

Salasika

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Association Between Gender Norms and Experiences of Sexual Violence with Sexual Violence Acts among University of Jember Students

Anisa Nur Fauziah¹, Elok Permatasari², Ni'mal Baroya³

^{1,2,3}*Faculty of Public Health, Jember University, Indonesia*

Correspondence email: elok@unej.ec.id

ABSTRACT

Sexual violence is a significant problem within university environments, impacting not only the physical and psychological well-being of victims but also deteriorating the overall academic atmosphere. This cross-sectional analytic study aimed to examine the relationship between gender norms, prior experiences of sexual violence, and the perpetration of sexual violence among students at the University of Jember. A total of 176 students participated, selected through stratified proportionate random sampling. Data were collected using structured interviews and analyzed via Chi-square tests with a significance level set at 5%. The findings indicated that students with traditional gender norms, higher semester levels, and previous victimization experiences were significantly more likely to engage in sexual violence behavior. Conversely, no significant relationship was found between gender or age and perpetration. These results emphasize the influence of cultural and social factors on sexual violence behaviors in academic settings. The study recommends implementing educational programs promoting gender equality and providing psychological counseling to support students, particularly those with trauma histories, as effective measures to reduce the incidence of sexual violence on campus.

KEYWORDS: *sexual violence, gender norms, university students, perpetration*

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO (2017), sexual violence includes unwanted acts, attempts, comments, or sexual coercion. The Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 30 of 2021 states that sexual violence may take the form of verbal, non-physical, or physical actions, or through information technology. Data from Komnas Perempuan indicate an increase in sexual violence complaints to an average of 17 cases per day, nearly twice as many as in 2020. In 2023, there were 29,883 recorded cases of sexual violence in Indonesia, with the majority of victims being women but also men, and perpetrators predominantly aged 18–40

years (Komnas Perempuan, 2023). Sexual violence often occurs in places considered safe, such as schools, campuses, dormitories, and workplaces, perpetrated by individuals known to the victims (Rusyidi et al., 2019).

At the University of Jember, a SATGAS PPKS survey revealed that 55% of respondents doubted the campus's safety against sexual violence, and 28% had experienced sexually nuanced verbal harassment (PPKS Universitas Jember, 2023). Experiencing victimization can lead someone to become a perpetrator of sexual violence due to its long-term impact on perceptions, where victims may come to believe that violence can be inflicted upon those perceived as weak (Weber & Smith, 2010). Gender norms deeply rooted in society position men as dominant and women as less privileged, triggering sexual violence by men against women (Kearns et al., 2020). However, numerous cases also show women committing non-physical violence against men. Male victims are often reluctant to report due to the stigma of losing their "masculinity" (Amin et al., 2018).

This study is important to understand the relationship between gender norms and experiences of sexual violence with sexual violence behaviors among students of the University of Jember, given the rising cases of violence in higher education institutions and the limited number of studies focusing on perpetrators' perspectives.

METHODS

Participant

This research was conducted as a quantitative observational study. The method used was analytic with a cross-sectional approach. The study involved 176 students of the University of Jember, selected using stratified proportionate random sampling.

Instruments

This study employed three primary instruments: the Sexual Violence Acts Questionnaire, the G-NORM Scale Questionnaire, and the Sexual Violence Experience Questionnaire. The Sexual Violence Acts Questionnaire and the Sexual Violence Experience Questionnaire each consisted of 15 items arranged according to categories of sexual violence. The G-NORM Scale Questionnaire used in this study was a modification of Sedlander's research and consisted of 10 items. All questionnaires were tested for validity and reliability at the University of Jember with respondents from different study programs, thus confirming their validity and reliability.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this research was univariate and bivariate. Bivariate analysis was carried out using the chi-square test. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

An overview of sexual violence acts

Sexual violence acts in this study were obtained from students' questionnaire responses, which revealed that nearly half (48.9%) of University of Jember students reported having committed sexual violence. Respondents indicated that verbal sexual violence was the most frequently committed form (41.48%), particularly making sexual comments about someone's body or clothing. Non-physical forms of sexual violence also appeared at a relatively high rate (21.59%), with the most common act being following someone without consent. Sexual violence through information and communication technology was also reported within the academic environment, with 11.93% of students acknowledging such behavior. The least reported form was physical sexual violence (7.95%); however, 2.84% of respondents admitted to having committed rape or attempted rape, a behavior that should never occur within a higher education setting.

