

**Family and institutional background: Experiences of undergraduate students in relation to role attainment and academic performance in Masvingo, Zimbabwe**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined how family and institutional background influence selected Zimbabwean undergraduate students' role attainment and academic performance. A qualitative descriptive case study was used to collect data. Thirty undergraduate students and five lecturers were randomly selected from a population of about four hundred and fifty people. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from lecturers and student participants, respectively. The findings indicated that family and institutional background negatively influenced the students' ability to achieve academic achievement. Most undergraduate students could not perform their duties to their best ability due to lack of resources. Institutional background was also not favourable for students from families with a low socio-economic status as a lot of consumables were to be sourced by students. In addition, the study also revealed that staying away from campuses caused much strain. The study recommends that undergraduate students receive special counselling related to role attainment and achievement. Counsellors may encourage families to treat student role as a priority in academic endeavour and ensure maximum support for them.*

**Key words:** Family background, institutional background, role attainment, academic performance, undergraduate student.

**Introduction and background to the study**

When students enter a higher education institution such as a university, fear of failure is caused by role difficulties and institutional barriers such as family structure, social structure and the university environment. According to Seshamani and Mwamba (2010) these factors form a web of acuity, constraint and role demands. The social structure of the society determines how rich or poor the community is. Family background is a significant factor in the students' ability

to achieve their academic pursuits (Backhaus, 2010; Nweke, Ihejirika & Deebom, 2018). Uwaifo (2008) and Fairchild (2003) argue that some other variables can be negotiated, but family structure and income levels are very difficult to handle. This means that if a student is from a poor background, it is not easy to change the status in order to meet the role demands because all roles require resources to be successfully performed. In most cases, basic needs such as food and health take priority over educational needs. Such circumstances have the potential to amplify the level of strain which university students experience since peoples' lifestyles and the environment in which they live sturdily influence their health.

Students' education is closely related to their life chances, income and well-being since adequate academic preparations, high aspirations and family support are easier to come by if the family has educational and economic resources (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayel, 2006). Aliyu (2016) posits that social class is an important factor that affects the individual's and group's access to resources. Thus, it is important to have a clear understanding of what may benefit or hold back the academic achievement of individuals. There are several pertinent areas that are most commonly linked to academic performance and these include student role performance and family factors.

Family and societal values generally define the academic success of university students in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular (Seshamani & Shalumba, 2010; Kapungu, 2007; Idris, 2011; Barry, 2006). Family values are significant components of belief systems and they are the highly perceptible ingredients that assist to bind members of social groups and culture together in their universal belief systems. This makes every member adhere to the social group's perceptions. Family issues have been identified as factors that may impede the academic success of most university students (Akampurira, 2017; Skinner, 2009; Ford, 2002). This is so since Africans believe parents are the custodians of the family, especially women. Thus, married female students may experience conjugal strain that may negatively affect their academic success or marriages, or both, because of their belief systems.

One's behaviour can determine whether one leads a healthy or unhealthy life. This may simply mean that the way one lives one's life can lead to manageable role attainment or exposure to too much stress. This may lead to psychological and physiological tension and consequently patho-physiological changes. This, therefore, can directly and/or indirectly determine the individual's well-being. De Bruyn (2010) suggests that the wellness of an individual

determines academic engagement. This may imply that if one is not mentally stable, it is very difficult to concentrate and perform well in academic work. Academic engagement involves one major key issue to academic success, namely; attentiveness.

Marmot and Wilkinson (1999) support the idea put forward by Merton (1968) that social structure has a bearing on the nature of life led by an individual though in a modified manner. For example, students from well-to-do families are likely not vulnerable to bad role attainment since, in most cases; they have all the necessary resources to meet their role demands. The social and college environments directly lead to certain role behaviours when fulfilling duties (Li, 2016; Okesina, 2018; Plageman, 2011). Normally, because of perceived non-availability of resources, undergraduate students may be forced to achieve the goals through unapproved means. In this current study, the use of the social determinants of health was deemed appropriate since Zimbabwean university students' lives are embedded in the Zimbabwean social structure which has many problems like any other developing country.

