

## FROM SILENCE TO STRENGTH: THE ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN BUILDING RESILIENCE AMONG SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali peran komunikasi interpersonal pendamping di Rumah Singgah St. Theresia Labuan Bajo dalam membangun resiliensi bagi penyintas kekerasan seksual. Menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus berlandaskan paradigma konstruktivisme, penelitian ini melibatkan dua pendamping dan dua penyintas sebagai informan kunci yang dipilih secara purposif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transformasi penyintas dari kondisi kebungkaman (*silence*) menuju kekuatan (*strength*) dikonstruksi melalui manajemen komunikasi yang holistik. Temuan utama mengungkapkan bahwa pendamping menerapkan lima proses *Communication Theory of Resilience* (CTR), yakni; menciptakan kenormalan, memperkuat jangkar identitas, memanfaatkan jaringan dukungan, menerapkan aksi produktif melalui pemberdayaan keterampilan, serta membangun logika alternatif untuk melawan stigma. Keberhasilan proses ini didukung oleh upaya-upaya dalam kesediaan pendamping yang memvalidasi perasaan penyintas serta penyediaan ruang aman yang bebas dari intimidasi pelaku. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa interaksi antarpribadi yang stabil dan suportif merupakan langkah-langkah yang krusial dalam memulihkan harga diri dan kemandirian penyintas kekerasan seksual. Selain itu, hal ini membuka jalan bagi penelitian di masa depan untuk menyelidiki dinamika komunikasi ketahanan yang beragam di antara kelompok perempuan rentan dan korban kekerasan berbasis gender, khususnya mengeksplorasi tantangan jangka panjang yang mereka hadapi dalam mempertahankan ketahanan dan menghadapi stigma budaya setelah keluar dari tempat penampungan. Serta meneliti tantangan komunikasi interpersonal di antara kelompok korban yang lebih terpinggirkan, seperti penyandang disabilitas atau perempuan adat, dengan mempertimbangkan konteks sosial dan budaya mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** Komunikasi Interpersonal, Resiliensi, Penyintas Kekerasan Seksual, Rumah Singgah St. Theresia, Labuan Bajo.

### Abstract

*This study aims to explore the role of interpersonal communication by support workers at the St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo in building resilience among survivors of sexual violence. This research uses a qualitative case study grounded in the constructivist paradigm. This study involved two support workers and two survivors as key informants, selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis followed an interactive model, encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing throughout the data collection phase. The results indicate that survivors' transformation from silence to strength is constructed through holistic communication management. Key findings reveal that the support workers apply the five processes of the Communication Theory of Resilience (CTR): creating normality, strengthening identity anchors, leveraging support networks, implementing productive actions through skill empowerment, and constructing alternative logic to counter stigma. The success of this process is supported by the companions' daily efforts to validate survivors' feelings and provide a safe space free from intimidation by perpetrators. The study concludes that stable and supportive interpersonal interactions are crucial steps in restoring the self-esteem and independence of survivors of sexual violence. This study enriches communication and social sciences by mapping the structured mechanisms of the Communication Theory of Resilience (CTR) within social shelters, demonstrating how adaptive interpersonal support serves as a vital social intervention that drives identity transformation. Furthermore, it paves the way for future research to investigate diverse resilience communication dynamics among vulnerable women groups and survivors of gender-based violence, specifically exploring the long-term challenges they face in sustaining resilience and navigating cultural stigma after transitioning out of the shelter. And also examine interpersonal communication challenges among more marginalized survivor groups, such as people with disabilities or indigenous women, by considering their social and cultural contexts.*

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication, Resilience, Survivors of Sexual Violence, St. Theresia Shelter, Labuan Bajo.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cases of sexual violence in Indonesia, particularly in areas with a strong patriarchal culture, such as Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, are a real and complex phenomenon that places women in a vulnerable position. According to data Komnas Perempuan, (2026) The most commonly reported form of violence is sexual violence, accounting for 37.51%; however, an increase in reported cases does not always correlate directly with adequate psychological recovery for the victims. Survivors of sexual violence are often caught in a cycle of social stigma that tends to blame the victim.

