



Sexual Violence on Campus: Between Power Relations and Law Enforcement

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ABSTRACT

Addressing sexual violence in higher education must be a top priority for several critical reasons. First, it causes serious harm to victims—physically, socially, and psychologically. Second, many incidents go unreported due to stigma or pressure from perpetrators, forcing victims into silence. Third, sexual violence is often normalized and not seen as requiring urgent action. Behaviors like catcalling, loud sexual remarks, whistling, or inappropriate physical contact—such as touching or poking—are frequently overlooked as forms of sexual violence. To tackle this, continuous and structured legal education must be promoted. This is especially vital for partner institutions like undergraduate students at the Midwifery Academy of the Health Polytechnic under the Ministry of Health in Jambi Province. Raising awareness and strengthening understanding of sexual violence prevention should be embedded in educational environments. Additionally, establishing a dedicated task force at Poltekkes Kemenkes Jambi is an essential preventive step. This task force would help ensure a safe and supportive academic atmosphere, where all members of the campus community can participate in learning and other activities without fear of harassment or violence. These efforts aim to build a campus culture that fully rejects and prevents all forms of sexual violence.

Keywords: Prevention Efforts; Sexual Harassment; Sexual Violence; Task Force, Victim Impact

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is an experience that almost every woman has encountered at some point in her life, and nearly all women know someone who has experienced it (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Sexual harassment encompasses inappropriate sexual comments or sexually suggestive physical advances that can occur in any setting (Fitzgerald & Corina, 2017; Nielsen et al., 2017). According to the Indonesian dictionary, violence refers to actions characterized by force or coercion, which may result in physical harm, psychological trauma, or damage to property.

Sexual violence on university campuses presents a disturbing paradox (Anderson, 2016; Fedina et al., 2016). Higher education

institutions are expected not only to facilitate the transformation of knowledge but also to uphold ethical and moral values (Prisacariu & Shah, 2016). However, campuses have increasingly become environments where sexual violence occurs but remains inadequately addressed (Moylan & Javorka, 2018; Bonar et al., 2020). There are several reasons why this issue demands urgent attention. First, sexual harassment causes significant harm to victims physically, socially, and psychologically. Second, many cases go unreported due to fear of stigma or pressure from the perpetrator, resulting in victims choosing silence. Third, sexual violence is often normalized, failing to be seen as a priority issue. Behaviors such as catcalling, inappropriate comments, whistling, touching, or poking are

frequently dismissed and not identified as forms of sexual violence (Akhtar & Khedam, 2024). Moreover, the advent of digital technology has led to a surge in cyber-based sexual crimes, expanding the scope of violence into virtual spaces (Kaphle, 2021; O'malley & Holt, 2020).

Cyberspace, enabled by the global reach of the internet, allows individuals to connect and interact across boundaries (Graham, 2013; Mueller, 2019). While this offers benefits, it also facilitates the rise of online sexual crimes, including cyberporn, cybersex, cyberprostitution, and revenge porn (Faradillah et al., 2023). The National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan in Bahasa) in Indonesia identifies fifteen categories of sexual violence, including rape, sexual intimidation, harassment, sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced pregnancy or abortion, and practices rooted in harmful traditional or discriminatory norms (Eddyono, 2021).

On university campuses, sexual harassment is often judged based on the perpetrator's intent or morality rather than recognizing the imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim (Dinh et al., 2022; Pacili et al., 2024). This power dynamic such as between lecturers and students enables a sense of entitlement in the perpetrator. When survivors seek justice, perpetrators often receive protection from their peers or institutional mechanisms (McEvoy & McConnachie, 2013; Schulz, 2019).

Therefore, sexual violence in higher education demands a coordinated response from both the government as policy-maker and the universities as both regulators and implementers of internal policy (Le et al., 2019). Victims are entitled to protection and legal support, as mandated by Indonesian Law No. 31 of 2014 on Witness and Victim Protection. Sexual violence is a persistent social reality in Indonesia, especially against women, and frequently occurs in spaces that are ironically

meant to be safe like educational institutions (Segal & Demos, 2015).

Previous studies have discussed the prevalence of campus-based sexual violence and the psychological impact on victims. However, limited research has focused on proactive legal education and institutional preparedness in midwifery education contexts. This study seeks to address that research gap by examining preventive legal education efforts and the role of campus-based task forces in mitigating sexual violence risks. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of legal literacy with capacity-building at a grassroots academic level within health polytechnic institutions. The objective of this study is to disseminate legal knowledge and promote institutional readiness to prevent sexual violence, focusing on students in the undergraduate midwifery program at Poltekkes Kemenkes Jambi.

METHODS

The implementation method adopted in this community engagement program is structured into several key stages to ensure a systematic and effective dissemination process.

Phase 1: Preparation

The initial step involves identifying the specific problems faced by the partner institution. This is carried out through preliminary communication and coordination with representatives of the partner campus to ensure mutual understanding and commitment. As a formal indication of agreement, a letter of consent is obtained from the institution, stating their readiness to participate in the dissemination activities and to collaborate with the research team.

Phase 2: Material Development

The team prepares two main educational modules tailored to the needs of the partner institution. The first module focuses on socializing Ministerial Regulation of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Permendikbudristekdikti) No. 30 of 2021 concerning the prevention and handling of

sexual violence in higher education institutions. The second module provides guidance for the establishment and empowerment of a task force for the prevention and handling of sexual violence within the educational institution.

