Original Paper

The Husbands' Support: The Experiences of off-Campus Married Muslim Student Mothers in Private and Religious Institutions of Higher Learning in Uganda—A Case of Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU)

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Abstract

While IUIU policies allow students to officially get married the same institution does not allow babies in halls of residence yet it has not put in place the necessary facilities and arrangements on campus to enable them juggle their multiple roles as Married Muslim Student Mothers (MMSM) in completing their academic undertakings. This poses a challenge due to constrained finances that make it difficult due to inability to pay maid thus causing frustrations which later affects their academic performance. The research adopted a Feminism theory and other supporting theories to explore the experiences of married Muslim student mothers, husbands support, institutional policies, challenges and coping strategies. The study was allocated within a qualitative research paradigm and involved semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of 30 undergraduate university married Muslim student mothers. Key findings were that the married Muslim student mothers' experiences were child care and excess workload: husbands' support included emotional and financial support: institutional support comprised of lack of child care support, support from lectures, family and friends: challenges involved time management, lack of support from lecturers, transport costs, excess workload, fixed timetables and lack of social and financial support: coping strategies included time management skills, faith and Allah, assistance with child care, creating extra time and advise. These findings have implications for policy in terms of empowerment, support to enable them to amalgamate competing

roles of student mothers. MMSM operate in a family system which influences their decisions hence failure to make independent decisions but rather seek approval from their husbands. If MMSM are to succeed with their endeavors of completing their education while married they should submit to their husband in order to receive emotional and financial support to fulfill their academic dreams and a better future.

Keywords

m*arried muslim student mothers' experiences, husbands' support, institutional policies, challenges, and coping strategies*

1. Introduction

Education is considered to provide knowledge and skills that empower people's lives for better livelihood and social development (Amos & Manieson, 2015). Through education, requirements for development are manifested such as improved health outcomes, poverty alleviation, quality of life, reduced gender and social disparities and improved economic productivity {Rogers, 1997 #3184). Following the above argument, there has been a significant expansion of women's enrolment by both married and unmarried mothers in higher institutions of learning with the aim of maximining the benefits of education. However, as women try to pursue further education, they are faced with a lot of challenges in trying to manage their roles as students and mothers (Lee & Myers, 2005)

Until 2018, pregnant girls were expelled from primary and secondary schools and denied their right to education hence exclusive education and management of teenage pregnancy (Kasujja, 2020). In 2019, government of Uganda revised the school rules on pregnancy to accommodate, retain and the re-entry of pregnant girls after at least one year of maternity leave (Independent, 2020; Natukunda, 2014).

Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) is a faith-based university that was established in 1988 to bridge the gap on Muslim education in Uganda and other English-speaking countries in Africa. The University follows the Qur'an and Suunah and it was founded on the principles of discipline, Islamic Faith, good behaviors and academic excellence. In IUIU, any acts of pre-marital and/or extra- marital sex, abortion and pregnancies are illegal and punishable by expulsion because the acts are considered to be violating the sharia rules. IUIU students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not contravene the Sharia rules. Any student found guilty of an offence faces the disciplinary committee and likely punishments include reprimand, apology, pledge not to repeat, dead year or expulsion. This enforces an Islamic code of conduct within the university and among the students (IUIU, 2020).

According to the rules and regulations of Islamic university Uganda (IUIU) as amended in 2007, female students are allowed to get married with the consent of their parents while pursuing their courses. Once a student gets married, she is required to report to the warden's department to register the marriage with the copy of marriage certificate to enable change of status. University rules further permit a married student to reside in the halls of residence as long as she is not pregnant. Once a married student becomes pregnant, she is required to become a non-resident. Still, the university does

70

not allow babies in the halls of residence and married students who have given birth can only be allowed to become resident after four months (IUIU, 2020).

Married Muslim Student Mothers (MMSM) denote a rising demographic trend in the student population in higher institutions of learning in Uganda and specifically in IUIU, the number of married Muslim student mothers has increased in the last 30 years of its existence. Over 11% of the student populations are married Muslim student mothers. As the number of Married Muslim Student Mothers (MMSM) grows, the university has to put in place policies that suit the category of students; understand their experiences, challenges, how they cope and which nature of support they receive from their husbands and IUIU to help them complete their studies hence increase completion rate. This study aimed at investigating Married Muslim Student Mothers' (MMSM) experiences; specially the study pointed at an exploration of their experiences, examined the husbands' support, identified institutional policies that allow continued education, challenges faced and their effect on academic performance and the different coping strategies.

2. Literature Review

There is a huge body of knowledge in line with student mothers aligned with their academic continuation in higher institutions of learning. These included;

According to Taukeni (2014) from Namibia who investigated challenges associated with five (5) single student mothers using a qualitative approach through the use of semi structure interviews and feminists theory (Stanley, 2013), he discovered that student mothers faced two major challenges such as lack of time to manage parenting roles and studying, and others include; missing lectures, restless, angriness, loneliness, failing some courses and qualifying exams, and recommendations included the establishment of student mothers' support group on campus to ease isolation and stress related to the dual role.

Another study by Atkinson (2003) who investigated her experience as a student single mother whose world unevenly paid while studying, working and doubted whether it would play out on the dual roles of parenting and studying since the playing field was uneven. She narrated that the scarcity of resources had so much to do ranging from pre-school, kindergarten costs, food and housing yet her marriage ended the day adoption process completed. There was doubt she would play the role of being a mother as well as manage the complicated schedule of PhD studies and also working. She aimed at understanding that gender perceptions for student mothers in universities are looked at as perceptions of belief and doubt. The attributes of failing to accept failure and fight on and on is referred to as masculinity (Atkinson, 2003; Elbow, 1986).

SmithBattle (2007) in his longitudinal study research for identification of teenage mothers and the impact of motherhood/parenting on their academic progress and education goals. He used 19 teenage student mothers with the objective of motivating them to remain in school although the renewed commitment was affected by family responsibilities, school policies and practices and work demands.

The study used a longitudinal research design to understand the plans, concerns and hopes for the future education aspirations. The purpose of the study was to establish the impact of mothering on teenager education aspirations before and after giving birth and the demands and challenges of returning to school. Findings indicated emergency of new priorities with parenting, family support for education, competing demands and responsibilities.

