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COLLEGE STUDENT & PARENTING:
HOW MANY HOURS DOES THIS TAKE?

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master's of Science

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Pittsburg, KS

May 2017

COLLEGE STUDENT & PARENTING:
HOW MANY HOURS DOES THIS TAKE?

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COLLEGE STUDENT & PARENTING: HOW MANY HOURS DOES THIS TAKE?

An Abstract of the Thesis
by Lynn Riggs

Nontraditional students with children are a growing population within the college and university environment (Ross-Gordon, Jovita 2011). Many questions about the struggles these students endure to achieve a degree have yet to be discovered. The aim of this exploratory descriptive study is to examine the relationships between the average study times of nontraditional students with children, versus students without children who attend Pittsburg State University (PSU) in the Spring 2017 semester. Data for this study was collected through a survey instrument which was administered through Survey Monkeytm. The instrument was delivered via the PSU Mr.Bulke email system to the population of students who were studied. A sample of the population was identified by those participants who voluntarily consented to participate in this inquiry. This study showed that the number of hours for study reported by the PSU students ranged from 20 hours to 29 hours per week. This range was significant since it was reported to be the same number of hours for each of the groups studied for this inquiry. It is the hope that the results of this study will help PSU faculty and instructors in supporting students who are considered nontraditional and have children.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Problem Statement	3
Research Questions	3
Definition of Terms	3
Delimitations	4
Limitations	5
Basic Assumptions	5
Significance of the Problem	6
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
Related Theory	7
Social Exchange Theory	7
Nontraditional Student By Definition & Criteria	9
Nontraditional Student	9
Characteristic of College Dropouts	10
Average Recommended Time of Study	13
Barriers of Nontraditional Student with Children	13
Summary	17
III. METHODOLOGY	18
Research Questions	18
Research Design	19
Population & Sampling	20
Implementation	21
Data Collection	22
Participant Demographic	23
IV. RESULTS	25
Participant Family Information	25
Ages of Children	27
After School Activities	28
Student-Parent Children Activities	29
Student-Parent Employment	30
Educational Credit Hours	31
Hours Applied to Study	33

V.	Conclusion, Implications for Practice, & Recommendations	35
	Conclusions	36
	Implications for Practice	38
	Recommendations	38
	REFERENCES	40
	APPENDIX	47

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Population Sample Demographic Variables	24
2. Participant Data Representing the Number of Children That Live in the Home Full-Time or Part-Time	26
3. Ages of Children Reported By All Respondents	27
4. After School Activities Reported by Respondents	29
5. PSU Student-Parent Range of Hours for Activities Attended With or For Children Outside of Course Work	30
6. Respondents Range of Hours of Employment	31
7. Pittsburg State University Students & Student-Parents 2017 Spring Semester Reported Credit Hours	33
8. Participants Reported Applied Hours To Study for 2017 Spring Semester	34

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. A Conceptual Model of Nontraditional Student Attrition	12
2. “Surviving College”	14
3. Conceptual model of how postsecondary education affects family formation and stability	16

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Over the years, college atmosphere has changed. Before World War I, students were young, and from wealthy families. Post-war prosperity and a fresh perspective on higher education caused college attendance to nearly double between 1920 and 1930 (Archibald, 2002; History, 2008). After World War II, the G.I Bill provided a way for soldiers to go to college and have the total cost of a full-time education for as many as three years (Ross-Gordon, Jovita 2011, Winter; Washington Jr, n.d.; Choy, 2002; Archibold, 2002; History, 2008).

The number of colleges and universities almost doubled between 1950 and 1990; this which led to the growth in numbers of, nontraditional students (Lazerson, 1998; History, 2008). Nontraditional students will be classified for this study, as a person that falls into one of the following criteria: (A) Did not enroll into postsecondary education by at least one year following high school; (B) Attends part-time for at least part of the academic year; (C) Works full-time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled; (D) Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining financial aid eligibility; (E) Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but sometimes others); (F) Is a single parent (has dependents and is either not married or married but living separately); (G) Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high

school completion certificate or did not finish high school) (Ross-Gordon, Jovita 2011, Winter; Washington Jr, n.d.; Choy, 2002).

In 2013, the National Center for Educational Statistics projected a 15 percent increase in college and university enrollment, from 2010 to 2021. That would mean 24 million students would be enrolled by 2021 (NCES, 2013). In 2008, the National Center for Educational Statistics said, 17.5 million people enrolled in colleges and university that 20.6 million were projected to enroll in 2016. In 2006, the degrees conferred were projected to be more than 2.9 million. This number is expected to reach nearly 3.5 million (NCES, 2008; History, 2008). Thirty-eight percent of the 3.5 million students projected to confer are estimated to be nontraditional students (Ross-Gordon, Jovita 2011, Winter; Washington Jr, n.d.; Choy, 2002).

The students with children have unique challenges, normally, obligations, responsibilities, and time limitations that traditional college students do not have. Of all “highly nontraditional” students, 80% have children or dependents (Washington Jr, n.d.; Choy, 2002).

Peterson (2014) studied nontraditional students in a community college. This study is based on her suggestions for future research. In her Dissertation Peterson suggested that this was the first study of community—college student-parents enrolled in an associate-degree program who had at least no child not yet in a K-12 educational setting. Based on the findings of Peterson’s (2014 study, “Nontraditional Community-College Students with Children: What It Means to Persist to Degree.”

PROBLEM STATEMENT

As nontraditional students start to increase in numbers, a large proportion is reported to have children or dependents (Choy, 2002). This means the responsibilities of children affects the amount of time the students will have to study for classes. The purpose of this exploratory descriptive study was to investigate the range of hours nontraditional Pittsburg State University (PSU) students with children, have available to study for classes per week versus those without children. This study focused on students that have children, and that are classified as financially independent per the PSU and FAFSA guidelines.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to determine how many hours nontraditional PSU students with children, have available to study for classes a week versus those without children. The following are the questions to be addressed during this study:

1. What are the demographics of nontraditional PSU students with children?
2. What is the range of hours of nontraditional PSU students with children have to study?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Nontraditional:

Classified as a person that falls into one criterion:

1. At least 24 years of age
2. Married

3. A Graduate or Professional student
4. A Veteran
5. A member of the Armed Forces
6. An Orphan
7. A Ward of the State
8. Someone with legal dependents other than a spouse
9. An emancipated minor
10. Someone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

(Glossary, n.d.)

Parent:

Legal Definition of *Parent* (n.d., 2016)

- a. a person who begets or brings forth offspring; especially: the natural parents of a child born of their marriage
- b. a person who legally adopts a child
- c. a person or entity that owes to a child a legally imposed duty of support
- d. a stepparent where designated by statute

DELIMITATIONS

The study was limited to Undergraduate and Graduate students attending Pittsburg State University (PSU) who were attending the 2017 Spring semester. The study explored the experiences of nontraditional students with children and traditional

students without children. Participants in this study were enrolled in a minimum of 3 credit hours and a maximum of 25 hours and maintained full or part time employment.

