

**PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
PREDISPOSITION AMONG YOUNG  
POSTPARTUM WOMEN**

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## ABSTRACT

This study attempted to determine the psychological stress and environmental predisposition among young postpartum women. The researchers made use of the descriptive-correlational research, as well as statistical treatment of both inferential and descriptive statistics in order to study the profile, level of psychological stress, level of environmental stress and the significant relationship between the two latter variables. Self-made questionnaires had been prepared by the researchers which was validated by various professionals.

A total of 15 respondents, aged 17- 20 years, 1-4 months postpartum, and living in Davao City were researched. Results show that there are low levels of psychological stress and environmental predisposition with a mean score of 2.08 and 2.20, respectively. Using 0.05 as a level of significance, the hypothesis has been rejected as result show a p-value of 0.038. This means that contrary, to usual results of studies, these respondents have shown that with lower levels of environmental predisposition, they also have low levels of psychological stress. This result has been greatly attributed to the positive Filipino cultural traits.

With regard to the result of this research study, the proponents would like to recommend that the young postpartum women continue to use their community resources and include family members in handling stress. It is also recommended that the health care community take better care of this population, informing and intervening in all aspects to promote health. Future researchers must strive to expand their area of research in order to study a more varied population.

your partner, getting a new job or moving to a new home within months or giving birth, and financial difficulties (Kleiman, 2014).

In Filipino culture, Filipinos are taught to expect that having a baby is the happiest time in a woman's life and for most women, childbirth and early parenting do provide great joy and fulfillment. Yet, the truth is that women are more at risk of experiencing emotional difficulties following the birth of a baby than any other time in their lives.

26 percent of our Filipino youth nationwide from ages 15 to 25 admitted to having a premarital sex experience. What's worse is that 38 percent of our youth are already in a live-in arrangement (Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study by the University of the Philippines Population Institute and the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, 2002)

The Ateneo de Davao Nursing Curriculum embraces the different aspect of nursing; one of which is Maternal and Child Nursing. The study will be conducted to impart knowledge on maternal health, especially to the young postpartum women. In addition the researchers would also like to expand their knowledge on the behavioral manifestations of young postpartum women.

## Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the theory “General Adaptation Syndrome” by Hans Selye (McGraw-Hill, 1976). In this theory, Selye explains stress based on physiology and psychology. According to his model, whenever there is stress, the body responds in three stages. The first stage is “Alarm Stage” where the body activates the sympathetic nervous system, the “fight-or-flight” response, releasing hormones such as cortisol and adrenalin into the bloodstream. This helps in mobilizing the body in the face of threat or danger. The second stage, the “Resistance Stage”, activates the parasympathetic nervous system, returning some body functions to normal. It only leaves some sympathetic functions active to focus against the stressor. The body keeps the blood glucose, cortisol, and adrenalin at high levels. In the “Exhaustion Stage”, the last stage of the model, the body exhausts or drains all of its resources when the stresses persist beyond the capacity of the body. This makes the body vulnerable to illnesses, even death.

In this study, the theory will help understand the level of psychological stress of each of the respondents and help the researchers understand whether their stresses are eustress or distress, two terms also coined by Selye. Eustress is manageable stress which can lead to growth and enhanced competence while distress are uncontrollable, prolonged, or overwhelming stress that can cause destruction (Smeltzer, et. al, 2004). The stress that the researchers would like to focus on are affected by environmental predispositions of each of the respondents, moderated by variables such as their age, educational level, socioeconomic status and marital status.

