

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Brestfeeding Support Group: Its Effectiveness on  
Breastfeeding Mothers' Knowledge**

***Breastfeeding Support Groups: Efektivitas terhadap  
Pengetahuan Ibu Menyusui***

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**Abstract**

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for the first 6 months of a child's life. However, in reality there are still many children who do not get their rights to exclusive breastfeeding. It can be caused by the lack of knowledge of mothers about breastfeeding. Another cause is the lack of breastfeeding support received by mothers from the environment. This study aims to determine the effect of Breastfeeding Support Groups on mothers' breastfeeding knowledge. A pre-experimental design with one-group pretest-posttest was the design used in this study. Determination of the sample by purposive sampling method as many as 34 participants. Data was collected using a questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis used marginal homogeneity test. The research results showed that Breastfeeding Support Groups were effective in increasing subjects' knowledge. The Proportion of participants with good knowledge increased from 32.4% to 58.8%, whereas poor knowledge decreased from 14.7% to 0% (p-value = 0.001). Breastfeeding Support Group can be recommended as an intervention strategy to increase mother's breastfeeding knowledge.

**Keywords:** breastfeeding, child, support group

**Article history:**

**PUBLISHED BY:**

Sarana Ilmu Indonesia (salnesia)

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Jl. Dr. Ratulangi No. 75A, Baju Bodoa, Maros Baru,  
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Submitted 11 February 2026

Accepted 25 July 2026

Published 29 August 2026



### Abstrak

ASI merupakan sumber zat gizi terbaik untuk 6 bulan pertama kehidupan anak. Namun, kenyataannya masih banyak anak yang tidak mendapatkan haknya untuk mendapatkan ASI Eksklusif. Hal ini dapat disebabkan oleh kurangnya pengetahuan ibu tentang ASI. Penyebab lainnya adalah kurangnya dukungan ASI yang diterima ibu dari lingkungan sekitar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas Breastfeeding Support Group terhadap pengetahuan ibu tentang ASI. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain pre-eksperimental dengan pretest-posttest pada satu kelompok. Penentuan sampel dilakukan dengan metode purposive sampling sebanyak 34 subjek. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Analisis data menggunakan uji marginal homogeneity. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan Breastfeeding Support Group efektif meningkatkan pengetahuan subjek. Proporsi subjek yang memiliki pengetahuan baik meningkat dari 32,4% menjadi 58,8%, sedangkan proporsi subjek yang memiliki pengetahuan kurang menurun dari 14,7% menjadi 0% (nilai  $p = 0,001$ ). Breastfeeding Support Group dapat direkomendasikan sebagai strategi intervensi untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan ibu tentang ASI.

**Kata Kunci:** ASI Eksklusif, anak, tim pendukung

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### Highlight:

- The implementation of the Breastfeeding Support Group program proved effective in enhancing lactating mothers' knowledge and understanding of breastfeeding.
- A substantial increase was observed in the proportion of participants demonstrating a good level of knowledge (from 32.4% to 58.8%), coupled with the complete elimination of the poor-knowledge category (declining from 14.7% to 0%).
- Consequently, Breastfeeding Support Groups are recommended as a viable intervention strategy to be integrated into antenatal and postnatal care services across healthcare facilities.

## INTRODUCTION

Breast milk (ASI) serves as the optimal nutrient source for infants, containing all essential nutrients required to support optimal health through six months of age (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2026). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasize the critical need to strengthen support for breastfeeding mothers, recommending exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life—initiated within one hour of birth—and continued alongside complementary feeding up to two years and beyond (World Health Organization, 2024). Nevertheless, global exclusive breastfeeding rates remain below target (Novianita et al., 2022). Standing at approximately 44% in 2021 (World Health Organization, 2023). In Indonesia, the exclusive breastfeeding rate was 67.96% in 2022, representing a 1.74% decline from the previous year. Although this rate reached 74.73% by December 2024, it remained below the 80% national target. A key determinant of low breastfeeding success is mothers' limited knowledge regarding breastfeeding

benefits, proper techniques, and strategies to manage lactation challenges (Setyaningsih, 2025). A preliminary study involving interviews with 10 breastfeeding mothers in the Sako Community Health Center service area revealed that seven mothers failed to breastfeed exclusively, nine experienced nipple trauma, and all lacked awareness regarding proper latching techniques and the physiological mechanisms of milk production and ejection governed by prolactin and oxytocin.

