical model. Instead, the seven indicators are treated collectively as a single reflective measure of social capital representing relational resources that respondents can access and mobilise for entrepreneurial purposes.

2.3 Theory of the Entrepreneurial Event

The Theory of the Entrepreneurial Event provides additional insight into the transition from entrepreneurial motivation to action. Its emphasis on desirability, feasibility and propensity to act is relevant because aspiring entrepreneurs may require resources and supportive conditions before entrepreneurial intentions are translated into practical action (Shapero & Sokol, 1982). In this context, social capital may strengthen the feasibility of entrepreneurial action by providing access to information, support and relationships. The theory therefore complements TPB and Social Capital Theory.

2.4 Theoretical Synthesis

The theoretical model combines individual intention with socially embedded resources. TPB explains why entrepreneurial intention is expected to precede planned entrepreneurial behaviour, while Social Capital Theory explains how relationships can provide resources that make action more feasible. The Theory of the Entrepreneurial Event adds a behavioural-process perspective by emphasising feasibility and propensity to act.

Within this synthesis, entrepreneurial intention is not treated as a force that creates social ties. Instead, stronger entrepreneurial intention is expected to be associated with greater purposeful engagement with existing and potential entrepreneurial relationships. Such engagement can involve seeking mentors, participating in entrepreneurial networks, discussing business ideas with knowledgeable contacts, requesting support and developing relationships with institutional actors. Through these activities, existing relational resources may be activated and made more useful for entrepreneurship. Social capital can then facilitate venture-creation behaviour by reducing information and resource constraints. The mediation model therefore represents a theoretically grounded association among motivation, mobilisation of relational resources and entrepreneurial action rather than a claim of temporal causality.

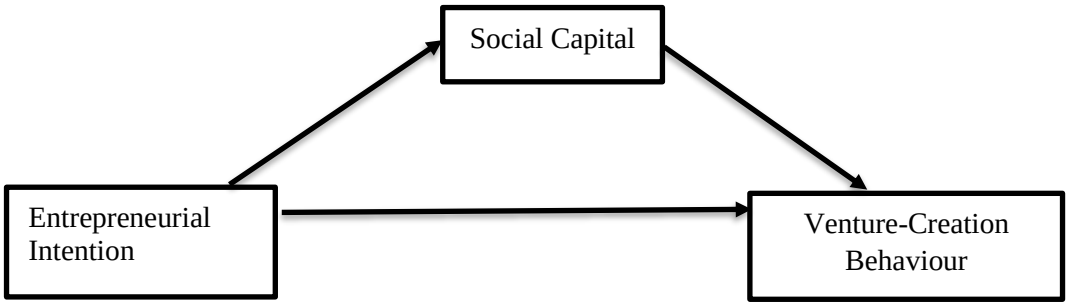

Figure 1
Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Authors' conceptualisation.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Entrepreneurial Intention and Venture-Creation Behaviour

Entrepreneurial intention reflects an individual's conscious desire, readiness and commitment to pursue entrepreneurial activity. Students with stronger entrepreneurial intentions may be more likely to undertake actions such as developing business ideas, preparing plans, seeking relevant information and taking steps towards venture initiation. TPB provides the basic expectation that stronger intentions are associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Accordingly:

H1: *Entrepreneurial intention is positively associated with venture-creation behaviour among female undergraduate students of the University of Jos.*

3.2 Entrepreneurial Intention and Social Capital

Social capital is embedded in social relationships, but its entrepreneurial value depends partly on whether individuals can identify, access and mobilise the resources available through those relationships. Entrepreneurial intention can be associated with proactive networking and relationship activation because individuals who are strongly committed to entrepreneurship have a reason to seek business information, discuss opportunities, approach mentors, join relevant networks and request support from family and peers. The proposed relationship therefore concerns the entrepreneurial mobilisation and accessibility of relational resources rather than the creation of entirely new social ties. This interpretation is consistent with the view that social and human capital are important resources in the nascent entrepreneurial process

(Davidsson & Honig, 2003), and with the broader social-capital perspective that relationships constitute channels for resource exchange (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Accordingly: (Neneh, 2022).

