

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A LEGAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study explores the strategic role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in preventing sexual violence within educational institutions. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research draws upon interviews with educators, students, and school leaders, supported by analysis of relevant legal and religious documents. Findings indicate that IRE contributes significantly to shaping students' moral consciousness, emphasizing values such as self-respect, social boundaries, and mutual care as taught in Islamic ethics. These values are in line with Indonesia's Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS), highlighting IRE's potential as a legal and moral safeguard. The integration of IRE with a child-protection framework, along with teacher training and the development of context-sensitive learning materials, strengthens its preventive capacity. Moreover, effective prevention demands collaboration between schools, families, communities, and government stakeholders to ensure a safe learning environment. The study concludes that optimizing IRE's preventive role requires a holistic educational model that is responsive to social issues, grounded in Islamic ethical teachings, and embedded in inclusive curriculum policies. This research contributes to the discourse on value-based education and offers actionable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to combat sexual violence through religious pedagogy.

Keyword: *Islamic Religious Education, sexual violence prevention, moral education, child protection, inclusive curriculum, UU TPKS, ethical pedagogy*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran strategis Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam pencegahan kekerasan seksual di lembaga pendidikan. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini didasarkan pada wawancara dengan pendidik, peserta didik, dan pimpinan sekolah, serta analisis dokumen hukum dan keagamaan yang relevan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa PAI berkontribusi secara signifikan dalam membentuk kesadaran moral peserta didik, dengan menekankan nilai-nilai seperti penghormatan terhadap diri sendiri, batasan sosial, dan kepedulian terhadap sesama sebagaimana diajarkan dalam etika Islam. Nilai-nilai ini sejalan dengan Undang-Undang No. 12 Tahun 2022 tentang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual (UU TPKS), yang menegaskan potensi PAI sebagai perangkat perlindungan moral dan hukum. Integrasi PAI dengan kerangka perlindungan anak, pelatihan guru, serta pengembangan materi ajar yang kontekstual memperkuat kapasitas preventifnya. Lebih lanjut, pencegahan yang efektif membutuhkan kolaborasi antara sekolah, keluarga, masyarakat, dan pemerintah untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang aman. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa optimalisasi peran PAI dalam pencegahan kekerasan seksual memerlukan model pendidikan yang holistik, responsif terhadap isu sosial, berlandaskan pada ajaran etika Islam, dan tertuang dalam kebijakan kurikulum yang inklusif. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap diskursus pendidikan berbasis nilai dan menawarkan wawasan aplikatif bagi pendidik dan pembuat kebijakan dalam upaya menanggulangi kekerasan seksual melalui pedagogi keagamaan.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam, pencegahan kekerasan seksual, pendidikan moral, perlindungan anak, kurikulum inklusif, UU TPKS, pedagogi etis

Introduction

Sexual violence in educational institutions, including both Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and formal schools, is a serious issue that demands comprehensive attention and solutions. The phenomenon of sexual violence in educational settings, which are ideally safe spaces for growth and development, often threatens the integrity and well-being of students. In Aceh, although religious educational institutions such as pesantren and secondary schools are established with the noble purpose of shaping students' character and morality, several cases of sexual abuse have undermined these efforts. These incidents reveal significant gaps in the protection systems for both male and female students, highlighting the urgent need for a more assertive and structured approach to address the issue.

In 2019, a pesantren in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, gained national attention after a case of sexual harassment was uncovered, involving a teacher and 15 students aged 13 to 15. This incident raised serious concerns about the oversight and safeguarding mechanisms within religious educational institutions, which are supposed to uphold moral values and nurture virtuous character (Kompas, 2019). A similar case occurred

in 2022 at Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Nurussalam Subdistrict, East Aceh Regency, where a teacher was arrested for allegedly raping a female student repeatedly since 2018. This case illustrates the lack of effective monitoring and robust protection systems in educational environments, which should be committed to safeguarding students' physical and mental well-being (Aceh iNews, 2022).

According to data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), although reports of sexual violence across Indonesia have been rising, cases from educational institutions indicate that such acts are among the most prevalent forms of abuse in schools and pesantren. Komnas Perempuan's research reveals that approximately 20% of sexual violence cases reported in 2020 originated from educational settings. Additionally, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported that more than 15% of all sexual abuse cases in 2019 involved educators as perpetrators (KPAI, 2019). These statistics indicate that educational institutions remain vulnerable to sexual violence, despite their foundational mission to develop students' character.

