

To cite this article: Vimala B.S and Dr. R.K Senthil Kumar (2025). MENTOR EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: ANALYZING THE INTERPLAY OF STRESS, INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE, AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, International Journal of Research in Commerce and Management Studies (IJRCMS) 7 (4): 425-436 Article No. 467 Sub Id 846

## MENTOR EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: ANALYZING THE INTERPLAY OF STRESS, INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE, AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Vimala B.S<sup>1</sup> and Dr. R.K Senthil Kumar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar (Part-time) PG Research Department of Commerce, Urumu Dhanalakshmi College, Tiruchirappalli, Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya College of science, Arts and Commerce, Bengaluru-09

<sup>2</sup>Research Advisor, and Convenor, Associate Professor in Commerce, PG Research Department of Commerce, Urumu Dhanalakshmi College, Tiruchirappalli, Affiliated to Bharathidasan University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38193/IJRCMS.2025.7432>

### ABSTRACT

This study explores mentor effectiveness in higher educational institutions, focusing on the interplay of stress, institutional climate, and demographic variables. Using data from primary responses and existing literature, the research examines how these factors influence mentoring dynamics. The findings reveal that mentors, despite experiencing some stress and burnout, effectively manage their roles across diverse educational settings, reflecting adaptability and resilience. The significant impact of a supportive institutional climate and mentoring experience on enhancing mentoring support. A positive environment and accumulated experience contribute to improved mentor effectiveness, emphasizing the importance of fostering professional growth and organizational support within institutions. Although demographic factors showed limited direct influence, they provide valuable insights into the broader context of mentorship effectiveness. The results suggest that mentors maintain consistent stress management abilities across different groups, demonstrating professional resilience. Despite limitations related to sample size and demographic diversity, the study offers crucial insights for developing effective mentorship programs. It recommends creating supportive institutional environments and promoting continuous mentor development to enhance effectiveness.

**KEYWORDS:** Mentor Effectiveness, Institutional Climate, Stress, Demographic Variables, Higher Education

### INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the role of mentors extends beyond traditional academic guidance to encompass emotional support, professional development, and the cultivation of a positive



learning environment. Mentor effectiveness is a critical determinant of both student success and institutional growth. However, various factors, including professional stress, institutional climate, and demographic variables, can significantly influence a mentor's ability to perform effectively. The increasing complexity of academic roles, coupled with evolving educational demands, necessitates a deeper exploration of how these elements interact to impact mentorship outcomes.

Stress in academic settings arises from multiple sources, such as heavy workloads, administrative pressures, performance expectations, and the constant need for professional development. Chronic stress not only affects the psychological well-being of mentors but also manifests in physiological symptoms, potentially leading to burnout. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, can severely undermine mentor effectiveness. Additionally, the institutional climate—encompassing organizational culture, leadership practices, resource availability, and support systems—plays a pivotal role in shaping the work environment. A positive institutional climate can mitigate stress, promote job satisfaction, and enhance performance, while a negative climate can exacerbate stress and contribute to mental health challenges.

Demographic variables such as age, gender, teaching experience, and academic position further complicate the dynamics of mentor effectiveness. These factors can influence how individuals perceive stress, access institutional resources, and develop coping strategies. For instance, research indicates that experienced educators may exhibit greater resilience to stress, while younger mentors might face challenges in adapting to institutional demands. Gender differences also emerge, with studies suggesting varying levels of emotional exhaustion and coping mechanisms among male and female mentors.

Despite extensive research on stress and institutional climate in educational contexts, there remains a significant gap in understanding how demographic variables specifically interact with these factors to influence mentor effectiveness. Most existing studies focus on isolated aspects, such as job stress or institutional policies, without considering the complex interplay between personal and organizational dimensions. Moreover, targeted interventions to address stress and burnout within mentorship roles are often lacking, particularly in diverse institutional settings where cultural and structural differences may affect outcomes.

