

Self-Protection model through children's knowledge and assertive behavior as an early protection effort against sexual violence in Kubu Raya Regency

Sri Nugroho Jati^{1*}, Vidyastuti²

^{1,2} Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak, Pontianak, Indonesia

^{1*}srinugroho_76@unmuhpnk.ac.id, ²vidyastuti@unmuhpnk.ac.id

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Keyword: Self-Protection Model, Knowledge, Assertive Behavior, Sexual Violence.	Abstract School-aged children are at risk of becoming victims of sexual abuse, highlighting the need for early self-protection programs. These programs should provide knowledge, training, and assertive actions as part of preventive psychoeducation for children. Studies show that between 20% and 33% of girls and 10% to 16% of boys will experience sexual abuse before reaching 18 years old. The Self-Protection Model aims to serve as an early protection program by equipping children with the knowledge to recognize and identify sexual abuse. This study employed a quasi-experimental method with a quantitative approach. The sampling method used was purposive sampling on 20 subjects consisting of male and female students who met the following criteria: aged 9-12 years and elementary school students. The measurement tools used were assertiveness scale and knowledge scale. The analysis using the non-parametric Wilcoxon test, demonstrated that the self-protection model significantly contributes to children's knowledge and assertive behavior in response to sexual violence. Efforts to prevent sexual violence should be directed at children, emphasizing the importance of providing knowledge and examples of assertive behavior. This study's findings indicated a significant improvement in children's knowledge and assertive behavior following the implementation of the Self Protection Model intervention, thereby empowering them to apply the newly acquired skills as a preventive strategy against sexual violence.			
*Corresponding Author: Sri Nugroho Jati Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak Email: srinugroho_76@unmuhpnk.ac. id				

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INTRODUCTION

Education about sexuality for children from an early age still needs to be improved, considering the alarming rates of sexual violence against children. Providing knowledge through various efforts to prevent sexual violence in children involves teaching about the body correctly, introducing reproductive health early on, naming and understanding the functions of genital organs, and learning how to protect them. The goal of providing sexual knowledge to children is to teach them how to protect themselves and understand the boundaries of body parts that can be touched, enabling them to practice early self-protection. The importance of children's knowledge is consistent with (Labir et al., 2019) research, which emphasizes the need to provide education to children about protective knowledge to safeguard against sexual violence. Acquiring knowledge enables children to recognize the characteristics of violent behavior, facilitating their ability to engage in preventive strategies and reducing their vulnerability to sexual abuse. Research suggests that fostering behavioral development and self-awareness within environmental contexts is a crucial strategy for preventing sexual violence (Kurnia et al., 2020). The identification of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) typically involves a range of topics, including understanding personal bodily autonomy, recognizing appropriate touch, and differentiating between safe and unsafe secrets (Ferragut et al., 2023). In addition to children's ability to

identify sexual violence, they also exhibit behavioral responses and assertive behavior, including having the courage to resist and report inappropriate actions, at least to parents or other trusted individuals. Additionally, with knowledge, children can identify signs of violent behavior, thus enabling preventive measures and preventing them from becoming victims of sexual abuse. Assertive behavior in the context of sexuality involves the ability to say "no" to negative and unwanted actions from others that lead to sexual harassment. Assertiveness skills serve as a social competency to prevent sexual violence (Fitria et al., 2023)

According to Law Number 35 of 2014, sexual violence is any act against a child that results in physical, psychological, sexual suffering, and/or neglect, including threats to commit such acts, coercion, or unlawful deprivation of liberty. Literature studies show that children have very little knowledge about sexual abuse or self-protection skills, and many may even perceive sexual touch as acceptable (Wurtele and Owens in Maleki et al., 2023).

Research indicates that between 20% and 33% of girls and 10% to 16% of boys will experience sexual abuse prior to turning 18 (Bolen & Scannapieco in Barth et al., 2012; Russell & Bolen, 2001). Children are particularly at risk of sexual abuse between the ages of 8 and 12, with the average age of first abuse being 9.9 years for boys and 9.6 years for girls. (Hinkelman & Bruno, 2008).

