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PROACTIVENESS AS PREDICTOR OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

***Raji Rasaki Alaba, Oduwole Abiodun Ayodeji and Oyeyemi Kayode**
Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Studies, College of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Lagos State University of Education, Otto/Ijanikin, Noforija, Epe Campus.

*Correspondence: rajira@Lasued.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial intention among business students is a strong indicator to avert unemployment in the country. However, most undergraduates are faced with the problem of entrepreneurial intention for starting up a business, which continually leads to increased unemployment among graduates and hinder the growth and sustainability of the country. The study adopted Theory of Planned Behaviour to justify and determined the intention of undergraduate students towards business start- up. The study used descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all business students in seven public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. A total of one thousand three hundred and ninety-three (1,311) Business Education students were selected using multi-stage sampling procedures. Data were analysed using percentage, mean, standard deviation and Multiple Regression at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS and Macro Process Analysis. The findings revealed that 72.1% students had high level of proactiveness to business intention ($\bar{x}$ = 39.35; SD=0.720) and few with low level of 27.9% ($\bar{x}$ = 34.8; SD=2.711), while 72.5% of the students had high business intention ($\bar{x}$= 39.8; SD=0.407). Proactiveness significantly contributed to the entrepreneurial. (β=0.371, t= 14.442). The study concluded that proactiveness influenced the entrepreneurial intention of Business students in public universities. The study has shown that proactiveness plays a significant role in predicting the entrepreneurial intention of business students in public universities in south-west, Nigeria. It was recommended that business students should endeavour to develop and focus more on traits of proactiveness in setting up and running a business enterprise. Government and policy maker should provide necessary support and policies to improve entrepreneurial intention among universities students in Nigeria.

Keywords: Business students, Entrepreneurship, Proactiveness

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the problem of entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students seems to be playing a prominent role in economic activities and possibly may be among the factors likely to lessen rate of unemployment in Nigeria. For example, universities, including other post-secondary institutions in Nigeria produce thousands of graduates each year into a labour market that appears to be fully filled with no openings for the new graduates to work in. This has been one of the factors fueling unemployment rate in the country. As stated by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), rate of unemployment in the country has been on increasing level since 1993 (3.98%) and moved up to 5.3% in year 2024. This trend is alarming and disturbing for government and other stakeholders in Nigeria economy.

Entrepreneurial intention is an individual's ambition to launch a quickly growing expanding company and

become an entrepreneur in the future. Additionally, the conscious state of mind is what motivates people to take action and focus on entrepreneurial intention like starting a new company and become an entrepreneur (Lee et al., 2022) while Maheshwari et al. (2022) showed that having an entrepreneurial intention requires the capacity to seek for and acquire information that advances venture creation. For entrepreneurs, one of the most important skills is being able to obtain the knowledge and information needed to overcome obstacles that come up during the startup business. Therefore, what is indicated by entrepreneurial intention is the process of producing value through the investment of time and effort while considering financial, social, and other risks that could result in financial benefit (Mawad & Freiha, 2024).

Proactiveness includes looking for new opportunities, product development, and launching new product. Being proactive in business might mean the difference between corporate success and failure. Proactive individuals always seek out new opportunities' identifications, prepare for the future, and seek out methods to do better. They anticipate problems and act to prevent them before they happen. People who take proactive are more likely to succeed in their careers and are more sensitive to the demands of control, accomplishment, self-assurance, and diligence. When it comes to entrepreneurship, being proactive means creating a business instead of purchasing or inheriting one, and also means increasing the quantity of firms that are launched.

People that are proactive frequently take the initiative to influence and significantly change their surroundings. Having a proactive mindset can help someone feel less stressed in situations, recognise opportunities for improvement, take charge of their life, and eventually influence the environment to bring about major changes. (Naz et al., 2020). Since identifying opportunities is a key component of individual initiative, proactiveness is considered the essential precondition for entrepreneurial awareness to opportunities (Ojeleye et al., 2023).

Additionally, proactiveness is the inclination of human agents to take action when confronted with external constraints. Entrepreneurs that take initiative are driven by action (Ojeleye et. al., 2023). Sourav and Kallal (2023) emphasized that managers should be proactive in their planning for future events in order to help the firm achieve its goals. In essence, it emphasizes the management of known risks. The proactive meaning in business refers to acting and thinking before a risk occurs. This kind of management, in most cases, acts as a precautional measure against future problems before they arise. Moreover, managers engage in proactive management skills to prepare their employees and customers for the expected problem and design a possible solution to the expected setback. Proactive management, on the other hand, is when managers counter arising problems and enforce management skills to combat the issue. Proactive entrepreneurs are viewed as one end of the employment spectrum due to their passion and commitment to their work (Sourav & Kallal, 2023).

