

**THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY WHO
ARE MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, Nina Doreen, declare that this is my report. I have prepared it as requested by my supervisor as partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Social Administration.

It has never been presented to any institution.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nina Doreen', positioned above a horizontal line.

Oct 3 / 2023

APPROVAL

I declare that this report was prepared under my supervision and submitted with my approval.

Signature *Imelda*

DATE *03/10/23*

MRS IMELDA SCHOLASTIC WABULEMBO

DECLARATION

I, Nina Doreen, declare that this is my report. I have prepared it as requested by my supervisor as partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Social Administration.

It has never been presented to any institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude goes to the Almighty God who has enabled me to complete this report. I thank my research supervisor Ms. Imelda Wabulembo for patient support and guidance. I also thank my husband Thomas Alinaitwe who stood with me throughout and provided supported to enable the accomplishment of the course.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my sons Matthew and Tharman.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general introduction to the topic under research which is “THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY WHO ARE MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY”.

Uganda Christian University is a registered institution of higher learning in Uganda. Students of the University are drawn from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This study focuses on the experiences of students who are mothers of young children. The study will define young children according to the age ranges stipulated in stage one and stage two of Erik Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development which lie between zero to three years of age (McLeod 2023).

During this period the young children have got basic needs such as nourishment and affection through breastfeeding as well as physical protection and hygiene. The above needs often require the presence of a primary caregiver, usually in the form a mother, to perform them appropriately. This could present a challenge due to lack of time and adequate supervision to facilitate normal growth and development.

The chapter will entail the study background, problem statement, research objectives and questions while drawing the content scope, justification, significance and conceptual framework.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

It is thought that education offers information and resources with the potential to lead to economic empowerment, improved living conditions, and social advancement. Education is the backbone of any country and is responsible for shaping a person. It plays a crucial role in technological developments and imparts various skills values and awareness (Bansal, 2020). According to Rogers (1997), education promotes national development by sustaining livelihoods and increasing economic growth and productivity. It is important to maintain and foster the growing interest of mothers in continuing their tertiary education. As a result, this enables them to utilize the advantages of social inclusion and involvement.

Most African women have been politically, socially and economically oppressed, discriminated and repressed for so long that in these societies, they still encounter many impediments as they try to ascend to different positions apart from the ones “originally” reserved for or expected from them (Uchem & Ngwa, 2014). In a typical African family setting, boys were preferentially selected to continue with their education (Becker, 2000). The girls were relegated to the roles of housework, child bearing and raising up of offspring.

There is, however, a growing trend of mothers, especially in Africa who hitherto had dropped out of school due to childbearing, child raising or otherwise, returning yet again to continue with their education (Ricco & McCollum, 2000). Despite the fact that the actual proportions of student mothers who drop out is not clear, retention remains a significant issue (Moreau & Kerner, 2012). Mothers who return to complete their studies find that they need to continuously provide care for other family members. This handicaps the mothers' ability to adequately complete their education and ultimately receive a degree resulting into resentment, loneliness and restlessness among others (Taukeni, 2014). Mothers also find challenges with the dichotomous balance between being both a student and a parent experienced through non-family-friendly lecture hours (Marandet & Wainwright, 2010).

An inclusive strategy is necessary due to the many obstacles faced by mothers with young children especially in tertiary institutions. Haggis (2018) underlined the need for mothers with young children to feel respected and to be included in classroom and participatory statistics. Ogunji, Nwajiuba, and Uwakwe (2019) discovered that mothers with children often feel alienated in the mainstream of academia owing to their incapacity to measure up with other students.

According to Lee & Myers' (2005) theory, juggling both being a mother and a student is a delicate balance. These claim that it demands endless amounts of time, patience, and energy. They have to plan their life around the needs of a developing child in addition to performing the duties assigned to them as students. Lee & Myers (2005) claim that a mother who is also a married student may have difficulties at home. Incompatible expectations cause inter-role conflict because they put more pressure on one role's performance than it can handle. Asare (1997) emphasized that a major issue is home pressure. Quartey (2003) further claims that mothers with children endure weariness, a lack of time for study and relaxation, and feelings of

guilt about not living up to their conventional role expectations at home as a result of the demands made on their time and energy. According to Lee and Myers (2005), mothers with children who are day students or non-residential students whose husbands leave the family's house and return late at night experience imbalance. Due to their unsatisfactory marital performance and the overbearing conduct of the student lady, the men frequently threaten to divorce their wives. Her vulnerable emotional state may be caused by depression as a result of this. Such a student is distracted and divides her concentration between her home life and her academic activities.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

Education is a universal human right and should be accessible to all regardless of one's cultural, social or physical obligations. It is imperative for all tertiary institutions to provide a conducive atmosphere for mothers especially those with young children to accomplish their studies. Suitable options in the form of home-schooling programs, breastfeeding infrastructure at school, remote participant among others could be provided.