Kubu Raya Regency ranks second highest, with 5 cases reported. In 2019, this number increased to 12 cases. According to the online information system for Women and Children's Protection (Simfoni PPA) in Kubu Raya Regency, in 2021, there were 74 reported incidents of violence against children and adolescents, which is considered quite high. The highest number of sexual violence cases involved children aged 6-12 years, with 14 cases (19%)—12 cases (16.2%) involving girls and 2 cases (2.7%) involving boys. For the age group 13-17 years, there were 34 cases (46%)—31 cases (41.9%) involving girls and 3 cases (4%) involving boys. Data and interviews from the DP3KB in Kubu Raya Regency indicate that sexual violence cases are a problem that requires serious handling.

Considering the vulnerability of school-aged children to sexual abuse, it is crucial to implement self-protection programs as early as possible by providing knowledge, training, and assertive actions as part of preventive psychoeducation for children. The Self Protection Model aims to serve as an early protection program by children equipped with the ability to recognize and identify sexual abuse. According to Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), knowledge can be acquired factually, conceptually, procedurally, and metacognitively. In relation to children's knowledge of sexual violence: factual knowledge pertains to the information obtained; conceptual knowledge involves the ability to classify and identify forms of sexual violence; procedural knowledge refers to the skills needed to know when to take action; and metacognitive knowledge is the ability to make decisions when facing sexual violence. Additionally, this model will teach assertive awareness through actions that encourage bravery in confronting sexual abuse.

Based on the initial field data and interviews with several children aged 10-12 years in Kubu Raya Regency, it was found that children still lacked knowledge about sexual violence; they understood physical violence better. Their ability to identify, recognize characteristics, and understand forms of sexual violence was also inadequate. Efforts to handle situations that lead to sexual violence, such as physical resistance and

talking to parents or teachers, are taught in schools. Children mentioned they would refuse if approached by strangers but would allow familiar individuals to touch and hug them. This aligns with the fact that sexual violence is often perpetrated by close acquaintances. In line with a study carried out by (Mlekwa et al., 2016), the majority of parents possess knowledge and positive attitudes regarding their responsibility in preventing child sexual abuse. However, the level of parental practice in preventing child sexual abuse remains low.

The low awareness of sexual education among children is partly due to inadequate parental communication implementing early childhood sex education. (Ardianto, 2017) suggests that promoting students' assertive behavior necessitates positive communication within the family and interpersonal communication with educators. This underscores the significance of family and school involvement in Sungai Raya Subdistrict, in which many Malay and Javanese parents consider discussing sexual topics taboo. Instead of open dialogue, they implicitly enforce rules on dress code and behavior, contributing to a cultural norm that limits children's knowledge and assertiveness in sexual education.

In addition to inadequate knowledge, the ability to resist through assertive behavior against sexual violence—by being brave enough to prevent unwanted or unsafe sexual activities—is essential. Therefore, teaching self-protection programs to children as early as possible is very important.

The early protection program through the Self-Protection Model is an intervention designed to tackle the problem of violence directed at children. Previous research has measured instruments related to skills and abilities in facing sexual violence, however, it has not yet presented an experimental model that directly instructs and assesses children's skills through assertive behavior activities aimed at combating sexual violence. Research conducted by Linehan (in Shorey, Zucosky, Brasfield, Febres, Cornelius, Sage & Stuart, 2012); (Nurdin et al., 2018) identified several skills that, if possessed, can eliminate or reduce the occurrence of violence. Self-protection skills or abuse response skills (Deblinger and Runyon, 2011) can reduce the likelihood of children experiencing inappropriate behavior and sexual violence by increasing awareness, knowledge, and response skills. Assertiveness is identified as a crucial protective factor for children, enabling them to prevent physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (et al., 2021). Assertive behavior, which includes being brave and firm in facing sexual violence, is crucial. Another study by Livingston, Testa & VanZile-Tamsen (in Couture et al., 2023) found that sexual assertiveness is negatively associated with sexual violence. Social skills, especially assertive behavior, can be employed as a preventive strategy to mitigate sexual violence, thereby fostering children's social competence during their developmental stages. Research by (Abdumadjidova Dildora Rakhmatullaevna, 2018) revealed that the development of targeted life skills in children promotes assertive behavior, ultimately augmenting their social activity potential.