Many research has conducted the concept of proactiveness in entrepreneurship. proactiveness has been a central domain of entrepreneurship that has received a wide theoretical and empirical attention. (Covin & Slevin 2006). Many research conducted in the field of proactiveness has led to the wide acceptance of the concept of proactiveness in entrepreneurship. Most studies on business proactiveness and entrepreneurial intention are conducted in developed countries and Africa respectively but there is limited empirical studies on how proactiveness predicts the entrepreneurial intention among business students in Nigeria where cultural, economic and environment differs. More so, most studies conducted in Nigeria were conducted in private universities in Southwest without moderating variables to test the relationship between proactiveness and entrepreneurial intention. This study addresses this gap by focusing on entrepreneurial intention among business students at undergraduate level in public universities.

There is no doubt, that developing countries are faced with the problem of high rate of unemployment. The unemployment issues such as poverty, income inequality and poor living standard, among others have rampaged the developing countries with particular reference to developing nation like Nigeria. Despite that, the menace of unemployment, particularly university graduates continue to increase. Invariably, the mechanism that propels young undergraduates into entrepreneurial intention is less researched in developing countries, including Nigeria (Amazue et al., 2015). Nigeria's unemployment rate has more than quadrupled over the last five years as the economy has gone through two recessions, casting a shadow on efforts to implement policies to drive growth and create jobs by the

government (Olurounbi, 2021). The number of unemployed Nigerians rose to 23.19 million in the fourth quarter of 2020 on the back of job losses occasioned by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and its stifling impact on businesses during the period (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The unemployment rate in Nigeria has rose from 27.1 percent to 33.3 percent from December to March 2021 (Egwuatu, 2021).

Thus, due to the high unemployment rate, coupled with a dwindling economy, entrepreneurial intention is sine-qua-non for individual survival and the sustainability of economic development (Anjum et al., 2021). Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) a professional accounting auditing firm service in its report titled "Global Economic Outlook" (2023) reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate may rise to 40.06% amid economic slowdown in 2023 due to the limited investment by the private sector and inability of the economy to absorb the massive annual job seekers into the Nigerian job market every year (April 11, 2023.cited in Premium Times Nigeria, 2023). Most studies on business proactiveness performance and entrepreneurial intention are conducted in developed countries and Africa respectively but there is limited empirical studies on how proactiveness predicts the entrepreneurial intention among business students in public universities, Southwest, Nigeria. It is based on the above that this study aims to ascertain relative contribution of proactiveness to entrepreneurship of business students.

This study benefits business students, academics, researchers, entrepreneurs, government and policy maker. The study benefits business students that are striving to become successful entrepreneur in their business start-up. The study is of immense benefit to the entrepreneurs by enriching their knowledge of salient practices that could produce the desired level of sustainable success in businesses. The study has practical implications for universities and researchers interested in entrepreneurial intention of business performance of students using proactiveness as a tool for achieving success in the business start-up. The study contributes to the entrepreneurship study by devising a new model to evaluate students' entrepreneurial intention in public universities. Also, the study informed the business practitioners in pursuits of entrepreneurial knowledge. The study also benefits government and various supporting institutions in formulating and implementing policies on entrepreneurship that would be of benefit to students in the universities system.

This study primarily investigated proactiveness as predictor of entrepreneurial intention among business education students in Southwest Universities, Nigeria. The study focused on the public universities offering business education programme in Southwest Universities, Nigeria (Lagos,

Ogun, Ekiti and Ondo) from 200-400 levels. Oyo and Osun states were not covered because no public universities offering business education programme in the two states respectively.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical review

Theory of Planned Behaviour

This theory was postulated by Ajzen (1991) According to the TPB model, the intention to participate in the business creation process is positively shaped by three variables: personal attitude (PA) towards a behavior, subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC). This theory is based on the assumption that the best predictor of a behaviour is the intention (Ajzen, 1991, as cited in Alexandros et. al., 2021). Personal attitude towards a behaviour refers to the degree to which an individual evaluates a particular behaviour in a positive or negative way. In the case of starting a new business, the attitude towards the new venture can be assessed by evaluating the desire for the relevant outcomes that result from the creation of the business. A person's perception of the positive and negative effects of starting a new business leads to the formation of his/her attitude towards this behaviour.

