

# Dissecting the Effect of Family Business Exposure on Entrepreneurial Implementation Intention

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## Abstract

### Purpose

Scholars have typically examined family business exposure as an aggregate variable. However, it is probable that this trend oversimplifies the complexity of family exposure and its nuanced influence on entrepreneurial behaviour. Thus, to extend the theoretical boundary, this inquiry investigates distinct dimensions of family exposure in Nigeria while drawing on the theory of planned behaviour.

### Methodology

Data were collected from five public universities in Nigeria. A sample of 1,314 respondents was analysed using a partial least squares structural equation modelling approach to determine the influence of alternate family business exposures.

### Findings

The results show that entrepreneurial exposure in the forms of parent, family member and work involvement have salient and distinctive influences on implementation intention to the extent that entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitudes and subjective norms are uniquely impacted.

### Originality

This study offers novel insights on the predictors of entrepreneurial implementation intention through the distinctive effects of (1) family member exposure, (2) parent exposure and (3) work involvement exposure among students in the family firm context.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship; Family Business Background; Theory of Planned Behaviour; Implementation Intention; Nigeria.*

## 1. Introduction

Family businesses are entities with family members working as directors or proprietors, and where relatives are employed within the firm (Cassar and Mankelow, 2000). For the most part, their governance is shaped by the pursuit of intergenerational legacy (Litz, 1995; Chua *et al.*, 1999) and capital (Rothausen, 2009). Accordingly, there is empirical understanding that individuals' exposure to the family business makes them more likely to assume entrepreneurship themselves (Kellermanns *et al.*, 2008, Altinay *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2018); as they would have developed relevant skills and confidence prior to starting up (Duchesneau and Gartner, 1990; Altinay and Altinay, 2006). Based on this notion, a substantial volume of literature has emerged citing family business background [FB] as an antecedent to entrepreneurial intention including, to mention a few, Chang *et al.* (2009), Laspita *et al.* (2012) and Liñán and Fayolle (2015)

However, although scholars have considered broad experiences that may foster entrepreneurial behaviour (Bignotti and le Roux, 2020), what is missing in extant work is a differentiation of types of family business exposure vis-à-vis entrepreneurial intention. Studies including Zapkau *et al.* (2015), Newbery *et al.* (2018) and Wang *et al.* (2018) have investigated prior entrepreneurial exposure in general without isolating and differentiating family business dimensions. Hahn *et al.* (2020, p. 261) argued that 'unfortunately, most literature on student entrepreneurship and EE [entrepreneurship education] treat exposure to entrepreneurship in the family as a dichotomic dimension (have vs. not have), hence overlooking its nuanced nature'. Specifically, exposure to family business operations may be acquired (1) from one's parents running a business, (2) from other family members running a business or (3) from working within one's own family business. Added to this, in contemporary literature, there is an empirical shift from examining entrepreneurial intention (EI) to investigating implementation intention (II). Fayolle and Liñán (2014) contend that II more effectively predicts behaviour because, as Krueger (2017) corroborates, EI merely ascertains intention to begin the process while II represents intention to actually launch the new venture. Moreover, Ajzen *et al.* (2009) state that II initiates and guides the performance of a behaviour without cognitive control and, therefore, could be considered as equivalent to an established habit. It [II] could also be understood as a volitional phase evidenced by actions eliciting the intended behaviour (Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006). In addition, Tornikoski and Maalaoui (2019, p. 547) argue that 'in real life, what can potentially decrease the intention-behaviour gap is a presence of implementation intention'.

Mainstream literature has typically focused on the relationship between FB and EI (Farrukh *et al.*, 2017; Nguyen, 2018; Nowiński and Haddoud, 2019; Esfandiar *et al.*, 2019). Yet, although there is a dominant consensus that FB positively impacts on offspring business disposition (Matthews and Moser, 1996; Zellweger *et al.*, 2011; Laspita *et al.*, 2012; Palmer *et al.*, 2019), there are exceptions to this view (e.g. Nguyen, 2018; Venkatapathy and Pratheeba, 2014). In this sense, Zhang *et al.*, (2014) suggest that exposure to negative entrepreneurial experiences may, in fact, diminish EI. Theoretically, these divergent findings could be context specific. Empirically, investigating II as a superior predictor of behaviour [over EI] (Fayolle and Liñán, 2014; Krueger, 2017) could also contribute toward settling the argument.

As an antecedent, FB has been widely studied (Eddleston and Powell, 2012; Smith, 2014; Ramadani *et al.*, 2019) as well as II as an outcome (Achtziger *et al.*, 2008; Adam and Fayolle, 2016; Olokundun *et al.*, 2018). On the one hand, until now, scholars have deemed FB to be a unidimensional variable (Scröder and Schmitt-Rodermund, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2013). Hence, this study attempts to demonstrate that it [FB] may be a composite and multi-dimensional variable with varying levels of exposure heterogeneously influencing II. On the other hand, II focused studies predominantly investigate phenomena outside the entrepreneurship domain. With the exception of Adam and Fayolle (2016), Olokundun *et al.* (2018), Haddoud *et al.* (2020) and Umans *et al.* (2020), studies capturing and predicting II in an entrepreneurship context are uncommon.

