

## THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN ENHANCING UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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### Abstract

*An effective and transparent sexual violence reporting system is crucial for addressing this issue, but in many universities in Indonesia, the existing systems are often inadequate, facing obstacles such as the incapability of the reporting system and the social stigma that blames victims. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to explore how digital technology can enhance universities' responses to sexual violence, particularly at Maliki Islamic University, as well as the needs that must be met by the university in implementing digital technology for handling sexual violence. The research results indicate that a digital reporting system, whether through an application or an internal web platform, allows reporters to report anytime and from anywhere with a high level of anonymity, reducing psychosocial barriers that usually prevent victims from reporting. Additionally, this system speeds up case management by digitally documenting data, which facilitates verification, follow-up, and efficient report management. Furthermore, clear internal policies and protection of reporter privacy are crucial to ensure that the system operates effectively and safely. Overall, this study suggests that the implementation of digital technology can improve the sexual violence reporting system in universities, but technical and policy challenges must be addressed to ensure that the system operates sustainably and delivers maximum positive impact.*

**Keywords:** Sexual violence, the role of digital reporting systems, digital technology, Institutional response.

### Abstrak

Sistem pelaporan kekerasan seksual yang efektif dan transparan sangat penting untuk menangani isu ini, namun di banyak perguruan tinggi di Indonesia, sistem yang ada sering kali tidak memadai, dengan hambatan seperti ketidakmampuan sistem pelaporan dan stigma sosial yang menyalahkan korban. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, dengan tujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana teknologi digital dapat meningkatkan respons universitas terhadap kekerasan seksual, khususnya di Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, serta kebutuhan yang harus dipenuhi oleh universitas dalam menerapkan teknologi digital untuk menangani kekerasan seksual. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sistem pelaporan digital, baik melalui aplikasi maupun platform web internal, memungkinkan pelapor untuk melapor kapan saja dan dari mana saja dengan tingkat anonimitas yang tinggi, mengurangi hambatan psikososial yang biasanya menghalangi korban untuk melapor. Selain itu, sistem ini mempercepat proses manajemen kasus dengan mendokumentasikan data secara digital, yang memudahkan verifikasi, tindak lanjut, dan pengelolaan laporan secara efisien. Selain itu, kebijakan internal yang jelas dan perlindungan terhadap privasi pelapor sangat penting untuk memastikan sistem ini berjalan secara efektif dan aman. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyarankan bahwa penerapan teknologi digital dapat meningkatkan sistem pelaporan kekerasan seksual di perguruan tinggi, namun tantangan teknis dan kebijakan harus diatasi agar sistem ini dapat berjalan secara berkelanjutan dan memberikan dampak positif yang maksimal.

**Kata Kunci :** Kekerasan seksual; Peran sistem pelaporan digital; Teknologi digital; Respon institusi



## INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence in universities in Indonesia is a serious issue that not only affects the safety and well-being of individuals but also has the potential to damage academic quality and campus life as a whole. In the context of higher education, sexual violence can occur in various forms, ranging from verbal and physical sexual harassment to technology-based violence. However, sexual violence on campus often goes unreported or ignored, given certain obstacles, such as inadequacies in the existing reporting system and the presence of social stigma that blames the victim. This phenomenon is increasingly concerning, considering the position of universities as educational institutions that should create a safe and inclusive environment for the entire academic community.

In Indonesia, although there are various regulations governing the handling of sexual violence on campuses, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 30 of 2021 on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions, the implementation of these policies is still not optimal. Many universities do not yet have a transparent and efficient reporting system, making victims feel unsafe or without a reliable channel to report. Often, a culture that blames the victim—such as judging the victim's behavior or clothing—becomes a major barrier for them in seeking justice. This results in many cases of sexual violence going unreported or not being addressed properly (Safitri & Prapanca, 2023).

Along with the increasing reliance on digital technology in daily life, universities are beginning to shift toward technology-based solutions to address this issue. Digital technology, with its various capabilities, offers opportunities to create reporting systems that are more effective, more accessible, and safer. One of the main benefits offered by digital technology is the ability to provide an anonymous reporting platform, allowing victims to report incidents of sexual violence without fear of social stigma or retaliation. Technology also provides flexibility for victims to report anytime and from anywhere, thereby reducing barriers that often arise due to time and location constraints (Yount et al., 2024). With a digital-based reporting system, universities can also improve the quality of the data collected, allowing them to process reports more quickly and accurately.

However, although technology offers great potential to improve reporting systems, its implementation in universities also presents a number of new challenges. One of the main challenges is digital literacy, both among students and campus staff. Many of them are not familiar with technology or feel uncomfortable using digital platforms to report. This can be a significant barrier in efforts to leverage technology to enhance responses to sexual violence. In addition, technology itself can pose a risk of creating new forms of sexual violence, known as Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence (TFSV). TFSV includes sexual violence facilitated by technology, such as cyberstalking, the distribution of explicit content without consent, or privacy violations through digital platforms. This phenomenon is increasingly developing along with the growing use of technology in everyday life, both among students and the general public (Pallottini, 2025).

Apart from technical issues, another challenge is the need to improve digital literacy, which not only includes technical skills in using applications but also an understanding of personal rights, online ethics, and safe and effective ways to report sexual violence digitally. This is very important because without an adequate understanding of technology use and legally protected rights, students and campus



staff may feel they lack control or a sense of safety when using digital reporting systems. Therefore, comprehensive digital education and awareness campaigns that educate about the importance of protecting victims of sexual violence are highly needed. Digital literacy should encompass a deeper understanding of how to effectively report sexual violence, as well as recognizing individual rights in the context of an ever-evolving digital world (Rohmah et al., n.d.).

