

PARENTING SELF-PERCEPTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEENAGE AND EMERGING ADULT MOTHERS IN WEST JAVA

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Abstract

Some studies have shown differences in parenting practices between teenage and emerging adult mothers; however, not all research has found this to be the case. This study aims to examine differences in perceptions of parenting roles between teenage and emerging adult mothers. Perceptions of parenting roles are associated with parenting practices and encompass four dimensions: parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, parenting investment, and integration/role balance. This research is a non-experimental study using a between-subjects design. A total of 86 teenage mothers (15–19 years old) and 86 emerging adult mothers (20–23 years old) participated in the study. Parenting self-perception was measured using the Self-Perception of Parenting Role (SPPR), and the data were analyzed using a t-test. The results indicated significant differences in parenting self-perception between teenage and emerging adult mothers in the areas of parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, and integration/role balance. Emerging adult mothers demonstrated higher competence, greater satisfaction, and a better ability to integrate the various roles they undertake. In contrast, no significant differences were found between the two groups in parenting investment. These findings support Law Number 16 Year 2019, which permits marriage for men and women aged 19 years and older.

Keywords: emerging adult mothers, parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, parenting self-perception, teenage mothers

Persepsi Diri terhadap Pengasuhan: Sebuah Studi Komparatif antara Ibu Berusia Remaja dan *Emerging Adult* di Jawa Barat

Abstrak

Sejumlah studi menunjukkan perbedaan dalam praktik pengasuhan antara ibu berusia remaja dan ibu *emerging adult*, tetapi tidak semua penelitian menunjukkan hasil yang sama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat perbedaan persepsi terhadap peran pengasuhan antara ibu remaja dan ibu *emerging adult*. Persepsi terhadap peran pengasuhan diasosiasikan dengan praktik pengasuhan dan mencakup empat dimensi: perasaan kompeten dalam pengasuhan, kepuasan sebagai pengasuh, pandangan terhadap pentingnya peran sebagai orang tua, dan kemampuan untuk mengintegrasikan berbagai peran. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian non-eksperimental dengan desain antara subjek (*between-subjects study design*). Terdapat 86 ibu remaja (15–19 tahun) dan 86 ibu *emerging adult* (20–23 tahun) dalam penelitian ini. Persepsi terhadap pengasuhan diukur menggunakan Self-Perception of Parenting Role (SPPR), dan data dianalisis dengan menggunakan t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat perbedaan dalam persepsi diri terhadap pengasuhan antara ibu remaja dan ibu *emerging adult* pada dimensi perasaan kompeten dalam pengasuhan, kepuasan sebagai pengasuh, dan kemampuan untuk mengintegrasikan berbagai peran. Ibu *emerging adult* lebih kompeten, lebih puas, dan lebih mampu mengintegrasikan berbagai peran yang mereka jalani dibandingkan ibu remaja. Sementara itu, pada dimensi pandangan terhadap pentingnya peran sebagai orang tua, tidak ditemukan perbedaan antara kedua kelompok ibu. Hasil penelitian ini semakin memperkuat Undang-Undang No. 16 Tahun 2019 yang menyatakan bahwa pernikahan diizinkan bagi laki-laki dan perempuan yang berusia 19 tahun atau lebih.

Kata kunci: ibu berusia remaja, ibu *emerging adult*, kepuasan terhadap pengasuhan, kompetensi dalam pengasuhan, persepsi diri terhadap pengasuhan

INTRODUCTION

Teenage mothers are often described as insensitive and more intrusive (Ierardi et al.,

2022; Riva Crugnola et al., 2018), less engaged and playful with their children (Riva Crugnola et al., 2014; Williams, 2020), and unresponsive in parenting (Lewin et al., 2013). This contrasts

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with emerging adult mothers, who tend to be more supportive, sensitive, and positive in their attitudes compared to teenage mothers (Lewin et al., 2013). These descriptions refer to parenting practices, which encompass the observable behaviors parents exhibit when interacting with their children (Kahraman et al., 2017). Based on the aforementioned studies, it can be concluded that teenage mothers often demonstrate poor parenting practices (Kumar & Huang, 2021; van Zyl et al., 2015).

