



The Relationship Between Maternal Knowledge and Maternal Occupation with Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Sundari Khairunniswah¹, Etti Sudaryati², Evawany Yunita Aritonang³

¹ Master Student, Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

^{2,3} Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

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Abstract

Early complementary feeding (MP-ASI dini) remains a major nutritional challenge that affects child growth and development in Indonesia. This study aimed to analyze the relationship between maternal knowledge and employment status with early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. An analytical cross-sectional design was employed, involving 155 mothers selected through purposive sampling across seven districts. Data were collected using structured questionnaires

and analyzed using chi-square and logistic regression tests.

The results showed that 74.2% of mothers introduced complementary feeding before the recommended age of six months. The bivariate analysis indicated a statistically significant association between maternal knowledge ($p < 0.001$) and early complementary feeding, as well as between maternal occupation and early complementary feeding practices ($p = 0.004$). Furthermore, the multivariate analysis revealed that both maternal knowledge and employment status were significantly associated with early complementary feeding ($p < 0.05$). Among these variables, maternal knowledge emerged as the most influential factor affecting early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency (OR=6,21; 95% CI: 2,223–17,394).

These findings highlight the need for targeted educational and health promotion interventions to enhance maternal understanding of appropriate infant feeding practices. Strengthening workplace policies and community support systems for exclusive breastfeeding is essential to prevent premature introduction of complementary foods and to promote optimal child growth and development.

Keywords: complementary feeding, maternal knowledge, working mothers

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Introduction (Time New Roman 12 pt Bold)

The first two years of life, often referred to as the *golden period*, represent a critical phase for optimal growth and development in children. Nutritional adequacy during this period is fundamental to achieving a child's full developmental potential. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by appropriate complementary feeding (CF) starting at six months and continued breastfeeding up to 24 months or beyond (UNICEF, 2022; WHO, 2021).

Breast milk is recognized as the gold standard for infant nutrition because of its immunological and developmental benefits. However, early introduction of complementary foods commonly known as *early complementary feeding* remains prevalent in many developing countries, including Indonesia. This practice can lead to adverse health outcomes, such as diarrhea, infection, obesity, malnutrition, and impaired growth (Karunia, 2016; Wahidin, 2024).

The 2023 Indonesia Health Profile reported that exclusive breastfeeding coverage reached 68.6%, still below the national target of 80% (Kemenkes, 2023). In Langkat Regency, exclusive breastfeeding coverage was even lower, at only 35.19% (Dinas Kesehatan Langkat, 2023). Consequently, early complementary feeding before six months remains a common practice. Preliminary data collected from seven subdistricts in Langkat indicated that 63% of mothers had introduced complementary foods before their infants reached six months of age, primarily due to perceptions of insufficient milk supply, crying interpreted as hunger, and cultural traditions encouraging early feeding.

Multiple factors influence early complementary feeding practices. These include maternal knowledge, education level, occupation, family support, cultural beliefs, and exposure to health information (Aina, 2019; Pramita & Sumarmi, 2024). Among these, maternal knowledge and employment status are considered key determinants. Working mothers often face challenges in maintaining exclusive breastfeeding due to time constraints and lack of workplace support (Harnawati, 2023). Inadequate knowledge about breastfeeding and infant nutrition may also lead to early introduction of complementary foods.

The UNICEF Conceptual Framework on the Determinants of Maternal and Child Nutrition (2020) emphasizes the role of resource, normative, and feeding factors in shaping nutritional behaviors. According to this framework, feeding practices are influenced by enabling resources (e.g., knowledge, occupation), sociocultural norms, and environmental conditions that support or hinder optimal infant nutrition.

This study is important because early complementary feeding remains a serious public health issue that affects child growth and development, particularly in developing areas such as Langkat Regency, Indonesia. Although previous studies (Haryanti & Heriani, 2023; Widiastuti et al., 2020) have examined factors influencing early complementary feeding, most have focused on educational level and socio-economic status. This study contributes to scientific development by simultaneously analyzing maternal knowledge and maternal occupation related to early complementary feeding practices. Considering the continued prevalence of early complementary



feeding and its impact on child health and development, this research aims to analyze the relationship between maternal knowledge and maternal occupation with early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency, Indonesia.

