Peer mentoring and increased interest in university study

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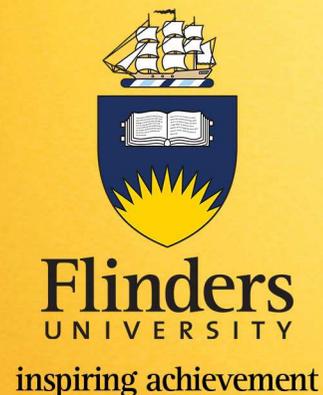
Outline

Context

- Bradley review and responses

Participation in higher education

- Influences of location and SES on post-school participation
- Influences of other factors
- Implications

Peer mentoring

The Bradley review

Under-representation in higher education

"Now, the most seriously under-represented groups are those from remote parts of Australia, Indigenous students, those from low socio-economic backgrounds and those from regional locations."

(Bradley et al., 2008, p. 27)

Participation targets

- 40% of the 25 to 34 year-old age cohort having at least a bachelor degree

- 20% of higher education enrolments being of low-SES individuals

Achieving the cohort attainment target will require increasing access by under-represented groups, especially low-SES and rural youth

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Responses to the Bradley review

- Increased funding to universities enrolling low-SES students
- 'Age of independence' being lowered to enable more students to qualify for Austudy
- Income threshold raised to $400 per fortnight

(DEEWR, 2009)

The effects of these changes, introduced from 2012, are not seen in our data

Influences on tertiary participation

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What factors influence participation in tertiary education?

- We are interested in the influences of SES and location on tertiary participation
- We examine both higher education and VET participation
- We consider participation frequency by SES and location (and other factors)
- We evaluate the importance of these factors in multivariate models to find 'net' influences

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Data and methods

Data

- Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth 2003 cohort

 Students were tracked from 2003 (15 year olds) to 2010 (22 year olds)

