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## FACTORS OF FATHER SUPPORT RELATED TO EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING BEHAVIOR IN SEMARANG CITY

Puja Anggun Febiani<sup>1\*</sup>, Zahroh Shaluhiah<sup>1</sup>, Sri Achadi Nugraheni<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Magister Promosi Kesehatan, Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat, Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang

<sup>2</sup>Magister Kesehatan Masyarakat, Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat, Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang

\*Correspondence email: pujaanggunfebiani@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

A breastfeeding father is a father who takes part in supporting his wife to breastfeed the baby. The success of exclusive breastfeeding can be achieved if there is husband involvement in it. Breastfeeding really requires a stable emotional condition. The husband's role in the breastfeeding process in Indonesia is still lacking so that the husband has to understand the importance of support for a mother. This study aims to analyze the factors of father support related to exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. This study was an analytical study with a Cross-Sectional design using a Simple Random Sampling technique. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The Chi-Square Test was used for bivariate analysis and the logistic regression test for multivariate analysis. The study results showed that variables of knowledge, attitude, emotional support, and instrumental support were related to exclusive breastfeeding in Semarang City. The most dominant factor influencing breastfeeding behavior was instrumental support with an OR value = 52.044. Father awareness regarding the important role of the breastfeeding father in supporting exclusive breastfeeding is expected to be improved. Family and health workers must collaborate to encourage the important role of the breastfeeding father.

**Keywords:** Appraisal Support; Breastfeeding Father; Emotional Support; Informational Support; Instrumental Support; Social Support

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### INTRODUCTION

According to the data by World Health Organization in 2018, it showed that 0-6 months infant who received exclusive breastfeeding was only 41%. This number is still low compared to Global Nutrition Targets 2025, which is to increase exclusive breastfeeding at least 50% of the target in 2030 of 70%. In a country with a low- and middle-income level, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding is only 47% on infants less than six months old.<sup>1</sup>

The coverage of infants receiving exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia in 2019 was 67.74%. This number has exceeded the Restra Target in 2019 of 50%. Based on the health profile of Central Java Province in 2019, the percentage of exclusive breastfeeding on infants in 2019 was 66.0%.

The percentage of exclusive breastfeeding in Semarang City is in eighth place, which is the highest in the Central Java Province at 78.0%.<sup>2</sup>

Factors influencing the low of exclusive breastfeeding consist of the lack of knowledge about the advantages of breastfeeding and mother awareness regarding the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. Moreover, health services and health workers that have not fully supported the Increased Use of Breast Milk (PP-ASI) program, incessant formula feeding, not maximal educational activities, socialization and campaign of breastfeeding, and the lack of family support, especially husband.<sup>3</sup>

The role of a father in the breastfeeding process in Indonesia is still lacking, especially in searching information about

breastfeeding, which is only 16.2%.<sup>4</sup> The husband's involvement in the breastfeeding process is usually called by Breastfeeding Father. Breastfeeding Father is the father who takes part in supporting his wife to breastfeed the baby.<sup>5</sup>

The success of exclusive breastfeeding can be achieved if there is husband involvement in it. Breastfeeding really requires a stable emotional condition because the psychological factors of the mother greatly influence the production of breast milk.<sup>6</sup> The husband has to understand the importance of support to the mother who is breastfeeding. The husband can have an important role in giving support because support given by the husband can influence the decision and breastfeeding behavior of the mother.<sup>7</sup>

The form of father support can be seen according to social support given. Social support is support obtained from an interpersonal relationship that refers to happiness, serenity, helpful assistance in the form of verbal information received by someone from another person or another group that has a behavioral influence on the recipient.<sup>8</sup> Social support can be concluded as everything from another person who often has interaction with individuals so that the individuals feel convenience physically and psychologically.<sup>9</sup>