Social Determinants of Health Model

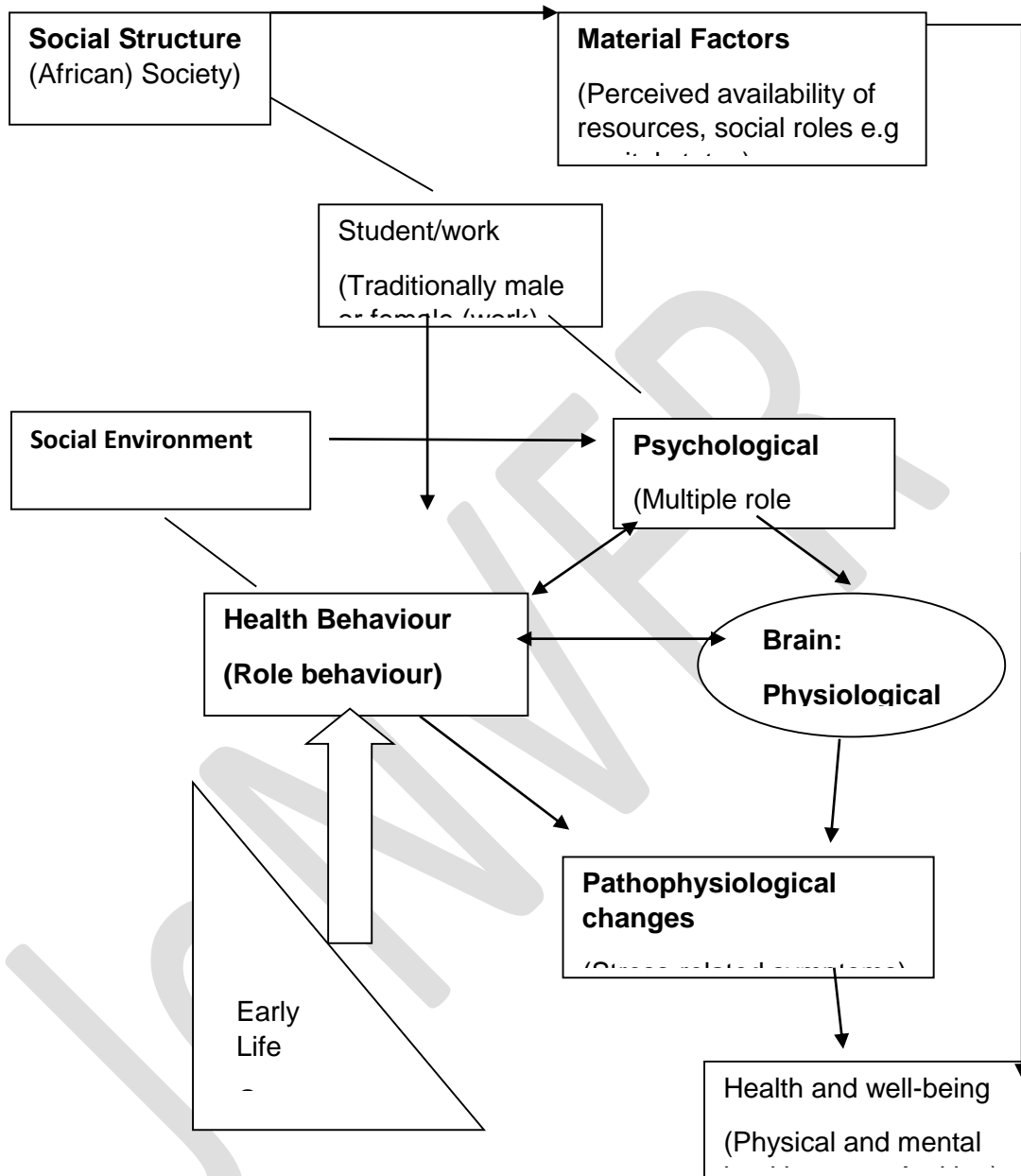


Figure. 1: Adapted from Marmot and Wilkinson (1999) Social Determinants of Health Model.

The social determinants of the health model above consider the personal and social factors that determine a person’s health status. The model shows that a person’s position within a society matters to their health behaviour. Hopkins-Chadwick (2005) asserts that three main alleyways exist, namely; material circumstances that directly relate to well-being (socio-economic status

and availability of resources), social and work environment that move through psychological factors, and health-related behaviours. Overall, early life experiences, cultural and genetic factors act in the model, hence, the need to have a study on the influence of undergraduate students' background.

