BALANCING MOTHERHOOD AND ACADEMIC PURSUITS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NIGERIAN WOMEN

Daniel, Rosemary Onchi
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.
rosemaryonchidaniel@gmail.com

Madugu, Doris Lami
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.
lamidoris1@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by Nigerian women as they balance motherhood and academic pursuits. Drawing on global and local perspectives, the research highlights the significant barriers these women encounter, including traditional gender roles, institutional gaps, economic pressures, and psychosocial stress. Traditional gender roles in many Nigerian communities place primary responsibility for childcare and household duties on women, significantly limiting their time and energy for academic endeavors. The primary objective is to identify and analyze these challenges while exploring potential strategies for support and empowerment. Guided by the theoretical framework of liberal feminist theory, which emphasizes gender equality and women's rights. A sample size of 374 Nigerian mothers on academic journey from various universities was selected using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained via in-depth interviews. Findings reveal that traditional gender roles significantly limit the time and energy women can dedicate to academic pursuits. Institutional barriers, such as inadequate childcare facilities and inflexible working hours, further exacerbate these challenges. Economic pressures and the high cost of childcare add to the financial burden, while psychosocial stress of juggling multiple roles negatively impacts mental health and academic performance. The study emphasized the urgent need for policy reforms and supportive measures within academic institutions. Recommendations include the implementation of family-friendly policies, establishment of support networks, and promotion of women's empowerment programs. These steps are essential for a more equitable academic environment, enabling Nigerian women to successfully balance motherhood and academic careers.

Keywords: Motherhood, Academic Pursuits, Nigerian Women, Gender Roles, Institutional Barriers.

Introduction

The intricate balance between motherhood and intellectual pursuits has long been a critical area of discussion in gender studies, sociology, and educational research. Historically, the roles of women have been predominantly confined to domestic spheres, with societal expectations placing a significant

emphasis on motherhood as a central identity. Across cultures, traditional gender roles often place the primary responsibility for childcare and domestic duties on mothers, limiting their time and energy for academic endeavors (Charles & Hurst, 2007). However, the evolution of gender roles and increased access to education and employment opportunities have enabled women to pursue intellectual and professional ambitions alongside their roles as mothers.

Globally, traditional gender roles have historically placed the primary responsibility for childcare and household duties on women. The pursuit of academic goals while navigating motherhood presents a significant challenge for women worldwide. This universal struggle manifests in different ways across cultures and socioeconomic contexts. This cultural expectation persists in many societies, including Nigeria, significantly limiting the time and energy women can dedicate to their academic pursuits. As Omoniyi (2020) notes, societal expectations that a woman's primary role is to be a caregiver can lead to a lack of support from family and community members for their academic ambitions. This phenomenon is not unique to Nigeria; similar patterns have been observed in various countries where cultural norms prioritize maternal roles over professional development (Cuddy et al., 2020).

Developed countries often have more extensive social safety nets, childcare options, and parental leave policies, easing the burden on mothers in academia. However, these structures are often lacking or underdeveloped in developing nations, creating a significant disparity. It is evident that cultural norms and gender expectations still play a significant role (World Bank, 2022). Some academic disciplines may be more accommodating of flexible work arrangements and family responsibilities than others (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). This can vary across institutions and countries. The global feminist movement has long been a powerful platform for women to advocate for change, including the challenges they face in balancing motherhood and academic pursuits. This movement creates opportunities for women to share experiences and strategies, fostering solidarity and inspiring collective action. Through international conferences, online forums, and academic networks, women are able to connect with one another, exchange ideas, and develop solutions to common challenges. Sharing experiences and strategies for balancing motherhood and academics fosters solidarity and inspires collective action (Braidotti, 2019).

Solidarity is a core principle of the feminist movement, and it plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and needs of academic mothers. When women come together in solidarity, they can create a stronger, united front to push for change. This collective power is evident in the numerous initiatives and campaigns led by feminist groups worldwide. For instance, the #MeToo movement, while primarily focused on sexual harassment, has also highlighted the broader issues of gender inequality in various professional fields, including academia (Khan et al., 2021). Such movements show how solidarity can amplify women's voices and drive meaningful change. Second-Wave feminists advocated for equal educational opportunities

for women across all disciplines, including previously male-dominated fields like science, engineering, and law (Evans, 2022). The mid-20th century witnessed a surge in feminist activism, with the Second-Wave Feminism movement leaving an indelible mark on the social fabric, particularly in the realm of education. This period, roughly spanning the 1960s to the 1980s, was characterized by a renewed fight against traditional gender roles and a relentless pursuit of equal rights and opportunities for women. Education became a central battleground in this fight. Second-wave feminists exposed the historical limitations placed on women's access to higher education. Works like Betty Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique" (1963) ignited discussions about the societal pressure on women to prioritize domesticity over academic pursuits (Freidan, 1963). Feminist scholars like Dale Spender critiqued the androcentric nature of education, highlighting the underrepresentation of women's contributions to history, literature, and science (Spender, 1981). This critique led to the development of women's studies programs and the inclusion of more diverse perspectives in the curriculum. This involved dismantling discriminatory practices in admissions, curriculum, and faculty hiring. Feminist scholars exposed and critiqued the inherent gender bias within education systems. They highlighted the underrepresentation of women's history and achievements in textbooks and curricula (Stanley & Wise, 1983). The movement saw the establishment of Women's Studies programs in universities, offering critical analysis of gender roles, feminist theory, and the experiences of women throughout history. These programs provided a vital space for women's voices and perspectives (Ferre & Garcia Dauder, 2019).

The African woman's experience of balancing motherhood and academic pursuits is deeply influenced by the African concept of Ubuntu, a philosophy emphasizing interconnectedness, humanity, and communal responsibility. This perspective shapes the challenges and opportunities these women encounter. Within the Ubuntu framework, childcare is not solely a mother's domain. Traditionally, extended families and the community share the burden, offering support and childcare (Alegi & Enobakhare, 2018). Corroborated by Azevedo, (2016), traditionally, African societies have strong extended family networks. Ideally, these networks provide childcare, emotional support, and even financial assistance to mothers pursuing education. The spirit of Ubuntu can foster a sense of community and belonging for mothers in academia. Support groups and mentorship from older women can provide valuable guidance and encouragement (Adefemi, 2022). As opined by Charles (2020), Ubuntu celebrates successful individuals who uplift the community. Nigerian women who have achieved academic success while raising families serve as powerful role models, inspiring others to pursue their goals. Agbasi & Imo (2021) affirmed that the Ubuntu philosophy encourages collective action for the betterment of all. Women can leverage this spirit to advocate for policies that support mothers in education, such as affordable childcare and flexible learning options. This communal approach can alleviate some of the pressures on mothers in academia. Overcoming hardship is a core value in

many African cultures. This translates to a spirit of resilience among women, enabling them to persevere through the challenges of balancing motherhood and academics (Emeagwali, 2018).

