

# Exploring Motivation and Life Course Transformations in Student-Mothers Pursuing Higher Education

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## Abstract

The impetus for this study came from my own history of being a student mother while completing my higher education, and the challenges which entailed during my studies. The study sought to find out the challenges faced by student mothers while attaining higher education. The study employed the qualitative research methodology, and phenomenology approach. Interviews were used as an instrument. A total number of 10 participants were involved in this study. The data collected was analysed by the thematic analysis. It was found that student mothers face challenges managing time, financials and no time for child care that is included while attaining higher education. As they have a responsibility for their child, home and studies along with work outside the house made them feel stressed and unmanageable. Student mothers involved in the study were: single mothers, married mothers and working mothers. The key themes from the study revealed that student mothers face challenges in managing time, financials and no time for child care. Balancing home and studies has become so challenging for them. All they need is support from family and especially their husband to complete their higher education. Lastly, student mother's life has changed after having a child. They were not enjoying their university life like before. The only motivation which made them do that is the support from husband, to build a better future and to become financially stable. All of the student mothers were doing it for their child's better future.

## Keywords

Student-Mother, Married-Mother, Single-Mother, Working-Mother, Challenges, Higher Education

## 1. Introduction

One of the most powerful mediums for progress is education. The importance of education in fostering human, societal, and economic development is, thus, fundamental. Strategic developmental priority is placed on women's education. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to be well-informed when it comes to nutrition and healthcare, which in turn leads to fewer children, later marriages, and generally healthier offspring. A higher income is being earned by these women in the formal work market. The accumulation of all these elements lifts individuals, groups, and nations out of poverty.

Women education has always been a subject of complex debate. It takes insight the consideration in the areas of gender equality as well as right to get education to eradicate poverty. Education helps men and women to claim their rights and to gather the potential they have in the social, political and economic fields. Education is therefore a powerful weapon that fights and lifts people out of poverty as well as plays a role as a foundation for female development towards maturity. In developing countries, the rate of returns of primary education is higher as compared to that of tertiary education.

The position of power is for men, while women are adversely affected by the circumstances in all spheres of life. As time has changed women are capable enough to pursue their education but still being a mother at once and having major responsibilities of household, and child care along with their studies is still a point of concern (Cooper, 2023).

There are some cases where men feel uncomfortable if their wives are going to co-educational institutes. In some other cases, women might not feel comfortable to study with male students. There are many barriers that make a woman especially a mother think whether she should pursue her dream or not. Having available people who positively show supportive attitudes in this respect, including family members, friends, and partners, seems essential in determining how mothers cope with these challenges.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Importance of Education for Mothers

“Give me an educated mother, I promise you that a civilized and educated nation will be born,” Napoléon Bonaparte. 18th century. The Napoleonic Code, a collection of regulations pertaining to common sense and justice, served as the basis for the new French educational system that Bonaparte instituted. Those early days when nations were trying to come out on top in terms of educational equality still have his words ringing true. However, our country is still fighting a battle against what is essentially a worldwide trend toward prioritizing females' education (Chhetri, 2024).

It is clear that a mother is a source of strength and courage for her child. An educated mother can guide and prepare her child's future in a better way. She can provide a better atmosphere at home by making better hygienic conditions due to

her knowledge of basic health and nutrition. She can teach her child after school at home and save money by not sending them to any tuition Centre. She can give a better understanding of concepts to her child than any other person can. Better career counseling and encouragement in extra-curricular activities will be the source of development of her child (Lamichhane, 2023). Therefore, the female should be educated because she has to take her family along with herself. If female is educated then our future generation will be fulfilled by success in every aspect of life (Awan & Kauser, 2015).

## 2.2. Child's Development and Significance of Education for Mother

Mothers are the most committed to raising their children and their main goal is to ensure the prosperity of their children. Conversely, the scheduling challenges of school often do not allow mothers to fulfill both academic commitments and commitment to their children. Mothers sink into obtaining a college education, which they hope, will translate to better economic opportunity one day; eventually, the results will be the improved quality of life for their children.

