B-ICON Proceeding

EMPOWERMENT MODEL OF LOCAL WISDOM VALUES OF THE LEMBAK TRIBE AS AN EFFORT TO PREVENT STUNTING IN BENGKULU CITY

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Abstract

Stunting is a nutritional status based on height/age as measured by a child's anthropometric standards, with a Z-score of <-2 SD to -3 SD and <-3 SD categorized as short and very short, respectively. Based on the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI 2023), the prevalence of stunting in Bengkulu Province increased by 0.4%, from 19.8% to 20.2%. Culturally and locally based stunting management has been implemented in several regions in Indonesia. The incorporation of local wisdom values is necessary to encourage local wisdom to complement stunting management policies from a local wisdom perspective. The study aims to determine the empowerment model of local wisdom values (local wisdom) of the Lembak tribe as an effort to prevent stunting in the city of Bengkulu. The research method used mix methods, namely a research method by combining two research methods at once, qualitative and quantitative in a research activity, so that more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data will be obtained. Qualitative research was conducted to identify the development of local wisdom of the Lembak tribe and analysis of the strategy for implementing local wisdom policies (local wisdom) of the Lembak tribe. Quantitative research was conducted for local wisdom interventions for mothers of toddlers (knowledge, skills) products to toddlers (anthropometry, Hb levels, protein levels) of the Lembak tribe using a questionnaire which was used as the main method to obtain data on consumptive behavior using a Likert scale, Data analysis used SWOT analysis, descriptive, bivariate (simple regression). The empowerment process, through nutrition education, innovative complementary feeding recipes, training for cadres and mothers of toddlers, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, has been shown to improve nutritional knowledge, the variety of nutritious local foods, and the nutritional status of toddlers.

Keywords: Empowerment Model, Local Wisdom, Stunting

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INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a nutritional status based on the PB/U or TB/U index seen from the child's anthropometric standards, namely a value (Z-Score) <-2 SD to -3 SD, <-3 SD which is categorized as short and very short (Kemenkes RI, 2020). The results of data from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020 stated that there were 22% or 149.2 million children under the age of 5 who experienced stunting, in Asia, 53% of children under the age of 5 experienced stunting (WHO, 2023). The results of the 2022 Indonesian Nutritional Status Study (SSGI) explain that the prevalence of stunting has decreased by 22.4% annually, but stunting remains relatively high, having not yet reached the WHO target of 20% (3). Bengkulu Province

is ranked 25th out of 34 provinces in Indonesia (Kemenkes RI, 2022). Based on the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI 2023), the prevalence of stunting in Bengkulu Province increased by 0.4% from 19.8% to 20.2% (Tim Penyusun SKI, 2022).

In Bengkulu City, reducing the prevalence of wasting and stunting in toddlers is a key target of the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). Factors contributing to stunting include direct and indirect factors. Direct factors include dietary intake (macro and micronutrient intake) and health conditions (infectious diseases) (Rahman FD, 2018) (Afiah N. et.al, 2020). Specifically, the issue of stunting is stipulated in Presidential Decree No. 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction. Public understanding of diverse foods in Bengkulu City is improving and requires support. Bengkulu City government policies remain ineffective in comprehensively addressing stunting. Policy models tend to be top-down and position the community as merely program recipients (target groups). Integrating local wisdom into stunting prevention initiatives is essential, as culturally rooted practices can strengthen community engagement, improve behavioral adoption, and ensure long-term sustainability of nutrition programs.

The impact of convergence efforts has not fully increased public knowledge and maintained the momentum of program sustainability. Addressing this situation requires alternatives in designing stunting management policies, one of which is based on local wisdom (Tim Percepatan Penurunan Stunting Provinsi Bengkulu, 2023).

