

The Descriptions of Wife's Perceptions of Husband's Support for Breastfeeding in Tanjungpandan, Belitung

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ABSTRACT

Husband's support for breastfeeding affected the wife's success in breastfeeding. This study used a mixed-method approach and applied the Partner Breastfeeding Influence Scale (PBIS) theory. PBIS involves five dimensions, including breastfeeding savvy, helping, appreciation, breastfeeding presence, and responsiveness. This study aims to determine the description of wife perceptions of husband's support for exclusive breastfeeding in Tanjungpandan, Belitung. The subject in this study is three mothers who gave birth for the first time and who recently had one child aged 0 to 24 months. This study started from September 2020 to December 2020, which was done step by step from the preliminary study by spreading PBIS questionnaires to 40 respondents, and continued with face-to-face interviews with the subjects. The data obtained is the result of the analysis from the subject's interview. This study found that the three subjects perceived that their husbands agreed and provided them emotional and physical support (helping) for breastfeeding their babies.

Keywords: *Wife perception, Breastfeeding support, Husband support, Breastfeeding, Breast milk*

1. INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is a fundamental need of human lives. Breast milk is an ideal food as it is safe, hygienic, and contains antibodies [1]. Breast milk is made of water, proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins [2]. Breastfeeding may provide physical, emotional, and psychological comfort to the infant, which later supports their cognitive development [3].

Breast milk cannot be replaced by any other food [4]. Breastfeeding may be psychologically beneficial for the mother and the infant, especially for the growth of emotional bond or attachment of the mother and the infant. John Bowlby formulated the attachment theory. Bowlby defined this attachment as an everlasting psychological bond between an individual and another [5]. The infant's craving for love and presence from their mother is as much as craving for food [6]. The practice of breastfeeding may release hormones that boost motherly behaviors. Breastfeeding is considered to improve emotional attachment, and thereafter, will play a significant role in the infant's development [7].

Riset Kesehatan Dasar (Basic Health Research) in 2018 showed that the proportion of the pattern of breastfeeding an infant of 0 to 5 months in Indonesia was 37,3% exclusive breastfeeding, 9,3% partial breastfeeding, and 3,3% predominant breastfeeding. The percentage of

residents who exclusively breastfed infants of 0 to 5 months are dominated by citizens (40,7%) when compared to villagers (33,6%) [8].

Based on the data, it can be concluded that citizens were aware of the importance of breastfeeding their infants, especially in Tanjungpandan, Belitung. Tanjungpandan is the capital of Belitung city, Bangka Belitung province. According to [9], the need for breastfeeding in Bangka Belitung was considered high. This statement is supported by [8], who stated that the proportion of breastfeeding in Bangka Belitung Province was 56,7%. Midwife HH (personal communication, September 5, 2020) and midwife M (personal communication, September 7, 2020) emphasized that husband's support is the main factor that affects the practice of breastfeeding in Tanjungpandan, Belitung.

Husband's support is a form of support given by husbands to their wives, which can come in the form of physical support, such as fulfilling the wife's needs and helping the wife in overcoming a problem or a certain activity, and psychological help, such as giving motivation, compliments, attention, or accompanying and supporting the wife.

In Tanjungpandan, Belitung, it is known that men in a household have a dominant role. *Deputi Bidang Perlindungan Perempuan Kementerian Negara Pemberdayaan Perempuan* (The Deputy of Women

Protection Sector of the National Ministry of Women Empowerment) explained that Belitung still heavily embraces the patriarchal culture [10].

The patriarchal culture may contribute to breastfeeding practice in a positive way. The patriarchal culture makes men dominate the household, particularly monopolize the process of decision-making [11]. The patriarchal culture does not only put men as power holder, but also apprises them of the fact that they are the head of the family and have the responsibility to protect their family [12].

In a family who recently had a child, the husband's agreement on breastfeeding their infant will certainly make the wife feel happy and supported. Five main points of husband's support in breastfeeding are: a) Awareness; b) Positive attitude; c) Involved in decision-making; d) Practical support; and e) Emotional support [13].

Based on [14], a husband's attitude affects the duration, energy, and decision whether the wife will breastfeed or not. A mother who breastfeeds will gain many benefits from her partner's emotional support [15]. A husband's support plays a big role in the success of the wife's breastfeeding, in that it affects the flow of breastfeeding since it is related to the wife's feelings and emotions [16]. A wife will feel capable and confident to breastfeed when she sees that her partner supports her and is actively involved during the breastfeeding process [17].