Egenti and Omoruyi (2011) assert that the stress and anguish experienced by mothers with children makes them feel mentally, emotionally, and physically averse to the education program. Enrolled mothers are likely to drop out of programs as result of this. Mothers with young children are obliged to continue providing the necessary care to infants while they pursue their studies.

Whereas the number of mothers opting to return to complete their tertiary studies is on the rise, there remains a significant challenge in enabling mothers with especially young children to establish themselves in their program of study. They are faced with the dual responsibilities of performing both university and home roles, which failing to do so, likely results in low self-esteem and stigmatization from the student community and teaching staff of the institution. students.

Hence the need to carry out a study about 'the experiences of students at Uganda Christian University who are mothers of young children'.

1.3 MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To explore the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children: A case study.

1.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the different experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children.
2. To document the challenges that mothers with young children experience at UCU.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the different experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children?
- 2) What are the challenges that are faced by students at UCU who are mothers of young children?

1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The issues that surround the experience of mothers with young children in relation to their education at UCU have been areas of concern but have not been qualitatively examined.

This study intends to offer an in-depth qualitative analysis of the experiences of students who are mothers of young children, and the effects on their education and the data acquired will be of significant value.

The findings from this study will be expected to have educational value in that they will enable the participants and target population to acquire extra knowledge on the topic under investigation.

The findings can as well be used by other researchers to conduct their own research at Uganda Christian University Mukono and in different learning institutions so as to broaden their knowledge on the issue at hand. The findings will also be expected to have practical and developmental value by way of benefitting policy makers and concerned organizations to inform decision making in implementing motherhood policies targeted at mothers with young children at Uganda Christian University.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The contribution of the study will be enormous. First and foremost, the study will propose solutions to the identified challenges by the students at UCU who are mothers of young children.

The study will also make the government aware of the presence of the mothers with young children and the special needs related to their education. The study will sensitize the government, in particular the Department of Education that the inclusion policy is undermined. It will sensitize the government planning unit to plan for all types of learners including mothers with young children, so that learning could be maximized. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will assist the Ministry of Education to include programs such as life skills and education initiation programs in the school curriculum. It is envisaged that such programs would sensitize all learners (males and female) about prevention of stigma. Such programs will also, enable mothers with children to adapt and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life towards their education.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 Content

The study will be limited to finding out the experience of students at UCU who are mothers of young children.

1.8.2 Study population

Study population will focus on university mothers at UCU.

1.8.3 Geographical location

The study will be conducted at Uganda Christian University Mukono Municipality, Mukono Central Division, Mukono District. The area of study was selected because of the number of student mothers with young children in the community.

1.8.4 Time frame

The researcher aims at compiling the data and information on the experience of mothers with young children from August to October 2023 which is a period of three months.

1.9 Definition of key terms.

University mothers with young children - are mothers who are pursuing their tertiary education at UCU and are looking after infants below three years of age.

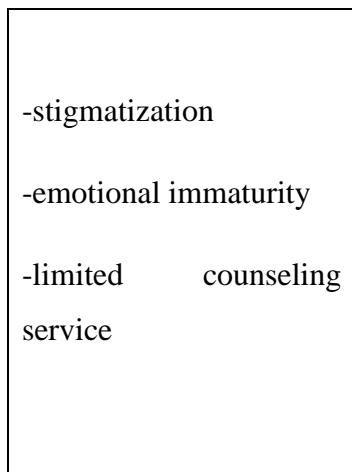
University Education- is the totality of general and specialized knowledge and skills that enable a university graduate to solve problems that he or she encounters in industry or to perform

scientific research or pedagogical work within the area of specialized knowledge that he or she has acquired (The Free Dictionary By Farlex, 2010).

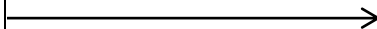
1.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent variable

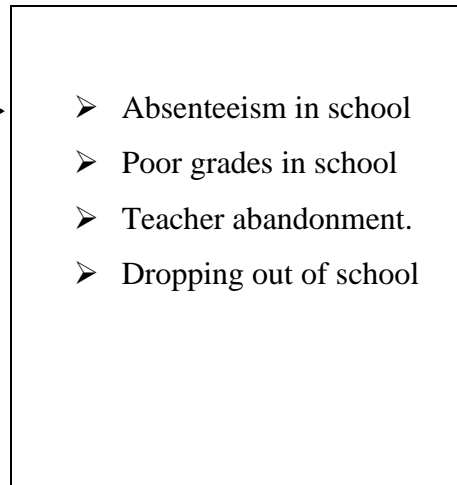
Experience of university mothers with young children