According to Glanz Karen, social support is categorized into four types of supportive behavior, namely emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support.<sup>10</sup> Informational supports consist of giving advice, suggestions, and information that an individual can use to solve problems. For example, a father gives information about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the baby. Appraisal support involves providing information that is useful for self-evaluation, in other words, constructive feedback and affirmations, such as husband reminding his wife to give exclusive breastfeeding to the baby according to the schedule, the husband rebukes his wife if she gives food and drinks other than breast milk. Instrumental support

consists of providing actual assistance and service directly or providing assistance to someone who needs it. For example, a husband prepares finances in the form of money for his wife and child. If there is a health problem during the breastfeeding process, the husband provides food and drinks to support the mother's nutritional needs during breastfeeding. Emotional support includes giving empathy, love, trust, and care, such as the husband giving motivation and listening to complaints about problems faced by the wife during breastfeeding.<sup>11</sup>

According to the background above, the researcher would like to analyze the factors of father support related to the exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was quantitative research with analytical survey research using a cross-sectional approach. The research site was conducted in Semarang City, which is 35 Puskesmas (Public Health Center) in the working area of Semarang City. The population in this study was all fathers or husbands who had infants, were breastfeeding, and spread over 35 working areas of Puskesmas in Semarang City. The sampling technique used in this study was Simple Random Sampling. The number of samples in this study was 320 respondents calculated according to the Lemeshow formula.

Variables in this study were knowledge, attitude, lactation counseling, emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support as independent variables and behavior of giving exclusive breastfeeding as the dependent variable. Data collection used a questionnaire guide. Data processing used editing, coding, scoring, and tabulating. Data analysis in this study used univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. The statistical test of bivariate analysis used a chi-square test, while the statistical test for

multivariate analysis using logistic regression.

compared to respondents with income  $\geq$  Regional Minimum Wage of 40%.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics

No	Variables	Categories	%
1.	Age	1. Late adolescent	1.6
		2. Early adulthood	84.4
		3. Middle adulthood	13.4
		4. Elderly	0.6
2.	Infants' Age	1. 0-3 months	51.6
		2. 3-6 months	48.4
3.	Respondents' education	1. Higher	27.2
		2. Secondary	52.8
		3. Primary	20
4.	Respondents' occupation	1. Civil Servant	2.8
		2. Private Employee	65.3
		3. Entrepreneur	18.4
		4. State-owned Enterprises	2.2
		5. Others	2.5
		6. Unemployed	8.8
5.	Respondents' income	1. $\leq$ Regional Minimum Wage of Semarang City	60
		2. $\geq$ Regional Minimum Wage of Semarang City	40

The characteristics of respondents consisted of age, infants' age, education, respondents' occupation, and respondents' income. Based on table 1, the study respondents were 320 with an average age of 33.5 years old. The majority of respondents were in the early adulthood group of 84.4% and most infants of 51.5%. The number of respondents who took secondary education was 52.8%, compared to respondents with higher education of 27.2% and primary education of 20%. Meanwhile, most of the respondents were private employees of 65.3%, and the least was State-Owned Enterprises of 2.2%. The majority of respondents having a higher income in the  $\leq$  Regional Minimum Wage group was 60%

**Table 2.** The Results of Bivariate Test

No	Variables	Not Exclusive %	Exclusive %	P Value
1.	<b>Knowledge</b>	Lack	36.9	0.002
		Good	25.0	
2.	<b>Attitude</b>	Not supportive	38.0	0.000
		Supportive	14.5	
3.	<b>Lactation Counseling</b>	Not participating	26.7	0.075
		Participating	17.8	
4.	<b>Emotional Support</b>	Lack	32.3	0.000
		Good	12.1	
5.	<b>Instrumental Support</b>	Lack	89.6	0.000
		Good	7.8	
6.	<b>Informational Support</b>	Lack	26.3	0.085
		Good	17.7	
7.	<b>Appraisal Support</b>	Lack	26.1	0.147
		Good	18.7	

The results of the bivariate test showed that there was a significant relationship between knowledge, attitude, emotional support, and instrumental support to the exclusive breastfeeding behavior of the mother.

