

Intention to Breast Feed From a Social Marketing Perspective: A Case Study at Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim

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ABSTRACT

This research concerns the issue of intention to breast feed from a social marketing perspective, which involves a case study at Sungai Petani Hospital. The objectives of conducting this research are to determine the relationship between knowledge, beliefs, referent others and social acceptability toward the intention to breast feed and to identify the most significant factor that influence the intention of women to breast feed in Sungai Petani, Kedah. Specifically this research is conducted at Unit Obstetrik Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim, Sungai Petani, Kedah. A total of 100 respondents were selected to fill in the questionnaire that consists of five sections. This study uses the systematic sampling which involves drawing every 3rd element in the population starting with a randomly chosen element between 1 and 3. The data was analyzed with inferential statistic and Multiple Regression of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. For the data analysis and hypotheses testing, researchers found that the four independent variables have significant relationship toward the intention to breastfeed and the social acceptability is the most influence factor.

Keywords: Beliefs, Intention, Knowledge, Referent others, Social acceptability, Social marketing

INTRODUCTION

There are still women facing misinformation about the benefits of breastfeeding. For instance, many women do not want to breast feed as they think that it is troublesome, especially those with a full-time job. They also think that breastfeeding can disturb their performance in the work place. A number of factors may influence whether women choose to breast-feed. Studies suggest that many women believe that breast-feeding is inconvenient or inconsistent with their lifestyles or work commitments. A general lack of social support, lack of confidence or prior experience, fear of pain or breast sagging, and modesty/embarrassment may also contribute to the decision to infant formula-feed rather than breast-feed. In addition, the breastfeeding levels in Malaysia are relatively low compared to other countries in the region. According to the 3rd National Morbidity and Health Study in 2006, only 14.5 per cent of mothers breast-fed their child for the first six months.

There are two models that contribute to the intention to breast feed which are EREI Model and Health Belief Model. EREI model consists of variables of knowledge, belief, referent to others and social acceptability that contribute toward the intention to breast feed (Hill, Arnett, and Mauk, 2008).

In other studies, breastfeeding knowledge is reported to have a strong correlation with breast-feeding confidence, breast-feeding duration, and intention to breast-feed (Hill, Arnett, and Mauk, 2008). Different ethnic groups may have different beliefs, attitudes, and practices in terms of nutrition and breastfeeding even though they are living in the same region (Saka, Ertem, Elmaci, and Ergenekon-Ozelci, 2006). On the other hand, support from the father of the baby and the woman's mother, family and friends, peer counselors, or lactation consultant has been shown to increase breastfeeding behavior (Lawrence, Haslam, and Haefeli, 2002). At Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim, Sungai Petani, Kedah, "Polisi Rakan Bayi" has been implemented in order to encourage the practice of breastfeeding among mothers, which therefore can enhance society's understanding about the issue.

The previous study by Hill, Arnett and Mauk (2008), was carried out in order to understand the process used by low income pregnant or postpartum women when deciding whether to breastfeed or not. The results found that the breastfeeding knowledge among the respondents is low compared to the belief and referent other which were related positively to attitude and subjective norm respectively. The subjective norm was related positively to intention to breastfeed. Referent other was a strong predictor of intention to breastfeed.

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the study are to determine the relationship between knowledge, beliefs, referent others and social acceptability toward the intention to breast feed and to identify the most significant factor that influence the intention of women to breast feed in Sungai Petani, Kedah.

The sample for this study was selected from the pregnant women that went for the medical check up at Unit Obstetrik & Ginekologi, Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim. In a week, the number of pregnant women who attend to get the service is 300 people. For this research, the total respondents selected are only 100 respondents. This is due to a judgmental rule of thumb for selecting a minimum subgroup sample size. It has been suggested that each subgroup that will be separately analyzed should have a minimum of 100 or more units in each category of the major breakdown.

Data Collection

The data for this study had been collected through personally administered questionnaires that are distributed to the respondents at Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim. The advantage of this method is the completed data can be collected from the respondent at one time or period (Sekaran, 2006). Section A contained questions that required the respondent's background, such as age, race, level of education, income level, occupation and the experience of breastfeeding. Sections B, C, D and E focus on studying the relationship between knowledge, beliefs, referent others and social

acceptability toward the intention of breastfeeding. Section F consists of questions regarding intention of pregnant women towards breastfeeding practices.

Data Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set positively correlated to one another (Sekaran, 2006). The closer Cronbach's Alpha is to 1, it indicates that the question is significant and reliable. To measure the reliability and significance of the questionnaire, the reliability test should be above or equal with 0.6.

In order to determine the relationship between knowledge, beliefs, referent others and social acceptability toward the intention to breast feed, inferential statistic is used in order to determine the Spearman Correlation value. If the value $p < 0.05$, it means that the variables have significant relationship. Meanwhile, to identify the most significant factor that influence the intention of women to breastfeed in Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim, multiple regression is be used in order to test the significant influence of the four different factors toward the intention to breastfeed.

RESULT

First, from the finding of this research, the researcher found that social acceptability is the most influence factor toward the intention to breast feed among pregnant women in Hospital Sultan Abdul Halim. It is hoped that the findings of this study can make the people aware and be encouraged to practise breastfeeding. The main people that can learn from this study are the pregnant women and the group of mothers that were involved in answering the questionnaire distributed. It makes them become aware and more interested to get information about breastfeeding. Last but not least, other future researchers should continue our research. Maybe, they can apply the research at other locations as well.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this study is to determine the factors that have significant relationships toward the intention to breastfeed. The four variables have been adapted from the expanded rational expectation intentions (EREI) model. The independent variables are knowledge, belief, referent to others and social acceptability. This study also examined which is the most significant factor that influence the dependent variable; the intention to breastfeed.

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