

# Sociodemographic Factors and Parental Verbal Abuse Among Indonesian Families

Susanti Niman<sup>\*1</sup>, Tina Shinta Parulian<sup>2</sup>, Febri Christian<sup>2</sup>, Anni Sinaga<sup>1</sup>


Ira Octavia Siagian<sup>1</sup>, Timothy Rothhaar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institut Kesehatan Immanuel, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Santo Borromeus, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Marquette University, United States of America

[susantiniman@gmail.com](mailto:susantiniman@gmail.com)\*

<p><b>Submitted:</b> 2026-03-11</p> <p><b>Revised:</b> 2026-03-27</p> <p><b>Published:</b> 2025-05-16</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Abuse, Parental Verbal Abuse, Sociodemographic, Violence</p> <p><b>Copyright holder:</b> © Author/s (2026)</p> <p><b>This article is under:</b></p>  <p><b>How to cite:</b> Niman, S., Parulian, T. S., Christian, F., Sinaga, A., Siagian, I. O., &amp; Rothhaar, T. (2026). Sociodemographic Factors and Parental Verbal Abuse Among Indonesian Families. <i>Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy</i>, 8(2). <a href="https://doi.org/10.51214/002026081860000">https://doi.org/10.51214/002026081860000</a></p> <p><b>Published by:</b> Kuras Institute</p> <p><b>E-ISSN:</b> 2656-1050</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT:</b> Violence against children has both physical and psychological impacts on their development. Perpetrators of verbal abuse are often caregivers or close relatives living in the same household as the child. The objective of the study is to analyse the relationship between sociodemographic factors and parental verbal abuse. The method uses a cross-sectional approach. Convenience sampling was used to select 225 samples. Data analysis with chi-square test, simple logistic regression, and multiple logistic regression. The result of parental verbal abuse was significantly related to the family income, mother's occupation, and ethnicity (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>). Odds ratio (OR) 4.6, ethnicity from outside Java has five times higher the effect on verbal abuse than ethnicity from Java. Conclusions socio-demography : family income, ethnicity, and the mother's occupation are factors that can predict the incidence of parental verbal abuse. Religious institutions or religious communities, basic education institutions and community health centers need to be encouraged to conduct parenting classes to prevent parental verbal abuse. In addition, family intervention is needed to decrease parental verbal abuse. The research findings contribute to public mental health. Practical implications include preventive and promotive actions by healthcare professionals, such as health education. The social implications of this research provide an understanding of the prevalence of parental verbal abuse in families, a practice that families may not fully understand regarding the limits of parenting that involves violence.</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Individuals who have experienced childhood violence have a higher prevalence of psychological problems. It includes depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and eating disorders. The other issues include suicidal symptoms, psychosis, personality disorders (Bendall et al., 2008; Norman et al., 2012; Teicher & Samson, 2013; Teicher & Samson, 2016), and decreased cognitive function (De Bellis et al., 2009; Gould et al., 2012; Teicher & Samson, 2016). Children who experience violence, especially verbal violence, can experience migraines in adulthood (Tietjen et al., 2010; Hendaus et al., 2020). The meta-analysis results revealed the effect of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence on depression and anxiety disorders

(Gardner et al., 2019). Violence committed against children has an impact both physically and psychologically on the development of children in the next period.

The Causal violence or abuse of children from census data by caregivers or people who are closest and live at home with children. Violence experienced by children has a prevalence that is not small. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that around 25% of adults have experienced physical violence as children, 36% have experienced verbal violence, 26% have experienced sexual abuse, and 16% have experienced neglect (Hendaus et al., 2020). Data in Indonesia, based on the census data from the Central Statistics Agency (2020), the proportion of households with children aged 1-17 years who experienced physical punishment and psychological aggression from caregivers in the past year, by area of residence, was 48.4% for urban areas and rural areas.

Abuse in children includes verbal, emotional, sexual, physical, or neglect of children under the age of 18 by parents, guardians, or caregivers, resulting in potential harm, harm, or threats of harm (Houseman & Semien, 2021). The closest people often carry out verbal violence, especially parents (Vega et al., 2019). Parents in disciplining children often use screams and shouting so that children experience pain and improve their behaviour, which is considered inappropriate by parents (Hendaus et al. 2020). Experiences of verbal violence by parents can cause symptoms of post-traumatic syndrome disorder (PTSD) with symptoms of nightmares and avoidance. Children who experience verbal violence do not get social support from their parents after the incident. As a result, children cannot cope with traumatic events effectively (Hoeboer et al., 2021). Parents' strategy to discipline their children can be an act of verbal violence that impacts the child's mental health.