H2: *Entrepreneurial intention is positively associated with social capital among female undergraduate students of the University of Jos.*

3.3 Social Capital and Venture-Creation Behaviour

Venture-creation activities often require resources that students may not possess individually. Social relationships may provide access to information, encouragement, mentoring, customer connections and other forms of support that facilitate concrete entrepreneurial action. Evidence from nascent entrepreneurs indicates that bonding and bridging social capital can support participation in and progression through start-up activities (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Accordingly:

H3: *Social capital is positively associated with venture-creation behaviour among female undergraduate students of the University of Jos.*

3.4 Mediating Role of Social Capital

The central proposition of the study is that entrepreneurial intention may be associated with venture-creation behaviour partly through the mobilisation of social capital. Students with stronger entrepreneurial intentions may be more proactive in activating relevant relationships; these relationships may provide information, advice, encouragement, customer connections and other resources; and access to these resources may be associated with greater engagement in venture-creation activities. The mediation hypothesis therefore concerns an indirect statistical pathway that is consistent with the proposed relational mechanism. Mediation is evaluated empirically through the bootstrapped indirect effect rather than inferred solely from the significance of individual paths (Nitzl et al., 2016; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

H4: *Social capital mediates the positive relationship between entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour among female undergraduate students of the University of Jos.*

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design and Participants

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised female undergraduate students of the University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and the final analysis was based on 392 respondents. The study focused on entrepreneurial intention, social capital and venture-creation behaviour.

A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used to measure the study constructs. The use of self-report measures was appropriate because the constructs involved intentions, perceptions of social relationships and self-reported entrepreneurial actions. The population and sample-size procedures are consistent with the thesis, which reports a population of 18,200 female undergraduates and a final sample of 392.

4.2 Measurement of Variables

Entrepreneurial intention was measured using seven reflective items adapted from the entrepreneurial-intention instrument of Liñán and Chen (2009). The items capture readiness, professional aspiration, effort, determination, future intention and confidence regarding entrepreneurship. Social capital was

measured using seven reflective items covering bonding relationships, peer and wider networks, and linking relationships with lecturers, alumni and mentors.

Table 1

Measurement items used in the study

Construct	Code	Actual measurement item	Source/Adaptation
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI1	I am ready to do anything to become an entrepreneur.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI2	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI3	I will make every effort to start and run my own business.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI4	I am determined to create a business venture in the future.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI5	I have seriously thought about starting a business after graduation.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI6	I intend to start a business within the next five years.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI7	I am confident that I will overcome challenges in starting a business.	Liñán & Chen (2009)
Social Capital	SC1	My family supports my entrepreneurial activities.	Researcher adaptation; Bourdieu (1986)
Social Capital	SC2	I can rely on close friends for advice about starting a business.	Researcher adaptation; Coleman (1988)
Social Capital	SC3	My immediate social circle provides financial or emotional support for business activities.	Researcher adaptation; Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998)
Social Capital	SC4	I belong to networks (student associations, online groups) that support entrepreneurship.	Researcher adaptation; Coleman (1988)
Social Capital	SC5	I regularly interact with people who share business ideas with me.	Researcher adaptation; Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998)
Social Capital	SC6	I have access to peers who can connect me to potential customers.	Researcher adaptation; Putnam (2000)
Social Capital	SC7	I have access to lecturers, alumni, or mentors who can guide me in business start-up.	Researcher adaptation; Putnam (2000)
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS1	I have identified a business idea I would like to pursue.	Researcher adaptation; Neneh (2022)
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS2	I have written a simple business plan or proposal.	Researcher adaptation; Neneh (2022)
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS3	I have discussed my business idea with potential partners or mentors.	Researcher adaptation; Neneh (2022)
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS4	I have started mobilizing resources (savings, loans, or family support) for a business.	Researcher adaptation; Mackiewicz (2023)
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS5	I have already started providing products or services informally.	Researcher adaptation; Mackiewicz (2023)
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS6	I intend to formally register a business within the next two years.	Researcher adaptation; Neneh (2022)
Venture-Creation	BS7	I am currently taking steps to launch a new business.	Researcher adaptation; Neneh