The degree to which the individual expects the results of setting up a new business to be positive indicates his/her intention to create it (Ajzen, 1991, as cited in Alexandros et. al., 2021). Subjective norms refer to perceived social pressure from society as well as family and friends. A person's subjective norms are determined by his or her normative beliefs weighted by the person's motivation to comply with those referents. If a person has strong motivation to conform to the beliefs of important people, he/she is more likely to behave in accordance with those beliefs. If the motivation is strong and the people important to the person (such as friends or relatives) approve of the behavior, the specific behavior is more

likely to be implemented. The opposite happens in the opposite case. PBC refers to the perception of the ease or difficulty in performing a behavior considering the expected obstacles or expected support. If the person does not believe that he or she can successfully perform the tasks related to starting a business, the person's intention to do business decreases and vice versa (Ajzen, 1991, as cited in Alexandros et. al., 2021). This theory of planned behaviour is relevant to the study because an individual who intends to become an entrepreneur must act on intended business plan.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention is a process of value creation consisting of committing time and effort, considering financial, social, and other risks resulting in monetary gain (Izlem & Nurdam, 2016). It involves creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort. Entrepreneurial intention is the self-belief of individuals who intend to start a new business and plan to do it in the future (Dung & Tu, 2021). Entrepreneurial intention is a behaviourial process that involves searching, evaluating, and exploiting business opportunities to make new business activities (Dao et al., 2021).

The existence of entrepreneurial intentions is an indication of how much effort will be expended by individuals to display entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurial intentions can grow from several factors including personality, family influences, and environmental influences, but entrepreneurial intentions mostly come from within the individual which then forms a tendency to act to realise their desires (Ayo-Sobowale,2021). For this reason, entrepreneurial intentions should be developed to create new businesses. Entrepreneurial intentions can grow due to several factors. Several factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions include personal attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, the need for achievement, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

A deeper understanding of the factors that encourage students to participate in entrepreneurial activity is necessary. It is not every intention that is eventually transformed into actual behaviour; instead, there is a high level of intention-behaviour connection and entrepreneurial intentions at the foundation of the entrepreneurial process (starting and operating a new venture) (Kautonen et al., 2015; Shirokova et al., 2016); thus, signifying entrepreneurship as an intentional behaviour.

However, studies have emphasised that the stronger entrepreneurial intentions are, the higher the possibilities that new business activities are created and developed by the individual. Furthermore, entrepreneurial intentions signal how intensely one is prepared and how much effort one plans to commit to carrying out entrepreneurial intention (Schlaegel et al., 2021). Understanding the factors that predict entrepreneurial intention is crucial because entrepreneurial intention is a result of the interaction of some factors, which include cognition and psychological factors (Ugwueze et al, 2022), Thus, the pertinent question is what contingent variables can influence entrepreneurial intention. However, extant studies (Shane et al., 2017) have raised concerns about why specific individuals can sense new opportunities, whereas others engage in behaviours toward such opportunities. This brings into focus endogenous variables such as proactiveness and entrepreneurial alertness, which play a vital role in business students' entrepreneurial intentions.

2.2 Conceptual Review

Concept of Proactiveness

Naz et al. (2020) define proactiveness as an individual's proactive attempts to bring about changes in their surroundings. People that are proactive frequently take the initiative to influence and maybe even significantly change their surroundings. Put in another way, having a proactive mindset can help someone feel less stressed in situations, recognize opportunities for improvement, take charge of their life, and eventually influence the environment to bring about major changes. (Naz et al., 2020). Since identifying opportunities is a key component of individual initiative, proactiveness is considered the essential precondition for entrepreneurial awareness to opportunities (Ojeleye et al., 2023).

Proactiveness is the inclination of human agents to take action when confronted with external constraints. They could alter and have an impact on the environment in which they operate by doing this. Entrepreneurs that take initiative are driven by action. Sourav and Kallal (2023) emphasized that individuals should be proactive in their planning for future events in order to help the firm achieve its goals. In essence, it emphasizes the management of known risks. The proactive meaning in

business refers to acting and thinking before a risk occurs. proactiveness in most cases, acts as a precautional measure against future problems before they arise. Moreover, managers engage in proactive management skills to prepare their employees and customers for the expected problem and design a possible solution to the expected setback.