The model above (Fig 1) clearly shows the relationships between one's background (early life) and one's lifestyle. Social determinants of the health model bring in the significant aspect of socialisation in the development of an individual's lifestyle. Socialisation is a process which takes place within a background (social structure) such as a cultural setting. In the context of this study's African society, being male or female traditionally has a bearing on how one behaves (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Schineider, 2018). What an individual is expected to do influences his or her principles. It is also the social structure which determines the availability of resources and nature of social roles. However, this may lead to role strain, especially among women in African societies where gender roles are key elements in shaping one's life. Traditionally, male or female related duties may lead to multiple roles especially in women (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Kadenyi & Kamunyu, 2006).

It is against this background that the following objectives guided the study:

- 1) Establish the impact of family background on undergraduate students' role attainment
- 2) Explore the influence of institutional background on students' academic performance

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative approach and a descriptive case study design. The use of qualitative research allowed the researchers to gain an integrated overview of the undergraduate students' experiences including their perceptions regarding role attainment. Finlay (2009) describes qualitative research as understanding the meaning participants have constructed. Stratified purposeful sampling was used to select thirty-second-year undergraduate student participants and five lecturers from a population of around three hundred and seventy people. In this study, the University departments were the sites within which the population was grouped as this created a sample which mirrored the five departments in the

School of Education. The departments were different particularly in the age groups of their undergraduate students and the peculiarities of modules in the departments. The researchers chose to collect data using face-to-face in-depth interviews for lecturers and focus group discussions for student participants as these required no special facilities and rich data were collected. Since fewer participants were required, scheduling was more flexible and there were fewer distractions. Marshall and Rossman (2011) affirm that instruments combined together help as a check and balance so as to improve on the trustworthiness of the study.

### **Ethical issues**

Research ethical issues were observed at all stages of the study with particular attention to consent and confidentiality (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). All the participants voluntarily participated in this study. Anonymity was enhanced during data collection by using codes for student participants and pseudonyms for lecturer participants. The information provided by participants did not reveal their identity. The essence of anonymity in the research study is that the information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity (Gilbert, 2011; Silverman, 2010).

### **Data analysis**

Data were thematically analysed. Emerging themes were presented and analysed according to research objectives (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **Influence of family background on the fulfilment of undergraduate student roles**

Responses from the student participants indicated that a good number of variables were listed as factors linked to family backgrounds and academic performance. These included the socio-economic status and education level of family members. The factors had an influence on the information and skills used, resource availability as well as moral support from the family.

Generally, most student participants were from families with a low socio-economic status which was below the poverty datum line.

### **Influence of educational level of members on students' role fulfilment**

On the question of whether undergraduate students' family backgrounds gave students access to facts and information that were useful in their students' lives, the majority indicated that their family backgrounds did not equip them for the future. Only five out of the thirty participants indicated that their family members were educated and that these were their role models and sources of inspiration. Thus, the education levels of parents and siblings have an impact on undergraduate students' academic performance as these influence the family values and norms. The following excerpts illustrate that the majority of undergraduate students did not get any useful information from their family background, which is important in students' lives.

One male student responded thus:

*Most of my family members are not educated; I really need close relatives who give me advice in my academic life (FGD 1- 3).*

Another student said the same point in a different manner:

*My background is so poor, my parents are uneducated so they do not know the worthy of me being at college. They do not care much about my situation here at college, for example, they don't mind about my welfare here even whether I collect my results or not (FGD 2- 10).*

The few students who had family backgrounds which seemed to provide useful facts and information revealed that they were assisted with subject content knowledge by their family members and this helped them to manage college stress.

One had this to say:

*I am encouraged by my family members who all attended tertiary education. They give me general knowledge and guidance which helps me to cope with college stress like avoiding procrastination and revising all the work covered in each single day (FGD 2- 12).*

Another one had this to say:

*My family members know the importance of education so they encourage me to work hard and my father promised to reward me every semester if I attain good academic grades (FGD 4- 22).*

Data from the lecturers indicated that some of the undergraduate students come from backgrounds which were so poor that they came into contact with computers for the first time at university. This means they needed more time to learn how to use technology which is essential for their studies. This finding is captured in the following excerpt:

*To be very honest, um..., at certain times you wonder how these students don't know most of the basic concepts and computer skills in this technological era, which we expect everyone to be acquainted with. From what students narrate, it seems their family members don't know what happens at college and have nothing to offer to their student family members (L- Dr Tee).*

### **The effect of social and economic status on students' role execution**

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The students' socio-economic background was also seen to affect student academic performance. The few (two students, one foreign and one local out of the thirty students) from well-to-do families did not have to struggle to get tuition fees and rentals. They also had adequate learning resources like laptops and smart phones and some could afford to buy textbooks which were not available in the university library. One student lamented:

*It's very stressful if you want to perform some tasks and you do not have adequate financial support. My academic life is sometimes a disgrace because I come from a very poor family background. The late payment of my tuition fees hindered me to access the library for research hence failure to meet submission deadlines (FGD 2- 8).*

Another student had this to say:

*My academic performance is negatively affected by lack of money to fulfil my duties both at college and at home. Sometimes I struggle to make ends meet (FGD 4- 19).*

Responses from student participants also revealed that they were struggling to meet their role demands due to lack of resources. The following response confirms the results:

*Our poor backgrounds can't supply the basic needs of my life including those needed at college. Every time, we beg other students to use their laptops (sometimes five people relying on one laptop) and phones for school work and it is embarrassing and we always submit our assignments very late (FGD 1- 5).*

Lecturers gave similar responses to those of undergraduate students. It was evident that all the lecturer participants were convinced that students' economic status had some influence on student role fulfilment. One lecturer pointed that:

*So far we have received memos from the department to accept hand written assignments from students because some cannot afford printing them so it puts us under pressure to read different handwritings. This limits the number of assignments I give to students because marking hand written assignments is very strenuous (L- Dube).*

Another lecturer bemoaned that:

*Some students, from the general outlook such as dry lips, chapped skins and general appearance show that they are stressed somehow or they are from poor backgrounds (L-Jojo).*

Most undergraduate student participants in this study accepted that they were negatively affected or embarrassed because they could not meet their expected role demands. Very few indicated that they were socially comfortable as they were not married and had fairly good family backgrounds economically. The following responses indicate that undergraduate students were negatively affected socially and in turn, academically as the tendency for individuals is to first attend to social issues before school work.

*Lack of basic needs disturbs my studies because they affect my daily life when performing duties. I will be focusing on family problems rather than performing my student duties (FGD 1- 2).*

*Sometimes I get socially embarrassed when I execute the student duties of the day at the same time failing to meet family demands. It affects me psychologically (FGD 3- 15).*

The study revealed that all the lecturers believed that students were socially affected by their resource situations and social problems. Thus, in the case of undergraduate students, basic needs and time are the major impediments as students have assignment deadlines and examinations to write at stipulated dates. The following responses illustrate the findings:

*Truly, in all my classes, more complaints are from married students especially women. They always complain of lack of basic needs to fulfil role demands. Thus, every time they have genuine excuses for coming late for lectures, failure to meet assignments deadlines, as well as for not being prepared for class presentations (L- Jojo).*

*I think students' situations are worsened by the economic challenges which the country is facing. Otherwise, if students had good financial positions, their problems would have been solved easily and quickly. (Laughing) Isn't it the Bible says money answers all problems? (L- Mandi).*

### ***Intervention by family members***

All undergraduate student and lecturer participants indicated that families had to take part in the undergraduate student academic learning process for optimum academic achievements. They mentioned that families need to give students material, moral and social support. Many students were from very poor economic backgrounds and some with uneducated family members and broken families. All these limitations show that undergraduate students already have role overload, mental and physical stress before they come to university, hence positive support from family members was essential. The following were their perceptions on possible solutions:

*People at home should not as far as possible call me back when there are problems, they must try to solve them during my absence (FGD 2- 8).*

*There is need for my family members to morally support and improve financial support for basic needs as college financial needs are endless. Money is needed to buy food, photocopy and type assignments (FGD 3- 13).*

Similar sentiments were echoed on the issue of social support from family members by another respondent thus:

*There is need for maximum social support from family members, especially educated ones as they bring ideas and solutions to academic problems. This is very important as it reduces academic stress (FGD 5- 28).*

### **Negative effects of the non-availability of institutional resources on the fulfilment of undergraduate students' roles**

In this theme, the researchers describe participants' responses to the nature of support that they received from the university, their families and society at large to fulfil their student roles. The greatest number of undergraduate students in this study stated that they need support from all angles so as to perform all their roles comfortably in a more efficient and effective way. Many undergraduate student participants stated that they need support from the university, their families, friends and lecturers to fulfil their role demands.