Maternal knowledge plays a pivotal role in determining breastfeeding success (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Mothers with higher breastfeeding knowledge demonstrate greater self-efficacy, effectively navigate lactation challenges, and maintain consistent breastfeeding practices (Aprilia *et al.*, 2025). Conversely, insufficient knowledge leaves mothers vulnerable to misinformation, cultural myths, and commercial formula marketing, ultimately leading to premature discontinuation of breastfeeding (Fajria *et al.*, 2023). Inadequate preparation is often driven by the misconception that breastfeeding is an innate, effortless process requiring no formal education (Unicef Indonesia, 2023). Consequently, immediate social support systems frequently overlook the needs of lactating mothers. Substantial evidence demonstrates that robust social support—from family members and healthcare providers—is strongly associated with exclusive breastfeeding success (Isnaniyah *et al.*, 2023; Lubis *et al.*, 2022). Mothers lacking adequate support exhibit diminished confidence, a vulnerability further compounded by limited breastfeeding literacy (Fajria *et al.*, 2023). These findings underscore that breastfeeding success extends beyond biological factors, requiring structured and sustained socio-educational support. Such support can be operationalized through interventions that provide evidence-based information, emotional reinforcement, and direct peer-learning platforms, such as Breastfeeding Support Groups.

A Breastfeeding Support Group serves as a dedicated platform for lactating mothers to share experiences, access evidence-based information, and receive emotional and social support from both peers and healthcare professionals (Rodríguez-Gallego *et al.*, 2024). This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a Breastfeeding Support Group as an intervention strategy to foster a supportive environment that enhances maternal knowledge regarding breastfeeding.

## METHODS

This quantitative study utilized a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design and was conducted in September 2024. The target population comprised 45 breastfeeding mothers with infants aged 0–3 months residing within the operational area of the Sako Public Health Center, Palembang. Participants were selected via purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria were: mothers actively breastfeeding infants aged 0–3 months, regularly attending the integrated health post (*posyandu*), residing in the study area, and consenting to participate. Exclusion criteria were: non-breastfeeding mothers, those with severe medical conditions compromising lactation (e.g., HIV-positive status, undergoing chemotherapy), and individuals with formal health education. Ultimately, 34 eligible mothers were enrolled. Primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaires.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 items assessing maternal knowledge, including the benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and infants, principles of breast milk production, positioning and latching techniques, and lactation challenges. Instrument validity was evaluated using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient among

30 respondents at a 5% significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), yielding a critical value of  $r$  table = 0.361. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values exceeding 0.60 considered reliable. The knowledge questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.894, indicating high internal consistency. The research procedure commenced with a pretest to measure baseline knowledge regarding breastfeeding among lactating mothers. Subsequently, an intervention comprising two sessions was implemented. Each session lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was guided by a facilitator. The first session focused on providing foundational education on breastfeeding.

The first session commenced with an opening address and group introductions, followed by educational presentations covering the definition of exclusive breastfeeding, benefits for infants and mothers, breast milk composition, proper breastfeeding techniques, infant positioning and latching, and indicators of adequate milk intake. Delivery methods included interactive lectures, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and peer experience sharing. During this session, participants were encouraged to share their breastfeeding challenges and experiences, thereby fostering peer support within the group. The second session focused on reinforcing knowledge and addressing specific lactation issues. Topics covered management strategies for common breastfeeding difficulties—such as sore nipples, low milk supply, and breast engorgement—alongside instructions on milk expression and storage. Additionally, psychological support and encouragement were provided to enhance maternal self-efficacy in breastfeeding. This session incorporated group discussions, practical demonstrations, experience sharing, and a Q&A segment. The facilitator offered constructive feedback on participant-reported issues while reinforcing core concepts critical to breastfeeding success.

The statistical analysis was performed using the Marginal Homogeneity test, which is appropriate for comparative analysis of paired categorical variables. This test was applied to evaluate changes in maternal knowledge pre- and post-intervention via the Breastfeeding Support Group. Statistical significance was set at a  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ . Ethical approval was granted by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Sriwijaya (Protocol No. 380-2024). The study was conducted in September 2024.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Distribution of knowledge before and after the breastfeeding support group intervention

Table 1 illustrates the shifts in participants' knowledge levels regarding breastfeeding before and after the Breastfeeding Support Group intervention. At baseline (*pretest*), the majority of participants were categorized as having moderate knowledge ( $n = 18$ , 52.9%), followed by good knowledge ( $n = 11$ , 32.4%), and poor knowledge ( $n = 5$ , 14.7%). Following the intervention (*posttest*), the proportion of participants with good knowledge increased to 58.8%, whereas the poor knowledge category was completely eliminated (0%).