Handling stunting based on culture and local wisdom has been carried out in several regions in Indonesia, such as in Seluma Regency, Bengkulu, where fish-based semi-finished food is provided (Eliana et.el, 2022). In Gorontalo, the PMT modification program is based on local wisdom. In Bireuen Regency in Aceh, the local government is formalizing the Me Bu Geteng tradition (Depkes, 2019) (Lamawarun YD et.al, 2023). Cultural values and local wisdom inherent in the way of life of local entities can be utilized to address issues and prevent stunting, leading to a maximum healthy standard of living. However, previous research has limited local wisdom to the design of specific nutritional intervention programs, such as supplementary feeding. Yet, one important aspect of stunting management is sustainability. Sustainability is needed to support the achievement of stunting management program goals in each region by involving independent community participation without relying on government programs. The penetration of local wisdom values is needed to encourage local wisdom to complement stunting management policies from a local wisdom perspective (Amelia R. et.al, 2021).

The Lembak people are part of the Malay ethnic group. They are Muslim, so their culture is heavily influenced by Islam. In terms of customs and traditions, the Lembak people maintain ancestral traditions, including eating besame (a meal), life cycle ceremonies (birth to death), weddings, haircuts, aqiqah

ceremonies, and the traditional art of Sarafal Anam (Amelia R. et.al, 2021). Local wisdom contributes to stunting prevention by improving children's nutrient intake through traditional fish-based foods (Rahman A. et.al, 2021), enhancing the effectiveness of nutrition education delivered during cultural and religious events (Sari D. et.al, 2020), strengthening adherence to hygiene and sanitation practices through shared cultural norms and rituals (Wijayanti L. et.al, 2019), and providing social support through women's groups such as community gatherings and religious study circles that reinforce proper complementary feeding and child growth monitoring (Hastuti T. et.al, 2022). The research aims to determine: The Empowerment Model of Local Wisdom Values of The Lembak Tribe as an Efforts to Prevent Stunting in Bengkulu City.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research uses mix methods, namely a research method by combining two research methods at once, qualitative and quantitative in a research activity, so that more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data will be obtained. Qualitative research was conducted to identify the development of local wisdom of the Lembak tribe and analysis of the strategy for implementing local wisdom policies (local wisdom) of the Lembak tribe. Quantitative research was conducted for local wisdom interventions for education of mothers of toddlers (knowledge, skills) products to toddlers (anthropometry, Hb levels, protein levels) of the Lembak tribe using a questionnaire (survey) which was used as the main method to obtain data on consumptive behavior using a Likert scale, where the elements studied were each given a score. 75 76 The respondent's response scores were added up and the total was the total score, the highest score was given to the most supportive answer, and the lowest score was given to the least supportive answer. The scoring of the respondents' answers is as follows: a. Strongly Agree (SS) answers are given a score of 5 b. Agree (S) answers are given a score of 4 c. Less Agree (KS) answers are given a score of 3 d. Disagree (TS) answers are given a score of 2 e. Strongly Disagree (STS) answers are given a score of 1.

The population of mothers of Lembak tribe toddlers and toddlers aged 6-24 months in Bengkulu city is as many as toddlers. Location and Subjects of the Study The subjects of the study were mothers of toddlers and toddlers aged 6-24 months whose development was followed monthly for up to 3 months. Subjects had the following inclusion criteria: toddlers aged 6-24 were physically healthy, had no congenital disabilities, and the parents of the infants were willing to participate in the ongoing study. This study uses two variables, namely dependent variables and independent variables. Independent variables are variables that explain or influence other variables and dependent variables are variables that are explained or influenced by independent variables. The research variables to be studied are the incidence of stunting as the dependent variable (Y), while the independent variable (X) is the local wisdom of the Lembak tribe which consists of: Mother's knowledge variable (local). (X1). Mother's skill variable (local). (X2). 8. Social processes of the Lembak tribe (local) (X3) Educational value (X4), Hb biochemical value (X5), Vitamin A biochemical

value (X6), Protein biochemical value (X7)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Identification of Local Food of the Lembak Tribe

The research findings identify the values and practices of the Lembak tribe's local wisdom as the basis for developing relevant, sustainable, and local nutrition interventions in accordance with local traditions, norms, and knowledge to support stunting prevention. To understand local potential in stunting prevention, this study first identified the values and practices of the Lembak tribe's local wisdom. This approach aims to explore how local traditions, norms, and knowledge that have developed over generations can be utilized as a basis for developing nutrition and child health interventions. Analysis of local wisdom is an important foundation in designing relevant, sustainable, and culturally based community empowerment strategies. Exploration of local traditions, norms, and knowledge forms the basis for developing relevant and sustainable nutrition interventions, in accordance with the local cultural context.

