

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING NURSING
MOTHERS ON ACADEMIC WORK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
WINNEBA, KUMASI CAMPUS



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NURSING MOTHERS ON ACADEMIC WORK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
EDUCATION WINNEBA, KUMASI CAMPUS



**A Project Report in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of
Education Communication Sciences, submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for award of the Master of Arts (Educational leadership) degree.**

NOVEMBER, 2018

DECLARATION

STUDENT DECLARATION

I, OBENG PETER, declare that this report with the exception of quotations of references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged is entirely the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree at the University or elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this project work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education Winneba

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR FREDERICK KWAKU SARFO

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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DEDICATION

To my precious wife, Faustina Obeng and my children Christabel Obeng Sarfowaa, Chris Obeng Nyarko, Obeng Achiamaa Amosah and Obeng Adoma Ursula.

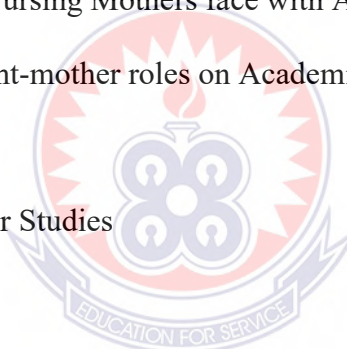


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ABSTRACT

Student mothers play the roles of being mothers, workers and students simultaneously and these come with a lot of challenges as they pursue higher education. These challenges sometimes kill the innate desire for them to pursue education to the highest level. The primary purpose of this research work is to identify the challenges of student nursing mothers offering distance education at University of Education Winneba, Kumasi Campus. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Using purposive sampling, sixty student-mothers with babies below five years, who agreed to take part in the survey, were sampled. These mothers were pursuing diploma programmes in Basic Education, Early Childhood Education and Management Studies; and Post Diploma programmes in Basic Education, Social Studies Education, Mathematics Education and English Language Education. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency counts, mean and standard deviations. The student-mothers indicated that the university authorities do not permit student-mothers to enter lecture halls with their babies; there are no facilities provided by the university to keep their babies; they intermittently cut lectures to attend to their babies; they did not feel psychologically sound in the absence of their babies and that they are not able to write comprehensive lecture notes with their babies around them at lectures. Again, the study showed that quite often; their babies cry to disturb them when learning at home; they breastfeed their babies alongside learning; they get no help with their babies when learning and they are not able to study well due to tiredness from family and child-care roles. On their academics, they agreed that they are not able to attend lectures punctually and regularly; they do not get enough time to study or attend group studies; they are not able to prepare well for examinations and that their student-mother roles are responsible for their bad grades in school.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

A lot of developing countries in the world today are placing much premium on education. In Ghana, education is one of the main institutions that employ the greatest number of the workers. Audi R. (2003) explains that education does not only bring about change and knowledge in a person but also helps the person to acquire behaviors, skills, interests, and attitudes. Since Education is responsible for bringing up youths and providing a bank of workforce in the country, the effectiveness of education has always been of government and public concern.

In lieu of this, Onuzulike (2006) explained that for any person to have the hope of occupying a meaningful position in future, he or she must cuddle good education as the first tool to this purpose. Abraham Lincoln, an American political philosopher and leader wrote that education kills the “bright diseases”: ignorance, superstition, fear, and poverty. He went on to urge learners not to give up on education, but to aspire to the peak to get the certificate first, then the available job later.

Due to the necessity for education, there has been the view that a person who stops learning literally stops living even though the person may be alive. Adofo, (2013). Freire (2005) further explains that, “existing” goes far beyond “living” because it means being in the world and at the same time with the world. Thus, one who exists has attributes of excelling, discerning, communicating and cohabiting with others who exist whereas the one who is merely living does not possess these attributes.

Women including nursing mothers are no longer willing to compromise on their chances for higher education. Freeman C. K (2009) is of the view that; in the light of modern-day rapid economic and societal changes, one area that needs attention which perhaps has not gotten the desired attention is the education of married women, especially the nursing mothers in the institution of higher learning. The modern-day woman by the day is growing strong in knowledge acquisition. This is evident in the current-days' women presidents, professors, lawyers, doctors, teachers and others. It is apparent that the modern day woman has the desire for higher and quality education regardless of their marital status and responsibilities.

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) is of the view that marriage and housekeeping limits the role of women. He said that it is traditionally believed that the place of the African woman was the home - to cook and cater for the children. Women were not as free as men. He also further explains that most women become economically limited because men provide money for the running of the home. It is therefore clear that apart from the socio-cultural factors that limit women's access to further education, economic factors cannot be ruled out. This is because the woman's reproductive roles at home as the mother and home keeper is not quantified, therefore limiting her ability to raise enough money to pursue further education.

Dolphyne (1991) points out that the recent trend in the global economy has made it necessary for women of today to be educated so that they will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to gain employment and earn a living in order to fit into the rapid-growing global economy and to act as co-breadwinners of the family. This presumes that the traditional role of a woman in Ghana as the keeper of the home and family cannot be accepted in this era.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the view of Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey, if you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a nation. In the context of African traditional society and for that matter Ghana, it is perceived that the position of a woman in the family and national development is the kitchen as well as taking care of children in the home. This perception poses a lot of challenges on women especially the nursing mothers who have the zeal to pursue higher education. The family, society and the nation therefore frowns on their zeal for higher education instead of inspiring them.

The challenges of childcare are usual problems of women. Sometimes, some of these challenges kill the innate desire for them to pursue education to the highest level. This has led to some of them dropping out of the programme while others do not have the appetite to try at all. As mothers, they are bothered about their children. Some have to contend with pregnancy while others nurse their newborn babies alongside their studies. According to Egenti et al. (2011), women who put to bed in the course of their studies or even during examinations go through a great ordeal before completion. This further increases their burden and causes some to either perform poorly or fail their examinations.

Clark (1996) also explains that domestic and childcare responsibilities are solely assigned to women in Ghana. Women who opt to participate in other activities outside their home find themselves carrying triple workload. The workloads consist of domestic work, childcare and work outside the home. It is clear from this assertion that gender roles of domestic work and childcare are hindrances to women's participation in education and public life. Nehlin et al. (1982) observed that in most cases women find it difficult to combine their traditional roles in the home and

official duties at their work places. He further explained that women therefore assess the commitments involved in their respective works before accepting responsibilities.

The current and present-day socio-economic demands have activated the need for women empowerment in the search of higher education. Men are no more the sole breadwinners of the family as perceived by African culture anymore. Nursing mothers in the quest of pursuing higher education face a lot of challenges which invariably affect their academic performance. The primary intention of this research work is to identify the challenges of student nursing mothers offering Distance Education at University of Education Winneba, Kumasi Campus.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The modern and current trend of marriage and family life style has brought about shared responsibility between men and women in the home thereby compelling nursing mothers to combine childcare, homecare and academic work simultaneously to sustain their families and to protect their marriages. The passion of the nursing mothers and their enthusiasm to achieve higher education is associated with numerous challenges in their academic work without the family, society and the University taking a critical look on how to salvage their academic problems. The ordeal that the nursing mothers go through before achieving their academic objective warrant a detailed research in order to protect their educational right now and the future.

Students who are mothers and want to seek academic excellence do not only play the role of being a mother but also play the role of being a worker and a student. This purpose comes with a lot of challenges posed to student mothers as they pursue higher education in the regular stream of schooling. Some of these challenges include

stress and anxiety, failure in courses being studied, inability to meet family needs, inadequate funding and lack of support from partners (Bratton & Gold, 2003). As a result of the challenges, they are sometimes unable to enroll themselves as regular students to achieve their educational aims. This has necessitated the process of choosing distance education in order to minimize the effects of some of these challenges.

Women face quite an appreciable level of hindrances that make attaining a degree in a traditional college setting challenging or impossible. How to balance career, family and academic responsibilities is difficult for women who are enrolled in distance education and online classes (Furst-Bowe & Dittmann, 2001; Kramarae, 2001; Muller, 2008). Student nursing mothers often struggle to fuse distance learning with their already packed work and family responsibilities.

In Ghana a lot of institutions, women groups and bodies are making much effort in Ghana to bridge the gap between males and females to raise the status of females. Some of these well noted groups include the Federation of African Women Educationists (F.A.W.E), Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU), 31st December Women's Movement, Mother and Child Foundation and Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to mention a few. The education act of 1961 emphasizes the education of all children. Successive governments of Ghana have embarked on educational reform, which targeted both male and female participation at all levels of education.