An empirical assessment of the FB-II link compels understanding of intervening factors in this nexus. Because family businesses are motivated by wealth creation for current and future generations, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is prevalent in FB entrepreneurship research (Palmer *et al.*, 2019). It captures attitudes within a context of subjective norms and perceived behavioural control that manifest within family environments (Ajzen, 1988). In this study, types of FB exposure are of particular interest as Ajzen (2011) urged scholars to recognise background factors such as prior experience as a determinant of intention formation and subsequent behaviour. Precisely, Ajzen and Fishbein (2005, p. 197) state that the extent to which intention is driven by ‘a particular background factor is an empirical question’. Therefore, ‘identifying relevant background factors deepens our understanding of a behaviour’s determinants’. Linked to the current inquiry, to the best of the authors’ knowledge, prior studies differentiating the types of FB exposure as background factors in Nigeria or other

contexts are limited. Scholars have been interested in family businesses' strategic marketing practices (Omotayo, 2009), succession issues (Ogundele, 2012), professionalisation (Onuoha, 2012), characteristics (Banki and Ismail, 2015), seasonality (Banki *et al.*, 2016), competitive advantage (Bednarz *et al.*, 2017), technical inefficiency (Olubukola *et al.*, 2017), cultural institutions (Igwe *et al.*, 2018) and the performance of non-family members (Agbaeze *et al.*, 2019). Thus, notwithstanding the substantial volume of research on family entrepreneurship in a developing setting, capturing different facets of exposure to family business will advance the extant literature. By the same token, this inquiry heeds and then addresses Carr and Sequeira's (2007) contention that there is a paucity of research considering the influence of family business on moulding future entrepreneurial inclination. Specifically, Clinton *et al.* (2020, p.1) highlight an empirical gap in the knowledge of 'transgenerational entrepreneurial families'.

Pressing forward, the aim of this study is to identify background factors and clarify the relationship between individuals' level of family business exposure and II. The current study also seeks to improve on sample size limitations and accede appeals by Gollwitzer (1999) and Fayolle and Liñán (2014) for more entrepreneurship researchers to investigate II over EI.

To achieve the aforementioned, a partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique is applied to examine data sourced from a representative sample of Nigerian students. The inherent results show that entrepreneurial exposure in the forms of parent, family member and work involvement hold discrete influences on implementation behaviour. The paper begins with a brief description of the research context before offering a theoretical background on levels of family business engagement, TPB and II. Subsequently, the method of data collection, research findings, discussion and conclusions are presented consecutively.

## **2. The Nigerian Context**

Family businesses are 'the main economic force in many countries' (Hernandez-Perlines *et al.*, 2020, p. 2) and constitute 70-90% of enterprises in the economic landscape, while providing 50-80% of global employment (Maloni *et al.*, 2017). Estimates show that family-run firms contribute more than 70% of the world's gross domestic product [GDP] (McKinsey and Company, 2014; Osunde, 2017). They are also ubiquitous in Nigeria where this study is set. The country is Africa's most populous nation with an ever-growing citizenry expected to reach 400 million by 2050 (United Nations, 2019). The rate of entrepreneurship and service commoditisation is especially rampant in Nigeria (Fadahunsi and Rosa, 2002), in comparison

to other African countries (Oyelola *et al.*, 2013; Awe and Gil-Alana, 2019; McGann, 2019). Its total early-stage entrepreneurial activity is 39.9%, higher than a regional average of 23.8% (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2013). Since 2008, Nigeria has surpassed South Africa as the continent's largest economy in GDP terms (Balcilar *et al.*, 2019; Evans, 2019). It accrued a GDP of \$397.27 billion in 2018, bettering South Africa's \$366.29 billion (World Bank, 2019). Nigeria is a lower middle-income state (IMF, 2019) and, besides oil production, much of its domestic and foreign revenue is generated from the activities of family businesses (Emerole, 2015; Adedayo *et al.*, 2016). In spite of their substantial contribution, '95% of family businesses do not survive the third generation of ownership' (Ogbechie and Anetor, 2015, p.1). Beyond Nigeria, Aderonke (2014, p. 379) discerns that 'all over the world', the 'poor survival rate' of family businesses 'is a continuing source of concern'. Thus, evidence from the Nigerian scene is timely because although the volume of entrepreneurship research has radically increased worldwide, there is still a shortage of African studies in the mix (George *et al.*, 2016). Also, interpretations from studies in western contexts may not be entirely applicable to emerging countries (Jones *et al.*, 2018). Ensuing from this inquiry, further understanding of the FB-II nexus may clarify issues that reduce intergenerational survival in developing countries.

### **3. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development**

#### *3.1 The TPB Drivers and II*

To explore the FB-II nexus, this paper adopts Ajzen's (1991, 2002) TPB as a theoretical base (Kautonen *et al.*, 2015). TPB advocates that intentions are greatest when individuals are predisposed to a behaviour, experience strong subjective norms towards that behaviour, and have a conviction of successful performance (Carr and Sequeira, 2007). In its full form, TPB applied in entrepreneurship research comprises of attitude, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (aka perceived behavioural control) and subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991; Carr and Sequeira, 2007). Firstly, regarding attitude, TPB rationalises that an intention is stronger when an individual has a favourable outlook towards a behaviour (Carr and Sequeira, 2007). Secondly, entrepreneurial self-efficacy [ESE] captures individuals' belief for goal accomplishment (Bandura, 1977); the greater the belief then the more intense the intention. Lastly, subjective norms are one's perception of social pressure to engage or not engage in a particular behaviour (Carr and Sequeira, 2007). In turn, a high intention will likely lead to an attempt to start a new venture (Ozaralli and Rivenburgh, 2016).

Albeit indirectly, TPB equips researchers with a comprehensive set of variables predicting entrepreneurial behaviour (Heuer and Lars, 2014). To date, this theory has gained popularity among entrepreneurship scholars (Esfandiar *et al.*, 2019; Tornikoski and Maalaoui, 2019), and become a widely accepted model for predicting entrepreneurial intention (Munir *et al.*, 2019). The particular value of TPB leveraged in this study is its tracking of background factors to the extent that they influence intention and behaviour on an individual basis (Ajzen, 2011). Palmer *et al.* (2021) report that TPB captures approximately 30% of variance in behaviour and is a robust theoretical basis for predicting entrepreneurial intention and behaviour. Moreover, TPB coexists with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). In Tornikoski and Maalaoui's (2019) interview with Icek Ajzen, the latter clarified that TPB considers behaviour control, whereas TRA does not. When individuals hold full control of a given behaviour, TPB defaults to TRA. However, this is unlikely to be the case in the performance of entrepreneurship and hence, TPB is deemed to be more appropriate for this study. The application of TPB extends precedent in studies including Krueger *et al.* (2000), Liñán and Chen (2009), Kautonen *et al.* (2013, 2015), Fayolle and Liñán (2014) and Shirokova *et al.* (2016). Its levers are attitude, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and subjective norms (Carr and Sequeira, 2007).