The rise of urbanization and nuclear families in Nigeria can weaken traditional support systems, leaving mothers more reliant on individual resources (Ogunleye, 2017). Modernization and urbanization weakened these support structures, placing a heavier load on individual mothers. Ubuntu emphasizes resilience in the face of hardship. However, Nigerian women demonstrate this strength by persevering through the challenges of juggling motherhood and academics (Akintola & Ajayi, 2020). There is considerable literature on the challenges faced by women in academia, specific studies focusing on Nigerian women balancing motherhood and academic careers are sparse. However, this study aims to fill this gap by providing detailed insights into the unique cultural, social, and institutional barriers Nigerian academic mothers face. By doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of their specific challenges and needs.

Challenges of Balancing Motherhood and Academic Pursuits

The stress of juggling academic deadlines, research responsibilities, and childcare can lead to significant psychosocial stress for women worldwide. This stress negatively impacts women's mental health and overall well-being, complicating their ability to succeed academically. Okeke (2022) emphasizes that the constant pressure to meet the demands of both motherhood and academia can lead to burnout, anxiety, and depression. Globally, the mental health challenges faced by academic mothers are increasingly being recognized, with calls for better support systems in academic institutions (Schiebinger & Gilmartin, 2010).

Balancing motherhood and academic pursuits presents significant challenges for women globally, and Nigerian women are no exception. Nigeria, a developing nation, grapples with poverty, limited access to quality childcare, and a less developed social safety compared to many developed countries. These factors can significantly exacerbate the financial and logistical strains faced by mothers in academia (Okeke & Agbasi, 2019). Traditional gender roles in Nigeria can be more rigid compared to some other regions. This can lead to societal pressure for women to prioritize motherhood over academic pursuits (Achum-Ogban, 2021). Furthermore, Achum-Ogban (2021) highlights the issue of gender stereotypes in developing countries, specifically Nigeria, which creates a significant challenge for women pursuing education. This directly addresses the point about more rigid cultural norms in Nigeria compared to other regions.

The intersection of these roles requires navigating a complex landscape of social, cultural, economic, and institutional barriers. This research explores into the specific challenges and opportunities Nigerian women face while balancing motherhood with their academic careers. In many Nigerian communities, traditional gender roles place the primary responsibility for childcare and household duties on women. This cultural

expectation can significantly limit the time and energy women can dedicate to their academic pursuits. As Omoniyi (2020) notes, the societal expectation that a woman's primary role is to be a caregiver can lead to a lack of support from family and community members for their academic ambitions. Women often face criticism or disapproval for prioritizing their education, which can create additional stress and reduce their ability to succeed academically.

Academic institutions in Nigeria often lack policies and support systems that accommodate the needs of mothers. This includes limited access to childcare facilities, flexible working hours, and parental leave. Alabi (2021) highlights that these institutional gaps can hinder women's ability to participate fully in academic activities and progress in their careers. Without adequate support, mothers in academia may struggle to balance their professional and personal responsibilities, leading to higher dropout rates and lower academic achievement. The financial burden of balancing motherhood and academia can be substantial. Many Nigerian women face economic pressures that require them to work multiple jobs in addition to their academic responsibilities. This economic strain is exacerbated by the costs associated with childcare and education. Adeyemi (2019) points out that these financial challenges can force women to make difficult choices between their academic goals and their family's needs. Limited financial resources can also restrict access to educational opportunities, such as attending conferences or purchasing necessary study materials.

The stress of juggling academic deadlines, research responsibilities, and childcare can lead to significant psychosocial stress. This stress can negatively impact women's mental health and overall well-being, further complicating their ability to succeed academically. Okeke (2022) emphasizes that the constant pressure to meet the demands of both motherhood and academia can lead to burnout, anxiety, and depression. The lack of mental health support services in many Nigerian academic institutions exacerbates these issues, leaving women without the necessary resources to cope with their stress.

Theoretical Framework: Liberal Feminist Theory

Born in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Liberal Feminism emerged alongside the Enlightenment's emphasis on individual rights. This European and North American movement responded to the stark inequalities women faced in education, jobs, and political participation. It built upon the earlier ideas of "first-wave feminism," which pushed for women's suffrage and educational access. Liberal feminists, like Mary Wollstonecraft, believed women deserved equal rights to men. They argued for legal and political changes that would dismantle discriminatory barriers, allowing women to vote, pursue careers, and be self-sufficient. Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792) stands as a cornerstone of the movement, advocating for a society where women are independent and have equal opportunities. Other key figures, like John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill, echoed these calls. Mill's "The Subjection of Women" (1869) is another foundational text, urging legal and social reforms to address women's unequal status. Liberal feminists like Wollstonecraft argued this inequality wasn't due

to natural differences between genders, but rather unjust laws and customs suppressing women's potential. Their goal was to secure equal rights under the law and full participation in society.

The development of liberal feminism was influenced by several factors:

Liberal feminism sprouted from the fertile ground of the Enlightenment. This era, with its emphasis on reason, individual rights, and progress, challenged traditional gender roles. Thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft argued for women's rights to education, property, and public participation, advocating for legal and political reforms.

Industrial Revolution's Impact: The rise of factories changed society's fabric. Women entered the workforce, questioning the status quo and demanding fairer treatment and opportunities. Urbanization, fueled by industrial growth, created new social dynamics. Cities became hubs of innovation, attracting people seeking work and progress. This fertile environment nurtured liberal ideas.

Social Movements as Inspiration:
The 19th century saw social reform movements like anti-slavery and temperance arise. These movements inspired women to become politically active and advocate for social change, paving the way for feminism.

Education as a Catalyst: The fight for women's education was crucial. As women gained access to knowledge, they became more aware of their rights and empowered to challenge traditional gender norms.

The Power of Political Action: Women's involvement in political activism, particularly the fight for suffrage, played a key role. This movement, uniting women to demand voting rights, laid the foundation for future feminist activism.

Liberal feminism rests on several key assumptions about the nature of society and gender equality:

Liberal feminists believe that individuals, regardless of gender, should have equal rights and opportunities. They focus on removing societal barriers that prevent women from achieving their full potential.