Phase 3: Dissemination and Implementation

The dissemination activities are scheduled to take place at the Environmental Sanitation Program, both at the Diploma III and Diploma IV levels, of the Health Polytechnic under the Ministry of Health, Jambi Province. The sessions will be delivered by two key resource persons:

1. Dr. Akbar Kurnia Putra, S.H., M.H., who will present and explain the legal framework and implementation strategies of Permendikbudristekdikti No. 30 of 2021.
2. Elizabeth Siregar, S.H., M.H., who will facilitate the second session on the formation and institutionalization of a campus-based task force to prevent sexual violence.

The dissemination process will be divided into three sequential components:

1. Presentation of materials by the experts.
2. Interactive discussion and Q&A session with participants to clarify and deepen understanding.
3. Task force training and simulation, including strategic planning and role designation within the institution.

Phase 4: Evaluation and Feedback

Following the dissemination, an evaluation phase will be conducted through a structured quiz designed to assess participants' comprehension and retention of the materials presented. This formative evaluation serves as a performance indicator to measure the success of the knowledge transfer and to identify areas for improvement in future dissemination activities.

This multi-phase approach ensures not only knowledge transfer but also the empowerment of institutional structures to take active roles in preventing and responding to sexual violence in academic settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In response to the challenges faced by the partner institution, this community engagement initiative aimed to provide concrete and sustainable solutions. The activities implemented by the project team produced the following key outcomes:

1. **Dissemination of Knowledge:** The team conducted a dissemination session aimed at empowering students of the Applied Bachelor of Midwifery Program to serve as frontliners in societal transformation by educating their surrounding communities.
2. **Increased Awareness and Understanding:** The sessions enhanced students' knowledge and awareness of the importance of preventing and responding to sexual violence in campus environments. Through knowledge transfer, students are expected to further disseminate this information within broader social contexts.
3. **Community Engagement and Advocacy:** Students were encouraged to consistently engage in public education efforts and conduct community outreach on a regular basis. This approach is intended to amplify awareness and generate a broader societal understanding of the issue.
4. **Media-Based Dissemination Strategy:** The team promoted the dissemination of sexual violence prevention mechanisms through both social and mass media channels. These platforms function as powerful tools for reinforcing awareness and inspiring students to become agents of cultural and institutional change.
5. **Catalyzing Collective Awareness:** This initiative is envisioned as a preliminary step in cultivating widespread awareness aimed at preventing sexual violence in academic environments and positioning universities as central hubs for information and support.

Application of Technology and Innovation

To strengthen the impact and sustainability of the initiative, the application of technology and innovation plays a pivotal role in addressing campus sexual violence. The following technological strategies were proposed and explored:

1. Development of Online Reporting and Counseling Platforms:
 - Anonymous Reporting Applications: Digital platforms can be developed to allow survivors or witnesses to report incidents confidentially. These platforms ensure privacy and simplify the reporting process.
 - Online Counseling Services: Psychological counseling and support services provided via online platforms can help survivors feel safer and more comfortable than face-to-face sessions.
2. Digital Information and Awareness Campaigns:
 - Social Media Education Campaigns: Social media serves as a highly effective tool to raise awareness among students about sexual violence, victims' rights, and reporting procedures. Campaign content may include educational posts, videos, webinars, and infographics.
 - E-Learning Modules: Institutions can implement mandatory online training modules on sexual violence prevention for both students and faculty, integrated into campus learning portals.
3. Data Monitoring and Reporting Systems:
 - Centralized Encrypted Database: Encrypted data systems are essential for securely recording and monitoring sexual violence reports.
 - Data-Driven Pattern Analysis: Collected data can be analyzed to identify high-risk locations or time periods, enabling the campus to implement targeted safety measures.
4. Campus Safety Technology Implementation:
 - Enhanced Security Infrastructure: Installation of CCTV systems in high-risk areas, along with improved public lighting, can help deter incidents.
 - Panic Button Applications: Mobile apps featuring emergency alert systems or "panic buttons" can enable students to contact campus security immediately when in danger.
5. Collaboration with Third-Party Organizations:
 - Partnerships with Mental Health Startups or NGOs: Collaborations with external counseling services can expand access to psychological support for students in need.
 - Development of Prevention Training Modules: Joint efforts with relevant institutions can result in the development of structured, evidence-based sexual violence prevention modules.
6. Whistleblowing and Support Systems:
 - Secure and Accessible Whistleblowing Mechanisms: Establishing transparent and anonymous reporting systems encourages victims and witnesses to report incidents without fear of retaliation or exposure. Such systems are crucial for building a culture of accountability.

Through this multifaceted approach, combining educational outreach, digital innovation, and institutional collaboration, the program aims not only to address current challenges but also to institutionalize sustainable mechanisms for sexual violence prevention and response on campus.

CONCLUSION

Preventing and addressing sexual violence within university settings requires a collective and sustained commitment from all members of the academic community, including students, faculty, administrative staff, and institutional leaders. A comprehensive and collaborative approach is essential to foster a culture rooted in safety, respect, and accountability. Students should be actively engaged in discussions on human rights, power dynamics, disability inclusion, and the prevention of gender-based violence, while also participating in educational campaigns and familiarizing themselves with the role of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Task Force. Faculty and administrative staff must likewise take an active role by promoting continuous dialogue, supporting joint initiatives

with students, and enhancing the availability and quality of training programs related to sexual violence response. Introducing the Task Force during student orientation and early academic activities, as well as integrating the promotion of healthy, equitable relationships into the university's core missions of education, research, and community service, is vital to building a campus environment that embodies zero tolerance for sexual violence.

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