

## Breastfeeding Experiences of Nutritionist who are Mothers in Quito-Ecuador

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Research regarding breastfeeding is devoted to how essential breastfeeding is to guarantee wellbeing for the mother and the baby from a medical standpoint relegating the cultural, material and social barriers for breastfeeding. Consequently, worldwide breastfeeding rates are low, and Ecuador is not the exception, especially among working mothers. Worldwide, health care providers have low rates of breastfeeding due to several barriers to lactation, such as the work schedule, a lack of private places for pumping while at work, and negative emotions. Goals and Methods: This study aimed to explore how do Ecuadorian women embrace their identities as nutritionists and mothers within their breastfeeding experience. The primary data come from 20 synchronous semi-structured interviews, which follow a topic guide. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data analysis followed the Phronetic Iterative Approach. Results: Women shifted the preconceived idea of the ideal breastfeeding that came from the medicalized discourse of breastfeeding, and that was constructed in their training as nutritionists. Although these women believe that breast milk and breastfeeding is the best way to feed a baby, the internalized ideal of breastfeeding shifted through the experience of motherhood. When these women developed their identity as mothers, they understood that the ideal breastfeeding is different from the medicalized discourse. Although they have that clash between the ideal and the external reality, they continued breastfeeding their babies and those experiences made them improve their professional practice. Conclusions: The narratives that women shared illustrate how complex it was to manage the different roles and identities that they wanted to fulfill to keep their identity of a good mother who breastfeeds her baby and, at the same time, a good healthcare provider identity. The process of breastfeeding for this group of women who are mothers and healthcare professionals appears to be a unique relational and identity negotiation process.

**Keywords :** breastfeeding, identity, nutritionist, qualitative

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