As one of the leading universities in Indonesia, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang faces a significant challenge in adopting digital technology for handling sexual violence. Although the campus already has policies related to the protection of sexual violence victims, there are still shortcomings in the implementation of a reporting system that can be easily and safely accessed by all parties. Therefore, it is important for UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang to strategically adopt digital technology, taking into account the appropriate infrastructure needs, supportive policies, and educational programs to enhance digital literacy among students and staff. This will ensure that technology can be optimally used in addressing and preventing sexual violence on campus.

This study aims to analyze the role of digital technology in enhancing university responses to sexual violence, with a focus on UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The study will delve deeper into how the application of technology in the sexual violence reporting system can accelerate response processes, improve reporting accessibility, and enhance case management quality. Additionally, this study will also identify the challenges faced by UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in implementing digital technology, including issues related to infrastructure, policy, and digital literacy. Thus, this research is expected to provide clearer insights into how technology can be optimized to create a safer and more responsive campus to sexual violence.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. The Concept of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence constitutes a serious and urgent issue within higher education environments, with extensive repercussions for both individuals and institutions. This problem is not isolated; rather, it is a form of gender-based violence rooted in the unequal power dynamics between men and women. Within the academic context, this power imbalance manifests through bureaucratic structures, hierarchical lecturer-student relationships, and institutional cultural norms that remain gender-biased, as highlighted by (Heliany et al., n.d.). This context renders female students particularly vulnerable to victimization. Sexual violence in university settings manifests in various forms, ranging from the covert to the overt. Mapping these prevalent forms is crucial for fostering collective awareness and designing targeted prevention mechanisms. Based on findings from multiple literature reviews, these forms can be categorized as follows: Verbal Harassment

*Verbal harassment is the most frequently reported form of sexual violence in higher education, with female students being the most affected demographic (Athanasziades et al., 2023; Maposa, 2025). This form is often dismissed as "trivial" or "just a joke," yet its impact is significant in creating an uncomfortable and degrading environment. Specific manifestations include:*

Offensive Comments and Propositions: Remarks that inappropriately evaluate a person's body, appearance, or sexual life. Examples include comments such as, "Your makeup is so provocative today," or "I bet you got an A because you're close to the



professor." Sexualized Jokes and Stories: Sharing obscene jokes or personal sexual experiences in public campus spaces (e.g., classrooms, laboratories, canteens) without regard for the comfort of others. This behavior not only objectifies the victim but also disrupts their concentration and sense of safety.

**Derogatory Nicknames or Labels:** Forcibly addressing an individual using sexually charged epithets. The high prevalence of verbal harassment indicates two underlying issues: first, the normalization of misogynistic and sexist culture in daily interactions; and second, the underreporting of physical and other forms of violence often begins with the acceptance of verbal harassment as "normal," leading victims to believe that reporting more serious incidents will not be taken seriously.

a. Physical Harassment

Although reported less frequently than verbal harassment, incidents of physical harassment remain a real threat and cause profound trauma (Baba, 2024). Underreporting is often associated with shame, fear of retaliation, and concerns about not being believed by authorities. Forms of physical harassment include: **Unwanted Touching:** This is the most common form in this category. Perpetrators may touch intimate parts of a victim's body (e.g., hips, thighs, or breasts) under the pretext of it being "accidental" or in a crowded space. This also includes forced hugging or kissing. **Coercion for Sexual Favors:** This form involves coercion under explicit or implicit threat. A lecturer or senior may demand sexual "compensation" in exchange for academic assistance, such as granting good grades, approving a research proposal, or securing a position in a student organization. The consequences of physical harassment are severe. Victims not only experience a violation of their bodily autonomy but may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and other mental health issues. Legal uncertainty and convoluted institutional procedures often exacerbate the victim's psychological distress.

b. Psychological Harassment

Psychological harassment is a subtle yet highly intrusive form of sexual violence that significantly contributes to creating a hostile academic environment (Burn, 2019). Unlike direct verbal harassment, psychological harassment often infiltrates interactions under the guise of "concern" or "curiosity." Its manifestations include: **Intrusive Questions about Personal Life:** Persistently inquiring about an individual's relationship status, sexual activity, or plans for marriage and family, especially in non-professional contexts. Such questions place the victim in an uncomfortable position, implying their private life is a matter of public concern. **Comments and Questions about Physical Appearance:** Offering excessive and persistent commentary on changes in appearance, weight, or style of dress. For example, "You've lost weight; did you get dumped?" or "You should wear skirts more often; they look better on you." While sometimes framed as compliments, these remarks constitute an unwarranted surveillance and judgment of the victim's body. **Intimidating Stares (Leering):** Gazing at a specific part of a person's body in a prolonged manner that causes discomfort, effectively treating them as an object. In alignment with the global movement to address campus sexual violence, the Director-General of Islamic Education in Indonesia issued Decree No. 1143 of 2024 on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Islamic Educational Environments. This decree delineates 16 forms of sexual violence, providing a comprehensive legal framework: **Appearance and Identity-Based Verbal Harassment:** Discriminatory or harassing speech targeting a person's physical appearance, bodily condition, and/or gender identity. **Sexually-Charged Verbal**



