Mothers' Sensitivity To Their Infants' Needs: An Exploration Of Influencing Factors In The First Six Months

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ABSTRACT

Background: Childhood 0-6 months is a crucial time period in human development. Data on developmental delays in West Java in 2024 show that around 30% of children in West Java experience developmental delays, with around 80% due to lack of stimulation. Stunting, which is a form of development delay, is also targeted to decrease significantly in West Java, from 21.7% to 14-15% in 2024. The relationship between mother and child is a context of maternal sensitivity. A sensitive mother will respond quickly and appropriately to the needs of the child, provide warm attention, and create a strong emotional bond between mother and child which is an important foundation for the child's future social and emotional development. **Objective:** to find out what factors can influence maternal sensitivity in babies aged 0-6 months. **Method:** this research uses quantitative research methods,With a total sample of 113 respondents, the sampling technique in this study used a non-probability sampling technique and the criteria for respondents were mothers who had babies aged 0-6 months using the NACTS (Nursing Child Assessment Teaching Scale) questionnaire. The CVI of maternal sensitivity scale ranged between 0.80 to 1.00. After reviewing the items (N = 36), the S-CVI was 0.87 for clarity and the S-CVI was 0.9 **Results:** The results show a p-value <0.05 for the variables number of children and family income. From this, it can be concluded that the factors that influence maternal sensitivity are these two variables. **Conclusion:** Of the several factors that influence maternal sensitivity, namely the number of children and family income are the most influential.

Keywords: maternal sensitivity; age 0-6 months; stimulation; development

I. INTRODUCTION

The childhood period of 0-6 months is usually called a crucial time span in the rate of human development, growth and development at this time will be an assessment of the success of growth and development in the future. The beginning of a child's life starts from the parents, where parents have a big role in the future of the child, besides that the quality of the child's future is also assessed with maximum development and growth. So that it can be known, stimulation and intervention of all growth retention and development are made from the beginning. Every parent can use education to gain a lot of knowledge about caring for children (Wilujeng, 2020).

The nature of each child has different stages of growth and development. The importance of stimulation at the age of 0-6 months is because children go through rapid growth and development, therefore if children do not get complete stimulation, children are worried that they are prone to lagging, growth and development and even permanent disruptions. The role of the family in stimulating

growth and development plays a very important role, especially the role of mothers because mothers who are often with children with gradual checks will be able to detect the child's development process, because the figure of the mother is very fundamental for the growth and development of children, so mother's knowledge is very necessary (Susanti, 2020).

Maternal sensitivity or in Indonesian called maternal sensitivity to children is one of the important factors in the relationship between mother and child. This maternal sensitivity leads to the mother's ability to respond and understand the emotional, physical, and social needs of children in a responsive and empathetic way. Sensitive mothers are able to read the signals given by their children and give appropriate responses. The relationship between mother and child is a context of maternal sensitivity, this is very important through sensitive interactions, mothers can provide deep emotional support to children. A sensitive mother will respond quickly and appropriately to the child's needs, provide warm attention, and create a strong emotional bond between mother and child, which is an important foundation for the child's future social and emotional development. Children who get high maternal sensitivity tend to grow up to be safe, confident, and easy to form healthy relationships with others. Children have strong confidence and are able to regulate emotions well. On the other hand, children who lack maternal sensitivity tend to be more susceptible to social and emotional problems such as difficulties in forming healthy relationships and decreased self-confidence (Shai, 2018).

Stimulus from parents is very fundamental for children's growth and development because parents can form the process of establishing relationships between children and parents so as to form a warm relationship and can also make the stages of children's growth and development according to their stages such as fine motor, gross motor, language, and social skills. So that lack of stimulation can result in lagging behind in the stages of growth and development and can have an impact on the next stages of growth and development of children to find their potential. So that parents can provide stimulation by stimulating stimulation according to (Haryanti, 2018). Mother's knowledge about stimulation plays a role in children's development because it will affect the stimulation that will be carried out on the child. Mothers who are active in sharing stimulation will cause good things for children's growth and development, and vice versa (RI Kemenkes, 2016).