Association between respondents' characteristics and sexual violence acts

The respondents in this study were 176 students of the University of Jember. Most of the respondents were female, totaling 111 students (63.1%), while 65 respondents were male (36.9%). The respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 24 years. The majority were between 18 and 21 years old (69.9%) compared to those aged 22–24 years (30.1%). Regarding educational level (semester), respondents were categorized into early level (1st & 3rd semesters), intermediate level (5th & 7th semesters), and final level (8th semester and above). Most respondents were at the intermediate level (60.2%), followed by the early level (32.4%), and the fewest were at the final level (7.4%).

The following are the results of the Chi-square test analysis on the relationship between respondents' characteristics and sexual violence acts among students.

The results of the Chi-square test between sex and sexual violence acts showed a significance value of $p = 0.941 > 0.05$, indicating that there is no association between gender and sexual violence acts. The absence of an association suggests a very weak relationship between the variables. The significance value for age was $p = 0.717 > 0.05$, indicating that there is no association between age and sexual violence acts among students. Similarly, the absence of an association suggests a very weak relationship between the variables. Meanwhile, the significance value for semester was $p = 0.035 < 0.05$, indicating that there is an association between semester level and sexual violence acts among students. The contingency coefficient value of 0.191

indicates that the strength of this association is weak. This finding suggests that the higher the level of education (semester), the greater the likelihood of students having committed sexual violence acts.

Table 1. Analysis of the Association between Characteristics and Sexual Violence Acts

Characteristics	Sexual Violence Acts						<i>p-Value</i>	<i>Contingency Coefficient</i>
	Never		Ever		Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Sex								
Male	33	18,8	32	18,2	65	36,9	0,941	0,006
Female	57	32,4	54	30,7	111	63,1		
Ages								
18-21 Years Old	64	36,4	59	33,5	123	69,9	0,717	0,027
22-24 Years Old	26	14,8	27	15,3	53	30,1		
Educational Level (semester)								
Early Level	35	19,9	22	12,5	57	32,4	0,035*	0,191
Intermediate Level	52	29,5	54	30,7	106	60,2		
Final Level	3	1,7	10	5,7	13	7,4		

Association between Gender Norms and Sexual Violence Acts

Gender norms are social rules or standards that regulate behaviors and roles considered appropriate for individuals based on their sex within a society. Gender norms are divided into two categories: traditional and egalitarian. The traditional norm refers to social standards, as perceived by respondents, that do not support gender equality, whereas the egalitarian norm refers to social standards that support gender equality. The majority of respondents supported gender equality (egalitarian norm), totaling 135 students (76.7%), while 41 respondents (23.3%) adhered to traditional norms.

The following are the results of the Chi-square test analysis on the relationship between gender norms and sexual violence acts among students.

Table 2. Analysis of the Association between Gender Norms and Sexual Violence Acts

Gender Norms	Sexual Violence Acts						<i>p-Value</i>	<i>Contingency Coefficient</i>
	Never		Ever		Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Tradisional	13	7,4	28	15,9	41	23,3	0,004*	0,209
Egaliter	77	43,8	58	33	135	76,7		

The Chi-square statistical test yielded a significance value of $p = 0.004 < 0.05$, indicating a significant association between experiences of sexual violence and sexual violence acts among students. The contingency coefficient value of 0.209 shows that the strength of the association between the two variables falls within the moderate category. This association suggests that respondents with traditional norms were more likely to have committed sexual violence acts compared to respondents with egalitarian norms, who were more likely to have never committed sexual violence acts.

Association between experiences of sexual violence and sexual violence acts

An overview of experiences of sexual violence obtained from the questionnaire responses shows that a greater proportion of respondents reported having experienced sexual violence, accounting for 68.7%, compared to respondents who reported not having such experiences, which accounted for 31.3%.

The following are the results of the Chi-square test analysis on the relationship between experiences of sexual violence and sexual violence acts among students.

Table 3. Analysis of the Association between Experiences of Sexual Violence and Sexual Violence Acts

Experiences of Sexual Violence	Sexual Violence Acts						<i>p-Value</i>	<i>Contingency Coefficient</i>
	Never		Ever		Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Never	89	50,6	1	0,6	90	51,1	<0,0001*	0,699
Ever	1	0,6	85	48,3	86	48,9		

The Chi-square statistical test yielded a significance value of $p < 0.0001$, indicating a significant association between experiences of sexual violence and sexual violence acts among students. The contingency coefficient value of 0.699 shows that the strength of the association between the two variables falls within the strong category. This finding suggests that the more experiences of sexual violence respondents had, the more frequently they engaged in sexual violence acts compared to respondents who had no such experiences.

