

Rethinking Sexual Violence Prevention in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions : A Victim-Centered Legal Framework from the Perspective of SDG 16

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Sexual Violence Prevention; Higher Education Institutions; SDG 16; Victim-Centered Approach; Legal Protection. Conflict of Interest Statement: - Copyright © 2026 Vifada Assumption Journal of Law. All rights reserved.	Purpose: This study examines sexual violence prevention in Indonesian higher education institutions through a victim-centered legal framework, with SDG 16 as the primary evaluative perspective and SDG 4 and SDG 5 as supporting perspectives on safe education and gender equality. Research Design and Methodology: This normative legal study applies statutory, conceptual, and analytical approaches using Law No. 12 of 2022, Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024, and relevant secondary legal materials. The materials were analyzed through legal interpretation, normative systematization, and evaluative analysis. Findings and Discussion: Indonesian law provides a sufficient normative basis for prevention and handling, but effective implementation requires accountable governance, safe and confidential reporting, victim protection, recovery services, and institutional responsibility. Prevention must therefore move beyond formal compliance toward substantive protection and access to justice. Implications: Universities should strengthen victim-centered governance by integrating prevention, reporting, recovery, and accountability into institutional policies and implementation mechanisms. Future research should empirically assess the effectiveness of these strategies across higher education institutions.

Introduction

Sexual violence in universities is not merely a disciplinary problem within academic institutions, but a legal, institutional, and human rights issue that affects access to safe and equal higher education.¹ Universities are expected to function as spaces for knowledge production, character formation, and social mobility, yet sexual violence undermines those functions by creating fear, silence, exclusion, and distrust.² In the Indonesian context, the issue becomes more complex because higher education institutions must respond not only as educational bodies, but also as legal communities bound by state regulations, ethical duties, and institutional accountability. The prevention of sexual violence in universities requires a legal framework that places victims at the center of protection, recovery, participation, and justice.

The theoretical problem of this study lies in the gap between the normative recognition of victims' rights and the practical capacity of universities to implement victim-centered prevention and response mechanisms. Legal norms may provide formal protection, but institutional procedures often remain fragmented when they are not supported by clear reporting systems, trained personnel,

¹ Tri Winarni Soenarto-Putri et al., "Developing and Strengthening the Role of Institutions in Preventing and Addressing Sexual Violence in Higher Education," *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies* 13, no. 13 (June 25, 2024): 119-36, <https://doi.org/10.17583/generos.12424>.

² Akbar Kurnia Putra et al., "Sexual Violence on Campus: Between Power Relations and Law Enforcement," *Jurnal Karya Abdi Masyarakat* 8, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 49-54, <https://doi.org/10.22437/jkam.v8i2.38351>.

survivor-sensitive services, and transparent accountability.³ This situation shows that the prevention of sexual violence cannot be reduced to sanctioning perpetrators after an incident has occurred. It must also include the reconstruction of campus governance, legal awareness, risk prevention, and institutional responsibility in line with the broader agenda of sustainable development.

Recent legal developments in Indonesia show that the state has strengthened the normative basis for addressing sexual violence through Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes. This law is important because it expands the legal understanding of sexual violence and gives stronger attention to victims' rights, protection, recovery, and access to justice.⁴ In the higher education sector, the regulatory framework has also developed through Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 55 of 2024 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education, which replaced Ministerial Regulation No. 30 of 2021.⁵ These developments indicate a policy shift from a narrow disciplinary approach toward a broader legal and institutional model of prevention and handling.

However, the existence of regulations does not automatically guarantee effective protection for victims in university settings. Sexual violence in higher education often involves unequal power relations between lecturers, students, staff, supervisors, and institutional authorities. Victims may face psychological pressure, fear of academic retaliation, stigma, confidentiality risks, and uncertainty regarding reporting outcomes.⁶ These conditions demonstrate that legal protection must be designed not only around formal procedures, but also around the lived experience and vulnerability of victims.

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a broader normative lens for reviewing sexual violence prevention strategies in higher education. SDG 4 requires safe, inclusive, and equitable education, SDG 5 demands the elimination of gender-based violence and unequal power relations,⁷ and SDG 16 emphasizes access to justice, institutional accountability, and effective protection mechanisms. Read together, these goals show that preventing sexual violence in universities is not only a matter of campus discipline or regulatory compliance, but also part of a governance obligation to build safe, equal, and accountable higher education institutions.⁸

Several recent studies on campus sexual violence in Indonesia have contributed to mapping legal instruments, institutional task forces, reporting procedures, and university obligations. However, much of this scholarship still centers on whether universities have adopted regulations and formal compliance mechanisms, rather than examining whether those mechanisms are capable of producing substantive victim protection, safe reporting, recovery support, and accountable institutional responses. As a result, the legal discussion often remains descriptive and regulatory, without fully reconstructing prevention as a governance-based strategy.

Another gap lies in the limited integration between sexual violence prevention and sustainable development analysis. Existing studies often discuss sexual violence as a legal or institutional problem, while studies on Sustainable Development Goals in higher education tend to focus on education quality, gender mainstreaming, or governance performance in general terms. This article departs from that separation by positioning sexual violence prevention as a concrete legal issue that

³ Aliya R. Webermann, Kathryn J. Holland, and Christopher M. Murphy, "Student Experiences Reporting Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct to the Title IX Office at a Public State University," *Violence Against Women* 30, no. 6-7 (May 12, 2024): 1564-85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012221150274>.