Parents' schooling plays an important role in child cognitive and non-cognitive development, especially the education and qualification of mother have been underlined in literature. Education of mother is the most influential in the adolescents' outcome through nature (genetically), nurture (surroundings) and predominantly the interaction between the two. In this case, the inherited genetics are may be the cause of intergenerational association of human capital. Educated mother could produce additional fostering and better environment for child's improvement, for example, better parenting, have sufficient economic inputs, better understanding of knowledge and high competence in social capital investment.

## 2.3. Higher Education and Mother's Education

An educated mother encourages directing her child to school but also provides a helpful setting at home because she knows the worth of getting higher education in this era. When she knows the worth of getting higher education she also wants this to happen herself to justify the need of education she herself takes a stand and starts pursuing towards higher education. A civilized mother is prospective to inspire and lead her children to make well-versed adoptions to overcome forthcoming financial challenges (Harcourt, 2023). It is quite evident that a mother's education brings life to her children, and it keeps getting a better relationship with them. An educated mother empowers herself and in return earns the respect of her children as well as helps them in a positive manner. So far, this seems to be quite interesting, but it takes a lot to fulfill the requirement of creativity, thoughtfulness, information, and problem-solving skills to survive the interruptions in education is challenging (Gupta, 2020).

The ratio of entering university of student-mothers around the world has been increased later by 1966. Commonly female students' age is linked with their developmental phase. Hence, the survival of student-mother increases distresses

about performing the role of a mother and student. A woman can actively play the immediate role of a mother as well as a student; on the other hand, this responsibility of dual roles even in superlative situations can take one person out in two ways. Without compromising the activities while playing a role as a mother and student simultaneously is a big problem for student-mothers. In any society, a clear discourse of a “good mother” is grounded based on traditional parenthood role. Here the explanations contrast by a society, which gives diverse capabilities and challenges of parenthood in different cultures. This is quite a challenging role because a woman must restrict one role for the sake of the other role. University culture (norms, traditions, and ethics) can influence this behaviour.

#### **2.4. Certain Problems and Barriers for Student Mother**

Beda (2020) found that a significant number of 17% of the participants involved in the research were women who completed further education after being a mother. Those women were single mothers, facing poverty, identified as a member of a minority group, and unemployed. These factors gave them a great disadvantage at the beginning of their education. Many researchers have identified that gender discrimination has been the reason based on women are widely represented in leadership positions. Recent studies have focused the role of gender discrimination more deeply and have described that one reason for the non-appearance of women in leadership roles is motherhood discrimination (Oh, 2023). On the other hand, student parents face significant time demands to manage financial constraints. Those students who do not have a child have high rate of degree completion when compared with student parents and single parents. Within six years of entering to college, only 27% of single parents attained a degree or certificate. However, generally, women complete their doctorate at an older age than men do. This is probably due to childcare and family responsibilities (Baker & Bobrowski, 2016).

Most of the student-mothers have pointed out that the non-academic tasks they performed had a highly negative effect on their academic life. For example, they agreed that they were not able to find time to attend lectures regularly because of so many other activities that they had to perform in their daily life. They always get late whenever they attend lectures, as they are unable to get enough time to learn and are even not able to join group discussions regularly.

Lasodea & Awotedua (2014) in their study addressed the challenges married female students' faces. A total number of 88 where 67.7% of respondents faced the challenges of inadequate time to do homework, poor academic performance, and not having sufficient time for personal activities. They are occupied by various responsibilities which often become the priority over schoolwork, they also find no time for child care which has made them feel guilty and regretful. Work along with the responsibility of family and school requirements brings stress among female students, where 108 (83.1%) agreed on this, and this has had the greatest effect on their daily life in general.

