



SELF-EFFICACY FROM A PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE IN EMPOWERING POSTPARTUM MOTHERS IN MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

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| Info Article | <p>Abstract: <i>The postpartum period is a crucial period with physiological, psychological, and social changes that can impact the health of both mother and baby. A mother's inability to adapt risks postpartum depression, poor breastfeeding success, and suboptimal infant care. Therefore, maternal empowerment is a crucial strategy, one of which is influenced by self-efficacy (confidence in one's own abilities). This study aimed to analyze the relationship between self-efficacy and postpartum maternal empowerment using a quantitative cross-sectional design among 40 postpartum mothers at the Sulaa Community Health Center in Baubau City (2025). Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Chi-Square test. The results showed that the majority of respondents had high self-efficacy (60%) and good empowerment (65%), with a significant relationship between the two ($p = 0.003$). Mothers with high self-efficacy tended to be more empowered. In conclusion, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in postpartum maternal empowerment and needs to be enhanced through education, counseling, and support from healthcare professionals.</i></p> <p>Abstrak: Masa postpartum merupakan periode penting dengan perubahan fisiologis, psikologis, dan sosial yang dapat memengaruhi kesehatan ibu dan bayi. Ketidakkampuan ibu beradaptasi berisiko menimbulkan depresi postpartum, rendahnya keberhasilan menyusui, dan kurang optimalnya perawatan bayi. Oleh karena itu, pemberdayaan ibu menjadi strategi penting, salah satunya dipengaruhi oleh self-efficacy (keyakinan terhadap kemampuan diri). Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hubungan self-efficacy dengan pemberdayaan ibu postpartum menggunakan desain kuantitatif cross sectional pada 40 ibu postpartum di Puskesmas Sulaa Kota Baubau (2025). Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis dengan uji Chi-Square. Hasil menunjukkan mayoritas responden memiliki self-efficacy tinggi (60%) dan pemberdayaan baik (65%), serta terdapat hubungan signifikan antara keduanya ($p = 0,003$). Ibu dengan self-efficacy tinggi cenderung lebih berdaya. Simpulannya, self-efficacy berperan penting dalam pemberdayaan ibu postpartum, sehingga perlu ditingkatkan melalui edukasi, konseling, dan dukungan tenaga Kesehatan.</p> |
| <p>Received: 02 Februari 2026</p> <p>Revised: 04 Maret 2026</p> <p>Accepted: 02 April 2026</p> <p>Publication: 30 April 2026</p> | |
| <p>Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Maternal Empowerment, Postpartum, Midwifery Practice, Maternal Health</p> <p>Kata Kunci: Pemberdayaan Ibu, Postpartum, Praktik Kebidanan, Kesehatan Maternal</p> | |
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INTRODUCTION

The postpartum period is a critical phase in the life cycle of women, characterized by various physiological, psychological, and social changes following childbirth. During this period, mothers not only experience physical recovery but must also adapt to their new role as the primary caregiver for their newborn. A mother's inability to adapt to these changes may affect both maternal and infant health, including an increased risk of postpartum depression, lower success in breastfeeding, and suboptimal newborn care. Therefore, empowering postpartum mothers has become an important strategy in maternal health services to improve the well-being of both mother and baby (Sharapova & Goguikian Ratcliff, 2025);(Lambermon et al., 2020).

Empowerment of postpartum mothers refers to a process that enables mothers to develop the ability, confidence, and control over decisions related to their own health and that of their infants. The concept of empowerment in maternal health is not limited to increasing knowledge but also includes the mother's capacity to make independent and responsible decisions regarding family health. Studies indicate that low levels of maternal empowerment can lead to poor infant care practices, lower rates of exclusive breastfeeding, and an increased risk of mental health problems during the postpartum period(Lagendijk et al., 2020).

One of the important factors influencing postpartum maternal empowerment is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform certain actions in order to achieve desired goals. This concept was first introduced in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that a person's belief in their abilities influences their thinking patterns, motivation, emotions, and behavior when facing certain situations. In the context of maternal health, self-efficacy is an important psychological factor because it influences a mother's ability to carry out her role as a caregiver and to perform self-care after childbirth (Puspasari et al., 2024).

Recent studies show that mothers with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to demonstrate better abilities in infant care, exclusive breastfeeding practices, and in coping with challenges during the postpartum period. Self-efficacy also plays an important role in enhancing maternal confidence, enabling mothers to adapt more effectively to their new roles and responsibilities as parents. Conversely, mothers with low levels of self-efficacy tend to experience doubts about their ability to care for their infants, which may affect the quality of caregiving and maternal mental health(Sitepu et al., 2025);(Lambermon et al., 2020).