Although a negative association between parenting practices and maternal age exists, not all teenage mothers exhibit poor parenting behaviors. Some studies present conflicting results, showing that teenage mothers make efforts to be good parents (Sheeran et al., 2016). They express love for their children by giving attention, being present (Aparicio et al., 2015; Erfina et al., 2019; Sadler et al., 2016), and taking responsibility for their child (Ngum Chi Watts et al., 2015). Additionally, they enjoy daily activities with their children, such as playing, feeding, and bathing them (Sheeran et al., 2015). These findings suggest that teenage mothers can also exhibit positive parenting practices similar to those of emerging adult mothers.

Parenting practices are closely linked to parenting cognition, which can influence a person's role as a parent and underlie their parenting behaviors (Bornstein et al., 2018). Parenting cognition includes five elements: attitudes, expectations, perceptions, attributions, and parents' knowledge about parenting and child development (Bornstein, 2016). This study focuses on perceptions because parents' perceptions of their parenting roles are known to motivate nurturing and constructive interaction with their children, thereby influencing child development. Parenting self-perception, or how parents view their own parenting, plays a key role in successful parenting (Bornstein et al., 2003) and affects parenting practices. Furthermore, perceptions of parenting shape other aspects of parenting cognition, such as expectations (Bornstein et al., 2018) and attitudes toward children (Bornstein et al., 2003), highlighting the significance of perceptions in parenting cognition.

Various definitions of parenting self-perception exist, but this study will use the definition proposed by MacPhee, who introduced the concept (MacPhee et al., 1986). In a personal communication, D. MacPhee (February 11, 2020) defined parenting self-perception as "...how they evaluate their own parenting and why they parent the way they do." He further explained

that it encompasses a parent's sense of competence in their caregiving role, satisfaction with their parenting, the belief in the importance of the parental role that drives them to invest time and energy in learning about parenting, and the ability to integrate the parenting role with other social roles. Based on this definition, four dimensions of parenting self-perception emerge: parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, parenting investment, and role integration/balance.

Research indicates that teenage mothers often perceive themselves as incompetent in their parenting roles (Mangeli et al., 2017; Puspasari et al., 2018; Rahmawati et al., 2019) and report low parenting satisfaction (Nomura et al., 2022; Passarelli et al., 2018). Their limited parenting knowledge may reflect a lower level of parenting investment, as this relates to the time and energy dedicated to learning how to be a good mother, evidenced by adequate child care knowledge (Mangeli et al., 2017; Rahmawati et al., 2019). Furthermore, teenage mothers frequently experience role conflicts, such as balancing the roles of wife, sexual partner, mother, student, and adolescent (Blaser, 2016; Mangeli et al., 2017).

The studies cited illustrate a generally low parenting self-perception among teenage mothers, which may be linked to poor parenting practices. However, the positive parenting behaviors observed in some teenage mothers suggest that their parenting self-perception is not uniformly low. This study aims to further explore the parenting self-perception of teenage mothers in comparison to emerging adult mothers.

This research investigates whether there are differences in parenting self-perception between teenage and emerging adult mothers. Four hypotheses will be tested: (1) There is a significant difference in parenting competence between teenage mothers and emerging adult mothers; (2) There is a significant difference in parenting satisfaction between teenage and emerging adult mothers; (3) There is a significant difference in parenting investment between the two groups; and (4) There is a significant difference in the ability to integrate roles between teenage and emerging adult mothers.

West Java was selected as the study site because it ranks highest in terms of child marriage incidence (Hakiki et al., 2020). Child marriage can alter an individual's responsibilities and parenting roles during adolescence. This

study is crucial as it involves an at-risk sample of teenage mothers. Factors such as limited parenting and child development knowledge (Mangeli et al., 2017), egocentric thinking (Dhayanandhan & Bohr, 2016), and the struggle between fulfilling maternal responsibilities and undergoing normal adolescent development (Aiello & Lancaster, 2007) may impact parenting self-perception, which, in turn, affects parenting practices. Additionally, the experiences of first-time mothers navigating their child's rapid development, especially within the first three years of life (Papalia & Martorell, 2024), can influence feelings of doubt about their parenting abilities or happiness (Reid & Meadows-Oliver, 2007).

