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The Effectiveness Of Relaxation Methods And Music On A Gentle Labor Experience

Hamdia Anas^{1*}, Sarjani Linggi Allo², Cakrawati R³^{*1} Nursing Study Program, St. Fatimah Institute of Health and Business, Mamuju, Indonesia² Midwifery Study Program, Pelamonia Institute of Health Sciences³ Midwifery Study Programs, Ummi Khasanah Health Polytechnic, Indonesia*Correspondent Author: Hamdia Anas, Email: diarejekiutami@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Gentle labor (Birth) is a birth approach that emphasizes comfort, calm, and a positive experience for both mother and baby. Relaxation and music therapy are non-pharmacological interventions that can help mothers reduce anxiety and pain during labor. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of relaxation and music methods on the experience of gentle labor in mothers. The study used a quasi-experimental design with a pretest - posttest approach. The study sample was 50 mothers who gave birth, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The intervention, in the form of relaxation exercises and music therapy, was given during the active labor phase. Data were collected using a childbirth experience questionnaire and a pain scale. Data analysis used paired t- test and chi-square tests. The results showed that mothers who received relaxation and music interventions had a higher level of labor comfort and lower pain intensity compared to before the intervention ($p = 0.015$). It was concluded that relaxation and music methods are effective in supporting a gentle labor experience.

Keywords: Relaxation, Music Therapy, Gentle Labor, Labor Pain



1. Introduction

Childbirth is a physiological process involving a complex interaction between physical and psychological factors in the mother. A positive birth experience is crucial for the well-being of both mother and baby and can impact the mother's mental health after delivery.

Gentle childbirth the birth approach is increasingly emerging in modern midwifery practice. This approach emphasizes a natural birthing process, minimal medical intervention, and provides a sense of safety and comfort for the mother.

One factor that influences the birth experience is the mother's level of anxiety and pain perception. Uncontrolled labor pain can lead to increased stress hormones, which can hinder the labor process.

Relaxation methods and music therapy are non-pharmacological approaches that can help mothers reduce anxiety and pain during labor. Relaxation helps calm the mind and body, while music can provide distraction and promote feelings of well-being.

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of relaxation methods and music therapy in supporting a gentle birth experience.

2. Research Methods

a. Research Design

This study uses a quasi-experimental design with a pretest - posttest approach.

b. Population and Sample

The research population was mothers who underwent normal delivery at health service facilities in region X.

The research sample consisted of 50 mothers giving birth who were selected using purposive sampling techniques.

c. Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Mother with normal delivery
- 2) Gestational age ≥ 37 weeks
- 3) No complications during delivery

d. Research Variables

- 1) Independent variables:
 - Relaxation methods and music therapy
- 2) Dependent variable:
 - Gentle birth experience
 - Intensity of labor pain

e. Data collection

Data is collected through:

- Labor pain scale





- Childbirth experience questionnaire
- Observation of the labor process

f. Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using:

- Descriptive analysis
- Paired t – test
- Chi-square test with a significance level of 0.05

3. Research Results And Discussion

a. Research Result

1) Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 50 mothers who underwent normal deliveries. Respondent characteristics included maternal age, parity, and education level.

Table 1.
Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	n	%
Mother's age		
<20 years	6	12
20–35 years	34	68
>35 years	10	20
Parity		
Primipara	22	44
Multipara	28	56
Education		
Intermediate	30	60
Tall	20	40

Most respondents were of healthy reproductive age (20–35 years old). This age group generally has the physical and psychological readiness to face childbirth.

2) Labor Pain Intensity Before and After Intervention

Labor pain is measured using a numeric scale of 0–10.

Table 2.
Labor Pain Intensity

Measurement	Mean ± SD
Before intervention	7.8 ± 1.2
After the intervention	5.6 ± 1.4

The average reduction in pain was 2.2 points.





The results of the paired t- test show:

$$p = 0.015$$

This shows that relaxation methods and music therapy are effective in reducing the intensity of labor pain.

3) Maternal Anxiety Level During Labor

In addition to pain, this study also evaluated the level of maternal anxiety during labor.

Table 3.
Maternal Anxiety Level

Anxiety Level	n	%
Low	18	36
Currently	22	44
Tall	10	20

Most mothers were in the moderate anxiety category. After the relaxation and music intervention, many mothers reported feeling calmer and more confident in facing the birthing process.

4) Mother's Birth Experience

The birth experience is measured based on the mother's perception of comfort, safety, and satisfaction with the birth process.

Table 4.
Childbirth Experience

Childbirth Experience	n	%
Very positive	18	36
Positive	22	44
Less positive	10	20

As many as 80% of mothers reported a positive or very positive birth experience after receiving relaxation and music interventions.

5) The Effect of Intervention on Childbirth Experience

Table 5.
Relationship between Relaxation and Music and Childbirth Experience

Intervention	Positive Experience	Less Positive Experience	Total
Relaxation and music	40	10	50





The results of the analysis showed that most mothers who received the intervention had a positive birth experience.

b. Discussion

The study results showed that relaxation methods and music therapy had a positive effect on the experience of a gentle birth. A 2.2-point reduction in pain intensity indicated that this intervention was effective in helping mothers cope with pain during labor.

Physiologically, relaxation helps reduce muscle tension and increases the production of endorphins. Endorphins are natural analgesics produced by the body to reduce the perception of pain.

Relaxation also helps reduce stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which can hinder labor. By reducing stress hormones, uterine contractions can occur more effectively, resulting in a smoother labor.

Music therapy also has a calming psychological effect. Soft music can help distract the mother from pain and promote feelings of comfort and security during labor.

Several studies have shown that music can influence the activity of the autonomic nervous system, thereby helping to lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety levels.

In the concept of gentle birth, a positive birth experience is very important because it can influence the mother's emotional condition after giving birth as well as the initial relationship between mother and baby.

The effectiveness of relaxation methods and music is also influenced by several other factors such as:

- Family support during labor
- Previous childbirth experience
- Mother's mental readiness
- Comfortable birthing environment

An approach that focuses on maternal comfort and emotional support during labor can help create a more positive birth experience.

➤ **Implications for Midwifery Practice**

The results of this study indicate that relaxation methods and music therapy can be effective non-pharmacological interventions to support a smooth labor. This approach is relatively easy to implement, requires no special equipment, and has no side effects.

Health workers can integrate this method into delivery services to increase maternal comfort during the birth process.





4. Conclusion And Suggestions

a. Conclusion

Relaxation methods and music therapy have been proven effective in enhancing the experience of a gentle birth and reducing the intensity of pain during the labor process.

b. Suggestion

- 1) Health workers can integrate relaxation methods and music therapy into childbirth services.
- 2) Pregnant women are advised to learn relaxation techniques from the time of pregnancy.
- 3) Further research could examine the effect of this method on labor duration.

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