



## BUSINESS MENTORSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS: A STUDY OF SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Small-scale enterprises in Nigeria have been recognized to often rely on business mentorship to boost performance. Yet, the extent to which aspects such as mentorship engagement level, quality of guidance and access to mentorship network contributes to entrepreneurial success remained underexplored. This leads the current study to purposely examine the effect of business mentorship on entrepreneurial success of 100 small-scale enterprises owners in Ilorin Metropolis using structured questionnaire with a descriptive survey design. Analyzing the data using regression in SPSS Version 25, the results revealed that mentorship engagement level significantly enhanced business growth rate. Also, mentor guidance quality significantly improved business sustainability, and likewise access to a mentor's network had a partial effect on profitability. The study concludes that active engagement, high-quality guidance, and strategic network access are good drivers of entrepreneurial success. Hence, the study recommends small-scale enterprise owners to promote structured mentorship programs that emphasize regular interaction, clear guidance, and targeted networking opportunities to their mentees to maximize business outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Business mentorship, entrepreneurial success, sustainability, profitability

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship and small-scale enterprises have been globally recognized as major drivers of local economy, job creation, innovative driven, and poverty reduction, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria (Olawale & Garwe, 2021). However, the growth rate, sustainability and profitability of a successful entrepreneur is facing a serious challenge as many are collapsing within the first few years of operation. This challenge is mostly attributed to inadequate managerial skills, funding constraints, insufficient market knowledge, and poor strategic planning. In response to this challenge is the emergence of business mentorship which involves guidance and support provided by an experienced entrepreneur or business professional to a less experienced entrepreneur or small business owner (Kuratko, 2022). Such support is particularly



important in developing economies where formal business training and access to capital may be limited (Ukanwa et al., 2020). The benefits of business mentorship may be numerous to mention, because it does not only provide practical knowledge and problem-solving strategies but also boosts the confidence and decision-making capacity of the mentee. In fact, through personalized advice, encouragement, and constructive feedback, mentors help entrepreneurs avoid costly mistakes, identify opportunities, and build resilience in the face of challenges. Besides, mentors serve as connectors that link mentees to broader business networks, potential investors, and industry-specific resources.

Hypothetically, business growth is strongly linked to mentorship engagement levels which is the extent to which a business increases its branches, number of products as well as market share among others. This may not be possible without business sustainability, which depends heavily on the quality of mentorship guidance, especially in the current unstable economic situation. Besides profitability is also necessary to determining the success of entrepreneurial as it is often influenced by access to a mentor's business network. Through these networks, as Bello and Hassan (2023) demonstrate, entrepreneurs gain exposure to potential clients, suppliers, investors, and collaborative opportunities that can significantly increase revenue.

To empirically substantiate these hypothetical benefits, studies have demonstrated the positive outcomes of mentorship on businesses. Yani et al. (2024) for instance, found that mentorship stimulates the growth and success of entrepreneurial business, while Soegiarto et al. (2024) and Brimah (2020) established its impacts on overall business performance. Sulandjari (2023) further revealed that business mentorship is positively related to growth and startup success. Although Njoku and Shaibu (2023) observed that the approaches used by SMEs do not differ significantly, the consensus across these studies points to mentorship as critical success factor. However, none of these have specifically examined its impact on business success in the Ilorin metropolis.

Ilorin metropolis that is a fast-growing commercial center in Kwara State, with small businesses facing problems of poor infrastructure, strict government regulations, little access to training and modern technology coupled with limited business connections, despite housing many small businesses, like retail, food services, manufacturing, and creative industries, business mentorship becomes fundamentally important, as it can close the knowledge gap and encourage new ways to



keep businesses growing. This increasing recognition of mentorship as a key factor in entrepreneurial success aligns with global entrepreneurship development strategies which leads this current study to empirically investigate the effect of business mentorship dimensions such as mentorship engagement, quality of guidance, and access to networks on the overall entrepreneurship success in Ilorin metropolis.