  Used

  - demographic data (sex, location, home language background, immigrant status, family structure and number of siblings)
  - attitude and aspiration (liking school, teacher student relations, sense of belonging, intention to complete school and participate in tertiary study)
  - achievement at school (composite index of reading, mathematics and science achievement at age 15)
  - school attainment and achievement (completion of Year 12, gaining an ATAR score)
  - tertiary participation (enrolment in higher education, enrolment in a VET program)
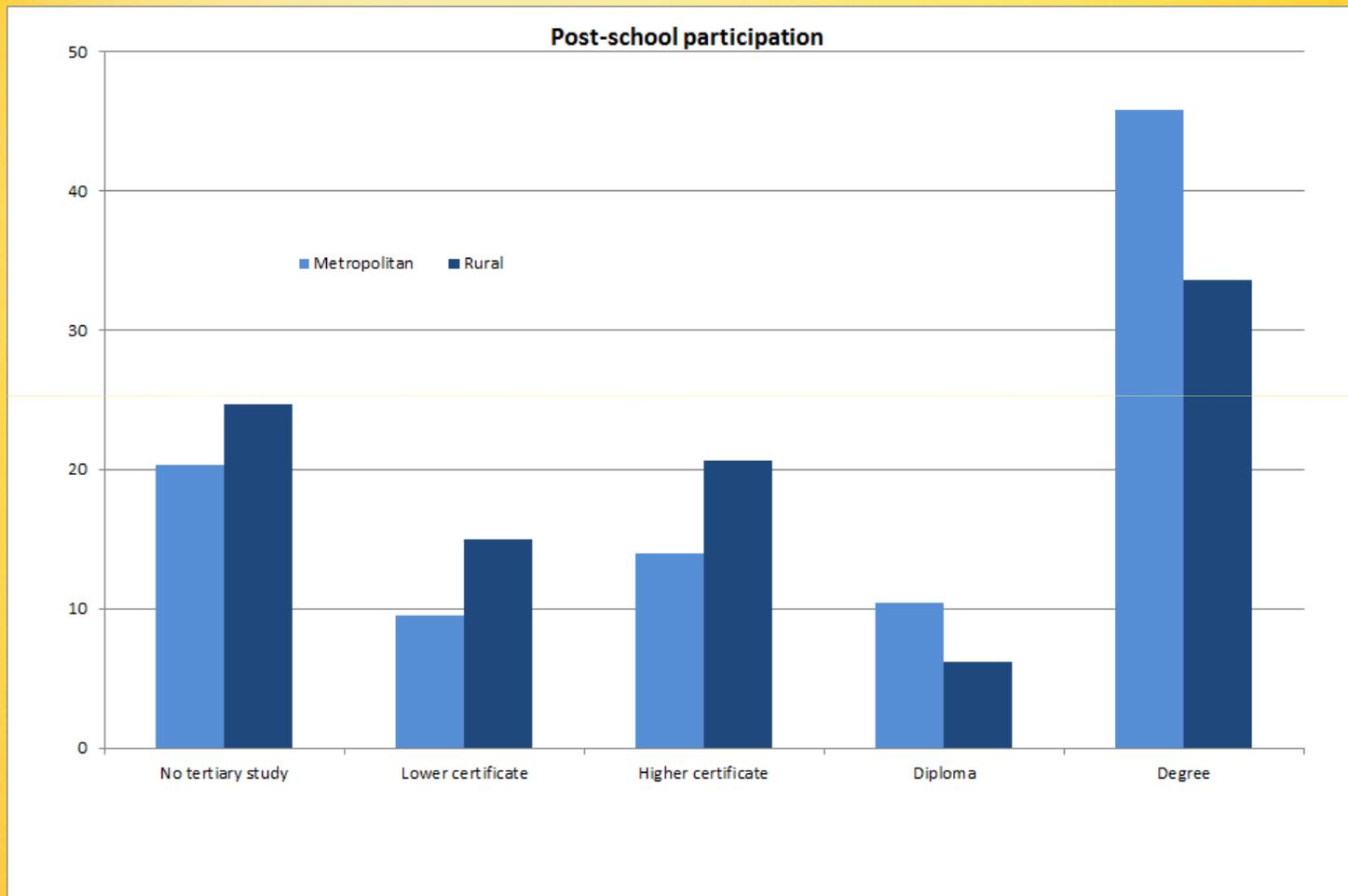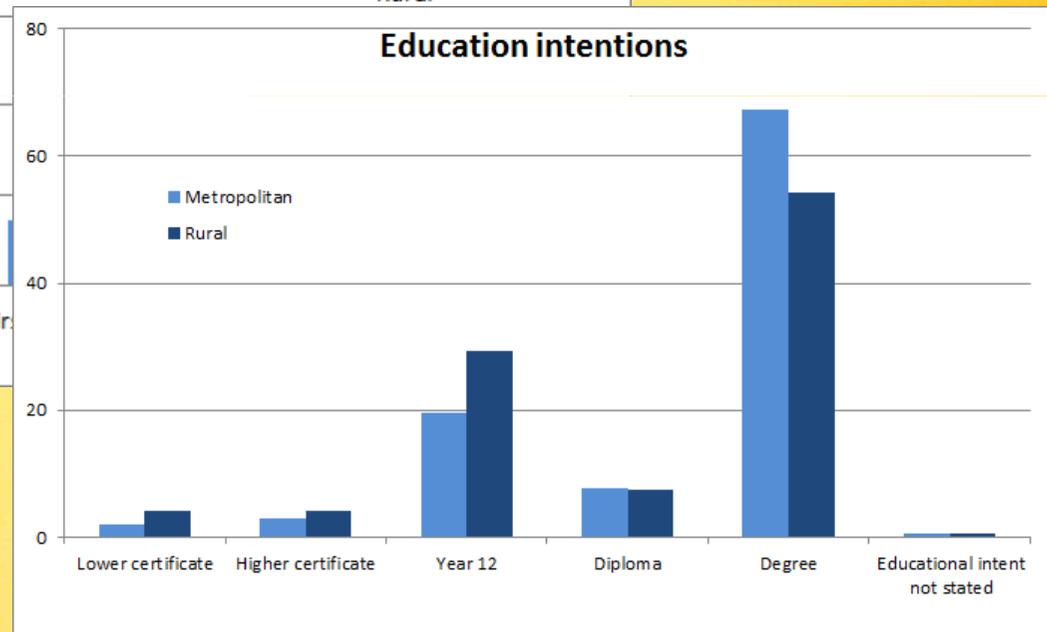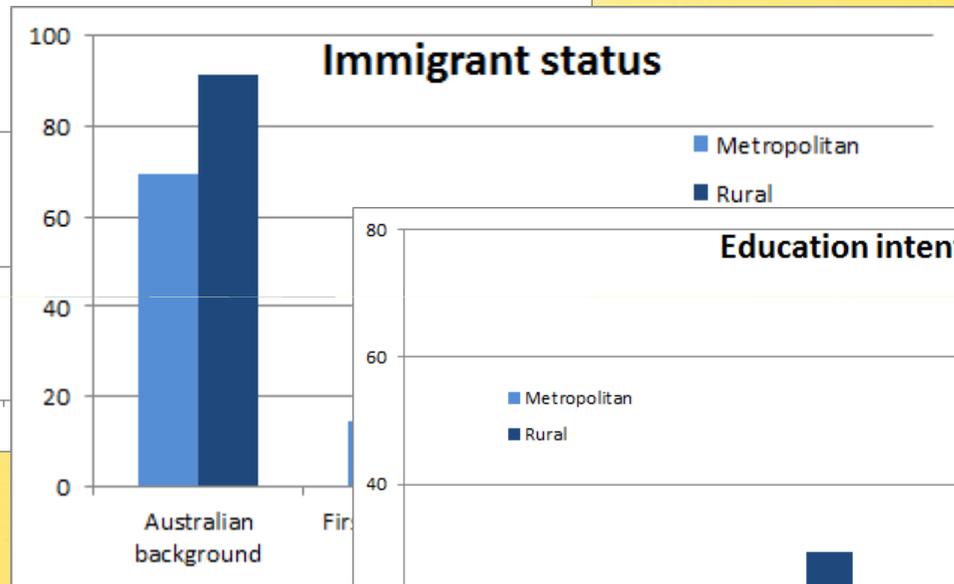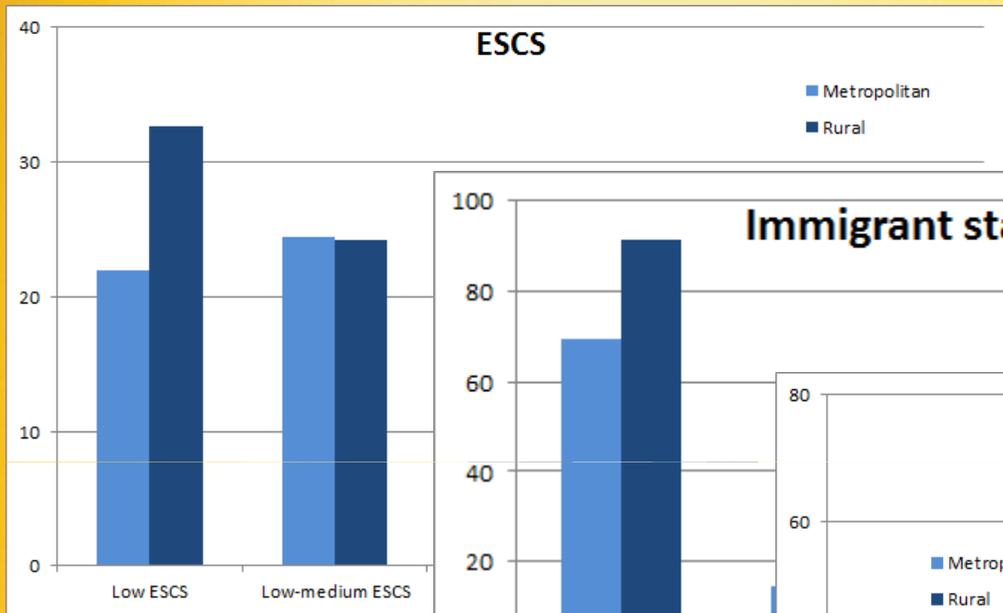
Methods