Conferring to Eyster, Callan, and Adams (2014) who assessed the education and training participation of low income single mothers in understanding their personal, family characteristics, factors to be considered to support low income student mothers and challenges they face in accessing and persistence in order to complete the education programs in post-secondary schools. The findings indicated that family plays a great role in future education of single low-income mothers, child care is key, majority receive public assistance, they have limited time to participate in education activities because they work full time, need more time to raise families, majority had children below the age of five and recommendations indicated that the demands are high in juggling jobs, education and parenting. There is need for practitioners and policy makers to consider the child care needs of low-income mothers seeking to improve skills and advancement to get better jobs to support their families. There is need for flexibility in the ways they support the student mothers.

Rendering to Edwards, Hasebe, and Sakai (2019) who investigated whether equal employment opportunity had an effect on the marriage decision. He specially focused on modelling women's interrelated decisions on university education and whether to marry at 32 years. The results indicated a negative relationship between marriage and education.

White (2008) assessed six mothers to understand the motivation, beliefs, and attitudes of student mothers who were also teachers and how they delt with the dual role using semi-structured in-depth interviews, the study discovered that they had the ambition of becoming primary teachers and improve on their opportunities and chances of retention in the education and tertiary institutions but their ambition affected the partners, children and extended families as they circumnavigated their dual roles and suggested on improving opportunities for student mothers. Student mothers recommended a child friendly space in higher institutions, offering priority over others before and after school care, counselling and sharing sessions among student mothers and teachers and leniency is needed for student mothers in relation to study commitments.

Ricco, Sabet, and Clough (2009) examined the effect of college mothers towards their children's attitude to school. The study focused on children between 7-14 years with 89 participants between 23-54 years of age and assessed the self-regulation, academic achievement motivation and academic self-efficacy. The study used a questionnaire to collect data for the study.

Booker (2011) examined the effect of poverty on single student mothers' education accomplishment at higher institutions of learning. Using participative methods with secondary data and interviewed 45 mothers in a comparative perspective of both traditional and non-traditional mothers, he discovered that they are different in many ways such as their responsibilities, learning ways, the motivation to pursue

future studies and demographic. Several obstacles were observed in this study such as lack of knowledge on various institutions of higher education and career path, being a single parent with children and dependents, family responsibilities, child care, student loan debt, stressful situations, job responsibilities, role over-load, poverty, lack of time, housing difficulties, role conflict, lack of resources, lack of environment to encourage them to attend college and the effect of college enrollment on their children.

Fluellen (2016) analyzed why single student mothers decided to continue with their education. The study used a phenomenological research design with snowball sampling and interviews. The participants were recruited from a study conference and included six mothers from Texas who establish the obstacles they overcame in their journey to completion. The inclusion criteria included single student mothers of children ages between zero and ten years. Themes out of the study included receiving help from other people, dealing with the impact of fathers' absence, acting as their children role models, overcoming obstacles and receiving motivation from their own parents.

In a study by Ajandi (2011) explored overcoming barriers and finding strengths of single student mothers' lives in institutions of higher learning in Canada. The study used a complementary methodology with four main principles such as self-determination, reflexivity, participation and action which had a basis in action research, feminism and decolonization. The study interviewed 35 women either in a focus group discussion or individually. Findings indicated that difficulties and barriers included lack of study time, difficulties in securing affordable, flexible and quality child care either on or off campus, exclusion due to racism or feeling uncomfortable as older students, financial instability, lack of child care options, poverty, institutional culture, and discrimination. However, the student mothers get support and strength through economic and role modeling, family and friends, institutional policies and practices, family housing, student parent center, access programs, administrators, professors, reciprocity and challenging the dominant discourse.

Opit (2020) examined breast feeding student mothers and their lived experiences in absence of on campus child care arrangement in Public universities in Uganda. Specifically, the study thought to identify what was missing, dilemmas faced and effects of the missing childcare arrangements within the university. The study used a phenomenological approach and interviewed 10 breast feeding mothers and the identified included; baby care rooms, professional nannies, baby play grounds, immunization and medical services, teaching sessions, timeframes for course work, examinations, choice between baby-sitting and academic activities, and they found strategies to cope such as receiving support from family and students, hired nannies, ignoring one of the two roles, time tabling the activities and spouse support.

Phiri and Machila (2019) conducted a study that aimed at investigating reasons for failure of re-entry policy and its effects on teenage mothers in Zambia. The study concentrated on two major events, that is to say misery and gender discrimination faced by these teenage mothers in primary and secondary schools. The study based its arguments and findings on teenage mothers' pregnancy experiences and

their stories in primary and secondary schools. The study adopted a qualitative approach anchored by the interpretative design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007) and participants were selected purposely and interviews guided data collection and data was analyzed thematically . The results showed that teenage mothers that enter schools in Zambia were few compared to those that get pregnant while at school. Further the re-entry policy alone is not enough to eliminate gender inequalities from schools. The study recommended that school policy implementers should put in place strong systems to support the challenges of teenage mothers accompanied by increased awareness of re-entry policy as well as need to address the weaknesses of the re-entry policy towards dealing with teenage mothers' challenges , engagement of different stakeholders such as traditional leaders, religious institutions, family and the government in emphasizing re-entry policy and need to increase on the contact hours between teachers and teenage mothers in order to enhance continued education.

Interpretation of Miller, Gault, and Thorman (2011) explored the improvement of child care access on promotion of post-secondary school success in low income single student mothers. The major challenge is access to affordable, high-quality child care, using face to face and telephone interviews and content analysis from the single mothers and child experts to understand the phenomenon. The study revealed that 40% of student mothers were single mothers and receive only 5% of on-campus child care arrangement and majority of mothers receive informal child care off-campus services. They recommended high-quality child-care campus-centered services; get a source of funding for the infrastructure, child care fully meets the needs of student mothers and policies to provide support.