A study conducted by Ji (2013) in the context of Nepal identified that parents are the still controllers of the resources and have right to make decisions about family development and education. High-resourced parents may be able to encourage their daughter's post-marriage education by enlightening her preference for education, either by providing funds and other practical help, or even by directly conversation with in-laws about her education and other concerns (Lamichhane, 2023). These women have sovereignty among cultural and financial resources to chase improvement in family status and personal achievement. Being educated means being "modernized" and being proficient in retaining cultural resources. Usually, they are prestigious in husband's family. On comparing love marriage and arrange marriage, in love marriage they have more "contemporary" values and needs and that is why they might value more education. Conversely, those in arranged marriage may have not only the independence to make marriage and education choices but have their parent's and parents-in-laws' commendations for marriage. Hence, they are prospective to gain more financial and other assistance from the family to support in getting education after marriage.

Teenage pregnancy has always become problematic and negative in the eyes of middle-class. The young women participated in this study can be perceived as engaged in a process of judgement, which is like, relating their experiences, accomplishments, and their lives in relation to the standards, and beliefs that are already set by the privileged group, the middle and upper class. The young women were made them feel as they are compared and considered on the basis of their contribution in education and at workplace and whether they relied on the state welfare. The mothers even if try to construct their personality not as a stereotypical mum, still they are still judged by the capacity of "lacking" something at this age of motherhood. Judging moral worth and respectability based on an individual's contribution with education and work is extremely challenging because it builds social inclusion in a pure economic term (Calver, 2019).

A study conducted by Craft & Maseberg-Tomlinson (2015) discussed the involvement of educated mothers among Christian women in higher education. Several Christian student mothers on Christian higher education have addressed the same causes of stress to those described by Christian student mothers on. Many Christian student mothers who work in Christian higher education, not only have a responsibility for the "second shift" like those in secular higher education, rather they also do the "mental labour" at home. The mental labor includes the worrying of everything, organising, and dealing with the needs of the family. Additionally, many Christian student mothers are wrapped up in conventional gender beliefs outside of the workplace, which make the work challenging even more significant. Another challenge a Christian student mother has to face is the activism of Christian leaders group for women to stay at home and nurture their child, instead of work often leads to contradicts inborn in the mixing of traditional motherhood beliefs and modern motherhood beliefs.

Pio & Graham (2016) conducted a study to explore the challenges faced by

teenage mothers while attaining higher education. A space needed for child-care, reliable means of transportation with car seats and driver, finance, providing scholarships are the needs for teenage mothers. Whereas a stability between academic life skills curriculum, absence from lectures, harmony in government policy outcomes and delivery with the Teen Parents Organizations, consistent evaluations of outcomes, insufficient academic skills of Teenage mothers. Teenage mothers are not capable to find appropriate role models because they have limited time frame in which they have to manage so many things.

## 2.5. Research Objectives

- 1) To identify the influence which made a student mother to apply for university.
- 2) To identify the change that affects the life of single mothers while getting higher education.

## 2.6. Research Questions

Following are the research questions guided by the study:

- 1) What influences the most in student-mother educational pursuits?
- 2) What has changed the most in single mother's life course in getting higher education?

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Purpose of the Study

The focus of this phenomenology research was on the difficulties Pakistani moms have when pursuing higher education. The mothers who participated in the study were those who juggled the responsibilities of being a student and a mother. We also learned how students' academic performance affects their home lives and how student moms' lives have evolved after becoming parents.

### 3.2. Research Design

A qualitative research methodology has been embraced. In a qualitative study, as defined by [Creswell and Poth \(2016\)](#), the researcher seeks to paint a complex picture through words, reports informed opinions in detail, conducts the study naturally, and forms it with informants in order to describe a phenomenon that the researcher believes to be social and human in nature.