⁴ Ermina Dwi Lestari, Achmad Adi Surya G S, and Rico Septian Noor, "Sexual Violence Crimes And Legal Protection For Victims: Law Number 12 Of 2022 On Sexual Violence Crimes And The Reality Of Handling Sexual Violence Cases In Indonesia," *Journal of Law, Politic and Humanities* 5, no. 6 (August 24, 2025): 4683-94, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jlph.v5i6.2196>.

⁵ Nabella Dellia Putri, Agus Mulyawan, and Nuraliah Ali, "Legal Protection for Victims of Sexual Violence in Higher Education from a Victimology Perspective," *Journal of Law, Politic and Humanities* 5, no. 4 (April 14, 2025): 2766-79, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jlph.v5i4.1633>.

⁶ Manon Bergeron et al., "Sexual Violence on University Campuses: Differences and Similarities in the Experiences of Students, Professors and Employees," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 49, no. 3 (January 9, 2020): 88-103, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1066637ar>.

⁷ Surattana Adipat and Rattanawadee Chotikapanich, "Sustainable Development Goal 4: An Education Goal to Achieve Equitable Quality Education," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 11, no. 6 (November 5, 2022): 174, <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2022-0159>.

⁸ Pål Wrangé, "SDG 16: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels," in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Sustainable Development Goals and International Law*, ed. Jonas Ebbesson and Ellen Hey, Cambridge Law Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 399-421, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/9781108769631.018>.

directly affects safe education, gender equality, and accountable institutions through the analytical lenses of SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16.

The empirical and theoretical gap becomes more visible when university responses are assessed through the lens of victims' needs. Victims require protection from intimidation, confidentiality of identity, psychological and academic support, procedural clarity, and assurance that reporting will not produce secondary victimization.⁹ A purely administrative model may fail to meet these needs when it prioritizes institutional reputation over victim recovery and justice. Therefore, the main challenge is not only whether universities have regulations, but whether their legal and institutional mechanisms are designed to protect victims substantively.¹⁰

This gap also shows the need to move from a reactive model to a preventive and transformative model. A reactive model usually begins after sexual violence has occurred, while a preventive model identifies risks, strengthens awareness, improves institutional procedures, and builds a campus culture that rejects abuse of power. A transformative model goes further by reconstructing the relationship between regulation, institutional ethics, gender justice, and accountability.¹¹ In this regard, the idea of reconstructing sexual violence prevention strategies in universities from the perspective of Sustainable Development Goals becomes relevant to strengthen the direction of this article.

Based on the above problem, this study asks how strategies for preventing sexual violence in Indonesian higher education institutions can be reconstructed through a victim-centered legal framework and evaluated primarily from the perspective of SDG 16, with SDG 4 and SDG 5 supporting the assessment of safe education and gender equality. It further asks how Indonesian regulations, university governance, victim protection, and institutional accountability can be integrated into a more effective prevention model. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the normative basis, governance weaknesses, and strategic direction for reconstructing sexual violence prevention in universities beyond formal compliance.

The novelty of this study lies not merely in discussing victim-centered legal protection, but in distinguishing itself from prior studies that primarily emphasize regulatory compliance and institutional implementation. This article offers a conceptual reconstruction of prevention strategies by connecting victim protection, governance-based prevention, institutional accountability, and sustainable development within one legal framework. In this respect, the article contributes a more integrated model for understanding sexual violence prevention in higher education as part of the realization of SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16.

This article is expected to contribute to legal scholarship by offering an analytical framework that connects sexual violence prevention with higher education governance, victims' rights, and sustainable institutional reform. It also provides a normative basis for universities to move from formal compliance toward risk-aware governance, safe reporting mechanisms, recovery-oriented protection, and accountable institutional responses. The central argument advanced in this study is that preventing sexual violence in universities is a legal and governance obligation that must be understood within the broader agenda of safe, equal, and sustainable higher education. Accordingly, SDG 16 functions as the primary analytical framework for assessing access to justice and institutional accountability, while SDG 4 and SDG 5 operate as supporting frameworks for evaluating educational safety, inclusion, gender equality, and protection from gender-based violence.

⁹ Mutimmatul Faidah et al., "Strengthening the Ecosystem for Preventing and Handling Sexual Violence on Campus to Support Achievements SDGs Gender Equality," ed. N. Suprpto et al., *E3S Web of Conferences* 450 (November 29, 2023): 01007, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202345001007>.

¹⁰ Bustaman Bustaman and Amir Machmud, "Analisis Perlindungan Hukum Dalam Pencegahan Dan Penanganan Kekerasan Seksual Di Lingkungan Perguruan Tinggi," *AKADEMIK: Jurnal Mahasiswa Humanis* 5, no. 2 (May 1, 2025): 1067-78, <https://doi.org/10.37481/jmh.v5i2.1448>.