Harassment: Speech containing sexually suggestive propositions, jokes, or whistles directed at a victim, often normalized as "banter" but which fosters a hostile and unprofessional environment. Coercion through Manipulation and Threats: Persuading, promising, offering incentives, threatening, or forcing a victim into sexual transactions or activities, reflecting a clear abuse of power. Non-Verbal Harassment through Staring: Staring at a victim with a sexual and/or uncomfortable undertone, a non-physical form of violence that can cause objectification and insecurity. Privacy Violation through Voyeurism: Peeping or deliberately observing a victim engaged in private activities in private spaces, constituting a serious breach of privacy. Exhibitionism: Deliberately exposing one's genitals to a victim, an act that can cause psychological trauma. Physical Harassment: Physical acts such as touching, stroking, groping, holding, hugging, kissing, and/or rubbing one's body against the victim's without consent. Attempted Rape: Actions constituting an attempt to commit rape, classified as serious sexual violence even without penetration. Rape in a Broad Sense: Committing rape, including penetration with objects or body parts other than genitals, thereby expanding the conventional definition. Culturally-Based Violence: Practicing cultural traditions that perpetuate sexual violence, acknowledging that certain customs can be a medium for such acts. Forced Abortion: Coercing or deceiving a victim into having an abortion, a form of reproductive control classified as sexual violence. Toleration of Sexual Violence: Knowingly allowing sexual violence to occur, emphasizing collective responsibility and the duty to prevent violence. Sexually-Charged Punishment: Imposing punishments or sanctions with a sexual connotation, involving the systematic use of power to perpetrate sexual violence. Online Harassment: Sending messages, jokes, images, photos, audio, and/or videos of a sexual nature to a victim after being prohibited, underscoring the necessity of consent in digital communication. Digital Exploitation: Taking, recording, uploading, or distributing photos, audio, or visual recordings of a victim with sexual content, encompassing revenge porn and other forms of digital exploitation. Catch-All Clause: Committing other acts of sexual violence in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations, providing flexibility to address forms of violence not yet explicitly identified.

This classification marks a significant development in comprehensively understanding sexual violence, as it acknowledges: The broad spectrum from verbal to physical violence, The digital context as a potential space for sexual violence, The dynamics of power within educational relationships, The role of culture in perpetuating violence, and The institutional responsibility to prevent and address cases. This regulation serves as a critical foundation for creating safe Islamic educational environments, free from all forms of sexual violence, supported by clear reporting and handling mechanisms.

## **2. The Prevalence of Sexual Violence in Higher Education**

The context of sexual violence in Indonesia reveals a concerning trend, with reported cases increasing annually. The Annual Notes of the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Susanti et al., 2025) documented a phenomenal 792% surge in reports of sexual violence over a 12-year period. This phenomenon transcends spatial boundaries, occurring in both private and public spheres, including within higher education institutions. Universities, which should be safe and conducive environments for intellectual development, have instead become one of the loci where sexual violence in its various forms—from physical to non-physical acts, including online and offline sexual harassment—is experienced by members of the academic



community. The victims of this violence are not confined to a specific gender and can include women, men, and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities.

Efforts to create a safe university environment extend beyond the mere provision of physical facilities; they fundamentally concern the establishment of conditions where all academic community members feel protected while carrying out their activities, both in classrooms and in extracurricular pursuits. In this regard, guaranteeing a sense of safety from the threat of sexual violence is a fundamental element. According to (Winingsih et al., 2024) and (Arzamasov & Nazaykinskaya, 2021), this guarantee must be realized through specific regulations at the university level that are distinct from general administrative rules.

Although comprehensive and centralized statistical data on sexual violence cases in universities remains limited, the on-the-ground reality is evidenced by continuous media reports uncovering new cases. A survey of 76 university administrators in Indonesia by (Yount et al., 2024) confirms this, with 75% of respondents acknowledging the occurrence of sexual violence cases on their campuses. This finding reinforces the assumption that sexual violence is a systemic problem, albeit one that is often hidden and difficult to uncover.

Prior to the issuance of specific regulations, several investigative reports illustrated the scale of the issue. For instance, a collaborative report from Tirto, Vice Indonesia, and The Jakarta Post (2020) documented 174 reports of sexual violence spread across 79 Indonesian universities. Of these, 172 reports came from students, while one report each came from a lecturer and staff member. However, this figure is strongly suspected to represent only the "tip of the iceberg." Given that the Ministry of Education recorded 4,550 universities with over 8 million students, the potential scale of sexual violence is far greater than the reported numbers suggest. This low reporting rate is attributed to complex challenges, such as social stigma, a culture of victim-blaming, fear of retaliation, and—particularly before 2021—the absence of clear, victim-centered handling mechanisms at the campus level.

Consequently, the existence of comprehensive rules and policies becomes increasingly crucial. In response to this urgent situation, the Indonesian government issued Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation Number 30 of 2021 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence (Permendikbudristek PPKS). This regulation represents a historic breakthrough as it broadens the definition of sexual violence, affirms victim-centered handling principles, and mandates every university to establish a PPKS Task Force. The existence of this regulation is expected not only to provide a strong legal foundation but also to act as a catalyst for a cultural shift on campuses towards safe, equitable spaces free from all forms of sexual violence.

**Contributing Factors to Sexual Violence in the University Setting** Sexual violence in universities is not an isolated phenomenon but a multifaceted problem driven by a complex interplay of structural, cultural, and individual factors. The normalization and trivialization of violent behaviour, coupled with imbalanced power dynamics, are central pillars that perpetuate this practice. A comprehensive understanding of its root causes is an absolute prerequisite for designing effective and sustainable prevention and handling strategies.

### **Cultural and Organizational Norms: A Culture of Denial and Trivialization**

The University often develop distinct organizational cultures that can indirectly tolerate sexual violence. A significant factor is the taboo surrounding the issue and its subsequent normalization. Many institutions perceive sexual violence as a scandal that tarnishes the reputation and the "ivory tower" image of a sterile environment free from



worldly problems. Consequently, there is a tendency to deny the issue, treating it as an external matter rather than an institutional responsibility. This attitude leads to the trivialization of incidents, often dismissed with comments like "it was just a joke" or "don't be so sensitive," which is a manifestation of this corrosive culture. This environment of minimization ultimately leaves victims feeling unsupported and afraid to report, as they fear their claims will not be taken seriously (Athanasiaades et al., 2023). This is compounded by an institutional myth that universities, as spaces of enlightenment and rationality, are immune to such acts. This collective denial provides a safe haven for perpetrators, enabling abusive behaviour to continue with impunity. Institutions often prioritize protecting their reputation and strategic personnel over defending victims and upholding justice.