### ***Objectives of the study***

The general objective of this study was to examine the impact of business mentorship on entrepreneurial success small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.

The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the influence of mentorship engagement level on the business growth rate of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.
2. examine the effect of the quality of mentor guidance on business sustainability of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.
3. Determine effect of access to a mentor's network on the profitability of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.

### ***Hypotheses of the Study***

**Ho<sup>1</sup>:** Mentorship engagement level has no significant effect on growth rate of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.

**Ho<sup>2</sup>:** Quality of mentor guidance has no significant effect on business sustainability of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.

**Ho<sup>3</sup>:** Access to mentor's network has no significant effect on profitability of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Business mentorship***

Different researchers have approached mentorship by describing who a mentor is. By so doing, Ayegba and Anasi (2023), attributed a mentor to a person that is committed to use his/her accumulated wealth of knowledge in facilitating the process of personal and professional growth of another with less experience. This definition is corroborated by that of Arogundade (2020)



who stress the transfer of superior experience, knowledge, skills, and status as the main essence of mentorship process. In addition to the previous perspectives, Institute of Business Advisors South Africa [IBA](2001), offers a unique approach to define mentoring as a continuous, long-term business advisory relationship between an experienced advisor and a client, by addressing a wide range of business matters as the enterprise grows. However, a cross examination of these definitions guides this study to generally define mentorship as a continuous, long-term developmental relationship between an experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced person (mentee), characterized by the committed transfer of accumulated knowledge, skills, experience, and insights to facilitate the mentee's personal and professional growth. This relationship involves ongoing guidance and advisory support that addresses a wide range of developmental needs and challenges as the mentee progresses in their career or enterprise.

### ***Entrepreneurial Success***

Entrepreneurial success is commonly described from two common perspectives: outcome-based and context-dependent. The outcome-based perspective attributes success to sustained growth in both financial and non-financial indicators. These includes quantitative measures such as personal income, wealth creation, company sustainability, and employee growth, as well as subjective dimensions such as company satisfaction, quality of life, and personal value fulfillment (Hu et al., 2022). The context-dependent perspective identifies three critical factors: positioning (competitive position relative to market competitors), expectations (fulfillment of the entrepreneur's predefined goals and satisfaction levels), and evolution (developmental trends in business metrics and market conditions). Success is then classified into three levels-success, survival, or failure-based on both objective performance data and entrepreneur's subjective assessments (Chaves-Maza & Fedriani, 2022). Drawing from these definitions, entrepreneurial success is a complex and multidimensional construct that cannot be adequately captured by single metrics, but rather requires consideration of both objective performance measures and subjective entrepreneur perceptions within their specific contexts. Objectively, this study measures entrepreneurship success using business growth rate, business sustainability, and profitability as deemed fit.



### ***Mentorship Engagement Level and entrepreneur Business Growth Rate***

The level of engagement between a mentor and mentee is a critical determinant of the extent to which knowledge, skills, and attitudes are transferred, thereby influencing the growth rate of entrepreneurial ventures. A high level of engagement often involves frequent interactions, structured learning sessions, and the continuous exchange of ideas between the mentor and the entrepreneur. According to Eesley and Wang (2017), entrepreneurs who engage more actively with their mentors are more likely to develop the competencies required for scaling their businesses and responding effectively to market dynamics. In the context of small-scale businesses in Ilorin Metropolis, where competition and resource constraints are prevalent, the intensity and regularity of mentorship sessions can help entrepreneurs make better decisions and pursue growth opportunities more confidently.

