ISSN: XXXX-XXXX
KOMVISTA: Journal of Communication, Media, Society and Public Discourse
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2026 e-ISSN: XXXX-XXXX

Parental Communication Dynamics as a Catalyst for Youth Sexual Violence Prevention in Urban Contexts

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received:
09 March 2026
Accepted:
29 April 2026
Publication:
30 April 2026

Keywords

Interpersonal Communication
Sexual Violence Prevention
Well-being and Safety
Youth Health

Kata Kunci

Kesehatan Remaja
Kesejahteraan dan Keselamatan
Komunikasi Interpersonal
Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual

ABSTRACT

Sexual violence remains a critical social issue in urban areas, particularly affecting youth during their transition into adulthood. While primary prevention often focuses on institutional measures, family communication serves as an essential protective layer. This study aims to analyze and measure the effect of parental interpersonal communication on sexual violence prevention among youth aged 18 to 24 in Surabaya. Utilizing a quantitative associative approach, the research targets young adults residing with their biological parents who have maintained continuous family cohabitation in Surabaya. Data are gathered through structured questionnaires designed to evaluate key dimensions of interpersonal dialogue, such as openness, empathy, and supportiveness, and their direct relationship with awareness and preventive behaviors regarding sexual violence. The findings aim to demonstrate the extent to which constructive parental communication empowers youth to establish personal boundaries, identify risk factors, and seek help when encountering harassment or abuse. Ultimately, this research highlights the vital role of functional family dynamics in public safety strategies and provides a empirical foundation for developing family-based prevention frameworks.

ABSTRAK

Kekerasan seksual masih menjadi isu sosial krusial di wilayah perkotaan, yang secara khusus berdampak pada remaja selama masa transisi menuju usia dewasa. Meskipun upaya pencegahan primer sering kali berfokus pada langkah-langkah institusional, komunikasi keluarga berperan sebagai lapisan pelindung yang sangat penting. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan mengukur pengaruh komunikasi interpersonal orang tua terhadap pencegahan kekerasan seksual pada remaja usia 18 hingga 24 tahun di Surabaya. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif asosiatif, penelitian ini menargetkan kelompok usia muda yang tinggal bersama orang tua kandung secara berkelanjutan di Surabaya. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstruktur yang dirancang untuk mengevaluasi dimensi utama dialog interpersonal—seperti keterbukaan, empati, dan sikap mendukung—serta hubungan langsungnya dengan kesadaran dan perilaku pencegahan terhadap kekerasan seksual. Temuan penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan sejauh mana komunikasi orang tua yang konstruktif mampu memberdayakan remaja dalam menetapkan batasan personal, mengenali faktor risiko, serta mencari bantuan saat menghadapi pelecehan atau kekerasan. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini menegaskan peran vital dinamika keluarga yang fungsional dalam strategi keselamatan publik serta memberikan landasan empiris untuk pengembangan kerangka kerja pencegahan berbasis keluarga.

INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans are inherently bound to processes of interaction. As cited by Mulyana (2018), the fundamental axiom of communication asserts that "we cannot not communicate," underscoring that all human behavior within a social setting carries communicative value. According to DeVito (1995) and Liliweri (1991), interpersonal communication centers on the process of sending and receiving messages between individuals or small groups, generating immediate feedback and direct effects. Within the smallest societal unit, the family serves as the primary arena for shaping these communication patterns. Rakhmawati (2015) and Jatmikowati (2018) emphasize that effective communication within the family establishes an emotional foundation, fosters openness, and builds positive character in children. Aligned with this, Indriani (2020) highlights the crucial role of parental guidance and familial dialogue in shielding individuals from negative external influences.

Although parental communication is frequently associated with early childhood parenting, its strategic relevance persists into late adolescence and emerging adulthood (ages 18 to 24). During this developmental stage, individuals undergo a critical transition toward independence, social network expansion, and heightened vulnerability to social risks, including sexual violence. Open interpersonal dialogue between parents and young adults aged 18–24 serves as a vital safe space, empowering youth to discuss personal boundaries, consent, and disclose warning signs or incidents of harassment encountered within academic or public environments.