Education relation



Dependent variable



Intervening variables

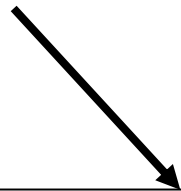
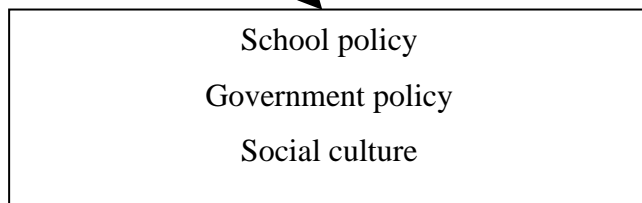


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework developed by the researcher

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter presents existing literature put forward by different scholars on the experiences of students who are mothers of young children. It also critically analyzes the challenges and solution to the challenges being experienced. Literature was reviewed objectively by starting with the theoretical concept followed by reviewing experiences of university students who are mothers of young children. Sources like newspaper articles, magazines, encyclopedia and books related to the students who are mothers of young children were used.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the Strengths Perspective Theory. The theory focuses on an individual's self-determination and strength to overcome challenges and adversity (McCashen, 2005). The theory was first formulated by Ann Weick and her colleagues at The University of Kansas in 1989 ((Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, & Kisthardt, 1989). The theory originates in social work and primarily builds on the resourcefulness, resilience and courage of the individual to effect change.

Beyond the recognition of the resources and stamina of the individual, a systematic assessment of the same is required to enable the identification of challenges and existing opportunity, acceptance of change, capacity building and collaboration (Hammond, 2010). Altogether, nine guiding principles serve as the foundation for the theory enabling individual to tell his own story based on the uniqueness of their situation (Hammond, 2010).

University students are faced with the challenges of balancing academic work with social life and extra-curricular activities. However, the situation of university students who are mothers of young children is more complex than that of the ordinary student. The intertwining nature of academic activities is quite challenging and this is escalated with motherhood responsibilities (Ogunji, Nwajiuba & Uwakwe 2019).

How they cope, make decisions and adapt can be viewed through the frame of reference provided by the strength-based perspective (Stoerkel, 2019).

2.2 Experiences of university students who are mothers of young children.

The Strength-based perspective views challenges as the inevitability of the changing nature of life which should not be resisted (Stoerkel, 2019). Accepting change, therefore is a coping mechanism. Stoerkel (2019) further suggests that the solutions come through an appreciation of the uniqueness of the experience of mothering young children while at the same time studying at the university which is the first guiding principle of the Strength-based theory.

It is estimated that the percentage of students who are mothers of young children in the sub-Saharan region is 40 per cent (World Health Organisation - WHO, 2012). University student-mothers may and will experience challenges from balancing between their new roles as mother and their education needs (Pungbangkadee, Parisunyakul & Kantaruksa, 2008), and for which they may need support.

For instance, the mothers are less likely to bond with their babies (Benson, 2004) and would most definitely benefit from supportive counseling (Wiemann, Rickert, Berenson, & Volk, 2005).

Experiences of university student mothers are also contextual and somewhat determined by the culture and society in which they live (Keller, Hilton et al 1999). In other words, motherhood may not necessarily have challenging outcomes for the student mothers in diverse cultural settings (Higginbottom, 2006; McMichael, 2013; Ngum Chi Watts, Liamputtong, & McMichael, 2015).

2.3 Challenges of university students who are mothers of young children

Wilson (1996) notes that student-mothers of young children are often subjected to discrimination and criticism from peers and lecturers leaving them feeling left out from typical institutional activities. Other challenges that they may face include but are not limited to the following:

2.3.1 Susceptibility to post-partum psychosis

Student mothers of young children will likely experience postpartum psychosis which occurs within the first three weeks of childbirth (American Mental Health 2018). This ailment is characterized by extreme confusion, memory loss and incoherence (American Mental Health

2018). A mother with young children is likely to forget what she has read and could be ill-prepared for an examination (Ogunji, Nwajiub & Uwakwe, 2019).

2.3.2 Financial Constraints

The socio-economic background of the mother of young children studying at university level could affect her ability to acquire course material and text books which could negatively impact on their performance (Read, Archer & Leatherwood, 2003).

2.3.2 Balancing motherly role with academic obligations

According to Vissick (2009), when a woman must focus all her attention on her studies, her behavior may contrast with her traditional motherhood role. This means that if she excels at her studies, her motherhood role will suffer and vice versa.