In conclusion, as higher education institutions continue to evolve, recognizing and addressing the psychological and organizational challenges faced by mentors becomes imperative. This research not only highlights the critical factors affecting mentor effectiveness but also underscores the need for holistic interventions that consider the diverse experiences and needs of academic mentors across

different contexts.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

(Mostert et al., n.d.) survey of South African higher education support staff found that high job demands and limited resources contributed to burnout and ill health, while optimism influenced exhaustion and cynicism. (Shin & Jung, 2014) study of 19 countries shows that market-driven reforms and performance-based management increase academic stress, while European countries report higher job satisfaction, highlighting the complex impact of managerial reforms in academia. (Sušanjan et al., 2020) explored HR practices in higher education institutions across Croatia, Austria, and Finland, highlighting the importance of strategic HR approaches for professional development and institutional effectiveness. (Stauffer & Mason, 2013) identified political structures, instructional demands, student factors, parental involvement, and school climate as key stressors, highlighting the need for systemic interventions and policy changes to reduce teacher stress and retain top educators. (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2020) study on African American professionals in higher education highlighted the harmful impact of racial micro aggressions, revealing both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies and calling for institutional policies to address biases and support staff. (Johari et al., 2018) Autonomy and work-life balance significantly enhance job performance, supporting the Border and Boundary Theory, while workload has no impact. (Anees et al., 2021) Job stress and workload increase turnover intention, while job satisfaction is key to retention, with structural equation modeling highlighting its impact and suggesting targeted interventions. (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016) found that induction programs enhanced classroom self-efficacy and reduced stress, promoting positive psychological outcomes for new teachers. (Cain et al., 2023) highlights technology challenges, student mental health issues, and emotional disconnection in remote learning, suggesting strategies for managing stress and improving institutional responses during crises. (Tytherleigh \* et al., 2005) study across 14 UK universities found job insecurity as the top stressor, with structural, funding changes, work relationships, and resource constraints increasing stress, varying by staff category and university type. (Mostert et al., n.d.) Job control, resources, communication, and work relationships are key stressors impacting organizational commitment, leading to costly outcomes like absenteeism and turnover, necessitating targeted interventions. (Cherkasy medical Academy et al., 2020) study on Ukrainian educators found high burnout levels, with teaching experience reducing emotional exhaustion, women reporting lower emotional exhaustion, and organizational factors influencing depersonalization and personal achievement. (Nadiia et al., 2022) The shift to distance learning negatively impacted educators' physical, psychological, and professional health, highlighting the need for support during the transition to online teaching. (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004) A study across eight countries found that trained teachers showed improved teaching approaches and student outcomes, while untrained teachers experienced stagnation or negative trends, highlighting the value of continuous professional development. (Skyline University College, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates et al., 2017) study on Omani higher education

teachers found negative correlations between work-life conflicts and job satisfaction, while work-life enhancement positively impacted job satisfaction. These results align with global research, highlighting the importance of work-life balance initiatives in organizations.

### **Research Gap**

The research gap lies in the limited exploration of how demographic variables specifically interact with stress and institutional climate to influence mentor effectiveness in higher education. Additionally, there is a lack of studies addressing targeted interventions to mitigate stress and burnout within mentorship roles across diverse institutional settings.

### **Research Methodology**

- Sources of data: Primary data is used in this study, and additionally secondary data used from existing literature.
- Sampling procedure: A questionnaire was designed and collected 108 responses to assess the impact of effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions and analyzing the interplay of stress, institutional climate, and demographic variables.

### **Objective of the Study**

- Examine how stress, institutional climate, and demographic variables influence mentor effectiveness in higher education.
- Analyze the impact of institutional climate on job stress, burnout, and mental health in mentoring roles.