Table 1. Identification of Local Food of the Lembak Tribe

Food Name	Description	Main Nutrients	Consumption Pattern
Pendap	Seasoned fish wrapped in taro leaves and steamed, a traditional dish from Bengkulu.	Animal protein, essential amino acids, healthy fats.	Still widely sold in traditional markets and restaurants; commonly consumed by families.
Bagar Hiu	Shark curry cooked with traditional spices.	Animal protein, omega-3, iron, zinc.	More popular during traditional ceremonies or special events.
Rebung Asam	Young bamboo shoots cooked in a sour broth.	Fiber, vitamin C, minerals.	Household dish, daily side dish.
Lema	Fermented bamboo shoots mixed with small fish (such as sepat or seluang).	Natural probiotics, protein, B-complex vitamins.	Traditional consumption; part of Lembak cultural identity.
Ikan Pais	Fish wrapped in banana leaves with spices, then grilled or steamed.	Animal protein, omega-3.	Household dish and main menu item.
Nasi Ubi Tumbuk	Rice mixed with mashed sweet cassava.	Complex carbohydrates, fiber.	Alternative staple food.
Bubur Patin Lembak	Porridge with catfish as a protein source.	Protein, energy, healthy fatty acids.	Served to children and toddlers.
Sayur Rebung Lembut	Bamboo shoots cooked with mild seasoning.	Fiber, minerals.	Daily consumption, child-friendly.
Pindang Ikan Gabus (for infants)	Snakehead fish cooked in a mild broth without spices.	High albumin, high-quality protein.	Complementary feeding (MP-ASI) or recovery food.
Food Name	Description	Main Nutritional Content	Consumption Pattern
Pendap	Spiced fish wrapped in taro leaves and steamed, a traditional Bengkulu dish.	Animal protein, essential amino acids, healthy fats.	Commonly sold in traditional markets and restaurants; consumed by families.
Bagar Hiu	Shark meat curry cooked with traditional spices.	Animal protein, omega-3, iron (Fe), zinc (Zn).	More popular during traditional ceremonies or communal events.

Food Name	Description	Main Nutrients	Consumption Pattern
Rebung Asam	Young bamboo shoots cooked in a sour broth.	Fiber, vitamin C, minerals.	Daily household dish; common side dish.
Lema	Fermented bamboo shoots mixed with small fish (sepat/seluang).	Natural probiotics, protein, B-complex vitamins.	Traditional consumption; an important Lembak cultural identity.
Ikan Pais	Fish wrapped in banana leaves, seasoned with spices, then grilled or steamed.	Animal protein, omega-3.	Common household dish and main side dish.
Nasi Ubi Tumbuk	Rice mixed with soft mashed cassava.	Complex carbohydrates, fiber.	Alternative staple food.
Bubur Patin Lembak	Porridge containing patin fish as the protein source.	Protein, energy, healthy fats.	Served for children and toddlers.
Sayur Rebung Lembut	Soft bamboo shoots cooked with light seasoning.	Fiber, minerals.	Daily consumption; child-friendly dish.
Pindang Ikan Gabus (for babies)	Snakehead fish cooked in mild broth without spices.	Albumin, high protein.	Used as complementary feeding (MP-ASI) or recovery food.

