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PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: BATAK ANGKOLA MOTHERS' PERCEPTION OF BREASTFEEDING PATTERNS FOR INFANTS AGED 0-6 MONTHS IN PADANGSIDIMPUAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

Exclusive breastfeeding is the provision of breast milk (ASI) only to newborns up to 6 months of age without any additional food except vitamins and medicines. Exclusive breastfeeding is the perfect way to provide the best food for babies in the first six months of life for healthy growth and development. The purpose of this study was to explore in depth the perceptions of Batak Angkola mothers about the pattern of breastfeeding in infants aged 0-6 months in Padangsidimpuan City. The research design was phenomenology. The data collection method was carried out by in-depth interviews. The purposive sampling method was used to select participants who met the criteria as participants. Participants in this study were 6 breastfeeding mothers who had infants aged 0-6 months in Padangsidimpuan City. The results of the transcribed interviews were analyzed using content analysis. The results of this study found 2 themes that reflected the phenomenon being studied. These themes are maternal knowledge about breastfeeding at the age of 0-6 months and maternal beliefs about

breastfeeding in infants aged 0-6 months. It is recommended that local governments and health workers can provide information about what Exclusive Breastfeeding is to the entire community, especially mothers in Padangsidempuan City.

KEYWORDS: Angkola Batak Tribe Mother, Breastfeeding Pattern, Babies Aged 0-6 months.

Exclusive breastfeeding is giving breast milk (ASI) only to babies new born until with 6 months old without giving food addition whatever except vitamins and medicines. Breastfeeding Exclusive is the perfect way for give food best for baby in six months month First life for healthy growth and development. Purpose of the study This is for explore in a way deep perception Mother Batak Angkola tribe about pattern breastfeeding babies age 0-6 months in Padangsidempuan City. The research design was phenomenology. The data collection method was carried out by in-depth interviews. The purposive sampling method was used to select participants who met the criteria as participants. Participants in this study were 6 breastfeeding mothers who had babies aged 0-6 months in Padangsidempuan City. The results of the transcribed interviews were analyzed using content analysis. The results of this study found 2 themes that reflect the phenomena studied. These themes are mothers' knowledge about breastfeeding at the age of 0-6 months and mothers' beliefs about breastfeeding for babies aged 0-6 months. It is recommended that local governments and health workers can provide information about the pattern of exclusive breastfeeding to the entire community, especially mothers in Padangsidempuan City.

1. INTRODUCTION

Exclusive breastfeeding is breast milk given to babies from birth for six months, without adding and/or replacing it with other foods or drinks (PP Number 33 of 2012). *The World Health Organization (WHO)* and *the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)* in 2013 stated that Exclusive breastfeeding is giving only breast milk to newborn babies up to 6 months of age without giving any additional food except oral rehydration solution, or vitamin, mineral or medicine drops/syrups (1)

Globally, exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life has increased by 10% over the past decade and has reached 48% in 2023, approaching the World Health Assembly target of 50% by 2025. Progress is being made across regions, with many countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Case studies in Kenya, Pakistan, Serbia, Sierra Leone and Vietnam illustrate key policy and programmatic progress in protecting and supporting breastfeeding. Marketing of breastmilk substitutes such as infant formula is acceptable where breastfeeding rates are higher. Beyond that, however, donor funding for breastfeeding protection and support is minimal and most countries do not guarantee working mothers the right to breastfeeding facilities and rest periods

(2)

Breast milk (ASI) is a globule-shaped fat emulsion in water, containing protein aggregates, lactose, and organic salts produced by the alveoli of a mother's mammary glands. The benefits of giving breast milk to babies are ideal nutrition, rich in antibodies to increase body resistance, help the emotional bond between mother and baby, increase the child's intelligence, ideal baby weight, and can prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Breastfeeding is also thought to reduce the risk of diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers (3)