This theory assumes that men and women are inherently equal in terms of their capabilities and deserving of the same rights and opportunities. Differences in behavior or achievement are seen as a result of social conditioning, not biological determinism.

Liberal feminists believe that legal and political reforms are the primary means to achieve gender equality. They advocate for changes in laws and policies that discriminate against women, such as suffrage, equal pay for equal work, and access to education.

Liberal feminism often assumes its principles are universally applicable across cultures and societies. It might not fully consider the diverse experiences and needs of women from different backgrounds.

This theory posits that a fair and meritocratic society rewards individuals based on their abilities and contributions. Liberal feminists believe that once women have equal access to education and opportunity, they will succeed based on their merits.

Through the lens of liberal feminism, explaining the challenges and opportunities women face in balancing motherhood and academic pursuits would focus on achieving equality for women in these spheres. Many Nigerian women lack access to childcare options, educational grants, or flexible learning schedules that would enable them to pursue higher education while managing motherhood. Liberal feminism focuses and seeks to explain how traditional gender roles in Nigeria often place the primary responsibility for childcare on mothers, which creates a significant burden for women pursuing academic careers, limiting their time and energy for studies and research. Liberal feminists argue that cultural expectations can pressure women to choose between motherhood and academic success. The theory further emphasizes that lack of access to affordable, high-quality childcare facilities or flexible work arrangements within universities ought to be a key focus. This lack of support disproportionately impacts mothers in academia, hindering their ability to participate fully.

Liberal Feminism asserts that all individuals, regardless of gender, should have equal opportunities to pursue education and careers. In the context of this study, academic mothers often encounter barriers such as traditional gender roles that prescribe caregiving responsibilities to women, limiting their ability to fully engage in academic activities. One of the most prominent barriers faced by academic mothers in Nigeria is the high cost of childcare. These financial burdens can limit women's ability to dedicate time and energy to their academic careers. Liberal feminists advocate for policies and programs that create these opportunities, allowing women to make individual choices about education and family. Liberal feminism would argue that women should have equal rights and opportunities to pursue education and academic careers as men. However, in Nigeria, traditional gender roles and societal expectations often place a greater burden on women to prioritize their roles as caregivers and homemakers over their educational aspirations.

Cultural norms in Nigeria may prioritize motherhood over female education. Legal reforms promoting girls' education and challenging discriminatory practices could empower women to pursue academic goals. Liberal feminists would advocate for such reforms and public awareness campaigns to shift societal expectations. From a liberal feminist perspective, there is a need for legal and policy reforms in Nigeria to support women's academic pursuits. This could include measures such as affordable childcare options, flexible work and study arrangements, and anti-discrimination laws to protect women from being penalized for being mothers. Liberal feminists emphasize the importance of education for women's

empowerment. In Nigeria, efforts to support mothers in pursuing education could include providing scholarships or financial assistance, as well as promoting awareness about the importance of education for women's economic independence and social mobility.

Strengths of Liberal Feminism Theory:

Liberal feminism emphasizes equal rights and opportunities for women, challenging traditional gender roles and advocating for women's autonomy (Charles & Hurst, 2007). This focus has been instrumental in securing legal and political victories for women, such as suffrage and equal pay for equal work.

Theoretically, liberal feminism aims to be universally applicable, promoting gender equality across cultures and societies. This principle encourages a broader view of women's struggles around the world.

Liberal feminism stresses the importance of legal and political reforms to dismantle discriminatory practices and create a more equitable legal framework (American Civil Liberties Union, 2024).

Weaknesses of Liberal Feminism Theory:

Critics argue that liberal feminism's focus on individual achievement overlooks the broader social structures and power dynamics that perpetuate gender inequality (McRobbie, 2009). It might not adequately address the influence of institutions like family or workplaces that disadvantage women.

Liberal feminism has been criticized for failing to consider how factors like race, class, and sexuality intersect with gender, creating diverse experiences for women (Collins, 2009). This "one-size-fits-all" approach may overlook the specific challenges faced by women of color, working-class women, or those from marginalized communities.

Some argue that legal and political reforms alone may not be sufficient to address ingrained cultural attitudes and social norms that reinforce gender roles (Connell, 2005).

The theory posits that a fair meritocracy rewards individuals based on their abilities. Critics argue that systemic biases and a lack of support systems might disadvantage women even in a system with equal legal rights (Joshi et al., 2019).

Research Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey which took place at a federal university in Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria. To gain a comprehensive understanding of how women manage the challenges of balancing motherhood and academic life, the researchers employed a mixed methods approach. This involved using both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, the researchers included participants from various backgrounds. This diversity encompassed factors like socioeconomic status, age, and educational level. The total number of FUW student is

roughly around 6672. Therefore, the study employed Taro Yamane's formula to determine the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; n = Sample size (?),
N = population size (6,672),
e = level of precision (0.05),
1 = constant

$$n = \frac{6{,}672}{1+6{,}672(0.05)^2} \; n = \frac{6{,}672}{1+6{,}672(0.0025)} \; n = \frac{6{,}672}{1+16.68}$$

$$n = \frac{6{,}672}{17.68} \; n = \frac{6{,}672}{17.68}$$

$n = 377.4$ Approximated to 378.

Data were analyzed with 374 retrieved questionnaires and 9 in-depth interviews were conducted with students from Federal University Wukari (FUW); 6 with undergraduate students while 3 with postgraduate students. For the selection of respondents; within each academic level and the criteria for selecting respondents, the study adopted the purposive sampling technique for the selection

Results and Discussions

This section of the study explores the thematic issues arising from the results of data analysis. These thematic issues encompass a range of topics related to the intersection of motherhood and women's academic aspirations, including societal expectations, access to education, individual struggles and economic pressures.

Table 1: Distribution of Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentages**
Male	33	8.8
Female	341	91.2
Total	**374**	**100**
Age		
15-24	126	33.7
25-34	105	28.1
35-44	62	16.6
45-54	50	13.4
55 and above	31	8.3
Total	**374**	**100**
Marital Status		
Single mothers	181	48.4
Married	163	43.6
Divorced/Separated	27	7.2
Widowed	3	0.8
Total	**374**	**100**
Student Status		
Post graduate	21	5.6
100 level	17	4.5
200 level	58	15.5
300 level	146	39.0
Final year	132	35.3
Total	**374**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 provides information on the distribution of respondents by sex; male recorded 33 respondents (8.8%) while females 341 respondents (91.2%), out of a total of 374 respondents. The majority of respondents were female, accounting for 91.2% of the total sample, while males accounted for only 8.8%. This

distribution suggests a significant gender imbalance in the sample, with females being overrepresented and this is because the study mainly focuses on the challenges women experience in balancing motherhood and furthering their academics.

