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Family as a Safe Space: A Descriptive Examination of Psychological Safety, Parenting Practices, and Parent–Child Emotional Relationships

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Abstract: Social and economic changes influence the dynamics of parenting within families, particularly in meeting children's emotional and psychological needs. This study aims to describe the condition of psychological safety within families, nurturing, caring, and nurturing parenting patterns, parental mental health, and the tendency of love languages in parent-child relationships during integrative parenting education activities. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a pretest–posttest design. The study subjects were 30 parents who participated in parenting education activities in Sukawangi Village, Sukabudi District, Bekasi Regency. Data were collected using psychological safety instruments, exploration of parenting patterns, mental health reflection through the metaphor of an emotional battery, and mapping of love languages. Then, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of JASP software. The results showed that psychological safety in families was in the moderate category, parenting patterns were dominated by aspects of compassion, parental mental health was at a moderate level of emotional energy, and the most dominant love language was physical touch. These findings indicate that psychological safety in families is formed through the interaction between parental emotional readiness, balanced parenting patterns, and how affection is expressed. This study provides an empirical picture that can be the basis for developing more holistic and contextual parenting education programs.

Keywords: Psychological Safety, Asah Asih Asuh, Parenting, Parental Mental Health, Love Language, Integrative Parenting

INTRODUCTION

Rapid social and economic changes have consequences for the dynamics of family life, particularly in child-rearing practices. Parents today face increasingly complex role demands, ranging from financial responsibilities and household management to active involvement in their children's education and development. These conditions often result in limited time, emotional exhaustion, and reduced quality of family interactions. In such situations, parenting

tends to be intuitive and situational, which may not necessarily align with the child's emotional and psychological needs.

Parenting is essentially a holistic process that encompasses meeting physical, emotional, social, and psychological needs. In the Indonesian cultural context, parenting is understood through the framework of *asah* (grooming), *asih* (caring), and *asuh* (nurturing). *Asah* refers to efforts to stimulate and develop a child's abilities, *asih* (caring) emphasizes compassion, empathy, and emotional attachment, while *asuh* (nurturing) relates to care, protection, and meeting a child's basic needs (Afriyenti et al., 2023). These three aspects are not isolated but are integrated into the daily parenting experience (Pertiwi & Fitriani, 2025).

The framework of nurturing, love, and care is also closely related to the formation of a sense of psychological safety within the family. Psychological safety, in the context of family relationships, is understood as a condition where children feel accepted, valued, and safe to express emotions, opinions, and mistakes without fear of rejection or emotional punishment (Fahmi et al., 2022). A family environment that provides a sense of psychological safety enables children to develop emotionally and socially and build healthy attachments with their parents (Ramadhan & Alfiandra, 2023).

Psychological safety in the family is inseparable from the quality of parent-child interactions, which are formed through parenting patterns (Setiadi, 2023). The aspect of love, which emphasizes warmth and empathy, plays a crucial role in creating a supportive emotional climate. However, the aspects of nurturing and nurturing also contribute to building a sense of security through consistency, structure, and clarity of roles and rules. This, psychological safety in the family can be understood as the result of a comprehensive balance of parenting practices. In addition to parenting patterns, the mental health of parents is a crucial factor in creating a psychologically safe family atmosphere (Clarissa Angela Uguy et al., 2025). Parents with stable mental health tend to be better able to manage their emotions, be patient, and respond adaptively to their children's needs. Conversely, emotional exhaustion and unmanaged stress can impact the quality of parent-child interactions. In this context, parental awareness of their own mental health is a crucial part of reflective parenting practices (Pertiwi & Muminin, 2020).

To help parents reflect on their mental health, the emotional battery metaphor is used as a simple and easy-to-understand visual tool (Suwijik & A'yun, 2022). This metaphor depicts a parent's emotional energy capacity in carrying out their parenting role, ranging from full, half, to low. This approach is not intended as a diagnostic tool, but rather as a means of self-reflection to understand parents' emotional readiness to interact with their children. The quality of emotional relationships within the family is also influenced by how parents express affection. The concept of the five love languages explains that individuals have different preferences in expressing and receiving affection, such as physical touch, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service, and gifts (Hadian et al., 2022).