LIMITATIONS

The following are limitations to the study that have been identified by the researcher:

1. Students may not participate in the survey.
2. Students may have children that come in the home for visitations.
3. Student children could be 18 years of age or older.
4. Student children could be more independent, and need less parental supervision.
5. Students may or may not work.
6. Students may or may not have adequate child care providers.
7. Student children may or may not have after school activities.

Therefore, the results are limited in the ability to inform and are not generalizable to the larger overall student population who attend PSU.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions will be made about the study for the purpose of conducting research:

1. Nontraditional students have children.
2. Most students have either a part-time or full-time job.
3. Students have at least one hour for every credit hour they are taking to study.
4. Most children of students will have some form of after school activity.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Research shows that in addition to working to provide for their children, student-parents must also devote a significant portion of their time to care giving of their children (Garcia, 2011; Washington Jr.). It is hoped that findings from this study will support the idea that nontraditional students are at a serious disadvantage when it comes to available time to study for classes. The significance for this study would be that information about how much time for study is needed to be applied to course work in colleges and universities. This work could prove a glimpse into how to support nontraditional students with children.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Review of Literature for this study is anchored in studies about nontraditional undergraduate, university students. The most relevant literature came from studies of community-college students and articles with information about the average expected time to study of any traditional college student, ways to help nontraditional students with children successfully complete a degree, and understanding of what is considered a nontraditional student. While conducting this literature review the author noted a general lack of literature associated especially to nontraditional students with children. Therefore, the literature presented reached saturation quickly. The author believes the information gathered from this inquiry will add to the overall body of knowledge.

RELATED THEORY

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange refers to voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring (Blau, 1964). For this study, the author relies on the concepts of the Social Exchange Theory to understand the interactions and motivations of the study participants depending on whether or not they have children. For the purposes of this study, the primary ideas from the social exchange theory will be focused on the

ideas from Blau (1964) and Homas (1958) and the critique of the Social Exchange theory by Emerson (1976).

Blau (1964) contends that the pervasiveness of social exchange makes it tempting to consider all social conduct in terms of exchange. The examples used relate to the fear of doing things, for example people doing things for fear of someone else, for fear of God or for fear of their conscience. Blau further explains that people cannot be forced in to this exchange but rather people will be willing to participate by being motivated by the social aspects of the society. Blau (1964) explained that social exchange involves favors that create future obligations and in turn create a return that is left to the discretion of the one who makes the obligation.

On the other hand, Homas (1958) states that social behavior is an exchange of both material goods and non-material goods. He equates these non-material goods as prestige or approval of others. He believes that persons who give much to others will try to get as much for others in return for their material or non-material goods. Homas contends that this process of influence works out to be at a balance or equilibrium in exchanges over time.

Emerson (1976) states that in the tradition of sociology and anthropology the focus is on social relations. In his critique, he concluded that to study social exchange there is confusion about the conceptual confusion and debate concerning issues of rationality in social behavior and in the explanations for social behavior strategies. He believes that his confusion limits the ability to conduct empirical research. Emerson recommends thinking about “social exchange theory as developing the conceptual tools

needed to deal with exactly those topics that economics theory has trouble dealing with, market imperfections” (Emerson, 1976).

Social Exchange Theory is a model for understanding the student decision-making behavior regarding the continuation of study (Horstmanshof, 2004). The research indicates that students continually evaluate the cost/benefits associated with study for classes and caring for a family. This study proposes that as students invest time in studying for classes, the roles as a student are rewarding and therefore, students that are parents are disinvesting in those that they perceive as relatively costly.

NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT BY DEFINITION AND CRITERIA

Nontraditional Student

The Kim (2002) study provided a summary of definitions of nontraditional students based upon the criteria: (a) age 25 or older, (b) background characteristics, and (c) risk factors. Kim (2002) concluded that research that nontraditional students and their persistence should be specific to subgroups, and suggested that nontraditional students be identified by specific terms such as reentry students, educationally disadvantaged students, first-generation students, or minority students (Kim, 2002; Peterson, 2014). Horn (1996) expanded on this summary of definitions for nontraditional students with the criteria: (a) did not enroll into postsecondary education by at least one year following high school, (b) attends part-time, (c) works full-time (35 hours or more per week), (d) considered financially independent, (e) has dependents other than a spouse, (f) a single parent, (g) does not have a high school diploma or completed high school with a GED (Ross-Gordon, Jovita 2011, Winter; Washington Jr, n.d.; Choy, 2002; Horn, 1996). Most

articles and research studies address the definition for who can be classified as a nontraditional student, and those lead to close variations. One statement that was agreed on, nontraditional students are a growing population in higher education within the United States (Peterson, 2014; Kim, 2002).

Characteristics of College Dropouts

Tinto (1975) describes the interplay between the individual's commitment to the goal of college completion and a commitment to the college will determine whether or not the individual decides to drop out of college and determines the forms of dropout behavior the individual adopts.

In addition, Tinto (1975) suggested that interplay varies between levels of student goals and institutional commitment. The characteristics of the institution may also be utilized to explain the occurrence of differing patterns of transfer between institutional commitments. This may lead to transfer behavior when educational expectations are substantially altered; Tinto believed that when individual expectations are enhanced from the experience in college that will transfer the experience to the outcome relating this to the Social Exchange Theory which is the theoretical framework for this study.

More recently, Tinto (2006) realized after years of study on the topic of student retention and attrition, involvement or what is increasingly being referred to as engagement, matters and it matters most during the critical first year of college. Based on 41 years of research, Tinto and his peers have established that the action of the faculty, especially in the classroom are the key to enhancing student retention. Tinto (2006), "Though it is true, as we are often reminded, that student retention is everyone's business, it is now evident that it is the business of the faculty in particular." However,

the involvement of faculty is limited more than it should be. While conducting the literature review, Tinto's observation seem to move from theory to action.

It was discovered by Bean and Metzner (1985) that attrition studies were primarily based on community-colleges and were descriptively overwhelming. No theoretical model was available to guide attrition research on nontraditional students enrolled in 4-year higher education institutions at that time. Bean and Metzner (1985) went on to create (See Figure 1) A Conceptual Model of Nontraditional Student Attrition. They believed individuals dropped out college for one of four reasons.

1. Students were suffering from poor academic performance.
2. Students are influenced primarily by psychological outcomes.
3. Students are affected by high school performance and educational goals.
4. Students are affected by the environment around them.

In Figure 1, the Bean and Metzner model (1985) depicts the variables that define the reasons nontraditional students may drop out of college background.

