

ASSESSMENT OF COPING STRATEGIES OF STUDENT NURSING MOTHERS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

The study centred on assessment of coping strategies of student nursing mothers in tertiary institutions and their academic performance in north-west. The researcher identified two research questions and hypotheses among which include to identify the challenges faced by student nursing mothers in tertiary institutions. To find out how student nursing mothers cope with the challenges. What are the challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic activities, child care, and economic situation? How do students nursing mothers cope with these challenges? There is no significant difference on the challenges confronting student nursing mothers in academic activities, child care, and economic situation. There is no significant difference on the remedies of student nursing mothers in coping challenges. Ex-post Facto design was used. The population of the study comprised of all student nursing mothers in the tertiary institution the total population is six thousand and thirty five (6,035). Purposive samples were used to sample seven hundred students in the Colleges of Education. The findings showed that there are significant challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities in the tertiary in institutions, in North West. Finding also showed that there are significant strategies for student nursing mothers in coping to academic activities in tertiary institutions in the North West. The study conclude that student nursing mothers in the pursuit of academic activities in the tertiary institutions face significant challenges and there quite many ways of remedies that student nursing mothers can use in order to cope with these challenges in academic activities, child care and economic situation. The study recommend among include, out of many challenges confronting student nursing mothers in their academic activities and economic situation family members, pare/its, neighbors.

Keywords: *Coping strategies, Student, Nursing mothers, Tertiary institutions, Academic performance*

Introduction

The importance of potentials for economic empowerment, for better livelihood and social development postulated that the educational system of any society is an elaborate social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons certain skills and attitudes that are adjudged to be useful and desirable in the society. As a result of the necessity for education, there has been the view (hat one who ceases to learn ceases to exist although the one may be living. This is because it means being in the world and at the same time with the world. Thus, one who exists has attributes of transcending, discerning, communicating and participating with others who exists whereas one who is merely living does not possess these critical attributes. The ideas above are indications that education is important for men and women alike. However, in the traditional society, it is perceived that the man is the head of the family and breadwinner and so needs to be educated tor better employment and higher income.

The woman who is the heart and keeper of the home must be trained at the kitchen, marriage and housekeeping which limit the role of women. The place of the African woman is that the home, is meant for cooking and bring up children. Women were not as free as men. Also, women are tended to become economically limited because men provided money for running the home. It is thus clear that apart from the socio-cultural factors that limit women's access to further education, some economic factors could even serve as a major hindrance. This is because the woman's reproductive roles at home as the mother and home keeper is not quantified thus limiting her ability to raise enough money to pursue further education. The recent trend in the economic struggle has made it necessary for women to act as a co-breadwinner of the family and therefore must be educated to gain employment so as to earn a living. As a

result of this trend it has become necessary for women of today to be educated so that they will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to fit into the ever-growing global economic challenges. This presupposes that the traditional role of a woman in Nigeria as a full homemaker of the family cannot be applied in this era. This is because domestic and childcare responsibilities are added burden to women who compliment the family up keep in Nigeria.

Women who opt to participate in other activities outside their home, therefore 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 public life. To buttress this point, Newland, Crinc, Cox, & Millskoonce, (2014) observed that in most instances women find it difficult to combine their traditional roles in the home and official duties at their work places. They therefore assess the commitments involved in their respective works before accepting responsibilities. Goodman, (2015) also affirms that life's work is assigned according to gender, and women's work is caring, nurturing, making things right and worrying about relation[^]. Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the families and across generations. Short, (2015) noted that educated women were better able to contribute to national development and participate more effectively in the economic and political life of societies yet societal norms, traditions and economic and social circumstances make it difficult for girls to attain desired higher levels of education.