### ***Quality of Mentor Guidance and Business Sustainability***

The quality of guidance provided by a mentor is essential to long-term sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. Quality mentorship involves providing relevant, timely, and actionable advice tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by the mentee. In the Nigerian context, where small-scale businesses often struggle with limited access to formal business education and resources, high-quality guidance serves as a critical substitute for formal managerial training (Olawale & Garwe, 2021). This accounts for reasons why mentors who possess deep industry knowledge, experience, and problem-solving abilities are better positioned to help entrepreneurs anticipate risks, make informed decisions, and sustain operations over time. In addition, a high-quality guidance also covers mentor's ability to provide honest feedback and constructive criticism. Such feedback mechanisms encourage entrepreneurs to evaluate their business processes objectively, identify weaknesses, and implement corrective measures promptly. As highlighted by Allen et al. (2020), constructive criticism does not only enhance performance but also cultivates a culture of continuous improvement, which is essential for sustainable business operations.



### *Access to a Mentor's Network and Profitability of Entrepreneurial Ventures*

Access to a mentor's network is one of the most valuable yet underexplored benefits of business mentorship. A mentor's professional and social network can provide mentees with access to potential clients, suppliers, investors, and industry influencers, all of which can directly or indirectly boost profitability. According to Elston and Audretsch (2021), network-based opportunities often lead to strategic partnerships that open new revenue streams, expand market reach, and enhance credibility in the eyes of stakeholders. In Ilorin Metropolis, where market penetration for small-scale businesses can be challenging, such access could provide entrepreneurs with a competitive advantage that accelerates revenue growth.

Besides, mentor networks also facilitate access to scarce resources, including financial capital, technical expertise, and marketing platforms. For small businesses that typically operate with limited budgets, these connections can substitute for otherwise costly market entry strategies. By leveraging a mentor's network, entrepreneurs can negotiate better supply deals, enter exclusive trade fairs, and secure lucrative contracts that might be unattainable without such referrals. This aligns with Burt's (1992) theory of structural holes, which emphasizes that individuals with broader networks can connect others to unique opportunities, thereby increasing economic returns.

### **Theoretical Framework**

***Social Learning Theory:*** Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura in the year 2010, assumed that people learn by observing others, especially individuals they perceive as role models. This theory is relevant to mentorship because mentees often learn entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, and problem-solving strategies by closely observing and interacting with experienced mentors. Unlike purely cognitive learning, social learning involves modeling behaviors, imitating successful practices, and integrating them into one's personal approach to business. In the context of this study, the theory explains how a mentee can acquire not only a technical knowledge but also soft skills such as negotiation, conflict resolution, and customer relationship management simply by observing, imitating and reinforcing a mentor in real business situations. Observational learning allows mentees to personally see how theoretical business principles are applied in practice. This practical exposure is critical in environment like Ilorin, where textbook



knowledge alone may not address the realities of the local market. Reinforcement in learning as another factor emphasizes in the theory suggests that there is every tendency that a behaviour would be repeated when mentees successfully apply strategies learned from mentors and achieve positive outcomes. By so doing, mentors serve as both guides and sources of positive reinforcement, validating the mentee's progress and encouraging continuous improvement. Consequently, this reinforcement cycle would strengthen the mentee's self-confidence and decision-making capabilities.

Another important dimension of the theory is the interaction between cognitive, environmental, and behavioral factors, referred to as reciprocal determinism. In a mentorship relationship, the mentee's mindset (cognition), the mentor's guidance (environment), and the mentee's business actions (behavior) interact continuously, influencing each other. This dynamic explains why mentorship is not just about transferring knowledge but also about creating an enabling environment where new behaviors can flourish.

***Human Capital Theory:*** Human Capital Theory, advanced by Gary Becker (2013), posits that investments in individuals through education, training, and skills development enhance productivity and economic value. In the mentorship context, the time, resources, and expertise a mentor provides can be viewed as a form of human capital investment in the mentee. This investment increases the mentee's capacity to operate more efficiently, make informed decisions, and compete effectively in the marketplace. One of the core assumptions of the theory is that the benefits of human capital accumulation are not immediate but accrue over time. For small-scale business owners in Ilorin, mentorship may initially require significant commitment, such as attending training sessions, revising business plans, or implementing new operational procedures. However, the long-term benefits such as improved profitability, expanded customer base, and sustainable growth often outweigh the initial investment of time and effort.

