AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS IN GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc.) SOCIOLOGY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this Dissertation entitled **An Analysis of the Challenges and Coping Strategies Adopted by Married Female Students in Gombe State University, Nigeria**was carried out by me in the Department of Sociology. It has not been presented or published anywhere by any person, institution or organization, or used for any previous application for a degree or other qualification. All sources of information cited have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

_____ _____

Joseph Daniel ELISHA **Date**

CERTIFICATION

This Dissertationentitled: **An Analysis of the Challenges and Coping Strategies Adopted by Married Female Students in Gombe State University, Nigeria**by Joseph Daniel Elisha meets the regulations governing the award of the Degree, of M.Sc. Sociology of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This Dissertation is most and affectionately dedicated to my wife and children.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to first and foremost appreciate theAlmighty God for His guidance and favour in my life and for being with me throughout my academic period.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the challenges and coping strategies of married female students in Gombe State University. The objectives were to examine the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University, investigate how the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University affect them and their academic performances, find out the coping strategies adopted by married female students to overcome their academic challenges and to proffer possible solutions to the challenges faced by female married students in Gombe State University. Relevant literature was reviewed in line with the study objectives and the role strain theory was adopted to explain the phenomenon studied. The study was conducted in Gombe State University, Gombe State and both the primary and secondary data were used for the study. Also, snow balling and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the process of data collections which are the questionnaire and in-depth interview. A total of 166 respondents were drawn across six (6) availablefaculties in Gombe State namely: faculty of Social Sciences, Science, Arts, Education, Medicine and Pharmacy. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) from which simple descriptive statistics was used. Based on the research conducted, it was found out that majority(20.5%) of the respondents said that pregnancy was a major challenge for them, and that they always lay complains to lecturers and seeking assistance from colleagues to work out assignments. An overwhelming majority of the respondents also revealed that they always feel bad whenever they miss a class, miss class assignments and presentationand that beingmarried and schooling affect their chances of good mothering. In addition, a significant majority of the respondents said they carried over some courses, complained of poor grades and spill over some coursesand suffered low self-esteem and poor health. The study also indicated majority (89.8%) of the respondents disclosed that they wake up at mid night to read their notes, wake up early to perform domestic chores and enroll their babies in daycare. Also, it was found that the respondents don't hesitate to always communicate with their lecturers when they encounter any problem, sought their colleagues' assistance by informing then when the lecturer is around for lectures and to also assist them with materials and tutorials to enable them meet up with academic activities.However,it was recommended that husbands and relations should support their wives in both division of domestic work and childcare to enable them effectively achieve their education with minimal problem. It is recommended that lecturers and the school authority should be sensitive and sympathetic and take it upon themselves to meaningfully guide the mothering students. The study recommends that student mothers should develop personal time tables to cater for various educational activities which include assignment writing, reading, research and writing of lecture notes for missed lectures.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Parenting is one of the most challenging jobs an individual will ever face and can be stressful at times, but also very rewarding. Becoming the parent of a child has a time of great stress and challenge and is reported to have higher amounts of physical, emotional, psychological, and financial constraints. Luzzo (2002), stated that motherhood seems to oppress women and mothering is not quite compatible with other roles women are expected to play because women's career motivation is much more vulnerable to competing role priorities and environmental demands which constitute serious barriers to their career aspirations.

Being a mother and pursuing a degree is a present challenge for many married female students. However, they often encounter additional obstacles as they strive to complete their degrees in a timely manner. Obtaining a higher education can provide economic security and social mobility for families while unleashing a potential wealth of human capital to meet the nation's workforce needs (White House, 2011). By completing a post-secondary education, women in particular increase their access to higher paying jobs and healthcare for their families (Lee, 2007). In some instances, the increase in income is immediate (Rose & Hartmann, 2004). This increased social mobility extends to women of all backgrounds and races (Zhan &Pandley, 2004).

Undoubtedly, education (formal) is one of, if not the most empowerment tools for human development. It has been argued that female education is critical to achieving particularly the first five Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Clark, 2010). A number of developing countries including Nigeria have implemented various interventions, not only to enable

them meet the third MDG, but also to encourage the upward education of females especially to the tertiary level through affirmative action.

Notwithstanding, reproductive characteristics of females impede the quest by some to achieve their full potential in their academic life. That is, combining household chores, child-rearing with academic activities on campus become a challenge. Chabaud (2012), observed that student mothers who combined activities would obviously find it difficult to effectively combine domestic responsibilities and academic work as they become tired which drained their physical energy and affected their academic performances. Mason et al. (2009) similarly reported that female students who are parents face difficulties balancing school, family, and work life. West *et al.'s* (2011) quantitative study of 103 married female students in education found that "Among the challenges experienced by the students, those most commonly reported were time management issues, including balancing work and life commitments, as well as their relationships with their spouse" and this affect family relationships and that parents struggle to satisfy their children's care responsibilities and academic demands. Other challenges faced by married female students include stress, absenteeism, financial constraints, lack of spousal supports and inadequate time to study.

However, Ansah, Osman, Thompson &Bondah (2007) found that many student mothers develop coping strategies by engaging house-helps and planned domestic work schedules. In their study, student's mothers engaged the services of house-helps (paid domestic workers) to perform their family chores, also plan family work schedules to make more time for their studies. Student mothers who combined child rearing and academic work made time for both children and academic work by visiting home frequently, at weekends, when they did not have lectures in order to perform their roles. Some worked to raise income for their needs and the needs of their children when their universities are not in

session. Married female students who have babies while in school depend on peer support for academic work because, lecturers often don't repeat what they have taught to enable them understand concepts that were taught in their absence. Some married female students continued to share accommodation with their family members and friends off campus for a greater part of their programmes and have had to attend to their childrens' needs before, during and after school.

Given the varied needs and challenges of married female students in relation to their academic work, emphasis also needs to be placed on issues that touch on their academic pursuits. It is against this backdrop, that the study seeks to analyse the challenges and coping strategies adopted by married female students in Gombe State University, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Being a mother and pursuing a post-secondary degree presents challenges for many mothers. This is because the reproductive career of females coupled with their socio-cultural and economic responsibilities have the potential to impede their academic endeavours. Generally, women are noted for playing multiple roles such as being a wife, cooking, washing, pregnancy burden, child rearing and nurturing and many other domestic chores. The pressure to fulfill these roles and concentrate on academic works overwhelms some married female students often laden with a disproportionate burden of household task and caregiver responsibilities when enrolled into higher institutions. As a result, management of multiple roles is a source of stress for married female students and unsuccessfully managed stress factors may result in premature withdrawal from school.

Also, academic stress such as early attendance to lectures, inability to meet assignment deadlines, inability to prepare for test, participate in examinations, uncompromising attitudes of lecturers, unfavorable comments, inadequate funds for academic fees including purchase

of books, handouts, accommodation fees, feeding, purchase of other logistics including drugs, clothing, among others has psychological effects on married female students and invariably produce poor grade which becomes a source of worry to affected married female students.

It has become an obvious fact that issue of gender seems to adversely affect women especially in education. As the women give birth, their career motivation becomes much more vulnerable to competing role priorities and environmental demands. In a study by Swanson &Tokar (1991), married female students identified childcare concerns and career sacrifices as barriers to their career aspirations. This is because the child development becomes critical for women to concentrate and it becomes worst when the child is sick. Women tend to abandon or miss classes, test and exams to take care of the child. This constitutes obstacles for many women career advancement especially when there is no support mechanism.

In addition, where married female are confronted with problems of financial difficulty, relationship problems and support networks, it affect the general life of married female students. While there are no comprehensive information on the conditions of married female students of higher institutions, perhaps, this can be attributed to the fact the educational institutions do not have a specific policy on the subject. As such UNESCO (2010) argued that countries can achieve most Millennium Development Goals if female education becomes a priority. Although Nigeria has reduced the gender gap in education over the last two decades, less emphasis has been placed on the challenges married female students face on campus.

1.3 Research Questions

This study answers the following questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University?

2. How do the challenges faced by married female students affect them and their academic performances in the study area?

3. What are the coping strategies employed by the married female students in Gombe State University?

4. What strategies can better help married female students in their academic work?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to analyse the challenges and coping strategies adopted by married female students in Gombe State University, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study include:

1. To examine the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University.
2. To investigate how the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University affect them and their academic performances.
3. To find out the coping strategies adopted by married female students to overcome their academic challenges in the study area.
4. To suggest strategies that can best help married female students in their academics.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge, as it disclosed the challenges facing married female students in combining academic work with marital and maternal roles and the various strategies they employ to overcome such challenges.

The study is useful to married female students on the need for effective and timely family planning in other to avoid role strain and conflict with their academic and family and maternal responsibilities.

The study has policy implication in that, it will provide that basis for the federal government and university authorities to initiate policies that will ensure equity for married female students so that they can cope with the academic demands without fear of being withdrawn.

The study is also relevant because it will serve as a useful resource material to future researchers on the subject matter.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study analysed the challenges and coping strategies adopted by married female students in Gombe State University, Nigeria. Therefore the geographical scope of this study covers only Gombe State University. Also, the scope of the study covered the challenges faced by undergraduate married female students, how the challenges affect their academic performance, the strategies they adopt to overcome such challenges in Gombe State University campus. Therefore, anything outside this scope was not a major concern of the study. The researcher chosed Gombe State University because it is among the fast growing universities in Nigeria and has among its objective to promote education across all human race and status.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Challenges: Something that appears new and difficult which requires great mentaland or physicaleffort in order to be done successfully.

Coping: This is an attempt to manage or deal with a stressful situation.

Coping Strategy: It is defined as 'survival skills' available for people to deal with or manage challenges or problems associated with biological, psychological and social challenges.

Married Student: This refers to a female student who is married with or without a child.

Parenting: It is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, financial, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood.

Performance: This is simplythe accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness and cost. It can also be define as the fulfillment of an obligation

Undergraduate Student: This is a student that is still undergoing a first degree programme in a university or any institution of higher learning.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter review relevant literature on the coping strategies of married female students and a theoretical framework adopted to address the phenomenon of study. The literature were reviewed in line with the specific objectives of the study which include: challenges faced by married female students in tertiary institutions, effects of the challenges faced by married female students with their academic performances, strategies adopted by married female students in coping with their academic activities and the theory of role strain.

2.2 Challenges Faced by Married Female Students in Tertiary Institutions

Being a mother who is schooling comes with challenges. The challenges range from stress, family issues, accommodation, absenteeism, poor grade, inadequate concentration, financial constraints. These challenges per se are not the bane but their effects on student mother's academic work. Some of these factors are discussed below:

(a) Stress: In his study, Cao (2001) examined how male and female students experienced their programs similarly and differently. Stress was especially high for married female students, who often felt they had to work harder than their male counterparts to prove themselves. The married female students reported feeling depressed, isolated, or strained in relationships. Cao argued that the familial obligations of female students make studies more stressful for them. Moyer et al. (1999) found that lack of support led to many psychological and physical health impairments, as reported by 17% of participants, including depression, lack of self-esteem, strains on social relationships, and migraine headaches. Additionally, Szekelyelt (2008) found that married female students suffered from loneliness, lack of a support system within the university setting, and an insecure professional future. In Williams-

Tolliver's (2010) study, married female students reported high levels of stress and anxiety and being at risk for heart disease and stroke due to their continuing struggle to balance their life roles. Similarly, Sessanna (2012) found that all married students reported huge responsibilities caused them to feel high stress and anxiety. A primary effect of those challenges was increased time to completion of programs.

According to Adler (2009), there were instances where post-natal clinic attendance coincided with lectures and continuous assessment examinations. As a consequence, student mothers' always postponed post-natal clinic attendance to write tests and examinations and even attend classes. This contributed to psychological stress of respondents. Hellenbeck (1998), also reports that apart from attendance to religious events, student mothers' hardly involve themselves in organized social activities on campus. They however conversed with friends around and those who visited. They preferred to stay indoors to take care of their babies or do private studies. Costes et al. (2006) interviewed 12 women and 8 men to identify impeding and enhancing factors in the success of education programme. All of their study participants indicated similar stress from sources such as time pressure, financial worries, and doubts about finding a job in the future. Gardner (2009) concluded that married students face many external stresses that make life difficult. A number of studies have documented the nature of the stressful life that married students lead (Toews et al., 1997). These stressors emerge in married students' lives from many different sources, such as time management, family obligations, finances, self-expectations, workload (Brauer et al., 2003), and difficulties balancing their personal and professional lives (Raddon, 2002). A study also found that married female students have much more emotional and academic stress than married male students (Nettles & Millett, 2006). So, as the role changes of married female students increased, time conflicts and time shortages increased. When adding the student role to their other roles they performed, roles conflicted because women had less time to spend with their

husbands and family, socialize, and devote to their faculty role. Time pressures constitute hug stress to married female students and affect their everyday life.

