

Role Experience of Muslim Adolescent Mothers Living in Remote Rural Areas in Indonesia: A Qualitative Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescents as mothers have limitations in carrying out their roles as mothers. This is due to adolescents' lack of knowledge and experience when performing as mothers.

Methods: This type of research is qualitative research with a case study approach and data collection methods with in-depth interviews. The participants in this study were adolescent mothers living in remote rural areas in Indonesia obtained by purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman technique.

Results: Adolescent mothers experience several obstacles while performing their role as mothers, including lack of experience and knowledge related to motherhood, lack of maturity in dealing with problems during their role as mothers, lack of support from their partners. Adolescent mothers also mentioned that the factor of family and social support is one of the essential points in carrying out their role as a mother.

Conclusion: This study concludes that adolescent mothers need physical and mental preparation for motherhood before having children. This encourages community nurses to provide counseling and consultation services to prepare adolescent mothers to carry out their roles as mothers.

Keywords: Adolescents, Mothers, Motherhood.

INTRODUCTION

¹The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020 states that approximately 12 million women aged between 15-19 years give birth and become mothers in their teens every year. Most of the adolescent mothers were raised by single mothers who also had children in their teens, and the education level of the adolescent mothers averaged high school graduation or the equivalent ².

The results of other studies explain that adolescent mothers have a variety of stress

that affect mental health due to a lack of physical and psychological readiness in the role of mothers and the lack of social support received by mothers who are adolescents³. Another consequence of being a mother at a young age is that adolescents lose their rights, care and experience difficulties transitioning to becoming a mother⁴.

⁵Data from the Population and Family Planning Agency (2020) identified 60 adolescent mothers in remote rural areas in the southern part of the province.

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⁶Data from the Maternal and Child Health Section at the South Aceh Health Office explained that among 427 pregnant women who had a high risk of pregnancy, 25 of them were adolescents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design

This study applied a qualitative design with a case study approach that focuses on the experience of adolescent mothers.

Participant

Participants in this study were mothers who had children in their teens who were selected using a purposive sampling technique with a total of 8 participants.

Setting

This research was conducted in a remote rural area in the southern part of Aceh, the province reinforcing Sharia law that condemns pre-marital sexual relationships.

Data Collection

From April 10 to May 9, 2020, the data collection process in this study used an in-depth interview technique. The interviews lasted 35-90 minutes for each participant. The principal researcher interviewed each participant two times.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out by reading the interview transcripts, then coding the data, determining the theme of the data obtained and explaining specifically related to the themes that emerged. Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman method, consisting of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or data verification.

Validity of Research Data (Trustworthiness)

The research data was recorded using a voice recorder to ensure the credibility of the data obtained; the researcher also checked the data obtained repeatedly to validate the data. As a qualitative research nurse expert, the researcher also asked an external reviewer to see the theme's suitability with the data obtained.

RESULTS

Characteristics of participants

There were 8 participants involved in this study. Characteristics of the participants are women who have children in their teens with an age range of 17 to 19 years when they first have children. The last education of junior and senior high school participants with the nuclear family and extended family types and current marital status consists of married and divorced (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants (N= 8)

Participant code	Current age (years)	Age when becoming a mother (years)	Education	Family type	Marital Status
P1	22	18	Senior High School	Extended Family	Married
P2	22	19	Senior High School	Extended Family	Married
P3	25	18	Junior High School	Nuclear Family	Married
P4	21	17	Junior High School	Extended Family	Divorced
P5	34	17	Junior High School	Nuclear family	Married

Participant code	Current age (years)	Age when becoming a mother (years)	Education	Family type	Marital Status
P6	32	18	Senior School	High Nuclear Family	Divorced
P7	23	19	Senior School	High Nuclear Family	Married
P8	24	18	Senior School	High Nuclear Family	Divorced

Descriptions of Categories

The research results are grouped based on four role acquisitions proposed by Mercer. It consists of anticipatory role acquisition, formal role acquisition, informal role acquisition, and personal role acquisition.

Anticipatory role acquisition

Adapting to changes during pregnancy.

This theme is explained based on three sub-themes which are defined as follows:

Adapting to Body Changes during Pregnancy. This sub-theme describes the physical changes that occur to the mother during pregnancy, consisting of a decrease in the physical condition and unusual consumption habits during pregnancy. Participants' statements are as follows:

"My condition was not very good when pregnancy, I'm also tired, and I don't want to eat" (P7).