### **Limitations**

- The study is based on responses from 108 participants, which may not fully represent all higher educational institutions, limiting the broader applicability of the findings.
- While demographic variables were analyzed, their minimal statistical significance suggests the need for deeper exploration with more diverse samples to capture nuanced effects.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

- I. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significant effect of institutional climate on mentoring support in higher education institutions.
- II. Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): Institutional climate has a significant positive effect on mentoring support in higher education institutions.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table No 4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

	Age	Gender	Mentoring Experience	Institution Type	Mentoring Stress	Mentoring Burnout
Mean	2.49	2	2.5	1.5	3.93	3.77
Standard deviation	0.791	0.82	1.12	0.502	1.08	1.31
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.821	0.793	0.856	0.636	0.792	0.784
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

**Interpretation**

The data reveals meaningful insights into mentoring dynamics. The moderate mean values for mentoring stress (3.93) and burnout (3.77) suggest that while mentors experience some challenges, they are managing their roles effectively. The standard deviations indicate a healthy diversity of experiences, reflecting adaptability across different mentoring environments. Although the Shapiro-Wilk test results (all  $p < .001$ ) indicate non-normal data distribution, this highlights the unique and varied experiences of mentors, which enrich the dataset. This diversity provides an excellent opportunity to apply robust non-parametric tests, ensuring more accurate, real-world insights into mentor effectiveness across diverse institutional settings.

Table No 4.2 Correlation Matrix

		Stress Impact	Mentoring Support	Climate Influence	Mentoring Burnout	Experience Effect
Stress Impact	Pearson's r	—				
	df	—				
	p-value	—				
Mentoring Support	Pearson's r	0.187	—			
	df	106	—			
	p-value	0.052	—			
Climate Influence	Pearson's r	0.015	0.277	—		
	df	106	106	—		
	p-value	0.877	0.004	—		
Mentoring Burnout	Pearson's r	-0.099	-0.056	-0.013	—	
	df	106	106	106	—	
	p-value	0.309	0.562	0.895	—	
Experience Effect	Pearson's r	0.064	0.338	0.239	-0.107	—
	df	106	106	106	106	—
	p-value	0.509	< .001	0.013	0.271	—

### Interpretation

The correlation matrix reveals several positive associations. Mentoring Support shows a moderate positive correlation with Climate Influence ( $r = 0.277$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) and a stronger correlation with Experience Effect ( $r = 0.338$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that supportive mentoring environments enhance both the perception of institutional climate and the positive impact of mentoring experience. Experience Effect has a significant positive correlation with Climate Influence ( $r = 0.239$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), indicating that a favorable institutional climate strengthens the benefits gained from mentoring experience. While Stress Impact shows weak correlations, its slight positive association with Mentoring Support ( $r = 0.187$ ,  $p = 0.052$ ) hints at the potential role of support systems in mitigating stress.

**Table No 4.3 Model Fit Measures**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.401	0.161

**Interpretation**

The model demonstrates a moderate positive correlation ( $R = 0.401$ ) between the predictors and mentor effectiveness. An  $R^2$  of 0.161 indicates that 16.1% of the variation in mentor effectiveness is explained by the model, offering valuable insights while suggesting scope for further exploration.

**Table No 4.4 Omnibus ANOVA Test**

	Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Mentoring Stress	0.7869	1	0.7869	0.54884	0.46
Climate Influence	6.06	1	6.06	4.2266	0.042
Age Impact	0.1191	1	0.1191	0.08306	0.774
Gender Impact	0.014	1	0.014	0.00975	0.922
Experience Effect	11.4764	1	11.4764	8.00432	0.006
Residuals	146.245	102	1.4338		

**Interpretation**

The Omnibus ANOVA test reveals key insights into factors influencing mentor effectiveness. Institutional Climate Influence shows a significant effect ( $F = 4.23, p = 0.042$ ), indicating that a supportive climate positively impacts mentoring capabilities. Similarly, Experience Effect is highly significant ( $F = 8.00, p = 0.006$ ), suggesting that increased mentoring experience enhances effectiveness. While Mentoring Stress, Age Impact, and Gender Impact are not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), their inclusion highlights comprehensive variable consideration. Overall, fostering a positive institutional climate and leveraging mentor experience can significantly boost mentor effectiveness in higher education settings.

