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## The effect of booklet media on increasing husband support for exclusive breastfeeding among breastfeeding mothers

Lia Arianty\*, Rita Ayu Yolandia, Irma Jayatmi

University of Indonesia Maju

Corresponding author: \*Email: [lia.arianty92@gmail.com](mailto:lia.arianty92@gmail.com)

### Abstract

**Background:** Husband support is a crucial factor in the success of exclusive breastfeeding, yet many husbands have limited knowledge and awareness of its importance. Education through booklets has been identified as an effective way to increase this support.

**Purpose:** To determine the effect of using booklets on increasing husband support for exclusive breastfeeding among breastfeeding mothers at the Cireunghas Public Health Center in 2025.

**Method:** This was a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test and post-test design with a control group, conducted in April 2025. The sample consisted of 30 husbands of breastfeeding mothers. Data were analyzed using an independent t-test.

**Results:** Breast milk production increased from 80 ml (40%) to 120 ml (60%) after the intervention, demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention in increasing breast milk production. In the intervention group, husband support significantly increased by 53% (from 47% to 100%) after the booklet was provided ( $p=0.05$ ). Meanwhile, in the control group, support increased by only 7% (from 27% to 33%). These results indicate that the booklet is effective in increasing husbands' understanding and attitudes toward the importance of exclusive breastfeeding.

**Conclusion:** The booklet has been shown to be effective in increasing husbands' knowledge, understanding, and support.

**Suggestion:** It is hoped that husbands will continue to improve their understanding and involvement in supporting exclusive breastfeeding.

**Keywords:** Booklet; Exclusive breastfeeding; Husband's support.

### INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) together with the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that breastfeeding plays a vital role in reducing infant mortality and disease, especially in developing countries. Exclusive breastfeeding can prevent up to 90% of child deaths due to diarrhea and acute respiratory infections (Mahadewi & Heryana, 2020).

According to UNICEF the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia remains relatively low, at only 32%. The Ministry of Health of the Republic of

Indonesia also recorded that the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding for six months reached only 32.3%, far below the global average of 38%. Meanwhile, formula milk consumption in Indonesia has significantly increased from 16.7% in 2010 to 27.9% (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Insufficient exclusive breastfeeding contributes to high child mortality rates 45% of deaths are caused by neonatal infections, 30% by diarrhea, and 18% by respiratory infections. Children who are not

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exclusively breastfed are 14 times more likely to die from diarrhea and pneumonia compared to those who are (Ulfah & Nugroho, 2020).

The success of exclusive breastfeeding is influenced by several key factors. These factors can be grouped into three categories: (1) Predisposing factors availability of facilities and infrastructure supporting breastfeeding; (2) Enabling factors encouraging maternal behavior in breastfeeding; and (3) Reinforcing factors environmental support, especially from husbands, which strengthens the mother's commitment to exclusive breastfeeding (Janah & Dewi, 2022). Husband support plays a significant role in the success of breastfeeding mothers. When fathers are actively involved and provide both emotional and physical support, it facilitates smoother production and release of breast milk (Andriani, Satria, & Meiriza, 2025).

Husband support is an external factor that strongly influences mothers' breastfeeding behavior and is one of the most important aspects of exclusive breastfeeding (Istianah, Masrurroh, & Lestari) 2020). Such support has a positive impact on mothers' breastfeeding experience. Husbands provide encouragement so that mothers can give exclusive breast milk optimally. Emotional support from husbands helps mothers feel calm and happy in their role, and can prevent "baby blues syndrome" after childbirth (Rosa, Estiani, Suparno, & Claudia, 2023).

There are five main roles that husbands can perform to support exclusive breastfeeding: knowledge, positive attitude, involvement in decision-

making, practical assistance, and emotional support. Husbands' attitudes both positive and negative strongly affect maternal breastfeeding behavior (Leahy-Warren, Coleman, Bradley, & Mulcahy, 2020).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This was a quantitative study using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. The population included all husbands of breastfeeding mothers at the Cireunghas Health Center, Sukabumi Regency, totaling 30 people. The sample size was determined using total sampling, meaning all members of the population were included as research subjects (n=30).

