

# Factors Affecting Exclusive Breastfeeding among Nursing Mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**— Successful breast feeding is crucial to the curbing of infant malnutrition and achieving the millennium development and sustainable development goals for reducing child mortality. It was observed by the researchers that there is high increase in mortality rate due to lack of exclusive breastfeeding, as a result of the socio-economic status of the parents. The study investigated socio-economic factors affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti state, Nigeria. Descriptive type of research design was used for the study. The population of this study comprises of nursing mothers attending public health institutions in the four (4) local selected for the study. The sample size of four hundred (400) respondents was used for the study. Multi-staged sampling technique was used, the data gathered from the administered questionnaire was analysed using inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The reliability of the study was ascertained with the coefficient (r) of 1 at 0.05 level of significance. The researchers concluded that level of education, income level and health status after birth are factors affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State. The researchers recommended that nursing mothers should see value in education by creating willingness in the acquisition of information and knowledge that will enable them to practice exclusive breastfeeding effectively, immediate needs and quality care should be acquired within the limit of income of individual nursing mothers at a particular time to encourage mothers, child growth and development, order than running into bankruptcy after birth.

**Index Terms**— Breastfeeding, Exclusive, Infants, Mother, Mortality.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is perhaps the oldest practice in human history. It is the healthiest, simplest and least expensive means of meeting the nutritional needs of newborns and infants. Breast milk contains all essential nutrients – carbohydrates, essential fats, proteins, minerals, and immunological factors – required for the optimal growth and development of infants; hence, it is the ideal meal for them (3).

Exclusive breastfeeding (EB) means that an infant receives only breast milk from his or her mother or a wet nurse, or expressed breast milk, and no other liquids or solids, with the

exception of oral rehydration solution, drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, minerals supplements or medicines. Nkala and Msuya (2011) defined exclusive breastfeeding as a practice whereby the infants receive only breast milk without mixing it with water, other liquids, tea, herbal preparations or food in the first six months of life, with the exception of vitamins, mineral supplements or medicines. Exclusive breastfeeding has been acclaimed to be of immense value to the mother, her child and even the society (2).

Despite the huge benefits of exclusive breastfeeding and efforts by international and national governmental and non-governmental agencies to encourage and support the practice, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding still remained low globally with Nigeria having compliance rate of 13 percent (6). Paradoxically, exclusive breast feeding (EBF), which is one of the major interventions to this social catastrophe which is recommended, free, accessible, sustainable and safe is not far from the reach of many rural women but is being underutilized (7). A large body of evidence demonstrates the benefits of EBF of infant feeding practice for child survival, growth, and development. This is premised on its high immunological, nutritional and hygienic value as compared to other liquids, solids and bottled infant milk formulas. Lack of EBF is associated with high incidences of diarrhoea, pneumonia, bacterial meningitis, bacteraemia, respiratory tract infection, necrotizing enterocolitis and malnutrition. These in turn are responsible for high morbidity and mortality in the lifelong associated with poor school performance, impaired intellectual and social development (8).

Human milk contains numerous components (i.e., proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, and inorganic elements) which provide basic nutrients for infants during the first period of their lives. The qualitative composition of milk components from healthy mothers is similar, but their levels change during lactation stages (4). Low prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding among educated Nigerian mothers might be linked to the current economic hardship in Nigeria that compel mothers to resume full time work shortening duration of breastfeeding (10). Most factors influencing breastfeeding are not constant within and between societies and may vary over the years. For example, it is well known that the mother's level of education appears to be associated to the decision to breastfeed. Different studies have found a direct relationship between level of education and frequency of initiation and continuation of breastfeeding (11).

It was argued that acceptance and practice of exclusive breastfeeding are allegedly low among mothers in the developing world in spite of the increasing efforts towards

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promoting optimal infant feeding. Working women tend to pay less attention to the nutritional development of their children due to the conflicting demands of business, domestic activities and official work (Patel, 2011). It is also noted that the increasing rate of women involvement in economic activities is a major factor that affects women’s ability to complete their six months breastfeeding practice. Despite the benefits and efforts to promote breastfeeding, EBF is sub optimally practiced in many developing countries. Only 35 % of the infants are exclusively breastfed worldwide. In sub Saharan Africa which has high rates of infants and child mortality only 33 % of infants are exclusively breastfed (4). Several factors have been found to be associated with EBF, in developed countries; social class, level of education, age of the mother, lack of parental support, living with partner, employment status, parity, place of delivery, income, health status after delivery and smoking during pregnancy (1).

Similarly in developing countries, socio demographic factors like maternal age, education, employment, residency, cultural and religious practices, living arrangement, antenatal care practices, home delivery, professional assistance at birth were associated with suboptimal breastfeeding practices (9). But the way the factors influence EBF practice differ in direction from one setting to the other, necessitating the need for setting specific data. The researchers observed that some nursing mothers who suffer complications at birth do not breastfeed their baby’s very well, forgetting the fact that it can also lead to complications on the part of the baby. It was noted by the researchers that due to low level of income of the nursing mothers and the need to get back to work as soon as possible tends to make them bow to the suggestions of taking their baby to nanny, making them forgetting the need for the baby to be exclusively breastfed. It was on this note that the researchers tends to investigate the socio economic factors affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State.

