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Breastfeeding Of Shift Working Mothers: a Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Introduction: Working mother has a dual role as a worker and caring for children including the fulfillment of breastfeeding (infants aged 0-24 months). The shift work method has the risk of fatigue and stress thus affect milk production. The shift work method requires working mother to have more effective time management for direct breastfeeding and pumping breast milk.

Objective: Obtain a description of breastfeeding experience of shift working mother.

Method: The phenomenological approach was used in this qualitative research. Selection of participants using a purposive sampling method of 8 people. In-depth interviews were used in data collection and then analyzed using Colaizzi's method.

Results: The qualitative thematic analyses included the following: (1) breastfeeding motivation of shift working mother, (2) problem occurs of breastfeeding period of shift working mother, (3) shift working mother strategic to resolve the problems, and (4) source and form of supports.

Conclusion: The support needed by working mothers is flexible time for breastmilk pumps, comfortable lactation rooms, consistent shift schedule arrangements, and assistance from occupational health nurses in companies. The results of this study can be used as the basis for occupational health providing nursing interventions such as education, counseling and advocacy to management.

Keywords: breastfeeding, working mother, shift

Introduction

Based on data for February 2018, the total workforce has increased 2.39 million people since last year, so that bringing the total to 133.94 million people. The Labor Force Participation Rate between men and women is different. Men have the rate of 83.01% while women are 55.44%. When compared to last year, the rate for women increased 0.40% and there was a decrease for men 0.04%. This shows that women's participation in work has increased.¹ The increased number of working mothers has positive and negative impacts. The positive impact of working mothers includes being able to increase family income, apply the knowledge gained from higher education, and participate in social responsibility.² Motivation of working mothers to meet self-actualization needs, meet family economic needs, and meet psychological needs.³ The negative impact includes working mothers are reduced time for children and husbands, feelings of guilt, and minimal opportunities for intervention in child development activities.² Working mothers also lose time to carry out reproductive functions and caring for children.⁴ Breastfeeding is communication between mother and baby that can have a big impact on both. The mother's rude attitude when breastfeeding, rush and inadequate time will cause displeasure,

sadness, and fear for the baby.²

The different phases of life experienced by working mothers compared to male workers are the phases of childbirth and breastfeeding. Working mothers must balance their time to work professionally and fulfill their child's rights, namely breastfeeding. Data according to the Profile of Indonesian Children in 2018 showed the average length of breastfeeding for "baduta" (babies 0-23 months) is 10.41 months. This average was higher in rural areas than in urban areas, namely 10.57 months versus 10.26 months. This means that the mothers do not complete the fulfillment of the needs for breast milk for 2 (two) full years.⁵ Factors drive the success of Exclusive Breastfeeding include visits to lactation clinics, the desire, belief, and role of parents. Factors that hinder this success include old age, early complementary foods in infants aged <6 months, and the use of a pacifier. Mother's strong beliefs and perceptions about breastfeeding are the strongest positive determinants.⁶

The success of breastfeeding in working mothers is influenced by several factors. Rosyadi (2016) explains that there is a relationship between maternal working hours and workplace support with the success of giving exclusive breastfeeding. The results of this study indicate that exclusive breastfeeding tends not to be done by working mothers using the shift method (97.7%). This condition occurs because mothers who work in the shift work system have the risk of experiencing fatigue and stress and this affects breast milk production.⁷ Exclusive breastfeeding is also not provided by mothers who work more than 8 hours. The shift work method requires working mothers to have more effective time management for direct breastfeeding and pumping breast milk than non-shift ones.⁸

Working mothers need assistance in carrying out all processes of their dual role of providing full breastfeeding for 2 years. One of the assistance is through occupational health nurses (OHN). The assistance is to provide health services during this development period, namely prenatal, postpartum, and childcare. Occupational health nurses can also carry out an advocacy function for practices and policies that support family needs such as flexible working hours, leave, and child care.⁹ Based on this, it is important to conduct research to obtain a broader and deeper picture of the experience of breastfeeding working mothers with the shift work method. In-depth and meaningful experiences were obtained through in-depth interviews with working mothers in Tangerang City, Indonesia.

Methods

The phenomenological approach is used in this qualitative research. Phenomenology studies are an approach to exploring and understanding one's life experiences. This study aims to understand the life experiences of working mothers in breastfeeding as a whole and their perceptions in dealing with these experiences. This study uses four stages of descriptive phenomenology, namely bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing.¹⁰ Selection of participants using purposive sampling, namely working mothers with the shift work method, while the breastfeeding period (infants aged 0-24 months), work institutions in Tangerang. The number of participants was 8 people and had reached data saturation, meaning that no new information was obtained and there was a repetition of information that had been achieved in previous participants.

The data collection process used an in-depth interview method. Data collection tools include researchers, recording devices (smartphones), field notes, and interview guides. The interview process ranges from 20-45 minutes. Data were analyzed using the Colaizzi method. This research has passed the ethical test by Research Ethics Committee, Health Science of Yatsi, Number: 138/LPPM-STIKES YATSI/VII/ 2020

Results

The participants of this study were working mothers with the shift method and range of age 28-35 years. Four main themes were generated regarding breastfeeding experiences in shift working mothers, namely: 1) breastfeeding motivation; 2) breastfeeding problems of shift working mothers; 3) strategies of shift working mothers to overcome problems during the breastfeeding process, and 4) sources and forms of support.

1) Breastfeeding Motivation

Motivations for breastfeeding mothers to work in shifts include meeting children's needs, following the success of others, increasing the child's immune system, reducing economic burdens, and providing convenience for mothers.

Participants meet children's needs by providing the best for children and fulfilling children's rights. This can be seen in the participant's expression as follows:

"... pengen yang terbaik untuk anak (... want the best for children)" (P1)

"memberikan yang terbaik untuk anak saya (give the best for my child)" (P3)

"saya mikirnya ASI itu adalah hak anak (I think breastfeeding is a child's right)" (P2)

Participants revealed that they followed the success of others, namely parents and friends. This is the expression of the participants:

"orang tua dulu juga kasih full ASI (parents used to give full ASI too)" (P7)

"... pengen banget ngasih ASI karena teman-teman yang lain juga kayak gitu (... doing breastfeeding because of other friends do)" (P8)

Motivation of breastfeeding to increase children's endurance can be seen from the following participant's words:

"... daya tahan tubuhnya akan lebih kuat (... his endurance will be stronger)" (P4)

"...daya tahan tuh anaknya terutama, anak jadi jarang sakit (... the child's endurance especially, the child rarely gets sick)" (P6)

"... kalau yang anak ASI itu sakit dia lebih cepet sembuh (... if the breastfed child is sick, he will recover faster)" (P3)

Participants said that breastfeeding would reduce the economic burden, such as the participant's statement as follows:

"... irit beli susu (... economical in buying milk)" (P6)

"... ga perlu beli susu tambahan (...no need to buy additional milk)" (P7)

Participants revealed that breastfeeding provides convenience as expressed by the participants as follows:

"... gampang kalau kita ngantuk trus anaknya bangun ya langsung aja (... it's easy if we are sleepy then the child wakes up right away)" (P6)

"pumping saat kerja, kalau di tinggal kerja ya di pakein dot ... (pumping at work, if I am going to work, the baby use a pacifier...)" (P1)

"kalau lagi di rumah secara langsung tapi kalau lagi kerja ya pakai dot ... (if i am at home directly breastfeeding but if I am at workplace, use a pacifier...)" (P3)

2) Breastfeeding problems of shift working mothers

Problems faced by shift working mothers during the breastfeeding period include work stress, shift schedules, psychological responses, and reduced breastfeeding.

Participants feel work stress from a tough job and superiors as follows:

"... ya stres kerja dari atasan (... yes work stress from superiors)" (P1)

"beban kerja juga mempengaruhi banget... (work load also really affects...)" (P4)

"ya capek, stres karna pekerjaan yang numpuk, banyak deadline harus buru-buru (yeah tired,

stress due to work that has accumulated, many deadlines have to be rushed)” (P5)

Shift schedules include shifting schedules, working hours and guilt during night shifts. This is the expression of the participants:

“..... ya capek ya kadang malam hari baru ada info besok ada perubahan jadwal atau tidak (. yeah tired, sometimes at night there will be info tomorrow that there is change of schedule or not)” (P1)

“bingung kapan jadwal pumpungnya kalau shift (confused about when the pumping schedule on shift method)” (P4)

“... shifting yah jadi jam kerjanya juga gak beraturan (... shifting method so the working hours are also irregular)” (P5)

“... apalagi di shift, kurang tidur juga (... especially in shifts, lack of sleep too)” (P7)

The psychological responses felt by shift working mothers during the breastfeeding process included sadness, disappointment, guilt and fatigue. This was expressed by the participants as follows:

“..... merasa bersalah, kadang sedih, kadang kecewa karena harus ninggalin anak (... feel guilty, sometimes sad, sometimes disappointed because i have to leave a child)” (P1)

“ ya sedih karena gak langsung ke anak gitu... (yeah.. sad because it does not go directly to the child...)” (P3)

Mothers who work shifts also experience in reducing breast milk due to psychological responses, food, and late breastfeeding, as expressed by participants as follows:

“... kalau stres ngaruh ke asi drastis berkurang (... stress affects reducing breast milk drastically) ” (P1)

“ ... sampai telat pumping ya emang berkurang sekitar 50 cc (... if I am late pumping, it has decreased for 50 cc)” (P2)

“... saya beranggapan gak bakal bisa dech dapat 2 tahun ... saya takut asi anak saya ga cukup (I thought that I would not be able to get 2 years ... I was afraid that my child would not breastfeed enough)” (P3)

“ saya cenderung malas makan... kurang nyemil (I am lazy to eat ... less snacking)” (P3)

“iya karena telat pumping,...kadang aktivitas yang bikin telat pumping (yes because of late pumping, ... sometimes activities that make me late pumping)” (P4)

“ya namanya kurang tidur, terus stres, kerja sambil menyusui pengaruhnya sama ASI jadi dapetnya sedikit (lack of sleep, continues to be stressed, work while breastfeeding affects breast milk so i get less breast milk)” (P7)

“kalau saya udah terlalu capek, ASI saya malah lebih sedikit (If I'm too tired, I get less breast milk)” (P8)

3) Strategies of shift working mothers to overcome problem during the breastfeeding process

The mother's strategy of shift method in overcoming problems during breastfeeding includes fulfilling nutrition, doing distractions to reduce psychological responses, and seeking social support from others.

Participants revealed that they overcome reduced breastfeeding by fulfilling nutrients including nuts, vegetables, breast milk booster and power pumping methods, as expressed by the participants as follows:

“makan kacang-kacangan sama sayur-sayuran ajah...sayur bayam sama sayur katuk, kacang tanah sama kacang kedelai (Eat nuts and vegetables ... spinach and katuk vegetables, peanuts and soybeans)” (P2)

“... susu sama kacang almond (... milk and almond)” (P3)

“..power pumping sama usaha beli pelancar ASI (... power pumping and buying breast milk

vitamins)” (P4)

“...power pumping di malam hari lalu minum ASI booster... bubur kacang ijo itu sih ngaruh biasanya (... power pumping at night then drinking booster breast milk ... green bean are very influential)” (P5)

Participants said they carried out activities to distract from psychological responses including social media, worship, and take a walk as conveyed by the following participants:

“... istighfar untuk nenangin diri sendiri (... istighfar to calm down my self)” (P1)

“trus lihat-lihat medsos, lihat foto anak, ngalihin biar ga kepikiran lagi... (Then look at social media, see photos of children, switch them so that i don't think anymore)” (P1)

“...ngajak jalan gitu, ya dia ngikutin mau jalan gitu biar ga stress (take a look around walk to reduce stress)” (P2)

“... ya shopping aja biar ga stres (... just shopping so it doesn't get stressed)” (P7)

Seeking social support from other people, namely husband, friends, and family can solve the problem. This was conveyed by the participants as follows:

“...becandaan sama temen-temen (... joking with my friends)” (P1)

“orang tua kasih arahan apa yang harus dimakan biar asinya banyak... (parents give directions what to eat so that it generates a lot ...)” (P1)

“... paling curhat doang sama suami, sesama ibu-ibu disini, dan rumpi-rumpi sama teman (“... the most I confide in with my husband, fellow mothers here, and chat with friends)” (P3)

“saya selalu konsul sama teman yang lebih dulu punya anak (I always consulted with friends who had children first)” (P4)

“saya sih paling main, kumpul sama teman (the most is playing, hanging out with friends)” (P8)

4) Source and form of support

Participants reveal sources and forms of support including emotional support and getting support from the workplace.

Participants expressed emotional support from their husbands, family, friends and colleagues. This was expressed by the participants as follows:

“...suami sich... dengerin kita cerita, menenangkan, bantu ngerjain semua pekerjaan rumah... dukungan keluarga yang paling berpengaruh (husband... listen to our stories, calm down, help do all the household chores ... support the most influential family)” (P1)

“...motivasi dari teman... suami dan kakak ipar disemangati untuk bisa 2 tahun (motivation from friends ... husband and sister-in-law encouraged to be fulfilled 2 years of breastfeeding)” (P3)

Participants also receive support from the workplace including time for a breast pump, nursing room, and storage area for breast milk. This is according to the participant's expression as follows:

“ada ruang menyusui....tapi saya pumping di ruang kerja aja” (there is a lactation room ... but I prefer pumped in the work room) (P2)

“menyediakan ruang laktasi, menyediakan alat pompa, cuci botol sterilnya pun ada, info leaflet sama poster tentang menyusui” (providing a lactation room, providing a pump, washing sterile bottles, leaflets and posters about breastfeeding) (P4)

“kita selalu dikasih waktu untuk pumping, toleransi dari perusahaan” (we are always given time for pumping, tolerance from the company) (P8)

Discussion

Breastfeeding Motivation

The results of this study indicate that the mother's motivation for breastfeeding is to fulfill the needs of the child, follow the success of others, increase the child's immune system, reducing the economic burden, and provide convenience for the mother. Motivation for working mothers is the fulfillment of the need for self-actualization, family economy, and psychological needs.³ Transitional periods such as pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding are difficult times for working mothers. She must adjust her responsibilities as a professional worker and meet the needs of the child and her family. Breastfeeding is the process of giving breast milk (ASI) to babies aged 0-24 months. Breastfeeding without adding and replacing it with other foods or drinks until the baby is 6 months of age is called exclusive breastfeeding

Breastfeeding problems of shift working mothers

Problems faced by mothers working shifts during the breastfeeding period include work stress, shift schedules, psychological responses, and reducing breast milk. The Encyclopedia of Children's Health defines a working mother as someone who plays a dual role, namely working outside the home to earn income and taking care of the household at home. Working mothers are grouped into the adult population who have developmental tasks and risk factors for health. Transition periods during pregnancy, childbirth, and caring for children and their families are other risk factors. Working mothers have special characteristics in carrying out their dual roles. Pregnancy affects women's performance, the use of the postpartum period to care for babies, feelings of guilt leaving the baby to work outside the home, feelings of guilt if leaving a sick child at home, and the professional attitude of working women who are enthusiastic about returning to work after maternity leave and childbirth.¹¹

Working mothers have feelings of heartbreak, pity for their babies, feelings of uneasiness, and it is hard to leave their babies to work outside the home.¹² Shift schedules allow mothers to leave their children for long periods of time and change according to shift rotation. Inadequate psychological response affects milk production. The shift work method allows working mothers to manage more weight than non-shifts. Exclusive breastfeeding tends not to be given by shift working mothers (97.7%). This happens because mothers who work shifts have a risk of fatigue and stress which affects milk production.⁷ Good time management by working mothers can affect a child's bonding attachment and emotional intelligence.¹³ The impact of the shift work method is general fatigue or general fatigue and the risk of chronic fatigue. Fatigue can decrease performance and increase the risk of disease. If the mother is tired or stressed, it will result in disruption of the production of the hormone oxytocin and further inhibit the production of breast milk.¹⁴

Strategies of shift working mothers to overcome problem

The mother's strategy of shift working in overcoming problems during breastfeeding includes fulfilling nutrition, doing distractions to reduce psychological responses, and seeking social support from others. Mothers' efforts to cope with problems include bringing food and drink to work, eating regularly, coming home during recess, and bringing or leaving the baby with trusted caregivers.¹² Relaxation techniques are self-management techniques based on the workings of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Optimization of organ function is achieved after the muscles are relaxed. Relaxation can help the body relax and improve various aspects of physical health.

Sources and forms of support

Participants reveal sources and forms of support including emotional support and getting

support from the workplace. This results support the previous finding that the success of breastfeeding in working mothers is influenced by several factors including visits to lactation clinics, the desire, beliefs, and roles of parents.⁶ Attitudes, subjective norms, and behavior control are closely related to exclusive breastfeeding behavior.¹⁵ Support can be in the form of a lactation room or place, assistance from colleagues and superiors, and length of work. The length of work is defined as the number of hours a mother uses to work so that she has to leave her child.⁷ Family support from husband, parents, and in-laws is the key to successful breastfeeding for working mothers. The support providing information and encouragement to the mother during the breastfeeding period.¹⁶

Conclusion

The result of the study formulates four main themes regarding breastfeeding experiences in shift working mothers, namely: 1) breastfeeding motivation; 2) breastfeeding problems with the shift work method; 3) Strategies of shift working mothers to overcome problems during the breastfeeding process, and 4) sources and forms of support. The support needed by working mothers is flexible time for breastmilk pumps, comfortable lactation rooms, consistent shift schedule arrangements, and assistance from occupational health nurses in the company. This research can be used as a reference for occupational health nurses to provide nursing interventions in the form of education, counseling and advocacy to management.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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