It is worth noting that women now compete with their male counterparts for places in various higher education programs. Professor Naana Opoku Agyemang was reported in the Daily Graphic, (December, 2011) to have made the statement that the University of Cape Coast admitted 12,407 students to various academic programs at

the Centre for Continuing Education for the 2011/2012 academic year of which 41% were women and she further urged females to take advantage of this appreciable improvement in flexible mode of education, in order not to be left behind in this current knowledge driven economy.

The current need for advanced knowledge, good paying jobs as well as taking care of the home has promoted distance learning among mothers. Therefore, the learning activity is a new ideological process to fuse into the lives of females. Time spent in academic processes could be a source of conflict for student mothers because they have to balance taking care of the home with academic or learning time in addition to their professional and social or family patterns. For this reason, work-life of a student mother has to do with the balancing or blending of the professional, family and academic activities (Bratton & Gold, 2003).

Studies on mature students found balancing work, study and family life very difficult. One group that can be considered in this regard is mothers with dependent children. The responsibilities typically associated with the role of mothers tend to change at home when these women become students (Callister, Newell, Perry & Scott, 2006). Neale (2001) also identified dealing with family issues and problems at home as one of the main barriers preventing or limiting mothers' ability to achieve their higher education aims.

The changing role of women in the society has made it necessary for nursing mothers to combine childcare, homecare, career and studies. This implies that even though the mothers are in school, they will have certain responsibilities to fulfill at home. Hensel (1990) points out how difficult it is for women to pursue academic careers and family life simultaneously. This burden therefore makes most women

accept to become traditional home keepers instead of striving harder to rise to a higher academic pedestal.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges that distance student mothers encounter in the process of achieving higher academic standards in the midst of motherhood. This research focuses on student mothers undertaking various distance education programmes in the University of Education, Winneba, Kumasi campus. Specifically, the study looked at the non-academic roles undertaken by student mothers and how these roles influence their academic lives.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the challenges that student nursing mother face in their quest to achieve higher academic success. The core objectives of the study are categorized into three main dimensions which include the following:

1. To identify the challenges student nursing mothers face during tutorials;
2. To find out how student nursing mothers cope with academic work at home;
3. To find out the influences that child-related roles have on academic performance of student nursing mothers.

1.5 Research Questions

In the interest of the important issues of concern raised, this study is poised to answer the following related questions:

1. What challenges do student nursing mothers encounter during tutorials?
2. How do student nursing mothers cope with academic work at home?

3. What are the influences of child-related roles on academic performance of student nursing mothers?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The core motivation of the study is to find out the problems facing the student nursing mothers offering distance education in the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi campus and to suggest possible solutions to them. Moreover, the findings could be of great importance to nursing mothers who wish to further their education. They would become much familiar with the inherent challenges in continuing education in the tertiary institutions and this will make them adopt appropriate measures to face these challenges.

The findings of the study would not only be useful to the family as a unit but to the nation as a whole in its quest for empowering women through education. The study will serve as a guide to policy makers to formulate policies and programmes that will help ease the challenges nursing mothers face in the tertiary institutions. Institutions of higher learning will equally be prompted to come out with user friendly measures to help student nursing mother in their desire to achieve higher academic successes.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The focus of this research work is limited to identifying academic challenges of student nursing mothers pursuing distance education at University of Education Winneba, Kumasi Campus. The views, responses and results of this work are therefore directly limited to student nursing mothers in the university. The study is limited to students pursuing academic progression in Education and also related

strictly to distance education student-mothers. This work should hence be interpreted with this limited focus in mind.

The following were also likely limitations to the study;

The researcher as a student worker will be met with limited time in gathering the data and response from the questionnaires due to the fact that this study has to be conducted at the times when there are lectures of which student nursing mothers are part of.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study begins with the introduction of the entire work by giving the background of the study, research problem, the research questions, the research objectives, and the rationale of the research. This is followed by the literature review which considers what various scholars have found and explained about the challenges and barriers encountered by student nursing mothers in the research process as well as the dimension that this research will be taking.

The methods used in analyzing the data are then described. It considers the theoretical framework used, the target population, data collection methods and analysis. It also explains how the samples were chosen, the rationale behind the choice as well as the qualitative and quantitative methods that are used. This is followed by the fourth chapter where the data gathered from the questionnaires administered are documented and analysis of the data obtained for the period under study. It shows an in-depth data analysis in an orderly manner.

The last chapter analyses the available information and interpretations as well as findings brought to fore. The needed conclusions are drawn based on the analysis and findings and recommendations made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chief purpose of this study is to assess the challenges that the student nursing mothers face in their quest to pursue higher education. This chapter therefore deals with the underlying theory and related literature reviewed to guide the study.

The related literature is reviewed under the following sub-headings:

A. Conceptual Framework

- Inter-Role conflict model by Malone (1998)

B. Theoretical Framework

- The Role Conflict Theory
- Gender Role Theory
- Transactional coping theory
- Theory of Self Identity Development

C. Related Empirical studies



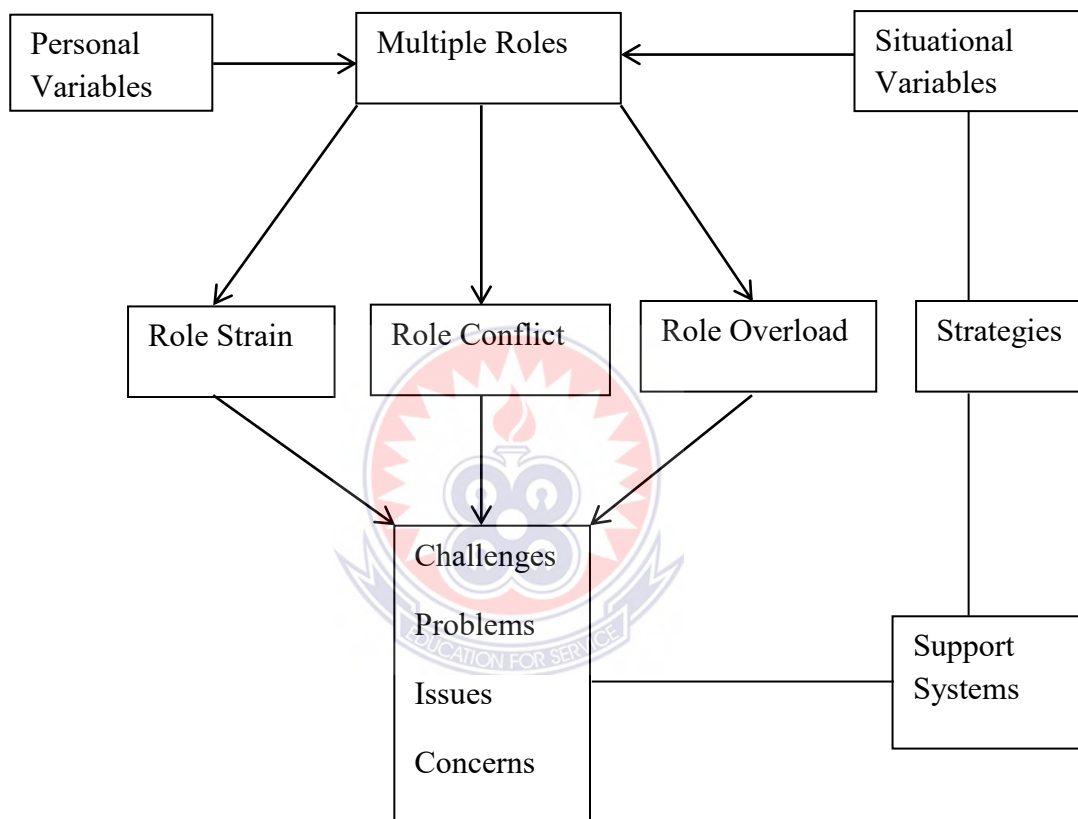
2.1 Conceptual Framework

According to Malone (1998) the steady increase in the desire of a number of women to enter professional and managerial occupations, their quest for higher education and the tendency for professional women to develop and maintain a marriage and family life have led to the performance of multiple roles by lots of women.

Personal and situational variables influence the multiple roles women experience in life and work. In performing their multiple roles women may experience role strain, role conflict, or role overload. These elements present

challenges, problems, issues, and concerns for women. Personal strategies, Support systems and management strategies are used to address the challenges, problems, issues, and concerns.