2.3.3 Timetables and scheduling

Teaching timetables may not be friendly to students who are mothers of young children (Ogunji, Nwajiub & Uwakwe, 2019). This could mean that either classes are held too early in the day or too late in the night.

Boulden (2001) alludes to the fact that balancing the demands of motherhood and school can cause many students who are mothers of young children to feel fatigued and generally stressed.

2.3.4 Poor performance leading to low self esteem

Mothers with young children could experience low self-esteem as a result of scoring poorly on coursework. Low self-esteem is a significant cause of low academic performance (Kenway, 1990) thereby resulting into a vicious cycle.

2.4 Solutions to challenges faced by university students who are mothers of young children

Counseling student mothers would provide avenues for the mothers to tell their own story and discover coping strategies on their own (Stoerkel, 2019). Tertiary student mothers with young children were encouraged to solicit for the support of domestic assistants, acquire loans to fund their study and to lobby for lactating rooms among other solutions (Adofo, 2013).

2.5 Summary of the review

This chapter reviewed various literature on the experience of student mothers with young children. The main themes that emerged from most of the literature reviewed above reveal the phenomenon of the plight of mothers of young children who are studying, especially at tertiary level.

However, studies on challenges of students at UCU who are mothers of young children are not explicitly known hence creating a gap in our body of knowledge. There was, therefore, a need to establish the experience of students who are mothers of young children at UCU and to disseminate this information.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher describes how the study will be conducted. Inclusive is the research design, the study area and the population, sampling procedures, sampling size and composition, data collection methods, data processing data analysis methods, data quality control, reliability and ethical consideration.

3.1 Research design.

The study will use mixed-method research combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches will also be used during the study. The quantitative study will be conducted using questionnaires with the group participants. The quantitative approach will be used with the objective of evaluating the relationship between the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children and their education. Qualitative study will be conducted using interviews, as key informants will provide to get an in-depth analysis about the topic, since they have the relevant knowledge about the topic understudy. The design was chosen because it generates quick self-reports from the participants under the study (Leedy & Ormorod, 2001).

3.2 Study area

The study will be conducted at Uganda Christian University Mukono Municipality, Mukono Central Division, Mukono District. The area of study was selected because of the number of student mothers with young children in the community who are able to share their experiences in relation to their education.

3.3 Study population

The study population will comprise undergraduate and postgraduate students who are mothers of young children. The study population was selected because they are students pursuing different programs and are able to share experiences that are relevant to the study.

3.4 Sample size and sample size determination

A sample is part of the target or accessible population that has been procedurally selected to represent it (Oso and Onen 2009) defines a sample as a part of the population which is studied in order to make inferences about the whole population. The sample of the study was obtained from students under different programs.

Data will be collected from a sizeable population in detailed form and for a short period of two weeks. The size of the sample will be 30 respondents this was because the study needed time to do in-depth interviews with especially key informants so as to understand the situation contextually.

Category	Access Population	Sample Population	Sampling Technique
Undergraduate	10	7	Simple random
Postgraduate	10	7	Simple random
Total	20	14	

3.5 Sampling procedure and methods

The participants interviewed will be purposively selected to share their experiences as students who are mothers of young children in relation to their education. The participants will be drawn from postgraduates and undergraduates.

The researcher will also use the snow ball sampling technique whereby key informants (respondents) assist in referring the researcher to their colleagues. Snow ball technique is the method used in research where the researcher is referred to his next respondent.

3.6 Sources of data

While carrying out the research study, both primary and secondary data will be employed by the researcher.

3.6.1 Primary source

Primary data is important for all areas of research because it is unvarnished information about the results of an experiment or observation. Primary sources provide first-hand information or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation.

3.6.2 Secondary source

Secondary data is collecting and processing data by individuals other than the researcher. For the purposes of a historical research project, secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles. Also included are reference sources like encyclopedias. This source will be used to collect data from the already written literature for example text books, journals, newspapers and periodicals.

3.7 Data collection instruments

The researcher will collect data from respondents by use of a questionnaire guide which will be used as a tool or instrument of data of data collection.

3.7.1 Questionnaire guide

A questionnaire containing a set of structured open-ended and closed-ended questions will be shared with the respondents physically or electronically. The researcher will require the respondent to choose a response from the set of questions provided by the researcher. Questions administered this way will provide greater uniformity of the responses. This approach also saves time.

3.7.2 Interview guide

The interview guide on the other hand will be used to obtain data from the key informants. The interview guide will comprise of semi structured questions which are meant to get an in-depth analysis from the respondents about the study. The use of the interview guide provide room for in depth analysis of the actual situation prevailing in the company. The information obtained from this source will be used for validation of that obtained from other primary sources.

