



## Entrepreneurial Mentorship and Economic Sustainability of Women-Led Rice Businesses in Kebbi State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study investigated the effect of entrepreneurial mentorship on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi State, Nigeria. Two objectives were formulated for the study which are to examine the effect of networking on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses and to assess the extent to which knowledge transfer affect the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study is descriptive research design, data were collected from 344 registered women rice farmers and processors affiliated with the Kebbi State Women in Agriculture (KSWIA) association. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and Robust Ordinary Least Squares (ROLS) regression. The results revealed that both networking ( $\beta = 0.546$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and knowledge transfer/coaching ( $\beta = 0.111$ ,  $p = 0.058$ ) had significant positive effects on the economic sustainability of the women-led rice businesses. The model explained 54% of the variance in economic sustainability ( $R^2 = 0.542$ ). The study concludes that entrepreneurial mentorship, particularly through effective networking and knowledge transfer, is a critical driver of economic sustainability for women in the rice business sector in Kebbi State. It is recommended that mentor–mentee partnership networks be strengthened, while continuous professional development opportunities for mentors should be encouraged to facilitate effective skill transfer and enhance the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses.

Keywords: economic sustainability, knowledge transfer and output, Mentorship, networking

### 1.1 Introduction

The desire of every business is to provide goods and services that guarantee its long-term sustainability. However, sustaining a business extends beyond the provision of quality products; it also depends on the surrounding environment and the managerial capacity of those steering its operations. In many contexts, particularly in developing economies, business ownership and success are influenced by cultural, religious, and socio-economic conditions that define access to resources and opportunities. For women-led enterprises, these challenges are often more pronounced. Establishing and maintaining a business requires strong determination, creativity, and risk-taking abilities, yet many women face barriers such as limited access to financial resources, low levels of education and exposure, and societal perceptions that constrain their entrepreneurial activities (Imo & Ekechukwu, 2024). According to Nwakile *et al.* (2024), female farmers in Nigeria constitute a sizeable proportion of the agricultural workforce women make up about 70 % of the workforce in the sector and produce roughly 60 % of the food consumed in Nigeria. Despite this contribution, women often have less access to assets such as land, credit and technologies, creating a gender productivity gap.

Business sustainability, in general, involves balancing short-term profitability with long-term environmental, social, and economic considerations (Nuruzzaman *et al.*, 2023; Biswas, 2022). According to Sambhanthan *et al.* (2017), it represents a structured production process and organizational commitment geared towards achieving sustainable economic, social and

environmental outcomes. Environmental sustainability entails implementing eco-friendly practices such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and adoption of renewable production systems (Roka, 2024; Alex, 2013). Social sustainability emphasizes the ethical and equitable impact of business operations on employees and communities through fair labour practices, diversity promotion and community-development initiatives (De & Chatterjee, 2024). Economic sustainability, however, is particularly crucial for small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs), as it ensures the continuous generation of profit, the ability to meet societal needs, and creation of long-term value for stakeholders (Ubfal, 2024; Ayewumi, 2023; Agoramoorthy *et al.*, 2012). When aligned with gender-sensitive policy, economic sustainability can become a major lever for inclusive growth.

The focus of this study is on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi State, a region where agriculture, especially rice production and marketing, forms a critical part of the local economy. In recent years, the rice business has witnessed increasing participation of women who contribute significantly to local food systems and household income. The emphasis on economic sustainability in this context stems from its vital role in driving long-term business performance through improved revenue generation, customer retention and access to investment opportunities (Jadhav *et al.*, 2024; Malhotra *et al.*, 2024; Shrestha *et al.*, 2024; Shukla & Kumari, 2023). Nonetheless, women-led agribusinesses continue to face significant challenges many of which are rooted in cultural and religious norms that restrict women's mobility, decision-making power and access to business networks (Ogbari *et al.*, 2024). Quadri *et al.* (2024) reinforce the depth of these constraints: for instance, in Nigeria less than 10 % of women own land, and only about 13.2 % of women in agriculture have access to key productive resources (land, loans, bank account) compared to 86.8 % for men.