Proactive entrepreneurs are viewed as one end of the employment spectrum due to their passion and commitment to their work (Sourav & Kallal, 2023). proactiveness is the ability of the company to compete with its competitors in an aggressive and proactive manner. It also describes as opportunity-seeking strategy that includes launching new goods or services ahead of rivals and taking action to anticipate demand in the future to bring about change and mold the environment. The main focus of proactiveness is implementation. It typically requires a great deal of flexibility, tenacity and a willingness to take some blame for setbacks. From an organizational standpoint, proactiveness as described by (Parker et al. 2003) aligns with the views of other writers who characterize proactiveness conduct as a facet of organizational behavior. This study defines proactiveness behavior as looking for new opportunities, addressing market obstacles, and launching new services. Students who possess a high level of proactiviness and/or confidence in their ability are likely to participate in self-directed entrepreneurship more often than those who lack these qualities or have a low level of proactive personality (Manishimwe & Ndifreke, 2021).

2.3 Empirical Review

Studies on Students' Proactiveness and Entrepreneurial Intention

Ojeleye et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between students' proactive personalities and entrepreneurial intention and, as well as the moderating effect of perceived institutional support. The study employed cross-sectional and survey research methodologies. Students at four federal institutions in Kano, Sokoto, Kaduna and Zamfara states filled out 1,000 questionnaires for the study. Of those, 627 were valid and utilized in the analysis. The approach used in the study was called purposive sampling. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for the study's early analysis, which included tests for normality, multicollinearity, outlier detection, and missing value detection. A structural equation model (Smart PLS) was used for both the structural and measurement models. According to the findings, the proactive personalities and institutional support of the students at the selected universities had a noteworthy and favorable impact on their entrepreneurial goals. The study of Aurilia and Yustina (2023) suggested a new proactive personality model as a moderating factor for the variables impacting students' entrepreneurial inclinations, with academic support and entrepreneurship education serving as a source of influence. 192 students' observed from Ten Semarang Universities were used to test the suggested model. The study used quota sampling and distributed questionnaire for data collection. The findings demonstrated that when entrepreneurship education and academic support were integrated into the entrepreneurship, the impact of students' proactive personalities and entrepreneurial goals was greater.

These results align with previous research and theories. Furthermore, this study has managerial implications for tertiary institutions by advising them to think about proactive personality, entrepreneurship education, and academic assistance as essential components to stimulate students' interest in entrepreneurship. Additionally, Luo et al (2022) investigated the connection between proactive personalities and college students' intention to launch their own businesses. This study evaluated 300 Chinese college students using valid samples and using the proactive personality scale, human capital scale, social capital scale and entrepreneurial intention scale.

The findings showed that the entrepreneurial inclinations were significantly and favorably impacted by proactive personality. The results also add significantly to the understanding of how proactive personalities of college students affect their inclinations to become entrepreneurs. Appraisal of the Literature**:** Some of the studies are concentrated in developed countries and others in African countries. Despite the consistency in the result of these studies, those in African countries were carried in the Private Universities within the south and north region indicating a gap for research in public universities across other geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design and is considered appropriate for this study. Through this design, data were generated and analysed to give result that represent the views of the entire population of study.

A representative sample size of 1,393 was drawn from the population through multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage was purposive sampling technique to select public universities that offered business education programme. The second stage involve using proportionate sampling of 30% of the total population (4,631) of business education students, this represents 1,393. The third stage is simple random selection of the 1,393 students used in the study.

The content validity of the instruments was achieved from the literature review and validated with the help of expert in the field of entrepreneurship. The items were modified by the experts to fit the research variables items where necessary. To determine the reliability of the instruments, it was subjected to pilot study and administered to 40 Business Education students at University of Nigeria, Nzukka (University outside the scope of the study). The reliability coefficient was obtained using Cronbach alpha technique, and it yielded a composite coefficient: proactiveness of 0.709, and 0.789 for Entrepreneurial intention which indicates that the instruments were reliable for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection:

Proactiveness Scale

The scale was developed by Miller et al., (1989). This scale was used by Olayemi (2014) and adapted by the researcher. The instrument consists of 7 items on 5-point likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree = 5, Agree =4 , Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = It was adapted by the researcher for this study and was adjusted from 7 items to 10 items on 4-point likert scale.. The Cronbach alpha obtained for the instrument is 0.709.

