

Breastfeeding self efficacy increases the success of exclusive breastfeeding in postpartum mothers with cesarean section delivery

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Abstract

Introduction: Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life can decrease infant mortality by 13% and serves as a technique for enhancing nutritional status and baby survival. The inability to initiate exclusive breastfeeding during the early postpartum phase sometimes poses challenges for mothers who have undergone a cesarean section. High self-efficacy will enhance maternal preparedness for exclusive breastfeeding. **Methods:** This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional methodology. The method used for sample technique was total sampling. The sample had 44 respondents. The method of statistical test was Spearman's correlation. **Results:** The analysis revealed a p-value of 0.041 (<0.05) for both variables, signifying a correlation and thus accepting the hypothesis. The Spearman's correlation coefficient was 0.310, signifying insufficient strength positive relationship. **Conclusion:** Higher breastfeeding self-efficacy correlates with a higher success rate of exclusive breastfeeding. Mothers who breastfeed and possess high self-efficacy are more likely to achieve exclusive breastfeeding, leading to the feeling of comfort, calm, and relaxation throughout the process, which eventually improves milk production.

Keywords: breastfeeding self-efficacy; exclusive breastfeeding; postpartum mothers; the success of breastfeeding,

1. Introduction

Breastfeeding is a natural behavior from a mother to her baby. Breastfeeding has been shown to protect babies from disease attacks and can improve the health condition of the mother. Breastfeeding is also able to be the glue of love between mother and child (Hasriyana, 2021). Breast milk (AS) is an ideal nutrient for babies that is safe, clean, and contains antibodies. These antibodies are useful for protecting babies from various diseases in childhood (WHO, 2023). WHO and UNICEF recommend that babies be born immediately, within the first hour, to initiate early breastfeeding (IMD), be given exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months of birth, and continue breastfeeding until the baby is 2 years old and added with complementary foods (WHO, 2023).

Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction states that the target of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia is 80% by 2024. However, the prevalence of breastfeeding in Indonesia is still relatively low, this is reinforced by data from Basic Health Research (RISKESDAS) in 2021 which stated that only 52.5% of babies aged less than six months received exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia or half of 2.3 million babies. Failure to exclusively breastfeed at the beginning of the postpartum period is often a problem for mothers undergoing SC delivery. Previous studies have reported that mothers with SC labor experience milk coming out more slowly than mothers with vaginal delivery. A study conducted by Putri et al (2024) in Cilandak District showed that 54.5% of post-SC mothers did not succeed in providing exclusive breastfeeding to their babies. In fact, a mother who has given birth is obliged to give exclusive breast milk to the baby starting from the time the baby is born until the age of 6 months. This must be done to ensure the fulfillment of the baby's needs to support the growth and development of the baby by providing exclusive breastfeeding. Breast milk is also the right of every person born into the world. Complete breast milk content will be free if it is not applied in the breastfeeding process. Its wisdom and recommendations are not only listed in government regulations but are clearly unraveled in the Qur'an (Hasriyana, 2021).

The low coverage of exclusive breastfeeding is certainly inseparable from several aspects. One of them is the belief in breastfeeding or called Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy (BSE). Self-efficacy is a person's belief in taking a certain picture to achieve the expected or desired results. The belief in breastfeeding or breastfeeding self-efficacy can be possessed by a mother starting from pregnancy so that the mother can prepare herself to give exclusive breastfeeding (Riska, 2024).

Breastfeeding self-efficacy is a determining factor for breastfeeding success which can be modified

through appropriate interventions such as education and support. The role of the mother's psychological aspect determines the success of breastfeeding. Mothers who do not have confidence in being able to produce breast milk result in reduced milk production. Stress, worry, and unhappiness of the mother in the breastfeeding period play a role in the unsuccess in exclusive breastfeeding. Based on a preliminary study that has been carried out in the An Nur ward of PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul in January, there are around 4-5 babies who are being treated with indications of icteric babies and do not want to breastfeed. The majority of mothers of sick babies complain that they do not have enough milk production. This is because the baby's mother does not have confidence in her breast milk production or commonly known as BSE so that it affects the success of the mother in giving exclusive breast milk to her baby. From this case, it can be concluded that one of the impacts if the mother is not confident, the success rate of exclusive breastfeeding decreases, making the baby sick (Titaley et al., 2021).