These barriers limit women's ability to harness entrepreneurial opportunities that could enhance their economic independence and reduce dependency on male family members for livelihood. To mitigate these constraints, Nwakile *et al.* (2024) advocate a multilevel approach that integrates mentorship and networking to foster equal recognition and participation of women in agribusiness. Mentorship, in this regard, serves as a strategic mechanism for linking less experienced entrepreneurs (mentees) with seasoned business actors (mentors) who possess the knowledge, skills and social capital necessary for business growth (Peter & Orser, 2024). Given the critical contribution women already make FAO estimates that women in developing countries produce about 60–80 % of food crops and carry out 60–90 % of rural marketing work.

From this perspective, mentorship is examined through the dual lens of networking and knowledge transfer. Entrepreneurial networking enables mentees to build relationships with mentors, investors, suppliers, and other business actors, thereby expanding their access to critical information, markets and financial opportunities (Afenyo-Agbe *et al.*, 2021). Through effective networking, women-led rice businesses can improve visibility, collaboration and adaptability in a competitive market. Complementarily, knowledge transfer allows mentors to share both explicit (documented) and tacit (experiential) knowledge that helps mentees acquire relevant competencies, decision-making skills and innovative capacities (Kanke, 2023). When these processes are effectively integrated, they can enhance productivity, innovation and ultimately the economic sustainability of women-led enterprises. Considering that gender inequalities in agrifood systems cost over US \$1 trillion globally according to FAO, addressing these internal capacities and external networks becomes not just desirable but essential.

While the role of mentorship and networking in promoting business success has been well documented globally, existing Nigerian literature on this relationship remains limited, particularly in the agricultural and rural enterprise. Most studies have focused on mentorship within academic or institutional settings. For instance, Olaleye *et al.* (2023) and Aghemwenhio

(2024) examined academic mentorship and lecturer performance in tertiary institutions, while Bamishaiye *et al.* (2024) analysed the role of women in enhancing food security and nutrition at the community level. Although these studies provide valuable insights, their contexts differ significantly from the entrepreneurial experiences of women operating in rural agribusiness environments. This gap is underscored by the fact that although women may contribute substantially to production and processing, they often lack decision-making authority, asset ownership and access to extension services—hindering the translation of their labour contributions into sustainable economic returns.

A few studies, such as those by Obinyan (2013), Ejiogu and Akinbode (2020), and Buvinic *et al.* (2020), explored mentorship within women's economic empowerment, offering a closer link to the present study. Building upon such studies, there is a pressing need to extend mentorship research to the domain of women-led agribusinesses, particularly in northern Nigeria, where socio-cultural dynamics shape entrepreneurial engagement.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of networking on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses and to assess the extent to which knowledge transfer influences their long-term viability. Understanding these insight is crucial, as enhanced mentorship networks and effective knowledge dissemination can empower women entrepreneurs to overcome cultural barriers, strengthen business operations, and contribute meaningfully to household income and community development. By situating mentorship within the study, networking and knowledge transfer, this research underscores its potential as a transformative tool for achieving economic resilience and inclusive growth among women entrepreneurs in Kebbi State.

## 2.0 Literature Review

This section reviews relevant literature in the area of economic sustainability and entrepreneurial mentorship. The review covers conceptual, theoretical and empirical issues.

### 2.1 Sustainability

Sustainability is the practice of maintaining processes that do not deplete the resources or harm the environment, ensuring that future generations can meet their own needs. This concept is traditionally built on three interrelated pillars: environmental sustainability, social sustainability, and economic sustainability (Atghia & Nazarian, 2023). Samy *et al.* (2023) confirmed that these pillars form the foundation for sustainable development, aiming to balance ecological health, social equity, and economic growth. While Environmental sustainability focuses on preserving natural resources and ecosystems which involves practices that reduce pollution, conserve biodiversity, and manage resources such as water, energy, and raw materials responsibly, Social sustainability aims to create equitable societies that provide good quality of life for all residents, both now and in the future by promoting social equity, community development, human rights, and access to essential services like education, healthcare, and employment (Ufodike & Ally, 2023).