The inclusion criteria were: (1) husbands of mothers who practice exclusive breastfeeding, (2) living with their wives, and (3) residing permanently within the health center's working area. The sample was divided into two groups: 15 participants in the intervention group (booklet media) and 15 in the control group (no intervention).

The research instrument used was a husband support questionnaire consisting of 20 items measured using a Likert scale. Data were analyzed using univariate methods to describe respondent characteristics and bivariate analysis using a paired t-test (SPSS version 26) to determine differences before and after the intervention.

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Indonesia Maju, No. 2109/Sket/Ka-Dept/RE/UIMA/VII/2025.

**Lia Arianty\*, Rita Ayu Yolandia, Irma Jayatmi**

University of Indonesia Maju

Corresponding author: \*Email: lia.arianty92@gmail.com

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## RESEARCH RESULT

Table 1. Characteristic Respondent (N=30)

| Variable                                           | Result  | p-value |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Age of Husband (n/%)                               |         |         |
| 20-30 years                                        | 8/26.7  |         |
| 31-40 years                                        | 15/50.0 |         |
| >40 years                                          | 7/23.3  |         |
| Education Level (n/%)                              |         |         |
| SD/SMP                                             | 5/16.7  |         |
| SMA/SMK                                            | 17/56.7 |         |
| Perguruan Tinggi                                   | 8/26.6  |         |
| Occupation (n/%)                                   |         |         |
| Labores                                            | 4/13.3  |         |
| Private Employee                                   | 13/43.3 |         |
| Entrepreneur                                       | 9/30.0  |         |
| Others                                             | 4/13.3  |         |
| Experience Receiving Breastfeeding Education (n/%) |         |         |
| Ever                                               | 11/36.7 |         |
| Never                                              | 19/63.3 |         |

The majority of respondents were aged 31–40 years (50%), most had completed high school (56.7%), and most worked as private employees (43.3%), followed by entrepreneurs (30%). The majority (63.3%) had never received breastfeeding education, indicating the need to improve outreach among fathers.

Table 2. Paired T-test

| Variabel                                      | Nilai |       | t       | P-value |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
|                                               | Mean  | SD    |         |         |
| Husband support (pre-post) intervention group | 60.27 | 4,728 | -16.097 | 0.001   |
| Husband support (pre-post) control group      | 37.87 | 2,588 | -16.097 | 0.001   |

The table shows that in the intervention group, the mean score was 60.27 (SD = 4.728), with a significance value of 0.001 (<0.05), indicating a significant difference before and after the booklet intervention. This demonstrates that booklet media significantly increased participants' knowledge/support after the intervention.

In the control group, the mean score was 37.87 (SD = 2.588), also with a significance of 0.001, but the improvement was less substantial compared to the intervention group. These findings confirm that booklet media effectively enhanced husbands' knowledge and support for exclusive breastfeeding.

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## DISCUSSION

The distribution of the 30 respondents in this study shows that the majority of them were in the age range of 31–40 years (50%), with the majority having a final educational level of senior high school or vocational school (56.7%). Based on occupation, most respondents worked as private employees (43.3%), followed by self-employed individuals (30%). In terms of experience receiving education about breastfeeding, most respondents (63.3%) had never received any form of education on this topic. This finding indicates the necessity of enhancing outreach and educational activities related to breastfeeding among husbands.

When observed from the practice of exclusive breastfeeding, out of 30 respondents, 21 (70%) reported that their wives gave exclusive breastfeeding to their babies, while 9 (30%) did not practice exclusive breastfeeding. This data shows that although most respondents had implemented exclusive breastfeeding, there were still one-third of them who had not fully carried out this practice.

