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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COVID-19, STUDENT-PARENT GPA, AND CHILDCARE NEEDS

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COVID-19, STUDENT-PARENT GPA, AND

CHILDCARE NEEDS

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Child Development

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by

Karina Ventura

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ABSTRACT

Being a college student comes with its responsibilities and challenges. Additionally, being a parent also comes with responsibilities and challenges. For those who classify as both student and parents, there is double the work. The student-parent population in colleges has increased over the past few years and it is important to ensure that their support needs, such as childcare, are taken into consideration. When the COVID-19 pandemic shifted learning to online and childcare centers shut down, student-parents felt the consequences. The purpose of this study was to examine how a student-parent support program (CCAMPIS) impacted academic progress and persistence from 2019 to 2022 when education courses and childcare shifted from in-person to online back to in-person with regulations. This study included 145 student-parents who participated in the program at various times during the years of interest. GPA and academic persistence were examined in relation to modality of course attendance and access to childcare (in-person, online, or returning) and work status. Results from the study found that when student-parents were employed, their persistence levels were higher than student-parents who were not employed. Mode of group participation related to type of instruction and childcare (in-person, online, or returning) were not statistically significant in influencing GPA or persistence levels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved family. To my mother, Reynalda Ventura, who picked me up after every mental break down, wiped away the tears, and pushed me to keep going. To my father, Jorge Ventura-Rivera, who couldn't get his dream of achieving higher education, but got to see it in his daughter who now holds a master's degree. To my brother, Jorge Ventura, for putting me through grad school by taking care of finances at home and making me laugh on my hardest days. To my youngest brother, Anthony Ventura, who I hope I made proud and inspired you in some way to work hard and achieve your dreams. I love you all. Thank you for being my backbone throughout all of grad school. Thank you for all your sacrifices. This thesis and master's degree is for you, mi querida familia.

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Obtaining a post-secondary education is a commitment that comes with beneficial and rewarding outcomes. However, achieving this milestone is not easy. Being in college comes with a significant number of challenges that students must endure. A college workload can be difficult to navigate, especially when students are balancing personal responsibilities. This leads to stress, burnout, feeling overwhelmed, anxiety, depression, and guilt (Gibbons et al. 2019). Having to balance responsibilities can be a challenge for students and it is important that they receive institutional support. Research shows that students are better able to succeed when resources are provided to them by the institution (Shi 2021). A particular population that needs to be supported is students who are also parents, referred to hereafter as "student-parents". Student-parents are considered non-traditional students due to having extra responsibilities of caring for a dependent (Peterson, 2016). Although student-parents share similar responsibilities to traditional students, their additional role of being a parent complicates their school, work, and life balance and can result in academic challenges, such as poor grades.

Childcare is an important supporting factor to student-parents. If there are no childcare resources available, the responsibility falls solely on the parent to care for their child. This impacts the time they can spend on their own education.

Childcare is seen as essential in student-parent success (Gassman-Pines et al., 2022). Childcare access has always been difficult for student-parents, and this was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic as childcare centers, including those on campuses, immediately closed.  The shift to online learning differentially impacted student-parents because they had to juggle the demands of schoolwork and childcare at home simultaneously (Petts et al., 2021). The pandemic also resulted in student-parent support services that were available on campuses to either shutter or shift away from in-person services. One example of this kind of support service is the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS).

The US Department of Education CCAMPIS program is designed to assist student-parents who are obtaining a higher education by providing funding to cover childcare costs. The program also offers resources to assist student-parents such as study time, parent workshops, material distributions, and networking with faculty and other student-parents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCAMPIS program was one of many resources available to student-parents that needed to either stop providing services or convert to providing services online. As many supports were unavailable to students during the pandemic, it was necessary for such programs like CCAMPIS to pivot and consider other ways of offering student-parents support. This population of student-parents served by the CCAMPIS program at this institution have a child between the ages of three months to five years. Therefore, this study will be

focusing on student-parents needing early childhood care. The goal of this study is to analyze whether a CCAMPIS program at a medium size western university effectively pivoted and continued to serve as a support to student-parents during the pandemic.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student-Parents and Challenges Encountered in Post-Secondary Education

College attendance is stressful and can take a toll on health and educational success. A study conducted by Gibbons, Trette-McLean, Crandall, Bingham, Garn, and Cox (2019) revealed that many college-students experience stress, anxiety, depression, and the feeling of having to be a perfectionist. This is due to the many stressors associated with obtaining a post-secondary education. Some common college stressors include assignment load, work-school balance, financial challenges, and attending to social life needs. It is unfortunate that students experience tangible stressors and challenges with mental health as these can lead to various outcomes such as a negative impact on academic performance (Amirkhan, Manalo, & Velasco, 2022).

The tangible stressors of college and the negative outcomes on mental health and academic success are exacerbated for student-parents. Hotez, Lin, Chan, Felix, Francis, Giancinto, Mitchell, and Siddique (2020) noted that student-parents struggle more with time management than traditional college students. This study conducted a focus group intervention and found that student-parent participants report not having adequate time which leads to higher levels of stress in attempting to complete both school and childcare responsibilities. Not having enough time also impacted how much engagement student-parents could have with other students or to attend extracurricular activities. This led to a

feeling of disconnection. Additional challenges consisted of needing to have accommodations made with assignments when unforeseen circumstances occur with their children. Student-parents noted that the college environment does not serve them in a way that benefits them due to difficulty in meeting the expectations that professors and the institution has for them. Overall, student-parents felt that their roles are bidirectional, where being a student and parent impact one another in conflicting ways. When these dual roles have a bidirectional impact on each other, there is much more at stake such as the toll it takes on emotional well-being (Hotez et al., 2020).

Across literature, parents report feeling conflicted about how to divide their time, which leads to guilt. Brooks (2014) interviewed student-parents in the United Kingdom and found that although obtaining a higher education is rewarding, students reported that there are sacrifices that must be made that lead to guilt. Parents feel guilty when needing to prioritize school responsibilities over spending time with their children. The quality of their parenting may be diminished when having to balance both roles of student and parent (Dotterer, 2021). Feelings of guilt arose when having to spend time with children and not attending to school responsibilities. This supports the literature that asserts that time constraints are a prevalent stressor amongst student-parents (Brooks, 2014). An example of the guilt that arises from not having time to both parent and student effectively comes from van der Riet, Corfe, and Kubeka (2020). This study revealed that single student-parents in Africa often attend to childcare

needs rather than academic responsibilities. This led to having many instances where the thought of dropping out of college seemed like a better alternative. Results revealed how student-parents felt guilty missing out on developmental milestones in their children's growth. The feeling of having to divide themselves between roles and how this led to feelings of burnout was commonly shared (Riet et al., 2020).

Time to graduation also suffers for student-parents. A study by Brauer and Foust (2020) compared working student-parents to working students and found that student-parents tend to take fewer college credits compared to their peers who are not parents to ensure they can handle all responsibilities. Student-parents who work also reported they do not feel they have the freedom to leave a job due to having to manage family financial responsibilities (Brauer and Foust, 2020). Having to prioritize work to meet financial obligations and their children's needs leads to a lower number of credits taken at a time and delays graduation compared to students who take full course loads.

Women, who are also mothers, enter the work field to help financially support their families (Edgley, 2021). However, their roles do not stop there. Working mothers are expected to attend to childcare needs along with household responsibilities while simultaneously holding a job. Dugan and Barnes-Farrell, (2020) labeled this as a second shift phenomenon where women attend to their second job at home after completing their daytime job. The study by Edgley (2021) described how women who are employed report it critical to find jobs that

will be flexible enough for them to continue to attend to childcare needs and home responsibilities. Maclean, Andrew, and Eivers, (2021) found that feelings of guilt arose when working parents were unable to attend to all their responsibilities. This was especially true for working mothers who were also students and actively taking courses. The additional role of being a student added to the feeling of guilt by having to compromise work and childcare responsibilities to attend to academic responsibilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic created hardships for all people, but especially working parents. Through a qualitative approach, Clark, McGrane, Boyle, Joksimovic, Burke, Rock, and Sullivan (2021), conducted a study interviewing mothers about their dual role of holding a job and taking care of home responsibilities. Results found that during the pandemic, working mothers had to reduce their hours or leave their jobs to attend to household and childcare responsibilities. Additionally, the findings emphasized how single mothers were severely impacted since they did not have flexibility on sharing the responsibilities of work and household responsibilities (Clark et al., 2021). All of these factors, time to graduation, feelings of guilt, and difficulty managing dual responsibilities are exacerbated by household status. Single parenthood comes with a number of challenges, especially for those who are students as well. Student-parents overall report feelings of exhaustion, being overwhelmed, anger, and hopelessness (Shenoy, Lee, & Trieu, 2016). Shenoy et al., (2016) noted that

this was true for all student-parents, but higher for those who were single student-parents.

The stressors that college students experience and the negative outcomes that are related to this stress, particularly those who are student-parents, speak to the need for institutional support. Although students are expected to input the effort in being engaged in school, institutions and faculty are also expected to reciprocate those efforts as well. Research has shown the importance of ensuring students are feeling supported and are receiving the resources they need to be successful. When they are, there are more positive academic outcomes. Most importantly, institutions, faculty members, advisors, and counselors are expected to be well equipped to support students to ensure their academics and overall well-being are taken care of (Garriott & Nisle, 2017).  Institutional support helps mitigate stressors experienced by students obtaining higher education.

<div align="center">Importance of Support</div>

As noted above, institutional support can alleviate the impact of stress and contribute to student success. A study by Shi (2021) examined whether the amount of faculty support students received had an influence on levels of depression and anxiety. Findings revealed that the more students were supported, the less stress and depression they experienced. This need for support is important at the faculty level as well as from the larger institution. When students are supported, it benefits them and the larger

community. According to a report from the Institute for Women's Policy Research (2020), data has shown that when student-parents are supported by their institution in obtaining higher education, they are more likely to achieve graduation, which in turn leads to the creation of home environments for their children that are education oriented. This then leads to future generations of the household emerging from an education-oriented foundation with the potential for greater skills and success in life. Benefits also consist of creating communities where residents hold higher education degrees. When this occurs, those who hold higher degrees contribute to voting and policy decision making for the wellbeing of the community. This emphasizes the importance of the role that institutions play in ensuring student-parents graduate because in the long run, it comes back to benefit the community (Israelsen-Heartley, 2020).