#### 2.1.1 Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability represents one of the pillars of sustainability that is of interest to this study. Economic sustainability, one among the Triple Bottom Lines (TBLs), perhaps the most attractive and popular dimension of sustainability, is the long-term standpoint of an establishment in terms of financial and marketing measures. Economic sustainability is the ability of an economy to support a defined level of economic production (Atghia and Nazarian, 2023). It involves managing resources in a way that ensures long-term economic health and stability without exhausting natural resources or causing severe ecological damage (Tsuma, 2023). Factors contributing to economic sustainability include strategic management, entrepreneurship, commercialization, financial management, and ownership (Nuruzzaman *et*

al., 2023). Achieving economic sustainability according to Biswas (2022), encompasses key dimensions such as financial stability, profitability and resource efficiency to generate the required output.

Business output which is the economic sustainability of interest refers to the quantity of goods and services produced by a business over a specific period and this measure the financial stability of the business (Roka, 2024). Business output is important because it directly affects a firms' financial performance and viability. According to Ubfal (2024), business output reflects financial stability in multiplicity of ways ranging from revenue generation occasioned by higher output, cost management, reducing waste, and consistent cash flow prompted by sustainable volume of output. In this study, the volume of output in tons produced or sold is used as the measure of sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state. This is due to the fact that the individuals in businesses are more convenient with disclosing their output than reporting profit due to fear of taxation. The second reason for opting for the use of output over profitability is that most of the women are not financially literate to accurately determine their profit as they can in terms of output.

### 2.1.2 Entrepreneurial Mentorship

According to Nwakile *et al.* (2024), the word "Mentor" originally emanated from Greek and is based on mythology where Odysseus before setting out on an epic voyage, entrusted his son, to the care and direction of his old and trusted friend (mentor) thereby marking the first mentoring partnership. Traditionally, mentorship involves a process that brings together the inexperienced and experienced individuals in an attempt to enable the former gain knowledge, self-confidence, skills as the other benefits from the later ( Afenyo-Agbe *et al.*, 2021). This shows that mentorship is a developmentally oriented interpersonal relationship that exists between a more experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced individual (mentee). Mentoring can also be described as a partnership between two people who have different levels of experience. Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to identify and achieve their goals. Similarly, Olaleye *et al.* (2023) defined a mentor as the person that facilitates personal and professional growth of an individual by sharing the knowledge and insight that have been learned through the years.

Mentoring is an informal face-to face communication process, over a predetermined and sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to be less knowledgeable (mentee) and is further argued that effective mentoring is more than a question-and-answer session, but involves various informal methods of sharing information through dialogue, and the development of an ongoing relationship through open learning where the mentor and the mentee face and resolve challenges as a team (Bamishaiye *et al.*, 2024).

### 2.1.3 Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Mentorship

This study used two dimensions entrepreneurial mentorship (Networking and knowledge transfer). The dimensions are reviewed thus.

#### i. Networking

Entrepreneurial networking is the lifeblood of any successful business venture which can be achieved through mentorship programme. It involves helping mentee(s) cultivate a vast network of relationships with fellow entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, industry experts, and potential customers to access vital resources, information, and opportunities (Jadhav *et al.*, 2024). This shows that the intricate web of connections serves as a safety net, providing support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the entrepreneurial journey of the mentee. Effective entrepreneurial networking be likened to gardening where one must plant seeds,

nurture relationships, and harvest opportunities which requires dedication, persistence, and a willingness to help others grow Biswas (2022). This, allows entrepreneurs to tap into the collective knowledge, expertise, and resources of their network, unlocking new avenues for growth, innovation, and success. According to Biswas (2022), Entrepreneurial networking encompasses various aspects which include and not limited to building relationships with fellow entrepreneurs to share experiences, challenges, and best practices; Connecting with investors to secure funding and mentorship; Seeking guidance from seasoned mentors and industry experts; Engaging with potential customers to validate ideas and gather feedback; collaborating with partners and suppliers to drive innovation and efficiency, and Participating in industry events, conferences, and networking groups to stay informed and visible.

## ii. Knowledge Transfer

Another way of fostering the relationship between the mentor and mentee is through knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer is pivotal components that ensure the effectiveness of the mentoring process. Knowledge transfer refers to the process through which mentors convey explicit and tacit knowledge to mentees that enable them to acquire the necessary skills and competencies. It also involves developing the mentee's potential through guidance, feedback, and support. Knowledge transfer in mentoring according to Tsuma (2023), encompasses the dissemination of both explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is codified information that can be easily communicated and documented, such as procedures, manuals, and formal education. This process is particularly crucial in fields that require specialized knowledge and skills, such as entrepreneurship and business management. Effective knowledge transfer and foster self-awareness, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that enable mentees to navigate complex challenges independently. In this instance, Biswas (2022) confirmed that the role of mentors as opportunity brokers, particularly in entrepreneurial settings through a personalized approach in ensuring that mentees receive relevant guidance that enhances their ability to identify and leverage business opportunities.