Previous research [18], which used Partner Breastfeeding Influence Scale (PBIS) as the research instrument, stated that there are five types of husband's support for breastfeeding, namely: a) Breastfeeding savvy; b) Helping; c) Appreciation; d) Breastfeeding presence; e) Responsiveness. Breastfeeding savvy involves learning and discussing about breastfeeding. Helping includes direct physical support, such as helping with household chores, nursing the child and partner. Appreciation measures the behavior of motivating and appreciating the wife during breastfeeding. Breastfeeding presence

measures the husband's support during breastfeeding, while responsiveness includes husband's sensitivity about the wife's needs and respect for the wife's decision. In the findings of [18], it was found that husband's support can affect the wife's decision and behavior of breastfeeding.

Wives who are eager to breastfeed sometimes face many obstacles. Therefore, the role of the husband as a provider of support needs to be presented so that the wife will be able to go through it all [19]. From various mothers' experience, the success of breastfeeding is correlated to how much support they get from their husbands [20]. This indicates that wives perceive their husbands as the largest source of help and as their supporter in life.

According to [21], if a wife gets support from her husband, it is likely that the practice of breastfeeding will succeed and she will not feel the need to stop until she wants to. Having a husband's support can make the wife feel happy and confident again. This positive impact may provide positive awareness to the wife about her life, partner, and marriage.

Based on the information described above, the researchers were interested in studying how wives perceive the husband's support for breastfeeding. Moreover, the researchers wanted to see the form of husband's support given to wives for breastfeeding in Tanjungpandan, Belitung.

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants and Procedure

The subjects for this research were 3 wives domiciled in Tanjungpandan, with the criteria of having one child with 0-24 months of age, and having been breastfeeding. The description of the subjects may be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Subject Demographic Data

Information	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
Name	NA	EK	Z
Age	29	26	26
Last Education	Doctorate Degree	Senior High School	Vocational School
Profession	General Practitioner (PNS)	Employee	Employee
Delivery Method	Caesarean	Normal	Normal
Birth of the Child	1 st	1 st	1 st
Infant's Age	6 months	16 months	13 months
Breastfeeding Duration	5 months	To date	2 months

2.2. Research Instrument

PBIS uses Likert's scale. The reliability of PBIS adapted by the researchers had the alpha Cronbach: α 0.86 on breastfeeding savvy domain; α 0.7 on helping domain; α 0.85 on appreciation domain; α 0.78 on breastfeeding presence domain; and α 0.42 on responsiveness domain.

The results of PBIS scoring of the subjects were divided into 3 categories, namely, high, average, and low, as can be seen in Table 2. Those categories were based on the calculation of the number of items multiplied by the maximum score of the scale, and divided by the number of categories.

Table 2 The PBIS Category

Category Score
Low Score = 0 - 53
Average Score = 54 - 107
High Score = 108 - 161

This research started with sharing PBIS questionnaires [18] to 40 respondents with the criteria that corresponded to the purpose of the research. The scoring results showed that only 10 out of 40 respondents who had valid data, as can be seen on Table 3. From that calculation, respondent NA with the highest support, and respondents Z and EK with the lowest support were chosen to be interviewed. The results of the interviews were compiled verbatim and a coding table was created to select important data collected from the subjects. The coding result was analyzed with a thematic approach, where the researchers analyzed the themes of five dimensions of PBIS and how subjects perceived the husband's support for breastfeeding. The conclusion would be drawn from the collected data.

Table 3 Respondents' Data

Name	Score	Category
NA	145	High
I	118	High
S	117	High
DA	115	High
GZ	114	High
R	113	High
MM	106	Average
MA	90	Average
Z	85	Average
EK	84	Average

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the result of data analysis of interviews with the three subjects, the researchers found that the theory of PBIS [18] was relevant to the research subjects, who fulfilled the five dimensions of PBIS, which can be seen in the table below.

The breastfeeding savvy dimension was fulfilled by the three subjects. Subject NA dominated this dimension. According to subject NA, she and her husband cooperated, discussed, and learned about breast milk or breastfeeding. The subjects had the same perception on breastfeeding. The three subjects and their husbands agreed on breastfeeding their infants because breast milk has better benefits than those of formula milk.

Table 4 Breastfeeding Savvy Dimension based on Wife's Perception

Item of Breastfeeding Savvy	Subject NA	Subject EK	Subject Z
Learning about Breastfeeding	✓	✓	✓
Discussing about Breastfeeding	✓	✓	✓
Reminding the wife about the benefits of breast milk	✓	✓	✓
Providing Solutions	✓	✓	✓

The second dimension, helping, was fulfilled by the three subjects. Subjects NA and Z explained that their husbands helped nurse the infant and helped with house chores. They also gave time to rest to the subjects to

avoid exhaustion. Meanwhile, subject EK had less help since she and her husband only lived together 1 to 3 times a week.