3.7.3 Documentary review

This is another method which will be used for the purposes of collecting the secondary data to supplement the primary data. This is information collected by other researchers and it may not

have been analyzed or published. The researcher will consult various documents like the annual reports of the university which contain the relevant information about the study. Other sources included files, circulars, journals, manuals, website and pamphlets which contain relevant information for the study.

3.8 Data collection procedure

The researcher will get an introductory letter from the Faculty of Social Sciences. This letter will introduce the researcher to responding groups, and these in turn will introduce her to the study population. Informed consent will be obtained from all respondents before including them in the study. Confidentiality will be maintained. The respondents will be informed about the nature and purpose of the study and their right to participate or not to participate. Upon agreeing to participate, the respondents will be notified of the time and date when the questionnaires will be administered.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative data analysis

Data analysis will be done with the aid of Microsoft Excel which besides being user friendly, is appropriate for handling the correlations between the variables plus regressions in the study. All variables will be assigned with names and coded for computer entry. Secondly all the responses will be coded to facilitate computer data in-put. Thirdly, after data entry is completed, negatively worded scale will be recorded and assigned with new values. Fourthly, in order to get composite scores for items on a scale, target variables will be computed. Fifthly, data will be screened in order to minimize data entry errors. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable in the study.

3.9.2 Analysis of qualitative data

This will involve content analysis. Thus, qualitative data will be edited and reorganized into meaningful phrases. In other words, a thematic approach will be used to analyze qualitative data where themes, categories and patterns were identified. The recurrent themes, which emerged in relation to each guiding question from the interviews will be presented in the results with selected direct quotations from participants presented as illustrations.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researchers will exhibit a high level of ethical behavior in the course of implementing the study; Confidentiality will be maintained and anonymity of the respondents will be preserved. This will enable the respondent to freely express themselves. More so, informed consent will be obtained from all respondents before including them in the study.

3.11 Limitations and the solutions

The cost of carrying out the study will be fairly high considering that the researcher has limited resources like means of transportation and stationery for typesetting, printing and photocopying of the proposal and dissertation. This challenge will however be drawing on the researcher's savings.

The identification of respondents is expected to be fairly challenging. This is because identifying students who are mothers of young children will not be a straightforward process. Young children found at the university campus will need to assist in identifying their mothers. If the mothers are found to be students at the university, they will then qualify to be referred to as respondents. This systematic process of selection will require patience and proper planning.

The time to conduct the research study in depth might not be sufficient. This could be solved by pre-scheduling appointments with the supervisor.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a section where data collected and analyzed was presented and discussions of the results. The statistical findings below come from data collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The data was collected from a total of fourteen (14) respondents. The findings were presented in line with the objectives of the study whereby the raw data in form of questionnaires was edited and interpreted which ensured uniformity, legibility and consistency. The data-filled questionnaires were copied and analyzed by tallying and tabling.

The information was then recorded in terms of percentages. Also, interview results were coded on frequency tables which were calculated in terms of percentages and presented in this study as illustrated below.

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

4.1 Response rate

The study had a response rate of 70 percent. 9/20 were undergraduates and 5/20 were postgraduates were interviewed as indicated in table 4.1 below. The results obtained were as shown below:

Table 4.1 showing the Response Rate

Category	Target sample	Percent
Undergraduate	9/20	45
Postgraduate	5/20	25
Totals	14/20	70

Source: primary data 2023

4.2 Demographics of respondents

This section provides the data obtained that shows the cross-cutting characteristics of all respondents involved in the study for instance, age, marital status and level of education among others.

4.2.1 Age of respondents

The study respondents were from varying age groups as indicated by the data obtained in table 4.2.1 below.

Table 4.2 showing age group of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
25 - 35 years	6	43
35 - 45 years	5	36
Above 45 years	3	21
Total	14	100

Source: primary data 2023

4.2.2 Marital status of respondents

The data obtained shows that participants were from varying marital categories and these are indicated in table 4.2.2 below.

Table 4.3 showing the marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	3	21

Married	11	79
Divorced	0	0
Total	14	100

Source: primary data 2023

4.2.3 Education levels of respondents

Respondents who participated in the study were of different education levels as indicated by the data obtained in table 4.2.3 below.

