

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Partner's Role in Breastfeeding Continuity: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Study

Peran Pasangan dalam Keberlangsungan Menyusui: Tinjauan Sistematis Studi Kualitatif

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Available online at:[https://e-](https://e-journal.unair.ac.id/AMNT)[journal.unair.ac.id/AMNT](https://e-journal.unair.ac.id/AMNT)**Keywords:**

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ABSTRAK**Background:** Breast milk is optimal for infant nutrition, and to ensure its sustained practice, maternal assistance from partners is essential, so that the breastfeeding process runs according to the expectations of the couple.**Objectives:** To identify the forms of support offered by partners for breastfeeding continuity.**Methods:** This research was conducted through a systematic review of qualitative research using three databases, namely PubMed, Scopus, and ScienceDirect, published from 2014 to 2023. The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research was utilized to critically evaluate the included publications, resulting in the inclusion of five studies.**Results:** Within the breastfeeding context, "husband support" can refer to several types of assistance, including emotional support, seeking breastfeeding information, helping with the mother's work, assisting in parenting responsibilities, and confiding in the mother and financial support. Only two of the seven studies indicated receiving financial support to replace the husband's role. Support from a partner makes a mother feel more confident about breastfeeding her baby. A positive response from the partner will help the mother feel more comfortable while breastfeeding her child.**Conclusions:** This systematic review provides a valuable reference for future research development by considering the phenomenon of spousal support for breastfeeding participation.**INTRODUCTION**

Breastmilk is the best nutrition source for infants, providing all the nutrients and energy required in the early months of life¹. It is recommended that infants be exclusively breastfed within one hour of birth and continue until six months of age¹. After this period, additional food can be given, but breastfeeding should be continued until the babies is two years old¹. Infants get benefit from the development of a good immune system and protection on infectious and chronic diseases because of breastmilk². Exclusively breastfed infants receive effective additional protection on many diseases, resulting in a reduced prevalence if infections, pneumonia and diarrhea compared to non-breastfed infants³.

In 2020, it was noted that the global prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding for infants under 6 months of age was 44%⁴. WHO set a target to increase the exclusive breastfeeding rate to 50% in 2025 and expects to reach 70% by 2030⁴. In the East Asia and Pacific Ocean region, exclusive breastfeeding rates are lower are around 30% than the other regions⁴. Meanwhile, rates of early

initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding, and continuation of breastfeeding until two years of age are still below optimal standards in many regions⁵.

Child health has been evidenced to increase with exclusive breastfeeding⁶. Parents, including fathers and other family members, are responsible for their child's health, with husbands providing the most support during breastfeeding process⁶. Research conducted by Ngoenthong in several studies showed that father's behavior towards supporting breastfeeding were influenced by his understanding of breastfeeding and their involvement in the breastfeeding process⁷. The correlation between father's knowledge and attitudes towards breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding rates highlights the importance of involving fathers in interventions to promote breastfeeding⁸. In family, the husband is a source of strength, where his positive behavior and support for EBF practices can influence a mother's subjective criteria related to breastfeeding⁹.

Previous studies have suggested that husband's support determines breastfeeding success, especially in the first six months of life¹⁰⁻¹². Mothers, who receive