### Conceptual Framework

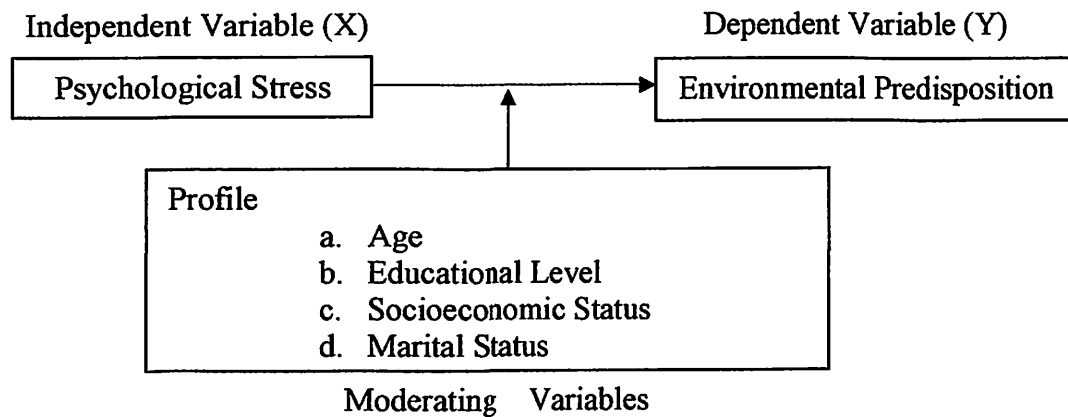


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework of this study

Figure 1 shows psychological stress, here represented as X, as the independent variable that stands as a probable cause to the environmental predisposition, here represented as Y, being the dependent variable in this study. The concept focuses on the cause and effect relation between psychological stress and environmental predispositions among young postpartum women with respect to moderating variables as the respondent's age, educational level, socioeconomic status and marital status.

### Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine the relationship of psychological stress and environmental predispositions among young postpartum women.

Specifically, this study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - a. Age
  - b. Educational Level
  - c. Socioeconomic Status

- d. Marital Status?
2. What is the level of psychological stress of the young postpartum women in terms of:
    - a. self esteem
    - b. change in mood
    - c. motivation
    - d. sleep?
  3. What is the level of environmental predisposition of the young postpartum women in terms of:
    - a. household responsibilities
    - b. financial status
    - c. marital status?
  4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of psychological stress and environmental predisposition among young postpartum women?

### Hypothesis

Research questions one to three are hypothesis free. For research question number four, the following hypothesis have been derived:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the level of psychological stress and environmental predispositions among young postpartum women.

### Scope and Limitation

This study was focused on psychological stress and environmental predisposition among young postpartum women within Davao City.

## Significance of the Study

This study is considered significant as it will be beneficial to the following:

**Postpartum Women.** Young postpartum women are the most significant in this study. Through this they will be able to acquire knowledge of what attitude they must have in this situation and they will know specific activities that they must do to lessen their stress in being mothers, wives, and members of the society, if ever they have it.

**Family.** The family plays a significant role in the respondent's life since they are the ones who give support most especially on the emotions. This study will help guide the family on providing support for their young postpartum women on physical, emotional and mental matters.

**Barangay Health Workers.** This study will be able to benefit the knowledge on how they can improve their facilities and on how they must approach their young postpartum women in the community.

**Public Health Nurse.** Through this study, the PHN nurse will be able to increase the knowledge about psychological stress and environmental predisposition among young postpartum women that would lead for a better and more effective intervention.

**Student Nurse.** Student nurses will also be aided in this study in their knowledge about postpartum women by knowing those who are greatly affected by it and what are the best interventions that must be rendered to them.

**Clinical Instructor.** Clinical instructors who guide and direct students in handling postpartum clients will be able to benefit from this study through additional information on local of postpartum women.

Future Researcher. This study will also be beneficial to the future researchers. Through this research, suggestions, modifications, and improvements can be made in their future research concerning the psychological stress that postpartum women undergo.

### Definition of Terms

For better understanding of the reader, the following terms were defined by the researchers conceptually and operationally.

**Psychological Stress.** According to National Cancer Institute (2012), this refers to what people feel when they are under mental, physical, or emotional pressure.

In this study, it refers to what the level of pressure the respondents feel with respect to the manifestations in their confidence after giving birth (self-esteem), temperaments (change in mood), determination being a young postpartum women (motivation) and to the amount of rest that affects their daily lives (sleep).

**Age.** According to Merriam Webster Online (2014), this refers to the time of life when a person does something or become legally able to do something.

In this study, this refers to women ages 17-20 years old and are postpartum for 1-4 months.

**Environmental predisposition.** According to Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2012), this refers to the conditions, or influences that incline or predisposes someone or something to change either positively or negatively.

In this study, it refers to the inclinations of the young postpartum women living with regards to each of their profiles and how it affects their lives in terms of their household responsibilities, financial status and marital status.

**Socioeconomic status.** According to American Psychological Association (2014), this refers to social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.

In this study, it refers to the respondent's monthly family income.

**Educational attainment.** According to Statistics Canada (2011), this refers to the term commonly used by statisticians to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed.

In this study, it refers to the level of education from which the respondents have graduated from elementary, high school, college.

**Marital status.** According to Oxford Dictionaries (2014), this refers to the condition of being married or unmarried.

In this study, it refers to the condition of being single, married, divorced, separated, widowed, or partnered/cohabitating.

**Young postpartum women,** in this study, refers to the 1-4 months postpartum women who are aged between 17-20 years old.