

Mother's psychology and exclusive breastfeeding success: Scoping review

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ABSTRACT

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) definition in 2011, exclusive breastfeeding means providing only breast milk without any other food or drink to the baby from birth to six months of age, except for medications and vitamins. This does not imply that breastfeeding should stop after the six-month period. Instead, breastfeeding should continue until the child reaches two years of age. Breast milk is recognized as the initial, primary, and best food for infants, based on scientific principles. This study aims to identify the relationship between the psychological state of breastfeeding mothers and the success rate of exclusive breastfeeding. This study employs a scoping review method involving the search, screening, and synthesis of literature pertinent to the research topic. The steps involve formulating the research question, setting inclusion and exclusion criteria, conducting literature searches, and selecting relevant literature, data extraction, and qualitative analysis. Psychological factors in mothers, such as high breastfeeding self-efficacy, and the absence of postpartum depression and anxiety, are significantly linked to the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Psychological interventions are needed to support the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Positive psychological factors in mothers, including high breastfeeding self-efficacy and the absence of postpartum depression and anxiety, play a crucial role in supporting the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Interventions to improve the psychological condition of breastfeeding mothers should be implemented to increase the rates of exclusive breastfeeding. Further research is needed to explore the psychological factors influencing the success of exclusive breastfeeding.

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INTRODUCTION

Exclusive breastfeeding plays a very important role in the health of infants and mothers. Various studies have been conducted to understand the factors that influence exclusive breastfeeding,

including psychological, social, and educational aspects of mothers. Exclusive breastfeeding not only provides optimal nutrition for infants, but also strengthens the emotional bond between mother and child and provides protection against various diseases. However, the level of exclusive breastfeeding still often does not reach the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), especially in several regions with various challenges.

Existing research indicates that factors such as the promotion of formula milk, the psychological condition of the mother, knowledge about breastfeeding, and social and educational support greatly influence the success of providing exclusive breastfeeding. Analysis of these studies provides deep insight into the various factors that can be intervened to increase the level of exclusive breastfeeding. The success of exclusive breastfeeding is one of the key factors in supporting the health of mothers and infants. Exclusive breastfeeding provides perfect nutrition and provides protection against various diseases in infants during the first six months of life. In addition to physical health benefits, breastfeeding also contributes to the psychological and emotional development of infants (Dukuzumuremyi et al., 2020).

However, the success of exclusive breastfeeding is not always easy to achieve. One of the main factors that influences this success is the psychological condition of the breastfeeding mother. Various studies have shown that the psychological condition of the mother, such as stress levels, anxiety, and depression, can have a significant impact on the mother's ability to breastfeed exclusively. Good psychological conditions in breastfeeding mothers not only increase breast milk production but also strengthen the emotional bond between mother and baby, which in turn increases the success of exclusive breastfeeding (Dewi, 2023).

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of psychological support for breastfeeding mothers to achieve the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Research shows that mothers who have stable psychological conditions and strong social support are more likely to succeed in providing exclusive breastfeeding than mothers who experience psychological stress or lack of social support. Therefore, interventions that focus on improving maternal mental health and providing psychological support can be an effective strategy to increase exclusive breastfeeding. (Dukuzumuremyi et al., 2020). Research shows that mothers who experience depression or anxiety are more likely to stop breastfeeding early than mothers with good mental health. A healthy mental condition contributes to increasing the optimal duration of breastfeeding (Assriyah et al., 2020). This study aims to understand the relationship between the psychological condition of breastfeeding mothers and the success of exclusive breastfeeding. By understanding the interaction and potential between these two approaches, it is hoped that it can provide a more comprehensive and evidence-based reference for more effective and safe management of dysmenorrhea pain (Tsai et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used the scoping review method, which involves a series of systematic steps to collect, screen, and synthesize literature relevant to the research topic (Pool et al., 2024). The first step involves formulating a clear research question and detailing inclusion and exclusion criteria to guide the literature search process. The literature was searched thoroughly through academic databases, journals, and other relevant sources. Once the literature was collected, selection was carried out using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data from selected articles were then extracted and analyzed qualitatively using an interpretive approach. The analysis process included identifying key themes, patterns, and relationships between concepts that emerged from the reviewed literature. This method allows for comprehensive analysis and answers specific questions by collecting and summarizing various related research sources. When defining the research question, the author used the mnemonic Population, Exposure, and Outcome (PEO), which is shown in Table 1 (Davies, 2024). The research question is how is the relationship between the psychology of breastfeeding mothers and the success of exclusive breastfeeding.