Verbal violence is a form of interpersonal violence using power or control over the victim. Verbal abuse triggers suffering, pain, and distress through intimidating verbal attacks that humiliate, harass, insult, or threaten. Verbal abuse is one of the most common and neglected forms of violence against children. Often a form of "discipline" or "tough love" from parents. Parents often carry out verbal violence against children as a form of love for children, based on the experiences their parents had when they were children. This thought hurts children's psychology. Exposure to parental verbal violence has been detrimental psychological effects (York et al., 1985; Teicher et al., 2006; Stark, 2015; Rerkswattavorn & Chanprasertpinyo, 2019).

Verbal violence perpetrated by parents on children, based on the results of previous research, is caused mainly by the experience of parents as victims of childhood violence, stress, inadequate parenting skills, and medical conditions (Polcari et al., 2014; Brown et al., 2021; Calvano et al., 2021). Researchers tried to analyse sociodemographic factors such as ethnicity, age, occupation, education, and parental income.

## **Study Aim and Hypothesis**

This research aims to explore the relationship between sociodemographic factors and parental verbal abuse. The expected research results will inform a parenting program policy for prospective parents, to be provided to the guidance class, to primary health services, to family welfare clinics in hospitals, or to religion-based pre-wedding class services. The hypothesis is that sociodemographic factors are correlated and are predictors of parental verbal abuse.

## **METHODS**

### **Design**

Study design: Cross-sectional. A cross-sectional design refers to collecting data assumed to be collected at a single point in time, with the objective of obtaining a "snapshot" or picture of a group (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). This study aims to determine sociodemographic factors: age, level of education, job, family income, and ethnicity as predictors of verbal violence. Setting: This research was conducted in Bandung, Indonesia, from March 2022 to December 2022.

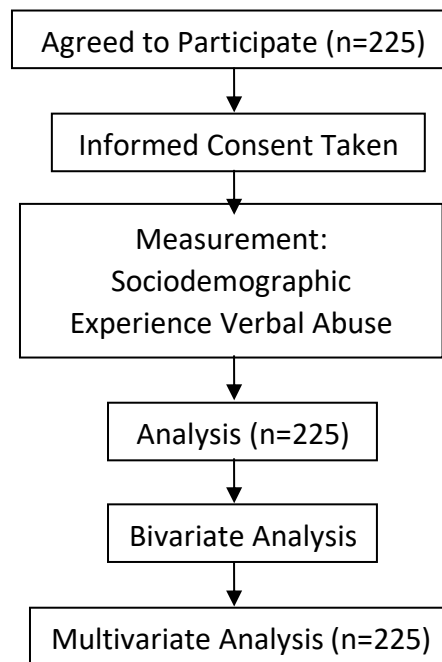


Figure 1. Study flowchart

### Participants

Sample determination: 225 students in Bandung, Indonesia, using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a method in which participants are selected based on their ready availability, such as their geographic location (e.g., students in Bandung) (Waterfield, 2018). Convenience sampling has practical advantages, as it does not require an exhaustive list of the study population (Waterfield, 2018). In this study, participants were willing to provide informed consent and to serve as research respondents; 4 weeks were allocated for data collection. Furthermore, a total of 225 students participated. All participants understood the purpose of the study and signed a written consent form on the first page of the electronic form. On the following page, participants completed a questionnaire regarding sociodemographic data and experiences of verbal abuse. The electronic form is shared on social media.

### Instruments

The questionnaire consists of two parts: 1) sociodemographic data; 2) the experience of verbal abuse. The questions about verbal violence experience are self-reported from students' verbal abuse experiences developed by researchers (validity test results > 0.374, Cronbach's alpha reliability 0.899). The instrument consists of 38 statement items using a Likert scale. Sociodemographic data and experiences of verbal abuse were filled out by student participants. The sociodemographic data included: age, highest level of education, parents' occupations (father and mother), family income, and ethnicity.

### Data Analysis

Univariate data is presented in frequency distributions. Bivariate data is analyzed using chi-square, and multivariate data is analyzed using logistic regression.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### *Sociodemographic*

The average father's age is 51.51 years. The fathers' education is 53% high school, and 94.2% are working. The mean maternal age was 47.74 years. Mother's education: 56.4% high school; 57.8% working mothers. Family income is 51.1% in the group of 1-3 million/month, and 29.8% Batak tribe.

