

Model of Parental Empowerment as Peer Educators in the Prevention of Child Marriage Among Adolescents: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Child marriage is a serious issue affecting adolescents' health, education, and well-being. This article aims to examine the model of parental empowerment as peer educators in preventing child marriage through a literature review of national and international studies published between 2016 and 2026. The findings indicate that preventing early marriage requires a comprehensive approach involving increased parental knowledge, strengthened parent-adolescent communication, and community-based social norm transformation. Peer education is considered effective in improving knowledge and attitudes and therefore has strong potential to be developed into a sustainable parent-to-parent preventive strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

Child marriage is a serious issue that broadly affects adolescents' social life, health, education, and well-being in many countries, including Indonesia. This condition is not only related to biological maturity but also to the lack of understanding among adolescents and parents regarding the negative consequences of early marriage, such as increased rates of adolescent pregnancy, maternal and infant health complications, school dropout, and limited economic opportunities in later adulthood (Widyawati, 2023).

Research results show that early marriage is significantly associated with an increased risk of unsafe pregnancy and childbirth, as well as higher maternal and infant mortality rates compared to women who marry at a more mature age. Studies on activities aimed at strengthening the role of families in preventing early marriage have found that educational programs and efforts to increase



family knowledge regarding adolescents' rights, the consequences of child marriage, and preventive strategies can significantly improve parental understanding of this issue.

The role of parents is very crucial in shaping adolescents' attitudes and behaviors toward child marriage. Parents are the first agents of socialization who shape children's norms and values from an early age, including their understanding of relationships, reproductive education, and emotional maturity. In many communities, the limited role of parents in providing information and positive guidance contributes to risky behaviors, including adolescents' readiness to marry early.

Studies on the role of parents in preventing early-age pregnancy show that parents who are actively involved in prevention efforts tend to have better communication and more responsive parenting patterns with their adolescents. These findings confirm the importance of parental empowerment as a primary strategy in mitigating child marriage through improvements in family-based parenting patterns and educational approaches (Rori *et al.*, 2025).

The peer education approach has been widely adopted in health promotion and preventive behavior programs among adolescents due to its effectiveness in improving knowledge and attitudes through peer-to-peer communication. Peer educators are selected and trained individuals who act as agents of behavioral change among their peers by utilizing strong social networks and interpersonal relationships to deliver relevant and credible information (Agung *et al.*, 2021). For example, literature studies in the field of adolescent reproductive education have found that peer educator programs can help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by improving adolescents' knowledge and attitudes regarding reproductive health. This concept can potentially be expanded into parental empowerment, where parents are trained as peer educators for other parents, enabling more effective facilitation of family understanding in preventing child marriage (Mehra *et al.*, 2022).

Community empowerment has increasingly become an important approach in building public capacity to address social issues such as child marriage. This approach involves strengthening the capacity of local actors, including parents, health cadres, community organizations, and community leaders, to effectively identify problems, develop educational strategies, implement interventions, and evaluate outcomes. Research evaluating the influence of community empowerment on efforts to prevent early marriage among adolescents shows that strengthening community capacity significantly increases public knowledge, skills, and motivation to address risk factors associated with child marriage. The combination of community empowerment with peer educator training for parents enables the development of an intervention model that is culturally relevant, sustainable, and capable of having a broader impact on preventing child marriage effectively (Arisjulyanto *et al.*, 2023).

METHODS

This study uses a literature review design with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine various studies related to the parental empowerment model as peer educators in preventing child marriage during adolescence. The literature review was conducted to identify, analyze, and



synthesize findings from previous relevant studies on the topic in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of parental empowerment approaches in the context of early marriage prevention.