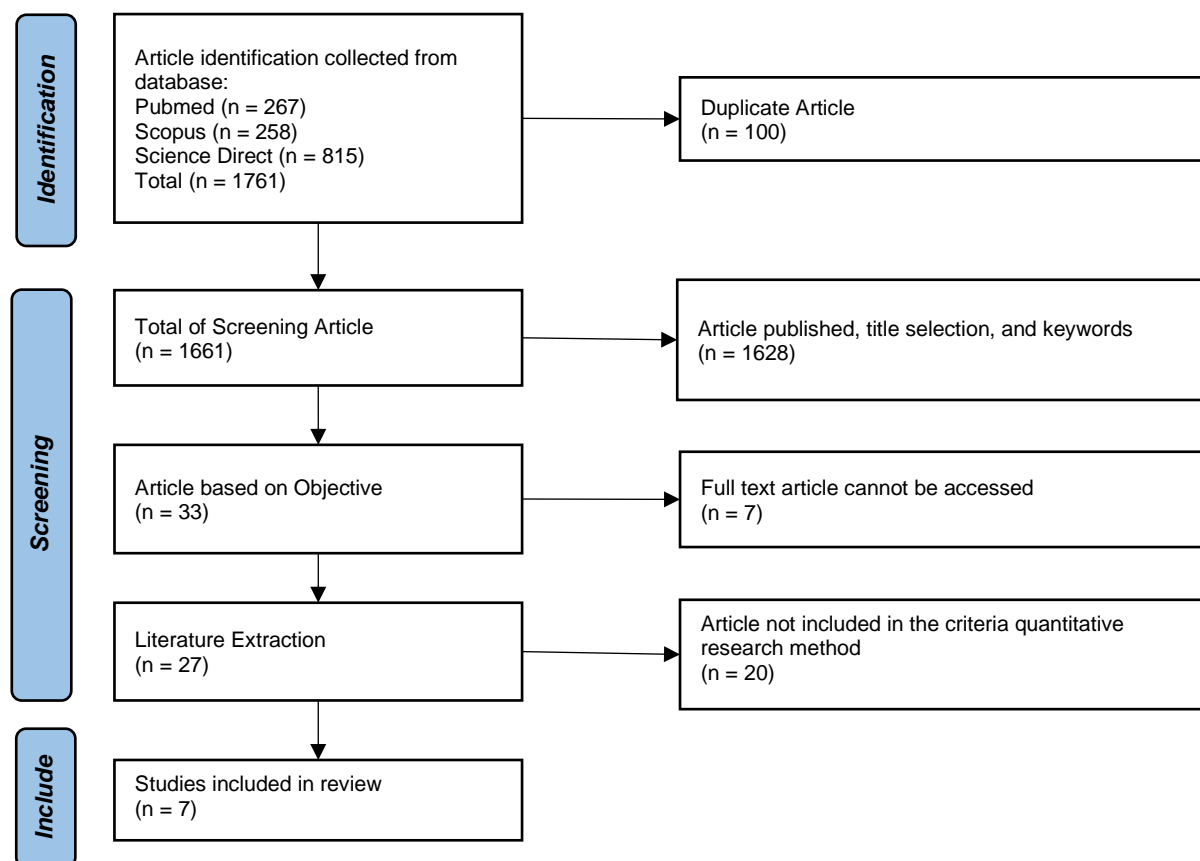
support from their husbands will be more enthusiastic and happy in the breastfeeding¹⁰⁻¹². Husband's support is very important for breastfeeding continuation, the higher the husband's support score, the higher duration of breastfeeding by the mother¹³. A study conducted by Kayode (2023) found that support from husbands had an impact on breastfeeding practices, with mothers who received its support has 86,47 times more likely to exclusively breastfeed compared to mothers who did not receive support from their husband¹⁴. This study looked more specifically at the forms of support provided by husbands during breastfeeding. The advantage of this study is to obtain information on the forms of husband support, as a basis for further research that wants to examine quantitatively the support received from husband.

METHODS

The study was conducted through a systematic review utilizing three databases, namely PubMed, Scopus, and ScienceDirect, published between 2014 and 2023 with the keywords ('Married Persons' or 'Married Person' or 'Spouse' or 'Husbands' or 'Husband' or 'Domestic Partners' or 'Domestic Partner' or 'Spousal Notification' or 'family') and ('Breastfed' or

'Breastfeeding' or 'Breast Fed' or 'Milk Sharing' or 'Exclusive Breast Feeding' or 'Exclusive Breastfeeding' or 'Wet Nursing'). References in this study were taken based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for this study included: (i) research highlighting support provided by husbands; (ii) research evaluating support from husbands; and (iii) original articles. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: (i) research that did not ascertain the form of support from husbands; and (ii) quantitative research.

The process of identifying and screening the literature was assisted by Mendeley software to facilitate the extraction of articles. The initial stage was done through searching the literature from three databases using several keywords mentioned earlier, after finding the article, then extracting the data with the assistance of Mendeley software, finding duplicate data and screening the title and keywords of each article. Next, conducted a full text search. In the next stage, assessed the article and determined according to the research objectives in conducting the assessment using the JBI Qualitative Research Checklist. The PRISMA diagram of the literature search strategy used in this study is presented in Figure 1.



Gambar 1. Diagram Prisma Pencarian Literatur

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the literature search, 1.761 articles were identified and 100 duplicate articles were found. In the screening stage of 1.661 articles, 1.628 were found that did not fit the research objectives so that there were 33 articles that fit the research objectives. Only 27 articles have complete articles and 7 articles that met the criteria and research objectives. The results of article extraction can be seen in Table 1.

After assessing the eligibility of the articles, the researchers then conducted literature extraction. The

results of the literature extraction identified that five articles stated that husbands provided emotional support. Four articles stated support in the form of helping with the mother's work, four articles stated that the husband became the mother's confidant, five articles sought information related to breastfeeding and shared the information obtained with the wife, four articles stated that the husband was involved in childcare, and two articles stated that financial support was needed to ease the mother's work. (Table 2).