¹¹ Brittnie E. Bloom et al., "Employees, Advisees, and Emerging Scholars: A Qualitative Analysis of Graduate Students' Roles and Experiences of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment on College Campuses," *Sexuality & Culture* 25, no. 5 (October 20, 2021): 1653-72, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09841-w>.

Literature Review

Sexual Violence in Higher Education as a Legal and Governance Issue

Sexual violence in higher education has been increasingly discussed as a legal and institutional problem,¹² not merely as individual misconduct within the academic environment. Universities are normative spaces governed by legal duties, ethical standards, and public responsibilities to ensure safe and equal access to education.¹³ For that reason, sexual violence directly affects the legal legitimacy of higher education governance.

The literature shows that campus sexual violence often arises within unequal power relations involving lecturers, students, supervisors, staff, or other institutional actors. Such relations create structural vulnerability because victims may depend on perpetrators or related authorities for academic evaluation, supervision, or administrative approval.¹⁴ This condition makes sexual violence in universities different from ordinary interpersonal violence because it is embedded in institutional hierarchy.

Scholarly discussions also indicate that the problem is often sustained by silence, fear of retaliation, stigma, and weak reporting mechanisms. Victims may formally have access to complaint procedures,¹⁵ yet remain unable to use them safely when they fear academic harm, disbelief, or secondary victimization. This gap shows that institutional response must be assessed not only by the existence of rules, but also by the substantive accessibility of protection.

In this context, the literature supports a shift from viewing campus sexual violence as a disciplinary matter to understanding it as a governance issue that demands prevention, protection, and accountability.¹⁶ However, many studies still stop at describing regulations, institutional duties, or general policy responses. This article builds on that literature by moving further toward a reconstruction of prevention strategies grounded in legal protection and institutional responsibility. This conceptual development provides the basis for the research problem examined in this article, namely how legal protection and institutional responsibility can be integrated into a more effective victim-centered prevention framework in higher education.

Victim-Centered Approach in the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence

A victim-centered approach is based on the recognition that victims are rights-holders whose dignity, safety, recovery, and participation must be protected throughout the legal and institutional process.¹⁷ In sexual violence cases, this approach is crucial because victims frequently experience trauma, shame, fear, and procedural vulnerability.¹⁸ Therefore, the legal framework must be designed to avoid further harm while ensuring access to justice.

The literature explains that a victim-centered model requires confidentiality, informed information, psychological support, legal assistance, academic protection, and safeguards against retaliation. These elements are especially important in universities because victims may continue to interact with perpetrators or with institutional actors linked to the case. Without such protection, reporting mechanisms may become formally available but substantively unsafe.

¹² Carissa Dwilanisusantya, Ratih Widowati, and Ifah Atur Kurniati, "RIGHTS AND POLICIES FOR WOMEN TO BE PROTECTED FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN OBTAINING EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES," *Sriwijaya Crimen and Legal Studies*, June 30, 2025, 46-64, <https://doi.org/10.28946/scls.v3i1.4773>.

¹³ Tiona Camille Martin-Thomsen et al., "The Scholarship of Critique and Power," *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* 9, no. 1 (March 7, 2021): 279-93, <https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.9.1.19>.

¹⁴ Georgia Zara et al., "Looking for a Preventive Approach to Sexual Harassment in Academia. A Systematic Review," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 31, no. 4 (December 20, 2025): 851-79, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-024-09582-0>.

¹⁵ Sharon Cowan et al., "Data, Disclosure and Duties: Balancing Privacy and Safeguarding in the Context of UK University Student Sexual Misconduct Complaints," *Legal Studies* 44, no. 3 (September 3, 2024): 478-97, <https://doi.org/10.1017/lst.2024.9>.

¹⁶ Mohamed Y. Mattar, "Combating Academic Corruption and Enhancing Academic Integrity through International Accreditation Standards: The Model of Qatar University," *Journal of Academic Ethics* 20, no. 2 (June 17, 2022): 119-46, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-021-09392-7>.

¹⁷ Olga Tesovic, "The Protection of Crime Victims in Contemporary Justice Systems: Legal Frameworks, Institutional Innovations, and Societal Challenges," *Temida* 28, no. 3 (2025): 419-38, <https://doi.org/10.2298/TEM2503419T>.

¹⁸ Dagmar Stockman et al., "An Ecological Approach to Understanding the Impact of Sexual Violence: A Systematic Meta-Review," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (May 24, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1032408>.

Victim-centered protection also broadens the understanding of justice beyond punishment alone.¹⁹ Justice includes safety, recognition, procedural clarity, recovery, and the ability of victims to continue their education without intimidation or exclusion. Accordingly, universities must treat sexual violence prevention and handling as part of their obligation to protect the right to education in a dignified and non-discriminatory manner.

Existing scholarship has made important contributions by emphasizing victim protection and institutional sensitivity, yet much of it still discusses these aspects in relation to case handling rather than prevention strategy.²⁰ This leaves a conceptual gap between victim-centered justice and the design of governance-based prevention mechanisms. The present article addresses that gap by linking victim-centered protection to institutional prevention, risk awareness, and accountability in higher education. Accordingly, this literature establishes the analytical foundation for examining how victims' rights can be translated from principles of protection into operational mechanisms of prevention, reporting, recovery, and institutional accountability.