Events that occur in the community are still found in children who experience suboptimal growth and development, with the prevalence of a high number of children, it is necessary to check the growth and development of children so that they move properly and in accordance with activities at their age level. When growth runs for a short time, the development is the same, there is an increase in mentality, memory, reasoning, association and others. Children are healthy, get older, gain weight and height and increase their intelligence. It is necessary to

check this development and growth gradually so that all development activities can be fulfilled and there are no deviations. The deviations that occur are the impact of a lack of stimulation such as children's impromptu communication skills, malnutrition problems and other developmental disorders (Ramadia, 2021).

Data from WHO according to (English, 2019), around 5-10% of children have a developmental impaired around 1-3%, especially in children under the age of 5 in Indonesia experience impaired in general development which includes motor, language, socio-emotional, and cognitive development. The Indonesian Ministry of Health conducted a development check in 30 (thirty) provinces in Indonesia and reported that 45.12% of babies had developmental disorders. In addition, around children in Java Kada experience developmental delays and around 80% of them are caused by lack of stimulation and based on data from West Java Province it is stated that 92% of toddlers carry out growth and development stimulation or commonly called (SDIDTK) in health services. WHO data in 2018 shows that the problem of growth is not only malnutrition, but also shortness and overnutrition. The prevalence of malnutrition was 7.3%, overweight was 5.9% and stunted (short) toddlers was 21.9%. Nationally in Indonesia, the prevalence of nutritional status of toddlers consists of 3.9% malnutrition, 13.8% malnutrition, 79.2% good nutrition, and 3.1% overnutrition. The total number of babies in 2021 in the city of Bandung was 4081 and in West Bandung Regency the number of babies was 8412 babies (OPEN DATA JABAR, 2019). Data on general developmental delays, 2 out of 1000 babies have motor development disorders, 3 to 6 out of 1000 babies have hearing loss and one in 100 toddlers have poor intelligence and speech delays. In addition, almost 30% of toddlers in West Java experience developmental delays (Sugeng, 2019). Data on developmental delays in West Java in 2024 show that around 30% of children in West Java experience developmental delays, with around 80% due to lack of stimulation. Stunting, which is a form of development delay, is also targeted to decrease significantly in West Java, from 21.7% to 14-15% in 2024. (Jabarprov.go.id 2024)

Gross motor development irregularities do not get quick action and are incompetent, the worst possibility leads to disability. Checking children's motor development can be checked at public health service centers such as posyandu, the Toddler Family Development Program (BKB) and the family environment, so that the family figure, especially the mother, is very fundamental, because with a good check, it can detect early child developmental disorders. The interaction between children and parents, especially the role of mothers, is very beneficial for the overall child development process because parents can immediately recognize abnormalities in their child's developmental process and as early as possible to provide stimulation to the child's overall growth and development. Given the great role of mothers, mothers' knowledge of child development is very necessary. Knowledge is the result of knowing and this happens after sensing a

certain object, most of human knowledge is obtained through the eyes (sight) and ears (hearing). The knowledge that mothers must know about child development includes developmental stages, developmental tasks, maternal skills or stimulation methods, developmental characteristics, and developmental monitoring. Knowledge about child development can be obtained through education, self-experience and other people's experiences, the media of the time and the environment (Susanti, 2020).

II. METHOD

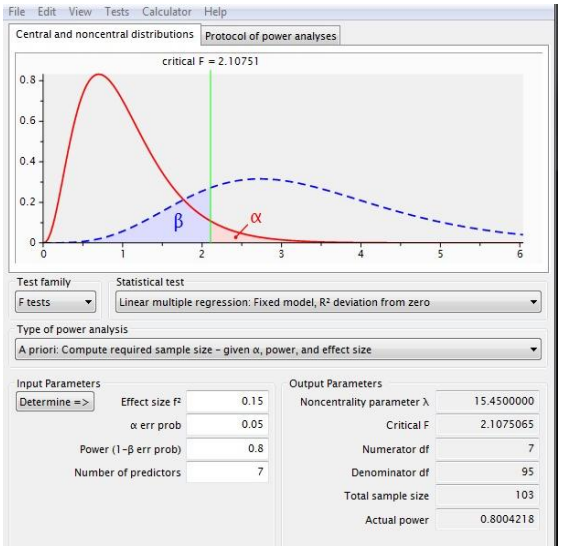
Study design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a cross sectional study design where the researcher takes data on dependent variables and independent variables both at once (simultaneously).

