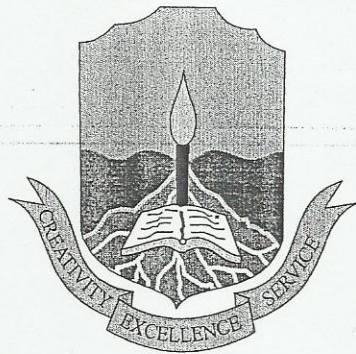




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PERCEIVED CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENT STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE PARTICIPANTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN SANDWICH DEGREE PROGRAMME

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Abstract

This study examined perceived challenges and adjustment strategies for female participants in University of Ilorin Sandwich Degree Programme. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study population comprises all female sandwich students of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The research instrument used for the study is researcher-designed questionnaire tagged 'Challenges and Adjustment Strategies of Female Students in sandwich Degree programme (CASFSDP) adequately validated by three (3) experts in the related field. The stability and consistency of the instrument was determined with the use of test re-test method. The reliability coefficient of correlation obtained was 0.81. In all, two hundred and fifty (250) female participants were selected for the study through multi-stage sampling technique. A total of two (2) research hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. The data collected were analyzed with the use of mean and rank order method, t-test and ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results of the study showed that there was no difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students on the basis of years of marriage and their age. Also, significant difference existed in their coping strategies on the basis of years of marriage and their age. Based on the findings of the study, it was suggested that Nigerian Federal and State Governments should regularly provide financial assistance to female sandwich degree students who are practicing teachers so as to encourage them in their quest to improve on their job performance. The government should make available, a well-deserved support system for female students attending sandwich programmes by giving them leave of absence with pay for the period of their study.

Introduction

Education is the process of learning and acquiring information. It is also seen as the act of impacting or acquiring general knowledge, developing power of reasoning and judgment, which prepares one intellectually for a mature life. This process involves the development of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of an individual. In a situation when an individual is exposed to right kind of education, he/she perceives information accurately, think clearly and act effectively to achieve self-selected goals (Arowona, 2016). The major aim of acquiring higher education, as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) includes acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and the society, the development of intellectual capacities of individuals and the acquisition of an objective view of theoretical and external environment. Therefore, education is future oriented and it is all about growth and development. According to Bello (2008), teacher training is a crucial component of the education industry; as such, universities are charged with the responsibility of producing professional teachers through sandwich programmes. The achievement of any nation in attaining their educational goals, rests on the professional competency, quality and quantity of its teachers.

Sandwich students are adults who desire to acquire university degree through continuing education. Universities are allowed to run sandwich programmes in Nigeria in order to cater for practicing teachers who are non-degree holders. The sandwich programme also provides opportunity for practicing teachers to upgrade their qualifications (Duyilemi (1997)). Adeosun (2008) stated that sandwich programme is a popular choice among adults as it gives them the opportunity to work and at the same time further their study. Dooris & Guides (2007) revealed that the quest for effective performance on the job and demand for higher income determined the enrollment of people for graduate studies. The flexibility in study plan and periods encourages a lot of teachers to opt for sandwich program. Ogunojemite (2006) explained that workers who are interested in up grading their certificate apply for in service training in order to attend sandwich programme. In a country where unemployment is rampant, in order to stay relevant on the job and for the purpose of job security many adults are going back to school for further studies (Oduaran, 2000). In a study carried out by Duyilemi (1997), job security ranked sixth in position as a reason for enrolment in sandwich education programme.

Ismail (2008) claimed that adults who are working and studying at the same time face a lot of challenges. They have a lot of commitment and responsibilities that induces stress and anxiety. Sandwich students find it difficult to cope with school activities and at the same time adjust to the rigorous demand of their various homes. Also, lack of time management skills has resulted into non efficiency and poor planning of study hours. Females face a lot of challenges in the quest to develop their career. In fact the culture does not permit the woman to pursue career development especially when raising kids. Many even condemned women pursuing a career as selfish, unnatural and even dangerous to their children and to the society at large (Bolu-Steve, Olawuyi and Shaba 2015). It was observed that the high level of moral decadence of children could be attributed to women who neglect their responsibilities pursuing career development.