(b) Lack of Concentration and Psychological/emotional challenge:

Many researchers examined the experiences of female married students and found that married female students experienced many psychological and physical health difficulties (Cao, 2001; Holmstrom&Holmstrom, 1969; Moyer et al., 1999; Sessanna, 2012; Szekelyelt, 2008; Haynes, Bulosan, Citty, Grant-Harris, Hudson, &Koro-Ljungberg, 2012; Williams-Tolliver, 2010). Additionally, Holmstrom and Holmstrom (2009) posit that all the emotional stress felt by married female students emerged because of negative faculty attitudes toward them, which contributed to decreasing their commitment to staying in school. Similarly, a study by Moyer et al. (1999) found that lack of support led to many psychological and physical health impairments, as reported by 17% of participants, including depression, lack of self-esteem, strains on social relationships, and migraine headaches.

Haynes et al. (2012) argued that conflict between roles could affect married female students' overall emotional and physical well-being negatively. However, when married female students adopted coping strategies to manage their life roles, they gained a sense of control over life aspects. According to Asare (1997), home pressure is a huge problem. A student mother who has children often gets up very early in the morning trying to get everything done at home before going to lectures becomes tired and not very alert at classes. Quartey (2003), also asserts that as a result of the strains on their time and energy, students' mothers experience fatigue, lack of time for revision and rest and feelings of guilt over not fulfilling their traditional role expectations at home. These challenges affects regular attendance of lectures, tutorials, personal and group discussions and study and consequently, these challenges affect academic results (Mortimore, 1996). Many of the student mothers'

when they compare their previous and current grades before and after childbirth, are likely to conclude that child-rearing has contributed immensely to their poor grades.

(c) Lack of Spousal and family Support:

Students who are parents face difficulties balancing school, family, and work life; these students also have to make sacrifices to be good parents and these leads to stressful lives because of the demands of their degrees programmes. According to Gardner (2009), married students feel pressure from the moment they begin coursework; then, slowly, the workload begins to prevent them from spending time with their families. Lovitts (2001) found that married female students reported finding themselves having to choose between a spouse and continuing in the program. According to Brannock, Litten, and Smith (2000), being a married female student demands much time and requires emotional and physical stamina. Besides being away from family.Brannock et al.'s (2000) study found evidence of stressful and dissatisfied marital relationships, coinciding with Madrey's (1983) study of the effects of school enrollment on full-time married female students. Madrey used in-depth interviews to collect data from 16 married students (eight women and eight men), all of whom had children and studied at Ohio State University. Madrey indicated that the stress levels that affected the marriages of the students were caused by external and internal factors, including "the educational level of the spouses, financial problems, time pressures, children, communication, sexual concerns, decision-making, role conflict, and physical and emotional separation". These findings also coincided with Nedleman's (1991) survey of 84 married graduate students in programs at the University of California, which showed that 40% of the respondents had children. The survey concluded that married students' greatest stressors were their relationships with their spouses.

Furthermore, time commitments of married students, such as attending classes, studying, and writing a project, can harm their family relationships and also found that the lived experiences of married students are challenging because they have to balance multiple roles: personal, family, academic, and work. Lee and Myers (2005) stated that family problems create imbalance for student mothers who are day-students or non-residential student whose husbands move out of the family home and come back late in the night. The husbands always threaten to divorce their wives as a result of poor marital performance and overweening behaviour on the part of the student's mothers. This may result in depression, making her emotional state so fragile. Such a woman who is a student is distracted and has divided attention at home and at academic work. Giancola, Borchert&Grawitch (2009), postulated that being a student-mother is a delicate juggling act. According to the authors it takes time, patience and boundless energy. In addition to filling the role prescribed to them as students, they also have to schedule their lives around a growing child's need. The authors stressed that a student mother may have challenges pertaining to the home. The inter-role conflict is due to incompatible expectations where demand on one role makes performance of the other more conflicting.

(d) Inadequate time to study: It is a well-established fact married female students has to juggle between competing roles. These role that include waking up early in the morning to cook, prepare the kids for school, tiding up the house, wash plate, revise note book, perform class assignment, reading for testes and exams among other are herculean tasks and is unbecoming for married student mothers to fulfill adequately. Therefore, managing time to fulfill the aforementioned competing roles demands subject married female students to a lot of challenges when pursing University education. As reported by Chigona &Chetty (2007), lack of time to study and do assignments is some of the major challenges of the student-mother. According to the authors, most of the student-mothers do not have time to

study because when they return from school, their relatives who voluntarily serve as baby-sitters want to be free of child-care chores, the babies also want their mother's attention. This suggests that mothers who do not have full day child-care services face the challenges in trying to balance childcare with academic work. Similarly, in a study conducted by Kaufman (2001) in South Africa, he found that student mothers' adjustment to school life after giving birth during the program is not easy. According to the finding, such mothers become divided between childcare and studies.

(e) Financial Constraint: Child-rearing comes with economic cost. Expenditure on diapers, food supplements and sometimes drugs (for the mother and the child) increase the cost of living of student-mothers. In addition, some of the student mothers who paid for accommodation and are staying in the hostels are compelled to leave their halls of residence for alternative accommodation without a refund from the University. Coupled with other costs, as such results to series of complain about increased cost of living. Student mothers' without family or spousal support or, belonging to the working class but with study-leave without pay also experienced gross economic challenges.

In the United States, 'The rise of attrition rates for graduate student mothers is one of the most serious problems in the American system of higher education today' (Lynch, 2008). A related issue consists of the financial strain experienced by many student parents, described as a result of the lack of funding for childcare and associated course costs, as well as modest welfare benefits and limited availability for paid work (NUS, 2009, Wainwright &Marandet, 2006). Seventy-six per cent of participants to the NUS survey stated that they received no funding at all for childcare. Study of lone parents in post-compulsory education identified that lone parents were particularly at risk of facing financial hardship (Hinton-Smith, 2012). A major issue, also possibly related to retention, is the lack of time and the juggling of the conflicting demands of being a student, a career and, sometimes, a paid worker (Moreau

&Leathwood, 2006; Wainwright &Marandet, 2006). Cappleman-Morgan's small-scale study of mature students in higher education showed that 'competing multiple obligations can leave student-careers time starved, stressed and consequently adopting "instrumental" approaches to learning and caring' (Cappleman-Morgan, 2005).

The lack of funding for childcare services on college campuses is also problematic for student mothers. Given that many student mothers spend a significant number of waking hours caring for dependent children, which contributes to a longer time to degree than male parents, the provision of campus childcare may be the most high-impact reform for student mothers (Cerven, 2013; Miller, Gault&Thorman, 2011). Childcare centers on college campuses are limited and in many instances nonexistent (Goldrick& Sorensen, 2010). On campuses with childcare centers, parents often face restrictive age limitations or hours of operation, and a waitlist for entry (Graham & Bassett, 2012).

(f) Nursing/dependent child(ren): For years, studies have been providing descriptions of how children are raised within cultures around the world, including the beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy, childbirth and treatment of young children. According to Darling (1993), child rearing styles are one of the world constructs, which express the emotional and general relationships between student mothers and their children. While childrearing practices may be different across cultures, scientific knowledge would suggest that there are basic needs that all children have and a predictable pattern of development during the early years that is universal. Studies from different parts of the world reveal that all young children need adequate nutrition, health and care from birth onwards. The lack of these supports during the early years has permanent negative effects on later development. Not only are there consequences for the child's physical well-being; in addition, these variables interact with and have an impact on the child's social and cognitive development. Engel (1992)

posited that the type of childrearing practices student mothers required at a given point in time depends to a large degree on the child's developmental age and the health and nutritional risks the child is facing.

Generally, the mother is the primary caregiver, sometimes with considerable support from others and sometime alone. She is responsible for providing all the things an infant needs: protection from physical danger; adequate nutrition and health care; an adult who can understand and respond to signals; things to look at, touch, hear, smell, and taste; opportunities to explore the world; appropriate language stimulation; and an adult with whom to form an attachment (Donohue-Colletta, 1992). Also, Boakye-Boaten (2010) lamented that the level of support the student mothers receives from others in the family and from society plays an important role in the kind of care she is able to provide during school times. Thus the cultural patterns surrounding the role of the father, other family members and the community during this period is also important for the child's survival and development.

Ansah*et al.* (2007), in their study revealed that, many different aspects of childcare and childrearing practices were covered including traditional maternal and child care practices, attitudes and behavior of parents towards raising children, traditional play and toys for children, and other issues impacting on child development and survival. In the same vein, Randell&Gergel (2009) said that there are many positive factors present, such as the presence of voluntary childcare providers (grandparents and other relatives), positive attitudes and spiritual beliefs towards children, availability of good traditional toys and play, strong self-help skills among children, a reliance on breastfeeding and a good availability on traditional medicines and knowledge, and strong traditions of mutual support and cooperation within the community.

Universities vary in the degree of support they offer to student mothers For example, Brooks (2012) drew on data from four different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK and Denmark. In comparison with Denmark, UK student parents received low structural support (high tuition fees, little or no free childcare, no automatic right to parental leave and little flexibility in modes of study, such as taking time off for a sick child). Any support tended to be given to student parents, was often at the discretion of academic staff. In Denmark, support for student parents was generally set within legislation (e.g., e-learning packages to enable students who had children with long-term illnesses to study at home and thus complete their courses on time) and was supported by the funding mechanisms used by the government: as universities receive payment for students who successfully complete their courses, there are considerable rewards for offering flexible modes of study. In the UK, there were some differences between the older and newer universities (e.g., some childcare provision was offered by the older university in the study, but not the newer one). In Denmark, there were many affordable childcare facilities with available places which were close to the higher education institutions. Brooks (2012) argues that "it seems likely that policy to promote a 'dual worker' (instead of a 'male breadwinner') model, in place in Denmark since the 1970s, may well help to explain the attitudinal and cultural support provided to student-parents". In the UK, however, the shift to a more equal "adult worker" model has been slower. As legislation underpins the support offered to student parents in Denmark, there were few institutional differences.

(g) Children Health Problem: A similar sentiment was echoed in the United States where it was argued that managing to care for a child and devoting adequate time to academic work has not been an easy task for students mothers (Arlington Public School, 2004). Hallman Grant (2004), identified missing class or lectures as one major challenge facing students mothers in school. According to them, when the child falls sick the mother gives attention to

the care of the child at the expense of their academic work. This suggests that even if a mother ignores a sick child because of her academic work it is likely she cannot concentrate. Dyson (2006) said that missing lectures or assessment deadlines were not uncommon, due to problems with childcare, child sickness, or general lack of time for studies, and lone parents were more prone to this than those living with a partner. 'Time poverty' can also result in limited engagement in the student community and, in some cases, bring about a sense of isolation. However, the NUS survey highlighted that a vast majority (75%) of student parents felt that studying in higher education had been a positive experience for them and their family. Overall, the picture drawn is that student parents are enthusiastic about learning, despite the barriers they face (NUS, 2009).

Also, educators do not understand students mothers who are in school. It is suggested that the institutions need knowledge regarding the problem of students mothers. Moreau &Kerner (2012) noticed little or lack of institutional support on campus for students mothers. Lectures are re-scheduled in the evening or into the night at the time day-care or other childcare service providers have closed. This made childcare a problem. According to Moreau &Kerner (2012), academic programmes disregard the need of women during pregnancy, childbirth, maternity leave, etc. Ignoring this creates an atmosphere of condemnation hence student-mothers feel their issue has not been given attention. This is consistent with Springer, Parker &Leviten-Reid (2009) who noted that:

> Mothering and fathering is not normative on campus. Student mothers experience awkward pauses rendered by pregnant bodies on campus, struggle to navigate strollers in classrooms, and search to find clean and discreet places to feed their babies. Although sometimes subtle, there are constant reminders in the social and physical environment of the university that student parents and their children do not truly belong (Springer, Parker &Leviten Reid, 2009).

While, there is a limited amount of research focusing specifically on how institutional policies and practices affect or support student parents. However, the literature exploring this aspect identifies a general mismatch between student parents' needs and university policies,

as many institutions address by default the needs of the young, childfree, single and male student (the 'bachelor boy', as summarized by Hinton-Smith) (Hinton-Smith, 2012). In particular, the report points to a discrepancy between the needs of student parents and course organisation. For example, over a third of the survey participants had received their timetable on the day or after the day term started, something which impacted on their ability to find suitable childcare. Marandet& Wainwright (2010) also observed that the lack of classroom space often resulted in lectures taking place at times conflicting with family demands. Wainwright &Marandet had earlier identified a lack of awareness among staff about students' caring responsibilities, which they described as 'hindering the needs of this group to be sufficiently addressed' (Wainwright &Marandet, 2006).