Figure 2.1 Women Inter-role Conflict Model



Source: Malone (1998)

In linking the model to this research, attending to personal demands as well as family obligations, or social obligations leads to the performance of multiple roles and this tend to be extremely difficult. Women therefore need to put in place the appropriate strategies coupled with the help of the family and society in other to handle the challenges, problems and issues therein. All these climaxes into role

conflicts and role strains and role overloads thus presenting gargantuan challenges such as attending lectures, meeting deadlines for assignments, childcare, domestic chores, learning, and examination to the student nursing mother. The support from the house, workplace and the society at large for nursing mothers will determine the extent to which the student mother will be able to cope with the multiple roles. This model is important to the study as it presents a broader picture of the experiences of nursing mothers who are pursuing further education.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The education of girls on the African continent has improved significantly. As pointed by Randell, et al. (2009), gender gap education has reduced tremendously over the last decade and half due to high priorities placed on girls-child education in national, continental and international education structures, conventions, policies and laws. These include education policies, poverty reduction and economic development strategies, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) campaigns.

Education in this present-day is regarded not only as a tool for development, but also a right. Such right has been treasured and reinforced in national and international laws, conventions and protocols such as the Human Rights Act, 1998. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, for example, provides every citizen in Ghana a right to education. At the basic level, it is illegal under the Constitution for a child not to be in school. The introduction of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the establishment of the Capitation Fund in 2004 have come to strengthen this constitutional provision. The main theoretical framework for this study is the Role Conflict Theory.

2.2.1 Role Conflict Theory

Role conflict theory was identified as a possible theoretical explanation for understanding the challenges of mothers. Student mothers assume a lot of roles at the same time, being a mother, a partner, an employee and a student. Role conflict occurs when they attempt to fulfill these multiple roles. Goode (1960) introduced the term “role strain” to describe the strain that occurs when an individual tries to meet the demands of multiple roles. Sieber (1974) explored two problems that contribute to role strain: role overload and role conflict. Role overload is mainly associated with time constraints. If an individual has several roles to perform, a time barrier will be reached whereby the person will have to choose which role to perform at the expense of the other. Basically, role conflict occurs when roles are in direct conflict to each other.

According to Katz and Khan cited in Ahmad (1995) the fact that multiple roles operate at the same time should lead to greater role conflict. The expectations surrounding any of these roles can generate inter-role conflict when they involve pressures to dominate the time of the focal person and interfere with fulfilling the expectations associated with the other roles. Kumekpor (1974) cited in Beneffo (2009) found the same for women whose economic activities are not self-controlled. Thus, women in situations dictated to them by conditions, which do not take into consideration the individualities of multiples roles in motherhood, work and studies, may find it difficult to resolve their role as workers, students and mothers.

2.2.2 Gender Role Theory

Gender role theory is also considered as a potential theoretical explanation for understanding how women give meaning to their challenges of combining

motherhood and education. This is because it explains why childcare mostly falls into the domain of motherhood and hence limiting their ability to pursue activities outside of mothering. This theory proposes that society holds fixed expectations of the appropriate behavior that men and women should exhibit. Specifically, men are seen as breadwinners and women are expected to be caretakers (Judiesch & Lyness, 1999). According to this theory, given that a woman's pursuit of higher education affects her roles as a mother, those who are students may not be seen as positive as women who end their education to have children (Mottarella, Fritzsche, Whitten & Bedsole, 2009).

2.2.2 Transactional coping theory

Transactional coping theory is defined as; constantly changing intellectual and behavioral effort to manage specific external and internal demands that exceeds the resources of the person (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This theory offers useful setting for an analysis of *coping*. The theory proposes that individual's mental appraisals and coping processes are influenced interactively by a combination of personality based situational factors. They identified two broad categories of experiences that directly influence how people appraise and cope with situations;

1. Those linked to the characteristics of the individual and
2. Those linked to the characteristics of the situation.

Characteristics of the Individual - These are the elements linked to the characteristics of the individual include commitments, beliefs, and personal traits.

Situational factors – These include the originality or the predictability of the situation, the uncertainty of events, temporary factors or the ambiguity of the situation.

2.2.4 Theory of Self Identity Development

Identity is argued and interpreted in different ways across different disciplines (Hall & Burns, 2009). Social and cultural factors influence identity development (Alsup, 2006) but individuals control their identities based on their social and academic goals (Gee, 2006).

Estes (2011) argued that it was not easy for student parents to be both good students and good parents and this presented an identity problem for student parents. She suggested that identity dilemma result from losing valued attributes and their resulting valued identities (positive definitions of the self) which may include socially advised and personally defined positive identities. According to Estes, when individuals became student parents, they faced an identity dilemma because of the practical and ideological conflicts that occurred with the intersection of the student and parent identities: as student parents they could not fit the ideals of either identity.

Josselson (1987), a psychologist, conducted an intensive interview study with 60 randomly selected college-educated women to assess each woman's progress of developing her identity and her life history. Josselson identified four main classifications of female identity development styles or pathways: (a) Foreclosures, (b) Identity Achievements, (c) Moratoriums, and (d) Identity Diffusions. He emphasized however that these four pathways are not permanent and that women revise their pathways throughout their lifetimes with the understanding that their lives and identities are influenced by life experiences and choices.

Foreclosures

He explained that the lives of the Foreclosures were dominated by the effort to feel loved and cared for. Without exception, these women highlighted the closeness of their families and their need for the security they had in them. The Foreclosures

often have successful academic and work careers. The main satisfaction for this group is found in relationships, family, tradition, and moral values.

Identity Achievements

The trademark of Identity Achievements on the other hand is the balance among work, relationships, and interests. The most significant characteristic of women that he identified as being in the Identity Achievements category is individuality. These women do not describe themselves by their work neither as a mother or wife of someone. The Identity Achievement women build secure relationships, reject feelings of guilt, and seek to build self-confidence, independence, and new experiences.

The Moratorium

This stage is one of testing and searching for new identities. The women who are in this phase are passionately aware of options in their lives, but are most of the time not sure of how to make their dreams realities. As a group, anxiety and guilt are a general theme because of the difficulty in separating themselves from the identity of their families. Relationships to other people give moratoriums new identifications and they look to others for ideas on how to live in an effort to discover their identities. Consequently, these women are continually searching and they eventually develop other identities later in their lives.

Identity Diffusion group

The Identity Diffusion group is characterized by the absence of qualities. Jolsselson terms these women as floating and lost. They only become committed to events only in times of crisis. Women in this group are lowest in physiological function, ego development, and in the formation of intimate relationships but rank highest and are mostly aligned to undifferentiated sex-roles. For this group, life

experiences do not produce learning or change and this lack of structure prevents the formation of identity.

2.3 Empirical Framework

Similar research works have previously been conducted on the subject area but in different directions. Similar works have been undertaken on same problem but were targeted to the student mothers in University of Ghana (Adofo, 2013) and University of Cape Coast (Boatema, 2017) etc. The desire of the researcher is to extend this work to identifying academic challenges of nursing mothers pursuing distance education at the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi Campus and the influence of such challenges on the academic performance of students

2.3.1 Non-academic roles undertaken by student mothers

Perceived Social roles of women in the family

Formerly, gainful employment was predominantly considered as the prerogative of the husband, while the wife was seen to be responsible for the private household chores and the tasks of caring for children and the elderly. In most societies women were not allowed to work. It was the husbands whose duty was to provide all the financial assistance secured through the income earned from their employments to be used in taking care of the family (Jacobs & Schain, 2000).

In the United States of America, the National Survey of Families and Households found that time spent in female housework chores has a negative effect on their wages and that the negative relationship between housework and wages is stronger for women than for men (Noonan, 2001). Also, the Bureau of Labour Statistics (2015) discovered that on an average day, women spend more than twice as

much time preparing food and drink and doing interior cleaning, and four times as much time doing laundry as men did.

In many societies in the world, women have been endorsed for traditional roles. These roles are dictated by the societies in which they find themselves. Greenstreet (1997) made an inquiry into the Ghanaian traditional society and found that it was based on a subsistence economy in which division of labour exists between men and women. The main functions of women were to look after the home, raise children and to give regular assistance with farm works such as the planting and harvesting of crops.

The duties of women are numerous and vary from society to society. Nevertheless, there are certain domestic activities which stand out in all societies, as female role starts from dawn and end at dusk. Brydon and Chant (1993) are of the view that the core of common tasks which women everywhere are required to perform include: cooking on daily basis, housework (sweeping, cleaning and washing) and very often fetching water and fire wood.