The Self-Protection Model was selected as the research intervention model with the goal of providing self-protection for children against sexual violence through the delivery of knowledge, problem-solving skills, and assertive behavior skills in relation to child sexual violence in Kubu Raya Regency. This aims to enhance both the knowledge and actions that can be taken as part of a preventive effort to protect children from sexual violence.

METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a quantitative approach. Quantitative of the Self-Protection Model (SPM) was implemented in several stages:

Table 1. Stages of Implementation of Self-Protection Model Intervention

Date	Time	Session	Method	Description and Achievements
10 Mei 2024	09.00-10.30	Screening	Selection of Subjects	Based on the research subject criteria
10 Mei 2024	09.00-10.30	Pre-Test	Measurement Scale	The subjects filled out the Self-Protection Model (SPM) questionnaire
10 Mei 2024	09.00-10.30	Rapport-Building	Games Ice Breaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team conducted ice-breaking activities Introduction of the Research Team and Facilitators Q&A
13 Mei 2024	09.00-10.30	Session 1. "Knowledge on Sexual Education for Children"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture/Education Discussion and Q&A Demonstration 	The children learned the concept of body parts, genital organs, protection of genital organs, signs of sexual abuse; they also participated in demonstration activities.
14 Mei 2024	09.00-10.30	Session 2. "Assertive Behavior in Response to Sexual Violence"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture/Education Discussion and Q&A Role Play 	The children learned assertive behavior; and how to bravely say "no,,"; they also engaged in role-playing assertive behavior to prevent sexual harassment.
17 Mei 2024	09.00-10.30	Session 3. Screening of Educational Video on Sexual Education for Children and Group Inquiry	Screening of video and Q&A	The children were given a refresher on sexual violence prevention through video presentations and Q&A sessions.
17 Mei 2024	10.30-11.00	Post-Test	Measurement Scale	The subjects filled out the Self-Protection Model (SPM) questionnaire

The sampling method employed in this study was purposive sampling. This approach entails choosing participants based on particular characteristics they exhibit. The criteria for including subjects in this study were: (1) children aged 9-12 years; (2) elementary school students; (3) children who had not received any prior intervention; (4) children who resided in Sungai Raya Subdistrict; (5) children who were willing to participate and were given permission from school or parents to participate until the end of the intervention session. The exclusion criteria for this study were: (1) previous participation in similar interventions; (2) no parental/guardian consent; (3) school or residential transfer during the study; (4) failure to complete the intervention sessions. Meanwhile, the data were collected using a questionnaire based on the Self-Protection

Model, adopted and modified from the Children Knowledge of Abuse Questionnaire by Leslie Maureen Tutty (1995) to measure children’s knowledge and assertive behavior towards sexual violence. Measurement results were calculated quantitatively by summing the scores of each item and then examining the percentiles. The results were then assessed to determine the overall level of the child’s abilities. This was assessed using a knowledge scale questionnaire consisting of 18 items and an assertive behavior scale questionnaire with 21 items. The reliability of the measurement tools was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which showed a reliability coefficient of 0.912 for the knowledge scale and 0.956 for the assertive behavior scale. The Self-Protection Model (SPM) questionnaire includes statements with four response options: Strongly Agree (score 4); Agree (score 3); Disagree (score 2); Strongly Disagree (score 1). Respondents will mark (√) the number corresponding to their answer for each statement. Higher scores on this scale indicate that the child has good knowledge and assertive behavior, while lower scores indicate the opposite. Qualitatively, the knowledge and assertive behavior towards sexual violence reflected in each statement provide an overview of how well the children can protect themselves from sexual violence.

