

The importance of family communication in mitigating parent-child verbal violence in Jakarta

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How to Cite This Article: Ayuningtyas, F.A et al. (2025). The importance of family communication in mitigating parent-child verbal violence in Jakarta. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, 9(1). doi: 10.25139/jsk.v9i1.9144
Received: 14-10-2024, Revision: 24-01-2025, Acceptance: 18-02-2025, Published: 26-03-2025

Abstract Children in homes are particularly susceptible to experiencing violence, especially verbal violence. Violence against children in Jakarta is a common occurrence and a significant concern in Jakarta's urban society. Specifically, verbal violence affects children by impairing their psychological development and obstructing their self-growth. This research examined the significance of family communication in mitigating verbal violence between parents and children in Jakarta through a qualitative methodology with a phenomenology approach. Data was gathered by observation and comprehensive interviews with five informants residing near Jakarta, subsequently transcribed and analysed utilising NVIVO 12. Additionally, the researcher performed a literature analysis by examining prior studies concerning the impact of family communication on reducing parent-child verbal violence. The research results indicate that the function of family communication is contingent upon the awareness of adults, particularly parents, who play a significant role in implementing family communication patterns. This includes providing appropriate examples of emotional expression and actively inquiring about their children's daily experiences. Verbal violence in children can be mitigated by effective family communication.

Keywords: children; family communication; verbal violence

INTRODUCTION

Family represents one of the most prominent and noteworthy social groups individuals belong to throughout their lives. Our families are influential in developing personal identity and self-concept, socialising attitudes and worldviews of members, and serving as a source of support and affiliation (Phillips & Soliz, 2020). The researchers' concern for child protection, particularly against verbal abuse drove this investigation to focus on family communication. This has to do with how children in a household are more likely to experience violence that can range from verbal abuse to neglect to physical abuse (Puspa & Sinaga, 2023). In recent years, cases of child-to-parent violence have increased significantly, prompting greater scientific interest in clarifying its causes (López-Martínez et al., 2019).

Based on data from SIMFONI PPA (Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children) shows that there were 1,655 cases of violence against children in the year 2022, in which verbal abuse is one of the types of violence which emerged cases and considered as Indonesia's first-ranked child violence in Southeast Asia (Humas KPAI, 2023). Based on the world data by UNICEF, Indonesia's data (KPAI) of violence every year has increased by 51% of children reported to be experiencing violence in their family, 28.6% in the school environment, and 20.4% experience violence in society (Kameliawati et al., 2020).

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Violence against children in Jakarta is a common occurrence and is considered to be a significant concern in Jakarta's urban society. Specifically in Jakarta, violence against women and children has significantly increased. Based on type, the highest number of cases documented in the following order: sexual, physical, psychological, and neglect. According to data from the Jakarta Integrated Service Centre for the Empowerment of Women and Children (P2TP2A), there was an increase in 2022. The number of victims reported in 2019 was 1,179, 947 in 2020, 1,313 in 2021, and in October 2022, already reached 1,278 (Tjitra, 2023).

The public's perception that verbal abuse is something that people do unintentionally can set off this issue, especially in the context of family communication. Syakhrani & Aslan (2024) argue that family communication encompasses both verbal and non-verbal interactions to shape family relationships and dynamics (Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024). Similarly, Giallo et al. (2023) argue that the effectiveness of family communication is characterised by openness, active listening, and mutual respect, forming the foundation for healthy family functioning (Giallo et al., 2021).

Communication serves as a conduit for developing social relationships between people and groups (Ayuningtyas et al., 2021). However, with the rapid development of technology, such as gadgets that provides access to the internet and its derivatives, such as social media, children also get a new environment to interact. This makes the opportunity to interact even more significant and in a broader realm of the family ecosystem.