Methods

This study employed an analytic cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between maternal knowledge, maternal occupation, and early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months. The research was conducted in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, from March to August 2025. The cross-sectional design was chosen because it allows simultaneous observation of the exposure variables (knowledge and occupation) and the outcome variable (early complementary feeding), providing a snapshot of the associations within the study population.

The study population consisted of mothers who had children aged six to twelve months residing in seven subdistricts of Langkat Regency, namely Stabat, Sei Lapan, Tanjung Pura, Gebang, Hinai, Brandan Barat, and Babalan. A total of 155 respondents were recruited using purposive sampling techniques, based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) mothers who had infants aged 6–12 months, (2) living permanently in the study area, and (3) willing to participate in the research voluntarily. Mothers who were unable to complete the questionnaire or declined consent were excluded.

Primary data were collected through structured and self-administered questionnaires distributed at community health centers (*Puskesmas*) and during home visits. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections. The first section contained sociodemographic information, including maternal age, education level, occupation, and family income. The second section assessed maternal knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding and the correct timing of complementary feeding initiation. The third section focused on infant feeding practices, particularly on whether MP-ASI was introduced before six months of age. The questionnaire had previously undergone expert validation and its reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating strong internal consistency.

Operational definitions were established to ensure clarity and consistency in data interpretation. Early complementary feeding was defined as the introduction of solid, semi-solid, or soft foods to infants before reaching six months of age. Maternal knowledge was categorized into "good" and "poor" levels based on the percentage of correct answers, where respondents achieving $\geq 75\%$ were classified as having good knowledge and those scoring $< 75\%$ as poor. Maternal occupation was classified as "working" (employed outside the home for income) or "non-working" (housewife).

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics. Bivariate analysis with the *Chi-square* test was applied to determine associations between independent variables (maternal knowledge and occupation) and the dependent variable (early complementary feeding). Variables with $p < 0.25$ in the bivariate stage were included in multivariate logistic regression analysis using the Backward LR method to identify the dominant



predictors influencing early complementary feeding practices. Statistical significance was determined at a p -value < 0.05 and a 95% confidence interval.

The study adhered to ethical standards for research involving human subjects. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee, Universitas Sumatera Utara. All participants were informed about the research objectives and procedures, and written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study, and participation was entirely voluntary without any form of coercion.

Results

Univariate Analysis

Characteristic of Respondent in Langkat Regency. The respondents in this study were mothers who had children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency. Based on Table 4, the majority of respondents were in the 20–35-year age group, accounting for 117 individuals (75.5%). Meanwhile, 37 respondents (23.9%) were over 35 years old, and only one respondent (0.6%) was under 20 years old.

Most respondents had a family income below the Langkat Regency Minimum Wage (UMK) of IDR 3,148,000, totaling 121 mothers (78.1%), while 34 mothers (21.9%) reported an income above the UMK. In terms of employment status, 101 mothers (65.2%) were unemployed or housewives, whereas 54 mothers (34.8%) were employed.

Table 1. Distribution of Maternal Characteristics of Mothers with Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Maternal Characteristic	n=155	%
Age		
<20 years	1	0,6
20-35 years	117	75,5
>35 years	37	23,9
Family Income		
< Regency Minimum Wage (UMK)	121	78,1
≥ Regency Minimum Wage (UMK)	34	21,9
Maternal Occupation		
Working	54	34 8
Not Working	101	65,2

Maternal Knowledge. The level of maternal knowledge among mothers with children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency is presented in Table 2. The results showed that most mothers had an adequate understanding of complementary feeding (CF), with 121 respondents (78.1%) demonstrating good knowledge. A total of 104 mothers (67.1%) knew that complementary foods



should not be introduced before the infant reaches six months of age, and 107 mothers (69.0%) were aware that early complementary feeding could have adverse effects on infant health. In addition, 102 respondents (65.8%) understood that early complementary feeding increases the risk of gastrointestinal infections in infants.

