



Determinants of career choice intentions among business education students in a Ghanaian university: Leveraging the theory of planned behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This study identified the factors that influence the career choice intentions among business education students. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) anchored this study. The study employed the cross-sectional survey design. A sample of 318 business education students was determined for the study using Adam's (2020) sample size determination table. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select the respondents. A self-developed questionnaire was used to gather relevant data. The data collected was processed using Jamovi software (version 2.3.28) and analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis). The study found that the relationship between the independent variables (attitude of business education students towards career choice intentions, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) and dependent variable (business education students' career choice intentions) is very strong, high and positive. 45.70% of the variation in business education students' career choice intentions is explained and accounted for by the predictors as the independent variables. In addition, gender does not influence business education students' career choice intentions. The study concluded that positive attitudes toward teaching enhance students' interest and commitment to an education career. Students are motivated by supportive social environments and the approval of important people in their lives when forming career intentions. The confidence in their abilities, preparedness, and perceived access to career opportunities determines their career intentions. Furthermore, male and female business education students demonstrated a comparable level of interest, motivation, and commitment toward teaching-related careers, suggesting a level of gender neutrality in the decision-making process for career choices within education. The study recommended that universities and colleges should integrate structured career development modules into the curriculum. These modules should focus on helping students assess their attitudes, strengths, and interests in relation to careers in education, while also building confidence in their professional capabilities. Embedding career planning workshops and mentorship programmes with experienced mentors can further enhance students' perceived behavioural control by strengthening their self-efficacy and readiness for their preferred careers.

Keywords: Attitude, Business Education Students, Career Choice Intentions, Perceived Behavioural Control, Subjective Norm, Theory of Planned Behaviour

I. INTRODUCTION

Education remains a critical driver of human capital development and a fundamental instrument for social and economic transformation in contemporary societies (Anyaneh & Nzegwu, 2015). Beyond the transmission of knowledge, education equips individuals with essential skills, values, and attitudes that enable them to respond effectively to changing labour market demands and societal expectations (Lawal, 2013; Chukwurah, 2013). As global economies become increasingly knowledge-driven, the role of education in preparing individuals for productive and meaningful participation in the workforce has become even more pronounced. Scholars have consistently argued that nations with well-educated populations tend to experience higher levels of technological advancement and sustained economic growth (Romer, 1990; Rahim et al., 2021). Consequently, educational systems are increasingly evaluated not



only by academic outcomes but also by their capacity to support students' career development and employability (Okolie et al., 2020).

The transition from education to the world of work represents a critical developmental stage for young adults who are required to make complex career-related decisions with long-term consequences. Career choice intentions during this period influences individuals' professional identity, job satisfaction, income prospects, and overall quality of life (Caldera et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002). However, this decision-making process is rarely straightforward. Students are often confronted with numerous career alternatives, limited access to accurate labour market information, and uncertainty regarding future employment opportunities (Creed et al., 2005). In the absence of structured career guidance, many students depend on parents, peers, role models, and media portrayals when forming career aspirations, which may not always reflect realistic opportunities or personal competencies (Wattles, 2009; Fasanmi, 2023). These challenges heighten the risk of poor career decisions and subsequent dissatisfaction (Kulcsár et al., 2020; Anghel & Gati, 2021).

Within the context of business education, career decision-making assumes particular importance (Edomwonyi, 2018; Greenbank, 2012). Business education programmes are designed to develop competencies relevant to teaching, management, entrepreneurship, and other business-related professions (Kozlinska et al., 2023; Azevedo et al., 2012). In spite of this broad scope, business education students frequently encounter difficulties in identifying suitable career paths that align with their training and personal aspirations. Previous studies suggest that career choice intentions are shaped by a combination of individual interests, family expectations, peer influence, and institutional support systems (Mtemeri, 2017; Olamide & Olawaiye, 2013). Malgwi et al. (2005) further observed that family influence often outweighs professional career guidance in shaping students' academic and career decisions. These competing influences may result in indecision, delayed career planning, or choices that lack alignment with students' abilities and labour market realities.

Gender dynamics further complicate career choice intentions among business education students. Persistent societal beliefs regarding gender-appropriate careers continue to shape students' aspirations and limit occupational choices, often leading to unequal representation of males and females across business-related fields (Jacobs, 1995; Eccles, 2011). Research indicates that such gendered expectations influence educational pathways early and may result in occupational segregation later in life. When students internalise these stereotypes, they may voluntarily restrict their career options, even when they possess the requisite skills and interest. Over time, these patterns contribute to disparities in career outcomes and economic opportunities, underlining the need to understand how gender interacts with other determinants of career choice intentions (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017; Gómez et al., 2021).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) provides a robust and widely accepted framework for examining career decision-making processes. According to Ajzen (1991), behavioural intention which is the immediate antecedent of behaviour is determined by three key components namely attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Attitude reflects individuals' evaluations of a particular career choice, subjective norms capture perceived social pressures from significant others, and perceived behavioural control refers to individuals' beliefs about their capacity to successfully perform the behaviour. Collectively, these components explain how personal beliefs and social contexts shape intentions and subsequent actions. Empirical evidence has consistently demonstrated the robustness of TPB in explaining career intentions across diverse professional fields, including accounting (Wen et al., 2018), entrepreneurship (Farani et al., 2017; Song et al., 2021), teaching (Evers & Sieverding, 2015), nursing (Arnold et al., 2006), hospitality (Wen et al., 2018), and the military (Gibson et al., 2007). Notwithstanding this substantial body of evidence, relatively few studies have applied TPB to examine career intentions within business education specifically, in developing country settings. Moreover, although TPB has been widely employed in career choice research (Zaremozhzabieh et al., 2022; Mokhlis et al., 2022; Moore & Burrus, 2019; Gorgievski et al., 2018), its explanatory power may vary across settings, as socio-cultural and educational differences can influence how its constructs operate (Sieger & Monsen, 2015). This suggests the need for context-specific investigations that extend TPB to underexplored populations and disciplines. Therefore, applying TPB to business education students in Ghana provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of the motivational processes underlying their career choices and to address an important gap in the existing literature.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Career choice appears to be a critical challenge for business education students, as it has long-term implications for their professional growth and economic well-being. Many business education students struggle to make informed career decisions due to a combination of inadequate career guidance, societal expectations, and uncertainty about labour market demands when transitioning from higher educational institutions like colleges and universities to the working environment (Boateng et al. 2024). In Ghana, where economic conditions are constantly shifting, students in business education programmes may face difficulties in aligning their career aspirations with available opportunities. This raises concerns about whether students are making career choices that match their skills, interests, and future job market prospects. Many students may feel compelled to pursue careers based on parental desires or societal prestige rather than their own personal interests and abilities. This external pressure often results in dissatisfaction, underemployment and,