**Table 3.** The Results of Multivariate Test

No	Variables	p-value	Exp (B)
1.	Attitude	0.000	3.564
2.	Emotional Support	0.000	2.825
3.	Instrumental Support	0.000	52.044

From the table above, the most influential factor to the exclusive breastfeeding behavior was attitude, emotional support, and instrumental support.

## DISCUSSION

### **The Relationship between Father Knowledge and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Knowledge is someone's ability to deliver express what someone knows in the form of evidence, either spoken or written, in which the evidence or writing is a reaction of stimulation in the form of questions, either spoken or written.<sup>12</sup> Based on the study results after the bivariate test (Table 2),  $p$ -value = 0,002 means that there was a significant relationship between father knowledge and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. The study results showed that respondents have good knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding. Respondents understand that the best food for newborns to 6 months old infants is only breast milk.

The result of this study is in line with a study by Yannie Mimie, which stated that there is a significant relationship between husband knowledge and breastfeeding practice.<sup>13</sup> A father with good knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding will influence and motivate the mother to give exclusive breastfeeding.<sup>14</sup>

One of the factors influencing a father in supporting exclusive breastfeeding is father knowledge. Father knowledge is the things related to breastfeeding, seeking information about exclusive breastfeeding, exposure to mass media and interpersonal communication, parity or number of childbirths, income level, and positive associations with other father roles.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Relationship between Father Attitude and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Attitude is an effective process in which someone has made a comparison of various information obtained. If the results of information comparison from what is understood are good, the attitude to exclusive breastfeeding will also be positive and vice versa.<sup>16</sup>

The results of this study after the bivariate test (Table 2) showed that

$p$ -value = 0.000 means that there was a significant relationship between father attitude and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. From the results of the study, respondents had a supportive attitude shown from the attitude that exclusive breastfeeding is the best food for 0-6 months old infants. Moreover, respondents need to spend a little time waiting for the mother while breastfeeding, be enthusiastic, and pay attention to counseling about exclusive breastfeeding.

This is in line with a study conducted by Fili Fartaeni, which showed that there is a significant relationship between husband attitude and exclusive breastfeeding. This shows that a positive father attitude towards exclusive breastfeeding will also provide a good impact on the mother in giving exclusive breastfeeding.<sup>17</sup>

A father that can create a positive attitude regarding breast milk and breastfeeding can increase the success of exclusive breastfeeding practice. Father also has an important role in supporting breastfeeding, mainly if a father has positive thoughts or attitudes towards breastfeeding.<sup>14</sup> Positive attitude of the father towards breastfeeding is the basic asset to build good cooperation with the mother for the success of breastfeeding. Father involvement in making a decision about how to feed children and a positive attitude towards marriage life influences breastfeeding practice.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Relationship between Lactation Counseling and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Lactation counseling is one of the effective educations, in which besides increasing knowledge, this program also can provide approach and support regarding exclusive breastfeeding for mothers for the baby.<sup>12</sup> Lactation counseling in this study is a father who accompanies mother to have lactation counseling at Puskesmas (Public Health Center).

The results of this study after the bivariate test (Table 2) showed that  $p$ -value = 0.075 means that there was no

significant relationship between lactation counseling in Puskesmas and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. This study is not in line with a study conducted by Nurfatimah, where the results showed that there is an influence of lactation counseling on exclusive breastfeeding for the baby for 6 months.<sup>18</sup>

Even though theoretically, lactation counseling by health workers will influence exclusive breastfeeding behavior, but statistically, the results of this study showed no significant relationship between lactation counseling in Puskesmas and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. This is because even though the husband accompanies and participates in lactation counseling, there are other factors influencing exclusive breastfeeding behavior in mothers. Exclusive breastfeeding behavior of mother is based on better mother knowledge because mother participates lactation counseling directly while father only accompanies the mother.