### **Power Dynamics: Hierarchy and Gender Domination**

The hierarchical structure of academia creates a fertile ground for the abuse of authority. The rigid hierarchical nature of the campus environment, built upon unequal power relations—particularly between lecturers and students, seniors and juniors, or advisors and advisees—is a key facilitator. Lecturers wield significant control over grades, recommendations, research opportunities, and students' academic futures. This power imbalance can be exploited for coercion, intimidation, or manipulation with promises of academic rewards or threats of failure. Vulnerable groups, such as women and students from marginalized backgrounds, are often primary targets (Zahoor et al., 2024). The situation is exacerbated by the male domination of strategic faculty positions. Many women report experiences of violence from male lecturers or staff who hold authority over them (Cheng et al., 2023). This phenomenon is linked to the broader patriarchal structure in society, where masculine power is often used to control women's bodies and sexuality. Within academia, this asymmetric power relation manifests concretely through rigid bureaucratic structures, imbalanced lecturer-student relationships, and institutional cultural norms that remain gender-biased, as highlighted by (Steele et al., 2024). This context creates an unequal environment that renders female students disproportionately vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual violence.

### **Socio-Cultural Influences: Victim-Blaming and the Impact of Trauma**

Prevailing societal values significantly shape responses to sexual violence within campuses. A major barrier is the pervasive cultural attitude of victim-blaming. Patriarchal social norms often erroneously assign fault to the victim. Myths that provocative clothing, "flirtatious" behaviour, or being in the "wrong" place or time invite sexual violence remain deeply entrenched (Dnb\_vol35\_noSuppl 2\_150, n.d.). This victim-blaming public discourse not only shields perpetrators but also deepens the problem's roots, causing victims to feel responsible for their own victimization and creating significant psychological barriers to speaking out. Furthermore, the profound fear and trauma experienced by victims naturally inhibit their ability to report. The fear of retaliation from the perpetrator, distrust in the system, and the prospect of a protracted, potentially re-traumatizing legal process lead many victims to choose silence (Nurhaliza Ubino & Astuti, n.d.). This silence is often misinterpreted by the institution as an absence of problems, thereby allowing the cycle of violence to persist.

### **3. Policies and Systems**

Beyond cultural and power factors, significant weaknesses at the policy and system level are also contributing causes. Many universities lack reporting mechanisms that are accessible, trustworthy, and protective for victims. Unclear procedures and uncertainty about whom to contact create confusion and deter reporting. Furthermore, the absence of clear, firm, and consistent sanctions for



perpetrators fosters a culture of impunity, signalling that acts of sexual violence do not carry serious consequences. This is compounded by a lack of sustained education and socialization. Insufficient ongoing programs on gender equality, consent, and the various forms of sexual violence result in a low level of awareness across the campus community. Both potential perpetrators and potential victims may not fully understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour(Zahoor et al., 2024)

In conclusion, the causative factors of sexual violence on campus are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, forming a system that complicates its eradication. While some institutions have begun to respond through policy reforms and awareness campaigns, the effectiveness of these measures remains to be proven. Meaningful change can only occur if such efforts dare to address and transform the root causes: the culture of denial and trivialization, imbalanced power structures, and victim-blaming social norms.

#### **4. The impact Sexual violence in higher education**

Sexual violence in higher education is not an event which the impact finishes when the violent act itself ends. Its consequences are profoundly serious, complex, and multidimensional, damaging the very foundations of a victim's life as both an individual and a member of the academic community. Victims bear not only a heavy psychological burden but also face tangible consequences affecting their educational trajectory and future prospects.

**Profound Psychological and Mental Health Impacts** Psychologically, victims of sexual violence often experience deep trauma that can manifest in various forms. Research indicates that these psychological impacts frequently include impaired social relationships, significant behavioral changes, and severe psychological distress(“Barriers To Reporting Sexual Violence In Higher Education: Power Dynamics And Anticipated Costs,” 2023). Victims become susceptible to serious mental health disorders, such as clinical depression and generalized anxiety disorder. In more extreme cases, this traumatic burden can lead to suicidal ideation or even suicide attempts (Bovill & Podpadec, 2023). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is also highly prevalent, where victims are persistently haunted by flashbacks, nightmares, and hypervigilance, causing them to feel unsafe even in supposedly protected environments like a university.

**Academic Impacts: Disruption to Educational Trajectories** Beyond psychological harm, sexual violence has significant and direct implications for a victim's academic performance. This impact begins at the most fundamental level, with a documented decline in concentration and cognitive capacity to absorb lecture material(Tarzia et al., 2024). This difficulty in concentrating subsequently leads to low participation and attendance in lectures, discussions, and group work, as victims may avoid locations or situations that trigger traumatic memories(Benningfield & Stephan, 2015). Ultimately, this cascade of issues results in a decline in Grade Point Average (GPA) and overall academic achievement(Cribb Fabersunne et al., 2023) and (Endleman et al., 2022). In the most severe situations, victims may decide to drop out of university, thereby forfeiting their potential and educational investment. A study by Muehlenhard et al. (2017) found that students who experienced rape showed a significant decrease in GPA compared to their peers who did not.**Long-Term Social and Economic Consequences**

The repercussions of sexual violence also extend to the social and economic dimensions of a victim's life. Victims often withdraw from social circles, lose interest in extracurricular activities, and struggle to form healthy relationships. This social isolation further exacerbates their mental health condition. Economically,



discontinuing studies or a decline in academic performance can hinder future career opportunities and earning potential. The cost of long-term therapy and counseling also poses an additional financial burden for victims and their families.