in some cases, career abandonment and career switching, negatively impacting the economic productivity of graduates (Gbadamosi et al., 2015; Mansour, 2024). In addition, business education students who feel forced into careers they do not enjoy may experience low motivation and engagement in their professional lives, reducing overall job performance (Pham et al., 2024).

Societal perceptions regarding gender-appropriate careers often influence and limit students' aspirations, resulting in an imbalanced representation of male and female students across various business-related professions. These persistent gender disparities in career choices may exacerbate existing gaps in economic opportunities between men and women, reinforcing occupational segregation and reducing the diversity of talent in business sectors (Eccles, 2011). If left unaddressed, such gender-based biases can further entrench inequalities in employment opportunities and prevent students enrolled in business education programmes from realising their full potential (Mansour, 2024). When students select business education over other academic programmes, their choices are likely influenced by a combination of personal, social, and economic factors. This raises a critical question: What are the key influences that guide students in choosing business education as their preferred field of study? Most existing research on career choice factors (Guo, 2022; Kwong, 2018; Li et al., 2024; Yoon et al., 2018) has been conducted in Western or Asian contexts, where socio-economic and cultural factors differ from those in Ghana. Furthermore, limited studies (Wang et al., 2013; Blotnicky et al., 2018; Eccles & Wang, 2016) have delved into the factors impacting students' career choices across various subject areas like English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, and more without focusing on business education. It appears that limited studies (Mozahem et al., 2020; Heiligers, 2012; Gómez et al., 2021; Angwaomaodoko, 2023) had investigated influence of gender on career choices of students. Addressing these research gaps is essential for improving career guidance and policy interventions tailored to business education students in Ghana. This study, therefore, seeks to provide empirical insights into the factors influencing career choice intentions among business education students. It is against this backdrop that the study aims to scrutinise the determinants of career choice intentions among business education students.

1.2 Research Objective

- i. To determine the factors influencing business education students' career choice intentions based on the framework of the theory of planned behaviour.
- ii. To examine the influence of gender on business education students' career choice intentions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), is a well-established framework for explaining and predicting human behaviour and has been extensively applied across a wide range of contexts. TPB has been widely used to explain behaviours such as recycling, travel mode selection, energy consumption, water conservation, food choices, and ethical investment (Ma et al., 2023; Si et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022; Gamel et al., 2022; Du & Pan, 2021; Passafaro et al., 2019; Jing et al., 2019; Xin et al., 2019; Nardi et al., 2019) but its relevance to career choice research is increasingly recognised. Within this framework, behavioural intention is regarded as the most immediate predictor of actual behaviour, although intentions may not always result in action where situational or structural constraints exist. According to TPB, three core components shape behavioural intention which are attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. When applied to career choice intentions, these components explain why students develop intentions toward certain professions over others. In this study, TPB is relevant for examining business education students' intentions to pursue careers in teaching, as it captures both individual motivations and external influences that are central to career decision-making. Career choice intentions is not a spontaneous act but a deliberate process involving evaluation of personal interests, societal expectations, and perceived opportunities and constraints. TPB therefore offers a comprehensive theoretical foundation for analysing how these factors interact to influence students' career-related intentions and decisions.

Attitude toward behaviour refers to an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing a specific behaviour (Beck & Ajzen, 1991). In the context of career choice intentions, students' attitudes toward becoming business education teachers are shaped by their beliefs about job satisfaction, income prospects, job security, social status, and alignment with personal values and long-term goals. When business education students perceive teaching as meaningful, respectable, and personally fulfilling, they develop a favourable attitude toward the profession, which in turn strengthens their intention to pursue it (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, attitude reflects how attractive or desirable a particular career path is to the individual. When business education students perceive the benefits of teaching as meaningful and rewarding, their positive attitude increases the likelihood that they will intend to pursue teaching as a career. Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure from important people in ones' life regarding whether one should engage in a particular behaviour (Beck & Ajzen, 1991). In career decision-making intentions, subjective norms capture the



influence of parents, teachers, peers, religious leaders, and other role models whose advice and perspectives students take seriously. Encouragement or discouragement from these reference groups strongly shape career intentions. For example, parents who prioritise high-income or prestigious careers may discourage teaching because they think teaching is not a high income or prestigious job, while mentors who emphasise the societal impact and stability of the profession may reinforce students' intentions to become teachers. In cultures where family and community approval are highly valued, business education students considering a teaching career may be strongly influenced by parental expectations, advice from respected teachers, or opinions of religious and community.

