

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze and interpret the results of the data analysis, which we collected from the questionnaires in order to prove the research objectives. The results of data analysis are based upon the data collection of 400 samples, using SPSS program to compile the data and analysis.

5.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1.1 Questionnaire Findings

The results from Part 1, the personal information section, shows that most of the respondents of this research are mothers below 30 years old (51%), with an education up to Bachelor's Degree level (67.8%), has their own business (43.8%) and receiving around 30,001 - 50,000 Bath as income per month.

The results from Part 2, the respondents' influencing psychological factors, shows that most respondents of this research believe that sore nipples will cause the most problems for the 6 month breastfeeding period ($\bar{X} = 3.80$), followed by cesarean sections ($\bar{X} = 3.70$) and diseases ($\bar{X} = 2.81$). In detail, the researcher found that most new mothers who faced the problem of sore nipples try to find accessories such as breast pumps, and breast shields, etc. but found they were not much help. They feel a sense of reluctance every time they give breast milk. This is an effective barrier to 6 month breastfeeding. For cesarean sections, the researcher found that it is believed that 'cesarean section' may cause the body to not produce breast milk, but this is not true. Proper education from hospitals may help to correct this belief. For diseases, it seems to not be a big problem for new mothers. The researcher thinks that because many of the respondents do not have any diseases, they feel that it has no effect on them.

The result from Part 3, external factors impacting on the 6 month breastfeeding period shows that social support is the most important aspect influencing new mothers when giving breast milk to their child ($\bar{x} = 3.72$). After social support was hospital support ($\bar{x} = 3.66$), family support ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and promotion of milk brands ($\bar{x} = 3.32$). When considering these in detail, the researcher found that new mothers worry about the limited days of absence that their company provides for them. They believe that the Thai employment law does not allow 6 months of breastfeeding as they are given leave from work for only 3 months. New mothers who really want to breastfeed their children have to use a breast pump and store breast milk at home. This contradicts the attempt of the Thai government to support breastfeeding. Moreover, they feel that social issues have the most effect on 6 month breastfeeding.

Regarding hospital support, they replied that it helps them a lot. Many new mothers who have no experience with how to breastfeed have a chance to train and know how to do it. This is very impressive, but the hospitals that the researcher reviewed are well-known hospitals in Bangkok; therefore, it is not certain that government hospitals with a very limited budget would also provide the same level of service. Concerning family support, some new mothers think that it is important because they think that every family should support breastfeeding out of common sense. For promotion of milk brands, some of them think that it can change their breastfeeding behavior.

5.1.2 Hypothesis Findings

Table 20. Hypothesis Findings

Hypothesis	Factor	Relationship
1	Internal factors relating to 6 months breastfeeding	
	Age	0.438
**	Education	0.000
**	Income	0.004

	Occupation	0.949
2	Psychological factors relating to 6 months breastfeeding	
**	Cesarean pain	0.000
**	Sore nipple	0.000
**	Diseases	0.000
3	External factors relating to 6 months breastfeeding	
**	Hospital	0.000
**	Social	0.000
**	Family	0.000
**	Promotion	0.000

From the hypothesis testing, the results show that all factors, except age and occupation, have relationships with 6 month breastfeeding behavior.

5.2 RESEARCH DISCUSSION

For those intending to breast-feed, the influential factors were articulated as benefits to the baby such as “helps baby fight infections”, “better immunity” and “for baby’s health”, whereas the influences on feeding intentions for those choosing bottle feeding were principally linked to external factors, including “husband can help”, “not so tiring” and “horror stories from other mums”.

However, for different reasons, the external factors featured widely as advantages or disadvantages for women with either feeding preference. The research results show that for the respondents, multiple factors were cited by many respondents as one might expect with a complex decision of this sort although for those intending to breast-feed this does not necessarily equate with a profound understanding of why “breast is best” (Health Education Board for Scotland, 1994).

