

# **Bringing voices together: Familial roles and persistence of female students in distance education programmes**

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Female Student Pursuing  
Distance education in a public  
university in Ghana

Most of these females who enrol on the distance education mode often possess multiple personal and professional roles

Persistence: Continued efforts made by female students to remain enrolled on their programmes of study.



How does familial roles affect persistence of female students in distance education programmes?

### **Null Hypothesis**

- ▶ Ho1: Family roles are not statistically significant predictor of persistence of female students in distance education programmes.

# Methodology

- ❑ Using an embedded mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2012; Onwuegbuzie, 2012), a questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect data from the sample.
- ❑ Stratified random sampling was used to select to 441 female students from 21 study centres in two public universities in Ghana.
- ❑ Quantitative data were analysed using means and standard deviation and simple regression analysis and presented in tables
- ❑ Qualitative data were grouped into themes and reported in narratives to support the quantitative data.

# Results and Discussions

The descriptive analysis of responses of the female students in relation to their family roles is presented in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Family roles as viewed by female students**

<b>Family Roles</b>	<b>Means</b>	<b>SD</b>
Caring for children.	3.9	1.2
Giving medical care to elderly relatives.	3.9	.99
Responsible for cooking for the family.	4.2	1.0
Responsible for doing the laundry for the family.	3.9	1.2
Have less time for husbands.	3.3	1.3
Expecting babies and studying is a problem.	3.7	1.3
Nursing babies and studying a problem.	3.9	1.2
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>1.1</b>

# Results and Discussions –Cont'd

One of the female student commented that:

- *When the child is sick, all my attention is directed to him so I forego all my academic practices till his health is restored. There had been few occasions when I had to leave class for home or miss lessons because my child suddenly got fever. It is really stressful to experience such situations.*

## Results and Discussions –Cont'd

Further probing on the issue of expecting babies as students, a female student reiterated that:

*Being pregnant and studying at the same time is really difficult. There are some of these days when you suffer from morning sickness and yet you need to attend face-to-face sessions and you sometimes have to leave class intermittently to take care of yourself.*

# Results and Discussions –Cont'd

The following was a comment from one of the female students on nursing babies;

*I had to defer my studies because I could not combine studies with caring for the baby. This is because I could not study well as a first-time mother. When I try to study at dawn, the baby also wakes up and I had no choice but to attend to her and usually I ended up falling back to sleep.*

Combining family roles and being a student on a distance education programme seen was a demanding task.

*You wake up early and sleep late. You prepare for work and come back home already exhausted to continue with cooking and taking care of other responsibilities. You get very tired as the day ends and just impossible to do any good academic work.*



# Results and Discussions –Cont'd

The responses of the female students with regards to their views on their level of persistence are as seen in Table 1.2.

<b>Persistence</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S D</b>
Confident to continue next semesters	4.3	.97
No intention to change university	3.6	1.4
Confident in completing studies in time	4.7	.71
Participate in all quizzes and exams	4.1	1.2
Lateness for class meetings	3.2	1.3
Inability to study very much	3.5	1.2
Absence due to personal reasons	3.5	1.3
Active participation in group work	3.8	1.1
Submit assignment on time	4.1	.96
Involvement in Co Curricular activities (seminars and sports)	3.9	1.2

# Results and Discussions –Cont'd

The result obtained from the simple regression is as presented in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Simple regression analysis of family roles and persistence of female students**

<b>DV: PERSISTENCE</b>			
<b>PREDICTOR</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>P - value</b>
Family Responsibilities	.177	.031	.001

Note:  $p=.001$

The R-Square which was .031 implied that family roles explained only 3.1% variance in persistence (multiplying .031 by 100).

## Results and Discussions –Cont'd

An ANOVA test to find out the significance level of the relationship between family roles and persistence found that  $F(1, 376) = 12.107$  which was significant at  $p < .001$  as depicted in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3: ANOVA test on family roles and persistence**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Model	533.425	1	533.425	12.107	.001
Residual	16522.406	375	44.060		
<b>Total</b>	17055.830	376			

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

# Results and Discussions –Cont'd

Model parameters (beta values) using regression equation;

$$Y = \alpha + \beta x_1 + \varepsilon,$$

**Table 1.4 Coefficients of family roles and persistence**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	30.734	1.279		24.036	.000
FamilyRes	.155	.045	.177	3.479	.001

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Persistence} &= \alpha + \beta (\text{family roles}) + \varepsilon \\ &= 30.734 + .155 (\text{family roles}) \\ &= 30.734 + .155 (1) \\ &= 30.889 \end{aligned}$$

This shows a unit increase in family roles, persistence is expected to increase to 30.889

# Summary and Conclusions

- ❑ Female students performed familial roles including giving care, maintaining homes, expecting and nursing babies.
- ❑ Performing these family responsibilities positively affected their persistence.
- ❑ Familial role was therefore a positive significant predictor of persistence of female students.

# Recommendations

- ❑ Administrators of distance education institutions could put in place structures necessary to support female students so as to manage both roles effectively.
- ❑ Office of the Women's' Commissioner of the Students Association could organise sensitization programmes to help female students build up self developed strategies to deal with the situation.
- ❑ Further research to find how family roles affect academic performance of female students in distance education.

**THE END**

**THANK YOU**