The importance of good learning environment cannot be overemphasized Adeosun (2006) noted that most sandwich students do not have access to good accommodation facilities. Lack of affordable and conducive accommodation also causes stress for these students. Egenti & Omoruyi (2011) revealed that sandwich students go through a lot of stress and anxiety due to the pressure they encounter during this period. As a result of this, Ajagbe (2012) recommended that counsellors should expose the students to systematic sensitization training and cognitive restructuring technique in order to combat stress. Also, because of lack of finance, many students cannot afford to buy handouts, talk less of paying their tuition fees. Time and energy spent trying to make ends meet can drain the most dedicated student (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002). Adeosun (2006) revealed that lack of adequate resources to finance the sandwich degree program has been one of the major challenges confronting sandwich students. Some of these challenges according to Duyilemi (1997) include: lack of support from their husbands, lack of finance to run a hitch-free programme and poor concentration while in classroom etc. Mothers of young children attending sandwich programmes experience more of role-conflict and guilt over being unavailable when the children need them (Terrell, 1990).

Adjustment or coping strategies deal with different methods, which an individual use in managing their circumstances/challenges. Adjustment strategy is often grouped into two major categories, i.e. problem-focused and emotion-focused (Amirkhan, 1994; Callan, 1993; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Problem-focused types of coping are directed at the problem and looking for ways to manage and solve the problem. The emotion-focused coping involves reducing the effects of stressful feelings caused by unpleasant experiences through relaxation, the use of substances (alcohol and drugs), social activities and defense mechanisms (Edwards & Holden, 2003). Most of sandwich students adjust to challenges by seeking for the counsellor's assistance especially when they are confused. The students also approach lecturers for further clarification on courses that seem to be a challenge and at the same time seek the help of course mates when necessary (Mbagwu and Ekwelum, 2006). Ajagbe (2012) affirmed that the place of regular exercise, rest and sleep is key in dealing with stress. Students also adjust by focusing on stressful situation and dealing with one emotions, ignoring and avoiding stressors, sleeping or daydreaming to escape from been anxious. Some of the students even use substance in the management of stress (Carver, Scheifer & Wientraub, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

Women have continued to show interest in the desire to further their education and become relevant in the society. There are lots of challenges that go with their participation in sandwich programmes. Female's involvement in the pursuit of education has continued to be limited by social norms and culture (Kazeem 1998; Osunde & Omoruyi 2003). Doeringer & Poirer (2001) revealed that the shift in the traditional norms and practices of women role in the society, has aggravated the need for woman insisting on improving themselves educationally in order to maintain an effective career. Branchi (2000) pointed out that the current changes in the traditional norms and practices in the society attract a lot of challenges. Also, the level of economic hardship and anti-discrimination against women, has forced many of them to take up paid jobs even with low qualifications. In order to secure their job, they apply for further studies through sandwich programme so as to obtain a higher qualification. In a study carried

out by Duyilemi (1997), job security ranked sixth in position as a reason for enrolment in further education. Egenti & Omoruyi (2011) also observed that the major constraints or challenges of women participants in the sandwich programmes include time constraints, increasing marital demand, poor economic or financial base, poor learning environment, lack of encouragement from employers and spouse. In a study carried out by Adeosun (2008) the major challenges encountered by students undergoing the sandwich degree programmes is the lack of adequate finance and accommodation problems.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to carry out a research on female participation in the sandwich programme in the University of Ilorin, Kwara State.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to find out the major

- a) challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin?
- b) adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study:

- (1) What are the major challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin?
- (2) What are the major adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated to guide the conduct of the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on religion.
2. There is no significant difference in the adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in the University of Ilorin, based on years of marriage.
3. There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin, based on age.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study population comprises all the female participants in the sandwich undergraduate degree programmes in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The female sandwich students estimated population at the institute of education, University of Ilorin, as at June -July 2015, was two thousand, eight hundred and ninety-five (2,895). The respondents used for the study were selected with multi-stage sampling technique, consisting of stratified, simple, purposive and systematic sampling techniques. In all, two hundred and fifty female participants in the University of Ilorin sandwich degree programme were finally selected for the study. The research instrument adopted for this study was researcher-structured questionnaire tagged a 'Challenges and Adjustment Strategies of Female Sandwich Degree Programme' (CASFSDP). The research instrument was validated by three (3) experts from Counselor Education Department.

