


# Chapter 3

## Effectiveness of Peer Mentoring Programs in Enhancing Students' Mental Well-Being

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the impact of peer mentoring programs on undergraduate students' mental well-being and academic outcomes. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from undergraduate students ( $N = 25$ ) and analyzed through ANOVA and regression analysis using JAMOVI. Key variables included positive and negative affect, stress, autonomy, coping strategies, resilience, and academic confidence. The reliability of the scale was strong (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.866$ ). Regression analysis showed that coping strategies significantly predicted academic confidence ( $\beta = 0.753$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ), while peer mentoring had a modest, non-significant effect ( $\beta = -0.390$ ,  $p = 0.191$ ). Factor analysis indicated high loadings for variables like negative affect (0.926) and relationship satisfaction (0.856). The findings suggest that while peer mentoring may not directly predict all outcomes, it contributes positively to emotional and academic resilience. Institutions should consider structured peer mentoring as a viable tool to enhance students' psychological and academic adjustment.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The impact of peer mentoring initiatives on student psychological well-being has become a critical area of investigation within the landscape of higher education. Recognizing the multifaceted challenges students encounter, including academic demands, social adjustments, and personal adversities, peer mentoring provides a structured support system designed to cultivate emotional resilience, mitigate feelings of isolation, and promote positive mental health outcomes. Distinct from conventional support models, peer mentoring establishes a relatable and empathetic environment wherein students can articulate their concerns, cultivate trust, and develop effective coping strategies through facilitated interactions with trained peer mentors. Empirical evidence suggests that these programs contribute to significant improvements in psychological metrics, including enhanced positive affect, diminished stress and anxiety levels, and increased relational satisfaction, thereby positively influencing students' overall well-being and academic engagement.

### Mental health challenges in academia

The escalating prevalence of mental health difficulties within academic environments, particularly in higher education, has become a pressing global issue. The transition to university life introduces students to a complex interplay of academic, social, emotional, and financial pressures, often with profound consequences for their psychological well-being (López-Sánchez et al., 2022). While designed to cultivate intellectual and personal growth, the university setting can, unfortunately, become a breeding ground for excessive strain, unattainable standards, and emotional depletion. Numerous global and national surveys corroborate the increasing incidence of mental health challenges among students. We're seeing a rise in anxiety disorders, depression, academic-related stress, performance anxieties, emotional burnout, and diminished self-worth, and tragically, in some cases, suicidal thoughts. These issues not only undermine a student's personal well-being but also significantly impede their academic performance (Chigwedere et al., 2021; Westerhof & Keyes, 2010).

Anxiety and depression are consistently identified as the most prevalent mental health challenges among students. Performance anxieties, fears of failure, and the looming pressure of future career prospects often fuel anxiety (Chigwedere et al., 2021). Conversely, depression can emerge from a confluence of factors, including sustained stress, social isolation, insufficient support networks, unresolved personal struggles, and a sense of alienation from the academic community. Students grappling with these disorders frequently report persistent fatigue, impaired concentration, diminished motivation, heightened irritability, disrupted sleep patterns, and an enduring sense of sadness or emptiness. Unfortunately, these symptoms are often dismissed or normalized within academic settings, leading to significant delays in help-seeking behaviors. Stress, another critical concern, arises from the cumulative weight of demanding coursework, frequent assessments, project deadlines, peer comparison, and parental expectations. When left unchecked, this stress can evolve into chronic anxiety, academic burnout, or depression. Burnout, in particular, is a serious condition characterized by emotional exhaustion and a profound detachment from academic pursuits, ultimately undermining both academic performance and satisfaction (Rincón Uribe et al., 2022).

The repercussions of mental health struggles on academic performance are significant and undeniable. Students facing psychological distress are at a heightened risk of absenteeism, delayed submissions, diminished exam performance, and even course withdrawal. Memory, decision-making, time man-

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