Vyskocil (2018) examined the needs, challenges and experiences faced by single student mothers pursuing higher education, perception of who a good mother is and whether they receive any institutional support while carrying out their dual role. A qualitative paradigm of inquiry was used to collect experiences through single student mothers' voices to enable the researcher get a deeper understanding of their educational experiences through their own eyes to get a deeper meaning. Findings revealed key themes such as competing time demands, guilt from missed event choices, outcomes of forced choice events, competing pressures of proving a "good mom" and "good student", teacher's support, absence or presence of institutional support, unmet needs and internal and external pressures that pushed them to become better. The respondents revealed that they were forced to choose between school attendance and family events hence forced to shift into various identities and roles which proved difficult and therefore failed to maximize performance. They indicated psychological torture when they missed a class activity as a result of playing another role hence putting their trajectory and achievements at risk. Some course tutors embarrassed them amidst their classmates when they brought kids to class hence castigated for bringing a child in an inappropriate forum, coupled with exhortation of choosing between being a student and a parent yet in their judgement, they wanted to take up the dual roles concurrently. They perceived absence of institutional support which would help them achieve their goals for a better future.

Understanding Bober (2017) and his exploration of single-mother students' perception of ability to succeed using strength based lens and data was collected using semi-structured interviews of seven (7) student-single mothers. The three dimensions model which guided the study were; participated shared life histories, current realities and future visions hence a perception of academic success and data was analyzed using narrative analysis technique (Bell, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Luttrell, 2010, 2019; Luttrell & Chalfen, 2010). Results indicated seven themes; education upbringing, parental perception and success, sense of not belonging, community paradox, overcoming abusive environment, support and barriers to success, children and single mother hood, common motivators to success, perception and future of success after paying off the degree and positive shift to self-efficacy. The study recommended student support programs and counselling support.

Ray, Bratton, and Brandt (2000) conferred on changing the welfare of the single student mothers attending community college. It was referred to as Filial/family therapy which intended to shift families towards healthier relationships. Using the basic role play methods, he discovered an effective intervention for improving the present and future welfare of these families.

Kubeka (2016) assessed the experience of student mothers in KwaZulu-Natal to understand how they balance their dual and triple roles by using the available resources. A qualitative approach with purposive, convenience and interpretive approach was used through focus group discussion and interviewed eight (8) student mothers using semi-structure interview and data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study also used an interpretive approach to assert that there is no one reality and no specific route of knowledge. The results reviewed that the major characteristics of student mothers were; time constraints, failure to get balance, change of plans, a lot of challenges are encountered and mentioned some coping strategies, guilt they carry and need for reparation with their families.

Considering Huff, and Thorpe (1997) who examined the social and economic conditions of single student mothers. The study used a quantitative method and targeted 759 single mothers who received financial aid and questions targeted children, emotions, academic, financial and social effect. Results discovered that majority worked full time, although their income was less than $500 and many don't receive enough support, housing was a major concern, stress and they depended on unlicensed day care arrangements, academic stress since they study with children at home, have anxiety, parenting, self-esteem, depression, relationship improvement, clarification of objectives and values, and gaining health care for themselves and their children is a nightmare. Close to 25% of the students reported sexual harassment at school and workplace, and 17% indicated to be victims of incest.

Stroble (2013) investigated teen mothers who completed college by understanding the school structure and its contribution to their completion in order to increase the graduation rates. The objectives included school factors that contributed to their success. The study used qualitative phenomenology because it describes the meaning of teen student mothers through interpretation and description of experiences of (Moustakas, 1994). The study established a feeling of accomplishment, struggle to balance the dual roles, difficult in paying child care, dilemmas, feeling judged, support and non-support,

75

supportive family, role model, teen parenting programs, motivation to continue, self-determination and recommendation related to a parenting program between the institutions and community.

Tatar and Emmanuel (2001) considered the teachers' attitude towards gender dual roles. The study administered a questionnaire on 221 teachers in Israel and responses indicated the chauvinistic and egalitarian views thus indicated lack of in-depth awareness on gender stereotypes and recommended a compulsory seminar and course on gender self-awareness in training teachers.

Maisela and Ross (2018) analyzed the experiences of motherhood on black undergraduate students in South Africa and how they settle the dual roles. The study specifically investigated motivation to continue studying, challenges experienced when taking on the dual roles, coping strategies, how they balance academic, social, personal, sources of finance, social and emotional support. The methods involved an interpretive, qualitative research approach with purposive sampling and snow balling used fourteen participants aged 35 years. The study discovered a number of themes such as; time management, childcare, financial strain, adjusting academic requirements to fit within children needs, internal coping mechanisms from self-talk, balance social life, personal and academic needs, prioritizing roles, support from family and friends, child care assistance, religion as a source of support, support from the university and course tutors, and concluded that they encountered numerous challenges and it is the university's responsibility to support this nature of students.

Nelson, Froehner, and Gault (2013) discussed the challenges faced by children and their mothers while in college and communities have a responsibility to support them in the United States of America. The research argued that there is need to address the low-income and care-giving responsibilities if the universities are to achieve good completion rates for student mothers. Some universities have appreciated the need for this category of students and provided additional resources like day care centers, housing opportunities such as scholarships. This category of students need services like online education, development education, improvement on ramps, institutional accountability, curriculum reform and financial aid for full potential to be realized. The study concluded that the support programs should be included in the education government budget in order to expand and strengthen related programs including the pregnant fund to enable student mothers raise their children while they add on their qualifications for better jobs.

McLaughlin, Osborne, and Chew (2009) analyzed factors that impacted on degree completion among undergraduate single student mothers. Using a longitudinal quantitative method with the use of voluntary participation, the study established why there is increased dropout rate among student mothers from higher institutions of learning to help increase on chances for completion, assessed the factors that impacted on their completion. The results indicated external factors such as financial difficulties, age of child and family difficulties.

Hayes Nelson (2009) uncovered how low-income single student mothers struggle in higher education in line with barriers faced and strategies used to cope, residential status and employment, relationship of students with parents and preparedness in college. The study used the qualitative method and

narrative analysis in order to create written detailed phenomena of single-student-mothers, targeted mothers between 17-24 years in three categories such as situational, institutional and dispositional, and data was analyzed using coding and discussion (Nelson, 2009).

Austin and McDermott (2003) explored barriers and coping strategies on low-income single student mothers in the public university in Northeast. In-depth interviews were used with 14 former and current students. The results indicated persistence was a result of faith, social networks, faculty relationships, university support services like day care centers, financial aid, strategic compliance with requirements, support from friends and family, and choice of flexible academic courses.

