

Father Presence and Adolescent Attitudes toward Sexual Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The presence of fathers in children's lives, especially during adolescence, is one of the protective factors that can prevent children from risky behavior, including negative adolescent attitudes towards sexual behavior. This study aims to measure the relationship between father's presence and adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior. The research design used descriptive correlation with a cross sectional approach. The study was conducted at a high school in Kudus Regency in 2024. The research sample was 96 students through purposive sampling technique. The research instrument used the Father Presence Questionnaire (FPQ) and the adolescent attitude towards sexual behavior questionnaire which had been valid and reliable. Data analysis using chi square test. The results showed that the majority of adolescents had a positive attitude towards sexual behavior (56.3%). In addition, the majority of adolescents who had high father presence also showed positive attitudes towards sexual behavior (61.1%). However, there was no significant relationship between father's presence and adolescents' attitude towards sexual behavior ($p = 0.276$). Father's presence in childcare needs to be increased to achieve a good mental health condition in adolescents. Future research is expected to evaluate interventions that can improve the role of fathers in parenting adolescents.

KEYWORDS

Adolescent attitudes; adolescent sexual behavior; fatherless; father's presence

INTRODUCTION

Fatherlessness, the condition of a child growing up without a father, is a global phenomenon that has received serious attention and has shown an alarming trend in recent years. The percentage of fatherless children varies across ethnic groups: 57.6% in black children, 31.2% Hispanic, 29% Native American, 20.7% white, and 16% Asian (Ellis, 2025).

Indonesia is considered the third most fatherless country in the world with less involvement in fathers' care roles based on a survey conducted by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (Puspa, 2023; Setyawan, 2017). In 2021, around 57% of children in Indonesia are growing up without a father (UNICEF, 2021).

The rising fatherless rate in Indonesia is fueled by divorce, patriarchal culture, and lack of father involvement in parenting (Oktavia, 2025); Romadhona

& Kuswanto, 2024). Fatherlessness significantly contributes to increased risky sexual behavior in adolescents. Mediating factors such as low self-confidence, poor emotion regulation, and low parental bonding quality are the main mechanisms of fatherless influence on adolescent sexual behavior (Rahmawati et al., 2024); (Larasati et al., 2022).

The results of a preliminary study at a high school through interviews with several students obtained data that some students stated that they did not have a father and did not feel the presence of their father because of their father's busy work or not living at home with their father, so that these conditions caused students to feel insecure or lack confidence while living their daily lives, and had difficulty making life decisions due to lack of direction and experiencing emotional instability.

Studies show that the higher the father's involvement in the lives of adolescents, the lower the tendency of premarital sexual behavior and promiscuous sexual behavior (Sauqinah, 2022); (Oktavia, 2025); (Prasiwi & Palupi, 2025). The presence of fathers not only provides emotional support but also helps adolescents develop self-control and emotion regulation, which play an important role in healthy sexual decision-making (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Therefore, research on the relationship between father presence and adolescents' attitudes toward sexual behavior is critical to understanding the mechanisms of influence and designing effective interventions (Sauqinah, 2022); (Oktavia, 2025); (Prasiwi & Palupi, 2025).

The presence of fathers can shape adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior, which can inform the development of risky sexual behavior prevention programs that are appropriate to the Indonesian socio-cultural context. With increasing rates of fatherlessness and negative sexual behaviors in adolescents, an in-depth understanding of adolescent attitudes is a priority so that interventions can be targeted and have a positive impact on adolescents' reproductive health and overall psychosocial well-being (Sauqinah, 2022); (Oktavia, 2025); (Prasiwi & Palupi, 2025).

The novelty of this research is to measure directly on adolescents through correlative studies with variables that have not been studied before, namely the relationship between father's presence and adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior. The role of the father that will be measured in this study is

how the father-adolescent relationship and the child's belief in the father.

Nurses as a holistic profession should also pay attention to father's involvement in childcare to optimize children's growth and mental health. Currently, there are not many studies that identify the role of father's presence in parenting adolescents, especially on attitudes towards adolescent sexual behavior, so this study was conducted to measure the relationship between father's presence and adolescent attitudes towards sexual behavior.

METHOD

The research design used descriptive correlation with a cross sectional approach. The study population was all active high school students in Kudus Regency. The sample size was determined based on the Lemeshow formula and obtained a total of 96 respondents (Darma, 2011). Samples were taken using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria in this study were students who were registered or had active status as students in high school.

Data analysis in this study using computer data processing applications consists of univariate and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis describes the attitude of adolescents towards sexual behavior interpreted in frequency and percentage. Bivariate analysis identifies the relationship between the presence of father's role with adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior using the chi-square test with a 95% confidence degree with an alpha value of 5% or 0.05.