Adapting To Changes of Habits During Pregnancy. Participants experienced changes in practices during pregnancy marked by changes in their way of thinking, attitudes, and behavior, and this can be seen from the statements said by the participants as follows:

"It's difficult to become a mother. I was still young, I was a little scared, , but I have a responsibility as wife and mother" (P5).

"it's a difficulty as a young mother, i have unstable emotion"(P4).

Adapting to the Absence of Husband's Support. This sub-theme describes the support received during pregnancy. This can be seen from the following statements:

" my husband hasn't accompanied me since I was three months pregnant; he only came home when I was eight months pregnant, I felt so sad about that" (P8).

"I live with my parents until I was eight months pregnant without a husband and when a child is born, it doesn't feel like the child has a father and my husband left my child and me. (participant's eyes filled with tears when she told the story)." (P1).

Family Support During Pregnancy. This sub-theme explains that participants get support from their families which is described as follows:

" my family always supports me even without my husband. Thank God, my family took care of everything from the first month of pregnancy." (P1).

" the family supports and takes care of me when I was sick." (P5).

Social Support During Pregnancy. The support received can be seen from the statements from the fifth participant said, "my neighbor supports me with everything. During delivery, the neighbors do the laundry, thank God," and the fourth participant said, "my neighbors always take care of me during pregnancy and delivery, they also give me encouragement."

Formal Role Acquisition

Wanting a complete family life

This theme explains the participants' desire to have a harmonious, complete, and happy family. The cause of the participants not having a whole family is due to the absence

of support from their husbands during motherhood. The first participant said, "my husband left me during pregnancy and delivery; I just want a harmonious family" and the fourth participant said "I am proud of myself because I can take care of my child even though without my husband."

Adapting to the role of a single parent

This theme describes the participant's role as a single parent due to her husband's absence. The statement from the first participant said, "I did everything without a living and support from my husband. I can support my children so that I can raise my children." and the fifth participant said, "I'm happy, really proud because I can survive taking care of children even without a father".

Adapting to changes during motherhood

This theme explains the constraints of parenting. This can be seen from the statements below:

"Being a mother is not easy. It is difficult to respond to a child who is quite fussy and lazy, all because I don't have experience as a mom" (P1).

"Well, taking care of children is bit difficult because you don't understand how to be a mother, but you get used to it" (P6).

Support during motherhood

Family Support. Family helps participants to take care of children and give some advice as a mother. Participants' statements are as follows:

"I don't have much experience because it's my mom who takes on all the roles, it's more of my mom who takes care of everything." (P2).

"If there is a problem, usually find a solution with the parents" (P4).

"During childbirth it is more to the mother-in-law who takes care of the child" (P6).

Husband's Support. The third participant said, "my husband give encouragement during motherhood."

Social Support. Participants' statements can be seen as follows: Eight participants said, "

my friends gave me many suggestions," the fifth participant said "my neighbors always support me, even they will come to take care of my child, especially when my baby is still newborn, they also help me doing housework," and the first participant said, "they gave good advice on how to be a mother."

Informal Role Acquisition

This category describes the achievement of maternal roles that begins when mothers create unique ways of dealing with unspoken parts of the social system. This category has one central theme, which consists of three sub-themes. The explanation is as follows:

Modifying the mother's role toward the children

This theme explains how participants modify their roles when dealing with children and the tips they use to create good relationships between participants and children. This theme consists of two sub-themes which are explained as follows:

How To Communicate With Children.

This sub-theme explains how participants communicate with children; this can be seen from the statements: the first participant said, "my child always listens to me when I give her advice; she is a perfect daughter."

Establishing Good Relationships With Children.

This sub-theme explains how participants build good relationships with children and spend time with children. This can be seen from the statement: the third participant said, "I always encourage them to learn new things, talk to them" and the seventh participant said, "Teach them to recognize letters, colors."

Personal Role Acquisition

This category describes the stages of maternal attainment related to the stage of role identity that occurs as women internalize their roles. This category has two themes which are explained as follows:

Applying Rationalized Coping in Solving Problems

This theme explains the way participants solve problems in their families. This theme describes how to resolve rationally to avoid conflicts that can affect relationships with children. This can be seen in the first participant's statement, "first, if I have a problem with my husband, I don't want to make a fuss; I want to solve the problem because I think of my child, and over time, the child will need her father."