Bosch (2013) evaluated an exploration on lived experiences of student mothers in postgraduate universities in Australia. The study was carried out in two phases normatively with 14 students and q-methods, q-statements, q-study interpretations using a mixed method research design. Results indicated that they juggled with childcare and timetabling and major challenge was lack of support. The mothers sacrificed sleep and recreation, partner support and developed organization and time management skills in order to manage studies as well care for their children. They were motivated by personal achievement and betterment for their future of their children and the university rewarded the student mothers with sense of freedom, pride, growth and achievement.

3. Theoretical Review

Feminism theory was used in this study because it aimed at understanding gender related challenges, power relations, politics, sexuality and promotion of women's interests and rights and how gender systems work in line with fairness in gender arrangement in society (Finke, 2018; Kendall, 2020). According to Nelson (2009) he argues that feminist theory analyses equality in opportunity (Hayes, 2009) and green (Green, 2007; Green & Green, 2007) focuses on diversity of specific experiences among women. Implications included delayed course completion, simple support systems to benefit them, they should receive orientation by existing student mothers.

The life course development theory which explains how individuals endure throughout their life span (Elder & Shanahan, 2007). Individuals are required to do certain things at certain times in their lives hence historical time and place, life timing independence in life and human agency (Elder, 1992). The experiences that children go through in life have a link on their social and historical influences. The difficulties that are encountered by people force them to work out means to ensure success or make the best of the situations hence the human agency principle. This theory applies to this study because it explains their life course as married Muslim student mothers in higher education positively or negatively.

4. Research Gap

From the studies above the literature clearly presents student mothers with multiple roles ranging from single, low income, working and students. Secondly it showed that mothers received loans to complete

77

their education. Further the literature indicated that most of the student mothers had dependent relatives. Majority of the studies looked at postgraduate mothers and were mature between the ages of 35-49 years while others were teenage mothers who got pregnant while in school. This study intended to close the gap by investigating husbands' support and Married Muslim Student Mothers' (MMSM) experiences in religious, private higher institutions of higher learning.

5. Objectives of the Study

a)   To explore married Muslim student mothers' experiences in Islamic University in Uganda

b)   To examine husbands' support in allowing married Muslim student mothers to continue with their education in Islamic University in Uganda.

c)   To identify institutional policies that allow married Muslim student mothers to continue with their education.

d)   To understand the challenges faced by married Muslim student mothers in their struggle to complete higher education and their effect on academic performance.

e)   Establish the different coping strategies used by married Muslim student mothers at the Islamic University in Uganda.

6. Research Methods

A Phenomenological research design was used because it deals with lived experiences on a given phenomenon (Vagle, 2018). Generally feminist researchers use qualitative research methods to produce in-depth understanding of women's experiences and focus on women diversity as a focus of examination (Reid, 2004; Taukeni, 2014).

6.1 Small Sample

The study used a small sample size of ten (10) Married Muslim Student Mothers (MMSM) to understand their lived experience. The study used purposive sampling technique since the IUIU coordinator's department that deals with student affairs through the wardens' offices on different campus provided a list of Muslim married student mothers. According to (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006), a small sample size gives a realistic account of explanation in social sciences in claiming greater efforts in accessing social process and establishing a social cause. This is further backed by (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013) who suggested that small numbers can also reflect the worlds of people indicated by research participants. The respondents interviewed were thirty (30) Muslim married student mothers aged between 20-25, with at least one child aged between one (1) and five (5), because the study mandated students who were mothers with husband support experiences. The participants were interviewed one by one due to Covid-19 related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to avoid the spread of the pandemic within the premises of IUIU, in their respective four campuses namely, Arua (2), Females campus (10), Mbale (15) and Kampala (3). Participants in Females campus, Mbale and Arua campus were full time students and unemployed while those at Kampala campus were

78

weekend and working Married Muslim student mothers. In Arua we bounced twice and later the researcher interviewed the two students via the telephone.

6.2 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Semi-structured interviews that lasted between 45 minutes and one hour were held and the participants signed a consent form for participation in the study (Barriball & While, 1994; Galletta, 2013). It was used because it allows two-way communication, which is attentive and relaxed, informal and familiar. Secondly there was no chance to engage the respondents again due to Covid-19 lockdown regulations since they were followed with observation and informally to enable researchers develop intense understanding of the topic with open ended questions. All interviews were recorded for transcription purposes and permission was granted by the respondents.

6.3 Ethical Issues and Recruitment Criteria

A purposive sampling technique was used focusing on only Married Muslim student mothers in the four campuses of IUIU namely main campus in Mbale, Kampala Campus, Females Campus and Arua Campus. Only students who gave birth and attended classes at any of the campuses were the focus of the study. The students were of the importance of the study and they signed a consent form, confidentiality was maintained by the researcher not exposing the information given by the mothers to the university. Efforts were made to recognize the interests, rights and sympathy of the participants and the researchers bracketed themselves. Approval was granted by the Executive Board (EB) of the university through the Vice Rector Academic Affairs (VRAA) and Director Research and Publication (DRPI) of the university. Participants were requested to review, clarify and correct the transcriptions to avoid falsifications and misquoting.

There was transparency and openness by permitting participants to share their experiences willingly and enthusiastically. The interests, sensitivity, rights of the participants were protected throughout the research process (Morse, 1994; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

6.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilized by the researchers to analyze the data and the responses for all research objectives were clustered and sub-themes were identified automatically through common responses. Data analysis and interviews occurred simultaneously and the researchers kept reflecting on the topic, coded and analyzed participants' stories during the interviews. Common experiences were clustered together and positioned under corresponding themes and sub-themes (Seidel, 1998).

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Participants Demographic

The 30 participants were married Muslim student mothers both employed and unemployed enrolled in IUIU at bachelor's level in its four campus; Mbale, Kampala, Females and Arua, and five faculties; management, arts and social sciences, education, science, law and health science. They were individually interviewed both face to face and telephone. Participants' age ranged from 20-25 years

79

with at least a child between one to five years. The main research question objective was: To investigate husbands' support and Married Muslim Student Mothers' (MMSM) experiences in religious, private institutions of higher learning. The results were presented and discussed in accordance with the objectives of the study and the analysis from the interview data from 30 MMSM highlighted seven themes which included; "lack of child care support in IUIU", "Emotional and Financial support from husbands", "Support from family, lecturers and fellow students", "Faith and Allah" and "Time Management", barriers, submissiveness to husbands and each theme was described below backed by participants' quotations.