2.3 Effects of the Challenges Faced by Married Female Students on their Academic Performances

Students nursing mothers experience challenges due to the competing and conflicting demands of their mothering roles and studentship. The challenges can be physical, social, financial and administrative. These challenges have a negative effect on academic progress and achievement. Some challenges are peculiar to pregnant mothers while others are confined to nursing mothers and a few are common to both.

(a) Health Complications: When a female learner becomes pregnant she bids farewell to youth and has to contend with realities and responsibilities of adulthood (Luttrell, 2003). She also adds the status of mother to her academic role. Yet more often than not, the demands of motherhood and studentship are incompatible. Pregnancy is a unique condition in that it is the only state which affords two people to live under one skin (Luttrell, 2003). This two-in-one state affects the physical well-being of the mother. Some of the problems given by Dlamini (2002) cited by Sekgobela (2008), include the following: oedema of the extremities, nausea,

vomiting, bleeding, dizziness, tiredness, cephalopelvic disproportions, pre-eclamptictoxaemia, etc.

Irrespective of the degree of their complexity, these problems have a debilitating effect on the pregnant students. Sekgobela (2008) also cited a study carried out by Netshikweta and Ehlers (2002) which indicated that pregnant student nurses found it difficult to care for their patients. Similarly, the Canterbury Christ Church University (2010) views pregnant learners as at risk students who should not be exposed to "significant physical activity chemicals, paints and radiation." Thus, pregnancy curtails students working capabilities thereby affecting their self-esteem (Sekgobela, 2008 citing Netshikweta, 1999). Studying while pregnant is an uphill struggle. This is supported by Zwolak (2008) who points out that students felt they could not cope with the demands of pregnancy and study hence they requested for maternity leave. Sentiments expressed by pregnant girls in Luttrell's (2003) study indicated that school life was a struggle. However, pregnant students experience their pregnancy differently. While some find it easy to study others find it almost impossible to study while pregnant (Pankhurst, 2010).

Although some pregnant students had positive attitudes towards their pregnancies, they acknowledged experiencing physical discomfort (Harries, 1996 cited in Netshikweta, 1999). In her study, Netshikweta (1999) noted that 89% of her respondents experienced physical discomfort. According to Luttrell (2003) during pregnancy the body undergoes changes and sends signals which the students must pay attention to. Some such signals are backache, morning sickness, muscle cramps, heartburn and hypertension. Physical discomfort tends to negatively affect academic performance. Academic progress is held back as coping strategies and attention spans are reduced (Sekgobela, 2008).

After giving birth the mother needs to recover physically and this may take time as such combining childcare with academic pursuits can be stressful and impacts negatively on either role (Tulman& Fawcett, 1991). Activities such as feeding the new baby at intervals during the day and at night deprive the student mother sufficient time to rest. Consequently, tiredness from lack of sleep breeds anxiety and in turn women feel incompetent in their mothering role (Woollett& Nicolson 1998). The nursing student mother is expected, among other things, to find out why the baby is crying when it does and to soothe it. In her efforts to cater for the needs of her new baby during the day and at night the student mother is deprived of sufficient rest. The disturbance made on her sleeping routines tires and exhausts her body. This view confirmed that the mother's physical and emotional health is affected by the baby's sleeping and crying behaviour (Lynch, 2008).

(b) Inadequate Class Attendance: While many undergraduate student mothers talked about the complications some went through during labour, for instance, Carney-Crompton & Tan (2002) finds out that those who went through caesarean delivery found it difficult to engage in certain domestic and academic activities for longer durations. These impacted on their physical presence at lectures and group discussions regularly. There were others too, who could not extract adequate milk from the breast due to biological reasons. Thus, they had to skip some hours of lectures to breastfeed, or rely on supplementary foods; a situation which prevent them from practicing exclusive breastfeeding (Branscomb, 2006).

(c) Poor Grade: Psychological effects associated with child-rearing mostly emanated from stigma-related comments, doubts and poor grades. Certain comments from some lecturers and students become a source of worry to some student-mothers. For instance, in a study conducted by Taiwo (2002), recounted an experience where a lecturer passed this comment: why did you in the first place get pregnant? The University is a place for students,

not mothers'. This comment was made because the student-mother was consistently late to a 7:30am lecture.

Without any prior background knowledge of baby-assistants, and sometimes, their lack of knowledge in child-care made some of the mothers doubt about the safety of their babies (Taiwo, 2002). The most mentioned source of psychologically and emotionally disturbances and stress was whenever a baby fell ill. In most cases, student mother's fear of losing a baby due to illness was so pronounced that they always stayed with them all the time until they got well. This did not only affect their attendance to lectures and group discussions but also private studies (Canagarajah&Coulombe, 1997).

(d) Reduce Good Mother Care: Hays (1996) cited in Lynch (2008), makes reference to intensive mothering which requires a woman to devote most of her time, energy and money in raising children. This can result in maternal burnout: an overload of stress that manifests itself in. Fulfilling the role expectations of motherhood and the academic demands, though possible, is a difficult task (Ghosh, 2000). These competing demands, viewed in the light of the fact that most lecturers are not grounded in adult learning theory (Gravett, 2004) pause adjustment problems to the nursingstudent. Hence, the debilitating effect of the constant and continuous demands made upon the student mother who has to accommodate the baby into study routines cannot be over emphasized. Women's competency and confidence as loving caregivers decreases as a result of anxiety caused by, among other factors, tiredness (Woollett& Nicolson, 1998). These feelings, coupled with a sense of guilt arising from failure to measure up to culturally prescribed norms of a good mother; subordinating all other interests to the child's are likely to negatively affect academic progress (Lynch, 2008). According to Bullen*et al.* (2000), parenting is not compatible with education. Involvement in learning activities tends to minimise the student's chances of good

mothering while mothering compromises her chances of a good student. The addition of the mothering role onto the student's identity makes it hard for women to concentrate on their studies and may retard their effort for personal development.

(e) Drop Out of School: Anxiety, according to Hybels& Weaver II (2004) can create psychological noise or disturbance of the mind which causes confusion. Psychological noise is a barrier to communication and consequently to academic achievement. Research focusing on student parents identifies three key issues experienced by this group. Retention is a major problem, despite the exact proportion of student parents dropping out remaining unknown. However, the NUS study established that 60% of survey respondents had thought about leaving their course, a figure which was significantly higher for lone parents and women compared with other groups of student parents (NUS, 2009).

In the United States of America, the Hearing Testimony (2010) reported that there had been a 70% student mother drop-out rate from New York City schools in the 21st century, caused by a lack of support from different sectors of society. According to Bullen*et al.* (2000), this lack of support was partly due to stigmatisation. In Australia, the Women's Employment Education and Training Project found that such social stigmatisation could cause a woman to have a negative self-image which tends to limit her future options. In many cultures young mothers who choose to engage in other activities such as employment and study, do not get society's approval. Magwaza (2003) indicates that such women were made to feel guilty, while Pillow (2006) echoes the same sentiments when she points out that society expects mothers who fail to fulfill ideal mothering duties to feel guilty. The realisation of these effects has led the Zimbabwean community to expect female students to complete high school and tertiary education before starting a family (The Saturday Herald, 2010), although this might often be in conflict with cultural norms and values (Kramer & Lancaster, 2010).

However, Kambanji (2010), who agrees with this point of view, argues that the psychosocial issues that pregnant students and student mothers have to deal with make it undesirable for girls to fall pregnant while studying.

Seen as such, in many cases the fear of being labeled incompetent or incapable causes some students to refrain from seeking support from academic staff members (Lynch, 2008). When students fail to talk about important issues salient to their academic well-being (Crous*et al.* 2000; Hybels& Weaver II, 2004), learning becomes a struggle and chances of academic excellence or achievement are stunted (Reece & Walker, 2003). So, the primary task of education is to assist students in actualising their potential (Elias & Merriam, 2005). To realise their educational goals, student mothers need a supportive environment in order for them not to experience. Depressed students cannot realise their full potential themselves in their studies. In support of this sentiment, Walklin (2002) indicates that for a meaningful interpretation of the learning situation, the student should be mentally and emotionally stable.

2.4 Strategies adopted by Married Female Students in Coping with their Academic Activities

Adjusting to an academic setting can be difficult for all students, no matter what stage of life they are in. The rigorous demand of the university level courses coupled with the patriarchal values of the institution can be overwhelming for even the most studious students. Instructors expect more with less guidance and may seem unapproachable. Strategies adopted to deal with challenges are conceptualized as coping strategies. Anspaugh*et al.* (2003) define coping strategies as 'survival skills' available for people to deal with or manage challenges or problems associated with biological, psychological and social challenges.

No one coping strategy has been shown to work for every problem or for every person (Tein*et al.* 2000). Each individual must determine which coping strategies to use in which situations in order to reach the most positive outcome. For student mothers, coping strategies

may mediate the relationship between family life, stress associated with college life, and depressive symptoms (Dyson &Renk, 2006). The types of coping strategies that may be effective are varied and depend on the situation. Problem-focused, or active, coping involves doing something to try to change or remove a stressor, whereas emotion-focused coping involves changing the way that stress is experienced emotionally, without addressing the underlying problem (Deater-Deckard, 2004). Generally, problem-focused coping is more effective in situations where an individual has some degree of personal control, while emotion-focused coping is more effective when an individual cannot change the situation. Emotion-focused coping has generally been found to be more effective than avoiding the problem as a method of coping, but may also be related to higher levels of parenting stress in situations where a parent has some degree of control (Giancola*et al.* 2009).

Student mothers adopt various methods in child-rearing. These include child-feeding methods as well as other structures put in place to support the rearing of children. The methods adopted were influenced by academic activities, human and logistic supports available (Adler, 2009). Medically, mothers are expected to exclusively breastfeed their babies for six months after which other food supplements and water can be introduced. Given the academic activities on campus, it was realized that student mothers rarely breastfed consistently beyond three months. This is consistent with literature (Ghana Health Service, 2009).

According to the Ghana Health Service Survey (2009), two types of breastfeeding methods were discovered to be adopted by student mothers. The first method is feeding the baby with breast milk from the feeding bottle. Student mothers extract breast milk into feeding bottle(s) to enable their baby-assistants feed the babies on demand. The second method is feeding the baby directly from the breast. With this method, baby-assistants had to be closer to the

student-mothers. Based on a regular time interval, student mothers attend to their babies to breastfeed them. Ghana Health Service (2009) survey added that even though the student mothers mostly used both methods of breastfeeding, supplementary feeding was also practiced. Baby-foods such as NAN 1 were preferred because it is affordable. Some of the students introduced complementary foods as early as the first month and was discovered that time constraint was the main factor that influenced such a practice.

Randel and Gergel (2009), disclosed that taking care of a child on campus as a student-mother was unanimously regarded as an enormous challenge. According to UNICEF (2010), study indicated that bathing, feeding, cuddling and putting a baby to sleep are challenging activities. To perform all these tasks in addition to academic work, student-mothers usually employ baby-assistants. In addition, the use of mobile phone and reliance on traditional knowledge complemented the child-rearing process. Baby-assistants comprised female relatives and non-relatives such as mothers and mothers' in-law as well as house-helps and landladies. In most cases, the non-relative baby-assistants were paid for child-care giving service. Nevertheless, there are other non-relatives who offer help to some of the student mothers without any remuneration. Randel and Gergel (2009), assert that the use of mobile phones is very essential in child-rearing among student-mothers on campus. Most of the baby-assistants had mobile phones to communicate with the student mothers whenever the babies needed their attention. Also, student-mothers who could not afford to buy additional mobile phone made arrangements with co-tenants to avail theirs to baby assistants to communicate with them whenever the need arose.

In a study conducted by Gardner (2008), she interviewed 40 married female students, eight of whom had children. According to the study, academic structures are not designed to welcome students with children, whose multiple roles and responsibilities often mean that flexibility is

needed. Springer et al. (2009) argued that institutions not only offer little support in their services for married doctoral students, but when they do offer services, students are unaware of them. Golde (2000) found "that the primary agents of socialization and integration are faculty. Relationships with faculty advisors consistently seem more important to student completion than relationships with peers". For instance, one of the participants explained in an interview that faculty helps students mothers prepare for oral exams. However, this is not always the case. Madrey (1983) found that it is mainly family who meet the student's needs, so relationships between the students and their peers develop little. Smith et al. (2006) disagreed, concluding that married female students with children constantly rely on support systems of both the family and the institution. However, Lovitts (2001) argued that family support for married female students occurred during the coursework stage and declined during the writing of the project, which caused student attrition from the program.

Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006) explored the experience of 149 married international graduate students through a quantitative study. They found that these students believed they did not need outside social relationships but relied heavily on their spouses while studying; however, the top important complaint for married international students is the lack of extended family for support. These findings make clear that married female students seek support from families, peers, and their institutions but do not get enough, especially when they have children (Springer et al., 2009). Maher, Ford, and Thompson (2004) found that 78% of early-finishing women were empowered by supportive advisors and/or mentors and campus resources; however, in many cases advisors' support was not enough. Maher et al. also found that late-finishing women also reported that faculty advisors had supported them; yet, they often faced one or more obstacles that hindered their progress, including financial issues, childcare responsibilities, and disruption by family–life demands, and factors such as these impacted degree progress. Female married students in the study by Sessanna (2012)

reported receiving varying kinds of support to deal with their multiple roles. Although not all of them received the expected amount of support from their departments, they formed their own support networks of friends, support groups, spouses, or family. Most of the participants reported that their departments were not particularly understanding or supportive of the needs of female married students. As a result, female married students reported that they received support mainly from friends or colleagues, while the main sources of departmental support came from one or two advisors or professors. According to Kenty (2000), female married students reported that classmates who offered to loan books or create study groups also provided support in school. In addition, colleagues offered support by sharing their learning experiences, encouraging the completion of one's assignment, project editing chapters by chapters and helping with statistical analyses.

Female married students adopted strategies such as the following to manage time pressures: establishing clear goals, setting priorities, remaining focused on goals they wanted to achieve, and allowing time for children and family. With a focus on the goal of obtaining a degree first, setting their school role as a priority helped female students commit to completing their studies. The majority of participants in this study were successful in prioritizing, setting goals, and being willing to compromise. For example, women spent time reading or studying when they might otherwise have been cooking or cleaning and accepted a less-than-tidy house and fast food. Other participants sacrificed getting sleep and studied or cleaned house at night. Other strategies related to cutting back on professional and community activities, which included restricting social relationships with friends outside of school and work, as the research found that women seeking a degree had little time and energy to maintain relationships with outside friends.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is anchored on the theory of role train and individualized individual theory.

2.5.1 Theory of Role Strain

The theory of role strain is a perspective in sociology and in social psychology that considers most of everyday activity to be the acting out of socially defined categories (e.g., mothering, nursing children, manager, teacher, etc). Each role is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to face and fulfill. The model is based on the observation that people behave in a predictable way, and that an individual's behaviour is context specific, based on social position and other factors. The theory is used to describe role conflict experienced by married student mothers and the tasks of rearing their children and how these roles impact on their academic performance.

Although the word role (or roll) has existed for centuries, as a sociological concept, the term has popularly been used since the 1920s and 1930s. It became more prominent in sociological discourse through the theoretical works of George Herbert Mead (1934), Talcott Parsons (1951), Ralph Dahrendorf (1958), Ralph Linton (1936) and Rose LaubCoser (1975) among others.

The theory posits that each individual has certain roles in life. These roles encompass certain responsibilities and obligations and in fulfilling each of these roles, one is bound to face conflict in fulfilling one of the role over the other. For student mothers, these roles include that of parent and student and may also include the roles of employee and significant other.

Role strain theory can help explain how different areas of stress may interact in performing two or more roles that conflict together. Attempting to balance these roles can create strain,

which includes role conflict, role overload, and role contagion. Role conflict occurs when the responsibilities and expectations of one role conflict with the responsibilities and expectations of another role (Goode, 1960). When this occurs, a person must choose which role's expectations he or she will meet and which expectations will not be met. For example, a student mother may be forced to choose between attending to her child and studying for a final examination. This choice will inevitably cause stress before, during, and after the decision has been made. When roles conflict frequently, stress is more likely to occur.

Related to role conflict is the fact that an individual often cannot meet the demands of all of the roles he or she may hold at any given time, so "in general, the individual's total role obligations are over-demanding" (Goode, 1960). This is especially likely to occur when a person has many roles, such as student, parent, spouse, employee, etc. Negative feelings are the likely result of an inability to meet all demands. On the whole, role contagion occurs when a person is preoccupied with one role while performing another role, which can interfere with meeting the obligations of each role.

Role strain theory expands the idea of role conflict in ways that can be useful in understanding the lives of student mothers. As applied to student mothers, role strain theory suggests that several types of conflict can impact these individuals, including conflict from unpleasant role demands, such as studying for test, exams or calming screaming children; conflict between the resources needed for different roles, such as money needed for household items and for tuition and time needed for schoolwork and for making dinner; and conflict between the activities required for each role, such as working on an assignment or cleaning the house. It has been suggested that various types of conflicts are the main contributors to role strain and role stress and that in situations of conflict, the most salient role will be fulfilled first, leaving other roles to be fulfilled less thoroughly (Chartrand, 1990).

In order to handle this conflict, individuals may utilize several strategies, including delegating tasks, eliminating roles, compartmentalizing roles and limiting the fulfillment of responsibilities of each role, creating barriers to the creation of new roles, and "extension," or expanding one role as a way to excuse commitments to another role. For student mothers, options for role strain reduction such as eliminating roles and extension are not possible if they want to be successful at parenting and at being a student. If, for example, a student parent chooses to tend to her sick child and fails to turn in a class assignment, she may experience academic difficulties, putting her student role at risk. The societal push for individuals to reach for success in all roles and norms regarding which roles should be fulfilled first can also prevent undergraduate married female students from using such strategies to effectively handle role strain and conflict. In fact, such societal pressures to be a good student and a good parent may create further stress.

Research on multiple-role engagement of women has focused primarily on the interaction of specific role categories i.e. student, worker/employee and familial roles. However, the role strain theory has failed to consider the variability and complexity of the roles that exist within the family role category and academics of the student mothers. Although roles such as caregiver, homemaker and/or wife have been included under the umbrella of the "family role", these roles may within their own right contribute to the degree and intensity of multiple-role engagement, consequently influencing the level of stress and any associated adverse psychological, academics and/or physical health outcomes of the students mothers and their nursing children.

The theory has also failed to put into consideration the cultural/traditional role and expectation of nursing mothers. As a result failed to provide relevant information on how

student nursing mothers can break through the cultural expectation of their status to achieve good academic performances.

However, the theory has succinctly explained that strain/conflict or stress is bound to occur among two or more statuses, for example, student mother who has to deal with pregnancy or nursing a baby. The role strain or role pressure arises when there is a conflict in the demands of roles. This conflict consciously or unconsciously, impact on the growth of the child, the health of the mother and the mother's academic performances.

2.5.2 Theory of Individualized Individual

The individualized individual theory is a type of feminist theory propounded by Ulrich Beck's in 1992. The individualized individual theory is used in understanding and explaining the rights and benefits of higher education to married women. This theory states that women's liberation is not only rewarding topeople as individuals but also to societies, and depends largely on the empowerment ofpeople. The theory posited that women like every other citizen should be accorded the right to education irrespective of their status.

A key contributory factor to the development of the individualized individual theory is the liberation of women. As Beck (1992) states, in a reflexive modernity, "people are removed from the constraints of gender". His argument points to the idea that men andwomen are being released from their traditional, ascribed gender roles. Beck strong advocacy for women's liberation is linked to feminist explorationand explanations of structures of power and gender, and particularly, in second-wave feminism (Barret, 1980; Bank, 1981; Skelton, 2005). Second-wave feminism sought to actively re-evaluate femininity and masculinity and develop new understandings ofwhat it means to be human (Wetherell, 2006). Second-wave feminism encouragedwomen to understand aspects of their personal lives as being deeply politicised, andreflective of a sexist structure of power (Brittan, 1984). While first-wave

feminismfocused on absolute rights such as suffrage, second-wavers were largely concerned withother issues of equality, such as an end to discrimination (Freedman, 2003) and entranceto liberation.

Women's liberation, according to Beck (2002) is identified as the release from compulsory housework and spouse domination. Moreover, the theory sees equal opportunities for men andwomen as a vehicle for power balancing. With equal opportunities, women will be able tocompete with men and their talents, as well as to productively utilize their abilities in the general interests of the society. Equal educational, economic and political access; quality health care; freedom from violence; and protected human rights are necessary conditions for women's wellbeing andwomen's inclusiveness.

The theory stressed the fundamentals of education and according to Engin (2009), education is not a charity but rather a fundamental human right for all people irrespective of their sex, race, economic status which is keyto sustainable development, peace and stability. In any society, theprovision of education is fundamental and basic for human resources development.King and Hill (1993) argued that educating females yield far-reaching benefits for girls and women themselves, their families and the societies in which they live.Obanya (2005) stated that an educated mother is likely to become a more competent and knowledgeable mother, a more productive and better paid mother, an informed citizen, a self-confident individual and a skilled decisions maker.

Beck's theory of the individualized individual was included for the study because of the increasing attention it is receiving from social scientists, especially those interested in social justice, women's education and equality issues. The individualized individual model explains the tension and struggles that exist between men and women. The study examines the ways in which power differentials emergefor female through a combination of their age and marital

status.Also, it discusses the importance of higher education for married women in order for them to compete with their male counterparts locally and in a global context.As Beck emphasizes, ideally women are part of modern society and should move to being politically distinct and a part of globalization and should become globalized citizens.In agreement with Beck, it is now generally accepted that the modern state must promote the course of social justice. Most modern constitutions recognised this as one of thecardinal functions of the state. The foundation on which this philosophy rests is theequality of human beings irrespective of marital status, gender, social class and so on.However, despite the emphasis on women education, social justice and liberation, Beck's theory of individualized individual fails to provide a concrete, clear and precise definition for what it means by power and how it informs this theory.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the steps taken to conduct the study. The section is discussed under the following headings: location of the study, population of the study, sources of data, methods of data collection, sampling techniques and method of data analysis.

3.2 Location of the Study

The location of study was Gombe State University, Gombe. Gombe is a State in north-eastern Nigeria created out of Bauchi State on 1st October, 1996 by the late General SanniAbachas Administration with its capital at Gombe. The State has an area of 20,265 km2 and a population of around 1.8 million (NPC, 2006). Gombe State shares boundaries with Yobe State to the North, Adamawa and Taraba States to the South, Borno State to the East, and Bauchi State to the West.

The State comprises many tribal groups which include Tangale, Terawa, Waja, Kumo, Fulani, Kanuri, Bolewa, Jukun, Pero/Shonge, Tula, Cham, Lunguda, Dadiya, Banbuka , Hausa and Kamo/Awak. Hausa is the commercial language amidst the people. The state is divided into eleven (11) local government councils. The local councils are Gombe, Billiri, Akko, Balanga, Shongom, Funikaye, Dukku, Yamatta, Bayoga, and Kwami.

The people of Gombe State are primarily farmers producing food and cash crops, which include cereals: Maize, Soghum, Rice and wheats: Legumes: Cowpeas, groundnuts, soya beans and bambara nuts. Fruits: Orange, Lemon, Mango, Guava, paw-paw and grapes. Vegetables: Tomatoes, pepper, onions, okra, pumpkin and melon. Tree Crops: Gum Arabic, Kenaf, sugar cane, sunflower and ginger. Industries in the State include Ashaka Cement Plc,

cotton ginneries, furniture and block making industries, and other small scale industries. Gombe is blessed with natural resources like Uranium, Gypsum, and Limestone (Tiffen, 2008). Recently, petroleum deposits were reported to have been discovered in the state.

Education is given priority in the State and many primary and secondary schools, Colleges of Education, and an Arabic Teachers' College have been established to provide the people with quality education including the only one state tertiary institution called the Gombe State University.

Gombe State University was established by the law on 6th 2004 when the State Governor, Alhaji Mohammed DanjumaGoje signed a bill of Gombe State House of Assembly. Academic activities commenced immediately after with the admission of candidate into the school of Basic and Remedial Studies which prepared candidate for admission into the undergraduate programme of the university. At inception, the university started with three faculties; Art and Social Science, Education and Science. Other faculties have been created; Medicine, Pharmaceutical Science, Postgraduate College and College of Remedial (http://gsu.edu.ng/about.php).

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of the Married female students of Gombe State University.

3.4 Source of Data

Two types of data namely; primary and secondary were used for this study. The sources of data (for the primary) were female married students of Gombe State University. This was collected through questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The choice of these sources was influenced by the fact that the researcher believed that primary sources provide first-hand

information that will help in addressing the problem under investigation, since the data will be collected directly from the field primarily for the purpose of this study. While, the secondary sources of data were collected from the School Registry Office and Day Care Centre of Gombe State University.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were adopted for this study.

3.5.1 Quantitative method

The technique for quantitative data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire provides a social research survey methods of collecting data by asking the people questions to agree or disagree on issues representing difference points of views.

The questionnaire was made up of five sections: section A highlights the socio-demographic data of the respondents. Section B: focuses on the challenges faced by undergraduate married female students. Section C: determines the effects of challenges faced by undergraduate married female students on their academic. Section D: addresses the coping strategies adopted by married female students towards improving their academic performances. Section E discusses possible solutions on how the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University can be overcome. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended and a few open-ended questions basically on the topic of the study. For the closed-ended questions, the respondents were given alternative options to each question which covered the complete range of probable responses from which they are to choose. While the open–ended questions allowed the respondents the choice to express their own views without being restricted from a number of options. One hundred and eighty three (183) questionnaires were printed and administered the respondents. For smooth and ease of data collection, the questionnaire was administered under a close-supervision of the researcher and six research

assistants who assisted in the administration, collection and follow up. The research assistants were selected from the University and in each of the selected faculty that formed the area of coverage.