Therefore, the researcher will conduct a study on breastfeeding self-efficacy with the success of exclusive breastfeeding in postpartum mothers with SC childbirth seen from related phenomena. Data was obtained from the An Nisa Ward of Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul in December – February the number of mothers gave birth to approximately 40 by cesarean section. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Breastfeeding Self Efficacy Increases the Success of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Postpartum Mothers with Cesarean Section Delivery".

2. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with the type of descriptive research correlation and cross sectional design. The sampling technique in this study is *total sampling*. The sample in this study was postpartum mothers with SC delivery at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul which amounted to 44 patients from May to June. The data collection method used an instrument in the form of a *Breastfeeding Efficacy Scale-Short Form (BSES-SF)* questionnaire filled out by patients. Meanwhile, data collection on the success of exclusive breastfeeding was carried out through observation and assessment using *the Latch, Audible Swallowing, Type of Nipple, Comfort, and Hold (LATCH)* instruments when the mother was breastfeeding her baby. Univariate analysis was used to describe the characteristics of respondents. Bivariate analysis using *the Spearman Correlation test* to determine the relationship between the variable of *Breastfeeding Self Efficacy* and the success of exclusive breastfeeding in postpartum mothers with SC delivery at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul. This research has received approval from the Research Ethics Commission of PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul with No.068/EC. KEPK/C/04.25.\

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Table 1. Distribution of respondent characteristics (n=44)

Characteristics of Adolescents	Frequency	%
Age		
23 – 35 years old	39	88,6
36 – 39 years old	5	11,3
Education		
JUNIOR	3	6,8
SMA	23	52,3
D3	8	18,2
S1	10	22,7
Work		
Work	15	34,1
Housewives	29	65,9
Parity Status		
Primipara	13	29,5
Multipara	31	70,5

Characteristics of Adolescents	Frequency	%
SC History		
Once	17	38,6
More than once	27	61,4

Based on the data, it was found that the majority of respondents were aged 23-35, which is included in the healthy reproductive age group. Most mothers have a final education, namely high school (52.3%) and are not working or housewives (65.9%). A total of 13 mothers were mothers who gave birth to live babies for the first time (29.5%), while 31 mothers already had more than one birth experience (70.5%). Furthermore, most mothers had given birth by cesarean section more than once (61.4%).

Table 2. Distribution of *breastfeeding frequency self efficacy* of respondents (n=44)

Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0
Keep	3	6,8
Tall	41	93,2

Table 2 shows that 41 respondents had high *Breastfeeding Self Efficacy* (93.2%), while 3 respondents had moderate *Breastfeeding Self Efficacy* (6.8%). The researcher also looked at respondents' answers to each statement on the BSES-SF instrument consisting of 15 questions with 11 favorable questions and 4 unfavorable questions. The following is the distribution of the percentage of respondents' answers based on question items.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of BSES-SF instruments (n=15)

Question	STY		TY		KY		Y		SY	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I believe that every mother can breastfeed her baby.	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	18,2	36	81,8
I am convinced that mothers who have SC surgery will not be able to breastfeed well*	31	70,5	10	22,7	3	6,8	0	0	0	0
I believe that breast milk is the best food that Allah has given for babies	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	9,1	40	90,9
I can make sure that the baby is perfectly attached for as long as breastfeeding	0	0	0	0	1	2,3	17	38,6	26	59,1
Despite SC surgery I can position well when breastfeeding.	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	19	5	25
I'm sure my surgical wounds will hurt even more when I'm breastfeeding*	29	65,9	13	29,5	2	4,5	0	0	0	0
In any situation, I can still breastfeed (in a family place or in a crowd/mall)	0	0	0	0	1	2,3	17	38,6	26	59,1
I believe that breastfeeding is a source of reward from Allah	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11,4	39	88,6
SC surgery will cause my breast milk production to be less*	29	65,9	13	29,5	2	4,5	0	0	0	0
I can breastfeed my baby anytime the baby wants	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	34,1	29	65,9
Breastfeeding a baby is a form of gratitude for Allah's blessings	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	13,6	38	86,4
I can always finish breastfeeding on one breast before moving on to	0	0	0	0	3	6,8	23	52,3	18	40,9

the other											
Breastfeeding is female nature, although SC surgery I am confident I can breastfeed my baby well	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	15,9	37	84,1	
I believe I can still breastfeed well when the baby is crying	0	0	0	0	1	2,3	20	45,4	23	52,3	

Information:

STY	: Very Unsure
TY	: Not Sure
KY	: Less Confident
Y	: Believe
SY	: Very Confident

Based on the results of the analysis in Table 3, the question with the highest score is found in the item of the mother's belief that breast milk is the best food that God has given to the baby. There are 40 mothers who feel very confident and confident about this. Furthermore, there were mothers who felt less confident about their ability to breastfeed properly when the baby was crying, their ability to breastfeed in all conditions, and the belief that the pain of SC surgery was a barrier to breastfeeding as many as one respondent (2.3%).

