

Experiences of Mothers in Childbirth: A Basis for Development of Birthing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Materials

Frimadel B. Tacis¹, Maria Digna Bose¹
tacisfrimadelbilledo@gmail.com / 0009-0009-1665-5240

1 – Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology

Publication Date: August 16, 2026

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21964525

Abstract

Maternal mortality remains a significant public health concern globally and in the Philippines despite ongoing efforts to improve maternal healthcare services. While institutional deliveries attended by skilled health professionals are encouraged to reduce maternal and neonatal risks, some women still opt for home births due to economic, geographic, cultural, and personal factors. Understanding mothers' childbirth experiences is essential in developing effective educational interventions that promote safe birthing practices. This study determined the experiences of mothers who delivered at home and in hospitals as the basis for developing Birthing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed involving thirty (30) mothers from Lagangilang, Abra who had experienced home, hospital, or both delivery settings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means. Findings revealed that mothers generally experienced safe and hygienic childbirth practices, received strong family and professional support, and rated the quality of care, emotional support, and overall satisfaction as Excellent (overall mean = 4.44). However, emotional preparedness, labor anxiety, and pain management remained significant concerns. Mothers reported moderate challenges during childbirth (mean = 2.99), particularly physical pain and fear, but demonstrated very high levels of effective coping strategies (mean = 4.37), including family support, positive thinking, and adherence to healthcare providers' guidance. Based on the findings, a Birthing IEC pamphlet was developed focusing on birth preparedness, hygiene practices, danger signs, emotional coping, breastfeeding, pain management, and postnatal care. Expert evaluation rated the IEC material as Highly Acceptable (mean = 3.89). The study concludes that incorporating mothers' actual childbirth experiences into IEC materials can enhance maternal knowledge, preparedness, and safe birthing practices.

Keywords: *maternal health, childbirth experiences, home delivery, hospital delivery, IEC materials*

Introduction

Maternal mortality continues to be a major health challenge worldwide despite advances in healthcare systems and maternal services. Globally, thousands of women still die each year due to preventable pregnancy and childbirth-related complications, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. In the Philippines, maternal mortality remains above the Sustainable Development Goal target, highlighting the need for continued efforts to improve maternal health outcomes and access to quality maternity care.

Institutional delivery attended by skilled healthcare providers is widely recognized as one of the most effective strategies for reducing maternal and neonatal mortality. However, many women continue to deliver at home because of financial limitations, geographical barriers, traditional beliefs, and negative experiences within healthcare facilities. Studies have also shown that emotional support, respectful maternity care, and culturally sensitive services significantly influence mothers' decisions regarding where they give birth.

Although quantitative evidence demonstrates the benefits of institutional deliveries, there is limited research exploring the experiences of mothers who have delivered both at home and in hospitals. Understanding these experiences is essential for designing educational interventions that address mothers' actual needs and concerns. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials have been identified as effective tools for promoting positive maternal health behaviors and increasing awareness regarding safe childbirth practices.

Guided by Donabedian's Model of Quality of Care, the Health Belief Model, the Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change, and the Respectful Maternity Care Framework, this study assessed mothers' prenatal, natal, and postnatal experiences and utilized the findings as the basis for developing a culturally appropriate Birthing IEC pamphlet.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the experiences of mothers who have delivered their children both at home and in the hospital as a basis for developing Birthing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the prenatal, natal, and postnatal experiences during delivery in terms of:
 - a. safety and hygiene practices;
 - b. assistance and support received;
 - c. physical and emotional comfort?
2. What is the level of mothers' experiences during delivery in terms of:
 - a. quality of medical care;
 - b. emotional and psychological support;
 - c. overall satisfaction?
3. What challenges and coping mechanisms did mothers encounter in delivery settings?

4. Based on the findings, what IEC material may be developed to enhance mothers' knowledge and preparedness for safe birthing practices?
5. What experiences can be included in IEC materials?
6. What is the level of validation of the IEC material?

Assumptions of the Study

These assumptions guided the interpretation of mothers' experiences and the development of the IEC material.

1. Mothers answered the survey and interviews truthfully and accurately.
2. The experiences of mothers in home and hospital deliveries reflect actual maternal care practices.
3. The variables measured are valid indicators of mothers' birthing experiences.
4. Reported challenges and coping mechanisms can serve as a basis for IEC development.
5. The IEC material developed is culturally sensitive, relevant, and practical.
6. The validation results reflect the clarity, content, relevance, and usefulness of the IEC material.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design. The research was conducted in the Municipality of Lagangilang, Abra, involving thirty (30) mothers who had experienced childbirth either at home, in hospitals, or in both settings. Participants were selected through purposive sampling.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire covering prenatal, natal, and postnatal experiences in terms of safety and hygiene, assistance and support, physical and emotional comfort, quality of medical care, emotional support, satisfaction, challenges encountered, and coping mechanisms. The instrument was pilot-tested before administration to ensure validity and reliability.