Furthermore, 60 mothers (38.7%) knew that the introduction of solid foods should begin only after the infant is six months old, while 59 mothers (38.1%) recognized that introducing complementary foods too early may reduce breast milk intake, whereas delaying it may lead to nutritional deficiencies. Meanwhile, 79 mothers (51.0%) believed that early complementary feeding could lower the risk of allergies, and 77 mothers (49.7%) realized that premature introduction of complementary foods could increase infection risk due to unsterile baby food.

The perceived benefits of complementary feeding among mothers included meeting the child's nutritional needs and helping the digestive system adapt to solid foods, as reported by 56 respondents (36.1%). Additionally, 113 mothers (72.9%) possessed knowledge regarding proper preparation and processing of complementary foods for infants.

Table 2. Distribution of Responses on Maternal Knowledge Among Mothers with Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Question	Do not know/Incorrect		Know/Correct	
	n	%	n	%
Do mothers know about complementary feeding (CF)?	34	21,9	121	78,1
Is complementary feeding recommended for infants under six months of age?	51	32,9	104	67,1
Can early complementary feeding have adverse effects on infant health?	48	31,0	107	69,0
Can early complementary feeding increase the risk of gastrointestinal infections in infants	53	34,2	102	65,8
Should solid foods be introduced only after the infant reaches six months of age?	95	61,3	60	38,7
Can early complementary feeding reduce breast milk intake and cause nutritional imbalance?	96	61,9	59	38,1
Can early complementary feeding reduce the risk of allergies in infants?	76	49,0	79	51,0
Can early complementary feeding increase the risk of infection due to unsterile baby food?	78	50,3	77	49,7
Is complementary feeding useful for meeting the child's nutritional needs and helping digestive adaptation?	99	63,9	56	36,1
Do mothers know the proper methods of preparing complementary foods for infants?	42	27,1	113	72,9



Based on table 3, the distribution of maternal knowledge among mothers with children aged six to twelve months regarding complementary feeding (MP-ASI) in Langkat Regency shows that the majority of mothers had poor knowledge, accounting for 94 respondents (60.6%), while only 61 mothers (39.4%) demonstrated good knowledge about complementary feeding practices.

Table 3. Distribution of Maternal Knowledge Categories Among Mothers with Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Maternal Knowledge	n=155	%
Poor	94	60,6
Good	61	39,4

Complimentary Feeding Practicess. Based on table 4, the complementary feeding practices among mothers with children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency showed that most respondents had introduced complementary foods before their infants reached six months of age, accounting for 155 mothers (74.2%). At the age of five months, 90 mothers (78.3%) had already started giving complementary foods. The most frequently given type of complementary food was soft food, reported by 58 mothers (50.4%). Meanwhile, the first type of complementary food most commonly introduced came from commercially manufactured products, as reported by 73 mothers (63.5%). The study also revealed that the majority of children appeared to enjoy receiving complementary foods, as indicated by 78 mothers (67.8%).

Mothers' feeding practices such as giving plain water, sugar water, mashed bananas, herbal concoctions for strength, or even honey placed on the pacifier have become cultural and traditional habits passed down through generations within families. This behavior is also influenced by husbands' approval, who often agree to the early introduction of soft foods to infants, thereby reinforcing the mothers' decision to initiate complementary feeding. In addition, family income also plays a role in shaping decisions related to complementary feeding. As a result, many infants receive complementary foods before reaching six months of age.

Table 4. Distribution of Responses on Complementary Feeding (MP-ASI) Practices Among Mothers in Langkat Regency

Question	Response	
	n	%
Have you given complementary feeding (MP-ASI) before your baby reached six months of age?		
Given	115	74,2
Not given	40	25,8
At what age did you first introduce complementary feeding?		