Sample

The researchers also used a convenience sampling technique, in which sample selection was based on availability and ease of access. The calculation of the required sample size in this study was conducted using G*Power software version 3.1.9.7, applying an F-test for linear multiple regression (fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero) with an effect size of 0.15, a significance level (α error probability) of 0.05, and a statistical power of 0.80. The minimum required sample size was 103 participants. Considering an attrition rate of 10%, the total sample size to be included in the study was 113 respondents.

Gambar 1. Analisis G-Power



The inclusion criteria in this study were: mothers who have children 0-6 months, mothers who can read and write, and mothers who have mobile phones.

Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria in this study were: mothers who have twins and mothers who have children with congenital defects.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a form of questionnaire that is distributed to respondents in the form of a question sheet. Maternal sensitivity was calculated using (NCATS) nursing child assessment teaching scale evaluated maternal sensitivity The questionnaire was calculated to calculate maternal sensitivity, 50 binary items 9 seen/not) used to measure maternal behavior arranged in empathy measured by NCATS delivered directly using question sheets to respondents in the form of structured closed questions, arranged in such a way that respondents could easily fill in and answer them. The CVI of maternal sensitivity scale ranged between 0.80 to 1.00. After reviewing the items (N = 36), the S-CVI was 0.87 for clarity and the S-CVI was 0.93

Data Analysis

Univariate data analysis was carried out to obtain an overview of the characteristics of the frequency distribution of respondents. This analysis was used to obtain an overview of the characteristics of each independent variable which includes age, education, socio-economic, access to information, and number of children as well as dependent variables, namely maternal sensitivity to stimulation of children's growth and development aged 0-6 months.

Bivariate analysis was conducted to test the existence of age relationships, education level, socioeconomic, access to information, family support, and number of children, as well as verifiable dependents, namely maternal sensitivity to stimulation of growth and development of children aged 0-6 months to test the significance of the hypothesis.

Multivariate analysis was used to determine factors related to maternal sensitivity to stimulation of growth and development of children aged 0-6 months. Using regression linear statistical tests is used to see if independent variables affect the dependent variables.

III. RESULTS

Table 1. Overview of Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Education		
Elementary School	12	10.6
Junior High School	16	14.2
Senior High School	45	39.8
Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	40	35.4
Employment Status		
Employed	48	42.5
Unemployed	65	57.5
Household Income		
Below IDR 1,000,000	13	11.5
IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 3,000,000	33	29.2
IDR 3,000,000 – IDR 5,000,000	34	30.1
Above IDR 5,000,000	33	29.2
Access to Information		
Yes	62	54.4
No	51	44.7

Of the total 113 respondents who participated in this study, it can be seen that most of them have a high school education background, namely 45 respondents or 39.8%. Education is one of the important factors that can affect knowledge and attitudes in childcare. The average age of respondents was 29.25 years, with an age range ranging from 19 years to 42 years. This age shows that the majority of respondents are in early adulthood, who generally already have emotional stability and experience in parenting. In terms of work, the majority of respondents, namely 65 (57.5%), are not working, while 48 respondents (42.5%) are working mothers. This condition can affect the time and attention that can be given to the child during the parenting process. Regarding family income, the distribution of respondents is quite even. A total of 34 respondents (30.1%) had a family income between Rp.3,000,000 to Rp.5,000,000 per month, followed by the group with an income below Rp.1,000,000 as many as 13 respondents (11.5%), income of Rp.1000,000 to Rp.3,000,0000 as many as 33 respondents (29.2%), and income above Rp.5,000,000 as many as 33 respondents (29.2%). Adequate family income can support the fulfillment of children's basic needs and the quality of care. Regarding access to information, more than half of the respondents, 62 people (54.4%), admitted to having access to information related to maternal sensitivity, while 51 respondents (44.7%) did not have such access. Access to this information is important to improve understanding and practice.