Pierson and Cohen (1995) stated that the daily activities of women include waking up, washing dishes, heating of leftover food, hoeing, weeding, planting, collecting firewood, pounding and grinding, fetching water and lighting fire. They are also of the view that a woman's place is the home, where she is supposed to fulfill her principal responsibility to society: taking care of children and supervising their emotional and mental development until they can be independent and taking care of her husband and his needs for his ultimate headship of the nuclear family.

Current roles of women in the family

Not so many decades ago, it was pretty much expected that women, once married, would dedicate their lives to raising children and managing the home. The role of women in society has changed. Today, women also play important roles in providing additional support to the family income, whether in household farms or businesses or as wage earning employees (Katepa-Kalala, 1999). In developing countries especially, such work is likely to be essential to family survival. Because of the time constraints of women, however, their roles as care-takers of the family and as providers of family income may conflict with one another, with potentially important implications for the welfare of children (Jokes, 2000). Urbanization, industrialization, migration, liberation of women's right, awareness of right and expanding access to education have to some extent, provided new opportunities for women (Lokshin, Glinskaya & Garcia, 2000).

In the 21st century society, women have been doing the same work which was once considered exclusively for men (Smith & Apicelli, 1982). For instance, women have gone to space, joined modern revolutionary groups and armies, headed the countries administration, participated in politics, sports and games and fought at the battlefield (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1991). Women have taken over the reins of politics and war when men had failed. For example, in Vietnam, legend has it that hundred years ago, two princesses overthrew Chinese oppression for the first time in that country's history (World Bank, 1995). Again, in the seventeenth century, Jamaica Nanny of the Maroons is credited to have outwitted the British for three decades. In the Gold Coast, now Ghana, Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the queen mother of Ejisu in the Ashanti region, led the Ashantis into war (Adu, 1999) etc.

2.3.2 Education of women

Dr. Aggrey's statement, though widely used in Ghana since independence that "No race or people can rise partly as slave, and partly free. The surest way to keep a people down is to educate the men and neglect the women. If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family does not reflect women's actual involvement in higher education. The status of the Ghanaian women in formal education is shaped by socio-cultural beliefs deepened by colonial heritages. The colonial system of education was sharply skewed toward boys. Bartels (1965) reveals that when the first school for girls was established in Ghana, the aim of the missionaries who ran the school was to groom young women to become wives fit for the men they were training.

Janowitz (1976) is of the view that formal education of females broadens their horizon, make them prone to new ideas and perception and liberate them from ignorance and traditions that are not helpful. In order to help promote development of any country, it is necessary for women to have equal access to education just as men to help in the development of a nation. Women generally cannot be sufficiently developed without education and training.

Wolf (2011) identified two types of role conflict: *intra-role conflict*, referring to conflicting requirements within the same role, and *inter-role conflict*, referring to conflicting anticipations from separate roles within the same person. Intra-role conflict can arise in two ways. First, different people sometimes have inconsistent perceptions concerning the requirements and expectations that constitute a particular role. A woman's conception of being a good mother might comprise having a good job. She might also believe that providing socio-emotional support to her family is a necessary ingredient in her role as a mother.

However, some schools of thought are of the opinion that to be a good mother, a woman need to abandon her job to provide regular care for her children. Because of these opposing perceptions concerning the role of a mother, women are likely to experience intra-role conflict. Inter-role conflict arises when the requirements and expectations of one role interfere or conflict with those of another role. A mother is likely to experience conflicting roles as a mother, student and worker.

2.3.3 Motherhood and Educational Attainment

The task of combining motherhood with the demands of academic life is difficult for most women. Even though these women are still in school, they still have primary responsibilities for homework, childcare and for imparting cultural values in their children. In the absence of the mother, as it can be in a situation of a student mother, the child may feel lonely and neglected in terms of maternal control, supervision and training. This may affect the emotions of the mother while at school. Jarvis (1995) found that student mothers do not learn well as compared to those who are not mothers. These multiple concerns and roles as a mother could also interfere with studies and inhibit natural thinking.

Caldwell (1981) cited in Wardatul (2001) in his research on some of the benefits of women's education explained that, the educated mother was more likely to hear of and adopt new ideas about childcare nutrition and also take advantage of modern healthcare practices such as immunization among others. This means the education of females will go a long way to even improve the health care of the family. He refers to the results of two surveys that were carried out to arrive at the conclusion that maternal education is the single most significant determinant of child mortality. However, the demands of parenthood and studentship are not only

conflicting but stressful thereby posing great challenges to the adult learner (Roxburgh, Stephens, Toltzis & Adkins 2001:56).

A research conducted by Andres and Finlay (2004) showed that in an effort to reduce the cost of caring for babies, some mothers traded babysitting time with friends. Although they saved money they compensated with less study time by studying all night prior to examinations. Lack of sleep affected their academic performances. Sleep deficits were common with the resultant blunting of decision-making processes. Most of the entering women received less than five hours sleep per night as they were finding it difficult to maintain academic and family responsibilities simultaneously.

2.3.4 Challenges Confronting Student Nursing Mothers in Academics

When mothers decide to further their education, they do not abandon their family roles all together. In an attempt to continue performing her role as a student and mother she is confronted with many challenges. The task of merging motherhood with the demands of an academic life is difficult for most women. Even though these women are still in school, they still have primary responsibilities of taking care of the home, caring for the children and for instilling cultural values in them. In the absence of the mother as it can be in a situation of a student nursing mother, the child may feel lonely and deserted in terms of maternal control, supervision and training. This may affect the emotions of the mother while at school.

Student mothers go through a lot of physiological, economic and psychological challenges in their search for academic advancement. In an interview by Boatemaa (2017) on *the challenges and coping strategies of student mothers of the University of Cape Coast*, student mothers expressed different levels of difficulties

associated with being a mother and a student at the same time. They expressed different degrees of complications in coping with education and motherhood. Some mothers had to intermittently leave lectures to attend to their babies while others could not attend lectures due to poor health of the babies. Some of these situations prevented them from practicing exclusive breastfeeding.

A third-year married student-mother of 33 years admitted that she always get thoughts of the safety of her baby in my mind anytime she leaves him. She said her concentration is always half lost at lectures because of such thoughts and as a result, she hardly completes a full two-hour lecture. Due to doubts of her baby in safe hands, she always leaves before closing.

In the same work, a second-year married student-mother of 31 years stated that leaving her babies behind in the care of her teenage baby-assistant was not easy for her. According to her, she at times felt very much worried leaving her children behind. She was worried as to how the assistant could carry two tiny twins if both are crying and as such she always thought about them whenever she was away. Moreover, she didn't even know whether her baby-assistant was good or bad person since it was a friend who recommended her.

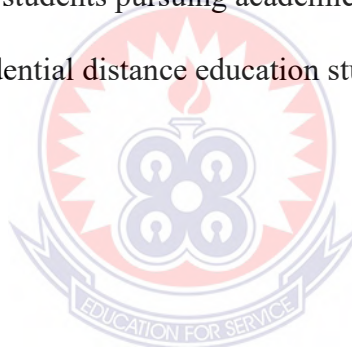
It is interesting to note that some student mothers never expected to be entangled in the web of being a student and a mother simultaneously. Some of them met this situation midstream. In the cause of administering the questionnaires for this study, a first-year married student-mother of about 28 year openly made this confession in an informal chat. She said she actually did not plan for the child. It was accidental. They (her husband and herself) were using the withdrawal method and it failed. She said she was nine months pregnant when she got admission so she

delivered at home. The baby was a month-old when she started the program and was now two months old.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the concepts of this research work, some of the works and studies undertaken on the subject matter as gathered from relevant textbooks, journals and articles. Theories from different authors are being integrated and linked to the purpose of this study. Unlike other research works, this takes into consideration;

1. Student mothers of the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi campus.
2. The study considers students pursuing academic progression in Education.
3. Extends to non-residential distance education student mothers.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is a description of the procedures to be adopted in conducting the study. The chapter is discussed under the research design of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, procedure for data collection, method of data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey research design. This is so because the work seeks to link some already existing influences and the effect/observations of the students' nursing mothers' physiological and psychosocial challenges as variables to their academic performance. This was used because survey study provides an accurate and objective description of a picture of an on-going situation or real life situation with the aim of employing data to assess the condition.

Koul (1997) stated that survey studies are conducted to gather detailed description on existing phenomenon with the intent of employing data to justify the current conditions or make more meaningful plans to improve them. Again, he explained that, in addition to analyzing, interpreting and reporting on a status for future guidance, descriptive surveys can be used to determine the adequacy of an activity by relating results to established principles.

