

**EXPLORING LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND WELFARE OF
MOTHERED UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT MZUMBE
UNIVERSITY IN MOROGORO REGION**

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MOTHERED UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT MZUMBE
UNIVERSITY IN MOROGORO REGION**

**By
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**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Education (MAEDU) of Mzumbe University
2018**

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the Mzumbe University, a dissertation entitled “Exploring learning experiences and welfare of undergraduate student mothers at Mzumbe University in Morogoro region” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Education (MA-EDU) of Mzumbe University.

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Accepted for the Board of Social sciences

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I, Sayuni Hezron Kiswaga, declare that this dissertation is my own original work, and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other university for similar or any other degree award.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am grateful to my Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, who gave me life and other numerous blessings throughout my studies.

Special thanks should go to my beloved supervisor Doctor PERPETUA KALIMASI for the valuable guidance offered in all stages of this study. Her availability and willingness to accommodate me tirelessly deserves my heartfelt thanks. In fact, the completion of this study is a product of her proper directives, patience and encouragement and love.

I wish also to extend my sincere appreciation to all teachers who taught me in my master degree and my classmates for their diverse support. I value their contributions.

I would be indebted if I fail to acknowledge the contribution made by respondents of this research, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of Students and welfare and Minister of Healthy and Gender of Mzumbe university students at large. Their spirit of sharing, collaboration and willingness to participate in the field work has real facilitated the completion of this study.

Finally, I could not forget to present my sincere gratitude to my family members; my mother, my relatives, and friends for their great moral and material support, thank you abundantly May God be kind and bless you in your life.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved mother, Beatrice Chaula, uncle Proaches Mmanda, and friends: Erick Mikao, Faraja Danken and Happy Nyaulile for all that they have been for me in the entire life. I have felt their parental and friendly caring love.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MUS	Mothered Undergraduate Students
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
EFA	Education for All
URT	United of Republic of Tanzania
TCU	Tanzania Commission of Universities
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Science
GPA	Grade Point Average
ARIS	Academic Registration System

ABSTRACT

This study explored the learning experiences and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University in Morogoro Region. Specifically, the study sought to find out the various challenges facing mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University, to determine the university support offered to the mothered undergraduate students and to assess the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students. In terms of approach, the research was a mainly qualitative case study based on the exploratory research design, following Sequential procedures in which the researcher seeks to expand the findings of one method with another method. The open-ended questionnaires and semi structured interviews were used in data collection. Some few quantitative data were also collected. The purposive sampling and snowball techniques were used. The qualitative data were manually analyzed using content analysis methods. The analysis of quantitative data employed SPSS method to get percentages and frequencies.

Findings revealed that some mothered undergraduate students were facing some academic and social-psychological challenges. However, these challenges varied among married, unmarried and divorced mothered undergraduate students. No explicit support is offered to MUS since there was no policy which is in favor of their situation. Some more findings also indicated that the university management at different levels implicitly discourages students from practicing parenting roles alongside academic obligations. However, there is a chance for candidate to postpone studies in case she demanded it.

There is also guidance and counseling from the students welfare directorate in collaboration with relatives and friends. The study recommends that MUS should create conducive environment for mothered students through gender policy consideration and facility improvement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and organization of the study.

1.2 Background to the Problem

The number of student mothers entering universities has been increasing around the world since 1966 (Williams, Alon, & Bornstein, 2006). This is because access to education is a fundamental human right, meaning that everyone has free access to education (UNESCO, 2012). It is recognized that higher education is essential for the development of the nation and individual. World Bank (2000) stated that, achievements in higher education are conceived to be fundamental to the construction of knowledge, growth of economy and society developments in all nations. Similarly, Giroux (2002) said higher education is essential to generate and establish a productive citizenry. This study assumes that we cannot speak about development of the nation and world in general without including women and girls in access of education, enrollment and achievement in all levels. Esia-Donkoh (2014) noted that, achieving development goals in any society depends on women's participation in education. In addition to that, Dundar and Haworth (1993) cited that "education of women is important not only from the angle of equal education opportunity between the sexes, but also for the substantial social and economic returns to female education that can be achieved by raising women's productivity and income level, producing better educated and healthier children, and reducing fertility rates" (p. 1). It is therefore important to pay attention on women in higher education and other level so that they can enjoy the right of education.

Basing on the importance of women in development of any nation, nations world wide have tried to declare different strategies to ensure access to education for men and women. With the help of different international conventions such as the

Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, the 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, and The World's Women 2015 (UNESCO, 1998). All these instruments and strategies address women and girls to have access to education and have been reported to have positive results in most countries. In 1989-90 women were awarded 58% of all two year degrees and 53% of all bachelors and masters degrees. In the Caribbean the proportion of female enrolments has increased from 32.9% in 1962/3 to 52.3% in 1985/6 (UNESCO, 1993 p.16). In Finland also about one third of students were women at the end of the thirties but progress was slow until the 1960's when the labor market demand for university trained people was growing. By 1990 about one in ten of the twenty to twenty-nine age groups was at university. Women have now gained the advantage with more than half of bachelor degrees and one third of postgraduate degrees being awarded to women (ibid). A similar picture emerges in France where the university population has increased fivefold in the last thirty years. Fifteen percent of eighteen to twenty-five year olds are in higher education and half of these are women. This compares favorably with Germany where participation of women is about forty per cent (UNESCO, 1993 p.16)

Likewise, Lips (1999) reveal that women's access to university-level education has increased in New Zealand and the United States of America, as well as most of the other countries in the world. Lips further posited that most of the women regard higher education as a major route for getting to the top or holding key, sensitive and powerful positions in a country Lips (ibid). These statistics implies that there are some changes pertaining to women access to university education.

Tanzania as one among of the developing countries in Africa has also adopted international declaration such as the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) which merits special attention for its role as a watershed in the history of women's social empowerment and leadership made important progress in ensuring girls and women have access on education in all level (UNESCO, 1998). Moreover, the adoption of Education and Training Policy (1995) and subsequently the launching of Education Sector Development Programme (1997) were fundamental in

reforming education in the country. In this view, Millennium Development Goals, and the Dakar EFA Goals embarked on different programmes and initiatives to address the issue of education as the major strategy to solve challenges regarding education equality and equity. The Education and Training Policy of 2014 states that, “the government shall increase diversified and equal education and training opportunities to all levels including children with special needs. The government shall remove all barriers that prevent students from completing their respective education and training cycle (URT, 2014). All these initiatives taken by Tanzania have improved the enrollment of women in higher education universities. Enrolment in universities and colleges doubled from 2005/06 to 2009/10, although female students constitute only a third of total enrolment at this level (URT, 2011:p.32). With the help of the newly established private higher learning institutions, the capacity of enrolling university candidates has expanded from 49,967 in 2006 to 135,367 in 2011 (URT, 2012). The Tanzania Council of Universities asserted that, students enrolment in Universities and University Colleges has increased from 123,434 in the academic year 2009/2010 to 218,959 in the academic year 2013/2014 equivalent to 177.4% increase with females constituting 36% and males 64% of the total enrolment (TCU, 2015). Similarly, Tanzania Education Sector Analysis shows that female enrollment in higher education has increased from 33.5 to 35.1 from 2004 to 2009 (URT, 2011).

With the increase of female students in higher education some women and girls are becoming mothers while studying and some join university while are mothers. This is because higher education does not restrict female to involve in reproduction. Esia-Donkoh (2014) maintained that it is essential that females’ reproduction rights are recognized in academic settings and their rights for education are respected with consideration given their demographic characteristics.

Moreover it is noted that the age of the majority of female students corresponds with their reproductive age (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009). Although the concept of mothered students differs from one scholar to another, in this study, the concept of mothered students refers to the students who have children of 0 to 3 ages while studying. That means mothered students are becoming involved into two roles

which are caring for baby and studying. The situation of being a mother and studying without compromising the activities of either one is a great dilemma for mothered students. This is because when a woman focuses all her attention on her studies, her behavior may contrast with her traditional motherhood role (Visick, 2009). Academic activities are intertwined with challenging competitions, hence, motherhood responsibilities impose a large burden on students' shoulders. The focus of the academic institutions is mainly on success, development and never ending competitions without supporting their student in all aspect (Moghadam, Khiaban, Esmaili & Salsali, 2017). Therefore, taking on motherhood along with studies is not considered normal in universities.

Mothered students experience horrible emotional pressures and receive negative feedback from the academic setting, implying that education is the first priority. However, welfare challenges are more experienced by on-campus mothered students where various students with different cultural background live together rather than those who study at Open Universities where student live to their homes. Yet, both may experience academic learning challenges.

Moreover, prejudice towards mothered students and the labeling of them as non-productive stimulate avoidance behaviors and a discriminatory allocation of educational resources to other students (Springer *et al.*, 2009). Nevertheless, the characteristics of female reproduction have become a barrier to some student mother's achievement of their full potential in the academic setting. A woman's reproduction rights, such as having the right to have children, are not considered equally as important as their education rights. In order for the mothered students to perform well and have retention on their academic activities there must be consideration of learning experience and welfare. Kolb (1984) argued learning is a human adaptation process. "It is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). He cited Lewin's (1951) work as the empirical evidence for supporting a learning cycle theory that begins with the experiences of the learner. Lewin's formula for learning describes human behavior as a function of a person and the environment $[B=f(p, E)]$. Learning takes place, according to Lewin, when a learner (person) interacts with, or is stimulated by, an environment.

Therefore the achievement of mothered students in academic depends on how they interact with the environment. However, the insufficient and difficulties of welfare are the once which challenge the performance of mothered students. Hence, these challenges have made a call to researchers to pay attention so that they may understand how mothered students manage to run two roles at once.

As a result various scholars emerged to find out how mothered students manage two roles and achieve their goals in education. The general experience showed that mothered students are facing a lot of challenges in the schooling process, such as lack of time to study, insufficient fund for childcare and academic activities, shortage of baby care center and poor support from universities. In Iran Moghadam, Khiaban, Esmaeili and Salsali (2017) found that mothered students were not supported, therefore in order to manage both roles they applied planning and sacrifices techniques. However the study reveals that when duties overlapped, mothered students task took priority and sometimes they decided to take a leave of absence from the universities for seven months and take care of their child. In Canada likewise the study conducted by Ajandi (2011) revealed that, single mother did not do well in school because of hostile environment of racism and ableism in the school system. This means the policies and practices within the University are not created in a way to be supportive of diverse students. Moreover, Chandler (2010), Polakow, Robinson and Ziefert (2014) found that graduate degrees are the means to improve the standard of living for themselves and their families. However several challenges faced them like financial strain, lack of study time and having access to adequate childcare. For stance Polakow, Robinson and Ziefert (2014) reported that 81.6% lacked study time, 26.9% delayed degree completion, 50.7% failed to compete an assignment and 26.4% received a poor grade.

Similarly, Spilovoy (2013) in England revealed that, multiple responsibilities and insufficient interaction with the faculty, technology and coursework ranked highest as barriers to women's persistence. Other factors include feelings of isolation, time constraints lack of support from family and their college, and financial concerns and abilities to balance multiple responsibilities of income provider, parent and student challenges to academic success. In addition to that, previous studies done by Ricco,

Sabet and Clough (2014) in California State University: Moreau Kerner (2012) in England and Erk (2013) at Indiana, uncovered that mothered low income students are motivated by the desire to be a good role model for their children hoping that earning a degree will raise them out of poverty. On contrary however, these studies depicted that, mothered students find the learning environment in the higher education unfriendly to them only that, sacrifices helped them to achieve their goals like sending children to the babysitters while investing much time in their studies help them to achieve better.

Despite the studies done over the world about mothered students in the universities, nothing is known about the mothered undergraduate students in Tanzania particularly in Universities. Therefore it is high time for the researcher to conduct a study to understand the realities on learning experience and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Education is “a fundamental human right, one that all individuals are entitled to enjoy whatever the circumstances in which they live and brings important benefits to human society as a whole (UNESCO, 2012). However, learning experiences and general welfare services of female student exhibiting maternal responsibilities in higher level of education have challenging effects. This is because mothered students are supposed to handle two roles at time. The situation may cause mothered students not to enjoy their fundamental right of education. According to literatures it was pointed out that university mothered students are not effectively supported, some live in hostile conditions and others have poor academic performances (Spilovoy, 2013; Ajandi, 2011). Other scholars pointed out that some universities have recognized the phenomenon of mothered students as a problem and hence deliberate measures were taken in the favour (Ricco, Sabet & Clough 2014; Erk 2013; Moreau & Kerner 2012). While other scholars argued in favour of the mothered students like Moreau and Kerner (2012) and Ricco, Sabet and Clough (2014) respectively, others were against the view of supporting mothered students in universities (Moghadam, Khiaban, Esmaeili & Salsali, 2017). In line with the observed findings from different

countries little is known about the reality of the welfares of mothered undergraduate students in universities present in Tanzania.

The present study sought to explore the situation of mothered undergraduate students in respect to the challenges and support they get from university institutions. Visick (2009) argued that when a female student focuses all her attention on her studies, her behavior may contrast with her traditional motherhood role. Nevertheless, mothered students especially with young babies raise concerns about how they would simultaneously manage to play two roles of mother and student. Basing on the situation revealed in the background of the study, there is a need to understand the situation of mothered undergraduate students in the universities.

Basing on the Stanford psychosocial development theory developed by Sanford in 1962, the study assumed that, mothered students need support from university institution to which they are admitted for them to progress in the academic and social welfares. The absence of sufficient literatures on the subject for universities in Tanzania the study sought to contribute on the knowledge gap of learning experience of the mothered undergraduate students in Tanzania. The underlying question for this study was how do the mothered undergraduate students balance their multiple roles in respect to learning and welfare experiences?

1.4 Main objective

The study explored the learning experiences and welfare of mothered undergraduate students in Mzumbe University.

1.4.1 Specific objectives

1. To find out the academic challenges of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.
2. To determine the university support to mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.
3. To assess the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What challenges do the mothered undergraduate students face in Mzumbe University?
2. How does Mzumbe University support the mothered undergraduate students?
3. How do mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University perform academically?

1.6 The significance of the study

This study would be useful to women particularly the mothered undergraduate and postgraduate students to understand challenges facing them in universities and out of the universities as well as gaining an understanding of the coping strategies to address those challenges in public universities. The study findings may have potential benefits for social change to allow women to freely acquire high education, perform well and be productive in a nation which may increase and contribute to national development. Rogers (1997) affirmed that education contributes to economic growth and productivity as well as sustains livelihood for national development. Apparently, findings from this study may benefit future researchers whereby as they may use this study as a reference source when conducting relevant studies.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study was conducted in Morogoro Region in Tanzania since it is not easy to conduct in all universities of Tanzania due to time factor and size as well as distribution of the population. The respondents for this study involved second and third year mothered undergraduate students. This category of respondents was selected because they had long holiday to stay home and in their return back to university some were in their maternal leave while they proceeded with studies. Researcher's choice decisions to conduct the study at Mzumbe University were influenced by the staggered system where normally students have longer holidays at home than other universities. As a result some of them come back to the university for studies while they are pregnant and some with babies already. Similarly, there was predictive information that when undergraduate female students enter second and third years of study they start parenting roles. Moreover, Mzumbe University is

located in the rural areas which may be a challenging to the mothered students to secure accommodation to live with their babies.