The reliability level of research instrument was determined through test re-test method. The coefficient of correlation obtained from the two results of pilot tests carried out was 0.81. The data collected for this study were analyzed with the use of means and rank orders, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical methods set at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Result

Research Question 1: *What are the major challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin?*

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order on the Challenges of Female Sandwich Students in University of Ilorin

S/No	In my own view, the challenges of female sandwich students are:	Mean	Rank Order
1.	poor concentration while in classroom	3.10	4 th
2.	poor state of finance	3.17	3 rd
3.	poor attendance as a result of distance from home	2.94	9 th
4.	not satisfying the husband as at when due	2.93	10 th
5.	inability to pay attention to social responsibilities	3.04	7 th
6.	lack of support from their husbands	3.19	2 nd
7.	lateness to submit assignments	3.02	8 th
8.	poor communication between husband and wife	3.08	5 th
9.	inability to develop effective study habit	3.07	6 th
10.	not getting assistance from course mates	3.21	1 st

Table 1 shows that Item 10 (In my own view, the challenge of female sandwich students is not getting assistance from course mates") had the highest mean score of 3.21 and was therefore ranked 1st. Ranked 2nd was Item 6 ("In my own view, the challenge of female sandwich students is lack of support from their husbands") with a mean a score of 3.19. Ranked 3rd was Item 2 ("In my own view, the challenges of female sandwich students is poor state of finance") with a mean a score of 3.17. Item 4 ("In my own view, the challenge of female sandwich students is not satisfying the husband as at when due") with a mean score of 2.93 ranked last. All the ten items have mean scores that are above the mid-mean score of 2.50, then it can be said that the respondents attest to the fact that they are facing some challenges as sandwich students of the University of Ilorin.

Research Question 2: *What are the major adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin?*

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order on the Adjustment Strategies Employed by Female Sandwich Students in University of Ilorin

S/No	Adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students includes:	Mean	Rank Order
1.	talking to trusted friends	3.14	5 th
2.	employing housemaid	2.86	8 th
3.	taking regular sleep	2.78	9 th
4.	taking regular exercise	2.64	10 th
5.	seeking counsellor's assistance	3.23	4 th
6.	seeking the service of a day care centre	2.92	7 th
7.	seeking the help of course mates	3.07	6 th
8.	approaching the lecturers for further clarification	3.26	3 rd
9.	knowing ones limit and sticking to them	3.51	2 nd
10.	believing oneself	3.66	1 st

Table 2 shows that **Item 10** ("Adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students include believing in yourself") had the highest mean score of 3.66 and was therefore Ranked 1st. Ranked 2nd was Item 9 ("adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students include knowing ones limit and sticking to them") with a mean a score of 3.51. Ranked last was Item 4 (Adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students include taking regular exercise) with a mean score of 2.64.

Hypotheses Testing

In all **three null hypotheses** were generated and as well tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using t-test and ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on years of marriage.*

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Challenges Faced by Female Sandwich Students in University of Ilorin Based on Years of Marriage

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	Critical F-value
Between Groups	4	24.139	6.03	0.45	2.37
Within Groups	245	3285.625	13.41		
Total	249	3309.764			

Table 3 shows the F-value calculated of 0.45 and a Critical value of 2.37. Since, the calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on years of marriage.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the Adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on years of marriage.*

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Adjustment Strategies Employed by Female Sandwich Students in University of Ilorin Based on Years of Marriage

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	Critical F-value
Between Groups	4	269.425	67.35	7.21*	2.37
Within Groups	245	3969.439	9.33		
Total	249	4238.864			

Table 4 shows that the calculated F-value was greater than the critical F-value. As such, the hypothesis is not accepted. Hence, there is a significant difference in the adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on years of marriage.