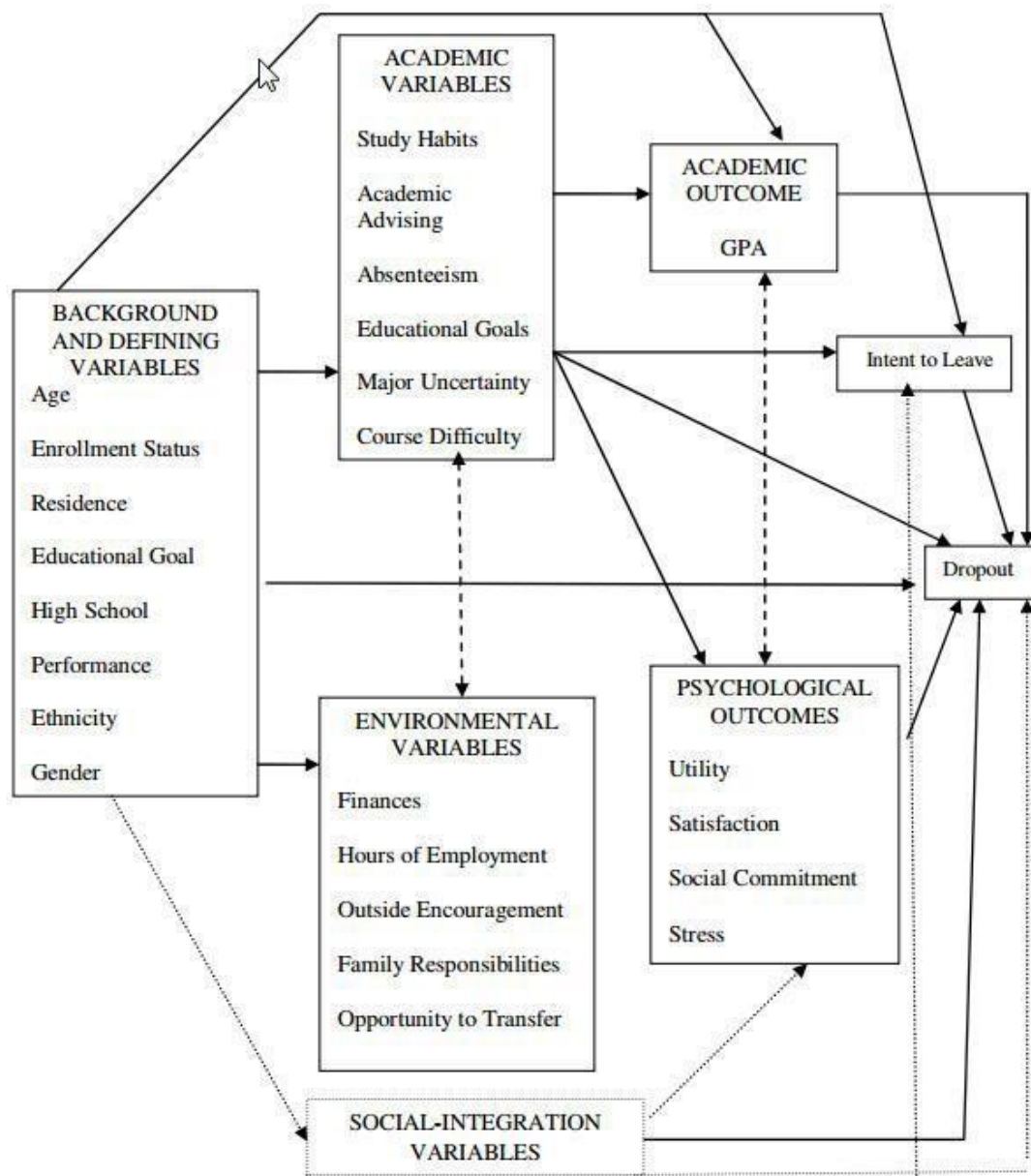


Figure 1: A Conceptual Model of Nontraditional Student Attrition (Bean & Metzner, 1985)

Average Recommended Time of Study

The University of Michigan-Flint has a section on their website on “Surviving College.” It gives students a course load guideline (See Figure 2) when enrolling for classes. For this study, all subjects will be full-time undergraduate nontraditional students with at least one child, attending Pittsburg State University.

According to the University of Michigan, a full-time undergraduate student should study between 24-36 hours a week (University, 2015). Cornell University suggest its students study 5-8 hours a day. That is approximately 25-40 hours a week (Cornell, 2014).

In addition, the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement released a study that full-time students study an average of 15 hours per week. Pierre (2014) states in her article the National Survey of Student Engagement’s findings, the average students spends about 17 hours each week preparing for classes. Preparation for classes includes homework, reading and any other assignments. If a student is passionate about a subject, it may not require as much time to prepare as other classes. At least not 45 hours a week of study (Herzog, 2011; Pierre, 2014). That is 2 hours more than three years previously. De Vise (2012) even asked the question, “Is College Too Easy?” He states that full-time students studying times are starting to decrease according to survey data.

Barriers of Nontraditional Students with Children

Ross-Gordon (2011) said, “A key characteristic distinguishing reentry adults from other college students is the high likelihood that they are juggling other life roles while attending school, including those of worker, spouse or partner, parent, caregiver, and community member.” The roles can be an asset in understanding life experiences that

University of Michigan-Flint, “Surviving College”

Course Load

Course Load is the total number of credit hours in which you enroll in for a semester. Consider restrictions imposed by financial aid, scholarships, and your own commitments. Advisors usually suggest that full-time new students stick to around 12 credit hours their first semester.

Course Load Guidelines

Winter Semesters:

Full-time = 12 - 18 credit hours per semester
hours per term

Half-time = 6 – 11 credit hours per semester
hours per term

Less than half-time = 5 or less credit hours per semester
Less than half-time = 1 or 2 credit hours per term

Spring/Summer Terms:

Full-time = 6 – 9 credit

Half-time = 3 – 5 credit

Course Load Recommendation

For every one credit hour in which you enroll, you will spend approximately two to three hours outside of class studying. Therefore, to help determine the course load most appropriate for you, use the formula:

3 credit hours (1 course) = 3 hours in class per week = 6-9 hours study time per week.

12 credit hours (4 courses) = 12 hours in class per week = 24-36 hours study time per week.

Full time students enroll in 12 - 18 credit hours per semester. Part time students enroll in 1 - 11 credit hours per semester. The course load that is best for you depends on a variety of factors, such as other commitments, study skills, time management skills, and self discipline. To determine the course load which is most appropriate for you, please refer to the guidelines indicated:

Employment Obligations: Course Load if Working

40 hrs per week -- 3-5 credit hours

30 hrs per week -- 3-9 credit hours

20 hrs per week -- 6-12 credit hours

Less than 20 hrs -- 12-18 credit hours

How many courses should I take?

I work _____ hours per week. Therefore, I should take _____ credit hours.

It is important to remember that there are only 24 hours in each day and only 168 hours in each week. It is common for college students to try to participate in more activities than their time allows and, as a result, perform poorly in many of the activities. Unfortunately, this poor performance often includes school work. Make your choices with all possible variables being considered.