Perceived behavioural control reflects an individual's perception of their ability to perform a behaviour, taking into account both internal capabilities and external constraints (Beck & Ajzen, 1991). In career choice intentions, perceived behavioural control relates to business education students' confidence in their skills, qualifications, and readiness to enter a particular profession, as well as their perceptions of opportunities and barriers such as access to training, financial resources, and employment availability. Ajzen (1991) notes that even when intentions are strong, low perceived control can prevent behaviour from being enacted. In the teaching profession, business education students may aspire to become teachers but feel constrained by limited job openings, inadequate training opportunities, or financial challenges. On the other hand, business education students who perceive high levels of control are more likely to translate their intentions into actual career decisions (Fishbein et al., 2007; Glanz et al., 2008) because they believe they possess the necessary skills, qualifications, and opportunities to succeed in the teaching profession. For example, business education students who feel confident in their pedagogical knowledge, teaching practice experiences, and subject mastery are more likely to pursue teaching after graduation. In addition, access to supportive institutional structures such as teaching internships, mentorship from lecturers, and clear pathways into teacher training or employment can strengthen students' sense of control. When these students perceive fewer barriers such as limited job opportunities, inadequate training, or financial constraints, they are more likely to act on their intentions and commit to a teaching career, consistent with the assertions of Fishbein et al. (2007) and Glanz et al. (2008).

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Attitude and Career Choice

Empirical studies grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour consistently highlight attitude as a key determinant of career-related intentions. Dewberry and Jackson (2018), examining voluntary college dropout behaviour through a TPB framework, found that TPB variables explained over 60% of the variance in students' behavioural intentions, with attitude emerging as a significant predictor closely linked to actual dropout behaviour. Students' evaluative beliefs about their educational experiences strongly shape their intentions and subsequent decisions, suggesting that positive attitudes toward a chosen programme or career path can enhance persistence, while negative attitudes may increase the likelihood of withdrawal or career disengagement. In a similar way, Aun and Chee (2020) investigated the career intentions of graduating students with internship experience and reported that attitude significantly influenced students' intention to work, alongside perceived behavioural control. Their results suggest that when students hold favourable perceptions about a particular career path, they are more inclined to pursue it, especially when supported by practical exposure such as internships. Further evidence is provided by Obschonka et al. (2015), who integrated entrepreneurial self-identity into the TPB framework and demonstrated that attitude exerted the strongest influence on career intention, with self-identity moderating this relationship. Beyond general attitudes, students' self-concepts and identification with a certain profession can intensify or weaken the effect of attitude on career intentions, showing that fostering professional identity development alongside promotes positive attitude towards forming positive career perceptions.

2.2.2 Subjective Norms and Career Choice

Subjective norms have been widely identified as a significant social influence on students' career choices where approval from important people in one's life influence one's decision-making in choosing a career. Alan et al. (2022) examined the influence of family members, academic advisors, and teachers on high school students' intentions to pursue an accounting major and their results revealed that subjective norms, alongside attitude and self-efficacy, positively influenced students' career intentions, with parental influence emerging as the most dominant factor. Notably, the study also showed that advisors and teachers strengthened students' self-efficacy, enabling them to make informed career decisions even when these differed from parental expectations. Also, Tey et al. (2022) investigated the role of subjective norms in shaping students' intentions to pursue careers in STEM fields. Using partial least squares structural equation modeling, the study found that subjective norms exerted both direct and indirect effects on career choice intention, mediated through students' attitudes and media exposure. Social expectations from parents, peers, and society do not only influence students directly but also shape how students perceive and evaluate career options, reinforcing the idea that social environments of students determines whether they should pursue a certain career decision-making or not. In line with this, Mohammed et al. (2017) found that subjective norms significantly predicted students' entrepreneurial intentions, emphasising that social approval influence career-related decisions. This suggest that students



are more likely to pursue particular career paths when they perceive encouragement and approval from important social referents such as parents, peers, and respected community members showing that social expectations exert a powerful influence on career intentions.

2.2.3 Perceived Behavioural Control and Career Choice

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) reflects individuals' beliefs about their capability and opportunity to perform a specific behaviour and has been shown to influence career decision-making intentions. Utami (2017) examined the influence of TPB components on students' entrepreneurial intentions in East Java and found that perceived behavioural control significantly influenced career intentions, alongside attitude, subjective norms, entrepreneurship education, and self-efficacy. This result suggests that students who feel confident in their skills and perceive fewer barriers are more likely to pursue intended career paths. Moreover, Tey et al. (2021) applied the TPB framework to investigate career choice intentions among secondary school STEM students. Their results revealed that attitude was the strongest predictor of career choice intention but perceived behavioural control also exerted a significant influence, ranking above subjective norms. This indicates that students' confidence in their academic abilities and access to resources strongly shapes their career aspirations. In a professional education setting, Jati and Fajar (2019) analysed factors influencing students' intentions to pursue careers as public accountants. The study reported that perceived behavioural control, together with attitude and subjective norms, positively and significantly influenced career intentions. This means that students are more likely to pursue a professional career when they believe they possess the necessary skills, competencies, and opportunities.