In modern midwifery practice, approaches that emphasize improving maternal self-efficacy are increasingly being developed as part of strategies for women's empowerment. Various interventions such as health education, lactation counseling, and family-centered maternity care have been shown to improve postpartum maternal self-efficacy and reduce the risk of psychological problems such as postpartum blues and postpartum depression. These approaches highlight the importance of support from family members, health professionals, and the social environment in strengthening mothers' confidence in their ability to care for their infants (Aghaei et al., 2023)

In addition, the development of health technology has opened new opportunities to enhance maternal self-efficacy through various digital-based educational programs. Research indicates that technology-based education and mentoring programs, such as e-coaching, can improve postpartum mothers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in performing infant care. Such interventions also have the potential to improve the quality of maternal health services at the primary healthcare level, including community health centers (Fatmawati et al., 2025).

Philosophically, the concept of self-efficacy can be understood through three main dimensions of the philosophy of science, namely ontology, epistemology, and axiology, which serve as the foundation for understanding the nature of knowledge and its application in scientific practice (Suriasumantri, 2017). Self-efficacy as a psychological concept in health science can be philosophically analyzed to understand how individual beliefs influence behavior and decision-making in health contexts (Shorey, 2020);(Bandura, 1977).

Ontologically, self-efficacy relates to the nature of an individual's belief in their capability to act and make decisions in various life situations (Bandura, 2020);(Dennis, 2021a). In the context of postpartum mothers, self-efficacy represents a mother's belief in her ability to perform her role as a mother and to care for herself and her baby after childbirth (Leahy-Warren et al., 2012);(Zheng, 2022). Epistemologically, self-efficacy is understood as a construct of knowledge formed through individual experiences, social interactions, and learning processes obtained through health education and life experiences(Bandura, 2020);(Shorey, Ng, et al., 2020). This knowledge develops through various sources such as health education, experiences in caring for infants, and support from healthcare professionals and family members who play an important role in increasing the confidence of postpartum mothers(Karimi, 2023);(Bezerra, 2024).

Axiologically, self-efficacy has practical value in increasing maternal independence, strengthening health decision-making abilities, and supporting the success of maternal health programs (Abbaspoor, 2023); (Pereira, 2025). Self-efficacy also plays an important role in improving successful breastfeeding practices, newborn care, and the psychological adaptation of mothers during the postpartum period (Dennis, 2021b); (Karacay-Yikar & Nazik, 2024). In midwifery practice, understanding self-efficacy as a philosophical foundation for empowering postpartum mothers is essential because midwifery care does not only focus on clinical aspects but also on psychological and social aspects that influence maternal and infant health (Organization, 2022); (Shorey, 2020). Empowerment-oriented midwifery approaches are expected to improve the quality of maternal health services and strengthen the role of mothers as primary decision-makers in family health care (Karimi, 2023); (Organization, 2023). Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that self-efficacy plays a very important role in enhancing postpartum maternal empowerment and strengthening mothers' ability to independently perform infant caregiving roles (Leahy-Warren et al., 2021); (Bezerra, 2024). However, further in-depth studies are still needed to explore how self-efficacy can serve as a philosophical foundation in midwifery practice, particularly in efforts to increase maternal independence in caring for themselves and their babies (Abbaspoor, 2023); (Karacay-Yikar & Nazik, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research examining maternal self-efficacy and its influence on maternal and newborn health outcomes, most existing studies primarily focus on psychological or behavioral aspects of self-efficacy in maternal care. Limited research has explored self-efficacy from a philosophy of science perspective, particularly in relation to the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions that underlie maternal empowerment in midwifery practice. Furthermore, empirical studies that examine the relationship between maternal self-efficacy and postpartum maternal empowerment within the context of primary healthcare services, such as community health centers in Indonesia, remain scarce. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the association between self-efficacy and the empowerment of postpartum mothers while also framing self-efficacy within the broader perspective of philosophy of science in midwifery practice.

This study provides a novel contribution by integrating the concept of maternal self-efficacy with the philosophy of science perspective, particularly through the

ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions in the context of midwifery practice. While previous studies have widely examined maternal self-efficacy in relation to breastfeeding, maternal mental health, and parenting outcomes, most of these studies primarily focus on psychological or behavioral perspectives (Dennis, 2021a); (Shorey, Lau, et al., 2020). Limited research has explored how self-efficacy can also be interpreted as a philosophical construct that underlies maternal empowerment in healthcare practice. By linking empirical findings on maternal self-efficacy with the philosophical dimensions of knowledge and human agency, this study offers a broader conceptual understanding of how self-efficacy can serve as a foundational element in empowering postpartum mothers within midwifery care. In addition, this research contributes empirical evidence from a primary healthcare setting in Indonesia, which remains underrepresented in global maternal health research (Karimi, 2023); (Karacay-Yikar & Nazik, 2024). Therefore, research on self-efficacy as a philosophical basis for empowering postpartum mothers in midwifery practice is important to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of self-efficacy in improving maternal and infant health outcomes (Pereira, 2025); (Tuncalp et al., 2015).