**Institutional Impacts: Weakened Credibility and Institutional Competitiveness**  
The plight of victims is worsened by the fact that reporting mechanisms at many universities are often ineffective. The presence of stigma, shame, and victims' fear of academic repercussions (such as retaliation from a perpetrator who may be a lecturer) leads to a tendency to remain silent. This powerlessness creates a recurring cycle of violence. These multidimensional consequences are not only detrimental to individuals but also potentially hinder the quality of Human Resources and the overall competitiveness of the higher education institution. An institution that fails to guarantee a safe, inclusive, and violence-free academic climate will lose its credibility in the eyes of prospective students, faculty, and partners. A hostile campus environment stifles academic productivity and innovation, ultimately undermining the very mission of higher education.

In conclusion, sexual violence in universities is a crisis that devastates well-being, stunts academic potential, and weakens institutions. Therefore, comprehensive prevention and handling efforts are not merely a need, but an imperative to ensure that educational spaces truly become environments conducive to growth and development.

## **5. Policies for Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education**

Sexual violence within higher education institutions has become a critical issue demanding firm and comprehensive policy responses from the government. Recognition of this problem's urgency is reflected in the enactment of two primary legal frameworks that serve as the foundation for educational institutions to conduct structured prevention and handling. The first framework is the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 30 of 2021 which applies to State Universities (PTN) and Private Universities (PTS) under the Ministry of Education. This policy establishes a detailed framework regarding forms of sexual violence, prevention mechanisms, case handling procedures, and administrative sanctions. The presence of this regulation represents a significant step forward in responding to the need for a safe academic environment free from sexual violence.

However, given the institutional status of Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, a need arose for a congruent regulation. This gap was subsequently addressed by the issuance of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 73 of 2022 (PMA 73/2022), which explicitly governs the prevention and handling of sexual violence across all Education Units under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including PTKI. PMA 73/2022 reinforces the state's commitment that the issue of sexual violence transcends ministerial boundaries and is a moral and legal mandate that must be firmly implemented in all educational institutions in Indonesia. Both regulations function as guidelines that provide guarantees of protection and a sense of security for the academic community, while also offering clear mechanisms for victims, witnesses, and reporters.

## **6. The Pillars of Prevention: Creating a Safe Academic Environment**

The preventive efforts outlined by Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No.30/2021 and Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 73/2022 are based on a multi-level approach known as the Four Pillars of Prevention, designed to function comprehensively and reinforce one another.

The first pillar is Socialization and Campaigns, which involves the mass dissemination of information and education on various forms of sexual violence,



applicable university policies, and available reporting mechanisms. This socialization aims to saturate the academic public sphere with adequate knowledge (Cheng et al., 2023), enabling the academic community to possess a solid understanding to identify and reject all forms of sexual violence.

The second pillar is Prevention Through Education, involving the integration of sexual violence issues into curricula, teaching materials, and other responsive learning resources. This education aims to build knowledge and a mental disposition that rejects sexual violence. Furthermore, institutions are encouraged to conduct scientific studies and research related to the prevention and handling of sexual violence, ensuring that preventive efforts are grounded in data and in-depth academic analysis. This aligns with the need to build sexual assertiveness and a better understanding within the higher education environment.

The third pillar is Governance Strengthening, which is the most crucial structural aspect. This strengthening includes providing systematic Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) as a guide for the entire academic community when facing cases, whether affecting themselves or others (Endleman et al., 2022). Beyond the Standard Operational Procedures, governance strengthening also encompasses providing supportive infrastructure, such as safe spaces and confidential reporting channels, and building partnerships with relevant institutions, including the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) for handling more complex cases (Orin Gusta Andini).

The final pillar is Cultural Strength, which focuses on changing social norms and values. These efforts include forming a "human geography" that supports the prevention of sexual violence—a physical and social environment that is safe for both men and women (Setiansah et al., 2025). Cultural strengthening also emphasizes the importance of eroding patriarchal cultures that often normalize violence and instilling equitable community moral values. The most crucial objective of this pillar is to eliminate negative stigma and cultivate an attitude that does not blame victims (victim blaming), so that victims feel safe and supported to speak out about the violence they have experienced. These efforts align with the development of a sustainable university social ecology model (Athanasziades et al., 2023).

## **7. Handling, Protection, and Administrative Sanctions**

Alongside prevention, both Ministerial Regulations also establish clear procedures for Victim Handling and Recovery. Case handling within the university environment begins with Reporting, which is meticulously regulated regarding clarification procedures for reporters, victims, witnesses, reported parties, and other relevant stakeholders.

The aspect of Protection is central to handling. This policy guarantees protection for victims and witnesses in the form of identity protection, provision of facilities, access to information rights, and guarantees for the continuity of their studies or work within the academic environment. In addition to protection, Assistance is also provided, encompassing counseling services, health services, legal aid, and psychological rehabilitation. These services are delivered by professional staff, either internal to the Task Force (Satgas) or through partnerships with competent external parties.

Recovery efforts are emphasized to be conducted based on the victim's consent and can include medical treatment, physical therapy, psychological therapy, or sexual guidance therapy, all of which must be performed by professional staff. Meanwhile, Administrative Sanctions are established as a form of enforcement by the university. These sanctions can range from relief of duties, demotion, to dismissal. In



the context of higher education, administrative sanctions are often viewed as a crucial and primary step, even prioritized over criminal law (Made Sugi Hartono), as criminal sanctions are considered an *ultimum remedium* or a last resort when other legal measures are unable to handle the case optimally at the institutional level.

Overall, the government, through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has provided a strong and comprehensive policy framework for preventing and handling sexual violence in higher education. Permendikbudristek 30/2021 and PMA 73/2022 function as legal instruments aimed at providing justice and protection. However, the most significant challenge currently lies in Operational Implementation. Not all universities have implemented these policies fully and effectively. This requires continuous encouragement, awareness, and effort from university leadership not only to establish Task Forces (Satgas) but also to embed a culture of care and accountability across all lines of the academic institution, in order to realize universities as safe spaces for all.