Research on parenting self-perception is also expected to support the new marriage law, Law Number 16 Year 2019. If teenage mothers are found to have lower parenting self-perception compared to emerging adult mothers, this may underscore the need to promote awareness about the benefits of marrying at a more mature age. Although the new marriage law stipulates that "Marriage is only permitted if both the man and woman have reached the age of 19" (A Perubahan atas Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 tentang Perkawinan, 2019), child marriages persist. The findings on parenting self-perception can also inform parenting intervention strategies.

METHODS

Research Design, Location, and Time

This study used a non-experimental design to test the relationship between variables by comparing scores from two groups (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). The independent variable is maternal age, categorized into two groups: teenage mothers and emerging adult mothers. The dependent variables are parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, parenting investment, and integration/role balance, which constitute the components of parenting self-perception. The study was conducted in Bogor City, Bogor Regency, Bandung City, Bandung Regency, and Bandung Barat Regency. The pilot study took place from May 27 to June 18, 2022, with the main data collection continuing until December 30, 2022.

Sampling Technique

Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method, with the following criteria: (1) first-time mothers aged 15–19 years for teenage mothers and 20–25 years for emerging adult

mothers; (2) mothers with biological children aged 0–36 months; and (3) mothers and children living in the same household. Exclusion criteria included mothers who were pregnant at the time of the study and/or had twin first children. The total number of participants was 172, with 86 teenage mothers and 86 emerging adult mothers. This exceeds the minimum required sample size based on G*Power analysis version 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2007), which, with a statistical power of 80%, a significance level of .05, and a medium effect size, required 102 participants across both groups. Some participants from the pilot study were included, but additional participants were recruited to meet the study's criteria.

Procedures for Data Collection

Participants were recruited through Community Health Centers (*Puskesmas*) in the study areas. *Puskesmas* were chosen because they maintain data on teenage and emerging adult mothers. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Commission of Universitas Padjadjaran, and permits to conduct the research were granted by the Public Health Office (*Kantor Dinas Kesehatan*) and the National Unity and Political Agency (*Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik*) in the relevant areas.

After obtaining ethical approval and research permits, *Puskesmas* in the study areas were visited. The research plan was presented at each *Puskesmas*, either in person or online, with the Head of the *Puskesmas*, the Head of Administration (*Kepala TU*), the Coordinator Midwife/Area Midwife, and the Village Midwives from the *Puskesmas*'s jurisdiction. With assistance from Village Midwives, Regional Midwives, and cadres, prospective participants meeting the study criteria were identified. During recruitment, midwives and cadres completed forms with the mother's name, address, contact information, age of mother and child, date of birth of mother and child, mother's education level, number of children, and information on whether the mother's first child was a twin or if the mother was currently pregnant. Mothers whose age, based on the birth dates provided, did not meet the criteria, and those with multiple children, twins, or who were pregnant were excluded. This ensured that the data aligned with the participant criteria. Selected participants were then invited to complete a questionnaire. Data collection took place at accessible locations, such as *Puskesmas*, Village Office (*Kantor Kepala*

Desa), *Posyandu*, cadre's homes, or the village library.

During data collection, participants were guided by the researcher and research assistants, all of whom held Master's degrees. Participants completed the questionnaires on-site after providing informed consent. Upon completion, they received transportation reimbursements, snacks, and gifts.

Measurements

Two variables were examined in this study. The independent variable is maternal age, categorized as teenage (under 20) and emerging adult (20–25). The dependent variable is parenting self-perception, defined as mothers' evaluations of their parenting roles, measured using the Self-perception of Parenting Role (SPPR) scale.

The SPPR, developed by MacPhee and colleagues (MacPhee et al., 1986), is intended for participants with children from infancy to early childhood. It assesses four dimensions of parenting self-perception: parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, parenting investment, and integration/role balance. The SPPR was selected based on its (1) strong internal reliability, with coefficients of 0.78 for parenting competence, 0.80 for parenting satisfaction, 0.72 for parenting investment, and 0.76 for integration/role balance (MacPhee et al., 1986); (2) use in diverse samples across various countries (Beyazit et al., 2018; Delvecchio et al., 2016); and (3) item format, which minimizes the influence of social desirability (Delvecchio et al., 2016).