Notably, the use of gadgets to communicate also increases verbal violence, as interlocutors may consequently make wrong choice of words because of the large number of people who are involved in it (Supriatno et al., 2022). Moreover, children are still vulnerable to selecting words that can trigger verbal violence. Verbal violence can affect psychological development and obstacles in children's self-development (Noh & Talaat, 2012). This condition requires parties such as teachers, parents, the environment, society, and the government to help create humanistic individuals with noble character. Therefore, one way to overcome this is through cooperation between relevant stakeholders to protect the next generation so that they can develop noble morals.

According to UNICEF (United for Children), in 2016, the country's violence against children in Indonesia remained high. According to the data from the Ministry of Health, the Director for Prevention and Control of Mental Health and Drug Problems (DPPMKJN) of the Indonesian Ministry stated that as many as 62% of Indonesian children have experienced violence from their parents. Approximately 49.4 million children have experienced parent-child verbal violence (Fuadah et al., 2023).

Parent-child verbal violence disrupts healthy family communication by creating an atmosphere of fear and mistrust (Farr et al., 2021). The parent-child bond is damaged by conflict and emotional distance, which replace open dialogue, mutual respect, and active listening in family communication. Difficult conversations among family members can impact the health and structure of familial relationships (Keating et al., 2013). Compared to physical violence, verbal abuse is found to be more 'imprinting' and more detrimental. Anywhere can be a place for verbal abuse: at work, at home, amongst coworkers, or between parents and their kids. Although some people believe that verbal abuse is meant to 'warn' or 'advise', it is undoubtedly not something that should be accepted and normalised in society.

Regardless of how it is perceived, the fact remains that verbal violence may harm a victim's psychological and mental health. Even if the scars are not noticeable, the seriousness of the situation is critical, mainly when the victim is a child who will have to bear the wounds until adulthood (Sabarre et al., 2021).

Grady (2003), defines verbal abuse as 'words that attack or harm a person, words that cause one to believe an untrue argument, or words that falsely speak of an individual'. Since wounds are seldom noticeable unless physical abuse has happened, verbal abuse is also more challenging to identify. Although verbal abuse leaves no visible trace or evidence, a verbally abused survivor typically suffers from low self-worth and esteem (Sabarre et al., 2021).

Grady (2003), also claims that verbal abuse is worse than physical abuse because it is considered a psychological assault. It is much more insidious because it targets both the emotional and mental dimensions of the victim. This is supported by Brendgen et al. (2006), who found that verbal abuse can be categorised as part of the broader definition of children's psychological abuse or maltreatment. Also, according to Garbarino et al. (1986), verbal abuse is 'emotional abuse, an assault on a child's growth of self and social maturity, and a pattern of

psychically harmful behaviour' (Sabarre et al., 2021).

This is a highly significant topic for research because parent-child verbal violence, which is frequently characterised by harsh words, insults, or insulting remarks, can have serious consequences for a child's psychological and emotional development. Moreover, the impact of verbal violence extends beyond immediate emotional harm. It can affect a child's future relationships and ability to communicate. Children who are exposed to verbal abuse may internalise inadequate communication patterns, which can continue a cycle of violence in their parenting styles (Noh & Talaat, 2012). This cycle emphasises the need for preventative measures to improve family communication dynamics.

When children continuously experience verbal violence, the impact is that children will encounter obstacles in their development, including disturbances in their emotional development; children will imitate the behaviour of their parents by behaving aggressively towards their peers. This also impacts children's social relationships, causing children to withdraw and be alone more often, making them unable to communicate well with friends and adults. As a result, children may not have many friends, but this verbally abusive behaviour does not seem to interfere with their development. Efforts such as interventions must be made early; parents who commit verbal abuse should apologise to their children and improve how they communicate with their children to manage their emotions, especially when upset. Then, parents need to understand that they should not bring their past parenting experiences to children because when a child feels hurt, it will affect their growth and development process (Fuadah et al., 2023).