#### Target Population and Participant Selection

All the mothers enrolled in the universities of Lahore were considered for this study. This included mothers who were single, mothers who worked, and married mothers. The mothers' ages ranged from twenty-five to fifty, and they came from many multicultural backgrounds. Ten students, ranging in age from twenty-five to fifty, will respond to invitations to participate in the study, and the sample will be collected using the purposive sampling technique. A key component of the purposeful sampling technique is the deliberate selection of informants who can shed

light on a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon. When choosing participants, the researcher relied on their personal social network, recommendations from friends and family, and the purposive sample technique (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Ten women who met the qualifying criteria were chosen for the sample and interviewed (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Participants.

Pseudonym	Marital Status	Occupation	Age	Number of Child
Participant 1	Single Mother	Working	28	1
Participant 2	Single Mother	Working	43	2
Participant 3	Single Mother	Working	37	1
Participant 4	Single Mother	Working	37	1
Participant 5	Married	Homemaker	26	2
Participant 6	Married	Working	29	1
Participant 7	Married	Homemaker	28	2
Participant 8	Married	Working	31	1
Participant 9	Married	Working	38	2
Participant 10	Married	Homemaker	33	2

To mitigate the risk of homogeneity, efforts were made to ensure diversity in participant selection. This included recruiting from varied demographic backgrounds, seeking referrals from multiple independent sources, and setting inclusion criteria that promoted representation across key variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, or professional experience. Additionally, recruitment was monitored to identify and address any emerging biases in the sample composition.

### 3.3. Instrument

The interview method has been widely utilized in phenomenology as it enables participants to articulate their own experiences. Conducting interviews is one of the most efficient methods for obtaining information for qualitative studies. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), qualitative methods, such as interviews, are anticipated to yield a more profound comprehension of social processes. Consequently, interviews are the preferred method when there is insufficient prior knowledge on the phenomena or when in-depth information from particular individuals is required (p. 292). We employed a semi-structured interview method using open-ended questions for our interviewees. Semi-structured interviews comprise essential questions that delineate the regions for exploration while permitting both the interviewer and interviewee to diverge in order to elaborate on a response or concept in greater detail. Individual discussions can enhance the comprehension of participants' views regarding the challenges of higher education.

Conducting interviews was the most effective method to extract themes and patterns that address the research questions.

### 3.4. Procedure

A software called ZOOM was used for the interview. As part of the lockdown in Punjab, the university campus remained locked since COVID-19 was still circulating. The researcher instructed participants on conducting interviews and provided them with a day and time that worked for them. The interviews last for 25- to 30-minute and after recording the interviews the researcher transcribes each interview. The researcher went back to assess the data after the interview recordings were finished. After that, we sent out the audio recordings to all respondents so they could review the final transcript and provide feedback. Throughout the research, this served as a member check. A safe laptop held the recorded audio. The researcher kept all the portable storage devices, such as USB drives, at their home.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

According to Renner & Taylor-Powell (2003), “Qualitative data consists of words and observations, not numbers” (p. 1). Thematic analysis served as a method for analyzing data in qualitative research. Creswell and Poth (2016) assert that coding data is a methodical process that entails assessing and classifying certain statements into themes that elucidate the phenomena of interest. Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasized the systematic methodology for data analysis. Acquainting oneself with the facts is the preliminary phase of the analysis. This is achieved by reviewing transcripts repeatedly and documenting the preliminary codes. Subsequently, we must produce initial codes for the complete dataset. Step 3 involves a search for themes, Step 4 entails an evaluation of issues, and Step 5 culminates in the naming and defining of themes. Finally, a succinct excerpt pertinent to the literature is selected to generate an analytical report. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), these steps resemble a recursive process characterized by iterative movements rather than a strictly linear progression.

## 4. Analysis

The first theme discussed the support system used by the students and the sub-themes is family and community support and available university support system. The second theme details the change in life course being a student. The sub-theme is about life before motherhood and the second sub-theme is university life and motherhood.