When surveyed, students routinely note that institutional support such as assistance from advisors is important to their success (Garriott and Nisle, 2017; Kalkbrenner, Brown, Carlisle, and Carlisle, 2019). Additionally, Israelsen-Heartly (2020) revealed that students who interacted with or consulted frequently with advisors and counselors throughout the term were more likely to succeed in school compared to their colleagues who did not frequently meet. Unfortunately, student-parents are not always supported adequately and at the level needed for their needs and they may be reluctant to seek support when it is not offered directly.

A study by van der Riet, Corfe, and Kubeka (2020) surveyed student-parents regarding services offered by the university. Results revealed that student-parents would not report their struggles with faculty in fear of not being taken seriously. Some reported that they did not want to seem as if they were asking for preferential treatment just because they were parents, so they avoided communicating their needs to faculty members. There is also evidence indicating that resources for student-parents are in short supply and that institutions do not make students aware of resources that are available. A study by Sallee and Cox (2019) showed that student-parents struggled with navigating through college and were not made aware of resources. One student-parent in this study stated how once they were made aware that certain resources existed, it led to them asking more questions about the resources and how they can put them to use. This does not occur when student-parents are not aware of such resources existing in the first place or are uncomfortable seeking such services. Student-parents also reported feeling as if campus did not welcome children on campus and therefore, student-parents felt the campus would not support them as parents either.

Assistance with academics is not the only area in which student-parents need support from the institution. It is important to remember these students are playing multiple roles at once and being a student only constitutes one of their roles. Aside from academic support, student-parents desperately need support when navigating personal struggles. According to the Institute for Women's

Policy Research (2020), some of the areas in which student-parents struggle and need support are with finances, time management, and basic needs such as housing, access to food, and general wellbeing. Data revealed that student-parents who are single parents and/or classify as black tend to be the ones who need the most support as they hold the most debt compared to their colleagues. Many families who fall in these categories do not have sufficient support or they simply do not have knowledge regarding existing resources. Some examples of resources that can be shared are locations of food banks, how to apply for WIC (Women Infants and Children), connection to counseling services, where to find peer support, and providing a safe space for them to come ask for help (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020).

In addition to being a student-parent, those who are student-parents of color carry additional burdens when it comes to obtaining higher education. A study by Huerta, Rios-Aguilar, and Ramirez (2022) conducted a case study with student-parents who were also students of color and their college experiences. Interviews revealed that when a student was a parent, but also a student of color, their experiences in college differed from traditional students. According to the U.S Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics, a traditional student classifies as a recent high school graduate, attending college full-time, living on campus, dependent on parents, with no dependent of their own. Huerta et al., (2022) revealed that non-traditional students had negative experiences with faculty at the college due to being pregnant at the time of

attendance. This led to dropping out of college due to not feeling supported and understood by the faculty. Another participant reported that they had to drop out of school after their mother was deported and could no longer find childcare. Some common traits among this sample of student-parents of color were lack of time, not being able to be flexible, not feeling understood or supported, and unable to take on additional units. Participants revealed how critical it was to them to have familial support along with institutional support to be able to succeed. The study notes the importance of implementing the Guided Pathways model with students of color to assist them succeeding in college. Guided Pathways provides support, guidance, feedback, career information, and resources given to students from the time they enroll to the time they graduate. The article notes how the Guided Pathways program does not make enough efforts to target students of color when it is them who need it the most. This study mentions the framework of community cultural wealth (CCW) which entails the importance of cultural skills and knowledge that get brought into the classroom and work fields. Students of color bring unique and important assets to the field of academia, and they should not be undermined, but instead valued and supported (Huerta, 2022).

An additional stressor that hinders student-parents of color is lower earnings. According to an article by the Institute for Women's Policy research, it was revealed that women represent 71% of the student-parent population. They also reported that women of color tend to have higher levels of financial stressors

and problems. Women of color who are student-parents also are more likely to accumulate debt and are more likely to drop out of college. In the work field, women of color who are parents earn less in comparison to men, Whites, and Asians. Financial stress while being a student, a parent, and being part of a minority group, impacts the ability to be able to succeed in post-secondary education (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2014).

It is not enough to simply have resources available; it requires guidance and contribution from the institution to ensure students are knowledgeable on how to access this help. Student-parents are frequently undermined. An article by Israelsen-Heartly (2020) uses the term invisible students when referring to student-parents due to how little recognition they receive. Two-thirds of student-parents claimed they do not share that they are parents due to fear of judgment. This can lead to student-parents going unseen when it comes to their challenges in having to balance their additional role and responsibilities. Student-parents need to be heard on what their specific needs are since they have unique lifestyles that differ from their peers who are traditional students. A statement from a parent quoted in the article by Israelsen-Heartly (2020) claimed that student-parents are not trying to be praised above others, they simply want to be supported, heard, and understood to ensure their needs are being met accurately.

Student-Parents and Childcare

An additional way to support student-parents is to provide childcare services. There are various benefits that come with having access to childcare. A study by Yamoah, Balser, Olgand-Hand, Doernberg, Lewis-Miller, and Freedman (2023) reported that childcare access lessens stress for student-parents because they know their children are being cared for in a learning rich environment while they attend to their responsibilities. Another study by Sattler (2022), found that children who were enrolled in early childhood care are exposed to positive environments. These environments serve to assist parents in building healthy and positive relationships with their children by informing parents of appropriate parenting practices to implement. When parents have help with their children's education and development through childcare centers, it takes away the stress of feeling like they are on their own when it comes to the care of their children (Yamoah et al., 2023) and allows them to focus on school.

Student-parents rely on childcare to attend to their academic responsibilities. A study by Manze, Watnick, and Freudenberg (2021) revealed that when childcare is not accessible to student-parents it leads to a negative impact on academic progress. Participants who reported lack of childcare further shared that this led to increased stress which impacted their overall mental wellbeing. Lack of childcare prevented some student-parents from being able to attend their courses. The study revealed the importance of institutions assisting student-parents through resources and policies, especially in the form of

childcare, to ensure they progress academically. Robeson and Green (2020) noted that childcare, especially childcare offered on college campuses, serves student-parents in a beneficial way by helping with balancing responsibilities. The benefits of on campus childcare include having convenient pick up and drop off times that are in proximity to classes and are in correlation with student-parent's class schedules.

Childcare centers on campus also allow student-parents to socialize with other student-parents which enables them to grow their support system, networking, and relating to others who are in similar positions to them. Diversity at childcare centers leads to feelings of belonging and acceptance which is important to student-parents since a large portion of the student-parent population consists of those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is especially true for women student-parents (Robeson & Green, 2020). Childcare access for student-parents leads to tangible economic and graduation rate outcomes as well. According to Cruse, Milli, Contreras-Mendez, Holtzman, and Gault (2019), women who obtain higher education increase their lifetime earnings between $250,000 with an associate degree and up to $625,000 with a bachelor's degree. When childcare is available and utilized, the rate at which single mothers graduate is much quicker. Data from Monroe Community College found that student-parents who utilized childcare at their campus in comparison to student-parents who did not were able to graduate sooner. Additional benefits of childcare center usage consisted of persistence into the next semester and on-

time graduation. Overall graduation rate for student-parents increased by 21%

when childcare was accessible and utilized (DeMario, 2017).

Childcare access for student-parents benefits them both in the short and

long-term. In addition to reducing time to graduation and the other benefits noted

above, Cruse et al. (2019) asserts that supporting childcare for student-parents is

an investment that benefits society in the long run. Although covering the cost of

childcare may seem high, research has shown that covering childcare tuition

increases graduation rates, which then leads to societal benefits. It is reported

that the U.S.A can expect $89 billion in societal benefits via tax contributions

from student-parents who have graduated, and that this investment can prevent

investment in public assistance spending. Explained in simpler terms, the article

notes that for every dollar invested in childcare for single mothers who are

students, there is a $4.30 return in societal benefits after graduation is achieved.

In the end, this is an investment that benefits the nation.

While childcare access clearly benefits student-parents, it can be

challenging to identify a source to financially support it. Herbst (2018), showed

that childcare costs have increased 14 percent since 1990. A study by Hess et

al., (2014) found that in Mississippi, childcare costs ranged from $2,726 to

$4,863 per year for children who were considered full time in the centers. Aside

from the cost of childcare fees, student-parents must also consider the cost of

tuition while attending college. The cost of both college tuition and childcare may

deter them from seeking a college degree. Beyond cost, there is also a dearth of

childcare available. Between the years 2003 and 2015, there was a decline in available childcare for student-parents (Robeson & Green, 2020). This decline was estimated to have decreased from 55 percent to 44 percent. Although availability of childcare declined, the need for it did not. According to the Institute of Women's Policy Research, 72.6 percent of student-parents, especially single mothers, reported needing childcare full time while 27.4 percent reported needing it for at least half time. The percentage of student-parents relying on childcare full time is quite high and it can be alarming to parents when they are unable to access childcare due to cost or availability.

## CCAMPIS

One source of childcare support for student-parents is the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program. This program is supported by the US Department of Education and provides funding to qualified student-parents (i.e., those who are low income) to cover childcare tuition fees (U.S Department of Education, 2022). According to CCAMPIS, to be considered low income, students may not exceed the poverty level amount of 150 percent of taxable income (Federal Trio Programs Current-Year Low-Level Incomes, 2022). Institutions of higher education qualify to receive CCAMPIS funding if the allocated amount of Pell grant dispersed by the institution equals or exceeds 350,000 dollars per year (U.S Department of Education, 2022). The goal of the CCAMPIS program is to provide low-income student-parents with childcare access to support them in pursuing a postsecondary education (U.S Department

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of Education, 2022). If a postsecondary education facility qualifies to receive funding, funding can be used to support campus childcare facilities and/or community childcare facilities (U.S Department of Education, 2022). Student-parents are assisted in alleviating childcare tuition cost through CCAMPIS grant funding and are offered support services targeting both personal growth and their roles as student-parents.

CCAMPIS participants have reported the benefits such as an increase in graduation rates, academic performance, and retention rates with enrollment in the program (Baskerville, 2013).  For example, a local CCAMPIS program that routinely surveys participants provided data from one recipient who reported that before being part of the program, the childcare accommodation she made for her son had failed her mid-semester. This led to missing class to care for her child and her grades suffered. This put her at risk of losing financial aid. After being accepted into the CCAMPIS program the participant shared how she flourished in her academics. She had reliable childcare which led to her being reliable in her studies. This brought her GPA back up and she was eligible to continue receiving aid to cover her tuition costs. Not only did she benefit from the program, but so did her son. Being in childcare, her son's language development excelled. She reported that the resources provided by the program helped build her parenting skills and her relationship with her son (Personal Communication, Alvarado, 2022).