Firstly, attitude is grounded in perceptions shaped by background factors which may include the family setting, education and prior experience (Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Athayde, 2009; Basu, 2010). The quality of these perceptions subsequently defines entrepreneurial desirability (Zhang *et al.*, 2014), or the degree of attraction to entrepreneurship (Henley *et al.*, 2017). Accordingly, extant studies have sought to identify and examine influences of perception, including demography, personal traits, sociocultural backdrop and financial support as antecedents of attitude (Bagozzi, 1992; Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Shirokova *et al.*, 2016). From the outset, scholars such as Bronfenbrenner (1986) and Kolvereid (1996) drew attention to FB as a precursor to attitude that subsequently regulates entrepreneurial behaviour. Hence, over time, works including Zellweger *et al.* (2011), Koropp *et al.* (2014), Palmer *et al.* (2019) and Combs *et al.* (2020) have examined attitude as having a mediating influence on FB. Attitudes are believed to be shaped by family norms developed from the decision-making process observed in family firm settings (Pearson *et al.*, 2008; Chang *et al.*, 2009).

Secondly, entrepreneurial self-efficacy [which could be seen as a form of perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991) or perceived feasibility (Bandura, 1997)] signifies individuals' perception of situational competence and self-employability (Zhang *et al.*, 2014). It [self-efficacy] is decision makers' discerned ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour

predicated on expected barriers and prior experience (Ajzen, 2002). Rather than an action-oriented factor, scholars including Manstead and van Eekelen (1998), Chen *et al.* (1998), Sardeshmukh and Corbett (2011) and Fini *et al.* (2012) view entrepreneurial self-efficacy as an endogenous and cognitive characteristic that regulates motivation. This motivation controls the ‘strength of a person’s belief’ that they can successfully perform entrepreneurial tasks (Chen *et al.*, 1998, p. 295). The power of this belief consequently influences individuals’ ‘choice of activities, persistence levels, personal goals as well as performance in a variety of contexts’ (Zhao *et al.*, 2005, p. 1265). Also, the said ‘entrepreneurial tasks’ constitute the multi-dimensions of entrepreneurial self-efficacy comprised of searching [opportunity recognition], planning [forecasting], marshalling [garnering support], implementing people [managing staff] and implementing finance [financial management] (McGee *et al.*, 2009). Where there is deficient entrepreneurial self-efficacy, individuals lack essential confidence and belief in their own ability (Axelrod and Lehman, 1993), there is ‘little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties’ (Bandura and Locke, 2003, p. 87). Hence, the connection between FB and entrepreneurial self-efficacy is contingent on predecessors nurturing successors’ self-confidence to effectively perform entrepreneurial activities (Forbes, 2005; Sardeshmukh and Corbett, 2011). Carr and Sequeira (2007, p. 1090) maintain that the family business scene has an ‘intergenerational influence on entrepreneurial intent’.

Lastly, regarding subjective norms, this factor measures feelings of social pressure to engage in entrepreneurship (Heuer and Kolvereid, 2013; Kautonen *et al.*, 2015). This pressure may come from family, friends or significant others (Ajzen, 1991). Together, these parties constitute a source of social reference (Palmer *et al.*, 2019) whose approval may inspire entrepreneurship as an individual’s career choice (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994; Liñán and Chen, 2009). Evident in the literature is a delineation of subjective norms into ‘injunctive norms’ [what others think one should do] and descriptive norms [what others do] (Deutsch and Gerard, 1995). Other scholars (Ham *et al.*, 2015) split subjective norms into the descriptive and the social. Descriptive norms are pressure felt from observing real-time activities undertaken by others, while social norms are one’s perception of others’ expectation. Yet, Ham *et al.* (2015) consider both to be subparts of a unified subjective norms factor. The real contention is the extent to which subjective norms predict intention. Ab initio, Ajzen (1991) conceded that subjective norms are heavily influenced by other TPB factors [attitude and entrepreneurial self-efficacy]. Yet, Krueger *et al.* (2000) remain doubtful of its correlation with entrepreneurial behaviour at any rate, as Armitage and Conner (2001) believe this doubtful relationship stems from prior narrow conceptualisations. Ultimately, legitimacy rests on the strength of empirical

correlations which ranged as high as .70 in Ravis and Sheeran's (2003) analysis, and as low as .04 in Stanton *et al.*'s (1996) investigation. The current study corroborates Ham *et al.*'s (2015) view that further research is needed to settle the matter. In terms of FB's association with subjective norms, Bagozzi *et al.* (2001), Carr and Sequeira (2007) and Krithika and Venkatachalam (2014) acknowledge the positive or negative stimulus that may arise from the business climate in one's family. Evidence from Pakistan has shown that individuals who enjoy family members' positive opinion exude greater entrepreneurial propensity (Yousaf *et al.*, 2015). Aided by the preceding review, the first hypothesis tests whether:

***H1. (a) Attitudes toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to H***

The conceptualisation proceeds to appraise levels of family business exposure in view of further hypotheses development.

### *3.2 Family Business Exposure and TPB Factors*

Hanson and Keplinger (2020, p. 1) affirm that 'challenging our current understanding of what constitutes a family is important to advance the emerging field of family entrepreneurship'. Even though, Hahn *et al.* (2020), in their multi-country student study, disentangle FB into perceived parents' performance in entrepreneurship and actual working experience in the family firm, the influence of family members has been overlooked as a sub-dimension. This sidesteps the specificity matching principle (Swann *et al.*, 2007), by which 'specific predictors should be used to predict specific behaviours' (Marsh and O'Mara, 2008, p. 544). Inspiration is drawn from Bracken (1996); Craven *et al.* (2003) and O'Mara *et al.*'s (2006) assertion that the underuse of multidimensional instruments may produce underestimation of causation. Thus, the background factors (Ajzen, 2011) constituting the proposed dimensions of FB are parental exposure, family member exposure and work involvement.