Knowledge is an important factor in forming mother behavior in providing breastfeeding. Mother knowledge increases due to the accompaniment and lactation counseling during the breastfeeding process. Lactation counseling can increase the mother's knowledge about breastfeeding. Thus, a mother who directly obtains lactation counseling from health workers will influence exclusive breastfeeding behavior on the mother.<sup>18</sup>

However, there are still some fathers who accompany the mother during lactation counseling in Puskesmas. This is caused by the father's occupation in which the working father is not always able to accompany the wife to have lactation counseling. Therefore, if a father cannot accompany the wife to have lactation counseling in Puskesmas, he cannot obtain an explanation about exclusive breastfeeding, its advantages, and others during the lactation counseling process.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Relationship between Father Emotional Support and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Emotional support is support involving giving empathy, love, trust, care, attention, and encouragement to individuals from the closest people or social environment. Emotional support from a husband as a comfortable, safe, and peaceful place will help psychologically in stabilizing emotion and controlling oneself.<sup>10</sup>

After the bivariate test (Table 2), the results of this study showed that p-value = 0.000 means that there was a significant relationship between father emotional support and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. From the results of the study, good emotional supports that the father always gives include looking happy when a mother is breastfeeding the baby, asking the mother and baby conditions with full of attention, remaining intimate while the mother is breastfeeding.

This is in line with a study by Elly Dwi, which stated the relationship between emotional support and the success of exclusive breastfeeding. This is a support that can make an individual feels comfortable, confident, being cared for, and loved by social support sources so that the individual can face the problems better.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Relationship between Father Instrumental Support and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Instrumental support is a form of husband support as the provision of materials that can provide direct assistance, such as giving money, goods, foods, and services.<sup>10</sup>

After the bivariate test, the results of this study showed that p-value = 0.000 means that there was a significant relationship between father instrumental support and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. From the results of the study, good instrumental supports that father always gives include accompanying mother to check the baby's health to Puskesmas, clinic, or other health facilities when the husband is off or after coming from work, providing a comfortable place to breastfeed when the baby is 0-6 months, helping in looking after and caring for the baby.

This is in line with a study conducted by Ambarita, which showed that there is a significant relationship of husband instrumental support on exclusive breastfeeding. The instrumental supports given by husband include the husband getting up at night helping and accompanying mother to breastfeed, husband getting up at night calming the crying baby, husband helping cleaning the milk bottle for breast milk storage, husband helping in preparing tool equipment for pumping or breast pump, and husband also helping in massaging mothers.<sup>21</sup>

This form of support can reduce stress. Other forms of these instrumental supports include continuous financial support, shopping, caring for children, and doing household tasks. This support has psychological implications if an individual defines instrumental support as proof of love and appreciation.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Relationship between Father Informational Support and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Informational support is defined as support in the form of providing certain information. The information delivered depends on someone's needs. Information support can be useful to overcome problems faced by the family, including giving advice, ideas, or information needed. A husband who provides informational support will expose the mother to information about exclusive breastfeeding. With the informational support from the husband, the mother is expected to be more able to have exclusive breastfeeding.<sup>20</sup>

After the bivariate test (Table 2), the results of this study showed that  $p$ -value = 0.085 means that there was no significant relationship between father instrumental support and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. From the results of the study, good informational supports that the father always gives include informing that breast milk is important for the mother or baby during the first six months, suggesting the wife consume foods that can facilitate

breastfeeding, such as *katuk* leaves, spinach, and others. Also, informing the mother that the content of breast milk is much better than formula milk.

This study is not in line with a study conducted by Hamidah, where the analysis results showed a significant relationship between husband informational support and exclusive breastfeeding. Husband informational support is highly required for exclusive breastfeeding. The husband can provide a reference or directly help store expressed breast milk and accompany the mother to the lactation clinic. A mother who obtains information support such as information about exclusive breastfeeding from the husband will be encouraged to give exclusive breastfeeding compared to those who never obtain information from the husband.<sup>23</sup>

Even though theoretically giving exclusive breastfeeding is influenced by husband informational support, but statistically, in this study, there is no significant relationship between father informational support and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. This is because the mother obtains several other informational supports, not only from the husband, which can affect exclusive breastfeeding behavior. Information access of the mother can come from social media, mass media, and electronic media.

### **The Relationship between Father Appraisal Support and Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Appraisal support is a form of appreciation given by someone to another person according to the condition. Appraisal support can be in the form of appreciation for achieving family conditions based on the real condition.<sup>20</sup>

After the bivariate test (Table 2), the results of this study showed that  $p$ -value = 0.147 means that there was no significant relationship between appraisal support and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. From the results of the study, good appraisal supports that father always

gives include providing support in order to make a mother feels confident so that she can breastfeed the baby, always providing encouragement for breastfeeding mother, and always understanding that mother cannot always serve his needs because a child is a priority in the family.

The result of this study is not in line with a study conducted by Elly, where the results of the study showed a significant relationship between appraisal support and the success of exclusive breastfeeding.<sup>20</sup> The wife highly requires the role of a husband in appraisal support because when the wife experiences breastfeeding problems, the role of the husband as an appraiser is really required, especially in exclusive breastfeeding. The husband's role as a quite good appraisal will make exclusive breastfeeding work properly. Positive appraisal support from the husband is one of the things that have a strong influence as a support for the success of exclusive breastfeeding.<sup>23</sup>

Even though theoretically appraisal support influences exclusive breastfeeding behavior, but statistically, according to this study, there is no significant relationship between appraisal support and exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City. There are several internal or main factors that can influence exclusive breastfeeding behavior by a mother, such as a mother's knowledge, mother age, and mother's education.

### **The Influence of Attitude, Emotional Support, and Instrumental Support on the Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior in Semarang City**

Someone's behavior is influenced by a predisposing factor, enabling factor, and reinforcing factor. One predisposing factor influencing behavior is attitude, while one reinforcing factor influencing behavior is social support.<sup>24</sup> Mother behavior in providing exclusive breastfeeding depends on factors that influence it. A positive or negative attitude from a husband to breastfeeding can influence the behavior of a

breastfeeding mother.<sup>25</sup> If the father's attitude is positive, it will positively influence the mother's behavior in providing exclusive breastfeeding so that the mother will provide exclusive breastfeeding to her children.<sup>14</sup>

Social support from the husband takes an important role in making the mother happy and not stressed so that the milk supply remains smooth. Emotional support, such as attention, love, and empathy for the mother during the breastfeeding process, is very important for the success of exclusive breastfeeding because a father also determines the smoothness of milk expulsion, which is highly influenced by the mother's emotion and feeling.<sup>11</sup>

Instrumental support provided by the husband can influence the behavior of exclusive breastfeeding. The forms of this support can help reduce the mother's stress because the mother can directly solve problems related to materials or finances. Instrumental support can be given by a father in the form of real or direct supports, such as helping to care for or look after the children, helping to do household tasks, and others so that this support will have implications for mother psychology.<sup>21</sup>

With these supports, a mother will feel that she is supported and cared for so that it will influence the behavior of exclusive breastfeeding by the mother.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that exclusive breastfeeding behavior in Semarang City is high, which is 78.1%. The father's most influential or significant influence on exclusive breastfeeding behavior is an attitude, emotional support, and instrumental support. In order to increase the father's awareness regarding the important role of the breastfeeding father in supporting exclusive breastfeeding, recommendations that can be provided are to make the father target of health promotion about exclusive breastfeeding and the role of breastfeeding father by creating a special class of breastfeeding father. Moreover, innovation in

the form of IEC related to health promotion media about the Role of the Breastfeeding Father is required.

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