The Father Presence Questionnaire (FPQ) was used to measure father presence. This questionnaire

contains 71 statement items consisting of 13 statement items about feelings towards fathers, 14 statement items about maternal support for relationships with fathers, 14 statement items about perceptions of father involvement, 9 statement items about physical relationships with fathers, 13 statement items about father's relationship with mothers, 8 statement items about conceptions of father's influence. This questionnaire uses 5 category Likert scale answers with the answer options never to always. The score range is from 71-355. The categorization of father's presence consists of a high category if the total score is 260.89 and a low category if the total score is < 260.89. The validity value of this questionnaire is 0.424-0.909 and the reliability value is 0.89 (Krampe & Newton, 2006).

The attitude towards sexual behavior questionnaire consists of aspects of feelings of pride, privatization, opinions about sexual activity, opinions about the impact and prevention. The number of statements consists of 15 statement items with answer options strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The interpretation of the measurement results is positive > 47 and negative ≤ 47 with a reliability value of 0.7 (Muflih & Syafitri, 2018). This research has obtained ethical clearance from the research ethics committee with number 91/Z-7/KEPK/UMKU/VII/2024.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Father Presence and Adolescent Attitudes toward Sexual Behavior

Table 1. Father presence and attitudes about adolescent sexual behavior (n=96)

Variable	f	%
Father Presence		
High	54	56,3
Low	42	43,8
Adolescent Attitudes toward Sexual Behavior		
Positive	68	70,8
Negative	28	29,2
Amount	96	100

Table 1 shows that explains that half of the students feel the presence of their father in the high category, namely 54 students (56.3%) and the majority of students have positive attitudes towards sexual behavior, namely 68 students (70.8%).

The results of this study are in line with previous research which states that most adolescents have a positive attitude towards sexual behavior. The attitude of adolescents towards sexual behavior is an important thing that needs to be considered by parents and schools. Parents and schools need to take action to minimize adolescent sexual behavior considering the many negative impacts of adolescent sexual behavior (Sitepu & Ervika, 2024).

Attitude towards sexual behavior is a favorable or unfavorable view of sexual behavior. A positive or negative attitude can be a predictor of whether or not a person will engage in the behavior. A person's attitude towards something is the result of the individual's experience. These attitudes can impact behavior and have a causal relationship that determines an individual's actions (Sitepu & Ervika, 2024).

The more involvement a biological father has in an adolescent's life, the more likely he is to engage in positive sexual behaviors. Father involvement is increasingly recognized as an important factor in influencing adolescents' attitudes and behaviors.

Adolescents who feel a positive relationship with their biological father, as indicated by feeling close to their father, communicating with their father, and engaging in activities with their father, are less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors (Alleyne-Green et al., 2016).

Every year, there is an increase in the prevalence of harmful sexual behaviors among adolescents. Sexual activity can lead to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), which makes the situation a cause for great concern (Amaylia et al., 2020). Risky sexual behavior in adolescents begins with the behavior of holding hands (83.4%), hugging (34.2%), kissing lips (15.6%), and fingering / stimulating (3.3%) (Simanjuntak et al., 2021).

Father's presence is the active involvement of fathers in parenting that includes intensive communication, emotional support, and good sex education, so that it can shape adolescents' positive attitudes towards sexuality and reduce the intention of sexual behavior. The better the role and involvement of fathers, especially in communication and sexual education, the lower the risk of adolescents engaging in risky sexual behavior (Handayani & Kustanti, 2020); (Sukma et al., 2025).

Sexual behaviors include touching, kissing, touching the genitals without intercourse, oral sex without intercourse, and touching the genitals (mainly by rubbing them against each other with a partner without having sex). Sexual behavior is an outward expression of underlying sexual desire, characterized

by increased levels of sexual activity. When people engage in sexual behavior, they are acting on sexual desire or engaging in activities that provide pleasure through the sexual organs. Such as daydreaming, masturbation, holding hands, kissing cheeks, hugging, kissing lips, fondling, and having sexual intercourse (coitus). Adolescents often struggle with sexuality as they have greater sexual desire despite social pressure not to engage in sexual activity until marriage. However, they reach sexual maturity at a young age (Sitepu & Ervika, 2024).

Attitude is a person's assessment of a stimulus or object, in the form of feelings in favor or against the object. Attitude has three main components, namely cognitive (knowledge and beliefs), affective (feelings or emotions), and conative (behavior or tendency to act). Attitudes towards sexual behavior are reactions or responses of adolescents that reflect how they assess and respond to various forms of behavior driven by sexual desires, which are still closed or have not reached the stage of implementation, and this attitude can affect their tendency to make decisions regarding sexual activity (Pratiwi & Sudaryanto, 2024).