From the respondent’s suggestions, in terms of the advantages of breast-feeding, these were seen overwhelmingly as benefits for the baby, and included: “better immunity from infection”, “good nutrition”, “less stomach upsets”, and “it’s

healthier”. A number of respondents also saw breastfeeding in terms of benefits to the mother and included that breastfeeding “reduces the risk of breast cancer” and it “helps get the body back to normal”. Society seems to be another factor with many advantages. Respondents know that apart from citing “convenience” of breastfeeding, other advantages which came into this category were specifically that breastfeeding was “cheap” and it was the “easiest way to feed”. However, breastfeeding also had disadvantages, some mothers worried that the baby can be underweight from breastfeeding. The most often cited disadvantage to the mother was “sore or painful nipples”. External (social) factors was the category which held the most disadvantages, with social barriers such as Thai laws being the most common disadvantage cited.

When the researcher analyzed the key advantages of bottle feeding, it was found that it was perceived in terms of its convenience. The fact that a bottle feeding duty can be shared with a husband, partner or others was the main advantage cited by a large number of respondents. It is prepared, has less adverse reactions in public and is convenient. Mostly mothers who think about bottle feeding believe in a manufactured feeding product that is providing optimized nutrition for babies: this is an argument that would have been strong in earlier decades.

The most important factor I want to discuss is the education factor. The result shows that breastfeeding has the most significant relationship to education. The data here does not suggest a straightforward link between a baby feeding preference to the mother’s social class but the association between levels of education and feeding intentions is statistically significant. This finding is congruent with a number of previous studies (Martin, 1982) which demonstrated that the incidence of breastfeeding is associated with the level of maternal education. Therefore, I think that a powerful origin of the breastfeeding preference is self-education, which the government should consider of.

5.3 RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Research results show that ‘society’ is the most important factor influencing the 6 month breastfeeding behaviour. Based on this finding, the researcher recommends that the government should provide a good environment for new mothers for the 6 month breastfeeding period. For example, breastfeeding areas in all supermarkets, airports and important places should be provided, as well as a correction of the employment laws and regulations in order to support 6 month breastfeeding.

Also, to heavily promote breastfeeding behaviour via various marketing and communication channels is advisable. Above the line and below the line advertising is needed. For above the line advertising, the government may use T.V, mother and baby magazines and newspapers in order to promote the right breastfeeding behavior. Air time on T.V as sponsors of women’s programs or being sponsors of famous talk show programs can build recognition and awareness in the target group (John R. Rossiter and Steven Bellman, 2005). In term of magazines, the most useful would be the mother and baby magazines or magazines which have a good image and are able to reach women at all levels.

To lower the cost of advertising, ‘below the line advertising’ is suggested. Below the line is more suitable for promotion, which aims at not much investment in the beginning. It provides a chance for new mothers to join and receive information at the promotion points. Below the line means ‘Activities’ (David Pickton and Amanda Broderick, 2005), promotion teams may plan activities such as co-promotion with hospitals to advertise breastfeeding, jointly with women cloth brands, and offer free breastfeeding training, bus-stop advertising, etc. (Pamela Angell, 2004)

Table 21. Example of an advertising plan for breastfeeding

Activities	Jan- Mar	Apr- Jun	Jul- Sep	Oct-Dec
Above the line advertising				
Government's website advertising	✓	✓	✓	✓
TV advertising, TV program sponsorship	✓		✓	
Magazines		✓		✓
Below the line advertising				
Billboards, Tabloids		✓		✓
Brochures, Catalogs	✓	✓	✓	✓
News letter for new mothers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Co-promotion with hospital	✓		✓	
Co-promotion with women's clothing brands		✓		✓

5.4 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. There was limited time to conduct the research; therefore, the researcher could conduct the research in only 4 hospitals in Thailand.

2. This study is limited to only breastfeeding results in Bangkok, Thailand. Therefore, the results from this research cannot be generalized to other parts of the country nor other countries.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The causality that affects people's viewpoints and behaviour towards 6 months of breastfeeding behavior should be studied more deeply; the field research should be expanded into the suburbs of Bangkok to make the result of the statistical research thorough and clearer.

2. The next research should study Thai employment laws related to providing maternity leave. This should benefit new mothers and be a guideline for the government.

3. For future plans relating to 6 month breastfeeding behavior research, the researcher suggests that emphasis be placed on qualitative research such as Ethnographic Delphi or focus group interview methodology in order to understand new mothers more deeply in term of their wants and needs.