Table 4.4 showing the education level of respondents

Level	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	9	64
Postgraduate	5	36
Total	14	100

Source: primary data2023

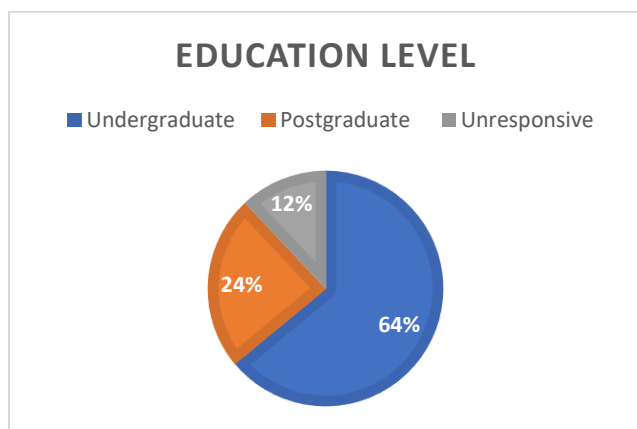


Chart 1.

4.3.THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS AT UCU WHO ARE MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

The study sought to investigate the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children. The statistics in table 4.5 below show the data obtained on this objective.

Responses were tabulated according to thematic responses made with regard to the respondent's degree of acceptance.

Table 4.5 showing the data obtained about the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children.

Thematic Response	Y		N		SH	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Stigmatization	2	14	5	36	7	50
Emotional Maturity To Handle Responsibilities	8	57	3	21	3	21
Accessibility To Counselling Services	5	36	3	21	4	29
Convenience of Time Allocated for Completion of Assignments	2	14	8	57	4	29
Adequacy of Breastfeeding and Baby Time	5	36	4	29	3	21
Supportive Educational Policies	4	29	9	64	1	7

Y=Yes, N=No, SH=Somehow

Source: Primary Data 2023

4.4 Documentation of the challenges that mothers with young children experience at UCU

The study investigated the challenges students who are mothers of young children. The responses were open-ended.

Mothers who felt emotionally immature to handle the dual responsibilities of student and mother mentioned that the tasks to perform were numerous all day long. This scenario left them emotionally drained at the end of each day. Moreover, because in most instances their partners were not readily present.

Mothers who stated that the university counselling services were not accessible mentioned that awareness about the services had not been effectively carried out. They revealed that walking up the steep incline to the Counselling Department was a hindrance to reaching out for assistance.

The time allocated for the completion of assignments was found inconvenient for the student mothers. Often, assignments required thorough research, group discussion, printing and submission of coursework amidst tight deadlines.

Mothers mentioned that the challenge with inadequate breast-feeding time was the need to stick to the recommended breastfeeding schedule. This proved difficult to adhere to amidst the different lecture schedules and non-existent lactating rooms.

4.5 Solutions to the challenges of student mothers with young children

The study also sought to investigate possible solutions to the challenges faced by student mothers with young children in school.

The University was urged to work hand-in-hand with stigmatized mothers as well as to create awareness in the student community about the dangers of stigmatization. This would reduce the levels of stigmatization.

Mother also suggested the publication of promotional materials to create awareness about counseling services and emotional support. This would improve the uptake of both medical and counselling services that would benefit the student mothers with young children.

The findings of the study were thus able to articulate the various experiences of students who are mothers of young children as well as document the challenges.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings from the data obtained on the various thematic areas of the study.

5.1 Response rate

As shown by the data obtained in the preceding section, the study had a response rate of 70 percent. 9/20 were undergraduates and 5/20 were postgraduates were interviewed as indicated in table 5.1 below.

Table 4.1 showing the Response Rate

Category	Target sample	Percent
Undergraduate	9/20	45
Postgraduate	5/20	25
Totals	14/20	70

Source: primary data 2023

According to the table above, the findings indicated a response rate of 70%. The findings also indicate that there were more undergraduate respondents with a representation of 45% than postgraduate respondents with a representation of 25%.

5.2 Demographics of respondents

5.2.1 Age of respondents

As shown by the data obtained in the preceding section, the study respondents were from varying age groups as indicated in table 5.2.1 below.

Table 5.2 showing age group of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
25 - 35 years	6	43
35 - 45 years	5	36
Above 45 years	3	21
Total	14	100

Source: primary data 2023

According to findings in the table above, it can be seen that majority of the respondents were in the age group between 25 - 35-25 years with a percentage of 43% and the minority of respondents were above 45 years with a percentage of 21%.

5.2.2 Marital status of respondents

As shown by the data obtained, the findings of the study indicated that participants were from varying marital categories and these are indicated in table 5.2.2 below.

Table 5.3 showing the marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	3	21
Married	11	79
Divorced	0	0
Total	14	100

Source: primary data 2023

According to the findings in table 4.3 above, it was revealed that majority of the respondents were married and these represented 79%. The minority were single mothers. None of the respondents were divorced.

5.2.3 Education levels of respondents

As shown by the data obtained, respondents who participated in the study were of different education levels as indicated in table 5.2.3 below.