Table 4. Distribution of the frequency of successful exclusive breastfeeding of respondents (n=44)

Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0
Keep	9	20,5
Tall	35	79,5

Table 4 shows that as many as 35 postpartum mothers have successful breastfeeding in the high category (79.5%). Meanwhile, 9 others are in the medium category (20.5%). The researcher also distributed the percentage of maternal behavioral observations from the LATCH instrument item. The LATCH instrument consists of 5 observation items. The following is the distribution of the percentage of respondents based on observation items in the instrument.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of LATCH instruments (n=44)

Question	0		1		2	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Latch-on	0	0	31	70,5	13	29,5
Audible swallowing	0	0	9	20,5	35	79,5
Type of nipple	0	0	1	2,3	43	97,7
Comfort	0	0	0	0	44	100
Hold	0	0	33	75,0	11	25,0

Based on the results of the distribution of each instrument item in Table 5, the items with the highest total score are found in the comfort indicator with the criterion of no complaints about the mother's nipples (100%). Then, the item with the lowest total score was found in the infant's position indicator with the criteria of still needing help in breastfeeding (75%).

Table 6. Relationship between BSE and breastfeeding success (n=44)

BSE	Breastfeeding Success						r	P-value
	Low		Keep		Tall			
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,310	0,041
Keep	0	0	2	4,5	1	2,3		
Tall	0	0	7	15,9	34	77,3		
Total	0	0	9	20,5	35	79,5		

The results of data analysis showed that postpartum mothers with high self-efficacy experienced high (77.3%) and moderate (15.9%) breastfeeding success rates. There was a postpartum mother with moderate self-efficacy who experienced a high breastfeeding success rate (2.3%). Then, two postpartum mothers with moderate self-efficacy had a moderate breastfeeding success rate (4.5%). From the results of the analysis, a value of $p=0.041$ ($p<0.05$) was obtained, which showed that the correlation between BSE score and breastfeeding success was very significant. Based on the data above, the Spearman correlation shows a value of 0.310 which indicates a low relationship between the two variables. The direction of the relationship between the two positive variables, namely the higher the breastfeeding self-efficacy that the mother has, the higher the success rate in exclusive breastfeeding.

3.2. Discussion

The variables of breastfeeding success consist of 5 indicators that describe the attachment of mother and baby, swallowing sound when the baby is breastfeeding, the type of mother's nipple, the comfort of the mother, and the baby's position. Based on the indicators assessed on the respondents, the baby's position is an indicator that has a dominance of response with a score of 1 or needs a little help. Overall, mothers have successfully provided exclusive breastfeeding but still need help to improve their breastfeeding skills appropriately. The prevalence of successful breastfeeding of postpartum mothers in PKU Muhammadiyah Bantul is in the high category (79.5%). In line with the research conducted by Suja et al. (2023), it was stated that 34 (68%) mothers who gave exclusive breastfeeding in this study were 34 people (68%). The success of high exclusive breastfeeding in this study can be influenced by various factors, including age, education, occupation, parity status, and SC history.

Age characteristics were dominated by mothers aged 23 – 35 (88.6%). In line with the research of Muchtar et al. (2021) on maternal self-efficacy on breastfeeding effectiveness, respondents aged 20-35 years were more compared to <20 years old and >35 years old. Pregnant women with an age range of 20-35 years are considered to be in a relatively safe period to undergo the process of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum period (Ratnaningtyas & Indrawati, 2023). Hormone production in pregnant women with the age of >35 years is relatively reduced so that it can result in a decrease in the lactation process. Meanwhile, pregnant women at the age of <20 years are not ready for their physical, psychological, and social development so that it can disrupt the psychological balance that affects breast milk production (Anggraeni & Rachmawati, 2022).