Firstly, the parental exposure dimension underscores the parent-offspring relationship essential for generational succession (Ramadani *et al.*, 2017). Parents, as owners/managers of the family business, are driven by dynasty perpetuation (Jaffe and Lane, 2004; Lambrecht, 2005) and a desire to extend the family legacy (Hammond *et al.*, 2016). The legacy could be biological, material or social and, in a family firm setting, it serves 'as a source of motivation for involving the next generation in the business' (Houshmand *et al.*, 2017, p. 244). Yet, Jaskiewicz and Dyer (2017, p. 199) stress that there is 'as much ambivalence' in the parent-offspring relationship as



in the manager and employee dynamic. This ambivalence may stem from mixed messages or the double bind transmitted from a parent to an offspring (Lansberg, 1999; Grote, 2003). The parent-offspring relationship may also be emotionally fraught and offspring may proactively pursue identities and livelihoods dissimilar to their parents' (Miller *et al.*, 2003). Levinson (1978) writes that clarity and wholeheartedness of parents' support are a condition for young adults' success. Therefore, the current assertion is that the parent-offspring relationship has a distinctive effect on II. To examine this argument, it is hypothesised that:

***H2. (a) Attitude toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to parental exposure to entrepreneurship***

The second dimension of family member exposure depicts nonparental but bloodline relationships in the business setting. Family structures are increasingly more complex than the parent-offspring scenario. Therefore, capturing 'family heterogeneity' is desirable for researchers 'to build and test richer theory to extend and refine our knowledge of family firms' (Jaskiewicz and Dyer, 2017, p. 111). In fact, scholars have long been interested in family member interactions by means of family systems theory (Davis, 1983; Hollander and Elman, 1988). Studies have shown that healthy, extended family interactions are important for the survival of (1) the family business and (2) an entrepreneurial mindset (Danes *et al.*, 2008; Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2015; Vladasel *et al.*, 2020). In modern family structures, family members assume various functions and endeavour to meet certain expectations (Popenoe, 1996). With evidence from Mexico and the US, van Auken *et al.* (2006) showed that family role models increase students' entrepreneurial drive. Yet, as per the principle of specificity (Swann *et al.*, 2007), very little is known about the extent to which family members shape entrepreneurial behaviours (James *et al.*, 2012; Jennings *et al.*, 2013). The motivation for the next hypothesis is that 'pluralistic communication patterns in families should help raise successful family business leaders' (Jaskiewicz and Dyer, 2017, p. 113). Accordingly, the following contention arises:

***H3. (a) Attitude toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to family member exposure to entrepreneurship***

The third dimension, work involvement, captures the experience of offspring involved with their family business in an occupational capacity. In the context of both the developed and developing world, La Porta *et al.* (1999), Arregle *et al.* (2007) and Houshmand *et al.* (2017) observe a prevailing tendency of parents to hire their own children, usually adolescents, on

board the family firm. In fact, when parents exclude offspring from the firm and spend less time with them as a result, they [offspring] lose the motivation to become involved in the family business (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003). Equally, the long-term competitive advantage of the family firm is weakened by a reduced social capital at home (Arregle *et al.*, 2007). White *et al.* (2007) find that adolescents working in the family firm acquire an entrepreneurial spirit and, even more importantly, develop greater psychological wellbeing. With an interest in II, this inquiry echoes Houshmand *et al.*'s (2017, p. 242) query that 'an important question thus emerges about the consequences of working in the family business'. Thus, the concluding hypothesis is:

**H4.** *(a) Attitude toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to work involvement exposure to entrepreneurship*

The research model is presented in figure 1, depicting the FB dimensions impacting on TPB factors and II in succession. The model also explores an indirect relationship between FB and II. This indirect association has been argued in previous works examining the effect of exposure variables on entrepreneurial behaviour. For instance, Zapkau *et al.* (2015) demonstrated that TPB's attitudinal variables mediate the relationship between prior entrepreneurial exposure and entrepreneurial intention. In this regard, Ajzen (2011) refers to "background factors" (such as family exposure in the present case) as being more likely to be indirectly associated with intentions, through the TPB determinants. More importantly, Zapkau *et al.* (2015) posit that uncovering such indirect links will reconcile inconclusive findings stemming from direct-effects models and thus welcomed "...future research to employ indirect (intention-based) models in order to reduce the inconclusive findings from direct effects models" (p. 649). As for the prediction of II over EI, this approach has been endorsed by Orbeil *et al.* (1997), Ajzen *et al.* (2009), Frese (2009), Fayolle and Liñán (2014) and Adam and Fayolle (2016).

Figure 1 Here

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Data

Data were sourced from students consistent with studies assessing entrepreneurial behaviour (Nowiński and Haddoud, 2019; Şahin *et al.*, 2019; Onjewu *et al.*, 2021) or skills (Hahn *et al.*, 2020). In total, five public Universities in four Nigerian states of Borno [the University of

Maiduguri], Kaduna [Ahmadu Bello University and Kaduna State University], Kano [Bayero University] and Plateau [the University of Jos] were targeted. A local survey company was appointed for this purpose and teams of research assistants were dispatched with digital devices to approach the population on a face-to-face basis. Convenience sampling was adopted and a total of 1,314 valid questionnaires were returned. Despite generalisability concerns, this non-probability type of sampling is common in entrepreneurship studies (e.g. Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2013; Kautonen *et al.*, 2015; Nowiński *et al.*, 2019; Haddoud *et al.*, 2020). To mitigate this issue, a large sample was drawn as, according to Coviello and Jones (2004), non-probability sampling can potentially generate quality data when high participation levels are achieved. In addition, the sampled states, especially Kaduna and Plateau, are highly representative of Nigeria's student population owing to their demographic diversity as alluded to by Abah *et al.* (2009).