However, in Nigeria the overall level of literacy improved significantly between 1970 and 1995,' the literacy rate more than doubled from 30 percent to 64 percent. Since then the female participation in education has continually grown (Adusah-Karikari, 2016). Nevertheless, policies instituted by some universities do not favour women's access to education. In a Gender newsletter (2016) published by University of Education, Winneba, it revealed that to be eligible to be enrolled as a mature student, one has to be thirty years or older. Adusah-Karikari (2016) disagrees with this assertion since the age is no! Favourable to females, as in Nigeria; it is a known practice for women to marry at an early age. This implies that, if a woman married in her mid-twenties and wanted to enroll as a mature student at University of Education, she would have to wait for some years. Males on the other hand, tend to marry later on in life and are more likely to follow the traditional pattern of pursuing education, from secondary to university. This implies that by the time these women get the chance to enroll as matured students, they would by then start having their babies.

Much effort is now being made in Nigeria to bridge the gap between males and females to raise the status of females by the establishment of various women's groups. The education act of 1961 emphasizes the education of all children. Successive government had developed numerous policies to provide basic education for all female children (Federal Ministry of Education 2016) in supporting this, the government of Nigeria embarked upon educational reform, which targeted both male and female participation at all levels of education (Musa, 2016) In the North West there is a dramatic increase in the numbers of tertiary institutions of the past decade. This has considerably contributed to the increase in the level of education in the country.

According to Federal Ministry of Education (2016), most of the higher institutions, about 41 percent women were admitted which urged females to take advantage of improvement in flexible mode of education to various academic programs of the institutions in the past years. In their effort not to be left behind in the knowledge driven economy, women are competing with their male counterparts for places in various higher education programs. It is worth noting that despite the numerous policies and programmes and the expansion of access to tertiary education no specific efforts are being made by way of policy or programme to make the tertiary institutions accommodating for female students who give birth in the course of their studies. This is quite worrisome. Due to their reproductive responsibilities,

women have had to combine their quest for higher education with child birth. This has resulted in a phenomenon of student nursing mothers in our various higher institutions. This phenomenon has brought in its wake several challenges to student nursing mothers, considering the fact that the institution do not have facilities like lactation rooms, convenient places for the baby sitters who accompany them; while the home setting may pose other challenges that prevent the nursing mother from leaving the infants at home. The effect of the inadequate support systems in the institutions and home on the academic performance, child care and other domestic chores poses great challenges to the student nursing mothers. This study thus seeks to find out the challenges and coping strategies of student nursing mothers who combine the world of family responsibilities and academic pursuits.

Williams (2009) notes that the academic tenure clock and women's biological clocks coincide. He added that graduate school is a space and a place where real changes can begin to enact different policies, build a different community, draw on functioning and effective support systems, and make inclusiveness and diversity a reality. These changes can happen if support comes from all fronts, if graduate students -who are mothers are not the only ones making all the sacrifices, and if children and Family-life are coded in the academic as symbols of encouragement rather than problems to be managed by individual women. Hensel (2008) also argue that the verdict is clear having children is detrimental to a woman's career success. It is difficult for women to pursue academic career and family life. Academic life assumes that people have uninterrupted time. This means that, choosing to become a mother gives the appearance that a woman is unmotivated, less committed, less interested in doing what she must do to get to the next step on the ladder in life.

According to Egenti and Omoruyi (2011) the stress or trauma which student nursing mothers have to go through make them feel psychologically ill-disposed towards the programme. This has led-some of their colleagues to drop out of the programme. As mothers, they are bothered about their infants' general welfare. In addition, some have to contend with pregnancy while others nurse their new born babies alongside their studies. Some have had to put to bed in the course of their studies or even during examinations. This further increases their burden and has made some to fail their exams while some have had to even abandon their examinations. Some come late for lectures because of their marital demands or even stay away from lectures for a reasonable period as a result of home pressure or demand. All these affect their learning and level of achievement (Egenti and Omoruyi, 2011). This study seeks to find out the challenges and coping strategies adopted by student nursing mothers who combine the world of family responsibilities and academic pursuits.