Based on educational characteristics, it is known that most mothers have completed their last education, namely high school (52.3%). This research is in accordance with the research of Ampu (2018) at the Neomuti health center which states that most of the mothers who succeed in breastfeeding are exclusively educated (73.5%). Based on work, data was obtained that most mothers did not work or were housewives (65.9%). Then, most housewives managed to provide exclusive breastfeeding. These results are in line with research that shows that most of the mothers who successfully breastfeed are non-working mothers (66.5%). Juwariyah - Hamidah (2024)

The work that a mother does can have an impact on the knowledge and opportunities she has to breastfeed. (Rahmawati & Revelation, 2020) Mothers who do not work have a lot of time to receive and search for breastfeeding information so that knowledge increases, mothers spend more time with their babies for a longer period of time according to the baby's needs so that it can be ensured that the success of breastfeeding is higher (Rismawati et al., 2023). However, there were six working mothers with a moderate success rate (66.7%) and 12 working mothers with a high success rate (34.2%) in this study. This can be attributed to the support of co-workers and the availability of facilities at work (Dewi & Nurjanah, 2022) which have been shown to affect the success of breastfeeding for working mothers. (Rodianto & Anshari., 2022)

The results of the study based on parity status showed that the average parity age of multipara, namely having given birth to two or more children with a distribution of 70.5% or 31 respondents. Parity refers to the number of births a mother has experienced. Mothers who have given birth more than once have a greater potential to give exclusive breastfeeding compared to mothers who have just had their first birth (Rahmawati & Revelation, 2020). In line with Khusniyati's (2024) research which said that most respondents were multipara 71%, where mothers with multipara parity will have a better breastfeeding experience when compared to primipara parity mothers. However, there were three multipara mothers who had a moderate success rate (33.3%) in this study. This can be attributed to the

mother's breastfeeding experience. Mothers with multipara parity who have a history of failure to provide exclusive breastfeeding have the potential to experience unsuccessful exclusive breastfeeding (Novembriany, 2022). A positive breastfeeding experience tends to strengthen the mother's confidence in the next breastfeeding process, and vice versa.

The majority of postpartum mothers with SC delivery at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul have a high level of *Breastfeeding Self Efficacy* (93.2%). This study is in line with the study results that mothers who have Khusniyati (2025) *high Breastfeeding Self-efficacy* (BSE) (71%). The results of this research analysis showed that there were 40 mothers who felt very confident and convinced that breast milk was the best food that God gave for babies. However, there are mothers who still feel unsure of their ability to breastfeed properly when the baby is crying, their ability to breastfeed in all conditions, and the belief that the pain of SC surgery is a barrier to breastfeeding as many as one respondent per item (2.3%). Mother's self-confidence is an important factor for a mother to continue breastfeeding her baby. Positive perceptions of the mother's self-esteem during breastfeeding and the mother's self-confidence determine the sustainability of breastfeeding. (Ernawati Et Al., 2020)

The variables of self-efficacy of breastfeeding and the success of exclusive breastfeeding in this study were tested for correlation using Spearman's Correlation. The test results of the two variables obtained a p value of 0.041 (<0.05) which indicates that the two variables are related so that the hypothesis is accepted. The Spearman's Correlation coefficient shows a value of 0.310 which means that the variable is positively correlated with low strength. The higher the self-efficacy of breastfeeding, the higher the level of success of mothers in providing exclusive breastfeeding. This study is in line with Rahayu (2018) found that the significance value of $p = 0.036 (< 0.05)$ can be interpreted as having a significant relationship between *breastfeeding self efficacy* and the success of exclusive breastfeeding in postpartum mothers. In line with research conducted by showed that maternal self-efficacy significantly affects maternal effectiveness in breastfeeding. This can increase the success of mothers in giving exclusive breastfeeding. Mother's self-confidence is an important factor for a mother to continue breastfeeding her baby. Positive perceptions of the mother's self-esteem during breastfeeding and the mother's self-confidence determine the sustainability of breastfeeding. Other studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between (Muchtar) Et Al., 2021) Bahriah & Kurniati (2024) *family support, breastfeeding self-efficacy* and the success of exclusive breastfeeding.

