

The influence of breastfeeding technique knowledge and husband's support on breastfeeding self-efficacy among postpartum mothers at Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital, Surabaya

Tanti Mardiana, Astika Gita Ningrum * and Wahyul Anis

Midwifery Study Program, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia.

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Abstract

Background: Breastfeeding self-efficacy (BSE), defined as a mother's confidence in her ability to breastfeed, plays a critical role in achieving exclusive breastfeeding. Factors such as knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and husband's support are hypothesized to influence BSE.

Objective: This study aimed to investigate the association between breastfeeding technique knowledge, husband's support, and BSE among postpartum mothers at Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital, Surabaya.

Methods: This research was conducted using an analytical observational method with a cross-sectional approach. The dependent variable is the Breastfeeding self-efficacy. The independent variables are breastfeeding technique knowledge and husband's support. The population comprised all postpartum mothers receiving care in the postnatal care unit, with a sample of 54 respondents selected via simple random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using the Chi-square test ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Results: The Chi-square test revealed significant associations between BSE and both breastfeeding technique knowledge ($p = 0.000$) and husband's support ($p = 0.006$).

Conclusion: Knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and husband's support were significantly associated with higher breastfeeding self-efficacy among postpartum mothers at Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital, Surabaya. Future research should explore broader population groups and adopt longitudinal designs to better understand the long-term impact of educational and support-based interventions on breastfeeding outcomes.

Keywords: Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy; Exclusive Breastfeeding; Maternal Health; Husband's Support; Breastfeeding Knowledge

1. Introduction

Breastfeeding is a natural and essential method of providing optimal nutrition to newborns. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding alongside appropriate complementary foods up to two years or beyond. Breast milk contains vital components that support optimal brain development, immune function, and overall infant growth (Tumiar et al., 2024).

* Corresponding author: Astika Gita Ningrum.

Despite these benefits, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding remains low. WHO reported in 2023 that only 38% of infants globally were exclusively breastfed, far below the global target of 50% by 2025. In Indonesia, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding declined from 69.7% in 2021 to 67.96% in 2022. The 2023 Indonesia Health Survey found that only 55.5% of infants aged 0–6 months received exclusive breastfeeding. A similar trend is observed in East Java, with only 72.68% coverage, falling short of the 80% target. This shortfall contributes to malnutrition among children under two years, undermining Indonesia's human resource development (Anggraeni et al., 2021).

Low exclusive breastfeeding rates may be due to both modifiable and non-modifiable factors. While socioeconomic status is considered non-modifiable, modifiable factors include maternal confidence in breastfeeding, known as breastfeeding self-efficacy (Royaningsih, 2018). BSE refers to a mother's belief in her ability to breastfeed successfully, including her emotional resilience in overcoming breastfeeding challenges (Rahayu, 2018).

This confidence may be shaped by various factors, including the mother's knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and the support she receives from her husband. A lack of understanding regarding proper breastfeeding practices and insufficient emotional or practical support from close family, especially the spouse, may reduce maternal confidence and lead to early cessation of breastfeeding (Martina, 2020).

A preliminary study conducted between November 26 and December 6, 2024, at the postnatal care unit of Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital, revealed that while 79% of 14 postpartum mothers had high BSE, the influencing factors were not yet clearly understood. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the influence of breastfeeding technique knowledge and husband's support on breastfeeding self-efficacy among postpartum mothers.

2. Method

This study employed a correlational analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. The population included all postpartum mothers receiving care at the postnatal care unit of Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital in Surabaya. A sample of 54 participants was selected using simple random sampling.

The independent variables were knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and husband's support. The dependent variable was breastfeeding self-efficacy. Data collection instruments included a breastfeeding technique knowledge questionnaire, a husband's support questionnaire, and the Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy Short Form (BSE-SF) questionnaire.

Data analysis included univariate and bivariate methods. Descriptive statistics were used for univariate analysis, while Chi-square tests were applied for bivariate analysis, with a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$. The study was conducted from February to March 2025. This study received ethical clearance from Research Ethics Committee dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital with number 5/EC/KEP/2025.

3. Result

3.1. Univariate Analysis

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics

Characteristics		Category	f	%
Knowledge of Breastfeeding Techniques	Low		19	35.2
	High		35	64.8
		Total	54	100
Husband's support	Not Supportive		16	29.6
	Supportive		38	70.4
		Total	54	100

Most respondents (64.8%) had high knowledge of breastfeeding techniques, and a majority (70.4%) received husband's support.

3.2. Bivariate Analysis

Table 2 Analysis of Association Between Knowledge of Breastfeeding Techniques, and Husband's support with Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy

Characteristics	Category	Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy		Total f (%)	p-value
		High f (%)	Low f (%)		
Knowledge of Breastfeeding Techniques	Low	16 (29.6)	3 (5.6)	19 (35.2)	0.000
	High	9 (16.7)	26 (48.1)	35 (64.8)	
	Total	25 (46.3)	29 (53.7)	54 (100)	
Husband's support	Not Supportive	12 (22.2)	4 (7.4)	16 (29.6)	0.006
	Supportive	13 (24.1)	25 (46.3)	38 (70.4)	
	Total	25 (46.3)	29 (53.7)	54 (100)	

The Chi-square test indicated a significant association between knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and BSE ($p = 0.000$), as well as between husband's support and BSE ($p = 0.006$).