Statement of the Problem

The changing role of women in the society has made it necessary for nursing mothers to combine childcare, homccare, career and studies. This implies that even though the mothers are in school, they will have certain responsibilities to fulfill at home, in spite of academic activities, child care and economic situation. The issue at stake is, do these women really neglect their family and infant welfare in their quest for knowledge; or forget about higher education entirely and focus on the old tradition of keeping the home and family? Through observation and conversation, it has been found that some female students in various tertiary institutions in North-West are nursing mothers who have left their babies in the care of other people to pursue higher education. Some even deliver in the course of their studies thus the need to combine academic work with nursing the babies. Unfortunately the institution in Nigeria does not have adequate support services for such category of students. Newland, Crinc, Cox, & Millskoonce (2014) points out how difficult it is for women to pursue academic activities and family life. Academic life assumes that people should have "uninterrupted" study time. Therefore, choosing to become a mother gives the appearance that a woman is unmotivated. Less committed, less interested in doing what she must do to get to the next step on the academic ladder. The research therefore seeks to answer the question, what are the challenges and coping strategies of student nursing mothers in tertiary institutions in the North West Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. Identify the challenges faced by student nursing mothers in tertiary institutions in the North West Nigeria
2. To find out how student nursing mothers cope with the above challenges identified in North West Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised

1. What are the challenges confronting student nursing mothers in academic activities, child care, economic situation?
2. How do student nursing mothers cope with these challenges?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are to probe the research questions at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference on the challenges confronting student nursing mothers in academic activities, child care, and economic situation.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference on the remedies of student nursing mothers in coping challenges.

Methodology

Ex-post Facto design was used. The population of the study comprised of all student nursing mothers in the tertiary institution; totaling 6,035. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 700 student nursing mothers in the Colleges of Education in the North West Nigeria. The presentations were organized according to research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question one: What are the challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, and economic situation?

The data collected in respect to research question one are as seen in table 1.

Table 1: challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, economic situation

S/N	Items	N	Df	X	SD	t-cal	Remark
1.	Lectures challenges	50	49	2.26	.694	23.017	Sig
2.	Tutorial challenges	50	49	2.14	.857	17.649	Sig
3.	Learning challenges	50	49	2.02	1.13	12.599	Sig
4.	Meeting date line for Assignment	50	49	2.28	.783	20.577	Sig
5.	Examination challenges	50	49	2.50	1.073	16.463	Sig
6.	Child care and academic Work	50	49	2.44	.674	25.564	Sig
7.	Economic situation	50	49	2.12	1.042	14.376	Sig
8.	Transportation situation	50	49	2.32	1.268	12.93	Sig

Table1 showed that challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, and economic situation Lectures challenges with a mean score of 2.36 and standard deviation of .694 while t-cal 23.017 which show significant to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Tutorial challenges, the mean score 2.14 and standard deviation of .857 while t-cal 17.649 showing significant to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Learning challenges, the mean score of 2.02 and standard deviation of 1.13while t-cal 12.599 showing significant to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Meeting date line for assignment the mean score of 2.28 and standard deviation of .783 while t-cal 20.577 showing significant to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Examination challenges, the

mean score of 2.50 and standard deviation of 1.073 while t-cal 16.463 showing significant to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Child care and academic work challenges, the mean score of 2.44 and standard deviation of .674 while t-cal 25.564 showing to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Economic situation challenges the means score of 2.12 and standard deviation 1.042 while t-cal 14.376 showing to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities. Transportation situation, the mean score of 2.32 and standard deviation of 1.268 while t-cal 12.93 showing to the challenges confronting nursing mothers in the academic activities.

The null hypotheses for the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance and the summaries are presented in Tables 2. There is no significant difference on the challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, economic situation.

The hypothesis in respect to research question one is as seen in table 2

Table 2: Significant difference on the challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, economic situation

Group	N	X	SO	DF	t-cal	R	P-value
Challenges	50	2.5	1.073	49	16.46	2.50	2.19
Nursing mothers		2.02	1.13				

Table 2 showed difference on the challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, and economic situation. The table revealed coefficient of correlations (R) of 2.50 and t-cal 16.46. This means that there are significant challenges on the nursing mothers in the academic activities. 2.50 as the variance mean scores and 1.073 as the standard deviation of challenges while on nursing mothers mean score of 2.02 as the variance and standard deviation of 1.13 and p= value of 2.19 showing significant challenges among nursing mothers. The data collected in respect to research question one are as seen in table 3