In addition, the theory also emphasizes the role of tacit knowledge skills and know-how that are difficult to codify but are acquired through experience. Mentorship provides an avenue for transferring such tacit knowledge from experienced entrepreneurs to novices. For example, a mentor might share insights on navigating local regulatory processes or managing supplier relationships, knowledge that is not readily available in textbooks or online resources. Besides,



the theory underscores that personal attributes such as motivation, work ethic, and adaptability form part of an individual's capital. Through regular interaction, mentors can influence these attributes in mentees, instilling a growth-oriented mindset and resilience in the face of challenges. This aspect is particularly critical in volatile business environments where adaptability often determines survival.

### **Empirical Review**

This section reviews empirical studies to provide concrete evidence on whether the current research is still needed. Among the studies examined is the work of Yani et al. (2024) who employed a literature review approach, analyzing articles from 2013 to 2023 on Google Scholar to examine the role of mentorship in stimulating the growth and success of entrepreneurial businesses. Their findings indicated that mentorship plays highly positive and significant role in fostering entrepreneurial growth and success. Although, the study used a systematic approach and identified key benefits of mentorship such as practical advice, inspiration, holistic perspectives, and emotional support, it has methodological limitations. Specifically, the authors failed to report the number of articles deemed valid for review, thereby limiting the generalizability of their findings. This gap underscores the need for empirical investigation within a specific context, such as the present study.

In another view, Soegiarto et al. (2024) used regression analysis in SPSS to analyse 200 responses obtained from employees and managers of different Indonesian companies when investigating the effects of leadership development programmes, mentorship, and employee empowerment on organizational performance. The analysis indicated that all three factors had positive and significant impacts on organizational performance. Despite the study's methodological robustness, examining all the identified variables across different economic sectors simultaneously may reduce the reliability of the findings, as each sector operates differently. This limitation underscores the need for the current study.

In Nigeria, Njoku and Shaibu (2023) adopted a descriptive survey design and analysed data from 356 entrepreneurs using a z-test to examine entrepreneurs' mentoring strategies and approaches for improved business performance in Imo State. Their findings suggested no significant



difference in the strategies and approaches used by the entrepreneurs in Imo State. Methodologically, the study failed to achieve its objective due to its use of z-test, which could provide neither the effect nor the relationship between the mentorship strategies and approaches considered and improved business performance. Additionally, the outcomes valid in Owerri may not hold in other local government areas within the state, given the differences in location and other contextual factors. Therefore, replication of this study is needed to produce more robust results and enhance generalizability.

In Indonesia, Sulandjari (2023) adopted a quantitative research design using structural equation modeling (SEM-PLS) to analyse responses from 120 startups when investigating the dynamic relationship between entrepreneurial skills, business mentoring, and startup growth and success in West Java. The findings suggested that entrepreneurial skills and business mentoring were positively and significantly related to both startup growth and success. The primary limitation of this study is its confinement to West Java, Indonesia as the result may not be valid when examined in other locations or sectors of the country. Hence, further studies are needed to enhance the generalizability of these findings.

In Nigeria, Brimah et al. (2020) conducted a cross sectional descriptive survey examining the effect of entrepreneurial mentoring on the performance of 82 SMEs in Kwara State. Using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to analyse data collected via structured questionnaire, their findings suggested that all categories of mentorship examined - psychosocial mentoring support, career mentoring support and role modelling-were significantly related to SME performance. While the study's strength lies in its inclusion of different mentorship categories across local governments in Kwara Central, it has several methodologically weaknesses. First, it failed to clearly identify the respondent categories and employed a small sample size. Second, although the authors claimed to use interview, they did not present any interview results. Third, reporting only ANOVA results without regression is insufficient as it does not reveal the actual contribution of each mentorship category to performance. These limitations may compromise the validity of the study's findings, thereby necessitating replication.