### **Inadequate institutional, financial and human resource support**

The majority of undergraduate students generally agreed that their institution was facing economic challenges which were also affecting the nation at large. Despite these challenges, most undergraduate students described the education they were receiving as ranging from fair to good. However, they noted that there were areas which were under resourced such as finance and human resources. The issues of exorbitant tuition fees, lack of student grants and the high student-lecturer ratio were raised as major concerns.

*I suggest the government give us grants through our institution so that we are cushioned financially and this will help us to get the basic needs. The level of economic challenges need some form of intervention (FGD 2- 8).*

*The fees are too high considering the economic situation in our country. It was better if these thousands of dollars are inclusive of food and accommodation. Financial stress is the biggest challenge we experience as undergraduate students (FGD 5-28).*

Besides the financial problem, undergraduate students had mixed feelings about other support services offered at the university. Some criticised the manner in which the university is structured and how the student affairs department operates. However, some had good comments about counselling services and some other services offered at the college. The following mixed feelings confirm the results:

*The quality of education we are receiving is second to none but co-ordination needs to be improved, especially the timetable which is too overloaded. It does not cater for tea and lunch breaks(FGD 1 -5).*

*Our university is fairly good considering the economic situation of the country but the student-lecturer ratio is abnormal in most courses, especially the research project. I feel we are not getting the best from our lecturers. (FGD 3 -12).*

*Student affairs help a lot especially the counselling section. I was touched when they took care of a fellow student who was staying in the street because he could not afford rentals (FGD 4 -20).*

### **Non-provision of infrastructure for learning, accommodation and inconsistent transport services for students**

Undergraduate students revealed that their institutional learning resources were not comfortable at all. They complained that the number of students per class and the size of lecture rooms as well as the library resources were not compatible with the size of the student body. Accommodation facilities, as well as the issue of transport to and from college campuses were also a cause for concern. Many students pointed out that they travelled to different learning venues in a single day. The following excerpt illustrates the findings:

*The major challenge is that of resources such as learning space, getting current library books, internet facilities and computers to cater for some of us who don't have laptops. We scramble for the few computers in the library (FGD 2 -7).*

*I am strained by having to move from one learning venue to the other every day. Being a multi-campus institution, I think the timetable must allow us to spend a day at one venue as the timetable does not give time to allow for movements from one venue to the other (FGD 4 -19).*

*The university must provide adequate accommodation facilities and learning resources so that we have less stress in terms of learning resources and comfortable learning environment (FGD 5 -30).*

The views of the majority of the undergraduate student participants concerning transport services were all the same. They all indicated that, despite the shuttle system which moves around the university's campuses, they still had difficulties accessing the different campuses of the university. The following quotes corroborate the findings:

One male student said:

*The institution seems to be supportive but we are too many to cater for especially in regards to the transport issue. Most students get into lectures very late due to transport challenges (FGD 1 -3)*

A female student echoed the same sentiments:

*Every day we face challenges to and from college so we get out of our rooms very early and come back very late and very tired because most of the times we walk as the college buses are not reliable (FGD 5 -25)*

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings from both instruments clearly demonstrated that undergraduate students and lecturers were aware of the impact of the educational level of family members on academic performance. The findings revealed that most of the undergraduate students were from families which could not help them access useful information and skills to enable them to fulfil their roles as students. Marmot and Wilkinson (1999) posit that social structures determine the nature of the individual's future life. This is closely linked to the values and norms of the family as students exhibit what they have brought from home and make use of it to enhance their learning. These current study findings concur with Li and Qui's (2018) and Uwaifo's (2008) studies that concluded that the psychosocial, spiritual and moral foundations of the student are laid down by the family background as this influences academic engagement and consequently academic achievement.