**Table No 4.5 Model Coefficients - Mentoring Support**

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	1.74878	0.6325	2.7649	0.007
Mentoring Stress	0.08207	0.1108	0.7408	0.46
Climate Influence	0.1918	0.0933	2.0559	0.042
Age Impact	0.02751	0.0955	0.2882	0.774
Gender Impact	0.00889	0.0901	0.0988	0.922
Experience Effect	0.26331	0.0931	2.8292	0.006

### Interpretation

The regression analysis reveals key factors positively influencing mentoring support. Climate Influence ( $\beta = 0.1918$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ) significantly enhances mentoring support, highlighting the importance of a supportive institutional environment. Experience Effect ( $\beta = 0.2633$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) shows that mentors with more experience are better equipped to provide effective support, likely due to their refined skills and coping strategies. While Mentoring Stress, Age Impact, and Gender Impact are not statistically significant, their minimal influence suggests that strong institutional support and mentoring experience play a more critical role in enhancing mentor effectiveness. This highlights the value of fostering supportive climates and continuous mentor development.

**Table No 4.6 One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)**

	F	df1	df2	p
Stress Impact	0.709	1	105	0.402

### Interpretation

The Welch's ANOVA result ( $F = 0.709$ ,  $p = 0.402$ ) indicates no significant difference in stress impact across groups. This suggests that stress levels are relatively consistent, regardless of group differences, highlighting the potential resilience of mentors in managing stress effectively within their roles.

**Table No 4.7 Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)**

	<b>W</b>	<b>p</b>
Stress Impact	0.81	< .001

**Interpretation**

The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicates that the Stress Impact variable does not significantly deviate from a normal distribution ( $W = 0.81, p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the data for stress impact are relatively well-distributed, supporting the assumption of normality for further statistical analysis.

**Table No 4.8 Homogeneity of Variances Test (Levene's)**

	<b>F</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>p</b>
Stress Impact	0.00204	1	106	0.964

**Interpretation**

The Levene's Test for homogeneity of variances showed a p-value of 0.964, which is well above the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the variances in stress impact are equal across the groups being compared. This suggests that the assumption of equal variances is met, supporting the validity of subsequent analyses.

**Results of Hypothesis Testing**

The regression analysis revealed that the institutional climate had a significant positive effect on mentoring support ( $\beta = 0.1918, p = 0.042$ ). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), indicating that a supportive institutional climate positively impacts mentoring support.

**Expected Outcome of the Study**

- Mentors experience moderate levels of stress (3.93) and burnout (3.77), managing their roles effectively across varied environments.
- The standard deviations indicate diverse mentoring experiences, enriching the dataset.
- Positive Correlations: Mentoring support shows moderate positive correlations with institutional climate ( $r = 0.277, p = 0.004$ ) and experience ( $r = 0.338, p < 0.001$ ), suggesting a supportive environment and experience enhance mentor effectiveness.

- Significant effects were found for institutional climate ( $F = 4.23, p = 0.042$ ) and experience ( $F = 8.00, p = 0.006$ ) on mentor effectiveness.
- Regression analysis shows both climate ( $\beta = 0.1918, p = 0.042$ ) and experience ( $\beta = 0.2633, p = 0.006$ ) positively influence mentoring support.
- No significant differences in stress levels across groups ( $F = 0.709, p = 0.402$ ), suggesting mentors manage stress similarly.
- Stress impact data is normally distributed ( $W = 0.81, p < 0.001$ ), supporting normality assumptions for analysis.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study highlights the key factors influencing mentor effectiveness in higher educational institutions, emphasizing the interplay of stress, institutional climate, and demographic variables. The findings suggest that while mentors face certain challenges related to stress and burnout, they manage their roles effectively across diverse institutional settings. The diversity of mentoring experiences reflects adaptability and resilience among mentors, showcasing their ability to navigate various professional environments.

The analysis reveals that both institutional climate and mentoring experience play significant roles in enhancing mentoring support. A positive institutional environment fosters a sense of support and motivation among mentors, while accumulated mentoring experience strengthens their ability to provide effective guidance. These factors collectively contribute to improving mentor effectiveness, underscoring the need for higher education institutions to cultivate supportive environments and encourage continuous professional development.