Table 3: Students of nursing mothers in academic work activities

S/N	Items	N	Df	x	SD	t-cal	Remark
1	Academic work coping strategies	50	49	1.82	.918	14.00	Sig
2	Tutorial and group discussion strategies	50	49	2.48	.952	18.40	Sig
3	Termination of roles strategies	50	49	1.70	.788	15.23	Sig
4	Childcare strategies	50	49	2.92	.944	21.86	Sig
5	Financial coping strategies	50	49	2.22	.887	17.69	Sig
6	Transportation coping strategies	50	49	2.48	.814	21.53	Sig

Table 3 Showed that students of nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, economic situation can adopt these strategies with a mean score of 1.89 and standard deviation of .918 while t-cal 14.00 showing significant strategy for students nursing mothers in coping to academic work activities. Tutorial and group discussion strategies, with a mean score of 2.48 and standard deviation of .952 while t-cal 18.40 showing significant strategy for students nursing mothers in coping to academic work activities. Termination of roles strategies with mean score of 1.70 and standard deviation of .788 while t-cal 15.23 showing significant strategy for students nursing mothers in coping to academic work, Childcare strategies with mean score of 2.92 and standard deviation of .944 while t-cal 21.86 showing significant strategy for students nursing mothers in coping to academic work. Financial coping strategies with mean score of 2.22 and standard deviation of .887 while t-cal 17.69 showing significant strategy for students nursing mothers in coping to academic work. Transportation coping strategies with mean of 2.48 and

standard deviation 0.814 while t-cal 21.53 showing significant strategy for student nursing mothers in coping to academic work. The hypothesis in respect to research question one is as seen in table 4

Table 4: Coping strategies of students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, and economic situation

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	t-cal	R	P- value
Challenges	50	2.9	.944	49	21.86	3.18	2.65
Nursing mothers	2.02		1.13				

Table 4 showed difference on the coping strategies of students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, and economic situation. The table revealed coefficient of correlations (R) of 3.18 and t-cal 21.86. This means that these strategies are significant to nursing mothers in coping academic activities. 2.9 as the variance mean scores and .944 as the standard deviation of challenges while on nursing mothers mean score of 2.02 as the variance and standard deviation of 1.13 and p= value of 2.65 showing significant strategies needed to be adopted for nursing mothers in the academic activities.

Discussion of the Findings

The study was conducted to assessment of coping strategies of student nursing mothers in tertiary institutions and their academic performance in north-west. The research question asked that, what is what are the challenges confronting students nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, and economic situation? The hypothesis that states there is no significant difference on the challenges confronting student nursing mothers in academic work activities, child care, economic situation. The study found out that there was significant difference on the coping strategies of student nursing mothers in tertiary institution and their academic performance. This is in line with the findings of Musa, (2014) that stress and coping strategies have significant relationship in student nursing mothers on their academic performance in institutions of learning. This was also found in the study of Newland, Crnic, Cox, & Mills-Kooncc (2016) that coping strategies are essential for student in academic learning institutions where effective teaching and learning take place.

The research question asked, how do student nursing mothers cope with these challenges? The hypothesis that state there is no significant difference on the remedies of student nursing mothers in coping challenges. The study found that there is significant difference on the remedies of student nursing mothers in coping with academic challenges in the tertiary institutions. This finding is in line with Bencfo (2009) on the remedies toward coping challenges of adult female in the learning condition in academic institution. This was also supported by Kottasz (2010) that there quite different remedies in coping with learning situation especial in an academic environment where two basic gender are found (male and female).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of research question one and two there are many challenges confronting student nursing mothers in the pursuit of academic activities in the tertiary institutions and there quite many ways of remedies that student nursing mothers can use in order to cope with these challenges in the academic institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion the paper recommend the following

1. Out of many challenges confronting student nursing mothers in their academic activities and economic situation families members, parents, neighbors and government should create enabling opportunities that will assist in coping these challenges among student nursing mothers.

2. In a similar manner, student nursing mothers should strived to apply some of these remedies in pursuit of their academic activities in the tertiary institutions.

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