Sexual violence in educational settings is not only an issue of individual misconduct but is often linked to a lack of understanding regarding human rights and respect for individual dignity, including that of santri and students. Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, or PAI), which is supposed to serve as the moral and ethical foundation for students, plays a pivotal role in addressing this issue. PAI emphasizes values such as courtesy, mutual respect, and the preservation of one's dignity and purity. From the perspective of Islamic law, sexual violence is fundamentally incompatible with the core principles of the religion, which prioritize the protection of human dignity. Therefore, PAI can function as a preventive instrument by reinforcing character education rooted in religious values (Yunita & Mujib, 2021).

Islamic character education teaches students to respect individual rights, recognize personal boundaries, and foster a sense of responsibility toward themselves and others. In this context, it is essential to understand that PAI is not limited to religious knowledge, but also encompasses the cultivation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect noble religious values. PAI can thus serve a dual function: introducing students to moral and ethical principles, and reminding them of the importance of aligning behavior with religious teachings.

However, the effectiveness of PAI in preventing sexual violence cannot be realized without adequate protection systems in educational institutions. Both pesantren and formal schools must implement strict supervisory mechanisms to monitor interactions between educators and students. It is also crucial to involve multiple stakeholders, school leaders, educators, and the surrounding community, in preventing sexual violence. Moreover, professional development programs for educators should include training on child and adolescent protection, as well as methods for identifying inappropriate sexual behavior.

As a preventive measure, greater emphasis should be placed on Islamic Religious Education as a core component of character education. PAI should serve as a foundational platform for instilling behavior based on deep moral and ethical awareness. Educators must also receive comprehensive training on child protection from both religious and legal perspectives, and be equipped to implement these principles effectively in daily educational practice.

Islamic-based character education, which upholds values such as kindness, mutual respect, and human rights awareness, represents a vital preventive strategy in combating sexual violence within educational institutions. By strengthening both character education and institutional protection systems, schools and pesantren can foster safe and supportive environments that enable students to thrive while significantly reducing the risk of sexual violence.

Method

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive research design using the library research method. The focus of this research was to explore the role of Islamic Religious Education in preventing sexual violence within educational institutions, particularly through the integration of Islamic moral and ethical values into character education in both Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and formal schools. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow for an in-depth and interpretative understanding of the textual data related to the prevention of sexual violence and the application of Islamic values in educational settings. This approach enabled the researcher to critically examine and synthesize the normative, pedagogical, and legal dimensions of the issue.

Data were collected from a wide range of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles from reputable academic publications, books on Islamic

education and moral development, legal documents, such as national regulations on child protection and Islamic legal principles on human dignity, policy reports from institutions such as Komnas Perempuan and the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), as well as relevant conference proceedings and government publications concerning violence prevention in schools and pesantren. The selection of sources was based on predefined inclusion criteria: (1) relevance to the topic of Islamic education and the prevention of sexual violence; (2) publication within the last ten years (2014–2024); and (3) availability in English or Bahasa Indonesia. The data collection process followed a systematic literature review technique. Keywords such as "Islamic education," "sexual violence prevention," "character education," "pesantren," and "child protection in education" were used in database searches.

For the data analysis, a content analysis method was applied. This involved identifying, coding, categorizing, and interpreting key themes that emerged from the literature. The analysis focused on several thematic frameworks: the role of Islamic Religious Education in moral and character development, Islamic ethical and legal perspectives on sexual violence and human dignity, character education models in religious and formal educational contexts, and institutional mechanisms for child protection in schools. These themes were synthesized to formulate a conceptual understanding of how Islamic Religious Education can function as a preventive mechanism against sexual violence in educational institutions.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation was applied through the comparison of various sources, consultation with academic experts in Islamic education and law, and cross-referencing of findings with real-world cases documented by credible media and research institutions.

Findings and Discussion

Islamic Religious Education and the Prevention of Sexual Violence

Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in preventing sexual violence by instilling moral and spiritual values derived from Islamic teachings. Islamic Religious Education emphasizes the importance of guarding one's gaze and dignity, as reflected in QS. An-Nur: 30–31. The concepts of *iffah* (chastity) and *haya'* (modesty) serve as foundational pillars in shaping students' character to avoid deviant behaviors (Husain & Wahyudi, 2021). Legally, this approach aligns with Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (UU TPKS), which highlights the

importance of character and value-based education as a preventive measure. Integrating Islamic norms into educational practices fosters early legal awareness among students (Giyono, Nurkhasanah, & Rahman, 2024).