Table 1. Article Quality Assessment using Instruments “Checklist Qualitative Research JBI”

Assesment Questions	Lundquist, (2022) ¹⁵	Budiati, (2022) ¹⁶	Palmqvist (2015) ¹⁷	Johansson (2022) ¹⁸	Srisopa (2021) ¹⁹	Kohan (2016) ²⁰	Saghooni (2022) ²¹
Is there suitability between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*
Is there suitability between the research methodology and the research questions or objectives?	Y*	Y*	N**	N**	Y*	Y*	Y*
Als there a suitability between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Is there suitability between the research methodology and data representation and analysis?	Y*	Y*	N**	N**	Y*	Y*	N**
Is there suitability between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?	Y*	Y*	N**	N**	Y*	Y*	N**
Are there statements that situate the researcher culturally?	Y*	Y*	N**	N**	N**	N**	N**
What is the influence of the researcher on the study, and vice versa, discussed?	Y*	Y*	N**	N**	Y*	Y*	Y*
Are the participants, and their opinions, adequately represented?	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	N**	Y*
Is the research ethical according to current criteria or for recent research, and is there evidence of ethical approval from appropriate bodies?	Y*	Y*	C***	C***	Y*	Y*	Y*
Do the conclusions drawn in the research report flow from the analysis, or interpretation, of the data?	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*

*Y = Yes; **N = No; ***C = Not Explained; ****N/A = Not Used

Tabel 2. The Summary of Literature Extraction

Author	Year	Country	Design	Total of Informant	Results
Alexandra Lundquist, Brent A. McBride, Sharon M. Donovan, Maris Wszalek ¹⁵	2022	Urbana (United States)	Qualitative using semi-structured interview	25 breastfeeding mothers	<p>Emotional Support: Motivating the mother that she can breastfeed, respecting her decisions regarding breastfeeding, reminding her when to breastfeed and pumping</p> <p>Helping the Mother’s Work: Assisting the mother in cleaning the pump every night. The husband waits for the mother to breastfeed or pump until the mother’s needs are met.</p> <p>Confidential Friend: Listens to the wife's emotional outburst about something that is not going well.</p> <p>Seeking Breastfeeding Information: Husband seeks information by attending breastfeeding classes.</p>

Author	Year	Country	Design	Total of Informant	Results
Tri Budiati, S.Setyowati, Seno Adjie, Jajang Gunawijaya ¹⁶	2022	Indonesia	Qualitative phenomenological approach	12 husbands having wives who are breastfeeding	<p>Babysitting: Husband gives breast milk to the baby, warms the breast milk, changes the baby's clothes. When the baby cries, the husband immediately picks up and gives the baby to the mother and provides equipment, such as pillows or drinks for the mother.</p> <p>Emotional Support: Keeping mother in a good mood, giving her extra attention, taking her for walks and massaging her to keep her happy.</p> <p>Confidential Friend: Talking about more things.</p> <p>Helping the Mother's Work: Husband helps with housework so that mother can rest, especially during the weekend.</p> <p>Financial Support: Giving mother lots of money.</p> <p>Providing Breastfeeding Information: Sharing breastfeeding information either articles from the internet or newspapers. Seeking information on the dangers of formula milk from the media and experienced friends. In addition, the husband attended prenatal classes.</p>
Hanna Palmqvist, Josene Za'ther, Margareta Larsson ¹⁷	2015	Sweden	Qualitative using semi-structured interview	7 Husbands and 2 Mothers	<p>Babysitter: Giving expressed breastmilk to the baby, helping to calm the baby, helping to put him to sleep, changing nappies.</p> <p>Helping the Mother's Work: Cooking</p>
Margareta Johansson, Petra Östlund, Cecilia Holmqvist, Michael B. Wells ¹⁸	2022	Sweden	Qualitative	16 husbands having wives who are breastfeeding	<p>Helping the Mother's Work: Cleaning and cooking.</p> <p>Seeking Breastfeeding Information: Husband takes breastfeeding classes, reads breastfeeding books, and visualizes breastfeeding through videos and pictures.</p> <p>Confidential Friend: Listening every story from the mother.</p>
Pornpan Srisopa, Ruth Lucas ¹⁹	2021	United Stated	Qualitative analysis of a longitudinal observational safety study	A total of 115 breastfeeding women	<p>Emotional Support: Providing breastfeeding support to the mother and trying together to keep the mother breastfeeding, support from the husband helps to get through the challenges of breastfeeding</p> <p>Financial Support: Providing material support to mothers to pay their baby-sitter and meet their needs at home.</p> <p>Seeking Information: Learning about the types of crying babies.</p> <p>Babysitter: Coordinating their baby's feeding schedule and sharing feelings, observations, and information related to feeding their baby, helping the mother to express milk at</p>

