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## Positive Affirmations Affected the Postpartum Blues Mental Health



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### Abstract

Indonesia is currently being hit by the Covid-19 virus, while the incidence of postpartum blues is increasing, one of the influencing factors is the decline in mental health and perceived social support. The objective of the research was to prove the effect of positive affirmations on mental health, perceived social support for postpartum blues mothers. This was analytic research with true experimental method, with randomized controlled, pretest-posttest design with control group. The number of samples was 40 respondents; 20 intervention respondents and 20 control respondents. The intervention group was given positive affirmation videos for 10 minutes, 5 times every day. The data obtained from the questionnaire. The analysis used to assess the variables was a paired sample test. To assess the differences in the two groups using the Independent T-test. The result showed the improvement in mental health before the intervention was 28.3 this value included weight. After the intervention was given, it was 13.3 in the normal category. The increase in perceived social support, before the intervention was given, was 24.7 the value was included in the low category, after being given the intervention, it was 38.4 in the medium category. The p-value before and after the positive affirmation technique treatment has a p-value <0.05, so there is a difference after being given positive affirmations, namely increasing mental health and perceived social support. Giving positive affirmations can improve mental health and perceived social support in postpartum blues mothers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mental health after childbirth is very important because it can affect the mother. After giving birth, the mother will experience major changes, namely changes in roles and psychological changes (Gurnita et al., 2020). Some mothers who cannot adjust to these changes will experience psychological problems and disorders, one of these psychological disorders is postpartum blues (Palupi, 2020; Rahayu, 2020). Postpartum blues is a problem that must be addressed. Postpartum blues can start from the first day postpartum and can last up to 10 days or several weeks postpartum (Rezaie-Keikhaie et al., 2020). 50% - 80% of postpartum mothers can experience postpartum blues after giving birth. 10-15% of them do not get treatment so they will tend to develop postpartum depression to postpartum psychosis (Ristanti & Masita, 2020). Most mothers do not show symptoms of depression, because they are afraid of being considered unable to care for their babies. Mothers only checked with health workers by talking about disturbing physical symptoms and only reporting a little depression. If the mother experiences postpartum blues and is not treated, it will result in postpartum depression. Mothers who experience postpartum blues have no known exact cause, but the most certain cause is hormonal changes after giving birth, so mothers are more sensitive in carrying out their roles (Rezaie-Keikhaie K, Arbabshastan ME & Amirshahi M, 2020).

Indonesia is currently being hit by the Covid-19 virus. So there is a change in policy. This pandemic is a non-natural disaster that has been determined by the world, including Indonesia. MMR and IMR are still a challenge under normal conditions, especially during a pandemic like this, resulting in an increase in morbidity and mortality due to limited maternal and neonatal services. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused almost restrictions on health services both in terms of access and quality, including maternal and neonatal restrictions, even mothers are afraid of health services (Kementerian Kesehatan, 2020). So that these conditions create psychological problems for postpartum mothers, which can cause stress and worry (Nanjundaswamy et al., 2020).

Stress in postpartum blues mothers is a condition caused by psychological pressure so that the body is disturbed by changes that occur including

physical, mental, social, and psychological conditions. Research conducted by Baran et al., 2021 that postpartum mothers during the covid-19 pandemic had different stress levels, obtained 38.46% with mild levels, 20% with moderate levels, 12.31% with severe levels, and heavy stress 29.23%. This is because during the pandemic there were restrictions on health services (Baran et al., 2021, p. 5). The results of research from Perzow et al., 2021 showed an increase in stress during the pandemic, from 15.5% to 35% (Perzow et al., 2021). Hormones produced during childbirth include adrenaline, non-adrenaline, and cortisol. High levels of catecholamines and cortisol during labor are associated with maternal anxiety about pain. Increased adrenaline and cortisol can increase stress (Musfiroh et al., 2023).

One of the factors that influence the postpartum blues is social support, because social support is one of the keys to a mother's happiness. Building social relationships is a lifelong task. One of the supports, perceived social support is support that is believed to be available to individuals or called perceived social support, which refers to what is perceived or realized that is present when needed. Social support is especially influential in maintaining the mother's mental health condition, and can increase the mother's ability to cope with stressful situations (Peter et al., 2017). When perceived social support is high, eating can improve mental health than receiving social support regardless of whether the perception is true or not (Grey et al., 2020).

A positive affirmation is a positive sentence composed in thought or in writing that can be spoken for others, it can also be for ourselves, so as to improve our ability to improve mental health. Positive affirmations can make you feel better (Li et al., 2020). Positive affirmations are empathy for oneself, because positive affirmations emphasize skills for positive thinking, affirming thoughts, increasing feelings, self-esteem, hopes, and self-esteem (Paul & Devi, 2021). Other benefits include growing self-confidence, improving body health, keeping away from stress, providing self-comfort, and making ourselves happier (E. P. Rahayu & Rizki, 2020). Based on the above background, the researcher wants to examine "The Effect of Positive Affirmations on Mental Health, Perceived Social Support in Postpartum Blues Mothers".