In order to determine the mean value(s) that caused the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results of Table 4, the Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test. The results of the DMRT procedure are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing the Adjustment Strategies Employed by Female Sandwich Students in University of Ilorin Based on Years of Marriage

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Years of Marriage
A	45	32.71	4	16 - 20 years
A	54	32.35	5	21 - 25 years
B	46	31.84	1	0 - 5 years
B	52	31.36	2	6 - 10 years
B	53	31.33	3	11 - 15 years

Table 5 shows the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 12. Group 4 (16 - 20 years) with a mean score of 32.71 slightly differed from Group 5 (21 - 25 years) with a mean score of 32.35, but significantly differed from Group 1 (0 - 5 years), Group 2 (6 - 10 years), and Group 3 (11 - 15 years) with mean scores of 31.84, 31.36, and 31.33 respectively. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of the mean of Group 4 (16 - 20 years) and Group 5 (21 - 25 years), hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 10 and thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This thus implies that female sandwich students who have spent between 16 - 25 years in marriage adjust better than others who have spent a few years in marriage.

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on age.*

Table 6: The t-test showing the Challenges Faced by Female Sandwich Students in University of Ilorin Based on Age

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. F-value	Critical F-value
20 - 39 years	95	30.84	3.68	248	0.18	1.96
40 - 59 years	155	30.75	3.63			

Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in University of Ilorin based on age.

Discussion of Findings

Most of the respondents Mean and rank order on the challenges faced by sandwich students showed that all the ten items have mean scores that are above the mid mean score of 2.50. This means that majority of the respondents agreed that there are lots of challenges they encounter during the sandwich programme. Egenti & Omoruyi (2011) also revealed that sandwich students go through a lot of stress and anxiety due to the pressure they encounter during this period and most of them cope with these challenges by employing some adjustment strategies. This is shown on the mean and rank order of adjustment strategies employed by female sandwich students in university of Ilorin, the mean score is also above 2.50.

Women number of years in marriage does not influence the challenges they face during sandwich programme. They all attest to the fact that they go through a lot of challenges. Many married women have continued to enroll for sandwich programme but their efforts have continued to be limited by social norms. This is because our traditional culture gives high priority to family responsibilities and child up bringing over career modus operandi (Bolu-Steve, Olawuyi & Shaba 2015). Egenti & Omoruyi (2011) also observed that the major constraints or challenges of women participants in the part-time programmes include time constraints, increasing marital demand, poor economic or financial base, poor learning environment, lack of encouragement from employers and spouse, increasing social pressure and poor psychological disposition. Hence, Ajagbe (2012) stated that most married sandwich students employ some adjustment strategies in the course of their programmes. Some of these strategies as discovered from this study include; believing ones themselves; knowing their limit and sticking to them; approaching lecturers for further clarification; seeking counsellor's assistance; talking to trusted friends; seeking the help of course mates; seeking the service of a day care Centre; employing housemaid; engaging in regular exercise amongst others.

The various age groups were not significantly different in their opinion on the challenges of female sandwich students. Mbagwu & Ekwelum (2006) affirmed that female students of different age group often experience challenges like lack of finance to run the program, difficulty to concentrate while in classroom and poor ability to develop effective study habit. From this study it is obvious that all female sandwich students respond and adjust virtually the same way to the challenges they encounter during sandwich program. Ajagbe (2012) revealed that students often develop some survival skills in order to adjust to the daily academic rigours.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the challenges faced by female sandwich students in the University of Ilorin, based on religion, years of marriage and age. However, a significant difference was found in the adjustment strategies employed by these students based, on religion and years of marriage. It was, therefore suggested that the NUC should enforce the establishment of counselling centres in each of the universities running

sandwich programmes in Nigeria. The government should regularly sponsor female students so as to encourage them in their quest to attain higher education and also encourage affirmative statements on gender issues. The Universities should make sandwich centres conducive for effective learning by providing adequate electricity and water supplies, comfortable accommodation and modern and effective instructional materials.

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