Construct	Code	Actual measurement item	Source/Adaptation
Behaviour			(2022)

All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

4.3 Data Quality, Procedural Controls and Common Method Bias

The questionnaire was reviewed for clarity and relevance, and a pilot study was conducted among female undergraduate students who were not included in the final sample. Expert review and pilot feedback were used to improve the clarity, relevance and coverage of the instrument. Respondents participated voluntarily and were informed about the purpose of the research. They were assured that the information provided would be treated confidentially and used for academic purposes. Research assistants were briefed on the procedures for questionnaire administration to promote consistency and minimise response bias.

Because the three constructs were measured from the same respondents using a single cross-sectional questionnaire, common method bias (CMB) is a potential concern. Procedurally, the study reduced this risk by assuring respondents of confidentiality, using clear and concise items, separating demographic information from construct measures, and administering the questionnaire consistently through trained research assistants. Statistically, a Harman single-factor diagnostic was conducted as a preliminary check. The 21 substantive measurement items were entered into an unrotated principal-components analysis. The first unrotated factor accounted for 47.42% of the total variance, which is below the commonly used 50% screening rule. This result does not prove that CMB is absent; rather, it provides no indication from this diagnostic that a single common factor accounts for the majority of covariance among the indicators.

Table 2

Preliminary common method bias assessment

Diagnostic	Result	Interpretation
Harman single-factor test	First unrotated factor = 47.42%	Below 50%; no dominant single factor detected

Source: Researcher's computation, 2026.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was used to assess the measurement and structural models and to estimate direct and indirect relationships among the latent constructs. The reflective measurement model was assessed using individual outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The structural model was assessed using collinearity diagnostics (VIF), path coefficients, standard errors, t-values, p-values, confidence intervals, R^2, adjusted R^2, f^2 and Q^2. Mediation was assessed using the specific indirect effect generated from 5,000 bootstrap resamples. This procedure is consistent with contemporary recommendations for PLS-SEM mediation analysis (Hair et al., 2019, 2022; Nitzl et al., 2016).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed before the structural model. All three constructs were specified as reflective measures. The final model retained all 21 indicators: seven for Entrepreneurial Intention, seven

for Social Capital and seven for Venture-Creation Behaviour. No indicator was removed. The complete indicator-loading evidence is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Complete outer loadings

Construct	Item	Outer loading	Decision
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI1	0.682	Retained
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI2	0.741	Retained
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI3	0.786	Retained
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI4	0.774	Retained
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI5	0.815	Retained
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI6	0.772	Retained
Entrepreneurial Intention	EI7	0.756	Retained
Social Capital	SC1	0.776	Retained
Social Capital	SC2	0.794	Retained
Social Capital	SC3	0.795	Retained
Social Capital	SC4	0.839	Retained
Social Capital	SC5	0.834	Retained
Social Capital	SC6	0.836	Retained
Social Capital	SC7	0.828	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS1	0.784	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS2	0.861	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS3	0.820	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS4	0.843	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS5	0.822	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS6	0.801	Retained
Venture-Creation Behaviour	BS7	0.806	Retained

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

5.1.1 Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 4

Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability (CR)	AVE
Entrepreneurial Intention	7	0.880	0.906	0.582
Social Capital	7	0.916	0.933	0.664
Venture-Creation Behaviour	7	0.919	0.935	0.672

All Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70 and remained below 0.95, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The AVE values were above 0.50 for all constructs, supporting convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022).