1.8 Organization of the study

The study comprised of six chapters. The first chapter sat the background of the study, problem, objectives, significance, delimitations and organization of the study. The second chapter reviewed literatures both theoretical and empirical reviews. Concepts were defined; the theory was employed to explain relationships among concepts and then the empirical review served to inform the study about other scholarly works underlying the objectives of the study. There after a conceptual framework was developed bearing to the theoretical and empirical reviews. Chapter three comprises of the research approach, and research design, study area, study population (units of analysis), sample size and sampling techniques, types and sources of data, data collection methods, data analysis methods and ethical considerations. Moreover, chapter four presents the findings that were obtained through questionnaires and interviews. Chapter five discusses the findings derived from chapter four of this report. The first part discusses the demographic characteristics of respondents. The second part provides discussion of challenges faced by mothered undergraduate students and coping mechanisms used to overcome the challenges in the course of undertaking academic and parental duties. The third part discusses the support given to MUS by university, family relatives and friends. Finally, the fourth part analyses the performance levels of mothered undergraduate students. Lastly, chapter six presents the summary of the study, conclusion of the study findings, policy implications and recommendations. It finally identified limitation of the study and suggests the areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature review comprises of three parts; the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and empirical studies parts.

2.1 The theoretical Framework

This section involves two sub-sections which are the definition of concepts and theory of the study.

2.1.1 Definition of Key Terms

Welfare

It can be interpreted in one way or another depending in a person's everyday life perspective. Most definitions comprise physical, physiological and psychological/mental aspects. Various scholars have defined the concept of welfare differently. Spruijt *et al.* (2001) maintained that welfare is the positive net balance between positive and negative experiences and poor welfare represents the negative balance. Moreover, Fitzpatrick (2001) said welfare refers to “perspectives on welfare: happiness, security, preferences, needs, desert, relative Comparisons”. In addition “Welfare” can also include acts of altruism, channels for the pursuit of self-interest, the exercise of authority, transition to work, and moral regeneration (Deacon, 1992).

Individual welfare refers to the micro level and how utility can be maximized by choices made by the individual. Social welfare refers to the sum of all individual welfare in a society (Walker, 2005). Welfare is used to refer to the goals of social security systems and to measures of the performance of systems, schemes or programmes. Distinctions are made between, first, the welfare or well-being of individuals and families, and secondly, between individual well-being and that of societies as a whole” (Walker, 2005).

The term happiness, subjective well being, satisfaction, utility, well-being and welfare are interchangeably” (Easterlin, 2001a, 465). Greve (2008) said “Welfare” at its core has something to do with fulfilling essential needs of the individuals and families. This implies that welfare can change over time, and to a certain degree depends on the level of income and/or having a job. He adds by saying welfare is the highest possible access to economic resources, a high level of well-being, including happiness, of the citizens, a guaranteed minimum income to avoid living in poverty, and, finally, having the capabilities to ensure the individual a good life.

Welfare stresses on “market-driven social benefits provided by private employers and the state in its role as employer” (Goodin & Rein 2001). Welfare is a range of voluntary social benefits that are provided by employers” (Farnsworth, 2004, 438). According to Farnsworth the benefits that are given by employer voluntary is welfare, this social benefits makes employees to be happy with the work they work. They can consist of both a group of cash benefits and services such as health care, education, housing, and childcare offered on the condition of employment (Cutler & Waine, 2001).

Welfare in this study refers to all available services that facilitate learners to learning effectively, the services include enough money, conducive environment, health services, teaching and learning materials, water and electricity services, favorable polices and laws. All this should help learners to live and engage in learning activities peacefully.

Baby care services

Childcare refers to arrangements for the care of children that have been variously categorized as non- maternal or non- parental care and include long day care in centers: home- based care in the child’s own home or a caregiver’s home; to an extent limited by lack of research, care by friends or relatives (sometimes called kith and kin care) (Huntsman, 2008).

Moreover, it has been Childcare can be regarded as a service to parents; away of enhancing children’s development; and part of a broad range of services to children and parents (ibid).

Scarr (1998:100) said childcare is characterized by warm, supportive interactions with adults in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment, where early education and trusting relationships combine to support individual children's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.

In this study, baby care services refer to all services that are provided at university to enhance the growth of babies so that their parents will engage freely in their studies. This includes special rooms for studying, sleeping, breastfeeding and sports and games' gear.

Special accommodation for mothered students

In this study, special accommodations are supports and services provided by universities to help a mothered students' access the education curriculum and validly demonstrate learning in universities in order to attain the intended goal. The support may be in form of economic, social, political and cultural which will facilitate the access of education to student mothers.

Learning Experience

Hansen (2000) said learning experience is to understand how people learn. He further maintained that Psychologists argued that learning is equated to a change of behavior. According to Zhu (1998) learning is a process of social negotiation or collaborative sense making, mentoring, and joint knowledge construction. In addition, National School in research (2002) maintained that, learning is the reflective activity which enables the learners to draw upon previous experiences to understand and evaluate the present, so as to shape the future action and evaluate new knowledge. Moreover, Wenger and Snyder (2000) says learning occur when group learn from each other by working together as, they develop a common way of thinking, about how work gets done and what is necessary to accomplish a task. Borthick, Jones and Wakai (2003) maintained that, learning experience is the practice of community that learners are seeking to join. It is what is done in the society that influences learners to learn; if nothing is practiced in the society also learners cannot learn.

Learning experience refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic setting (schools, classrooms) or nontraditional settings (outside of schools locations, outdoor environments). Therefore in this study learning experience depends on how learners engage, participate, interact and collaborate so as to develop sufficient competence and acquire knowledge and skills.

Mothered Undergraduate Students

In this study refer to the students who have child of 0-3 years while she is studying. This means these students have double roles to play at the same time (Megan, 2011). The mothered undergraduate students in this study are defined as female students admitted in the university and have born babies in the course of pursuit of the studies. The students may have got married or single parents but remain bonafide of the university to which they are admitted to pursue university studies for the first degree. This category of students is subject to risk due to mixed responsibilities allied to academic excellence and parenting roles (Brooks, 2011).

Academic Performance

Education performance tends to fall under four groups namely education inputs, education processes, educational output and educational policy (Lugayila (2002). Academic performance that is measured in examinations becomes good measurements of school academic achievements. The concept is explained by Lupimo (2014) who contended that academic performance is the educational goal that is achieved by a student, teacher or institution over a certain period. This is measured either by examinations or continuous assessments and the goal may differ from an individual or institution to another. Academic performance, which is measured in terms of the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. Hoyle (1986) argued that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance.

In this study, academic performance refers to the ability of an individual student to present concepts learned in a given time and conditions in agreed examination. It is also a continuous participation on individual assignment, group work, presentation of the ideas and the University examination. This helps to assess the performance of students in general, based on the targeted grades in specific university.

2.2 Theory for the Study

This research is informed by Sanford Psychosocial Development theory.

2.2.1 Sanford Psychosocial Development Theory

Psychosocial Development theory was first developed by Sanford who came up with the idea of “challenge and support,” in 1962. The theory originates from a psychosocial theory that is considered fundamental in the world of student affairs (McEwen, 2003). Sanford’s theory focuses on students’ development and a holistic approach to higher education was not new in 1967. It helped to explain the balance between the issue of challenges and support in academic development. In his writings, Sanford suggested that for student academic development to occur, the college environment must balance the existing challenges and support presented to students.

This theory pays particular attention to the experiences of college students, specifically exploring the concepts of differentiation and integration. Differentiation refers to the process of students identifying personality characteristics and how these characteristics shape and support their individual identities. McEwen (2003) said Integration refers to the understanding of how the context of the environment either affirms or rejects one’s identity. The environment typically provides expectations which can be a challenge to student’s way of knowing. Through support student can reconcile the differences or understand how he/she must work to conform to or cope with the environment. Once students understand their own identity, and it has been positively supported through environmental factors, students can succeed (Evans, Forney, Guido, *et al.*, 2010; Sanford, 1962). Awareness of the developmental conditions a person brings to the environment is helpful for practitioners in

recognizing the varying levels of challenges and support that one offers to students (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Furthermore, Sanford's theory examines three development conditions: readiness, challenge, and support. Readiness is the maturity and preparedness that a student brings to the experience. How students are able to move through experiences, interact with others, and manage emotions are indicators of student readiness. Challenge, the second condition, is a necessary component in helping to guide students through their own development. According to the theory, students must have a healthy level of challenge in order to move through the college experience in a way that prepares them for young adulthood. It is worth noting that challenging students more than they are adequately ready for can prove problematic, often resulting in a decline to earlier stages of development (Sanford, 1966). The last component of the three developmental conditions is support. Support requires an environment that is conducive to student exploration of his or her own identity in a safe and encouraging way. Examples of the concept of support can be seen in the inclusivity of the organization, the value placed on individual learning, and the regard given by the institution to the holistic development of students (Evans, Forney, Guido, *et al.*, 2010).

This theory has direct association with the mothered undergraduate students who face different challenges and in order to complete their studies they need to be supported. The theory states that, the institutions should create supportive environment so that students may interact well, for better academic performance in their studies. Sanford suggested that for students' development to occur the learning environment at the university must balance the challenges faced and the institutional support presented to students. Therefore, for the mothered undergraduate students to interact well in the existing environment they need to be supported by the institution hence, they will perform better in their academic matters. For the case of Mzumbe University the entire exposure of the environment is expected to provide support but also manageable challenges.

2.3.2 Empirical Studies

There have been different studies that investigated the challenges that face female students who play double roles of being students and at the same time parents during their studies at the Universities. The section on empirical reviews sought to establish a link between the theory and practice of the issue under investigation for the sake of bridging the gap in knowledge worthy for the new study. The discussion of the review was done by considering each of the content and methodology of the respective research or journal. Additionally the review followed the logic of argumentation basing on the attempts to understand the three specific objectives of the study: To find out the academic challenges and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University, to determine the university support offered to mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University and to assess the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.

Academic challenges and welfare of mothered undergraduate students

Speaking of challenges and welfares of mothered undergraduate students, different scholars have come to agreement that the part of the student is the most suffering in the university. Lee and Myers (2005) postulated that being a student-mother is a delicate juggling act. According to the authors it needs time, endurance and unlimited energy so that they can balance between academic activities and family matters. This is because mothered students have multiple roles to do like child care as a mother, family responsibility for the same time she has to study. Institute for Women Policy Research (2014) also states that, students with children are unlikely to complete a certificate or degree within six years of enrollment, with only 33 percent attaining a degree or certificate in that time. They face significant time demands, with 56 percent of single parents devoting more than 30 hours per week to for child care and they use the rest of hours for academic matters and often have significant financial challenges. All these difficulties force some students to drop out of studies at the university so that they may have ample time to take care their babies. For example, after six years of enrollment, 52 percent of parents dropped out from the university without a degree, compared to 32 percent of non-parents at George Washington University. Student- parents work more than non-parents to

meet their many financial obligations (Miller, Gault, & Thorman, 2011). In addition, student parents work 29.2 hours, on average, compared with 21.6 hours among non-parents. In addition to their work demands, 68 percent of married student parents, and 56 percent of single student parents spend 30 hours or more on child care (Miller, Gault, & Thorman 2011). In fact, these demanding schedules underscore the importance of child care availability for student parents. Although the New Labour and the Coalition governments have supported initiatives aiming to increase the engagement of parents in paid work and in education and training, student parents have been given limited consideration both in terms of policy intervention and of research, (Brooks, 2011). In particular, the level of support offered to this group by English HEIs and how existing policies meet their needs remain a widely undocumented area. It is also worth noting that, HEFCE does not require that HEIs collect information on the family circumstances of their student population. However, currently there are no national data is available for this group, however, some information is provided by the Student Income and Expenditure Survey (Johnson *et al.*, 2009).

Apparently, the financial strains experienced by many university student parents, have been described as a result of lack of funding for childcare and associated course costs, as well as modest welfare benefits and limited availability for paid work (NUS, 2009, Wainwright & Marandet, 2006). Similarly, the study by Najjuma and Kyarugahe (2006) on Studying and parenting: Experiences of student mother in Ugandan Universities found that student mothers face the problem of insufficient money to sustain their needs including access to education. It was also observed that lack of money to pay for childcare, course costs and modest welfare hinder mothered students from access of education in universities.

Student mothers lack time and the juggling of the conflicting demands of being a student, a carer and, sometimes, a paid worker (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006a, Wainwright and Marandet, 2006). Similarly, Cappleman-Morgan's small-scale study of mature students in HE showed that 'competing multiple obligations can leave student-carers time-starved, stressed and consequently adopting "instrumental" approaches to learning and caring' (Cappleman-Morgan, 2005: 1). In her study,

missed lectures or assessment deadlines were not uncommon, due to problems with childcare, child sickness, or general lack of time for studies, and lone parents were more prone to this than those living with a partner, with similar findings in the NUS survey (NUS, 2009). 'Time poverty' can also result in limited engagement in the student community and, in some cases, bring about a sense of isolation. However, the NUS survey also highlighted that a vast majority (75%) of student parents felt that studying in HE had been a positive experience for them and their family. Overall, the picture drawn is that student parents are enthusiastic about learning; despite the barriers they face (NUS, 2009).

Students talked of a 'balancing act', through which they aim to dedicate enough time to the needs of their family, to their studies and to the other activities and people that matter in their lives. This is in line with findings from the Marandet and Wainwright's (2010) study, in which they established that, in the institution where they conducted their fieldwork, 85% of student parents described balancing studying and domestic responsibilities as difficult, while 69% struggled to find time for personal studies. Similarly, Alsop *et al.*'s (2008) study of mature students (many of them parents) identified that balancing the time demands of their dual role was reported by this group as their biggest issue. Lee and Myers (2005) postulated that being a student-mother is a delicate juggling act. According to the authors it need time, endurance and unlimited energy so that they can balance between academic activities and family matters. This is because mothered students have various activities to do like child care as a mother, family responsibility for the same time she has to study.

In addition to that, Taukeni (2014) in his study of Main Challenges Student Mothers Experience to Manage Their Dual Roles at University of Namibia and University of Fort Hare at London shows that, student mothers lack time to engage in their studies. This means being a student mother is difficult to find enough time to navigate between studying and parenting.

Hinton-Smith (2008), drawing on Acker's (1980) and Edwards' (1993) work, academia and the family are both 'greedy institutions', task-driven rather than time-

driven commitments. But, even when a ‘task’ appears completed, there is always room for producing ‘better’ academic work or being a ‘better’ parent. Pregnancy and parenting have traditionally been constructed in this particular societal context as private matters (Moreau, 2011a), yet they are now the subject of intense scrutiny and state regulation.