The data analysis was conducted using non parametric Wilcoxon test to draw conclusions. A normality test (p-value = 0.16) was performed to ensure the validity of statistical assumptions in the analysis. The qualitative data analysis was obtained through observations during the intervention phase.

The aspects measured in this study included variables related to knowledge and assertive behavior in children concerning sexual violence. These aspects were further clarified by the indicators presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Knowledge Aspect and Indicators

No	Aspect	Indicator
1	Factual Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terminology knowledge Knowledge of details and elements
2	Conceptual Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to categorize and classify problems Ability to relate problems to phenomena
3	Procedural Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to carry out tasks and series of steps Knowing criteria to determine appropriate procedures, methods, or techniques
4	Metacognitive Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of strategies for problem-solving Knowledge of self-awareness

Table 3. Assertive Behaviour Aspect and Indicators

No	Aspect	Indicator
1	Ability to Express Feelings	Ability to accept feelings of anger and warmth Ability to accept sexual feelings
2	Ability to Express Beliefs and Thoughts Openly	Courage to express personal opinions on a situation or event Ability to disagree or express differing opinions to others and be assertive about anything
3	Ability to Assert Personal Rights	Maintaining personal rights and not allowing others to infringe upon them Ability to oppose differing opinions, confront people who disturb or exploit

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the research stages, the pretest was conducted on May 13, 2024, and the post-test was conducted on May 17, 2024, in Sungai Raya Subdistrict, Kubu Raya Regency. The study involved 20 elementary school students aged 10-12 years, both boys and girls. This study aimed to assess children's knowledge and assertive behavior as an early protection effort against sexual violence before and after the intervention with the Self-Protection Model (SPM). The SPM intervention model was implemented based on the field findings. Based on data on sexual violence cases in children in Sungai Raya Subdistrict, and preliminary interview results, children's knowledge and assertive behavior regarding sexual violence were still low. Therefore, a self-protection model through psychoeducation and actionable behavior is necessary as a preventive measure to prevent sexual violence. The distribution of subject characteristics is shown in the following table:

Table 4. Distribution of Research Subject Characteristics

Characteristic	Group			
	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender				
Boys	10	100	-	-
Girl's	-	-	10	100
Education				
Elementary School	10	50	10	50
Status				
Student	10	50	10	50
Age				
09-10	2	20	-	0
11-12	7	70	7	70
≥ 12	1	10	3	30
Total	10	100	10	100

Preventive measures against sexual violence in children were implemented through psychoeducation as part of the intervention. This form of education was based on psychological theories and learning principles, providing information and skills training to enhance knowledge and behavior related to sexual violence. Several methods were used, including delivering material on sexual violence and assertive behavior, followed by demonstrations and role-playing exercises to train assertive behavior against sexual violence. These activities were part of the intervention process during the intervention sessions.

The results of this study addressed the research problem based on measurements obtained from the pretest and post-test, which showed changes in knowledge about sexual violence and children's ability to act assertively in response to sexual violence.

The distribution of differences in the pretest and post-test scores for knowledge among boys and girls is detailed in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Sexual Violence Knowledge Data Score

Gender	Aspect			
	PF	PK	PP	PM
Boys (n = 10)				
Pretest (P1)	191	203	227	227
Posttest (P2)	259	258	266	274
Difference Pre-test and post-test	68	55	39	47
Girl's (n = 10)				
Pretest (P1)	252	262	273	273
Posttest (P2)	294	307	299	295
Difference Pre-test and post-test	42	45	26	22

Information: The table above shows the score for each aspect. PF= Factual Knowledge; PK= Concept Knowledge; PP= Procedural Knowledge; PM= Metacognitive Knowledge

Table 5 shows the changes in scores between the pretest and post-test phases. The highest increase in scores among girls was observed in the concept knowledge (PK) aspect, with an improvement of 45 scores, while the lowest increase was in the metacognitive knowledge aspect, with a score of 22. This indicates that the ability to categorize and classify problems, as well as the ability to connect issues, improved significantly. Girls already had a good level of knowledge about strategies for dealing with problems and self-awareness, which explains why the score increase in the post-test was not as high. During the discussion and Q&A session on sexual education, some female participants demonstrated an understanding by providing strategies to address sexual violence. The average increase in ability across all aspects for the children was 33.75.