#### 8. Technology and digital innovation for sexual violence prevention

Sexual violence in universities is frequently underreported due to barriers such as stigma, shame, and distrust in the institution (Mills, 2025). Technological advancements present an opportunity to address this challenge through the implementation of web-based digital applications. These platforms can serve as anonymous reporting channels, educational hubs, and means for rapid, transparent communication (Cover et al., 2025). The presence of such digital services addresses psychosocial barriers by providing a safer, less intimidating first point of entry for victims seeking help, while simultaneously functioning as a 24-hour information center.

Furthermore, a web application can function not merely as a passive channel, but as a proactive platform for support and prevention. International studies demonstrate that web-based interventions can enhance student awareness and encourage them to become active bystanders (Feldstein et al., n.d.). Features such as psychoeducation, connections to counselors, and "virtual escort" services provide crucial support for victim recovery (Benningfield & Stephan, 2015) while simultaneously empowering the campus community in prevention efforts (Rafif Attala & Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni, 2024). By adopting a user-centered design approach, such applications can be developed to meet the real needs of the academic community, and the anonymized report data can be utilized to design more targeted prevention policies (Safitri & Prapanca, 2023).

Mobile applications addressing sexual violence can be categorized based on their primary functional focus. The first category comprises **information and education-focused apps**, which act as digital resource centers to enhance user literacy. The second category includes applications with **anonymous reporting mechanisms**, such as "Callisto," which has been shown to significantly increase reporting rates by reducing victim fear (Nurhaliza Ubino & Astuti, n.d.). Other categories encompass apps offering **support and connection**, where online peer-support platforms can reduce isolation and trauma symptoms (Rohmah et al., n.d.), as well as applications featuring **personal safety tools** designed for prevention.

Overall, the effectiveness of these various applications is highly dependent on key factors beyond their technical features. For reporting apps, their success is determined by seamless integration with institutional systems and user trust in data security. For support applications, stringent moderation quality is absolutely essential to prevent re-victimization. Although promising, comprehensive evaluation of the long-term impact of these applications remains limited, and their transformative success is highly



contingent on adoption rates, interface usability, and most critically, trust in data security (Heliany et al., n.d.).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to explore how digital technology can enhance universities' responses to sexual violence, particularly at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as well as the needs that must be met by the university in implementing digital technology for handling sexual violence. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative, focusing on gaining an in-depth understanding of the role of digital technology in addressing sexual violence, as well as identifying challenges and needs in its implementation at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang (Safitri & Prapanca, 2023). The research participants consisted of several groups directly involved in the use of digital technology in handling sexual violence, namely:

- a. Students, who can provide perspectives on their experiences related to reporting sexual violence using digital-based systems (Mills, 2025).
- b. Lecturers and campus staff, who are involved in policies for handling sexual violence and managing reporting applications (Baba, 2024).
- c. Campus technology managers, who are responsible for the development and maintenance of reporting applications or digital platforms used on campus (Baba, 2024).

Data collection techniques using semi-structured interviews. This technique is used to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and the challenges they face (Safitri & Prapanca, 2023). The researcher will analyze policy documents and regulations related to sexual violence at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, including reporting guidelines and regulations underlying the use of digital technology in handling cases of sexual violence (Rafif Attala & Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni, 2024).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The role of digital technology in improving reporting systems and responses to sexual violence in higher education, especially at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Research found that the implementation of a digital-based reporting system on campus (such as an application or internal web platform) makes a real contribution to improving reporting mechanisms and responses to sexual violence. Here is a summary of the findings based on respondents' initials:

*I feel safer and find it easier to report using the reporting application. There is no need to come directly to the campus service office; I can report anytime (LLM, 2025). I think this digital reporting application removes geographical and time barriers, which are usually obstacles in the manual reporting system (QQ, 2025). I feel hesitant to go directly to the campus office because I am afraid of meeting people I don't know, or afraid of being judged by those around me (YYA, 2025).*

The data presented above explains that with the application, they feel more in control in terms of time and privacy, and it gives them a greater sense of security. An app-based reporting system or an internal web platform allows reporters to report sexual violence easily and safely without having to meet face-to-face. This is very important considering that sexual violence is an issue often accompanied by feelings of fear and shame, as well as the potential social stigma it may cause.



By providing 24/7 access, digital reporting systems reduce the barriers of time and place that often prevent victims from reporting. Additionally, the anonymity offered by this platform increases the courage of victims and witnesses to report incidents without fear of their identities being revealed, which is often one of the main reasons they are reluctant to come forward (Mills, 2025).

Furthermore, digitally documented data makes the case management process more systematic and transparent. Well-structured reporting allows easier access to information and provides real-time notifications to the campus response team, enabling faster and more efficient responses. These findings are consistent with the research by (Setiansah et al., 2025), which states that the development of digital reporting platforms in universities increases the reporters' trust and courage to report sexual violence, by supporting more efficient management of reports by the PPKS task force. It was then explained that the students' responses:

*The anonymity provided by this application makes me more confident to report. I'm afraid if I have to meet face-to-face with the campus authorities, because I'm afraid my identity will be exposed (LRH, 2025). When I report directly, I feel intimidated as if I'm the one at fault (RHN, 2025). It's convenient to access the application directly; it makes it easier for me to act quickly and freely share my feelings (THN, 2025). This application helps those of us who are easily oppressed and treated unfairly (LHN, 2025).*

Anonymity is one of the features highly valued by reporters in digital reporting systems. Respondents emphasized that the fear of their identity being exposed in the real world often prevents victims from reporting. With a system that allows reporters to remain anonymous, they feel more protected and braver in reporting sexual violence they have experienced or witnessed. This is also consistent with international research findings showing that reporting applications that prioritize anonymity increase victims' courage to report (Mills, 2025).

