



RECONSTRUCTING THE SELF-IDENTITY OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS THROUGH WRITTEN NARRATIVES FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of life narratives in the psychological trauma recovery process of sexual violence survivors, integrating an Islamic perspective as an analytical framework. The study employed a qualitative approach using the Written Narrative Inquiry (WNI) method, collecting data through online written narratives via an open-ended essay questionnaire in Google Forms. Five female sexual violence survivors were selected through purposive sampling with an online snowball sampling technique. The data were analyzed using narrative thematic analysis combined with an Islamic perspective, encompassing the values of patience, tawakkul (trust), *hifz al-nafs* (relief in the heart), and *tazkiyatun nafs* (relief in the heart). The results showed that the survivors' narrative patterns progressed from a phase of disorientation to one of acceptance and self-identity reconstruction, with family as the primary source of support. Several respondents showed signs of post-traumatic growth (PTG), namely positive psychological growth after a crisis. The findings also revealed limited access to professional mental health services, with none of the respondents receiving formal psychological support. This study confirms that written narratives composed by survivors themselves can serve as a meaningful tool for emotional recovery. Strengthening survivor-friendly mental health services and developing community-based social support systems are urgently needed to ensure effective and sustainable recovery for victims of sexual violence in Indonesia. The research findings indicate that the values of patience, trust in God, and maintaining self-dignity (*hifz al-nafs*) emerge as sources of meaning that help survivors rebuild their self-identity and hope in life, thereby contributing to their psychological recovery through written narratives. The findings of this study can serve as a basis for developing narrative-based support services and Islamic values to facilitate survivors' psychological recovery.

Keywords: Islamic Perspective; Reconstruction; Self-identity; Sexual Violence; Written Narrative

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran narasi kehidupan dalam proses pemulihan trauma psikologis pada penyintas kekerasan seksual, dengan mengintegrasikan perspektif Islam sebagai kerangka analisis. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode Written Narrative Inquiry (WNI), yaitu pengumpulan data melalui narasi tertulis secara daring menggunakan kuesioner esai terbuka berbasis Google Forms. Sebanyak lima penyintas kekerasan seksual perempuan dipilih melalui purposive sampling dengan teknik snowball sampling secara daring. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik naratif yang dipadukan dengan lensa perspektif Islam, mencakup nilai-nilai sabar, tawakkul, ḥifẓ al-nafs, dan tazkiyatun nafs. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pola narasi penyintas bergerak dari fase disorientasi menuju fase penerimaan dan rekonstruksi identitas diri, dengan keluarga sebagai sumber dukungan utama. Beberapa responden menunjukkan tanda-tanda post-traumatic growth (PTG), yakni pertumbuhan psikologis positif pascakrisis. Temuan juga mengungkap keterbatasan akses terhadap layanan kesehatan mental profesional, di mana tidak satu pun responden menerima pendampingan psikologis secara formal. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa narasi tertulis yang disusun secara mandiri oleh penyintas dapat berfungsi sebagai alat pemulihan emosional yang bermakna. Penguatan layanan kesehatan mental yang ramah penyintas dan pembangunan sistem dukungan sosial berbasis komunitas menjadi kebutuhan mendesak untuk memastikan pemulihan yang efektif dan berkelanjutan bagi korban kekerasan seksual di Indonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai sabar, tawakkul, dan pemeliharaan martabat diri (ḥifẓ al-nafs) muncul sebagai sumber makna yang membantu penyintas membangun kembali identitas diri dan harapan hidup, sehingga mendukung pemulihan psikologis penyintas kekerasan seksual melalui narasi tertulis. Temuan penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai dasar untuk membangun layanan pendampingan berbasis narasi dan nilai-nilai Islam guna membantu pemulihan psikologis penyintas.

Kata Kunci: Perspektif Islam; Rekonstruksi; Identitas Diri; Kekerasan Seksual; Narasi Tertulis.