**Table 1. Distribution of participants' knowledge before and after the Breastfeeding Support Group intervention**

| Knowledge Level | Pretest   |              | Posttest  |              |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
|                 | n         | %            | n         | %            |
| Good            | 11        | 32.4         | 20        | 58.8         |
| Moderate        | 18        | 52.9         | 14        | 41.2         |
| Poor            | 5         | 14.7         | 0         | 0.0          |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>34</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Univariate analysis of baseline data revealed that 11 participants exhibited good knowledge (32.4%), 18 possessed moderate knowledge (52.9%), and 5 demonstrated poor knowledge (14.7%). These findings align with [Promosi Kesehatan, Tim Kerja Hukum, Hukum RSST](#) (2024) who reported that many breastfeeding mothers still lack an adequate understanding of lactation mechanisms and proper breastfeeding techniques, which ultimately hinders exclusive breastfeeding success. A detailed examination of the pretest items indicated that 23 out of 34 participants (67.6%) incorrectly answered questions concerning prolactin function. Prolactin plays a pivotal role in stimulating milk synthesis ([Monica](#), 2016). Given that prolactin secretion peaks nocturnal levels, nighttime breastfeeding is crucial for maintaining sustained milk production ([Rimawati and Suwardianto](#), 2020).

Further analysis of the pretest questionnaire revealed that 23 participants (67.6%) incorrectly answered questions regarding oxytocin function. Oxytocin acts by stimulating myoepithelial contractions in the breast, thereby facilitating milk ejection during expression and nursing ([Rosyida](#), 2022). Misconceptions surrounding prolactin and oxytocin mechanisms may result in a lack of maternal awareness regarding the importance of breastfeeding frequency, particularly at night, as well as the impact of psychological well-being on milk supply ([Hamdayani et al.](#), 2023). A study by [Stellata et al.](#) (2025) emphasized that optimal breastfeeding stimulation—encompassing nocturnal nursing and a positive maternal emotional state—contributes significantly to sustained milk synthesis and ejection.

Subsequent analysis of the pretest questionnaire indicated that 19 participants (55.9%) incorrectly answered questions regarding breastfeeding latch. Latch refers to the manner in which an infant takes and holds the mother's nipple within their mouth ([Herlina et al.](#), 2024). Proper latching ensures comfortable breastfeeding without causing pain or nipple and areolar damage, whereas poor latching serves as a primary etiology of nipple trauma and impairs milk transfer, leading to a perceived reduction in milk supply ([Rahmi et al.](#), 2024). According to [Direktorat Promosi Kesehatan and Kesehatan Komunitas Kemenkes](#) (2023) proper positioning is characterized by the infant's head and body being in alignment, the face facing the breast with the nose aligned with the nipple, the body held close to the mother, and the entire body securely supported. Meanwhile, correct attachment is indicated when the infant approaches the breast with a wide-open mouth, the chin touches the breast, more of the upper areola is visible than the lower part, and the lower lip is flanged outward.

Univariate analysis of the posttest data revealed a marked improvement following the Breastfeeding Support Group intervention, with the proportion of participants demonstrating good knowledge increasing to 58.8%. Specifically, 18 participants (52.9%) correctly recognized that oxytocin induces milk ejection rather than milk synthesis, while 19 participants (55.9%) demonstrated an accurate understanding of

proper infant latching techniques. This overall increase highlights the efficacy of the Breastfeeding Support Group approach in enhancing maternal comprehension. By facilitating peer-to-peer experience sharing, interactive discussions, and emotional support among mothers, this framework optimizes information dissemination, thereby fostering greater retention and comprehension of lactation material (Yang et al., 2024). These findings corroborate the results of Rodríguez-Gallego et al. (2024), who reported that Breastfeeding Support Group interventions effectively promote the maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding.

The knowledge gain observed among participants in the good and moderate categories can be attributed to the peer discussion, experience sharing, and social support fostered within the Breastfeeding Support Group intervention, which enabled mothers to better comprehend the lactation information provided. According to Social Cognitive Theory, environmental support and social interactions play a key role in shaping knowledge acquisition and health behavior adoption. This aligns with findings by Yulita et al. (2022) who reported that group support and breastfeeding education are significantly associated with knowledge enhancement and exclusive breastfeeding success. However, a subset of participants exhibited non-significant knowledge gains. This variability may stem from individual differences in educational background, personal motivation, prior breastfeeding experience, and level of active engagement during sessions. In agreement with these observations, Nurnajmi et al. (2024) highlighted that maternal motivation substantially impacts the improvement of lactation management knowledge.

#### **Analysis of differences in knowledge before and after the breastfeeding support group intervention**

Table 2 presents the shifts in participants' knowledge levels pre- and post-intervention via the Breastfeeding Support Group. All participants who exhibited good knowledge prior to the intervention remained in the good knowledge category post-intervention ( $n = 11$ , 32.4%). Among participants with baseline moderate knowledge, half transitioned to the good knowledge category ( $n = 9$ , 26.5%), while the remaining 9 participants (26.5%) retained moderate knowledge levels. Furthermore, all 5 participants (14.7%) who presented with poor knowledge at baseline demonstrated improvement, shifting entirely to the moderate knowledge category.