5.1.2 Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table 5

Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	Venture-Creation Behaviour	Entrepreneurial Intention	Social Capital
Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.820	0.554	0.711
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.554	0.762	0.585
Social Capital	0.711	0.585	0.815

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

For each construct, the square root of AVE exceeded its correlations with the other constructs, satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Because the Fornell-Larcker criterion has known limitations in some PLS-SEM situations, HTMT was also examined as a complementary assessment (Henseler et al., 2015).

5.1.3 Discriminant Validity: HTMT

Table 6

Heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Construct pair	HTMT	Criterion	Decision
Entrepreneurial Intention - Social Capital	0.624	< 0.85	Established
Entrepreneurial Intention-Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.603	< 0.85	Established
Social Capital - Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.763	< 0.85	Established

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

All HTMT values were below 0.85, providing additional evidence that the three constructs are empirically distinguishable (Henseler et al., 2015).

5.2 Structural Model

5.2.1 Collinearity Assessment

Table 7

Structural-model collinearity assessment

Predictor relationship	VIF	Decision
EI → Venture-Creation Behaviour	1.521	No problematic collinearity

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

The VIF value of 1.521 is below conventional thresholds, indicating that collinearity among predictors of the outcome construct is not a substantial concern (Hair et al., 2022).

5.2.2 Path Coefficients and Significance

Table 8

Direct structural paths

Path	β	SE	t	p	95% CI	Decision
EI → SC	0.585	0.055	10.635	< .001	[0.478, 0.692]	Supported

Path	β	SE	t	p	95% CI	Decision
EI → Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.210	0.065	3.215	.001	[0.081, 0.334]	Supported
SC → Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.588	0.057	10.402	< .001	[0.471, 0.691]	Supported

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

All three hypothesised paths were positive and statistically significant. Entrepreneurial intention was positively associated with social capital (β = 0.585, t = 10.635, p < .001). Social capital was positively associated with venture-creation behaviour (β = 0.588, t = 10.402, p < .001). Entrepreneurial intention also demonstrated a significant direct positive association with venture-creation behaviour (β = 0.210, t = 3.215, p = .001).

5.2.3 Coefficient of Determination

Table 9

R^2 and adjusted R^2

Endogenous construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Interpretation
Social Capital	0.343	0.341	Moderate
Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.534	0.532	Moderate to substantial

Entrepreneurial intention accounted for 34.3% of the variance in social capital (R^2 = 0.343). Entrepreneurial intention and social capital jointly accounted for 53.4% of the variance in venture-creation behaviour (R^2 = 0.534). The adjusted R^2 values were 0.341 and 0.532, respectively.

5.2.4 Effect Size

Table 10

Effect sizes

Path	f^2	Effect size
EI → SC	0.521	Large
EI → Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.062	Small
SC → Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.488	Large

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

Values around 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are commonly interpreted as small, medium and large effects, respectively (Cohen, 1988). Social capital showed a large effect size for venture-creation behaviour, while the direct EI → VCB relationship showed a small effect size.

5.2.5 Predictive Relevance

Table 11

Q^2 predictive relevance

Endogenous construct	Q^2	Decision
Social Capital	0.221	Predictive relevance confirmed
Venture-Creation Behaviour	0.358	Predictive relevance confirmed

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

Both Q^2 values are greater than zero, indicating predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

5.3 Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of social capital was tested through the specific indirect effect EI → SC → VCB using 5,000 bootstrap resamples. Contemporary mediation guidance recommends evaluating the indirect effect directly through bootstrapped confidence intervals rather than relying solely on the traditional causal-steps approach (Nitzl et al., 2016; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Table 12

Direct, indirect and total effects

Effect	B	SE	t	p	95% CI	Interpretation
Direct: EI → VCB	0.210	0.065	3.215	.001	[0.081, 0.334]	Significant
Indirect: EI → SC → VCB	0.344	0.042	8.148	< .001	[0.263, 0.430]	Significant
Total: EI → VCB	0.554	-	-	-	-	Direct + indirect

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, 2026.