Sustainable Development Goals and the Reconstruction of Prevention Strategies in Higher Education

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a relevant normative framework for reviewing sexual violence prevention in universities. SDG 4 emphasizes safe, inclusive, and equitable quality education, SDG 5 underscores gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence, and SDG 16 highlights access to justice and accountable institutions.²¹ These three goals together show that sexual violence prevention is closely connected to the legal and governance quality of higher education institutions.

Within higher education studies, universities are often described as strategic actors in achieving sustainable development through teaching, research, and institutional governance.²² In that context, preventing sexual violence is part of the university's responsibility to create an academic environment that is safe, equal, and accountable. A campus that fails to prevent sexual violence cannot fully fulfill the normative direction of sustainable and inclusive higher education.

Nevertheless, the literature often treats these fields separately. Studies on campus sexual violence tend to focus on regulations, task forces, or victim handling, while studies on SDGs in higher education commonly address education quality, governance, or gender mainstreaming in broad terms.²³ As a result, there is still limited integration between victim-centered legal protection and SDGs-based evaluation of prevention strategies.

This article contributes by positioning sexual violence prevention as a concrete legal and governance issue that must be read through SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16. The contribution of the article lies not only in mapping legal norms, but also in formulating rethinking strategies based on risk-aware governance, victim protection, safe reporting, recovery support, and institutional accountability. In this way, the Literature Review provides the conceptual basis for the article's argument that preventing sexual violence in universities is part of sustainable institutional reform. Accordingly, this synthesis connects the identified research gap with the article's analytical focus by positioning SDG 16 as the primary framework for access to justice and institutional accountability, supported by SDG 4 and SDG 5 in assessing safe education and gender equality.

¹⁹ Cindy A. Crusto, Lisa M. Hooper, and Ishita S. Arora, "Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education: A Framework for Prevention Science Program Development," *Journal of Prevention* 45, no. 4 (August 13, 2024): 501-20, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-024-00780-4>.

²⁰ Joanna Collaton et al., "Justice for Women After Sexual Assault: A Critical Interpretive Synthesis," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 25, no. 5 (December 9, 2024): 3457-72, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241248411>.

²¹ Salvatore Monaco, "SDG 16. Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All, and Build Effective, Accountable, and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels," in *Identity, Territories, and Sustainability: Challenges and Opportunities for Achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2024), 157-65, <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83797-549-520241017>.

²² Walter Leal Filho et al., "Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into the Strategy of Higher Education Institutions," *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology* 30, no. 5 (July 4, 2023): 564-75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2023.2167884>.

²³ Dewi Setyowati Sukeni and Bhanu Prakash, "Sexual Violence in Higher Education, Policies in Indonesia and India," *Justitia Jurnal Hukum* 7, no. 2 (November 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.30651/justitia.v7i2.20438>.

Research Design and Methodology

This study employs normative legal research using statutory, conceptual, and analytical approaches to examine the reconstruction of sexual violence prevention strategies in Indonesian higher education through a victim-centered legal framework. The statutory approach focuses on Law No. 12 of 2022 and Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024, while the conceptual and analytical approaches assess victim-centered protection, prevention, institutional accountability, and higher education governance. In this study, SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16 are not treated as independent research methods, but as evaluative frameworks for assessing whether prevention strategies support safe education, gender equality, access to justice, and accountable institutions.

The subject of this research is not a population or empirical sample, but legal materials relevant to the prevention and handling of sexual violence in universities. The primary legal materials consist of legislation and official regulations, including norms on sexual violence crimes, higher education governance, human rights protection, child and women protection where relevant, and ministerial regulations concerning violence prevention and handling in higher education. Secondary legal materials include journal articles, books, research reports, policy papers, and academic writings relevant to sexual violence in universities, victim-centered justice, campus governance, gender equality, and SDGs, selected based on relevance to the research problem, academic credibility, thematic relevance, and analytical contribution. Priority was given to peer-reviewed publications from 2020 onward, while earlier works were retained when they provided foundational concepts or established analytical frameworks. Tertiary legal materials, such as legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and official institutional documents, are used to support conceptual clarification and ensure consistency in the use of legal terminology. The primary legal analysis is centered on Law No. 12 of 2022 and Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 as the principal legal instruments for assessing the normative structure of prevention and handling of sexual violence in higher education.

Legal materials were collected through library research and organized using a document review matrix covering normative issues, institutional obligations, victim protection, and their relevance to SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16. The materials were then analyzed qualitatively through legal interpretation, normative systematization, and evaluative analysis to identify normative gaps, assess institutional responsibilities, and formulate a reconstructed victim-centered prevention framework for Indonesian higher education.