Previous studies have shown that trauma resulting from sexual violence causes severe emotional and physical effects, particularly in children and adolescents (Anisa & Djuwita, 2021). Therefore, the existence of safe houses or shelters, such as the St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo, is crucial as a safe, comfortable space for survivors. According to internal reports from the shelter, there were 52 cases of sexual violence reported between 2020 and 2025. In institutions such as shelters, the recovery process is not limited to medical or legal approaches; rather, it primarily occurs through interpersonal interaction. Interpersonal communication between support workers and survivors is a key tool in restoring victims' sense of security and self-esteem (Hananah et al., 2021).

Numerous studies have examined support for survivors, including a study at the Nurani Perempuan Women's Crisis Center that emphasizes the importance of five positive attitudes in interpersonal communication for building victims' self-confidence (Vanisya et al., 2023). Mufaridho et al. (2025) explains that therapeutic communication in counseling involves systematic stages, from preparation to termination, aimed at reducing gender-based trauma. However, there is a research gap regarding how this communication process specifically contributes to resilience development among survivors in areas such as Labuan Bajo, where local cultural pressures have unique characteristics.

The significance of this study lies in its effort to understand how counselors' messages of support and interpersonal communication

techniques can foster resilience. Resilience is not merely the ability to endure, but the ability to bounce back and rebuild one's future after experiencing a major setback (Sherman, 2018). Middleton et al. (2016) In his study, he emphasizes that the disclosure process is a very fragile moment. A negative response from the listener or a trusted person, such as skepticism, judgment, or unsolicited advice, can exacerbate trauma and hinder healing. While psychological resilience has been widely explored in the broader literature, empirical research that directly maps real-world interpersonal communication interventions within localized social shelters remains critically scarce.

Therefore, it is crucial to reinforce the urgency of this study, as contemporary communication research frequently overlooks how institutional shelter environments systematically structure these interpersonal interactions. Understanding this specific dynamic is deeply urgent to prevent secondary trauma and ensure a successful social reintegration for survivors.

On the contrary, communication grounded in positive support norms can serve as a turning point for survivors to begin rebuilding their self-confidence. This is what makes the role of support workers at institutions like the St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo so crucial.

Given this background, this study aims to answer the question: What role does the interpersonal communication of support workers at the St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo play in building resilience among survivors of sexual violence? This research seeks to contribute to the social sciences, emphasizing the importance of communication in addressing social issues and fostering resilience.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Using a case study approach grounded in the constructivist paradigm to examine how resilience is constructed through interactions between support workers and survivors of sexual violence.

The research was conducted at the St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, involving informants selected through purposive sampling. The research subjects consisted of two primary caregivers, who had empirical experience managing and providing full support at the shelter, as well as two survivors selected by the caregivers to account for the level of trauma experienced by the survivors; their identities were fully anonymized for research ethical reasons.

The data analysis technique used in this study applies the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions and verification. To ensure data validity, the researcher used source triangulation by comparing caregivers' and survivors' perspectives, and conducted member checking to ensure that data interpretations aligned with informants' actual experiences at St. Theresia Shelter. This procedure was conducted in accordance with informed consent protocols.

### **3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The JPIC Commission, or the Commission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation of the SSpS in West Flores, is a religious social service organization founded by Suster of the SSpS Congregation that focuses on preventing violence and assisting its victims. The St. Theresia Shelter is better known as the Labuan Bajo Women's and Children's Protection Center. The services provided include safe housing, complaint reception, counseling support, spiritual care, legal assistance, and empowerment.

The St. Theresia Shelter has also begun collaborating with the West Manggarai Regency Government through the Social Affairs Office's Division of Women's and Children's Empowerment. This collaboration extends beyond service provision to include data sharing.

With the vision of fostering free, dignified individuals who enjoy equal rights to life in justice and peace, the mission of the SSpS West Flores JPIC Commission is to support women and children who are victims of violence (domestic and sexual), enhance prevention

efforts through awareness campaigns, provide necessities at shelters, and promote economic self-reliance through the development of productive skills.

#### **The Initial Condition of Survivors: Between Silence and Deep Trauma**

Before entering the recovery phase, it is important to understand the psychological realities of survivors upon arrival at the Shelter. Research findings indicate that the majority of survivors are in a state of fear and silence. This condition is characterized by an inability to recount the chronology of events, fear of strangers, and self-isolation. Survivors often withdraw to the point of isolating themselves from their surroundings. This serves as a form of self-protection in the early stages, when survivors feel afraid of an environment that cannot provide them with protection or a safe space.