The results of the analysis also showed that mothers with *high breastfeeding self efficacy* experienced a success rate of exclusive breastfeeding mostly in the high category (77.3%). In line with the research by those who said that the results of the study were found that mothers who had a high BSE of 71%, most of 68.2% had smooth milk production which was also good. Meanwhile, mothers who have BSE have enough (29%) and their milk production is also sufficient (77.8%) but there are also those who have good milk production (22.8%). Another study is from those that state that there is a relationship between maternal confidence and exclusive breastfeeding. Based on research that has been conducted, mother's confidence while breastfeeding is related to confidence in mother's ability while breastfeeding. This self-confidence is able to control environmental factors and demands, both physical and psychological, in achieving the set targets and goals, including exclusive breastfeeding. Khusniyati (2025) (Jamaludin Et Al., 2022)

The results of the study showed a relationship between (Rahmadani & Sutrisna, 2022) *Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy* and exclusive breastfeeding. This study stated that the low confidence of breastfeeding mothers is due to several factors that affect including work factors that are used as the reason why mothers choose not to breastfeed exclusively. The taking of all decisions about the intake to be given to the baby depends on the mother. The role of mothers is very important in decision-making about exclusive breastfeeding. The results of the study showed a significant relationship between Azim Et Al. (2021) *breastfeeding self efficacy* and the success of exclusive breastfeeding in postpartum mothers. This shows that postpartum mothers who have high confidence are able to give exclusive breast milk to their babies and vice versa if mothers with low confidence tend to be unable to provide exclusive breast milk to their babies.

However, there were 7 mothers with high efficacy who experienced a moderate breastfeeding success rate (15.9%) and 1 mother with moderate efficacy who experienced a high breastfeeding success rate (2.3%) in this study. Although self-confidence in breastfeeding is high, breastfeeding success rates can remain moderate or even low. Conversely, successful breastfeeding can also occur even if the level

of self-efficacy is not optimal. This can be influenced by various other factors. Self-efficacy is just one aspect of many factors that play a role in the success of breastfeeding, especially the support factor from husband and family. Studies show that one of the most important factors influencing the onset of lactation is the support of breastfeeding by the family during the early postpartum period. Family members with the right knowledge and experience in breastfeeding can play an efficient supportive role in the mother's efforts to breastfeed (Gharaei et al., 2020). Therefore, it is very important to be able to form an Exclusive Breastfeeding Support Group (KP-ASI) in each posyandu work area so that every breastfeeding mother gets full support from the surrounding community. In addition, the success rate of moderate breastfeeding in mothers with high self-efficacy in this study can be caused by maternal characteristics. Three out of nine mothers with moderate success rates were multipara mothers and six out of nine mothers were mothers with a history of SC (Asih, 2022).

This study shows that the higher the level of *breastfeeding self efficacy*, the higher the success rate of breastfeeding. Most postpartum mothers with SC delivery at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul have success in breastfeeding in the high (79.5%) and medium (20.5%) categories. Breast milk is the first intake for babies, there is mineral content that babies need to grow and develop during the first six months (Hamid Et Al. , 2020). However, there are still mothers who feel insecure and anxious about their ability to breastfeed properly when the baby is crying, their ability to breastfeed in all conditions, and the belief that the pain of SC surgery is a barrier to breastfeeding as many as one respondent (2.3%). Mothers with moderate to low breastfeeding self-efficacy may understand the importance of breastfeeding, but a lack of confidence and comfort can cause them to stop breastfeeding efforts when faced with difficulties and switch to formula.

It is supported by research that states that the average (Susilawati, 2023) *breastfeeding self efficacy* in *post-caesarean section* mothers is 46.80 and is included in the low category. Mothers who undergo cesarean delivery are more likely to experience postoperative pain and need help with daily activities, which can lower confidence to breastfeed. The traumatic labor process can trigger stress, anxiety, depression, and disrupt the bond between mother and baby, affecting the mother's ability to give breast milk. Conversely, a positive childbirth experience supports emotional stability, facilitates adaptation to maternal roles, and increases breast milk production (Abuidhail Et al., 2019).

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted on "The Relationship *between Breastfeeding Self Efficacy* and the Success of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Postpartum Mothers with SC Delivery at PKU Muhammadiyah Bantul Hospital", it can be concluded that as many as 35 postpartum mothers with high self-efficacy have a high breastfeeding success rate (79.5%). However, there were 9 mothers with high efficacy who had a moderate breastfeeding success rate (20.5%). The results of the study showed that there was a relationship between *Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy* and the success of breastfeeding in postpartum mothers with SC delivery at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Bantul. *Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy* and the success of breastfeeding owned by mothers are in the high category. The correlation of the two variables is positive with a low degree of tightness. The higher the self-efficacy of breastfeeding, the higher the success rate in exclusive breastfeeding. Breastfeeding mothers with high confidence will succeed in exclusive breastfeeding, so that in breastfeeding mothers feel comfortable, calm and relaxed so that the milk production released also becomes more, so that *breast feeding self efficacy* has an important role for breastfeeding mothers.

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