

Family Life and Satisfaction in Graduate School

Name

Institution

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Student graduate outcomes are affected by factors such as the duration of the degree, nature of enrollment, and completion of the program. While gender influences the mix of the sexes in a department, marital status tends to affect the outcomes of male and female students differently. The position of men and women in marriage determines their time and mobility when pursuing a graduate degree (Ehrenberg et al., 1973). Married female graduate students are more likely to drop out of a program if the spouse moves to a new location (Ferreira, 2003). On the other hand, married male graduate students are less likely to engage in risky behaviors compared to fellow male graduate students who are not married.

Females have minimal behavioral changes when married but may require additional attention from university personnel to make their graduate studies a positive experience. Married students are better adjusted in terms of high self-efficacy, and increased satisfaction and happiness compared to non-married students (Mercer, 1989). They are also less likely to be full-time students. Conversely, single students are often poorly adjusted and more likely to experience financial stress but graduate at higher rates despite their poor grades.

Even though divorced students have more financial problems and are generally more heterogeneous, they tend to have higher self-esteem compared to non-divorced students. Price (2005), in an empirical study, established the relationship between student marital status and their graduate studies outcomes. The results shows married males and females are more likely to complete their studies within the program duration compared to single graduate students. Specifically, married male students had higher probability of completing their graduate studies 0.21 years quicker compared to their single female counterparts. The aim of this study is to examine the association between family life (marital status) and satisfaction in graduate school.

Data and method

A sample of 200 graduate students was analyzed to examine the relationship between satisfaction in graduate school and family life. Marital status was used as a measure of family life. Single, married, and divorced were the three distinct categories of the marital status variable. On the other hand, the satisfaction variable had two categories; satisfied and not satisfied. The two variables analyzed in this study are both nominal variables. As such, the chi-square test was chosen as the most appropriate test to use to examine the association between the two variables.

Results

The following table indicates the cross-tabulation for the 200 respondents based on satisfaction in graduate school and family life (marital status). The expected frequencies are indicated in parentheses ().

Table 1

	Marital Status			Total
	Single	Married	Divorced	
Not satisfied	21 (16.45)	7 (29.75)	42 (23.80)	70
Satisfied	26 (30.55)	78 (55.25)	26 (44.20)	130
Total	47	85	68	200

The test statistic for the chi-square test was obtained as follows.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{Observed} - \text{Expected})^2}{\text{Expected}}$$

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(21 - 16.45)^2}{16.45} + \frac{(7 - 29.75)^2}{29.75} + \frac{(42 - 23.80)^2}{23.80} + \frac{(26 - 30.55)^2}{30.55} + \frac{(78 - 55.25)^2}{55.25} + \frac{(26 - 44.20)^2}{44.20}$$

$$\chi^2 = 50.11$$

$$\text{Degrees of freedom} = (2 - 1) \times (3 - 1) = 1 \times 2$$

$$\text{Degrees of freedom} = 2$$

$$P(\chi^2(2) > 50.11) = 0.000$$

$$P\text{-value} = 0.000$$

The results of the chi-square test, $\chi^2(2) = 50.11$, $p < .001$ revealed a significant association between family life (marital status) and satisfaction in graduate school.

Conclusion

The findings from this study support empirical evidence that satisfaction in graduate school is significantly associated with family life. Notably, a significant majority of married graduate students were satisfied with their graduate studies. Similarly, most of the graduate students who were single were found to be satisfied with graduate studies. However, a majority of graduate students who were divorced were not satisfied with their graduate studies. The findings show that there is a significant association between family life (marital status) and satisfaction in graduate school.

References

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