3.5.2 Qualitative method

For the qualitative data, in-depth interview guide was designed. Eight (8) key informants comprising of two lecturers, two married female students, Director of Guidance and Counseling, two Nurses/Doctors from the school clinic and the head of the day care centre were selected. The key informants were believed to provide relevant and in depth analysis of the issue in focus. The criterion for the selection was based on availability of married female students at the time of the research.

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Gombe State University is made up of six (6) faculties and two colleges: Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, Education, Medicine and Pharmaceutical Science; others include School of Remedial and Postgraduate College. However, only the faculties dealing with undergraduate programmes were selected for the study and all the faculties were selected purposively. Information collected from the University's Registry Office shows that there are one hundred and eighty three (183) married female students in the five faculties as in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Lists of Married Female Students in Gombe State University across Faculties

Faculties	**Number of married female students**
Science	24
Social Science	34
Arts	31
Education	54
Medicine	23
Pharmacy	17
Total	**183**

All the faculties were covered because of the limited number of married female students in the University. Based on this discovery, the study adopted purposive, snow ball and accidental sampling techniques. In tracing the respondents, the researcher penetrated all the departments in the five faculties with the help of referral to identify and locate the married female students.

In the case of the in-depth interviews, eight (8) key informants comprising of two lecturers, two married female students, Director of Guidance and Counseling, two Nurses/Doctors from the school clinic and the head of the day care centre were purposively selected. The lecturers were selected to assess the married female students academic performances based on their experiences and knowledge, the married female students were selected to find out their experiences in the conflicting role they are playing and the head of day care centre was use to assess the various alternatives available to married female students especially the nursing mothers.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

The analytical tools used for the quantitative data is the descriptive analysis of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data collected using survey questionnaire were coded and analyzed using the SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages in tabular forms were used to present the data. Thereafter, in the form of a narrative description, the results obtained was interpreted and explained once the data were analyzed, before making concluding remarks.

On the other hand, the qualitative data were collected through the use of in-depth interview. During the in-depth interview and discussion, hand written notes were taken in addition to all the responses audio recorded. The objective of the hand written notes was to

ensure that the transcribed data is a true reflection of the issues covered during the interview sessions.

Data collected via the in-depth interviews were transcribed and the thematic and narrative analyses were used to analyze the data. The transcribed data were analyzed in a prose format in which the actual responses of the key informants were taken into account. The key informants' convergent and divergent views were presented to strengthen and validate the quantitative data by means of triangulation.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Introductions

This chapter presents the results of the research conducted on coping strategies of married female students in Gombe State University. One hundred and eighty three (183) copies of survey questionnaire were administered but 166 (90.7%) were successfully retrieved. Also, the key informants were interviewed and the results of the two findings were analysed and triangulated. Thereafter, discussion of major findings followed suit.

4.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section provides the personal profiles of the respondents such as age, marital status, religion, faculty, academic level, family type, occupation beside schooling and number of children.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-22years	8	4.8
23-27years	77	46.4
28-32years	22	13.3
33-37years	19	11.4
38-42years	37	22.3
43years and above	3	1.8
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Religion		
Christianity	95	57.2
Islam	71	42.8
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Faculty		
Science	29	17.5
Arts	45	27.1
Medicine	8	4.8
Social Sciences	51	30.7
Pharmacy	15	9.0
Education	18	10.8
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Academic Level		
100L	23	13.9
200L	69	41.6
300L	47	28.3
400L	27	16.2
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Occupation beside Schooling		
Civil servant	14	8.4
Trading	48	28.9
Farming	8	4.8
Artisan	4	2.4
House wife	92	55.4
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Family Type		
Monogamous	109	65.7
Polygamous	57	34.3
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Number of Children		
1-2	118	71.1
2-4	43	25.9
5-6	5	3.0
Total	**166**	**100.0**

Table 4.1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The findings reveal that 46.4% of the respondents are between the age bracket of 23-27years, 22.3% between the ages of 38-42years, 13.3% are aged between 28-32years, 11.4% are between the age of 33-37years, 4.8% are between the age of 18-22years and only 1.8% of the respondents are 43years and above. This means that majority of the respondents are between the age of 23-27years and falls among the younger age of married female students in Gombe State University. The religion of the respondents indicated that 57.2% are Christians and 42.8% are Muslims. This means that on the average, both Christianity and Islam religion are practice by respondents. In terms of respondent's educational faculty, majority (30.7%) are from faculty of Social Sciences followed by faculty of Arts with 27.1%, faculty of Science has 17.5%, faculty of Education has 10.8% and faculty of Medicine has 4.8% representation in the study. Respondents' educational level also shows that majority 41.6% of the respondents are in 200level, 28.3% are in 300level, 16.2% are in 400level and 13.9% of the respondents are in 100level. This shows that majority of the respondents are in their second year of academic level and have issues to content with before graduation especially as it concern their status as married women and students.

With regard to the occupational status of respondents, 55.4% are housewives, 28.9% of the participants are also involved in trading, 8.4% are civil servants, 4.8% combined academics with farming and only 2.4% of the respondents are artisan. From the findings, it can be deduced that majority of the married female students that participated in the study are full-time housewives as such may face the greater challenges of finance since they have to depend on their husbands and family members exception in special cases where some husband support their wives fully and they automatically become the sole nurturers of the children since they are always around in the home front. It was also gathered that 65.7% of the respondents come from a monogamous family where there is only one husband to one wife

and 34.3% of them come from a Polygynous family. Here there is the present of one husband with many wives and the study discovered that 71.1% of the respondents have only 1-2 children, 25.9% have 2-4 children and only 3% of the respondents have 5-6 children. This clearly shows that majority of the married female students are young in their reproductive age as confirmed from the composition of their ages where majority falls between the age of 23-27years.

4.3 Challenges Faced by Married Female Students of Gombe State University

This section presents the views of the respondents on the various challenges that married female students are facing in their academic pursuit in Gombe State University. This was done to identify the challenges with a view to make policy recommendations on this set of special students and how they can be carried along in educational policies to encourage mass education in the entire segment of the society irrespective of one's status

Table 4.2: Views of Respondents on whether or not they Experience Challenges with Schooling

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	143	86.1
No	23	13.9
Total	**166**	**100.0**

Table 4.2 indicates the views of respondents on whether or not they experience challenges with schooling. It was gathered that 86.1% of the respondents said yes and 13.9% said no. This means that an overwhelming majority of the married female students face one form of challenge or the other as they combine school and their stereotypical sole responsibility of domestic sphere.

The qualitative data collected indicated that all the key informants acknowledged that married female students in Gombe State University are face with challenges in their academic pursuit.

According to a female key informant (a Student) said that*: there are a lot of challenges married female students experience especially those of us that are nursing mothers. The challenges from waking up early in the morning and preparing the family food, prepare the children and get prepared to go to school.*

Another key informant said:

> *Basically, the challenges is that we don't attend lectures regularly and even if we do, we normally come late and our concentration in the class is different from the unmarried most especially those of us that are nursing mothers and even if we are in the class, our attention is always where our babies are.*

In an interview with a female lecturer, she said that:

> *Well, female students face a lot of challenge that need to be looked into. This is because whatever a woman does and she is married then she has additional responsibilities. They face huge conflict because they have children, their husband to take care of and the house chores that need to be done, so you find yourself juggling between many things.*

Similarly, a male lecturer interviewed said:

> *Married female students are finding it difficult to combine and maintain the house and struggling with academic activities and 90% of them have children. While those with pregnancy often experience health and physical challenges like nausea, vomiting, laziness, dizziness and these affect their tests and exams.*

Another key informant (student) said that:

> *Personally for me, marriage and schooling was very challenging and this is because I left school for a very long time and I find it difficult to cope, I just came back to continue with my degree programme. So, I find myself missing classes and not having enough time to study and this result to stress and tiredness.*

So, the findings captured aptly the experiences that married female students face in schooling. This means that being married and schooling is a harculing tasks for women particularly as they have to contend with multiple responsibilities of domestic works, child care, husband care, personal and academics. All these add burden to the female students as such affect their academic works.

Table 4.3: Challenges Facing Married Female Students in Gombe State University

Challenges	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Financial problems	125(75.3%)	36(21.7%)	5(3%)	166(100.0%)
Family and academic work conflict	137(82.5%)	26(15.7%)	3(1.8%)	166(100.0%)
Insufficient supports from husband and relatives	57(34.3%)	105(63.3%)	4(2.4%)	166(100.0%)
Lack sufficient time to do assignment and reading	133(80.1%)	32(19.3%)	1(0.6%)	166(100.0%)
Improper dietary/feeding	103(62%)	52(31.3%)	11(6.7%)	166(100.0%)
Absenteeism and irregular class attendance	96(57.9%)	65(39.1%)	5(3%)	166(100.0%)
Missing class test	96(57.9%)	63(37.9%)	7(4.2%)	166(100.0%)
Miss examination	27(16.3%)	127(76.5%)	12(7.2%)	166(100.0%)
Stress problem	149(89.8%)	14(8.4%)	3(1.8%)	166(100.0%)
Raising and upkeep of child(ren)	142(85.5%)	16(9.6%)	8(4.9%)	166(100.0%)
Pregnancy	148(89.1%)	17(10.3%)	1(0.6%)	166(100.0%)

Table 4.3 shows the challenges facing married female students in the study area. An overwhelming majority (89.1%) of the respondents said they are faced with pregnancy challenges and stress problem (89.8%), 85.5% said challenges in raising and upkeep of their children, 82.5% said family and academic work conflict together, 80.1% said they do not have sufficient time to do assignment and read their notes books. A significant proportion (75.3%) of the respondents identified financial challenges, significant majority 62% said they face the problem of improper dietary and feeding and majority (57.9%) of the respondents disclosed that absenteeism and irregular class attendance and missing tests as their challenges. However, significant proportion (76.5%) of the respondents said they don't miss

exams and significant majority (63.3%) voiced that they get sufficient supports from husbands and relatives.

Information gathered from the in-depth interview clearly shows that married female students are confronted with a lot of challenges which ranges from missing class, health challenges, stress, missing test, irregular class attendance, etc. However, according to a 300level student:

> Actually, I came to this school in 2015 through direct entry and was given 200L. After a while, it was confirm that I was pregnant and my husband advice I carry both (academics and pregnancy) together. Part of the challenges I experience was lack of adequate class attendance, insufficient time for my family and school, problem from stress. All these mentioned are the paramount problems I encountered. After delivery, the problem increased as I now become a nursing mother who has to take care of the baby, my husband, house works and others. Many a times if I have no body to assist me with washing plate, it takes two days for me before I wash them including my baby's clothes. And all these affect my academics in a very tremendous way that I had to just sacrifice lectures and stay at home with the baby. She further stated that: I normally come to the lectures late and many times slept off in the class without getting any teaching. (300level Student)

Another 200level key informant said that:

> My husband is very supportive, infact even before I got pregnant, he has been bringing me to school, and when I got pregnant, he brings me to school and at times he come and take me back home. He even assists me with some home cores, go to market for us and even assist me with assignments. (200level Student)

From all indications, the female students of Gombe State University are vulnerable to encounter problems because of the multiple roles they have to play. However, minimal supports from spouse could help reduce the challenge as testified by one of the key informants above.

Table 4.4: Views of Respondents on the Challenges that affect them most

Challenges that affect most	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of sufficient time to do assignment and reading	29	17.5
Pregnancy	34	20.5
Financial problems	19	11.4
Raising and upkeep of child(ren)	9	5.4
Insufficient support from husband and relatives	7	4.2
Family and academic work conflict	12	7.2
Stress problem	32	19.3
Missing class test	4	2.4
Absenteeism and irregular class attendance	10	6.0
Improper dietary/feeding	3	1.8
No response	7	4.2
Total	**166**	**100.0**

Table 4.4 above shows that 17.5% of the respondents identified lack of sufficient time to do assignment and read their notes, 19.3% identified stress problem, 20.5% said pregnancy, 11.4% identified financial problem and only 1.8% of the respondents identified improper dietary and feeding. This finding shows that pregnancy constituted the huge challenge facing married female students in Gombe State as attested by majority of the respondents.

According to the in-depth interview conducted, a key informant (Student) said that:

> *There are instance where we (Married female students) come to the class late, because we have to go and keep our babies in the day care and when we enter the class, some of the lecturers will drive us out of the class and many a times stop us from writing test because we came late.*

This findings show that married female students unlike the singles will have to make thorough adjustment so as to avoid coming to the class late. While this is common among married female students, more studies need to be conducted to find out how and what is best education frameworks like (time table, interval or weekend lectures) and practices could help the married female students overcome the problem of late coming to the class.