Table 5 Helping Dimension based on Wife's Perception

Item of Helping	Subject NA	Subject EK	Subject Z
Husband paid attention to wife's nutrition	✓	✓	✓
Husband gave time to rest	✓	X	✓
Helped nursing the infant	✓	✓	✓
Husband took care of wife	✓	X	✓
Husband helped with house chores	✓	✓	✓

On the third dimension, appreciation, the three subjects explained that their husbands supported and cheered them up, and they also appreciated the wives' hard work. The

subjects' husbands also depicted that they were happy seeing the subjects breastfeeding their infants.

Table 6 Appreciation Dimension based on Wife's Perception

Item of Appreciation	Subject NA	Subject EK	Subject Z
Appreciation from husband	✓	✓	✓
Affirmation from husband	✓	✓	✓
Motivation from husband	✓	✓	✓
Solutions from husband	✓	✓	✓

The fourth dimension, breastfeeding presence, was fulfilled by the three subjects. According to them, their husbands were always present to help them during

breastfeeding, but they felt more comfortable and calmer when their husbands were not with them.

Table 7 Breastfeeding Presence Dimension based on Wife's Perception

Item of Breastfeeding Presence	Subject NA	Subject EK	Subject Z
Husband provided comfort	✓	✓	✓
Husband was attentive	✓	✓	✓
Husband was present	✓	✓	✓
Husband helped with breastfeeding	✓	✓	✓
Husband felt satisfied	✓	✓	✓

The fifth dimension, responsiveness, was fulfilled by the three subjects. The subjects perceived that their husbands were very responsive and sensitive about fulfilling their

needs. They were also attentive, respectful to and supported their decisions.

Table 8 Responsiveness Dimension

Item of Responsiveness	Subject NA	Subject EK	Subject Z
Husband's attention to wife	✓	✓	✓
Sensitivity to wife's needs	✓	✓	✓
Respects wife's decision	✓	✓	✓

Previous research [18] showed that responsiveness aspect was the aspect that depicted the most a wife's perception of the husband's support for breastfeeding. However, in this research adaptation, the researchers found that the aspect that depicted the most a wife's perception of the husband's support for breastfeeding were helping and appreciation dimensions. Based on the three subjects, the appreciation support meant there were appreciation, motivation, and compliments from their husbands.

Meanwhile, helping support meant there was direct help from the husbands to finish an activity or do house chores, and take care of the wives by giving them food or spoiling them. The subjects emphasized that breastfeeding presence aspect was not too important for them. The presence of their husbands did not significantly affect their breastfeeding practice.

The researchers found that in Tanjungpandan, Belitung, it is obvious that patriarchal culture in a household is still heavy. This patriarchal culture brings positive impacts. Patriarchy makes husbands realize their position and role they have to be responsible for protecting their families [12]. The three subjects emphasized that even though their husbands, as heads of the family, were the decision-maker in the family, they were not dominant in their relationships. On the contrary, they were willing to involve the subjects to make decisions, and were willing to listen to subjects' opinions. This indicates that patriarchal culture in Tanjungpandan, Belitung is not exaggerated and may bring positive impacts to the decision to breastfeed.

According to [18], a wife's perception of the husband's agreement on breastfeeding, and help from the husband were significantly correlated to the wife's desire and duration of breastfeeding. The three subjects considered that their husbands' support for breastfeeding had a significant impact on their breastfeeding practice. Subjects NA and Z were subjects with the lowest level of breast milk production, thus, they balanced it by giving formula milk. Based on them, even though their husbands preferred breast milk to formula milk, their husbands gave them support to cheer them up as they could not breastfeed. This statement supports [22], which explained that during difficult times of breastfeeding, the husband had the role as a supporter, helper, protector, and provider to his family.

Emotional, practical, and physical support from the husband is identified as a crucial factor to promote the success of breastfeeding [15]. This statement is in agreement with explanations from subjects NA, EK, and Z. They stated that emotional support from the husbands affected their feelings.

Based on the subjects' perception, a breastfeeding wife wants to be cared for and motivated so that they will go through baby blues or stress from difficulties during breastfeeding. Therefore, the three subjects as wives who are living in Tanjungpandan, Belitung, perceived that husband's support for breastfeeding was crucial, especially helping support, which includes helping the wife, and appreciation, which includes appreciating the wife's hard work in breastfeeding.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of the results of the interview with three subjects in Tanjungpandan, Belitung, it was found that the three subjects positively perceived the husband's support for breastfeeding. They claimed that their husbands were their supporters who affected them the most during the breastfeeding period. The husbands motivated them to not be distraught whenever they had troubles during breastfeeding. The three subjects also fulfilled all five dimensions.

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