The best way to feed a baby is to breastfeed the baby from birth to six months, then continue until the baby is 24 months old. Complementary foods that are nutritious and safe to consume are only given to babies after six months of age, with breastfeeding continued until the age of two years. Exclusive breastfeeding is important for the baby's immunity and resistance to disease, as well as to increase attachment between mother and child, in reality there are still various problems related to exclusive breastfeeding (4) . Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both mother and baby. Breast milk contains all the nutrients a baby needs in the first six months of life. Breastfeeding protects against diarrhea and childhood illnesses such as pneumonia, and may also have long-term health benefits for both mother and child, such as reducing the risk of overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence (5)

Breastfeeding also has an effect on a child's intelligence level as the results of a study stated that the IQ score in children who receive exclusive breastfeeding is higher than those who do not receive it with an average difference of 3.44 points (6) . Another benefit that is no less important is the reduced risk of obesity in children who are given exclusive breastfeeding, which states that breastfeeding is associated with a significant reduction in the risk of obesity in children (7) Preparing a good generation starts from pre-pregnancy preparation, pregnancy preparation, childbirth preparation and breastfeeding preparation. Because there will be many health problems that may arise, especially during pregnancy, such as mothers who lack vitamins (folic acid, calcium, vitamin D, etc.) (8) can cause various diseases that will continue to have an effect until the breastfeeding period.

Not exclusive breastfeeding is a risk factor for infant and child morbidity and mortality which is exacerbated by inappropriate complementary feeding. Long-term impacts include reduced

productivity, and impaired intellectual and social development. Exclusive breastfeeding can reduce the occurrence of childhood diseases such as diarrhea and pneumonia and can recover more quickly when sick. For mothers, breastfeeding has been shown to protect against postpartum hemorrhage, ovarian and breast cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes (9)

The results of a study by Sankar et al showed that babies who do not receive exclusive breastfeeding will be at risk of dying 14 times compared to babies who receive exclusive breastfeeding. This will certainly have an impact on increasing the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) (10) Based on the results of the Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey, it shows that the Infant Mortality Rate reached 24/1000 KH while the SDG's target is to reduce the Neonatal Mortality Rate to 12/1000 KH by 2030.

The achievement of Exclusive Breastfeeding is still very far from the target that has been set, According to WHO in 2021 the presentation of Exclusive Breastfeeding in the World only reached 69.7%, (11) while in Indonesia according to Basic Health Research (RISKESDAS) data in 2021 it only reached 52.5%. For the North Sumatra region according to the North Sumatra Health Profile in 2021 it has reached 57.83% and for Padangsidempuan City in 2022 the presentation of Exclusive Breastfeeding achievement was even smaller, namely 38.96% (12)

In human life, it is inseparable from the issue of values. Values are traits or things that are important or useful for human life. With reason, humans are able to create culture. Indonesia with thousands of tribes certainly has millions of positive values that are owned by its cultures. Cultural diversity in Indonesia will also direct the determination of sources of values, hopes and needs in its unique society (13)

One of the cultures that has positive values in its behavior is the Batak Angkola culture. The Batak Angkola community is one of the Batak sub-tribes in Indonesia that is located in the Sumatra island region. The Batak Angkola who inhabit the main Angkola region (Padangsidempuan), North Padang Lawas, Sipirok and Batang Toru (14)

The Batak Angkola tribe adheres to a kinship system based on the principle of *dalihan natolu*, namely the linkage of three (*tolu*) kinship elements; *kahanggi* (friends of the same clan), *anak boru* (group of wife takers) and *mora* (party giving wives). The clans in the Batak Angkola tribe are Harahap, Siregar, Hasibuan, Batubara, Dasopang, Daulay, Dalimunthe, Rambe, Siagian, Ritonga and Tanjung (15). The custom of the Batak people is that even

when they are away from home, the Batak people always care about their tribal identity, such as trying to establish associations of the same clan or village with the aim of bringing to life the ideas of their cultural traditions (16).