Introduction

Women who experience sexual violence, especially incest, experience severe dysmorphic psychological trauma and can experience long-term consequences, such as emotional problems and mental disorders. Many victims struggle to talk about their experiences due to fear, shame, and low self-esteem. Therefore, therapy that allows children to express their feelings through media such as art or play can help them cope with trauma more safely and indirectly. This method

not only helps children's emotional recovery but also builds their social skills and self-confidence. According to Landgarten, art therapy is an effective way for people, especially children, to express pent-up feelings. Children can convey their emotions and experiences through artwork; it serves as a representation of those emotions and experiences. Drawings can be a window into the thoughts and feelings of children who have experienced sexual violence when they struggle to talk about their experiences. However, interpreting children's artwork requires special skills to understand what they are trying to convey correctly. (Saputra, 2025)

Sexual violence can be defined as an act of assault or violence against a woman's vital organs or reproductive organs. This can range from sexual harassment, such as unwanted touching, to forced sexual intercourse or rape (Algifahmy & Hanifah, 2024). Sexual violence is a sensitive topic to discuss within the community. However, this discourse on sexual violence is actually very useful in preventing discrimination against victims and raising public awareness. Various types of sexual violence occur in the community, including contact sexual violence, non-contact sexual violence, verbal and nonverbal sexual violence, and internet-based sexual violence. According to Sanistuti, sexual harassment is defined as non-physical (images, words, language, or words) or physical (visible gestures such as holding, touching, groping, or kissing) sexual acts or tendencies committed by the perpetrator against the victim. Victims of sexual harassment may experience stress due to the traumatic experience they experienced during the incident. The pain and trauma experienced by victims of sexual harassment can lead to anxiety disorders, emotional vulnerability, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). (Khairani et al., 2024)

Geldard & Gildard (2008) state that counseling is intended to assist clients in resolving their troubling issues and developing more positive ways of coping with life. The general goal of counseling is to resolve clients' problems or increase their resilience in coping with life (Khairani et al., 2024). This trauma recovery service is specifically aimed at victims of sexual violence, especially children, and is provided through a systematic process. This trauma recovery is successful due to the participation of each individual and the institution's facilities and infrastructure. The immediate environment can facilitate a child's rapid mental and social recovery, allowing victims to communicate and interact with those around them without feeling uncomfortable or unsafe. Thus, victims are expected to avoid the same negative experiences. Professionals must immediately help children who are victims of sexual violence recover from the trauma they have experienced so that they can care for, assist, guide, and accompany them so they can improve and live their daily lives and reintegrate into their surroundings to avoid more serious consequences in the future.

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) has been shown to help treat trauma caused by sexual violence, especially in victims of sexual violence. This method focuses on identifying and changing negative attitudes that arise as a result of traumatic experiences. Research shows that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can significantly reduce post-traumatic stress, trauma symptoms, and other emotional problems often experienced by female victims of sexual violence. This method not only helps victims of sexual violence process their experiences but also teaches them useful coping techniques to handle situations that cause discomfort. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a suitable method to help victims of sexual violence recover from the trauma they have experienced. This therapy helps them rebuild a more balanced, positive life. (Saputra, 2025)

Sari et al. (2017) stated that victims of sexual violence are more likely to experience this and are more likely to face challenges that prevent them from achieving their life goals. Sexual trauma experienced by adolescents who are victims of violence often causes psychological problems that impact their motivation and self-confidence in achieving their goals. They also often have difficulty setting clear life goals and feel hopeless in achieving them. (Suryani & Ardani, 2024)

Islamic criminal law also considers sexual violence as a violation of the rights of God (*ḥuqūq Allāh*) and the rights of human beings (*ḥuqūq al-ʿibād*). While human rights include respect for the dignity and security of every person, the rights of God oblige humanity to maintain morality and social structure. This method ensures that legal protection for victims of sexual violence not only punishes the perpetrator but also helps the victim recover and prevents similar crimes from happening again. (Uddin & Kristiono, 2025). Sexual crimes are considered extraordinary crimes in Islamic criminal law. Therefore, the crime of sexual violence must be prevented, sexual violence must be punished, and victims must receive protection. According to Islamic criminal law (*fiqh al-jinayah*), the law must be implemented to ensure the safety and comfort of society. *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*, which promotes public welfare and prevents harm, must be a priority in policy and legal implementation. Sexual violence is a crime that contradicts *maslahah*, namely *hifz al-irdh* (preserving honor), as mentioned in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra', verse 32 (Musyafaah & R, 2022).

The principle of *hifz al-irdh*, which is an essential component of the *Maqāṣid* of Sharia, contradicts sexual violence against children (Herawati, Pancasilawati, & Rahmi, 2023). They assert that Islamic education should teach children about body boundaries, respect for privacy, and refrain from inappropriate touching. The results of international research by Fadhilah and Duran reinforce the idea that the prevention of child abuse in Islam is rooted in the concept of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*. This Islamic family structure protects children from birth to adulthood. The study shows that Islam rejects all types of domestic violence and

Reconstructing the self-identity of sexual Violence survivors through written narrative from Islamic perspective emphasizes the principles of compassion, justice, and protection of the soul. This research, in the context of early childhood education, underscores the importance of collaboration between schools and families to create a safe environment that aligns with religious values and serves as a foundation for children's character education.