The importance of childcare (and other institutional supports) to student-parents has been researched over the years and having resources, support, and programs set in place to assist individuals is critical to their success. This formula for success was tested in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Impact of COVID-19 on College Student Success

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of college students in significant ways. A study conducted by Madrigal and Belvins (2021) assessed the mental health of college students during the pandemic. This study asked university students how they coped with challenges relating to school and personal life and how it impacted their mental health during COVID-19. Surveys were open-ended and themes were created based on the data. When discussing mental health, participants reported feeling a range of negative emotions such as sadness, anger, anxiety, and fear. Coughenour, Gakh, Pharr, Bungum, and Jalene (2021) found that college students reported spending less time on physical activity when the stay-at-home order was placed. This then resulted in having higher symptoms of depression which then impacted academic performance.

A study by Kim, Rackoff, Fitzsimmons-Craft, Shin, Zainal, Schwob, Eisenberg, Wifley, Taylor, and Newman (2022) surveyed college students prior to the pandemic and during the pandemic to assess possible differences in their mental health. Results showed that there were changes in depression, alcohol use, eating disorders, and comorbidity. These outcomes were all more prevalent

when compared to pre-pandemic data. A study by Lopez-Castro, Brandt, Anthonipillai, Espinosa, and Melara (2021) echoed these findings and noted that anxiety and depression led to poorer mental health during the pandemic, especially with those individuals who lost a loved-one because of COVID-19.

Moving to an online learning format where students were asked to complete their academic responsibilities virtually, essentially overnight, was also hard on students. Garris and Fleck (2022) revealed that students felt the quality of their courses diminished during the shift from in-person to online. Students also reported that interest and motivation levels decreased as time online continued. As the pandemic waxed and waned, courses shifted from online to in-person and back again. Garris and Fleck (2022) reported that courses that underwent the shift from in-person to being virtual were the ones that were more challenging and were more negatively experienced. Students reported feeling higher levels of anxiety and stress due to this change from in-person to virtual. When instructors were flexible, this helped to alleviate the stress and anxiety that students were experiencing, allowing them to feel more supported and enjoy the course more.

Sadly, not all instructors were flexible. There were various challenges that arose with the shift to online learning. This was particularly true for non-traditional students, such as student-parents. Mercado-Lopez (2021) shared how institutions may not have stressed the importance of supporting those who are also considered caregivers in the shift to virtual learning. One parent reported the

difficulty of following an instructor's policy of having their cameras on during class. This parent shared that they were multitasking during class (attending class while caring for their children) and were penalized for not turning their camera on. Student-parents not only needed to shift to online learning personally, but they needed to care for their children and perhaps even manage their children's own online learning experience (Nyanamba, Liew, & Li, 2022). This led to concerns about their own academics and their children's, which increased levels of stress and worry (Gupta, Aggarwal, Sable, Chahar, Sharma, Kumari, &Maji, 2022). A study by Nyanamba et al. (2022) found that this burden (of overseeing their own academic responsibilities along with that of their children) led to an increased risk of burnout. Mercado-Lopez (2021) reported that many student-parents could not find the motivation to attend to their academic responsibilities in an online format. Many student-parents shared they had the urge to take the semester off or until courses were offered in person again. Many student-parents did pause their education, although there is no clear number reported on what this percentage may be due to institutions meshing all students together and not specifically separating those who are student-parents.

<div align="center">Impact of COVID-19 on Institutional Support</div>

When the pandemic hit, the quarantine lockdown halted access to resources used by students, particularly those who were parents. Some examples included childcare, technology, study groups, and the ability to schedule with advising counselors (Israelsen-Hartley, 2020). Student-parents

were also particularly vulnerable to financial insecurity during this time. Two-thirds of student-parents live in poverty, and they often face job insecurity due to having to prioritize family over work and school. The pandemic accelerated accumulation of student debt due to additional financial hardships and was especially true for student-parents who are single and/or black (Cruse, Mendez, & Holtzman, 2020). An article by the Institute for Women's Policy Research written by Nicole Lynn Lewis (2020) revealed that the average amount of loans that black student-parents took out was about $18,000 in comparison to $13,500 from other students. The black ethnicity makes up more than one third of the student-parent population. Some reasons as to why black students, specifically black student-parents accumulate high numbers in student debt is because of the racial wealth gap. The article by Lewis (2020) reveals how white women have a net worth of $171,000 while black women have a net worth of $17,000. Additionally, black student-parents have additional financial responsibilities with their children with childcare costs, food, and medical expenses (Lewis, 2020).

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, minority groups who are student-parents were impacted the most. Many faced financial strain with the pandemic reducing work hours, being let go, or furloughed. This led to many student-parents putting a pause on their education to attend to their family's needs, sometimes referred to as a stop-out, rather than a drop-out (Israelsen-Hartley, 2020). Weber (2021) noted that parents who stopped-out during the pandemic want to come back as soon as circumstances allow them to.

Weber (2021) also noted how the pandemic led to many resources being put on hold and how there will be a high need to reinstate these services for student-parents to successfully return to the university and continue their studies.

One of the main resources stripped from student-parents was access to in-person childcare. The lack of available childcare due to center closures led to student-parents experiencing additional stressors during online learning. In addition, according to Robeson and Green (2020), various centers were unable to recover after the pandemic and remained permanently closed or switched their services to online only, thus differentially impacting the return of student-parents to campus even after the stay-at-home order was lifted. These closures led to parents having to accommodate their childcare and, in many instances, they themselves were the ones responsible for childcare while simultaneously attending to their additional responsibilities. This closure of childcare centers led to an increase in parent stress. (Schuller &Steinberg 2022)

A study by Gassman-Pines et al. (2022) studied the stressors that arose from the unpredictability of whether centers and schools would remain open and the attempt to keep consistent routines in children's lives. The study measured how these disruptions in routine may impact parent's mood. Participants were parents of children of the ages of 3 and 8 years. Parents were asked to complete daily surveys for a month that assessed whether their initial plan for the day followed through when it came to childcare and school sessions. Results found that the unpredictability of childcare and schools remaining open led to

inconsistency in parents' daily routines. This then led to an increase in stress and impacted parent's mood (Gassman-Pines et al., 2022).

Institutional Supports that Alleviated the Impact of COVID-19

As mentioned previously, institutional support is important for student success. The pandemic was a time where a lot of resources and support were needed to ensure the success of students and where universities needed to pivot quickly to provide adequate support that may not have been provided to students previously.

Gonzalez-Ramirez, Mulqueen, Zealand, Silverstein, Reina, BuShell, and Ladda (2021) examined factors that had an impact on student success during online learning. The results showed that access to resources such as reliable Wi-fi connectivity and appropriate study areas that were quiet (Gonzalez-Ramirez et al., 2021) increased student success. Additionally, the quality of the online courses was deemed important for the success of students. Zeng and Wang (2021) found that when faculty adapted their courses to fit the needs of their students such as providing the right amount of synchronous and asynchronous opportunities, encouraging discussions, having materials uploaded and ready, it helped students persist in the course.

Lederer, Hoban, Lipson, Zhou, and Eisenberg (2021) noted some key factors in alleviating stressors that arose from the COVID-19 pandemic. When institutions relied on the voices of the students, it helped ensure that future decisions considered the needs of the population. Additionally, it was reported

that when colleges relayed information to students about the pandemic, it was helpful to be clear and concise with the information. At the start of the pandemic, students were unsure of where to obtain more information on the COVID-19 virus and relied heavily on social media and the internet. When institutions were responsible for providing accurate and reliable information to students, it helped keep them knowledgeable about the situation (Lederer et al., 2021).

Most importantly, one of the major supports from institutions during the pandemic was their willingness to expand, adapt, and add new resources for students. Pre-existing resources that were set in place before the pandemic were already beneficial to students, but being able to continuously provide those resources during the lockdown was extremely important to the success of students. Many resources adapted to online services which allowed students to continue accessing them. For example, online meetings with counselors and access to telehealth and phone appointments. Lederer (2021) emphasized the importance of resources adapting during the pandemic was essential to provide continuous support to student-parents.

Another critical resource that alleviated the impact of COVID-19 was childcare. Data from Yamoah, Balser, Olgand-Hand, Doernberg, Lewis-Miller, and Freedman (2023), revealed how access to childcare during the pandemic amplified the success of parents and families. Parents in the study reported how having childcare relieved mental stress by allowing them to attend to their responsibilities while knowing their children were being taken care of in a healthy

learning environment. Parents were at ease knowing their children were in an environment that provided developmentally appropriate education. The study further noted that access to childcare brings positive outcomes to the community as whole. Resources are shared, assistance is available, and having support alleviates stressors that families may be dealing with on their own. One parent shared that assistance in childcare has a ripple effect that helps keep balance in the lives of families (Yamoah et al., 2023).

Unfortunately, as noted earlier, during the pandemic, many childcare centers were forced to close due to the COVID-19 regulations that were enforced. Centers that were primarily affected were those located on college campuses. Due to university closures, childcare centers on campus were also forced to close and adapt the form in which they provided services. It was necessary for universities to find ways to continue providing support and services during the lockdown to student-parents.

One example of such a shift in the provision of campus childcare service during the COVID-19 pandemic was the CCAMPIS Program at a mid-sized western university. This CCAMPIS program offered childcare tuition and in-person childcare services on campus to low-income student-parents prior to the pandemic. During the initial phase of COVID-19, the childcare centers on campus were forced to close, leaving student-parents to struggle with online learning at home with no institutionally supported childcare options. The CCAMPIS program quickly pivoted and shifted to virtual services to continue

assisting children and student-parents. Specifically, a Virtual Enrichment

Program was created where families received monthly materials to use during

weekly circle times held by the master teachers of the classrooms. This virtual

program ran for approximately a year before the centers on campus were

reopened and families were able to return to using in-person childcare services.