### 4.1. Support

#### 4.1.1. Family and Community Support

When asked about the support provided by the family and community all the participants responded positively. Participant 1 commented:

Participant 1, Single-working mother, 28, 1

*“<Yeah> Alhamdulillah I am very much lucky to have friends and family who take care of me and my daughter. My parents are still my biggest support and yes I am many good friends. Sometimes I feel blessed (ummmhmmm). They all are my support system. Almost every student expressed a sign of relief for being supported by family and community. Another participant responded with joy that whenever they tell anyone about being a university student the other person encourages them, and it will help them to motivate”.*

She explains:

Participant 7, Married, Homemaker, 28, 2

*“Yes, they have helped me a lot in everything. They appreciate me always as I am getting education along with having two children. This is really quite nice actually (hmmm)”.*

Another participant expressed the similar response in getting support.

Participant 8, Married, Working, 31, 1

*“(Hmmm) Yes my husband, my friends and my mother were very much supportive and because of them I completed my degree. Everyone was supportive <yeah> and they encouraged me to complete my studies”.*

It is evident from the above extracts that support from friends and family comes first, in completing their higher education. All of the students responded with the similar answers of getting support and they also added that without their support they won't be able to get admission in university.

#### **4.1.2. University Support**

When asked about the support from university, almost every student mentioned that university itself doesn't provide any kind of support for student mothers. They have been treating them like a normal student. And it disappoints them much. One of the student argued that university should at least offer scholarship without asking, because most of the student mothers' especially single mother often faces financial difficulty. She commented:

Participant 2, Single-working mother, 43, 2

*“Being a mother it's a big no I got scholarship because my grades were good. (ummm) I think universities are not providing knowledge about scholarship to students and that is why students are not aware of it. <Yeah> that is also a big reason universities should tell themselves (ahaan) when a student pay a visit to university for admission. If that would happen many will start getting their education”.*

University culture is also the one reason added by the above student. She responded:

*“The university culture, when I was in Punjab University in IER department everybody there from dean to the peon of the department all of them know me and I knew all of them still when I visit everybody recognize me and pay Salam and all that. I believe that the university culture also depends on how they support you, either morally or financially in any way”.*

Another student also mentioned that support depends on the university culture.

Participant 4 commented:

Participant 4, Single-working mother, 37, 1

*“No not at all (sigh) some teachers were good some were not much supportive. All were same actually (hhh). They treated me like they treat normal students no specific help or supportive environment for me being a mother. I can say that it also depends on (ummm) university culture. May be some other universities can provide a supportive environment for mothers”.*

Students stated that university itself doesn't provide any support for student mothers, but the teachers are solely really supportive. Students discussed about the situations where they need some allowance, and that particular teacher has helped her a lot. One of the students shared her experience. Participant 3 commented:

Participant 3, Single-working mother, 37, 1

*“No... actually I never asked for a support so I have no idea whether they support or not but one thing I can my teacher were very lenient and have been very supportive. in way like Dr. S has always allowed me to leave without questioning and you know when I am taking classes at home and work from home so Dr. F allowed me to switch off my camera because at that time my daughter was clingy and she wouldn't leave me alone and she have to sit on my lap so Dr. F you know, her rules are very strict she don't allow usually to switch off the camera while taking class. This kind of support is provided by the university staff”.*

Participant 7, Married, Homemaker, 28, 2

*“As I mentioned above my teachers specially my advisor has accommodated me a lot they cooperated with me in switching my thesis into courses. And yes, they also gave me maternity leave when I was having my second child and it was so nice of them”.*

Two students from the interview discussed about being in a public university might be the reason for getting no support even from the teachers. She further explains it like:

Participant 8, Married, Working, 31, 1

*“No not at all they never compromised on anything for me being a mother. The rules are rules for everyone. I think if I studied at private university, they would have cooperated with me, but public university doesn't differentiate between a person just being a student and a person is student along being a mother. Public university teachers don't give extension in work, and they were strict to rules followed by themselves. So, there is no such support from university for me being a mother”.*

## **4.2. Change in Life Course**

### **4.2.1. University Life before Motherhood**

Participants reported that they had somehow idea about what university life would be like and they tried to manage it with their children and most students had plans of completing their qualifications and taking care of their immediate

families.