Table 1. PEO mnemonic selection

Population	Exposure	Outcome
Breastfeeding mothers	Psychological Conditions	Success of Exclusive Breastfeeding

Source: Author Discussion, 2024

The author narrows the scope by setting inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature to be used (Table 2). The purpose of setting these criteria is so that the study review can be more focused and in accordance with the research topic. The keywords used are Psychological, Breastfeeding Mothers, Success, Exclusive Breastfeeding.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Research articles published in 2020-2024	books, blogs
Articles in Indonesian and English	
Articles have full text	Paid full text access

Source: Author Discussion, 2024

The author screened the literature obtained from various article search engines using previously determined keywords. A total of 1,443 articles were obtained, with details from each search engine as follows: Pubmed 112 articles, Science Direct 89 articles, Google Scholar 1121 articles, and Worldcat 121 articles. The author used the PRISMA guide in compiling this scoping review. In addition, the author includes a PRISMA diagram showing the number of literatures found, the screening process, literature that met the criteria, and which were finally included in the overall review (Figure 1).

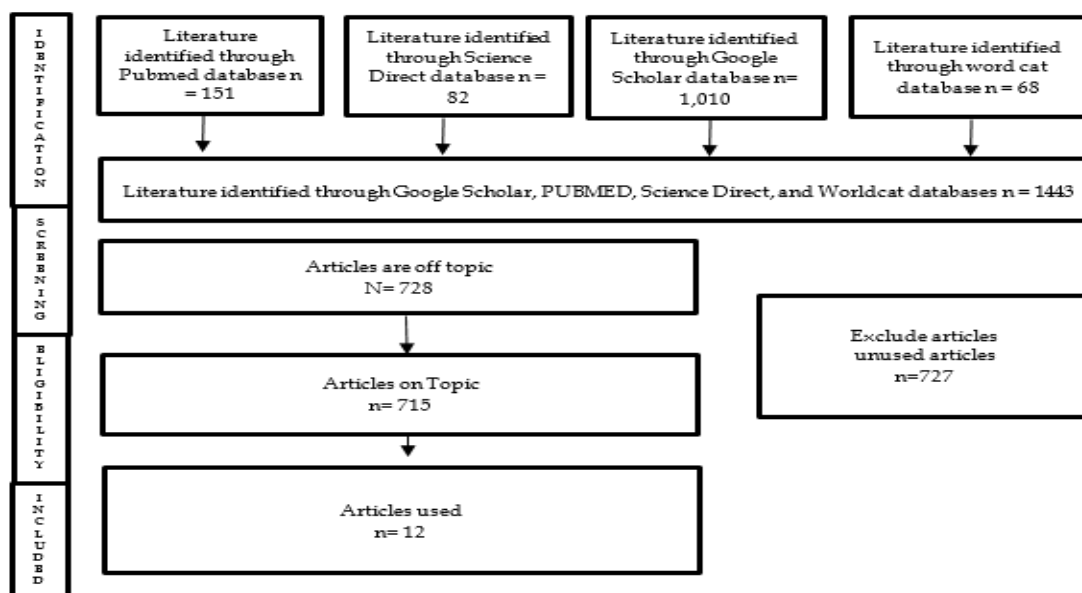


Figure 1. Prism

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

The data synthesis process in this study involved collecting and summarizing articles that met the inclusion criteria into a table. The table includes the title, findings, methodology, and results of the 12 synthesized articles.