The results showed that in the group receiving the booklet intervention, the mean value was 60.27 with a standard deviation of 4.728. The t-count value was -16.097 with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.001 ( $<0.05$ ). This result indicates a significant difference between scores before and after the provision of booklet media. This means that the use of booklet media significantly increased the knowledge and support of respondents after the intervention compared to before receiving the booklet.

Meanwhile, in the control group, the mean value was 37.87 with a standard deviation of 2.588, and the t-count value was -16.097 with a significance (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.001 ( $<0.05$ ). Although there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the control group, the increase was not as high as that in the experimental group.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was a significant improvement in husband support toward exclusive breastfeeding after being given the booklet intervention. Before the intervention, only 40% of husbands supported exclusive breastfeeding, but after the booklet was provided, husband support increased to 100%. This finding proves that providing information through educational media can enhance understanding and foster positive attitudes among husbands regarding the importance of

exclusive breastfeeding.

The educational media that are interesting, easy to understand, and can be accessed independently play an important role in changing individual behavior and attitudes. In this study, the booklet served as an educational medium containing structured and clear information, accompanied by illustrations and explanations that were easy to comprehend. This type of media allows husbands to read, understand, and re-access the information whenever needed, thus increasing their knowledge and awareness of their role in supporting their wives to breastfeed exclusively (Notoatmodjo, 2007).

Moreover, the results of this study align with previous research which states that husband involvement in the breastfeeding process can increase the mother's confidence and strengthen her motivation to provide exclusive breast milk. Emotional and practical support from husbands creates a conducive environment for breastfeeding mothers, thereby increasing the likelihood of success in exclusive breastfeeding programs (Pratiwi, Afrina, & Shifa, 2025).

WHO and UNICEF emphasize that family involvement, especially that of the husband, is crucial in ensuring the success of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant's life. Husbands who understand and support breastfeeding are more likely to help mothers overcome challenges such as fatigue, stress, or low confidence in milk sufficiency, which often cause mothers to discontinue breastfeeding early (World Health Organization, 2018).

In this study, the use of booklet media proved to be a simple yet highly effective intervention in increasing husband involvement. Booklets act as self-learning materials that can be read repeatedly, enabling husbands to recall information about the benefits of breastfeeding, techniques, and how they can contribute. The structured content of the booklet helps husbands understand the health benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, not only for the baby but also for the mother and the family as a whole.

On the other hand, in the control group, although there was a slight increase in husband support from 27% to 33%, this change was relatively small compared to the experimental group. The absence of structured educational intervention led to minimal behavioral changes. This shows that information alone

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is not enough; it must be delivered through engaging and understandable media such as booklets to achieve meaningful behavioral improvement.

This study also supports previous research findings, which found that fathers who receive proper education and guidance during the perinatal period are more likely to become supportive partners and contribute positively to the breastfeeding process (Leahy-Warren et al., 2023). Similar research has also revealed that husband support plays an essential role in the success of breastfeeding, particularly among mothers experiencing difficulties or ineffective breastfeeding (Rosa et al., 2023).

Increasing husband support through educational interventions such as booklets is very important, considering that the husband is the closest figure who can influence the mother's success in providing exclusive breastfeeding, both through emotional, instrumental, and motivational support. The findings of this study are similar to previous research studies that reported that educational programs targeting male partners were able to improve breastfeeding practices (Andrade, Winemiller, Barbosa, Fortunati, Chelazzi, Cincinelli, & Giarrizzo, 2019).

Another study on "Booklet and Support from Husband to Exclusive Breastfeeding" showed similar results, indicating that providing a booklet can improve a husband's knowledge, attitudes, and support for exclusive breastfeeding (Safitri, Hastuti, & Widyasih, 2019). Other research indicates that husband support correlates with breastfeeding self-efficacy in working mothers, which in turn influences the success of exclusive breastfeeding (Annisa, Lestari, & Amir, 2022). Husband support is not merely an additional factor but a crucial determinant of the success of exclusive breastfeeding. The finding that an increase in husband support scores occurred with the booklet intervention suggests that husbands can be directed to become active "support systems" (A'yun & Yuliaswati, 2024).