Some of the traditional events of Batak Angkola related to breastfeeding mothers that are still preserved until now are *manakko dalan*, which is the activity of the child leaving the house and being taken for a walk around the house and then returning home to be given *parompa sadun* which is done by *Mora* (family from the mother's side) and also *mambaen goar*, which is the naming of the baby. All of these activities are attended by all family members, namely *Mora*, *Kahanggi*, *Anak boru* (17).

As a culture, Batak Angkola has positive values. Harahap said that Batak Angkola has nine main cultural values. The nine cultural values are written in sequence, namely (1) Kinship, the Batak Angkola community highly prioritizes the spirit of kinship, (2) Religion, the Batak Angkola community is very religious, this can be seen from how the implementation of customs does not conflict with religious teachings, (3) *Hagabeon*, the Batak Angkola community always hopes for a long life and many descendants, (4) *Hamajuon*, the Batak Angkola community has the spirit to seek knowledge, one of which is through efforts to migrate, (5) *Hasangapon*, the Batak Angkola community upholds being respected and honored in society by maintaining the good name of the family and clan, (6) *Hamoraon*, the Batak Angkola community believes that they must have exemplary behavior, authority, and leadership, (7) *Uhum* is a cultural value that makes the Batak Angkola community a community that highly values the truth and is sensitive to irregularities or problems, (8) Protection, the value of protection is already stated in the *dalihan natolu* kinship interaction. Every Batak Angkola person is a protector and the one being protected, the *mora* as the protector and the *anak boru* as the one being protected, and (9) Conflict, for the Batak Angkola people conflict is a disgrace and this must be resolved immediately (18)

Based on a preliminary study in Padangsidempuan City conducted by interview method to 6 breastfeeding mothers, 3 of them said that they did not really care about the pattern of breastfeeding, breast milk was given without knowing whether it would cancel Exclusive Breastfeeding or not. Customary activities and habits that have become hereditary traditions must continue to be carried out as usual without considering whether it will cancel Exclusive

Breastfeeding.

Based on this phenomenon, researchers are interested in conducting research on the Perceptions of Batak Angkola Mothers Regarding Breastfeeding Patterns for Babies Aged 0-6 Months in Padangsidempuan City .

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used is phenomenology. This study aims to explore and understand the Batak Angkola Tribe Mothers About Breastfeeding Patterns for Babies Aged 0-6 Months in Padangsidempuan City.

The study was conducted in Padangsidempuan City in October 2024. Participants in this study until data saturation reached 6 breastfeeding mothers who had babies aged 0-6 months who were selected through purposive sampling techniques.

Data collection was conducted by researchers as

the main research instrument. Data were collected through in-depth interview methods with a voice recorder based on a combination of interviews with open questions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Result

Participants in this study were 6 people, with a mother's age range of 21-35 years as many as 4 participants and an age range of > 35 years as many as 2 participants. 3 participants had babies aged 0-3 months and 3 participants had babies aged 4-6 months. 4 participants had high school education, 1 participant had a Diploma education and 1 participant had a Bachelor's degree. 5 participants worked as Housewives (IRT) and 1 participant worked as a Civil Servant (PNS). The characteristics of the participants in detail will be explained below.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics.

	Characteristics	Frequency	%
Age Mother	21 - 35 years	4	67%
	> 35 years	2	33%
Age baby	0 - 3 months	3	50%
	4 - 6 months	3	50%
Education	Bachelor	4	66%
	Diploma	1	17%
	Senior High School	1	17%
Work	Housewife	5	83%
	Civil servant	1	17%

Research result This found 2 themes namely: Knowledge Mother about breastfeeding at age 0-6 months and belief Mother about breastfeeding babies

age 0-6 months. More details can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2: Content Analysis Results.

