SRISAMORN PHUMONSAKUL : A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL OF MATERNAL ROLE ATTAINMENT AMONG WORKING PRIMIPAROUS MOTHERS. THESIS ADVISORS : KOBKUL PHANCHAROENWORAKUL, Ph.D. RUTJA PHUPHAIBUL, RN, DNS. THAVATCHAI VORAPONGSATHORN, Ph.D., 213 p. ISBN 974-663-961-7

Maternal role attainment is a complex and difficult development process encountered by pregnant women. This role attainment is especially more complicated among primiparous mothers. Incorporating maternity and the working role entails psychological integrity that involves the well being of the mother, infant, and the family. Thus, an understanding of the mechanism of factors that affect the maternal role attainment process is needed to enhance the potential of the maternal role and the quality of family life at large. The knowledge gained from the study could shed some light on the formulation of new nursing concepts as well.

This study aimed to test the causal model derived from Mercer's maternal role attainment theory, which illustrated the causal relationships among 6 variables. These include working conditions, marital relationship, social support, self-esteem, infant's characteristics, and maternal role attainment. For the purposes of the study, 390 hospitalized working primiparous mothers were drawn from government hospitals located in Bangkok metropolitan area. Two consecutive questionnaires were used to facilitate data gathering within a 5 month period after delivery. The first set of questionnaires was administered during the first 2-3 days after the delivery of the samples to collect the data on working conditions, marital relationship, and social support. Four months later, the second set of questionnaires was mailed to the participants in order to determine their self-esteem, infant's characteristics, and maternal role attainment. The LISREL program version 8.30 was employed to facilitate the data analysis.

The finding of this study revealed that the factors directly affecting maternal role attainment are self-esteem ($\beta = 1.89$, $p < .05$) and infant's characteristics ($\beta = .81$, $p < .05$). Factors that directly affecting infant's characteristics are working conditions ($\beta = .95$, $p < .05$), marital relationship ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$) and social support ($\beta = .80$, $p < .05$). Marital relationship and social support have direct positive effect on self-esteem ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$, and $\beta = .81$, $p < .05$, respectively). The model accounts for a 58 % of variance on maternal role attainment.

The study indicated that further testing of nursing strategies through experimental research for supporting maternal role attainment should be implemented in the future.