Bivariate analysis evaluating the changes in maternal knowledge pre- and post-intervention using the Marginal Homogeneity test yielded a significance level of  $p = 0.001$ . Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted, confirming a statistically significant difference in mothers' knowledge levels following the implementation of the Breastfeeding Support Group.

Knowledge is defined as the cognitive outcome derived from sensory perception of an object, leading to a comprehensive understanding of that entity (Notoatmodjo, 2012). In this study, the intervention delivered was a Breastfeeding Support Group. A Breastfeeding Support Group is a peer support group comprising 6–12 pregnant women and mothers with newborns who conduct regular home-based meetings to share experiences, engage in discussions, and provide mutual support regarding maternal and child health, particularly during pregnancy, lactation, and nutritional management (Hasanah et al., 2020).

**Table 2. Differences in Maternal Knowledge Before and After the Breastfeeding Support Group Intervention**

| Knowledge Level Before Intervention | Knowledge Level After Intervention |      |          |      |      |     |       |       | <i>p-value</i> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|----------|------|------|-----|-------|-------|----------------|
|                                     | Good                               |      | Moderate |      | Poor |     | Total |       |                |
|                                     | n                                  | %    | n        | %    | n    | %   | n     | %     |                |
| Good                                | 11                                 | 32.4 | 0        | 0.0  | 0    | 0.0 | 11    | 32.4  | 0.001*         |
| Moderate                            | 9                                  | 26.5 | 9        | 26.5 | 0    | 0.0 | 18    | 52.9  |                |
| Poor                                | 0                                  | 0.0  | 5        | 14.7 | 0    | 0.0 | 5     | 14.7  |                |
| <b>Total</b>                        | 20                                 | 58.8 | 14       | 41.2 | 0    | 0.0 | 34    | 100.0 |                |

Note: \*Marginal Homogeneity test; statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Mothers participating in the Breastfeeding Support Group acquire comprehensive information regarding the lactation process, thereby enhancing their maternal knowledge. This aligns with findings by [Anggraini and Kursani \(2025\)](#), who demonstrated that mothers actively engaged in Breastfeeding Support Groups exhibit higher adherence to exclusive breastfeeding practices compared to non-participants. Furthermore, involvement in peer support groups provides mothers with broader opportunities to actively participate in health promotion and education. Consequently, mothers do not merely receive information, but also gain a platform to articulate various challenges encountered during exclusive breastfeeding.

Lactating mothers require comprehensive support to initiate and sustain optimal breastfeeding practices. One key form of support is delivered through Breastfeeding Support Group interventions, which provide information, motivation, and emotional support. This is consistent with findings by [Syahri \(2023\)](#), who emphasized that crucial support should be extended to all mothers, regardless of employment status, to assist them in overcoming various lactation challenges and improving breastfeeding success. Furthermore, the [World Health Organization \(2023\)](#) highlighted that mothers should be trained in express milk techniques to maintain lactation during periods of mother-infant separation. Additionally, mothers should be equipped with responsive feeding skills, including the ability to recognize and appropriately respond to infant feeding cues. Guidelines also specify that mothers must be informed about avoiding supplementary foods or fluids during early infancy unless medically indicated. Therefore, implementing Breastfeeding Support Groups is paramount to delivering support and education, serving as a pivotal strategy to promote exclusive breastfeeding success.

The study demonstrated a significant difference in maternal knowledge before and after the intervention, which can be attributed to increased exposure to breastfeeding information. According to [Agustina \(2022\)](#), maternal involvement in Breastfeeding Support Groups exerts a substantial influence on breastfeeding success. This outcome is largely driven by continuous exposure to relevant information during group sessions, particularly through discussions concerning various challenges faced during exclusive breastfeeding. Such interactive processes directly contribute to enhancing knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, active participation within these support groups fosters a sense of validation and encouragement among mothers, thereby bolstering their self-efficacy and confidence in breastfeeding.

## CONCLUSION

Regarding the knowledge variable, the proportion of participants with good knowledge increased from 32.4% to 58.8%, while those with poor knowledge decreased

from 14.7% to 0%. Bivariate analysis using the Marginal Homogeneity test demonstrated a statistically significant association between the Breastfeeding Support Group intervention and increased breastfeeding knowledge among lactating mothers ( $p = 0.001$ ). Nurses, in collaboration with community health centers (*Puskesmas*), are expected to integrate the Breastfeeding Support Group framework into routine antenatal and postnatal care services as a key strategic intervention to enhance maternal lactation knowledge.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Sriwijaya for funding this study. Special thanks are also extended to Sako Public Health Center (*Puskesmas Sako Palembang*) for providing technical support and research approval, as well as to all participants who voluntarily contributed to this research.

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