The results showed that boys had lower pretest scores compared to girls, particularly in the factual knowledge aspect, which experienced a significant increase by 68 scores. This indicates that knowledge of terminology, details, and elements related to events, locations, sources of information, and timing improved substantially. However, the increase in procedural knowledge was lower, with a score of 39, reflecting that boys already had a basic understanding of how to perform tasks through steps and criteria to determine appropriate procedures, methods, or techniques when facing problems. Thus, the increase was not as high. The average increase across all aspects was 52.25. The following graph displays the knowledge scores of boys and girls related to sexual violence.

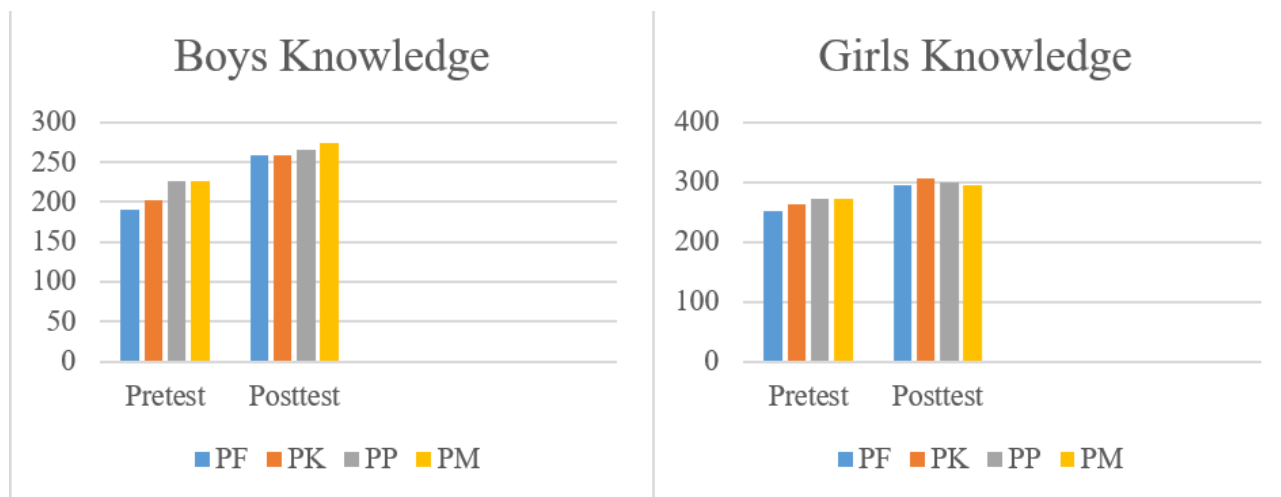


Figure 1. Pretest -Posttest knowledge of boys and girls

Research by (Rodzali et al., 2023) reveals a disparity in knowledge between boys and girls regarding sexual violence awareness, indicating that females exhibited a greater understanding of sexual violence compared to their male counterparts. This finding can be attributed to the fact that females are disproportionately represented as victims of sexual violence, resulting in a heightened sense of concern and awareness regarding prevention and avoidance strategies among females compared to males (Sudaryasa et al., 2023).

The assertive behavior variable also showed differences in both the pre-test and post-test results as shown in Table 6. The distribution of differences in the pre-test and post-test score data for assertive behavior in boys and girls is as follows:

Table 6. Assertive Behavior Data Score on Sexual Violence

Gender	Aspect		
	KMP	KMK	KMH
Boys (n = 10)			
Pretest	320	350	211
Posttest	397	397	266
Difference in pre-test and post-test	77	47	55
Girls (n = 10)			
Pretest	407	424	295
Posttest	465	460	315
Difference pre-test and post-test	58	44	20