## 2.2. Theoretical Framework

The social learning theory (SLT) was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1960s drawing on earlier works in behaviorism. Bandura's research emphasized the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1977). He argued that individuals could learn new behaviours and skills by observing others, rather than solely through direct experience and reinforcement. This postulation marked a significant departure from the dominant behaviorist views of the time, which focused on the direct reinforcement as the primary mechanism for learning. Since the introduction of social learning, it has remained a popular approach for explaining skills acquisition in individuals. The theorist emphasized the part played by models in transmitting specific behaviour, attitudes and emotional responses in different circumstances, indicating that there is much more to learn through role modelling than classical or operant conditioning (Ofobruku and Nwakoby, 2015). The theory explains that people learn new behaviour through observational learning, suggesting that if an individual observes pleasant, favourable outcome or consequences in the observed behaviour, they are most likely imitate, and adopt the behaviour themselves (Afenyo-Agbe, *et al.*, 2021). This suggests that, by watching the behaviour of other people, we are capable of learning many behavioural patterns.. The choice of SLT is due to the belief of the theory that individuals could learn new behaviours and skills by observing others, rather than solely through direct experience and reinforcement (Ekpodilè-Domingo, 2024). This type of learning takes place in mentoring relationships where the mentees learn from their mentors through observation, imitation, and modeling. Effective mentors serve as role models, demonstrating behaviors, skills, and attitudes that mentees can observe and emulate. The multiplicity of learning by mentee allows them to deploy knowledge acquired towards uplifting their businesses and other entrepreneurial activities which consequently drive performance and protracted level of sustainability (Afenyo

-Agbe, *et al.*, 2021). The level of sustainability especially in women-led businesses is of challenged in the northern part of the country owing to cultural and religious beliefs. It is therefore expected that when such group of entrepreneurs are properly guided through the social learning theory, they will be properly mentored to take on entrepreneurial engagement without being dissuaded by adverse cultural beliefs thereby making their businesses to thrive and remain sustainable.

### 2.3. Empirical Review

Studies that examined the effect of entrepreneurial mentorship on the sustainability of businesses are reviewed as follows in line with the objectives of the study.

#### i. Networking and Economic Sustainability

Kheiran (2022) examined the effect of entrepreneurial networking on the sustainability of women-led microenterprises on Indonesia using sustainability of microenterprise performance and family wellbeing as measures of sustainability while, entrepreneurial networking was used as the independent variable. Data for the study were collected through questionnaire from the studied organizations and analyzed using ordinary partial least square regression. The result of the study revealed that entrepreneurial networking has significant positive effect on the sustainability of women-led microenterprises. Similarly, Wonseok *et al.* (2022) assessed the effect of entrepreneurial networking on organizational sustainability on 230 sampled public medical institutions. The study utilized organizational sustainability (patient turnover) as the dependent variable while entrepreneurial networking (marketing) was used as the independent variable. The result of the study analyzed through regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial networking and the sustainability of the firms. In the same vein, Jaffar *et al.* (2019) evaluated the effect of entrepreneurial business networks on the sustainable performance of small firms in Pakistan. Entrepreneurial networking was proxied using dynamic capabilities and network size, while sustainability was measured using performance (sales and profit). The result of the data extracted from the firms and analyzed through Smart PLS-SEM showed that networking has a positive and significant effect of the sustainability of the firms. The reviewed studies confirmed jointly that entrepreneurial networking has significant effect on the sustainability of business enterprises.

