

Gender and residence in focus: A cross-sectional analysis of sexual violence among University Students in Bengkulu

Emi Kosvianti^{1*}, Nopia Wati¹, Bintang Agustina Pratiwi¹, Cantika Alya Dwy Febriani¹

¹ Study Program of Public Health, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, Indonesia

*Corresponding author's email: emikosvianti@umb.ac.id

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Abstract

Background: Sexual violence is an ongoing public health problem in Indonesia, including in the university environment. This study aims to analyze the relationship between gender, residential status, and experiences of sexual violence among students in Bengkulu City.

Method: The method used is quantitative with analytical observational design, involving 525 randomly selected respondents. Data were collected through online surveys at state and private universities in Bengkulu.

Results: The results of the analysis showed that although women are more vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual violence, there was no significant relationship between gender and the experience of sexual violence ($p = 0.138$) > 0.05 . In addition, students who live in boarding houses have a higher risk, but there is no significant relationship between residential status and the experience of sexual violence ($p = 0.720$) > 0.05 .

Conclusion: This study concludes that gender and place of residence are not significantly associated with experiences of sexual violence among students in Bengkulu, emphasizing the need for broader prevention strategies and further research into other contributing factors.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Gender, Residence, University Student, Bengkulu

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is one of the human rights issues which requires attention from both the national and international community. Although most people care about matters related to sexual harassment in the global context in Indonesia, sometimes this issue in local places, even on campus, is often forgotten (1).

Sexual violence can occur in various settings or groups, including within the field of education. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women (2021), in cases of sexual violence in higher education from 2015 to 2021, the highest incidence occurred within the campus environment, and the highest ranking of sexual violence occurred in the campus environment (2).

The existence of problems related to sexual harassment still exists in many university environments, where the victims are not only students but also employees

who work, including lecturers, who can become victims (3),(4).

Demographic variables, such as gender and place of residence, are significant factors in determining the risk of sexual violence. Studies show that women are significantly more vulnerable to becoming victims than men (5). Moreover, students who live in boarding houses or dormitories are more susceptible to sexual violence than those who live with their parents. This vulnerability is attributed to the higher level of freedom and reduced supervision in these environments (6).

According to a UN Women report, one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, with educational settings being one of the highest-risk places (7),(8).

This violence impacts victims and children, their families and communities. There are severe physical and mental health consequences, both life and long-term for

survivors. Consequences for victims and children, adults include injuries, drug addiction, food disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, spontaneous and suicidal thoughts (9).

As one of the main educational hubs in Sumatra, Bengkulu faces similar challenges. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) indicates that more than 20,000 students are currently pursuing education in the city, yet research on the patterns of sexual violence among students remains scarce. Additionally, universities in Bengkulu lack a structured and comprehensive sexual violence prevention policy, which further complicates efforts for evidence-based mitigation and intervention (6).

Previous research has identified that gender and the higher education environment significantly contribute to the prevalence of sexual violence. For example, a study by Smith and Klein (10) found that female students are at greater risk of becoming victims of sexual violence than their male counterparts, particularly in campus environments with limited supervision. Additionally, Wahyuni and Budiman (11) revealed that student residences such as boarding houses or dormitories are strongly associated with an increased risk of sexual violence, due to the high degree of personal freedom and low levels of social control in these settings.

The impact of sexual violence is very bad, so prevention and manipulation of sexual violence cases must be treated seriously. The pattern of sexual violence that occurs on campus can occur between male and female students, lecturers and educators, and so on. To prevent and handle cases of sexual violence in higher education, the University has formed a task force for the prevention and handling of sexual violence cases (12).

Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the risk factors associated with sexual violence among university students in Bengkulu City. Data were collected through the distribution of online questionnaires across various universities in Bengkulu City.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative method with an observational analytic design using a cross-sectional approach. The aim of the study was to analyze the risk factors associated with sexual violence based on gender and residential status among university students in Bengkulu City. Data collection was carried out in Bengkulu City between January and February 2024. The study population included all active students enrolled at various universities in Bengkulu city.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure balanced representation based on gender and residential status. A total of 525 respondents participated in the study. Data were collected through an online survey.

Statistical analysis was conducted using univariate and bivariate methods. The chi-square test was applied to examine the relationship between the independent variables (gender and student residence status) and the dependent variable (experience of sexual violence).

RESULTS

In this study, the names of the universities are withheld to protect institutional confidentiality and safeguard the privacy of participants, considering the sensitive nature of the topic involving experiences of sexual violence

Table 1 shows the results of univariate analysis showing the dominant age of respondents aged <20 years as many as 275 people (52.4%), then the most respondents came from University 1 as many as 219 people (41.7%), most of the respondents were female as many as 405 people (77.1%), the average place of residence of respondents was boarding house as many as 277 people (52.8%), for the experience of sexual violence, respondents who had never experienced sexual violence were 378 people (72.0%).