Tabulations

Regression modelling

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Findings

University study commenced
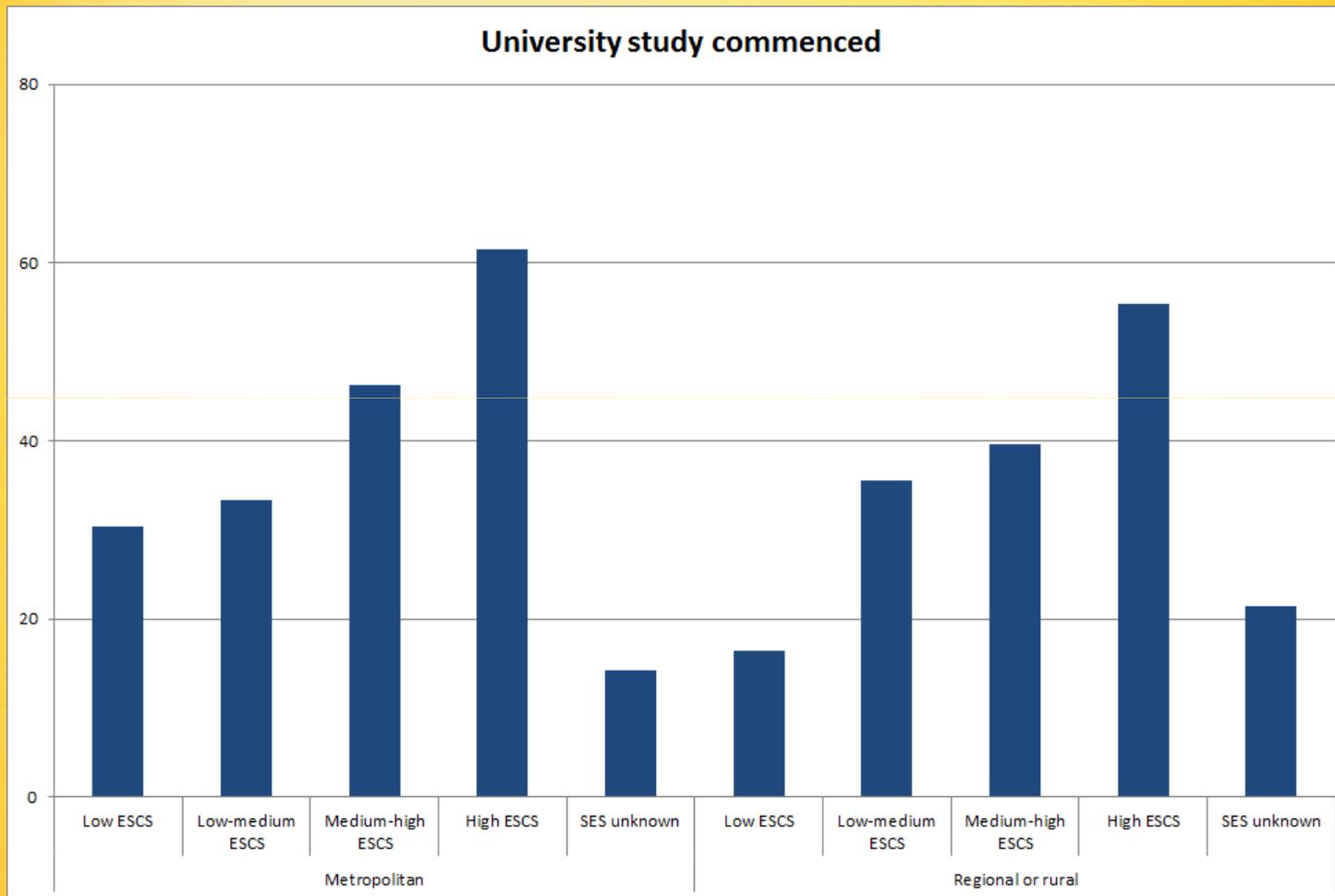
Findings

Findings

Findings

		University			VET		
		B	p	Odds	B	p	Odds
Location	Metro (r)						
	Regional	-0.11	0.21	0.90	0.09	0.26	1.09
Sex	Male (r)						
	Female	0.73	0.00	2.08	-0.54	0.00	0.58
Home language	English (r)						
	NESB	0.22	0.15	1.24	-0.24	0.10	0.79
Immigrant status	Australian (r)						
	First generation	0.64	0.00	1.90	-0.31	0.01	0.73
	Born overseas	1.16	0.00	3.17	-0.71	0.00	0.49
Family structure	Nuclear (r)						
	Non-nuclear	0.21	0.01	1.23	-0.03	0.68	0.97
Siblings		-0.05	0.12	0.95	-0.03	0.24	0.97
ESCS		0.29	0.00	1.33	-0.10	0.02	0.90
Attitude to school		0.24	0.00	1.27	-0.15	0.00	0.86
Year 12 intent	No intent (r)						
	Intends to complete	1.54	0.00	4.68	-0.41	0.00	0.67
Achievement	CompAch	0.71	0.00	2.03	-0.39	0.00	0.68
ATAR	ATAR not reported (r)						
	ATAR reported	1.70	0.00	5.45	-1.01	0.00	0.36
Constant		-4.52	0.00	0.01	1.35	0.00	3.86

Peer Mentoring

Aims

Could peer mentoring increase university aspiration in low SES and rural schools?