Mismatch between student parents’ needs and university policies, as many institutions address by default the needs of the young, childfree, single and male student (the ‘bachelor boy’, as summarized by Hinton-Smith) (Hinton-Smith, 2012). In particular, the NUS report points to a discrepancy between the needs of student parents and course organization (NUS, 2009). For example, over a third of the NUS survey participants had received their timetable on the day or after the day term started, something which impacted on their ability to find suitable childcare. Marandet and Wainwright (2010) also observed that the lack of classroom space often resulted in lectures taking place at times conflicting with family demands. Wainwright and Marandet had earlier identified a lack of awareness among staff about students’ caring responsibilities, which they described as ‘hindering the needs of this group to be sufficiently addressed’ (Wainwright & Marandet, 2006: 16). The NUS research found that younger student parents in particular were made invisible in terms of policy and practice, due to the conflation of student parents with mature students (NUS, 2009). The lack of institutional support implies that mothered students depend on the benevolence of particular individuals, for example tutors, relatives and friends. This is problematic as it means that there is no insurance regarding the continuity and quality of support despite ‘support from school and service staff [being] crucial for non-traditional students such as those with dependent children’ (Wainwright & Marandet, 2006: 42). The same also note that widening participation policies have taken an ‘add on’ approach, with a focus on entry rather than retention and progression, and have ignored how the new opportunities opened to nontraditional students such as student parents have been modeled on the needs of childless students (Marandet & Wainwright, 2010). In their work on the feminization of higher education, Leathwood and Read note that the participation of groups of ‘nontraditional’ students in HE, associated with raising levels of achievement, have

sometimes led to a ‘moral panic’ about ‘dumbing down’ the standards (Leathwood & Read, 2009). This may have implications for universities trying to recruit and support these students as policies aiming to be inclusive may be seen as antithetic to academic excellence and high standards. However, the lack of research with a specific focus on policies and mothered students means that what we know about this group remains rather impressionistic. In particular, most studies of mothered students are based on a single case study institution, thus limiting the opportunities to explore how different institutional policies can make a difference to the lives of mothered students due to the lack of a comparator. Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005) observed that female students are overwhelmed with work at school and at home and their rate of failure is higher than males because they have less time to study and therefore give their studies less attention. The same response was reported in United States where it was argued that managing to care for a child and devoting adequate time to academic work has not been an easy task for mothers (Arlington Public School, 2004). Hallman and Grant (2004) identified missing class or lecturers as one major challenge facing mothers in school. They added by saying when child falls sick the mother gives attention to the care of the child at the expense of their academic work. This suggests that even if a mother ignores a sick child because of her academic work it is likely she cannot give attention to academic work. Further they said that, adolescent mothers in their case face the challenge of acceptance by teachers and colleagues, they are stigmatized as bad girls who did not plan their lives hence became mothers. Thus, this stigma may go long way to affect their performance at school.

Moreover, educators do not understand mothered students who are in school. Moreau and Kerner (2012) noticed little or lack of institutional support on campus mothers. Lectures are rescheduled in the evening or into the night at the time day care or other childcare services have closed this made a problem for student mother to attend the classes. It is suggested that the institutions need knowledge regarding the problem of student’s mother. Moreau and Kerner (2012) said that academic programmes disregard the need of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity leave. Therefore ignoring this creates an atmosphere of blame for this

reason student-mothers feel their issue has not been given attention. This is consistent with Springer, Parker & Leviten-Reid (2009) who noted:

Mothering and fathering is not normative on campus. Student mothers experience awkward pauses rendered by pregnant bodies on campus, struggle to navigate strollers in classrooms, and search to find clean and discreet places to feed their babies. Although sometimes subtle, there are constant reminders in the social and physical environment of the university that graduate student parents and their children do not truly belong” (Springer, Parker & Leviten- Reid, 2009, pp. 439).

Additionally, Conflict between the demands of academic work and motherhood affect much the academic performance of mothered students for example childbearing and nursing time, pregnancy and academic work; which means the progress of academic work is stopped or slowed down. While fathers or mothers without nursing babies could spend nights in the library or laboratory researching, nursing mothers without reliable childcare facilities cannot do that. Childcare is expensive therefore, parents resort to family members catering for their children while in school. This is similar to Chigona and Chetty (2007) who also affirmed that financial problems have made mothers to ignore quality childcare services since they cannot hire or pay for it.

Furthermore, when mothered students are mixed with other students who are younger or are not mothers, it creates an atmosphere of inconvenience since some of them may be noisy. This creates an atmosphere of disturbances and limited privacy. Research shows that the experiences, anxiety and emotional stress that adult-students go through, sometimes affect their academic performances. For instance, the findings of Olu and Brown (1979) stated that adult students can perform excellently if they are free from other roles and concentrate only on their academic work. A study in Easten Australian indicated that weight of domestic responsibilities and lack of understanding of subject content, caused attrition in universities (Cuthbertson *et al.*, 2004). If what was found in Australia holds for Ghana, then many of the mothered and mature students were likely to face serious problems of attrition because they had heavy weights of family responsibilities and therefore had little time left in a day to concentrate on their academic work. On the other hand, those

who decided to give priority attention to their studies were likely to have separating families.

The university support to mothered undergraduate students

Trinity College Dublin (2013) believes that being or becoming responsible for a child or dependent adult should not, in itself, be a barrier to a student succeeding in, or completing a programme of study. College is committed to being as flexible as possible, whilst, at the same time, making sure that any accommodations made for the student do not compromise academic standards. The special arrangements which can and should be made for a student in these circumstances will vary from Faculty to Faculty and, indeed, from programme to programme. However, College will support students by taking a flexible and reasonable approach to attendance and assignment deadlines, while ensuring academic standards are achieved.

Students who are careers and feel that their responsibilities outside College will impact on their studies should contact their personal tutor, supervisor, course co-ordinator, or postgraduate advisor. Together they should make a management plan in conjunction with the School, taking into account the demands of the course, the expected demands of the careers' responsibilities, and the achievement of academic standards. This plan should be revisited as necessary, but at least annually. College will make reasonable efforts take into account the needs of mothered students and careers and where feasible prioritize family-friendly timetables. This includes out-of-hours classes and recognition that school holidays may not align with College vacation periods or study weeks. Students should let College know as soon as possible after they accept a place of their additional caring responsibilities so that arrangements can be made. In special circumstances, reasonable accommodations will be made for mothered students and careers to hand in assignments during the summer months if they have had cumulative issues relating to their caring responsibilities during the year.

In these cases the supplemental marking period will be treated as a first attempt. Students who are careers may need to provide certifications. This might take the form of certificates from medical professionals or, in certain circumstances, self-

certification. College understands that although plans will have been made, there are occasions that when circumstances change suddenly. College will use reasonable endeavors to support and facilitate students in these circumstances. When there is a sudden change in circumstance students who are careers should contact their personal tutor, supervisor, course co-ordinator, or postgraduate advisor as soon as possible to assess the situation. College has a student parent group which meets during term time (Trinity College Dublin, 2013). It is indicated that at the institution there is student parent group for discussing and addressing issues related to them. They used to share experiences, difficulties they face and the strategies they used to come out until mothered students complete their education level.

Furthermore, Ajandi (2011) in his study about *Overcoming Barriers and Finding Strength: The Lives of Single Mother Students in University at Toronto University* reveals that family and friends are main support used to support single mother students. Inside the institution administrators, professors and other students were helpful while outside of the institution advocates from social services, family, and friends were supportive in childcare, meal preparation, housecleaning, financial support. Christopher (2005) insisted that, the act of providing this unpaid childcare is described in the literature as assistance from social networks such as family and community. Similarly Anderson (2000) said biological parents are not seen as being the only (or natural) caregivers, as seen in many dominant Western Cultures. Moreover, Taukeni (2014) in his study of *Main Challenges Student Mothers Experience to Manage Their Dual Roles at University of Namibia and University of Fort Hare at London* shows that student mothers get support from their friends and family members to manage their dual roles and cope with these experiences.

In the study done by Ajandi (2011) in Toronto universities, administrator created the group called single parent support which met only once a month to discuss a range of topics which they would find important to them. Through such meetings with others they were able to share their frustrations about social systems, insensitive professors, controlling ex-partners, a curriculum that did not reflect their social locations and discrimination in the workforce. In addition to that, they were able to connect with each other and share strategies about how they could handle various

difficulties faced as well as getting opportunity to share information about important resources. Bruns (2004) depicted that, having a support group on Campus for single mothers reduced their feelings of isolation and provided a space where single mothers could express their fears and trepidation about their experiences on and Off-campus. Furthermore, Adair (2001) argues that for educators to be aware of the social injustices rising against single mothers who are trying to persist in school, it is vital to critically understand and creatively redress the traditional, allegedly neutral pedagogical practices that can act as barriers to this population's academic success.

Kerner and Moreau (2012) conducted a study about Supporting Students Parents in Higher Education at university of Bedfordshire where the study findings portrayed that student parents were defined at national level particularly in terms of financial support while other supports such as on campus childcare were tied to institutional policies. It was noted that at national level, Higher Education policies establish which loans, grant and tax credits are available to student parents and other groups of students.

It was reinforced by Kerner and Moreau (2012) that some students parents are entitled to extra financial support, some of those studying full-time are eligible to apply for the special support Grant. The grant is available to lone parents or individuals whose partners are also students. Moreover, the parents should be supported with learning allowances to student parent with dependent children to help them towards meeting the learning costs. It is accessible to full-time undergraduate students and the payment depends on household income where students can receive up to E1, 508 per year for books, materials and travel costs. Furthermore, students with dependent children can apply for the childcare grant. This is given so as to contribute to the costs of childcare, specifically for children under the age of 15. The intention is to provide support for students who cannot cover their living costs using student finances and those who have emergency costs that may require immediate attempts.

Kerner and Moreau (2012) maintained that, students union provide support also to students parents by consulting students about their caring responsibilities and occasionally organizes on campus events for students and their young families. Also, it has been noted that, the availability of document concerned with mothered students in the university helps the student parents to be seen and considered in their needs. In addition to that in the university there are nursery services for children of student, staff and members of local community who are between three months to five years of age. Student parents also get fee discounts and nursery opened for ten hours of a day during the week. According to Kerner and Moreau (2012) it is important that students' accommodation in the university campus should be child-friendly to ensure that family rooms to ease childcare and room for breastfeeding are available.

Furthermore, Taylor, Macnamara, Groskin and Petras (2013) conducted a study on Medical Students Mother at University of Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, the study reveals that, the university created flexible curriculum in each year which allows for time at home with a new baby. For example, because both the pre-clinical and clinical years at Brown are divided into two- to six-week blocks, it is possible to take at least a six-week long break in the middle of the semester. The student may then make up any missed material later. Further, if students wish to extend their medical education to five years, they may take a 'Fellowship Year' after years two, three, or four. Students use this time to complete additional graduate degrees, conduct mentored research, or complete other projects they may have begun before or during medical school. For medical student-parents, this option allows students to create a more flexible schedule for one year before beginning the intensity of residency training. Similarly, Students at Brown rarely take a formal leave of absence to parent as an official leave results in termination of all university resources. Instead, using the flexibility of the curriculum or the Fellowship status, where students are engaged in scholarly work, some of which can be done at home, students remain eligible for health insurance and other university benefits, especially with respect to student loans.

Breastfeeding policies and systematic breastfeeding support. A medical school-wide policy for lactating medical student-mothers is a simple way for institutions to support their learners in a wide variety of clinical settings, as do an increasing number of breastfeeding laws at the state and national levels in the United States. Institutional supported childcare with financial support for student-parents. It is due to inadequate childcare in the United States, there is a lack of high quality resources and costs are often prohibitive, especially for students. Therefore local childcare facility for students, faculty, and staff has the added advantage of creating an informal parenting and advising network at the institution.

Moreover, at university of Brown, there is a network of physician-mothers which has been established under the auspices of the Brown Office of Women in Medicine. Primarily connected via a listserv, Mom Doc Family (MDF) is a group that unites more than 200 physician-mothers from all stages of their medical training and careers, allowing students to come into contact with and learn from other women about both personal and professional issues (Taylor, Macnamara, Groskin & Petras, 2013). At the international level, MomMD is a career website that provides professional and personal support for women physicians, residents, medical and premedical students (ibid).

Academic performance of mothered undergraduate students

Pinilla and Munoz (2005) conducted a study on Educational opportunities and Academic Performance among university student mothers in Venezuela. The findings showed that, the academic performance of student mothers was lower than that of other groups of university students. In practice, student mothers participated in higher education as part-time students, although this category was not officially recognized by most Venezuelan public universities.

In a study about Supporting students' Parents in higher education at university of Bedfordshire, Kerner and Moreau (2012) maintained that lack of childcare services , conflicting demands of being student and parent, financial difficulties and lack of awareness were the obstacle to the academic achievement of student mothers. This implied that Interview Transcript students did not have time to concentrate much on

their studies instead of looking for their babies especially when the babies are still young. Also, when the baby is ill, the student mother needs time to stay with the baby and therefore she cannot take baby to the childcare or babysitters. On the other hand, due to financial constraints student mothers had to look for alternative jobs which would help them to get some money to meet their basic needs (ibid). All those circumstance hindered academic performance of student mothers in attaining the targeted goals at the University of Bedfordshire.

Similar, Monteagudo and Merrill (2010) maintained that, the struggle of student mothers towards achieving education is hindered by various factors such as violent incidents, lack of confidence in academic ability and housing problems. The study indicated that some student mothers were violated simply because they had children while undertaking their undergraduate studies and they were regarded as not serious because they did not plan well before they joined the university. This situation caused student parents to feel isolated hence they lost confidence in studying hard which finally affected their academic performance. Additionally, such circumstances resulted to drop out of student parents from the university for them to have enough time to take care of their babies.

Similarly, in his study of Motherhood and Pursuit of Higher Education online, Spilovoy (2013) found that, multiple responsibilities and insufficient interaction with the faculty, technology and coursework were ranked highest as barriers to women persistence in universities. This has an implication that mothered students achievement in education was limited since they cannot balance the duo roles they have as a result student mother's sacrifices one role and perform much one role. In addition to that, the study revealed that some student mothers did not comply with the technology used in higher education hence they did not understand what they were assigned to do.

2.4 Research Gaps

To summarize the literature reviews, Lee and Myers (2005) postulated that being a student-mother is a delicate juggling act. According to the authors it needs time, endurance and unlimited energy so that they can balance between academic activities and family matters. Institute for Women Policy Research (2014) states that, student mothers with children are unlikely to complete a certificate or degree within six years of enrollment, with only 33 percent attaining a degree or certificate in that time. They take time to concentrate in their studies, for example the studies shows that 56 percent of single parents devote more than 30 hours per week for childcare, and they use the remaining hours for academic matters, and in fact this has significant financial implications . Due to a number of challenges faced, the student mothers are sometimes forced to drop out from the university so as to have more time to take care of their babies. For example, after six years of enrollment, 52 percent of parents left without a degree at George Washington University compared to 32 percent of non-parents (IWPR, 2014).