Question	Response	
	n	%
4 months	25	21,7
5 months	90	78,3
What type of complementary feeding was given?		
Liquid	57	49,6
Soft Food	58	50,4
What was the first type of complementary feeding you gave to your child?		
Homemade	42	36,5
Manufactured Product	73	63,5
Did your child seem to enjoy the complementary food given?		
Yes	78	67,8
No/Refused	37	32,2

Bivariate Analysis

Relationship Between Maternal Knowledge and Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency. Based on table 5, it was found that 81 mothers (86.2%) with poor knowledge had given early complementary feeding, while among mothers with good knowledge, only 34 mothers (55.7%) had done so. The results of the *Chi-square* statistical test indicated a significant relationship between maternal knowledge and early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency, with a $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$).

Tabel 5. Relationship Between Maternal Knowledge and Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Maternal Knowledge	Complementary Feeding Practice						<i>p-value</i>
	Appropriate		Early		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Good	27	44,3	34	55,7	61	100	<0,001
Poor	13	13,8	81	86,2	94	100	

Relationship Between Maternal Occupation and Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency. Based on table 6, it was found that 48 working mothers (88.9%) had introduced complementary feeding before their infants reached six months of age. In contrast, among mothers who were not working, only 67 mothers (66.3%) had done so. The results of the *Chi-square* test revealed a significant relationship between maternal



occupation and early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency, with a p -value = 0.004 ($p < 0.05$).

Tabel 6. Relationship Between Maternal Occupation and Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Maternal Occupation	Complementary Feeding Practice						<i>p-value</i>
	Appropriate		Early		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Working	6	11,1	48	88,9	54	100,0	0,004
Not Working	34	33,7	67	66,3	101	100.0	

Multivariate Analysis

This study employed binary logistic regression for multivariate analysis because the dependent variable, complementary feeding practice, was measured on an ordinal scale. Prior to the multivariate analysis, bivariate analysis was conducted on variables with a p -value ≤ 0.25 . As shown in table 7, the variables maternal knowledge and maternal occupation met the criteria and were therefore included for further multivariate analysis.

Tabel 7. Independent Variables in the Study

Variabel	<i>p-value</i>
Maternal Knowledge	<0,001
Maternal Occupation	0,004

The multivariate analysis in this study was performed using multiple logistic regression with the backward method. Based on table 8, the variables maternal knowledge and maternal occupation showed p -values < 0.05 . Among these variables, maternal knowledge was identified as the most influential factor affecting early complementary feeding practices among children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency.

The Exp(B) or odds ratio (OR) value indicates the magnitude of this influence. Based on the second step of the analysis shown in table 8, the Exp(B) value for maternal knowledge was 8.567, indicating that mothers with insufficient health worker support were 6,218 times more likely to provide early complementary feeding compared to mothers who received adequate support from health workers.



Tabel 8. Results of Multivariate Analysis on Early Complementary Feeding Among Mothers with Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency

Variable	B	<i>p-value</i>	Exp-B (OR)	95% CI	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Tahap 1					
Maternal Knowledge	1,827	<0,001	6,218	2,223	17,394
Maternal Occupation	-2,293	0,003	0,101	0,022	0,459
Constant	-0,887	0,711	0,412		

Discussion

Early Complementary Feeding Practices Among Infants Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency. Early introduction of complementary feeding (MP-ASI) remains a significant issue in child health, particularly during the first six months of life. Findings from Langkat Regency reveal that most mothers provide complementary foods before their infants reach six months of age. This indicates a persistent gap between maternal knowledge and daily feeding practices, as the behavior contradicts the Ministry of Health's recommendation for exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months.

Similar patterns have been reported elsewhere in Indonesia. Haryanti and Heriani (2023) found that 56.7% of mothers in Kendal Regency introduced complementary food early, while Purba (2021) recorded an even higher prevalence of 65.7% in Medan. Conversely, lower rates were observed by Widiastuti et al. (2020) at 37.7% and by Mirania and Louis (2021) at 30.2%. These differences likely reflect variations in socioeconomic conditions, maternal education, and local cultural norms.