### Research Gaps

This section summarizes the similarities and differences between the reviewed studies and the current to show gaps in the body of knowledge for the study. To start with the, the current study shares several commonalities with the reviewed literature. Like Soegiarto et al. (2024), Brimah et al. (2020), and Sulandjari (2023), it adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between mentorship and business performance. Similar to Njoku and Shaibu (2023) and Brimah et al. (2020), the current study focuses on the Nigerian context, specifically examining small-scale enterprises. Additionally, like Yani et al. (2024), Soegiarto et al. (2024), and Sulandjari (2023), the study acknowledges the positive contribution of mentorship to entrepreneurial success and business performance.

Despite these similarities, the current study addresses several critical gaps in the existing literature. First, while Yani et al. (2024) conducted a general literature review without empirical validation in a specific context, the current study provides empirical evidence from small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis. Second, unlike Soegiarto et al. (2024) who examined mentorship alongside other variables across multiple sectors, the current study focuses specifically on business mentorship dimensions within a single sector, thereby enhancing reliability and contextual relevance.

Third, whereas Njoku and Shaibu (2023) used a z-test that could not establish the effect or relationship between mentorship strategies and business performance, the current study employs regression analysis to reveal the actual contribution of each mentorship dimension to entrepreneurial success. Fourth, while Brimah et al. (2020) examined general mentorship categories without specifying their individual contributions, the current study distinctly measures three specific dimensions: mentorship engagement level, mentor guidance quality, and access to mentor's network, providing clearer insights into how each affects different success outcomes (business growth rate, sustainability, and profitability).

Fifth, unlike Sulandjari (2023) whose findings were confined to West Java, Indonesia, the current study extends the geographical scope by examining Nigerian small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis, thereby enriching cross-cultural understanding of mentorship effectiveness.



Finally, none of the reviewed studies simultaneously examined the differential effects of mentorship engagement level, guidance quality, and network access on distinct entrepreneurial success indicators, which represents a unique contribution of the current study. These gaps collectively underscore the necessity and originality of the present research.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive survey research design to investigate the role of business mentorship in enhancing entrepreneurial success among small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis. This design is appropriate because it enables the collection of quantifiable data from a sample of entrepreneurs in the target area through a structured questionnaire (Singh, 2023). The small-scale enterprises selected in Ilorin metropolis include those in retail trade, manufacturing, services, and agriculture, as all these sectors require mentorship for entrepreneurial success. The study population comprises 134 small-scale enterprise owners and operators who share common characteristics in terms of capital investment, number of employees, and geographical location. To select a sample from this population, the study applied Taro Yamane’s (1967) sample size determination formula as demonstrated below, to arrive at a sample size of 100:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}, \text{ Where: } n = \text{sample size, } N = \text{population (134), } e = \text{margin of error (5\%)}$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2} = \frac{134}{1+134(0.05)^2} = \frac{134}{1+134(0.0025)} = \frac{134}{1+0.335} = \frac{134}{1.335} = 100$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is approximately 100 respondents.

To select the sampled respondents appropriately, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. The population was divided into relevant strata based on business sector classifications, and samples were then proportionally selected from each stratum. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was further used to select individual respondents, ensuring equal probability of selection and minimizing sampling bias.

A structure questionnaire developed based on the research objectives was the primary instrument for data collection from owners and operators of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis. Secondary data for identifying trends in the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between business mentorship and entrepreneurial success were obtained through a review of existing literature and relevant online materials.



The research instrument was validated seeking by seeking expert opinions from academic and experienced entrepreneurs who understood the local business environment. Their feedback confirmed that the questionnaire items were clear, relevant, and appropriate for the target respondents. The reliability (internal consistency) of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, which exceed the threshold of 0.7. Data analysis was conducted using regression analysis in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

H01: Mentorship engagement level has no significant effect on small-scale enterprises’ growth.