Table 2. Overview of Maternal

Domain	Mean (SD)	Min-Max
Sensitivitas to Signals	7.58 (2.738)	1-10
Response to Children's Distress	12.0 (0.000)	12-12
Fostering Socio-Economic Growth	10.54 (0.846)	8-11
Cognitive Crowth Coaching	16.03 (1.366)	11-17

Based on the data in the table regarding the description of maternal sensitivity, there are several domains that are measured by the average value and score range, in the domain of sensitivity to signals, the average score obtained is 7.58 with a standard deviation of 2.738 and the lowest to highest values range from 1 to 10. For the response to children's distress, all respondents received the same score of 12, showing full consistency in this aspect. In the domain of socio-economic growth coaching, the average score was 10.54 with a standard deviation of 0.864 and a range of values between 8 to 11. Meanwhile, in the domain of cognitive growth coaching, the average score reached 16.03 with a standard deviation of 1.366 with the lowest and highest values between 11 to 17. Overall, the average total score obtained was 39.78 with a standard deviation of 10.17 with a minimum score of 7.00 and a maximum of 49.00 out of a maximum total score of 49.00. This illustrates that in general, the level of sensitivity of mothers in responding to the needs of children is quite high, although there are differences between individuals.

Table 3. The Relationship of Each Independent Variable to Maternal Sensitivity

Variabel	Maternal Sensitivity T	*p*-Value
Age	-0.252*	0.007
Respondent's Last Education	0.075	0.432
Number of Children	-.257*	0.006
Respondent Occupation	0.118	0.213
Family Income	0.437*	0.000
Access information	1.673	0.054

Based on the results of the analysis of the relationship between independent variables and maternal sensitivity, several important findings were found. The age of the respondents had a significant negative correlation with maternal sensitivity (T= value 0.252 P=0.007), which means that as the mother ages, the level of sensitivity to the child tends to decrease. The number of children also showed a significant negative relationship with maternal sensitivity (T = -0.257 P = 0.006), so that the more children one has, the mother's sensitivity to each child tends to decrease. Meanwhile, the respondents' last education and employment status did

not show a significant relationship with maternal sensitivity, with P values of 0.432 and 0.213, respectively. This indicates that the level of education and whether the mother works or not, has no direct effect on the sensitivity of parenting. Family income shows a very significant positive relationship.

Table 4. Factors Affecting Maternal Sensitivity

Variabel	B	*p*-Value	Confidence Interval for B	
			Lower	Upper
Number of children	-3.003	0.032	-5.804	-0.262
Family income	-4.247	0.000	2.468	6.026

Based on the results of the analysis, there are two variables that specifically affect maternal sensitivity, namely the number of children and family income. The variable number of children has a negative regression coefficient of -3.003 with a value of P=0.032 which shows that the more children, the more maternal sensitivity the level tends to decrease. This is supported by the confidence interval for the number of children coefficient that is between -5.804 and -0.262 that do not pass zero, so this relationship is statistically significant. Meanwhile, family income has a positive regression coefficient of 4.247 with a value of P=0.000. This indicates that the higher the family's income, the higher the level of maternal sensitivity. The confidence interval for the family income coefficient ranged from 2,468 to 6,026 which also showed a significant positive relationship

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a study involving 113 mothers with babies aged 0-6 years, as many as 45 mothers (39.8%) have a high school education background. A study conducted by Camila da Costa Ribeiro, et al . (Ribeiro et al., 2020) showed that no significant relationship was found between the demographic factors of maternal education and the result of 11.6%. In addition, mothers with higher education and good jobs tended to have higher parenting sensitivity and good jobs tended to have higher parenting sensitivity, although Most mothers in the study had low levels of education (Rahma et al., 2021).

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, the characteristics of the sensitivity of the nurse in working mothers show quite significant variations. That as many as 60% of respondents who are working mothers have a level of parenting sensitivity that ranges from moderate to very low. On the other hand, only 40% of these mothers showed a high to very high level of parenting sensitivity. One of the factors that is suspected to affect this is the limited time experienced by working mothers due to the demands of the profession, including the possibility of overtime, so that they experience time that

they can dedicate to childcare (Faizati, 2019). This condition illustrates how work pressure can have an impact on the quality of interaction and parenting provided by mothers to their children.

