

Psycho-Physiological Coherence of Breastfeeding among Women in Nigeria

¹Ogunlade Joseph Olurotimi and ²Odu Bimbola Kemi

¹Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education,
Islamic University, Mbale, Uganda

²Department of Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract: The study investigated the psycho-physiological coherence of breastfeeding among women in South West Nigeria. The research design used was the descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for the study was made up of women with breastfeeding experience. The sample consisted of 1,385 women selected from three states in South West Nigeria. Multistage random sampling technique was used. The research instrument used was titled Psycho-Physiological Coherence of Breastfeeding among Women Questionnaire (PPCBWQ). The instrument was valid and reliable; it was construct validated and a split half reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The reason behind this study was to expose mothers to the realistic expectations of their physique or bodily changes to support the decision to breastfeed and avoid unnecessary supplementation. From literature, it was observed that despite exclusive breastfeeding being the optimal way of feeding an infant, the percentage of mothers who exclusively breastfed drop from over 75% who initiate to <11% at 6 months, well short of the Healthy People 2010 initiative goal of 50% of infants being exclusively breastfed for 6 months. The result of the finding clearly shows that more of the breastfeeding activities took place during the night compared to day time as frequency of breastfeeding increased in the night. This is so because mothers do work during the day. It was also discovered that 725 out of 736 respondents who had knowledge of psycho physiological coherence breastfeed their babies until satisfaction level is reached.

Key words: Psycho-physiological, coherence, breastfeeding, women, South West Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Emphasis on psychological human well-being as a panacea or a strong constituent in human health could not be under estimated. No wonder Hull and Hull (1977) compares individual well-being with a modest house built by using boards, nails and corrugated iron with emphasis on different parts often supported by four corner posts. Similarly our health is shaped by well numerous influences but is related to a four corner influences. Such as:

- Behavior (psychological)
- Environment
- Medical care
- Biological make up (physiological)

As it is possible to strengthen your house by upgrading the quality of the post so our health condition or quality of well being can be better improved through those influencing factors. Out of these factors the

psychological which is a product of our behavior if accorded necessary attentions could enhance coherence with biological condition of breastfeeding women for the purpose of this study would no doubt be a strong factor enhancing the good health condition of women and their babies.

While physiological research and practice had focused on human well-being through the elimination of negative emotions, not much study investigated the effects of positive emotions on physical and psychological functioning. Studies especially of the breastfeeding mothers showed that positive emotions had significant positive effects on women well-being.

It was observed that physiological coherence is associated with wave like pattern in heart rhythms increased heart/brain syndrome entrainment between diverse physiological systems. It was also observed that although physiological coherence could occur spontaneously. It was difficult to sustain such coherence. Researchers of the breastfeeding women convincingly demonstrated that active sustainance and maintenance of

a positive emotion can produce extended periods of psychological coherence in women's well being (Bagwell, 2007).

Meanwhile, it can be concluded that when positive emotion were used to drive coherence, it allowed coherence emergency naturally, most likely to change the afferent information flowing from the heart to the respiratory and other centres. It was also observed that while physiological coherence is driven by positive emotion, the real phenomenon taking place is psycho physiological coherence, therefore, psycho physiological coherence is an internal mode which has far reaching implications for breastfeeding woman health and effectiveness.

These has been a lot of agitation and worries in the mind of breastfeeding women about their ability and sustainability of breastfeeding due to their presumed health status. Specifically, there are complains about whether their breasts could produce enough milk to feed their babies. Probably unknowing to them that during pregnancy the breast goes through distinct changes as they prepare for nourishing a new born baby. Without controversy, nature itself has natural provision that has been put in place in a young woman long before she prepares to procreate. At conception, the women body is naturally active to receive and feed an infant that is yet about 8 months to come, thus, the first physical sign in a young lady who is newly pregnant of a baby is the enlargement (engorgement) of the mammary gland, preparation to lactation at birth so as to feed the expected baby and nurse it to life when it finally arrives. This engorgement sign becomes noticeable around the 6th week of pregnancy or 2 weeks after amenorrhea (loss of menstruation). This is due to the growth and enlargement of the milk duct and the alveoli in the breast. This enlargement is due to the influence of estrogens and performance for preparation of the breast for all the important nursing care of the mother. Shortly before delivery the levels of estrogens and progesterone fall in order to stimulate the pituitary gland produce lactogenic hormone which act on the acini's cell in the breast to start the production of milk. Within 2 or 3 days after a woman might have given birth the breasts begin to produce milk and that when the baby sucks at the nipple the pituitary is stimulated to produce another hormone called oxytocin which leads to the injection of the milk from the breast. UNICEF explain that in the beginning of breastfeeding or the point of initiation the experience may strange, tingling and exciting but in a matter of time mother and baby will surely find a comfortable and enjoyable routine naturally beneficial to both.