Table 1. Characteristic Respondents (n=225)

Variable	n (%) / Mean ± SD
Age, Mean ± SD	
Father	51.51 ± 6.529
Mother	47.74 ± 5.810
Father's Education Level	
Elementary School	24 (10.7)
Junior High School	18 (8.0)
Senior High School	120 (53.3)
University	63 (28.0)
Father's Employment Status	
Unemployed	13 (5.8)
Employed	212 (94.2)
Mother's Education Level	
Elementary School	32 (14.2)
Junior High School	22 (9.8)
Senior High School	127 (56.4)
University	44 (19.6)
Mother's Employment Status	
Unemployed	95 (42.2)
Employed	130 (57.8)
Family Income (million rupiah/month)	
1–3	115 (51.1)
4–6	79 (35.1)
> 6	31 (13.8)
Ethnic Group	
Javanese	50 (22.2)
Sundanese	50 (22.2)
Batak	67 (29.8)
Others	58 (25.8)

#### *Verbal Abuse*

Data from respondents' self-reports show that 82.7% of verbal violence did not occur, and only 17.3% of verbal violence occurred.

Table 2. Verbal Abuse (n=225)

Variable	n (%)
Verbal Abuse	
No	186 (82.7)
Yes	39 (17.3)

**The Relationship Between Sociodemographic Factors and Verbal Abuse**

Table 3 shows that 17.5% fathers with a high school education commit verbal violence, p-value = 0.184 (no significant relationship between a father's education and verbal violence behaviour). 17.9% working fathers did verbal violence, OR = 2.6 (working fathers had 2.6 times the chance of verbal abuse). P-value = 0.475 (there is no significant relationship between the father's work and verbal violence). 17.3% mothers with a high school education committed verbal violence, p-value = 0.676 (no significant relationship between a mother's education and verbal violence behavior). 10.8% working mothers do verbal violence, OR = 0.338 (working mothers have 0.3 times the chance of verbal abuse). P-value = 0.004 (there is a significant relationship between the mother's work and verbal violence). There are 41.6% families with income > 6 million/month who do verbal violence, p-value = 0.001 (there is a significant relationship between family income and verbal violence behavior). There are 32.8% Batak tribe parents who use verbal violence, p-value = 0.001 (a significant relationship between ethnicity and verbal violence). There was no relationship between the father's and mother's age with verbal violence (p=0.570; p=0.313).

Table 3. Sociodemographic Factor and Verbal Abuse Behavior (n=225)

Variable	No n (%)	Yes n (%)	Total n (%)	OR (95% CI)	p-value
Father's Education Level					0.184
Elementary School	20 (83.3)	4 (16.7)	24 (100)		
Junior High School	18 (100)	0 (0.0)	18 (100)		
Senior High School	99 (82.5)	21 (17.5)	120 (100)		
University	49 (77.8)	14 (22.2)	63 (100)		
Father's Employment Status				2.621 (0.331-20.758)	0.475
Unemployed	12 (92.3)	1 (7.7)	13 (100)		
Employed	174 (82.1)	38 (17.9)	212 (100)		
Mother's Education Level					0.676
Elementary School	25 (78.1)	7 (21.9)	32 (100)		
Junior High School	20 (90.9)	2 (9.1)	22 (100)		
Senior High School	105 (82.7)	22 (17.3)	127 (100)		
University	36 (81.8)	8 (18.2)	44 (100)		
Mother's Employment Status				0.338 (0.165-0.693)	0.004*
Unemployed	70 (73.7)	25 (26.3)	95 (100)		
Employed	116 (89.2)	14 (10.8)	130 (100)		
Family Income (million rupiah/month)					0.001*
1-3	102 (88.7)	13 (11.3)	115 (100)		
4-6	66 (83.5)	13 (16.5)	79 (100)		
> 6	18 (58.1)	13 (41.9)	31 (100)		
Ethnic Group					0.001*
Javanese	47 (94.0)	3 (6.0)	50 (100)		
Sundanese	46 (92.0)	4 (8.0)	50 (100)		
Batak	45 (67.2)	22 (32.8)	67 (100)		
Others	48 (82.8)	10 (17.2)	58 (100)		
Father's Age				Exp(B) = 0.989 (0.950-1.029)	0.570
Mother's Age				Exp(B) = 0.972 (0.919-1.028)	0.313

**Predictive Model Logistic Regression**

The results of bivariate selection using simple logistic regression are obtained (Table 4).