However, the studies discussed from the review of empirical literature were about the challenges faced by mothered undergraduate students; university support to mothered undergraduate students and the performance of them to different places. Moreover, the reviewed literatures are silent on the learning experiences and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University in Morogoro and Tanzania at large. Thus, the researcher intended to find out the learning experience and welfare of mothered undergraduate students in relation to the academic performance at Mzumbe University.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was grounded from the theoretical and empirical review of relevant literatures which led to the formulation of the two variables: the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables were the University academic challenges, determinants of the university support and academic performance while the dependent variable is learning experience and welfare.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework

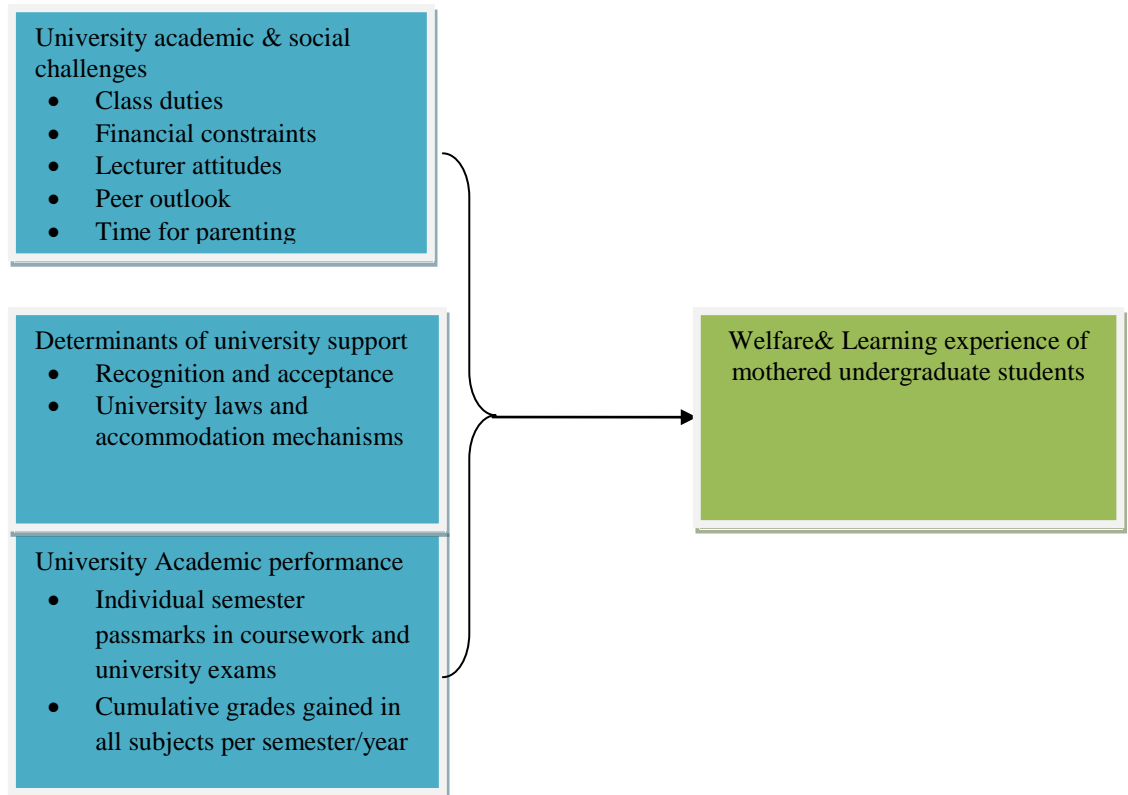


Figure 1.1 Source: Researcher's Own Construction (2018)

As reflected from the conceptual framework presented in figure 1.1 above, welfare and learning experiences of mothered undergraduate students depend on the university academic and social challenges such as class duties, financial difficulties, lecturers' attitudes, peer outlook and time for parenting. This entails that, if the challenges are solved, mothered undergraduate students will engage well in their studies rather than doing other business to meet their needs. For example financial constraints can influence mothered students to engage in business, negative attitudes of lecturers can discourage mothered undergraduate students to engage effectively in studies, and shortage of time for parenting can influence mothered students to leave the class sessions and go home for parenting and taking care of their babies.

Moreover, the university support determines welfare and learning experiences of mothered undergraduate students. The kind of support available at the university like recognition and acceptance of mothered undergraduate students and the availability

of laws and accommodation mechanisms help to identify the support given by university. However, if there is no laws and accommodation provided to MUS in the university, this implies that the university is less concerned with mothered undergraduate students because it may seemingly be regarded that the university treats all undergraduate students equally regardless of their socio-economic differences.

In addition to that, university academic performance has influence on welfare and learning experience of mothered undergraduate students. Academic performance in the university includes individual semester pass marks in coursework and university examinations, and cumulative grades gained in all subjects per semester/ year. The performance of MUS in the university determines welfare and learning experience of undergraduate student mothers.

Therefore, the conceptual framework exemplifies the link between academic and social challenges, university support and university academic performance towards welfare and learning experience of mothered undergraduate students. In that vein, if one aspect is left out may affect the welfare and learning experiences of MUS. In nutshell, this illustrates that welfare and learning experience depends on the consideration of both aspects.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the research approach, research design, study area, study population (units of analysis), sample size and sampling techniques, types and sources of data, data collection methods, data analysis methods and ethical considerations. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) contend that, the methodological part of the research proposal describes the procedures to be followed by the researcher in conducting the study. Besides that, a research methodology is also concerned with the reasons for using particular methods, the analysis of the principles, procedures, rules, and postulations employed by an education discipline (Mugenda, 2004).

3.1 Research approach

There are three main basic approaches to research, these include quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches (Creswell, 2014). In achieving the specific objectives of this study, the study employed mainly a qualitative approach complemented by some elements of the quantitative approach, meaning that the large part of the study required narrative data which were corroborated with some numeric data. The combination and integration of both qualitative and quantitative elements in a single study provides a more complete understanding of a research rather than relying on a stand-alone approach (Creswell, 2014).

This study employed sequential procedures of approach, according to Creswell (2003) a sequential approach is the process in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand the findings of one method with another method. This may involve beginning with a qualitative method for exploratory purposes proceeded by a quantitative method with a large sample so that the researcher can generalize results to a population. This design is considered appropriate because it allows the collection of sufficient data since the data that may not be obtained in one of the approach may be obtained in another approach. The researcher chose to use sequential design in order to collect sufficient data drawn from qualitative and

quantitative data about learning experience and welfare of undergraduate student mothers. The rationale behind the choice of qualitative research is centered on its strength as it helps and to get in-depth information of the phenomena and to explore the opinion of the respondents from their understanding point of view

3.2 Research Design

Research design according to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009) is best described as the overall plan, in which the respondents of a proposed study are selected, as well as the means of data collection. In other words, it provides a road map of the research process. The study was guided by an exploratory design whereby, according to Pilot, Beck & Hungler (2001), explorative studies are undertaken when a new area is being investigated or when little is known about an area of interest. The researcher intended to use exploratory design so as to familiarize herself with the phenomena under investigation to some extent.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted at Mzumbe University in Morogoro region. Morogoro is located on the eastern side of the country. The region lies between latitudes 5o58' and 10o00' South of the Equator and between longitudes 35o25' and 38o30' East of Greenwich. It is bordered by seven regions. In the north are Tanga and Manyara while in the eastern side are the Coast Region and Lindi regions. On the western there are Dodoma and Iringa regions while Ruvuma is located in the southern side of the Region. Morogoro Region has a total area of 73,039 km² out of which 2,240 km² is covered by water. This area makes it the second largest region in Tanzania (the largest is Tabora). The Region covers about 7.7 percent of the total area of Tanzania (URT, 2014: p16).

Generally, Mzumbe University was chosen as the study site for this study because it embraces a staggered system for every academic year where normally students have longer holidays at home than other universities. As a result some of them come back to the university for studies while they are pregnant and some with babies already. Similarly, there was predictive information that when undergraduate female students enter second and third years of study they start parenting roles. Moreover, Mzumbe

University is located in the rural areas which may be a challenging to the mothered students to secure accommodation to live with their babies. Hence, the researcher wanted to know the learning experience and welfare of mothered students towards their performance.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of the study included mothered undergraduate students from Mzumbe University because are the ones affected in one way or another in their academic performance. Moreover other respondents such as Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of students and welfare, and Minister of Health and Gender of university students formed the study population. Those people were sought to have potential information relevant to the study. Additionally, they were selected because are the ones who administer, document, evaluate, assess and guide and counsel students of Mzumbe including mothered undergraduate students.

3.5 Sample Techniques

Sampling techniques refer to the methods used in selecting a study sample. Best and Kahn (2006) argue that a sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis, the characteristics of which can enable the researcher to make certain inferences about the population from which the sample is drawn. According to Krishnaswami (2004), sampling techniques are classified into two types; Probability and non-probability sampling.

In this study, non-probability sampling was used to select the respondents specifically, purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The purposive sampling was used to get Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of students and welfare. According to Punch (2002) the technique enables the researcher to sample participants based on his/her judgment as the most important kind of non-probabilistic sampling to identify the primary participants. **Snowball** sampling is a special non-probability method for developing a research sample where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Katz, 2006). The **snowball** was applied to mothered undergraduate students. This sampling technique is often used in hidden populations which are

difficult for researchers in cases where a sampling frame is hard to establish and it is assumed that cases are affiliated through links that can be exploited to locate other respondents based on existing ones. Snowball was used to identify mothered undergraduate students since the researcher could not identify directly the respondents from the population.

3.6 Sample size

According to MacDonald and Headlam (2014) the population size refers to the number of people within a group that have a similar characteristic. The total sample size of 42 respondents was categorized as follows:

Table 3.1 Distribution of Sample size

Sampling Techniques	Sample Size	Respondents	Research Tools
-Purposive sampling	1	Director of the Students and welfare	Interview
-purposive sampling	1	Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance	Questionnaires
-Purposive sampling	1	Minister of Health and Gender of university students	Interview
-snowball sampling techniques	39	Mothered undergraduate students.	Questionnaires

3.7 Operationalization of Concepts

Table 2.2 Operationalization of concepts

Variables	Indicators	Data collection methods
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ University environment ✓ Economic difficulties ✓ Shortage of babysitters and childcare center ✓ Family harmony and peace ✓ University schedules ✓ Drop out 	Document review and interview
Universities support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Loans and grants ✓ Availability of babysitters an childcare which are affordable ✓ Administrators and Lecturers recognition of student mothers. ✓ Avoidance and withdraw ✓ Seeking social support ✓ Engagement of house help and planned domestic work schedules 	Questioners and Interview
Academic Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Course works ✓ University exams ✓ Semester result 	Document review and interview

Source: Researchers Own Construction (2018)

3.8 Types and sources of data

3.8.1 Primary data

Two types of data were collected, these included primary and secondary data. The primary data were gathered from the mothered undergraduate students using questionnaires which consisted of both open and close ended set of questions. Further still, primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews which were administered to the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of students and welfare, and Minister of Health and Gender of university students. The information collected from these respondents provided detailed understanding on the investigated phenomenon.

3.8.2 Secondary data

In this study, secondary data was extracted from Mzumbe University particularly from the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of students and welfare, and Minister of Health and Gender of university students. Those officials enabled the researcher to get statistical data on the number of

mothered students at the university, academic performance records of mothered students, as well as gaining of documented data of any provisional supports provided by the university to mothered students and explores if there were any policies document that were available at the university for mothered students from the existing published and unpublished records, written documents such as results sheet, books, class attendance and articles obtained from different sites.

3.9 Data collection methods

3.9.1 Interviews

An interview is an exchange of views between two people on a topic of mutual interest, as well as emphasizes the social context of research data (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). The use of interview enables the researcher to gather information regarding individual experiences, knowledge, and feelings of the problem under investigation (Best & Khan, 2006). In this study semi-structured interview was used to collect data from Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of students and welfare, and Minister of Health and Gender of university students. This technique was chosen for the purpose of obtaining rich and detail information concerning welfare and academic performance of mothered undergraduate students.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide where by which was prepared by the researcher taking into consideration of the key issues relevant to research objectives. This interview guide was served as an outline with some questions added and some that were not asked. Open-ended questions were used where according to Patton (2002) they generate rich answers where interviewees use whatever words they want to express what they have to say as each interviewee provides different answers. The interviewees were chosen because they were directly involved with the academic subject concerned or had substantial knowledge on the area of study. The researcher recorded all interviews using a voice recorder and each interview was done in a isolated area in order to be able to record the interview clearly and have the full attention of the respondent. An interview guide is essential in conducting focus group interviews for it keeps the interactions focused, while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge (Patton 2002: 343-344).

3.9.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are referred to as a formatted set of questions that are drawn up to meet the objectives of the study (Ary *et al.*, 1996). The researcher employed both closed and open-ended questions to collect various information from the undergraduate student mothered to gain their demographic information, as well as gaining their knowledge related to learning experiences as students at the university. The use of questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect adequate information from a large number of respondents within a relative short period of time.

3.9.3 Documentary review

Documentary review also was another method used in this study to collect secondary data that which could not be collected by another instrument. It is a method for data collection which involves deriving information by studying written documents. According to Singh (2006) documentary review deals with the systematic examination of current records or documents as sources of data. In documentary analysis, the following documents were used as sources of data: official records and reports, printed forms, text-books, reference books, letters, autobiographies diaries, pictures, films and cartoons (*ibid*). A careful review of those documents provided useful information that demonstrated the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students and policy on gender development.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The validation of instruments is the process of establishing document evidence which provides high degree of accuracy that specific process consistently produces a product meeting its specification and quality attribute (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).The questionnaires were prepared in English but later with the help of experts from the Institute of Kiswahili studies (TATAKI) from the University of Dar es Salaam they were translated and back translated into Swahili, the national language. Therefore, the translation increased validity of the responses. Also in this study, the semi-structured interview guides were prepared in English and cross-checked by fellow MA students and discussed with the researcher's supervisor.

Furthermore, triangulation of data sources and research approaches was made to cross-check the validity and reliability of the data collected. More importantly, the triangulation of data sources and methods increased the credibility of the research findings. Triangulation of methods is the use of a variety of data collection methods and sources (Henning *et al.* 2004: 103).

3.11 Data Processing and Analysis

Thematic and content data analysis approaches were used to analyze qualitative data whereby, data collected through interviews, were analyzed according to the main themes in relation to the research objectives and questions before its interpretation. Some of the phrases, arguments and words were presented as direct quotations. Moreover, data obtained through questionnaire were coded and entered and analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Programme Version 20. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to measure knowledge concerning learning experiences and welfare among undergraduate mothered students in universities. The collected data were edited, coded, classified, tabulated, and computed in order to search for patterns of relationship that existed between the variables

3.12 Ethical Considerations

This section was concerned with ethical consideration which is essential in social science researches. Ethics can be thought of as the study of good conduct and of the grounds for making judgments about what is good conduct (Birch *et al.*, 2002). Therefore ethical issues such as informed consent for one to participate in the study, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality as argued by Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2000) were adhered to.

At the preliminary stage before embarking into fieldwork, the overall research permit was thought from Mzumbe University Directorate of Research which allowed the researcher to conduct the study successfully. Having consented official letters from responsible client institution accepting their involvement in the study, then researcher met the key figures of the public universities expected to conduct

fieldwork in order to explain the intention of study and how planned to conduct the research as well as the participants who would be involved in the study,

Additionally, in this study, respondents' informed consent was obtained earlier before data collection begun, for example, before the beginning of the interview sessions and as well as data recording, the researcher sought informed consent from the respondents while the assurance of confidentiality will also be guaranteed to them. This was the same before the respondents begun to complete the questionnaires.