Table 1. Results of Univariate Analysis

Variables	Frequency n=525	%
Age		
< 20	275	52.4%
21-25	235	44.8%
26-30	3	0.6%
>30	12	2.3%
Universities	219	41.7%
1. University 1	25	4.8%
2. University 2	62	11.8%
3. University 3	24	4.6%
4. University 4	39	7.4%
5. University 5 University 6	24	4.6%
6. University 7	29	5.5%
7. University 8	3	0.6%
8. University 9	2	0.4%
9. Others	6	1.1%
Gender		
Female	405	77.1%
Male	120	22.9%
Residence		
Boarding house	277	52.8%
With Parent/sibling	201	38.3%
With friends	13	2.5%
Dormitory	12	2.3%
Others	22	4.2%
Sexual Violence Experience		
Ever	147	28.0%
Never	378	72.0%

DISCUSSION

There are several factors that influence the occurrence of sexual harassment in the campus environment. First, there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, both in academic and social relationships. Students who have positions of authority, such as lecturers or seniors, often use their positions to oppress the weaker party. Second, there is a lack of knowledge about the boundaries in social interactions. Many students are not yet aware of the

boundaries between reasonable interactions and those that can be categorized as harassment. Third, social norms that still support a patriarchal culture, where women are often considered sexual objects, worsen this situation (13).

Table 2. Relationship between gender and student residence status with experience of sexual violence

Variables	Experience of sexual violence				p-Value
	Ever		Never		
	n	%	n	%	
Gender					0.138
Female	107	72.8%	298	78.8%	
Male	40	27.2%	80	21.2%	
Total	147	100%	378	100%	
Residence Status					0.720
Boarding House	84	57.1%	193	51.1%	
With Parent/siblings	50	34.0%	151	39.9%	
With friends	7	4.8%	9	4.0%	
Dormitory	3	2.0%		2.6%	
Others	3	2.0%		2.4%	

According to Khaerul and friends the emergence of sexual violence is also motivated by the perspective of society related to the differences between the two sexes, enough to call it patriarchy, that this understanding considers the position of a victim. It is also important to understand that discrimination or paralyzed interstitial relationships can not only occur based on gender and gender differences. however, in society, there may be an imbalance in power relations based on society, culture, economy, politics and also for a person's physical and mental condition (14).

Indonesia's Gender Development Index (IPG) tends to increase from year to year, but the level of gender inequality always ranks highest among ASEAN countries. Strong gender inequality is due to strong differences in the gender development index and self-employment index between provinces and between districts/cities in Indonesia. Cases of gender discrimination in society, including university facilities, are the tip of the iceberg. In other words, the number seems to be much smaller than the actual number of cases, because so far, there is no valid data. This type of violence is the result of unequal power relations between men and women(15).

According to research by Sitompul and friends, sexual harassment can happen

anywhere and to anyone. Although so far data in the field through previous research or official reports from the authorities show that most victims of sexual harassment are women and the perpetrators are men, in reality sexual harassment is also experienced by men and the perpetrators are women. However, sexual harassment experienced by men is often not reported because it is considered a disgrace or a threat to their status as parties who are considered to have more "power" than women in society. The ideal expectations associated with patriarchal culture are one of the reasons why sexual harassment experienced by men is not reported. Meanwhile, the large number of female victims who experience sexual harassment is also related to patriarchal culture, namely the different power relations in this society which ultimately become one of the causes of sexual harassment against women (16). The results of this study are in line with the research data which shows a p-value of $0.138 > (\text{Sig.}) 0.05$, this shows that there is no significant relationship between gender and experiences of sexual violence in students in Bengkulu City.

In this study, respondents who reported experiencing sexual violence were predominantly students living in boarding houses, with a total of 84 respondents (57.1%). However, the p-value obtained was

0.138, which is greater than the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant relationship between residence and the experience of sexual violence.

However, the findings of this study are not in line with the research by Pibra and Ismurizal which shows that there is a significant relationship between gender and experiences of sexual harassment (17).

According to research by Abdul and friends place of residence plays an important role in influencing a person's behavior. Teenagers who live with their parents are considered to be able to influence their behavior. The daily routine of teenagers under the supervision of the family is considered a resource that influences the growth of children. Healthy families create healthy structures and provide opportunities for children's growth and development. A study shows that a child's personality will be influenced by the environment in their family (18).

So this research is not in line with the research of Abdul and his friends because it can be seen from the results of the data analysis on the relationship between residence and experiences of sexual violence showed that on average 57.1% of students lived in boarding houses from respondents who had experienced sexual violence and 51.1% who had never experienced sexual violence. Chi-square analysis based on residence of students in Bengkulu City found a p value of 0.720 >0.05, which means that there is no significant relationship between residence and experiences of sexual violence in students in Bengkulu City. And this study is in line with the research conducted by Fatchiya and friends who said that sexual violence can occur in public places such as parks, canteens, places of worship, and parking lots, as well as in residences and boarding houses. In general, the results of this study indicate that sexual violence can occur in various places, without ruling out the possibility that campus environments such as lecturer rooms, academic service rooms, lecture rooms and laboratories can

also be locations for sexual violence, not just in boarding houses (19).

Preventing sexual violence in universities can create various ways, such as disseminating information about anti-sexual violence through different media, it has increased understanding through conferences, seminars, discussions and training; Develop scientific research on sexual violence and integrate values and gender into programs, provide planning and space places that are safe, comfortable and friendly for men and women, and provide a budget to manipulate victims of victims (20).

From the variables of gender and place of residence, the analysis results showed that no significant relationship was found with experiences of sexual violence.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that gender and place of residence do not have a significant relationship with the experience of sexual violence among students in Bengkulu City. Although female students appear to be more vulnerable to sexual violence, statistical analysis does not provide enough evidence to support a significant association. These findings highlight the need for more effective prevention strategies and evidence-based interventions to address sexual violence in campus environments. Further research is recommended to explore additional factors that may contribute to the incidence of violence among students.

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