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an observational analytic design using a cross-sectional method. The cross-sectional design was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at the same time within a single observation period (Setia, 2016). This approach was selected because it is able to describe the condition of postpartum mothers' self-efficacy and its relationship with the level of maternal empowerment in midwifery practice. The study was conducted at Sulaa Community Health Center (Puskesmas Sulaa), Baubau City, in 2025. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that Puskesmas Sulaa is one of the primary healthcare facilities that routinely provides midwifery services to postpartum mothers, thereby enabling the researcher to obtain data relevant to the research objectives. The population in this study consisted of all postpartum mothers who received midwifery services in the working area of Puskesmas Sulaa, Baubau City, during the study period. The research sample was taken from postpartum mothers who met the inclusion criteria, namely mothers who were in the postpartum period, willing to participate as respondents, and able to complete the research questionnaire. The total number of respondents in this study was 40 postpartum mothers. The sampling

technique used was total sampling, in which the entire population that met the research criteria was included as research respondents.

The variables in this study consisted of postpartum maternal self-efficacy as the independent variable and postpartum maternal empowerment as the dependent variable. Self-efficacy in this study refers to the mother's belief in her ability to perform self-care and care for her baby after childbirth. Meanwhile, postpartum maternal empowerment describes the mother's ability to make decisions and take actions related to her own health and her baby's health independently. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire that was administered directly to respondents. The questionnaire was used to measure the level of self-efficacy and postpartum maternal empowerment. The research instrument was developed based on the concept of self-efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory proposed by Bandura (Bandura, 2020) and the concept of empowerment in maternal health (Karimi, 2023). Before being used in the study, the questionnaire underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure that the research instrument could accurately measure the variables under study.

The collected data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis was conducted to describe the frequency distribution of respondents' characteristics and research variables, namely self-efficacy and postpartum maternal empowerment. Bivariate analysis was performed to determine the influence of self-efficacy on postpartum maternal empowerment using the Chi-Square test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The results of the analysis were considered statistically significant if the p-value < 0.05 . This study also considered research ethics by ensuring that all respondents provided informed consent to participate in the study after receiving an explanation regarding the research objectives and procedures. The confidentiality of respondents' identities was maintained, and the collected data were used solely for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution of Postpartum Mothers' Self-Efficacy at Sulaa Community Health Center, Baubau City, 2025

| Self-Efficacy | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| High | 24 | 60% |
| Low | 16 | 40% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents had high self-efficacy, totaling 24 respondents (60%), while 16 respondents (40%) had low self-efficacy.

Table 2. Distribution of Postpartum Maternal Empowerment at Sulaa Community Health Center, Baubau City, 2025

| Maternal Empowerment | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Good | 26 | 65% |
| Poor | 14 | 35% |
| Total | 40 | 100% |

Source: Primary Data

Based on Table 2, most respondents demonstrated good levels of maternal empowerment, with 26 respondents (65%), while 14 respondents (35%) showed lower levels of empowerment.

Table 3. The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Postpartum Maternal Empowerment at Sulaa Community Health Center, Baubau City, 2025

| Self-Efficacy | Good Empowerment | Poor Empowerment | Total |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| High | 20 | 4 | 24 |
| Low | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| Total | 26 | 14 | 40 |

Source: Primary Data

The results of the Chi-Square test showed a p-value of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and postpartum maternal empowerment at Sulaa Community Health Center, Baubau City, in 2025. Based on the analysis results, respondents with high self-efficacy mostly had good levels of empowerment (20 respondents). In contrast, among respondents with low self-efficacy, the majority had lower levels of empowerment (10 respondents). These findings indicate that self-efficacy plays an important role in improving postpartum maternal empowerment in midwifery practice.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted at Sulaa Community Health Center, Baubau City, in 2025, it can be concluded that the majority of postpartum mothers had high levels of self-efficacy, indicating strong confidence in their ability to perform self-care and care for their infants after childbirth. In addition, most postpartum mothers also demonstrated good levels of empowerment, as reflected in their ability to make health-related decisions and their independence in performing self-care and infant care.

The results of the bivariate analysis showed a significant relationship between self-efficacy and postpartum maternal empowerment in midwifery practice. Mothers with higher levels of self-efficacy tended to have better levels of empowerment compared to those with lower self-efficacy. This finding indicates that self-efficacy is an important factor that contributes to increasing maternal independence and ability to perform caregiving roles during the postpartum period.

Therefore, improving postpartum maternal self-efficacy is an important strategy in supporting maternal empowerment. Healthcare providers, particularly midwives, should provide health education, support, and guidance that can enhance mothers' confidence in caring for themselves and their babies. These efforts are expected to improve maternal and infant health outcomes and strengthen empowerment-oriented midwifery practice.

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