Findings and Discussion

Normative Findings on Indonesian Legal Framework and Institutional Obligations in University Sexual Violence Prevention

The normative analysis of Indonesian legal materials shows that sexual violence in higher education is regulated through a layered legal framework. This framework consists of criminal law norms, victim protection norms, human rights norms, and higher education governance norms. Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes provides the general legal basis for recognizing sexual violence as a serious violation that requires protection, handling, recovery, and access to justice for victims. In the higher education sector, Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 specifically regulates the prevention and handling of violence within universities and replaces Ministerial Regulation No. 30 of 2021.²⁴

The processed legal materials show that the Indonesian framework has moved from a narrow understanding of sexual misconduct toward a broader institutional prevention model. Sexual violence is no longer positioned only as an individual moral violation, but as a legal problem that requires institutional response. This shift is important because universities are not neutral spaces when violence occurs within academic hierarchy, supervision, mentorship, or administrative dependency. Therefore, the first finding of this study is that Indonesian law has formally recognized university sexual violence as an issue of institutional responsibility.

²⁴ Nabella Dellia Putri, Agus Mulyawan, and Nuraliah Ali, "Legal Protection for Victims of Sexual Violence in Higher Education from a Victimology Perspective."

Tabel 1.
Processed Normative Findings on Legal Materials

Legal Material	Normative Focus	Processed Finding	Relevance to the Article
Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes.	Sexual violence crimes and victims' rights.	Victim protection, recovery, and access to justice are placed as central legal concerns in the handling of sexual violence.	Provides the general victim-centered legal foundation for preventing and handling sexual violence in higher education.
Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education.	Prevention and handling of violence in higher education.	Universities have institutional duties relating to prevention, task forces, case handling, victim recovery, data management, and funding.	Provides the institutional governance framework for universities and responding to sexual violence.
Ministerial Regulation No. 30 of 2021 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Higher Education.	Earlier regulation on sexual violence in higher education.	This regulation marked an initial legal basis for campus-based sexual violence prevention but was later replaced by a broader regulation on violence in higher education.	Shows the development of Indonesian higher education regulation from a specific sexual violence framework toward a broader violence prevention framework.
SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16.	Inclusive education, gender equality, justice, and accountable institutions.	Sexual violence prevention is connected to safe and inclusive education, gender justice, access to justice, and institutional accountability.	Provides the sustainable development framework for reconstructing victim-centered prevention strategies in universities.

Source: Author's Legal Analysis.

The table demonstrates that the relevant legal materials form an interrelated normative structure rather than a mere list of regulations. Law No. 12 of 2022 establishes victim protection and access to justice as central legal concerns, while Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 translates those concerns into institutional duties within higher education governance. In evaluative terms, SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16 provide the broader framework for assessing whether those duties actually support safe education, gender equality, and accountable institutional response. Therefore, the normative findings of this study must be read not only as regulatory mapping, but as the legal basis for reconstructing prevention strategies in universities.

The analysis of Law No. 12 of 2022 indicates that the protection of victims is a central element of Indonesia's contemporary sexual violence legal policy.²⁵ This law strengthens the position of victims by recognizing that sexual violence causes legal, psychological, social, and personal harm. The law also reflects a shift from perpetrator-centered criminal enforcement to a broader model that includes victim protection and recovery. This finding supports the argument that prevention in universities must be connected to victims' rights and not limited to disciplinary sanctions.

However, the normative strength of Law No. 12 of 2022 still requires institutional translation within universities. Criminal law can identify prohibited acts and provide a basis for legal accountability, but it cannot by itself create a safe reporting culture on campus. Universities require internal mechanisms that are accessible, confidential, responsive, and trusted by victims.²⁶ This means that the effectiveness of national law depends on how higher education institutions transform legal norms into operational procedures.

²⁵ Atikah Rahmi and Hotma Siregar, "Community-Based Recovery for Sexual Violence Victims: The Case of Hapsari," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 1 (June 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v20i1.13520>.

²⁶ Nicola Roberts, Catherine Donovan, and Matthew Durey, "Students' Help-Seeking for Experiences of Interpersonal Violence: How Can Universities Respond?," *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 25, no. 5 (November 12, 2025): 1530-49, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958231202011>.

Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 provides a more specific institutional basis for such transformation. The regulation governs prevention and handling of violence in higher education, including the scope of subjects, forms of violence, task force mechanisms, case handling, recovery, rights of victims, witnesses and reported parties, data management, awards, and funding.²⁷ It also formally revokes Ministerial Regulation No. 30 of 2021, which previously focused on sexual violence prevention and handling in higher education. This regulatory development shows that the government has broadened the institutional approach from sexual violence alone to violence in higher education more generally.

The broadening of scope has two legal implications. On one hand, it allows universities to respond to sexual violence as part of a wider ecosystem of violence, discrimination, intimidation, and abuse of power. On the other hand, it creates the risk that sexual violence may lose analytical specificity if universities treat all forms of violence with the same procedural logic. Therefore, institutional policies must preserve the special needs of sexual violence victims while still operating within the broader violence prevention framework.

The processed normative finding also shows that the university task force has a central position in prevention and handling. The task force is the institutional mechanism that connects reporting, assessment, protection, recommendation, and recovery, and therefore becomes a concrete expression of institutional accountability within higher education. Its effectiveness is closely related to SDG 16 because it determines whether victims can access fair and reliable procedures, and it also relates to SDG 4 and SDG 5 because safe education and gender-sensitive protection depend on how the institution responds in practice. Without independence, competence, procedural clarity, and leadership support, the task force risks becoming only a formal compliance structure.²⁸

The legal materials further indicate that prevention must be understood as a continuous institutional obligation. From the perspective of SDG 4, universities must ensure that the academic environment remains safe, inclusive, and free from fear or exclusion. From the perspective of SDG 5, prevention must address gender-based violence and unequal power relations that often shape vulnerability in higher education. From the perspective of SDG 16, prevention also requires clear, accountable, and trusted procedures, which means that occasional socialization or formal rules alone are insufficient.