2.2.4 Gender and Career Choice

Gender has been identified as an important factor influencing students' career choices, although its impact varies across contexts and disciplines. Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) examined determinants of career choice among MS-level students in Lahore and found that while parental influence was the most significant factor, gender also played a notable role in shaping students' career decisions and the results suggest that gender operates alongside social and economic influences, such as peer pressure, financial considerations, and personal interests, in determining career pathways. Career choice intentions are not purely individual decisions but are embedded within broader social and gendered expectations that may either expand or constrain students' perceived career options. Again, Gómez et al. (2021) investigated factors influencing students' enrollment in engineering programmes in Spain, with particular emphasis on gender differences. The study identified key determinants of career choice, including interest and personal development, career guidance and prior exposure, outcome expectations, and social influences. Importantly, the results revealed significant differences between male and female students in how these factors influenced their decisions, showing the continued presence of gender-based variations in career preferences. This indicates that gender-sensitive career guidance and early exposure to diverse career pathways are necessary to reduce occupational segregation and promote more balanced participation across disciplines. Gender can influence career aspirations indirectly through social expectations, perceived suitability of certain professions, and differential access to career-related information and encouragement.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Sampling Procedure

The study employed a descriptive cross sectional survey design, which, as asserted by Siedlecki (2020), aims to identify and analyse factors potentially linked to the phenomenon under investigation. This design was both analytical and correlational, examining variables and their interrelationships. In addition, it was cross-sectional, capturing data within a specific timeframe. The population for the study comprised all 447 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Business) programme for the 2024/2025 academic year. These students were drawn from the Department of Business and Social Sciences Education at the University of Cape Coast. Specifically, the population included 118 Level 300 Bachelor of Education (Accounting) students, 157 Level 400 Bachelor of Education (Accounting) students, 64 Level 300 Bachelor of Education (Management) students, and 108 Level 400 Bachelor of Education (Management) students. The decision to focus exclusively on Level 300 and 400 students was deliberate and theoretically grounded in that business education students at these levels are closer to graduation, have had substantial academic and practical exposure to their programmes, and exhibit higher levels of career maturity. Therefore, they are better positioned to make informed and realistic career decisions compared to lower-level business education students who are still exploring their academic and career options.

A sample of 318 business education students was determined for the study using Adam's (2020) sample size determination table. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select the respondents. First, purposive sampling was used solely to identify eligible respondents, that is, students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Business) programme, specifically Accounting and Management. This step was necessary because the department offers multiple programmes (e.g., Geography, Economics, and Social Studies), and only students specialising in



Accounting and Management fall within the scope of business education. As such, purposive sampling served as a screening mechanism to ensure conceptual relevance rather than a preferential selection of respondents. Secondly, a proportionate sampling method was applied to allocate the sample size across Level 300 and 400 students from both the Accounting and Management groups, ensuring representation from each subgroup. Finally, a simple random sampling technique, employing the lottery approach, was used to select the final respondents. This method was chosen to provide all students within the identified subgroups an equal opportunity to be included in the study, thereby enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the data collected. The sample size constituted 83 Level 300 Bachelor of Education (Accounting) students, 101 Level 400 Bachelor of Education (Accounting) students, 56 Level 300 Bachelor of Education (Management) students, and 78 Level 400 Bachelor of Education (Management) students. However, only 311 out of 318 students responded to the questionnaire constituting 97.80% of the sample size which was used to perform the statistical analyses.

3.2 Instrumentation

Data for this study was gathered through the administration of a self-developed questionnaire. Questionnaires are recognised for their cost-effectiveness and efficiency in obtaining substantial information from a large sample, making them particularly suitable for research involving extensive populations where conducting interviews would be impractical (Mann, 2003). Despite their advantages, questionnaires are susceptible to social desirability bias, potentially impacting the accuracy of responses provided (Safdar et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the study used questionnaires as they facilitated the systematic collection of comprehensive and accurate data, essential for deriving reliable conclusions. They are versatile for both qualitative and quantitative data collection purposes, although they are particularly well-suited for obtaining quantitative data (Opoku et al. 2016), which was the primary data type gathered in this study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections and a total of 27 items. Section A requested information on the background data of the respondents which consisted of four items which were gender, age, programme of study and level, and section B focused on the factors that determines student's choice of education as a career choice based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The items in sections B were developed using a 5-point Likert scale (as described by Likert (1932) to capture the views of the respondents. To elicit the views of from business education students, the options to respond to the statements ranged from "Strongly Disagree (SD)," "Disagree (D)," "Neutral (N)," "Agree (A)," and "Strongly Agree (SA)."

Prior to the main data collection, the instrument had been piloted and validated in an earlier study by Moses et al. (2020) to establish its reliability and internal consistency. The pilot study reported satisfactory Cronbach's alpha values for the TPB constructs namely attitude toward career choice ($\alpha = .85$), subjective norms ($\alpha = .85$), perceived behavioural control ($\alpha = .82$), and career choice intention ($\alpha = .97$), all exceeding the recommended threshold of .70. These results provided empirical support for the suitability of the instrument for the current study. Attitude toward career choice was assessed with items such as "*A career in education makes me feel happy*," "*I will be respected as I choose a career in education*," and "*I am proud of myself because I chose a career in education*." Subjective norms included statements like "*People who are important to me think that I should choose a career in education*," "*My teachers' teaching encourages me to choose a career in education*," and "*My parents encourage me to choose a career in education fields*." Perceived behavioural control was measured using items such as "*I am confident that I can choose a career in education*," "*For me to choose a career in education is easy*," and "*I expect that I will have the self-confidence to choose a career in education*." Finally, career choice intention was assessed with statements like "*I aim to choose a career in education*," "*I plan to choose a career in education*," and "*I will choose a career in education*". The data collected was assessed for reliability of which the results are presented in Table 1. The reliability for the entire questionnaire was .928, which suggested that, largely, the indicators had internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 2008) which was sufficient for the study. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Reliability Test

Scale	Respondents	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitudes (ACC)	311	5	.841
Subjective Norms (SN)	311	8	.883
Perceived Behavioural Controls (PBC)	311	5	.889
Career Choice Intentions (CCI)	311	5	.932
Overall	311	23	.928

