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Master's Dissertation of
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**Barriers to Timely Introduction of Complementary Feeding
through Mothers' Perception in Ghana**

ガーナにおける母親の認識を通じた乳児への適切な時期の補完食開始の障壁

21MW301

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Abstract

Objectives: The study aimed to explore mothers' perceptions, recognition, and expectations for timely introduction of complementary feeding (CF) through interviews with 2- to 12-month-old infants' mothers in Ghana.

Methods: This was a qualitative descriptive design with data collected from 16 semi-structured interviews with mothers attending the Child Welfare Clinic in Ejisu Government Hospital. Only mothers with term infants from 2 to 12 months old were included. Mothers, with infants weighing under 1,500 g at birth, were excluded. Interviews were guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Collected data were also analyzed using the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Results: The months of introducing CF was six months for ten mothers and before six months for six mothers. All mothers (N=16) understood CF should only be introduced at six months of age. By contrast, some mothers had behavioral beliefs that CF should be introduced earlier due to their experience raising children (attitude toward the behavior). Influence by grandmothers, group norm (subjective norm), and difficulty in continuing breastfeeding (perceived behavioral control) also changed their behavioral beliefs and generated the intention to introduce CF early. Additionally, some mothers were struggling to give CF despite optimal introduction, and there may be gender inequalities in giving CF.

Conclusion: Driving complementary feeding were: "attitude toward the behavior", "subjective norm", and "perceived behavioral control", which influenced each other and attributed to mothers' intention. The results suggested the importance of enhancing support for continuing breastfeeding, retraining for grandmothers, and support after introducing CF. This study made a significant contribution to understanding mothers' perceptions of introducing CF and it may be useful for effective health education or making policy recommendations. It is necessary to reduce the number of malnourished children through providing individualized support, rather than just imparting knowledge unilaterally.