Furthermore, in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents' respondents 'real and official documents accessed were not disclosed unless the respondents allowed to do so.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings that were obtained through questionnaires and interviews. The overall goal of the study was to explore the learning experiences and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University. Specifically, the study intended to; find out the academic challenges of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University; determine the university support to mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University and to assess the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University. The research findings were presented in the order of the study objectives.

The chapter starts by presenting the demographic profile of respondents of the sample population focusing on age, marital status, academic year of study and age of the baby. The aim was to find out how do mothered undergraduate students manage the parenting roles and studies at a time.

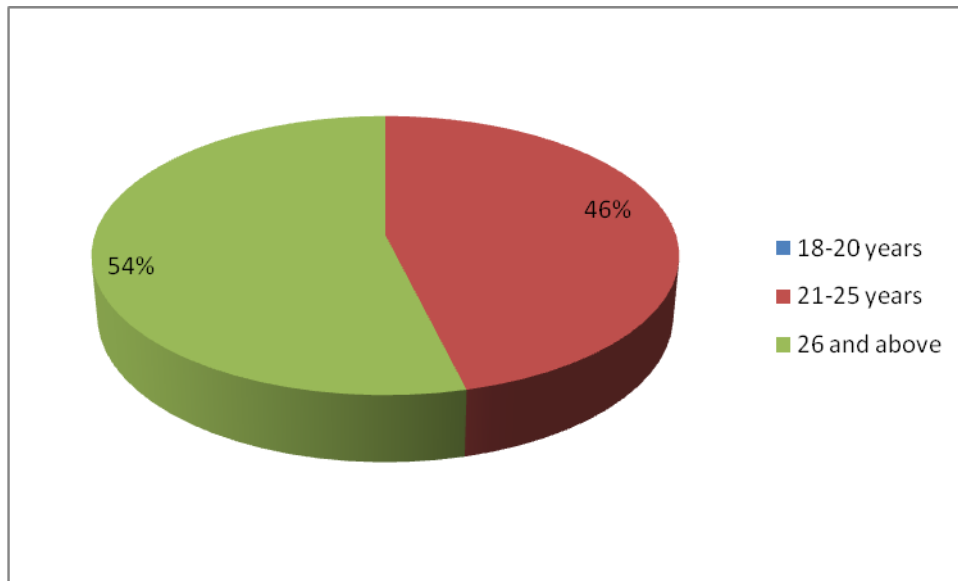
4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

A total of 39 respondents were involved in open-ended questionnaires method of data collection. These were the mothered undergraduate students. However, there were 3 respondents who participated in interview. These include who are Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, the director of students and welfare, and Minister of Healthy and Gender of university students. They were not included in the analysis of demographic characteristics.

4.2.1 Categories of respondents by age

The researcher included the age groups of respondents in study purposely to identify the age when female university students begun to engage in parenting roles. It was observed that the age between 18-26 and above. Having conceptualized that, the researcher divided the respondents into three groups as follows; 18-20 years old, 21-25 years old and 26 above years old as presented in the **Figure.4.1**

Figure 4.1. Age distribution of respondents



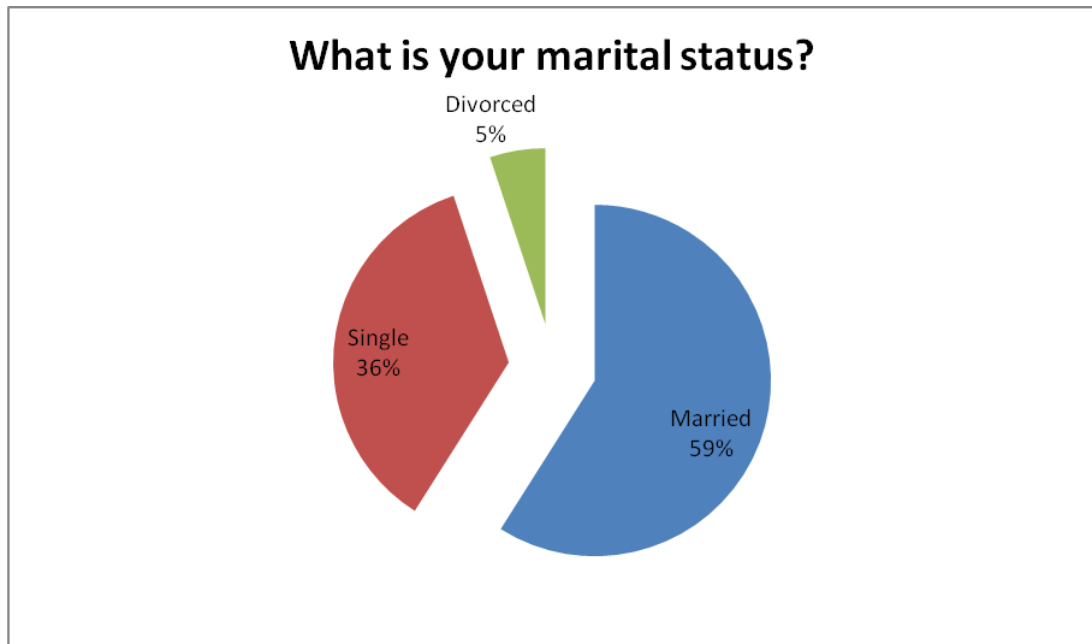
Source: Field Data, 2018.

From the fig. 4.1 above indicates the age distribution of respondents involved in the study. The findings showed that MUS aged between 26 and above (54%), followed by those who aged between 21-25 years (46%), however, the age range between 18-20years (0%) had no any respondents. This implies that majority of students are likely to engage in the parenting roles when they are in the second and third year of the study.

4.2.2 Categories of respondents by marital status

Data on marital status sought to determine the kind of marital status possessed by mothered student. The idea behind was to determine whether the marital status contributes to motherhood of female undergraduate students for them to give birth or not before they finish their studies. The results of marital status are summarized in fig. 4.2.

Figure 4.2 The marital status of respondents



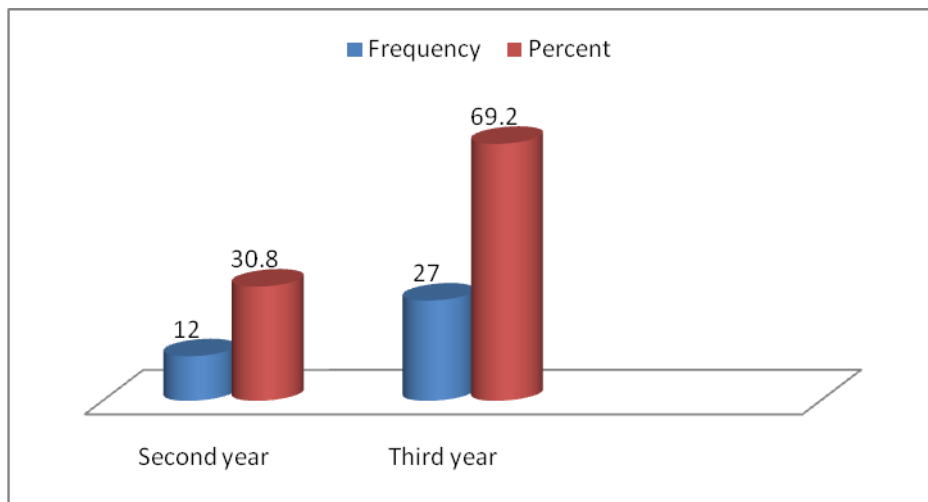
Source: Field data, 2018

The fig. 4.2 above aimed at demonstrating the marital status among respondents. Findings of data revealed that majority from questionnaire data revealed that majority of respondents had a married status of (59%), single status at (36%), and respondents with divorced status were 5%. In this regard, it is evident possible that mothered undergraduate students who engage in parenting role are those with married status.

4.2.3 Categories of respondents by academic year of studies

The researcher was interested to know in which academic year majority of undergraduate students engage in parenting roles. To get a clear view, respondents were grouped into two categories of year of study namely, second year and third year. Figure 4.3 illustrates the distribution of academic year of studies of respondents.

Figure 4.3 characteristics of respondents by academic year



Source: Field data, 2018

The fig. 4.3 above indicates characteristics of respondents by academic year. The findings showed that 69.2% of mothered undergraduate students (MUS) were in the third year while the rest of students equivalent to 30.8% were in second year. This depicts that students engage in parenting roles as they shift from lower to higher classes.

4.2.4 Categories of respondents by age of the baby

The researcher asked the respondents to state the age of their babies they have. This information was important because the knowledge of the age of the baby that a respondent up brings indicates the level of the responsibility intensiveness for a mother to plays. The distribution of age of the babies is described in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Distribution by age of the baby

Age	Frequency	Percent
0-1	18	46.2
1-2	8	20.5
2-3	7	17.9
Above 3	6	15.4
Total	39	100.0

Source: Field data, 2018

The findings showed that the ages for the babies of mothered undergraduate students ranged between 0-1 by 46.2%, followed by those aged between 1-2 by 20.5% and 17.9% of babies whose age ranged between 2-3. The last group of babies aged above 3 ages comprised 15.4%. However, it was found that some of mothered undergraduate students were living with their babies in student's rooms while others were not. In this view, MUS had very young babies who needed special and maximum care.

In summary the presented demographic characteristics that described mothered undergraduate students were at the age that allows them to start parenting roles. Moreover, the findings indicated that female students conceived when they are in second year and gave birth at third year. Apart from the Faculty of Law which extends to four years of completion, the rest of degree courses are completed within three years where students have to accomplish their classroom duties and the academic research which demand a lot of time and energy while at the same time should engage in parenting roles which also demand them to pay attention to care the babies because their babies are still younger.

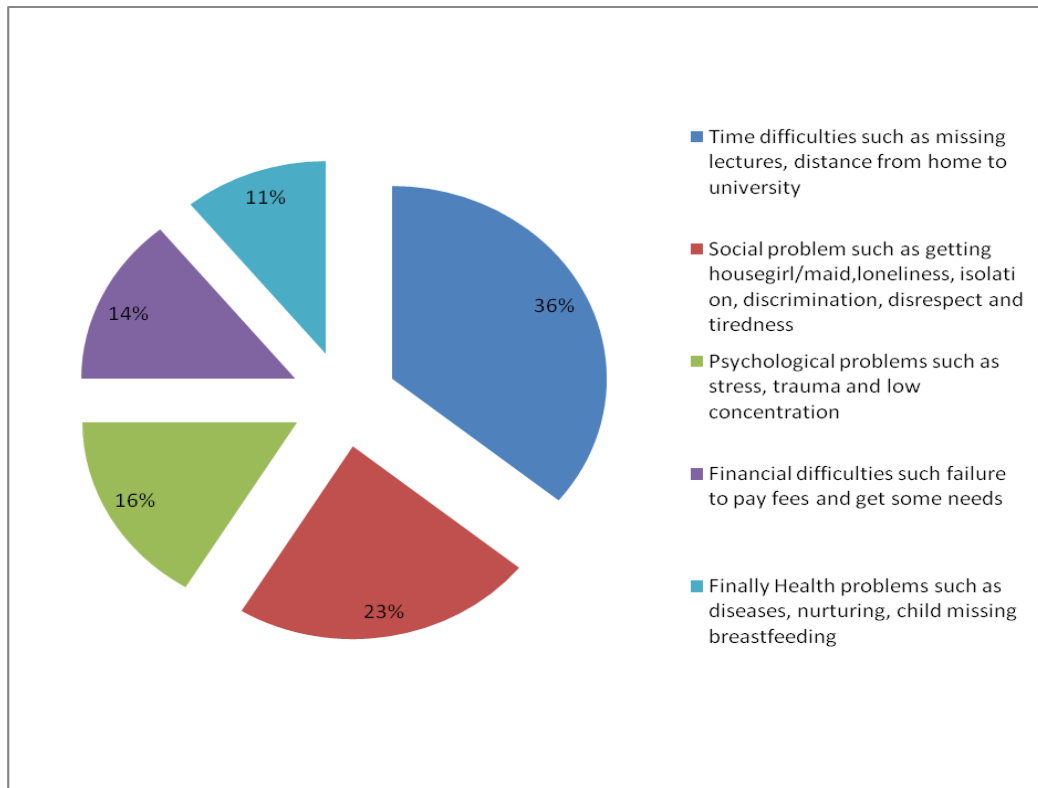
4.3 The academic challenges that faced mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.

The first objective intended to know about the challenges that undergraduate students faced after they become mothers while they studying at Mzumbe University. To assess the challenges, indicators like management of studies and parenting roles were used to get data. The other indicator was identification of kinds of challenges faced in playing their roles.

4.3.1 Challenges that Faced mothered uundergraduate Students at Mzumbe University

The respondents were asked to tell about any inconveniences, problem or difficulties they encountered as they played the double roles. The descriptive results of their responses are presented in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Kinds of challenges faced by mothered undergraduate Students



Source: Field data, 2018

There were five types of challenges that faced mothered undergraduate student. These included time difficulties/constraints such as missing lectures, distance from home to university (36%), social problem such as getting house girl/maid, loneliness, isolation, discrimination, disrespect and tiredness (23%), Psychological problems such as stress, trauma and low concentration (16%), Financial difficulties such failure to pay fees and get some needs (14%) and finally Health problems such as diseases, nurturing, child missing breastfeeding (11%). These results ascertained that MUS faced multiple challenges due to the condition they are in.

The interview information revealed similar challenges like shortage of time, financial problem and low concentration in their studies. During the interview session, one of the University administrators expressed his worry and concerns about mothered undergraduate students in the following words:-

It is hard for mothered undergraduate students to concentrate well in the studies for instance when their babies are sick where they are required to stay at home and look for their babies. Also the shortage of time to take care of their babies because they have a lot of activities to do at time like to attend classes, do assignment, and perform domestic activities. Moreover, mothered students lack money to get their needs and to attend their babies because the money given to them is just for individual needs so when they got babies, the money given does not satisfy their needs (Interview Transcript,3).

Additionally, other interviewee was against the practice of parental roles for university students due to the fact that they were still young and have heavy duties of pursuing their studies.