The SPPR is a multidimensional tool (Bornstein et al., 2003), with each dimension being independent; hence, the scores cannot be combined into a single score. The SPPR comprises twenty-two items: six items each for parenting competence and integration/role balance, and five items each for parenting satisfaction and parenting investment. Responses are scored 1, 2, 4, or 5, resulting in a minimum and maximum score of 6 to 30 for parenting competence and integration/role balance, and 5 to 25 for parenting satisfaction and parenting investment. Table 1 presents examples of SPPR items in the Bahasa Indonesia version across the four dimensions.

Although the SPPR has been used in various countries, it had not been adapted into a Bahasa Indonesia version before this study.

Therefore, the adaptation of the instrument followed the guidelines set by the International Test Commission (2017). The following steps outline the adaptation process:

(1) Pre-condition. At this stage, permission to adapt the SPPR into Bahasa Indonesia was sought from Professor David MacPhee, the developer of the SPPR. The items were reviewed to ensure they were suitable for use in Indonesia.

(2) Test Development. This stage began with translating the SPPR. First, a forward translation was done by two bilingual Indonesians who regularly use both Indonesian and English. One translator is a psychology lecturer who completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees and is currently pursuing a Doctoral program abroad. The other translator is a learning support assistant at a primary school in the United Kingdom, where she has lived for 14 years. Although their translations had similar meanings, they differed in word choice. The translation results were then discussed with an expert in Bahasa Indonesia to improve the appropriateness of word choice and the clarity of the sentences for teenage and emerging adult mothers, who were the study's target sample. The finalized forward translation was subsequently given to two native English speakers for back-translation. One back-translator is an IELTS examiner for the speaking module, originally from Australia but living in Indonesia, while the other is a British proofreader and translator residing in the UK. Both speak Indonesian fluently. The back-translations were reviewed with Professor MacPhee to ensure the meaning was consistent with the original SPPR. Based on his feedback, three items were revised. After finalizing the Bahasa Indonesia version of the SPPR, a readability test was conducted with 20 teenage and emerging adult mothers. The test revealed that most participants understood the questionnaire items but had some difficulty with the instructions. Consequently, the instructions were revised for greater clarity.

(3) Confirmation. In this stage, a pilot study of the SPPR-Bahasa Indonesia version was conducted. Participants were recruited through *Puskesmas*, with assistance from Regional Midwives, Village Midwives, and community health volunteers (*cadres*). They were gathered at a central location, where the study was explained to them. Participants confirmed their willingness to join the research by signing an informed consent form.

Table 1 Sample items of the four dimensions of parenting self-perception in Bahasa Indonesia Version

Dimension	<i>Sangat benar untuk saya</i> (Really true for me)	<i>Agak benar untuk saya</i> (Sort of true for me)	Sample items	<i>Agak benar untuk saya</i> (Sort of true for me)	<i>Sangat benar untuk saya</i> (Really true for me)		
Parenting Competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Beberapa orang tua seringkali tidak dapat memahami apa yang dibutuhkan atau diinginkan anak-anaknya</i> (Some parents often can't figure out what their children need or want)	TETAPI (BUT)	<i>Orang tua lain tampaknya memahami apa yang dibutuhkan dan diinginkan anak-anaknya</i> (Other parents seem to have a knack for understanding what their children need or want)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Menjadi orang tua adalah pengalaman yang memuaskan bagi beberapa orang</i> (Being a parent is a satisfying experience for some adults)	TETAPI (BUT)	<i>Bagi orang lain, menjadi orang tua (itu) sama sekali tidak memuaskan</i> (For other adults, being a parent is not all that satisfying)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Beberapa orang tua banyak membaca (informasi) bagaimana menjadi orangtua yang baik</i> (Some parents do a lot of reading about how to be a good parent)	TETAPI (BUT)	<i>Orang tua lain tidak menghabiskan banyak waktu untuk membaca (tulisan) tentang bagaimana cara mengasuh anak</i> (Other parents don't spend much time reading about parenting)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integration/role balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Beberapa orang tua merasa bahwa mereka terlalu banyak melakukan pengorbanan untuk anak-anaknya</i> (Some parents feel they end up making too many sacrifices for their children)	TETAPI (BUT)	<i>Bagi orang tua lain, terdapat lebih banyak karunia dibandingkan dengan pengorbanan dalam membesarkan anak-anak</i> (For other parents, there are more rewards than sacrifices in rearing children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(4) Administration. A total of 218 teenage and emerging adult mothers completed the SPPR-Bahasa Indonesia version, with the process carried out face-to-face, assisted by several research assistants. The necessary materials, including questionnaires, stationery, snacks, transportation fees, and participant gifts, were prepared beforehand. The Regional Midwives,