So, the function of family communication is as messages that are typically sent with intent, commonly perceived as intentional, and that have consensually shared meaning among individuals who are related biologically, legally, or through marriage-like commitments and who nurture and control each other. Communication is central to the family and its functioning. This is especially true for the two primary functions of nurturing and control. Nurturing includes communication central to encouraging development, including verbal and nonverbal encouraging and supportive behaviours. Control provides communication central to guiding, influencing, and limiting the behaviours evidenced by family members. Specifically, communication is central to the two primary functions of nurturing and control within families. These highlight communication as an important coping mechanism for changing family roles, rules, and systems. Furthermore, the importance of communication in the family is underscored by all the essential functions that families have in socialising with children. To further illustrate the importance of family communication, sometimes children are being socialised in families that experience conflict, substance abuse, and violence. Moreover, all these issues point to the most critical function that communication has in families: to nurture and control family members simultaneously. Family members facilitate individual member growth through nurturing and facilitate socialisation through control. Encouraging and controlling are the two central functions that communication serves within families.

The objective of this research is to explore and analyse the role of effective family communication in preventing verbal violence between parents and children. It will focus on understanding communication patterns, identifying potential barriers, and proposing strategies to foster healthier parent-child interactions. Researching the role of family communication in preventing verbal violence can identify effective strategies for fostering healthier interactions between parents and children. Understanding the factors contributing to poor communication can help develop targeted interventions that promote positive dialogue and conflict resolution skills. Furthermore, the significance of this research is further highlighted by the increasing recognition of mental health as a critical component of overall well-being.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach aimed at understanding human behaviour from the participant's viewpoint by gathering data on social occurrences. A qualitative methodology is a technique for delineating, investigating, and understanding the significance of different persons or groups attribute to social or humanitarian issues (Creswell, 2016).

While, phenomenology constitutes a meticulous, methodical, and analytical examination of an occurrence. The primary objective of this strategy is to explain the structure of the lived experience of an event. This methodological investigation begins with phenomena of interest and seeks to comprehend the subjective significance of the lived experience of an event (Ayuningtyas et al., 2024; Badil et al., 2023). It illustrates a qualitative technique's components, including conceptual and qualitative data (Sobur & Mulyana, 2020). Phenomenological research is grounded in philosophy and psychology, resulting in solid conceptual foundations (Creswell, 2013).

In this research, the phenomenological approach provides researchers with the opportunity to explore participants' experiences of verbal violence between parents and children in detail and depth. This approach also allows researchers to explore the perceptions and meanings of how participants view phenomena related to family communication patterns in reducing the potential for verbal violence between parents and children. The result is qualitative data that focuses on the personal experiences of the informants without being overly influenced by pre-existing knowledge.

As a qualitative phenomenology researcher, one must examine and analyse the influence of the research subject on the 'lived experiences' of the participants. Creswell (2012) asserts, 'the purpose of a proposal is to assist an investigator in contemplating all facets of the research and foreseeing potential issues'. The core objective of an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) technique is to understand and enhance the 'lived experiences' of the research participants under investigation in the project. Wu and Wu (2011) assert that qualitative researchers 'concentrate on contextual analysis, investigate the underlying causes of phenomena, and elucidate the explanations of events'. Furthermore, Flick (2010) asserted that qualitative researchers possess a 'specific understanding of the relation between issue and method'. Thus, as a qualitative methodology that examines and explains this phenomenon, it is fitting for qualitative researchers to adopt the IPA research tradition due to its distinctiveness and appropriateness in exploring and interpreting the 'lived experiences' of participants (Alase, 2017).

The use of qualitative methods provides qualitative data on various aspects of preventing parent-child verbal violence through communication patterns that numbers or statistics cannot measure. This method allows researchers to explore the meaning of the phenomenon of parent-child verbal violence for participants in more depth, particularly the communication patterns used in the family, parents' awareness of the effects of verbal violence, and the role of parents in supporting a safe and healthy environment for children.