**A. Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the study is to investigate the factors affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the following:

- i. if level of education will be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
- ii. if income of the mother will be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
- iii. if health status of the mother will be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**B. Hypotheses**

**Table 1: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing level of education as a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Cal	F-Tab	Sig.
Between Groups	43.008	1	43.008	310.268	4.860	.000
Within Groups	55.169	398	.139			
Total	98.178	399				

**P < 0.05 (Significant)**

*Source: Field Survey (2019)*

The following null hypotheses were formulated based on the objectives of the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. Level of education will not significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
- ii. Income of the mothers will not significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
- iii. Health status of the mothers will not significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**II. METHODOLOGY**

The researchers used survey design of the descriptive type of research for the study. This is because it gave the researchers the opportunity to elicit the needed information from the respondent. The area of the study was Ekiti State. The population of the study was restricted to nursing mothers in the study area. The respondents were workers of government owned establishments such as, state hospital, local government council, public school teachers etc.

The sample size of four hundred (400) respondents was used for the study. Multi stage sampling was used for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select four (4) local governments; (Ado-Ekiti, Ikere-Ekiti, Ikole-Ekiti and Ise/Orun) out the sixteen (16) local government in the state simple random sampling technique was used to select four (4) health centres in the selected local government for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured close ended questionnaire which was constructed by the researcher to obtain information from the respondents for the purpose of the study. The face, content and structure validation of the instrument was done by giving the draft of the questionnaire to experts. The reliability coefficient (r) of 1.00 obtained was and subjected to further analysis with the use of Spearman Brown's formula to determine and ascertain the value of (r) at 0.05 level of significance. Inferential statistics of One-way Anova was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**A. Results**

Hypothesis 1: Level of education will not significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State.

The result presented in table 1 revealed that F-Cal (310.268),  $df = (1, 398)$ ,  $P < 0.05$  at 0.05 level of significance was significant. This led to the rejection of hypothesis one. Hence, level of education will significantly be a factor

affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Income of the mothers will not significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State.

**Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Income of the mother as a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mother**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	F-Tab	Sig.
Between Groups	8.272	1	8.272	47.280	4.860	.000
Within Groups	69.638	398	.175			
Total	77.910	399				

**P < 0.05 (Significant)**

*Source: Field Survey (2019)*

The result presented in table 8 revealed that F-Cal (47.280),  $df = (1, 398)$ ,  $P < 0.05$  at 0.05 level of significance was significant. This led to the rejection of hypothesis two. Hence, level of income of the mother will significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Hypothesis 3: Health status of the mother will not significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mother in Ekiti State.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the correlation between health status of the mother and exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mother**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	F-Tab	Sig.
Between Groups	93.666	1	93.666	194.83	4.860	.000
Within Groups	3.932	398	.010			
Total	97.598	399				

**P < 0.05 (Significant)**

*Source: Field Survey (2019)*

The result presented in table 9 revealed that F-Cal (194.813),  $df = (1, 398)$ ,  $P < 0.05$  at 0.05 level of significance was significant. This led to the rejection of hypothesis three. Hence, health status of the mother will significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mother in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The finding supported the view of Njai and Dixey (2013). In their study they found out that low income reduced EBF due to women's lack of access to food for themselves and emotional and physical stress. Also the finding supported the view of (10) who opined that low prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding among educated Nigerian mothers might be linked to the current economic hardship in Nigeria that compel mothers to resume full time work shortening duration of breastfeeding. Certain socio-economic factors such as the lack of suitable facilities outside the home, inconveniences, conflicts at work, family pressure and ignorance were found to adversely affect the willingness of women to practice exclusive breastfeeding (12).

**B. Discussion**

The finding of the study showed that level of education will significantly be a factor affecting Exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti state. The finding of the study goes in line with the assertion of Ibe, et.al, (6) who asserted that income level could contribute to the early discontinuation of breastfeeding as low income women were likely to have unplanned pregnancy which was associated with low breastfeeding rate and highly educated women were more likely to have access to information that would resolve breastfeeding difficulties instead of discontinuing breastfeeding. The study also goes in line with the study done by (14) it was revealed that mothers with college education started complementary food at correct time compared to those mother with low education. Low education level also can affect mother's ability to take care of their child in appropriate way. However, most mothers in developing countries were still not practicing exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months (11). The study also supported the assertion of Colodro-Conde et al. (2011) who opined that women with fewer school years, breastfeeding duration reduced very early in the period studied and remained at low levels for the rest of the duration.

Finally, the study revealed that health status of the mother will significantly be a factor affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The finding supported the view of Carlos and Katia (2013) who opined that mothers experience significant health changes during the postpartum period, including fatigue, headache, dyspareunia, haemorrhoids and pain at multiple sites, as this affect their level of commitment to exclusive breastfeeding. Many nursing mothers with history of diseases or ailment and postpartum depression find it very difficult to breastfed their child exclusively. A percentage of mothers also experience psychological distress and dysphoria. These dysfunctions are often regarded as transient and inconsequential. Yet, these changes are associated with significant functional impairment and poor maternal emotional status. Human milk is species

Furthermore, the study revealed that level of income will

specific, having evolved over time to optimize the growth and development of the baby and young child. Breastfeeding is an integral part of the reproductive process with important implications for the health of the mother and baby (Fraser, Cooper & Nolte, 2009).

**C. Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that level of education, income level of the mother and health status of the mother after birth are factors affecting exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State.

**D. Recommendations**

The researchers recommended that nursing mothers should see value in education by creating willingness in the acquisition of information and knowledge that will enable them to practice exclusive breastfeeding effectively. Immediate needs and quality care should be acquired within the limit of income of individual nursing mothers at a particular time to encourage mothers, child growth and development, order than running into bankruptcy after birth.

Lastly it was recommended that diseases and illness that may limit the performance of nursing mothers to carry out effective exclusive breastfeeding should be diagnosed and treated immediately. Nursing mothers who have the history of a particular disease or postpartum depression should endeavor to notify the doctors in charge as his will enable them to know the right step to take after delivery

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