The findings on the educational level of family members revealed that some undergraduate students had siblings and parents who were not educated and because of that students did not have the background knowledge of what happens at university and the requirements thereof. From the student narratives, the researchers concluded that some families did not even appreciate the importance of providing the basic needs required by these students. Missing lectures was nothing to them and they did not worry much about it. It also emerged from the results that some of these uneducated parents were reluctant to attend to students' needs, for example, purchasing laptops and smart phones for them so that they could be fully equipped for learning in this technological era. This may simply mean that quite a number of parents are still lagging behind and are relaxed when it comes to the needs of undergraduate students.

These findings are in line with those of Akampurira (2017) and Mamhute (2011) who argue that students who do everything for themselves have educational challenges because they are the ones who clear the educational path for themselves. This is burdensome for them.

The affirmations from students and lecturers clearly indicated that, due to a lack of basic requirements, most students were struggling to fulfill their student roles effectively. The researchers interpreted these responses to imply that most undergraduates were not comfortable in fulfilling their student roles because those roles required resources to fulfill them. Thus, it may be concluded that students from better resourced families performed better than their counterparts from poor families. This may be because the former have the basic resources needed and only struggle to manage their time to execute the duties, while the latter have nothing. This supports Azhar, Nadeem, Naz and Sameen (2013) who argue that the poor socio-economic backgrounds of some students contribute to a lack of resources. This has an impact on the students' psychological, emotional and social well-being. Undergraduate students from underprivileged backgrounds spend time worrying about how their classmates consider them and this impacts negatively on their academic engagement.

Undergraduate students who participated in this study pointed out that lack of resources resulted in social embarrassment for them. The majority emphasised that they felt very low when they failed to register for modules in time. These feelings reduced their self-esteem and, consequently, led to non-participation in class and poor academic performance. These findings reflect a high level of anxiety among the undergraduate students. Dobson (2012) asserts that anxiety leads to poor academic achievement and self-efficacy.

It also emerged from this study that most undergraduate students spent a considerable amount of time sourcing funds for basic needs and general upkeep. The researchers are of the view that this role is too challenging for students, making it incompatible with their main role as students, especially considering the economic challenges that Zimbabwe and the region at large are experiencing. This finding is consistent with Mamhute's (2011) who posits that all students who are self-sponsored use most of their time raising money. Since this cannot be done overnight, students' eating and study time are reduced. This implies that too much involvement



in other duties compromises students' academic performance and leads to physical and mental fatigue.

The findings on unavailability of institutional resources revealed that the unavailability and inadequacy of resources negatively affected the performance of undergraduate students. Lack of materials and human resources were a major impediment to role execution as many duties require resources such as money, time and energy. The undergraduate students' academic engagement was, therefore, reduced as the study time was used for resource mobilisation to prepare or accomplish their duties, be it at home or at college. This finding on the inadequacy of resources is consistent with O'Brien's (2008) observation that scarcity of resources leads to role overload and, consequently, role strain due to insufficient role preparation. Thus, resources should be available well in advance as it is less stressful for students to cope with multiple roles within a good resource situation.

Regarding institutional financial provisions, the study revealed that the undergraduate students' academic performance was significantly influenced by financial shortages as most students complained that government grants were not available. Students also pleaded for the inclusion of meals in tuition fees. Most participants who were involved in this study indicated that it was very stressful to do a part-time job or be fully employed, in order to raise funds for tuition fees, rentals and general upkeep, while at college. They all indicated that they were physically exhausted before they even sat down at their study desks, thus negatively impacting on their concentration span and academic performance. The finding echoes IRIN's (2011) argument that it is difficult to concentrate before the basic needs are satisfied. Thus, money is needed to access all the basic needs required by a student to fulfill his/her role and execute all the other social obligations.

One other interesting trend which was noticed by the current researchers was that most students were not satisfied with the human resource provisions. The student-lecturer ratio was said to be uncharacteristically high in some courses leaving some students with the feeling that they were not getting the best from their lecturers. This simply means that most student-lecturer

relationships were untenable because of the large numbers of students, thus, negatively impacting on lecturers' ability to do their work. The finding was supported by lecturers who also lamented on the issue of numbers which they argued was not compatible with the allocated time and teaching venues. Similarly, Mohanty (2007) revealed that the high teacher/lecturer-student ratio affects both parties' competence and motivation negatively, leading to inefficiency and poor academic achievement. In such a scenario, one can argue that undergraduate students' learning is compromised because of the high student-lecturer ratios.