The phenomenon of verbal violence between parents and children is a pressing issue that has garnered attention from various fields, including psychology, sociology, and communication studies. Verbal violence can manifest as insults, threats, or derogatory remarks, often leading to long-term emotional and psychological damage for the child. This research aims to explore the role of family communication in mitigating such violence, positing that improved communication strategies can significantly reduce instances of verbal abuse within familial relationships.

The rationale for selecting qualitative methods, specifically a phenomenological approach is deeply rooted in the need to understand the lived experiences of families who have encountered verbal violence. Phenomenology, as a qualitative research method, allows for an in-depth exploration of individuals' perceptions and feelings, providing a rich, nuanced understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). This approach is particularly relevant in the context of family communication, as it enables researchers to capture the complexities of interpersonal dynamics and the subjective meanings that family members attach to their interactions. By focusing on the lived experiences of parents and children, this research aimed to uncover the underlying factors that contribute to verbal violence and identify communication strategies that can foster healthier relationships.

Moreover, the significance of explaining the rationale behind the chosen methods cannot be overstated. Transparent methodological choices enhance the credibility of research findings and allow for a more robust discussion of the implications. By articulating the reasons for selecting qualitative methods, researchers can better understand how these methods align with the research objectives, ultimately contributing to the field's broader knowledge base (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Creswell asserts that a competent informant must know firsthand the event (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023). Creswell further explains that a competent informant requires that 'all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon'. (Creswell, 2018). Researchers select informants who can provide relevant information and aid in clarifying the research issues (Ayuningtyas et al., 2024; Creswell, 2013). The informants in the current research were chosen using a non-probability sampling method. Non-probability sampling is a method that does not provide equal chances for all elements of the population to be selected as samples (Hardani et al., 2022).

Additionally, Creswell (2014), states that the number of respondents in qualitative research often varies from three to ten (Ayuningtyas et al., 2024; Creswell, 2018). The informants in this research are comprised of five parents with varying numbers of children residing near Jakarta (see Table 1). Participation in this research was voluntary. Also, this research has been approved by the Institute of Research and Community Services, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Indonesia, referring to Contract Number 147/UN61.4/LIT.RIKIN/2024. All informants in the current research understood that this research aims to achieve and has obtained consent to publish the results. The interview procedure was performed transparently, without compulsion or pressure, and maintained anonymity.

Table 1: List of informants

Informant	Number of Children	Location
Informant 1	4	West Jakarta
Informant 2	2	South Jakarta
Informant 3	2	South Jakarta
Informant 4	1	North Jakarta
Informant 5	2	East Jakarta

Source: Field data result (2024)

This research utilised in-depth interviews, observations, and literature studies to gather data. An interview is a component of the qualitative methodology. Moleong (2009) characterises an interview as a purposeful dialogue between two parties when one party poses questions, and the other provides answers. Interviews enable researchers to gain insights into a participant's viewpoint on a subject or occurrence that cannot be acquired by observation (Sugiyono, 2016). Comprehensive interviews with five informants were conducted utilising a hybrid approach— in-person and online via Zoom—for 1 to 2 hours per informant. Interviews were made from May 22, 2024, to July 22, 2024. This inquiry employed a semi-structured interview, a type of in-depth interview. A semi-structured interview 'enables the researcher to adapt to the current context, the respondent's evolving perspective, and novel concepts related to the subject'. (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, 2016).

The current research employed observations alongside in-depth interviews to collect data. An observer must possess a comprehensive understanding of the subject being observed, grasp the objectives of the research implementation, conduct meticulous and critical observations, document every sign that arose during the observation process, and be familiar with the scientific instruments utilised in the observation, as researchers can gather comprehensive and intricate data about the subjects or phenomena under investigation through observation. This data may encompass qualitative information, including behaviours, gestures, and vocal interactions, alongside quantitative data, such as the frequency and duration of specific acts. The researchers observed multiple schools in Jakarta, Indonesia region, from early May 2024 to late July 2024. The outcomes of these observations yielded insights for this investigation.