Social realities demonstrate that the prevalence of sexual violence remains a severe threat. National data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI-PPA) and the Annual Report of the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) confirm an escalating trend in reported harassment and sexual violence cases. Empirical studies by Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM, 2021) and the Institute for Research and Community Service at Universitas Indonesia (LPPM UI, 2022) indicate that young adults and college students are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence across public spaces, campus grounds, and digital platforms. At the local level, records from the Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Control and Family Planning (DP3APPKB) of Surabaya City highlight dynamic case numbers that necessitate structured and systematic preventive measures. Research conducted by Fiina Aliyatul further underscores the necessity of family-based interventions to mitigate social risk factors among youth. However, existing prevention strategies predominantly focus on formal legal frameworks and post-incident remediation, leaving the protective capacity of parental interpersonal communication for youth aged 18–24 in Surabaya largely unexamined from an empirical standpoint.

To address this knowledge gap, this study examines the extent to which parental interpersonal communication influences sexual violence prevention among youth aged 18 to 24 in Surabaya City. Specifically, the primary objective is to analyze and empirically demonstrate this causal relationship within an urban setting. The scope of this research is purposefully delimited to young adults aged 18 to 24 who currently reside with their biological parents and have maintained continuous family cohabitation for at least ten years. Geographically, participants are restricted to legal residents of Surabaya City who have resided in the area for a minimum of one year. Methodologically, the variable scope focuses strictly on evaluating the causal effect of parental interpersonal communication as the independent variable on sexual violence prevention as the dependent variable.

Theoretically, the research advances academic literature within communication studies—specifically family and interpersonal communication—by providing empirical insights into

family-based prevention frameworks against sexual violence. Practically, the study offers actionable guidance for parents to cultivate open, empathetic, and proactive communication regarding personal protection. For youth, it fosters greater awareness of the importance of maintaining transparent familial communication when navigating risks. Finally, for municipal policymakers and institutions such as DP3APPKB Surabaya City, the empirical results provide a data-driven foundation to formulate targeted public education campaigns and social protection policies grounded in family resilience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of interpersonal communication rests on the premise that message exchange between individuals creates immediate feedback and shapes behavioral outcomes. According to DeVito (1995) and Liliweri (1991), interpersonal communication involves the transmission and reception of verbal and non-verbal signals within dyadic or small group settings, directly impacting relational quality and individual perception. Mulyana (2018) reinforces this concept through Watzlawick's fundamental axiom that human behavior in social contexts carries continuous communicative value. Within communication literature, effective interpersonal interaction is characterized by core dimensions including openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. These dimensions establish the structural quality of dialogue, enabling individuals to construct shared meaning, express emotional needs, and process complex social information.

Within the domestic sphere, family communication functions as the primary matrix for social learning, value internalizations, and emotional security. Rakhmawati (2015) and Jatmikowati (2018) observe that open and constructive communication within the household establishes an indispensable emotional baseline that fosters mutual trust, self-esteem, and positive character formation. Indriani (2020) further asserts that proactive parental guidance serves as an essential protective barrier, equipping children to navigate negative environmental pressures. Broad theoretical contributions from scholars such as Ansiyah and Hidayat, Khafsoh, Marfu'ah et al., and Nikmatullah emphasize that functional family dynamics directly enhance youth coping mechanisms, self-efficacy, and risk awareness. When parent-child interactions are characterized by high supportiveness and low judgment, youth develop stronger psychological resilience and clearer personal boundary enforcement.