Table 3. Review article data synthesis

No	Title	Method	Country	Summary
1	Agustina, et al. 2020. The relationship between formula milk promotion, breast milk production and maternal psychology with exclusive breastfeeding	Descriptive analytical approach with cross-sectional method	Indonesia	Identifying the relationship between formula milk promotion, breast milk production, and maternal psychological factors with exclusive breastfeeding. There is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding with formula milk promotion) and breast milk production but no relationship was found with maternal psychological factors. Breast milk production and formula milk promotion are related to exclusive breastfeeding (Agustina et al., 2020).
2.	Fauziyatun Nisa, et al. 2022 Internal factors affecting the mother's psychological capital in exclusive breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic	Cross sectional analysis	Indonesia	In conclusion, motivation is a factor that influences mothers' psychological capital in providing exclusive breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hoped that mothers have high motivation because this can affect their psychological capital, which can ultimately increase the success of providing exclusive breastfeeding (Nisa et al., 2022).
3.	Jean Prince, et al. 2020 Knowledge attitude, and practice of exclusiveness breastfeeding among mothers in East Africa : a systematic review	Systematic review.	Afrika Timur	This review revealed that almost 96.2% of mothers had heard about exclusive breastfeeding, 84.4% had knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding, and 49.2% were aware that the duration of exclusive breastfeeding was the first six months. The practice of exclusive breastfeeding among this sample was still below the standard recommended by WHO. Therefore, it is very important to provide early antenatal and postpartum education and regular breastfeeding counseling to improve mothers' attitudes and knowledge towards breastfeeding practices. (Dukuzumuremyi et al., 2020)
4	Hasna Assriyah, et al. 2020 Relationship between Knowledge, Attitude, Age, Education, Occupation, Psychology, and IMD with Exclusive Breastfeeding at Sudiang Health Center	cross-sectional analytical study	Indonesia	There is a relationship between maternal factors such as knowledge, occupation, psychological conditions, and early initiation of breastfeeding (IMD) with exclusive breastfeeding. However, no relationship was found between factors such as attitude, age, and education level of the mother with exclusive breastfeeding in the Sudiang Makassar Health Center Working Area. (Hasna Assriyah, 2020)
5	Jenica Hillary, et al. 2021 The Influence of Family and Psychological Support of Mothers on Exclusive Breastfeeding	cross sectional, retrospective method	Indonesia	The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of family support and maternal psychological conditions on exclusive breastfeeding. The results showed that family support and maternal psychological conditions did not affect the success of exclusive breastfeeding. In conclusion, family support and maternal psychological conditions did not affect the success of exclusive breastfeeding (MCRP et al., 2020).
6	Emily M Nagel, PhD, et al. 2021 Maternal psychological distress and lactation and breastfeeding outcomes: A Narrative Review	Narrative review.	Amerika Serikat	Objective: To review the evidence for the association between maternal psychological distress and lactation and breastfeeding outcomes and the physiological mechanisms that facilitate this association. Findings: Methods of assessing maternal psychological distress vary, with some studies examining perceived distress through validated measures and others measuring biological indicators of distress such as cortisol. Evidence supports a role for psychological distress in several breastfeeding outcomes, including

No	Title	Method	Country	Summary
7	Lacey Pezley, et al. 2022 Efficacy of behavioral interventions to improve maternal mental health and breastfeeding outcomes: a systematic review	Systematic review	15 Negara	delayed secretory activation and decreased duration of exclusive breastfeeding. Implications: Current evidence suggests maternal psychological distress may interfere with lactation and breastfeeding outcomes, but more robust study designs and more rigorous assessment methods are needed. A better understanding of the physiological mechanisms that lead to lactation impairment may aid in the development of early interventions for mothers experiencing distress. Additionally, stress reduction programs and policies need to be examined for their potential to improve breastfeeding outcomes(Nagel et al., 2022). Thirty interventions reported in 33 articles were identified. Common characteristics of successful interventions were a) occurring during pregnancy and postpartum, b) delivered by hospital staff or a multidisciplinary team, c) offered on an individual basis, and d) designed to focus on breastfeeding and maternal mental health or breastfeeding alone. The results of this study are not representative of all countries, people, experiences, circumstances, or physiological characteristics(Pezley et al., 2022).
8	Fera The, et al. 2023 Education on the Importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding for Babies at Gambesi Health Center	Descriptive Analytical	Indonesia	The purpose of this activity is to increase the knowledge of pregnant women at the Gambesi Health Center regarding the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. After counseling, the percentage of mothers with good knowledge increased to 65%, while those with sufficient knowledge reached 35%. There were no participants with low knowledge. These results indicate that counseling is effective in increasing pregnant women's understanding of the importance of exclusive breastfeeding(Hasan & Saputra, 2023).
9	Riadinata Sinta P, Yulia Adhistry, Elmawidiawati, 2023 The Relationship between Maternal Anxiety and ON-Demand Breastfeeding in Infants Aged 0-3 months at PMB Emi Narimawati Pleret Bantul	quantitative method	Indonesia	Breastfeeding babies on demand can prevent problems in the breastfeeding process and keep babies feeling full. Shows a significant relationship between maternal anxiety levels and on-demand breastfeeding practices in babies aged 0-3 months at PMB Emi Narimawati(Puspitasari & Adhistry, 2024).
10	Polina Bugaeva1, et al. 2023 Association of breastfeeding with mental disorders in mother and child: a systematic review and meta analysis.	Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE).	Not Specific	There is limited evidence to support a protective association between breastfeeding and the development of mental health disorders in children, and data on the association between breastfeeding and maternal mental health are also limited(Bugaeva et al., 2023).
11	Ayu Devita Citra Dewi, 2023. Relationship of mother's psychological condition to smooth milk production in breastfeeding mothers.	Analytical Survey, Cross Sectional	Indonesia	Based on the results of this study, a good psychological condition of the mother is very important for the smooth production of breast milk, so it is important to keep the mother happy and happy while breastfeeding. (Devita Citra Dewi & Bina Husada Health Sciences College, 2023)
12	Maria Dagla, et al. 2021 Women's Mental Health as a Factor Associated with Exclusive	Longitudinal study	Yunani	In conclusion, this study shows a negative association between exclusive breastfeeding, breastfeeding duration, and poor maternal mental health in the perinatal period(Dagla et al., 2021).