(https://www.umflint.edu/advising/surviving_college)

Figure 2: “Surviving College” (University, 2015).

may help adult learners understand the theoretical constructs that a young learner may not be able to understand yet (Ross-Gordon, 2011). “One problem for adults is the constant, competing tension between life obligations and educational obligations,” said Jamie Merisotis (Pelletier, 2010).

Nontraditional students with children are under a lot of pressure to prove a great future for their children. Research shows that children born to well-educated mothers are gaining from their mother’s substantial investment of both money and time in higher education, while those born to less-educated mothers are not. However, gaining access to post-secondary education does not always result in positive benefits (Goldrick-Rab & Sorensen, 2011).

Nontraditional students with children must: (a) set a routine, (b) take advantage of free time, (c) know limitations, (d) focusing on what matters most, and (e) play (Work, 2015). Goldrick-Rab & Sorensen (2011) believed there were four characteristics of individuals that affected college attendance and in turn affect the individuals children and family well-being. As seen in Figure 3, Conceptual model of how postsecondary education affects family formation and stability.

“Faculty members need to know that adult students learn differently...They don’t just memorize. They have a context within which they take information [they learn] and apply it,” said Susan Aldridge, University of Maryland-College Park (Pelletier, 2010). Adult students bring different expectations to the teaching and learning experience which need to be recognized by universities (Aldridge, 2010).

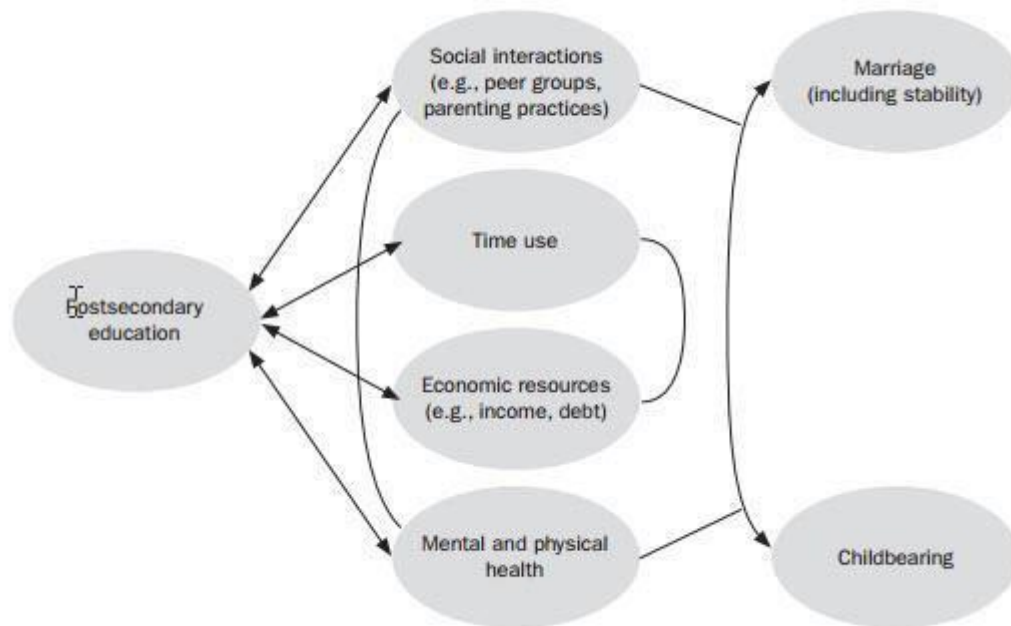


Figure 3: Conceptual model of how postsecondary education affects family formation and stability (Goldrick-Rab & Sorensen, 2011).

Gasser & Gasser (n.d.) suggested that campuses should implement ten initiatives/factors that could contribute to a more child-friendly campus climate. Those are: (1) installing diaper changing tables (in both men's' and women's') restrooms in major public buildings on campus, (2) make sure your dining center or campus eateries have highchairs and booster seats available, (3) provide safe, sanitary, and private places for women to breastfeed and/or pump, (4) Set up and maintain child-friendly play areas in public spaces where students study or use computers, or are likely to be found with children, (5) develop a resource website for student parents on activities to do on campus with kids, (6) provide a sick-child emergency back-up program so students don't have to miss class to stay home with a sick child, (7) advocate for "maternity leave" for undergraduate and graduate student parents, (8) through campus awareness campaigns,

promote a culture on campus that appreciates the presence of children, (9) apply for a CCAMPIS Grant and use the funds to develop child care subsidy programs or on-campus child care facilities, (10) understanding faculty (Gasser, n.d.).

SUMMARY

Social Exchange Theory was threaded throughout the literature review. Knowing the average time for class preparation associated with a nontraditional student with children, educators could determine how to appropriately modify and present class information to that particular subgroup of students with this disadvantage (Aldridge, 2010; Pelletier, 2010). The literary review revealed that nontraditional students with children were just as motivated as those without children. Students tended to be more motivated to studying in order to obtaining a degree. As revealed by the literature review universities should consider implementing research, and possibly implement adequate options for student parents in becoming successful in obtaining a degree (Archibold, 2002; Brown, 2002; Estes, 2011; Garcia, 2011; Gasser, n.d.; Pelletier, 2010).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory descriptive study was to investigate the range of hours nontraditional Pittsburg State University (PSU) students with children, have available to study for classes per week versus those without children. This study focused on students that have children, and that are classified as financially independent per the PSU and FAFSA guidelines. If the results are evaluated on a University level, then the President of the University can present the feedback provided by this study to the Board of Regents to further evaluate how Universities can help nontraditional students with children complete a four-year degree successfully (Work Life Balance, 2015; Estes, 2011).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

During the review of the literature, there was found to be a small body of research pertaining to nontraditional students with children attending a University, the following general research question and sub-questions will guide this study. The overall question for this study is “How many hours do nontraditional PSU students with children dedicate to studying class material each week?”

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the demographics of nontraditional PSU students with children?
2. What is the range of hours of nontraditional PSU students with children have to study?

The related sub questions for research question one, which address academic, family, and work responsibilities, are as follows: (a) How many hours are dedicated to studying per week? (b) Determine if they work? If so, how many hours does a student work a week? (c) How many children are in the home? (d) The age of children living in the home. (e) Determine if they have after school activities. (f) Determine if any children have after school activities. (g) What level of education is being sought? (h) How many credit hours are being taken on average?