3.2 Population

Mertens (2005) defines population as the group to whom a researcher wants to apply the results of the research. In line with this definition, the study is conducted in

the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi campus. The population of this study consisted of all student nursing mothers who were undertaking education programmes.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

In the study, only students who were nursing mothers were sampled. According to Erickson (2004), children under the age of five need more attention from their mothers especially to grow and develop well psychosocially. The choice of student mothers for this study is based on this premise. Student mothers with children under the age of five were accordingly selected for this survey. Sixty student mothers offering distance education programs in the university and with children below the age of five were identified and all of them were sampled for this research.

Purposive sampling was employed to identify sixty student-mothers on campus for this research. Patton (2002) asserts that the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for in-depth study. He further explains “Information rich” cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry. These sixty student-mothers were the only mothers with babies below the age of five, who agreed to partake in the survey. Course representatives helped in locating such student mothers by asking during lectures, which of them had babies below five years. The respondents then gave the times when they will be available to participate in the study. This technique was used because

1. Not all student-mothers offering distance education had children that needed so much attention since at some age, children can be left with caretakers easily without much worry.

2. The university had no records on pregnant or nursing student mothers offering distance education programs and hence total number of student nursing mothers could not be ascertained.

3.4 Data Collection

This section considers the fundamentals about the data that were required for analysis. It considers the source of the data needed for this research work, the method or technique that were used in acquiring the data and how they were analyzed for the purposes of this study.

3.4.1 Source of Data Collection

Data were collected from primary sources. The primary source is derived from the information provided by the student nursing mothers pursuing further studies at university. The Questionnaires were used as a primary source for data collection because the study population for this study was literates and the process required limited time for data collection, since respondents (students) needed time for their academic work as well.

3.4.2 Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaire has four sections. Section one encompasses the demographics of respondents. The rest of the sections tackled a specific research question as posed in Chapter One.

Section 1: Sought information on the social background and the demographics of the respondents which had seven items with questions on the age, program of study, number of children and marital status of respondents.

Section 2: This section hinges on the problems that student nursing mother's face during lecture times. This section has five (5) items basically of Yes-No responses. This section helps to address research question one (1)

Section 3: This section has six (6) items which encompass the problems that student nursing-mothers face with academic work at home. Questions in this sections are on a four (4) point Likert scaling ranging from; Always, Often, Occasionally to Not at all, with weighted value of 1 to 4 in terms of scoring, ranging from the lowest to the highest. This section helps provide answers to research question two (2)

Section 4: This section focuses on the effects of student-mother roles on the academic performance of student mothers. The section also consist of 5 (5) items rated on a Likert-type five-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral to Disagree and Strongly Disagree with weighted value of 1 to 5 in terms of scoring. Data collected in this section addresses research question three (3).

3.4.3 Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity and reliability tests were conducted on the instrument. An instrument is valid if it measures what it is envisioned to measure and correctly achieves the purpose for which it was designed (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). A sample of the instrument was given to my supervisors to check its content and validity. The items were critiqued and ascertained to be valid by face and content. The suggestions as given by the supervisor were used to effect the necessary changes to improve upon the instrument.

A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted using (10) student mothers drawn from the Kumasi Girls study center of the University of Education, Winneba. Choosing students from this center was basically due to the homogeneity in their

characteristics. It was discovered that some of the student mothers did not respond to some statements, perhaps, the questions did not apply to them. Such items in the questionnaire were noted and later restructured.

The data gathered from the pilot study were coded into the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS). The Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all the three sections. The yes-no section as well as the sections that were in Likert-type scale and were all above 0.70 (Section 2 = 0.836; Section 3 = 0.895 and Section 4 = 0.736). These values show that the instrument was reliable and of good quality for collecting useful data for the study as maintained by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) that if the coefficient alpha value is 0.70 and above then it is of good quality.

3.4.4 Data Collection Procedure

In order to ensure proper administration of these instruments of research, several personal visits were made to lectures of other programs in the University. These programmes were Diploma in Basic Education, Diploma in Early Childhood Education, Diploma in Management Studies, Post Diploma in Basic Education, Post Diploma in Social Studies Education, Post Diploma in Mathematics Education and Post Diploma in English Language Education. Course representatives who were ready to help in this work were trained by the researcher to serve as research assistants. The questionnaires were then administered in person to the respondents by the researcher with the help of the course representatives. The questionnaires were distributed to the course representatives according to the number of student mothers who have agreed to be part of this study. These instruments were collected from the students on the same day they are administered. The responses were then vetted to identify possible errors and also check response rate to determine the coverage of the

responses. A response rate of 100% was recorded since all the questionnaires administered were successfully retrieved.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data gathered were analyzed using frequency counts, mean, standard deviations and Cross-tabulations and presented in tables and graphs. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to obtain overall average scores. The decision on the cut-off point for the item means were based on the Gregory and Ward's (1978) formula for determining the lower and upper limits in means.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

On the definition of ethical issues Babbie (2004: p6) said "...the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of scientific inquiry." These include seeking permission, voluntary participation, and no harm to participants, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Permission was sought from the student mothers who wanted to take part in this research through their course representatives to conduct the research. Participants were furnished with accurate and complete information on the goals and procedures of the research work so that they fully understand and in make firms decision whether to participate or not. Respondents were assured that the study was strictly for academic purpose and that utmost confidentiality would be observed. In order for the researcher and others readers not to be able to identify a given response from a respondent, the questionnaires used in this study were anonymously coded and therefore could not be traced back to individual students.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on presentation, analysis and discussion of the primary data. The data presented were obtained using research methods discussed in the previous chapter. The researcher undertook a this study with the intention of identifying educational challenges faced by student mothers at the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi campus. The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges focusing on student mothers undertaking Distance Education in the University. Specifically, the study looked at the non-academic or child-care roles undertaken by student mothers and how these roles influence their academic lives.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Students

Table 4.1.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Students

	Frequency	Percent
Age Range (Years)		
20-29	35	58.3
30-39	24	40.0
40 and above	1	1.7
Total	60.0	100.0
Marital Status		
Nil	3	5.0
Married	36	60.0
Not Married	21	35.0
Total	60	100.0

	Frequency	Percent
Programme of Study		
Diploma in Basic Education	15	25.0
Diploma in Management Studies	9	15.0
Diploma in Early Childhood Education	10	16.7
Post Diploma in Basic Education	3	5.0
Post Diploma in Social Studies Education	5	8.3
Post Diploma in Mathematics Education	6	10.0
Post Diploma in English Language Education	12	20.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

Age Distribution

From table 4.1.1, it can be observed that a larger proportion of the respondents (58.3%) were within the ages of 20 and 29. This shows that most of the student mothers were young ladies who might have been married for not more than ten (10) years and are still in their childbearing age, the possible pressure of taking care of the husband and the baby together. Quite a substantial proportion of (40%) were also within the ages of 30 and 39. This shows that quite a reasonable number of women have the notion of probably having all their children before thinking of furthering their education. Only one person was beyond the age of 40 representing 1.7% of the respondents.

Marital Status of Respondents

The results from the table again show that more than half of the respondents (60%) were married. This explains that most of them had much more multiple roles to perform as wives and as students which required more commitment and devotion from them. Combining roles as mothers, wives and students definitely increases the role conflicts they are likely to encounter. 35% of the respondents were unmarried mothers. This may comprise of the “never married” and the divorced. One may think of a less conflicting role as student mothers but the burden of some of them taking care of their babies and schooling at the same time, coupled with less support from their husbands in attending to the babies cannot be written off. Three (3) respondents, representing 5% on the other hand did not specify whether they were married or not.

Programme of Study

These determined mothers desiring to achieve higher academic statuses were into different programmes including Diploma programmes in Basic Education, Management Studies and Early Childhood Education. Others are also studying Post Diploma programmes in Basic Education, Social Studies Education, Mathematics Education and English Language Education.

It could be seen from table 4.1.1 that a higher percentage of the respondents (56.7%) are taking up diploma programmes in Basic Education, Management Studies and Early Childhood Education. This supports the publication by the Statistics Division of the United Nations (2010) that women dominate the teaching profession at the primary level. One possible reason for this occurrence is the fact that taking care of younger children in nursery and primary school is basically seen as a derivative of motherhood and therefore a traditional birthright of women. An

appreciable percentage of them are also upgrading their academic status to fit into the ever growing economy. This is evident as a combined total of 43.3% of the respondents are undertaking post diploma programmes in Basic Education, Social Studies Education, Mathematics Education as well as English Language Education.