Objective one was to identify institutional policies that allow married Muslim student mothers to continue with their education.

7.2 Theme One: Lack of Child Care Support in IUIU

All the 30 participants agreed that IUIU has policies in place that allow students to get married but does not have any deliberate institutionalized child care facilities in place to cater for both married Muslim student mothers and their babies.

(Laughing) "What an institution that permits to get married within the course but denies you support after the fruits of getting married. Do they expect me to eat the babies; can a mother concentrate on studies when the safety of her child is not guaranteed?" (Participant 7; aged 24)

"I wish that management would be kind and allow me come with my baby to the university and keep her in the halls of residence, this would make me very comfortable since I would make time to breastfeed and also care for my baby." (Participant 21; aged 24)

All the interviewees agreed that women bare the primary burden of child care. Child care is an unpaid role sacrifice that mothers perform because of the love for their children in the present and in the future. Child care was the major and greatest continuous problem faced by MMSM and made their lives very difficult because it encroached on their school time hence making it hard for them to meet course work requirements for example course assignments, presentations, tests and exams. There is continued lack of child care resources and facilities which stresses the MMSM in line with balancing their multiple roles. IUIU policy does not allow babies in halls of residence. It poses a challenge due to constrained finances that makes it difficult due to inability to pay maids thus causing frustrations which later affects their academic performance. Literature continuously cited inadequate or lack of on-campus child care facilities. MMSM decried child care duties among others as one of the aspects that consumes most of their time hence making it difficult to juggle their multiple roles.

There is need to provide sustainable and adequate support for child care facilities so that it does not impact on their academic performance. MMSM highly recognized themselves as primary care givers and if completion rate is to be achieved, there is need to provide their children with acceptable child care facilities. MMSM recognized that it is very difficult to give unconditional love and care to both the father and child while pursing education in the face of missing child care facilities. As a matter of fact, if institutions continue admitting this category of students, they should preplan for them to ensure their

comfortable stay at the university. This will help them to stop "proving" that they "can do better than childless students".

Whereas IUIU policies allow students to officially get married, the institution has not put in place the necessary facilities and arrangements on campus to enable them juggle their multiple roles in completing their academic undertakings.

IUIU policies emphasize that MMSM who are pregnant do commute from home yet some MMSM lack the means to do so especially in terms of financial resources, transportation which complicate plans for academic accomplishment. Given the bad weather coupled with the poor infrastructure, MMSM were exposed to accidental risks that resulted into class absenteeism, failure to meet assignments deadlines and being late for classes. They also depended on public transportation which involved waiting for buses, minibuses and taxies coupled with continuous break downs, which complicated their movements from home to school and this caused several absences in class. Interviewees decried of continued unreliable and limited transportation which is not safe. Extra transport costs were incurred and this resulted into irregular attendance of lectures and this affected their academic performance. Transportation of children to day care centers costs money yet when child day care facilities are provided within the university, the MMSM saves on the transportation costs.

7.2 Theme Two: Support from Lecturers, Family and Fellow Students

"I received support from my family members especially my elder sister who pays the care giver of my baby and tuition fees." (participant 4; aged 24)

"As I start my day, I keep thinking of where to keep my baby to enable me attend my lectures. One of my classmates found me worried at the university campus and she offered to risk her degree in order to help me keep my baby in her room in Khadijah hall. This was unconditional support to me because if she was caught by the warden, she would be taken to disciplinary committee whose punishment would be expulsion from the university." (participant 16; aged 22)

"A classmate lent me money for tuition fees. It was approaching examination time and I had pressure to clear fees to zero balance since that is university policy and my peer saw me crying and she saved me the stress for the day" (Participant 27; aged 22)

"My grandmother helps me look after my baby during the day as I head to the university to attend my lectures and once, I return home in the evening, I begin my parental role. It's tough because I keep awake for long hours in order to juggle my dual roles." (Participant 5; aged 25)

"Some lecturers are supportive others, are not for example director of the females' campus and the Law faculty coordinator understood my personal challenges and supported me throughout the course both morally and financially." (Participant 26; aged 25)

"Lecturers have been lenient with my studies especially when I missed classes; I always called them for more explanations." (Participant 10; aged 24)

Majority of the participants agreed that without support from family, university lecturers and fellow students, they would not manage on their own. Taking on dual roles of mother and student is a tough

81

task that needs support and without, it you break down.

7.3 Husbands' Support in Allowing Married Muslim Student Mothers to Continue with Their Education

7.3.1 Theme One: Financial Support

All participants agreed that they received financial support from their husbands although delayed sometimes. Husbands have many financial obligations to meet such as paying rent, medical bills, school fees for children, paying for utilities, putting food on the table, supporting in-laws and his own family members. This is coupled with paying tuition fees for their wives who have to complete university education in anticipation for a bright future (Dankyi, Dankyi, & Minadzi, 2019). The wives evaluation of husbands' willingness to finance their education depended on meeting their financial obligations including payment of tuition fees (Berkove, 1979).

"My husband meets the university financial obligations; he pays the care giver of our baby, meets my transport expenses to and from school. I am his responsibility and he has done his best to support me. Allahmudlillah (thank God) I do not regret having married while studying although many times the tuition is cleared late yet the university policy is zero balance on sitting exams and this sometimes stresses me." (Participant 29; aged 23)

"It has not been difficult for me Allahmudlillah (thank God) my husband takes care of all my financial needs together with my family. This has enabled me concentrate while in class because all is well." (Participant 14; aged 22)

"There are good husbands in this world after a failed marriage I broke down in tears following negative comments from relatives and the community. One year down the road I met a new husband who has made me believe in love again after visiting my parents he enrolled me in the university to enable me complete higher education and he meets all my financial obligations." (Participant 2; aged 23)

7.3.2 Theme Two: Emotional Support

Emotional support is key to academic performance especially for student mothers due to the nature of struggle for their ideologies and identities (Goode, 1960a, 1960b). They struggle to adjust and make ends meet which is not possible without receiving support from their husbands. The support received from a husband underlines the relevance of adopting and commitment to goal achievement because of interrelationship and connectedness, and need for care as basic need. Their support is understood as approval for their education and their level of modernity and understanding of the world view that things have changed, and that it's a woman's world and her education is a benefit to financial empowerment of the entire family and a good future (Berkove, 1979)