Table 1: Regression coefficients of mentorship engagement measures on small-scale enterprises’ growth

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.068	.078		-.864	.390
	Freq_ Interaction	.396	.088	.415	4.495	.000
	Commit2_ schedule	.345	.084	.311	4.117	.000
	Level_of Parti	.257	.099	.269	2.602	.011

a. Dependent Variable: Bus\_growth  
R=.635<sup>a</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>=.403, DW=.553, F=1038.307, Sig=.000<sup>b</sup>

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 1 presents the results of a multiple linear regression analysis showing that mentorship engagement (as measured by frequency of interaction, commitment to schedule, and level of participation) was positively and significantly associated with business growth. Without mentorship engagement, the growth of small-scale enterprises declines by 0.068 units, though this is not significant at p=0.390. With the adoption of mentorship engagement measures, the growth of small-scale enterprises is significantly improved at p<0.05, most specifically with frequent interaction bringing a 0.396-unit of change, commitment to schedule generating a 0.345-unit change, and level of participation showing a 0.257-unit change. These measures jointly accounted for 40.3% of the variation in business growth, which is significant at p<0,05; the remaining 59.7% was attributed to exogenous factors. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that mentorship engagement level has a significant effect on small-scale enterprises’ growth.

H02: Quality of mentor guidance has no significant effect on small-scale enterprises’ sustainability.



**Table 2:** Regression coefficients of mentor guidance measures on small-scale enterprise sustainability

Model		Unstandardized		Std	t	Sig.
		Coefficients				
		$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.022	.052		.422	.674
	Relevance_of_Advice	.238	.105	.235	2.280	.025
	Clarity_of_Communication	.397	.087	.395	4.555	.000
	Problem_solving_Support	.350	.077	.366	4.568	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Business\_sustainability  
R=.658<sup>a</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>=.433, DW=.707, F=1460.755, Sig=.000<sup>b</sup>

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 2 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis of quality mentor guidance measures (relevance of advice, clarity of communication, and problem-solving support) on business sustainability. Without the inclusion of these measures, small-scale enterprises' sustainability would remain at 0.022, though this is not significant at  $p=0.674$ . With the inclusion of quality mentor guidance measures, their sustainability is significantly improved at  $p<0.05$ . Specifically, relevance of advice stimulates a 0.238-unit change, clarity of communication generates a 0.397-unit change, and problem-solving support produces a 0.35-unit change. These measures jointly accounted for 43.3% of the variation in business sustainability, while the remaining 56.7% was accounted for by other exogenous factors. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that quality of mentor guidance has a significant effect on small-scale enterprises' sustainability.

**H<sub>0</sub>**: Access to a mentor's network has no significant effect on small-scale enterprises' profitability.

**Table 3:** Regression coefficients of mentor's network measures on small-scale enterprises' profitability.

Model		Unstandardized		Std	t	Sig.
		Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.091	.066		1.376	.172
	Intro. to_new_Contacts	.274	.124	.265	2.211	.029
	Opportunities_Provided	.690	.129	.695	5.328	.000
	Follow_up_Connections	.028	.104	.027	0.271	.787

a. Dependent Variable: Profitability  
R=.484<sup>a</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>=.234, DW=.620, F=985.145, Sig=.000<sup>b</sup>