Village Midwives, and cadres helped arrange suitable locations for the pilot study. Given the challenge of finding participants with specific characteristics, the pilot study included not only teenage and emerging adult mothers with one child aged 0–36 months but also those with more than one child, up to a maximum child age of 91 months.

(5) Score Scales and Interpretation. Psychometric evaluation of the SPPR-Bahasa Indonesia data was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The analysis showed that all SPPR items had good factor loadings (values > 1.96), indicating validity. The Construct Reliability (CR) values for SPPR dimensions were satisfactory, with parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, parenting investment, and integration/role balance scoring 0.837, 0.841, 0.836, and 0.853, respectively. Furthermore, the CFA results indicated a good fit between the SPPR measurement model and the data (RMSEA = 0.071; NFI = 0.96; NNFI = 0.97; CFI = 0.98; IFI = 0.98; RFI = 0.95; RMR = 0.012; Standardized RMR = 0.058; GFI = 0.90; AGFI = 0.91).

(6) Documentation. All research files will be stored for five years. The adaptation process has been thoroughly documented in Excel and MS Word formats, and these records will be kept on a secure laptop.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in this study were analyzed using an independent sample T-Test. Before

conducting the analysis, assumption tests were performed, including a normality test and a test for equality of variances.

RESULTS

Description of Participants

The mean age of the teenage mothers was 18.09 years (SD = 1.01), while the mean age of the emerging adult mothers was 20.09 years (SD = 0.85). For the teenage mothers, the age range was 15 to 19 years, and for the emerging adult mothers, it was 20 to 23 years. Overall, the children of the participants had a mean age of 13.22 months (SD = 9.06), with the majority being boys (52.3%).

Most of the mothers were married (99.4%), had a junior high school education (43%), and were stay-at-home mothers (87.2%). A majority lived with extended family members (54.7%) and had never attended a parenting seminar (72.1%). A detailed comparison of the demographic data between teenage and emerging adult mothers is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The comparison of demographic data between adolescent and emerging adult mothers (n=172)

Characteristics	Adolescent mothers (n = 86)	Emerging adult mothers (n = 86)
<i>Mother's education level</i>		
Attended or graduated from elementary school	24 (27.91%)	14 (16.28%)
Attended or completed junior high school	45 (52.33%)	40 (46.51%)
Attended or graduated from senior high school	17 (19.77%)	29 (33.72%)
Currently enrolled in a diploma program	-	1 (1.16%)
Currently enrolled in an undergraduate program	-	2 (2.33%)
<i>Mother's employment status</i>		
Working mother	8 (9.30%)	14 (16.28%)
Stay-at-home mother	78 (90.70%)	72 (83.72%)
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	86 (100%)	85 (98.84%)
Divorced	-	1 (1.16%)
<i>Residential status</i>		
Living only with a nuclear family	28 (32.56%)	46 (53.49%)
Living separately from a spouse	3 (3.49%)	1 (1.16%)
Living with extended family	55 (63.95%)	39 (45.35%)
<i>Participation in parenting training/seminar</i>		
Ever participated	26 (30.23%)	22 (25.58%)
Never participated	60 (69.77%)	64 (74.42%)
<i>Gender of the child</i>		
Male	38 (44.19%)	52 (60.47%)
Female	48 (55.81%)	34 (39.53%)

Tabel 3 Comparison of the four dimensions of parenting self-perception between teenage and emerging adult mothers using independent sample T-test analysis (n=172)