In the context of parenting, understanding love languages is important because differences in how affection is expressed can influence a child's perception of acceptance and emotional security. Previous research has shown that physical touch and words of affirmation are the dominant love languages parents use in interactions with their children (Dayita, Hutahaeon, & Pertiwi, 2021).

Various training and community service activities have demonstrated that parenting education can increase parents' awareness of the parenting styles they employ. Training that emphasizes objectivity and the learning process in parenting helps parents reflect on their parenting behaviors more openly and adaptively (Dayita, Hutahaeon, & Pertiwi, 2021). However, most of these activities are still focused on increasing knowledge, while a

comprehensive picture of the psychological conditions of parents, parenting patterns, and emotional relationships within the family has not been systematically described.

In a scientific context, research on psychological safety has been extensively developed in organizational and educational settings (Diptya Baswara, 2023). However, studies that capture psychological safety in the family context, particularly as it relates to nurturing, loving, and nurturing parenting, parental mental health, and love languages, are still relatively limited. The family is the initial environment that shapes an individual's experience of psychological safety before entering a broader social environment (Kurnia, 2018).

Based on these conditions, this study was conducted to provide a descriptive overview of psychological safety within the family, nurturing, loving, and nurturing parenting patterns, parental mental health, and love language tendencies in parent-child relationships. This study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a pretest-posttest design as part of an integrative parenting education program.

The purpose of this study was to describe the level of parental understanding after participating in an integrative parenting intervention and to describe the state of psychological safety, nurturing, loving, and nurturing parenting patterns, parental mental health, and dominant love languages. The research question posed in this article is: What is the picture of psychological safety, nurturing, loving, and nurturing parenting, mental health, and parents' love languages after participating in an integrative parenting education program?

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. The descriptive design was chosen to provide an empirical overview of psychological safety within families, nurturing, caring, and nurturing parenting patterns, parental mental health, and love language tendencies in parent-child relationships. This study did not aim to examine relationships between variables or test hypotheses, but rather to systematically capture the characteristics and trends of the data based on measurement results. The subjects in this study were 30 parents who participated in an integrative parenting education activity. All participants were selected using a total sampling technique. The study subjects were parents who agreed to participate in the complete series of activities, from completing the questionnaire, participating in the educational sessions and reflective discussions, to final data collection.

This study was conducted concurrently with the integrative parenting education activities in Sukawangi Village, Sukabudi District, Bekasi Regency. Data collection took place during community service activities in the area. The entire research process was carried out in a structured manner within a single series of activities.

The research instrument consisted of several sections designed to describe the research variables descriptively. The first instrument was a Family Psychological Safety Identification Sheet, used to describe parents' perceptions of psychological safety in the parent-child relationship, including openness of communication, emotional acceptance, and children's comfort in expressing themselves. The research instrument consisted of several sections structured to describe the research variables descriptively. The first instrument was a Family Psychological Safety Identification Sheet, used to describe parents' perceptions of psychological safety in the parent-child relationship, including openness of communication, emotional acceptance, and children's comfort in expressing themselves.

The research was conducted through an explanation of the activity's objectives and instrument completion to participants. An integrative parenting education session covered topics such as nurturing, caring, and nurturing parenting, parental mental health awareness,

love languages, and reflections on family psychological safety. After the educational session and reflective discussion, participants completed the research instrument based on their experiences and perceptions. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics using JASP software, including frequency distribution, percentages, mean values, and standard deviations. The results of the analysis were presented in tables and narrative descriptions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of descriptive statistical analysis to describe psychological safety within families, nurturing, caring, and nurturing parenting patterns, parental mental health, and love language tendencies in parent-child relationships. Data analysis was conducted using JASP software with a descriptive statistical approach.

Overview of Psychological Safety in Families

The analysis results indicate that the majority of parents have a moderate level of psychological safety. Of the 30 respondents, 15 (50.0%) were in the moderate category, 8 (26.7%) were in the high category, and 7 (23.3%) were in the low category.