The various traditional dishes of the Lembak tribe offer a rich and varied source of nutrition, including pendap, a dish of fish wrapped in taro leaves with spices rich in animal protein and micronutrients such as calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin B. Bagar Hiu, a dish of shark with thick spices high in protein and omega-3 fatty acids; Rebung Asam, a vegetable dish made from bamboo shoots rich in fiber, vitamins B1, B2, C, and the minerals potassium and phosphorus. Lema, fermented bamboo shoots with anchovies that act as natural probiotics and contain protein and calcium and Ikan Pais, fish wrapped in banana leaves with minimal spices, as a source of low-fat animal protein. All of these dishes reflect local wisdom while supporting the need for balanced nutrition.

Food Name	Description	Nutritional Content	Consumption Status
Kue Lepek Binti	Sticky rice filled with coconut and palm sugar, wrapped in banana leaves.	Carbohydrates, plant-based fat.	Still popular in traditional markets.
Kue Bay Tat	Bengkulu traditional tart filled with pineapple jam.	Carbohydrates, sugar.	Commonly served during ceremonies/celebrations.
Kue Siput	Crispy layered fried pastry.	Carbohydrates, fat.	Everyday snack.
Kue Cucur	Fried rice flour cake with soft texture.	Carbohydrates, energy.	Sold in markets and used in celebrations.
Wajik Pulut	Sweet sticky rice cooked with palm sugar and coconut milk.	Carbohydrates, plant-based fat.	Still popular.
Lempuk Durian	Bengkulu-style durian dodol.	Energy, sugar, vitamins from durian.	Popular as a regional souvenir.
Manisan Terong	Small purple eggplants processed into sweet preserves.	Sugar, vitamins.	Unique traditional snack.
Kelicut	Steamed grated cassava with coconut filling.	Complex carbohydrates, fiber.	Still found in Lembak rural areas.
Onde-Onde Ketan Hitam	Black sticky rice balls with mung bean filling.	Plant-based protein, fiber.	Common snack.
Lempeng Sagu	Flat-shaped snack made from sago flour.	Complex carbohydrates.	Traditional light food.
Nagasari Pisang	Bananas steamed with rice flour wrapped in banana leaves.	Fiber, vitamins A & C.	Still popular.

Food Name	Description	Nutritional Content	Consumption Status
Bola Singkong & Keju Kukus	Steamed cassava balls with cheese.	Carbohydrates + milk protein.	Modern snack with local modification.
Perkedel Kukus Ikan/Sayur	Healthy steamed fish/vegetable patties.	Protein, vegetables.	A healthy alternative snack.

A variety of traditional snacks and local adaptations offer a combination of nutritional value and cultural delights. Glutinous rice and coconut cakes such as Lepek Binti, Kelicuk, Wajik Pulut, and high-energy sweets like Kue Siput, Kue Cucur, and Onde-Onde Ketan Hitam provide energy from carbohydrates and vegetable fats. Fruit-based sweets, such as Lempuk Durian and Manisan Terong, provide energy and antioxidants and vitamins, despite being relatively high in calories. Meanwhile, Nagasari Pisang provides vitamins A, C, and potassium from bananas wrapped in rice flour, and modified snacks like Bola Cassava & Keju Kukus provide carbohydrates and calcium from cheese. For healthier, protein-rich options, Steamed Fish/Vegetable Perkedel and Mini Spinach Omelettes are suitable for children and complementary feeding, providing both animal and vegetable protein and essential iron for growth. Overall, these snacks balance cultural aspects, flavor, and nutritional value, making them attractive and beneficial snack alternatives.

The Lembak people in Bengkulu have a variety of traditional drinks and preparations rich in nutrients and cultural values, such as Klamansi Syrup, Betel Nut, Ginger Tea, Mangosteen Peel Juice, and Serabot Water, which are beneficial for the community's health and socio-cultural well-being. Some of these drinks, along with local preparations such as pureed fruit juices and pumpkin or sweet potato porridge, can be adapted into safe and nutritious local food-based complementary foods for babies, providing vitamins, minerals, protein, and calcium, while preserving local wisdom through healthy eating habits from an early age

Mother's knowledge: Identification of values and development of local wisdom of the Lembak tribe

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-29 years	10	32%
30-39 years	18	58%
40-49 years	3	10%
Total	31	100%