"My husband was understanding since he accepted light meals to enable me make time for resting and studying. He would accept having kikomando (commonly known as chapati and beans) or rolex (commonly known as chapati and fried eggs.") (Participant 28; aged 21)

"The only luck I possessed was the level of support from my husband ranging from dropping children to school, helping me with take home assignment, paying tuition fees and encouraged me register and

82

complete my first degree and this became his responsibility to assist me in completion of the course."
(Participant 20; aged 22)

"My husband has made it easy for me since he encourages me to work hard and complete the course. He helps me believe in myself that I can do it." (Participant 3; aged 25)

"Some husbands demand for submissiveness even when life is oppressive. I wake up early, I prepare him and the children for school, I then get ready for lecturers, it is a long distance from home to the university but I commute on daily basis and my husband has a car but he does not branch off to the university to pick me. On returning home, he is demanding for marital duties including heavy traditional meals, ironed clothes, homemade juice, preparing hot water for bathing, serving him meals after returning home very late yet you have a text or exam the next day, one wonders which kind of treatment this is." (Participant 6; aged 21)

"I understood that my husband was not in approval of my studies and I proved to him that going back to school to complete my first degree did not mean that I will neglect him or even divorce him after. Since my actions have spoken louder than words, he is supportive and helped me emotionally and resulted into improved grades." (Participant 30; aged 23)

"Lack of husband support is very destructive and emotionally draining, leads to self-destruction, stress, frustrations, loss of confidence, divorce and above all poor performance in your academic endeavors hence dropping out of the university." (Participant 12; aged 21)

7.4 Married Muslim Student Mothers' Experiences

7.4.1 Theme One: Excess Workload

Many participants in this study expressed experiencing chronic tiredness and physical exhaustion due to excess workload. They argue that this is related to their status of being MMSM. Most participants stated that excess workload that involves household activities, taking care of children and husbands combined with university work created the continuous experience of tiredness among MMSM, thus affecting their performance. University work with motherhood increases MMSM workload, which constitutes a lot of pressure for them to effectively balance the two roles. This is in confirmation with findings of Ogunsiji and Wilkes (2005) that indicated that student mothers are faced with multiple roles to play and in many cases, they become overloaded which later affects their academic performance.

7.4.2 Theme Two: Caring for Children

Caring for children is one of the most important responsibilities of motherhood that involves a lot of activities such as baby care giving, laundry, preparing meals, taking kids to schools, house chores, among others. Child care plays an important role in children's development and without it, the child's development will be affected and taking on student roles by student mothers becomes difficult for MMSM to this fulfill child care roles effectively. The study revealed that whenever the roles of a mother and student role overlapped, MMSM became overwhelmed and they sacrificed their studies for families and children, and this created a negative impact on the academic performance of MMSM. These outcomes were in agreement with (Amoabea, Abigail, Adei, & Yaa, 2020; Behboodi Moghadam,

Ordibeheshti Khiaban, Esmaeili, & Salsali, 2017; Forster & Offei-Ansah, 2012; Sa'ad, 2014) whose findings claimed that giving priority to the family and responsibilities of marital life created problems for doing academic tasks, because the comfort of a family and children was more important than studies for MMSM.

Participant one; aged 22*: "I requested to be a resident with my baby but I was not permitted. I felt so disappointed but my baby is one that cheers me up. I am a non-resident, when it rains, I have to wait for it to stop then I foot to the university. The fixed timetable is also bad because it does not allow me have time with my baby since lectures end at 6:00pm."*

Participant nine; aged 23*: "My experience was both good and bad. The first days of student motherhood were not pleasant but with hope and prayer, I learnt to adjust to the situation and honestly, I enjoy my identity."*

Participant 19; aged 21*: "It is difficult to manage a balance of dual roles since I travel long distances to the university and find lectures in progress. Sometimes some lecturers refuse me from entering the class while others give me a benefit of doubt to explain my self and eventually, they allow me in. It is a tough journey for me I can assure you it takes a real woman to juggle the roles."*

Participant 22; aged 22*: "My day starts as early as 4:00am, I get ablution then I perform **Fajir** (morning) prayers, revise books, do house chores and then rush to work before heading to the university for lectures. When lectures end, I return to work before heading home to begin with house chores and the process continues on a daily basis."*

Participant 25; aged 24*: "My husband and friends have been so so understanding and bambi (literally means really) some lecturers have been understanding especially when you explain. My experience has been challenging but Allah enables me go through it Allahmudlillah (thank God). My classmates are supportive they call me for lectures and send me updates. I pray and hope that as I persevere all will be well."*

Participant 17; aged 25*: "Really it has been challenging, I wake up early to prepare my two school going children, iron uniforms and pack the lunch box, prepare my husband and myself leaving some house chores undone and always complete them in the evening as I return home. Allahmudlillah (thank God) I have persevered on the journey of completing my first degree."*

Participant 18; aged 23*: "My experience is a narrow one; I rented a small house near the university. I wake up every day, breast feed my baby before I report on campus for lectures. Allahmudlillah (thank God) my classmates have been good to me even the days I do not report to the university, they call me to establish why. Allahmudlillah (thank God)."*

Participant 23; aged 21*: "I begin my day by preparing morning meals for my children, I prepare my husband then I pick a commuter taxi to the university and sometimes the jam is too much and I jump on the boda-boda (motorcycle) to avoid running late for lectures. One day I was pregnant for my first born and a boda-boda knocked me while reporting to the university and that day, I did not attend lecturers, I had acquired bruises."*

7.5 Challenges Faced by Student Mothers

Findings in this study discovered that as MMSM decided to continue with their studies at the university, they did not neglect their family roles. In an attempt to continue performing their roles as students and mothers, they encountered a lot of challenges. Challenges according to this study are the factors and conditions which inclined to limit the effective juggling of MMSM dual roles and these included time management, lack of support from the lecturers, transport, excess workload, inflexible education system and policies, lack of social and financial support.