The 'studies library' serves as a data collection technique conducted using data or informational resources from scientific journals, reference books, and available publication materials in the library. (Dalimunthe & Ayuningtyas, 2024; Ruslan, 2008). Researchers are

investigating prior studies concerning the impact of family communication on child-to-parent violence.

This study employed thematic analysis. It is a qualitative data analysis method examining transcripts from in-depth interviews to identify recurring patterns in meaning and extract themes. Thematic analysis is an active reflexive process wherein the researcher's subjective experience is essential for extracting meaning from information. The initial phase of data analysis involved reviewing the transcripts. Then, the researchers reviewed the transcripts multiple times to familiarise themselves with the data. The researchers subsequently initiated the coding process utilising NVIVO 12. Three tiers of coding were used: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Drobic, 2020).

The researchers developed codes based on the informants' language during the open coding phase. NVIVO 12 facilitated the organisation of codes and the formulation of significant categories for reporting the results. The following are the themes identified for this research as per table 2:

Table 2. The themes of research

No	The Themes of Research
Theme 1	The Phenomenon of Verbal Violence in Children
Theme 2	Parental Communication Patterns to Protect Children from Verbal Violence

Source: Field data result (2024)

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are called trustworthiness, encompassing credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Merriam and Tisdell (2016), assert that trustworthiness in qualitative research can be attained through many methods. Credibility can be achieved by triangulation, responder validation, and member checking. The current research employed data triangulation through diverse data sources (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, 2016).

Moleong defines triangulation as a method for assuring data accuracy using alternative sources for comparison or verification. The most frequently employed form of triangulation is source verification (Ayuningtyas et al., 2024; Moleong, 2009) or respondent validation. In that case, Humphrey asserts that phenomenological research may employ data validation strategies by presenting results to each informant and soliciting corrections or feedback (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023; Kuswarno, 2007).

After transcribing the interview data, the researchers forwarded the transcripts to each participant for their assessment. This was executed for two objectives. Initially, it aimed to ascertain whether the researchers accurately understood the information conveyed by the participants during the interview. Subsequently, it offered the individuals a chance to amend their responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of verbal violence in children

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of reported incidents of a relatively understudied type of intra-family violence, such as child-to-parent violence (Jiménez et al., 2019). Family violence may be experienced at any stage of the lifespan; however, these experiences are often understood differently based on the age of the victim and who perpetrates the abuse (Warren et al., 2024).

The child is the asset and successor of the ideals of the nation's struggle for the future. Children are entitled to services to develop their abilities and social lives by following the culture and personality of the nation and becoming good and useful citizens. Children are entitled to maintenance and protection while in the womb or after birth, and children are entitled to protection against the environment that endangers or hinders their growth and development. Child abuse comes in many forms (Parulian et al., 2022).

Based on table 2. There are 2 (two) themes in this research, specifically, the phenomenon of verbal violence in children (1) and parental communication patterns to protect children from verbal violence (2).

The data analysis indicates that all respondents from Jakarta, Indonesia understand their children's social environment. . Figure 1 categorises the five informants into the 'Knowing Well' classification. In the interviews, Informant 3 indicated that parents oversee their children's social settings, as her statement shows.

"I will make sure I know. I know who they play with, where, and where they go." This is consistent with the responses provided by Informants 1 and 4. In addition, Informants 1 and 2 educate their children about the boundaries of social safety. Therefore, parents' understanding of their children's social environments is supported by their active involvement in monitoring and educating their children on social interactions within the environment.