The main weakness found in the normative framework is the gap between formal obligation and enforceable institutional practice. A university may formally establish a task force or issue internal rules, yet still fail to provide confidential reporting, immediate protection, or meaningful recovery services for victims.²⁹ In this respect, formal compliance alone does not satisfy SDG 4 because it does not guarantee safe education, does not satisfy SDG 5 because it leaves structural vulnerability untouched, and does not satisfy SDG 16 because accountability and access to justice remain weak. This shows that institutional compliance must be measured by the quality of protection and response delivered in practice. Accordingly, the effectiveness of institutional implementation can be evaluated through practical indicators, including the accessibility and confidentiality of reporting channels, protection against intimidation and retaliation, timely protective measures, and effective access to psychological, legal, academic, and recovery services for victims. These indicators provide an operational basis for assessing whether formal institutional obligations have been translated into substantive victim protection.

Another finding concerns the relationship between confidentiality and institutional transparency. Victims require confidentiality to avoid stigma, retaliation, and secondary victimization. At the same time, universities need transparent procedures so that academic communities can trust the mechanism. The challenge is to design a system that protects victim identity while maintaining accountable case handling and institutional reporting.

²⁷ Ina Heliany, Feny Windiyastuti, and Sofa Laela, "Digital Transformation In Handling Sexual Violence In Higher Education Institutions," *Journal of Law, Politic and Humanities* 6, no. 1 (October 26, 2025): 457-64, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jlph.v6i1.2502>.

²⁸ Hafrida Hafrida, Nelli Herlina, and Zulham Adamy, "The Protection of Women and Children as Victims of Human Trafficking in Jambi Province," *Jambe Law Journal* 1, no. 2 (July 12, 2019): 207-30, <https://doi.org/10.22437/jlj.1.2.207-230>.

²⁹ Charlotte Hoppen et al., "Preventing Campus Sexual Assault: Institutional Variation in Prevention Programming Across U.S. Colleges and Universities," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 48, no. 2 (June 20, 2026): 754-72, <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737251364816>.

The analysis also finds that academic power relations must be treated as a core legal variable in university sexual violence prevention. Unequal authority between lecturers, supervisors, staff, and students can directly affect reporting decisions, victim safety,³⁰ and access to institutional remedies, which makes SDG 4 and SDG 5 materially relevant to the legal analysis. At the same time, intimidation, academic retaliation, and institutional silencing weaken access to justice and thus implicate SDG 16. Therefore, the university legal framework must include protection against retaliation, abuse of academic supervision, pressure related to grades or thesis processes, and institutional interference in complaint handling.

The discussion of these findings shows that Indonesian regulations already provide an important normative foundation, but the framework remains incomplete without a victim-centered operational model. Legal norms are meaningful only when victims can access protection without fear. A university that has regulations but fails to protect victims from pressure, stigma, or procedural uncertainty cannot be considered substantively compliant. Thus, the legal framework must be assessed through the experience and safety of victims, not only through the existence of written rules.

This finding is consistent with the conceptual premise of victim-centered justice. Victim-centered justice requires legal systems to protect dignity, autonomy, safety, recovery, and participation. In the university context, these elements must be translated into accessible reporting channels, informed consent, confidentiality, psychological assistance, academic protection, and non-retaliation guarantees. Therefore, the legal framework must integrate criminal law, administrative law, education law, and human rights principles.

The connection between these findings and the Sustainable Development Goals is therefore operational rather than symbolic. SDG 4 evaluates whether universities transform legal norms into safe and inclusive educational conditions, SDG 5 evaluates whether prevention strategies respond to gendered power imbalance and violence, and SDG 16 evaluates whether reporting, handling, recovery, and institutional oversight provide real access to justice and accountable governance. This analytical linkage is important because it moves the discussion beyond the existence of regulations toward the effectiveness of institutional obligations. In that sense, the SDGs strengthen the legal argument for rethinking prevention strategies in higher education.

The first sub-discussion therefore concludes that Indonesian law has established an important normative basis for institutional responsibility in preventing sexual violence in universities. However, the legal significance of Law No. 12 of 2022 and Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 depends on how universities operationalize those norms through victim-centered governance, risk-aware prevention, and accountable institutional response. This interpretation supports the article's broader argument that rethinking sexual violence prevention in higher education must connect victim protection, campus accountability, and sustainable development primarily through SDG 16, supported by SDG 4 and SDG 5.

Reconstructing a Victim-Centered Legal Framework Based on Sustainable Development Goals

The second finding of this study is that the prevention of sexual violence in universities must be reconstructed through a victim-centered legal framework. This reconstruction is necessary because existing regulations already provide legal foundations, but do not automatically ensure substantive protection. A victim-centered framework functions as a bridge between legal norms, institutional duties, and the lived vulnerability of victims. It also prevents universities from reducing sexual violence prevention to formal compliance, procedural reporting, or reputational management.