The related sub questions for research question two, which address academic, family, and work responsibilities, are as follows: (a) How many hours are dedicated to studying per week? (b) Determine if they work? If so, how many hours does a student work a week? (f) Determine if they have after school activities. (g) What level of education is being sought? (h) How many credit hours are being taken on average?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a descriptive survey method, providing descriptive data about the sample of participants from PSU. “Survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people – perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or previous experiences – by asking those questions and tabulating their answers (Leedey &Ormrod, 2013). The author chose a Tailored Design survey method research strategy

for this study because it allows the study to show descriptive data of a sample population at Pittsburg State University. Dillman (2014) describes Tailored Design as:

Customizing survey procedures for each survey situation base upon knowledge about the topic and sponsor of the survey, the types of people who will be asked to complete the survey, the resources available, and the time frame for reporting results. Tailored design is a strategy that can be applied in the development of all aspects of a survey to reduce total survey error to acceptable levels and motivate all types of samples members to respond within resource and time constraints. (p.16)

For this study, a questionnaire was sent out via Survey Monkey offering an intrinsic reward. Dillman (2014) stated that an understanding of the social exchange theory was the underlying theory for the design of the tailored design method. Based on this assumption, the author decided on the tailored design method for the flexibility Dillman's method offered.

POPULATION & SAMPLING

The population for this study was focused on the graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in courses for the 2017 Spring semester at PSU. Non-probability was used as the method drawing a sample of PSU population. Non-probability sampling is used for this study because it can be considered a valuable, cost efficient alternative to the random sampling methods, exploratory inferences could be drawn or interpretations about participants or their attitudes can be measured (Schillewaert, Langerak, Duhamel, 1998). Dillman (2014) addresses non-probability as a modern way for conducting surveys. Non-probability sampling methods differ in quality and range from simple to sophisticated. The assumptions and procedures for creating non-probability samples and adjust the data vary considerably Criticisms for non-probability methods, mainlybecause

large numbers of people from the selection process are left out and the method relies on people who volunteer to participate in the study. As result modeling and statistical adjustments are often needed to compensate for the selection biases. However, non-probability sampling methods are increasingly being used for testing and experimentation as well as for surveys that need a quick turnaround (Dillman, 2014, p.92).

According to the PSU Registrar, the population of students enrolled for 2017 Spring semester courses was 7,244. Using non-probability sampling methods the study sample size needed to be a sample of 364 individuals (Krijcie and Morgan, 1970). This study will only be generalized to the PSU population of students enrolled 2017 Spring semester. It cannot be inferred to populations enrolled in future semesters or other 4-year institutions.

IMPLEMENTATION

This study was approved by the PSU Internal Review Board (IRB) exempt review on February 18th, 2017. The instrument used for this study was a researcher designed online questionnaire. The web survey instrument used was Survey Monkey TM. An introductory letter was sent via PSU Mr. BulKE email system to all students on February 20th, 2017. Participants that voluntarily consented to participate in this study are included in the sample. Within the first week 378 responses were recorded. A follow up letter was sent out on March 13th, 2017. After the follow up letter 186 responses were recorded and the survey was closed on March 27th, 2017.

Face validity was addressed by examination of the questionnaire by a panel of experts from PSU. The instrument was examined for face validity only. Reliability of the

instrument was not addressed because the instrument was only collecting descriptive data from the participants. The scale of measurement for questions in the survey were nominal and some demographic questions scale of measurement was ratio. The central tendency from this study would be frequencies reported as percentages. Non-response was not considered to be a problem for this study because based on Krijcie and Morgan (1970) we reached the sample size needed.

DATA COLLECTION

The instrument was designed in Survey Monkey which is an online survey instrument. Data collection was done through an email link to the survey. All submitted questionnaires are on a secure server owned by Survey Monkey. The data collected will be saved for two years and then deleted off the Survey Monkey server.

Each questionnaire completed by participants was date and time stamped. The data collection from each participant included:

- ï Gender.
- ï Number of hours applied to studying each week.
- ï University classification.
- ï Number of credit hours taken during the 2017 Spring semester.
- ï Number of hours at a place of employment.
- ï General location of the place of employment.
- ï Number of hours applied to after school activities.
- ï Do they have children
- ï How many children do they have?

- ï How old are their children.
- ï Number of hours applied to children after school activities.
- ï Number of children living in the home full-time.
- ï Number of children living in the home part-time.
- ï Email address

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC

The study began with a bulky email sent to all PSU students starting February 20th and ended on March 13, 2017. Data was collected from 572 participants, 563 who voluntarily chose to participate in the study and consented to answering questions in the survey, 3 consented to answering questions but did not provide any answers and 6 did not consent to participate in the study or answering questions. Table 1 shows the demographics information collected from participants in this study.

Demographic information depicted by Table 1, which was gathered from PSU students included: gender, number of children, university classification, and number of children in the household. Other information collected included: family size, afterschool activities for the student and children, work hours and location, as well as information about number of credit hours the student is currently taking for the Spring semester 2017. Table 1 depicts gender, number of children and university classification for students participating in the study. The participants from the study (n=572) reported 28.6% as male (n=154) and 71.4% as female (n=385). Thirty-three participants did not report their gender so this was recorded as missing data for analysis.

Table 1
Population Sample Demographic Variables (n = 572)

Variable	Label	n	%
Gender	Male	154	28.6%
	Female	385	71.4%
Number of Children	Yes	80	14.3%
	No	479	85.7%
University Classification	Freshman	94	17.5%
	Sophomore	93	17.3%
	Junior	135	25.1%
	Senior	117	21.7%
	Graduate	99	18.4%

The number of children reported by participants depicted in Table 1 show that 14.3% of the participants report having children (n=80) while enrolled as students in 2017 Spring semester at PSU. Students in the population sample reported their university classification indicated in Table 1 as: 17.5% Freshman (n=94), 17.3% Sophomore (n=93), 25.1% Junior (n=135), 21.7% Senior (n=117) and 18.4% Graduates (n=99). Thirty-four participants failed to report their university classification.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this exploratory descriptive study was to investigate the range of hours nontraditional Pittsburg State University (PSU) students with children, have available to study for classes per week versus those without children.

PARTICIPANT FAMILY INFORMATION

According to data of the exploratory descriptive survey participants had the option to report whether they have children living in the home. Participants (n=80) reported having an average of 2 children living in the household full-time ($M=2.3750$, $SD= 1.37828$). Participants reported having grandchildren and foster children living in the home and were reported in this study. One participant reported having 2 children and 2 grandchildren that lived with them in the home full-time. Another participant reported having two children and two foster children that lived with them in the home full-time. The two grandchildren and two foster children were counted as the children of the participants and included in the study. The researcher believed that inclusion of these children would not affect the validity of the study since the study was looking at student who had responsibility of child care in either full-time or part-time basis.

Participants reporting children reported by participants (n=80) is depicted in Table 2 and shows participants with 1 child 30.6% (n=22), 2 children 30.6% (n=22), 3 children 22.2% (n=16), 4 children 9.7% (n=7), 5 children 4.1% (n=3), 6 children 1.4% (n=1), 7 children 0% (n=0), and 8 children 1.4% (n=1). There were eight participants that reported having children by answering yes to question 1 “Do you have children?” The researcher considered this data as missing for analysis, but was found to not impact the final results. The total sample size for the study was 572 participants.