#### ii. Knowledge Transfer and Economic Sustainability

Cherono *et al.* (2016) examined the influence of mentorship practices through knowledge transfer on employees' performance and job sustainability in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County. Specifically, leadership mentorship and knowledge transfer were used as measures for mentorship while sustainability was measured using employee performance. A cross-sectional survey design was used in the study whereby the respondents were all the employees of the studied firms. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to arrive at conclusions on the relationships between study variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the set hypotheses and construct the model of interest. The study established a significant positive relationship between leadership mentorship, and knowledge transfer and the performance of the employees. Also, Godwin *et al.* (2022) examined mentoring and employees' commitment in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The objective of the study was to examine how dimensions of mentoring such as career support, psychological support, and knowledge sharing influence employee commitment. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of five hundred and fifty (550) staff in selected twenty-two (22) Manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination Table of 1970 was used to obtain a size of 226 respondents. Out of 226 copies of the validated questionnaire distributed, 181 copies were retrieved. Bivariate analysis (test of hypotheses) was done using SPSS Version 22 at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that dimensions of mentoring such as career support,

psychological support, and knowledge sharing are significantly and positively correlated with employees' commitment and performance. There is a consensus from the reviewed studies on the significant effect of knowledge transfer on the economic sustainability of firms.

### 3.0 Methodology

The study utilized quantitative research design using descriptive survey approach. The population of the study consists of 2,476 registered women rice farmers and processors with Kebbi State Women in Agriculture (KSWIA) association. The sample size of the study which was determined through Yamane (1967) formula is 344 women in rice business from production to processing. However, only 325 copies of the questionnaire were duly filled and returned which provide basis for analysis. Data for the study were retrieved through structured questionnaire to elicit information from the sampled respondents. The psychometric properties of the instrument were ascertained through content validity and instrument reliability. While the content validity was confirmed by experts in the academia and in practice, the study conducted pilot study on the 10% of the sampled respondents, and employed Cronbach's alpha to establish the reliability of the instrument. The result revealed a reliability coefficient of 0.85. This implies that the instrument is highly reliable as it has reliability value above the minimum limit of 0.7. Data for the study were analyzed through correction to establish the relation among the variables and confirm the existence or otherwise multi-collinearity and robust OLS regression to establish the effect of entrepreneurial mentorship proxies on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state, Nigeria. The modified model for the study which was adapted from Tyrer (2022) is stated thus;

$$OUTPUT_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NTW_i + \beta_2 KTC_i + e_i$$

$\beta_0$  = constant term

$e_i$ , = error term

$OUTPUT_i$  = Output of individual respondent i

$NTW_i$  = Networking of individual respondent i

$KTC_i$  = Knowledge Transfer of individual respondent i

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results emanating from the study are presented and discussed as follows

### 4.1 Correlation Result

The correlation result of the variables is presented in Table 1

**Table 1. Correlation matrix**

|        | OUTPUT | NTW   | KTC      | VIF  |
|--------|--------|-------|----------|------|
| OUTPUT | 1.000  |       |          |      |
| NTW    | 0.425  | 1.000 |          | 1.04 |
|        |        |       | Mean VIF | 1.11 |

**Source:** Computed using 'Stata' 2025

Table 1 shows the correlation results of the variables as well as the correlation coefficients which show the direction of relationship. The diagonal correlation coefficients of 1.000 show that each variable has a perfect positive linear relationship with itself. For the correlated variables, the result reveals that all the variables are positively correlated with one another. This indicates that the variables move in the same incremental direction.

That is, the output/sales volume increase as the network, knowledge transfer, feedback and meeting frequency increase. On the whole, the correlation coefficients for each variable show absence of multi-collinearity as no correlation coefficient is above the threshold of 0.8 and this was corroborated through the mean Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) which is less than the threshold of 10 (Gujaratti, 2004).

#### 4.2 Regression Results of the Variables

The result of the regression analysis is presented in Table 2

**Table 2: OLS Robust Regression Result**

| Variables      | Coef.    | P-value |
|----------------|----------|---------|
| NTW            | 0.546*** | 0.000   |
| KT             | 0.111**  | 0.052   |
| R <sup>2</sup> | 0.542    |         |
| F-stat         | 12.94    |         |
| P-val.         | 0.000    |         |
| Obs.           | 325      |         |

*Source: Generated from the questionnaire through 'Stata' 2025*

Table 2 shows R<sup>2</sup> of 0.542 for the model which suggests that 54% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. That is the change in the output of the women in rice business in Kebbi state is 54% due to the mentorship proxies such as networking and knowledge transfer. The f-statistics value of 12.94 with the model p-value of 0,000 signifies the fitness of the model. The result also discloses an observation value of 325 which indicates the total number of questionnaire analyzed. The variable coefficients as well as their respective p-values are shown in Table 2. The coefficient marked in asterisk \*\*\* and \*\* denote significant at 1 and 5% respectively.