The explanation above is also reinforced by the results of interviews with lecturers who revealed that digital reporting makes data more structured and well-documented, including details of time, place, and the chronology of events. This greatly facilitates the team in carrying out verification and follow-up on cases (AAN, 2025). It is also reinforced by lecturers/staff involved in managing reporting on campus who revealed that the data collected in the digital reporting system is more organized and easier to access compared to the manual system, which is prone to data loss or recording errors (AAN, 2025).

With a systematically documented system, the case verification process becomes faster and more efficient. Complete and structured data also makes it easier for the campus authorities to conduct evaluations and analyses of existing sexual violence cases that require prompt and appropriate resolution.

The digital reporting system, the campus response team can receive notifications instantly when there is a new report. This significantly speeds up our response compared to the manual system, which takes longer. The technology management staff explained that the real-time notifications received by the response team allow them to immediately act on incoming reports. This indicates a significant improvement in the speed and effectiveness of responses to received reports. Previously, the slower, paper-based manual system made the process of collecting and managing reports more complicated and time-consuming.

The interpretation of results presented on digital reporting applications or platforms allows reporters to report more easily, anytime, and without having to come in person—reducing reporting barriers. Anonymity in digital reporting increases



reporters' courage to report—especially for victims or witnesses who fear stigma, worry about their identity being exposed, or fear social consequences. From the campus's perspective, the reporting data is well-documented, making the process of verification, follow-up, and case archiving easier — supporting systematic case management. Campus responses can be faster because reports are received in real-time, allowing the Task Force or handling unit to immediately follow up — increasing response effectiveness. This finding is consistent with the literature: for example, research on sexual violence reporting applications on campus shows that digital platforms "allow safe reporting and support case management by the Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force," thereby increasing the courage to report and the efficiency of handling cases. Additionally, international studies show that the adoption of online reporting systems via mobile applications in educational institutions reduces reporting barriers and increases the number of reports as well as institutional responses.

### **B. Requirements That Must Be Met to Implement Digital Technology**

Based on interviews, observations, and analysis of campus policy documents, several fundamental needs have been identified to ensure that the digital reporting system at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang can function effectively and sustainably. The following findings illustrate the critical needs that must be met to support the implementation of a more efficient and secure digital reporting system for the entire academic community. These needs include adequate technological infrastructure, user-friendly and secure application design, digital literacy among the academic community, clear internal policies, and protection of the reporter's privacy.

#### **1. Adequate Technology Infrastructure**

According to Muhammad Akbar (2025), one of the primary needs that must be met to support an effective digital reporting system is reliable technological infrastructure. All the respondents interviewed agreed that stable and fast internet access is a key component in ensuring the smooth use of reporting applications. Akbar explained, "If internet access is unstable, users will have difficulty accessing the application or website for reporting, which can lead to delays in reporting and response. Furthermore, respondents also highlighted the importance of secure and reliable servers and databases. A digital-based reporting system requires large storage capacity to safely and securely store reporting data. If the server used is inadequate or prone to failure, reporting data could be lost or corrupted, which could compromise the integrity of the system. Therefore, Akbar suggests that the campus should invest in servers with large capacity and backup systems to prevent data loss. Equally important is the use of compatible devices, whether they are desktops, laptops, or smartphones. Every member of the academic community, including students, lecturers, and campus staff, must be able to access the reporting application with any device they have. In this way, the accessibility of the reporting system can be ensured throughout the campus environment, even outside the campus.

#### **2. User-Friendly and Secure System Design**

Based on interviews with Linda S and Marwah (2025), one of the challenges in developing digital reporting applications is the importance of a user-friendly and secure application interface design. Linda revealed, "The reporting application must have a simple interface, easy to understand, and not confuse its users. If the application is too complicated, users tend to be reluctant to use it.

In addition, Marwah added that the digital reporting system must provide options for anonymous reporting and protection of personal data. "Many victims



of sexual violence are hesitant to report because they fear their identities will be exposed. Therefore, the application must be able to ensure that their data is protected," she said. This policy is very important to create a sense of security for reporters and encourage more individuals to report cases of sexual violence without fear of social repercussions or retaliation. If an application has a design that is not easy to understand or does not protect personal data confidentiality, the risk of losing users' trust is very high. Poor application design can cause confusion, uncertainty, and even fear for reporters, which ultimately can hinder the effectiveness of the reporting system itself.

### 3. Digital Literacy and Socialization to the Academic Community

One of the most striking findings in this study is the low level of digital literacy among some students and campus staff. Some students, such as Laila, Herlin, and Siska (2025), admitted that they were not familiar with the concept of digital reporting. They felt hesitant to use reporting applications because they had never received adequate socialization or training on how to use these applications.

Laila revealed, "I know there is a reporting application, but I don't know how to use it properly." A similar statement was made by Herlin, who admitted that she has not received socialization about the benefits and importance of using this digital reporting application. They realized that they need to be given a deeper understanding of how to use the application and why reporting sexual violence is very important to be done through secure digital channels.

Siska added, "If we were given more in-depth training on how to use the application and its benefits, I think many of my friends would feel more confident in reporting." Based on these findings, it is important for the campus to provide regular education and digital literacy programs for students and staff, so that they understand the functions and workings of the digital reporting system as well as the importance of reporting sexual violence safely.

### 4. Internal Policies, Handling Procedures, and Institutional Commitment

Hanapi (2025) emphasizes that simply having a digital reporting application is not enough. "The campus must have clear internal policies regarding the procedures for handling sexual violence, including how reports are verified, protection for victims, and appropriate follow-up. Without clear procedures, reports can end up stuck in the 'report inbox' without any real response." Hanapi added that without strong institutional commitment, the digital reporting system will not have the desired impact. Clear procedures related to report verification, victim protection, and follow-up are crucial to ensure that every report receives a prompt and appropriate response. The campus must also provide counseling or advocacy services for victims who need further support after reporting cases of sexual violence.