The same is true when survivors enter and stay in a shelter environment. They do not openly reveal themselves; there is a long process involved in blending in or adapting. Suster Rita, the coordinator at the St. Theresia Labuan Bajo Shelter, explains that this reticence is the main obstacle in the initial stages of support.

*“so the first thing that becomes apparent in the survivors is that, generally, they are in a state of silence, fear, and may exhibit pessimism or a lack of self-confidence” (Suster Rita).*

*“Their body language shows they've withdrawn into themselves and become stiff; that's a sign of withdrawal. Also, for example, there's a room in this house, so they spend more time in their room than outside the house. Their interactions with those around them are also very limited. If they're not sitting, they're lying down—these are the kinds of behaviors they consistently display. At mealtimes, they'll only come out if called” (Suster Rita).*

According to Suster Rita, survivors are very passive in their interactions; for example, they must be prompted to perform even small tasks like bathing and eating. If not prompted, survivors will not initiate these activities on their own, so caregivers at the shelter must take

the lead until the survivors become accustomed to the routine. This is not intentional on the survivors' part, but rather stems from deep-seated trauma. Psychological and physical trauma are the primary factors affecting the survivors' communication. In fact, this trauma triggers a fear response toward certain figures perceived as resembling the perpetrator. As explained by Mrs. Erni, who provided an example involving a child survivor.

*"There was one victim before she was five years old, and her case was severe: rape. Every time a male visitor came here, she was afraid. She was deeply traumatized. She hid because she believed that men were all the same as the perpetrator"* (Mrs Erni).

The initial condition of survivors is deeply concerning, as it reveals a climate of silence in which survivors feel they have no safe space to speak out due to societal stigma and intimidation by perpetrators. It is not uncommon for survivors to face stigma; in fact, society often blames the victims—particularly women—and disregards the trauma they have experienced. The trauma experienced is not merely physical injury, but also the difficulty in communicating. Therefore, the initial phase of support at St. Theresia Shelter focuses on rebuilding a sense of basic safety before moving on to more in-depth counseling.

### **Communication as a Means of Healing and a Safe Space**

Communication serves as the most critical element in providing comfort and a sense of security to survivors of sexual violence. Suster Rita perceives communication not merely as an exchange of information, but as a primary tool for empowering these individuals. Beyond its function in daily interaction, communication is utilized as a vital therapeutic mechanism that allows survivors to gradually interact, express themselves, and safely disclose their trauma. Suster Rita emphasized that the verbal process of speaking up is fundamental to psychological healing. From a communication stance, this approach validates the survivors' voices, transforming the act of dialogue into a structured social intervention that rebuilds their shattered confidence.

*"The only way is through communication by finding ways to help the victim communicate, and it is through open sharing, that is, by communicating with others, that the victim feels a sense of strength"* (Suster Rita).

This was reinforced by one of the survivors, Rosi (a pseudonym), who said that when she shares her story, she hopes to receive advice, encouragement, and acceptance. Previously, survivors did not have a support system that could validate them. Therefore, their hope is that when they share their stories with a trusted support person, they will be accepted, believed, and heard.

*"They kept encouraging me, kept motivating me, kept giving me advice, and accepted everything I shared"* (Rosi).

Communication is the most important aspect of the healing process; providing validation and motivation to survivors is precisely what victims of sexual violence most want from their support workers.

### **Building Trust Through Intimacy**

During the intensive process of sharing and communicating with survivors, support workers at the St. Theresia Shelter deliberately position themselves in a non-dominant, egalitarian role to foster an optimal sense of psychological comfort and emotional security. This relational strategy is systematically implemented by adopting a passive yet deeply empathetic listening approach, which purposefully ensures that survivors are granted ample communicative space and autonomy to articulate their traumatic stories without fear of judgment, interruption, or institutional pressure. By minimizing the traditional authority gap often present between a counselor and a client, the support workers transform the interaction from a rigid interview into a safe, collaborative dialogue.

*"During sharing sessions and counseling, we prioritize a passive approach; we remain passive. In other words, when the survivor is speaking, if we sense they've hit a roadblock, we start looking for ways to help them find the strength to continue sharing their story. So, we*

*strive to be their friend, the survivor's friend"*  
(Suster Rita).