#### 4.3 Discussion

The result of the regression is hereby discussed, evaluated and linked with previous studies in line with the objectives

##### i. Networking and Economic Sustainability

The result displayed in Table 2 shows that networking in mentorship has positive coefficient of 0.546 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This implies that networking meant to facilitating mentorship has significant positive effect on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state. That is, every enhancement in the mentorship network, translated into about 50% economic sustainability of the women in rice business in Kebbi state. The implication of this finding is that an appreciable network size and quality can stimulate the economic sustainability of women in rice businesses in Kebbi state. Reason for the significant incremental effect of networking of the economic sustainability could be due to the mentees exposure to valuable industry connections, exposure to new opportunities, and access to key decision-makers. It could also be due to the provision of market insights, secured partnerships, and access to resources that helped to build economic sustainability. The finding that networking within mentorship significantly enhances the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi State aligns with Kheiran (2022) emphasized that mentorship networks serve as strategic social capital structures that connect entrepreneurs to valuable resources, knowledge, and

opportunities, thereby improving business performance and resilience. Similarly, Odunayo (2022) found that mentorship components such as networking, apprenticeship, and coaching have a significant positive relationship with the productivity and profitability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. In the same vein, Wonseok *et al.* (2022) argued that entrepreneurial networking provides access to market intelligence, institutional support, and industry linkages that are critical to sustaining competitive advantage in dynamic business environments.

### **Knowledge Transfer and Economic Sustainability**

Table 2 reveals that knowledge transfer in mentorship has a coefficient of 0.111 ( $p = 0.052$ ) in relation to economic sustainability. The finding indicates that every knowledge transfer by the mentor to mentee led to about 11% increase in the economic sustainability of the women in rice businesses in Kebbi state. This implies that the

sampled women-led rice businesses have enjoyed effective mentorship that facilitated knowledge transfer that enabled them (mentees) to acquire industry-specific skills, problem-solving techniques, and strategic insights from experienced professionals. This exchange of knowledge reduces the learning curve, fosters innovation, and enhances decision-making, leading to higher efficiency and improved the economic sustainability of the women in rice businesses in Kebbi state. This finding is in alignment with Godwin *et al.* (2022) who found that knowledge-sharing relationships between mentors and mentees significantly contribute to entrepreneurial innovation, productivity, and long-term business growth, particularly in women-owned enterprises.

### **5.0 Conclusion and recommendations**

This study investigated the effect entrepreneurial mentorship on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state, Nigeria. The study found that entrepreneurial networking and knowledge transfer have significant positive effect on the economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state. In view of the findings of this study, the study attributes the significant and positive effect of entrepreneurial networking on economic sustainability to a well secured web of partnerships between the mentors and mentees that provides access to resources, exposure to new opportunities, industry connection and entrepreneurial information that helped to spur the economic sustainability of the women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state. Similarly, the significant positive effect of knowledge transfer on economic sustainability could be the resultant effect of effective mentorship that facilitated special skill transfer that enabled mentees to acquire industry-specific and problem-solving techniques as well as achieving higher efficiency to address the challenges of rice businesses hitherto faced by women in this line of businesses. It is concluded therefore, that entrepreneurial mentorship has incremental effect on the economic sustainability of women in rice businesses in Kebbi state, Nigeria.

Following the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations have been proffered.

- i. The existing size and composition of the entrepreneurial networking of the mentor-mentee relationship should be consolidated upon to continue to drive economic sustainability of women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state. To achieve this, a strategic network partnership must be built between the mentors and mentees. This will ensure that the mentees within network are knowledgeable about rice business to enable them provide the mentees with access to resources, exposure to new opportunities, industry

connection and entrepreneurial information that can spur the economic sustainability of the mentees (women-led rice businesses in Kebbi state).

- ii. Given the significant positive effect of knowledge transfer on economic sustainability, it is recommended that the mentors should engage in continuous learning to upgrade their skills in order to transfer same to the mentees to sharpen their skill-set in terms of industry-specific and problem-solving techniques to achieve greater economic sustainability.

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