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Theory of Planned Behavior: Examining Breastfeeding Intentions and Behaviors

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Background
- Breastfeeding is the ideal infant nutrition, providing benefits to both infants and mothers.
- Global health organizations recommend that infants are exclusively breastfed for 6 months.
- According to the CDC (2017), 23.9% of mothers are exclusively breastfeeding for the first 6 months in Michigan.

Purpose
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between antecedents in the Theory of Planned Behavior and breastfeeding intentions with breastfeeding at 60 days postpartum.

Research Questions
1. Is there a relationship between antecedents (maternal attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) and maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months?  
2. Is there a relationship between maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months and actual breastfeeding behavior at 60 days postpartum?

Theoretical Framework
According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, a mother’s breastfeeding intention is directly related to the following antecedents: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Methods
Design: Secondary analysis of a larger prospective descriptive study
Recruitment: Convenience and snowball sampling through social media, hospitals, and local businesses.
Procedure: 3 Questionnaires: baseline, 10 and 60 days postpartum
- Baseline: Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward breastfeeding (Likert-scales)
- 10 and 60 days: Breastfeeding behaviors
Analysis: Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21 software.
- Descriptive statistics
- Spearman’s Rho: Antecedents vs Intention
- Fisher’s Exact Test: Intention vs Breastfeeding Behavior

Limitations
- Limited diversity of participants
- Convenience sampling
- Maternal self reported data

Nursing Implications
- Implement nursing interventions to foster positive breastfeeding attitudes among breastfeeding mothers
- Establish supportive measures to promote perceived behavioral control among breastfeeding mothers

Table: Participant Demographics (N=52)
- Mean age: 31 years
- Bachelor’s educated: 51.9% (n=27)
- Employed full time: 44.2% (n=23)
- Multipara: 78% (n=41)
- Married: 96% (n=50)

Breastfeeding Intentions
- Extremely likely to give breastfeeding a try= 96.2% (n= 50)
- Extremely likely to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months= 76.9% (n= 40)
- Extremely likely to exclusively breastfeed at 6 months= 65.4% (n= 34)

Breastfeeding Behaviors at Day 60 postpartum
- Any breastfeeding= 98% (n= 51)
- Exclusive breastfeeding= 90.4% (n= 47)

Results & Conclusions

**Correlations**
- There was a significant positive correlation between attitudes and intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months, r(52)= .452, p<.05.
- There was a significant positive correlation between perceived behavioral control and maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months, r(52)= .330, p<.05.
- There was no significant correlation between subjective norms and maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months, r(52)= .242, p=.09.
- There was no significant relationship between maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months and exclusive breastfeeding at 60 days postpartum, x²=2.70, p=.23.

**Theoretical Results**
- Attitude vs Perceived Behavioral Control
- Subjective Norm vs Intention
- Perceived Behavioral Control vs Intentions
- Attitudes vs Intentions
- Correlations: Intention vs Breastfeeding Behavior

**Recruitment:**
- Convenience and snowball sampling through social media, hospitals, and local businesses.

**Participant Demographics**
- Marital Status:
  - Single
  - Married
  - Living with partner

- Household Income:
  - Less than 10k
  - 10-15k
  - 15-20k
  - 20-25k
  - 25-30k
  - 30-35k
  - 35-40k
  - 40-45k
  - 45-50k

**Methods**
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