The table further presents the distribution of respondents by age group: 15-24 recorded 126 respondents (33.7%), 25-34 displayed 105 respondents (28.1%), 35-44 totaled 62 respondents (16.6%), 45-54 amounted to 50 respondents (13.4%) while 55 and above summed 31 respondents (8.3%). The largest age group among the respondents is 15-24 years, accounting for 33.7% of the total sample. The 25-34 age group is the second largest, representing 28.1% of the respondents. Older age groups have progressively fewer respondents, with the 55 and above group being the smallest at 8.3%. This distribution indicates a relatively diverse age range among the respondents, which may provide a comprehensive view of the research topic across different life stages.

The table also presented the distribution of respondents by marital status. Out of a total of 374 respondents; Single mothers were 181 respondents (48.4%), the Married amounted to 163 respondents (43.6%), Divorced/Separated recorded 27 respondents (7.2%) while the least was Widowed; 3 respondents (0.8%). The majority of respondents are single mothers, accounting for 75.2% of the total sample. Married respondents make up 16.8% of the sample, while divorced/separated respondents represent 7.2%. The smallest proportion of respondents are widowed, at 0.8%. This distribution indicates a predominantly single respondent population, which may reflect the demographics of the study area or the target population.

The table further presented the distribution of respondents by student status. The majority of respondents are in their 300 level, amounting to 146 (39.0%) of the total sample. Final year students make up a significant proportion of the respondents at 132 (35.3%). 200 level students represent 58 (15.5%) of the sample, indicating a substantial number are younger respondents. Postgraduate and 100 level respondents form smaller proportions of the sample at 21 (5.6%) and 17 (4.5%), respectively. This distribution suggests a diverse range of student statuses among the respondents, which implies that all categories of studentship were represented.

Table 2: Economic Pressures that Affects Balancing Motherhood and Academic Pursuits. (374)

Variable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Strongly Agree	Agree	Mean	S.D.
Economic factors play a significant role in determining whether women can pursue higher education while managing motherhood.	36	14	8	179	137	3.98	0.3030
Economic constraints have made it challenging for me/my daughter to balance motherhood and academic aspirations.	11	9	26	166	162	4.49	0.474
Economic factors influence societal expectations regarding women's roles as mothers and students	9	13	22	186	144	4.18	0.299
Women generally feel that economic conditions in our community have a significant impact on their decisions regarding education and motherhood.	2	19	64	206	82	3.93	0.267

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

To calculate the mean and standard deviation for each variable, numerical values were assigned to the responses on the 5-point scale:

Strongly Disagree = 1
Disagree = 2
Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3
Agree = 4

Strongly Agree = 5

The data presented on Table 2 above reflects responses from participants regarding the impact of economic pressures in balancing motherhood and academic. Economic factors play a significant role in determining whether women can pursue higher education while managing motherhood calculated a Mean: 3.98, Standard Deviation: 0.30 respondents, on average, agree that economic factors play a significant role in determining whether women can pursue higher education while managing motherhood. The low standard deviation indicates that responses were more consistent for this statement.

Economic constraints have made it challenging for me/my daughter to balance motherhood and academic aspirations displayed a Mean: 4.49, Standard Deviation: 0.47. The high mean suggests that respondents strongly agree that economic constraints have made it challenging to balance motherhood and academic aspirations. The relatively low standard deviation indicates that there is some variability in responses, but overall, respondents tend to agree on this statement.

Economic factors influence societal expectations regarding women's roles as mothers and students, recorded Mean: 4.18, Standard Deviation: 0.30. The mean suggests that respondents agree that economic factors influence societal expectations regarding women's roles as mothers and students. The low standard deviation indicates that responses were consistent.

Women generally feel that economic conditions in our community have a significant impact on their decisions regarding education and motherhood, showed a Mean: 3.93, Standard Deviation: 0.27. Respondents, on average, agree that economic conditions in their community have a significant impact on their decisions regarding academic and motherhood. The low standard deviation suggests that responses were consistent among participants.

The in-depth interview data from the Federal University Wukari (FUW) undergraduate student highlights significant challenges faced by student mothers balancing academic pursuits with childcare responsibilities and are presented below.

A 32-year-old FUW 200 level undergraduate student expressed that:

> "Managing my time between classes, studying, and taking care of my child is incredibly challenging. There are never enough hours in the day. Financially, it's a struggle. Childcare costs are astronomical, and I often have to work extra shifts to make ends meet. Federal University Wukari and Nigerian universities at large doesn't have adequate childcare options or flexible schedules. It's hard to find support. There are days when I feel overwhelmed and guilty for not spending enough time with my child or missing lectures. I wish the university offered more resources like counseling or workshops specifically for student mothers. I worry about my career prospects after graduation. Will employers understand the challenges I faced balancing motherhood and academics? If it is easy for other mothers, it is definitely not easy for me"

The student expresses immense difficulty in managing time effectively between attending classes, studying, and caring for

her child. This reflects the demanding nature of juggling academic responsibilities with parental duties, where every hour feels insufficient. The perception of time scarcity underscores the overwhelming pressure experienced daily. Financial concerns are a prominent issue for the student, particularly the high costs associated with childcare. The student mentions working extra shifts to supplement income, indicating a heavy reliance on additional employment to meet financial needs. This financial strain adds to the complexity of balancing academic and parental roles.

The student criticizes FUW and Nigerian universities in general for inadequate childcare options and inflexible schedules. This institutional shortfall exacerbates the student's challenges, as she struggles to find the necessary support systems within the educational environment. The absence of tailored resources for student mothers, compounds feelings of isolation and difficulty. The student reveals emotional strain, expressing feelings of guilt over perceived shortcomings in both parenting and academic attendance. This emotional burden underscores the psychological impact of trying to excel in multiple roles while feeling unsupported and overwhelmed.

There is a clear desire for enhanced institutional support, including counseling services or workshops tailored specifically for student mothers. This reflects a need for proactive measures to address the unique challenges faced by this demographic within higher education settings. The student expresses legitimate concerns about future career prospects, questioning whether employers will appreciate the complexities of balancing motherhood with academic achievements. This uncertainty highlights broader societal challenges regarding the recognition and accommodation of working mothers in professional environments. Finally, the student emphasizes the individualized nature of her experience, acknowledging that while some mothers may find it manageable, her personal circumstances present exceptional challenges. This highlights the variability in experiences among student mothers and the need for nuanced support strategies.