Table 4. Bivariate Selection Results

Variables	P value
Father ages	0.570
Mother ages	0.313
Ethnic group	0.001
Father level education	0.877
Mother level education	0.690
Father jobs	0.362
Mother jobs	0.003
Family income	0.001

Multivariate analysis was carried out from the results of bivariate selection with a p-value < 0.25. Final modelling results:

Table 5. Variables in the Equation

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B) Lower	95% CI for Exp(B) Upper
Mother’s Employment Status	-1.071	0.383	7.807	1	0.005*	0.343	0.162	0.726
Ethnic Group	1.537	0.454	11.482	1	0.001*	4.650	1.912	11.311
Family Income	0.862	0.389	4.897	1	0.027*	2.367	1.103	5.077
Constant	-3.417	0.771	19.667	1	0.000	0.033	—	—

Significant at p < 0.05.

Note: Variables entered in Step 1: Mother’s employment status, ethnic group, and family income

From the results of multivariate analysis, the variables that were significantly related to the incidence of verbal abuse by parents were family income, mother's occupation and ethnicity. The analysis results obtained an Odds Ratio (OR) of 4.6, meaning that ethnic groups from outside Java had five times the higher effect on verbal violence than ethnic groups from Java after controlling for the family income and mother’s occupation variables.

**Discussion**

This study aims to analyse the relationship between sociodemographic factors and verbal violence. Based on the father's educational level, the most verbal violence occurred in fathers with a high school education level and a college education level. Formal education doesn’t automatically improve emotional regulation and communication skills. A father with a high school or college education may still resort to verbal aggression if stress management, empathy, or conflict resolution were never cultivated. But the analysis results of the father's education level and verbal violence were not related.

Harmful communication patterns are not simply a matter of schooling. Instead, verbal abuse reflects deeper cultural, emotional, and social factors (Singkhorn et al., 2023). This finding reminds us that preventing verbal violence requires more than academic achievement. It demands emotional awareness, healthy parenting practices, and supportive family environments.

The education level of mothers, the highest verbal violence was in mothers with a high school education level. The analysis results of maternal education level and verbal violence were not related. Based on the risk factors regarding domestic and family violence, a low level of education will trigger feelings of inferiority, so there is a need to control the situation by becoming a perpetrator of violence. In addition, women who have a higher level of education or occupation than their partners are also at risk of becoming perpetrators (Houseman & Semien, 2021).

Childhood experiences greatly influence the way a mother educates her children. Parents tend to adopt parenting behaviours based on their experiences as children. The risk of verbal abuse is six times greater in parents with a history of verbal abuse (Finzi-Dottan & Harel, 2014; Assink et al., 2018; Fredland et al., 2018; Woollett et al., 2020). The results of this study are in line with research that states that there is no relationship between the level of fathers' education and the experience of verbal violence in junior high school adolescents in Pasaman, West Sumatra (Wati et al., 2021). However, it is different from the results of research, which state that there is a relationship between the level of mother's education and verbal violence in pre-school age children in Kendal District (Iqomh et al., 2019).

There is no relationship between the level of education of the father and the mother's level of education with verbal violence. Researchers argue that other factors trigger verbal abuse from parents, such as behaviour or parental personality problems, family economic problems or a history of being a previous victim. In addition, higher education levels of fathers and mothers will have better job opportunities so that their socioeconomic status also increases.

Father's verbal violence on working fathers. Father's occupation was not related to verbal violence. Verbal abuse is not driven by job type. It more about emotional, cultural, and family factors. It is needed universal parenting support and emotional awareness programs that determine family behaviour. The risk of family violence increases in people who do not work (Huecker et al., 2022). The factors that influence a child's life in the family are the family's socioeconomic status, family income, employment status, and parents' education. Children from families with low socioeconomic status are at higher risk of experiencing violence and neglect from their parents (Goltermann et al., 2021).

The researcher argues that there is no relationship between the father's work and verbal violence because the father works, so the socioeconomic status of the respondent's family is good, and verbal violence is low. This research is in line with research that states that there is no relationship between a father's work and the experience of verbal violence in junior high school adolescents in Pasaman, West Sumatra (Wati et al., 2021).

Mother's verbal abuse of working mothers. The mother's occupation is related to verbal violence. Stress from work can contribute to frustration. A working mother under pressure may unintentionally use harsher language at home. Working mothers often face a double burden: professional responsibilities and domestic duties. This imbalance can heighten stress, which, if unsupported, may manifest in negative communication patterns. Working mothers must strive to balance the demands of work and family responsibilities. This situation can increase stress levels in working mothers.