#### 4.2 Measures

The measures in this study were appropriated from the literature. Implementation intention was captured through Gollwitzer's (1999) conceptualisation of entrepreneurial behaviour in Sniehotta *et al.* (2005). The items echo a specific plan detailing where, when and how a desired behaviour [new venture creation in this case] will be performed (Fayolle and Liñán, 2014; Pham *et al.*, 2021). Family business background was developed from a single item in Carr and Sequeira (2007) which conceptualised it [FB] as an aggregate and composite variable. In this study, the item was further split into three distinct levels namely: parental exposure (do any of your parents currently own or have they ever owned a business?), family member exposure (does a family member other than a parent currently own or have they ever owned a business?) and work involvement (have you ever worked in a family member's business?). The three questions were assessed as a binary variable with yes/no answers consistent with Carr and Sequeira (2007). As for TPB, entrepreneurial self-efficacy items were adopted from McGee *et al.* (2009), while attitude and subjective norms<sup>1</sup> were espoused from Carr and Sequeira (2007). All items were measured on a 7-point scale.

#### 4.3 Measurement Bias and Control Variables

Recognising that the survey instrument is likely to generate common method bias, a post-hoc Harman's one-factor test was employed to check the variance shared among the variables (Mattila and Enz, 2002; Lings *et al.*, 2014). The single factor accounted for less than 50% of

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<sup>1</sup> Note that for subjective norms, Carr and Sequeira's (2007) first 4 items related to family support were used.

the total variance, hence it can be concluded that the measurement method has no major implications on the results. Furthermore, the study controlled for two factors likely to affect students' entrepreneurialism namely: respondents' gender and age. Particularly, gender is considered as there are inconsistencies in previous studies. While Shinnar *et al.* (2014) suggest that males display higher levels of entrepreneurial intention than females, and entrepreneurship is considered a man's career, Entrialgo and Iglesias (2017, p. 10) claim that FB has a significantly more 'favourable effect on women's attitude toward entrepreneurship'. Also, Hatak *et al.* (2014) indicate that older individuals are less likely to act entrepreneurially than younger individuals.

#### *4.4 Sample Characteristics*

In total, the study was based on a sample of 1,314 respondents. Of these, 47.3% were females and 52.7% were males (valid percentages). Age wise, 72.8% were 25 years old or younger, while the remaining were between 26 and 45 years old. Turning to the level of study, over 98% were undergraduate students.

### **5. Analysis**

To test the hypotheses, a non-linear regression-based partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was adopted using WarpPLS 7.0 software (Kock, 2020). A variance-based approach was considered appropriate owing to the focus on explaining variation in students' entrepreneurial behaviour. In this vein, Hair *et al.* (2017, p. 119) posit that 'in a direct comparison with CB-SEM the variance explained in the dependent variables is substantially higher [in PLS-SEM]'. Hence, to ensure robustness, a PLS-SEM approach was preferred. It is also deemed suited for assessing models with dichotomous variables (Demek *et al.*, 2018; Kock, 2014).

#### *5.1. Constructs' Reliability and Validity*

For reflective constructs, both constructs' reliability and validity are assessed. Reliability refers to the ability of a measure to provide consistent outcomes under the same conditions. This is typically examined through composite reliability [CR] and Cronbach's Alpha [ $\alpha$ ] (see table 1). Furthermore, the individual reliability of all the indicators is also assessed using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis PLS approach (results available upon request). On the other hand, validity captures the extent to which indicators reflect what they are meant to measure (Hair *et al.*, 2016). Two types of validities need to be assessed, namely: convergent and discriminant

validities. The former is examined through the average variance extracted [AVE], and the latter is based on the square roots of AVEs. Lastly, constructs' collinearity is also assessed through the variance inflation factor [VIF] (see Table 1). As for formative constructs, their measurement quality is assessed through the significance of the indicators' weights and their individual VIFs, i.e. item level (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table 1 about here

Table 1 shows that all CR and  $\alpha$  scores exceed the 0.7 threshold (Mackenzie *et al.*, 2011), hence confirming good reliability. As for convergent validity, table 1 indicates that all AVE scores are greater than the 0.5 threshold (Schmiedel *et al.*, 2014). Regarding discriminant validity, all AVE square roots were greater than the diagonal suggesting sufficient discriminant validity. Finally, Table 1 also reveals no collinearity issues, since all variables score below the 5 threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Turning to entrepreneurial self-efficacy, the variable is treated as a formative second order. Here, all item weights were significant and no VIFs exceeded the 5 threshold<sup>2</sup>, thus confirming validity. In conclusion, the latent constructs in the model depict good measurement quality sufficient for testing the hypotheses in the structural model.

## 5.2 Hypothesis Testing

The structural model is assessed through the path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and the p values of the relationships hypothesised. Figure 2 and table 2 report these values.

Figure 2 Here

Table 2 Here

To begin with, the PLS-SEM analysis confirms H1 showing that ESE, attitudes toward entrepreneurship and subjective norms respectively had a positive and significant influence on implementation intention, with ESE portraying the strongest impact compared to other two factors. Turning to the impact of FB, the results revealed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy [ESE] was positively and significantly influenced by parent ( $\beta = 0.15^{***}$ ) and family member ( $\beta = 0.29^{***}$ ) exposures, whereas work involvement had no significant influence ( $\beta = 0.04$ ). Similarly, for subjective norms, both parent ( $\beta = 0.14^{***}$ ) and family member exposures ( $\beta =$

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<sup>2</sup> Note that the ESE first order variables were assessed as reflective constructs and were checked for both reliability and validity

0.23\*\*\*) had positive and significant influences. Once more, work involvement had no significant effect ( $\beta = 0.03$ ). As for attitudes, the factor was significantly and positively affected by all three exposures, namely family member exposure ( $\beta = 0.19***$ ) and parental exposure ( $\beta = 0.15***$ ). Although significant, work involvement yielded a relatively marginal influence here ( $\beta = 0.05^*$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that the findings fully support H2 and H3 yet reject H4 since not all associations materialised.

