

The role of mother's knowledge and feeding rules implementation adherence in association with the nutritional status of toddler in Bandung City

Peran pengetahuan ibu dan kepatuhan penerapan feeding rules yang berhubungan dengan status gizi balita di Kota Bandung

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Poltekkes Kemenkes Aceh

Aliefya Salfi Nayada^{1*}, Widya Astuti², Hurry Mega Insani³, Isti Kumalasari⁴

Abstract

Background: Poor nutrition can have a lasting impact on children's growth throughout the golden era, as evidenced by rising national and international wasting rates.

Objectives: This study aimed to analyze the relationship between maternal knowledge and adherence to feeding rules implementation on the nutritional status of toddlers aged 6–24 months at the working area of Margahayu Raya Health Center.

Methods: This quantitative, cross-sectional study was conducted at the Margahayu Raya Health Center from December 2024 to April 2025, involving 115 mothers of children aged 6–24 months, selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through structured interviews using the validated Feeding Practices and Structure Questionnaire (FPSQ) and anthropometric measurements using the Weight-for-Height Z-score (WHZ) indicator and assessed using the World Health Organization (WHO) Anthro program. Following data processing and cleaning, univariate and bivariate analyses were performed using the Chi-Square test ($p < 0,05$) using IBM SPSS Statistic to identify the statistical significance of the relationships between variables

Results: According to the findings, 63,5% of mothers were adherent to the feeding guidelines, and 73% of mothers were well aware of them. The results showed that mothers' knowledge of feeding rules ($p = 0,000$; OR = 7,822; 95% CI = 3,105 – 19,704) was associated with adherence to feeding rules. The mother's knowledge of feeding rules ($p = 0,003$; OR = 5,238; 95% CI = 1,779 – 15,420) and adherence to feeding rules ($p = 0,004$; OR = 5,440; 95% CI = 1,760 – 16,811) were associated with the nutritional status of toddlers aged 6-24 months.

Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of increasing mothers' understanding of and adherence to feeding rules to improve toddlers' nutritional outcomes.

Keywords:

Feeding rules, maternal knowledge, nutritional status, toddler

Abstrak

Latar Belakang: Gizi yang buruk dapat berdampak jangka panjang pada pertumbuhan anak di masa emasnya, seperti yang terlihat dari meningkatnya angka wasting secara nasional dan internasional.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara tingkat pengetahuan ibu dan kepatuhan penerapan *feeding rules* dengan status gizi balita usia 6–24 bulan di wilayah kerja Puskesmas Margahayu Raya.

Metode: Penelitian kuantitatif dengan desain *cross-sectional* ini dilaksanakan di wilayah kerja Puskesmas Margahayu Raya pada Desember 2024 hingga April 2025 dengan melibatkan 115 ibu dari balita usia 6–24 bulan yang dipilih

¹ Nutrition Program Study, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia. E-mail: aliefyasalfi@upi.edu

² Nutrition Program Study, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia. E-mail: widyaastuti@upi.edu

³ Nutrition Program Study, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia. E-mail: hurimega@upi.edu

⁴ Nutrition Program Study, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia. E-mail: ikkumalasari@upi.edu

Penulis Koresponding

Aliefya Salfi Nayada: Nutrition Program Study, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia
E-mail: aliefyasalfi@upi.edu

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melalui teknik *purposive sampling*. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara menggunakan kuesioner valid *Feeding Practices and Structure Questionnaire* (FPSQ) serta pengukuran antropometri berdasarkan indikator Berat Badan Menurut Panjang Badan (BB/PB) dan dievaluasi menggunakan WHO Anthro. Setelah data melalui tahap pengolahan, analisis univariat dan bivariat dilakukan menggunakan uji statistik *Chi-Square* ($p < 0,05$) menggunakan IBM SPSS Statistik untuk mengetahui signifikansi hubungan antar variabel.