One effective communication strategy employed by support worker Mrs. Erni is to adopt a relational role—that of a close friend or older sibling—when interacting with survivors. This deliberate role-taking aims to reduce the social-emotional distance between the support worker and the survivors, thereby creating a very comfortable atmosphere that encourages survivors to voluntarily share sensitive details about their cases and the personal trauma they have experienced. This egalitarian approach allows survivors to feel fully relaxed, safe, and comfortable during interpersonal interactions.

*"Usually, we try to build a rapport with them so they'll tell us everything. That's hard. It's hard at first, for example, if they come and stay here for a few days, they find it hard to tell us everything. So usually, we let them settle in first before we approach them, like taking them out somewhere, building rapport. I try to make them feel comfortable so they don't see me as just a staff member; otherwise, they might feel awkward or something. So I have to build a connection with them, becoming their friend, their younger sibling, or their older sibling. That way, later on, when I call them back to interview them about the timeline of their case, they'll already be open"* (Mrs. Erni).

The support worker acts as an active listener, giving the survivor time to speak as freely as possible; this helps the survivor feel at ease so they don't feel pressured to recount what they've experienced, as Mrs. Erni said.

*"So, usually I just listen more and let them tell their stories. Usually, they'll pause first if there are things they still want to talk about, they'll definitely ask me, 'So what happens next?' so I mostly listen like that"* (Mrs. Erni).

The support workers at the St. Theresia Shelter also strictly respect the survivors' privacy and proactively execute environmental management strategies to ensure that survivors feel psychologically secure when disclosing the highly sensitive details of their cases. As part of this trauma-informed care, communication is

treated not merely as a verbal exchange, but as an experience deeply influenced by environmental and spatial factors. This intentional design of communication privacy is clearly illustrated by Mrs. Erni during an interview.

*"Usually, at the beginning, we'll meet and look for a safe space, meaning a place where we can at least avoid crowds, a quiet and peaceful space, so they won't be afraid to talk and won't feel embarrassed"* (Mrs. Erni).

Not all survivors of sexual violence voluntarily share their traumatic stories with the general public; instead, they display high selectivity, only confiding in specific, highly trusted individuals like Suster Rita or Mrs. Erni as their primary sources of support. In the wake of gender-based violence, survivors often experience a profound breakdown of social trust, which severely restricts their communication boundaries. Consequently, the decision to engage in self-disclosure is not arbitrary but is strictly contingent upon a deep-seated feeling of psychological and relational safety. These defensive communication mechanisms and patterns of selective disclosure are clearly reflected in the life experience shared by one survivor, Elis.

*"Oh, right, because if I want to talk about it, I feel a bit awkward talking to just anyone. I look for the right person to talk to, like Suster Rita or Mrs. Erni; it's easy to chat with them. I feel comfortable that way; with other people, I'm a bit nervous"* (Elis).

Elis's reluctance to speak with "just anyone" and her feelings of nervousness around others indicate that indiscriminate social environments are perceived as threatening or prone to secondary victimization. By contrast, she actively navigates her network to locate a "safe harbor" in Suster Rita and Mrs. Erni, whose egalitarian and empathetic communication styles effectively lower her communication apprehension. This strategic placement of trust in dedicated support figures systematically alleviates the fear of social stigma and judgment. Ultimately, when a support worker successfully establishes this sanctuary of safety,

it empowers the survivor to safely dismantle their emotional walls, allowing them to express their suppressed feelings and gradually reconstruct their communication resilience.

### **Protection of Communication and Transformation Toward Strength**

Interpersonal communication serves as both a method and a stepping stone toward empowerment. Supporters enforce strict communication protocols to protect the recovery process from external intimidation. As is well known, survivors face many external disturbances. In particular, there are many perpetrators who seek to mentally torment survivors, or to intimidate or physically threaten them. This is a major concern for the staff at the shelter, as explained by Mrs. Erni.

*“So, while the legal proceedings are ongoing, we’re restricting who they can interact with. It’s limited to their closest family members. As for others, we don’t want that. We’re not giving permission. We’re worried they might be intimidated by various parties.”* (Mrs Erni).

Mrs. Erni’s statement highlights a critical strategy known as communication boundary management. By restricting interactions exclusively to immediate family members and blocking untrusted external networks, the shelter staff creates a controlled environment free from threats. This strict protocol is not meant to isolate the survivors, but rather to establish a “psychological sanctuary” where they can focus entirely on legal proceedings and emotional recovery without fear of secondary trauma. Once this safe communication foundation is firmly established, the survivors can safely begin their transition toward psychological empowerment and social reintegration. This positive transformation is closely observed and reported by Suster Rita.