This study employed a systematic literature review approach guided by the PRISMA framework. The data sources were obtained from national and international scientific articles accessed through electronic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, PubMed, and national journal portals indexed in SINTA. The literature search covered publications from 2014 to 2025 to ensure the relevance and recency of the data. The keywords used in the search process included “child marriage prevention,” “parental empowerment,” “peer education,” “parent involvement,” and “community-based intervention.” The selection process followed several stages, namely identification, title and abstract screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) original research articles or systematic reviews; (2) studies focusing on child or early marriage prevention; (3) studies addressing parental roles, peer education, or community empowerment approaches; and (4) full-text availability. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria included opinion articles, editorials, and studies not relevant to the research focus. Through this systematic selection process, a total of 16 relevant articles were included in the final analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques, namely grouping study results based on major themes such as the urgency of preventing child marriage, the role of parents in decision-making, the effectiveness of peer education, and community empowerment models. The results of the synthesis were then systematically organized to explain research findings and identify research gaps that can serve as a basis for developing parental empowerment models as peer educators in preventing child marriage during adolescence.

RESULTS

1. Article Description Results

The results in this section describe the main characteristics of the selected articles, including publication year, study design, research focus, and key findings.

Table 1. Article Description

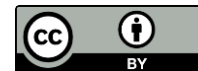
Title	Insight	Method	Results	Correlation Study
Community-Based Interventions to Delay Early Marriage (BMC Public Health)	Intervention based community capable changing social norms related age wedding ..	Quasi-experimental with group control .	Happen improvement average age of marriage and increase participation school teenager Woman .	Support draft empowerment parent in scheme community



Parent-Adolescent Communication and Adolescent Sexual Behavior (Mehra <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	Communication open between parents and teenagers correlated negative with behavior sexual risky .	Cross-sectional survey.	Teenager with communication good parents own trend more low For do behavior sexual early .	Theoretical basis importance practice parent as educator .
The Effectiveness of Peer Education on Adolescent Reproductive Health BMC Public Health (Akuiyibo <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	Effective peer education increase knowledge and attitudes teenager related health reproduction Because his approach more comfortable and not judging compared to method lecture normal .	Quasi-experimental (pre-test and post-test). Respondents teenager given intervention education peers , then compared to change knowledge before and after intervention .	Happen improvement significant on knowledge health reproduction , understanding risk behavior sexual , as well as attitude to prevention pregnancy and STIs after peer education intervention .	show that the peer educator model is effective in increase literacy health reproduction teenager .
Community Empowerment through Youth Peer Education in Efforts to Prevent Child Marriage(San Agustina Siregar <i>et al.</i> , 2024)	Empowerment program community use peer educator method is able increase knowledge and attitudes teenager to prevention wedding age child	Quasi-experimental with purposive sampling of 65 adolescents and pre-post measurement of peer education intervention	Improvement significant on the score knowledge and attitudes about impact wedding early after peer education intervention	Supporting the peer educator model in prevention of child marriage Because show effectiveness approach education peers to improvement understanding teenager .
The Effect Of Peer Education On Knowledge About The Dangers Of Early Marriage	Peer education interventions improve outlook teenager about danger wedding early	Quasi-experimental design (pre-test and post-test) with respondents 65 teenagers .	Average score knowledge increase in a way significant after the peer education program.	Demonstrate effective peer educator in increase knowledge teenagers — relevant for parent



In Mimika Regency (Kainde <i>et al.</i> , 2024)				empowerment model .
The Influence of Peer Group Education on Adolescents' Knowledge of Early Marriage (Wahyuningsih <i>et al.</i> , 2025)	Peer group education is influential positive to improvement knowledge teenager about issue wedding early .	Descriptive quantitative with questionnaire For measure knowledge teenager before and after education same age .	There is an increase score knowledge about risk Marry early post peer education intervention	Similar with the previous item — strengthens proof that peer education improves knowledge teenager .
Effects of Parent–Child Relationships on Child Marriage (Bhan <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	Good relationships and communication between parents and children lower risk wedding early .	Longitudinal cohort study in several developing countries .	Communication effective parent - child become factor protective significant to wedding age child .	Give base theoretical that parents is the main protective factor , so worthy empowered as a peer educator.
Perception of Rural Adolescents and Parents Regarding Child Marriage (Islam <i>et al.</i> , 2025)	Parents' perceptions and social norms greatly influence decision wedding child .	Cross-sectional survey of adolescents and parents .	Parent with perception positive to wedding early more tend marry child more fast .	Strengthening that intervention must target change parental perception through empowerment.n
A synthesis of what we know works... (UNICEF, 2024)	Synthesis of effective strategies	Evidence synthesis	Clarification effectiveness intervention	Support runway theoretical preventing child marriage
The Relationship between Level of Knowledge, Attitude and Role of Parents	knowledge , attitudes , and roles of parents related wedding early own connection significant with	Descriptive analytical approach <i>cross-sectional</i> , n = 35 adolescents ,	A p-value < 0.05 indicates that the more Good knowledge & role of parents , increasingly big	Relevant very Because show <i>connection direct</i> between parental knowledge and efforts prevention