Hasil: Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, 63,5% ibu patuh dalam mengikuti pedoman pemberian makan, dan 73% ibu mengetahuinya dengan baik. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pengetahuan ibu terkait feeding rules ($p = 0,000$; OR = 7,822; 95% CI = 3,105 – 19,704) memiliki hubungan dengan kepatuhan penerapan feeding rules. Variabel pengetahuan ibu terkait feeding rules ($p = 0,003$; OR = 5,238; 95% CI = 1,779 – 15,420) dan kepatuhan penerapan feeding rules ($p = 0,004$; OR = 5,440; 95% CI = 1,760 – 16,811) berhubungan dengan status gizi anak usia 6-24 bulan.

Kesimpulan: Penelitian ini menyoroti betapa pentingnya meningkatkan pemahaman dan kepatuhan ibu terhadap pedoman pemberian makan untuk meningkatkan hasil gizi yang lebih baik bagi anak-anak.

Kata Kunci:

Balita, feeding rules, pengetahuan ibu, status gizi

Introduction

The nutritional state of children during the golden period can permanently impact their development and growth in adulthood (Shekar et al., 2020). According to data released by the World Health Organization, up to 45 million children worldwide are too thin for their height, with 6,8% of toddlers experiencing wasting. According to the most recent 2023 Indonesian Health Survey statistics, the incidence of toddler wasting increased by 2,5% in just one year, from 4,1% to 6.6% (Kemenkes, 2022; Kemenkes, 2023). Similarly, after a year, the prevalence of wasting in the city of Bandung increased from 3,7% to 4,2%. Wasting negatively impacts the growth and development of children.

A variety of factors, including food consumption, parenting, and maternal knowledge, play a role in feeding practices in children that affect their nutritional status (Ghinanda et al., 2022). To promote their physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth and development, it is crucial to meet their nutritional needs (Al Rahmad & Annisa, 2025; Nasution et al., 2024). In addition to hindering growth and nutritional status, inadequate nutrient intake can make toddlers less energetic and weaken their body's defenses (Toby et al., 2021).

Factors such as food intake, dietary choices, and parental knowledge play a role in a child's eating habits. Providing a balanced diet that includes both physical and mental development can help reduce wasting in children. For instance, if an infant does not consume a balanced diet, it may lead to a decrease in their ability to engage in

activities and to maintain their weight. Feeding rules can be an effective alternative for promoting healthy eating habits among children (Saha et al., 2022; Ye et al., 2017).

Feeding rules can be an effective alternative for promoting healthy eating habits in children. Feeding rules are a fundamental aspect of the WHO guidelines and can help prevent wasting in children caused by food issues. The three aspects of feeding rules are schedule, environment, and schedule. (Ekarini et al., 2024). Appropriate feeding behavior guidelines based on feeding rules are used to manage the challenges related to meals. Feeding rules can be implemented as a preventive strategy against childhood eating disorders as soon as an infant is first exposed to foods other than breast milk.

To achieve a higher level of dietary quality, which leads to a normal nutritional status, parents should adhere to feeding rules (Ananta et al., 2023). This is consistent with the study by Sari et al. (2025), who found that toddlers' nutritional needs can be ideally satisfied by implementing feeding rules, such as a regular meal schedule, suitable food selection, and appealing food presentation. A study conducted by the Department of Health found that the Puskesmas Margahayu Raya area has a higher wasting rate (7,27%) than Bandung City (4,2%). The relationship between maternal knowledge of feeding rules and adherence to feeding rule implementation requires further investigation. This study aimed to determine the role of maternal knowledge of feeding rules and adherence to the implementation of feeding rules in association with the nutritional status of toddlers in Bandung.

Methods

This research employed a cross-sectional study was conducted in the Margahayu Raya Health Center work area of Bandung City from December 2024 to April 2025. The study population included mothers with toddler (6-24 months) residing in the working area of the Margahayu Raya Health Center. The research area was selected based on data from the Bandung City Health Office, which indicated that the prevalence of wasting in the area was 7,27%. This figure is higher than that of other health center areas and higher than that of the city of Bandung.