Discussion

Sexual violence acts

In this study, sexual violence acts were categorized into four forms based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No. 30 of 2021: verbal, non-physical, physical, and those involving information and communication technology. The findings revealed that 41.48% of respondents had committed at least one form of verbal sexual violence against others. The most frequently reported forms of verbal sexual violence were making sexual comments about the body and clothing, sexual jokes, and catcalling or provocative sounds. This study is consistent with previous research, which reported that 72.7% of respondents admitted to having engaged in various forms of verbal sexual harassment (Pangastuti & Fajarwati, 2024), including indecent comments, intrusive questions about personal life, flirtations, whistling, and telling obscene jokes.

In addition to verbal forms, there were also non-physical forms of sexual violence. The findings showed that 21.59% of respondents had committed at least one form of non-physical sexual violence against others. The most frequently reported non-physical acts in this study were following someone without consent, winking at someone's intimate parts, and persistently pressuring someone to engage in a relationship. Non-physical sexual violence

remains a prevalent issue in Indonesian society, with a considerable number of perpetrators, even though such acts are often trivialized (Kemal & Pratama Hapsari, 2023). Other studies have also highlighted that perpetrators of non-physical sexual violence often do not realize that their behavior constitutes harassment (Mahalieng et al., 2022). Therefore, education and law enforcement are crucial so that perpetrators become aware of the consequences of their actions.

The next form of sexual violence is physical. The findings showed that 7.95% of respondents had committed at least one form of physical sexual violence against someone. The most frequently reported physical sexual violence acts in this study were touching someone without consent and unwanted and overt sexual touching (e.g., touching breasts, buttocks, or genitals, as well as attempted kissing). This finding is in line with previous research, which revealed that 90.2% of university students had experienced sexual violence during their time in higher education (Mantiri et al., 2025). However, the majority of reported cases involved verbal and non-physical forms, while physical sexual violence was less frequently reported.

The fourth form of sexual violence is through information and communication technology. The findings showed that 11.93% of respondents had committed at least one act of sexual violence through information and communication technology against someone. The most frequently reported form of this type of sexual violence was sending unwanted messages containing sexual content, for example, via text messaging applications, email, social media, or other platforms. This result is consistent with the annual report, indicating that online gender-based violence is among the most prevalent forms of sexual violence, with 838 cases (66%) recorded in 2023, in which perpetrators were identified as coming from diverse backgrounds, including students (Komnas Perempuan, 2024).

Association between respondents' characteristics and sexual violence acts

SEX

Sex refers to biological differences that relate to physical distinctions associated with reproductive organs. In this study, sex was categorized into female and male. The findings showed that most respondents were female (63.1%), while 36.9% were male. Previous studies have indicated that male respondents were more likely to have committed sexual violence. However, this does not mean that females did not engage in sexual violence. In line with the study by Hidayat & Setyanto (2020), most respondents were female (62%) and male (38%), with the majority of sexual violence being committed by men. Nevertheless, there were also cases of men who became victims of sexual violence perpetrated by women.

Based on the findings of this study, there was no significant association between sex and sexual violence acts. Although many male respondents reported having committed sexual violence, this does not mean that female respondents did not engage in such acts. This finding is consistent with previous research, which stated that sex was not associated with sexual violence acts;

although cases of sexual violence were predominantly perpetrated by men, this fact does not negate that women also committed sexual violence (Panggabean et al., 2022). The results of this study are also in line with other research, which concluded that sex does not have a significant association with sexual violence acts, as both men and women can often become perpetrators as well as victims of sexual violence (Hutami et al., 2022).

AGE

In addition to sex, age was also one of the characteristics examined in this study. The findings showed that respondents were between 18 and 24 years old. This age range indicates that respondents were in adolescence. Adolescence is known as a transitional stage of personal development, including emotional, physical, cognitive, and social aspects, in the process of forming self-identity (Aulia et al., 2022). Adolescents aged 18–21 are categorized as being in late adolescence, which is characterized by physical growth that has usually reached its maximum development (Atiqah et al., 2024). During this phase, physical changes and sexual maturity due to hormonal increases lead to strong sexual drives, heightened curiosity about sex, and a tendency to explore sexual identity and orientation. This process is also influenced by cognitive development, emotional instability, and external factors such as peers and media. These conditions make adolescent sexual behavior diverse, often occurring without sufficient knowledge or self-control, which places adolescents in a vulnerable group at risk of reproductive and social health issues (Hanifah et al., 2022). Meanwhile, respondents aged 22–24 were categorized as being in early adulthood. Early adulthood is a stage of searching for stability and reproductive maturity, often marked by various challenges such as emotional tension, social isolation, commitment, dependency, value changes, creativity, and adjustment to a new life phase (Papatungan, 2023).