towards Early Marriage in Teenagers (Hanifa, 2024)	incident wedding early in adolescence .	questionnaire , Chi-Square test.	effort prevention wedding early .	— basics strong For developing a <i>parent peer educator</i> model in prevention wedding child .
The Role of Parents in Prevention Early Marriage in Cakul Village , District Dongko , Regency Trenggalek (Azzahra, 2025)	The role of parents including give example behavior , advice life , communication open , and settings socializing as effort prevent wedding early .	Case study qualitative (observation , interviews) in - depth documentation).	Involved parents active in communication and supervision social help postpone trend wedding early .	Suitable For review qualitative in related literature review <i>concrete parental strategies</i> in prevention wedding child .
Parental Communication About Reproductive Health Education with Children's Perception of Wedding Early (Agustiani , 2018)	Parental communication influence perception children . Effectiveness parent communication about health reproduction related with perception child to wedding early — good communication make perception child more critical against young marriage .	Descriptive correlation , <i>cross-sectional</i> , 111 elementary school students , Chi-Square analysis .	Communication effective parents 3.2 times more likely big influence perception child positive to delay wedding .	Give proof empirical that the role of parents in education reproduction impact to attitude teenagers — important For entered in the parent empowerment model as a peer educator.
The Influence of Parenting Class on Reproductive Health on the Level of Parental Knowledge (Ekawati <i>et al.</i> , 2024)	Parenting classes in context health reproduction in a way significant increase parental knowledge related prevention wedding early .	Quasi-experiment / pre-post design	Parental knowledge increase after given parenting class materials .	Support that training parental education increase knowledge — which can become core module of <i>peer educator parents</i> .



Impact of Parenting Patterns Against Early Marriage (Suharti, 2024)	Pattern style foster parents perspective and decisions child related future marriage .	Empirical survey	Parent with pattern foster care supportive influence the decision mature marriage .	Show connection pattern parenting with trend wedding early – relevant For part argumentation <i>how are parents can becoming a peer educator changes pattern foster care .</i>
Unrelated Knowledge with Attitude Family about Incident Wedding Early age (Swarjana <i>et al .</i> , 2025)	Study This test connection between parental knowledge and attitudes family to incident wedding early , found that knowledge No always impact on attitudes family .	<i>Cross-sectional</i> design with respondents family in one ward .	Not found connection significant between parental knowledge and attitudes family related incident wedding early .	show that just knowledge No enough – necessary <i>peer educator intervention</i> For change attitudes and practices social .
The Socio-Cultural Environment, Parental Perception, Adolescent Knowledge, and Attitude Toward Early-Age Marriage Decision (Intan <i>et al .</i> , 2020)	Parents ' perception about age marriage and social norms own connection with attitude teenager to Marry early ..	<i>Cross-sectional</i> study with parents and teenagers as respondents .	The height perception traditional about readiness Marry moment menstruation or age young associated with poor attitude support delay wedding . changed	Show importance change parental perception through education between parents so that the pattern think about wedding early

Based on the synthesis of various studies presented in the table above, it can be concluded that preventing child marriage requires a comprehensive, holistic, and multi-level approach. Studies such as Bhan et al. (2019) and Kalamar et al. (2016) show that single interventions are not sufficiently effective in the long term; instead, interventions must integrate individual, family, community, and social norm change dimensions. This confirms that families, especially parents, hold a strategic position in efforts to prevent child marriage.