The report by Ogunlade alleviated the complaints of breastfeeding women about insufficient breast milk due to issues like breast size and shapes as just a common bodily worries that has no direct effect in the biological functions of the system, he explained that at puberty the female breast under the influence of hormones called oestrogen starts showing female contour with the development of secondary tissue and are richly supply with blood. The breast develops in different sizes and shapes just as individuals different from person to person. The following are the contradictions to woman health in a few cases have been agreed upon that exceptions be granted to breastfeeding: cases of HIV infections in mother, some medical reason where the mother is on a particular drug, cases of tuberculosis, psychiatric disorders, cases of diabetes mellitus were stillbirth or neonatal death occurs anathesis (Kong and Lee, 2004).

UNICEF explains that breast-milk is the best possible food and drink for babies in the first 4-6 months of life. World Health Assembly reported that during the first 4-6 months of life, no food or liquid other than breast milk, not even water is required to meet the normal infant nutritional requirements. Series of researches and write up by individuals, corporate bodies, expert groups and international organizations of repute had done a lot of work on breastfeeding. Notable among them is the group called bid six viz: United Nations Organization (UNO), United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO) and Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI). They have all come to the agreement that breastfeeding is the natural food and therefore unparalleled source of feeding for an infant.

Hence, it is necessary that mothers should focus their attentions on the desirability of good health for themselves and their babies with reference to several benefits of breastfeeding to them and their infant as this study will find a balanced coherence in the psycho physiological health status of a breastfeeding woman to enhance or boost her well being and that of their babies.

Statement of the problem: The researcher observed that the worries and agitation in the mood of women about their presumed health status and bodily situation most especially their size of breast condition of the nipples of body physique seems to be affecting their decision to breastfeed and possibly their duration of breastfeeding. Meanwhile, Kong and Lee (2004) asserted that every

women has the ability and the potentiality to breastfeed their babies as long as they want. It is against this background that the researcher intend to specifically investigate the extent of the psycho physiological worries on the breastfeeding women with a view of finding a balance between their physiological and psychological dispositions to ensure a desirable behaviour that will enable them to breastfeed appropriately to realize the gains and benefits attached to breastfeeding in all ramifications.

Research question and hypothesis: One general question and one hypothesis were raised and generated to pilot the study.

- What is the frequency of breastfeeding among women in Nigeria?
- There is no significant relationship between women’s knowledge of psycho physiological coherence and their intensity of breastfeeding

Purpose of the study: The reason behind this study is to expose mothers to the realistic expectations of their physique or bodily changes to support the decision to breastfeed and avoid unnecessary supplementation. Specifically the objective was to determine the level and to alleviate the bodily worries against frequent breastfeeding pattern adopted by South West Nigeria women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design used was the descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for the study was made up of women with breastfeeding experience. The sample consisted of 1,385 women selected from three states in South West Nigeria. Multistage random sampling technique was used. The research instrument used was titled Psycho-Physiological Coherence of Breastfeeding among Women Questionnaire (PPCBWQ). The research instrument consisted of two sections A and B. Section A consist of social characteristic of the respondent such as religion, sex of their children, age, location of residence, educational qualifications and some background information such as birth interval, method of feeding. Section B consists of 25 items on psycho-physiological coherence of breastfeeding among women. The instrument was construct validated and a split half reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. Research assistants and the researcher administered the questionnaire. The data was analyzed

using descriptive statistic such as frequency, percentage, chart and inferential statistic such as χ^2 -test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is the frequency of breastfeeding among women in South West Nigeria?: To answer the question, responses on items 15 and 16 of the questionnaire which depicted the frequency of breastfeeding during the day and night were use. The result is shown in Table 1.

The result of Table 1 and Fig. 1 reveal that 20 (1.6%) of the total sample breastfeed their babies ranging from 1-5 times during the day, 318 (25.4%) breastfeed between 6 and 10 times, 125 (10%) between 11 and 15 times, 284 (22.7%) breastfeed between 16 and 20 times while 503 (40.2%) were not certain about the frequency of breastfeeding during the day time.

Responses on frequency of breastfeeding during the night by women in South West Nigeria showed that 539 (43.1%) of the subjects put their babies to breast milk between 1 and 5 times, 107 (8.6%) breastfeed between 6 and 10 times in the night, 385 (30.8%) had their frequency to breastfeeding between 16 and 20 times in the night while only 96 (7.7%) could not ascertain their frequency of breastfeeding in the night.