Parenting self-perception	Teenage mothers (n= 86)		Emerging adult mothers (n = 86)		t(170)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Parenting competence	19.48	4.31	21.00	4.28	2.33	0.021	0.353
Parenting satisfaction	19.27	3.16	20.26	3.20	2.04	0.043	0.311
Parenting investment	18.67	3.37	17.81	3.94	-1.54	0.126	-0.235
Integration/role balance	19.26	4.03	20.79	3.73	2.59	0.010	0.394

Note. *M* = Mean (average), *SD* = Standard Deviation

The data in Table 2 show results similar to the overall findings, with some differences in residential status and the gender of the child. Compared to teenage mothers, emerging adult mothers were more likely to live with their nuclear family, while teenage mothers more often lived with extended families. Additionally, most emerging adult mothers had sons, whereas teenage mothers were more likely to have daughters.

Regarding educational status, although the majority in both groups had a junior high school education, a higher proportion of emerging adult mothers had reached the senior high school level, and some had even pursued higher education.

Main Result

After confirming that the data were normally distributed and the assumption of equality of variance was met, the main analysis was conducted using an independent sample T-Test. The results are presented in Table 3.

The table reveals significant differences in the mean scores for parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, and integration/role balance between teenage and emerging adult mothers. Teenage mothers had significantly lower mean scores for parenting competence ($M = 19.48$, $SD = 4.31$), parenting satisfaction ($M = 19.27$, $SD = 3.16$), and integration/role balance ($M = 19.26$, $SD = 4.03$) than emerging adult mothers ($M = 21.00$, $SD = 4.28$, $t(170) = 2.33$, $p = 0.021$ for parenting competence; $M = 20.26$, $SD = 3.20$, $t(170) = 2.04$, $p = 0.043$ for parenting satisfaction; and $M = 20.79$, $SD = 3.73$, $t(170) = 2.59$, $p = 0.010$ for integration/role balance). The effect sizes for the three outcomes were small, with Cohen's *d* values of 0.353 for parenting competence, 0.311 for parenting satisfaction, and 0.394 for integration/role balance. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups in parenting investment.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate differences in parenting self-perception, specifically in parenting competence, satisfaction, and integration/role balance, between teenage and emerging adult mothers. Teenage mothers reported lower levels of parenting competence, satisfaction, and role integration compared to emerging adult mothers. These results align with previous research showing that teenage mothers tend to have lower parenting competence (Mangeli et al., 2017; Puspasari et al., 2018; Rahmawati et al., 2019), satisfaction (Nomura et al., 2022; Passarelli et al., 2018), and ability to integrate multiple roles (Mangeli et al., 2017).

The educational differences between teenage and emerging adult mothers may have contributed to these findings. Although most participants in both groups had a junior high school education, emerging adult mothers were more likely to have completed high school, with some pursuing higher education. Previous studies suggest that a parent's education level is linked to their knowledge of child development (Mangeli et al., 2017; Rowe et al., 2016), as more educated parents are more inclined to seek advice from health professionals or access parenting resources. Parenting knowledge has also been found to correlate with parenting competence (Bornstein et al., 2003), as parents who are knowledgeable about child development demonstrate more competence in their parenting tasks.

The limited education levels among teenage mothers in this study may explain their lower parenting knowledge and perceived competence. Previous research has shown that teenage mothers often have inadequate knowledge about parenting and child development (Mangeli et al., 2017), which is consistent with findings that young mothers may lack essential resources like parenting guidebooks (Tyas et al., 2017). This lack of knowledge, combined with the rapid

developmental changes that occur in the first three years of life (Papalia & Martorell, 2024), may leave teenage mothers feeling unprepared and less confident in their parenting abilities (Puspasari et al., 2018).

In addition to education level, living arrangements also appear to play a role, as emerging adult mothers in this study were more likely to live with their nuclear family, suggesting a greater ability to care for their children independently. In contrast, teenage mothers often lived with extended families, possibly indicating a need for more support.

Lower parenting competence may contribute to lower parenting satisfaction among teenage mothers compared to emerging adult mothers. Beliefs about one's parenting abilities are a predictor of parenting satisfaction (Shorey et al., 2020). Mothers who feel competent are more likely to meet their children's needs effectively, resulting in positive responses from their children and greater satisfaction with their parenting role.