## METHOD

This research was analytical research with a true experiment method and a pretest-posttest design with control group. In this research, a cluster random sampling technique was used, namely taking samples by grouping them by randomizing the groups. This research was conducted at the Community Health Center in Demak Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The population in this study were 76 postpartum blues mothers. The researchers carried out clustering because the research area coverage was very wide, so the first step was to randomly determine the community health centers in the Demak Regency area on a random basis, namely by making a lottery. Then, after obtaining the population, randomization was carried out to take samples. The research sample consisted of 40 respondents divided into 20 interventions and 20 controls. The intervention group was given a 10-minute positive affirmation video 5 times every day. In this research, cluster random sampling technique was used. Samples were taken based on the inclusion criteria, namely postpartum blues mothers on days 1-14 who did not have congenital diseases and the exclusion criteria were normal postpartum mothers, namely mothers who took antidepressant medication. In this study, stress measurements were carried out before being given positive affirmation videos in the intervention group and control group. In the morning, the intervention group was given a

video containing positive affirmations every morning for 5 times and then their stress level was measured.

The instruments used were respondent characteristic sheets, postpartum blues (EPDS), 21 Item Mental Health Scale (DASS-21), Perceived social support (MSPSS). The DASS 21 questionnaire has a high validity value of 0.71 and a reliability value of 0.93 (Zhang et al., 1996). The DASS 21 questionnaire categories were divided into normal, mild stress, moderate stress, severe stress, and very heavy stress. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) questionnaire developed by Zimet et al (1998) consists of 3 items, namely the support of friends, family, and closest people. This study uses a questionnaire that has been translated into Indonesian. It was conducted at the State University of Jakarta which was conducted on student X with a total of 112 respondents with a Cronbach alpha of 0.81, 0.82, 0.75 to family, friends, and significant others (Dambi et al., 2018). Statistical analysis to determine the effectiveness of the intervention the effect of positive affirmations on mental health and perceived social support, the statistical analysis used was the paired sample test and the independent T-test for normally distributed data and the Wilcoxon test if the data was homogeneous and the Mann-Whitney data was not homogeneous.

## RESULT

Based on table 1, respondents are highly educated (12.5%), working respondents (50%), primiparous (50%), high blood pressure (45%). The experimental group and the control group had the same level of education ( $p=0.101$ ), parity ( $p=0.851$ ), occupation ( $p=0.371$ ), and blood pressure ( $p=0.177$ ). While in table 2 it is found that the pre-test results show that the two groups have similarities in stress levels, perceived social support before the intervention.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents Characteristics

Respondents Characteristics		Experimental		Control		P value*
		N	%	N	%	
Education	Higher	3	15	2	10	0,101
	Middle	9	45	9	45	
	Basic	8	40	9	45	
Working Status	Working	12	60	8	40	0,851
	Not Working	8	40	12	60	
Parity	Primipara	9	45	9	45	0,371
	Multipara	11	55	11	55	
Blood pressure	Hypertension	10	50	8	40	0.177
	Normal	10	50	12	60	

\*Lavene Test

Table 2 Comparison of The Average Stress Score, Perceived Social Support in The Postpartum Blues Before and After The Intervention

Time		Pre-Test	Post-Test	P value <sup>2</sup> (within group)	$\Delta$ Pre-Post-Test
Variables	Group	mean $\pm$ SD	mean $\pm$ SD		mean $\pm$ SD
Mental Health	Experimental	28,3 $\pm$ 3,43	13,3 $\pm$ 3,19	0.000 <sup>1</sup>	15,0 $\pm$ 4,11
	Control	27,0 $\pm$ 3,60	16,5 $\pm$ 3,72	0.000 <sup>1</sup>	10,5 $\pm$ 3,20
P value (between group)		0,269 <sup>2</sup>	0,000 <sup>2</sup>		0,000 <sup>1</sup>
Perceived Social Support	Experimental	24,7 $\pm$ 4,86	38,4 $\pm$ 4,61	0.000 <sup>1</sup>	13,7 $\pm$ 5,95
	Control	23,7 $\pm$ 4,50	35,1 $\pm$ 3,81	0.018 <sup>1</sup>	11,4 $\pm$ 5,47
P value <sup>1</sup> (between group)		0,504 <sup>2</sup>	0,018 <sup>2</sup>		0,211 <sup>2</sup>

#### 1 Independent T test 2 paired T-test

Based on table 2 on the mental health variable, the mean difference in the intervention group was 15.0 while in the control group it was 10.5. In the intervention group and the control group, the p-value was 0.000 before and after the intervention was given. based on the Independent T-Test test, it was found that the p-value on the mental health variable was 0.000. In the perceived social support variable, the mean difference in the intervention group was 13.7 while in the control group it was 11.4. In the intervention group and the control group, the p-value was 0.000 before and after the intervention was given. Based on the Independent T-Test test, it was found that the p-value on the mental health variable was 0.018. Measurements in the intervention group and control group decreased, the intervention group decreased more than the control group.