No	Theme 1: Mothers' knowledge about breastfeeding for babies aged 0-6 months	
1	Sub themes	Category
	1. Knowledge	1. Knowledge about Exclusive Breastfeeding 2. Benefits of Exclusive Breastfeeding 3. Support on Exclusive Breastfeeding
	2. Breastfeeding Pattern	1. Give only breast milk until the baby is 6 months old 2. Provide breast milk and formula until baby 6 months old 3. Give only breast milk until the baby is 6 months old without avoiding giving other foods. 4. Only give breast milk until the baby is 6 months old and avoid giving other foods except at traditional events.
2	Theme 2: Mothers' beliefs about breastfeeding babies aged 0-6 months	
	Sub themes	Category

1.	Habit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are food taboos for breastfeeding mothers 2. There is a sequence of meals for breastfeeding mothers
2.	Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional event Manakko road 2. Traditional event crowning goar

1. Theme Mother's Knowledge About Breastfeeding at Age 0-6 Months

Mothers' knowledge about breastfeeding at the age of 0-6 months, namely knowing about knowledge about breastfeeding, the benefits of breastfeeding and the support that mothers get from those closest to them in providing breast milk to their babies.

The participant statements are as follows:

"I don't really understand about breast milk, the important thing is that the baby is given breast milk, right?"

"As far as I know, breast milk is good for babies, but only if the mother has breast milk and the baby is full."

"Babies who are breastfed are fine, there are no problems"

"Breast milk can be given, as long as it is not the original breast milk because it usually smells because it has gone stale."

"I know about exclusive breastfeeding, my child was also exclusively breastfed for 6 months"

"Exclusive breastfeeding means giving breast milk for 6 months, right? No other milk is allowed."

"They say it has many benefits for babies, but it's the same as formula milk, right?"

"Breastfeeding is very good for babies, I agree."

"If a baby is given breast milk, his body will be stronger than if he is given formula milk."

"Breast milk is very good for baby's immunity"

"Breast milk is very good for baby's health; babies don't get sick easily"

"If only breast milk is given, the baby will not get fat, mixed with formula milk is better"

"I got support from my husband to continue breastfeeding my baby but not from my in-laws."

"My whole family supports me to continue breastfeeding"

"I was supported, but during the traditional event, my baby was given sugar, is that allowed?"

"Supported or not, I still breastfeed my baby"

"Everything is supportive but my breast milk is not enough so I supplement it with formula milk"

"Thank God everyone supports"

Breastfeeding patterns at the age of 0-6 months, namely knowing how mothers provide breast milk to their babies, whether to only provide breast milk to babies up to the age of 6 months or to provide additional food to babies before the baby is 6 months old.

The participant statements are as follows:

"I only give my baby breast milk without giving any additional food"

"I only give breast milk, I don't give any other food, but if he is sick, I give him medicine."

"I gave her breast milk but added formula milk because my breast milk supply was low"

"I give her breast milk, but if I leave it with her grandmother, sometimes she gives me purik."

"I gave him breast milk but because his weight didn't increase, I added formula milk but only gave him 1 drink a day."

"I only give breast milk, I never give formula milk or anything else, but if there is a traditional event, my baby is given honey."

"My baby only drinks breast milk, but when he is fussy, I like to put sugar in his mouth, because before during the manakko dalan event, my baby was given sugar and initially he would cry but then he would stop crying."

"My baby only drinks breast milk, but when it's a traditional event, of course I follow the traditional customs that we often do, such as giving my baby sugar/honey."

"I just gave it to him; he only ate a little sugar during the name-giving ceremony yesterday."

"My baby has only drunk breast milk from birth until now, I only smeared honey on his lips yesterday during a traditional event."

2. Theme: Mothers' Beliefs About Breastfeeding Babies Aged 0-6 Months

Mothers' beliefs about breastfeeding babies aged 0-6 months include knowing about the habits that mothers continue to do during breastfeeding, such as food taboos and meal order.

The participant statements are as follows:

"While I was breastfeeding, I was not allowed to eat spicy food because it would make my breast milk spicy, but eating without chili sauce tasted bland, so I had no appetite."

"I don't have any dietary restrictions, I eat everything."