Based on the findings of this study, there was no significant association between age and sexual violence acts. This result is consistent with previous research, which reported that age was not significantly associated with sexual violence among adolescents, as sexual violence is influenced by various complex factors that are more dominant than age (Panggabean et al., 2022). This indicates that sexual violence can occur across different age groups, particularly among adolescents and young adults; however, age variation within these groups does not directly determine the risk of or involvement in sexual violence (Mannika, 2018). The findings of this study are also in line with other research, which stated that age does not always significantly correlate with cases of violence, including sexual violence (Hutahaean et al., 2024).

Educational level (semester)

An individual's characteristics in experiencing and committing sexual violence in higher education settings are strongly influenced by their level of education or semester of study. First-year students (semesters 1 and 3) tend to be more vulnerable to sexual violence due to their limited understanding of personal boundaries, victims' rights, and the reporting and protection mechanisms available on campus (Zarkasi & Siregar, 2024). This condition is

further exacerbated by the psychological and social unpreparedness of new students in dealing with campus dynamics, including power imbalances with seniors or academic staff. In addition, early-semester students often lack strong social support networks to rely on when facing sexual violence, which makes them reluctant to report or even unaware that they have become victims of sexual violence (Awaru & Ahmad, 2023).

Conversely, students in higher semesters (semesters 5 and 7) may experience and potentially commit sexual violence in various forms, including verbal, non-physical, physical, and digital media-based acts (Mantiri et al., 2025). However, in other higher education contexts, an interesting phenomenon has been observed in which final-year students (semesters 9 and 11) sometimes hold inaccurate perceptions of the definition of sexual violence, such as denying that derogatory remarks or the sharing of sexual digital content constitute sexual violence (Yudhawasthi et al., 2023). This misconception contributes to the normalization of sexual violence among final-year students.

Based on the findings of this study, it was identified that there is an association in which students in higher semesters were more likely to commit sexual violence compared to those in earlier or final semesters. The level of education plays a role in shaping students' knowledge, self-control, and attitudes toward sexual violence, where the higher the semester, the more complex social dynamics and interactions on campus may influence the risks and behaviors related to sexual violence (Adistya & Mudzakkir, 2023). Students in higher semesters also demonstrated different levels of awareness regarding the possibility of close peers being perpetrators of sexual violence compared to early-semester students, indicating a shift in attitudes and perceptions as education level progresses (Yudhawasthi et al., 2023). This finding suggests that the level of education (semester) plays a significant role in the dynamics of sexual violence on campus.

Association between gender norms and sexual violence acts

Gender norms are one of the factors in overcoming external inhibitors. Gender norms refer to respondents' perspectives or beliefs that discriminate against individuals based on their sex. In this study, gender norms were categorized into two types: traditional and egalitarian. Traditional norms are social standards that, according to respondents, do not support gender equality, whereas egalitarian norms are social standards that support gender equality (Lamont, 2014). The findings revealed that 76.7% of respondents held egalitarian norms, while 23.3% adhered to traditional norms. This indicates that the majority of respondents supported egalitarian norms, meaning they endorsed gender equality. These findings are consistent with previous research, which demonstrated that students generally believe individuals should be free to act as they wish without restrictions based on gender (Astuty, 2024).

Based on the findings of this study, it was identified that students with traditional gender norms were more likely to commit sexual violence compared to those with egalitarian norms. Egalitarian gender norms refer to the belief that women and men have equal rights and opportunities and should be treated

fairly regardless of sex (Pessin, 2019). In contrast, traditional gender norms portray women as submissive and vulnerable, while men are perceived as strong, unemotional, and dominant. The results of this study demonstrate that students who held traditional gender norms engaged in sexual violence more frequently than those with egalitarian norms. Previous research has emphasized that patriarchal social, cultural, and religious norms shape adolescents' perceptions of gender roles. Despite a relatively high level of understanding regarding gender-based violence, cases of sexual harassment and violence continue to occur (Muhani et al., 2021). This suggests that traditional gender norms play a significant role in the occurrence of sexual violence. These findings are consistent with other studies, which have shown that traditional gender norms—characterizing men as superior—significantly increase the likelihood of committing violence against partners, whereas more egalitarian gender role attitudes may reduce the propensity to engage in sexual violence (Aprilia & Masyhadi, 2022).