As for the indirect effects, parental and family member exposures both had a positive and significant indirect impact on implementation intention ( $\beta = 0.10***$  and  $0.18***$  respectively), whereas work involvement had no indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.02$ ). As for the influence of age and gender on entrepreneurial intention, the findings showed that age and implementation intention were positively related, whereas no relationship was determined for gender. Overall, the model explained 37% of the students' implementation intention by way of explained variance.

## **6. Discussion**

This study has revealed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitudes and subjective norms influence implementation intention in varying degrees, with ESE exhibiting the strongest effect. As for the role of family business, it is shown that entrepreneurial exposure through parents, family members and work involvement have salient and distinctive influences on implementation intention. The specific measurement of different forms of family business exposure demonstrates that entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitudes and subjective norms are uniquely impacted. Family member exposure is deemed to be a greater stimulant of entrepreneurial behaviour, followed by parental exposure. In comparison, work involvement played a less important role. These findings are discussed next, with reference to the Nigerian context.

### *6.1. The Influence of Attitudes, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Subjective Norms*

This study confirmed that attitudes toward entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and subjective norms are all positively related to implementation intention; corroborating Kautonen *et al.* (2013), Zapkau *et al.* (2015) and Al-Jubari *et al.* (2019). Nevertheless, new evidence is offered on the role of these attributes in enhancing implementation intention as opposed to entrepreneurial goal intention. Accordingly, it can be argued that when it comes to implementation intention, entrepreneurial self-efficacy seems to play a much more important

role than the remaining two factors. In fact, although attitudes towards entrepreneurship and subjective norms are significant, the strength of their impact is much lower compared to self-efficacy. This is, to some extent, a deviation from previous works investigating goal intention. While subjective norms were mostly found to play a trivial role, attitudes towards entrepreneurship have often emerged as a key precursor to entrepreneurial goal intention. In extant findings (e.g. Al-Jubari *et al.* 2019, Usman and Yennita, 2019), the influence of attitude was comparable or greater than perceived behavioural control (analogous to entrepreneurial self-efficacy). Therefore, in this study, it can be argued that although attitudes may be paramount to the formation of goal intention, its importance tends to decrease in the implementation stage where self-efficacy becomes the main driver. Implementation intention is deemed to be a step closer to the action where people consider the where, when and how aspects of new venture creation. It is also a self-regulated attribute (Fayolle and Liñán 2014) that requires self-confidence to overcome negative emotions that impair its formation. In this way, recent calls to distinguish between these two levels of intentions (e.g. Fayolle and Moriano, 2014; Krueger, 2017; Haddoud *et al.*, 2020) have been acceded.

The prominent role of self-efficacy has also been confirmed in the Nigerian context. In a study of Nigerian adolescents, Ayodele (2013) determined that ESE had a significant correlation with entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Akanbi's (2013) analysis of vocational students in western Nigeria showed a high association between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. To explain this relationship, Eniola (2020) maintains that, in Nigeria, young entrepreneurs' self-efficacy is enhanced by factors including quality education and the removal of socio-cultural barriers which in turn increase entrepreneurial orientation. To this end, Abubakar *et al.* (2020) examined and stressed the importance of institutional support such as access to finance for strengthening the link between ESE and entrepreneurial intention.

## 6.2. *The Influence of Family Business Exposure*

This study shows that the impact of the family business experience on individuals' self-efficacy, attitude and subjective norms depends on the level of FB, with direct work involvement in the family business showing no significant effect on self-efficacy and subjective norms, and a relatively marginal effect on attitude. Such results may partly challenge Arregle *et al.* (2007) and White *et al.*'s (2007) contention that offspring working in the family firm acquire an entrepreneurial spirit. In this respect, Newbery *et al.* (2018, p. 53) explain that while family members tend to provide an incomplete picture and often 'edited highlights' about

their entrepreneurial experience, a direct experience would instead offer a more objective insight into complex entrepreneurial realities and uncover much of the ‘everydayness’ of entrepreneurship (Steyaert and Katz, 2004, p. 191). Consequently, individuals will be exposed to reflected appraisals that contrast with actual experience (Carr and Sequeira, 2007), to the extent that they are deterred from entrepreneurship (Lockyer and George, 2012). When offspring get directly involved in the business through work, they become even more highly exposed to the operational realities of being an entrepreneur (Julien, 2007), and this does not necessarily improve self-efficacy nor subjective norms. In fact, it is only through work involvement that budding entrepreneurs come to experience first-hand the graft and challenging realities of entrepreneurship. This echoes Wang *et al.*’s (2018) argument that offspring involvement in the family business weakens the positive influence of perceived parental entrepreneurial rewards on entrepreneurial intentions. This is because, through work, offspring are exposed to the detriments of entrepreneurial careers.

To discuss why work involvement in the family firm may least encourage entrepreneurialism in the Nigerian context, a reflection is provoked on business sectors and the nature of work in the country. Most family businesses in Nigeria are agricultural, artisanal and small-scale manufacturing firms (Joseph, 2014; Igwe *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, across Africa, it is estimated that 90% of rural and urban employment is in the informal sector (Diallo *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, in contrast to the bright lights of white-collar professions and the perks of blue-chip employment, there is an understandably lower appeal to commit to predominantly labour-intensive and low-skill family enterprises. Indeed, Mortimer *et al.*’s (2016) assertion that only ‘high-quality’ employment increases self-efficacy in transitional years applies here. Not to mention, offspring work involvement in Nigeria is typically on an unpaid basis (Kazeem, 2013). Without monetary incentive in the short-term, entrepreneurship would seem like a chore beyond rational logic.

