REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56131

Title: Peer mentorship, wellbeing and academic performance of nursing students: a single-center prospective study in an eastern Nigeria federal institution

Recommendation:
Accept after major revision ………………

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Lastri Wahyuni Manurung

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Reviewer Comments

Overall Evaluation

This manuscript explores an important topic—the role of peer mentorship in improving academic performance and psychological wellbeing among nursing students in a resource-constrained context. The study addresses a relevant educational issue and applies a prospective design, which is a strength. However, several methodological, analytical, and presentation issues need to be addressed before the manuscript can be considered for publication.

Major Comments

1. Study novelty and theoretical positioning

- **Lines 82–88, 89–94**
  The authors state that empirical evidence is limited, but the novelty of this specific study remains insufficiently justified. The introduction should more clearly explain what is *new* compared with prior mentorship studies (e.g., contextual novelty, methodological improvement, or theoretical contribution).
  Suggestion: Add a concise paragraph explicitly stating the research gap and how this study advances existing knowledge.

2. Methodological clarity and design limitations

- **Lines 108–114, 121–125**
  The study compares a mentored cohort with previous cohorts instead of a concurrent control

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group. This introduces potential confounding variables (curriculum changes, exam difficulty differences, institutional changes).

Concern: Causal claims such as "effect of mentorship" may be overstated.

Suggestion: Clearly acknowledge this limitation and soften causal language throughout the manuscript (e.g., "associated with" rather than "effect").

- **Lines 131–138**
  The intervention description lacks sufficient detail (duration, frequency of meetings, training of mentors, and monitoring procedures). Without this, replication is difficult.
  Suggestion: Include:
    A. mentorship duration (weeks/months),
    B. frequency and format of meetings,
    C. mentor training process,
    D. supervision mechanisms.

3. Sample size inconsistency

- **Lines 169–172**
  The psychological well-being analysis includes 93 participants, while the academic performance analysis includes 108 students. This discrepancy is not clearly explained.
  Suggestion: Clarify whether the additional 15 students were excluded only from wellbeing measures and explain reasons (missing data, attrition, etc.).

4. Statistical reporting issues

- **Lines 178–183**
  The reported mean difference for anxiety appears inconsistent with the presented means (8.08 vs 7.34 should yield a difference of 0.74, not 0.60).
  Suggestion: Recheck calculations and ensure consistency across tables and text.
- **Lines 155–160**
  Independent-samples t-tests are used to compare different cohorts across academic years. This ignores possible cohort-level variation.
  Suggestion: Consider discussing why other analyses (e.g., ANCOVA or regression controlling for cohort effects) were not employed.
- **Lines 211–214**
  Report exact p-values instead of mixed reporting ("< .001" and ".001") for consistency.

5. Interpretation of increased stress

- **Lines 251–258**
  The explanation that mentorship increased awareness and, therefore, stress is speculative.
  Suggestion: Present this as a hypothesis rather than a conclusion and support it with literature or qualitative insights if available.

6. Missing limitations section

- **Lines 279–297 (Conclusion)**
  A clear, separate limitation section is missing. Major limitations should include:
    A. single-centre design,
    B. non-randomized comparison,

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    C. historical control group,
    D. reliance on self-report instruments,
    E. potential confounders.

Minor Comments

1. Language and grammar

- **Line 152:** "Data wereanalysed" → spacing error.
- **Line 159:** "Independent-samplest-tests" → typo.
- Several spacing inconsistencies around p-values (e.g., "p< .05", "p = .013"). Standardize formatting.

2. Figures not properly included

- **Lines 189–205**
  Figures are described as placeholders ("Line chart or clustered bar chart…"), indicating missing finalized figures.
  Requirement: Replace placeholders with actual high-resolution figures, including titles and legends.

3. Reference issues

- **Line 53 vs Reference list:** Arinze et al. (2026) is a future-dated citation; verify accuracy.
- Several references lack consistent formatting (journal capitalization, punctuation).
  Suggestion: Follow the IJAR reference style strictly.

4. Objective 3 unclear

- **Lines 103–105**
  Objective 3 ("overall contribution") is vague and not directly measurable using the reported quantitative methods.
  Suggestion: Rephrase to align with measurable outcomes.

5. Terminology consistency

- Use consistent terminology for "psychological wellbeing" vs "well-being" throughout the manuscript.

Strengths of the Study

- Prospective design for wellbeing assessment.
- Use of validated instruments (GAD-7, PHQ-9, USS).
- Focus on peer mentorship in a low-resource context, which is practically relevant.
- Clear statistical structure overall.

Recommendation

Major Revision

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The manuscript addresses an important topic and has potential contribution value, but substantial methodological clarification, stronger discussion of limitations, statistical consistency, and improved reporting are required before consideration for publication.