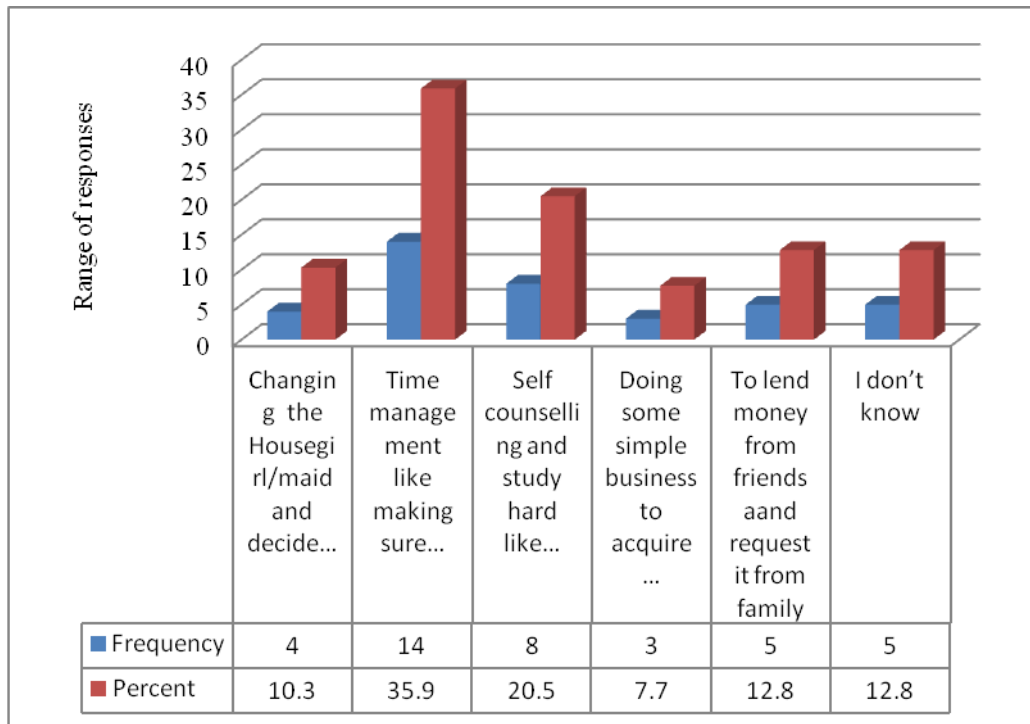
These students are still young hence it is difficult to engage well in multiple roles. This is because they don't take care of their children hence it causes malnutrition and death. What the university do is to discourage them because there are impact of being mother at the same time studying like shortage of time to feed their babies (Interview Transcript 1).

Together with the above identified challenges that faced MUS, lack of recognition of undergraduate student mothers in the University also was another challenge. It was found that some other university administrators and Lecturers at Mzumbe did not know if the category of students with children existed at the University. Failure of recognition to existence of the MUS in the University by administrators and lectures could suggest the question of interaction nature between university students and the university staff.

4.3.2 Techniques used by MUS to manage both academic and parenting roles

Having known the challenges the study sought to discover how MUS managed to undertake their parenting and study duties simultaneously. Based on the data from the questionnaires, respondents expressed various coping strategies. The results are then summarized in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Management of multiple roles at time



Source: Field data, 2018

The findings demonstrated that some MUS had maids to help them and manage their time table, they get family and relative support and they plan their time table. Others mentioned that they do not live with a child in university and some failed to explain how they were able to overcome the challenges faced hence included into a category of do not know. The findings are illustrated on the figure 4.5.

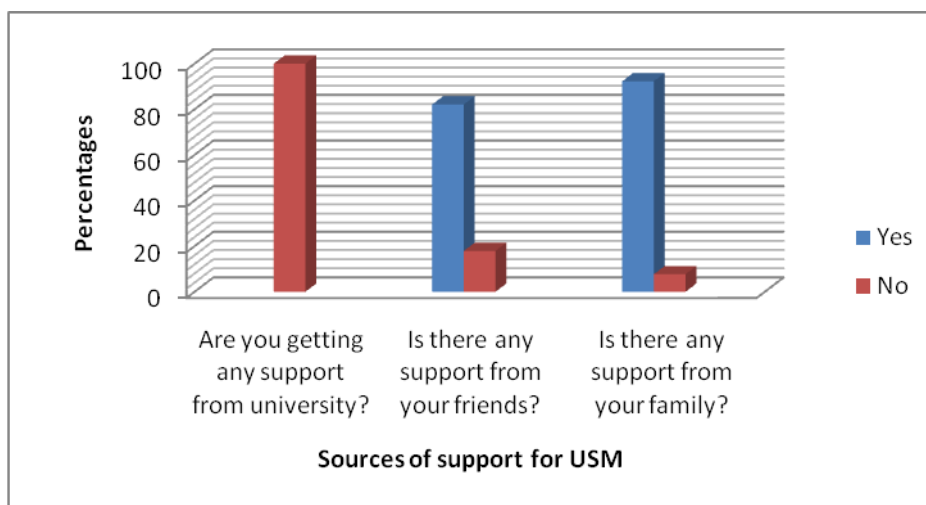
4.4 The university support to mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University

In determining the kind of University support given to the mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University, the researcher used indicators such as University support, friends support, family support, satisfaction of the support and ways used to fulfill their needs.

4.4.1 Support from university, friends and family

In the attempt to understand about the support given by Mzumbe University to mothered undergraduate students, respondents were probed to state whether they got any support from the university management, friends and family. To establish evidences of whether they received any support from the university, friends and family, results are shown in figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6 Supports given from university, friends and family



Source: Field data, 2018

The results showed that mothered undergraduate students did not get any support from the university by 100%. It was observed in this study that the major sources of support for MUS from the family counted 90%, and 80% from friends. In connection to the findings from the analysis of information from the questionnaires indicate that to a great extent the MUS depends much on the help from the family and relatives.

Additionally, the results from interview concurred with the statistical finding. It was expressed that the university granted no support to the mothered undergraduate students because the university has no policy or strategy basically to cater for MUS. Among of the arguments which were raised concerning lack of policy or strategy was the need to strongly discourage the university female students from such behavior of engaging in marital and maternal practices in the university. However, cultural grounds were used to explain the reason for the discouragement of the practice.

Another reason was due to hardship to undertake academic responsibilities congruently with the parenting roles. The first respondent clearly said that:

It is not good thing for university student to become a mother. As university we discourage them from being mother and advice to engage in studies first but also it is because of our culture which prohibits women or girls to have children before marriage. Therefore we as parents, teachers and administrators advise students to abstain from sexual intercourse or use contraceptives to prevent pregnancies until they finish/ complete their studies. We advise students to abstain from sexual intercourse, else should they use contraceptives to prevent pregnancy. Otherwise no special treatment or policy which adhere student mothers to be treated in special way, however all students are guided by the same law and policy without looking on the situations of the individual student (Interview Transcript 1).

However, the administrators provide some material and moral support based on their discretionary powers and humanistic grounds. Despite the lack of official support from the university, the government of university students confirmed to provide some occasional services which normally ranged from moral to material support. This argument gained support from the third interviewee who had the following to say:

We help them by giving some needs like money, soap, clothes and any other mothered students who are in need and we as leaders we can afford. Example few days ago, we got such problem but we as leaders we contributed what we have and helped her. Also we have our groups where anyone who get any problem we help them by donating what we have, this is because we don't have any source for supporting student mothers or any other. Example, some students it reaches the time for giving birth but they don't have some stuff like dishes, clothes, soap and even food, in such circumstances we used to inform Director of students and welfare to help them (Interview Transcript 3).

4.4.2 Kinds of Support Received by MUS from family and friends

The researcher asked the respondents to affirm the kind of support received from family and friends. The results of the findings are described on table 4.2.

Table 4.2 The kind of support from family and Friends

N=39

Kind of support	Family support		Friends support	
	F	%	f	%
Advice/Courage/Directions and ideas/Guidance and counseling and prayers	5	12.8		
To take care of baby and find house girl/maid	6	15.4		
Learning materials and living with my baby	1	2.6		
Material and Financial support like money, medical expenses, shelter, food and clothes	24	61.5	2	5.1
Academic support like discussion, materials, information, notes and doing assignment			20	51.3
Domestic support like fetching water, cooking, washing clothes, taking care of my baby and finding house girl			4	10.3
Moral and spiritual support			3	7.7
I don't know	3	7.7	7	17.9

Source: Field Data, 2018

The analyzed data provide evidences that different mothered undergraduate students were receiving different kind of support from family members and friends. Material support from the family members was the highest form of support which composed by 61.5% followed by academic support from friends which composed of 51.3%. Therefore, the data showed that to some extent the survival of MUS in universities depend much on their families in managing their multiple roles.

On other side, respondents from interview had different ideas on what kind of the material support the MUS received from their family. They mentioned different kinds of support given by MUS. The first interviewee stated that:

It depends on the nature of the problem; example if it is financial matters we assist them with some money as individuals, but not by university decree. If it is an academic issue like failure in the exams because of being mothers there is no favor, we never help them or give any kind of help to them. They must follow the regulations with no favor. However, in the university we support student mothers morally and provide the chance for study leave (Interview Transcript 1).

Moreover, at the university there is no formal or clear document that provides guidelines on how mothered students could be helped. Another observation was that the university discouraged the practice of students to engage in parenting roles while they are studying was difficult to handle two roles at once. Cultural factors like getting pregnant before marriage was a factor reported to have led to increased number of MUS. It was well understood some of the cultural groups in Tanzania not

allow students to become mothers before marriage, so it is better for students to wait until they finish studies and get married. The first Interviewee was very opposite to ever think of having a policy in favor of student mothers as she remarked that;

I don't think we need to do that, this is because of our culture which prevent girls/women to engage in mother role before marriage, all students they have to wait until they complete their studies (Interview Transcript 1). Another respondent added that I don't encourage students to become mothers because their still young so they have to study first. If I encourage students to engage in parenting roles, many of them will imitate from others (Interview Transcript 2).

4.4.3 Status of accommodation for MUS

In a quest on accommodation, Many respondents pointed out that Mzumbe University does not guarantee accommodation to students with babies to stay in the campus hostels. Therefore, students who became mothers were required to find hostels or rent houses outside the university campus. This was due to the shortage of rooms that can accommodate such category of students. The reason behind such claim was that, the hostels are not conducive for maternal mothers. One of the administrative interview staff stressed that, by then there was no accommodation offered to the MUS. This interviewee expressed a concern that the university had some plans to construct more buildings which includes hostels. Thus in future, there would be more hostels with a capacity to accommodate even the mothered students on campus.

In addition to that another respondent expressed that;

We don't have documented accommodation or policy for accommodating student mothers. Also in terms of hostel, here in university we have law that any student who will give birth they have to go off campus and rent house. Simply at university no accommodation is given to undergraduate student mothers (Interview Transcript, 3).

The findings showed that the university strongly discouraged female students to engage in parenting roles.

In addition to that, Mzumbe University Policy on Gender Development (2008:5) states that Mzumbe University provides good accommodation and classrooms to

students of both sexes. Moreover, bathrooms and toilets need to be provided with the required privacy. This is important especially now that male and female students are sharing accommodation facilities. From the document, there is nothing informed about mothered students, however, Mzumbe University provides accommodation equally regardless of the gender differences and parental matters.

Furthermore, MUS are almost left to struggle alone in taking charge of their double responsibilities. Even though respondents from interview said the university offers moral support and study leave this is not peculiar to student mothers per se but is for all students.

4.4.4 Ways used to fulfill their needs.

The descriptive analysis provided the results on how MUS fulfill their needs. The results of the findings are described in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Distribution of mothered undergraduate students fulfillments of needs

How do you do to fulfill your needs?		
Responses	<i>f</i>	%
By getting support from family/relatives and friends through cooperation in search of maid	14	35.9
Make priorities/participating effectively in my duties both university and family activities	5	12.8
Time management and Hard working	7	17.9
Doing simple business to get money	4	10.3
I don't know	9	23.1

Source: Field data, (2018)

The data obtained indicated that 35.9% of mothered undergraduate students satisfy their needs by getting *support from family/relatives and friends through cooperation in search of maid*. 17.9% of MUS depended on *time management and hardworking whereas, 10.3% of them engaged in doing simple business to earn more money*. The data obtained showed that mothered undergraduate students have different ways through which they use to fulfill their needs (money, time, academic materials and house maid).

4.5 Assessment of MUS academic performance at Mzumbe University

In attempt to understand the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students, respondents were asked to rank their levels of academic performance in three categories. The categorization commenced from higher, middle and lower. The results are descriptively shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 distributions of mothered students by performance

Performance	Frequency	Percent
Higher (GPA,3.8-4.5)	12	30.8
Middle (GPA 3.0-3.7)	25	64.1
Lower (GPA Below 3.0)	2	5.1
Total	37	100

Source: Field data, (2018)

The result demonstrated that, the performance level of mothered undergraduate students was at the middle performance level by 64% while others fell under higher performance level and very few performed at a low level by 5.1%.

Empirical evidences were provided from Mzumbe University on the performance level of MUS. The examination results for 2016/22017 are presented in Table 4.4 to support the trend of academic performance of MUS.

Table 4.4: Annual examination results performance

No. of responders	Faculty	Semester	Course1	Course2	Course3	Course4	Course5	Course6	Course7	Total pts	GPA	Remarks
1	BELM	1	*C*	B+	C	B+	B	*C*	B	60	3.1	Pass
		2	B+	B	C	B+	B	B	B			
2	BELM	1	B+	A	B+	A	B	B+	B	60	4.0	Pass
		2	A	A	A	B	B	B	B+			
3	BELM	1	B	B	C	B+	B+	B	C	56	2.7	Carry(1)
		2	*C*	B+	*E*	B+	C	C	*C*			
4	BELM	1	B+	A	B+	B+	B	A	B	60	4.1	Pass
		2	A	A	B+	B+	B+	B+	B+			
5	BELM	1	B+	A	B	A	B+	B	B	60	3.9	pass
		2	B+	B+	B	B	A	B+	B+			
6	BELM	1	B+	B+	B+	A	B+	B	B+	60	3.7	pass
		2	A	B+	B	B	B	B+	B			
7	BELM	1	B	B+	B	B+	B	C	*C*	60	3.0	pass
		2	C	B+	C	B+	C	B	C			
8	BELM	1	B+	B+	B	B+	B+	B+	B	60	3.8	pass
		2	A	B+	C	A	B	B+	B			
9	BECA	1	B	B	B+	C	B	A	A	60	3.4	Pass
		2	B	*C*	B+	B	B+	B	B+			
10	BECA	1	B+	B	B+	B	A	B	A	56	3.5	Carry(1)
		2	B	C	A	B+	B+	*D*	B			
11	BECA	1	C	C	B+	B	B+	B	B+	60	3.7	Pass
		2	B+	C	A	A	B+	B+	A			
12	BECA	1	B	B	B	A	A	B	B+	60	3.7	Pass
		2	B	*C*	B	B	B+	B	B+			
13	BECA	1	C	*C*	B	B	B+	B	B+	60	3.3	Pass
		2	C	*C*	B+	B+	B+	B	A			
14	LLB	1	B	B+	F	B	B	C	-	-	none	Fail(1)
15	LLB	1	B	B+	C	B+	B	B	-	-	3.17	Pass
16	LLB	1	B	B+	F	B	B+	C	-	-	none	Fail(1)
17	LLB	1	B	B+	B	B	B+	B	-	-	3.50	Pass

Source: Field Data, (2018)

The results from table 4.4 demonstrate that 3 students had lower performance of below 3.0 GPA, 10 students had middle performance of 3.0-3.7 GPA and 4 students performed higher with GPA of 3.8 and above. Out of 17 candidates only four failed one of the subject courses with a carry over. However hard the programme might have been appear, the recorded results portray that they were capable of handling the double roles.