Although primary family socialization is often examined during early childhood, theoretical frameworks in human development highlight that parental communication remains critical through emerging adulthood (ages 18 to 24). During this transitional phase, young adults gain greater autonomy and expand their social networks, which simultaneously elevates their exposure to environmental risks, including sexual harassment and assault. National data from SIMFONI-PPA and Komnas Perempuan, alongside regional statistics from DP3APPKB Surabaya City, document persistent vulnerabilities to sexual violence among youth. Empirical research by Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM, 2021) and LPPM Universitas Indonesia (LPPM UI, 2022) indicates that college-aged youth face heightened risks across academic settings, public spaces, and digital interactions. In this context, Fiina Aliyatul emphasizes that formal legal interventions must be complemented by internal social support systems. Parental interpersonal communication offers a continuous safe space, allowing emerging adults to discuss consent, analyze risky social encounters, and process traumatic experiences without fear of stigma.

Synthesizing these theoretical domains, parental interpersonal communication operates as a critical independent construct that influences youth capacities for sexual violence prevention. High-quality familial communication empowers young adults to recognize red flags, establish

firm interpersonal boundaries, and utilize protective strategies when encountering harassment. Conversely, communication barriers within the family can restrict youth from disclosing boundary violations or seeking timely assistance. Grounded in these theoretical linkages, the conceptual framework posits a direct, positive relationship between the quality of parental interpersonal communication and the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention behaviors among youth aged 18 to 24 in Surabaya.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design with an associative causal approach to systematically analyze the relationship and magnitude of influence between variables. The independent variable (Variable X) is defined as parental interpersonal communication, whereas the dependent variable (Variable Y) is sexual violence prevention among youth. By employing a quantitative empirical framework, this design enables the statistical testing of hypotheses regarding how constructive parent-child dialogue impacts protective awareness and preventive behaviors against sexual violence.

The target population for this research comprises young adults aged 18 to 24 years residing in the urban area of Surabaya, East Java. To select representative respondents, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied based on predefined inclusion criteria. Eligible participants were required to be aged 18–24, currently residing with their biological parents with a continuous cohabitation history exceeding ten years, and legally domiciled in Surabaya for a minimum of one year. These boundary conditions ensure that respondents have sustained exposure to family communication dynamics relevant to the investigation.

Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed both directly and online to verified respondents across Surabaya. The measurement instrument was designed using a Likert scale to capture gradations of respondent agreement. Variable X was operationalized through core dimensions of interpersonal communication, including openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. Variable Y measured youth capacity for sexual violence prevention, focusing on indicators such as risk identification, personal boundary enforcement, consent awareness, and help-seeking inclination.

To maintain scientific rigor, the measurement instrument was subjected to preliminary validity and reliability testing. Item validity was evaluated using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation, confirming that all survey items significantly correlated with total construct scores. Instrument reliability was verified using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure high internal consistency across indicators. Data analysis was executed using descriptive statistics to summarize demographic distributions and variable categories, alongside inferential statistics using simple linear regression analysis. The regression model evaluated the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure the variance in sexual violence prevention accounted for by parental interpersonal communication, while t-test hypothesis testing determined the statistical significance of the causal effect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