Total effect is 0.554, obtained as 0.210 + 0.344, subject to rounding of the reported component effects. VAF = 0.344 / 0.554 × 100 = 62.1%. The indirect effect was statistically significant because its 95% bootstrap confidence interval [0.263, 0.430] did not include zero. The direct effect also remained statistically significant. Accordingly, the results support partial complementary mediation: entrepreneurial intention was positively associated with venture-creation behaviour both directly and indirectly through social capital. The indirect effect is numerically larger than the direct effect (0.344 versus 0.210), while VAF of approximately 62.1% indicates that a substantial proportion of the total association is represented by the indirect pathway. These statistics describe effect magnitude within the estimated model and should not be interpreted as proof that the mediator is causally responsible for the observed relationship because the data are cross-sectional.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Entrepreneurial Intention and Venture-Creation Behaviour

The findings showed that entrepreneurial intention was positively and significantly associated with venture-creation behaviour. This result is consistent with the TPB proposition that intention is an important motivational antecedent of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and with the established role of entrepreneurial intention in entrepreneurship research (Liñán & Chen, 2009; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). The finding indicates that respondents with stronger entrepreneurial intentions also tended to report greater engagement in concrete venture-creation activities.

At the same time, the relatively smaller direct effect ($\beta = 0.210$) and small f^2 (0.062) indicate that entrepreneurial intention alone does not account for all the variation in venture-creation behaviour. This supports the intention–action distinction emphasised in entrepreneurship research and provides a rationale for considering relational resources alongside individual motivation.

6.2 Entrepreneurial Intention and Social Capital

Entrepreneurial intention was positively and significantly associated with social capital ($\beta = 0.585$). The finding requires careful interpretation because social capital is not necessarily created by intention.

Rather, the relationship can be understood in terms of activation and mobilisation. Students who are strongly committed to entrepreneurship may have stronger incentives to identify relevant contacts, seek advice, join entrepreneurial networks, discuss business ideas and mobilise family or peer support. Through these activities, pre-existing relationships can become more accessible and productive for entrepreneurial purposes.

This interpretation is consistent with Social Capital Theory, which views relationships as channels through which resources and knowledge can be accessed (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), and with evidence showing that social capital is relevant to the nascent entrepreneurial process (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). The result therefore supports the proposed statistical relationship while avoiding the stronger claim that entrepreneurial intention itself creates social capital.

6.3 Social Capital and Venture-Creation Behaviour

Social capital was positively and significantly associated with venture-creation behaviour ($\beta = 0.588$) and showed a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.488$). This result highlights the importance of relational resources in supporting concrete entrepreneurial activity. Family and close friends may provide encouragement and immediate support; wider peer and entrepreneurial networks may provide information, ideas and market connections; and relationships with lecturers, alumni and mentors may provide guidance and institutional knowledge.

The finding is compatible with prior evidence that bonding and bridging social capital can be associated with nascent entrepreneurship and progress through the start-up process (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). It also complements research on the intention–behaviour link by indicating that social context is relevant to the process through which entrepreneurial aspirations become venture-creation activities (Weiss et al., 2019). Because the study used cross-sectional data, however, the finding should be interpreted as a significant positive association rather than as evidence of causality.

6.4 Mediating Role of Social Capital

The mediation analysis produced a significant indirect effect of entrepreneurial intention on venture-creation behaviour through social capital ($\beta = 0.344$, 95% CI [0.263, 0.430]). Because the direct effect remained significant ($\beta = 0.210$), the evidence supports partial complementary mediation. The result suggests that entrepreneurial intention is associated with venture-creation behaviour through two routes in the estimated model: a direct route and an indirect route involving social capital.