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that postpartum blues mothers who take part in positive affirmation programs delivered through 10-minute videos every day for 5 times in the morning can reduce stress and cortisol hormone levels, as well as increase perceived social support for postpartum blues mothers. The postpartum period is the period after the birth of the placenta until the reproductive organs return to their pre-pregnancy state which lasts for 6 weeks or 40 days (Walyani & Endang Purwoastuti, 2017). During the postpartum period, there will be role and psychological changes, some mothers who cannot adjust to these changes will experience problems, one of which is postpartum blues (Rahayu, 2020). Postpartum blues is a condition of mild depression that is common, and occurs after giving birth until the fourteenth day, this condition will recover spontaneously but if the symptoms of the postpartum blues persist or become worse, it is necessary to watch out because it can lead to more severe depression to postpartum psychosis<sup>21</sup>. Postpartum blues is a condition of mild depression that is common, and occurs after giving birth until the fourteenth day, this condition will recover spontaneously but if the symptoms of the postpartum blues persist or become worse, it is necessary to watch out because it can lead to more severe

depression to postpartum psychosis (Ikatan Bidan Indonesia, 2018).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, postpartum mothers are vulnerable to stress. Mothers who gave birth during the COVID-19 pandemic showed an increase in trauma and stress compared to mothers who gave birth before the pandemic (Manuela et al., 2021). Stress in postpartum blues mothers is a condition due to psychological pressure so that the body is disturbed by changes that occur including physical, mental, social, and psychological conditions. Stress in postpartum mothers will affect the baby, mother's mental health, and marital relations, while the hormones progesterone, estrogen, endorphins, prolactin, cortisol will change so that if anxiety is not handled it will result in postpartum blues (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2019). This research is in line with previous research that positive affirmations can reduce anxiety, stress, and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic, this is because positive affirmations can give you a better feeling (Li et al., 2020). Positive affirmations are self-affirmation by repeating repeated sentences into the subconscious mind that reflect positive values and beliefs, so as to reduce stress (Saleha et al., 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, stress and depression in mothers increased compared to before

the pandemic. Social support or perceived social support can have an effect in reducing stress, depression, and mood disorders. Mothers who have low social support during the COVID-19 pandemic will be vulnerable to stress, depression, and high psychological pressure (Harrison et al., 2021). Based on research conducted by Peggy, Annette, and Liz, it was found that social support from family, friends, other people can reduce stress and depression in mothers who experience postpartum depression. self-support, anxiety and mental health needs are met (O'Neill et al., 2019). Previous research has stated that social support can reduce stress and depression in postpartum mothers because the belief in being a mother and being able to care for their baby is obtained from social support. One of the mechanisms of depression, stress is the tendency of individuals to process information negatively which leads to depressive beliefs about themselves, the future, and the world. Perceived social support is needed because symptoms of depression or postpartum blues occur at the highest 3 weeks after giving birth, therefore the skills and abilities of mothers are recognized by others by providing social support from family, friends, and others (Fitria et al., 2020).

Positive affirmations can be done quickly and effectively, this can reach the subconscious mind so that it can repeat thoughts and can eliminate negative thoughts. Positive affirmations are able to affect the work of the parasympathetic nervous system which can protect from the effects of electrical stabilization in the myocardium by increasing adrenergic tone which can reduce stress. Relaxation of the mind as a physiological response will affect the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and the sympathetic-adrenal-medullary (SAM) axis by decreasing cortisol secretion in the adrenal cortex and reducing the release of catecholamines through sympathetic fibers. on the medullary adrenal sympathetic axis. Decreased levels of cortisol and catecholamines will reduce stress, stress on the heart, induce an increase in plasma volume, and increase mean heart variability (HRV) (Padoli et al., 2020).

Postpartum mothers who are under pressure from inside and outside, traumatic experiences, have changed roles, can be a negative record that can disrupt the psychological condition of postpartum mothers. Positive affirmations can help program the subconscious recordings that were initially negative into positive thoughts. The technique used must focus on what is desired, in compiling sentences it must be in accordance with the conditions

experienced so as not to cause rejection in oneself (Prasetyo, 2022). Positive affirmations are useful for increasing one's self-confidence, reducing anxiety, negative thoughts, besides that positive affirmations can be done anywhere and save costs. This positive affirmation is done by repeating the words so that it generates a response function to strengthen and raise positive energy (Brandrick et al., 2021). Positive affirmations can be repeated and done alone so that mothers are calmer and avoid postpartum blues.

## CONCLUSION

Giving positive affirmations to postpartum blues mothers through videos is effective for increasing mental health and perceived social support after 5 days during the covid-19 pandemic.

## SUGGESTION

We recommend using positive affirmation video media in reducing the occurrence of postpartum blues because the intervention costs are lower, lesser and can be done alone. For further researchers, it can be combined with other interventions or can increase the duration to be more effective in increasing mental health and perceived social support.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Study This explains to prove the effect of positive affirmations on mental health, perceived social support for postpartum blues mothers. Researchers use anonymity to enter identity data.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

First author responsible in the answer of the entire research process, begins the writing process until publication. Second author responsible in search of literature and theory, and discussion. Third author in charge of the data collection and creation process results study.

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