"While breastfeeding, my husband did not allow me to drink cold drinks, he said that the baby would get a cold. Even though I only like cold drinks, regular water makes me nauseous, so I rarely drink."

"I don't have any restrictions, I just can't eat a lot, my mother-in-law said that I'll get fat, maintaining my weight is also very important"

"I am not allowed to eat fish because it can cause allergies"

in babies, even though I don't really like meat, especially chicken."

"I don't have any taboos, it's just that when I eat at home, the men have to eat first, and the women last.

Sometimes I only get the gravy because the side dishes have already been eaten first."

In addition to the mother's beliefs, culture also still influences the practice of breastfeeding babies aged 0-6 months. As conveyed by the following participants:

"My basic background is health so I know that babies should be given exclusive breastfeeding but my family doesn't care, especially at traditional events such as manakko dalan, my baby is given sugar and that cancels my baby's exclusive breastfeeding."

"My baby is exclusively breastfed, but if it is as you said, honey was indeed smeared on my baby's mouth at the Panabala Goar event."

"My baby only gets breast milk, no other additional food. He was only smeared with honey when he was given a name yesterday. Does that have any effect, ma'am?"

"In addition to breast milk, I also give my baby formula because I don't have much breast milk and when my baby is fussy, I put a little sugar on his lips to keep him quiet. It started when it was during the manakko dalan event, but it's become a habit until now."

"I am exclusively breastfeeding, ma'am, and I am not participating in the traditional activities because I don't have the money."

"I always follow traditional activities, ma'am, according to the advice of my parents and in-laws. The breast milk problem is easy, ma'am, I still give it to her."

4. DISCUSSION

1. Theme Of Mothers' Knowledge About Breastfeeding for Babies Aged 0-6 Months

The theme of mothers' knowledge about breastfeeding for babies aged 0-6 months consists of 2 sub-themes, namely Knowledge and Breastfeeding Patterns. The first sub-theme in this theme shows that mothers' knowledge is different. Many factors can influence a person's level of knowledge, such as education, experience, environment, sources of information and others. The majority of participants know about breast milk and the benefits of breast milk, but there are also those who do not know about the benefits of breast milk. Knowledge is the result of knowing, and this occurs after people sense a certain object. Sensing occurs through the five human senses, namely the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Most human knowledge is obtained through the eyes and ears (19)

As for the benefits of breast milk, everyone agrees that breast milk has many benefits for babies, in addition to health, it is also for the baby's immunity

and endurance . There are many benefits of giving breast milk, namely: Breast milk as nutrition, Breast milk increases endurance, increases intelligence, Breastfeeding increases the bond of affection, As a single food to meet all the growth needs of children up to the age of six months, Contains fatty acids needed for brain growth so that children who are given exclusive breast milk have the potential to be smarter, Reduces the risk of diabetes, cancer in children and reduces the possibility of suffering from heart disease, Supports motor development so that children who are given exclusive breast milk will be able to walk faster, Supports the development of emotional personality, spiritual maturity and good social relationships (20)

Family closest support breastfeeding but support without know with Certain What what is breast milk and what can it do cancel exclusive breastfeeding so Can be a bias that can cause baby No get exclusive breastfeeding (21) A mother really needs support in giving her breast milk until she is 6 months old. Family or people closest to the mother greatly influence the mother's attitude to give exclusive breast milk, but many families, namely parents or husbands, actually give food or drinks before the baby is 6 months old . Good support will encourage mothers to give breast milk until the age of 6 months and not give complementary foods to their babies when they are less than 6 months old (22) Information about breastfeeding is not only given to mothers but also to husbands and families, so that they also gain knowledge about proper breastfeeding . Good support is support to motivate mothers to breastfeed their babies and provide psychological support to mothers. Seeing the great benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and babies, exclusive breastfeeding is highly recommended for babies for 6 months and a person's high level of knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding for babies will support the success of the exclusive breastfeeding program for 6 months (23)

This study also found that families the close one with we have a big influence on the formation of our behavior The main problem in exclusive breastfeeding is still existence method inadequate breastfeeding exactly what causes canceled exclusive breastfeeding .