Table 2

Participant Data Representing the Number of Children That Live in the Home Full-Time or Part-Time (n=572)

Number of Children	Total Number of Children		Living in the Home Part-time		Living in the Home Full-time	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
0			51	78.5%	8	11.1%
1	22	30.6%	10 ^b	15.4%	21	29.2%
2	22	30.6%	3	4.6%	19	26.4%
3	16	22.2%	0	0%	17	23.6%
4	7	9.7%	0	0%	6 ^{ab}	8.3%
5	3	4.1%	1	1.5%	1	1.4%
6	1	1.4%				
7	0	0%				
8	1	1.4%				
Missing	8		15		8	
Total	80		80		80	

Note. ^a Grandchildren (n=2) and ^b Foster Children (n=2)

Respondents (n=80) reported children living the home part-time. Table 2 depicts 1 child 15.4% (n=10), 2 children 4.6% (n=3), 3 children 0% (n=0), 4 children 0% (n=0) and 5 children 1.5% (n=1). Fifteen respondents reported having children living part-time in the home but did not provide data.

Respondents (n=80) reported children living in the home full-time. Table 2 depicts 1 child 29.2% (n=21), 2 children 26.4% (n=19), 3 children 23.6% (n=17), 4

children 8.3% (n=6), and 5 children 1.5% (n=1). Eight respondents reported having children living full-time in the home but did not provide data.

AGES OF CHILDREN

Table 3 depicts the ages of children reported by all respondents who participated in the study. Participants reported having children over the age of 18 (n=32). For this study children 18 years and older were not included in data analysis because they are legally considered adults and the researcher did not believe that they would have an impact on time for their parents that are also students. Fourteen participants said they did have children but did not report their children's age, therefore these counted as missing for data analysis.

Table 3

Ages of Children Reported By All Respondents (n=123)

With Children	Family Info	n	%
Children Ages	<1	8	6.5%
	1	8	6.5%
	2	6	4.9%
	3	5	4%
	4	9	7.3%
	5	4	3.3%
	6	9	7.3%
	7	4	3.3%
	8	8	6.5%
	9	8	6.5%
	10	6	4.9%
	11	4	3.3%
	12	11	8.9%
	13	5	4%
	14	7	5.7%
	15	8	6.5%
	16	4	3.3%
	17	5	4%
	18	4	3.3%
	Missing	14	
	Total	123	

Note. Respondents reported children over 18 (n=32) which were not included in this table or for data analysis.

The ages of children reported by participants and depicted in Table 3 show that 6.5% (n=8) were less than a year old, 6.5% (n=8) have a one year old, 4.9% (n=6) have a two year old, 4% (n=5) are three year old, 7.3% (n=9) are four years old, 3.3% (n=4) are five years old, 7.3% (n=9) are six years old, 3.3% (n=4) are seven years old, 6.5% (n=8) are eight years old, 6.5% (n=8) are nine years old, 4.9% (n=6) are ten years old, 3.3% (n=4) are eleven years old, 8.9% (n=11) are twelve years old, 4% (n=5) are thirteen years old, 5.7% (n=7) are fourteen years old, 6.5% (n=8) are fifteen years old, 3.3% (n=4) are sixteen years old, 4% (n=5) are seventeen years old and 3.3% (n=4) are eighteen years old.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Participants were asked to report their own after school activities. Table 4 depicts after school activities for students participating in the study. The findings in Table 4 show 77.1% (n=27) of the respondents with children participate in 1-9 hours of activities not related to course work and 22.9% (n=8) participated in 10-19 hours of activities not related to course work. Thirty-seven participants reported N/A and 8 participants chose not to report their after school activities so they counted as missing for data analysis.

Of the participants in the study that reported not having children 70.3% (n=247) participate in 1-9 hours activities not related to course work, 19.4% (n=68) participate in 10-19 hours activities not related to course work, 6.3% (n=22) participate in 20-29 hours activities not related to course work, 2.3% (n=8) participate in 30-39 hours activities not related to course work, 118 participants reported N/A, and 17 participants chose not to

report their after school activities so they counted as missing data for analysis (See Table 4).

Table 4

<i>After School Activities Reported by Respondents</i>			
Variable	Label: Hours Per Week	n	%
With Children			
	1-9	27	77.1%
	10-19	8	22.9%
	20-29	0	0%
	30-39	0	0%
	40	0	0%
	N/A	37	
	Missing	8	
Without Children			
	1-9	247	70.3%
	10-19	68	19.4%
	20-29	22	6.3%
	30-39	8	2.3%
	40	6	1.7%
	N/A	118	
	Missing	17	

STUDENT-PARENT CHILDREN ACTIVITIES

Table 5 depicts the range of hours PSU student-parents with attend after school activities each week. The survey question provided examples of activities which included clubs, sports, and intramurals. Respondents reported 60.4% (n=29) 1-9 hours of activities, 27% (n=13) 10-19 hour of activities, 6.3% (n=3) 20-29 hour of activities, 6.3% (n=3) 30-39 hour of activities, and 0% (n=0) 40 or more hours of after school activities. Thirty-two participants with children did not provide any data so they were recorded as missing for data analysis.

Table 5

PSU Student-Parent Range of Hours for Activities Attended With or For Children Outside of Course Work

Hours	n	%
1-9	29	60.4%
10-19	13	27%
20-29	3	6.3%
30-39	3	6.3%
40	0	0%
N/A	24	
Missing	8	

STUDENT-PARENT EMPLOYMENT

Respondents were asked to report the range of hours they work outside of course work, and where the job is located. Table 6 depicts student-parent employment for the 2017 Spring semester. Respondents with children reported: 1.6% (n=1) work 1-9 hours, 13.1% (n=8) work 10-19 hours, 8.2% (n=5) work 20-29 hours, 29.5% (n=18) work 30-39 hours and 47.6% (n=29) work 40 or more hours. Participants with children reported location of employment to be; 59% (n=36) work outside of Pittsburgh city limits, 16.4% (n=10) work inside the Pittsburgh city limits, 16.4% (n=10) are University employees and 8.2% (n=5) are student workers.

Respondents with no children reported the range of hour of employment to be; 12.6% (n=41) work 1-9 hours, 35.6% (n=116) work 10-19 hours, 34.6% (n=113) work 20-29 hours, 8.3% (n=27) work 30-39 hours, and 8.9% (n=29) work 40 or more hours. Participants with no children reported location of employment to be; 21.8% (n=71) that work outside of Pittsburgh city limits, 31% (n=101) work inside the city limits, 13.5% (n=44) work for the University and 33.7% (n=110) are student workers.