Can increasing aspiration for university occur without negatively impacting on other post-school aspirations (e.g., for TAFE).

How might peer-mentoring influence aspiration?

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Aims

How might peer-mentoring influence aspiration?

- Peer group identification
- Cognitive Distance
- Self-efficacy

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Participants

48 Students participated in all 4 time points

Participants began mentoring project in year 9, and continued until year 10. Aspirations for TAFE and University were measured at each time point.

Schools

One semi-rural (almost 80km from metropolitan location) and one low-SES school.

Semi-rural school, median household income $975 per week in 2006.

Low-SES school, median household income $794 per week in 2006. ($1,027 weekly Australia wide)

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Mentors

These were Flinders University Students.

Current Police Check

Visited the School for ½ day to 1 day a week during term time.

Mentors

Had discretion about exact tasks

Generally, helped with schoolwork

Discussed experiences with University

Discussed career options

Measures

How likely are you to attend university when you leave high-school? (0%-100% in 10% intervals)

How likely are you to attend TAFE when you leave high-school? (0%-100% in 10% intervals)

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Measures

How far away is Flinders University to you? (72mm Visual Analogue Scale).

|———————————————————————————|

Closer   Further
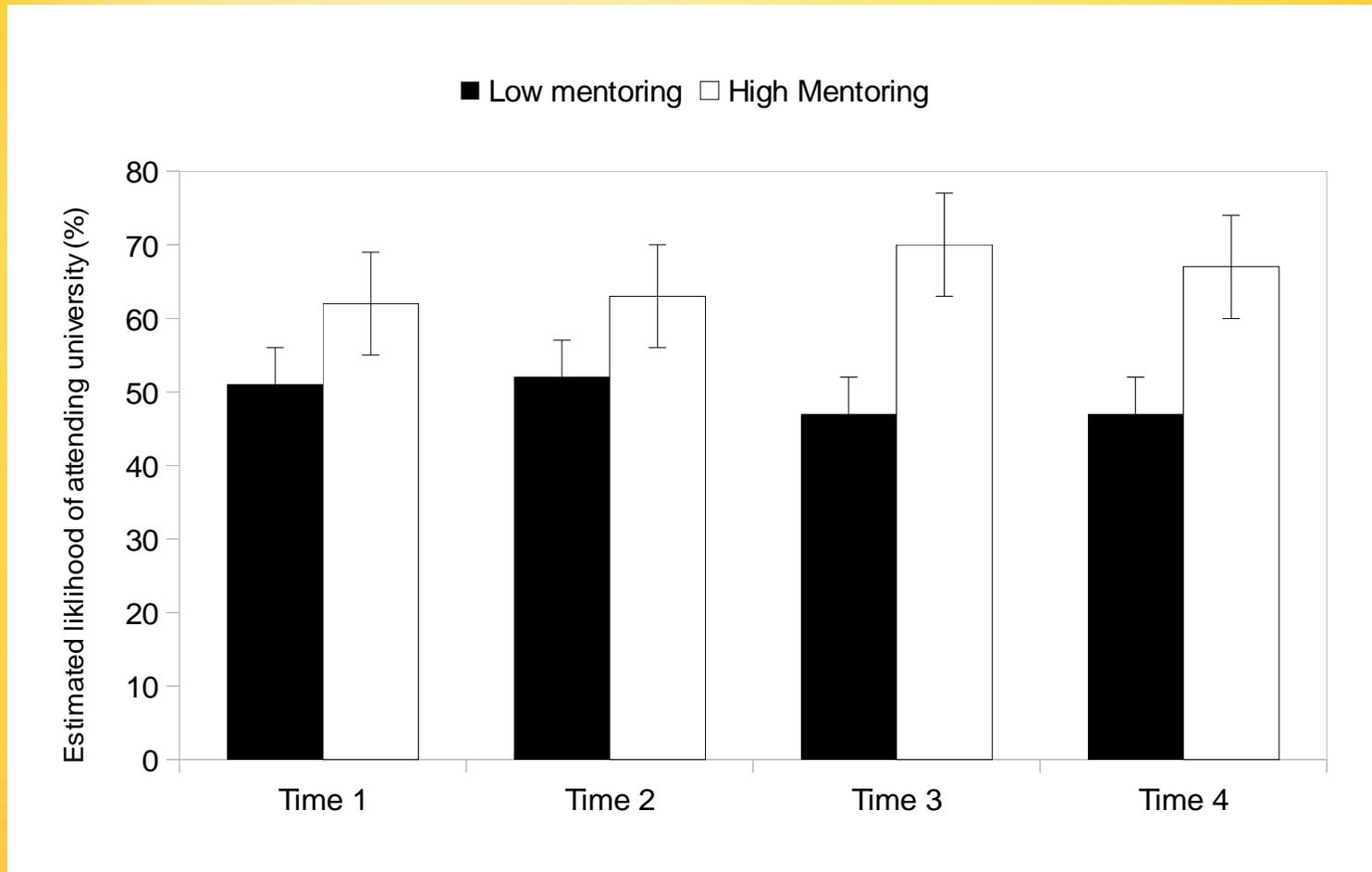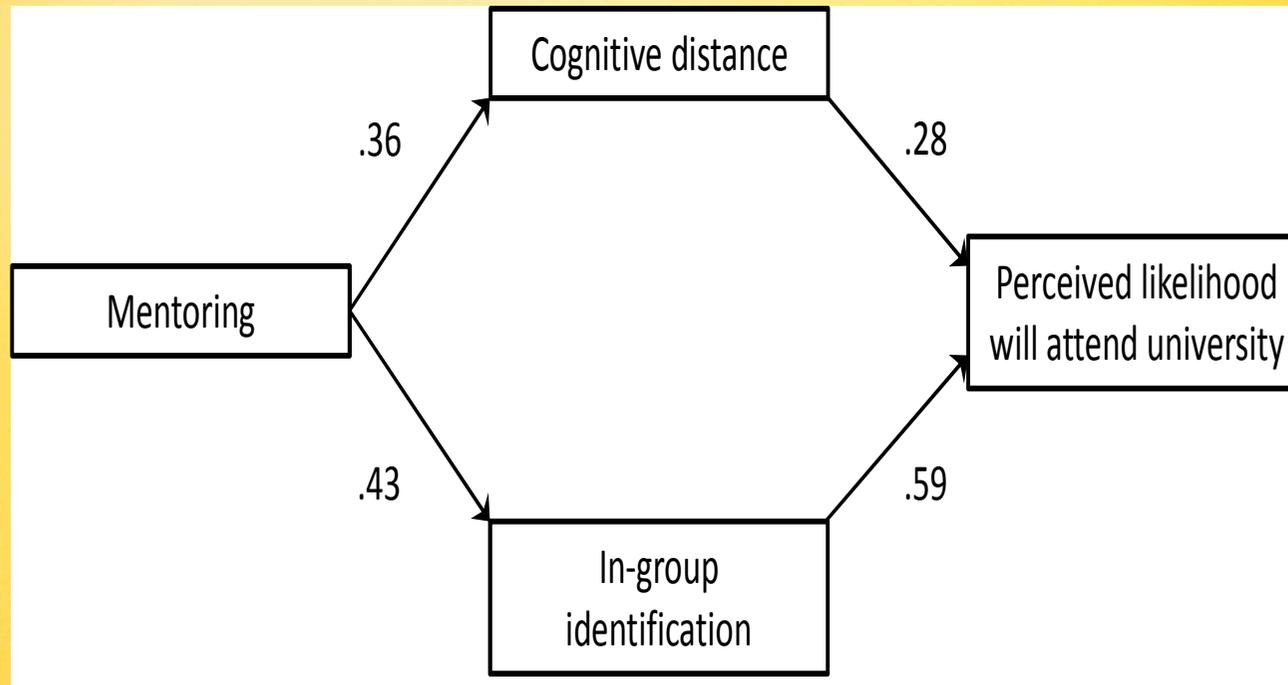
Measures

5 in-group identification items. For example:

University students are just like me" and "How much do you trust the people at university?" (1 not at all, strongly disagree – 7 almost completely, strongly agree).