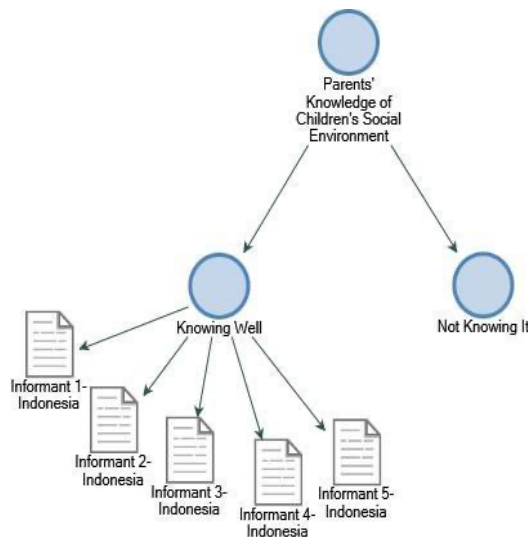


Figure 1. Parent's knowledge of children's social environment
Source: Processed using NVIVO 12 (2024)

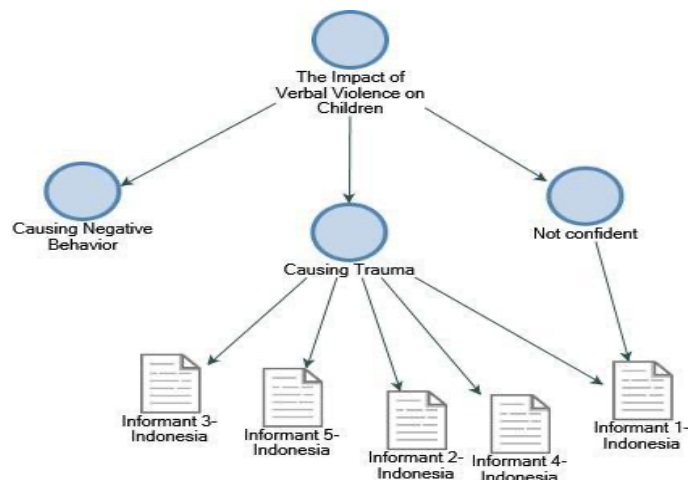


Figure 2. The Impact of Verbal Violence on Children
Source: Processed using NVIVO 12 (2024)

An additional component explaining the phenomena of verbal violence in children is the influence of verbal aggression on their development. In Figure 2, all respondents assert that verbal aggression can inflict stress on children. Informant 5 corroborated that encircling a child and using disparaging nicknames might result in profound psychological trauma. Furthermore, Informant 4 asserted, "Verbal violence will profoundly affect the child in the future." Conversely, Informant 1 asserts that verbal aggression can induce trauma and result in diminished self-confidence.

Parental communication patterns to protect children from verbal violence

Figure 3 delineates two sorts of efforts undertaken by parents to safeguard children from verbal violence: engaging in discussions with the school and other parents and educating the youngsters. Informant 5's measures to shield their children from verbal aggression include engaging in dialogue with the school and other parents, whilst Informants 1 and 3 choose to instruct their children as a means of safeguarding them from verbal violence. Nonetheless, Informant 2 executed both measures to safeguard their youngster from verbal abuse. The responses of Informant 2 corroborate this:

"First, I don't get angry immediately; I calm them down. I mean, I prepare their mental state as well, especially for boys. Then I inform the teacher, and the teacher mediates the situation".