Indicators of attitudes towards sexual behavior are adolescents' reactions or responses to pride in maintaining self-respect, privatization of sexual problems, masturbation, touching, kissing, oral sex, petting, sexual intercourse, the impact of free sex, prevention of free sex with health education (Muflih & Syafitri, 2018).

The Relationship between Father Presence and Adolescent Attitudes toward Sexual Behavior

Table 2. The relationship between father presence and adolescent attitudes toward sexual behavior

Variable		Father Presence				Total		p-value
		High		Low		n	%	
		n	%	n	%			
Adolescent Attitudes toward Sexual Behavior	Positive	33	61,1	21	38,9	54	100	0,276
	Negative	21	50	21	50	42	100	
Total		54	56,3	42	43,8	96	100	

Based on Table 2, it shows that out of 54 adolescents who had high father presence, 33 adolescents (61.1%) had positive attitudes towards sexual behavior, while 21 adolescents (50%) had negative attitudes towards sexual behavior. Of the 42 adolescents who had low father presence, 21 adolescents (50%) had positive attitudes towards sexual behavior, and 21 adolescents (50%) had negative attitudes towards sexual behavior.

Research by Handayani & Kustanti (2020) in Bogor City High School found that there is a very strong correlation between the father's role in communication and attitudes towards adolescent sexual perceptions (correlation value $r=0.738$ and $r=0.855$, $p=0.000$). The better the father's role in communication and attitude, the more positive the adolescents' sexual behavior attitude. This supports the finding that high father presence is associated with positive behavioral attitudes in adolescents.

Previous research explains that father's involvement in parenting has a negative relationship with adolescent sexual behavior. The higher the father's involvement, the lower the sexual behavior of adolescents dating with a correlation coefficient of -0.405 (Paransa & Hatta, 2021).

The results of the bivariate chi square test obtained a significance value of 0.276. Because the p-value is $0.276 > 0.05$, it can be concluded that there is

no statistically significant relationship between father's presence and adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior. Fatherless does not only mean the physical absence of the father, but also the absence of the father's role in the child's life emotionally and psychologically. Fathers who are physically present but not active in parenting are also called fatherless. This condition has an impact on adolescents' emotional development and self-control, which then affects their sexual behavior (Oktavia, 2025).

The results of research conducted by Novitasari (2016) explain that there is no significant relationship between behavioral father involvement and premarital sexual behavior in adolescent boys, which suggests that other factors may also play a role, such as maternal influence, social environment, and sexual education.

The results of the study are also supported by the results of previous studies that found a negative relationship between father involvement in parenting and juvenile delinquency, which can be interpreted as unhealthy adolescent sexual behaviour (Taqiyya, 2023).

The results showed no statistically significant relationship between father's presence and adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior. Not all children with a low level of father's presence in parenting, will show negative behavior, in some

families, there is a mother who can substitute the presence of a father's role that is felt to be lacking in parenting. Mothers can also play a role in reducing the negative effects of father absence for their children, for example surrounding the child with male role models other than the father such as the grandfather or brother of the mother can be very beneficial (Castetter, 2020).

The results of the same study explain that there is no relationship between juvenile delinquency and fatherlessness in adolescent boys. of th study show This result indicates that the presence or absence of fathers in the lives of adolescents does not directly affect their level of delinquency. One possible cause of this finding is the existence of other factors that are more dominant in shaping adolescent delinquent behavior such as, social and school environment, peer influence, maternal parenting, family economic factors, adolescent psychology and media technology which may have a stronger role than the physical presence of the father. In addition, the presence of a substitute figure such as a grandfather, uncle, or brother who acts as a father figure can also be a compensating factor in adolescent development (Febrianty & Suhesty, 2025).

LIMITATION

Adolescents' attitudes towards sexual behavior are influenced by many other factors such as peer influence, media, mother's role, and social environment that were not controlled for in the study. This could make the relationship of father's presence appear insignificant

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results showed that the majority of adolescents had a positive attitude towards sexual behavior (56.3%). In addition, the majority of adolescents who had high father's presence also showed a positive attitude towards sexual behavior (61.1%). However, there was no significant relationship between father's presence and adolescents' attitude towards sexual behavior ($p = 0.276$).

A recommendation for future research is to compare the influence of the presence of fathers and mothers on adolescent sexual behavior. This can provide insight into the specific role of each parent in shaping adolescents' sexual behavior attitudes.

ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

This research has been declared to have passed ethical review from the Research Ethics Committee of the Muhammadiyah Kudus University Health Research Ethics Committee with number 91/Z-7/KEPK/UMKU/VII/2024.

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