Table 6
Respondents Range of Hours of Employment

Variable	Label: Work Info	n	%
With Children			
<i>Hours Worked Per week</i>	1-9	1	1.6%
	10-19	8	13.1%
	20-29	5	8.2%
	30-39	18	29.5%
	40+	29	47.6%
	N/A	11	
	Missing	8	
<i>Job Location</i>	Works Outside Pittsburgh	36	59%
	Works Inside Pittsburgh	10	16.4%
	University Employee	10	16.4%
	Student Worker	5	8.2%
	Missing	19	
Without Children			
<i>Hours Worked Per Week</i>	1-9	41	12.6%
	10-19	116	35.6%
	20-29	113	34.6%
	30-39	27	8.3%
	40+	29	8.9%
	Missing	145	
<i>Job Location</i>	Works Outside Pittsburgh	71	21.8%
	Works Inside Pittsburgh	101	31%
	University Employee	44	13.5%
	Student Worker	110	33.7%
	Missing	160	

EDUCATIONAL CREDIT HOURS

The question in the survey asked participants how many credit hours they were taking in the 2017 Spring semester. Participants with children reported; 15.5% (n=11) take 3 credit hours, 2.9% (n=2) 4 credit hours, 0% (n=0) 5 credit hours, 33.8% (n=24) 6 credit hours, 1.4% (n=1) 7 credit hours, 0% (n=0) 8 credit hours, 4.2% (n=3) 9 credit

hours, 0% (n=0) 10 credit hours, 1.4% (n=1) 11 credit hours, 14% (n=10) 12 credit hours, 2.9% (n=2) 13 credit hours, 4.2% (n=3) 14 credit hours, 8.5% (n=6) 15 credit hours, 1.4% (n=1) 16 credit hours, 0% (n=) 17 credit hours, 4.2% (n=3) 18 credit hours, 4.2% (n=3) 19 credit hours, and 1.4% (n=1) 20 credit hours (See Table 7).

Overall, 73.2% of students with children (n=52) seem to carry between 3 and 12 credits hours of course work.

Participants with no children reported; 0.4% (n=2) take 3 credit hours, 0.4% (n=2) 4 credit hours, 0.3% (n=1) 5 credit hours, 2.1% (n=10) 6 credit hours, 0.3% (n=1) 7 credit hours, 0% (n=0) 8 credit hours, 4.3% (n=20) 9 credit hours, 0.4% (n=2) 10 credit hours, 1.4% (n=2) 11 credit hours, 9.8% (n=46) 12 credit hours, 6.6% (n=31) 13 credit hours, 7.1% (n=33) 14 credit hours, 19.7% (n=92) 15 credit hours, 10.5% (n=49) 16 credit hours, 9.8% (n=46) 17 credit hours, 10% (n=47) 18 credit hours, 6.8% (n=32) 19 credit hours, 3.6% (n=17) 20 credit hours, 5.6% (n=26) 21 credit hours, 1.3% (n=6) 22 credit hours, 0.4% (n=2) 23 credit hours, 0% (n=0) 24 credit hours and 0.3% (n=1) 25 credit hours.

The majority, 91.23% of students without children (n=482) reported taking 12 to 25 credit hours in the 2017 spring semester.

Table 7

Pittsburg State University Students & Student-Parents 2017 Spring Semester Reported Credit Hours

Number of Credit Hours	Students with Children		Students without Children	
	n	%	n	%
3	11	15.5%	2	0.4%
4	2	2.9%	2	0.4%
5	0	0%	1	0.3%
6	24	33.8%	10	2.1%
7	1	1.4%	1	0.3%
8	0	0%	0	0%
9	3	4.2%	20	4.3%
10	0	0%	2	0.4%
11	1	1.4%	2	0.4%
12	10	14%	46	9.8%
13	2	2.9%	31	6.6%
14	3	4.2%	33	7.1%
15	6	8.5%	92	19.7%
16	1	1.4%	49	10.5%
17	0	0%	46	9.8%
18	3	4.2%	47	10%
19	3	4.2%	32	6.8%
20	1	1.4%	17	3.6%
21			26	5.6%
22			6	1.3%
23			2	0.4%
24			0	0%
25			1	0.3%
Missing	9		18	
Total	80		486	

HOURS APPLIED TO STUDY

Table 8 depicts the number of credit hours' students report applying to study for the Spring 2017 semester. Participants with children reported the number of hours applied to studying were; 33.8% (n=24) 1-9 hours per week, 43.7% (n=31) 10-19 hours per week, 18.3% (n=13) 20-29 hours per week, 0% (n=0) 30-39 hours per week, 4.2%

(n=3) 40 plus hours a week. Nine participants with children did not answer and were recorded as missing data.

Students without children reported applied hours of study were; 37.7% (n=178) 1-9 hours per week, 35.2% (n=166) 10-19 hours per week, 20.1% (n=95) 20-29 hours per week, 4.5% (n=21) 30-39 hours per week, 37% (n=12) 40 plus hours a week. Fourteen participants with children did not answer and were recorded as missing for data analysis.

Table 8

Participants Reported Applied Hours To Study for 2017 Spring Semester

Hours Applied to Study	Students with Children		Students without Children	
	n	%	n	%
1-9	24	33.8%	178	37.7%
10-19	31	43.7%	166	35.2%
20-29	13	18.3%	95	20.1%
30-39	0	0%	21	4.5%
40+	3	4.2%	12	37%
Missing	9		14	
Total	71			

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this exploratory descriptive study was to investigate the range of hours nontraditional Pittsburg State University (PSU) students with children, have available to study for classes per week versus those without children. This study focused on students that have children, and that are classified as financially independent per the PSU and FAFSA guidelines. This study was conducted during the 2017 spring semester and included enrolled graduate and undergraduate students. The sample size was 572. Thus, 486 participants in this study do not have children and demographics were reported separately of the 80 participants that reported having children.

This study is personal to the researcher as she is a student-parent. The findings should bring light to answers and further research on this subject. The researcher had faculty as instructors that implemented student engagement suggestions from Tinto (2006) study that made the higher education experience rewarding. Presented in this chapter are the conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future study.

Conclusions

Research question one: What are the demographics of nontraditional PSU students with children?

The researcher found that 14.3% of the population sample (n=80) identified as student-parents. From the population sample, 61.2% of the participants reported at least 2 children. The population sample (79.2%) reporting to have 3 children living in the home full-time. Compared to 20% that reported having up to 2 children living in the home part-time. The age range of children reported by participants was less than 1 and up to 18 years of age. Seventy-seven point one percent of participants reported spending 1-9 hours on afterschool activities not related to course work. Eighty-seven point four percent of student-parents reported children participating in 1-19 hours of afterschool activities. Participants reported being employed (47.6%) 40 or more hours per week, with 59% of student-parents being employed outside of Pittsburg. Overall, 73.2% of students with children seem to be enrolled in 3 and 12 credit hours of course work. Participants reported (43.7%) studying 10-19 hours per week on course work. In this study student-parents were pursuing all levels of higher education.