4.4 Effects of Challenges on Married Female Students and their Academics

This section sought respondents opinion on the effects of the challenges married female students encountered in their academics. A question was asked whether or not marriage affect the respondents' academics, a significant proportion 73.5% (122) of the respondents said yes and 26.5% (44) said marriage has no effect on their academics. In trying to find out how the married female student feels when they missed class shows that an overwhelming majority 98.8% (164) of the respondents said they feel bad and only 1.2% (2) said indifferent. In terms of missing class assignment and presentations, an overwhelming majority 97.6% (162) of the respondents said they feel bad when they miss class assignment and presentation and only 1.2% (2) said good and indifferent. Also, views of respondents on whether or not missing lectures affect their academic performances indicated that an overwhelming majority 94.6% (157) of the respondents acknowledged that missing lectures had a lot of effect on their academic performances and 5.4% (9) said no. From the findings above, it can be seen that married female students' experienced series of challenges ranging from, missing class, missing class assignment and presentation among others. All these have direct effects on their academic performances compared to the singles. However, the effects of the challenges married female of Gombe State University are confronted with are shown in the table below:

Table 4.5: Effects of the Challenges on Married Female Students Academics in Gombe State University

Effects	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Poor grade	104(62.7%)	59(35.5%)	3(1.8%)	166(100.0%)
Carry over courses	105(63.3%)	59(35.5%)	2(1.2%)	166(100.0%)
Spill over	97(58.5%)	67(40.3%)	2(1.2%)	166(100.0%)
Decision to drop out of school	47(28.3%)	104(62.7%)	15(9%)	166(100.0%)
Lower self esteem	97(58.5%)	54(32.5%)	15(9%)	166(100.0%)
Psychological/emotional imbalance whenever the child fell ill	153(92.2%)	10(6%)	3(1.8%)	166(100.0%)
Limit chances of good mothering	139(83.8%)	24(14.5%)	3(1.8%)	166(100.0%)
Poor health	91(54.8%)	70(42.2%)	5(3%)	166(100.0%)

Table 4.5 indicates that an overwhelming proportion (92.2%) of the respondents said that they suffer of psychological/emotional imbalance whenever their child falls sick, 83.8% said that they have limited chances of good mothering. A significant proportion (63.3%) of the respondents identified carry-over of courses, 62.7% said poor grades. In addition to the effects of the challenges facing married female students, majority 58.5% of the respondents disclosed that they spill over some courses and face the problem of low self-esteem, while 54.8% of the respondents said they suffer from poor health. However, of all the effects of challenges facing married female students, only 62.7% of the respondents said they do not consider dropping out of school because of the challenges they are facing when compared to 28.3% who consider dropping out of school as the tasks are too herculean on them.

Qualitative data collected revealed that all the key informants said that married female students are unstable academically and that affect their results. A key informant (Lecturer) said that:

> *Student mothers face serious challenges especially poor grade. A lot of them have this problem not because they are not intelligent but because they don't have time to read, meet up with presentation, classes, assignment, tests and all that and these affect their grade and if you didn't have test you miss 30% and assignment 10% which is 40% remaining 60% for exams. So where is the guaranty that they will get 60%, it is not possible.*

A student interviewed said:

> *The challenges I face schooling always affect me psychologically, many times I tell my mum that I don't think I can continue with schooling because I don't want a situation whereby I would be running at a lower grade but she keeps encouraging not to.*

Similarly, another key informant said that:

> *Married female students face a lot of challenges. For the female students that have married for long and have grown up children, can easily adjust and manage themselves but the new ones, they find it difficult which leads to poor academic performances.*

Another key informant, a student of 400level said that:

> In my first semester, I carried over some courses. This is because I was informed in the exam hall that my baby was sick, I became psychologically and emotionally imbalance that I had to abandon the exams and rush to the day care centre. I forfeit the exams and have to carry over the courses.

Similarly, another student said: *I carried over some course because I was unable to write the exams that semester. I was pregnant and on the day of my first paper I fell seriously ill that I had to be admitted in the hospital. So, being a married student and pregnant in school was not an easy thing for me.*

From these findings, it is can be seen that married female students have to bear with the effects of their dual roles as its affect their academics performances. While poor grades was discovered is a major source of concern and worry among most married female students, the results of their status also make them vulnerable to carry over courses and even spill over. The effects of this spam through psychological or emotion to physical and prompt their choice of continuing with their education or drop it. Therefore, studies need to be intensify on

the plight of married female students to help them complete their education without considering stopping along the way.

4.5 Coping Strategies Adopted by Female Married Students in Gombe State University

This section explored the techniques and strategies female married students use to balance their domestic and academic activities. While some of the respondents chose to do house chore themselves, others seek assistant. See table below:

Table 4.6: Coping Strategies Employed by Respondents

Coping Strategies	Yes	No	Total
Employment of house help	64(38.6%)	102(61.4%)	166(100.0%)
Enroll the baby into day care	102(61.4%)	64(38.6%)	166(100.0%)
Leave the baby at home with relative	87(52.4%)	79(47.6%)	166(100.0%)
Keep the baby with neighbours	20(12%)	146(88%)	166(100.0%)
Skip lectures to take care of the child(ren)	129(77.7%)	37(22.3%)	166(100.0%)
Draw domestic chores time table	116(69.9%)	60(30.1%)	166(100.0%)
Pay colleagues to assist with assignments	15(9%)	151(91%)	166(100.0%)
Pay colleagues to write test	13(7.8%)	153(92.2%)	166(100.0%)
Bribing lecturers	14(8.4%)	152(91.6%)	166(100.0%)
Wake up early to perform domestic chores	163(98.2%)	3(1.8%)	166(100.0%)
Wake up mid night to read	149(89.8%)	17(10.2%)	166(100.0%)

Table 4.6 shows that overwhelming majority (98.2%) of the respondents said they wake up very early in the morning to perform domestic chores, 89.8% said they wake up mid night to read their note books. A significant proportion (77.7%) of the respondents said they skip lectures to take care of their children, significant majority (69.9%) said they draw time table

on domestic chores, 61.4% of the respondents said they enroll their baby into day care and majority (52.4%) said they leave their baby at home with their leaves. However, 92.2% of the respondents they don't pay their colleagues to write test for them, 91.6% said they don't bribe their lecturers, 91% said they don't pay their colleagues to assist them with assignment, 88% of the studied population revealed that they don't keep their babies at home with their relatives and 61.4% of them said they don't have house help to assist them in the upkeep of their homes and babies.

In an interview with a student, she said that:

> We are three in the house including my sister and if not for her, I wonder how I could combine many responsibilities like looking after the baby, my husband and my academics works. I wanted to employ the service of a house help but because of my sister I did not because she has been the one helping whenever I am going to school and other places.

A Respondent also said that:

> I normally come with my house help to school to help me take care of the baby outside the class. When the baby is hungry, the house help would flash me and I will come out, breast feed the baby and return to the class.

Another 400Level student interviewed said:

> My experience schooling is seriously challenging especially when I see my Grade Point Average (GPA) dropping, I became disturbed that I hardly sleep and anytime I am sleeping I find myself waking up to read at night to correct my poor grade. In my first semester, my GPA was 3.32 and in the second semester it reduces to 2.79 and that made me unhappy. So, to correct that, I always try to wake up very early and read before doing some domestic work.

Similarly, another informant said that:

> For me, I normally wake up at night to read because, when everybody is sleeping, the place seems quiet and for now I can't take the baby to day care because the baby is too young but as the baby mature a little say 6months, then I will enroll him into day care but for now, I will either take him to the class and sit close to the entrance door or leave him with my cousin whenever she is at home.

Another student interviewed said that:

> I mostly beg my colleagues to help me with tutorial, assignment and submitting the assignment. Another student interviewed said: as a married and nursing mother, it is not easy to combine two roles together and since I don't have anyone to assist me in nursing the child, I always carry along the child to school since there is no one to help and I don't money to hire the service of a nanny.

In an interaction with a baby sitter (Staff of Day Care Centre), she said that:

> In the centre here, we have all the contact number of the married female students that register with us. Whenever, we need anything or their baby is crying uncontrollably, I call them to come and breast feed or be with the child for a while and on our own, we are working out better modalities to help the students' mothers especially liaising with the school health centre for good services.

Another key informant (Health Worker) said that:

> We tried to see that all married female students including staff are well cared for. We have free antenatal service for them, free delivery service and during exams, we give married female students letter of exemption when their condition is critical. While some others we recommend to the school management to always give them enough time and extra hours during exams so as to enable them write well. We also organise discussion session, awareness and encourage them on what to eat, exercise and resting time.

From the findings above, it can be seen that both the responses from the quantitative and qualitative data expresses the various coping strategies married female students adopt, it is important to pin point that the use of mobile phone by student mothers is an effective means that can assist them especially in their communication with the day care centres and house help. The use of mobile phones can also help some married female students especially those whose child/children are healthy and are growing up could easily concentrate more and stay longer in class without going out often. Therefore, there is need for effective communication medium be workout between the day care centres and students mothers which can enhance the academic performance of the students.

Table 4.7: Views of Respondents on whether or not they Communicate to their Lecturer when they encountered any Problem

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	53.6
No	77	46.4
Total	**166**	**100.0**

The finding shows that 53.6% of the respondents share their problems with their lecturers and 46.4% said no. This shows that majority of the married female students who experience problem along their academics do meet their lecturer for assistance.

The qualitative collected shows that the married female students interviewed said they have and always meet their lecturers whenever they have any problem in their school works. However, it was revealed that some lecturers are friendly and kind to the students while others are not. A lecturer interviewed said that:

> I tried to on my own to assist these married female students. Because I know that when a woman is educated is like the entire society is educated. So, I have been thinking of the initiative to help these women because I have done an application and waiting to see if it will be approve by the school management. The initiative is having a forum for married female students and sees how we can effect changes on them and assist them in their academics.

Based on the finding, it has been justified that married female students are not without challenges; these challenges affect them tremendously especially on their academics. While it is expected that students irrespective of their status should work and study hard, it will also be necessary that married female condition should not be equated as singles. Therefore, all stake holders (spouse, relations, lecturers and colleagues) should join in the efforts to help married female students in their academics as this will go a long way promoting education and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on achieving wide coverage of education among all members of the society including married female students.

Table 4.8: Views of Respondents on the Response of their Lecturers

Response of Lecturers	Frequency	Percentage
Giving me advice and help if they are capable of doing so	25	15.1
Encouraging	15	9.0
Some are tough while some are simple	12	7.2
They always encourage us to work harder all the time	9	5.4
Some don't care/listen to us and not willing to help	3	1.8
Some lecturers give us make up test	2	1.2
Some of them understand our complains and find proper way/solution to assist	3	1.8
Some assist through bribing	2	1.2
No response	95	57.3
Total	**166**	**100.0**

The findings presented in Table 4.8 shows that 15.1% of the respondents said their lecturers advise them and assist them in area they could, 9% said the lecturers encourage them, 7.2% said some of their lecturers are tough and difficult while others are simple and helpful and 1.2% of the respondents said that some of their lecturers give them make up tests and some of the lecturers only assist when they are bribed. However, majority (57.3%) of the respondents did not response.

The qualitative data collected from a key informant (Student) revealed that:

> Actually, sometimes the lecturers are friendly and sometimes not. Sometimes the lecturers when we meet will show angry face (look) and sometimes we go to plead with them and some agree to our plea others don't. Similarly, another key informant (student) said that: some lecturers do give us make up test but depends on the lecturer and some of them when you complain to them and they reason that you are married persons and your complain is genuine, they

will assist. I had an experience where I failed to present my assignment in the class presentation, after explaining to the lecturer of my antenatal appointment, he collected the presentation and assessed me.

Respondents were also asked on whether or not their colleagues assist them in the class. The findings show that 151(91%) of the respondents said yes and 15(9%) said no. This means that a reasonable number of the respondents get help from their colleagues. Some of the areas the married female students' colleagues assist them are shown in Table 4.10 below:

Table 4.9: Views of Respondents on the Areas their Colleagues assist them

Colleague Assistance	Frequency	Percentage
By communicating about what is been thought in class to have little knowledge about it	24	14.5
By informing us when the lecturer is around	37	22.3
Reading together	20	12.0
By helping with lectures materials and also tutorials	36	21.7
By having group discussion and explaining what we didn't understand and notifying us on academics	26	15.7
They informed us whenever there is a fixed class	6	3.6
No response	17	10.2
Total	**166**	**100.0**

Table 4.9 shows the views of respondents on the areas their colleagues assist them. Twenty two percent of the respondents said that their colleagues assist them by informing them when the lecturer is around, 21.7% said their colleagues helps them with lecture materials and tutorials, 15.7% said their colleagues organise group discussion and explain what they did not understand or missed in class and only 3.6% of the respondents said that their colleagues assist that by informing them whenever a class is fix. This findings shows that majority of the

married female students acknowledged their colleagues efforts in informing about the present of lecturer.