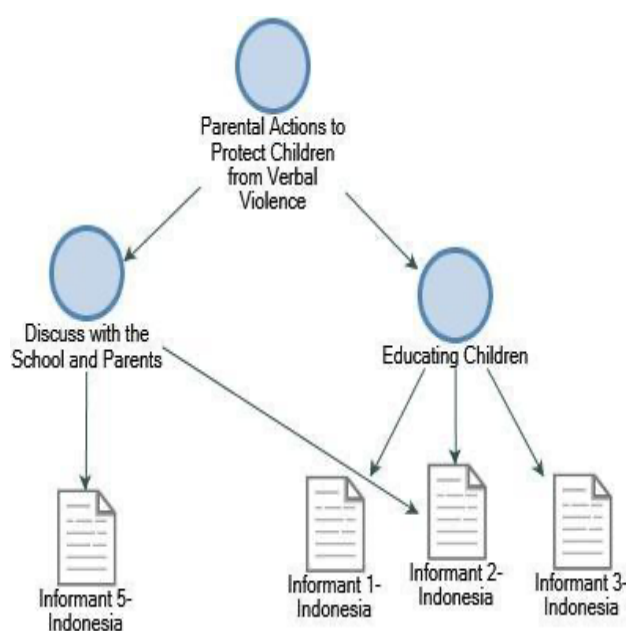


Figure 3. Parental actions to protect children from verbal violence

Source: Processed using NVIVO 12 (2024)

The examination of the communication strategies employed by each informant to shield children from verbal abuse indicates that all informants opted to engage in discussions with their children for this purpose. This aligns with Figure 4, which suggests that all five informants are classified under 'discuss with children'. The response of Informant 3 corroborates this classification.

"So far, communication has been smooth. It means that there is always something we talk about every day, even if it's just light discussions." This is in line with Informant 4's statement: "When the children come home from school, I usually ask about their day, such as 'Who did you play with today?', 'Who did you sit with during lunch?', and 'Were you happy today?'".

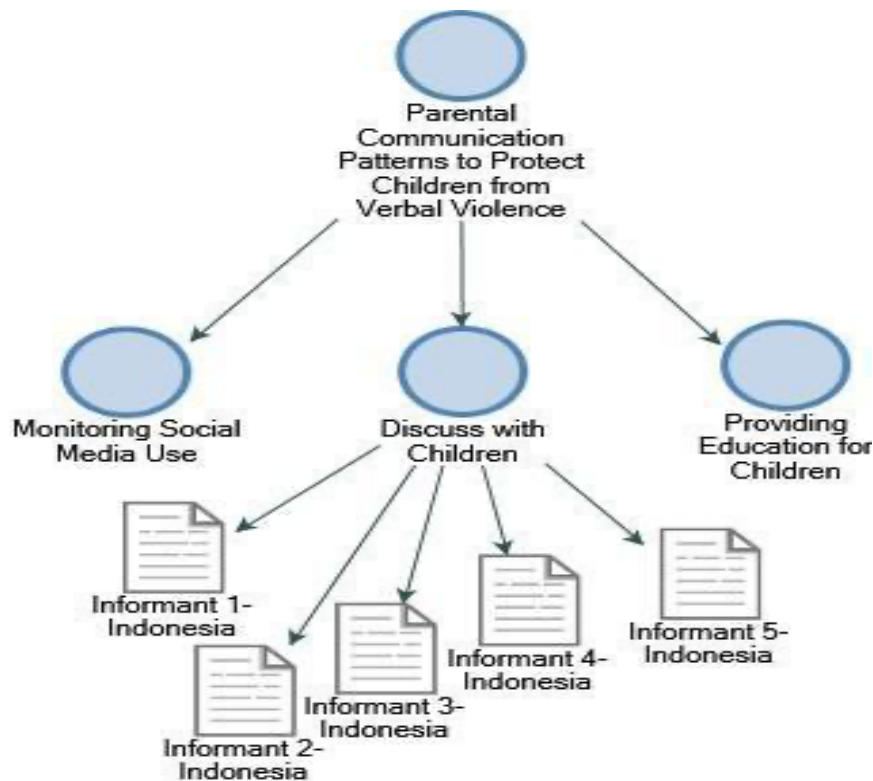


Figure 4. Parental communication patterns to protect children from verbal violence
Source: Processed using by NVIVO 12 (2024)

Discussion

Family communication is critical in shaping the relationships between parents and children. Effective communication fosters an environment of trust and understanding, while poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Additionally, the impact of cultural differences on family communication styles must be considered. Different cultures may have varying norms regarding communication, which can affect how verbal messages are interpreted. For instance, indirect communication may be preferred in collectivist cultures, while individualistic cultures may encourage directness. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for developing targeted interventions that address the specific communication needs of diverse families.