3.3 Data Analysis

All responses from the questionnaire were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools with the aid of Jamovi software (version 2.3.28). No missing data were detected, as all returned questionnaires were fully



completed. Therefore, no data imputation or case deletion procedures were required, and all 311 valid responses were retained for the final analysis. The demographic characteristics of respondents were analysed using simple frequency counts and percentages. Means and standard deviations were also used to analyse the data. Inferential statistical tools, including Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), multiple regression analysis, and independent samples t-test, were used to test the research hypotheses. The study adopted a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scale was justified on methodological and practical grounds in that although the original instrument developed by Moses et al. (2020) used a 7-point Likert scale, subsequent adaptations in similar educational and career-intention studies have successfully utilised a 5-point scale due to its simplicity, clarity, and reduced cognitive burden on respondents (Vasconcelos et al., 2025). A criterion mean value of 3.0 was used to interpret respondents' responses, as it represented the midpoint of the 5-point Likert scale. A mean score below the criterion value (< 3.00) indicated disagreement with the construct, whereas a mean score above the criterion value (> 3.00) signified agreement. This is widely adopted in social science and educational research for interpreting Likert-scale data. To ensure the validity of using t-tests, correlation, and multiple regression analyses, a normality tests and Levene's test for equality of variances were performed, with a significance level set at .05.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Background Information of Respondents

The background data of the students were sought. The information elicited related to gender, age distribution, programme of study and their level. The purpose for the inclusion of background data of respondents was to have idea about the general information of respondents. The results were discussed using frequency counts and percentages and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Background Information of Business Education Students

Variable	Sub-scale	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	190	61.10
	Female	121	38.90
Age (in years)	25 and below	242	77.80
	26 – 30	65	20.90
	31 and above	4	1.30
Programme	Accounting	172	55.30
	Management	139	44.70
Level	300	134	43.10
	400	177	56.90

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the majority of respondents were male ($n = 190$, 61.10%), with females making up 38.90% ($n = 121$), showing a higher male representation. This suggests that gendered societal expectations may differently shape male and female evaluations of business-related careers. Regarding age, most respondents ($n = 242$, 77.80%) were aged 25 years and below, followed by those aged 26–30 years ($n = 65$, 20.90%), and a few aged 31 years and above ($n = 4$, 1.30%), indicating a relatively young sample. This suggests that most students are in the early stages of career decision-making, where intentions can still be influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control under the TPB. In terms of programme of study, 55.30% ($n = 172$) were pursuing Accounting, while 44.70% ($n = 139$) were in the Management programme, suggesting a slightly stronger preference for Accounting, possibly driven by perceived career value and normative influences. Concerning academic levels, 43.10% ($n = 134$) were in Level 300, and 56.90% ($n = 177$) in Level 400, indicating that more students were in their final year, where career intentions are likely more defined and aligned with behavioural intentions.

4.1.2 Test for Normality

Assessing the normality of data is a key prerequisite for many statistical tests, as parametric testing assumes the data follows a normal distribution. Normality can be evaluated through two primary methods namely graphical methods and numerical methods, including statistical tests (Bland, 2015; Campbell et al., 2010). While statistical tests offer an objective means of determining normality, they may lack sensitivity with small sample sizes and become overly sensitive with larger samples. Among the various methods available for testing normality, the most widely used are the Shapiro–Wilk test, Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, skewness, kurtosis, histograms, box plots, P–P plots, Q–Q plots, and comparisons of mean and standard deviation (Mishra et al., 2019). For this study, skewness and kurtosis were selected due to their



consistent reliability across both small and large sample sizes (Kim, 2013). According to Kim (2013), for sample sizes greater than 300, the normality of data can be assessed using absolute values of skewness (≤ 2) and kurtosis (≤ 4). In this study, with a sample size of 311, all variables showed skewness and kurtosis values within the acceptable range. In addition, the mean and median values were approximately equal, further affirming the normal distribution of the data. These findings, as presented in Table 3, validated the application of parametric statistical tools for subsequent data analyses.

Table 3*Test for Normality*

Variable		Statistic	Std. Error
Attitudes (ACC)	Mean	3.65	.965
	Median	3.80	
	Skewness	-.831	.138
	Kurtosis	.103	.276
Subjective Norms (SN)	Mean	3.24	.932
	Median	3.25	
	Skewness	.008	.138
	Kurtosis	-.808	.276
Perceived Behavioural Controls (PBC)	Mean	3.86	.887
	Median	4.00	
	Skewness	-.976	.138
	Kurtosis	.746	.276
Career Choice Intentions (CCI)	Mean	3.75	.990
	Median	4.00	
	Skewness	-.800	.138
	Kurtosis	.235	.276

Table 4*Levene's Test for Equality of Variances*

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	F	Sig.
Career Choice (CCI)	Sex	.373	.542

Significant at the .05* level

Parametric mean comparison tests, such as t-tests, rely on the assumption of equal variance, which ensures consistency in the variances of the groups being compared. It is crucial to verify the assumption of homogeneity of variance before performing this test. This verification confirms that the variances of the dependent variable (career choice intentions) are consistent across the sub-groups of the independent variable (gender). As indicated in Table 4, the assumption of homogeneity of variance has been met, validating the use of independent sample t-tests for subsequent statistical analysis.