Based on the results of the research conducted, many families have a monthly income between Rp.3,000,000 to Rp.5,000,000. Research (Qiong Wu, 2021) shows a positive relationship between family income and maternal sensitivity in parenting. This is due to the ability of families with this income to better support children's development and meet basic needs optimally. With adequate income, families can provide an environment conducive to children's growth and development, so that mothers' sensitivity in responding to children's needs also increases.

Based on the results of the study, access to information, Most of the respondents, namely 62 people, stated that they had access to information about maternal sensitivity while the other 51 respondents did not have such access. The research is in line with these results, some respondents stated that they had access to information about maternal sensitivity, which contributed to improving the quality of childcare. This is in line with the findings that access to information plays an important role in supporting parents, especially mothers, to be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of their children, although statistically the effect is close to significant. Foley's research (2024) confirms that the availability of adequate information can help improve the mother's ability to respond optimally to children's cues and needs

Sensitivity to cues refers to a mother's ability to recognize and understand various signs or signals given by the child. It can be in the form of facial expressions, crying, tubih movements, or other behaviors that show the child's needs or feelings. Based on the data obtained, the average score in this domain was 7.58 with a standard deviation of 2.738 and a range of values between 1 and 10, which illustrates that there is a significant variation among mothers in terms of their ability to read and interpret the cues given by the child, thus showing that the level of sensitivity to the child's cues varies from person to individual. In line with the findings of Mangkuayu (2024), there is significant variation in the mother's ability to read and interpret children's cues, so sensitivity to cues varies from time to time individu.

Response to child distress describes a mother's ability to respond quickly and appropriately when the child experiences difficulties or shows signs of discomfort, and based on the data obtained, all respondents obtained the same score of 12, which shows full consistency among mothers in terms of their responsiveness to the needs and distress of the child, thus reflecting a high level of awareness and attention in caring for the child situation. Research by Misniarti and Haryani (2022) shows that the mother's ability to respond to children's needs, including providing appropriate stimulation when the child is experiencing difficulties or showing signs

of discomfort, is greatly influenced by factors such as knowledge, awareness, and maternal attention to child development.

The development of socio-economic growth reflects the various efforts made by mothers in supporting the social and economic development of children, which include providing social stimulation, introducing children to the surrounding environment, and fulfilling the basic needs obtained, the average score in this domain is 10.54 with a standard deviation of 0.846 and a value range between 8-1, showing that most mothers provide quite consistent support in this aspect. Fostering the socio-economic growth of children by working mothers includes various efforts such as providing social stimulation, introducing children to the surrounding environment, and meeting the basic needs of children. Some mothers provide quite consistent support in this aspect according to research (Daily, et al, 2021).

Ballarotto's (2023) research on parental sensitivity to the need for ballad autonomy in mother-child and father-child interactions during eating and play activities is in line with findings regarding the role of mothers in fostering children's cognitive growth. Mothers play an important role in stimulating and supporting the development of children's thinking and learning abilities through meaningful interactions, the provision of educational games, and children's involvement in activities that stimulate their cognitive function. The data showed that the average score of the cognitive domain reached 16.0 with a standard deviation of 1.366 and a score range of 11-17, indicating that most mothers provide optimal and consistent support in aspects of their child's cognitive developmenteka

Based on the results of the study, the average age of respondents was 29.25 years, with the youngest age being 19 years old and the oldest age being 42 years old. This data is in line with the findings of Safruddin (2022) which shows that 40.9% of respondents are in the age range of 28-32 years, 19.4% in the age range of 33-37 yajim, and 11.8% in the age range of 38-42 years. Parents over the age of 20 tend to apply a positive parenting style, because at that age they usually already have good emotional stability. In addition, the study also revealed that children under five who were cared for by parents aged 20 generally showed relatively good growth and development and were in accordance with the stages of development of children of their age.

Based on a study involving 113 mothers with babies aged 0-6 years, as many as 45 mothers (39.8%) have a high school education background. Study conducted by Caamila Da Costa and colleagues (2020). It shows that there is no significant relationship between the demographic factor of maternal education and the result of 11.6%. In addition, mothers with higher education and good jobs tended to have higher parenting sensitivity, although Most of the mothers in the study had a low level of education (Rahma et al., 2021).