CHAPTER THREE:

CURRENT STUDY


As noted throughout this paper, student-parents have not been
appropriately supported in obtaining higher education. The idea of what makes
up the college population has changed drastically over the years, and it is time to
reconsider the types of support and guidance being offered to the student
population. Institutions share the responsibility to ensure the needs of students
are being met to support academic success. When appropriate resources are
offered to students, it helps alleviate and manage stressors when balancing
multiple responsibilities. However, when an unprecedented situation occurs, the
way in which support is offered and challenges are navigated must shift. As the
global pandemic spread, businesses shut down, institutions changed mode of
instruction, jobs were impaired, and lives were forever altered. Students, faculty,
and childcare settings on-campus were interrupted and forced to adapt according
to COVID-19 regulations. This led to a situation where student-parents
experienced a combination of in-person and virtual coursework and in-person
and virtual childcare. The CCAMPIS program serves qualifying student-parents
who have a child between the ages of three months to age 5. Therefore, the
childcare mentioned in this study was specific to early childhood care. The
purpose of this study was to compare the GPAs and persistence of students who
participated in in-person coursework and CCAMPIS childcare services prior to

the pandemic to those who received virtual services, to those who returned to campus from the virtual services. The study used a MANCOVA with the covariate being employment status (employed or unemployed). Specifically, the design of this study allowed comparison of student-parents based on the mode of instruction and childcare they experienced during the 2019 through 2022 academic years. There were three groups of interest. In-person students were enrolled in the university pre-COVID and had access to in-person childcare and course instruction (Fall 2019 and Winter 2020). Virtual students had access to virtual childcare support and online instruction (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021). Returning students experienced a combination of online and virtual instruction and in-person childcare (Fall 2021 and Spring 2022). The term Spring 2020 was not included in the formation of these groups as there was not a survey this quarter due to the sudden closures from the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine. The research questions for this study are.

1. After accounting for employment status, how did mode of group participation (in-person, virtual, or returning) and employment status impact student-parents' GPA?

2. After accounting for employment status, how did mode of group participation (in-person, virtual, or returning) and employment status impact student-parents' persistence?

It is hypothesized that:

H1: After accounting for employment status, when student-parents are part of the in-person group, student-parents' GPA will be highest. When student-parents are part of the return group their GPA will be lower than those students who were in the in-person group, but higher than those who were in the online group. When student-parents are part of the online group their GPA will be lower than those students who were in the in-person group and the return group. This derives from the knowledge that online learning led to a decrease in attention and motivation in classes (Garris & Fleck, 2022) and that having access to in-person childcare is an important student support. It is important to account for employment status because literature has shown that employed student-parents sometimes prioritize work over academic responsibilities to ensure they are attending their financial obligations for their family (Brauer and Foust, 2020).

H2: After accounting for employment status, when student-parents are part of the in-person group, student-parents' persistence will be highest. When student-parents are part of the return group persistence will be lower than those students who were in the in-person group, but higher than those who were in the online group. When student-parents are part of the online group persistence will be lower than those students who were in the in-person group and the return group. When student-parents attend online instruction, school retention and persistence will be lower than students who attend any amount of in-person instruction. Previous research has shown that students

having access to campus resources and opportunities to communicate with faculty and peers in-person assists them in finishing their degree (Shi, 2021). It is important to account for employment status because the literature notes that having to attend to various responsibilities such as work, school, and childcare leads to negative impacts on school performance (Amirkhan, Manalo, & Velasco, 2022).

# CHAPTER FOUR:

# METHOD

The CCAMPIS program is funded by the US Department of Education and serves university students who are also parents. Participation is dictated by enrollment status (at least half-time) and financial need. Financial needs are determined by evaluating if interested students are Pell-eligible. If students are not Pell-eligible but exhibit financial need, eligibility is determined by calculating a student's Expected Family Contribution number (EFC). Students who fall below a $5,684 EFC threshold are eligible to participate. Participation in this program also depends on enrollment in one of the two on-campus childcare centers. Students who do not obtain childcare space, even if they are Pell-eligible, may not participate in this program.

## Participants

Participants for this study consisted of student-parents enrolled in the CCAMPIS program and the institution from the academic years of 2019 through 2022. The overall study had a total of 145 participants from the academic years of 2019-2022. Ages ranged from 20 ½ to 43 with an average of 26 years. 137 participants identified as female and eight identified as male. The racial breakdown of the sample was 70.3% Hispanic, 13.8% White, 9.7% Black/African American, 0.7% American Indian, 1.4% Asian, and 4.1% identified as two or more races. Employment status consisted of 46.8% employed and 53.1%

unemployed. The average hours worked per week for those employed was 11

hours. For household status 40% identified as not married independent (NMI),

13.8% as not married dependent (NMD), and 37.9% as married (M). Household

status did change for some participants across semesters. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Whole Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 145 | 20.5 | 43.0 | 26.84 | 4.60 |
| **Hours Worked** | 145 | 0 | 40.0 | 11.60 | 13.87 |

| Variable | Description | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | 102 | 70.3% |
| | White | 20 | 13.8% |
| | B/AA | 14 | 9.7% |
| | American Indian | 1 | .7% |
| | Asian | 2 | 1.4% |
| | Two or More | 6 | 4.1% |
| | Total | 145 | 100% |
| | | | |
| **Employment** | Employed | 68 | 46.8% |
| | Unemployed | 77 | 53.1% |
| | Total | 145 | 100% |
| | | | |
| **Gender** | Female | 137 | 94.5% |
| | Male | 8 | 5.5% |
| | Total | 145 | 100% |
| | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | 58 | 40% |
| | NMD | 20 | 13.8% |
| | M | 55 | 37.9% |
| | M->NMI | 2 | 1.4% |
| | NMI->M | 2 | 1.4% |
| | NMI->NMD | 6 | 4.1% |
| | NMD->NMI | 2 | 1.4% |
| | Total | 145 | 100% |

*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, M->NMI= Married to Not married independent, NMI->NMD= Not married independent to Not Married dependent, NMD->NMI= Not married dependent to Not married independent*

In-Person Group.

Prior to the pandemic, in person services for the CCAMPIS program allowed participants to have access to childcare while they attended their primarily in-person classes (courses were rarely offered online prior to the pandemic). There were opportunities for networking via parenting workshops, discussions, and advising consultations. Participants in the in-person group consisted of student-parents who were enrolled in the CCAMPIS program prior to the pandemic (Fall 2019-Winter 2020). The Spring 2020 quarter was not included as there was not a survey administered during this semester due to the sudden lockdown and closure of the centers on campus. The in-person group participants did not experience any of the CCAMPIS services in a virtual format. They were enrolled in the program when the university was fully in-person.

The in-person group included 40 participants. Ages ranged from 20 ½ to 43 with an average of 26 years. Thirty-eight of the participants identified as female and two identified as male. The racial breakdown for this group of participants was as follows: 67.5% Hispanic, 22.5% White, 5% Black/African American, and 5% identified as two or more races. Employment status consisted of 52.5% employed and 47.5% unemployed. The average hours worked per week was 12.8 hours. For household status 32.5% were Not Married Independent (NMI), 12.5% were Not Married Dependent (NMD), and 37.5% were Married (M). Household status did change for some participants across semesters. (See Table 2 below).

Table 2. In-Person Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 40 | 20.5 | 43.0 | 26.0 | 5.20 |
| **Hours Worked** | 40 | 0 | 40.0 | 12.80 | 14.06 |

| Variable | Description | | Frequency | | Percent | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | | 27 | | 67.5% | |
| | White | | 9 | | 22.5% | |
| | B/AA | | 2 | | 5% | |
| | 2 or More | | 2 | | 5% | |
| | | Total | | 40 | | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| **Employment** | Employed | | 21 | | 52.5% | |
| | Unemployed | | 19 | | 47.5% | |
| | | Total | | 40 | | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| **Gender** | Female | | 38 | | 95% | |
| | Male | | 2 | | 5% | |
| | | Total | | 40 | | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | | 13 | | 32.5% | |
| | NMD | | 5 | | 12.5% | |
| | M | | 15 | | 37.5% | |
| | NMI->M | | 1 | | 2.5% | |
| | NMI->NMD | | 5 | | 12.5% | |
| | NMD->NMI | | 1 | | 2.5% | |
| | | Total | | 40 | | 100% |

*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, NMI->M= Not married independent to married, NMI->NMD= Not married independent to Not Married dependent, NMD->NMI= Not married dependent to Not married independent*

Online Group.

Online services were offered during the lockdown to follow CDC

guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Campus was not accessible to any

faculty, staff, nor students. All courses across the university were provided online

(both synchronously and asynchronously). The childcare centers were closed

and not accessible. All services offered by the CCAMPIS program were provided in an online format to follow CDC and university protocols. This included virtual childcare services (the Early Learning Enrichment Program). Virtual childcare services consisted of weekly circle times for the children to attend along with monthly materials to distribute to CCAMPIS parents for their children. Participants could pick up materials at the university in a drive through fashion where materials were placed in their trunk. These materials were then used for weekly circle time activities with the master teachers at the centers. Participants in the online group consisted of student-parents who enrolled in the CCAMPIS program during online instruction (Fall 2020-Spring 2021). They did not receive any form of in-person services.

The online group consisted of 83 participants. Ages ranged from 21 to 39 ½ with an average of 27 ½ years. Seventy-nine participants identified as female and four identified as male. Amongst this group of participants, the racial breakdown was 69.9% Hispanic, 10.8% White, 12% Black/African American, 1.2% American Indian, 2.4% Asian, and 3.6% identified as two or more races. Employment status consisted of 47% employed and 53% unemployed. The average hours worked per week was 12.6 hours. For household status 43.4% were NMI, 15.7% were NMD, and 36.1% were M. Household status did change for some participants across semesters. (See Table 3 below).

Table. 3 Online Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 83 | 21.0 | 39.5 | 27.50 | 4.35 |
| **Hours Worked** | 83 | 0 | 40.0 | 12.60 | 14.60 |

| Variable | Description | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | 58 | 69.9% |
| | White | 9 | 10.8% |
| | B/AA | 10 | 12% |
| | American Indian | 1 | 1.2% |
| | Asian | 2 | 2.4% |
| | Two or More | 3 | 3.6% |
| | Total | 83 | 100% |
| | | | |
| **Employment** | Employed | 35 | 39.8% |
| | Unemployed | 44 | 53% |
| | Total | 83 | 100% |
| | | | |
| **Gender** | Female | 79 | 95.2% |
| | Male | 4 | 4.8% |
| | Total | 83 | 100% |
| | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | 36 | 43.4% |
| | NMD | 13 | 15.7% |
| | M | 30 | 36.1% |
| | M->NMI | 2 | 2.4% |
| | NMI->NMD | 1 | 1.2% |
| | NMD->NMI | 1 | 1.2% |
| | Total | 83 | 100% |

*\*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, M->NMI=
Married to Not married independent, NMI->NMD= Not married independent to Not Married
dependent, NMD->NMI= Not married dependent to Not married independent*

<u>Return Group.</u>

In the Fall 2021 semester, the university began opening in-person services. Students were able to come back to in-person courses (although there was masking, temporary moves to online instruction, and many more online offerings than during pre-pandemic times). The childcare centers on campus opened but were also impacted. Centers were not opened at full capacity, CDC guidelines had to be followed in classrooms, and social distancing was still expected. These circumstances created a situation wherein some participants were not 100% back on campus and thus the need for on campus childcare fluctuated as the university and childcare programs were occasionally faced with temporary closures and a move back to online instruction due to high numbers of COVID-19 cases or exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals. Participants in the returning group consisted of participants who were enrolled in the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semester when the university reopened but still provided many online services.