In addition, various empirical studies show that the quality of parent–child communication plays a role as a protective factor against early marriage. Bhan et al. (2019) and Agustiani (2018) found that effective and open communication between parents and adolescents is negatively correlated with risky sexual behavior as well as decisions to marry early. However, the findings of Swarjana et al. (2025) show that knowledge alone does not always directly translate into changes in family attitudes. Therefore, interventions are required that not only increase literacy but also transform social norms and practices within families.

Furthermore, the proven effectiveness of peer education approaches in various studies (Akuiyibo et al., 2021; Siregar et al., 2024; Kainde et al., 2024) opens opportunities for developing a parental empowerment model as peer educators. If peer education approaches have been proven effective among adolescents, similar strategies have the potential to be applied to parents through parent-to-parent education schemes. Thus, the parental empowerment model as peer educators in preventing child marriage has a strong empirical and theoretical foundation.

DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Parental Knowledge in Prevention Wedding Child Age

Parental knowledge about the physical and social impacts of early marriage is an important aspect of prevention efforts. A study conducted by Agustiani et al. (2023) found that parents who have a good understanding of reproductive health risks, such as pregnancy complications and school dropout, tend to delay the decision to marry off their children. This knowledge is also related to parental attitudes in supporting girls' education for a longer period, which is one of the effective strategies to prevent early marriage (Ivo Reskika Indah et al., 2024).

However, other studies show that knowledge alone is not always sufficient to change practices in society. Putri and Handayani (2024) stated that even though parents are aware of the risks of early marriage, peer pressure, cultural norms, and social expectations can still influence such decisions. This indicates that interventions focusing only on improving knowledge are not yet capable of producing significant behavioral change (Rismawanti et al., 2020).

In addition, research by Sari (2024) shows that parental knowledge regarding the dangers of early marriage is closely related to their access to information sources. Parents who have access to information sources such as health services, parental education programs, or educational media are more capable of understanding the long-term consequences of child marriage (Agustiani, 2018). Therefore, although parental knowledge is an important prerequisite for preventing early marriage, intervention strategies need to be designed more comprehensively by combining education, social norm transformation, and community support to increase their effectiveness.

2. Parent–Child Communication as a Protective Factor

Communication between parents and adolescents regarding issues of reproduction and early marriage plays a strong protective role. A study by Larasati (2023) shows that adolescents who regularly discuss relationships, the consequences of early pregnancy, and education with their



parents tend to delay marriage until after the age of 18. Open communication allows adolescents to understand risks more accurately rather than relying solely on information from peers (Yusuf et al., 2025).

However, research by Yuliana et al. (2024) found that many parents still tend to avoid discussing sensitive issues such as sexuality and early marriage because they consider these topics taboo or inappropriate. This lack of readiness affects the amount of information received by adolescents, making them more vulnerable to negative social influences (Intan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, other studies show that the quality of communication—not only the frequency—affects adolescents' behavioral outcomes. When parents use supportive and non-judgmental approaches, adolescents are more open to sharing experiences and reflections about social pressures, relationships, or the desire to marry (Agustiani, 2018).

3. Social and Cultural Norms in Parents' Views

Social and cultural norms remain a major challenge in efforts to prevent early marriage. Research by Islam and Nuraini (2025) shows that parents living in communities with strong traditional values tend to view early marriage as a solution to economic or social problems, including reducing the financial burden on the family. This situation makes medical knowledge and parenting education less effective without accompanying changes in social norms.

Meanwhile, Greene et al. (2024), in their systematic review, found that interventions aimed at changing social norms through community-based approaches have stronger and longer-term impacts in promoting changes in parental attitudes toward child marriage compared to individual educational programs alone.

Research by Handayani and Putra (2024) further shows that social norms are not only influenced by parents individually but also by neighborhood groups, religious leaders, and broader community structures. These social interactions often reinforce traditional norms that support early marriage practices. Therefore, interventions need to involve local leaders or peer educators within the community. Thus, social norm transformation should become an important component of parental empowerment programs that educate other parents, as individual behavioral change must be supported by a culturally conducive environment.