The selection of the age of 6-24 months is due to this period being an important transition period where babies begin to be introduced to complementary foods. The introduction of complementary foods is the initial foundation for the formation of eating habits and adherence to feeding guidelines. The total number of respondents was 115, selected using purposive sampling. The sample size was determined using Lemeshow's formula.

The calculation sample used a confidence interval of 95% ($Z=1,96$), margin of error (d) of 5%, and a proportion of 7,27% ($P = 0,0727$). The sample size was increased by 10% to anticipate potential dropouts, resulting in 114 respondents being retained. The inclusion criteria were mothers with children aged 6-24 months, mothers who lived with their children, mothers residing in the working area of the Margahayu Raya Health Center, as evidenced by their identity card (KTP), and mothers willing to be respondents. Respondents who resigned were excluded, as were mothers with children currently receiving medical treatment and congenital defects.

The data source used in this study was primary data collected through a survey. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through interviews using questionnaires and direct measurements of their nutritional status. Data on adherence to feeding rule implementation were collected using the Feeding Practices and Structure Questionnaire (FPSQ) through direct interviews. It covers three aspects: the schedule, environment, and procedures. The instruments used in this study have been previously validated by Jansen et al. (2021) and showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales ranging from 0,71 to 0,92. The assessment of

mothers' knowledge related to feeding rules was carried out through a questionnaire instrument consisting of 24 questions. The 24-item questionnaire was previously validated by Ekarini (2024) and Pradita (2023), with an r -value of 0,444. The 24 questions consisted of the schedule aspect, environmental, and feeding rules procedures.

Direct measurements were used to collect the anthropometric data. An infantometer was used to measure the toddlers' height, and a body scale was used to determine their weight. The Ministry of Health's weight-for-length z-score (WHZ) was used to categorize the results of body length and weight measurements to assess the nutritional condition of the assessed children. Nutritional status based on WHZ was categorized as normal (-2 SD sd $+1$ SD) or wasting (-3 SD sd <-2 SD).

IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows (version 21.0) was the main program used to analyze the data, with the help of Microsoft Excel 2019, WHO Anthro, and NutriSurvey 2007 software. Participant characteristics, feeding rule adherence implementation, mothers' knowledge of feeding rules, and nutritional status were included in the analysis. A normality test was performed to determine the cut-off value of maternal knowledge variables related to feeding rules. The association between mothers' knowledge of feeding rules and adherence to feeding rule implementation was investigated using a bivariate analysis. The relationship between these variables was evaluated using the chi-square test. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Malang State University (No. 19.02.07/UN32.14.2.8/LT/2025).

Results

Characteristic of Respondent

The importance of analyzing demographic phenomena is a particular concern to ensure that these data are accurately recorded in research. The distribution of respondents' characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Most of the respondents were aged between 17-29 years old. Most respondents willing to participate in the study were housewives. To devote more time to supporting their children's development, most mothers decide to become housewives. Some women decide to become housewives because they place a higher prioritize their families' needs. Most mothers in this study

were > 20 years old. Since they are thought to be mentally and physically prepared to start a family, this is the perfect age to marry and start a family.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents in the working area of the Margahayu Raya Health Center

Characteristics	n	%
Mother's Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules		
Good (≥ 17)	84	73
Insufficient (< 17)	31	27
Feeding Rules Adherence Level		
Adherence (≥ 133)	73	63,5
Inadherence (≤ 132)	42	36,5

Nutritional Status of Toddlers

Normal (-2 SD sd $+1$ SD)	98	85,2
Wasting (-3 SD sd $<- 2$ SD)	17	14,8

The Relationship Between Mother's Level of Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules With Feeding Rules Adherence Level Implementation

Based on Table 2, the results of the chi-square test between variables showed that there was a significant relationship between the mother's level of knowledge related to feeding rules and feeding rules adherence level implementation, with a p-value of less than 0,05.