The return group consisted of 22 participants. Ages ranged from 21 to 35 ½ with an average of 25 years. Twenty participants identified as female and two identified as male. The racial breakdown for this group of participants was 77.3% Hispanic, 9.1% White, 9.1% Black/African American, and 4.5% identified as two or more races. Employment status consisted of 36.4% employed and 63.6% unemployed. For household status 40.9% were NMI, 9.1% were NMD, and

45.5% were M. Household status did change for some participants across

semesters. (See Table 4 below).

Table 4. Return Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 22 | 21.0 | 35.5 | 25.93 | 4.13 |
| **Hours Worked** | 22 | 0 | 25.0 | 5.65 | 8.71 |

| Variable | Description | | Frequency | | Percent | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | | 17 | | 77.3% | |
| | White | | 2 | | 9.1% | |
| | B/AA | | 2 | | 9.1% | |
| | Two or More | | 1 | | 4.5% | |
| | | Total | | 22 | | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| **Employment** | Employed | | 8 | | 36.4% | |
| | Unemployed | | 14 | | 63.6% | |
| | | Total | | 22 | | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| **Gender** | Female | | 20 | | 90.9% | |
| | Male | | 2 | | 9.1% | |
| | | Total | | 22 | | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | | 9 | | 40.9% | |
| | NMD | | 2 | | 9.1% | |
| | M | | 10 | | 45.5% | |
| | NMI->M | | 1 | | 4.5% | |
| | | Total | | 22 | | 100% |

*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, NMI->M= Not married independent to Married*


Procedure

<u>In-Person Group and CCAMPIS Services.</u>

To enroll into the in-person CCAMPIS program, participants first had to secure a spot at either of the childcare centers on the university campus. Directors of the centers announced the opportunity to enroll in childcare spots via email. This email was sent out to continuing families at the centers first as they had priority in deciding if they would like to continue with childcare. Then, if spots were still available, the email was sent to the wider population for those interested in signing up their children for childcare. Slots were awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. Students who obtained a spot received an application to fill out to receive these services. Once an application was completed and a spot was secured, directors constructed a list of possible eligible participants and sent it to the CCAMPIS program director to screen for Pell eligibility. The CCAMPIS program coordinator enrolled participants and followed up with those student-parents who may or may not be eligible. Eligibility consisted of student-parents being enrolled at least half time at the institution, receiving a Pell grant, and/or demonstrating a need for financial assistance by having an Expected Family Contribution number (EFC) below $5,684.

After ensuring all participants were eligible, the enrollment process for CCAMPIS began. Participants were given an application that asks for demographic information, personal information, how they file their taxes, class standing, major, and name and birthday of their child. Proof of financial aid summary and their semester class schedule were also required to be turned in. After applications for CCAMPIS were submitted (which are separate from the

childcare application completed to secure a spot at one of the two on-campus

childcare centers), participants completed enrollment in the CCAMPIS program

by attending a mandatory in-person meeting that was scheduled on a Saturdays

at one of the childcare centers on campus. During orientation, participants were

walked through the goal of the CCAMPIS program, the committee members and

their contact information, requirements to remain eligible, and information about

the organization page on Blackboard. Requirements that were expected for those

enrolled in CCAMPIS in-person services were attending parent workshops three

times a semester at a designated classroom or at one of the centers. The

workshops consisted of topics on parenting and positive child rearing and were

held by the parent education specialist. The next requirement was discussion

board posts. This consisted of posting on Blackboard. Here, participants

responded to a prompt given by the parent educator and then replied to other

peers' posts to build conversations and connection amongst the participants.

The next requirement consisted of advising. Here, participants were

expected to attend a meeting with a faculty advisor during the semester to

discuss ideas that could help expand their career such as internships, job or

research opportunities, life after college, and any other questions they may have.

The next requirement was to attend Saturday play workshops. All families were

required to attend at least one Saturday play workshop. This workshop allowed

participants to bring their family to the center's play yard and interact with other

CCAMPIS participants, the program coordinator, the parent educator, and other

families. The workshop targeted social interactions and one on one time with their children to guide their play. An additional requirement for participants was to bring their child to at least 75% of their contracted childcare hours at the center. The final requirement, which may be the most crucial, was completion of the CCAMPIS survey. The CCAMPIS survey was administered every quarter/semester. Parents were given a link via email to complete this requirement. Many of the questions asked in the survey were used in the annual performance report that the CCAMPIS program needs to conduct yearly for the US Department of Education.

This survey was distributed to all participants at the end of each academic term. The survey was created by the CCAMPIS program coordinator and the committee members. The format in which the survey was conducted was Qualtrics. Distribution of the survey occurred two weeks prior to the end of the academic term. The participants were informed one week prior that the survey will be distributed to them via email. Participants were given a due date for when they should have the survey completed by. Upon completion, answers were recorded and submitted to Qualtrics.

Online Group and CCAMPIS Services.

To recruit participants, directors of the on-campus childcare centers promoted the early learning enrichment program to students via email. Interested students were instructed to reach out to the center directors for an application to receive these services. Once an application was complete and a spot was

secured, directors constructed a list of possible eligible participants and sent it to the CCAMPIS program director to screen for Pell eligibility. The program director checked if participants were a Pell grant recipient (or have a qualifying EFC number) and were enrolled at least half time in the university. After screening for eligibility was completed, the program coordinator sent out applications to participate in the CCAMPIS program to qualified participants to fill out. Due to the shift to online instruction, the application was completed electronically. Participants were emailed applications. Adobe sign was the format for the application to be filled out virtually with an included section for attachments to be submitted for class schedule and proof of financial aid.

Participants were given a CCAMPIS application that asked for demographic information, personal information, how they file their taxes, class standing, major, and name and birthday of their child. Proof of financial aid summary and a copy of their semester class schedule was also required. After applications for CCAMPIS were submitted (which are separate from the childcare application completed to secure a spot in the Virtual Services Program), participants completed enrollment in the CCAMPIS program by attending an online orientation. During this online orientation participants were instructed to watch a pre-recorded orientation. The orientation was recorded by the program coordinator and uploaded to Blackboard for access. During orientation, participants were walked through the goal of the CCAMPIS program, the committee members and their contact information, requirements to remain

eligible, and information about the organization page on Blackboard. In addition to viewing the orientation, participants were required to take a quiz as proof of watching the recording. They were advised that to receive their contract, completion of the orientation and quiz was mandatory. Participants were expected to pass the quiz with 100% and upon doing so, their contract was sent to them for signature through Adobe Sign.

Participants were expected to complete requirements throughout the semester to remain eligible and active in the program. The first requirement consisted of attending two parenting workshops. Workshops were offered via zoom by the parent educator. Topics consisted of parenting and positive child rearing. CCAMPIS participants were given the choice of attending synchronously during the workshop sessions on Zoom or they were allowed to view the recording on their own time. Participants who viewed the recording instead of attending live were required to take a mandatory quiz and pass with 100% to receive credit for the requirement. Those who chose to attend live were not required to take a quiz, just stay the entire duration of the workshop. The next requirement was to ask participants to meet with an advisor during the semester. Participants were instructed to meet with advisors via video call to discuss ideas that can help expand their career such as internships, job or research opportunities, life after college, and any other questions related to their time at the university.

The next requirement asked parents to participate in an online discussion forum on Blackboard. Participants answered prompts given by the parent educator and were instructed to reply to two other colleagues' posts. Saturday play workshops were not offered due to COVID-19 restrictions. As noted above, online participants received virtual childcare services (monthly materials and weekly circle times). Participants were required to attend at least 75% of the virtual service online sessions to remain eligible in the program and receive monthly materials.

At the end of the semester, parents were given a link to the required Department of Education survey via email to complete. Each academic term a survey is distributed to all who are enrolled in CCAMPIS and receive funds. The survey was created by the CCAMPIS program coordinator and the committee members. The format in which the survey was conducted was Qualtrics. Distribution of the survey occurred two weeks prior to the end of the academic term. The participants were informed one week prior that the survey will be distributed to them via email. Participants were given a due date for when they should have the survey completed by. Upon completion, answers were recorded and submitted to Qualtrics

Returning Group and CCAMPIS Services.

To apply for the CCAMPIS program during the return to campus, participants first had to secure a spot at either of the childcare centers on the university campus. Directors of the centers announced the opportunity to enroll in

45

childcare spots via email to the campus community. Slots were awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. If parents obtained a spot at one of the centers, an application was given to fill out to receive those services. Once an application was complete and a spot was secured, directors constructed a list of possible eligible participants and sent it to the CCAMPIS program director to screen for Pell eligibility.

During enrollment Pell eligibility was checked by the CCAMPIS director for all students. The directors of the center created a list of all who are eligible and sent this list to the CCAMPIS program coordinator to enroll participants and follow up with those student-parents who may or may not be eligible. Eligibility consisted of student-parents being enrolled at least half time at the institution, are receiving a Pell grant, and/or demonstrate a need for financial assistance by having an Expected Family Contribution number (EFC) below $5,684.

The CCAMPIS program coordinator reached out to participants to send them an application after screening for eligibility was completed. The application was to be signed online using Adobe sign along with attachments of documents such as class schedule and proof of financial aid. In this application, participants were asked to provide demographic information, personal information, how they file their taxes, class standing, major, and name and birthday of their child. After applications for CCAMPIS were submitted (which are separate from the childcare application completed to secure a spot at one of the two on-campus childcare centers), participants completed enrollment in the CCAMPIS program by

attending a mandatory orientation. The orientation was recorded by the program coordinator and uploaded to Blackboard for access. During orientation, participants were walked through the goal of the CCAMPIS program, the committee members and their contact information, requirements to remain eligible, and information about the organization page on Blackboard. In addition to viewing the orientation, participants were required to take a quiz as proof of watching the recording. They were advised that to receive their contract, completion of the orientation and quiz was mandatory. Participants were expected to pass the quiz with 100% and upon doing so, their contract was given to them. Contracts were to be signed electronically with Adobe Sign.