The central implication is not simply that social capital has a significant coefficient. Rather, the mediation result provides evidence consistent with a relational mechanism connecting individual entrepreneurial motivation with entrepreneurial action. Strong entrepreneurial intention may be accompanied by greater purposeful engagement with family, peers, mentors, alumni and entrepreneurial networks; the relational resources available through those connections may, in turn, be associated with greater engagement in venture-creation activities. The VAF of approximately 62.1% further indicates that the indirect pathway represents a substantial share of the total estimated association. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design prevents a definitive temporal or causal interpretation.

7. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study contributes theoretically in three connected ways. First, it extends intention-based explanations of entrepreneurship by distinguishing entrepreneurial intention from venture-creation behaviour. This

responds to the intention–action problem by focusing on concrete venture-creation activities rather than treating intention as equivalent to entrepreneurial behaviour.

Second, the study integrates individual cognitive and socially embedded explanations. TPB explains the motivational relevance of intention, while Social Capital Theory explains how relational resources may support action. The resulting model therefore moves beyond an exclusively individual explanation of entrepreneurial behaviour and recognises that entrepreneurial action can be embedded in relationships and networks.

Third, and most importantly, the study provides empirical evidence consistent with social capital functioning as a relational mechanism between entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour among female university students. This contribution goes beyond reporting significant bivariate or direct relationships by identifying a statistically significant indirect pathway through which entrepreneurial intention is associated with venture-creation activity.

8. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Universities should complement entrepreneurship education with practical mechanisms that enable female students to identify and mobilise entrepreneurial relationships. Structured mentorship programmes can connect students with experienced entrepreneurs; entrepreneurship networking events and student business communities can broaden bridging ties; alumni-student entrepreneurial connections can provide linking resources; and incubation activities can help students convert ideas into concrete venture-creation steps. Entrepreneurship-support programmes should therefore address both intention formation and the relational resources required for action.

The findings also suggest that interventions aimed solely at increasing entrepreneurial intention may be insufficient. Programmes should assess whether students can access information, advice, mentoring, customer connections and other forms of relational support. Government agencies and entrepreneurship-support organisations can complement university initiatives by facilitating mentorship, networking, financing linkages and institutional support for emerging female entrepreneurs.

9. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship among entrepreneurial intention, social capital and venture-creation behaviour among female undergraduate students of the University of Jos. The findings showed significant positive associations between entrepreneurial intention and social capital, entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour, and social capital and venture-creation behaviour. The mediation analysis further showed a significant indirect relationship between entrepreneurial intention and venture-creation behaviour through social capital, while the direct relationship remained significant. The results therefore support partial complementary mediation.

The central conclusion is that entrepreneurial intention, although important, is not by itself sufficient to explain venture-creation behaviour. The evidence is consistent with the view that entrepreneurial action is both motivational and socially embedded. Female students with stronger entrepreneurial intentions may be more likely to mobilise relevant relationships and resources, and such social capital may be associated with greater engagement in venture-creation activities. The study consequently contributes by showing how a relational mechanism can complement intention-based explanations of entrepreneurial action.

10. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has several limitations. First, its cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish temporal ordering or causality. Future longitudinal research could examine whether entrepreneurial intention precedes the mobilisation of social capital and subsequent venture-creation behaviour. Second, the constructs were measured through self-reported responses from the same respondents using a single survey instrument. Although procedural safeguards and a Harman single-factor diagnostic were used, common-source measurement cannot be completely ruled out. Third, the study focused on female undergraduate students of one university. The findings should therefore not be generalised automatically to all Nigerian students or entrepreneurs.

Future studies could compare male and female students, examine multiple universities, use longitudinal designs and test alternative theoretical models. Future research could also distinguish more explicitly between possession, mobilisation and development of social capital, and could examine whether social capital functions as a moderator of the intention–behaviour relationship in addition to its mediating role.

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