Table 4.1.2: Number of Children-Marital Status Cross Tabulation

Marital Status	Number of Children		Total (%)
	1-2 (%)	3-4 (%)	
Nil	3 (5)	0 (0.00)	3 (5)
Married	16 (26.7)	20 (33.3)	36 (60)
Not Married	7 (11.7)	14 (23.3)	21 (35)
Total	26 (43.4)	34 (56.6)	60 (100)

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

The table above show a cross tabulation of the number of children per marital status of respondents. It could be seen that 26 respondents had between 1 and 2 children representing 43.4% of total respondents while a majority of 56.6% had either 3 or 4 children. This shows that majority of the student mothers had more children to take care of in the midst of their academic works which obviously will have extra burden on them as far as their academics are concerned. *Ceteris paribus*, these students will be confronted with more challenges in the process of blending motherhood with education.

To conclude, out of the majority (34 out of 60) of the respondent who have more children to take care of [three (3) or four (4) children], a higher proportion of them (20) representing 58.8% are married while 14 respondents (41.2%) are not

married. Efforts by such student mothers to manage child care, domestic activities (including taking care of the husband) and academic work could have profound effect on their ability to perform other socially expected roles. An important factor that could influence married women's access to further education is their husband's expectations, approval and attitude. The husband's attitude could influence the level of support he will be willing to offer. In as much as attending to husbands, taking care of the babies and furthering education obvious affects the academic work of student nursing mothers, some husbands also provide enormous assistance and support to their wives in the midst of the multiple roles they perform as student mothers.

Consequently, out of the number of respondents who have between 1 - 2 children (26 out of 60 respondents), a greater number of them (16) representing 61.5% of them are married. This further explains that even with the lower proportion of respondents with few numbers of children, most of them are married and hence will have quite a number of roles to perform in the home as in taking care of the husband and the children at the same time. Just 7, representing 26.9% are not married. All the three (3) respondents who did not indicate their marital status had either one or two children, constituting 11.5%

4.2 Presentation and Discussion of Research Question One:

Challenges Student Nursing Mothers encounter during Tutorials

In examining the challenges that student mothers go through at lectures, questions on some of these challenges ranging from whether the University authorities permit mothers to enter the lecture hall with your baby, whether there is any facility provided by the University to keep babies for nursing mothers, whether they intermittently cut lectures to attend to your child, whether they feel

psychologically sound at lecture time in the absence of their child and lastly if they are capable of writing comprehensive lecture notes with their child around them at the lecture hall were asked.

Table 4.2: Challenges Student Nursing Mothers Face at Lectures

S/N	Question	Response	
		Yes Frequency (%)	No Frequency (%)
1.	Do the university authorities permit you to enter lecture halls with your baby?	6 (10%)	54 (90%)
2.	Is there any facility provided by the university to keep babies for nursing mothers?	7 (11.7%)	53 (88.3%)
3.	Are you able to have continuous lectures without stopping to attend to your child?	20 (33.3%)	40 (66.7)
4.	Do you feel psychologically sound at lecture time in the absence of your child?	29 (48.3%)	31 (51.7)
5.	Are you capable of writing a comprehensive lecture notes with your child around you at the lecture hall?	6 (10%)	54 (90%)
Overall Score		(22.66%)	(77.34%)

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

The results show that student mothers face lots of challenges with lectures. Majority of the students 90% (n = 54) agreed that the university doesn't allow them to enter into the lecture halls with their babies. This could be a school policy, lecturer based or inconvenience to colleague students with only 10% (n = 6) supporting the

claim that they are permitted to enter the lecture halls with their babies. 53 respondents representing 88.3% said the school does not have facilities provided to keep babies for nursing mothers. A minor proportion of 11.7% rather thinks there are facilities that help keep babies for nursing mothers. This could be as a result of high expectation of student mothers from the university in making necessary provisions that can relieve them of baby care during lectures. On whether they intermittently cut lectures to attend to their babies, 66.7% (n = 40) of the mothers consented to this question with few mothers having this difficulty.

Quite a reasonable percentage of student mothers are seen not to have problems with lectures in the absence of their babies. A little above half of the respondents (51.7%) didn't feel any problem psychologically when their babies are not around them at lectures. A helping hand is certainly something they could really use during lecture times. In the same way, 90% of the respondents had problems with writing comprehensive lecture notes with their babies around them at the lecture hall with only 10% of them being able to manage writing lecture notes with their babies around them. This goes a long way to explain the difficulties student mothers go through at lectures with their babies around. In conclusion, it could be observed from the overall score that majority of 77.34% responded in the negative way to the above listed challenges from both the school and the mothers, with only 22.66% responding in the positive way.

4.3 Presentation and Discussion of Research Question Two:

Challenges Student Nursing Mothers Face with Academic Work at Home

In response to research question 2, some of the challenges that student mothers face with their academic work in the home were asked for the purpose to

fully appreciate the challenges they face in pursuing further studies. Student mothers were asked how often they encountered certain challenges with their academic work in the home; babies crying and disturbing mothers when they are writing and typing assignment at home, breastfeeding their babies alongside writing or typing assignment at home, babies defacing or tearing solved assignments on hardcopies, having someone to help with babies when learning or writing assignments, children crying when writing and typing assignment at home, changing baby diapers and washing baby clothes impeding writing assignments and being able to keep babies away from their academic materials. The responses are graduated on a 4 Likert-type scale. The scales are labeled as follows: Always = 1; Often = 2; Occasionally = 3; Not at all = 4. Given this and with the statistical analyses in means and standard deviations, mean responses falling on a particular scale or close to the scale (i.e. +.5 or -.5 range), becomes the overriding response.

Table 4.3a: Challenges Student Nursing Mothers Face with Academic Work at Home

Question	Always Count (%)	Often Count (%)	Occasionally Count (%)	Not at All Count (%)
10. My child cries to disturb me when writing and typing assignment at home.	40 (66.7%)	14 (23.3%)	4 (6.7%)	2 (3.3%)
11. I breastfeeds my child alongside writing or typing assignment at home	11 (18.3%)	20 (33.3%)	19 (31.7%)	10 (16.7%)

Question	Always Count (%)	Often Count (%)	Occasionally Count (%)	Not at All Count (%)
12. My baby defaces or tears academic materials and solved assignments on hardcopies	14 (23.3%)	33 (55.0%)	7 (11.7%)	5 (8.3%)
13. I attend to the baby while learning or writing assignments without any help from anyone	33 (55.0%)	13 (21.7%)	7 (11.7%)	7 (11.7%)
14. Changing baby diapers and washing clothes impede studying and writing assignments	17 (28.3%)	24 (40.0%)	10 (16.7%)	9 (15.0%)
15. I get tired and not able to study well due to family and child-care roles at home.	14 (23.3%)	19 (31.7%)	18 (30.0%)	9 (15.0%)
Overall Score	(35.8%)	(34.2%)	(18.1%)	(11.7%)

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

Table 4.3a shows the frequency of the opinion of the respondents per each item on the challenges of student nursing mothers with academic work in the house. A majority of 90% of the respondents indicated that their children always or often cry to disturb them when they are writing or typing assignment at home while as low as 10% of them said they do not encounter this challenge once a while or never at all. A combined percentage of 51.6% indicated that most of the time (always/often), they

have to breastfeed their children alongside writing or typing assignments at home while 48.4% of them encountered this issue less often. 47 respondents (78.3%) most of the time had their babies defacing or tearing their academic materials and solved assignment on hardcopies with 12 respondents representing 20% encountering this challenge less frequently or not at all.

Most of the respondents (76.7%) do not get help with their babies when learning at home and have to combine taking care of the baby with learning simultaneously. Changing baby diapers and washing clothes recorded 68.3% responses as a challenge that either always happened or happened often while 31.5% responses suggested otherwise. Out of the 60 respondents, 33 of them (55%) said they always or more often get tired and not able to study well due to the family and child-care roles they perform at home while 27 of them (45%) face this challenge less often or never encounters this at all. In conclusion, 70% (35.8% and 34.2%) of the student mothers indicated that they encounter these challenges most of the time (always/often) with 29.8% of them encountering them less often or never at all.

