

Abstract

The research problem of the thesis undertakes psychological aspects of carrying an infant on a mother's body using a sling or carrier. The research question states: What are the motives of mothers to carry their infant in carrying aid, according to opinions of mothers who carry their babies?

The theoretical part discusses psychological findings about an early mother-child relationship in terms of contact and emerging bonds (attachment) from a prenatal period, through perinatal period, and up to one year of an infant's age. More attention has been paid to biological, behavioural, anthropological, and especially psychological assumptions for carrying an infant by its mother.

A qualitative research method has been chosen for the empirical part of the thesis. The data has been obtained by means of semi-structured interview conducted with nineteen respondents that have had experiences with carrying an infant. The respondents have been selected by an improbability selection method. The recorded interviews have been transcribed verbatim and analysed using a grounded theory.

Among the most common motives for carrying a child include pleasurable feelings and experiences of mothers; especially feelings of naturalness, tranquillity, security, and freedom. Furthermore, the mothers appreciate the practicality of carrying: contact with the baby while having their hands free, freedom of movement, close communication with the baby and the ability to respond instantly to the needs of the child. They see a great benefit in carrying in a calming effect on the infant. Motives lead to carrying a baby, subsequent experiences with carrying become the motives for further carrying; a cyclical process arises that is repeated as long as carrying benefits the mother or the child. The process takes place again if a mother has another new born baby however, individual motifs for carrying may differ.

Keywords: early mother-child relationship, attachment, carrying an infant, contact