

Maternal Role Attainment During the Letting-Go Phase of the Postpartum Period Among Teenage Mothers in Cebu City

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ABSTRACT

Teenage motherhood presents significant challenges as adolescents transition into maternal roles while simultaneously undergoing developmental changes associated with adolescence. This study assessed maternal role attainment during the letting-go phase of the postpartum period among teenage mothers in Cebu City. Specifically, it examined the respondents' demographic characteristics and the extent of their maternal role attainment in caring for their infants and adapting to motherhood. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed involving thirty (30) teenage mothers aged 16 to 19 years who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire that underwent pretesting to establish its validity and

reliability. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that most respondents were 18 years old, single, college-level students who had undergone normal delivery and continued their schooling after childbirth. The overall weighted mean of 3.36 indicated that maternal role attainment was fully attained. The respondents demonstrated competence in infant care practices such as feeding, hygiene, health monitoring, and emotional nurturing. The findings suggest that teenage mothers are capable of successfully assuming maternal responsibilities when supported by family members, healthcare providers, and the community. The study concludes that strengthening postpartum education, counseling services, and family-centered interventions may further enhance maternal role attainment among teenage mothers.

Keywords: *Maternal role attainment, teenage mothers, postpartum period, letting-go phase, motherhood, Cebu City*

INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is a developmental process that requires women to adjust physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically to their new responsibilities. For teenage mothers, this transition can be particularly demanding because the developmental tasks associated with adolescence occur simultaneously with the challenges of parenthood. Adolescents are still establishing their personal identities, educational goals, and social relationships when they become responsible for caring for an infant.

Mercer's Maternal Role Attainment Theory emphasizes that motherhood is acquired through a developmental and interactional process in which a mother gradually develops confidence, competence,

and attachment to her child. During the letting-go phase of the postpartum period, mothers begin to redefine their personal identities and integrate motherhood into their daily lives. Successful maternal role attainment during this phase contributes to positive maternal-infant outcomes and family well-being.

In Cebu City, teenage pregnancy remains a social and public health concern. Many adolescent mothers face difficulties related to interrupted education, financial limitations, emotional stress, and social adjustment. Despite these challenges, some teenage mothers demonstrate resilience and successfully adapt to motherhood. Understanding the extent of maternal role attainment among teenage mothers can provide valuable information for healthcare providers, educators, and policymakers in developing interventions that support adolescent mothers.

This study aimed to determine the level of maternal role attainment during the letting-go phase of the postpartum period among teenage mothers in Cebu City.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to determine the extent of maternal role attainment among teenage mothers during the letting-go phase of the postpartum period. A descriptive design was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researchers to systematically describe, measure, and analyze the maternal experiences and caregiving practices of teenage mothers. The quantitative approach facilitated the collection of numerical data that provided an objective assessment of maternal role attainment in relation to infant care and adaptation to motherhood.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Cebu City, Philippines. Cebu City was selected as the research locale because it has a considerable number of adolescent mothers and provides an appropriate setting for examining maternal role attainment among teenage mothers. The city's diverse population and accessibility to healthcare facilities offered valuable insights into the experiences of teenage mothers during the postpartum period.

Sampling Technique

The study utilized purposive sampling in selecting the respondents. Thirty (30) teenage mothers aged 16 to 19 years residing in Cebu City were chosen based on predetermined inclusion criteria. To qualify for participation, respondents had to be teenage mothers within the specified age range and currently residing in Cebu City. This sampling technique ensured that the participants possessed the characteristics necessary to provide relevant information regarding maternal role attainment during the letting-go phase of the postpartum period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were 18 years old (40.00%), followed by 17 years old (23.33%), 19 years old (20.00%), and 16 years old (16.67%). In terms of civil status, most respondents were single (56.67%), while 30.00% were in live-in relationships and 13.33% were married. Regarding educational attainment, 50.00% were college-level students, 33.33% were high school graduates, and 16.67% were at the high school level. The majority experienced normal delivery (66.67%), whereas 33.33% underwent cesarean section delivery. Concerning occupational status after childbirth, 60.00% continued their education, 26.67% remained at home, and 13.33% were employed.

These findings indicate that teenage motherhood commonly occurs among adolescents who are still pursuing their education. Despite the challenges associated with early motherhood, many respondents continued their schooling, demonstrating resilience and determination to complete their education. This

highlights the importance of educational and social support systems that assist adolescent mothers in balancing their maternal responsibilities and academic goals.

Maternal Role Attainment During the Letting-Go Phase

The study found an overall weighted mean of 3.36, interpreted as Fully Attained, indicating that the respondents had successfully adapted to their maternal roles during the letting-go phase of the postpartum period. Teenage mothers demonstrated active participation in various infant care activities, including diaper changing, feeding, monitoring their infants' health conditions, attending medical appointments, and responding appropriately to their babies' needs.

Among the indicators, the highest mean score was recorded for bringing the baby to medical checkups and vaccinations (3.97), reflecting a strong commitment to ensuring their infants' health and well-being. In contrast, relatively lower mean scores were observed in monitoring the baby's growth and development (2.43) and bathing the baby (2.50), suggesting areas where additional guidance and support may be beneficial.

The findings suggest that teenage mothers are capable of performing essential childcare responsibilities despite their young age. These results support Mercer's Maternal Role Attainment Theory, which posits that maternal competence develops through continuous interaction with the infant, learning experiences, and support from significant individuals. The successful attainment of maternal roles among the respondents may be attributed to the assistance provided by family members, healthcare professionals, and community support systems.

Furthermore, the results imply that maternal role attainment is influenced not only by age but also by the availability of social support, education, and access to health services. Teenage mothers who receive adequate emotional, informational, and practical support are more likely to develop confidence, competence, and effectiveness in caring for their infants. Therefore, strengthening support programs for adolescent mothers may further enhance maternal role attainment and promote positive maternal and child health outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that teenage mothers in Cebu City generally demonstrated a high level of maternal role attainment during the letting-go phase of the postpartum period. Most respondents were single, college-level students who continued their education after childbirth and successfully adapted to motherhood. The overall findings showed that maternal responsibilities related to infant care were fully attained, indicating that teenage mothers are capable of developing competence and confidence in their maternal roles.

The study concludes that adequate support from families, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and the community plays a significant role in facilitating successful maternal role attainment among teenage mothers. Strengthening postpartum education programs, parenting guidance, counseling services, and family involvement initiatives may further enhance the transition to motherhood and promote positive outcomes for both mothers and their children.

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