4.1.3 Factors Influencing Business Education Students' Career Choice Intentions based on the Framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Prior to the main results, students' perception on the factors influencing their career choice intentions was explored. Table 5 (Appendix A) presented the results regarding business education students' career choice intentions and the factors influencing these decisions. The findings revealed that business education students demonstrated strong intentions to pursue education-related careers, as indicated by the overall positive career intentions ($M = 3.75$, $SD = .99$). Specifically, they expressed a clear desire to choose a career in education ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.11$), plans to follow this career path ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.08$), and a strong commitment to actualising these plans ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.14$). Business education students also displayed notably positive attitudes toward choosing a career in education ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .97$). They reported feeling good about this decision ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.27$), taking pride in their choice ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.22$), and deriving happiness from the thought of pursuing this path ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.11$). In addition, business education students held favourable normative beliefs about their career choice, reflected in an overall positive response ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .93$). They felt encouraged by friends to choose education as a career ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.35$), believed their friends supported this choice ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.30$), and sensed approval from their teachers ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.24$). Furthermore, students showed strong perceived behavioural control regarding their career choice ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .89$). They expressed confidence in their ability to pursue a career in education ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.01$), felt capable of making this decision ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.23$), and anticipated achieving good academic outcomes in their chosen field ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.00$). These findings suggest that undergraduate students have high levels of confidence and positive



perceptions about their ability to embark on and succeed in education-related careers. The relationship between attitude towards career choice, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and career choice intentions was investigated using Karl Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6*Correlation Matrix Analysis of Variables*

Variables	ACC	SN	PBC	CCI
Attitudes (ACC)	1			
Subjective Norms (SN)	.420*	1		
Perceived Behavioural Controls (PBC)	.594*	.354*	1	
Career Choice Intentions (CCI)	.556*	.382*	.626*	1

*Correlation is significant at the .001**

As seen in Table 6, the relationship between attitude of business education students towards career choice, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour control and business education students' career choice intentions was investigated, using Karl Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results indicated that there is a high positive relationship between attitude towards career choice and career choice intentions ($r = .566, p < .001$). The results implies that if students have a strong positive belief of outcome on a value they are intending to place, then they are likely to engage in that behaviour. Again, there is a weak positive relationship between subjective norm and career choice intentions ($r = .382, p < .001$) as well as attitude towards career choice ($r = .420, p < .001$). The results show that the perception business education students form about the people who important in their lives such as their family members, religious leaders, healthcare providers, or friends and peers had minimal influence their choice of career intentions. Furthermore, there is a strong high positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and career choice intention ($r = .626, n = 318, p < .001$), a high positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and attitude towards career choice intention ($r = .594, p < .001$) and a weak positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and subjective norm ($r = .354, p < .001$). Furthermore, the relationship between attitude towards career choice, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and career choice intentions was computed using multiple regression and the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7*Multiple Regression Analysis of Determinants of Business Students' Career Choice*

Variable	B	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	VIF	Tolerance
(Constant)	.529	.209	2.535	.012*		
ACC	.250	.056	4.471	.000*	1.680	.597
SN	.133	.050	2.663	.008*	1.240	.807
PBC	.488	.059	8.274	.000*	1.580	.634
R	=	.676*	Durbin Watson		=	2.047
R ²	=	.457		F-value	=	86.024
adj R ²	=	.451		p-value	=	.000*

Significant at the .05* level

Table 7 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis between independent variables (attitude towards career choice, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) and the dependent variable (students' career choice intentions). The results of the multiple regression analysis show that the multiple correlation coefficient is .676. This measures the degree of relationship between the actual values and the predicted values of the students' career choice intentions. Because the predicted value is obtained as a linear combination of attitude of business education students towards career choice, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control, the coefficient value of .676 indicates that the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable is very strong, high and positive. The R² (R-square) measures the goodness-of-fit of the estimated Sample Regression Plane (SRP) in terms of the proportion of the variation in the dependent variables explained by the fitted sample regression equation. That is, the value of R-square is .457, which simply means that 45.70% of the variation in students' career choice intentions is explained and accounted for by the predictors as the independent variables and R square value is significant at 5 percent level.

The Durbin-Watson statistics is 2.047 as this test for autocorrelation in the residuals from a statistical regression analysis. Thus, it informs whether the assumption of independent errors is tenable or otherwise and, in this data, it is seen that the value is close to 2, hence, the assumption has certainly been met. Therefore, there is no first order linear auto-correlation in the multiple linear regression data, and that there is no auto-correlation in the sample. A model is deemed free from collinearity issues when all VIF values are below 5. From the multiple linear regression model, it is again seen that the F-test has the null hypothesis that there is a linear relationship between the variables ($F = 86.024, p$



= .000). The F-test is significant. Thus, there was a linear relationship between the variables in the model. All these findings give credence that the model used was satisfactory.

As shown in Table 7, the constant of the regression model was .529 which mean that even when the independent variables (attitude of students towards career choice, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) are held constant or held at zero, students' career choice intentions were .529. Therefore, it could be said that each predictor is making a valuable and significant contribution to the model. For this model, attitude of students towards career choice ($\beta = .250$, $t = 4.471$, $p = .000$), subjective norm ($\beta = .133$, $t = 2.663$, $p = .008$) and perceived behavioural control ($\beta = .488$, $t = 8.274$, $p = .000$) significantly and positively influences business students' career choice intentions. From the magnitude of the t-statistic, attitude towards career choice and perceived behaviour control had extremely more impact or effect or prediction than subjective norm had on business education students' career choice. Finally, independent sample t-test was computed to find out the relationship between gender and career choice intentions of business education students and the result is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Relationship Between Gender and Business Students' Career Choice

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d
CCI	Male	190	3.82	1.02	1.497	309	.135	.174
	Female	121	3.65	.94				

*Significant at p-value at .05**

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether gender influences business education students' career choice intentions. Results from Table 8 indicated that there was no statistically significant differences in scores for male ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.02$) and female business education students ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .94$; $t[309] = 1.497$, $p = .135$). Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d, which yielded a value of .174 (95% CI [-.054, .402]), indicating a small effect size. This suggests that although male students reported slightly higher career choice intention scores than female students, the magnitude of this difference is minimal and practically negligible. This indicates that both male and female business education students are equally likely to choose careers in education, suggesting a level of gender neutrality in the decision-making process for career choices within education. This result aligns with the growing recognition of gender equality in educational career opportunities.