A 29-year-old final year FUW students recounted that:

> "I've learned to prioritize and plan meticulously. It's tough, but staying organized helps me get through each day. I'm fortunate to have family support, but it's still tough. Balancing part-time work with studies and parenting adds a lot of stress. I've found a supportive community among fellow mothers at school. We help each other out with childcare and emotional support. It's emotionally exhausting, but I remind myself that I'm setting an example for my child and pursuing my dreams. I've had positive experiences with professors who understand my situation and provide flexibility with assignments. I'm determined to succeed. This experience has made me more resilient and driven to achieve my career goals. I'm challenging stereotypes. I believe women can excel in both motherhood and academics."

The student demonstrates strong organizational skills by prioritizing and planning meticulously. This proactive approach helps the student navigate the challenges of balancing studies, part-time work, and parenting. By staying organized, the student effectively manages daily tasks, indicating resilience and

determination in overcoming obstacles. Despite having family support, the student acknowledges the ongoing challenges of balancing part-time work, studies, and parenting. This highlights the financial pressures faced by student parents, necessitating additional income to support themselves and their families. The dual responsibilities contribute to stress, despite the supportive family network.

The student finds solace and support within a community of fellow student mothers at FUW. This peer support network plays a crucial role in providing emotional support and practical assistance, such as childcare. The community's solidarity alleviates some of the emotional burdens associated with balancing multiple roles. The student acknowledges the emotional exhaustion of balancing academic and parental responsibilities but emphasizes the importance of perseverance. By pursuing academic goals, the student sets a positive example for their child, demonstrating resilience and determination in achieving personal and professional aspirations despite challenges.

The student highlights positive interactions with professors who understand their situation and offer flexibility with assignments. This supportive academic environment is crucial in accommodating the student's dual responsibilities and fostering academic success. This student expresses determination to succeed academically and challenges stereotypes about women's capabilities in balancing motherhood and academics. This reflects a proactive stance in advocating for gender equality and empowerment, both personally and within the broader societal context.

A 37-year-old 100 level, FUW Undergraduate Student revealed that:

> "It's a constant juggling act between caring for my child, breastfeeding, and attending classes. Time management is crucial, but sometimes it feels overwhelming. Financially, it's tough with the added expenses of childcare and baby supplies. Emotionally, the demands of motherhood and academics can be draining. I have support my lecturers who deliberately refuse to understand the challenges of breastfeeding and childcare. Missing classes due to childbirth recovery and breastfeeding has affected my academic progress. I wish there were more flexible options. It's challenging, but I see it as an opportunity to grow personally and academically. However, I'm determined to succeed despite the obstacles. it is so real that there's pressure to conform to traditional gender roles of caregiving while pursuing academic goals. It's a balancing act of expectations."

The student highlights the constant struggle of managing childcare, breastfeeding, and attending classes. This emphasizes the critical importance of effective time management in balancing multiple responsibilities. However, the student also acknowledges that despite efforts, the demands can feel overwhelming, underscoring the sheer complexity of their daily life. Financial constraints are a significant concern for the student, exacerbated by the additional expenses of childcare and baby supplies. This financial strain adds pressure to an already

challenging situation. Emotionally, the student describes motherhood and academics as draining, indicating the profound emotional toll of balancing these roles simultaneously.

A notable frustration for the student is the perceived lack of understanding and support from lecturers regarding the challenges of breastfeeding and childcare. This lack of empathy and accommodation from academic staff contributes to the student's difficulties in maintaining consistent attendance and academic progress. The student acknowledges that missing classes due to childbirth recovery and breastfeeding has affected their academic advancement. This highlights the need for more flexible academic options that cater to the unique needs of student parents, ensuring that they can balance their academic responsibilities with the demands of parenthood effectively. Despite the challenges, the student views their experience as an opportunity for personal and academic growth. This determination to succeed despite obstacles reflects resilience and a strong commitment to achieving educational goals, despite the challenges posed by traditional gender roles and societal expectations.

A 22-year-old 200 level FUW Undergraduate Students emphasized that:

> "I've learned to prioritize academic deadlines while ensuring my child's needs are met. It's challenging, but setting a routine helps maintain balance. Having a supportive partner makes a big difference, he deferred his studies just to assist me but there are still days of stress and exhaustion trying to keep up with everything. The University does not have resources like lactation or nursing rooms. Balancing marriage, motherhood, and academics has made me more resilient and motivated. I want to show my child the importance of education. I challenge stereotypes by pursuing my education while being a mother. It's about proving that women can excel in both roles."

The student emphasizes the importance of prioritizing academic deadlines while ensuring their child's needs are met. This indicates a strong ability to manage time effectively and highlights the necessity of establishing routines to maintain balance. Having a supportive partner who deferred his studies to assist is a significant factor in the student's ability to manage their responsibilities. This support alleviates some pressures, yet the student still experiences stress and exhaustion, illustrating the intense demands of balancing marriage, motherhood, and academics. The presence of a supportive partner highlights the importance of family and spousal support in managing these roles.

The student notes the absence of resources such as lactation or nursing rooms at the university. This gap in institutional support points to a critical need for universities to provide facilities that accommodate the needs of student parents, ensuring they can manage both their academic and parental duties effectively. Balancing multiple roles has made the student more resilient and motivated. This experience fosters personal growth and a strong determination to succeed academically. The student's motivation is also driven by the desire to set a positive example for their child, showcasing the value of education and perseverance.

The student actively challenges societal stereotypes by pursuing education while being a mother. This stance not only underscores their resilience but also contributes to breaking down gender norms that traditionally restrict women's roles to caregiving. The student's efforts serve as an inspiration to others, demonstrating that women can excel in both academic and parental roles.

A 43-year-old final year FUW Undergraduate Student revealed that:

> "Every day feels like a marathon. I have to wake up early to prepare my child for daycare, attend classes, and then work part-time jobs to make ends meet. By the time I get to study, I'm exhausted. I barely get any sleep. Finances are the biggest challenge. Childcare is expensive, and without any financial help, I struggle to pay for basic necessities. I often have to choose between buying textbooks or paying for my child's daycare. I feel isolated because most of my classmates don't understand what I'm going through. I can't attend study groups or social events because I have to take care of my child. My grades have suffered because I can't dedicate enough time to my studies. There are days when I have to miss classes because of my child's health issues or lack of childcare. The stress and anxiety are constant. I worry about my child's future and my ability to graduate. It's mentally and emotionally draining. I hope to graduate and secure a stable job that will allow me to provide a better life for my child. Education is my way out of this struggle."