4. The Effectiveness of Peer Education for Parents

The peer education model has been widely used in health promotion contexts, including reproductive health and the prevention of risky behaviors among adolescents. Research by Dewi et al. (2023) shows that peer education interventions for parents can significantly increase parenting self-efficacy and parental knowledge about family-related issues (Rokhanawati et al., 2023).

In addition, Reitzel et al. (2026), in their systematic review, observed that peer-led parenting intervention programs demonstrate significant improvements in parental well-being and the effectiveness of parenting practices, which contribute to preventing risky behaviors, including decisions related to early marriage. Parenting training that involves discussions among parents can



increase their understanding of the importance of delaying child marriage and strengthen parental commitment to supporting adolescents' education (Azzahra, 2025b).

These findings strengthen the argument that the peer education model, when designed with appropriate educational materials and community support, can become an effective method for empowering parents to prevent child marriage.

5. Barriers and Strategies for Strengthening the Role of Parents

In practice, several obstacles are frequently encountered in efforts to strengthen the role of parents. Research by Nasrullah et al. (2018) identified that low levels of parental education and limited access to information are major inhibiting factors in understanding the risks of early marriage. In addition, misconceptions or a lack of support from husbands regarding reproductive health issues have also been reported as important barriers to effective family communication (Muhammad & Siti, 2024). In the author's view, these barriers indicate that interventions targeting parents cannot rely solely on information dissemination, but must also address deeper socio-cultural dynamics that influence family decision-making.

However, research by Munawaroh (2024) shows that empowering parent groups within communities through training and peer education can help overcome these obstacles by creating social support and networks for sharing experiences (Suharti, 2024). The author argues that this approach is particularly relevant and sustainable, as it not only enhances parental knowledge but also strengthens collective awareness and mutual support among parents. Therefore, parental empowerment strategies should not only focus on increasing knowledge and communication skills but also on building strong social networks and community support systems for parents as agents of change. In this context, the author emphasizes that positioning parents as active change agents within their communities is a key strategy to ensure long-term effectiveness in preventing child marriage.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the literature studies analyzed, it can be concluded that the prevention of child marriage cannot be achieved through a single approach but instead requires a comprehensive strategy that involves families as the main actors. Parental knowledge about reproductive health risks, psychosocial impacts, and the educational consequences of early marriage has been shown to be an important factor in shaping attitudes toward decisions about marrying off children. However, the literature also shows that increasing knowledge alone is not sufficient to produce sustainable behavioral change, especially when social norms and cultural pressures still support the practice of child marriage. Therefore, interventions should not only focus on cognitive education but also aim to transform values and perspectives within families and communities.

Apart from the knowledge aspect, the quality of communication between parents and adolescents is a significant protective factor in preventing early marriage. Open, supportive, and non-judgmental communication allows adolescents to gain a more comprehensive understanding



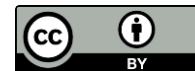
of the risks of child marriage as well as the importance of continuing their education. On the other hand, communication barriers resulting from taboos surrounding reproductive health issues may increase adolescents' vulnerability to inaccurate information and social pressure. Therefore, strengthening parents' communication capacity should become a key component of prevention intervention models.

Furthermore, social and cultural norms embedded within communities have a strong influence on family decisions regarding child marriage. The perception that early marriage can serve as a solution to economic or moral problems often overlooks its long-term impact on children's health and future opportunities. Therefore, change must occur collectively through community-based approaches. In this context, a parental empowerment model as peer educators has strategic potential because peer-based approaches enable more equal, contextual, and acceptable dialogue among community members.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that child marriage prevention programs integrate reproductive health education, the strengthening of parent-adolescent communication skills, and community-based social norm transformation strategies. Governments and related institutions can develop parent-to-parent peer education programs as sustainable intervention models. Future research is recommended to test the effectiveness of parental empowerment models as peer educators through experimental or quasi-experimental designs to obtain stronger empirical evidence regarding their impact on reducing child marriage rates.

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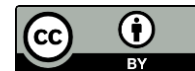
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