Participants were expected to complete requirements throughout the semester to remain eligible and active in the program. The first requirement consisted of attending three parenting workshops. Workshops were offered via zoom and in-person by the parent educator. Topics consisted of parenting and positive child rearing. CCAMPIS participants were given the choice of attending in person, attending the live session on zoom, or were allowed to view the recording on their own time. Participants who viewed the recording instead of attending live (whether in-person or through Zoom) were required to take a mandatory quiz and pass with 100% to receive credit for the requirement. Those who chose to attend live (either in-person or through Zoom) were not required to take a quiz, just stay the entire duration of the workshop. The next requirement asked participants to meet with an advisor during the semester. Participants were

instructed to meet with advisors via video call or in-person to discuss ideas that can help expand their career such as internships, job or research opportunities, life after college, and any other questions related to their time at the university.

The next requirement asked for parents to participate in an online discussion forum on Blackboard or Canvas. Participants answered prompts given by the parent educator and were instructed to reply to two other colleagues' posts. The Saturday workshop requirement remained off limits due to CDC guidelines. The final requirement was completion of the CCAMPIS survey. The CCAMPIS survey is administered every quarter/semester. Parents were given a link via email to complete this requirement. Each academic term a survey was distributed to all who were enrolled in CCAMPIS and received funds. The survey was created by the CCAMPIS program coordinator and the committee members. The format in which the survey was conducted was Qualtrics. Distribution of the survey occurred two weeks prior to the end of the academic term. The participants were informed one week prior that the survey will be distributed to them via email. Participants were given a due date for when they should have the survey completed by. Upon completion, answers were recorded and submitted to Qualtrics.

## Materials

The study used the survey administered to participants during their time in the CCAMPIS program for the 2019 through 2022 academic years with the omission of Spring 2020. The survey is a quarter/semester requirement for all

who receive subsidies from the program. Prior to the start of the survey, instructions were given along with a consent form. The survey consisted of demographic information, university enrollment status, course information, CCAMPIS standing, persistence at the university, and feedback for the program. GPA and graduation information was pulled from the university's PeopleSoft data system by a faculty member with authorized access and training. The PeopleSoft data system is a place where the university houses student information for faculty and staff to have access to. Data in this system pertains to student biographical information such as, courses taken, withdrawals, degrees earned, and term GPA. Data was recorded on a SharePoint spreadsheet where the CCAMPIS Committee stores data to report annually. For the purpose of this study, the following information from the survey and PeopleSoft was used to analyze and answer research questions of interest

Demographics.

For demographics, the survey asked participants basic demographic questions. These included questions like ("What is your race", "What is your gender", and "What is your current household status; Married, Not Married Independent, or Not Married Dependent"). Other basic demographic questions consisted of asking about age and date of birth and employment status. (See Appendix A).

Persistence.

For the category of persistence, the survey distributed to participants directly asked them, "How helpful has the CCAMPIS grant been in enabling you to complete or work towards your degree/certificate?". Participants were able to answer on a scale of Extremely helpful which was coded as (4), Very helpful which was coded as (3), Moderately helpful which was coded as (2), Slightly helpful which was coded as (1), and Not at all helpful which was coded as (0). (See Appendix B). For participants who participated in the two semesters within each group, persistence scores were averaged to calculate one persistence score per participant. For the in-person group persistence was calculated by combining data from Fall 2019 and Winter 2020. For the online group persistence was calculated by combining data from Fall 2020, and Spring 2021. For the Returning group, persistence was calculated by utilizing data from Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. Spring 2020 was omitted due to there not being a survey because of the sudden closures from the COVID-19 pandemic.

GPA.

GPA per term was retrieved and verified through the university's record storing system PeopleSoft. A faculty member who holds a security clearance and is trained to use this system accessed the data from PeopleSoft. Through this system, GPA per term was retrieved for all CCAMPIS participants of this study. Using this per term information (total cumulative points and total credit hours) GPA for each participant was calculated across the semesters of interest by dividing participant's cumulative total points by their total credit hours. For the in-

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person group GPA was calculated by combining data from Fall 2019 and Winter

2020. For the online group GPA was calculated by combining data from Fall

2020, and Spring 2021. For the Returning group, GPA was calculated by utilizing

data from Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. Spring 2020 was omitted due to there not

being a survey because of the sudden closures from the COVID-19 pandemic.

# CHAPTER FIVE:

# RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to compare the GPAs and persistence of student-parents who participated in in-person coursework and CCAMPIS childcare services prior to the pandemic to those who received virtual services during the pandemic, to those who returned to campus (at least somewhat) as the pandemic waxed and waned during the academic years 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022. To better explain each group, if a participant was in the in-person group, this meant they were enrolled in the CCAMPIS program before the start of the pandemic and were receiving in-person instruction and childcare. If a participant was in the online group, this meant they were enrolled in the CCAMPIS program during the pandemic and were receiving online instruction and virtual services childcare. If a participant was in the return group, this meant they were enrolled in the CCAMPIS program during the return from online services and had a combination of in-person and virtual coursework combined with in-person childcare access.

The hypotheses were that, after accounting for employment status, when student-parents are part of the in-person group, student-parents' GPA and persistence will be highest. When student-parents are part of the return group their GPA and persistence will be lower than those students who were in the in-person group, but higher than those who were in the online group. When student-

parents are part of the online group their GPA and persistence will be lower than those students who were in the in-person group and the return group. GPA for the whole group ranged from 0.58 to 4.00 with the average GPA being 3.35. Levels of persistence ranged from zero to four with the average persistence level being 3.65 (See Table 5 below). GPA and levels of persistence were also calculated for each group separately; in-person, online, and return. For the in-person group, GPA ranged from 2.06 to 4.00 with the average GPA being 3.34. Levels of persistence ranged from zero to four with the average persistence level being 3.83. (See Table 6 below.) For the online group, GPA ranged from 1.33 to 4.00 with the average GPA being 3.36. Levels of persistence ranged from zero to four with the average persistence level being 3.53. (See Table. 7 below). For the return group, GPA ranged from .58 to 4.00 with the average GPA being 3.31. Levels of persistence ranged from two to four with the average persistence level being 3.81. The highest average level of GPA was reported in the online group 3.36, while the highest average level of persistence was reported in the in-person group 3.83. The lowest average level of GPA was reported in the return group with 3.31, while the lowest average level of persistence was reported in the online group 3.53. (See Table. 8 below.)

Overall, participants in the CCAMPIS program had fairly high GPAs and persistence scores. It was expected that there would be a dramatic difference between groups due to the different format of instruction and different format of childcare experiences (in-person, online, and return). However, GPA on average

ranged from 3.31 to 3.36. The same is true for persistence levels. A difference

was expected, however persistence levels stayed in the range from 3.53 to 3.83.

It may be that supports such as the CCAMPIS program may have served as a

buffer to student-parents in maintaining academic progress and persistence

during the various permutations of instruction and childcare that students

experienced during the pandemic.

Table. 5 Whole Group GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 145 | .58 | 4.00 | 3.35 | .626 |
| Persistence | 145 | 0 | 4 | 3.65 | .764 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 145 | | | | |

Table. 6 In-Person GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 40 | 2.06 | 4.00 | 3.34 | .503 |
| Persistence | 40 | 0 | 4 | 3.83 | .675 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 40 | | | | |

Table. 7 Online GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 83 | 1.33 | 4.00 | 3.36 | .655 |
| Persistence | 83 | 0 | 4 | 3.53 | .838 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 83 | | | | |

Table. 8 Return GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 22 | .584 | 4.00 | 3.31 | .737 |
| Persistence | 22 | 0 | 4 | 3.81 | .524 |

Valis N          22
(listwise)

To further evaluate GPA and persistence among the three groups and explicitly explore the hypotheses related to the relationship between variations in course instruction and childcare (in-person, online, and return) and GPA/academic persistence, a between subjects MANCOVA was run with group type (in-person, online, and return) as the independent variable and GPA (N = 145, M = 3.35, SD = .626) and persistence (N = 145, M = 3.65, SD = .764) as the dependent variables. In addition, employment status (employed versus not employed) was used as a covariate to determine if this factor had any bearing on GPA and/or academic persistence. Results from the MANCOVA showed there was no statistically significant difference of group type on GPA $F_{(2,143)}$ = .100, p = .905; Wilk's $\Lambda$ = .961, partial $\eta 2$ = .001 or persistence $F_{(2,143)}$ = 2.78, p = .065; Wilk's $\Lambda$ = .961, partial $\eta 2$ = .038 indicating that mode of group participation was not related to student GPA or persistence across the 2019/2022 academic period. However, persistence was trending towards significance.

There was a statistically significant difference in persistence based on participant employment status $F_{(1,144)}$ = 6.08, p = .015; Wilk's $\Lambda$ = .952, partial $\eta 2$ = .048 indicating that students who were employed had greater persistence than those who were not employed. There was no statistically significant difference in GPA based on employment status $F_{(1,144)}$ = 1.25, p = .265; Wilk's $\Lambda$ = .952, partial $\eta 2$ = .009. The null hypothesis that mode of group participation

(in-person, online, and return) does not influence GPA and persistence, when accounting for employment status, cannot be rejected. (See Table. 9 below).

The hypothesis for the study was that, after accounting for employment status, those students who were part of the in-person group would show the highest GPA and persistence scores followed by those in the returning group, and lastly those in the online group would show the lowest levels. The MANCOVA results found no statistically significant results indicating that time of participation (i.e., mode of course instruction/childcare) did not have an impact on GPA and persistence. However, when employment was used as a coefficient, results found that if a participant was employed, they had higher levels of persistence compared to participants who were not employed.