Table 1. Distribution of Psychological Safety in the Family

Psychological Safety Level	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
High	8	26,7
Moderate	15	50,0
Low	7	23,3
Total	30	100

For the purposes of JASP descriptive analysis, the psychological safety variable was coded ordinally (1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high). The results of the descriptive statistics calculations are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Safety

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
30	1	3	2,03	0,74

The average value shows that in general psychological safety in families is in the moderate category, with variations in conditions between parents.

Overview of the Asah, Asih, and Asuh Parenting Patterns

The results of the parenting pattern mapping show that the compassionate aspect is the most dominant parenting pattern applied by parents. Fifteen respondents (50.0%) showed a tendency towards compassion, followed by asah (9 respondents) (30.0%), and asuhan (6 respondents) (20.0%).

Table 3. Distribution of Asah, Asih, and Asuh Parenting Patterns

Dominant Parenting Style	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
Asih	15	50,0
Asah	9	30,0
Asuh	6	20,0
Total	30	100

For the descriptive analysis of JASP, parenting patterns were coded (1 = asah, 2 = asih, 3 = asuh). The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Parenting Patterns

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
30	1	3	1,70	0,78

The average value approaching the compassionate category indicates a dominant tendency towards the aspects of affection and emotional attachment in parenting practices.

Overview of Parental Mental Health

The mental health status of parents is described through the metaphorical reflection of an emotional battery. The results show that 15 respondents (50.0%) were at 50% battery level, 8 respondents (26.7%) at 100% battery level, and 7 respondents (23.3%) at 15% battery level.

Table 5. Overview of Parents' Mental Health

Emotional Battery Condition	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
100%	8	26,7
50%	15	50,0
15%	7	23,3
Total	30	100

For the descriptive analysis of JASP, the mental health variables were coded (1 = 15%, 2 = 50%, 3 = 100%). The descriptive statistics results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Mental Health

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
30	1	3	2,03	0,74

This value indicates that the general mental health condition of parents is at a moderate level.

Overview of Parents' Love Language

The results of the love language mapping show that physical touch is the most dominant love language used by parents. The distribution of love languages is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Distribution of Parents' Love Languages

Dominant Love Language	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
Physical touch	10	33,3
Acts of service	7	23,3
Gift-giving	6	20,0
Quality time	4	13,3
Affirmative words	3	10,0
Total	30	100

The results of this study provide an important overview of the state of psychological safety in families that fall into the moderate category, with the majority of parents describing family relationships as fairly emotionally safe, but not yet fully consistent. These findings suggest that psychological safety in families is not a black-and-white condition, but rather exists on a spectrum influenced by emotional dynamics, parenting patterns, and the quality of parent-child relationships. The concept of psychological safety, initially studied in the context of organizations and work teams, emphasizes the importance of an environment that allows individuals to feel safe expressing ideas, emotions, and mistakes without fear of negative

consequences (Edmondson, 1999). In the family context, the same principle applies, where children need a safe space to explore emotionally and psychologically.

The dominance of the moderate psychological safety category in this study can be understood as a reflection of the reality of everyday parenting. Parents generally have the intention and effort to create a safe environment, but limited emotional energy and role demands often influence the consistency of their emotional responses. This finding aligns with the family systems perspective, which states that the quality of family relationships is strongly influenced by the internal conditions of primary caregivers, particularly the parents' emotional regulation and reflective capacity (Minuchin, 1974).

Parenting patterns dominated by the aspect of compassion demonstrate that affection and emotional attachment are the primary assets in parenting practices. This aspect aligns with attachment theory, which emphasizes that parental warmth and sensitivity play a crucial role in building a child's sense of security (Bowlby, 1988). Children who grow up in warm, empathetic relationships tend to have better emotional regulation skills and a stronger sense of psychological security.

However, the results of this study also indicate that the dominance of affection has not been fully balanced by nurturing and nurturing aspects. This gap is an important finding because parenting that places too much emphasis on emotional warmth without consistent developmental stimulation and structure can potentially lead to role and boundary ambiguity. Baumrind (1991) emphasizes that optimal parenting requires a balance between emotional responsiveness and adaptive control. Thus, healthy psychological safety is built not only through affection, but also through clear structures, rules, and developmental support.