Table 5.4 showing the education level of respondents

Level	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	9	64
Postgraduate	5	36
Total	14	100

Source: primary data2023

Given the statistics in the table above, it is evident that the majority of the respondents were of undergraduate mothers with a representation of 64% and the minority were postgraduate mothers that were represented by 36%. Graphical illustration is shown in Chart 1 below:

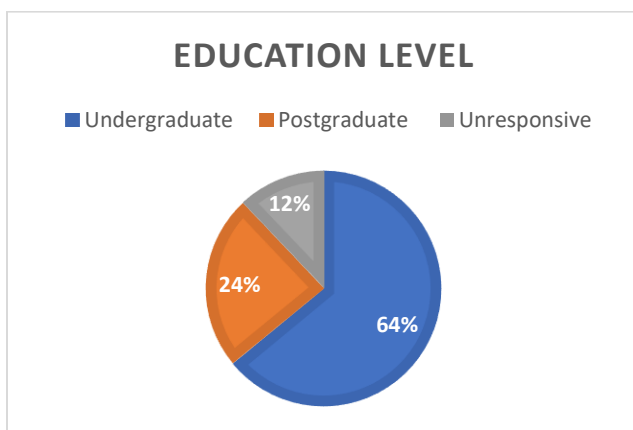


Chart 1.

5.3.THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS AT UCU WHO ARE MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

The study sought to investigate the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children as per the data obtained in the section above.

Table 5.5 showing the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children.

Thematic Response	Y		N		SH	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Stigmatization	2	14	5	36	7	50
Emotional Maturity To Handle Responsibilities	8	57	3	21	3	21
Accessibility To Counselling Services	5	36	3	21	4	29
Convenience of Time Allocated for Completion of Assignments	2	14	8	57	4	29
Adequacy of Breastfeeding and Baby Time	5	36	4	29	3	21
Supportive Educational Policies	4	29	9	64	1	7

Y=Yes, N=No, SH=Somehow

Source: Primary Data 2023

The findings of the study indicate that the majority of mothers did not feel stigmatized as mothers of young children with a representation of 36% attributable to the Christian background of the university that recognizes the role of mothers in the community.

The findings also indicate that the majority of mothers possessed the emotional maturity to handle the responsibilities of being both a student and a mother of young children with a representation of 57%.

Furthermore, mothers stated that the university counselling services were accessible with a representation of 36% with the Counselling Department being centrally located and well-resourced with staff.

The time allocated for the completion of assignments was found to be inadequate with a representation of 57%. More mothers felt pressured by the timelines required for handing in coursework.

The findings also reveal that mothers were not spending enough time breastfeeding their babies or looking after their young children. This finding was represented by a 36% statistic. This was a key finding as it bears an overall influence on the development of the young children.

Finally, the study found that the overall existing educational policies at the university were not supportive of student mothers of young children with a representation of 64%. Facilities, infrastructural designs and scheduling were not favoring the academic pursuits of the mothers for the purposes of breastfeeding and, or remote participation on a continuous basis.

5.4 Documentation of the challenges that mothers with young children experience at UCU

The study investigated the challenges students who are mothers of young children. The responses were open-ended.

Mothers who felt emotionally immature to handle the dual responsibilities of student and mother mentioned that the tasks to perform were numerous all day long. This scenario left them emotionally drained at the end of each day. Moreso because in most instances their partners were not readily present.

Mothers who stated that the university counselling services were not accessible mentioned that awareness about the services had not been effectively carried out. They revealed that walking up the steep incline to the Counselling Department was a hinderance to reaching out for assistance.

The time allocated for the completion of assignments was found inconvenient for the student mothers. Often, assignments required thorough research, group discussion, printing and submission of coursework amidst tight deadlines.

Mother mentioned that the challenge with inadequate breast-feeding time was the need to stick to the recommended breastfeeding schedule. This proved difficult to adhere to amidst the different lecture schedules and non-existent lactating rooms.

The open-ended findings indicate that mothers are indeed experiencing challenges top among which are emotional in nature requiring the intervention of counselling services to handle them well.

5.5 Solutions to the challenges of student mothers with young children

The study also sought to investigate possible solutions to the challenges faced by student mothers with young children in school.

The University was urged to work hand-in-hand with stigmatized mothers as well as to create awareness in the student community about the dangers of stigmatization. This would reduce the levels of stigmatization.

Mother also suggested the publication of promotional materials to create awareness about counseling services and emotional support. This would improve the uptake of both medical and counselling services that would benefit the student mothers with young children.