*“I’ve seen significant changes in the survivors. They’ve gone from feeling insecure to confident. Most of them are very confident now. They’re able to socialize easily with anyone”* (Suster Rita).

Furthermore, regarding empowerment, the Shelter offers survivors training to improve

their skills and enhance their economic well-being.

*“So, we do try to help them learn to sew. As it happens, this is a tourist town. They can use the skills they’ve gained from this training to build their own livelihoods”* (Suster Rita).

This sewing training is a brilliant communicative and social masterstroke tailored to the local economy of Labuan Bajo. By teaching survivors to sew in a booming tourist town, the shelter does not just give them a hobby; they are actively giving them a sustainable tool to build an independent livelihood. In the framework of communication resilience, this productive action changes how survivors communicate with the outside world. They no longer step back into society as helpless victims, but as self-reliant, skilled individuals who can proudly look after themselves. Ultimately, this combination of strict physical protection, emotional support, and practical skill-building allows survivors to permanently break the cycle of stigma and step into a self-sufficient future.

These findings align with Middleton et al. (2016) research on normative approaches to communication with trusted individuals. Their study emphasizes that how listeners respond to disclosures of sexual violence significantly shapes the recovery process; it is noted that survivors tend to evaluate the support provider’s response based on the quality of emotional support and the effectiveness of protection. At St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo, the support worker’s strategy of limiting interactions with unknown outsiders is a concrete manifestation of the listener’s duty to safeguard the survivor’s privacy and safety.

The support worker’s strategy of prioritizing a “passive” attitude and “active listening” at the beginning of the meeting meets survivors’ normative need for non-judgmental acceptance. St. Theresia Shelter strives to maintain professional communication while adopting a familial role, evident in survivors’ terms of address for support workers: Suster Rita (*Inang*), which means “Aunt” in Indonesian, and survivors addressing Ms. Erni as “*Mama Erni*.”

Demonstrates that in Labuan Bajo, the effectiveness of normative responses is significantly influenced by sociocultural proximity. The validation provided by support workers to survivors like Rosi meets the normative expectation that survivors need to be heard without judgment to begin the healing process. Based on the Communication Theory of Resilience (CTR) developed by Buzzanell, resilience is built through a communication process that enables individuals to reintegrate after a disruptive event (Wilson et al., 2021).

### **Creating a Sense of Normalcy**

The finding that survivors began to feel at home at the Shelter and to engage in activities freely demonstrates the success of creating a new sense of normalcy. The support provided by counselors to survivors helped them shift their focus away from past trauma and toward stable daily routines in a safe environment. Within the framework of communication resilience, constructing this routine is essential to counteract the chaos caused by crisis. By establishing predictable daily interactions and supportive environment, the shelter successfully provides a cognitive anchor for the survivors. Consequently, this communication atmosphere allows them to slowly distance themselves from the identity of trauma and adapt to a structured, peaceful reality.

This structured focus on cognitive and environmental adaptation aligns with recent empirical studies on survival outcomes. Putra et al. (2024) reinforce this approach, concluding that strong social support and targeted guidance are key determinants in enhancing the resilience of survivors of sexual violence. By establishing predictable and supportive daily routines, St. Theresia Shelter directly implements these findings, thereby successfully accelerating survivors' transition toward psychological recovery and the restoration of a basic sense of normalcy.

### **Highlighting Productive Action**

The transformation of survivors who were initially fearful, uncommunicative, and lacking in self-confidence into open, brave, and self-assured individuals underscores the importance of institutional empowerment. Providing sewing training offers survivors the space to

grow, develop, and exercise agency through tangible skills.

Through these productive activities, communication is no longer just verbal, but manifests in collaborative and goal-oriented behaviors among peers. This hands-on empowerment successfully shifts the survivors' self-perception from helpless individuals into productive, self-reliant creators. Ultimately, this newly gained independence becomes a powerful communicative tool for them to face the social stigma in the outside world.

This active shift toward self-reliance highlights how practical skills act as an external coping mechanism for trauma recovery. Recent literature by Nurjannah et al. (2024) supports this trajectory, demonstrating that structured self-management interventions are highly effective in reconstructing and improving the self-confidence of sexual violence survivors. By providing sewing training, the St. Theresia Shelter successfully applies these self-management principles, transforming the survivors' daily routine into a productive pathway that restores their agency and social confidence.