7.5.1 Theme One: Time Management

The greatest challenge indicated by participants was failure to manage their time appropriately and resulted into delayed dropping of their children at school, late meals at home, missed course work and assignment deadlines, failure to sit examinations and attend lectures, unexploited tutorials and group discussions, and all of this affected their academic performance as well as failure to manage their home responsibilities effectively. As captured in the following responses;

"Time management was the greatest challenge encountered while managing my dual roles of student mother." (Participant 29; aged 23)

"I always failed to meet academic deadlines especially handing in course assignments in time and attending tutorials and group discussion projects due to failure to manage the limited time available at my disposal." (Participant 30; age 21)

7.5.2 Theme Two: Inflexible Education System and Policies

The participants highlighted the inflexible education system reflected in the institutional barriers such as fixed timetables, inflexible rules and regulations, overloaded curricular and limited collaboration of lecturers and classmates in taking on the roles of both mother and student, as expressed in the following participants' responses;

Participant 9; aged 22*: "When my child fell sick, there was no one to take care of her, I asked my lecturers to accept my late arrivals and absences. Some said "it was none of their business since it's my problem I should sort out myself". One must find a way where there is no one; since policies do not easily change in your favour after all we are the minorities."*

"My day begins with preparing my husband, food for my children for school and work before getting ready to catch a taxi (taxicab) and go to the university to attend lectures; given the busy morning schedule I am always late or miss morning lectures because they are fixed from 7:00am and it affects my academic performance." (Participant 5; aged 25)

Participant 6; aged 21*: "I recall having missed an examination in second semester because I had no one to keep the baby and when I raised my issue to the concerned department, I was told to follow policy which meant sit for the paper when it is offered as a retake."*

This was supported **Dallas's (1998)** who observed that time-structured and inflexible academic systems do not favour student mothers to leave school activities behind but often occupy one's thought and emotions throughout the day.

85

7.5.3 Theme Three: Transport Challenges

"I have been spending three dollars (10.000 Uganda shillings) every day for my transport and my husband contributes one and half dollars (5000 Uganda shillings) and it was not easy to make it to the university daily until my parents and elder sister topped up." (Participant 18; aged 23)

 "It has been costly especially for us who come from far." (Participant 1; aged 22)

"I shifted and rented a house near the university so as to reduce on the transport costs since I had to balance in other child care related expenses where my husband could not afford." (Participant 15; aged 21)

Most MMSM were unable to reside on campus because university facilities do not plan for them. Results from study showed that due to inability for MMSM to reside on campus with their children, they faced various transportation challenges to and from the university among them were incurring high transport costs, fueling of vehicles everyday to those whose husbands can afford. Struggling for public transport with the babies, staying in long queues with the babies before and after lectures and walking for long distances back home is a mere representation of the daily hustles MMSM go through in attempt to complete their studies.

7.5.4 Theme Four: Lack of Social and Financial Support

There are relatively a number of circumstances that explain the ideology and identity of MMSM. These circumstances become justifications to explain why some respondents lacked or received social and financial support, for example if a student mother was officially married with both parents' consent, she received social and financial support from both the parents and the husbands whereas a student mother who cohabited and conceived would arose anger from the parents and the would-be husband depending on whether he is or not interested in the baby leaving this student mother to finance her dual roles single handedly, which was constraining and stressful to the student mother as one participant expressed;

"Whenever I would ask for financial support from my family members, they would refuse reminding me on how I didn't seek for parents' approval. The only fall back plan is turn to the father of the child to bear the responsibility." (Participant 27; aged 22)

"Although at times my mother and husband extend their financial support towards my studies but still my ability to juggle the two roles effectively is still affected by financial constraints that never seem to end." (Participant 10; aged 24)

The above statements are a true reflection to Miller et al. (2011) who asserted that Student mothers work more than non-parents to meet their many financial obligations.

7.5.5 Theme Five: Excess Overload

The study indicated that MMSM are stressed as result of handling too many responsibilities both at home and at the university. Sometimes the demand for those responsibilities collides which amounts pressure and the MMSM is left with no choice other than choosing one against the other for example baby caring and sitting for an examination.

Participant 16; aged 22*: "I reached home when the maid had left leaving my child on their own, I had a*

test the following day but I was forced to choose care giving over the test."

Participant 25; aged 24: *"If my baby is in poor condition, the rest can wait, I first take care of my baby and then school comes later."*

Participant 14; aged 24: *"I chose to take the baby for immunization and missed the group presentation."*

7.5.6 Theme Six: Lack of Support from Academic Staff

Student mothers is a new global phenomenon in higher education and given the amount of workload that is expected from them, it leaves university professors and lecturers wondering whether these categories of students are up for the challenge. They constitute personal biases and this puts a lot of pressure on MMSM to keep struggling for their identity in order to prove them wrong. This creates a lot of stress and creativity on how these mothers juggle their dual roles to enable them fulfill their dream achievements as voiced by two participants;

"Female lecturers do not care and are not understanding even if you explain to them." (Participant 17; aged 25)

"My lecturers are so insensitive when it comes to my personal challenges and this makes studying very difficult." (Participant 4; aged 24)

"Most lecturers pass insults at us when caught in situations like late coming and seeking their support as one passed nasty abuses calling me a dull lady and wondering which kind of children I have mothered just a day before my important examination, this tortured me psychologically and I ended up retaking the paper." (Participant 26; aged 25)

From the above statements, it is clear that MMSM received discrimination, insults, intimidation, stigma and were mocked by teaching staff which depreciated student mothers' morale through staff comments and actions (Mamhute, 2011). Similarly Tronto (2013) emphasized the need for educational institutions to training their academic staff to be caring people.

7.6 Coping Strategies Adopted by Student Mothers

In this study, participants revealed that they came up with means on how to manage their motherhood and marriage roles alongside their academic undertakings amidst many challenges. Such strategies included following advice, good time management skills, support from family and fellow students, faith and Allah, planning, creating extra time, assistance with child care.