Author	Year	Country	Design	Total of Informant	Results
Shahnaz Kohan, Zeinab Heidari, Mahrokh Keshvari ²⁰	2016	Iran	Semi-structured Qualitative	18 mothers, 5 family members, and 10 health officers	night and letting the mother rest. Assist in others childcare. Confidential Friend: Reflecting and sharing feelings about their challenges and joys in breastfeeding creates a valuable shared experience.
Nahid Maleki Saghooni, Hossein Kareshki, Habibollah Esmaily, Khadige Mirzaii Najmabadi ²¹	2022		Qualitative using semi-structured interview	25 breastfeeding mothers, 9 health workers, and 2 family members	Emotional Support: The husband encourages his wife or the mother to breastfeed, the husband's encouragement makes the mother more determined to breastfeed, keeps the mother's mood from being anxious and angry, gives thanks to the wife for struggling to breastfeed. Providing Information: The husband informs the mother that breast milk is irreplaceable with other milk. Babysitting: Helping to care for the newborn, e.g. he holds, soothes the newborn, and burps the baby. Emotional Support: When the husband does not give full support, the mother will stop breastfeeding, the praise given by the husband will affect the mother's mood.

In emotional support, husbands provide support by motivating the mothers to continue breastfeeding, reminding mothers to breastfeed, respecting breastfeeding decisions, providing comfort to mothers, keeping mothers in a good mood, giving massages to make them happy, reassuring mothers that they can breastfeed and ensuring they will get through it together, as well as thanking them for their efforts so that they feel happy^{15,16,19-21}. Support from husbands can strengthen the emotional bond between couples and ensure that mothers feel empowered and supported in their breastfeeding journey²². There is a positive correlation between husbands' emotional support and mothers' breastfeeding duration²³.

Husbands help mothers with various tasks, such as cleaning the milking equipment, cooking, cleaning the house, and other household works¹⁵⁻¹⁸. Husbands' role in helping mothers with household works and infant care has an impact on breastfeeding duration, and the high level of husband involvement prolongs the breastfeeding period²⁴. Husbands also provide support by assisting mothers in infant care by providing expressed breast milk to the baby, warming breast milk, changing the baby's clothes, helping to put the baby to sleep, changing nappies and so on. Husbands provide financial support to ease the mother's work when the husband cannot be involved^{16,19}.

The husband also became the mother's confidant so that she felt calmer and happier that there is someone to listen to her complaints and a friend to share ideas^{15,16,18,19}. Husbands' efforts to support mothers include seeking and providing information to mothers about breastfeeding by attending classes for pregnant women, looking for articles from the internet, newspapers, asking experienced friends, reading breastfeeding books, so that husbands can share information with their wife^{15,16,18-20}. This study also found that husbands seek information about breastfeeding, and their exposure to breastfeeding information affects the support they provide²⁵. The husband's support will affect the duration of breastfeeding²⁵. Informational support is the factor most correlated with duration of breastfeeding.¹³ Similarly, spouses who do not have enough information about breastfeeding are more likely to make decisions not to breastfeed if they encounter breastfeeding problems²⁶⁻²⁸.

Support by couple is more likely to occur if he or she has adequate knowledge about breastfeeding²⁹. Husbands know that breast milk can make the baby's body strong and shape the baby's body to be fatter²⁹. The husband participates in breastfeeding the baby, the mother receives emotional and practical support, and the husband continues to support the wife in breastfeeding even in public^{27,22}.

The strength of this study is that it obtained descriptive types of support from both mothers or wives and husbands. The first limitation of this study is bias in the selection of articles. Secondly, this research used qualitative method so that the information obtained was based on the researcher's ability to dig up information and the limited number of publishers used to search for articles where this study only used three sources. This

study can be a reference in formulating policies related to efforts to increase husband support through education by prioritizing emotional support as the main support and continued with other supports.

CONCLUSIONS

Spousal support is essential for the successful breastfeeding process. The most common forms of spousal support received are emotional support, information support, helping the mother with care, helping with the mother's work, and being a confidential friend where the mother expresses her grievances and financial support. Husbands or partners need to get information related to breastfeeding starting from pregnancy.

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Conflict of Interest and Funding Sources

All authors in this article declare no specific interests, particularly those related to the topic.

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