### **Strengthening the Foundation of Identity**

Through the support worker's role as a family member, older sibling, and friend, survivors gain a sense of identity as valuable and dignified individuals, no longer as weak and broken "victims." Through the services provided by the Shelter, survivors are gradually helped to reclaim their sense of self and find healing. In line with the Shelter's vision to restore dignity, the use of medical services is not merely about physical health but also serves as a compassionate means of communication. These multi-layered interpersonal relationships communicate a strong message of unconditional acceptance and social validation to the survivors. As a result, this continuous affirmation helps them reconstruct a resilient identity, allowing them to see a hopeful future after the crisis.

The transformation of survivors' identities within the shelter from deeply traumatized individuals into dignified and self-reliant figures aligns with contemporary domestic violence studies in Indonesia. Kaiser & Kurniawan (2022) revealed that resilience

among domestic violence survivors emerges from a dynamic interaction between risk and protective factors. Their findings emphasize that inner protective elements, such as self-skill development, initiative, and identity stability are vital catalysts that enable survivors to recover their mental well-being.

In the context of the St. Theresia Shelter, this trajectory is vividly apparent; as counselors employ egalitarian and non-dominant communication styles, they directly stimulate the survivors' internal coping mechanisms. The supportive and empathetic communication used by shelter workers matches key concepts in interpersonal literature. As highlighted by Imanniyati & Suranto (2022) effective interpersonal communication is essential to lower psychological barriers and build emotional security. At the St. Theresia Shelter, this is done by counselors who choose to act as open and friendly figures rather than distant officials. This confirms that a comfortable communication climate is a vital requirement for building trust and restoring the survivors' dignity.

#### **Maintenance and Use of Communication Networks**

As stated by Buzzanell, (2010), resilience involves the use of support networks; Sister Rita's provision of medical care serves as a gateway for survivors to feel psychologically safe enough to begin speaking up. The strength that survivors possess today is the result of a supportive, egalitarian, and safe communication environment. This interconnected network functions as a safe space where open disclosure is met with empathy rather than skepticism. Furthermore, the shelter workers act as a vital bridge that links the survivors back to supportive external relationships. Therefore, maintaining this structured interpersonal communication network is highly critical to ensure that the survivors' resilience is sustained even after their time in the shelter concludes.

#### **Applying Alternative Logic**

This process involves reframing traumatic events so that they are no longer viewed as the end of everything, but rather as part of a life journey that can be navigated (Buzzanell, 2010). Whereas previously society, the social

environment, or the perpetrator's family blamed the victim, here the support worker builds a new logic and understanding: the victim is a person of dignity and has the right to speak up.

Survivors of sexual violence need support and validation of their feelings. This is what the support workers at St. Theresia Shelter in Labuan Bajo are striving for. Support workers hope for the survivors' healing so that they can become self-reliant, both economically and in terms of personal strength. The presence of survivors in a safe house and their residence there is one way to support their safety, preventing the recurrence of sexual violence and ensuring they do not become victims yet again.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The transformation of sexual violence survivors from a state of silence to one of strength at St. Theresia Shelter is the result of structured and adaptive interpersonal communication management. Through the lens of the Communication Theory of Resilience, this resilience-building process manifests in five key mechanisms: 1) creating a sense of normalcy by providing a safe living environment that feels like home, 2) strengthening the anchor of identity, 3) leveraging support networks, 4) applying alternative logic to reframe traumatic events into the courage to speak up, and 5) highlighting productive action through the empowerment of sewing skills that transform survivors' identities into self-reliant individuals.

This change is also driven by the sensitivity of support workers, who validate survivors' feelings and ensure strict privacy protection. The integration of interpersonal support, protection, motivation, validation, and medical assistance has proven effective in fostering open communication. The outcome is reflected in a significant transformation in the survivors' character, from withdrawn individuals to individuals with high self-confidence who can reintegrate into society.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that supporting organizations continue to maintain an egalitarian sociocultural approach and strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration as the foundation of communication. Further research is needed to investigate the diverse

dynamics of resilience communication among vulnerable women and survivors of gender-based violence, particularly by examining the long-term challenges they face in maintaining resilience and coping with cultural stigma after leaving shelters. Further research could also examine interpersonal communication challenges among more marginalized survivor groups, such as people with disabilities and indigenous women, by considering their social and cultural contexts.

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