4.6 Possible Measures to Overcome the Challenges Faced by Married Female Students inGombe State University

This section analyzed how married female students can overcome the challenges they faced in their academics. The findings were presented to help know the strategies the respondents apply while schooling.

Table 4.10: Coping Strategies Adopted by Married Female Students in Gombe State University with their Academics

Copies Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Female married students should prepare their personal time table that will make work easy and reduce stress	25	15.1
Have a time with their fellow colleagues to help them with tutorials	46	27.7
The government should organize scholarship and financial supports for married students (females)	7	4.2
Through enrolling their children in day care to avoid distraction	7	4.2
Wake up early to do the home cores and read hard to pass	21	12.7
Family planning	3	1.8
The school should provide modern and standard day care within the school premises	16	9.6
Employment of house help to help with the domestic work and children	10	6.0
Unequal treatment by lecturers to both the married and unmarried female students should be avoided	2	1.2
By creating time for the family and academics	5	3.0
Hard work and commitment	9	5.4
They should be determined and the husbands should be supportive to their wives	10	6.0
No response	5	3.0
Total	**166**	**100.0**

The data collected in Table 4.10 show that 27.7% of the respondents suggested that married female students should have enough time with their fellow colleagues to help them with tutorials, 15.1% said married female students should prepare their personal time table that will make work easily and reduce stress, 12.7% of the studied population said married female student should endeavor to wake up early to do the home cores and read hard to pass and only 1.2% of the respondents opined that lecturers should avoid unequal treatment to both the married and unmarried female students and 9.6% suggested that the school management should provide modern and standard day care within the school premises to assist the married female students to attend to their children and also carry out their academic activities effectively.

Qualitative data collected from a key informant (Male Lecturer) strongly shows that: *female students should discuss with their husband to employ a house help is very important so as to take care of the home in her absence and men need to supports their wives in their academics and keep away bad attitudes towards their wife education.*

Another Lecturer (Female) said that:

> The university have a policy of play class. The federal policy that make provision of crèches facilities for student mothers. The Gombe state university has the crèches facilities where married female students entrust their children to be taken care of and they can go to their classes and library to read and can go and check their children once or twice a day. So, married female students should endeavor to register their children with the children centre.

Another key informant (Health Worker) interviewed said that:

> The university management should increase the number of health workers so that we can begin run shifting especially now that more married women are enrolling into the university. Also, the day care centre need to be expanded to accommodate more children belonging to students and staff and flexible means of transportation (like motor cycle, Keke NAPEP) should be provided by the school management to enable movement about their academic activities without much stress. The key informant added that lecturers should be kind to these married female students and be friendly to them and understand their

plight especially for those that are pregnant and have to go for antenatal and other checkups.

A key informant (Student) interviewed said that: *lecturers should be friendly to married students and they should endeavor to listen to us and our complains, evaluate our complains and see how they can assist us.* Another student interviewed said that: *married female students should try to adjust to any situation they find themselves and work very hard.*

4.7 Discussion of Major Findings

In trying to find out the challenges married female students face in schooling, an overwhelming majority 86.1% of the respondents disclosed being married and schooling is accompanied with a lot of challenges especially for women who have to contend with role conflicts as mother and students and an overwhelming majority said pregnancy was also a challenge for them, This is supported by Zwolak (2008), who point out that students felt they could not cope with the demands of pregnancy and study hence they requested for maternity leave. Sentiments expressed by pregnant students indicated that school life was a struggle. However, pregnant students experience their pregnancy differently. While some find it easy to study others find it almost impossible to study while pregnant. According to Luttrell (2003), during pregnancy the body undergoes changes and sends signals which the students must pay attention to. Some such signals are backache, morning sickness, muscle cramps, heartburn and hypertension. Physical discomfort tends to negatively affect academic performance. Therefore, academic progress is held back as coping strategies and attention spans are reduced. Luzzo (2002), stated that motherhood seems to oppress women and mothering is not quite compatible with other roles women are expected to play because women's career motivation is much more vulnerable to competing role priorities and environmental demands which constitute serious barriers to their career aspirations.

Also, majority of the respondents pointed out that married female students also experience stress problem, lack of sufficient time to do assignment and read was a challenge and significant proportion of them said financial challenges. This finding corroborated Chigona &Chetty (2007), study who identified lack of time to study and do assignments as one of the major challenges of the student-mother. According to them most of the student-mothers do not have time to study because when they return from school, their relatives who voluntarily serve as baby-sitters want to be free of child-care chores. According to the role strain theory, people perform most of everyday activity according to a socially defined category i.e. women are to child bearing and nurturing and men to fending for the family and argued that mothering and academic career are competing roles that women jungles and constitute stress when they try to fulfill both at the same time. However, significant proportion of the respondents said that they have never miss exams and significant majority of the respondents praised their husbands and relatives for the support they give them. This finding also corroborated the role strain theory where it argues that some roles are left unfulfilled. According to the theory, individuals are bound to face conflict in fulfilling one role over the other for example, students mothers may decide to leave their sick child to the relatives or house help to partake in class test or exams and may also decide to spend the night in the classroom reading for her exam while the husband cooks for himself and the kids and prepare the kids for school the next day. While women refusal to fulfill their traditional roles is not an end in itself, the theory individualized individual theory clarifies that individual tends to fulfill certain roles they defined important to them as such emphasized that education of women is key to women's liberation from all traditional and socio-cultural factors that impede their career advancement. According to majority of the respondents, lack of sufficient time to do assignment and read their notes is the major challenges they are facing and identified less time to take care of their children and husbands as other challenges they are

confronted with. The role strain theory lamented that married female mothers are pressured as they have to gets up very early in the morning trying to get everything done at home before going to lectures becomes tired and not very alert at classes. Quartey (2003) supports this findings when he said that as a result of the strains on married female students time and energy, students' mothers experience fatigue, lack of time for revision and rest and feelings of guilt over not fulfilling their traditional role expectations at home. It is also in line with Thortimore (1996) view that these challenges affects regular attendance to lectures, tutorials, personal and group discussions and study and consequently, these challenges affect academic results.

Regarding the effects of the challenges married female student face with schooling, the study found that marriage life affect married female students academic, as an overwhelming majority (98.8%) of the respondents said that they always feel bad whenever they miss a class, they feel bad whenever they miss class assignment and presentation and missing lectures has a lot of effects on their academic performances. Grant (2004), identified missing class or lectures as one major challenge facing students mothers in school. According to him, when the child falls sick the mother gives attention to the care of the child at the expense of their academic work. This suggests that according to the role strain theory, even if a mother ignores a sick child because of her academic work, it is likely she cannot concentrate. Dyson (2006), said that missing lectures or assessment deadlines were not uncommon, due to problems with childcare, child sickness, or general lack of time for studies, and lone parents were more prone to this than those living with a partner. Chabaud (2012), observed that student mothers who combined activities would obviously find it difficult to effectively combine domestic responsibilities and academic work as they become tired which drained their physical energy and affected their academic performances. Other challenges face by married female students includes stress, absenteeism, financial constraints, lack of spousal

supports and inadequate time to study. Related to the role strain theory, is the fact married female students often cannot meet the demands of all the roles they may hold at any given time as such the individual's total role obligation are over-demanding and generate to role contagion which interferes with meeting the obligation of each roles. However, the NUS (2009), survey highlighted that a vast majority (75%) of student parents felt that studying in higher education had been a positive experience for them and their families. Overall, the picture drawn is that student parents are enthusiastic about learning, despite the barriers they face. This directly correlates with individual individualized theory which centers most on people removing the constraints of gender and advocates for women's liberation through education at whatever cost. The theory stressed that the education of women would make them productive in the society and provide grounds for women's well-being and inclusiveness.

It was also gathered that being married and schooling affect married female students psychologically and emotionally especially whenever their children fall sick, According to Thompson (2000), becoming the parent of a child has a time of great stress and challenge and is reported to have higher amounts of physical, emotional, psychological, and financial constraints. And was discovered that marriage and schooling affect the chances of students mothers of good mothering. Hays (1996), cited in Lynch (2008), makes reference to intensive mothering which requires a woman to devote most of her time, energy and money in raising children. This can result in maternal burnout: an overload of stress that manifests itself in fulfilling the role expectations of motherhood and the academic demands, though possible, is a difficult task. According to Bullen*et al*. (2000), parenting is not compatible with education. Involvement in learning activities tends to minimize the student's chances of good mothering while mothering compromises her chances of a good student. While role performance are socio-culturally determined, education for individual individualized theoryis

a rights and be given equally between men and women. The theory sees equal opportunities for men and women as a vehicle for power balance. With equal opportunities, women would compete with men and their talent as well as become better mothers in the home both in role performance and child development.In addition, significant majority 63.3% of the respondents said they carry over some courses, 62.7% complain of poor grades and 58.5% said that they spill over, suffer low self-esteem and poor health. Therefore, the psychological effects associated with child-rearing mostly emanated from stigma-related comments, doubts and poor grades. This findings further confirms the parlance of role strain theory where it argues that married female students are confronted with many roles which leads to role conflicts and that some certain roles can be fulfilled over the others as such, the inability to fulfill all the roles, result in some role not be achieve which account for why some married female students may fail exams when they spend greater part of their time looking after the sick child or family member or when they themselves fall sick.

Findings on the coping strategies adopted by married female students Gombe State University indicated that an overwhelming majority of the respondents said that they wake up at mid night to their notes, they wake up early to perform domestics chores, significant proportion of the respondents said they skip lectures to take care of their babies and that they prepare domestic time table. In a similar finding, Ansah*et al.* (2007) found that many student mothers develop coping strategies by engaging house-helps and planned domestic work schedules. In their study, student mothers engaged the services of house-helps (paid domestic workers) to perform their family chores, also plan family work schedules to make more time for their studies. The study also found that significant majority who have enrolled their babies in daycare communicated with their lecturers when they encounter any problem. Majority of the students said that their colleagues assist them by informing then when the lecturer is around and assist them with materials and tutorials. Seen as such, in

many cases, the fear of being labeled incompetent or incapable causes some students to refrain from seeking support from academic staff members. This also agrees with the role strain theory when it emphasized that in order to handle role conflicts, individuals may tend to delegate tasks thereby limiting the fulfillment of each role and also creating barriers to the creation of new roles or expanding one role as a way to excuse the commitments to another role. Contrary to this, Reece & Walker (2003) maintained that some students fail to talk about important issues salient to their academic well-being as such learning becomes a struggle and chances of academic excellence or achievement are stunted.

However, the study gathered that majority of the respondents suggested that married female students should endeavour to have enough time with their fellow colleagues to help them with tutorials, female married students should prepare their personal time table that will make work easy and reduce stress, married female students should wake up early to do the home chores and read hard to pass and the school management should provide modern and standard day care within the school premises. according to Cerven (2013), given that many student mothers spend a significant number of waking hours caring for dependent children, this contributes to a longer time to complete degree than male parents, the provision of campus childcare may be the most high-impact reform for student mothers. However, in Gombe State University, childcare centre on the campuses is limited. Also it was suggested that married female students should employ the service of house help to help with the domestic work and children and should be determined and the husbands should be supportive to their wives. To sum this, Boakye-Boaten (2010), lamented that the level of support the student mothers receive from others in the family and from society plays an important role in the kind of care she is able to provide during school times. Thus the cultural patterns surrounding the role of the father, other family members and the community during this period is also important for the child's survival and development. In addition, the individualized individual also stressed

that education is fundamental for women and both sexes should be given equal opportunities to education and develop their potentials to improve their educational, economic and political status which is key to sustainable development.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of the study, draws conclusion and recommendations on challenges and coping strategies adopted by married female students in Gombe State University.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This study analysed the challenges and coping strategies adopted by married female students in Gombe State University, Gombe State, Nigeria. It examined the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University, investigated the challenges faced by married female students in Gombe State University and how its affect them and their academic performances, the coping strategies adopted by married female students to overcome their academic challenges and proffered possible solutions on how the challenges faced by female married students in Gombe State University can be ameliorated. Relevant literature materials were reviewed in line with the study objectives and role strain theory was adopted to explain the phenomenon. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collections were employed and the findings were analyzed and triangulated to complement each other.

Findings from the study revealed that all the respondents acknowledged that married female students have to contend with role conflicts especially in balancing familial and academic works. While it is obvious on the challenges married female face, 89.1% of the respondents said that pregnancy was a major challenge for them, as the impact of pregnancy manifest in regular visit to the hospital, regular and minor system disorder and constant fatigue, it was

discovered that the respondents suffer from stress problem. Lack of sufficient time to do assignment and read was a challenge married female face on daily bases as 80.1% of the respondents are seen always laying complains to lecturers and seeking assistance from colleagues to work out assignment, this problem is also compounded where a significant proportion of the respondents disclosed that they are face with financial challenges. However, interestingly, significant proportion of the respondents said that they have never missed exams and praised their husbands and relatives for the support they give them.