The number of children owned by a mother shows a significant negative relationship with the level of maternal sensitivity, which is shown by the intention T of -0.257 and the P value of 0.006, which means that when the number of children in the family increases, there is a clear tendency that the sensitivity or sensitivity of the mother in responding to the needs, cues, and conditions of each child individually will decrease. So the attention and response given to each child may be less optimal than a family with fewer children. In line with the results (Ulfa, 2020). Families with fewer children tend to be able to provide more intensive and personalized attention and stimulation to each child and families with a large number of children face challenges in dividing time and attention, so the role of parents in supporting children's development needs special strategies to maintain sensitivity. Respondent's occupation

Safruddin's (2022) research on the relationship between parental parenting and child development shows that parenting styles set by parents greatly affect children's growth and development, especially in motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional aspects. The results of this study are in line with the findings that the respondents' employment status does not show significant changes with maternal sensitivity P= 0.213), which means that whether a mother works or not, does not have a direct effect on her sensitivity level in parenting and responding optimally to children's needs. In other words, the mother's work factor is not the main determinant in the quality of parenting and child development, resulting in consistent and attentive parenting from parents who play a more important role in supporting the child's overall development.

Qiong Wu's findings (2021). In line with the results of the study which showed that family income had a very significant positive relationship with maternal sensitivity with a value of T = 0.437 and a value of P = 0.000. The higher the family income, the higher the level of sensitivity of mothers in caring for and responding to the needs of their children individually, so that with better economic conditions they tend to be able to provide more optimal attention, stimulation, and emotional support to their children. Environmental factors and more adequate family resources can strengthen the role of maternal sensitivity in supporting children's emotional development and self-regulation from an early age.

Research shows that access to information has a value of T=1.673 with a value of P=0.054 close to statistical significance, which indicates the possibility that access to information plays a role in increasing maternal sensitivity. Better access to children's needs, so that it has the potential to strengthen the positive impact of maternal sensitivity on language development, executive function, academic achievement, and independence Foley (2024).

The number of children has a negative regression coefficient of -3.003 with a significance value of P=0.0032 which shows that the more children, the more maternal sensitivity the level tends to decrease. The confidence interval for the coefficient of the number of children is between -5.804 to -0.262 that does not go past zero, research by Ulfa (2020) on the role of the family concept of early childhood developmental psychology, which states that families with a greater number of children face challenges in providing optimal attention and stimulation to each child, so that parenting sensitivity tends to decrease.

Family income has a positive regression coefficient of 2.247 with a value of P=0.000 which shows that the higher the family income, the higher the level of maternal sensitivity. This finding is in line with Qiong Wu (2021) who emphasizes the importance of maternal sensitivity in the regulation of infants' emotions, where better family socioeconomic conditions allow mothers to provide more optimal attention and response to children's emotional needs. Thus higher parental income provides adequate resources for mothers to increase their sensitivity to childcare, which contributes positively to emotional development and fear regulation in babies.

V. CONCLUSION

In accordance with previous research on maternal sensitivity in childcare, the findings indicate that maternal sensitivity is shaped by a range of demographic and socioeconomic factors. Family income shows a positive and significant influence, suggesting that better economic conditions support more responsive and optimal caregiving, while the number of children has a significant negative effect, as increasing caregiving demands may limit mothers' ability to provide sufficient attention to each child. Access to parenting-related information tends to enhance maternal sensitivity, although its effect is marginally significant, indicating its potential role in improving caregiving practices. Maternal education and employment status do not demonstrate significant direct effects but may contribute indirectly within a broader caregiving context. Additionally, mothers generally exhibit high and consistent responsiveness to children's distress and provide adequate support for children's socio-emotional and cognitive development. Mothers aged over 20 years tend to demonstrate more positive parenting behaviors, which may be associated with greater maturity and caregiving experience. Overall, economic factors and access to information are important determinants of caregiving quality, while family size presents challenges in maintaining maternal sensitivity, and high maternal sensitivity is essential for supporting children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and long-term well-being.

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