In comparison to direct work involvement, when exposed through parents, the information and insight received would be filtered, as parents tend to protect their offspring from adverse situations. Here, Wang *et al.* (2018) acknowledged that parents tend to exaggerate their entrepreneurial success when their children are present. Hence, the positive influence of parental exposure is more likely to materialise. From a learning perspective, Palmer *et al.* (2021) reported that exposure to entrepreneurship through parents enhances perceived behavioural control and subjective norms, along with other traits. They also outline an indirect



effect on EI through the TPB antecedents, and further explain that, as role models, parents enhance offspring's leadership competencies which would boost their self-efficacy. In the current context, there is evidence that Nigerian parents actively encourage their offspring to tow the business line for the purpose of perpetuity (Ofem *et al.*, 2017). However, such exposure might be less effective than extended family exposure as offspring would still access a more realistic entrepreneurial experience from frequent contact with parents than from other family members (Wang *et al.*, 2018). This corresponds with Zhang *et al.*'s (2014) view that negative entrepreneurial incidents from parents discourages entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Hahn *et al.* (2020: 261) recognise that '...exposure [through family] can be source of stress and negative perceptions about entrepreneurship'.

Contrastingly, when individuals are exposed to family members, they mostly perceive the 'bright side' of entrepreneurship and hence, their attitude, subjective norms and self-efficacy are enhanced even further. These family members could be older siblings, in-laws, aunts and uncles who act as role models (Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2015; Vlasdel *et al.*, 2020). They may command greater entrepreneurial inspiration among offspring because sporadic interaction masks the grind of self-employment much more than permanent interaction. In this regard, McCann (2017) argues that, in theory, observing these positive experiences will shape attitudes, which in turn will have an influence on future entrepreneurial beliefs. Also, Delmar and Davidsson (2000) reported that the good impression of self-employed family members and friends was positively related to entrepreneurship. Hence, this study has shown that there is a higher likelihood of a positive entrepreneurial outlook through family as opposed to more direct involvement through work. Subsequently, this boosts individuals' entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy, leading to a higher entrepreneurial intention. To put this into context, Nigerians are generally collectivistic (Minkov *et al.*, 2017), and extended family members are mostly present in the family business scene (Igwe *et al.*, 2018). Much has been written about a pervasive 'care syndrome' in Nigeria (Joseph, 2014; Agbim, 2018), where entrepreneurial (and usually more financially secure) relatives assume the role of economic benefactor for the wider family. While Ajayi *et al.* (2011) believe that this 'care syndrome' leads to a dependency culture that does not stimulate entrepreneurship, the present analysis suggests otherwise. Although this dependency has not been measured, it is arguable that offspring reliance on extended family members is not a constant. Family members may inspire entrepreneurship without being financially benevolent. For that matter, the success of attachment figures could

be a source of healthy rivalry or perceived social pressure that incites entrepreneurial behaviour among offspring.

## **7. Conclusion**

The analysis has shown that students are exposed to different forms of family business environments and this has an impact on their personality, and subsequently their entrepreneurial behaviour. The novelty and contribution of this article to the family business literature resides in uncovering the influence of three distinct levels of family business exposure through (1) extended family, (2) parents and (3) direct work involvement. In so doing, it addresses Hahn *et al.*'s (2020) call to investigate the nuanced nature of entrepreneurial family exposure. Indeed, the sociology of the contemporary family business has been described as a 'meta system' (Nnabuife *et al.*, 2018, p. 6). Hence, the conventional unidimensionality of family business exposure disguises the complexity of modern family firm structures. By advancing multi-dimensionality, this study extends the theoretical boundary of family business background and the consequent effect on entrepreneurial behaviour. Precisely, in disentangling Carr and Sequeira's (2007) family business background variable, it goes one further and demonstrates how parental exposure, family member exposure and work involvement discretely impact on attitudinal factors toward entrepreneurship. In fact, while the results confirm that entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitude and subjective norms mediate the relationship between family business background and implementation intention, the quality of this attitudinal mediation rides on the nature of one's family business background. The study concludes by reflecting on its theoretical and practical ramifications, as well as inherent limitations and opportunities for further research.

### **7.1 Theoretical Implications**

In the Nigerian context, this inquiry bears the torch for operationalising implementation intention over entrepreneurial intention as a construct for measuring individuals' more actionable intentions. Similar to Esfandiar *et al.* (2019), a more comprehensive and robust proxy of entrepreneurial behaviour has been examined. To be sure, entrepreneurial intention is merely a desire, while implementation intention is a commitment to new venture creation. On this basis, the analysis better depicts the relationship between intention and actual behaviour. In terms of the key findings arising to advance theory, this study demonstrates that, more than any other family exposure, extended family have the greatest influence over Nigerian students' planned behaviour, followed by parents and work involvement respectively. This means that

the closer Nigerian students are to the family business action, the lower the positive impact on their entrepreneurial mind-set. Furthermore, for the TPB factors, nurturing entrepreneurial self-efficacy in the Nigerian family firm context has the greatest positive effect on entrepreneurial implementation intention. This is then followed by enkindling entrepreneurial attitudes and subjective norms. Generating new dimensions by dissecting family business background opens diverse avenues for further research, some of which are highlighted here. First, scholars embarking on studies in other African countries and similar developing contexts may replicate the structural model with implementation intention as a dependent variable. This will allow comparison and/or confirmation of the present findings and increase the volume of more useful research as per the actual behaviour argument. Second, there is opportunity for further studies to examine the influence of country-specific cultural issues. Nigeria, for example, is a largely patrilineal society (Joseph, 2014). New studies could explore how the preference for male succession and gender hierarchy may impact on the TPB factors and entrepreneurial behaviour. There is a possibility that customary laws on gender supremacy may curtail the entrepreneurial propensity of female and younger offspring. Third, emotional intelligence has been known to pre-empt work-family conflict. To this end, future studies may measure emotion-based factors as a moderator in the FB-II nexus.