Table 1: Frequency of breastfeeding among women in South West Nigeria

Periods	Frequency of breastfeeding	Frequency	Percentage
Day	Not sure	503	40.2
	About 1-5 times	20	1.6
	About 6-10 times	318	25.4
	About 11-15 times	125	10.0
	About 16-20 times	284	22.7
Night	Not sure	96	7.7
	About 1-5 times	539	43.1
	About 6-10 times	107	8.6
	About 11-15 times	385	30.8
	About 16-20 times	123	9.8

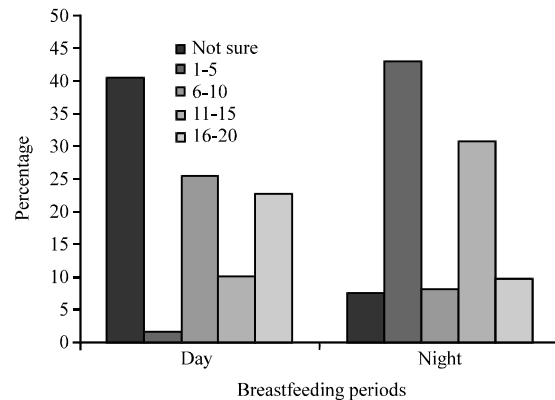


Fig. 1: Frequency of breastfeeding behaviour among women in South West Nigeria

Table 2: Chi-square (χ^2) analysis showing the relationship between knowledge of psycho physiological coherence and intensity of feeding

Frequency	Have knowledge of psycho-physiological coherence of breastfeeding		Total	df	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{table}
	Yes	No				
About 5 min	32 (31.4)	13 (2.6)	34 (34)	4	294.358	7.81
About 10 min	67 (108.1)	51 (9.9)	118 (118)			
About 15 min	294 (286.9)	17 (24.1)	311 (311)			
About 20 min	46 (47)	5 (4)	51 (51)			
Until baby shows satisfaction	725 (678.9)	11 (57.1)	736 (736)			
Total	1153 (1153)	97 (97)	1250 (1250)			

p<0.05

The result clearly shows that more of the breastfeeding activities took place during the night compared to day time as frequency of breastfeeding increased in the night. This is so because mothers do work during the day.

There is no significant relationship between women's knowledge of psycho physiological coherence and their intensity of breastfeeding.

Analyzing this hypothesis involves cross tabulating intensity of breastfeeding of those who had knowledge of psycho physiological coherence of breastfeeding and those who do not. This was subjected to Chi-square (χ^2) analysis. The result is presented in Table 2.

The Chi-square (χ^2) reveals that χ^2_{cal} (294.358) is greater than χ^2_{table} (7.81) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between women knowledge of her physique and bodily changes and their intensity of breastfeeding.

Table 2 shows that 725 out of 736 respondents who had knowledge of psycho physiological coherence breastfeed their babies until satisfaction level is reached. In contrast, 51 out of 118 respondents who lack knowledge of psycho physiological coherence breastfeed their babies for about 10 min.

Moreover, it is revealed that the frequency of breastfeeding is very high among women in South West Nigeria that is women provide virtually all the baby's nutrition from the breast. On the average most of the breastfeeding activities were done in the night. This may not be so strange since most of our women are engaged in different work or activity during the day which might not allow them to breastfeed properly during the day. Therefore, the night could be a better time even when the mother is asleep some baby do suck till they slept off. But some were not sure about the number of times they do it in the night and during the days. This could mean that these set of women are those who saw breastfeeding should be relegated to the rural women or those who cannot afford to buy commercial milk.

The finding of an aspect of this study which reported a highly favourable attitude to full breastfeeding is supported by Warner and DeFleur (1969) who indicated that children were exclusively breastfed. This view was equally corroborated by the submission by Ayadi (1994)

and Pittard (1979) when they reported that breast milk is the best possible food and drink for babies in the first 4-6 months of life and universally breast milk is naturally accepted as food for babies because cow milk is not suitable to human infant digestive tract and hence, it has to be diluted and made into formula.

It was discovered that there exist a significant relationship between knowledge of psycho physiological coherence of breastfeeding and intensity of breastfeeding among women. This could mean that the effort of agencies like World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), World Health Organization (WHO), United International Children Education Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the rest are worthwhile. In line with these findings, it becomes imperative that more effort must be geared towards encouraging women to see the importance of breastfeeding to the health of their baby and themselves.

Caldwell and Caldwell (1997) emphasized that giving information on reproductive attitudes and motivation may be helpful in understanding the factors that affects breastfeeding and fertility. It is very clear that women have a very high knowledge of basic concept of breastfeeding and child spacing.

CONCLUSION

The finding of the research shown that women have a positive attitude towards breastfeeding. Bodily worries with regard to size and shape of their breast were not a barrier to their frequency and intensity of breastfeeding. Conclusively women in South West Nigeria appreciates the importance of breastfeeding to their health and that of their babies and were therefore, able to endure the pains and inconveniency it may cause them thus they breastfed their babies very well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was therefore, recommended that the advocacy and campaign for full breastfeeding by government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) be stepped up in encouraging women to breastfeed exclusively and appropriately.

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