Booklets, which function as a medium, can increase husbands' support by changing perceptions and internal family norms. When husbands understand the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding and the potential barriers mothers may face, they are more prepared and willing to actively participate in the breastfeeding process. The effect of education on changing husbands' attitudes has also been demonstrated in previous research studies, which

found that education aimed at partners increases mothers' maternal breastfeeding self-efficacy and increases husbands' involvement in supporting the success of exclusive breastfeeding (Abageda, Jena, & Belachew, 2024).

Furthermore, booklets offer advantages over other educational media, such as repeated exposure, the lack of ongoing healthcare provider supervision, and the ease of taking home for discussion with a partner. This aligns with previous systematic reviews that concluded that interventions involving husbands were consistently associated with increased duration and success of exclusive breastfeeding (Zhou, Lu, Qin, Wang, Gao, Li, & Rao, 2024).

The effectiveness of booklets is further enhanced by their accessibility and adaptability to local cultural contexts. Booklets can be written in language relevant to the local culture and include illustrations depicting the husband's role in breastfeeding, making them more easily accepted and understood. Previous research has shown that contextual and culturally based educational media are more effective in increasing husband support because they align with family values and customs (Koksal, Acikgoz, & Cakirli, 2022).

Increasing husbands' support through the use of booklets directly contributes to mothers' motivation to exclusively breastfeed. This is because husbands' support is a crucial psychological and social factor in successful breastfeeding practices (Abageda et al., 2025). Research shows that mothers who feel supported by their husbands have higher motivation, stronger self-confidence, and greater resilience in facing breastfeeding obstacle (Nigussee, Demeke, Bagilkar, Firetsidk, Abageda, & Belachew, 2025).

From a psychological perspective, partner support plays a significant role in shaping a mother's emotional regulation and internal motivation. When a husband consistently encourages and understands the breastfeeding challenges a mother may face, she feels safe, valued, and less alone in the breastfeeding process. This increases a mother's intrinsic motivation to maintain breastfeeding for the full six months (Ayele, Tegegne, & Mekonen, 2025). Husbands who receive education about breastfeeding are more active in helping mothers overcome breastfeeding stress, thus having a positive impact on the continuity of exclusive breastfeeding (Panahi, Fakari, Nazarpour, Lotfi, Rahimizadeh, Nasiri, & Simbar, 2022).

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Educational interventions using booklets are also cost-effective and easy to implement in community health settings such as health centers (puskesmas). The use of this medium can reach husbands who may not have time to attend health counseling sessions due to work or other commitments. Booklets can serve as independent learning materials that can be taken home and shared with other family members, thereby multiplying their impact (Purba, Sandy, Damanik, Purba, & Nainggolan, 2024).

The significant improvement in husband support after the use of booklet media in this study further reinforces the importance of continuous health education for both mothers and fathers. Health workers, especially midwives and community health staff, should involve husbands more actively in maternal and child health programs, particularly in promoting exclusive breastfeeding.

In conclusion, the discussion of this study emphasizes that the booklet medium is an effective educational tool for increasing husbands' knowledge, awareness, and active participation in supporting exclusive breastfeeding. This approach is not only beneficial for the mother and baby but also strengthens family involvement in achieving better maternal and child health outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

There was a significant difference between those who used booklet media and those who did not in increasing husband support for exclusive breastfeeding.

## SUGGESTION

Husbands are encouraged to continuously improve their understanding and active involvement in supporting exclusive breastfeeding by providing emotional support, helping with household chores, and creating a comfortable environment for breastfeeding mothers.

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Lia Arianty\*, Rita Ayu Yolandia, Irma Jayatmi

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