This study revealed that learning facilities, especially learning venues, the library space and books were inadequate for the number of students who were supposed to make use of those services. Learning facilities are crucial for academic achievement as the learning environment must be conducive to learning, in order to achieve optimum academic performance (Abd-Elmoteleb & Saha, 2013). Lack of well-equipped physical amenities such as lecture rooms were also mentioned among major challenges at the university as the study established that most lecture rooms were too small for classes involved. Marmot and Wilkinson (1999)'s model highlights the link among social structure, resource situation and psychological stress.

The shortage of accommodation was also identified as a major challenge for undergraduate students. The majority of students stayed outside the university campus and some had to travel long distances. This negatively impacted on their academic engagement. Most students who stayed outside campus also complained about loss of time during their journey to the campus, food preparation and maintenance of quarters. These problems also lead to physical and psychological strain which disturbs academic engagement and, consequently, academic performance of students. Marmot and Wilkinson's (1999) model highlights the perceived availability of accommodation as an important determinant of the individual's well-being. The findings of this study support Wakefield (2013) who states that healthy accommodation and facilities are some of the key factors which influence academic performance. Thus, overall, environmental needs must be adequately provided for as the living environment is critical to a healthy body and mind.

It also emerged from the study that, besides the financial stress caused by students trying to source tuition fees and rentals, some undergraduate students needed transport fares as the transport system was inconsistent and unavailable some of the days. This increased mental stress, as well as the physical strain caused by travelling long distances. Lack of a reliable transport system leads to half-absenteeism due to tardiness. The finding resonates with Pearlin, Lieberman, Managhan and Mullan's (1981) sociological process of stress, which postulates that life events come as stressors and they act as barriers to self-concept and consequently affect academic performance. This implies that undergraduate students who get into classrooms late develop anxiety which leads to stress. This, in turn, impacts negatively on academic engagement. The findings of the study are in line with McLeod and Lively's (2007) study which argues that individuals, in this case, undergraduate students, need to adjust themselves to new life conditions so that constraints do not manifest in thought and actions as this disrupts learning.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that family and institutional background influence the academic engagement and consequently role achievement. Undergraduate students need financial and moral support from their families as well as from their institutional structure.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The current study made recommendations for family members, friends and college mates and government as well as guidelines for undergraduate students so as to achieve their optimum performance.

#### **Recommendations to family members**

The student role should be treated as a priority by the whole family. Academic achievement benefits all family members, so there is need to co-operate accordingly through sharing the burden of being a student. The family resource support system, from the little they have would be fair if they prioritised the needs of undergraduate students such as laptops, printers, transport fares and even food. There is need for families to boost the self-esteem of the students by encouraging them when they face challenges and also by giving them incentives when they attain good grades. Family members should not pressure students unnecessarily. For example, if there are issues which need attention in the family, the family members at home should try to solve them without calling them.

### **Recommendations to friends and college mates**

A few recommendations were made on how college mates and friends could improve undergraduate students' role fulfilment. College mates can provide moral and social support through group discussions, sharing notes and textbooks. Helping those in need of materials to fulfil the student role could also reduce student stress, as well as physical and mental problems through provision of basic needs like food. Friends should, where possible, support undergraduate students both materially and morally to enhance student role execution.

### ***Government resource support***

The country's economic climate requires poor families to be empowered through donor agencies so as to assist undergraduate students, especially females. This may help reduce student role stress and prostitution as all duties are executed through use of material, financial and time resources. The student role has its challenges which include very tight schedules. Thus, having adequate resources ready for role performance might help ensure efficiency, accuracy and less strain.

### **Guidelines to undergraduate students**

The study recommends the following management skills as guidelines to promote undergraduate students' role achievement:

(a) It is important that undergraduate students should not be easily moved by situations as the student role entails a lot of things which may cause anxiety. Students should avoid being too sensitive to petty issues at home and they should treat college and home issues separately.

(b) Students should share or seek advice from relevant people when in need of help. They should avoid playing their friendship roles only on social networking sites (Lavy & Sand, 2012). Undergraduate students who leave home for the first time should not be too anxious

about establishing new friends as this may affect academic commitment and divert their attention from their studies.

(c) Undergraduate students, especially those who leave home for the first time should be taught how to manage their finances. Similarly, some adults need to learn to prioritise students' needs so that they do not end up needing extra tuition.

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