The student describes her daily routine as a "marathon," highlighting the intense time management demands. She has to wake up early to prepare her child for daycare, attend classes, and work part-time jobs. This leaves her exhausted with little time to study. The lack of time for rest and academic preparation directly affects her academic performance and overall well-being. The exhaustion reduces her ability to focus on her studies and impacts her mental and physical health.

The student identifies finances as her biggest challenge. The cost of childcare is high, and without financial help, she struggles to cover basic necessities. She often has to choose between essential academic resources, like textbooks, and childcare expenses. Financial strain exacerbates her stress and limits her academic opportunities. The inability to afford textbooks and other study materials hinders her ability to succeed academically. This financial pressure also affects her mental health, contributing to constant stress and anxiety.

The student feels isolated because her classmates do not understand her situation. She cannot attend study groups or social events due to her childcare responsibilities. This isolation impacts her academic success and mental health. The lack of peer support means she misses out on collaborative learning opportunities and the emotional support that comes from social interactions. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and decreased motivation.

The student's grades have suffered because she cannot dedicate enough time to her studies. She has to miss classes due to her child's health issues or lack of childcare. Missing classes and inadequate study time directly affect her academic performance.

This can lead to a vicious cycle of falling behind in coursework, increasing stress, and further deteriorating her academic results.

The student experiences constant stress and anxiety, worrying about her child's future and her ability to graduate. The demands of motherhood and academics are mentally and emotionally draining. Chronic stress and anxiety can have severe long-term effects on mental health, including depression and burnout. This mental strain can further hinder her academic performance and overall quality of life.

Despite the challenges, the student hopes to graduate and secure a stable job to provide a better life for her child. She sees education as her way out of her current struggles. Her aspirations reflect a strong sense of resilience and determination. This hope can serve as a motivating factor, driving her to overcome obstacles and succeed despite the difficulties.

A 19-year-old FUW Undergraduate Student expressed that:

> "Time management is a constant challenge. Between lectures, assignments, and taking care of my child, I feel like I'm always running out of time. The lack of sleep and constant pressure are overwhelming. I rely heavily on student loans and scholarships, but they aren't enough. I sometimes skip meals to save money. The financial pressure is immense, and it affects my ability to focus on my studies. Support is hard to come by. I don't have family nearby, and there are no specific support groups for single mothers on campus. It's difficult to find people who relate to my situation. Balancing everything has taken a toll on my academic performance. I often submit assignments late and struggle to keep up with the coursework. Despite the challenges, I try to stay positive. I remind myself that I'm setting an example for my child. It's tough, but it's also making me stronger and more determined. I dream of a future where I can balance a successful career and motherhood. I want to prove that single mothers can achieve their academic and professional goals despite the odds."

This 19-year-old student expresses that time management is a constant challenge. Balancing lectures, assignments, and childcare leaves her feeling perpetually behind. The lack of sleep and relentless pressure exacerbate this sense of overwhelm. The inability to manage time effectively can lead to a cascading effect on academic performance. Chronic sleep deprivation and stress can impair cognitive function, reduce productivity, and negatively affect physical health.

Despite relying on student loans and scholarships, the financial support is insufficient. The student sometimes skips meals to save money, highlighting the severe economic pressure. Financial strain directly impacts the student's ability to focus on her studies. Nutritional deficiencies from skipping meals can lead to health issues, further affecting academic performance and overall well-being. The constant worry about finances adds to the psychological burden, making it difficult to concentrate on academic responsibilities.

The student lacks nearby family support and there are no specific support groups for single mothers on campus. This isolation makes it hard to find others who understand her situation. Social isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness and alienation, further

compounding the stress of managing motherhood and academics. Without a support network, the student lacks essential emotional and practical support, which could otherwise help mitigate some of her challenges.

Balancing her responsibilities has negatively impacted her academic performance. She often submits assignments late and struggles to keep up with coursework. Late submissions and difficulty keeping up with coursework can result in lower grades and academic probation, which could jeopardize her academic future. This creates a cycle of stress and diminished academic achievement.

Despite the overwhelming challenges, the student tries to stay positive and views her struggle as a way to set a positive example for her child. She dreams of balancing a successful career and motherhood. Her resilience and determination are crucial strengths. This positive outlook can help her persevere through difficulties and stay motivated. Demonstrating such resilience can inspire others in similar situations and challenge societal stereotypes about single mothers in academia.

In-Depth Interview Responses from Postgraduate Students in Federal University Wukari (FUW) Balancing Motherhood, Academic Pursuits, and Jobs.

A 30-year-old MBA Student explained that:

> "Balancing my MBA studies with motherhood and a full-time job feels like a never-ending marathon. My work demands are high, and my academic deadlines are tight. Often, I have to stay up late to finish assignments after putting my child to bed. The financial strain is also significant, as I have to pay for both my child's daycare and my tuition fees. Sometimes, I feel guilty for not spending enough time with my child, and the stress can be overwhelming. However, the skills I'm learning in my MBA program are directly applicable to my job, which is a huge motivator. I wish my university offered more support for student mothers, such as flexible schedules and childcare facilities."

The interview data highlights significant time management challenges faced by the student. The necessity to balance MBA studies, motherhood, and a full-time job means that every day feels like a marathon. The student often has to stay up late to finish assignments after putting her child to bed. The student likely experiences chronic sleep deprivation, which can negatively impact both her academic performance and overall well-being. Constant juggling of responsibilities may lead to reduced productivity in both academic and professional settings. The constant need to meet tight deadlines adds to the stress and pressure.

The student mentions significant financial strain as a major challenge, with high expenses related to childcare and tuition fees. The financial burden necessitates the student to work a full-time job, limiting the time available for studies and personal life. The need to allocate funds to essential services such as daycare might lead to compromises on other aspects of life, such as purchasing academic materials. The student may accumulate debt from student loans or other sources, adding to the long-term financial stress.

The student expresses feelings of guilt for not spending enough time with her child and acknowledges the overwhelming stress. Persistent guilt and stress can have detrimental effects on the student's mental health, potentially leading to anxiety or depression. The limited time spent with the child might affect the quality of parental bonding and the child's emotional development. The student experiences a conflict between her role as a mother and her roles as a student and professional, which adds to the emotional burden.