The proposed reconstruction begins with the recognition that victims are rights-holders. Victims must not be treated merely as complainants, evidence providers, or objects of institutional investigation. They have rights to safety, confidentiality, information, recovery, academic continuity, and protection from retaliation.³¹ This rights-based position is essential because sexual

³⁰ Crusto, Hooper, and Arora, "Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education: A Framework for Prevention Science Program Development."

³¹ Cowan et al., "Data, Disclosure and Duties: Balancing Privacy and Safeguarding in the Context of UK University Student Sexual Misconduct Complaints."

violence often produces trauma, fear, shame, and unequal bargaining power within academic communities.

The first component of the reconstructed framework is risk-based governance. Universities must identify structural and procedural risks that enable sexual violence, including unequal academic supervision, closed mentoring spaces, dependency on lecturers or supervisors, weak complaint channels, and gender-insensitive campus culture. In this sense, prevention must move from a reactive model toward anticipatory governance that detects vulnerability before harm occurs. This component is analytically linked to SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16 because safe education, gender equality, and accountable institutions all require the management of institutional risk.

The second component is secure reporting. Reporting mechanisms must be accessible, confidential, trauma-sensitive, and protected from retaliation so that victims can safely enter the institutional process without fear of academic, social, or reputational harm. A secure reporting model requires clarity regarding reporting channels, procedural stages, available protection, and institutional follow-up, because uncertainty itself may discourage reporting. Therefore, the effectiveness of a victim-centered framework depends not only on whether a reporting mechanism exists, but on whether it can function as a trusted gateway to justice and protection.

The third component is immediate protection. Once a report is submitted, the university must be able to prevent further contact, pressure, retaliation, or academic harm. Protection may include class transfer, supervision adjustment, temporary restrictions on reported parties, academic accommodation, and safe communication channels. These measures are important because victims may still be in the same academic environment as the reported party.

The fourth component is victim recovery. Recovery must be treated as a central institutional obligation rather than as a supplementary response after case handling, because the effects of sexual violence often continue in academic, psychological, and social forms. A victim-centered framework therefore requires psychological assistance, academic accommodation, legal support, and social reintegration to ensure that victims can continue their education with dignity and safety. Analytically, this component reinforces SDG 4 through educational continuity, SDG 5 through gender-sensitive protection, and SDG 16 through meaningful access to justice beyond formal complaint resolution.

The fifth component is fair and accountable procedure. Victim-centered protection does not mean ignoring the rights of reported parties. It means that procedures must protect victims while still maintaining fairness, evidence-based assessment, and institutional accountability. This balance is important to ensure that university mechanisms are legitimate, trusted, and legally defensible.

The sixth component is data governance. Universities need data to identify patterns, evaluate prevention policies, and improve institutional response. However, data management must protect the identity and privacy of victims. Therefore, data governance should combine institutional learning with strict confidentiality safeguards.

The seventh component is institutional leadership. The effectiveness of prevention depends on whether university leaders treat sexual violence as a legal and governance priority. Leadership is required to allocate budget, support task forces, protect independence, ensure training, and prevent interference. Without leadership commitment, victim-centered mechanisms may exist only on paper.

The eighth component is institutional evaluation through the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16 should not be understood merely as rhetorical references, but as evaluative benchmarks for measuring whether prevention strategies actually produce safe education, gender-responsive protection, and accountable institutional response. Through this lens, a university's compliance cannot be assessed only by the existence of internal rules or task forces, but by the quality of prevention, protection, reporting, recovery, and oversight delivered in practice. This makes the reconstruction of prevention strategies more analytical, measurable, and governance oriented. The reconstructed framework can be summarized through the following institutional indicators to clarify how each component supports victim-centered prevention and the achievement of SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16.

Table 2.
Victim-Centered Reconstruction Framework and SDG Linkages

Reconstruction Component	Institutional Indicator	SDG Linkage
Risk-Based Governance	Periodic risk mapping, identification of vulnerable academic relations, and preventive protocols.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 16
Secure Reporting	Accessible and confidential reporting channels, trauma-sensitive procedures, and protection from retaliation.	SDG 5, SDG 16
Immediate Protection	Academic accommodation, supervision adjustment, safe communication, and protection from intimidation.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 16
Victim Recovery	Access to psychological assistance, legal support, academic support, and social reintegration.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 16
Fair and Accountable Procedure	Impartial assessment, procedural clarity, evidence-based decisions, and accountable case handling.	SDG 16
Data Governance	Confidential data management, protection of victim identity, and institutional monitoring of violence patterns.	SDG 5, SDG 16
Institutional Leadership	Adequate funding, task force independence, personnel training, and institutional oversight.	SDG 16
Institutional Evaluation	Periodic assessment of prevention, reporting, protection, recovery, and institutional accountability.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 16

Source: Author's Legal Analysis.