A student in an interview discussed her life before having a child.

Participant 1, Single-working mother, 28, 1

*“Well (ummm) when I was graduating from university of education, I was so much lively. I enjoyed that time at my fullest <yeah>. I was a social women I had a lot of friends even I participate in every activity going”.*

Another participant expressed the similar response. Participant 6 commented:

Participant 6, Married, Working, 29, 1

*“Before my child I have been so much active so much carefree and a lively person actually I am still lively but now I have a big reasonability of my child. When I was doing my masters, I used to bunk classes, hanging out with friends, visiting friends home and all those things a person can do to enjoy their life”.*

Another participant discussed about her life.

Participant 8, Married, Homemaker, 31, 1

*“Well... I have always been a toper and before my baby I was going fine I was enjoying plus having good grades in my academics but before my baby (he he he)”.*

#### **4.2.2. University Life and Motherhood**

Becoming a mother, especially for the first time, changes one's life and how each person tries to adjust to the new role depends on many factors. One of these factors is that how they are managing their life. Participant 2 Commented:

Participant 2, Single-working mother, 43, 1

*“Ummmm that was frustrating... frustrating in a sense that there were so many limitation in so many things probably... like you feel bounded means that is all you are not allowed to think out of the box so many time so when you are experienced enough and even at that age I am at those restrictions seems to be annoying but senior teachers are really good enough they allow you to explore whatever you want to do like specially at MPhil level. As far as my experience is concerned my mother was with me and she is old enough and as my children are grown up so it was like sometimes they pick me up and drop me off something like that I was not technology friendly like I don't know how to operate LMS and some other software and everything from assignments to your fee vouchers has been uploaded on the student portal since my daughter was studying in the same university so she was so much helpful for me so at this stage at MPhil level my children are grown up I am enjoying my time more and if my children were small it may be difficult for me to manage”.*

In the above extract participant 2 account shows that her children are grown up and she has less responsibility of children. Her children helped her a lot in studies and take care of her as well. She also added if her children would be small like when she was doing her Masters' she faced so many problems at that time she was a mother of toddlers, same is the situation if know she would not be enjoying her university and studies.

Another participant responded with the similar response.

Participant 4, Single-working mother, 37, 1

*“When I was doing my master’s my child was two years old at that time my problems were more because he was at his growing age and I was the only one to take care of him I was the only provider, he stay with me all the time and he even doesn’t allow me to study either so what I did that I just jot down the points and bring out the other material myself so I haven’t studied in my master’s like I studied in MPhil the reason is that he is Masha Allah grown up and his age is 13 now so he know how to take care of himself and even sometimes mine. When I was doing my master’s I feed him and take care of his everything this time in my MPhil I found myself quite comfortable like he take care of his things even if food is ready he can warm it and take out in a plate and eat, does his homework alone so these small things helped me to focus on my studies”.*

Another factor discussed by some participants that they have become time-bounded and restricted by their duties. Participants also share that they just want to come back home as early as class ends. They haven’t visited their whole university either. Participant 8 discussed her experience as below:

Participant 8, Married, Working, 31, 1

*“Ummm... After the birth of my child, I became so busy in my life and I wasn’t having enough time to study even my grades were bit disturbed because of my time which I wasn’t able to manage. Secondly, I belong to a nuclear family so all the households from cooking to cleaning along with taking care of my child and your husband’s duties everything was on my shoulder so you know I had to do all those stuff first and when I got time then I studied. Being a university student wasn’t joyful for me after being a mother. When you have responsibilities how can you enjoy your life with friends? <Yeah>. Now I just visit university for taking my class and always in a hurry to go back home for my child. While doing my thesis I always tried to send my supervisor an email and avoid visiting him in university”.*

Another participant shared her similar experience after having a child. Participant 9 commented:

Participant 9, Married, Working, 38, 2

*“You know I didn’t have time to visit my whole university (sigh). When I was at university, I forcefully pay my attention at my studies because my mind was always stuck behind my children and I used to think about them all the time. So being a student I was just having my classes and coming back straight to home because my children were waiting for me. I missed my life when I was student before marriage or having child. (I wish could go back hhhhh)”.*

Here the results shows that all the student mothers including, single-working mothers, Married-working mothers are getting education for their better future. On the other case, time-management and no child-care was the biggest challenge for all the student mothers. There was full support provided by their family in order to complete their higher education whereas, university doesn’t provide any sort of support for student mothers (all the students reported that teachers were supportive but university itself wasn’t). Life before motherhood in university was

so much better and joyful for all the mothers, there was no responsibility on them except studies which they were easily managing, whereas university life and motherhood has create so many complication in their life, they have become mentally stressed and couldn't manage their studies with their family and other responsibilities.

## 5. Discussion

Relationships between family and peer support were highly required for both intent to complete and completion of their degrees (Williams, 2018). With this challenging academic life, the only thing with motivated the student mothers to complete their degree was the support provided by the student's mother and husband. Without the support they could not have done this. However, some student mothers reported that, if they don't find their husband supportive, they could not have applied for the university. Since many student mothers living with their husband only find themselves comfortable, with the support of their husband. When they have to visit university, their husband stays at home with their child.

Surprisingly, all the student mothers who interviewed in this study choose the weekend program. As student mothers have to visit university on weekends, so, they were not much worried about their children, because they have their husband at home to take care. Besides that, single mothers found their parental family, siblings and mother supportive. All the student mothers reported that, they were not worried about their child as they believe that their family might be taking care of their child more than they could do alone. Student mothers also found their classmates supportive and some of them also addressed that their teachers have cooperated with them whenever they need help. All of the mothers, whether single or married discussed that they found themselves lucky, whenever they tell anyone, they are attaining higher education, everybody from the community and family encourage them, motivate them as they are handling a big responsibility of a child along with studies.

University life and motherhood was the most challenging things which student mothers faced. This issue has been highlighted in Chapter 2 of literature review. Student mothers always found themselves in a hurry to go back to home. They were not attentive during lectures; they never took part in any extra-curricular activity. Since, some student mothers discussed that in between they regret their decision as they took admission very late. They should have start it bit earlier. The responsibility of a child, family along with their studies has ruined their academic life. Some mothers discussed that they were very good students before child and marriage, now they are not enjoying their studies and their grades are also disturbed. The results of this study identified that life of student mothers become stressful after having a child. However, these challenges push them closer to complete their higher education as well. This study ultimately connects every student mother's intrinsic motivation. If those mothers don't have inner motivation, they could not have done that.

## 6. Conclusion

The research specifically identifies several factors that complicate the lives of student mothers, especially as they balance parenting with education and often employment. The research addresses the motivations for returning to education, such as the pursuit of a better future, financial stability, and the desire to complete unfinished endeavors, alongside the significant challenges faced, including insufficient funds, poor time management, and inadequate childcare options. In comparison to married women, single mothers had greater challenges since they had to balance financial provisions for their families with household responsibilities. In the absence of institutional assistance from universities, the support networks of wives, relatives, and sympathetic teachers enabled them to persist in their education.

The study advocates for systemic changes such as improved institutional support for student mothers, including on-campus childcare services, financial aid programs, and flexible academic schedules. Universities should implement policies that accommodate parenting students, such as extended deadlines, hybrid learning options, and dedicated support networks. Additionally, increased awareness and training for faculty on the challenges faced by student mothers can foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

The data indicate that these issues substantially impacted family life, academic achievement, and general health. The undergraduate years were unencumbered and joyous before motherhood; yet, as mothers, they are now inundated with responsibilities, leaving scant time for social engagements and extracurricular activities. Mothers of older children encountered fewer difficulties than those with younger children.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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