Despite the challenges, the student is motivated by the direct applicability of the skills learned in her MBA program to her job. The relevance of academic content to professional tasks provides intrinsic motivation, which can enhance engagement and persistence in the program. The alignment between academic skills and job requirements might facilitate career advancement and professional growth. The ongoing development of skills beneficial to her job can lead to improved job performance and potential recognition in the workplace.

The student wishes for more support from the university, such as flexible schedules and childcare facilities. The absence of supportive policies for student mothers indicates a gap in institutional policies aimed at facilitating work-life balance for non-traditional students. Universities that do not provide adequate support may see lower retention rates among student mothers. Lack of institutional support can adversely affect the academic performance and progress of student mothers.

A 35-year-old PhD Candidate:

> "As a PhD candidate, my research is extremely demanding, and balancing it with motherhood and a part-time job is incredibly challenging. My job provides some financial relief, but it's not enough to cover all expenses. The lack of sleep and constant juggling between responsibilities take a toll on my mental health. Support from my spouse is invaluable, but institutional support is minimal. More flexible research deadlines and mental health resources would significantly help. I often feel isolated because there aren't many other student mothers in my program. Despite the challenges, I am committed to my research because it's my passion and I want to set a strong example for my children."

The interviewee emphasizes the extreme demands of PhD research, which require significant time, intellectual effort, and dedication. Balancing rigorous research with motherhood and a part-time job necessitates highly efficient time management skills. The demands may affect the quality and depth of research due to the divided attention and energy. Maintaining consistent progress on research milestones is challenging under such a heavy workload.

The part-time job provides some financial relief but is insufficient to cover all expenses related to childcare, household needs, and academic costs. Persistent financial strain can lead to stress, affecting both personal well-being and academic performance. Limited financial resources may necessitate difficult decisions about prioritizing spending, potentially impacting the availability of necessary research materials or

childcare. The need to work part-time adds another layer of time commitment, further stretching the student's capacity to manage all responsibilities.

The lack of sleep and constant juggling of responsibilities significantly impacts the student's mental health. Chronic stress and sleep deprivation can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout. Mental health struggles may affect cognitive functions, reducing academic productivity and research innovation. Poor mental health can also manifest physically, leading to exhaustion and other health issues.

The student finds the support from her spouse invaluable in managing her various roles. Spousal support provides emotional stability and reduces feelings of isolation. Practical help with childcare and household duties can alleviate some of the burdens, allowing the student to focus more on her research. A supportive partner can significantly enhance the ability to balance multiple responsibilities effectively.

The student points out the minimal institutional support, highlighting the need for more flexible research deadlines and mental health resources. The absence of flexible deadlines and mental health resources indicates a gap in the university's support for non-traditional students. Universities that do not provide adequate support may experience lower retention and completion rates among student mothers. The need for structured support systems, such as counseling services and flexible academic policies, is critical for student success.

The student often feels isolated due to the lack of other student mothers in her program. Isolation can exacerbate stress and mental health issues, highlighting the need for social support networks Creating peer support groups for student mothers can provide a sense of community and shared understanding, reducing feelings of isolation. Encouraging inclusivity and support for diverse student populations can enhance the overall academic environment.

The views of a 28-year-old M.Sc. Student:

> "Balancing my M.Sc. studies with motherhood and a teaching job is a daily struggle. The school where I teach is supportive, but my university could do more to accommodate student mothers. Financially, it's tough to manage tuition fees and childcare costs on a teacher's salary. The emotional stress of trying to be a good mother, a dedicated teacher, and a successful student can be overwhelming. Support groups for student mothers and financial aid specifically for this group would make a huge difference. I'm driven by the desire to improve my career prospects and provide a better future for my child."

The student juggles her M.Sc. studies, motherhood, and a teaching job, indicating a complex and demanding daily routine. Effective time management is crucial to balance academic deadlines, job responsibilities, and childcare. The competing demands of being a student, teacher, and mother can lead to role conflict and stress. The divided attention might affect the quality

of work in each role, potentially impacting academic performance and job efficiency.

The student receives support from her school but notes a lack of adequate support from her university. Institutional Differences: There is a disparity between the support provided by her workplace and her academic institution. The university's policies might lack the flexibility needed to accommodate the unique challenges of student mothers. A supportive work environment can significantly alleviate some pressures, but comprehensive support from both the workplace and university is essential for overall well-being.

Managing tuition fees and childcare costs on a teacher's salary presents significant financial difficulties. Economic Pressure: Persistent financial strain can lead to stress, affecting both personal well-being and academic performance. Limited financial resources may necessitate difficult decisions about prioritizing spending, potentially impacting academic resources or childcare quality. There is a clear need for targeted financial aid to support student mothers in managing these dual financial burdens.

The emotional toll of balancing motherhood, a teaching job, and academic studies is significant. Chronic stress can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout. Developing coping strategies and resilience is crucial for managing the emotional demands of multiple roles. Emotional support from peers, family, and professional counseling services can mitigate some of the stress.

The student highlights the necessity of support groups for student mothers and specific financial aid. Support groups can provide emotional support, practical advice, and a sense of community, reducing feelings of isolation. Financial aid tailored to the needs of student mothers can alleviate some economic pressures and allow them to focus more on their studies. Universities should consider implementing policies that address the specific challenges faced by student mothers, such as flexible scheduling and on-campus childcare.

The student is driven by the desire to improve her career prospects and provide a better future for her child. Strong motivation and clear goals can help sustain perseverance through challenging times. Achieving higher education qualifications can lead to better career opportunities and financial stability. The student's commitment to her education serves as a positive example for her child, demonstrating the value of persistence and hard work.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study of balancing motherhood and academic pursuit highlights the intricate challenges and opportunities faced by women worldwide. Societal expectations continue to impose significant pressures on women to prioritize motherhood over personal and professional growth. Liberal feminist theory advocates for cultural shifts that recognize and value women's diverse roles and contributions, promoting gender equality in both domestic and public spheres. Women face substantial challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. Financial constraints significantly impact women's ability to

pursue higher education and career advancement. The dual pressures of motherhood and academic pursuits can lead to significant stress and mental health challenges for women. Societal and institutional support systems, including mental health services and community networks, are crucial in addressing these issues and promoting women's overall well-being.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were reached:

Institutional Support and Policies

Universities should offer flexible class schedules, including evening and weekend classes, to accommodate student mothers.