Permission was secured from appropriate local authorities, and ethical standards involving informed consent, confidentiality, voluntariness, and participant welfare were strictly observed. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean scores. Findings served as the basis for developing a Birthing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) pamphlet.

Results and Discussion

The findings revealed that mothers generally experienced positive childbirth outcomes across prenatal, natal, and postnatal stages. In terms of safety and hygiene, most respondents attended regular prenatal check-ups (96.67%), delivered in clean environments, and followed proper hygiene practices. However, gaps were noted in counseling on birth preparedness and postnatal cord-care education.

Regarding assistance and support, mothers reported strong family support (96.67%) and professional guidance from healthcare providers (90.00%). Breastfeeding assistance was universally provided (100%), although emotional reassurance during labor was reported less frequently (66.67%), indicating the need for enhanced emotional support services.

Physical comfort was consistently rated high throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and recovery. Nevertheless, emotional preparedness remained a concern. Many mothers reported experiencing stress and fear during pregnancy (60.00%) and anxiety during labor (53.33%), demonstrating the importance of psychological support and counseling.

The overall level of mothers' childbirth experiences was rated Excellent, with an overall mean score of 4.44. Quality of medical care obtained the highest rating (4.50), followed by emotional and psychological support (4.43) and overall satisfaction (4.40). These findings indicate that healthcare providers generally delivered competent, respectful, and responsive maternal healthcare services.

Mothers reported moderate challenges during childbirth (mean = 2.99), primarily related to labor pain (3.60) and anxiety or fear (3.70). Despite these challenges, coping mechanisms were employed at very high levels (mean = 4.44), including positive thinking, breathing techniques, family support, and adherence to healthcare providers' advice. The effectiveness of these coping strategies was likewise rated very high (4.37), demonstrating their importance in helping mothers manage childbirth-related difficulties.

Based on these findings, a Birthing IEC pamphlet was developed. Key topics included birth preparedness, hygiene practices, danger signs during pregnancy, pain management strategies, emotional coping techniques, breastfeeding guidance, postnatal care, and emergency preparedness. The material integrated mothers' real-life experiences to improve relevance and relatability.

Expert validators assessed the developed IEC material and rated it Highly Acceptable, obtaining an overall mean of 3.89. The highest scores were recorded for content accuracy, clarity, actionability, and overall usefulness, indicating that the pamphlet effectively met maternal educational needs.

Conclusion

The study concluded that mothers generally experienced safe and satisfactory maternal care before, during, and after childbirth. Family support and professional healthcare assistance played important roles in achieving positive childbirth experiences. Although mothers reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality of care received, emotional preparedness, fear, anxiety, and pain management remained important concerns requiring greater attention.

The findings further demonstrated that mothers effectively utilized coping strategies that helped them manage labor-related challenges. Most importantly, the study confirmed the value of using actual maternal experiences in developing educational resources. The Birthing IEC pamphlet developed from the study findings was rated Highly Acceptable and provides evidence-based, culturally sensitive, and practical information that can enhance mothers' preparedness for safe childbirth.

The study recommends strengthening emotional support services, improving counseling programs, promoting birth preparedness education, and disseminating the developed IEC materials in healthcare facilities and communities to support safe motherhood and improve maternal health outcomes.

References

- Ahmed, S., Khan, M., & Rahman, A. (2023). *Determinants of home delivery and maternal health service utilization in low-resource settings*. Journal of Maternal and Child Health, 27(4), 512–521.
- Amit, A. M., Cruz, J. P., & Reyes, L. M. (2022). *Socioeconomic disparities in skilled birth attendance in the Philippines*. Philippine Journal of Health Research and Development, 26(2), 45–58.
- Bohren, M. A., Vogel, J. P., Hunter, E. C., et al. (2019). *The mistreatment of women during childbirth in health facilities globally: A mixed-methods systematic review*. PLoS Medicine, 12(6), e1001847.
- Department of Health. (2023). *Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) Strategy*. Department of Health Philippines.
- Dorairajan, G., Soundararajan, R., & Chinnakali, P. (2020). *Respectful maternity care and women's choice of place of delivery*. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 20(1), 1–9.
- Lungu, E. A., Phiri, M., & Chirwa, E. (2023). *The role of information, education, and communication materials in improving maternal health outcomes*. Global Health Promotion, 30(3), 89–98.
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2023). *Maternal mortality in the Philippines*. PSA.
- United Nations Population Fund Philippines. (2023). *State of Maternal Health in the Philippines*. UNFPA Philippines.
- World Health Organization. (2018). *WHO Recommendations on Respectful Maternity Care*. WHO.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *Maternal Mortality: Evidence and Strategies for Improvement*. WHO.
- World Health Organization. (2023). *Postnatal Care for Mothers and Newborns: Highlights from the 2022 Update*. WHO.