Table 4.3b: Challenges Student Nursing Mothers Face with Academic Work at Home

S/N	Question	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
10	My child cries to disturb me when writing and typing assignment at home.	1.47	0.769	Always
11	I breastfeeding my baby alongside writing assignments	2.47	0.982	Often
12	My baby defaces or tears academic materials and solved assignments on hardcopies	2.05	0.839	Often
13	I attend to the baby while learning or writing assignments without any help from anyone	1.80	1.054	Often
14	Changing baby diapers and washing clothes impede studying and writing assignments	2.18	1.017	Often
15	I get tired and not able to study well due to family and child-care roles at home.	2.37	1.008	Often
Overall Score		2.1	0.945	

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

Table 4.3b above shows the mean and standard deviation per each item on the challenges of student nursing mothers with academic work in the house. Items on breastfeeding babies alongside writing assignments; babies defacing or tearing solved assignments on hardcopies; attending to the baby while learning or writing assignments without any help from anyone; whether changing baby diapers and

washing baby cloths impedes writing of assignments and getting tired and not able to study well due to family and child-care roles at home obtained a mean value approximately equal to 2.00 (i.e. to the nearest whole number). This means that more often, mothers are confronted with such challenges in the house. The table also shows that the children of student-mothers always cry when writing and typing assignment at home (with mean value approximately 1.00). In conclusion, the mean of means of 2.1 with a standard deviation of 0.945 shows that student-mothers encounter these enumerated challenges more *often*.

4.4 Presentation and Discussion of Research Question Three:

Influences of Child-related Roles on Academic Performance of Mothers

In response to research question 3, some of the effects of student-mother roles on the academic performance of respondents were asked. Student mothers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed to some items concerning their academic work and performance. Questions on not being able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities perform as a nursing mothers, not being able to get enough time to learn or attend group studies, not able to prepare well for examinations, whether activities as a student mothers always make them attend lectures late and finally whether student-mother roles performed are responsible for their bad grades. The responses are graduated on a 5 Likert-type scale. The scales are labeled as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5. Given this and with the statistical analyses in means and standard deviations, mean responses falling on a particular scale or close to the scale (i.e. ± 0.5 or ± 0.5 range), becomes the overriding response.

Table 4.4a: Influences of student-mother roles on academic performance

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)
16. I am not able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities I perform as a nursing mother	1 (1.7%)	6 (10.0%)	20 (33.3%)	33 (55.0%)
17. As a student mother I am not able to get enough time to learn or attend group studies	18 (30.0%)	9 (15%)	17 (28.3%)	16 (26.7%)
18. As a student mother I am not able to prepare well for examinations.	2 (3.3%)	3 (5.0%)	19 (31.7)	36 (60.0%)
19. My activities as a student mother make me attend lectures late.	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.7%)	17 (28.3%)	39 (65.0%)
20. The student-mother roles I perform are responsible for my bad grades.	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.7%)	14 (23.3%)	44 (73.3%)
Overall Score	(7.34%)	(7.68%)	(28.98%)	(56%)

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

Table 4.4a shows the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree to the listed challenges they face with their performance. A combined majority of 88.3% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they are not able to attend lectures

regularly because of the many non-academic activities they perform as nursing mothers while 11.7% of them disagreed with this challenge. 55.0% indicated that they agreed/strongly agreed that they are not able to get enough time to study or attend group discussions as student mothers while 45.0% of them disagreed to this challenge. 55 respondents (91.7%) agreed/strongly agreed that they are not able to prepare well for examinations and 5 respondents representing 8.3% also disagreed with that. Most of the respondents (93.3%) agreed/strongly agreed that activities they perform at home as student mothers make them attend lectures late while 6.7% think otherwise. Consequently, 58 out of the 60 respondents representing 96.6% agree/strongly agreed that the student-mother roles they perform are responsible for their bad grades in school. To conclude, 84.98% (28.98% and 56%) of the student mothers indicated that they agreed/strongly agreed to the extent of these challenges on their academic performance with 15.02% of them thinking otherwise.

Table 4.4b: Influences of student-mother roles on academic performance

S/N	Questions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
16	I am not able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities I perform as a nursing mother	3.42	0.743	Agree
17	As a student mother I am not able to get enough time to learn or attend group studies	2.52	1.186	Disagree

S/N	Questions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
18	As a student mother I am not able to prepare well for examinations.	3.48	0.748	Agree
19	My activities as a student mother make me attend lectures late.	3.58	0.619	Strongly Agree
20	The student-mother roles I perform are responsible for my bad grades.	3.68	0.596	Strongly Agree
Overall Score		3.34	0.778	Agree

Source: Field Survey, Obeng Peter (2018)

From table 4.4b, it is evident that student mothers only disagreed (Mean = 2.52; Std. D = 1.186) to them not getting enough time to learn or attend group studies. This explains the determination in them wanting to make it higher in education despite the challenges they encounter. The table again reveals that the respondents agree that they are not able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities they perform as nursing mothers and hence they are not able to prepare well for examinations. Dallas (1998) found out that undergraduate studies, especially, are time structured and inflexible, such that a woman would have to attend classes when they are offered and not when they fit into her day. Harrison (2008) also explained that the stress of combining numerous activities could cause most student mothers to be absent themselves from lectures and tutorials.

Owing to the response above, it is therefore not surprising that the respondents strongly agreed that their activities as student-mothers always make them attend lectures late and that consequently the student-mother roles they perform are

responsible for their bad grades with very high means of 3.58 and 3.68 respectively (Approximately 4 – Strongly Agree). In order to appreciate the influence of non-academic activities on academic lives of the student mothers, the response for the final question provided the highest mean score of 3.68 with Standard Deviation of 0.596 to give an overall combined rating of 96.6% influence. To conclude, a mean of means of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.778 indicates that student-mothers *agreed* to the extent of the enumerated challenges they encounter.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the challenges that student mothers face in their academic work, focusing on the University of Education, Winneba, Kumasi campus. Specifically, the study looked at the child-care roles undertaken by student mothers and how these roles influence their ability to study in the home, how they cope with lectures and how their academic performance is affected by these roles.

Current trend of life has made it a must for women to also go through formal educational system and work to support their husbands in taking care of the home financially, as well as taking care of their families. Despite the important roles that higher formal education plays in the lives of women, their gender roles and modern life styles have made it extremely challenging for women to have access to higher formal education. This chapter of the study discusses the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for policy making and professional practice. A suggestion for further research has also been provided in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

On the challenges student mothers face at lectures, research question one; it was found that most of the student mothers (90%) have indicated that the university authorities do not permit them to enter the lecture halls with their babies and also that they are not able to write comprehensive lecture notes with their babies around them. 88.3% of them have also indicated that there are no facilities provided by the university to keep babies for them while 51.7% do not feel psychologically sound at lectures in the absence of their babies. A significant percentage of 66.7% of them also

cut lectures intermittently to attend to their babies. This explains that student mothers face all these challenges in high percentages with the least being 51.7% and the highest of as much as 90%. On the whole, 77.34% responded negatively to all the challenges indicating the enumerated challenges were really problems to them.

On the challenges that student mothers face at home, about 40 (66.7%) of the 60 respondents held the notion that their babies cry to disturb them when they are studying at home or writing assignments. With a mean of 1.47 and standard deviation of 0.769, the respondents agreed that this problem *always* happens and this affects their academic activities in the home. Challenges concerning breastfeeding babies being an obstacle to studying and writing assignments in the home, babies defacing and tearing assignments and education materials in the home, attending to babies without any help, changing diapers and washing clothes when they have to study in the home as well as getting tired and not able to study well due to family and childcare roles at home with means and standard deviations of (Mean=2.47; Std. D=0.982), (Mean=2.05; Std. D=0.839), (Mean = 1.80; Std. D = 1.054), (Mean=2.18; Std. D=1.017) and (Mean=2.37; Std. D=1.008) respectively, the respondents are in tandem that this problem *often* happen. This is evident with an overall mean of 2.1 with standard deviation of 0.945.

With respect to the influences of student mothers' academic pursuits on their academic performance, about 55% of the respondents with mean=3.42 and Std. D=0.743, *agreed* that they were not able to attend lectures regularly because of the non-academic activities they perform as nursing mothers. With a mean of 2.52 and standard deviation of 1.186, the respondents *disagreed* to the statement that they do not get enough time to learn or attend group studies. However, in response to the challenges of not able to prepare well examinations, activities as student mothers

making them attend lectures late and their roles as student mothers being responsible for their bad grades in school, means and standard deviations of (Mean=3.48; Std. D=0.748), (Mean=3.58; Std. D=0.619) and (Mean=3.8; Std. D=0.596) proved that mothers either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* to the existence of these challenges in their academic work. The highest of all the means (3.8) with standard deviation of 0.596 showed that the student mothers strongly agree that their duties as student mothers are responsible for the bad grades they obtain in school. This is supported by an overall mean of 3.34 with standard deviation of 0.778, indicating that the respondents *agreed* to the challenges listed.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made:

5.2.1 Problems Student Nursing Mothers Encounter during Lectures

In general, it could be observed that student mothers face lots of challenges at lectures. Majority of the students agreed that the university doesn't allow them to enter into the lecture halls with their babies; the school does not have facilities provided to keep babies for nursing mothers; student mothers intermittently cut lectures to attend to their babies and mothers had problems with writing comprehensive lecture notes with their babies around them at the lecture hall. About half of the respondents are seen not to have problems with lectures in the absence of their babies.