4.2 Discussion

Research hypothesis one examined the influence of business education students' attitudes towards careers on their career choice intentions and revealed that business education students' attitudes toward careers in education significantly influenced their career choice intentions. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, attitude represents an individual's overall evaluation of a behaviour and reflects the extent to which pursuing a certain career is perceived as desirable or rewarding. The strong positive attitudes observed among the business education students suggest that they view careers in education as meaningful, fulfilling, and aligned with their personal and professional aspirations. This result indicates that students' career intentions are shaped not merely by external pressures but by genuine interest and favourable evaluations of the teaching profession. This result aligns with Dewberry and Jackson (2018), who found that attitude was a significant predictor of students' behavioural intentions and closely related to actual educational decisions, such as persistence or withdrawal. Their study suggests that when students hold positive evaluations of their chosen academic or career pathways, they are more likely to commit to and remain in those paths. Also, Aun and Chee (2020) reported that attitude significantly influenced graduating students' career intentions, mostly when students perceived their training and experiences as relevant and rewarding. In the context of business education, this suggests that students who perceive teaching as a stable, respected, and impactful profession are more inclined to pursue it as a long-term career. Further support for this finding is provided by Obschonka et al. (2015), who demonstrated that attitude exerted the strongest influence on career intention within a TPB framework, especially when reinforced by a strong professional self-identity. Applied to the present study, this implies that business education students who identify with the role of an educator and derive pride and satisfaction from that identity are more likely to develop strong career intentions toward teaching. Overall, the prominence of attitude as a predictor shows that fostering positive perceptions of the teaching profession through curriculum design, mentorship, and professional exposure may enhance students' long-term commitment and retention in education-related careers.

Moreover, research hypothesis two assessed the influence of subjective norms of business education students on their career choice intentions and highlighted the powerful role of social influences on their career choice intentions. The positive reinforcement from friends, family, and teachers stresses that a supportive network influence the decision-making process of students. The results of the current study support the findings of Alan et al. (2022), who reported that subjective norms, mainly parental and teacher influence, significantly shaped students' intentions to pursue careers in accounting. Their study indicates that social referents guide students' educational and career trajectories, especially



during critical decision-making periods. These findings align strongly with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which posits that subjective norms reflect perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). When business education students perceive that important people in their lives value and support careers in education, this social approval strengthens their motivation and reinforces their commitment to that career path. The results of the current study were in consistent with the findings Tey et al. (2022), who found that subjective norms influenced career intentions both directly and indirectly through attitudes and media exposure. This suggests that social expectations not only exert direct pressure but also shape how students evaluate and internalise career options. Furthermore, the results corroborate the results of Mohammed et al. (2017), who established that subjective norm significantly predicted students' entrepreneurial intentions. In culturally communal societies such as Ghana, where family and community approval are highly valued, social endorsement carries considerable weight in career decision-making.

Furthermore, research hypothesis three examined the influence of perceived behavioural control on business education students' career choice intentions and revealed high levels of perceived behavioural control among the students. This suggests that business education students feel adequately equipped with the necessary skills, confidence, and resources to pursue careers in education. This result of the current study is consistent with Utami (2017), who reported that perceived behavioural control significantly influenced students' entrepreneurial intentions, indicating that students who perceive themselves as capable and encounter fewer barriers are more likely to pursue their intended career paths. Notably, perceived behavioural control emerged as the strongest predictor of business education students' career choices in this study. This result can be partly explained within the Ghanaian socio-cultural setting, where children are often raised to respect authority, follow structured pathways, and value professions perceived as stable and socially respectable, such as teaching. From an early age, Ghanaian students are socialised to associate success with discipline, perseverance, and formal qualifications. As a result, students who feel academically prepared, confident in their pedagogical abilities, and assured of meeting professional requirements are more likely to view teaching as an achievable and realistic career option. This result aligns with Tey et al. (2021), who found that perceived behavioural control exerted a significant influence on STEM career choice intentions, ranking above subjective norms and highlighting confidence and access to resources in shaping career aspirations. This cultural emphasis on preparedness and capability reinforces the TPB proposition that perceived behavioural control translate intentions into actual career decisions. Moreover, when students perceive fewer uncertainties regarding job access, training requirements, and career progression, perceived behavioural control becomes a dominant factor influencing their intentions. This self-efficacy is a key determinant in career decision-making, as individuals who believe in their ability to succeed are more likely to take proactive steps toward their goals. The confidence expressed by business education students further indicates that they perceive the training and education they are receiving as adequate preparation for their future careers. This result agreed with Jati and Fajar (2019), who reported that perceived behavioural control significantly influenced students' intentions to pursue professional careers in accounting. Such positive self-perceptions enhance persistence and resilience, enabling students to overcome challenges and sustain long-term commitment to their chosen careers.