Information: The table above shows the score for each aspect. KMP = Ability to express feelings; KMK= Ability to express beliefs and thoughts openly; KMH= Ability to defend personal rights

Table 6 provides an explanation of the assertive behavior variables, showing changes in scores between the pretest and post-test phases. Among boys, the highest increase in score was observed in the aspect of expressing feelings, with an improvement of 77 scores. This indicates that boys were able to better accept feelings of anger and warmth as well as feelings related to sexuality. The ability to express beliefs and thoughts openly also improved, but the score was not as high. Meanwhile, the ability to assert personal rights remained

the lowest among the three aspects. This suggests that boys still had limited skills in opposing differing opinions and dealing with disruptions. The average increase in assertive behavior skills for boys across all aspects was 59.7.

The changes in the pretest and post-test scores for girls were somewhat similar to those for boys in terms of the order of improvement across aspects. However, girls had higher pretest scores compared to boys, and the average increase in assertive behavior for girls across all aspects was 40.7. The following graph illustrates the knowledge scores of boys and girls related to sexual violence.



Figure 2. Pretest-Posttest of assertive behavior in boys and girls

In terms of assertive behavior variable indicators, boys showed an increase of 44 scores in the ability to accept feelings and warmth when the pre and post scores were compared. In contrast, for girls, the indicator of maintaining personal rights showed variation in scores. Differences in results between the pretest and post-test were evident across all indicators in both groups. For boys, changes were observed in each indicator. For girls, the knowledge variable was dominated by the aspect of factual knowledge, particularly in categorization and classification skills, and terminology knowledge, with increases in scores of 29 and 33, respectively. Similarly, for boys, the indicator of terminology knowledge showed a difference of 39.

Based on the results, the Self-Protection Model could be said to have an impact as an intervention model for helping children implement self-protection measures against sexual violence. This is evident from the changes in knowledge about sexual violence and assertive behavior towards sexual violence, as demonstrated by the measurement results and the courage to engage in assertive behavior through role-playing and demonstrations during the intervention sessions. The regression analysis using the Wilcoxon test on the knowledge variable showed a difference in the impact of the Self-Protection Model on children's knowledge and assertive behavior regarding sexual violence.

The analysis of the pretest and post-test data on knowledge and assertive behavior towards sexual violence indicated that the implementation of the Self-Protection Model had a quantifiable impact on the experimental groups. The Wilcoxon test results showed that the Z-score was 3.625 and significance was of 0.000. Since $0.000 < 0.05$, The alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, indicating that there was a significant

difference between the pretest and post-test results. This concludes that assertive behavior plays a role in preventing sexual violence against children.

The limitations of this study include the lack of generalizability to other regions, the small sample size, and the limited age range of the subjects. Future researchers are advised to consider a more diverse sample size and age range, as demonstrated by (Oktavianti et al., 2024), which showed an increase in positive attitudes among adolescents after receiving education on sexual violence in the community. Knowledge and assertive behavior are also crucial at the early childhood stage, as highlighted by (Kemer et al., 2021), which found that knowledge and skill training programs for preventing sexual violence are effective in enhancing the ability to recognize body parts and safety techniques to prevent sexual abuse among children aged 5-6 years-old.

CONCLUSION

The Self-Protection Model, employed as an intervention strategy in this study, demonstrates a significant increase in children's knowledge and assertive behavior in preventing sexual violence. Efforts to prevent sexual violence should be directed at children, emphasizing the importance of providing knowledge and examples of assertive behavior, alongside the roles of parents, the environment, and schools. This approach can enhance children's skills and knowledge to address the rising incidence of sexual violence. Children's understanding of sexual violence should go beyond just physical abuse to include other actions that may indicate harassment or sexual violence. Similarly, improving assertive behavior skills helps children anticipate and address sexual violence effectively.

This study has limitations. Firstly, its focus on a specific research location, identified through initial data as having high rates of sexual violence, restricts generalizability. Additionally, time constraints and difficulties obtaining participant consent resulted in a relatively small sample size, further limited by adherence to strict selection criteria.

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