Entrepreneurial Intention Scale

The instrument scale was developed by Linan and amp; Chen (2009). This scale was used by Jena (2020). The instrument consists of 7 items on 5-point likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree = 5, Agree =4 , Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1. It was adapted by the researcher for this study and was adjusted from 7 items to 10 items on 4-point likert scale. The Cronbach alpha obtained for the instrument is 0.789. The reliability coefficient was obtained using Cronbach alpha technique. it indicated that the instrument is reliable for the study

The original scales were developed to measure firm level performance and consists of 7 items on 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree = 5, Agree =4 , Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1.Since the study focused on the individual innovativeness on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates, some items were reworded and three additional items were developed based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and reviewed literature to ensure content validity for the study context. The adapted scale now consists of 10 items. Additionally, the "Undecided" option was omitted to avoid ambiguity and bias in order to encourage respondents to indicate a directional attitude towards the items.

The Model for the study **is** the linear regression model. It is generally given by the equation:

$Y=\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$

Where:

Y = dependent variable (Entrepreneurial Intention of Business Education Students).

X_1 = independent variable (Proactiveness).

β_0 = intercept (constant).

β_1 = coefficient of Proactiveness

e = error term.

The researcher obtained approval from the Head, Department of Business Education covered by the study to administer questionnaire on the respondents. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and their consent were obtained before administering the questionnaire. Descriptive and multiple regression were used. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, standard deviation, percentages and bar charts were used for certain illustrations while Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) were employed to measure the contribution and the relationship among the variables. The descriptive and multiple regression was employed due to its suitability to measure the constructs under investigation. Data were analysed using percentage, mean, standard deviation and Multiple Regression at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS and Macro Process Analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

Description of Demographic Data

One thousand three hundred and ninety-three 1,393 questionnaire were administered to business education students across various institutions, and an impressive

response rate of 94.2% was achieved, with One thousand three hundred and eleven. (1,311) completed questionnaire returned.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question one: What is the level of Proactiveness of Business Students in Southwest, Nigeria

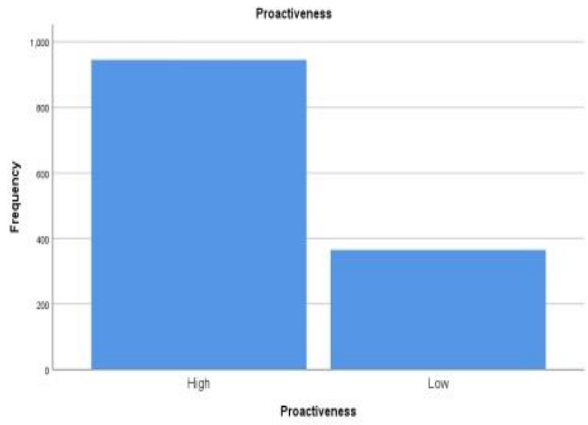
Descriptive Statistics of the level of Proactiveness for business start- up by the business students

Level of Proactiveness of Business Students in Southwest, Nigeria

Proactiveness	***Low***	***High***	***Total***
Mean	*34.85519126*	*39.35238095*	
Median	*34*	*39*	
Standard Deviation	*2.711378933*	*0.720211497*	
Kurtosis	*6.731166011*	*-0.845535426*	
Skewness	*-2.218453116*	*-0.642171919*	
Percentage	*27.9*	*72.1*	*100*
Count	***366***	***945***	***1311***

Source: Researcher 2024

Graph showing level of Proactiveness of Business Students in public universities, Southwest, Nigeria



The results of the level of proactiveness indicated that 27.9 % (mean score of 34. 85519126 and a standard deviation of 2.711378933) of the business education possessed a low proactiveness towards entrepreneurial intention and 72.1% (mean score of 39.35238095 with standard deviation of 0.720211497) possessed high proactiveness towards entrepreneurial intention.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho_1: Proactiveness will not significantly contribute to the prediction of entrepreneurship of business students in public university in southwest, Nigeria.

Table: Regression analysis of Proactiveness to entrepreneurial intention business education students.