Based on research question one the researcher found it interesting that people reported children over the age of 18, this may be because of tax related deductions and Obamacare rules for dependents. Further, it was surprising that participants reported foster children and grandchildren since it was not considered in this study. The author did not disaggregate transfer students from the total sample, it can be concluded that transfer student could be different than the nontraditional and traditional students. It is further concluded that there is a wide range of after school activities of students and their

dependent children which takes away from the total amount of time to study or participant in classes.

Research question two: What is the range of hours of nontraditional PSU students with children have to study?

The researcher found that 43.7% of student-parents spent a range of 10-19 hours to study class material. This is roughly about the same amount of time the National Survey of Student Engagement (2011) study found in which students applied about 15 hours toward studying. Therefore, it was concluded that the participants with children in the study required at least 15 hours or more to study for course work. It was interesting to find that 37.7% of the participants who do not have children reported spending a range of 1-9 hours toward course work, which is well below the recommended average time to study for course work. It is concluded that student-parents are studying more than their traditional student peers whom do not have children, which could be attributed to being mature, managing time more efficiently and prioritizing responsibilities efficiently. I conclude this is because they are more mature and able to manage time better with the amount of responsibilities.

Like Bean & Metzner (1985), the author found attrition studies mostly focused on community-colleges and all the descriptively overwhelming data. Few studies have been done on 4-year Higher Education Institutions. Universities and researchers also recommend that all students should study around 15-20 hours per week with a full course load.

The researcher found that only 14.3% reported having children but anticipated that the number of participants from this study having children would be higher. It can be concluded that male students chose not to participate in this study.

Implications for Practice

Based on the conclusions from this study, some implications for practice to be considered is the fact that, that student-parents are a particular class of student that have special types of challenges when attending colleges and universities. These challenges bring forward special implications for practice by faculty in the classroom, in the laboratory, and during advisement sessions with students. These implications include considering the importance of the student-parent engagement with faculty to be successful in certification or degree programs. The social exchange theory plays a part in changing how faculty interact with student-parents. Further implications would require evaluating faculty engagement with students. Furthermore, college and university administration should seek to improve training for better engagement between faculty and students.

According to Tinto (2006) the engagement of students matters, it matters most during the first year of college and it was evident that student retention is particularly the business of the faculty.

Recommendations

The author recommends the following:

1. It is recommended a qualitative study should be conducted to further understanding the student-parent and their experience as a student, as well as their ability to manage time for study.

2. It is recommended for further study to look at the differences between male student-parents and female student-parents that attend PSU.
3. It is recommended to collect more statistical data from the student population so that significance and correlational statistics can be done.
4. It is recommended to study why male student-parents did not participate in this study to determine if they are different from female student-parents.
5. It is recommended that further research should be conducted to determine if there is a correlation between the number of hours works versus the number of course work.
6. It is recommended that training should be proved for faculty in how to engage with student-parents.
7. It is recommended that PSU offer a wider range of class options to students such as online, night and hybrid classes.
8. It is recommended that in future studies of the PSU population that graduate and undergraduate students data be disaggregated and reported separately.

Overall, it is recommended that the engagement of student-parents is the most important for student success when obtaining a degree at a higher education institute.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

Dear Students,

I am a Graduate Student at the College of Technology, doing a research study on how many hours of study are applied to classwork. I would like to invite you to participate in an online survey for those taking classes at Pittsburg State University. Your quick response would be greatly appreciated.

As an incentive for those willing to participate in the survey, I will be drawing for a chance to win a \$100 and \$50 gift card for those that participate in the survey. This will be done through a random drawing.

Click the link below to begin your survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H7WNGJC>

Thank you for your time,

Lynn Riggs

APPENDIX II

PSU Students,

A QUICK REMINDER

Thank you for those that have already participated in the survey. The drawing will occur the Friday after Spring Break, March 31, 2017. Winners will be emailed later that evening with the details on how to collect their Visa Gift Card.

If you have not, I would like to invite you to participate in an online survey for those taking classes at Pittsburg State University. Your quick response would be greatly appreciated. The Survey will end this Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 5 pm.

As an incentive for those willing to participate in the survey, I will be drawing for a chance to win a \$100 and \$50 gift card for those that participate in the survey. This will be done through a random drawing.

Click the link below to begin your survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H7WNGJC>

Thank you for your time,

Lynn Riggs

APPENDIX III

PSU Student Time Management Study

Welcome!

1. Welcome to the research study on student time management!

I am investigating Pittsburg State University student's beliefs and intentions regarding time management. You will be asked to answer some questions about your opinions on time management as a student. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The study should take about 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the investigators in the study to discuss this research, please contact Lynn Riggs (620) 875-1961, lynn@olenredbird.com or Dr. Jeanea Lambeth (620) 235-4073 or jlambeth@pittstate.edu

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

- ☐ I consent to participate in the study
- ☐ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate in the study

2. Do you have children?

☐

Yes ☐

No

PSU Student Time Management Study

Family Information

3. How many children do you have? (Please answer with a numerical value)

4. How many children live in the home full-time? (Please answer with a numerical value)

5. How many children live in the home part-time? (Examples: Comes in the home for visitations, college breaks/holidays)

6. How old are your children? Please answer with a numerical value. If a child is under the age of 1, please answer with a '0'. (I.E. Child 1 Age: 0, Child 2 Age: 2,etc.)

7. How many hours do your children participate in after school activities? (Examples: Clubs, Sports, Intramurals, etc)

☐

N/A ☐

1-9

☐

10-19

☐

20-29

☐

30-39

☐

40+

PSU Student Time Management Study

University Information

8. How many credit hours are you currently taking?

9. How many hours do you study per week for classes? (Examples: Homework, reading textbook, etc.)

☐

N/A ☐

1-9

☐

10-19

☐

20-29

☐

30-39

☐

40+

PSU Student Time Management Study

Work Hours

10. How many hours a week do you work at a job?

☐ N/A

☐ 1-9

☐ 10-19

☐ 20-29

☐ 30-39

☐ 40+

PSU Student Time Management Study

Job Description

11. What type of job do you have?

- ☐ Student worker
- ☐ University employee
- ☐ Work for business in Pittsburg
- ☐ Work for business outside of Pittsburg

PSU Student Time Management Study

Activities Outside School

12. How many hours do you participate in after school activities? (Examples: Clubs, Fraternity, Sports, Intramurals, etc)

☐ N/A

☐ 1-9

☐ 10-19

☐ 20-29

☐ 30-39

☐ 40+

PSU Student Time Management Study

Demographics

13. What is your gender?

☐

Male

☐

Female

14. What is your classification?

☐

Freshman

☐

Sophomore

☐

Junior

☐

Senior

☐

Graduate

Gift Card Drawing

Please enter your email address if you would like to enter the gift card drawing.

15. Please leave your email address to participate in the Visa Gift Card drawing.

PSU Student Time Management Study

Thank you for your participation!