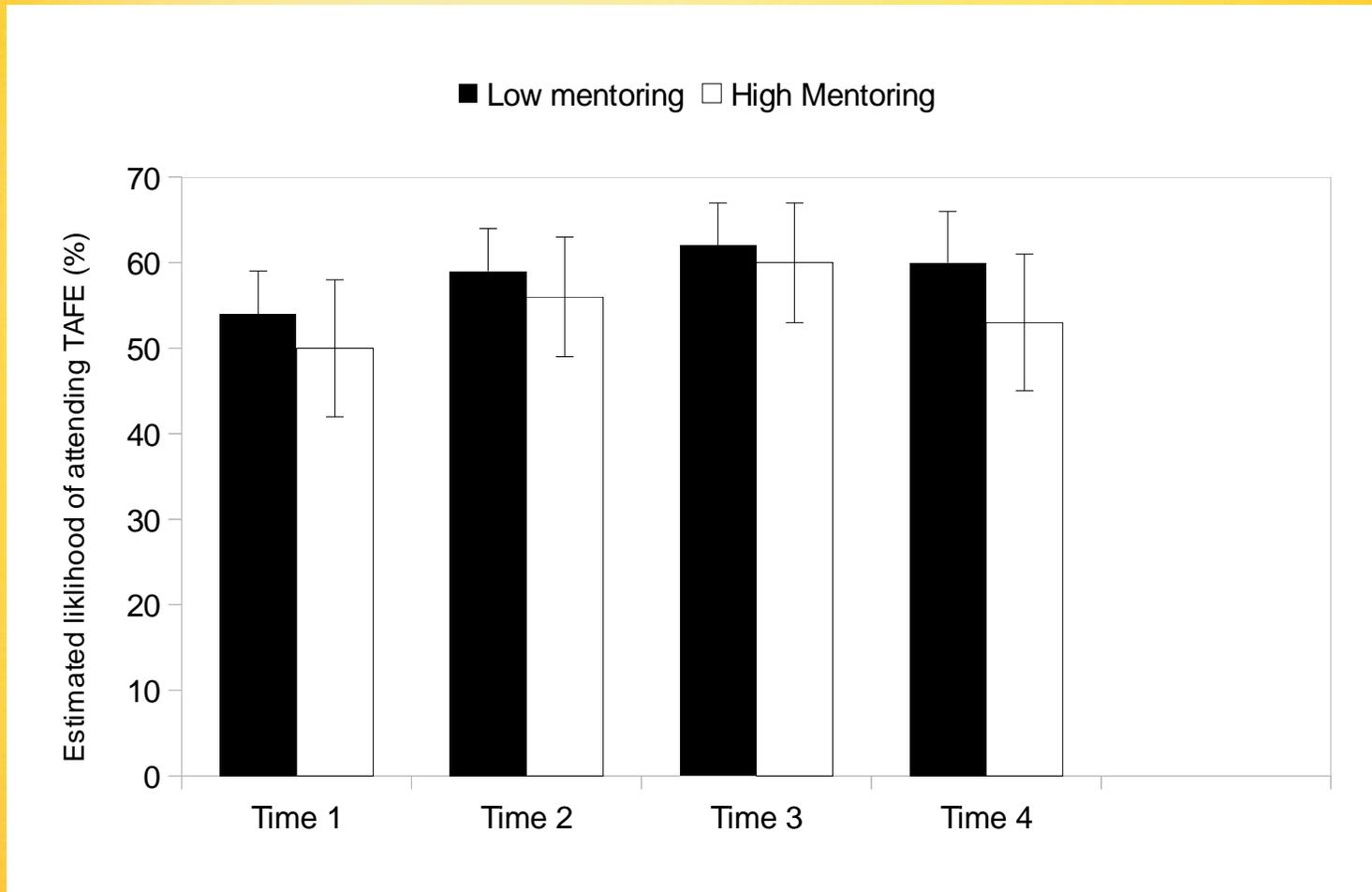# Results – University Aspiration

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When students who were involved for only 1 mentoring time point were included, differences dropped to non-significance ($p > .05$).

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Results – TAFE Aspiration

Discussion

Peer Mentoring appears to be associated with increased intention to attend university

This is a selective increase

Cognitive distance and in-group identification may account for these changes

Discussion – Policy Implications

Focusing on peer-mentoring projects likely to be effective for

-University

-TAFE?

A particular focus on building relationships important