Complementary feeding marks a crucial transition from exclusive breastfeeding to semi-solid foods. When introduced prematurely, however, it can pose health risks, as infants under six months have immature digestive systems incapable of processing complex nutrients (Mirania & Louis, 2021). Early feeding can therefore lead to allergic reactions, malabsorption, or gastrointestinal infections (Haryanti & Heriani, 2023). Additionally, poor food hygiene may increase the risk of diarrhea, vomiting, and weight loss. For this reason, the World Health Organization (Aina, 2019) strongly recommends introducing complementary foods only after six months of age.

Sociocultural beliefs play a key role in early feeding decisions. Many mothers perceive that breast milk alone is insufficient or are influenced by elders who adhere to traditional practices. In Langkat, long-standing customs—such as offering mashed bananas or thin porridge—are often viewed as signs of care rather than risk. Working mothers may also introduce foods earlier due to concerns about limited milk production.

Health workers thus have a vital role in promoting correct feeding practices. Limited counseling sessions and low participation in *posyandu* activities contribute to poor adherence to exclusive breastfeeding. Regular education using practical tools such as leaflets, videos, and



feeding demonstrations can improve maternal understanding. Economic factors also play a role, as families with limited income often substitute inexpensive home foods without adequate nutrition awareness.

Overall, early complementary feeding in Langkat is shaped not only by maternal knowledge but also by intertwined social, cultural, and economic factors. Effective interventions should therefore engage multiple stakeholders health workers, families, and local authorities through continuous education and *posyandu* empowerment. Strengthening family support, especially from husbands and grandparents, can help sustain exclusive breastfeeding for six months, thereby improving infant nutrition and long-term health outcomes.

The Relationship Between Maternal Knowledge and Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency. This study revealed that most mothers in Langkat Regency have a low level of knowledge regarding complementary feeding (MP-ASI). Based on the data distribution, 60.6% of respondents had poor knowledge, while only 39.4% demonstrated good understanding. However, 78.1% of mothers correctly identified the definition of MP-ASI, indicating that basic awareness of its meaning is relatively high. Such foundational knowledge is essential for guiding mothers in determining the appropriate timing and method of introducing complementary foods.

Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between maternal knowledge and early complementary feeding practices ($p = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$). Mothers with lower knowledge levels were more likely to introduce MP-ASI before six months of age, often due to limited access to accurate information. Many believed that feeding mashed bananas or formula milk early could prevent fussiness or promote weight gain. This finding aligns with studies by Haryanti and Heriani (2023) ($p = 0.042$; $p < 0.05$), Widiastuti et al. (2020), who reported that knowledgeable mothers were 11.455 times more likely to avoid early feeding, and Wahyuhandani and Mahmudiono (2017) in Aina (2019), who found that poor knowledge increased the risk of premature MP-ASI introduction.

Although 67.1% of respondents knew that feeding before six months is not recommended, 32.9% were unaware of this guideline. Only 38.7% understood that MP-ASI should begin after six months, reflecting limited comprehension of proper timing. In terms of health risks, 31% recognized potential adverse effects of early feeding, and 65.8% were aware of gastrointestinal infection risks. Meanwhile, 77% acknowledged the importance of food hygiene to prevent illness.

Knowledge regarding the nutritional role of MP-ASI was still limited only 36.1% understood its purpose in fulfilling nutrient needs and preparing the digestive system for solid food. Conversely, 72.9% demonstrated good understanding of proper food preparation techniques, although 27.1% lacked adequate knowledge about hygienic feeding practices. Thus, good maternal knowledge includes awareness of MP-ASI definition, timing, health risks, benefits, and safe preparation. Mothers with good knowledge tend to follow proper feeding practices, supporting optimal growth and preventing malnutrition. In contrast, mothers with poor understanding are more likely to introduce complementary foods too early or neglect food quality and safety.



Several factors influence maternal knowledge and feeding practices, including education level, experience, access to information, healthcare support, and family habits. Highly educated mothers or those actively engaged in health counseling sessions usually have better knowledge and adhere to recommended practices. Conversely, mothers with lower education or limited support tend to provide complementary foods prematurely.

Maternal knowledge thus serves as a crucial internal factor influencing feeding behavior. Mothers with adequate knowledge are generally more attentive to their child's nutritional needs, while those with limited understanding rely on tradition or social advice. Therefore, continuous health education through nutrition counseling, *posyandu* programs, and accessible media campaigns is vital to ensure mothers provide timely, safe, and nutritious complementary feeding to promote optimal child growth and development.