The statistical results were contrary to what interviewees perceived mothered undergraduate students on academic performance. During the interviews sessions, the common experience was that mothered students are not performing well in academics. They faced challenges such as time shortage and health problems were expressed to impede MUS from optimum concentration in academic matters as it was expressed by the first respondent.

Those who become mothers while studying; their academic performances is normally poor though I didn't do any study for that in order to know how student mothers perform. To my experience, most of them who came to my office to explain their circumstances their not performing well. However, I cannot generalize to all student mothers that they perform poorly because no research and no evidence to prove that” (Interview transcript 1).

The second interviewee affirmed openly his assumptions that MUS cannot have good academic performance as he said, *“student mothers can't perform well because of multiple roles they have to do (studying and taking care of their babies)* (Interview transcript 2).

Some respondents from the student government were of the opinion that mothered students had moderate academic performance. In course of the interview, on respondent was quoted saying that:

“It is fifty to fifty, some perform well but others when are stressed with parenting role their performance drops. So it depends on the kind of the students and life situation. However, some they lose competence and feel shy so they don’t even participate well in academic matters hence they fail” (Interview Transcript 3).

The statistical display of the findings on the academic performance of MUS was average, though the narrative findings presented a negative picture. The respondents noted that: *“The parenting roles have no adverse effects on the academic performance of undergraduate student mothers.”* The findings from the interview respondent expressed that the performance of MUS was relatively poor.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings based on the research questions as outlined in chapter 1 of this report. However, first part of the chapter discusses the demographic characteristics of respondents. The second part provides discussion of challenges faced by mothered undergraduate students and coping mechanisms used to overcome challenges in the course of undertaking academic and parental duties. The third part discusses supports given to MUS by university, family relatives and friends. Finally, the fourth part analyses the performance levels of undergraduate student mothers. In the course of discussion reference to the building theory and several studies was used to provide further explanations.

5.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The demographic profile provides a picture that a good number of female university students who engage in parenting roles in the university are at their mature age, exhibiting marriage life and are towards the end of their academic studies in third year. The dominant age groups of babies was 0-1 years old implying a greater responsibility of the student mothers is needed to grant attention to her baby and her academic studies simultaneously. This creates a clash of conflicts and challenges ranging from personal to social levels (Megan, 2011). With regard to this study, the dominant age group of the mothered students at Mzumbe university was found to be 26 and above followed by those aged 21-25 years old who were believed to be mature enough to excise parenting roles. According to Springer, Parker, and Leviten-Reid, (2009) attested that the matured reproductive age usually begins at twenties years which is also the age when many youth enter into university or colleges. The presented age group allows them to engage in parenting roles since the world health Organization explained teen pregnancy as the phenomenon exhibited by girls below 20 years (Manglaterra *et al*, 2008).

The demographic profile also informed that not all mothered undergraduate students became pregnant while in the university. It was noted that some of MUS had babies aged 2-3 and above three years, meaning that those gave birth to babies before they joined the university for studies. The fact that many of the mothered undergraduate students were married and some divorced, there were concern that exercising parenting roles and academic duties simultaneous was deliberate effort to keep their marriage alive meanwhile pursuing with university studies. The assumption is supported by Cuthbertson *et al.* (2004) that married female students had difficulties to deal with their academic works but they had to accept playing maternal roles for the sake of avoiding separation with their husbands.

5.2 Academic challenges that faced mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University

It is usual that most higher learning institutions in world, particularly in developing countries face academic challenges that hinder them to attain their predetermined goals. These challenges emerge even in universities where students' performance remains stagnant. Most of vulnerable students are mothered undergraduate students who play multiple roles (studies and parenting) while studying. At Mzumbe University, it was found that mothered undergraduate students experienced academic problems such as time, psychological, and social challenges, just to mention a few. However, these challenges differed from one mothered undergraduate student to another depending on number of factors. These findings are line with those of Institute for Women Policy Research (2014); NUS (2009) and Najjuma and Kyarugahe (2006) who stated that mothered students use few hours for academic matters while many hours are spent for parental matters. They added that, financial difficulty was seen to be another challenge where mothered students failed to meet their daily expenses. Another study reported that a university student mother had to use an average of 18 hours (Miller, Gault, & Thorman 2011). This was contrary to what the study findings revealed that students at Mzumbe University spent less time for their studies while much of their time was spent more time for caring their babies.

Consequently, the study identified the psychological stress as a constrain towards meeting the education targets among the mothered students at the University of Mzumbe in Morogoro campus. This was also in line with some previous studies which showed that mothered undergraduate students face psychological problems related to stress, trauma, low concentration failure to meet deadlines for assignments, sickness of their babies, and very low score in exams. In this regard, for example, Cappleman-Morgan's small-scale study of mature students in HE showed that 'competing multiple obligations can leave student-careless time-starved, stressed and consequently adopting "instrumental" approaches to learning and caring' (Cappleman-Morgan, 2005: 1).

On the other hand, these findings did not concur with that of NUS (2009) who reported that missed lectures or assessment deadlines were not uncommon, due to problems with childcare, child sickness, or general lack of time for studies, and lone parents were more prone to this than those living with a partner. In this view, the study was also in line with findings which revealed that men, who impregnated university students offered responsible support, care or concern by finding and paying housemaids.

Despite the fact that, mothered undergraduate students face a number of academic problems, to some extent there were initiatives taken to deal with their challenges. At Mzumbe University, initiatives taken were not recognized officially were individually based initiatives. These is different from other previous studies like Steel *et al.* (2005) who found that coping mechanisms identified to overcome the problems of child-care, elderly care, financial difficulty, relationship problems and problems with re-entry into the university included support networks, prioritizing and organizing, positive expectations and attitudes for the future.

Moreover, the study uncovered that some undergraduate mothered students faced healthy problems like difficulties in child nurturing and missing of breast feeding for a child. Mostly, the challenges were related with child up bringing difficulties since it is well known that MUS have Health insurance cards which simplifies the solutions to attain health services for the mother and not for babies. These challenges

created brutal cycle that affected mothered undergraduate students and the child, such that when a MUS needed to provide care to a child, she had to take risks of missing lectures bearing in mind that she lives in the off campus which was located at a relatively long distance from the university.

5.2.1 Management of the parenting roles and studies at once

Under this aspect, the study found that mothered undergraduate students applied several techniques to cope with the challenges they encountered. Some of the coping strategies involved; hiring maids to take care of their babies, search for family support, cultivate personal discipline for time management, sending their babies back home to their parents or relatives and some never had clear answers on how they coped with the situation. Some of the findings are similar with those of Ansah *et al.* (2007) who found that coping strategies of MUS involved engagement of house helps and planned domestic work schedules. They added that students engaged in the services of house helps (paid domestic workers) to perform their family chores and also planned family work schedules to earn more time for their independent studies.

On the other hand, Yusoff (2010) found that the most frequent coping strategies used by the university students are religion, positive reinterpretation and growth and active coping. These coping strategies were contrary to the findings of this study. However, since the strategies are very important they should be adopted by universities to handle matters related to mothered undergraduate students.

5.2.2 The theoretical support of the study findings

The theoretical underpinning of Management strategies used by mothered undergraduate students got support from Sanford psychosocial Development theory. The theory explained three aspects which were linked to development or school experience of students. The concerned aspects include readiness challenge and support. With respect to the theory that guided the study, it is advisable student mothers must be ready to meet challenges and seek for support. The level of maturity and preparedness explained the context of readiness, whereas challenge encompassed the second position sine quo none for the development in academic

studies (Sanford, 1966). Support composed the third type of aspects used by undergraduate student mother to survive in the university despite the challenges faced. The aspects of support are further discussed in the sub section below.

5.3 The university supports offered to mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University.

The findings revealed that there were different views on the kind of supports offered to mothered undergraduate students. The respondent's views were of three categories, namely, supports from university, students, and parents. This concurs with different previous studies that mothered undergraduate students receive supports from different stakeholders in different forms, for example, Kerner and Moreau (2012) found that student's union organization provides support also to students' parents by consulting students about their caring responsibilities and occasionally organizes events on campus for students and their young families. In addition that, Taylor, Macnamara, Groskin and Petras (2013) conducted a study on Medical Students Mother at University of Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, the study reveals that, the university created flexible curriculum in each year which allows for time at home with a new baby. Furthermore, Ajandi (2011) in his study reveals that family and friends are main source of support to single mother students. He added that, support does not only come from Inside the institution administrators, professors and other students but also from the community outside the institution advocates such as social services, family, and friends were supportive in childcare, meal preparation, housecleaning, financial support. Moreover, Taukeni (2014) in his study showed that student mothers get support from their friends and family members to manage their dual roles and cope with these experiences. Similarly, Anderson (2000) said that biological parents are not seen as being the only (or natural) caregivers, as evident in many dominant Western Cultures. In Africa, support is usually provided by biological parents contrary to Western Cultures where parents who are not biological ones are responsible also to support mothered students.

Therefore, this is time for the Government and University to develop parenting policy that will precisely outline how to handle and manage mothered students to enable them to pursue their studies successfully.

5.3.1 Missing supports from Mzumbe University

Apart from guidance and counseling service and chance to postpone studies, the university had no policy and special accommodations for mothered undergraduate students. In line to that, Mzumbe University Policy on Gender Development (2008:5) states that Mzumbe University provides good accommodation and classrooms to students of both sexes. Moreover, bathrooms and toilets need to be provided with the required privacy. This is important especially now that male and female students are sharing accommodation facilities. From the document, there is nothing informed about mothered students, however, Mzumbe University provides accommodation equally regardless of the gender differences and parental matters.

The absence of policy signified the lack of official support that the university could guarantee in support of miseries faced by MUS. In addition, the narrative findings explained that the university administration discourages and thus they cannot even propose to have a stipulated document specifically set for mothered undergraduate students. The findings from the study were not in line with some findings such as Kerner and Moreau (2012) who conducted a study about Supporting Students Parents in Higher Education at university of Bedfordshire whereby their study showed that student parents are defined at national level particularly in terms of financial support while other support such as on campus childcare are tied to institutional policies. At national level Higher Education policies establishes which loans, grand and tax credits are available to student parents and other groups of students. These supports by universities are very important because they make targeted students to uplift their performance despite of their multiple roles as Bruns (2004) who found that, having a support group on Campus for single mothers reduced their feelings of Isolation and provided a space where single mothers could express their fears and trepidation about their experiences on and off-Campus.

Though the university offers counseling and guidance services as well as opportunities for postponement of studies, as far as matters related to mothered students are concerned, the study find it important for the university to establish a special policy and unit for counseling and guidance which will specifically deal with only mothered students only.

5.3.2 Reasons for insufficient supports of mothered students at University

Despite the fact that the university supported the mothered students in several ways but the supports provided seemed unsatisfactorily still the students had to perform some academic duties in the course of their studies and they experienced shortage of funds for them to meet their daily needs. These findings were against with previous researches, for example, URT (1997) claimed that it was hard to justify the issue of age appropriate for having baby apart from the teen age, since university studies are regarded as matured entry stage after completing form six in common regulations. Similarly, the education and training policy reveals that in Tanzania a student completes advanced secondary school at an average of 20 years if commenced his/her standard one at seven years (URT, 2014). In line with the findings of the study, student mothers were found to fall under the age category of 21-25 years and 26 and above years old. However, the age factor was not strong enough to discourage undergraduate students to practice parenting roles.

The second reason was due to social cultural morality, in that interview respondents expressed the need to abstain from having babies outside marriage. The argument holds water in as far the student is still single as it was identified in the demographic profile of the study. However, the dominant part of the undergraduate student mothers were found to be married and some few of them were divorced, implying that there is great possibility that female students admitted in the university are at same time required to accomplish their family responsibilities and excel in their academic professions. The undergraduate female student may therefore be found in dilemma on what to concentrate either between studies for the university and parenting roles associated with other family issues. However, as for the single university students, if the social cultural point still count, then they might risk to fall into abortion practice which is another possible risk. It follows that, limiting female

students from practicing parenting roles lacked a plausible backup from the perspective of education and training policy.

The other reason was that academic duties are heavy to be undertaken at goal with other parenting roles. The study revisited some literatures which demonstrated that the practice of parenting roles was a common phenomenon in the universities in the world, Mzumbe inclusive. In Dublin, the Trinity College (2013) conceived that being university student should not be a barrier to bear and raise a child but also not a reason to fail to continue with studies. The college recognized the reality of the time and thus went further to create flexible conditions which could cater for the support of mothered students. The supportive conditions were like time setting for long pauses in the afternoon and avoiding extensions of class sessions into nights as to avail time for mothered students to attend their maternal responsibilities. In Toronto University, Kerner and Moreau (2012) student parent have extra financial support, clubs are created and occasional campus gathering are organized to table a forum for university parent students to share about their experiences among each other's. In addition, the recognition of the phenomena served tutors and educators to understand student's situations and be in position to respond to their difficulties (Adair, 2001). The Mzumbe University being a public academic institution is availed to a bank of information to understand that the culture of the society is subject to change, particularly in this time of globalization. There is a need therefore to deliberately take concern of the situation of mothered students in the university since student admitted at Mzumbe university are not limited to a single cultured society.

5.3.3 Importance of supporting undergraduate student mothers

The study however discovered that apart from strong expressions in view of discouraging female students to engage in parenting roles in the university, administrators used their humanity and discretionary powers to grant some material and moral support to mothered undergraduate students under difficult conditions. Things like money, soaps, clothes and care once in the university hospital can be availed to mothered students. Arguing from the same perspective, it would be useful then for the university to open up a discussion on how to deal with the problem of pregnant students in the university. The fact that the problem persist out of all the

means to discourage it, implies the need of accepting reality and proceed with means to channel or establish soft ways that could serve to remedy the situation of mothered undergraduate students.

Learning from different research documents the study found offering support to mothered undergraduate students was of much significant than not acting at all in favor of the mothered students. Arguing from the social welfare perspectives, the lack of institutional support to the university student mothers implies that students have to seek support from the donors on individual basis (NUS, 2009). It was earlier mentioned that family relatives and friends composed the major sources of support for the USM. The problem with such kind of dependence was its instability since for some mothered students, their parents were far distant from their children, hence compromising the effectiveness of the assistance. In respect to friends who were reported to offer academic and moral support, it may be noted that there is no insurance of continuity of the quality of the assistance since friends are not made to respond to all demands related to parenting roles (Wainwright & Marandet, 2006).

Offering support to university mothers students is useful to improve retention rates, remedy the psychosocial tensions, stress and distractions that mothers may suffer from the lack of support. University Student mothers who are supported may improve their ability to deal with their double responsibilities hence, impact on their studies, increased sense of self-motivation to love their babies and reduce anxieties (Burns,2004)

In other places, universities established different networks in favor of mothered students. Taylor, Macnamara, Groskin and Petras (2013) emphasize that there is a network of physician-mothers in university of Brown that has been established under the auspices of the Brown Office of Women in Medicine. Primarily connected via a listserv, Mom Doc Family (MDF) is a group that unites more than 200 physician-mothers from all stages of their medical training and careers, allowing students to come into contact with and learn from other women about both personal and professional issues. At the international level, Mom MD is a career website that provides professional and personal support for women physicians, residents, medical

and premedical students (Taylor *et al.*, 2013). The Government and Mzumbe University have to deliberate on plausible policy interventions in support of mothered undergraduate students.