The mental health of parents, who were mostly at a moderate level of emotional energy, provides crucial context for understanding the above findings. The metaphor of an emotional battery suggests that parents still have the capacity to carry out their parenting role, but are vulnerable to exhaustion. The literature on parental burnout indicates that parental emotional exhaustion is correlated with decreased sensitivity, increased irritability, and reduced quality of parent-child interactions (Mikolajczak et al., 2018). In this condition, psychological safety in the family tends to fluctuate, depending on the emotional readiness of parents in certain situations.

Findings on love languages enrich our understanding of the dynamics of emotional relationships within families. The dominance of physical touch as a love language suggests that parents express affection through closeness and direct presence. Chapman (2010) states that physical touch plays a crucial role in building a sense of security and attachment, especially in children. In the context of this research, the dominance of physical touch can be understood as an intuitive parental strategy for calming and bonding with children.

However, the relatively low distribution of love language skills in terms of words of affirmation and quality time suggests there is room for development in relational literacy. Children who need verbal affirmation or a need for full presence without distraction may not be optimally facilitated. This mismatch in love language can affect children's perceptions of acceptance and security, even if parents feel they have expressed affection optimally. This confirms previous research findings showing that the quality of emotional relationships is influenced not only by the intensity of affection, but also by the appropriateness of how it is expressed (Dayita, Hutahaean, & Pertiwi, 2021).

When viewed integratively, the results of this study indicate that psychological safety in families is formed as a result of the interaction between three main elements: parental emotional readiness, a balance of nurturing-loving-caring parenting patterns, and the

appropriate love language in the parent-child relationship. When any one of these elements is less than optimal, psychological safety tends to be moderate or fluctuating, rather than stable and strong.

This finding strengthens the results of previous research which shows that parenting plays an important role in shaping an individual's sense of psychological security and adaptive behavior at later stages of development (Simbolon, Pertiwi, & Fitriani, 2023; Sitomurang & Pertiwi, 2023). However, this study provides additional contributions by portraying these conditions descriptively and contextually, without placing parents in a right-wrong framework, but rather as individuals who are developing within their existing limitations and potential.

This, this discussion emphasizes that efforts to strengthen psychological safety within families need to be directed toward a holistic and realistic approach. Parenting interventions should not only improve parenting knowledge but also help parents recognize their emotional capacities, balance parenting aspects, and expand ways of expressing affection. Such an approach has the potential to create a family environment that is not only warm but also psychologically safe and supportive of children's ongoing development.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a descriptive overview of the state of psychological safety within families, nurturing, caring, and nurturing parenting patterns, parental mental health, and the love language tendencies within parent-child relationships within the context of integrative parenting education activities. The research findings indicate that psychological safety within families is generally at a moderate level, reflecting parental efforts to create a safe emotional environment, but is still influenced by limited emotional energy and parenting consistency in daily life.

A parenting pattern dominated by the nurturing aspect indicates that affection and emotional attachment are the primary foundations of parenting practices. However, this also indicates the need for a balance between nurturing and nurturing aspects so that parenting is not solely emotional but also supports cognitive development and consistent structure. Moderate levels of parental mental health indicate that parents still have the capacity to carry out their parenting role, but are vulnerable to emotional exhaustion, which can impact the quality of interactions and the sense of psychological safety within the family.

The tendency for physical touch to be the dominant love language indicates that parents express affection through closeness and direct presence. While these forms of expression play a role in building emotional attachment, the limited variety of love languages suggests there is room for strengthening relational literacy so that children's diverse emotional needs can be more optimally met. Overall, the results of this study confirm that psychological safety in families is formed through the interaction between parental emotional readiness, balanced parenting styles, and the way affection is expressed.

This research's contribution lies in providing a comprehensive empirical picture of family psychological dynamics in the context of parenting, which can enrich the study of family psychology and applied social sciences in general. By descriptively capturing the conditions of psychological safety, parenting, mental health, and emotional relationships, this study provides a foundation for the development of more holistic, reflective, and contextual parenting education programs and can serve as an initial reference for future research.

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