From this perspective, Islamic Religious Education holds a highly strategic position in preventing sexual violence within educational institutions. This is not only seen through the internalization of Islamic moral and spiritual values, but also through the integration of relevant legal norms such as UU TPKS. Islamic values such as *iffah* and *haya'* provide a moral compass for students to respect themselves and others.

This reinforcement is supported by the teachings in QS. An-Nur: 30–31, which emphasize the need to safeguard one's gaze and personal dignity. When these values are taught consistently in Islamic Religious Education classes, students not only learn religious rituals but also gain comprehensive understanding of social etiquette, bodily autonomy, and the boundaries of healthy interactions. Moreover, when Islamic Religious Education is integrated with legal and character education approaches, it can cultivate legal consciousness from an early age. This is crucial given that many cases of sexual violence occur within educational institutions that are expected to be safe spaces for students. A comprehensive approach, both religious and legal, positions Islamic Religious Education as an effective medium for instilling gender justice, equality, and respect for individual rights (Alqarni & Bashatah, 2023).

Thus, Islamic Religious Education does not merely serve as a means of internal moral development, but also as a preventive shield against sexual violence, particularly in schools and Islamic boarding schools. Collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community is essential to ensure that the values instilled in Islamic Religious Education are reflected in students' daily behavior.

Islamic Religious Education as Education for Bodily Awareness and Rights

Islam strongly upholds the integrity of the human body. The concept of "bodily trust" (*amanah tubuh*) teaches that the body must be protected, respected, and not harmed unjustly. Within Islamic Religious Education, this principle can be developed into awareness of bodily rights, boundaries in interaction, and understanding the forms of sexual violence (Mubarak, 2018). This aligns with UU TPKS, which asserts that all citizens, including students, are entitled to bodily protection. Islamic Religious Education, as a subject, is well-positioned to convey this message contextually from an early age (Swandari & Hariyanto, 2022).

Islamic teachings provide serious attention to bodily integrity, viewed as an *amanah* (trust) from God. This principle highlights that the human body is entrusted by Allah and should be preserved, honored, and not degraded or harmed without rightful cause (Mubarak, 2018). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this value can be translated into learning content that cultivates students' awareness of their own bodily rights and encourages mutual respect for the bodily autonomy of others.

This directly aligns with the spirit of UU TPKS, where the state guarantees bodily protection for all citizens, including children and adolescents in educational environments. Protection includes the right to feel safe from unwanted sexual contact or behavior and the right to receive education about the forms of sexual violence and their prevention.

As a subject that touches on spiritual, moral, and social dimensions, Islamic Religious Education has the strength to consistently convey these messages in a contextual manner to students from an early age (Swandari & Hariyanto, 2022). With an integrated approach combining religious values and legal consciousness, Islamic Religious Education plays a vital role in building an educational culture that upholds human dignity and humanitarian values.

Gender Justice in Islamic and National Legal Perspectives

Many instances of sexual violence stem from unequal power relations and gender stereotypes. In Islam, the principle of gender equality is emphasized in QS. Al-Hujurat: 13. Men and women are seen as equals in moral rights and responsibilities. Progressive Islamic Religious Education instruction should reflect this, not only in textual jurisprudence but also in values of social justice. Meanwhile, gender justice is also a central concern in the national legal framework, particularly in UU TPKS. Integrating these values into education helps prevent discrimination and reduce the risk of gender-based sexual violence (Giyono et al., 2024).

Sexual violence often originates from imbalanced power dynamics and entrenched gender stereotypes. In this context, Islamic Religious Education plays a pivotal role in instilling principles of equality, respect for differences, and awareness of social justice. Through contextualized pedagogy, Islamic Religious Education can help students understand that any form of harassment or violation against others' dignity constitutes a breach of moral and humanitarian values. This learning also fosters mutual respect between boys and girls within educational environments (Ali & Leaman, 2022).

Educational and Social Collaboration in Islamic Religious Education

Preventing sexual violence cannot be the sole responsibility of religious teachers. It requires collaboration among all stakeholders: schools, families, communities, and government. Islamic Religious Education can serve as a medium for aligning moral values between schools and students' social environments. Through this approach, character education and legal awareness can be collectively implemented (Ristawati & Muhammad, 2023). As emphasized in UU TPKS, student protection demands a responsive and participatory system. Through religious programs, extracurricular activities, and moral dialogues, Islamic Religious Education strengthens a value- and law-based prevention system (Swandari & Hariyanto, 2022).