4. Discussion

4.1. Association Between Knowledge of Breastfeeding Techniques and Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy

There is a significant association between knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and breastfeeding self-efficacy. This finding is consistent with the study by Abeng and Wahyuni (2020), which demonstrated that maternal knowledge positively correlates with breastfeeding self-efficacy. Their research suggests that adequate knowledge helps dispel misconceptions about breastfeeding, thereby enhancing maternal confidence. Similarly, Nurul et al. (2020) reported that mothers with greater knowledge tend to exhibit higher levels of BSE. Knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping beliefs, cognitive processes, and maternal attitudes.

Knowledge results from the stimulation of information, which may come from formal or informal education, conversations, reading, listening to the radio, watching television, or personal life experiences, such as previous breastfeeding experiences. A mother's limited knowledge of proper breastfeeding techniques can hinder successful breastfeeding. Often, maternal knowledge remains at a superficial level, lacking the depth and practical skills needed for implementation. Broader knowledge and experience, whether personal or observed in peers, neighbors, or family, can inspire mothers to breastfeed. Early experiences and education influence a woman's attitude toward breastfeeding later in life. Women who grew up in environments where breastfeeding was common are likely to have positive views toward it (Pramita, 2020).

The association between maternal knowledge and BSE is linked to the transformative role of knowledge in shaping perceptions and attitudes. Cognitive aspects are critical to behavioral formation. Breastfeeding behavior stems from increased motivation that arises with better knowledge. When motivated, mothers are more confident and self-assured in breastfeeding (Khaerawati, 2020). Mothers with strong knowledge also tend to understand how to manage breastfeeding challenges (Rahayu, 2018).

According to the researchers, the significant relationship between knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and BSE among postpartum mothers in the postnatal unit of Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital exists because well-informed mothers better understand how to breastfeed properly and cope with challenges. When mothers are aware of breastfeeding's benefits for infant growth and development and possess appropriate technique knowledge, breastfeeding becomes smoother, thereby increasing maternal confidence.

4.2. Association Between Husband's support and Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy

There is a significant relationship between husband's support and breastfeeding self-efficacy. These findings are consistent with Yuris et al. (2024), who found that husband's support in the form of knowledge sharing, assistance, appreciation, presence, and responsiveness boosts maternal comfort and confidence in breastfeeding. Such support also facilitates smoother milk production. Similarly, Rokmah et al. (2021) concluded that husband's support significantly influences maternal self-efficacy during pregnancy and breastfeeding. The greater the husband's support, the higher the mother's breastfeeding self-efficacy.

Husband's support involves providing emotional and motivational assistance throughout the breastfeeding process. Such involvement is crucial as support from someone emotionally close creates a comforting environment. Spousal support is a key factor in shaping mothers' exclusive breastfeeding behavior. This support may take the form of emotional, informational, or practical help, such as changing diapers (Oktalina et al., 2016). While many believe breastfeeding success relies solely on the mother, spousal support plays a critical role. Some women avoid breastfeeding due to fears of altered breast shape; thus, moral encouragement from husbands—who are seen as influential figures—is essential in helping mothers commit to breastfeeding (Khofiyah, 2019).

The relationship between husband's support and BSE is linked to the husband's role in fostering maternal comfort and confidence during breastfeeding. Husbands who offer attention, assist with household chores, ensure adequate maternal nutrition, and show appreciation help alleviate fatigue and promote confidence. Such moral and practical support reinforces the mother's decision to exclusively breastfeed. Feeling supported, mothers are more likely to persevere through breastfeeding challenges (Rokmah et al., 2021). Moreover, husband's support enhances maternal comfort and sense of security, which positively affects milk production (Royaningsih, 2018).

According to the researchers, the observed relationship between husband's support and BSE among postpartum mothers in the postnatal unit of Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital is due to the comfort and confidence generated by spousal support. When husbands assist with infant care and household tasks, maternal stress is reduced, allowing the mother to focus on breastfeeding. This support also helps mothers navigate breastfeeding difficulties more effectively.

5. Conclusion

This study concluded that there is a significant association between knowledge of breastfeeding techniques and husband's support with breastfeeding self-efficacy among postpartum mothers in the postnatal care unit of Dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital, Surabaya. Mothers who possess adequate knowledge about breastfeeding techniques and receive supportive involvement from their husbands are more likely to have higher confidence in their ability to breastfeed. Future research should consider conducting multi-center studies with larger sample sizes and longitudinal designs to assess the long-term impact of maternal education and husband involvement on exclusive breastfeeding practices and breastfeeding self-efficacy.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

There was no conflict of interest.

Statement of ethical approval

Ethical clearance was approved by the Ethics Committee of Research Ethics Committee dr. Ramelan Naval Central Hospital with number 5/EC/KEP/2025, on January 30, 2025.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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