Applying maladaptive coping in solving problems

The theme explains how participants deal with problems in their families by using maladaptive coping.

" I have concern that I can not support my child in the future" (P1).

"Sometimes it's embarrassing; it's hard to be a mother at such a young age because I am still young, , I also feel uncomfortable, and I feel so inferior" (P3).

DISCUSSION

This study describes the experience of the role of adolescent mothers related to the stages of role acquisition proposed by Mercer. The explanations can be seen as follows:

Anticipatory role acquisition

In the anticipatory role, there are two themes, namely:

Adapting to changes during pregnancy

This theme is divided into three sub-themes based on the changes during pregnancy. Participants revealed that several changes occurred during pregnancy. These changes consist of changes in the body, and emotions during pregnancy.

Body Changes During Pregnancy. Body changes during pregnancy are marked by changes in conditions that occur to participants, such as the health conditions of these participants. Participants adapt to these changes as the gestation period increases.

Emotional Changes during Pregnancy. Participants mentioned emotional problems during pregnancy, the transition of significant changes in feelings. One of the reasons for emotional problems during pregnancy is a conflict with a partner and anxiety that occurs during pregnancy. This study is in line with a survey conducted by⁷ which explains changes in adolescent mothers, such as physical and emotional changes. Social factors influence emotional changes in participants, such as family, partners, and close people.

Adapting to changes in support during pregnancy

Husband Support. The support from the husband received by the participants was emotional support. Some participants admitted that they did not get support from their husbands during pregnancy because they worked outside the region. Another reason that participants did not get support from their husbands was the conflict between the participants and their husbands.

Family support. Participants explained that family support was the direct support they received during pregnancy. The support is provided in physical assistance and emotional support during pregnancy.

Social support. The support received is emotional and physical support, such as assistance in doing household chores.

Formal Role Acquisition

There are four themes in the acquisition of formal roles, including the following:

The desire to have a complete family

Participants support their children without help from their husbands, The conflict between the participant and the husband, which affects the family harmony of the participant. The presence of a husband to meet physical and psychological needs, especially for adolescent mothers, is very important because adolescent mothers do not understand and do not have experience compared to adult mothers⁸.

Adapting to changing motherhood

The barriers experienced by participants when raising children were dealing with diverse child behavior, lack of knowledge and understanding regarding motherhood, and lack of experience possessed by participants. Adolescent mothers share conflicting feelings about their role as mothers; on the one hand, adolescent mothers feel happy because they have children, but on the other hand, they have difficulty playing the role of mothers because of their lack of knowledge and experience⁴.

The support you get during your role as a mother

Family support is one of the critical factors for adolescent mothers in carrying out their roles as mothers; family support also increases the confidence of adolescent mothers to carry out their roles as mothers⁹. Family support is usually emotional support, instrumental in caring for children, and informational support related to carrying out their role as mothers¹⁰.

Informal Role Acquisition

Modifying the mother's role toward the children

This research states that there are variations in attitudes shown by adolescent mothers in responding to pregnancy and childbirth; still, on average, adolescent mothers show positive attitudes towards their children.¹¹

Personal Role Acquisition

Applying rationalization coping in solving problems

This coping is applied by thinking in advance about the actions to be taken when dealing with issues, especially issues related to their husbands because participants do not want these problems to affect their household harmony, which can impact their children in the future.

Application of maladaptive coping in solving problems

The application of maladaptive coping carried out by participants is how participants solve problems by using incorrect adaptations to the problem, such as silence, anger, crying,

and avoiding facing the problem. The cause of this coping arises because the participants' expectations of marriage are different from the reality that occurs. Research shows that adolescent mothers are more susceptible to depression and stress than adult mothers¹².

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The results of this qualitative study cannot be generalized as a general condition that occurs in the province of Aceh related to the experience of motherhood in adolescence, so further research is needed regarding this research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

The problems that arise in adolescent mothers are caused by several things, the lack of experience and knowledge of mothers in carrying out their roles, lack of maturity in dealing with problems during motherhood, and lack of husband support during their role as mothers. Community nurses, especially maternal and child care unit nurses, can further increase their attention to adolescent mothers by providing preparatory counseling before becoming mothers.

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Ethical Considerations

This study received ethical approval from the ethics committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Syiah Kuala, with number 112002170321. Before conducting the study, the researcher first explained the procedures and objectives of the research and asked for informed consent from the participants.

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