Most respondents were in the age range of 30-39 years 18 (58%), productive age and active in raising children, so it is important for nutritional interventions.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Elementry School	2	6%
Junior High School	3	10%
Senior High School	14	45%
Bachelor's Degree	9	29%
Master's Degre	1	3%
Total	31	100%

Most respondents had secondary education (high school/vocational school, 14 people (45%)) and 9 (29%) had a bachelor's degree, so that nutrition counseling could be adjusted to their literacy.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Employment Status

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Housewife	28	90%
Self Employed	1	3%
Others	2	7%
Total	31	100%

The majority are housewives, which indicates that the main target of nutritional interventions is the primary caregiver of the child.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Information Sources

Sourrce of Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sosial Media	12	39%
Health Workers (posyandu/ community health center	8	26%
Others	11	35%
Total	31	100%

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Information Sources

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sosial media	12	39%
Health Workers (Posyandu /Community Health Center)	8	26%
Others	11	35%
Total	31	100%

Social media is the primary source of information (39%), but the role of health workers remains significant (26%), indicating the importance of integrating digital and face-to-face education.

Table 7 Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge of Lack of Nutritional Intake

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	48%
No	16	52%
Total	31	100%

Some respondents, 16 people (52%), did not fully understand about malnutrition, so educational intervention was very necessary.

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of Posyandu Participation/Empowerment

Participation in Posyandu /Nutrition Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	74%
No	8	26%
Total	31	100%

Most of the respondents, 23 people (74%), were involved in posyandu activities or nutrition education programs, indicating high potential for community-based interventions.

Discussion

Identification of Local Food of the Lembak Tribe

Stunting remains a major nutritional problem in Indonesia, including in Bengkulu Province, with a relatively high prevalence (Riskesdas, 2021). Efforts to prevent stunting emphasize the importance of a balanced nutritional intake, particularly animal protein, iron, calcium, vitamins, and fiber, to support optimal child growth (Rahman A. et.al, 2021). Local Lembak foods empirically and culturally meet these criteria. Some highly promising examples include: Pendap and Pais Fish. They contain high-quality animal protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and B-complex vitamins, which play a vital role in muscle and bone formation and cognitive development in children. Jayedi's study shows that regular fish consumption, as a source of high-quality animal protein and omega-3 fatty acids, can reduce the risk of chronic malnutrition and support children's growth and development (Sari D. et.al, 2020).

Mother's knowledge: Identification of values and development of local wisdom of the Lembak tribe

Based on the data presented, the majority of respondents were in the 30–39 age range (58%), with secondary education (high school/vocational school, 45%), and the majority were housewives (90%). This indicates that mothers in the productive age group and active in childcare have great potential to accept and implement nutritional interventions. Education is a factor associated with stunting incidence, local food processing, and nutritious food parenting patterns (30). Mothers' knowledge about nutrition and children's diets plays a crucial role in preventing stunting and meeting nutritional needs during growth. In

Bengkulu City, the local wisdom of the Lembak people provides a variety of traditional food sources rich in nutritional and cultural values, such as pendap (steamed rice cake), pindang gabus (spicy fish stew), sour bamboo shoots, and cassava-based dishes. Identifying the values of this local wisdom is the first step in developing a culture-based community empowerment strategy, enabling mothers' knowledge to be reinforced with concrete practices aligned with local traditions.

Thus, integrating mothers' nutritional knowledge and developing local wisdom not only supports children's health but also preserves Lembak culture and strengthens family food security. This is in line with Elfina's research on maternal nutritional knowledge, which significantly influences stunting in preschool-aged children, while misperceptions and inappropriate use of local wisdom also affect children's nutritional intake. Maternal nutrition education and the appropriate use of local foods are necessary to prevent stunting and improve children's diets (Wijayanti L. et.al, 2019). Parental education, provision of nutritious local foods, and good parenting practices play a crucial role in preventing stunting and improving the nutritional status of toddlers. Interventions that involve improving maternal nutritional knowledge and utilizing local foods can be effective strategies for addressing nutritional issues in toddlers (Hastuti T. et.al, 2022). Data shows that social media is the primary source of information for 39% of mothers about child nutrition. Social media is an effective educational tool for mothers, helping to deliver nutritional information interactively and practically.