The second sub theme namely the pattern of breastfeeding. Some participants Already apply pattern giving exclusive breastfeeding to the baby without realize that exclusive breastfeeding the has fail because of activity customs and some participant Again of course Not yet apply pattern giving exclusive breastfeeding to the baby because of baby

who often fussy, babies who don't gain weight and because babies often entrusted to others. Breastfeeding predominant is breast-feed baby but ever give a little water or drink water based, for example tea, as food / drink prelacteal before the breast milk comes out. Breastfeeding partial is breast-feed baby and given food artificial other than breast milk, either formula milk, porridge or food other before baby aged six month , good given in a way continuous and also given as food prelacteal (24) . The above matters have clearly made the pattern of providing breast milk non-exclusive.

2. Theme Of Mothers' Beliefs About Breastfeeding For Babies Aged 0-6 Months

The theme of mothers' beliefs about breastfeeding for babies aged 0-6 months found 2 sub-themes, namely habits and culture. The first sub-theme is habits, where there are still habits carried out by breastfeeding mothers that can cause negative impacts for breastfeeding mothers such as food taboos and meal order. Beliefs about food taboos for breastfeeding mothers also do not have a proper basis, in fact breastfeeding mothers need more nutrition not only for themselves but also for their babies because babies will get nutrition from the breast milk given by the mother to the baby (25) . Beliefs and traditions that exist in society lead to the mindset of society regarding actions that will be taken and are believed to have to be carried out from generation to generation (26). Existing habits directly or indirectly can support or not support breastfeeding. The breastfeeding process is often not determined by biological factors but is mainly based on existing habits in society that are passed down to children and grandchildren from generation to generation through the process of socialization or word of mouth, where these habits contain rules that according to society are something that should be done (27)

second sub-theme is Culture, in this study it was discovered that there are two cultures that are still being implemented which can interfere with the practice of giving breast milk to babies aged 0-6 months, namely *the Manakko Dalan traditional event* and the *Panabalan Goar traditional event*. Some traditional events of Batak Angkola-Mandailing

related to pregnant women and the provision of Exclusive Breastfeeding that are still preserved until now are mangupa upa (malehen mangan) for pregnant women approaching childbirth and *manakko dalan* , which is the activity of the child leaving the house and being taken for a walk around the house and then returning home to be given parompa sadun which is done by Mora (Mother's family) and also *panabalan goar* , which is giving a name to the baby. Where in this activity sugar/honey is given to the baby's mouth which can cause the cancellation of the provision of Exclusive Breastfeeding (28) Cultural and social standards that exist in society vary between each society. This shows that public health policies throughout the world should consider and study the culture of the community to create conditions that support the practice of providing breastfeed, with the expected end result being the provision of Exclusive Breastfeeding (29)

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusion

Mothers are required to provide exclusive breastfeeding to their babies from birth to 6 months of age without any additional food. We live in an area that still upholds culture, customs, and habits that are still often carried out. Not infrequently, these customary activities unintentionally or intentionally change the pattern of exclusive breastfeeding, such as giving honey/sugar/salt to babies before the baby is 6 months old. Many mothers think they have implemented the pattern of exclusive breastfeeding but it turns out that their exclusive breastfeeding has been cancelled.

Therefore, support is needed from various parties so that the mother's breastfeeding pattern improves so that exclusive breastfeeding can be achieved.

2. Suggestion

Suggestions given to local governments and health workers to be able to provide information about the correct pattern of breastfeeding to the entire community, especially mothers in Padangsidempuan City, and things that can cancel the provision of exclusive breastfeeding.

Ethical Clearance: This research has obtained Ethical clearance from the research ethics commission of the Faculty of Public Health, Hasanuddin University, Makassar with no. 298/UN4.14.1/TP.01.02/2024 dated October 11, 2024 to 11 October 2025.

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