Table. 9 Between-Subjects MANCOVA

| Source | Dependent Var. | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Square |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employment | GPA | 1 | .497 | 1.251 | .265 | .009 |
| | Persistence | 1 | 3.358 | 6.080 | .015 | .041 |
| Mode of Group. | GPA | 2 | .040 | .100 | .905 | .001 |
| | Persistence | 2 | 1.537 | 2.784 | .065 | .038 |
| Error | GPA | 141 | .397 | | | |
| | Persistence | 141 | .552 | | | |
| Total | GPA | 145 | | | | |
| | Persistence | 145 | | | | |

# CHAPTER SIX:

## DISCUSSION

The current study sought to examine how student persistence and grades were impacted by COVID-19 and participation in a student-parent support program. To do this, mode of group participation (in-person, online, or return) was used to assess the possible impact on GPA and academic persistence. Participants consisted of student-parents enrolled in the university and CCAMPIS program during the academic years 2019 through 2022. The study separated students into three groups (i.e., those who had in-person instruction and childcare, those who had online instruction and childcare, and students enrolled during a time when students were able to return to campus but course instruction vacillated between online and in-person and childcare was in-person with limitations).The variable of whether a student-parent had a job during their time enrolled was used as a covariate. It was hypothesized that, after accounting for employment status, that students in the fully in-person group would have the highest GPAs and levels of persistence followed by the returning group and then the online group.

A between-subjects MANCOVA was used in this study to evaluate the research hypotheses developed indicating that mode of group participation and employment would have an impact on GPA and academic persistence. Results showed that mode of group participation did not impact GPA and persistence.

This may be due to the participant composition of each group not being distinct. There were participants who were in more than one group type (in-person, online, return) if they were continuing services with CCAMPIS for multiple semesters. Due to the low number of sample size and uneven group numbers, the current study did not remove the participants who overlapped. This may have been a reason as to why there was no statistically significant results.

There was a significant mean difference in persistence, but not GPA, when participants reported they were employed. These results show that when a participant holds the role of student, parent, and employee, their levels of academic persistence are higher in comparison to those student-parents who were not employed. It is possible that the more responsibilities a student holds, the less likely they would be to persist in school due to potentially taking fewer units and needing to prioritize work as stated in Brauer and Foust (2020). However, that was not the case in this study. Student-parents who worked reported higher levels of persistence. It may be possible that working student-parents may have a different support group than non-working student-parents that allow them to attend to their multiple roles. There is not much literature on working student-parents. Existing research focuses either on working students or working parents, but little is known about a person who holds all three roles. This study adds a little bit of insight to that literature.

Another potential explanation, beyond a robust support group, as to why working student-parent were more likely to persist, may be due to variables not

measured in this study. Research has demonstrated that adaptability skills and personality play a role in how likely one is to succeed. For example, Bruso, Stefaniak, and Bol (2020) assessed how Big 5 personality traits and time management skills had an influence on learning strategies when taking an online course. Results found that the traits from the Big 5 model of agreeableness, consciousness, openness, extraversion, and lower neuroticism traits resulted in greater success in an online course (Bruso, 2020). Perhaps students in this study who worked had more of the traits identified as important to academic success in this study.

Another study by Besser, Flett, and Ziegler-Hill (2020) measured student personality traits and adaptability related to changes in course instruction during COVID-19. The results of the study found that although many students reported negative reactions to the pandemic, the ability to adapt played a role in how they reacted to and coped with the sudden switch to online learning. If students showed higher levels of adaptability, they tended to have the personality traits of agreeableness, consciousness, openness, extraversion, and lower neuroticism which helped with their ability to adapt to the switch to online learning Besser (2020). Although the current study did not find that there was a difference in persistence for students taking in-person or online courses, this study does offer a possible explanation for why working student-parents may have demonstrated this tendency. Again, perhaps they are imbued with the factors noted in this study

to be important to adaptability and success, regardless of the many roles they play.

As noted earlier it was found that mode of group participation (in-person, online, return) did not have an impact on GPA and persistence. It was hypothesized that the in-person instruction and childcare group would have the highest GPA and persistence while the online instruction and childcare group would have the lowest. The MANCOVA results showed type of group format did not have an impact on GPA and persistence. This is possibly good news that may suggest that students were adequately supported (both instructionally through the university and with their children through flexible CCAMPIS services) to enable them to succeed during the changes brought on by the pandemic. Additionally, student-parents may also have the skills and personality traits to persist through school during a pandemic, along with adequate social support, that was not captured in this study. Further research is needed to follow with these possibilities.

As indicated earlier in this paper, institutional support is vital to the success of all students, particularly student-parents (Besser, 2020). The current study's participants may have demonstrated similar levels of persistence and maintained similar GPAs because they were provided with necessary support despite experiencing differences related to mode of course instruction and childcare. Although much literature discusses how in-person instruction is more beneficial than online instruction (Callister & Love, 2016; Pirlott, 2022), there may

be more to student success than just format of instruction. Perhaps online instruction can be effective if students feel supported and online instruction is conducted with a high level of quality. Although quality of instruction was not measured in this study, it is possible that students had access to equally high-quality instruction during the pandemic and that is why GPA and persistence differences were not found. As for childcare, the literature shows that having reliable childcare is one of the most important factors to student success (Robeson and Green, 2020). The results of the current study suggest that type of childcare services provided may be less important than having access to childcare support of some kind (tailored to the needs of students in a given moment). The fact that GPA and persistence differences were not noted for the groups of students in this study indicates that the virtual services provided to the online group may have been adequate in ensuring their school success.

The fairly high GPAs and persistence levels of the student-parents in this study are also indicative of the idea that students were receiving adequate support despite being in-person, online, or returning. GPAs ranged from 3.31 to 3.36. The same is true for persistence levels with the range being 3.53 to 3.83. The literature clearly shows the importance of institutional support being a key factor in student success (Israelsen-Heartley, 2020) especially when it comes to non-traditional students and their unique needs (Peterson, 2016). The CCAMPIS program was able to show continued support to CCAMPIS student-parents during the three modes of groups: in-person, online, and returning. Although the

type of services student-parents received differed throughout these three

different time spans, the CCAMPIS program and the wider university supports

appear to have done their best in listening to the needs of student-parents to

better be able to assist them through services during unprecedented times.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

LIMITATIONS

Pre-Collected Data

The data used for this study derived from a survey administered to all
CCAMPIS participants during their term of enrollment. The survey is used to
report annually to the Department of Education to assure that grant funds are
spent well and that students are reaping benefits from participation and is, at
least in part, dictated by Department of Education requirements. Questions used
in this study came from that pre-existing survey. There are various limitations that
come with using pre-collected data. One is that the study was unable to
implement additional measures to capture levels of persistence to a greater
extent. The survey used during the semesters of interest included only one
question related to academic persistence. The survey also did not directly assess
the quality of instruction or childcare that students received during the timepoints
of interest. It is impossible to explicitly comment on differences and similarities in
online or in-person childcare and course instruction.

Sample

Sample sizes differed among the three groups evaluated due to various
reasons. The study worked with three different time frames in the past few years:
pre-pandemic, during quarantine, and returning to in-person with restrictions.
Each time frame consisted of unique protocols for enrollment in the CCAMPIS

program. This led to the number of participants in each group fluctuating drastically. The terms Fall 2019, and Winter 2020 represent those who were part of the program prior to the pandemic. Participants in the in-person group were those who enrolled in the CCAMPIS program prior to the pandemic. The conditions to enroll were first securing a spot at the childcare centers. Due to this, spots were extremely limited. Only a certain number of participants were able to enroll in the centers and thus, were able to enroll in CCAMPIS.

During the shift to virtual services during the pandemic, there was no longer in-person childcare available. Therefore, securing a spot at the center was no longer a requirement to enroll in CCAMPIS. This led to a drastic increase in the number of CCAMPIS participants served during the shift to online learning and the ability of the virtual services enrichment program to handle large numbers of students. The terms Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 reflect this spike in numbers. The return group consists of those participants who were part of CCAMPIS during Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. Childcare centers were open, but not at full pre-COVID capacity. In addition, as many students were still taking online courses, there was not a high need for childcare as compared to pre-pandemic. Therefore, the numbers for the return group participants are fairly low. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, the sample for this study did not have distinct groups for the in-person, online, and return group. Many participants were in one or more of the groups of interest if they were continuing services with CCAMPIS

over the academic years of Fall 2019- Spring 2022. This may have impacted finding statistically significant results for this study.

## The Return Group

There were many complications that arose when trying to assign and code the return group. Taking into consideration the time frame of Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, there was a lot occurring regarding the return to campus. Students were allowed to go back to campus with COVID-19 regulations set in place. However, the university was far from returning to normalcy. Although in-person classes were back, not all classes returned to being in-person. Many stayed online or were offered in a hybrid format. Additionally, if a COVID exposure were to occur, classes would shift from in-person to being virtual while students quarantined and then would go back to in-person once cleared. The same was true for the childcare centers on campus. There were various times when the classrooms had to close for 10 days at a time when there was an exposure. This led to uncertainty as to whether a student-parent would have access to childcare during this time. There were many ways in which an individual may have experienced the return to campus. Some may have had their classes only online while others may have had a combination of online and in-person. Some may have had more consistent childcare than others whose child's classroom got frequent exposures and closed down. Overall, it is difficult to label the return group into a certain category on the type of instruction and type of childcare received when experiences differed for each person. Despite these structural

challenges for students, the results do indicate that students in all three groups received the support that they needed to be successful academically.

## Childcare Supported Provided

Another limitation of this study and the support provided to student-parents was the type of childcare service provided. This study focuses on student-parents who have children between the ages of 0-5 who were able to enroll in one of the two childcare centers on campus or in the virtual services provided geared towards children aged 0-5. The study does not measure if participants had additional children who are older and what childcare might have looked like for them. Therefore, the full aspect of childcare needs for student-parents with children older than 5 are not fully captured in this study.

## Institutional Leniency

The institution noted that the pandemic and the shift to online learning was stressful to all faculty and students. Therefore, there was a modification of the academic grading system to help alleviate that stress. Students were given the option to petition to change a letter grade to a credit/no credit basis. Additionally, the institution changed various policies in their administration department to accommodate students during this unprecedented time such as extensions, grade forgiveness, and waivers. This may have led to a discrepancy when considering the grade point average for the online group. If grading policies typical prior to the pandemic were used, perhaps differences GPA and

persistence differences would have been found between the three groups of

student-parents evaluated during this study.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It would be interesting to see what additional factors lead to student-parent persistence. Due to the data used in this study being pre-collected, there was no room for adding or adjusting variables. In the future, it would be helpful to tailor the survey to measure personal skill sets that student-parents possess. This might help to capture at a more specific level, what leads to persistence. Also, it would be helpful to evaluate the quality of childcare and instruction that students receive, learn more about variation in grading policies during times of interest, and assess student-parent access to childcare, (i.e., those who have access to reliable and high-quality childcare compared to those who do not). This can help further investigate the importance of university and childcare supports for student-parents when it comes to succeeding in school. It would also be interesting to include a section in the survey for open-ended responses where student-parents can share personal experiences on obtaining higher education while being a parent. The qualitative data can be analyzed for recurring themes. The findings can assist institutions by providing insight regarding the needs and the characteristics of student-parents and ensuring the resources that are being provided by the institution are appropriately benefiting student-parents to succeed.

