CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background and Significance of the Research Problem

Breastfeeding is the distinctive source of nutrition for growth, development, and survival of infants. There are two types of breastfeeding, namely partial and exclusive breastfeeding. Partial breastfeeding means an infant receives not only breast milk but also other foods or food-based fluids such as formula milk or weaning foods (Bonyata, 2011). Lawrence and Lawrence (2011) have categorized breastfeeding into full breastfeeding, which includes exclusive breastfeeding (EBF); as well as partial breastfeeding and token. EBF means an infant receives only breast milk; no other liquids or food are given during the first six months of life—not even water--with the exception of vitamins, mineral supplements, or medicines (World Health organization [WHO], 2014).

Breastfeeding, in particular EBF, is considered to be beneficial to the health and wellbeing of infants and mothers (Kramer & Kakuma, 2002). For infants, breastfeeding stimulates their immune system and responses to vaccination as well as provides cognitive benefits (Dorea, 2012). Thus, it protects infants from many diseases (Hanson, 2004). Infants receiving only partial breastfeeding had a higher incidence of acute respiratory infection and diarrheal infection in comparison with infants with EBF (Mihrshahi, Oddy, Peat, & Kabir, 2008). In addition, breastfeeding promotes special bonding between mother and infant by releasing the hormone oxytocin (Dutton, 2011). In mothers, breastfeeding is good for their physical health including contraction of the uterus, as well as reduced risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis (Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative [BFHI], & United Nation Children Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2014) Even though breastfeeding demonstrates many good benefits to infants and mothers, the rate of EBF at 6 months is still low in some areas.

In the 1996 national health survey in Australia regarding rate of breastfeeding, it was found that the breastfeeding rate at discharge from the hospital was 81.8%, 62.6% fully or partially breastfed at 3 months, 46.2% fully or partially breastfed at 6 months, and 21.2% receiving some breast milk at 1 year (Donath & Amir, 2000). Another result from national surveys from 94 developing countries on breastfeeding revealed that compliance to breastfeeding recommendations was low (Lauer, Betrán, Victora, de Onís, & Barros, 2004) with 55.4% of any type of breastfeeding. Chien, Chu, Tai, and Lin (2005) reported that in Taiwan the prevalence of exclusive and partial breastfeeding (to any degree) was 17.9% and 47% during hospitalization; 22.3% and 48.4% at 1 month; and 16.7% and 17.4% at 2 months; respectively. In Bangladesh, it was found that only 38% of infants aged 2 – 3 months received EBF, and 23% of infants were given complementary foods before the age of sixth months (Mihrshahi et al., 2007). A study in Mirzapur, northern Bangladesh, revealed that the prevalence of EBF was only 36% (Joshi et al., 2014). In addition, the rate of bottle feeding was 30% of infants aged 2 – 3 months, and the rate of infants aged 4 – 7 months bottle-fed had almost doubled since 2000 especially in urban areas (National Institute of Population Research and Training, 2005, as cited in Mihrshahi et al., 2007). According to Tarannum and Hyder (1998), a study conducted in rural Bangladesh found that only 7% of the infants were given breast milk as a first meal. Furthermore, the World Bank (2014) reported that the percentage of infant mortality rate was 33/1,000 live births in Bangladesh; the causations were malnutrition and diarrhea. The infant mortality and morbidity rates could be reduced by EBF. It is empirical that breastfeeding is a natural behavior of mothers to provide food to infants; however, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1988) postulated that appropriate behavior arises from intention.

Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behavior, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 1988). Ajzen (1988) developed the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The theory points out that intention of an individual to perform a certain behavior is reported to be the primary determinant of behavior performance, which is determined by the interrelated influence of attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In applying the TPB to breastfeeding, the individual refers to a primiparous pregnant woman with the attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control toward breastfeeding. There was one

study that showed the relationship of knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy to EBF intention. Thomas et al. (2015) studied the relationship of knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy to EBF intention among pregnant women in their third trimester in rural Bangladesh. The study used TPB as the conceptual framework with the Breastfeeding Attrition Prediction Tool (BAPT) by Janke (1994) as the instrument for data collection. It was found that attitudes and self-efficacy were independently associated with EBF intention.

There have been some studies conducted related to intention towards breastfeeding and EBF. One study on intention towards breastfeeding was done by Al-Akour, Khassawneh, Khader, Ababneh, and Haddad (2010). They conducted a cross-section comparative study of 1,200 Jordanian and Syrian pregnant women. The researchers mentioned none of the theory in their study. The study results showed that the two groups of pregnant women had no significant difference in breastfeeding intention. The majority of Syrian (77.2%) and Jordanian (76.2%) pregnant women intended to breastfeed their infants. In regards to determination of EBF, a study was conducted among 2,400 rural Bangladeshi women in their third trimester of pregnancy (26 – 32 weeks) about intention toward EBF using the TPB (Thomas et al., 2015). Data were collected by interview with standardized questionnaire. The result showed that their intention of EBF was high. Another study in Vietnam, using the TPB, was conducted in 180 first-time pregnant women receiving care at the antenatal Tu Du Hospital. The results showed that most of them expressed strong intention toward EBF for six months (Nguyen, Deoisres, & Siriarunrat, 2013). In addition, a cross-sectional study in Ethiopia among 709 pregnant women used the TPB and showed their intention toward EBF (Teklehaymanot, Nailu, & Wossen, 2013). Furthermore, it was found that the intention to either EBF or breastfeeding was correlated to attitudes, subjective norm, and behavioral control (Nguyen et al., 2013; Teklehaymanot et al., 2013; and Thomas et al., 2015).