The lower parenting satisfaction among teenage mothers could also stem from conflicts between fulfilling parental responsibilities and navigating the developmental tasks typical of adolescence (Aiello & Lancaster, 2007). Emerging adult mothers, on the other hand, may experience less conflict because parenting is more aligned with their life stage (Papalia & Martorell, 2024).

Teenage mothers also demonstrated a lower ability to integrate multiple roles compared to emerging adult mothers. This could be attributed to their lack of readiness to handle role changes (Djamilah & Kartikawati, 2014), as research has found that role readiness is a significant factor in marriage readiness (Sari & Sunarti, 2013).

Other factors that may influence differences in parenting competence, satisfaction, and role balance between teenage and emerging adult mothers include maternal sensitivity (Dhayanandhan & Bohr, 2016) and socio-economic status (Bornstein et al., 2003). Teenage mothers are often associated with lower levels of maternal sensitivity and socio-economic status, which were not measured in this study, thus limiting the ability to empirically explain the results.

Although significant differences were observed in parenting competence, satisfaction, and role integration, there was no significant difference

in parenting investment. As defined by D. MacPhee (personal communication, February 11, 2020), parenting investment reflects the importance mothers place on their role, motivating them to dedicate time and energy to learning about parenting. Both teenage and emerging adult mothers reported limited involvement in parenting activities, with 69.77% of teenage mothers and 74.42% of emerging adult mothers indicating they had never attended a parenting seminar. This suggests that both groups may be devoting less time to seeking parenting-related information (MacPhee et al., 1986). Additionally, the fact that most mothers in both groups were stay-at-home mothers (90.70% of teenage mothers and 83.72% of emerging adult mothers) could explain the similarity in parenting investment levels.

This study has both novel aspects and limitations. Notably, it successfully adapted a parenting self-perception measurement tool to Bahasa Indonesia, and the findings contribute to the limited research on parenting self-perception across age groups in Indonesia. However, the study also has limitations. First, the age range for teenage and emerging adult mothers was narrow, with the mean age difference being only two years, potentially resulting in similar characteristics across groups. Additionally, while the children's ages ranged from 1 to 36 months, most were clustered around 12 months, leaving the experiences of mothers with toddlers less explored. Second, differences in educational levels between the groups limited further statistical analysis. Third, most participants were stay-at-home mothers, which may not represent mothers with different employment statuses. Finally, other variables, such as knowledge of childcare and readiness for parenting, were not measured, limiting the comprehensiveness of the findings. Measuring these additional factors could provide a more complete understanding of the differences in parenting self-perception based on maternal age.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study found differences in parenting self-perception, particularly in parenting competence, parenting satisfaction, and integration/role balance, between adolescent mothers and emerging adult mothers. Teenage mothers reported lower levels of parenting competence, satisfaction, and role integration compared to emerging adult mothers. This suggests that adolescent mothers feel less competent as

parents, less satisfied with their parenting role, and less capable of balancing multiple roles than their emerging adult counterparts. However, there was no difference in parenting investment between the two groups, indicating that teenage and emerging adult mothers similarly invest their time and energy in being good parents.

These findings have important implications for Law Number 16 Year 2019. The observed differences in parenting self-perception—especially regarding competence, satisfaction, and role integration—support promoting marriage at a more mature age, such as emerging adulthood. Additionally, the lower levels of parenting competence, satisfaction, and role balance among teenage mothers highlight the need for intervention programs. Such programs could focus on enhancing mothers' parenting knowledge, thereby improving their competence, satisfaction, and ability to integrate various roles. Providing parenting education may also help teenage and emerging adult mothers understand the importance of their role as parents, which is linked to parenting investment.

For future studies, it would be beneficial to ensure that the ages of adolescent and emerging adult mothers, as well as their children, are more evenly represented. A more balanced distribution of mothers' employment status (working versus stay-at-home) and education levels should also be considered. Including more mothers who are students or working may provide valuable insights into parenting self-perception, particularly regarding role integration. Furthermore, future research should incorporate additional variables such as parenting knowledge, readiness for parenthood, maternal sensitivity, and socioeconomic status in relation to the mother's age and parenting self-perception.

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