### 5. Privacy and Protection of Whistleblower's Identity

Privacy and the protection of the reporter's identity are primary concerns in digital reporting systems. Hanif (2025) emphasizes that, "Because issues of sexual violence are very sensitive, reporters are often worried that their identity will be exposed. Therefore, reporting systems must ensure that the reporter's data remains securely protected."

The security of personal data is crucial in preventing exposure that could harm the reporter, both socially and psychologically. Reporting systems must have strict protection for reporter data and provide secure channels for communication. Without adequate protection, reporters may feel uncomfortable reporting incidents, which



ultimately reduces the effectiveness of the reporting system. The utilization of digital technology in handling harassment cases according to expert opinions is as follows:

1. Administrative Efficiency and Institutional Responsiveness Improvement

The use of digital reporting systems also contributes to improving campus administrative efficiency. The processes of verification, handling, and follow-up on reports become faster because the data collected is automatically well-documented, including important information such as time, location, and the chronology of events. Easy access to this information supports the response team in making quicker and more accurate decisions. As (Rafif Attala & Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni, 2024) explain, reporting applications that allow real-time data integration can enhance the institution's response speed to cases of sexual violence. Furthermore, digital systems facilitate transparency in case handling. With this system, the campus can track every step in the case management process, from receiving reports to follow-up actions and resolution. This strengthens accountability and assures reporters that their complaints are taken seriously. As a result, digital reporting systems not only serve as a "complaint box" but also become an integral component in the institutional response to sexual violence.

2. Challenges in Implementation and System Requirements

Although digital technology brings significant benefits in handling sexual violence, this study also found that the success of implementing a digital reporting system depends on meeting several critical needs. Reliable infrastructure, user-friendly application design, digital literacy, and clear internal policies are key factors that need to be considered to ensure the success of this system.

3. Reliable Infrastructure

One of the main needs identified is the presence of adequate technological infrastructure. Based on interviews with Muhammad Akbar (2025), all respondents mentioned that stable and fast internet access is very important for the smooth operation of digital reporting applications. Without reliable infrastructure, such as secure servers and compatible devices, the reporting system may fail to function or even lose data, which could be detrimental to both the campus and the reporters. Therefore, the campus must ensure the availability of sufficient technological infrastructure throughout the campus environment.

4. User-Friendly and Secure Application Design

User experience is also an important factor in the success of using reporting applications. Linda S and Marwah (2025) emphasize the importance of a simple and easy-to-understand application interface design. A reporting application that is complicated or difficult to use can cause users to feel frustrated or uncomfortable, which can ultimately reduce the level of participation in reporting sexual violence. Additionally, the application must provide anonymous options and ensure the protection of the reporter's personal data to prevent information leaks that could harm the reporter or worsen their situation.

5. Digital Literacy and Socialization

Improving digital literacy among academic communities, particularly students, is very important so that digital reporting systems are used optimally. Some students, such as Laila, Herlin, and Siska (2025), admitted that they do not fully understand the concept of digital reporting and feel hesitant to use it. This



highlights the importance of providing adequate digital literacy education and training for students and campus staff so that they understand how to use reporting applications properly and comprehend their benefits in addressing sexual violence. Education based on better social and gender awareness can also enhance students' understanding of their rights and how to safely report sexual violence (Pallottini, 2025).

#### 6. Clear Internal Policies

As part of internal infrastructure, clear policies and transparent handling procedures are essential to support the digital reporting system. Without clear policies, verification procedures, victim protection, and appropriate follow-up, digital reporting can be futile and fail to make a significant impact. Pak Hanapi (2025) emphasizes that campuses must have a strong institutional commitment and provide clear guidelines in handling every incoming report of sexual violence, as well as ensure that each report is taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

#### 7. Protection of Privacy and Whistleblower Identity

Finally, because sexual violence is a very sensitive issue, protecting the privacy and identity of the reporter is crucial to prevent social stigma or retaliation. Hanif (2025) emphasizes that digital reporting systems must ensure that the reporter's personal data is strictly protected, so they feel safe in reporting cases of sexual violence.

### CONCLUSION

Sexual violence in higher education is a major challenge that affects the quality of education and the well-being of the academic community. In efforts to address this issue, digital technology has emerged as a solution that offers convenience, anonymity, and transparency in the reporting system. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of a digital technology-based reporting system at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang has a significant positive impact. Reporters can now report more easily and safely without needing face-to-face interaction, thereby reducing the psychosocial barriers that often prevent victims from coming forward. However, although technology can speed up and simplify reporting, its implementation on campus also presents new challenges, such as the need for adequate infrastructure, user-friendly and secure application design, and digital literacy among students and staff. In addition, clear internal policies and effective handling procedures are essential to ensure proper follow-up on received reports. One of the biggest challenges still faced is how to maintain the reporter's privacy and avoid potential retaliation or social stigma that may arise.

The adoption of digital technology must be accompanied by increased awareness of the importance of protecting victims of sexual violence, which not only includes technical literacy but also an understanding of personal rights, online ethics, and safe procedures for reporting incidents of sexual violence. Therefore, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang needs to continue striving to improve the quality and effectiveness of its digital reporting system, while ensuring supportive policies and comprehensive education for the entire academic community. Overall, digital technology has the potential to strengthen university reporting and response systems to sexual violence, but the challenges of implementation and the needs that must be met also require serious attention to ensure that these systems can operate effectively and sustainably. Moving forward, a holistic strategy involving technology, strong





internal policies, and good digital literacy across the entire academic community will be the key to creating a campus that is safe and responsive to sexual violence.

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