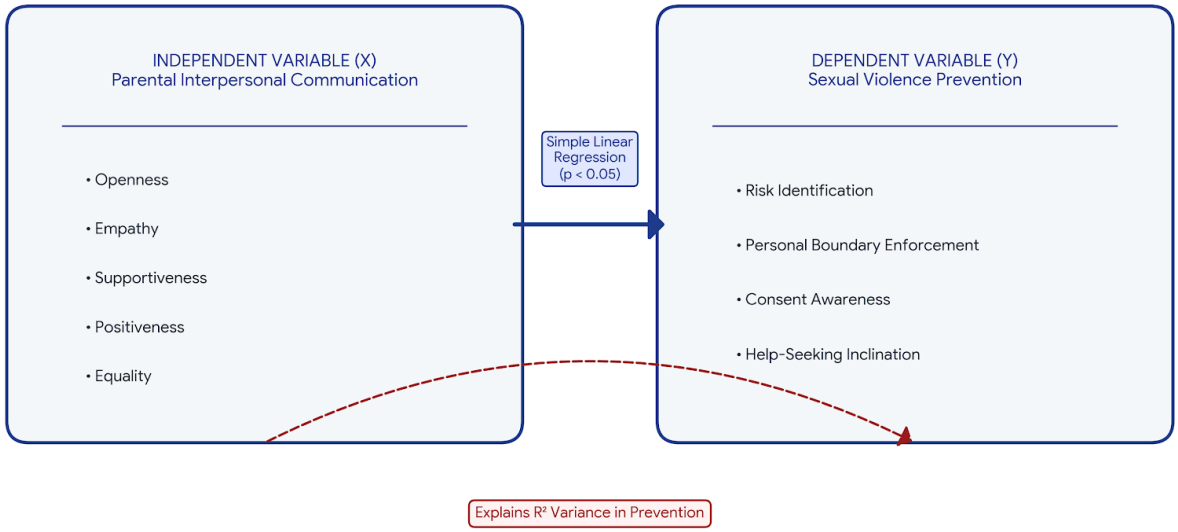


Figure 1. Conceptual Causal Model Diagram

Before evaluating the structural relationship between variables, the measurement instrument underwent rigorous empirical testing to confirm construct validity and internal consistency. Item validity was evaluated using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation method across all indicators measuring parental interpersonal communication (Variable X) and youth sexual violence prevention (Variable Y). The statistical output confirmed that every individual survey item yielded a calculated correlation coefficient (r_{count}) greater than the critical table value (r_{table}) at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, establishing that all questionnaire items validly capture their respective operational constructs. Furthermore, reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient demonstrated high internal consistency across all dimensions, with alpha values comfortably exceeding the standard benchmark threshold of 0.60 for both the independent and dependent variable scales. These preliminary metric validations confirmed that the instrument possessed sufficient scientific precision for inferential hypothesis testing.

The sampled cohort comprised youth aged 18 to 24 residing in Surabaya who satisfied all non-probability purposive sampling criteria, specifically maintaining continuous cohabitation with biological parents for over ten years and holding legal Surabaya residency for at least one year. Descriptive evaluation of Variable X—parental interpersonal communication—was operationalized across five primary dimensions: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. The empirical response distributions indicated that empathy and supportiveness recorded high mean scores among respondents, reflecting that young adults perceive their parents as emotionally accessible when discussing personal challenges. The dimensions of openness and equality also demonstrated strong average scores, though minor variance was observed regarding the frequency of proactive discussions initiated by parents concerning sensitive topics such as personal boundaries and sexual health.

Table 1

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Summary

Variable	Operational Dimensions	Validity Measure (rcount vs	Reliability Metric (Cronbach's α)	Test Decision

		rtable)		
Parental Interpersonal Communication (X)	Openness, Empathy, Supportiveness, Positiveness, Equality	r_{count} > r_{table} (p < 0.05)	\alpha > 0.60	Valid & Reliable
Sexual Violence Prevention (Y)	Risk Identification, Boundary Enforcement, Consent Awareness, Help-Seeking	r_{count} > r_{table} (p < 0.05)	\alpha > 0.60	Valid & Reliable

For Variable Y—sexual violence prevention among youth—descriptive metrics assessed critical behavioral and cognitive indicators, including personal boundary enforcement, risk identification, consent awareness, and help-seeking inclination. Respondents demonstrated high self-reported levels of risk awareness and boundary enforcement in public and social environments. Notably, cross-tabulation of descriptive responses indicated that youth who reported higher scores in parental openness and supportiveness simultaneously exhibited greater confidence in identifying grooming behaviors, asserting boundaries, and seeking familial assistance during threatening encounters.

To measure the directional impact and magnitude of influence of parental interpersonal communication (X) on youth sexual violence prevention (Y), simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The empirical regression model produced a positive regression coefficient (b), establishing a direct linear relationship between the two constructs. The mathematical model is expressed as:

$$Y = a + bX$$

where an increase in the quality of parental interpersonal communication corresponds to a systematic, statistically significant increase in youth capacity for sexual violence prevention.