Establish affordable and accessible childcare centers on university campuses to provide reliable childcare options.

Implement parental leave policies that allow student mothers to take necessary time off without academic penalties.

Provide dedicated lactation rooms for breastfeeding mothers to support their needs and comfort.

Financial Aid and Assistance

Offer scholarships and grants specifically for student mothers to alleviate financial burdens related to tuition and childcare costs.

Create emergency financial aid funds to support student mothers facing sudden financial crises.

Develop work-study programs that allow student mothers to earn income through flexible, on-campus jobs that accommodate their academic schedules.

Mental Health and Counseling Services

Provide access to mental health counseling services tailored to the unique challenges faced by student mothers.

Facilitate peer support groups for student mothers to share experiences, offer mutual support, and reduce feelings of isolation.

Organize workshops on stress management, time management, and resilience building to help student mothers cope with their demanding roles.

Academic Support

Advising: Offer specialized tutoring and academic advising services to help student mothers keep up with coursework and manage academic responsibilities.

Expand online learning options to provide more flexibility for student mothers who may have difficulty attending in-person classes regularly.

Workplace Flexibility

Encourage employers to provide flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours, to accommodate the needs of student mothers.

Foster partnerships between universities and local employers to create supportive work environments that recognize the dual responsibilities of student mothers.

Community and Family Support

Promote the involvement of extended family members in providing childcare and emotional support to student mothers.

Develop community-based programs that offer additional resources and support for student mothers, including childcare services and educational workshops.

Advocacy and Awareness

Increase awareness about the challenges faced by student mothers through campus campaigns, workshops, and seminars.

Advocate for policy changes at institutional and governmental levels to better support the needs of student mothers, such as increased funding for childcare and educational grants.

References

Achum-Ogban, E. I. (2021). Gender Stereotypes and the Challenges of Women's Education in Developing Countries: The Nigerian Experience. *International Journal of Educational Development Using Information and Communication Technology* (IJEDICT), 16(2), 221-232.

Adefemi, O. O. (2022). The Role of Social Media in Empowering Women in Education: A Case Study of Female Academics in Nigeria. *Journal of Education, Society and Culture*, 17(2), 271-284.

Adeyemi, A. (2019). Economic Challenges Faced by Academic Mothers in Nigeria. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 8(2), 134-149.

Agbasi, C. N., & Imo, F. O. (2021). Faculty Mothers in Nigerian Universities: Balancing Motherhood and Academic Responsibilities. *International Journal of Gender and Education,* 13(4), 543-558.

Ajayi, T. (2020). Policy Reforms to Support Academic Mothers in Nigerian Universities. African *Journal of Education and Development*, 5(1), 77-89.

Akintola, B. J., & Ajayi, O. A. (2020). Balancing Motherhood and Academic Work: The Lived Experiences of Female Academics in Nigerian Universities. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science* (IJRES), 6(2), 345-358.

Alabi, O. (2021). Institutional Barriers for Academic Mothers in Nigeria: A Case Study. Nigerian *Journal of Higher Education*, 12(3), 223-238.

Alegi, P. O., & Enobakhare, A. (2018). The African communal child-rearing system and its contemporary relevance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational*

Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT), 13(2), 315-328.

American Civil Liberties Union. (2024, June 20). Title IX: 50 Years of Progress. https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/155090

Azevedo, M. J. (2016). Historical Dictionary of Chad. Rowman & Littlefield.

Braidotti, R. (2019). Post-Human Knowledge. Polity Press.

Charles, M., & Hurst, C. (2007). Social Capital, the Family and Educational Outcomes: A Review of the Literature. *Sociological Review,* 55(1), 1-40.

Charles, V. (2020). Nigerian Women in Higher Education: A Story of Triumph and Tenacity. UNESCO Institute for Statistics Report.

Collins, P. H. (2009). Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (2nd Ed.). Routledge.

Connell, R. W. (2005). Masculinities (2nd Ed.). Polity Press.

Cuddy, A. J., Wolf, E. B., Glick, P., Crotty, S., Chong, J., & Norton, M. I. (2020). Men as Cultural Ideals: Cultural Values Moderate Gender Stereotype Content. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(5), 759-778.

Emeagwali, G. (2018). African Indigenous Knowledge and the Disciplines. U.S.A.-Springer.

Evans, R. (2022). Feminism and Education: A Critical Reader (4th ed.). U.S.A.-Routledge.

Ferre, J., & Garcia Dauder, S. (2019). Feminist Methodologies in Education Research: A Practical Guide. Routledge.

Friedan, B. (1963). The Feminine Mystique. W. W. Norton & Company.

Joshi, A., Baumert, J., & Schnabel, K. (2019). Time Use and Gender Inequality. Annual Review of Sociology, 45(1), 339-365.

Khan, A., Rowe, D., & Bidwell, S. (2021). The #MeToo Movement and its Impact on Academia. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 30(2), 233-245.

McRobbie, A. (2009). The Post-Feminist and Popular Culture. Routledge.

Moss-Racusin, C. A., Phelan, J., & Carmona, A. M. (2012). Science Faculty's Subtle Gender Biases Favour Male Students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(4), 16474-16479.

Nwosu, E. (2021). The Role of Support Networks in Balancing Motherhood and Academia. *International Journal of Women's Studies,* 9(4), 301-315.

Ogunleye, A. (2021). Technological Solutions for Academic Mothers in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Technology,* 7(2), 102-115.

Okeke, N. A., & Agbasi, C. N. (2019). The Financial Challenges Faced by Female Postgraduate Students in Nigerian Universities. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science* (IJRES), 5(3), 547-558.

Okeke, I. (2022). Psychosocial Stress and Academic Performance among Nigerian Mothers. Journal of Psychology and Mental Health, 11(1), 56-70.

Ojo, B. (2022). Empowering Nigerian Women in Academia: Programs and Initiatives. Women's Studies Quarterly, 10(3), 145-160.

Omoniyi, F. (2020). Cultural Expectations and the Role of Women in Nigerian Society. Sociology of Gender Journal, 15(1), 45-59.

Schiebinger, L., & Gilmartin, S. K. (2010). Housework is an academic issue. *Academe*, 96(1), 39-44.

Spender, D. (1981). Man Made Language. Routledge.

Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1983). Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research. Routledge.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2023). Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Schools for All – Gender Equality and the Right to Education. [Report] https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en

World Bank. (2022). The World Bank Gender Data Portal. Retrieved on the 14th of March 2024 from https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators