

RIGHT TO BREASTFEED: THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE FACILITIES IN UiTM(T)



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5. Report

5.1 Proposed Executive Summary

This study is conducted to examine the existing policy on breastfeeding facilities in Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Terengganu (UiTMCT) as well as determining the adequacy of existing breastfeeding facilities provided by the university to its staffs. Currently there is no policy regarding breastfeeding facilities in the university which may be the factor for inadequacy of facilities provided. Example that can be seen is no specific room provided or refrigerator to store expressed breast milk (EBM), which are the basic facility to express milk and storage purpose. A self-developed questionnaires are distributed to respondent staffs of UiTMCT including administration, supporting staffs as well as lecturers. The data was gathered using stratified random sampling. The sampling frame is taken from the database focusing on the female staffs in UiTM Terengganu that comprises of three campuses located at Dungun, Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Besi. The analyses carried out in this study are frequency distribution and descriptive analysis. Thus, the expected findings of this study is expected to help the construction of a specific policy for breastfeeding facilities in the university as well as become a turning point to develop breastfeeding facilities in UiTMCT.

5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

Breastfeeding benefits has been vastly discussed by health and medical practitioners all over the world. Such benefits may not be possible to achieve without adequate and necessary support to those who practice breastfeeding. As working sectors nowadays are largely contributed by women, the issue of breastfeeding facilities at work is very important alongside maternity protection issues. This study intended to identify the obstacles women staffs are facing in practicing breastfeeding at work, particularly in UiTMCT. Specifically, the objectives of this study tend to recommend a policy regarding adequate breastfeeding policy in UiTMCT so as to ensure its implementation. Questionnaires were distributed to 250 female staffs in UiTMCT which comprises of three campuses with the return rate of 100%. The findings revealed that 99% of the respondents agreed that breastfeeding is important, and majority of the respondents agreed there is not adequate facilities at the workplace to support breastfeeding practice.

5.3 Introduction

The issue of breastfeeding among female workers has been vastly discussed globally, including Malaysia. In 2016 alone, women workforce in Malaysia comprises of 54.3%, which shows the significance of women participation in building and developing the nation. The number includes working mothers who are also juggling between work and family responsibilities. As bearing children is exclusive to women, their rights for maternity protection and breastfeeding their children should not be taken for granted.

According to Skafida (2011), educated mothers are likely to practice breastfeeding with longer duration as compared to mothers with lower or no education. Since most educated mothers are serving various workforce, breastfeeding practice becomes very challenging. For working mothers, they may be demotivated to continue breastfeeding if the facilities at their workplace does not support such practice. This is evidenced by research by Amin, Mohd Said, Sutan, Shah, Darus and Shamsuddin (2011). Tan (2011) also supports this finding as one of the factors for discontinuance of breastfeeding. According to Karin and Runge (2014), the way many workplace and work schedule are structured makes it difficult to practice breastfeeding, for example, inflexible time schedule, lack of break time as well as lack of support from supervisors and co-workers. There are also gap between professional, unprofessional and hourly workers. This is because not all workers have their own separate room which may offers some kind of privacy. Without proper facilities, it is cumbersome for working mothers to express breast milk at workplace, thus make breastfeeding practice impossible.

The benefits of breastfeeding are worldly known as the key to optimal health. According to Horta and Victora (2013), human growth, physically and intellectually depends very much on the nutrition they obtained during the first two years of their life. Therefore, it is recommended a child to be breastfed for the first 6 months up to 2 years of age. Furthermore, according to Gettas and Morales (2013), breastfeeding practice among women employees are significant in reducing the health and medical cost provided by the employers. Moreover, Horta and Victora (2013) found that breastfeeding has long term benefits as to produce healthier human capital in the long run.

5.4 Brief Literature Review

5.4.1 The Background Law

Maternity protection is provided by Employment Act 1955 (Act 265). However, there is no mention on breastfeeding rights. Before its amendment in 2012, the Act is only applicable to employees whose wages are below RM2000. For those earning more than RM2000, reference should be made to Industrial Relations Act 1967. Nowadays, maternity protection under Employment Act 1955 covers all women employees regardless of their wages with the new insertion of Section 44A of the Act.

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