## *7.2 Practical Implications*

For practical purposes, family business leaders can draw on these findings to organise and precondition the firm environment to better stimulate entrepreneurial interest among offspring. In this regard, effective family governance practices, as cited by Umans *et al.* (2020), are essential for nurturing superior entrepreneurial intention. Within family firms, processes optimising positive parental and family member exposure as well as high quality work are fundamental to succession. Particularly, it is crucial to cultivate the subjective norms held by offspring as self-efficacy and attitude may be collectively insufficient to trigger entrepreneurship. In like manner, stakeholders looking to address the low succession/survival of family businesses, such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria [SMEDAN], may find it prudent to assess the entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitude and subjective norms of offspring in and around family firms. In Nigeria, the cumulative effect of entrepreneurial families on supporting livelihoods and enabling grassroot development cannot be overstated (Onuoha, 2013; Xiong *et al.*, 2018). The design and delivery of formal and informal mentoring, support and training programmes by SMEDAN could incorporate aspects of assertive role modelling by parents and attachment figures in tandem with role-

playing of premium work to stimulate transgenerational entrepreneurship (Clinton *et al.*, 2020). The attention of family business leaders, whether parents or extended family, is also drawn to instigate a more conscious engagement of offspring in the family enterprise through informed guidance and management. These recommendations complement van Auken *et al.*'s (2006) logic that parents and family members can only spark entrepreneurship with a positive aura.

### 7.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study acknowledges a few limitations that prompt future lines of inquiry in addition to those outlined in 7.1. To begin with, the observed population is entirely students from four states, albeit across five universities. For this reason, the results are mostly dependent on mindsets and social conditions that may not be nationally applicable in Nigeria. Therefore, observing nascent entrepreneurs in the same context will increase the external validity of the structural model. This is especially pertinent in Nigeria where students have been observed to engage in a miscellany of informal entrepreneurship (Meagher, 2016). Furthermore, the non-probability sampling employed here suggests that there could be bias in the generalisability of the findings. Moreover, while this study focuses on the mediating role of cognitive factors, through the TPB lens, it does not exclude the important role of other aspects such as emotions (Nabi *et al.*, 2017; Haddoud *et al.*, 2020). Further research should consider these factors alongside cognitive mediators. Lastly, the cross-sectional nature of the data should be considered when inferring causality. It should be noted that the relationships determined in the path model are associations rather than causal links. Any reference to causality in the findings is primarily based on the theoretical logic underpinning the relationships. Likewise, assessing cross-sectional data projects a static view of otherwise evolving entrepreneurship behaviour (Sahindis *et al.*, 2012). Although implementation intention, a closer proxy for behaviour has been captured, future research can analyse longitudinal data to track the dynamic evolution of entrepreneurial behaviour. This will also establish causality, including possible reverse causal influences which could be from intention to cognition.

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## Tables and Figures

Table 1: Constructs' Reliability and Validity

	<b>ATT</b>	<b>IMP</b>	<b>SN</b>						
<b>CR</b>	0.891	0.927	0.868						
<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	0.846	0.882	0.797						
<b>AV</b>	0.622	0.809	0.623						
<b>E</b>									
	<b>ATT</b>	<b>IMP</b>	<b>SN</b>	<b>ESE</b>	<b>PRNT</b>	<b>FAM</b>	<b>WORK</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>GEN</b>
<b>VIF</b>	2.080	1.521	1.992	2.189	1.615	1.513	1.605	1.074	1.061

*ATT=Attitudes toward Entrepreneurship; IMP=Entrepreneurial Implementation Intention; ESE= Entrepreneurial self-efficacy; SN = Subjective Norms; PRNT=Parent Exposure; FAM=Family Member Exposure; WORK; Work Involvement; AGE=Age; GEN=Gender.*

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Test</b>
H1. (a) Attitudes toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to II	(a) = 0.07** (b) = 0.57*** (c) = 0.05*	Accepted Accepted Accepted
H2. (a) Attitude toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to parental exposure to entrepreneurship	(a) = 0.15*** (b) = 0.15*** (c) = 0.14***	Accepted Accepted Accepted
H3. (a) Attitude toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to family member exposure to entrepreneurship	(a) = 0.19*** (b) = 0.29*** (c) = 0.23***	Accepted Accepted Accepted
H4. (a) Attitude toward entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial self-efficacy and (c) subjective norms are positively related to work involvement exposure to entrepreneurship	(a) = 0.05* (b) = 0.04 (c) = 0.03	Accepted Rejected Rejected



Figure 1. Research Model

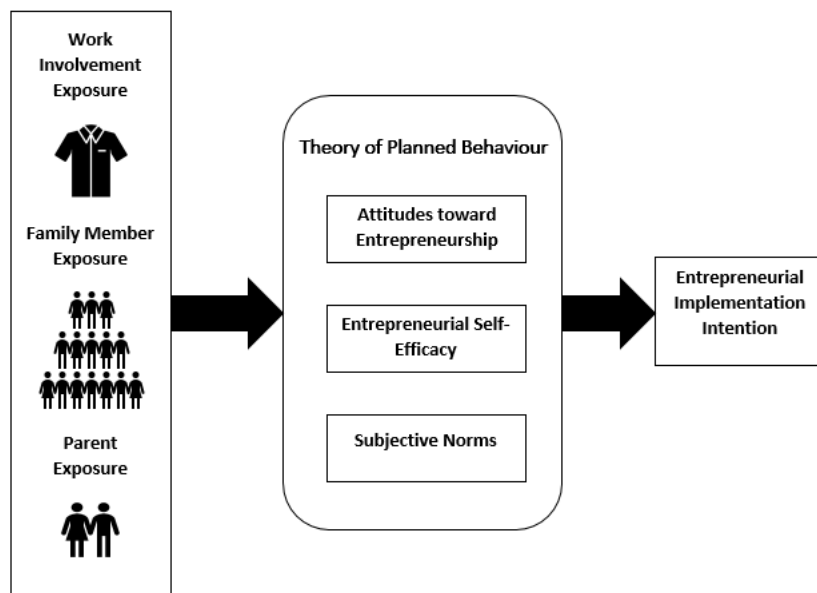


Figure 2. Levels of Family Business Background Model