Drawing from the effects of the challenges married female students face while schooling, it was found out that 73.5% of the respondents said that marriage life affect their academics. This as a result of the married female students' struggles to fulfill her dual roles amidst competing roles and expectations and this problem worsen when the spouse and family members are unsupportive. This makes them miss class or lectures as attested by 98.8% of the respondents who revealed that they always feel bad whenever they miss a class, miss class assignment and presentation and 94.6% of the respondents said that missing lectures has a lot of effects on their academic performances. While the effect of schooling on married female students cannot be overemphasize, the study found that 92.2% of the respondents said that being married and schooling affect them psychologically and emotionally whenever their children fall sick, 83.8% said married and schooling affect their chances of good mothering. In addition, significant majority of the respondents said they carry over some courses, complain of poor grades and spill over some course, suffer low self-esteem and poor health. This is to say married female students unlike the unmarried female students do not find it easy combining two or roles. This is even worst when the married female students have sick children and or relations who would need constant attention and care. Thereby making them unavoidably absent from school and deprive them chances of class group presentation, class works, assignment and writing of test.

Findings on the coping strategies adopted by married female students of Gombe State University indicated that an overwhelming majority of the respondents said that they wake up at mid night to read their notes, wake up early to perform domestic cores. These married female students do to succeed conscious of the fact that energies, sacrifice must be directed to achieve academic success. Seventy eight percent of the respondents said they skip lectures to take care of their babies, majority of the studied population revealed that they prepare domestic time table to enable them plan and accomplished domestic and academic works within schedules planned and 61.4% of the respondents enroll their babies in daycare. Also, it was found that respondents do not hesitate to always communicate to their lecturers when they encounter any problem, the respondents often sought their colleagues' assistance by informing then when the lecturer is around for lectures and to also assist them with materials and tutorials to enable them meet up with the academics activities.

However, the respondents suggested that married female students should endeavor to have enough time with their fellow colleagues to help them with tutorials and should endeavour to wake up early to do the home cores and read hard to pass. Also, it was gathered that the school management should provide modern and standard day care within the school premises to assist the married female students with young and dependent child to enable them concentrate and attend lectures, and where necessary and capable, married female students should employ the service of house help to help with the domestic work and children and husbands are call upon to support their wives domestically, socially and financially.

5.3 Conclusion

Being a married woman and pursuing a university degree presents challenges for many students. However, obtaining a postsecondary education can provide economic security and social mobility for women parent families while unleashing a potential wealth of human

capital to meet the nation's workforce needs. By completing a postsecondary education, women in particular increase their access to higher paying jobs and healthcare for their families and in some instances the increase in income is immediate.

Undoubtedly, higher education of students' mothers is very crucial for their development, the family and society at large. Nonetheless, mothering and schooling becomes a critical issue that challenges many student-mothers at higher institutions of learning, and perhaps other institutions of higher learning. Although, this issue has not gained much attention, its discussion is relevant and timely to complement the various interventions necessary for implementation to make University education more accessible to married female students. Irrespective of their intention to have babies while schooling, student-mothers face challenges that affect their welfare. With reference to the framework used for this study, student-mothers performs several roles ranging from domestic, childbearing and rearing and academic. Performing all these roles within a 'strict' academic system does not only compound the challenges they face, but subsequently impact on their results. The effects of these challenges reflect in the total wellbeing of student-mothers because they relate to all the factors (biological, psychological, social and economic) that touch on human health and welfare. However, married female students in this study demonstrated a commitment to the educational process, a willingness to succeed against all odds, and a desire to make a valuable contribution to their families, the college community and to the nation. Therefore, more attention need to be directed to the welfare of married female students to enable them have a viable and conducive environment to strive in their academics.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The study found that married female students' juggle with childcare and domestic work with studying, and in many cases, are particularly difficult and cumbersome for

student them to cope. The study recommends that husbands and relations should supports their wives in division of domestic work and childcare nurturing to enable them effectively achieve their education with minimal problem.

2. The finding of the study revealed that universities vary in their response and level of support to female married students, with many students having to rely upon individual staff members and colleagues, and others missing classes or turning up late, due to child sickness or difficulties with course timetabling, which often change at short notice. It is recommended that such problems should be addressed expediently by the university management. This can be achieved by incorporating policies to supports such disadvantage students in curriculum development of the school through provision of adequate crèche facilities to support the students mothers.

3. From the study, students attend lectures for almost every day which may not favour nursing mothers. It is therefore recommended that lecturers should adopt the use of modern technological innovations by presenting some of their lectures and reading materials online so that other students can access them at their various locations instead of having to converge at the campus. This will enable those with marital responsibilities especially married female students to cope with both the home chores and school activities.

4. It was discovered that some lecturers do not support married female students. It is recommended that lecturers and the school authority should be sensitive, empathetic and sympathetic and take it upon themselves to meaningfully guide this category of students. Instead of blaming them, lecturers and administrators should encourage them to rise above the situation and put in their best. Considering that collaborative learning has been found to be beneficial by the participants, lecturers should practice

and encourage group discussions among learners. This gives students the opportunity to interact among themselves and reflectively engage with the learning material in order to enhance their understanding of such material.

5. The study also found that some female married students don't share their problem with their lecturers and course counselors. It is recommended that pregnant and nursing mothers should endeavor to communicate with their lecturers and course counselors whenever they face education related problems or personal problems that are likely to affect their academic work. Through such communication, fear, anxiety, suspicion and apprehension, feelings which have been shown to have a negative effect on learners' academic welfare can be prevented. On the other hand, lecturers and administration are likely to understand the situation of married female students from an informed perspective. This is likely to build and enhance a relationship of trust between student mothers and their lecturers and it could leads to positive responses and experiences.

6. The study recommends that student mothers should develop personal time tables to cater for various educational activities which include assignment writing, reading, research and writing of lecture notes for missed lectures. This would enable the students to do assignments at the earliest possible time thereby preventing procrastination which leads to accumulation and increased pressure of work.

7. The study also recommends that the university management should make available adequate counseling and health care services for female married students and offer referral treatment where discovered to be facing some psychological problems, for proper guidance and counseling.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

1. The researcher has discovered a shift in gender role because those roles that are traditionally known to be occupied and handled by women are now being carried out by men in order to support their wives in actualizing their educational goals.
2. The research has also observed that there is now an institutional supports by the University management through provisions of Day Care Centers, Crèches and flexi time for nursing mother in an attempt to enhance their academic performance.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a masters' student of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria conducting a research on the topic: **An Analysis of Challenges and Coping Strategies Adopted by Married Female Students in Gombe State University, Nigeria.** I wish to seek for your cooperation by filling the questionnaire, your views will contribute tremendously to this research and any information given will be treated with maximum confidential. Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Instructions: Please tick (√) in the box provided or write in the blank space as appropriate.

Section A: Socio – demographic Data

1. Age (a) 18 – 22yrs [ ] (b) 23 – 27yrs [ ] (c) 28 – 32yrs [ ] (d) 33 – 37yrs [ ]
(e) 38 – 42yrs [ ] (f) 43yrs and above [ ]
2. Sex (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]
3. Religion (a) Christianity [ ] (b) Islam [ ] (c) Traditional [ ]
4. What is your faculty (a) Science [ ] (b) Arts [ ] (c) Medicine [ ] (d) Social Sciences [ ]
(e) Education [ ] (f) Pharmacy [ ]
5. What is your department? _____
6. What academic level are you? (a) 100L [ ] (b) 200L [ ] (c) 300L (d) 400L [ ] (e) 500L [ ]
(f) 600L [ ]
7. Type of academic programme (a) Undergraduate [ ] (b) Postgraduate [ ]
8. Other occupation beside schooling (a) Civil servant [ ] (b) Trading [ ] (c) Farming [ ]
(d) Artisan [ ] (e) House wife [ ]
9. Number of children (a) 1 – 2 [ ] (b) 3 – 4 [ ] (c) 5 – 6 [ ] (d) 7 and above [ ]
10. Type of family you came from (a) Monogamous [ ] (b) Polygamous [ ]

Section B: Challenges Facing Married Female Students in Gombe State University

11. As a married female student, do you experience any challenges schooling?
(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
12. If yes, what are these challenges?

_____

_____

15. What are the attitudes of your lecturers towards you?

_____

_____

To what extent do you agree on the following challenges facing married female students in Gombe State University? Where A=Agree, SA=Strongly agree, D=Disagree, SD-Strongly disagree and UN=Undecided

S/no	Challenges	A	SA	D	SD	UN
16	Financial problems					
17	Family and academic work conflict					
18	Insufficient supports from husband and relatives					
19	Lack sufficient time to do assignment and reading					
20	Improper dietary/feeding					
21	Absenteeism and irregular class attendance					
22	Missing class test					
23	Miss examination					
24	Stress problem					
25	Raising and upkeep of child(ren)					
26	Pregnancy					

27. Which of the challenge above affect you most?

_____

28. What other challenges do you face?

_____

_____

Section C: Effects of the Challenges on Married Female Students and their Academics

29. Does marriage affects your academics? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

30. How do you feel when you missed a class? (a) Bad [ ] (b) Good [ ] (c) Indifferent [ ]

31. How do you feel when you miss an assignment or presentation? (a) Bad [ ] (b) Good [ ] (c) Indifferent [ ]

32. Do you think that missing lectures affects your academic performance? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

To what extent do you agree with the following effects of the challenges on married female students and their academics in Gombe State University? Where A=Agree, SA=Strongly agree, D=Disagree, SD-Strongly disagree and UN=Undecided

S/no	Effects	A	SA	D	SD	UN
33	Poor grade					
34	Carry over courses					
35	Spill over					
36	Decision to drop out of school					
37	Lower self-esteem					
39	Physical discomfort					
40	Psychological/emotional imbalance whenever the child fell ill					
41	Limit chances of good mothering					
42	Poor health					

Section D: Coping Strategies Adopted by Married Female Students in Gombe State University

43. Do you have dependent child(ren)? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

44. How many dependent children do you have? _____

Which of the following strategies do you employed as a married female students?

S/no	Coping Strategies	Yes	No
45	Employment of house help		
46	Enroll the baby into day care		
47	Leave the baby at home with relative		
48	Keep the baby with neighbours		
49	Skip lectures to take care of the child(ren)		
50	Draw domestic cores time table		
51	Pay colleagues to assist with assignments		
52	Pay colleagues to write test		

53	Bribing lecturers		
54	Wake up early to perform domestic cores		
55	Wake up mid night to read		

56. Which one of the coping strategies in the table above do you use most?

_____

57. What other coping strategies do you employ?

_____

58. Do you communicate with your lecturers when you encounter a problem in your studies?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

59. What has been their response? _____

_____

60. Do your colleagues help you? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

61. In what ways do your colleagues support you?

Section E: Possible Measures to overcome the Challenges Faced by Married Female Students in Gombe State University

62. Suggest ways in which married female students can employ in order to cope with their academics?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX II

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

An Analysis of Challenges and Coping Strategies Adopted by Married Female Student in Gombe State University, Nigeria

Section A: Challenges Facing Married Female Students in Gombe State University

1. Could you narrate your experience as a married female student?
2. How could you describe the challenges facing you in your academics?

   Probe for:

   - Irregular class attendance
   - Insufficient time to do assignment or read
   - Improper and inadequate dietary/feeding
   - Family and school work problem
   - Stress related problems
   - Others (specify)-----
3. Are there any institutional provisions to care for married female student in the university? i.e law on compulsory make up test, exam re-sitting? What are they?

Section B: Effects of the Challenges on Married Female Students and their Academics

4. How does the challenge affect you and your academic activities?

   Probe for:

   - Absenteeism/irregular class attendant
   - Missing test, class presentation, exams etc
   - Poor grade, carry over, spill over
   - Poor health of mothers and children
   - Physical and psychological discomfort
   - Others ------

Section C: Coping Strategies of Married Female Students in Gombe State University

4. As a married female student, could you describe the various coping strategies you employ to balance family and school work?

   - Employment of house help

- Enroll the baby in a day care
- Draw domestic time table
- Pay colleagues to assist with assignment and tests
- Bribe lecturers
- Wake up early in the morning to read and perform domestic cores
- Others ----------

5. Do you communicate with your lecturers when you encounter a problem in your studies?
    - If yes, how do you relate with them?
    - What are some of the issues you discuss with them?
    - If no, why?
6. What suggestions do you have that can help you and others cope with your studies as married female student?
7. What would you like the university management should do for you as married female student to enhance your studies?