No	Title	Method	Country	Summary
	Breastfeeding and Breastfeeding Duration: Data from a Longitudinal Study in Greece			

The search results that match the research keywords produce 12 articles. The reviewed articles come from several countries, namely Indonesia, East Africa, the United States, Greece, and there are 2 articles whose country of origin is unknown because the research sampling was conducted in several countries. The following are the countries that are the research locations in these articles.

Table 4. Distribution of countries in articles

Country	Freq.	Country	Freq.
Indonesia	7	Yunani	1
Afrika Timur	1	Not known	2
Amerika Serikat	1		

This article evaluates the relationship between the psychological condition of breastfeeding mothers and the level of success in providing exclusive breastfeeding. Analysis of various studies shows that the psychological condition of breastfeeding mothers affects the level of success of exclusive breastfeeding. This emphasizes that psychological conditions, which are certainly influenced by several factors, greatly affect the level of success of exclusive breastfeeding. The findings of this article show that original research using quantitative and quantitative methods as a whole examines the psychological influence of breastfeeding mothers on the success of exclusive breastfeeding.

Table 5. Article synthesis results

No	Thema	Subject
1	The Impact of Stress and Anxiety on Breast Milk Production and Release	a. Breast milk production (1,2,3,4,9) b. Factors that affect maternal psychology (1,2,4,6,11)
2	The Role of Social Support in Supporting Mental Health of Breastfeeding Mothers	a. Social Support for Breastfeeding Mothers (3,5,7,10) b. The Role of Health Workers in Providing Psychological Support (3,7,12)
3	Intervention Strategies to Improve Mental Health of Breastfeeding Mothers	a. Intervention (6,7,11) b. Education (7,8)

Discussion

The Impact of Stress and Anxiety on Breast Milk Production and Release

a. Breast Milk Production, stress is one of the psychological factors that can affect breast milk production in breastfeeding mothers. The mechanism behind the impact of stress on breast milk production involves various complex physiological and psychological aspects. (Yurike Syamu Rafika1, 2023).

Stress triggers the release of the hormones cortisol and adrenaline. Cortisol, often referred to as the stress hormone, can interfere with the production of the hormones prolactin and oxytocin which are essential for lactation. Prolactin is responsible for breast milk production, while oxytocin is needed for the let-down reflex or release of breast milk from the breast. Increased cortisol levels can inhibit both of these hormones, thereby reducing breast milk production and release. (Nisa' et al., 2022).

Stress has a significant impact on the production and success of exclusive breastfeeding. Physiological mechanisms such as the influence of stress hormones and disruption of the let-down

reflex, as well as psychological impacts such as decreased motivation and emotional well-being, play an important role in this process. Therefore, it is very important for health workers to provide psychological support and appropriate interventions to manage stress in breastfeeding mothers in order to increase the success of exclusive breastfeeding (Fitriani et al., 2022).

- b. Factors that influence maternal psychology, the psychological health of breastfeeding mothers is an important factor that influences the success of exclusive breastfeeding. There are several factors that can affect the psychological condition of breastfeeding mothers, ranging from individual factors to social and environmental support (Istighosah & Sari, 2021).