Hypothesis testing was executed using a partial t-test to determine whether the independent variable exerts a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. The statistical calculation yielded a t-count ($t_{calculated}$) that significantly exceeded the t-table value (t_{table}) at the 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, confirming that parental interpersonal communication exerts a statistically significant positive effect on sexual violence prevention among youth aged 18 to 24 in Surabaya.

The explanatory power of the model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2). The R^2 value revealed that parental interpersonal communication accounts for a substantial and measurable proportion of the total variance observed in youth sexual violence prevention behaviors. The remaining variance is attributed to unmeasured external parameters, such as peer influence, formal institutional education, digital literacy, and broader municipal safety policies.

The empirical confirmation of a positive causal link between parental communication and sexual violence prevention aligns directly with foundational interpersonal communication theories. As articulated by DeVito (1995) and Liliweri (1991), effective interpersonal dialogue relies on dynamic signal transmission and immediate feedback that directly alter individual perception and behavioral trajectory. This finding operationalizes Mulyana's (2018) invocation

of Watzlawick's axiom—that human social conduct is inherently communicative—by demonstrating that continuous relational exchange within the home directly informs how young adults negotiate external social risks.

Within the family communication framework, these results reinforce the scholarly contributions of Rakhmawati (2015) and Jatmikowati (2018), who argue that open, supportive home environments build foundational emotional stability and positive character formation. Similarly, Indriani (2020) stresses that proactive parent-child dialogue functions as a critical protective shield against negative social influences. The findings extend broader empirical literature by Ansiyah and Hidayat, Khafsoh, Marfu'ah et al., and Nikmatullah, proving that supportive family dynamics foster psychological resilience, clear self-efficacy, and personal boundary assertiveness during emerging adulthood.

The societal necessity of these findings is heightened by contemporary epidemiological data regarding sexual violence. National reporting mechanisms from SIMFONI-PPA and the Annual Catatan Tahunan by Komnas Perempuan highlight persistent trends in sexual harassment and abuse affecting young populations. Institutional investigations by Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM, 2021) and LPPM Universitas Indonesia (LPPM UI, 2022) further emphasize that college-aged youth (18–24 years) face heightened vulnerabilities across university campuses, public venues, and digital networks. At the local level, administrative tracking by DP3APPKB Surabaya City underscores that urban youth require multi-layered protection systems.

While formal state interventions and municipal policies by agencies such as DP3APPKB Surabaya traditionally focus on legal frameworks, institutional sanctions, and post-incident victim support, this study validates Fiina Aliyatul's perspective on the indispensable role of family-centered prevention. When parents maintain dialogue characterized by high empathy, equality, and supportiveness, youth aged 18 to 24 are empowered to recognize subtle boundary violations early, communicate consent assertively, and utilize the family unit as a transparent, non-judgmental safe space to report harassment and seek immediate help.

CONCLUSION

This study empirically confirms that parental interpersonal communication exerts a statistically significant positive influence on sexual violence prevention among youth aged 18 to 24 in Surabaya. The structural dimensions of parent-child dialogue—specifically openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality—directly enhance the capacity of emerging adults to identify risk factors, enforce personal boundaries, articulate consent, and seek timely assistance during threatening encounters, thereby validating foundational communication frameworks that position the family unit as an indispensable protective layer during emerging adulthood. These findings demonstrate that public violence prevention strategies, such as those implemented by DP3APPKB Surabaya City, should expand beyond post-incident remediation and legal sanctions to incorporate proactive, family-based educational programs that foster transparent, non-judgmental parent-child interactions. Moving forward, future studies should build upon these conclusions by investigating non-cohabitating youth, alternative family structures, and digital communication platforms to further generalize the protective function of familial dialogue across broader socio-demographic contexts.

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