7.6.1 Theme one: Advice to MMSM

Participants have revealed that one of the coping strategies to their challenges faced while juggling their dual roles was by listening to good piece of advice. It has been observed that offering advice to student mothers is a source of motivation to continue studying while doing their motherhood roles. This advice was given in form of counselling by experienced people both on and off campus, which exposed MMSM to issues such as balancing family responsibilities, handling stress, time management, and developing confidence towards achieving their academic and personal goals. As reflected in the words of some participants;

"I received advice from many different people for example my father, sister, lecturers and the university

warden that motivated me to keep struggling despite the many challenges." (Participant 8; aged 23)

"I took the advice that my parents and director of the university because it was encouraging and helped me to persevere amidst all odds. I took it in good faith because it helped me positively when juggling my dual roles." (Participant 24; aged 23)

"My sister, husband and mother always reminded me of the opportunity I have got in life compared to other women in my situation which I must not put to waste, this motivated me to always push forward and ensure that I complete my studies." (Participant 13; aged 21)

7.6.2 Theme Two: Faith and Allah

Participants' devotion to religion being mainly Islam was a strong coping strategy towards the challenges of MMSM. Most participants who had challenges in managing their dual roles highlighted the fact that some aspects of Islam helped them to cope with the challenges they faced as reflected in the words of some participants;

Participant 15; aged 21: *"Allahmudlillah (thank God) Allah (God) has always made the challenges easy for me because my day begins and ends with praising Allah (God). With Allah (God) everything is possible."*

7.6.3 Theme Three: Assistance with Child Care

"I spend most of the time at the university studying and yet I have a child to take care of at home, due to my busy schedules at the university, my mother stays with my child during day as I concentrate on my studies." (Participant 11; aged 22)

Although most of the participants highlighted the fact that IUIU did not avail them with child care facilities at the campuses to enable them juggle their dual roles effectively, most of them revealed that they were privileged to have their relatives, fellow classmates and husbands to support them look after their children while at the university. This is in regard to Lynch (2008) who emphasized that suitable child care is always first priority for most mothers, those that are reliable are often expensive, but if support comes from sources like family members, the better.

7.6.4 Theme Four: Creating Extra Time

"I wake up at 4:00 am in the morning, pray Fagir (morning prayer). Then after read my books and later start preparing breakfast for the kids and my husband as I do some chores at the same time. This has helped me catch up with university schedules."

Findings from the participants discovered that MMSM resorted to creating extra time for successfully undertaking their dual roles by either working late at night or working very early in the morning as a way of coping with the pressure and juggling two roles at the same time. This is in accordance with (Riordan, 2015) arguments that equated success to being able to stay in the moment for hours and focus on behaviors that must be done for that particular role to be performed effectively.

7.6.5 Theme Five: Time Management Skills

According to participants' responses, they revealed that many had experienced academic related challenges such as late coming to class, missing course work assignments deadlines, missing

examinations, missing tutorials and group discussions and all this is attributed to failure to manage their time while juggling their dual roles. As a way of coping with this challenge, many participants need to improve on their time management skills by learning to plan in order to coordinate and organize their motherhood and student roles such that time is not wasted, time tabling their activities so that they set their priorities right, ignoring some roles as a way of keeping time and trying to do the right activity at the right time, are some of the copying strategies that participants invented in order to manage their time effectively in manipulating their dual roles. As one participant voiced that;

"You timetable yourself clearly indicating priority tasks. If I want to bathe in the morning, I first prepare the fire and boil water for tea as I am bathing and by the time you finish, the water is ready. I perform all activities concurrently because the time is not enough if I concentrate on one activity at a time."
(Participant 3; aged 25)

Time management is a key factor in improving the MMSM academic performance and other achievements in life. Thus, a need for each of the MMSM to acquire the ability of managing time effectively, which includes setting goals and priorities, using time management approaches aiming at using their time well while managing their dual roles.

7.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

There is need to provide accessible, affordable and dependable on-campus child care facilities. Provision of sustainable and adequate child care resources and facilities is one sure alternative way for MMSM to access and complete higher education. IUIU can pattern with nearby communities to actualize child care centers. MMSM continuously cited lack of child care facilities within and outside the university. Yet it was very significant if they were to complete their studies.

The university needs to provide support to students in form of individual counselling, management of dual roles and parenting skills; the lecturers, administrators, family members and non-married students should be sensitized on understanding the complexities against provoking married Muslim student mothers that struggle with their realities of ideologies and identities on a day-to-day basis that require flexibility and support.

MMSM operate in a family system which influences their decisions hence the failure for them to make independent choices but seek approval from their husbands. If MMSM are to succeed in their endeavors of completing their education while married, they should submit to their husbands in order to receive emotional and financial support from them to fulfill their academic dreams and better future. This kind of phenomenon presents a major untraditional step of great personal significance to women but also keeps in mind that their husbands may not like it because of the changes in the home especially in unprepared meals or calling meals late.

It is important for MMSM to understand that each step one takes in life will always encounter challenges but how you persevere through those challenges is what matters. Therefore, there is need for MMSM to remain positive and motivated by their identity and work hard to disprove those in doubt.

Conclusively, motherhood is a complicated and challenging undertaking and it becomes more complex

when mothers add academic demands in order to meet the global changing trends. Findings have revealed that the role conflict experienced by MMSM affects their performance both at home and in their academic pursuit. Hence the need for policy makers to come up with effective strategies to deal with the change of the traditional perspective that motherhood and educational roles cannot be simultaneously managed by one person and the coping strategies should be geared towards traditional challenges embedded between motherhood roles and educational responsibilities. Institutions of higher learning should amend their policies to suit the growing phenomenon and make MMSM comfortable during their academic undertaking.

Academic staff should be mindful of the new category of learners in the 21st century who struggle to make ends meet while managing their dual roles. It is not pragmatic to give the same treatment to different categories of students. Given the nature of identity, lecturers need to be mindful and human when dealing with MMSM to enable them claim their ideology as they struggle to achieve equality.

7.8 Implication for Future Research

The results of this study cannot be generalized because of the small sample of MMSM although they provide a context to understand the experience of MMSM in private and religious context. The findings of the study indicated that IUIU needs to put in place child care facilities to enhance academic completion. The study further provides for Ugandan context in understanding the implications of lack of child care facilities to mothers juggling multiple roles.

The study also contributed to the exiting literature by closing a gap of understating husbands' support in influencing MMSM academic completion.

The themes generated in this study represent the reality that MMSM deal with and how it impacts on their academic performance. Findings present a new category of student mothers motivated by their husbands to achieve their personal goals.

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