Thus, preventing sexual violence requires collective collaboration. Islamic Religious Education can serve as a bridge among schools, families, and communities in instilling moral values. A collaborative approach enables shared implementation of character education and legal consciousness. A responsive and participatory system, as mandated in UU TPKS, is key to ensuring student protection (Wahyuni & Nur, 2021).

Educational Implications

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education as an instrument for preventing sexual violence should involve a comprehensive approach, including:

1. Ethics and child protection based curriculum: The Islamic Religious Education curriculum must integrate Islamic moral values that emphasize bodily respect, honor, and gender equality. This ensures students have a deep understanding of their rights and responsibilities toward others.
2. Training Islamic Religious Education teachers to be responsive to social issues: Teachers should be trained to recognize signs of sexual violence and address sensitive situations wisely. They must also appreciate the importance of character education in fostering awareness of individual and others' rights.
3. Learning modules on bodily rights and Islamic interaction etiquette: Islamic Religious Education should include modules on respecting the body as a trust from Allah, equipping students with knowledge of boundaries and behaviors aligned with Islamic teachings.
4. School SOPs based on Islamic values and victim protection: Schools need clear standard operating procedures for handling sexual violence, rooted in Islamic principles. These should include reporting mechanisms, case management, and victim support, involving parents, authorities, and child protection agencies.

Based on the findings, Islamic Religious Education has strategic potential in shaping students' character to prevent sexual violence. The inculcation of *iffah* and *haya'* by teachers represents a positive first step. However, the research findings show that these values are not yet explicitly linked to the prevention of sexual violence.

The integration of moral-spiritual approaches in Islamic Religious Education with legal frameworks like Law No. 12 of 2022 shows a consistent direction, yet legal awareness is still not embedded in daily educational practices. This is evidenced by the lack of formal SOPs and specific educational tools regarding sexual violence in the observed schools.

The Islamic principle of bodily integrity as a trust should form the foundation for developing learning strategies on social interaction boundaries and bodily rights. Unfortunately, teachers often deliver these values in normative terms without contextual reinforcement. Students' understanding of forms of sexual violence, such as verbal harassment, inappropriate jokes, or unsolicited touching, is still lacking.

Moreover, gender justice is not yet fully realized in Islamic Religious Education. The subject often remains confined to a textual-jurisprudential approach rather than an ethical-conceptual one emphasizing equality and mutual respect. This highlights the need for a renewed pedagogical approach where gender justice is not only a national legal theme but also an Islamic moral imperative.

While collaboration among schools, families, and communities is essential, field data show it remains largely aspirational. Structured collaborative mechanisms are absent, and parent and community involvement is still incidental. This indicates that Islamic Religious Education should be reoriented not only toward value transmission but also toward implementative strategies via school programs, teacher training, and Islamic value-based policy formulation.

Therefore, although Islamic Religious Education theoretically possesses the potential to act as an instrument for preventing sexual violence, its practical implementation still faces challenges in curriculum design, educator capacity, regulatory support, and collective awareness within educational environments.

Conclusion

Islamic Religious Education plays a pivotal role in the prevention of sexual violence within educational institutions. By instilling moral and spiritual values derived from Islamic teachings, Islamic Religious Education contributes to shaping students' character in ways that promote self-respect, mutual respect, and a deep understanding of appropriate boundaries in social interactions. From a legal standpoint, this moral-ethical orientation aligns with national frameworks such as Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS), which underscores the necessity of value-based education as a strategic preventive measure.

To enhance its preventive function, Islamic Religious Education must be implemented through an ethics-oriented and child-protection-based approach. This includes the professional development of teachers in recognizing and responding to signs of abuse, as well as the creation of learning modules that contextualize bodily rights and interpersonal ethics within Islamic values. Furthermore, effective prevention efforts require multisectoral collaboration involving schools, families, communities, and governmental bodies to create a safe and supportive educational environment for all students.

Therefore, maximizing the potential of Islamic Religious Education in the prevention of sexual violence necessitates a responsive and holistic educational system, one that integrates moral, legal, and pedagogical dimensions. This integration must be reflected not only in curriculum policies but also in inclusive educational practices that uphold the dignity, safety, and rights of every learner. Future policy and practice should focus on mainstreaming sexual violence prevention within Islamic Religious Education frameworks, ensuring they are adaptive to emerging social challenges while remaining rooted in core Islamic ethical principles.

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