CHAPTER NINE:

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to compare the GPAs and persistence of student-parents who participated in in-person coursework and CCAMPIS childcare services prior to the pandemic to those who received virtual services, to those who returned to campus from the virtual services during the academic years 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022. Results showed there was no significant mean difference between the groups on GPA and persistence. Results indicated there was a significant mean difference in persistence levels if a student-parent had a job. Participants who reported they were employed tended to have higher persistence levels than participants who were not employed. There was no significant mean difference in GPA when considering employment status. Further research with larger and equal sample sizes is needed to find possible trends in these findings.

That said, this study suggests that university support for student-parents, like the CCAMPIS program, can be important in helping student-parents persist and increasing academic success. This is particularly important considering the sample of this study. CCAMPIS participants for the current study were 94.5% females and only 5.5% males. Literature has shown that when it comes to childcare, women are more likely than men to be responsible for attending to childcare responsibilities, (Dugan and Barnes-Farrel, 2020). This was true even if

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the women held a job (Clark et al., 2020; Gorska et al., 2021). The sample also primarily consisted of students of color. The largest ethnic group in the sample consisted of 70% Hispanics, followed by 9.7% that were Black/African American, and a little over 2% were of other minority groups. The literature shows that people of color are the ones who predominantly need assistance in childcare, especially single mothers of a minority group (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial that women who are also mothers, employees, students, and part of a minority group receive the appropriate support, access to childcare, and financial assistance, such as those services offered by CCAMPIS, when working towards a higher education to ensure they are successful in achieving their degree. Overall, this study showed that when an institution is active in ensuring they are meeting the needs of their students, especially during a global pandemic, then they can ensure the success and well-being of students and their academic progress.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey Questions Demographics
(Developed by the author)

Q.5 What is your age? _____
Q.6 What is your Date of Birth? (MM/DD/YY) _____
Q.7 What is your race?

- American Indian

- Asian

- Black or African American

- Hispanic or Latino

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

- White

- Two or more races

Q.8 What is your gender?

- Male

- Female

- Transgender Male

- Transgender Female

- Gender Nonconforming

- Non-Binary

- Prefer not to answer

- Other: _____

Q. 9 What is your current household status?

- Married

- Not Married and Dependent (living with parents)

       ○       Not Married and Independent (living separate from parents)

Q.12 Are you currently employed?
       ○       Yes

       ○       No

Q. 13 If you are employed, how many hours do you work per week? _____

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTION PERSISTENCE

Survey Question: Persistence
(Developed by the author)

Q. 38 How helpful has the CCAMPIS grant been in enabling you to complete or work towards your degree/certificate?

- o       Extremely helpful

- o       Very helpful

- o       Moderately helpful

- o       Slightly helpful

- o       Not at all helpful

APPENDIX C

TABLES

Table 1. Whole Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 145 | 20.5 | 43.0 | 26.84 | 4.60 |
| **Hours Worked** | 145 | 0 | 40.0 | 11.60 | 13.87 |

| Variable | Description | Frequency | | Percent | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | 102 | | 70.3% | |
| | White | 20 | | 13.8% | |
| | B/AA | 14 | | 9.7% | |
| | American Indian | 1 | | .7% | |
| | Asian | 2 | | 1.4% | |
| | Two or More | 6 | | 4.1% | |
| | Total | | 145 | | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Employment** | Employed | 68 | | 46.8% | |
| | Unemployed | 77 | | 53.1% | |
| | Total | | 145 | | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Gender** | Female | 137 | | 94.5% | |
| | Male | 8 | | 5.5% | |
| | Total | | 145 | | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | 58 | | 40% | |
| | NMD | 20 | | 13.8% | |
| | M | 55 | | 37.9% | |
| | M->NMI | 2 | | 1.4% | |
| | NMI->M | 2 | | 1.4% | |
| | NMI->NMD | 6 | | 4.1% | |
| | NMD->NMI | 2 | | 1.4% | |
| | Total | | 145 | | 100% |

*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, M->NMI= Married to Not married independent, NMI->NMD= Not married independent to Not Married dependent, NMD->NMI= Not married dependent to Not married independent*

Table 2. In-Person Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 40 | 20.5 | 43.0 | 26.0 | 5.20 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Hours Worked** | 40 | 0 | 40.0 | 12.80 | 14.06 |

| Variable | Description | | Frequency | | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | | 27 | | 67.5% |
| | White | | 9 | | 22.5% |
| | B/AA | | 2 | | 5% |
| | 2 or More | | 2 | | 5% |
| | | Total | | 40 | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Employment** | Employed | | 21 | | 52.5% |
| | Unemployed | | 19 | | 47.5% |
| | | Total | | 40 | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Gender** | Female | | 38 | | 95% |
| | Male | | 2 | | 5% |
| | | Total | | 40 | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | | 13 | | 32.5% |
| | NMD | | 5 | | 12.5% |
| | M | | 15 | | 37.5% |
| | NMI->M | | 1 | | 2.5% |
| | NMI->NMD | | 5 | | 12.5% |
| | NMD->NMI | | 1 | | 2.5% |
| | | Total | | 40 | 100% |

*\*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, NMI->M= Not married independent to married, NMI->NMD= Not married independent to Not Married dependent, NMD->NMI= Not married dependent to Not married independent*

Table 3. Online Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 83 | 21.0 | 39.5 | 27.50 | 4.35 |
| **Hours** | 83 | 0 | 40.0 | 12.60 | 14.60 |

| Variable | Description | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | 58 | 69.9% |
| | White | 9 | 10.8% |
| | B/AA | 10 | 12% |
| | American Indian | 1 | 1.2% |

| | | | Frequency | | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Asian | | 2 | | 2.4% |
| | Two or More | | 3 | | 3.6% |
| | | Total | | 83 | 100% |
| **Employment** | Employed | | 35 | | 39.8% |
| | Unemployed | | 44 | | 53% |
| | | Total | | 83 | 100% |
| **Gender** | Female | | 79 | | 95.2% |
| | Male | | 4 | | 4.8% |
| | | Total | | 83 | 100% |
| **Household Status** | NMI | | 36 | | 43.4% |
| | NMD | | 13 | | 15.7% |
| | M | | 30 | | 36.1% |
| | M->NMI | | 2 | | 2.4% |
| | NMI->NMD | | 1 | | 1.2% |
| | NMD->NMI | | 1 | | 1.2% |
| | | Total | | 83 | 100% |

*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, M->NMI=
Married to Not married independent, NMI->NMD= Not married independent to Not Married
dependent, NMD->NMI= Not married dependent to Not married independent*

Table 4. Return Group Demographic Information

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 22 | 21.0 | 35.5 | 25.93 | 4.13 |
| **Hours Worked** | 22 | 0 | 25.0 | 5.65 | 8.71 |

| Variable | Description | Frequency | | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Hispanic | 17 | | 77.3% |
| | White | 2 | | 9.1% |
| | B/AA | 2 | | 9.1% |
| | Two or More | 1 | | 4.5% |
| | | Total | 22 | 100% |
| **Employment** | Employed | 8 | | 36.4% |
| | Unemployed | 14 | | 63.6% |
| | | Total | 22 | 100% |

| Gender | Female | | 20 | | 90.9% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | 2 | | 9.1% |
| | | Total | | 22 | 100% |
| | | | | | |
| **Household Status** | NMI | | 9 | | 40.9% |
| | NMD | | 2 | | 9.1% |
| | M | | 10 | | 45.5% |
| | NMI->M | | 1 | | 4.5% |
| | | Total | | 22 | 100% |

*\*NMI= Not married independent, NMD= Not married dependent, M=Married, NMI->M= Not married independent to Married*

Table. 5 Whole Group GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 145 | .58 | 4.00 | 3.35 | .626 |
| Persistence | 145 | 0 | 4 | 3.65 | .764 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 145 | | | | |

Table. 6 In-Person GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 40 | 2.06 | 4.00 | 3.34 | .503 |
| Persistence | 40 | 0 | 4 | 3.83 | .675 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 40 | | | | |

Table. 7 Online GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 83 | 1.33 | 4.00 | 3.36 | .655 |
| Persistence | 83 | 0 | 4 | 3.53 | .838 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 83 | | | | |

Table. 8 Return GPA and Persistence

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GPA | 22 | .584 | 4.00 | 3.31 | .737 |
| Persistence | 22 | 0 | 4 | 3.81 | .524 |
| Valis N (listwise) | 22 | | | | |

Table. 9 Between-Subjects MANCOVA

| Source | Dependent Var. | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Square |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employment | GPA | 1 | .497 | 1.251 | .265 | .009 |
| | Persistence | 1 | 3.358 | 6.080 | .015 | .041 |
| Mode of Group. | GPA | 2 | .040 | .100 | .905 | .001 |
| | Persistence | 2 | 1.537 | 2.784 | .065 | .038 |
| Error | GPA | 141 | .397 | | | |
| | Persistence | 141 | .552 | | | |
| Total | GPA | 145 | | | | |
| | Persistence | 145 | | | | |

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

January 9, 2023

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Protocol Change/Modification
IRB-FY2018-114
Status: Approved

Prof. Amanda Wilcox-Herzog
CSBS - Child Development
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Prof. Amanda Wilcox-Herzog:

The protocol change/modification to your application to use human subjects, titled "CSUSB CCAMPIS" has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). A change in your informed consent requires resubmission of your protocol as amended. Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study. A lapse in your approval may result in your not being able to use the data collected during the lapse in your approval.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's COVID-19 Prevention Plan for more information regarding campus requirements.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following by submitting the appropriate form (modification, unanticipated/adverse event, renewal, study closure) through the online Cayuse IRB Submission System.

1. If you need to make any changes/modifications to your protocol submit a modification form as the IRB must review all changes before implementing them in your study to ensure the degree of risk has not changed.
2. If any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research study or project.
3. If your study has not been completed submit a renewal to the IRB.
4. If you are no longer conducting the study or project submit a study closure.

You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

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