Table 2. Analysis of the relationship between mother's knowledge related to feeding rules with adherence to feeding rules

Mother's Level of Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules	Feeding Rules Adherence Level		Total	p-value	OR (95% CI)
	Adherence	Inadherence			
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)		
Good	64 (76,2)	20 (23,8)	84 (100)	<0,001*	7,82 (3,105 – 19,704)
Insufficient	9 (29,0)	22 (71,0)	31 (100)		
Total	73 (63,5)	42 (36,5)	115 (100)		

The following table shows the relationship between mothers' level of knowledge about feeding rules and adherence to their application. Adequate knowledge is expected to increase mothers' awareness and understanding of the importance of adhering to feeding rules for children. This analysis was conducted to identify whether there is a correlation between maternal knowledge and adherence to feeding rules implementation and behavior, which plays an important role in supporting a healthy diet for children from an early age. Insufficiently informed mothers were 7,822 times more likely to adhere to feeding rules than mothers with good knowledge (OR = 7,822; 95% CI = 3,105 – 19,704).

The Relationship Between Mother's Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules and Adherence Level Feeding Rules Implementation with Nutritional Status

Based on Table 3, the results of the chi-square test between variables showed that there was a significant relationship

between the mother's level of knowledge related to feeding rules and adherence to feeding rule implementation with the nutritional status of toddlers with a p-value of less than 0,05.

Mothers with an insufficient level of knowledge related to feeding rules had a 5,238 times higher risk of having toddlers with wasting compared to mothers with good knowledge (OR = 5,238; 95% CI = 1,779 – 15,420). Several factors, including high levels of maternal motivation, understanding and processing of information, and sensitivity to toddler growth and development, can influence the fact that the majority of mothers have also been informed about feeding rules. According to Nursa'iidah and Rokhaidah (2022), most housewives have more free time to locate and obtain nutritional information, particularly feeding rules, from various sources (Starkweather et al., 2020). The likelihood of a child in the 6-24 months age group experiencing wasting was 5,440 times higher for mothers who did not properly adhere to feeding rules (OR = 5,440; 95% CI = 1,760 – 16,811).

Table 3. Analysis of the relationship between mother's knowledge related to feeding rules and adherence to feeding rules with nutritional status

Category Score	Nutritional Status		Total n (%)	p-value	OR (95% CI)
	Normal n (%)	Wasting n (%)			
Mother's Level of Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules					
Good	77 (91,7)	7 (8,3)	84 (100)	0,003* ^a	5,238 (1,77 – 15,42)
Insufficient	21 (67,7)	10 (32,3)	31 (100)		
Feeding Rules Adherence Level					
Adherence	68 (93,2)	5 (6,8)	73 (100)	0,004*	5,440 (1,76 – 16,81)
Inadherence	30 (71,4)	12 (28,6)	42 (100)		
Total	98 (85,2)	17 (14,8)	115 (100)		

*Significant at $p < 0,05$. ^aTest using Fisher's Exact Test.

Discussion

Characteristic of Respondent

Health workers from the Margahayu Raya Health Center provide information on feeding rules during Posyandu activities every month. Better parental knowledge raises awareness of the importance of correct feeding rules for children (Wati et al., 2024; Amran et al., 2024).

To compare and assess the growth of newborns and toddlers, measurements must be collected monthly, as the addition of height and weight data is an ongoing process (Addawiah et al., 2020). According to Permaida et al. (2024), understanding and curiosity about the significance of a child's development from an early age are issues that residents of residential regions with high population densities frequently encounter (Permaida et al., 2024).

The Relationship Between Mother's Level of Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules With Feeding Rules Adherence Level Implementation

Every month, during posyandu activities, health staff from the Margahayu Raya Health Center share information about feeding rules for toddlers, which can help mothers gain knowledge. Furthermore, some mothers are highly motivated to learn about and comprehend the process of feeding their infants healthily, which makes them eager to learn about feeding rules and to adhere to them.

According to field research, some mothers have been given information regarding feeding rules, but because they are not directly applied to toddlers, some mothers have forgotten them. Furthermore, it has been discovered that mothers acquire a variety of information about how to feed

and raise toddlers, causing them to deviate from a single parenting style. These parenting characteristics can negatively impact adherence to feeding rules and the nutritional status of children (Rofiqoh et al., 2021). The tendency to adhere to children's desires will make them picky about foods, which will impact their nutritional status in the future (Maneschy et al., 2024).