The Relationship Between Maternal Occupation and Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency. The study revealed that most mothers in Langkat Regency had inadequate knowledge regarding complementary feeding (MP-ASI). A total of 60.6% of respondents showed poor knowledge, while only 39.4% demonstrated good understanding. However, 78.1% correctly identified the definition of MP-ASI, indicating that basic awareness was relatively good. Such fundamental understanding is essential in determining the appropriate timing and method for introducing complementary foods.

Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between maternal knowledge and early complementary feeding practices ($p = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$). Mothers with lower knowledge were more likely to introduce MP-ASI before six months of age, often due to limited information and misconceptions that early feeding—such as mashed bananas or formula milk—helps babies gain weight or sleep better. These results are consistent with Haryanti and Heriani (2023), who reported a similar association ($p = 0.042$; $p < 0.05$), as well as with Widiastuti et al. (2020), who found that mothers with good knowledge were 11.455 times more likely to avoid early feeding. Likewise, Wahyuhandani and Mahmudiono (2017) in Aina (2019) confirmed that poor maternal knowledge increases the risk of premature MP-ASI introduction.

Although 67.1% of respondents understood that feeding before six months is not recommended, only 38.7% correctly identified six months as the appropriate starting age. Awareness of health risks was also limited—only 31% recognized the potential negative effects of early feeding, and 65.8% understood the risk of gastrointestinal infections. In contrast, 77% were aware of the importance of food hygiene in preventing disease.

Knowledge about the nutritional purpose of MP-ASI remained low (36.1%), suggesting that most mothers did not fully understand its physiological role in fulfilling nutritional needs and preparing the digestive system for solid foods. However, 72.9% had adequate knowledge of food preparation techniques, while 27.1% lacked proper understanding of safe and hygienic preparation methods. Mothers with good knowledge were generally more capable of applying correct feeding practices, ensuring optimal growth and preventing malnutrition.



Various factors influence maternal knowledge and practice, including education, experience, access to information, healthcare support, and family traditions. Educated mothers and those participating in health counseling tend to have better knowledge and adhere to recommendations, while limited education or lack of support often leads to early feeding. Overall, maternal knowledge is a key determinant of feeding behavior. Mothers who are well-informed tend to be more attentive to their children's needs, while those with poor understanding rely heavily on cultural habits or external advice. Therefore, continuous nutrition education through *posyandu* programs, health counseling, and easily accessible media is essential to ensure timely, safe, and nutritious complementary feeding that supports optimal child growth and development.

The Most Influential Factor in Early Complementary Feeding Among Children Aged Six to Twelve Months in Langkat Regency. Based on the findings of this study, maternal knowledge was identified as the most influential variable affecting early complementary feeding practices among mothers with children aged six to twelve months in Langkat Regency. This result is consistent with the study by Manoppo (2023), which reported that maternal knowledge was the dominant factor influencing early complementary feeding. However, it differs from the findings of Purba (2021), who found that maternal education was the most influential factor affecting early complementary feeding among infants at the Patumbak Health Center, Medan, in 2017.

Inappropriate complementary feeding practices remain common, particularly regarding the timing of introduction and failure to meet the minimum dietary standards recommended for infants (Manoppo, 2023). Therefore, maternal knowledge emerged as the strongest predictor in this study. Mothers with limited knowledge about early complementary feeding were 6.218 times more likely to introduce complementary foods prematurely to children aged six to twelve months compared to mothers who received adequate support and guidance from healthcare workers.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that maternal knowledge and maternal occupation were significantly associated with early complementary feeding practices. The factor most commonly observed among mothers who provided early complementary feeding was poor knowledge (60.6%). Maternal knowledge was identified as the most dominant factor, with an odds ratio (OR) of 6.218. This means that mothers with limited knowledge were six times more likely to introduce complementary feeding prematurely to children aged six to twelve months compared to those with better knowledge.



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