Association between sexual violence experiences and sexual violence acts

Sexual violence experience is one of the factors related to overcoming internal inhibitors. In this study, experiences of sexual violence were categorized into four forms based on the Regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No. 30 of 2021, namely verbal, non-physical, physical, and information and communication technology-based forms. The findings revealed that 61.93% of respondents had experienced at least one form of verbal sexual violence from others. This result is consistent with previous research, which showed that 78.8% of respondents frequently experienced verbal sexual violence perpetrated by those in their surroundings (Fajariyah et al., 2022). The most common forms of verbal sexual violence reported were sexual comments about the body and clothing, sexually suggestive jokes, and catcalling, including whistling or other provocative sounds.

In addition to verbal forms, non-physical sexual violence was also reported. The findings showed that 51.7% of respondents had experienced at least one instance of non-physical sexual violence. The most frequently reported forms of non-physical sexual violence in this study were receiving intrusive stares that caused discomfort and deliberate winks directed at intimate body parts. Many people perceive non-physical sexual violence as commonplace, leading both victims and perpetrators to be unaware that such behaviors constitute sexual violence (Dewi & Swardhana, 2023).

The next form of sexual violence is physical. The findings showed that 42.61% of respondents had experienced at least one instance of physical sexual violence. The most frequently reported forms of physical sexual violence in this study included being touched without consent and experiencing unwanted and overt sexual touching (e.g., touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals, as well as attempted kissing). Physical sexual violence is one of the more prevalent forms of sexual violence and represents a major concern in the protection of women in Indonesia. Data from the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) and the Online Information System for the Protection of

Women and Children (SIMFONI PPA) indicate that the number of reported cases of physical and sexual violence nationwide remains considerably high (Komnas Perempuan, 2024).

The fourth form of sexual violence is that which occurs through information and communication technology. The findings showed that 47.73% of respondents had experienced at least one instance of sexual violence through digital platforms. The most frequently reported form in this study was the receipt of unwanted messages containing sexual content, delivered through text messaging applications, email, social media, or other channels. Data from the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) indicate that cases of sexual violence perpetrated through information and communication technology in Indonesia have increased fourfold in recent years. In 2019, 281 cases were recorded, whereas in the first ten months of 2024 alone, the number had already reached 659 cases (Komnas Perempuan, 2024).

Based on the findings of this study, it was revealed that students with experiences of sexual violence were more likely to engage in sexual violence acts. This result is consistent with previous research, which reported that several perpetrators of sexual violence against minors had experienced sexual violence themselves during childhood (Sinta & Khairi, 2023). Such past trauma serves as a driving or triggering factor for deviant sexual behaviors in adulthood, including the perpetration of sexual violence later in life. These findings are also in line with other studies indicating that prior experiences of violence increase the likelihood of individuals either experiencing or committing subsequent sexual violence. Thus, experiences of sexual violence represent a significant risk factor for future sexual violence perpetration (Nasution et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that the gender distribution of respondents consisted of females (63.1%) and males (36.1%). The respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 24 years, with the majority falling between 18 and 21 years (69.9%) compared to those aged 22–24 years (30.1%). Respondents' educational levels (semester) were categorized into early (semesters 1 and 3), advanced (semesters 5 and 7), and final (beyond semester 8). The analysis indicated a significant association between educational level and sexual violence acts, suggesting that the higher the semester, the greater the likelihood of students engaging in sexual violence. By contrast, gender and age were not significantly associated. The study also identified the role of gender norms in sexual violence behavior. Respondents' gender norms were classified into traditional (23.3%) and egalitarian (76.7%). The analysis revealed a significant association between gender norms and sexual violence acts, showing that those with traditional norms were more likely to engage in sexual violence. This finding underscores that biased gender perspectives increase the risk of violent behavior, whereas egalitarian norms tend to protect students from such behaviors. In addition, prior experiences of sexual violence were found to be significantly associated with sexual violence acts. Respondents who had previously experienced sexual violence were more likely to become perpetrators compared to those without similar experiences. Chi-square analysis demonstrated a strong relationship,

indicating that past traumatic experiences may serve as a substantial risk factor influencing future sexual violence behaviors.

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