The stress experienced can impact family functioning (Limbers et al., 2020). The researcher argues that a mother's work is related to verbal violence because psychological conditions trigger it. Mothers who cannot balance the roles of responsibility as workers and as mothers in the family will experience stress due to role conflict. Researchers argue that the stress experienced by working mothers triggers mother-child communication patterns to be ineffective and at risk of verbal violence. The mother's psychological condition can affect the psychological development of the child. Parents don't intend to hurt their children on purpose, but sometimes they do it because of a lack of experience or skills in parenting a teenager. This argument is supported by the results of research, which state that violence can occur due to "losing patience". Healthy mothers react to

"losing their temper" about 10% of the total time spent with their children, while unhealthy mothers can react about 80-90% (Aberle et al. 2007). Other research results also state that there is a relationship between mothers' work and experience of verbal violence in junior high school youth in Pasaman, West Sumatra (Wati et al., 2021).

Family income is related to verbal violence. Families with lower incomes often face financial strain, which can increase stress levels. Stress can make parents more irritable or less patient, raising the risk of harsh communication. Economic hardship can increase stress, which may raise the risk of verbal conflict in families without adequate support. Risk factors for violence in children can include a parent's history of experiencing violence as a child, low socioeconomic status, single parent, limited parental abilities, and parental stress (Dubowitz, 2013; Hendaus et al., 2020).

Family income will affect the stress level of parents. The existence of stress on parents can affect their mental health, which will impact the quality of their relationships and parenting. This condition can disrupt communication patterns between parents and children, triggering verbal violence in children. This study is supported by the research results, which state that raising children is stressful even for families without facing economic difficulties. Chronic stress due to economic conditions can limit the ability of parents to play an effective role, triggering parent-child conflict. Parents with limited family income are more likely to do harsh parenting (Perzow et al., 2018).

Researchers categorise ethnic groups based on the most ethnic groups in Indonesia. Ethnicity correlates with verbal violence. In some contexts, verbal discipline may be normalized or seen as acceptable due to cultural and personal differences. So cultural norms play a role in negative communication. In verbal communication, need to be politeness for spoken words. It is related to procedures, customs, and habits. All about it will affect grammar in society. The research results state a relationship between cultural values and parenting practices. Cultural values that exist in society will shape the appreciation of parents' arts and influence parenting practices (Wiswanti et al., 2020).

The research results related to violence and ethnicity. The results of research on ethnicity state that domestic violence is more common in African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan natives, and Hispanics (Houseman & Semien, 2021). In Indonesia, several articles discuss violence against women. A husband carries out verbal violence against his wife by often speaking loudly, yelling without caring about the environment, and cursing his wife with various accusations (You et al., 2019). This form of characterised verbal abuse is exposure to stress-inducing shouts and yells. The victim's emotions and thoughts are disturbed due to exposure to verbal violence. Verbal violence affects the victim's self-esteem and, in the long term, triggers anxiety, post-traumatic disorder syndrome/PTSD and depression (Bhandari et al., 2022).

The analysis results showed that ethnic groups outside Java Island had five times the higher effect on verbal violence. In some cultures, direct or harsh language may be more common, but it is not necessarily intended as abuse. Misinterpretation across cultural lines can make normal communication seem violent when viewed through a different lens. Social and cultural contexts, including experiences tied to ethnicity, may influence communication styles and stress responses, which in some cases can increase the risk of verbal conflict.

## **Implications**

This study has implications that socio-demographic factors can trigger verbal abuse by parents, thus highlighting the importance of educating parents about verbal abuse. This is crucial because parents can never predict when and where they will experience a loss of emotional control. Furthermore, for children who have experienced verbal abuse, it is crucial to design appropriate strategies and obtain psychological support. This study also provides information for nurses, counsellors, psychologists, social workers, religious leaders, and other clinicians to identify families at high risk for verbal abuse and refer or implement early interventions to mitigate its impact.

## Limitations and Further Research

Based on these results, the researcher believes that further studies are needed on parenting practices related to culturally based verbal violence with different research designs because there are still limited research results comparing ethnic-related parenting patterns in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This study showed that socio-demographic factors, such as family income, the mother's occupation, and ethnicity, are factors that can predict the incidence of parental verbal abuse. Family intervention is needed to decrease parental verbal abuse. This study strengthens existing research that factors of ethnicity can influence verbal abuse. The recommendation given is that mental health nurses can contribute to providing primary prevention services through verbal abuse education in guidance classes for prospective parents in primary health services, family welfare clinics, or religion-based premarital course services.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors agree to the final version of this article.

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