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 3 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis of access to mentor network measures (introduction to new contacts, opportunities provided, and follow-up connections) on small-scale enterprises' profitability. Without mentor network measures, small-scale enterprises'



profitability is at 0.091, though this is not significant. With the introduction of these measures, profitability improves significantly at  $p < 0.05$ . Specifically, introduction to new contacts and opportunities provided significantly generated 0.274-unit and 0.690-unit changes respectively, while follow-up connections generated an insignificant 0.028-unit change. These measures accounted for 23.4% of the variation in profitability, while the remaining 76.6% was accounted for by other exogenous factors not captured in the study. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that access to a mentor's network has a significant effect on small-scale enterprises' profitability.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To achieve objective one, a hypothesis was tested. The findings revealed that mentorship engagement level has a significant effect on small-scale enterprises' growth. This outcome is consistent with that of Adeoye and Elegunde (2023), who proved that structured mentorship programs improve managerial competencies and market adaptability, leading to business expansion. It is also in line with the findings of Kamau and Wanjohi (2022), who found that active mentorship engagement fosters business innovation and customer retention, echoing the current findings.

Objective two was also tested through the second hypothesis. The findings suggested that quality of mentor guidance significantly influences business sustainability. This outcome is consistent with that of Owusu and Mensah (2021), who highlighted the importance of sector-aligned mentor expertise, which likely enhances the clarity and relevance of advice, thus promoting sustainability. Objective three was achieved through the test of the third hypothesis. The findings showed that all measures of access to mentorship network, except follow-up connections, significantly influence profitability. This finding resonates with that of Jones et al. (2022) who noted that access to professional networks enhances revenue growth and market integration among immigrant entrepreneurs in developed contexts.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study examined the effect of business mentorship on the entrepreneurial success of small-scale enterprises through three key dimensions: mentorship engagement level, quality of mentor



guidance, and access to mentor networks. The findings revealed that mentorship engagement level, measured by frequency of interaction, commitment to schedule, and level of participation, has a significant positive effect on business growth. Quality of mentor guidance, encompassing relevance of advice, clarity of communication, and problem-solving support, significantly influences business sustainability. Access to mentor networks, particularly through introduction to new contacts and opportunities provided, significantly affects profitability, though follow-up connections showed no significant impact. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that mentorship plays a crucial role in enhancing the entrepreneurial success of small-scale enterprises in Ilorin metropolis.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that mentorship is a critical determinant of small-scale entrepreneurial success. The significant positive relationships established between mentorship engagement and business growth, quality of mentor guidance and business sustainability, and access to mentor networks and profitability underscore the multifaceted benefits of structured mentorship interventions. These findings suggest that small-scale enterprises that actively engage with mentors, receive high-quality guidance, and leverage mentor networks are better positioned to achieve sustainable growth and enhanced profitability. However, the substantial proportion of unexplained variance in each model indicates that other factors beyond mentorship also contribute to enterprise success, warranting further investigation. The consistency of these findings with existing literature reinforces the imperative for policymakers, business support organizations, and enterprise owners to prioritize mentorship as a strategic tool for fostering small-scale enterprise development and competitiveness.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:



1. Small-scale enterprise owners in Ilorin metropolis should actively seek and engage with mentors who possess relevant industry experience and expertise to maximize the benefits of mentorship on business growth and sustainability.
2. Business support organizations and entrepreneurship development agencies in Ilorin metropolis should establish structured mentorship programs that emphasize frequent interaction, clear communication, and practical problem-solving support tailored to the specific needs of small-scale enterprises.
3. Business mentors in Ilorin metropolis should prioritize the quality of their guidance by ensuring that advice given is relevant to the mentee's business context, communication is clear and actionable, and problem-solving support addresses real operational challenges.
4. Kwara State Government and private sector stakeholders in the state should facilitate platforms that enable small-scale entrepreneurs to access professional networks through their mentors, particularly focusing on introductions to new contacts and creating meaningful business opportunities.
5. Mentorship programs should incorporate mechanisms for regular follow-up connections, as this study found this dimension to be insignificant, suggesting a need for improved strategies to make follow-up interactions more impactful on enterprise profitability.
6. Researchers should conduct further studies to identify and examine the exogenous factors that account for the unexplained variance in business growth, sustainability, and profitability to provide a more comprehensive understanding of small-scale enterprise performance.

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