The findings of the study were thus able to articulate the various experiences of students who are mothers of young children as well as document the challenges. Key among the solutions to the challenges included collaborations between the Administration of the University and the student mothers of young children.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.0 Introductions

This chapter provides the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study. Specifically, it mentions the study findings, conclusion, recommendations, and the areas suggested for future research.

6.1 Summary of findings

6.1.1 Experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children

This study has contributed to the discovery of the experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children. The study has revealed the existence of stigmatization of student mothers thereby hindering their wellbeing at the University.

The study found that student mothers with young children are in need emotional support and require easy access to counselling services among others. Mothers wished for more opportunities to breastfeed and look after their young ones.

Lastly, the study discovered that policy-wise and infrastructure-wise, the environment was not favorable for their academic pursuit through the provision of among others lactating rooms.

6.1.2 Challenges of students at UCU who are mothers of young children

Whereas a number of the experiences shared by the student mothers in the study double as challenges faced, a significant number of mothers had a challenge with the policy framework of their dispensation. The educational policy to support their academic pursuit was not particularly user-friendly. As a result, among others, the time allocated for assignments was found too short, the infrastructure not suited for breastfeeding and counselling services sub-optimally promoted.

6.2 Conclusions

Mothers remain the primary caregivers in any community. Mothers who embark on academic pursuits are presented with unique challenges that require a delicate balancing act between their

caregiving role and the classroom. The establishment of supportive educational policies and presentation of opportunities for counselling could go a long way in creating a conducive environment for them to succeed.

6.3 Recommendations

This research serves as an eye-opener to administrators and policy makers in relation to the plight of student mothers. Interventions in the form of enabling policies and campaigns ought to be considered to facilitate the equitable academic pursuit of students who are mothers of young children.

The University could make it mandatory to provide lactating rooms or extra time for student mothers to submit assignments. The Ministry of Education could institute legislation to facilitate remote participation and assessment among others.

Further research on the subject matter could focus on exploring the differences of student mother care in a faith-based educational institution as opposed to non-faith-based educational institutions.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am **NINA DOREEN** a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work and Social Administration at Uganda Christian University. This questionnaire is designed to investigate **“THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY WHO ARE MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN.”**

I appreciate your participation in this study. Be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous and therefore any information you provide in here will be treated with strict confidentiality.

INSTRUCTIONS

Tick appropriately in the boxes provided. The information that will be given will be used for academic purposes only. Please do not write your name.

PART A

BIO - DATA

1. Your Age

- (a) 25-35 (b) 35-45
(c) above 45

2. Marital status

- (a) Single (b) Married
(c) Divorced

Others specify.....

3. Level of education

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Faculty/Department.....

PART B

Experiences of students at UCU who are mothers of young children.

1. Stigmatization of students who are mothers of young children

i. Do you feel stigmatized at UCU as a student mother of young children?

Yes

No

Somehow

ii. If not, why is this so?

.....
.....

iii. What would you recommend to prevent stigmatization of student mothers?

.....
.....

2. Emotional maturity of students who are mothers of young children

i. Do you feel emotionally mature to handle the responsibilities of being a student mother of young children?

Yes

No

Somehow

ii. If not, why is this so?

.....
.....

iii. What would you recommend to emotionally support student mothers of young children?

.....
.....

3. Accessibility to counselling services for student mothers of young children

i. Are the counselling services at UCU adequate in terms of accessibility?

Yes

No

Somehow

ii. If not, why is this so?

.....
.....

iii. What would you recommend to improve on accessibility to counselling services?

.....
.....

4. Convenience of time allocated for completion of assignments

i. As a student mother of young children do you find the time allocated for completion of assignments convenient?

Yes

No

Somehow

ii. If not, why is this so?

.....
.....

iii. What would you recommend to improve on the convenience of the allocated time?

.....
.....

5. Adequacy of Breastfeeding and baby time

i. As a student mother of young children do you spend adequate time breastfeeding and looking after your baby?

Yes

No

Somehow

ii. If not, why is this so?

.....
.....

iii. What would you recommend to improve on the breastfeeding and baby time?

.....
.....

6. Educational policies that support student mothers of young children

i. As a student mother of young children do you find the existing policies supportive of student mothers of young children?

Yes

No

Somehow

ii. If not, why is this so?

.....

.....
iii. What policies would recommend to be instituted?

.....
.....

Thank You For Your Cooperation



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

September 20th, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This is to introduce to you **NINA Doreen** Registration number **J22B15/195**, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree Social Work and Administration. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above mentioned award.

Topic: "The Experience of Students at Uganda Christian University Who Are Mother's of Young Children: A Case Study."

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,



Kasule S Kibirige
HoD, Undergraduate Studies Department
Tel: 0776711546
Email: kkibirige@ucu.ac.ug

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