Although demographic variables such as age and gender did not show strong direct impacts, their consideration adds depth to understanding the complex dynamics of mentorship. The findings indicate that mentors demonstrate a consistent ability to manage stress effectively, regardless of demographic differences, highlighting their professional resilience.

While the study offers meaningful insights, its scope is limited by the sample size and the range of demographic diversity. It provides valuable direction for educational leaders and policymakers to enhance mentorship programs by focusing on creating supportive institutional climates and promoting mentor development. Future research could explore broader populations and investigate targeted strategies to further reduce stress and improve mentorship outcomes.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Journals Referred

1. Anees, R. T., Heidler, P., Cavaliere, L. P. L., & Nordin, N. A. (2021). Brain Drain in Higher Education. The Impact of Job Stress and Workload on Turnover Intention and the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction at Universities. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 6(3), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2021.6.3.849>
2. Cain, M., Campbell, C., & Coleman, K. (2023). ‘Kindness and empathy beyond all else’: Challenges to professional identities of Higher Education teachers during COVID-19 times. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 50(4), 1233–1251. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-022-00552-1>
3. Cherkasy medical Academy, Kyrian, T., Nikolaesku, I., Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, Stepanova, N., Bogdan Khmelnytsky National University at Cherkasy, Nenko, Y., & National University of Civil Defence of Ukraine. (2020). Relationship between Professional Burnout of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine and Their Organizational, Professional and Socio-demographic Characteristics. *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 12(4), 268–288. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/12.4/345>
4. DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Johnson, O. T., Womble Edwards, C., McCoy, W. N., & White, A. M. (2020). African American professionals in higher education: Experiencing and coping with racial microaggressions. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 23(4), 492–508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1579706>
5. Gibbs, G., & Coffey, M. (2004). The Impact Of Training Of University Teachers on their Teaching Skills, their Approach to Teaching and the Approach to Learning of their Students. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 5(1), 87–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787404040463>
6. Helms-Lorenz, M., & Maulana, R. (2016). Influencing the psychological well-being of beginning teachers across three years of teaching: Self-efficacy, stress causes, job tension and job discontent. *Educational Psychology*, 36(3), 569–594. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2015.1008403>
7. Johari, J., Yean Tan, F., & Tjik Zulkarnain, Z. I. (2018). Autonomy, workload, work-life balance and job performance among teachers. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(1), 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-10-2016-0226>
8. Mostert, F. F., Rothmann, S., Mostert, K., & Nell, K. (n.d.). *Outcomes of occupational stress in a higher education institution*.
9. Nadiia, V. S., O. Barannyk, M., V. Naumenko, N., V. Alokhina, N., N. Nessonova, M., & G. Kaidalova, L. (2022). Study of Professional Health of Higher Education Teachers in

- Ukraine under Quarantine. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems*, 20(4), 336–348. <https://doi.org/10.7906/indec.20.4.3>
10. Shin, J. C., & Jung, J. (2014). Academics job satisfaction and job stress across countries in the changing academic environments. *Higher Education*, 67(5), 603–620. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9668-y>
  11. Skyline University College, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, Agha, K., Azmi, F. T., & Irfan, A. (2017). Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: An Empirical study Focusing on Higher Education Teachers in Oman. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 7(3), 164–171. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijssh.2017.V7.813>
  12. Stauffer, S. D., & Mason, E. C. M. (2013). Addressing Elementary School Teachers' Professional Stressors: Practical Suggestions for Schools and Administrators. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 49(5), 809–837. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13482578>
  13. Sušanj, Z., Jakopec, A., & Đorić, A. (2020). Academics' effectiveness and professional development in Croatia: Challenges for human resource management in higher education institutions. *European Journal of Education*, 55(4), 476–488. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12422>
  14. Tytherleigh \*, M. Y., Webb, C., Cooper, C. L., & Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK higher education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 24(1), 41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0729436052000318569>