Child-to-parent violence and abuse (CPVA) was initially recognised as 'battered parent syndrome'. A commonly cited description of CPVA characterises it as 'a behavioural pattern that employs verbal, financial, physical, or emotional methods to wield power and impose control over a parent'. This term is beneficial as it highlights the significance of power and control in CPVA and its effects on parent-child interactions (Rogers & Ashworth, 2024).

Child-to-parent violence and abuse (CPVA) refer to a behavioural pattern in which a parent or caregiver is subjected to abuse by the child under their care. The primary corpus of research on CPVA is comparatively fresh and rapidly advancing (Rogers & Ashworth, 2024).

Interviews with five informants revealed that children may be subjected to verbal aggression. This is inextricably linked to the environment in which children develop, encompassing not just their family and school settings but also the digital realm, including social media and the frequency of use of electronics daily. This circumstance compels parents to establish family contact.

Family communication is a process that facilitates the establishment of positive relationships among family members. This procedure facilitates the interchange of communication messages among family members, fostering positive connections and mutual understanding (Astuti & Triayunda, 2023). The informants implemented family communication practices designed to avert verbal aggression, specifically: 1) Demonstrating appropriate emotional expression. Children frequently struggle to articulate their emotions. Adults serve as

exemplars for fostering greater organization and precision. One method is to soothe oneself with positive affirmations such as 'patient' and 'calm'. Parents, being the nearest living influence to their children, are anticipated to offer comprehension and messages that will subsequently inspire the children (Nauw et al., 2018). 2) Inquire daily about the children's experiences. Effective communication can be achieved through appropriate methods as well. Effective communication with children requires a gentle approach and clear directions, facilitating the attainment of the intended message by parents (Astuti & Triayunda, 2023). This seeks to guarantee that the communication rhythm established focuses on understanding rather than judging the children's experiences of events.

This condition facilitates parents in inquiring about the experiences their children have encountered, particularly with their daily emotions. Children can exhibit honesty and experience a sense of security in expressing themselves. If this occurs consistently, the family may achieve harmony. Family harmony signifies the quality of positive connections among parents and family members (Nauw et al., 2018). Establishing a healthy communication rhythm within a family can serve as a long-term investment in the cohesion among its members. Consequently, the function of family communication is to foster harmony among family members. This can also mitigate verbal aggression, particularly in children.

The dynamics of family communication play a pivotal role in preventing parent-child verbal violence. Families can create a supportive environment that reduces the likelihood of conflict by prioritizing open dialogue, active listening, and cultural awareness. Future research should explore these dimensions to develop comprehensive strategies for enhancing family communication.

CONCLUSION

The researcher's concern for child protection, particularly against verbal abuse, drives this investigation. This has to do with how children in a household are more likely to experience violence, which can range from verbal abuse to neglect to abuse. Family communication helps mitigate verbal violence among youngsters—the role of effective family communication in preventing verbal violence between parents and children. The function of family communication is significantly influenced by adults, particularly parents, who play a crucial role in establishing communication patterns. This includes modelling appropriate emotional expressions and actively inquiring about their children's daily experiences. This fosters peace within the family, representing a long-term investment in the relationships among its members. Further research could investigate the significance of nonverbal communication in family relations. According to research, nonverbal cues such as body language and tone of voice can substantially impact the emotional environment in family interactions. Future research could analyse how positive non-verbal communication can serve as a buffer against verbal violence, thereby fostering a more supportive environment for children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express our gratitude to Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, particularly the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and the Institute for Research and Community Services, for their assistance and funding for this research. We express our gratitude as well for the collaboration with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The authors expect other researchers to do analogous and more detailed investigations on the same topic in future research.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The authors declare no conflicts of interest pertaining to this article's research, writing, or publishing. We can assert, however, that we complied with the ethical ideals. The information will be maintained in stringent confidentiality.

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