Attitudes towards the behavior are defined as the individual's positive or negative feelings towards breastfeeding. It is determined through an assessment of one's beliefs regarding the consequences arising from a behavior and an evaluation of the desirability of these consequences. A cross-sectional study among 848 Saudi Arabian pregnant

women found that they planned to feed their babies by both breastfeeding and formula milk (Alwelaie et al., 2010). Persad & Mensinger (2008) studied about the attitudes of 100 primiparas mothers (12 weeks pregnancy) in an inner city university hospital, using theory of reasoned action (TRA). The results revealed that they had positive attitudes about breastfeeding. In a study in Nigeria among 100 working mothers, the results showed that 66% of breastfeeding mothers believed their breast milk needed to be supplemented with artificial formula for fast growth and health of their infants. They mentioned that infants had excessive crying, so it would be more appropriate that they were fed breast milk with supplementary feeding (Ekanem, Ekanem, Asuquo, & Eyo, 2012). Teklehaymanot et al. (2013) conducted a cross-sectional study in Ethiopia among 709 pregnant women, using the TPB. The findings showed that 87% of the respondents rated as false for the statement "breast milk and bottle milks are the same" of the attitudes. However, 84% of the mothers had the attitudes that small breasts do not produce enough milk for their infant.

Subjective norm, based on the TPB, is defined as an individual's perception of whether people important to the individual think a behavior should be performed. In this study, subjective norm refers to whether primiparous pregnant women value the opinion of the people around them on giving breastfeeding. There are few studies in relation to subjective norm towards breastfeeding. Walingo and Mutuli (2014) studied about breastfeeding among mothers in Kenya. They found that the most influential persons on mothers to breastfeeding were medical professionals, traditional birth attendants, and significant others. In addition, family members, mothers' partners, and society also encouraged mothers to practice EBF. Another study in Ethiopia found that a mother's perception of influential persons to EBF were father of the infant, mother-in-law, close friends or peer groups, and health care providers (Teklehaymanot et al., 2013).

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's perceptions of his/her ability to perform a given behavior, which is breastfeeding in this study. Khoury, Moazzem, Jarjoura, Carothers, and Hinton (2005) conducted a study in Mississippi, USA, to examine perceived behavioral control on breastfeeding among 733 low-income postpartum women, using the TPB. The findings showed that 82.1% of the women in the sample had the confidence to breastfeed even if they went to work or school.

Teklehaymanot et al. (2013) conducted a study in a community based on the cross-sectional study to assess the perceived behavioral control on EBF among 709 pregnant women in Medebay Zana District, North West of Tigray, North Ethiopia. The study used the TPB. The findings showed that the samples had high levels of perceived behavioral control on EBF.

From the above review it can be summarized that the studies were conducted in developed and developing countries. The samples comprised mothers, and primiparous as well as multiparous pregnant women. There are inconsistent findings of attitudes towards breastfeeding. The subjective norm involved husbands, family members, health personnel, and friends. The perceived behavioral control to breastfeeding related to going back to work or school. Their intention is towards both EBF and breastfeeding. The findings of previous studies may not fully explain the situation of Bangladeshi pregnant women due to daily living differences. Only one study in Bangladesh has been found, and it was conducted in a rural area. In addition, the situation of the ANC in one urban hospital of Bangladesh showed that there is a shortage of personnel in the ANC. Only one nurse provides service to 15 – 20 pregnant women who visited the ANC unit (Personal communication with a senior staff nurse, May 4, 2015). Thus, the investigator was interested in studying the intention as well as correlated factors including attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control towards breastfeeding in primiparous pregnant women in their third trimester. Szwajcer Hiddink, Koelen, and van Woerkum (2005) studied nutrition awareness among a group of pregnant women in the first, second, and third trimester. It was found that the group of pregnant women in their third trimester sought breastfeeding information from friends and other sources. It is expected that the results of this study may serve as preliminary data for health care professionals in Bangladesh to promote breastfeeding.

Research Objectives

1. To describe the attitudes towards breastfeeding among primiparous Bangladeshi pregnant women

2. To describe the subjective norm towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women

3. To describe the level of perceived behavioral control towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women

4. To describe the intention towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women

5. To investigate the relationship between attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women?

2. Who are the subjective norms towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women?

3. What is the level of perceived behavioral control towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women?

4. What is the intention towards breastfeeding for infants among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women?

5. Is there any relationship between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention towards breastfeeding among Bangladeshi primiparous pregnant women?

Definition of Terms

Attitudes refers to the feelings of primiparous pregnant women about the benefits and outcome of breastfeeding. It was measured by using the Breastfeeding Attrition Prediction Tool (BAPT) developed by Janke (2008), which was translated into Bengali by the researcher.

Subjective norm refers to the surrounding people of primiparous pregnant women of whose opinions on breastfeeding behavior they value. It was measured by the Breastfeeding Attrition Prediction Tool (BAPT) developed by Janke (2008), which was translated into Bengali by the researcher.

Perceived behavioral control refers to the feeling of primiparous pregnant women towards their ability to breastfeed. It was measured by the Breastfeeding Attrition Prediction Tool (BAPT) developed by Janke (2008), which was translated into Bengali by the researcher.

Intention refers to the thought of primiparous pregnant women in planning to breastfeed. It was measured by the Breastfeeding Attrition Prediction Tool (BAPT) developed by Janke (2008), which was translated into Bengali by the researcher.

Breastfeeding refers to the methods of providing breast milk to an infant.

Primiparous pregnant women refers to females with their primiparous pregnancy who visited the ante natal clinic at the tertiary hospital in Bangladesh.