5.2.2 Problems Student Nursing Mothers face with Academic work at home

The study identified the following as the problems that student-mothers face with academic work at home; breastfeeding babies alongside writing assignments; babies defacing or tearing solved assignments on hardcopies; mothers not getting help with the babies; changing baby diapers and washing baby cloths impedes writing of assignments; difficulty in keeping babies away from academic materials; children of student mothers always cry when they writing and typing assignment at home; sickness of their babies had greater impact on their studies in the house; breastfeeding of babies had greater influence on their studies in the house and a large section of them attributing their inability to study well in the house to tiredness. On the average, the student mothers indicated that they encountered the challenges more *often*.

5.2.3 Influences of Student-mother roles on Academic Performance

Student mothers only disagreed to them not getting enough time to learn or attend group studies. This explains the determination in them wanting to make it higher in education despite the challenges they encounter. It is in this vein that Williams (2007) added that choosing to become a mother means one should be well motivated to get to the next step on the academic ladder. The study revealed the academic performance of student mothers are influenced due to the following reasons; they are not able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities they perform as nursing mothers; they are not able to prepare well for examinations; their activities as student-mothers always make them attend lectures late and that the student-mother roles they perform are responsible for their bad grades in school. It is in the light of this challenge that Bobbie (2008) admitted that the overburdening household chores women engage in results in poor academic

performance. On the average, the respondents *agreed* that their student-mother roles affect their academic performance

5.3 Recommendations

This study ends up with the following recommendations;

The university authorities and lecturers should ensure that enough is done to make education life in school for nursing mothers and student-mothers more flexible and relaxed to accommodate the pressures in combining academic work with motherhood. Again husbands/partners of student mothers as well as other aids and relatives, should provide maximum support morally, psychologically and physically in ensuring successful education of the student mother. Other recommendations include;

1. As 76.7% of student mothers either get little or no help at all with their babies when learning or writing assignments while 90% of them are not able to write comprehensive lecture notes with their babies around them, husbands/partners, close relatives or care-takers should give their full support to the student mothers and provide a helping hands in taking care of the home and the babies in order to reduce the daily schedule and roles of student mothers to help them get time for their academic work as well.
2. Guidance and counseling on how to manage academics with family responsibilities is very much needed to help student mothers. As part of their orientation programme, the counseling center of the University should provide extensive counseling services to all the student mothers in order to make them know the challenges ahead of them and the strategies they need to take in order to minimize the adverse effects. This is very much needed because 51.7%

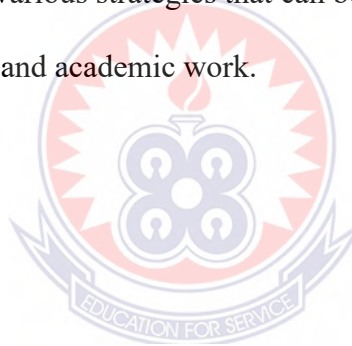
of mothers do not feel psychologically sound at lectures in the absence of their babies.

3. In order to save the student-mothers from the overpowering challenges they face, the University should make provisions for a center or rooms attached to some lectures halls where student mothers can intermittently keep their babies during lecture times or attend to them when the need for breastfeeding arises. This is important especially when 90% of mothers say the university does not permit them to enter lecture halls with their babies while 88.3% see the need for facilities to be provided to keep babies
4. Lecturers should also consider student mothers when giving loads of assignments to their students. Student mothers can be given special assignments that factor in the numerous roles they perform at home. Their burdens should be lessened a bit so that they can manage both motherhood and academic work efficiently.
5. The University must annually obtain the data of pregnant and student mothers by indicating a section on the admission form of applicants. This data is needed in assessing and developing a policy guideline with respect to child-care practices on campus and the welfare of student mothers and their babies.
6. Last but not least, the determination of the student mother to be able to make in the midst of all their challenges is very vital. From the research, 78.3% of the respondents complained that their babies most often or always deface or tear their academic materials and assignments. Student mothers should be able to blend motherhood with academic work effectively and efficiently to achieve the best possible results. Academic materials should be well kept away from the reach of their children and they should also be able to program

their time well in order to get ample time to study in the home and also to attend to their babies.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Studies

This study focused on student mothers undertaking the distance education mode at the University of Education, Winneba, Kumasi campus. Further studies can be conducted in other universities running programmes on the distance education mode, taking into consideration a much larger sample involving more programs in the university, to substantiate the findings of this study and to ensure their ability to be generalized. Finally, further research should focus on the welfare of children of student-mothers and the various strategies that can be employed by student mothers in coping with motherhood and academic work.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, KUMASI CAMPUS

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHALLENGES OF STUDENT NURSING MOTHERS IN
ACADEMIC WORK IN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA, KUMASI
CAMPUS.**

You are specifically selected from the school population for this survey. The results will help to assess the challenges of student nursing mothers on academic work in University of Education, Winneba Kumasi campus. Please provide the best response as apply. You will not be identified by name. All the information you shall provide will be treated as strictly confidential. Thank you

SECTION 1: STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick where appropriate [√]

1. Age: 20 – 29 years [] 30 – 39 years [] 40 and above []
2. Program of study.....
3. Number of children: 1 – 2 [] 3 – 4 [] More than 4 []
4. Marital Status: Married [] Not Married []

**SECTION 2: PROBLEMS STUDENT NURSING MOTHERS ENCOUNTER
DURING LECTURES**

Please tick as appropriate [√]

5. Do the University authorities permit you to enter the lecture hall with your baby?
Yes [] No []

6. Is there any facility provided by the University to keep babies for nursing mothers?

Yes No

7. Are you able to have continuous lectures without stopping to attend to your child?

Yes No

8. Do you feel psychologically sound at lecture time in the absence of your child?

Yes No

9. Are you capable of writing a comprehensive lecture notes with your child around you at the lecture hall?

Yes No

SECTION 3: PROBLEMS STUDENT NURSING MOTHERS FACE WITH ACADEMIC WORK AT HOME

Please Tick as appropriate [✓]

	STATEMENT	Always	Often	Occasionally	Not at All
10.	My child cries to disturb me when writing and typing assignment at home.				
11.	I breastfeeds my child alongside writing or typing assignment at home.				
12.	My baby defaces or tears academic materials and solved assignments on hardcopies.				
13.	I attend to the baby while learning or writing assignments without any help from anyone				
14.	Changing baby diapers and washing baby clothes impedes studying and writing assignments				

15.	I get tired and not able to study well due to family and child-care roles at home					
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SECTION 4: INFLUENCE OF STUDENT-MOTHER ROLES ON ACADEMIC WORK OF STUDENT NURSING MOTHERS

Please tick (✓) as appropriate

	STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	I am not able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities I perform as a nursing mother					
17.	As a student mother I am not able to get enough time to learn or attend group studies					
18.	As a student mother I am not able to prepare well for examinations.					
19.	My activities as a student mother make me attend lectures late.					
20.	The student-mother roles I perform are responsible for my bad grades.					

APPENDIX 2**Statistics**

	My child cries to disturb me when writing and typing assignment at home	I breastfeeds my child alongside writing or typing assignment at home.	My baby defaces or tear solved assignments on hardcopies	I attend to the baby while learning or writing assignments without any help from anyone	Changing baby diapers and washing baby clothes impedes writing assignments	I get tired and not able to study well due to family and child-care roles at home
Valid	60	60	59	60	60	60
Missing	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mean	1.47	2.47	2.05	1.80	2.18	2.37
Std. Deviation	.769	.982	.839	1.054	1.017	1.008

Statistics

	I am not able to attend lectures regularly because of the many non-academic activities I perform as a nursing mother	As a student mother I am not able to get enough time to learn or attend group studies	As a student mother I am not able to prepare well for examinations.	My activities as a student mother always make me attend lectures late.	The student-mother roles I perform are responsible for my bad grades.
Valid	60	60	60	60	60
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.42	2.52	3.48	3.58	3.68
Std. Deviation	.743	1.186	.748	.619	.596