Some of these factors include: Individual Factors (Mothers who have a history of depression or anxiety before or during pregnancy are at higher risk of experiencing psychological problems during the breastfeeding period. This condition can interfere with the mother's ability to provide exclusive breastfeeding effectively), stress factors (high levels of stress due to daily demands, concerns about breastfeeding ability, or other personal problems can have a negative impact on the mental health of breastfeeding mothers), the mother's physical condition (Mother's health conditions, including postpartum complications such as mastitis or nipple pain, can affect the mother's psychological condition. Physical pain and discomfort can increase the risk of stress and depression) and the mother's access to health services (Good access to health services, including lactation counseling and psychological support, is very important to help breastfeeding mothers overcome psychological problems that may arise). (Tunjung Fitriani et al., 2022).

The Role of Social Support in Supporting Mental Health of Breastfeeding Mothers

- a. Social Support for Breastfeeding Mothers, social support is one of the key factors that influence mental health and breastfeeding success in mothers. This support can come from various sources, including family, partners, friends, communities, and health workers. Research shows that mothers who receive adequate social support are more likely to be successful in providing exclusive breastfeeding and have better psychological conditions. (Febryana Choiriyah et al., n.d.-a).

Support from partners and family members is very important for breastfeeding mothers. This support can be in the form of practical assistance in taking care of the baby and household, as well as emotional support that helps reduce stress and anxiety. (Febryana Choiriyah et al., 2022b).

Helping mothers with household tasks or caring for babies can give mothers more time and energy to concentrate on breastfeeding. This also allows the mother to get more rest, which is important for optimal milk production (Fauziah et al., 2022).

Providing encouragement, listening, and validating the mother's feelings can reduce feelings of isolation and stress that are often experienced by breastfeeding mothers. Partners who are actively involved in the breastfeeding process can also increase the mother's self-confidence. (Fauziah et al., 2022)

- b. The Role of Health Workers in Providing Psychological Support, health workers, such as doctors, nurses, and lactation counselors, have a crucial role in providing support to breastfeeding mothers. Education and Information: Providing accurate information about breastfeeding and addressing lactation problems can help mothers feel more prepared and confident in breastfeeding (Nur et al., 2024).

Psychological Counseling and Support: Lactation counseling and psychological support can help mothers cope with emotional and psychological problems they may face while breastfeeding. These interventions may include individual or group counseling sessions, as well as referral to mental health services if needed (Melia et al., 2023).

Workplace Interventions: Providing breastfeeding facilities in the workplace and policies that support breastfeeding mothers can help reduce stress and facilitate the continuation of breastfeeding when mothers return to work. (Rika Melia, 2023).

Intervention Strategies to Improve Mental Health of Breastfeeding Mothers

- a. Intervention, mental health of breastfeeding mothers is a key factor in the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Various intervention strategies have been developed to improve maternal mental health, which in turn can support successful breastfeeding. (Pezley et al., 2022a). Individual counseling conducted by a licensed psychologist or counselor can help mothers cope with stress, anxiety, and depression that they may experience during breastfeeding (Solehati et al., 2020). Joining a breastfeeding support group can provide significant emotional and practical support. These groups can also be a useful source of information and strategies for overcoming breastfeeding challenges. (Pezley et al., 2022b)
- b. Education, educational programs provided before and after delivery can help mothers prepare themselves mentally and physically for breastfeeding. The program includes information on breastfeeding techniques, lactation management, and how to cope with common problems that may arise (Maharani & Khumairoh, 2023). Lactation counselors can provide practical and emotional support to breastfeeding mothers. They help mothers cope with lactation problems such as improper attachment, nipple pain, and insufficient milk production. (Solehati et al., 2020). Good access to mental health services, including referral to a psychologist or psychiatrist if needed, is essential to address more serious psychological problems (Hasan & Saputra, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Research on the psychological impact of breastfeeding mothers on the success of exclusive breastfeeding shows that the psychological condition of the mother greatly influences the success of breastfeeding. Stress, anxiety, and depression are the main psychological factors that can inhibit the production and release of breast milk, as well as reduce the duration of breastfeeding. Social support from family, partners, support groups, and health workers has been shown to be effective in reducing psychological stress and improving the mental well-being of breastfeeding mothers. In addition, psychological interventions such as individual and group counseling, as well as relaxation and stress management techniques, have shown positive results in improving the mental health of breastfeeding mothers. Comprehensive education programs and health services are also important to help breastfeeding mothers overcome the psychological and practical challenges they may face. Further research is needed to explore interventions that can be carried out to maintain the psychological health of breastfeeding mothers so that the success rate of exclusive breastfeeding can increase.

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