The source of information is another variable that influences adherence to feeding rules. Some mothers obtained their knowledge from social media sources. Similarly, Juniarti et al. (2023) claimed that reliable information sources, including health information media, influence an individual's knowledge growth (Juniarti et al., 2023). The reason for this is that mothers have been given knowledge regarding feeding rules, but they have not implemented them since they were initially provided with the information.

The Relationship Between Mother's Knowledge Related to Feeding Rules And Adherence Level to Feeding Rules Implementation with Nutritional Status

Information access is anticipated to be more difficult for respondents with knowledge below the good category, particularly for those who work as housewives. The nutritional status of children is also affected by the low knowledge and motivation of their mothers. This is due to mothers' ignorance about good and nutritious eating arrangements and the importance of setting a regular schedule and creating a pleasant eating environment.

Despite having more time, housewives run the risk of having fewer resources or money, which makes it harder for them to access information regarding feeding rules (Rahmania et al., 2025).

Furthermore, low-income unemployed mothers risk not being able to provide their children with the best possible nutrition (Al Rahmad & Shavira, 2024; Rahmania et al., 2025).

Health professionals in the Posyandu or neighboring areas are a source of information for housewives (Starkweather et al., 2020). In keeping with the field's finding that the Posyandu is conducted each month, health professionals from the Margahayu Raya Health Center are always present to offer advice on nutrition and health issues. Health professionals provide advice on feeding rules in the form of meal plans, serving sizes, and food types for children.

According to the interviews conducted, mothers adhered to feeding rules because they were highly useful in establishing daily routines for their toddlers' meals or other activities. Toddlers can maintain a proper nutritional status with the support of planned daily activities, such as a regular eating schedule and parental support. This is in line with research conducted by Azizah et al. (2025), who showed that implementing feeding rules could help children recognize their hunger and fullness cues. Feeding rules designate periods for main meals and snacks; children who adhere to a regular meal plan also have a lower risk of nutritional status not within the normal range.

Through interviews and observations, it was found that some toddlers did not have difficulty eating, were fussy when eating, or refused to eat at all. Although the feeding rules were not adhered to with the application, the nutritional intake of toddlers remained adequate, and the nutritional status of the respondents was normal.

Not all mothers implement feeding rules when feeding their toddlers during their day-to-day activities. According to the interview results, most mothers gave in to their children's requests to keep eating because they were afraid the child would not eat and they would not be able to provide for his daily nutritional needs. This is consistent with the findings of Darmayanti and Nugraha (2023), who found that most Indonesian children have similar experiences during the feeding process (Darmayanti et al., 2023). Specifically, the habit of holding children while they eat while providing them with distractions such as talking, watching television, or using electronics.

Mothers' feeding techniques are not always successful. It is possible that there are additional elements at play, such as controlled variables,

specifically toddlers' eating patterns (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024). When a child refuses to eat or does not finish the food that is provided, some mothers chastise, coerce, and occasionally frighten their children. Children may develop a picky eating condition as a result of the stress caused by this treatment (Darmayanti et al., 2020).

This study had some limitations. First, the cross-sectional design prevented causal inferences between maternal factors and nutritional status. Second, important confounding variables such as family economic status and parental education level were not controlled for in the multivariate analysis. Future research should involve these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing nutrition in toddlers.

Conclusion

This study found that maternal knowledge of feeding rules and adherence to feeding practices were significantly associated with toddlers' nutritional status. Mothers with better knowledge and higher adherence were more likely to have children with normal nutritional status. Proper feeding schedules, supportive mealtime environments, and positive maternal behavior may contribute to improved nutritional outcomes in children. However, this study did not control for factors such as family income and parental education, which may also influence feeding practices and the nutritional status of the children.

Practical interventions should focus on improving mothers' knowledge and adherence to appropriate feeding rules through nutritional education and counseling. Health workers should provide consistent guidance on healthy feeding practices to support the optimal nutritional status of toddlers.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in relation to the publication of this article.

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