The SDGs strengthen the legal argument because they provide normative criteria for evaluating the institutional performance of universities. Sexual violence is a barrier to educational participation, equality, and institutional trust, which means that the failure to prevent it weakens the realization of SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16 simultaneously. For that reason, the integration of SDGs into a victim-centered framework is not symbolic, but functional in assessing whether higher education institutions have transformed legal obligations into effective governance mechanisms. This perspective allows the article to move from descriptive legal analysis toward a more structured model of rethinking strategies.

This SDGs-based reconstruction also responds to the earlier proposed title, "Reconstructing Strategies for Preventing Sexual Violence in Universities from the Perspective of Sustainable Development Goals." The phrase is relevant because the article does not merely describe legal rules but offers a structured reform direction. Reconstruction means rearranging existing legal and institutional elements into a more coherent prevention model. In this study, the reconstruction is centered on victims and evaluated through SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16.

The discussion shows that a victim-centered framework becomes meaningful only when it can be translated into institutional design. Legal protection is effective only if victims can report safely, obtain immediate protection, access recovery services, and trust that the institution will respond fairly and accountably.³² This means that the existence of regulations must be tested through operational indicators such as risk management, reporting security, recovery support, and institutional evaluation. In this regard, prevention must be understood as a legal structure of governance rather than merely as a policy statement.

The reconstructed framework also differs from a purely punitive model. A punitive model focuses mainly on sanctions after violence occurs. A victim-centered preventive model focuses on risk reduction, protection, recovery, education, and institutional transformation. This distinction is important because universities must prevent harm before it becomes a criminal or disciplinary case.

The findings also show that Indonesian higher education requires harmonization between national law and campus-level rules. Campus regulations must not contradict or weaken the protection provided by national law. They must operationalize national norms through clear procedures, trained personnel, adequate funding, and measurable prevention programs.³³

³² Kathryn B. H. Clancy et al., "Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault," ed. Coren Lee Apicella, *PLoS ONE* 9, no. 7 (July 16, 2014): e102172, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172>.

³³ Sukeni and Bhanu Prakash, "Sexual Violence in Higher Education, Policies in Indonesia and India."

Harmonization is therefore a legal requirement for ensuring that victim protection is not fragmented across institutions.

The discussion further demonstrates that sexual violence prevention must be integrated into institutional evaluation and university quality assurance. Quality assurance should assess not only teaching, research, and administration, but also whether the university provides a safe, inclusive, gender-responsive, and accountable academic environment. This institutional evaluation model is important because it transforms prevention from an additional administrative duty into a measurable element of campus governance performance. Accordingly, rethinking strategies requires universities to develop indicators for risk prevention, reporting effectiveness, victim recovery, and institutional accountability.

This model strengthens the relationship between victims' rights, university obligations, and SDG 16 as the primary framework for access to justice and institutional accountability, supported by SDG 4 and SDG 5 in promoting safe education and gender equality. In this respect, the article contributes by translating victim-centered protection into an operational governance model for preventing sexual violence through accountable and sustainable institutional reform.

Conclusion

This study concludes that preventing sexual violence in Indonesian higher education requires a rethinking of strategies through a victim-centered legal framework that integrates national legal norms with SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16. Law No. 12 of 2022 and Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 55 of 2024 provide an important normative basis for victim protection, institutional responsibility, and access to justice, but their effectiveness depends on how universities translate them into risk-aware governance, secure reporting, victim recovery, academic protection, and accountable institutional mechanisms. Therefore, sexual violence prevention must move beyond formal compliance toward substantive legal protection that supports safe, equal, and inclusive higher education.

The main contribution of this article lies in formulating sexual violence prevention as a rethinking of higher education governance rather than merely a matter of criminal sanction or campus discipline. By connecting victim protection with the SDG framework, this study shows that prevention strategies must be assessed through educational safety, gender-responsive protection, access to justice, and institutional accountability. Accordingly, universities should strengthen prevention through risk-based governance, confidential reporting mechanisms, recovery-oriented victim services, and continuous institutional evaluation as part of sustainable campus reform. More specifically, universities should develop clear technical guidelines for prevention and case handling, provide periodic training for university task forces, strengthen integrated psychological, legal, and academic recovery services for victims, and regularly evaluate reporting systems based on accessibility, confidentiality, response effectiveness, protection from retaliation, and institutional follow-up.

This study is limited to normative legal research, so it does not measure the empirical effectiveness of university task forces, reporting mechanisms, or victim recovery services in specific campuses. The analysis is based on legal materials, policy documents, and conceptual interpretation, which means that institutional practices may vary depending on leadership, resources, campus culture, and regional context. Future research may conduct empirical studies involving victims, university task forces, policymakers, and law enforcement institutions to assess how victim-centered protection operates in practice. Further studies may also develop comparative research between Indonesian universities and higher education institutions in other countries to strengthen the model of SDGs-based sexual violence prevention.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors employed ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Grammarly exclusively to improve linguistic quality, including grammar, clarity, style, and readability. Any content generated or suggested through these tools was carefully examined, edited,

and verified by the authors. These tools were not used as substitutes for scholarly judgment, data analysis, interpretation of findings, or the formulation of conclusions. The authors retain full responsibility for the manuscript's accuracy, originality, academic integrity, and final content, in compliance with the journal's Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) policy.

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