5.3.4 Ways used by mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University in fulfilling their needs

The study found four main ways used by mothered undergraduate students to fulfill their needs. The mothered undergraduate students met their needs by getting support from family, relatives and friends, hiring maids cultivating time management and hardworking, creating properties for demands and practice simple business to get money. Basing on the findings it was evidenced that student mothers created means to comply with their daily demands of money, maternal help and studies. Similar findings were observed from other studies. Ansah *et al.*, (2007) found that students have house helps and planned domestic work schedules. Parents and friends were pinpointed to be frontiers of help for the mothered students and that some students created some groups for social-academic support for mothered students in the university (Institute for Women Policy Research, 2014).

5.4 Academic performance of mothered undergraduate students

In understanding the level of academic performance of mothered undergraduate students, the study found that the academic performance level of the mothered students was moderate, though the narrative findings portrayed the category to have poor performance in academics.

5.4.1 Trend of academic performance of mothered undergraduate students

The findings from respondents mothered students tallied with the statistical findings obtained from ARIS in that in both perspectives. The researcher found that the university administrators perceived mothered undergraduate student mothers to have poor academic performance. The practice of parenting roles was not welcomed in the university and thus students who conceived were seen to be less serious with their studies. In contrary, the statistical findings proved that having babies was not a major factor for poor performance among student mothers, since they performed moderately and few of them failed some single courses. Pinilla and Munoz (2005)

conducted a study about Educational opportunities and Academic Performance and found that the academic performance of student mothers is lower than that of other groups of university students. This did not specify the method of data collection used to conclude his statement, though it generally shows that mothered student usually face problems that lead them to poorer perform than others.

The findings of the study on performance level of mothered undergraduate students uncovered that if the university could offer some necessary support like in-campus accommodation, time for attending children or establish baby care centers in the university, the mothered students could be highly empowered to perform better than the observed performances. The Stanford psychosocial Development theory propounds that that students ought to pay particular attention to the experiences of the college. In particular, students have to be able to differentiate and integrate their environment personality and the reality set before them for the sake of identifying opportunities and possibilities to overcome challenges. The integration constitutes understanding environment and contexts that may support them to get along with studies. Linked to the reported levels of performance the study contends that undergraduate student mothers were not able to integrate their personality characters and the external reality in the course of pursuing their academic studies.

5.4.2 Conditions that risk academic performance of mothered undergraduate students

The findings indicated that mothered undergraduate students' performance was moderate because of various challenges as discussed in chapter 5. These challenges include time difficult like missing lectures, social problem, psychological problem and financial problem. This means if these challenges will be solved, undergraduate student mothers will perform higher. The findings of the study differed with the observations of Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005). According to them female students are overwhelmed with work at school and at home and their rate of failure was higher than males. The underlying reason for the poor performances was less time to study and therefore give their studies less attention. Other reasons were due to anxiety and emotional stress that adult-students go through, hence affecting their

academic performances. In Venezuela, Pinilla and Munoz (2005) also found that the academic performance of student mothers was lower than the rest of the university students. In practice, student mothers participate in higher education as part-time students, although this category is not officially recognized by most Venezuelan public universities.

The life circumstances that contribute negatively affect academic performance of MUS are both institutional and contextual. Lack of institutional recognition and support create unfriendly situations for mothered undergraduate students to have confidence, and motivation to concentrate on studies. Contextually, the lack of necessary demands for child up-bringing have negative outcome to mothered undergraduate students. Monteagudo and Merrill (2010) maintained that the struggle of student mothers towards achieving education was hindered by violent incidents, lack of confidence in academic ability and housing problems. This means that lack of awareness was identified as among of the problems faced by student mothers at university. Moreover, lack of support was another marked obstacle of mothered students among the MUS. It would be impressive to find a university that takes concern of the inclusive realities related to gender roles.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the summary of the study, concluding remarks based on the study findings, policy implications and recommendations. It finally suggests the areas for further research. The chapter begins with a summary which highlights the major findings of the study followed by the concluding remarks which provides the main arguments developed. The policy recommendations section provides suggestions for policy directions towards tackling issues that could enable mothered undergraduate students attain their goals for instance access to education at university level of education.

6.2 Summary of the study

The study explored on the learning experience and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University in Morogoro. The main objective of the study was to explore the learning experience and welfare of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University. The study specifically had three objectives: to find out the academic challenges of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University, to determine the university support to the mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University and to assess the academic performance of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University. The open-ended questionnaires and semi structured interviews were used in data collection. The purposive sampling and snowball techniques were used to get units of inquiry and the sample size of 39 respondents. The analysis of quantitative data employed SPSS method to get percentages and frequencies. The qualitative data were manually analyzed using content analysis methods. The purposive sampling technique was used to select key interview informants. Specifically, purposive sampling was used to get Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Director of Students

and welfare and Minister of Health and Gender of university students. The snowball sampling technique was used to get mothered undergraduate students.

The questionnaire consisted of both open and close-ended questions which were administered to 39 undergraduate student mothers of Mzumbe University.

6.3 The academic challenges of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University

With regard to the challenges of MUS, there were variations in the way respondents defined them. Those challenges include time constraints and social problems associated with hardship to get maids, loneliness, isolation, discrimination, disrespect and tiredness. Other challenges were financial difficulties, psychological problems like stress and trauma, health problems like diseases, nurturing difficulties and child missing breast feeding. In addition mothered students reported to cope with the challenges by hiring a maid for help and time management, seek for support from family and relatives and lastly, some left their babies in their homes with their parents or husbands.

6.4 The university support to mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University

In investigating the support given to undergraduate student mothers from Mzumbe University, family and friends. It was found that Mzumbe University does not provide any official support purposely in favor of mothered undergraduate students. There was no policy or strategy in place to respond to problems of MUS. The need to discourage the behavior of having babies in universities for students was forwarded a major reason of having no policy or strategy to support MUS. The study further found that the university in-campus does not provide accommodations for university students exhibiting having babies. Therefore, students who become mothers are needed to find hostels or house rents outside the university campus. The reason behind is shortage of rooms particularly set aside to accommodate such category of students. Other reason is that the hostels are not conducive for maternal mothers. Some administrators were not even aware of the existence of such practices

of having mothered university students. However, University administrators applied their discretionary powers and personal wisdom to provide moral, psychological and material supports. Mothered university students however have the chance to postpone studies and take care of their babies for one year before they regain their university bonafide.

Instead, MUS get support from family, relatives and friends. This was observed from statistical results and narrative findings. Family relatives and friends provided material support like money, clothes and food and academic support from friends like being helped in studies. The mothered undergraduate students used different means to fulfill their needs such as request parents to grant money and seek for housemaid, some made priorities of their time use and management, hardworking and do some simple businesses. Surprisingly others did not know how they fulfilled their needs.

6.5 Academic performance of mothered undergraduate students

The attempted to assess the academic performance of MUS at Mzumbe University the respondents ranked themselves basing on their performance levels ranging from higher, middle to lower. The findings showed that mothered undergraduate students had middle or average level of academic performance (64%) followed by the other group with higher level of performance (30.8%) then lower performance. Collected results from the University ARIS showed that 10 USM had average pass rate of 3.0 – 3.7GPA performance of correlating to statistical findings. The findings demonstrated that some MUS have portrayed strong abilities to handle studies and parenting roles. These findings were contrary to the perceived experiences of some of the interview respondents who claimed that mothered undergraduate students had poor academic performance.

6.6 concluding Remarks

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that mothered students survives through using various informal ways in order to handle multiple roles of taking care of their children and studying. There is also contradiction between the age and marital status which necessitates some female students to have children

alongside their studies. Despite of this contradiction, the university stays somehow aside in terms of policy and facility support to these students. The average performance revealed through the sample progress reports implies that there is extra individual struggle among mothered students to survive academically. It was found that the university just offered only guidance and counseling supports. This was offered to all students regardless of their gender. However, the study finds the provision of supports related to parental roles as important to be given to MUS in order to promote their academic achievements.

However, it was found that MUS had average performance despite the challenges encountered. Based on the observed academic results, the study noted that, generally the academic performance of MUS was on average. This is an indication that if more support was given to them their performance would have increased. Therefore universities still have a lot to be done to improve education for all.

6.7 Policy implications and recommendations

Based on the findings, the study has few recommendations geared towards improving the welfare and performance of mothered undergraduate students at Mzumbe University and Tanzania at large. The following are recommendations to the government officials, policy makers and other education stakeholders. in order to promote mothered undergraduate students engagement effectively in accessing higher education to ensure the attainment of their intended educational personal goals, the study suggests the following to be done. The government through its Ministry of Healthy should sensitize and educate the society, institutions and stakeholders particularly the provision of seminars and workshop on reproduction health education among the Tanzanian youths. This may help MUS to abstain or wait until their time. The use of media like TV and radio stations, elders, religion institutions, pioneers of women rights and local leaders to reach majority should also not be underscored. The Government should cooperate with stakeholders from both private and public sectors to build more hostels for students are accommodated in campus or around the campus. In so doing, this will improve learning environment condition particularly to the students with babies. In addition to that,

The government should build or allow other stakeholders to build baby sitters center near or around the university so that students who have babies can have someone around to assist her in taking care of the baby while mothers are attending classes. However, the cost of the baby sitters should be affordable to all students who have babies. Also within university there should be clubs and special places that student mothers can use for breast feeding and nurture their babies.

Mothering rights should be identified in the university policy so that special care can be given to the student mothers. There is need to have a change of mindset for university administrators, tutors and students with respect to MUS.

6.5 Limitation of the study

The study was widely qualitative despite a mixture of some statistical data. Spatially the study was done at one Mzumbe University main campus. With such setting the study faced some few limitations with regard to number of participant respondents both mothered students and administrators. The other limitation was the hardship to find the academic results of all participants' students as it was hard to get the consent of all of them. Moreover, there was a shortage of documented literatures on university mothers' cases in Tanzania.

6.6 Suggestion of areas for further studies

The fact that little has been done to investigate the learning experiences and welfare of the mothered students in higher learning institutions in Tanzania, the study proposes a similar study to be done across the universities present in the country so as to provide more evidences on the issue. Moreover, a quantitative study may be conducted to investigate on the role of education policy in safeguarding the welfare of university female students. Additionally, a comparative study may worth to be conducted to analyze the extent to which universities support the university student mothers in different countries in East Africa.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

My name is Sayuni; currently I am student at Mzumbe University pursuing Master of Arts in Education. I am conducting a study to explore on the learning experience and welfare of undergraduate student mothers at Mzumbe. Thank you for your time devoted to participate in this interview. I would like to assure you my confidentiality and anonymity of your identity unless otherwise you permit that your name be disclosed in the study.

The interview will take about 1:30 hours.

Could you present yourself please? What perceptions do you hold about undergraduate student mothers?

1. What are your views about the undergraduate students who conceive and become mothers in Mzumbe University?
2. How Mzumbe University does recognize undergraduate student mothers? Probe if there is any inconvenience with the university regulations?
3. How does the university accommodate undergraduate student mothers? How do administrators feel about undergraduate student mothers towards their performance?
4. On what ways does Mzumbe University perceive a concern of the life of undergraduate student mothers?
5. How does university support undergraduate student mothers?
6. What mechanisms taken by university to help undergraduate student mothers?
7. Is there any policy about undergraduate student mothers? If not how do you think undergraduate student mothers can be helped?

8. Do you think the undergraduate student mothers experience any challenges that calls for help? If there is, how do you solve them?
9. What should be done in the university to favor the situation of mothered undergraduate students?

APPENDEXI II

QUESTIONNAIRE TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT MOTHERS

Dear student,

I am Sayuni, a student from Mzumbe University. I would like to request you to fill in this questionnaire sheet. The questionnaire is made to facilitate responses for the study that **Explores about the Learning Experiences and Welfare of Undergraduate Student Mothers at Mzumbe University in Morogoro Region**". Moreover, I appreciate for your participation, and I further assure you with my esteemed confidentiality and protection. The answers given will only be used for the academic purpose and not otherwise. I beg for your honesty and objectivism in answering this questionnaire. Please put a tick (√) to the most correct answer among others. The questionnaire is expected to take at least 15 Minutes.

Background Information: Put a tick and fill in blank spaces

1. How old are you?
 - A. 18-20
 - B. 21-25
 - C. 26 and above

2. What is your marital status?
 - A. Married
 - B. Single
 - C. Divorced

3. In which academic year are you studying?
 - A. Second year
 - B. Third year

4. How old is your baby?

A. 0-1

B. 1-2

C. 2-3

D. Above 3

5. How do you manage your studies and parenting roles?

What challenges do you face in playing your role as a student and a mother simultaneously?

A. -----

B. -----

C. -----

D. -----

E. -----

6. How do you overcome those challenges on your part?

7. Are you getting any support from university?

A. Yes

B. No

C.

8. If yes, mention them;

i. -----

ii. -----

iii. -----

iv. -----

v. -----

9. Are you satisfied with the support given by the universities?

A. Yes

B. No

10. If no, how do you do to fulfill your needs?

11. Is there any support from your friends?

A. Yes

B. No

12. If yes, mention the support given and say from whom?

i. -----

ii. -----

iii. -----

iv. -----

v. -----

13. Is there any support from your family?

A. Yes

B. No

14. If yes, mention the support given and say from whom?

i. -----

ii. -----

iii. -----

iv. -----

From-----

15. How do your student fellows perceive student mothers?

A. Negatively

B. Positively

16. For any of your answer above explain how?

How do you perform academically?

A. Lower

B. Middle

C. Higher

17. For any of your selected answer explain why?

What should be done to improve the performance of undergraduate student mothers?

APPENDEXI III



**MZUMBE UNIVERSITY
(CHUO KIKUU MZUMBE)**

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

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Ref. No. MU/DPGS/INT/38/Vol. IV/125

Date: 20th March, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: INTRODUCTION OF MR. SAYUNI HEZRON KISWAGA

The bearer of this letter Mr. Sayuni Hezron Kiswaga whose registration number is 15408022/T.16 is a postgraduate student at our University (Mzumbe University) pursuing **Masters of Arts in Education (MA-EDU)**. As part of requirements for completion of his studies, he is collecting information on: **Exploring Learning Experiences and Welfare Undergraduate Student Mothers at Mzumbe University in Morogoro Region.**

This letter serves to achieve three purposes. Firstly, to introduce him to you, secondly, to request you to grant him permission to undertake the mentioned research at your Institute, and thirdly to request you to facilitate any form of assistance he might need in order to successfully pursue this noble exercise at your organization/institute. We can assure you that this activity is entirely for academic and will never be used for any other purposes.

We trust that you will accord our student with necessary assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Alfred', enclosed in a rectangular box.

Dr. Fred Alfred (PhD)

For: VICE CHANCELLOR

QUOTATION OF REF. NO IS ESSENTIAL