R	R^2		Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate	
.371[a]	.137		.137	1.951	
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	794.103	1	794.103	208.583	.000[b]
Residual	4983.537	1309	3.807		
Total	5777.640	1310			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	27.162	.808		33.630	.000
Proactiveness	.305	.021	.371	14.442	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention, b. Predictors: (Constant): Proactiveness* indicates significant r at α = 0.05

Source: Researcher 2024

The final regression model is: Entrepreneurial Intention=27.162+0.305×Proactiveness. This model predicts the entrepreneurial intention of students based on their level of proactiveness. The regression analysis result examines the dependent variable entrepreneurial intention and the independent variable proactiveness. R = 0.371, R-squared = 0.137 and Adjusted R Square = 0.137, standard error = 1.951 which means that approximately 13.7% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention is explained by proactiveness.

In other words, "proactiveness" accounts for a significant portion of the variability in entrepreneurial intention. The Adjusted R Square for the number of predictors in the model were very close to the regular R-squared value, indicating that "proactiveness" is strong and a predictor to entrepreneurial intention. A lower standard error indicates a better fit of the model to the data. The result also revealed F-value of 208.583 and significant (2-tailed) of 0.00 (F = 208.583; P<0.05) which means that the regression model is fit for the study. The standardised coefficient (Beta) of 0.371, P = 0.000, and 0.000 for both proactiveness and entrepreneurial intention. The result supports the rejection of null hypotheses and accept the alternative hypotheses indicating that proactiveness significantly and positively predict entrepreneurial intention among business education students.

i. 72.1% of the students possessed high level of proactiveness ($\overline{x}$ = 39.35; SD=0.720) while 27.9% had low level of proactiveness ($\overline{x}$ = 34.8; SD=2.711) to entrepreneurial intention.
ii. Proactiveness significantly contributed to the entrepreneurial intention of business education students in public universities in Southwest, Nigeria (β= 0.371, t= 14.442).
iii. The study concluded that proactiveness influenced the entrepreneurial intention of Business students in public universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one tested the relationship between the proactiveness and entrepreneurial intention: The findings of this result conform to the findings of Ojeleye et al. (2023) who investigated the relationship between students' proactive personalities and entrepreneurial intention and, as well as the moderating effect of perceived institutional support. The findings also align with the study of Aurilia and Yustina (2023) who

suggested a new proactive personality model as a moderating factor for the variables impacting students' entrepreneurial inclinations, with academic support and entrepreneurship education serving as a source of influence. The alignment of this study with other findings showed the interrelationship between proactiveness and entrepreneurial intention of students and it signifies the students' commitment and their readiness to enhance their proactiveness in business intention. The implication of this result is that students with proactive mindset have strong tendency to develop new ideas in business and will result in better performance because proactiveness has direct relationship with entrepreneurial intention of students. In other words, students with high levels of proactiveness are problem solver in the society and they are more likely to have strong entrepreneurial intentions. Students with proactive mindset would easily identify opportunities in the society, envisage future changes in the environment and turn it to value. Students with creativity would serve as an eye opener to other students because being proactive while in school gives opportunity to partake in entrepreneurial competition among universities within and outside the countries.

Research question on student level of proactiveness: The result indicates that strong proactiveness was found among the business students to predict their entrepreneurial intention. Given that they understand being a self-reliance or future entrepreneur is better than looking for job with certificate after graduation having noticed the increase level of graduate unemployment in the labour market. The findings corroborate with Aurilia and Yustina (2023), who found that when entrepreneurship education and academic support were incorporated in the interaction, students' proactive personalities and entrepreneurial intentions had a greater impact.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigates proactiveness as a predictor to entrepreneurial intention among business students in public universities in South-West, Nigeria. In order for the researcher to achieve the goal of the study, one objective, one research questions and one null hypothesis were highlighted to guide the study. Two validated instruments namely: proactiveness and entrepreneurial intention scale were used for the data collection and it was administered on 1,311 business students comprises of 200, 300 and 400 levels across public universities covered in the study. At the end of data analysis, it was found that: proactiveness is crucial in predicting entrepreneurial intentions among business students in public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Students with proactive mindset have stronger intentions towards business start-up.

The study presents the following recommendations in line with the findings and conclusion:

i. Public universities should create a competitive and friendly environment for the students to learn entrepreneurial activities and create extra- curricular activities that reward creative problem solving and idea generation.

ii. Public universities should partner with established entrepreneurs in the industries to provide mentorship, practical training to the students based on the particular choice of business identified based on their potential. This would build strong entrepreneurial mind-set.

iii. Public universities should expose students to emerging technologies and diverse industries through internship, workshop and seminars on business start-up.

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