Digital participation can complement face-to-face education and improve mothers' understanding (Jayedi et.al, 2020). While health workers remain crucial (26%), their role is crucial in improving mothers' nutritional knowledge. Mothers who regularly receive education from health workers have a better understanding of the nutritional needs during pregnancy and PMBA, highlighting the need for a combination of digital and in-person education (Natalia E. et.al, 2020) (Subekti S. et.al, 2017). As many as 52% of mothers do not fully understand malnutrition, so local culture-based education is needed to increase knowledge and encourage healthy eating practices, which can prevent stunting (Rahmadinda R. et.al, 2024).

Conceptual Model of Empowering Local Wisdom of the Lembak Tribe in Preventing Stunting

The conceptual model for empowering the local wisdom of the Lembak people in preventing stunting in Bengkulu City integrates local food potential, human resources, and local culture to improve family nutritional status. This approach utilizes local foods that are rich in nutrients and easily accessible to the community. The human resources involved include families, integrated health post (Posyandu) cadres, traditional leaders, religious leaders, health workers, and policy support from the government and relevant institutions. A conducive environment and culture, including the availability of local ingredients, the tradition of mutual cooperation, and the value of eating together, serve as important social capital in building family nutritional resilience. The empowerment process includes culture-based nutrition

education, recipe innovation and food diversification for complementary feeding (MP-ASI), training for cadres and mothers of toddlers, and multi-stakeholder collaboration with universities, the government, and indigenous communities. Short-term outcomes include increased nutritional knowledge, a variety of nutritious local MP-ASI, trained cadres, and health promotion media. Medium-term impacts include increased protein and micronutrient intake in toddlers and a decrease in malnutrition. In the long term, this model is expected to reduce stunting, strengthen local food independence, and preserve the culture of the Lembak people.

This local wisdom-based empowerment model aligns with research showing that cultural approaches can increase the effectiveness of stunting prevention. For example, community empowerment through a culture of mutual cooperation has been shown to be effective in preventing stunting in rural areas. Utilizing local wisdom in stunting prevention (Desmita R. et.al, 2025). Local wisdom in the form of dietary patterns, traditional food ingredients, and cultural practices can improve children's nutritional intake and support optimal growth. Interventions that take cultural context into account are more readily accepted by communities. Furthermore, empowering communities to prepare food menus based on local wisdom can also improve family nutritional status and prevent stunting (Sihole A, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Local foods of the Lembak people, including pendap, pindang, lema (spicy fish with sweet potato), nasi mashed sweet potato, sweet potato or cassava-based snacks, and traditional drinks, are rich in protein, micronutrients, fiber, vitamins, and healthy fats. Local foods play a strategic role in supporting optimal child growth and preventing stunting. The majority of mothers are of productive age, have secondary to higher education, and are mostly housewives. Mothers' knowledge about child nutrition and the use of local foods significantly influences healthy eating practices for toddlers.

The conceptual model for empowering local wisdom of the Lembak people integrates local food, human resources, and local culture. The empowerment process, through nutrition education, innovative complementary feeding recipes, training for cadres and mothers of toddlers, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, has been shown to improve nutritional knowledge, the variety of nutritious local foods, and the nutritional status of toddlers. This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Potential sampling bias may exist due to the limited geographical coverage, which may not fully represent all Lembak communities. Data collection relied partly on self-reported information, introducing possible recall and social desirability bias. In addition, cultural diversity within the Lembak ethnic group may not have been comprehensively captured, leading to limitations in cultural representation. Researcher subjectivity may also have influenced the interpretation of qualitative data. Furthermore, methodological constraints, including the cross-sectional design and limited sample size, restrict causal inference and the generalizability of the results.

Declaration of Interest Statement

State if there is any competing interest of any sort. If there is no financial interest, use the following format: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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