Finally, research hypothesis four examined the influence of gender on business education students' career choice intentions and revealed that gender does not have a significant influence on students' intentions to pursue careers in education. This result suggests that male and female business education students demonstrate comparable levels of interest, motivation, and commitment toward teaching-related careers. One possible explanation for this outcome is the gradual shift in societal norms and the increasing emphasis on gender equality in education and employment. Traditional gender stereotypes that previously framed teaching as either a male- or female-dominated profession appear to be diminishing in higher educational institutions where inclusivity and equal opportunity are actively promoted. In the Ghanaian setting, teaching is generally regarded as a socially respectable and stable profession for both men and women, which may reduce gender-based differentiation in career intentions. University environments such as the University of Cape Coast provide similar academic training, exposure, and support systems to all students regardless of gender, enabling both male and female students to feel equally prepared and capable of pursuing careers in education. The broad applicability of business education, combined with clearly defined training and employment pathways, may further neutralise gender differences by making the profession equally accessible and attractive to both genders. However, this finding contrasts with earlier studies such as Kazi and Akhlaq (2017), who reported that gender significantly influenced career choices alongside parental and peer influences, and Gómez et al. (2021), who identified marked gender differences in factors shaping students' enrollment in engineering programmes. The discrepancy may be attributed to differences in disciplinary focus, cultural context, and professional perceptions. Unlike engineering or technical fields, which are often strongly gender-typed, business education may be perceived as more gender-neutral, reducing the salience of gender in career decision-making. Overall, the non-significant gender finding in this study suggests a positive shift toward merit-based and interest-driven career choices among business education students. It indicates that sustenance inclusive in educational policies and career guidance practices have encourage students to base their career decisions on personal interests, competencies, and perceived capabilities rather than socially constructed gender expectations.



V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This study examined the factors influencing career choice intentions among business education students using the Theory of Planned Behaviour and concluded that business education students' attitudes toward careers in education, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control jointly and significantly influence their career choice intentions. This implies that positive attitudes toward teaching enhance students' interest and commitment to an education career. It further shows that students are motivated by supportive social environments and the approval of important people in their lives when forming career intentions. Perceived behavioural control emerged as the strongest predictor, meaning that students' confidence in their abilities, preparedness, and perceived access to career opportunities determines their career intentions. Career decision-making among business education students is a dynamic and interconnected process rather than the result of a single influence. However, gender was found not to significantly influence career choice intentions among business education students, suggesting a shift toward interest- and competence-based career decisions within the education sector. This implies that career choices are increasingly guided by personal capability and interest rather than by gender-related expectations. Overall, the results provide empirical support for the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in understanding career choices among business education students in Ghana, demonstrating that career intentions are shaped by a combination of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, several targeted recommendations are proposed to strengthen career decision-making among students. First, universities and colleges should integrate structured career development modules into the curriculum. These modules should focus on helping students assess their attitudes, strengths, and interests in relation to careers in education, while also building confidence in their professional capabilities. Embedding career planning workshops and mentorship programmes with experienced mentors can further enhance perceived behavioural control of students by strengthening their self-efficacy and readiness for their preferred careers. Secondly, career guidance and counselling units within universities and colleges should adopt interventions explicitly grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Counsellors should design assessment tools and guidance sessions that evaluate students' attitudes toward careers, the influence of important social referents, and students' perceived control over career-related decisions. Such targeted counselling will enable early identification of students with low perceived behavioural control and provide tailored support to strengthen their confidence and decision-making capacity. Third, parents and guardians should be engaged through university and college-led career forums and outreach programmes to promote supportive, non-coercive involvement in students' career choices. Sensitisation programmes can help families understand the importance of allowing students autonomy in career decisions while providing encouragement that aligns with students' abilities and aspirations.

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Appendix A

Table 5

Determinants of Business Education Students' Career Choice

Statements	Mean	SD
<i>Attitude towards Career Choice (ACC)</i>	3.65	.97
A career in education makes me feel good.	3.65	1.27
A career in education makes me feel happy.	3.70	1.11
I will be respected as I choose a career in education.	3.82	1.10
A good income from an education career is what I want.	3.39	1.44
I am proud of myself because I chose a career in education.	3.69	1.22
<i>Subjective Norms (SN)</i>	3.24	.93
People who are important to me think that I should choose a career in education.	3.46	1.11
Many people choose a career in the education field, so I want to choose an education career too.	2.82	1.37
My teachers think that I should choose a career in education.	3.17	1.20
My teachers' teaching encourages me to choose a career in education.	3.45	1.23
My parents think that I should choose a career in education.	3.33	1.24
My parents encourage me to choose a career in education fields.	3.41	1.24
My friends think that I should choose a career in education	3.10	1.30
My friends encourage me to choose a career in education.	3.17	1.35
<i>Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)</i>	3.86	.89
I am confident that I can choose a career in education.	3.80	1.23
For me to choose a career in education is easy.	3.77	1.13
I expect that I will have the ability to choose a career in education.	3.81	1.06
I expect that I will get good academic results to choose a career in education.	3.97	1.00
I expect that I will have the self-confidence to choose a career in education.	3.94	1.01
<i>Career Choice Intention (CCI)</i>	3.75	.99
I aim to choose a career in education.	3.73	1.11
I plan to choose a career in education.	3.72	1.08
I will choose a career in education.	3.80	1.22
I am going to choose a career in education.	3.74	1.11
I guess I would choose a career in education.	3.78	1.14

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Key: A criterion value of 3.00 was established for the scale used in the study. This value ($CV = 3.00$) was calculated by summing the scores of all the scale items and dividing by the number of items ($5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 15/5 = 3$). A mean score below the criterion value (< 3.00) indicated disagreement with the construct, whereas a mean score above the criterion value (> 3.00) signified agreement. Additionally, the standard deviation was employed to measure the dispersion of responses from the respondents. A standard deviation below 1.00 indicated homogeneity in the responses, suggesting that most respondents had similar views. Conversely, a standard deviation greater than 1.00 reflected diversity in the responses, indicating varying perspectives among the respondents.