From an Islamic perspective, the human body is a trust from Allah SWT that must be protected and respected. The body is considered sacred because it is considered a divine possession. Islamic education emphasizes maintaining one's private parts, respecting oneself and others, and avoiding actions that violate bodily honor (Gunawan, Zen, & Riani, 2024). Thus, body awareness education in Islam serves as a way to build children's spirituality and morals from an early age and as a way to protect their bodies. The concept of genitalia and bodily honor is the foundation of Islamic protective education. Children are taught to respect others' bodies, maintain their genitalia, and dress modestly. Research shows that sex education from an Islamic perspective in kindergarten can help children understand the body as a trust and teach them how to protect themselves from sexual violence. (Hayati & Kinasih, 2026) .

Although various studies have examined the psychological impact of sexual violence, the effectiveness of art therapy, counseling, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in assisting victims' recovery, and discussed sexual violence from the perspective of Islamic law and the maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, there is still limited research exploring the subjective experiences of survivors through life narratives as a medium for trauma recovery. Furthermore, studies that integrate survivors' narrative experiences with an Islamic perspective, particularly through the values of patience, tawakkul (reliance on God), ḥifẓ al-nafs (self-reliance), and tazkiyatun nafs (obedience to God) in the psychological recovery process, remain relatively limited. However, understanding survivors' narratives is crucial for uncovering the process of interpreting traumatic experiences and reconstructing self-identity after sexual violence. Based on previous research, it can be concluded that there has been no research using Written Narrative Inquiry to explore the recovery experiences of sexual violence survivors through the lens of Islamic psychology.

Based on these research gaps, this study seeks to answer the question: What is the role of life narratives in the process of psychological trauma recovery in survivors of sexual violence, and how can this process be understood from an Islamic perspective? This study aims to examine the role of life narratives in the process of psychological trauma recovery in survivors of sexual violence and analyze this recovery process from an Islamic perspective. Specifically, this study aims to identify patterns of recovery narratives constructed by survivors and explore Islamic values that contribute to the process of reconstruction of meaning, self-identity, and psychological growth

after trauma. This study is expected to contribute to the development of a narrative-based trauma recovery approach and Islamic psychology.

Method

This study employed a qualitative, narrative approach. Specifically, it employed a subtype of written narrative research (WNI), a narrative study in which data were collected through online written narratives using an open-ended essay questionnaire in Google Forms (Bhatt & Bhatt, 2022). Epistemologically, humans are storytelling beings who interpret their life experiences through the narratives they create. Therefore, narrative research was chosen as the approach. This method allows researchers in post-sexual violence trauma recovery to understand how survivors construct self-identity, the meaning of their suffering, and the healing process through their written narratives.

Elmir et al. (2021) demonstrated that WNI (Indonesian Citizenship Interview) is useful for sensitive topics such as sexual violence because participants felt safer and freer to communicate their traumatic experiences through written communication than in face-to-face interviews. This is because the asynchronous format gives participants more time to think before answering and reduces social pressure from the interviewer. The use of an Islamic perspective as an interpretive lens during the data analysis process makes this study more novel than conventional narrative research. The Islamic perspective does not serve as a substitute for narrative; instead, it provides an additional framework of meaning that helps understand the issues survivors experience.

Islamic values used as an analytical lens include: (1) the concept of patience (steadfastness in facing trials) found in QS. Al-Baqarah: 155–157; (2) *tawakkul* (surrender to Allah) found in QS. At-Talaq: 3; (3) *ḥifz al-nafs* (protection of the soul), which is included in *Maqāṣid Sharia*; and (4) the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), which is a process of spiritual recovery in Islam (Al-Ghazali, in Usman & Sarnoto, 2022). A purposive sampling technique aligned with the research objectives was used to select participants. The small number of participants in qualitative narrative research is a methodological advantage, as it allows for a deeper, more comprehensive analysis of each story.

Josselson (2020) emphasized that narrative research involving 3-8 participants can yield rich and meaningful analysis, provided each narrative is explored in depth. This aligns with Creswell & Poth's (2018) view that in qualitative research, data depth is much more important than participant quantity. Based on these considerations, this study selected five survivors of sexual violence who met the inclusion criteria. As a result of these considerations, this study selected

five survivors of sexual violence who met the following inclusion criteria: (1) females aged at least 18 years; (2) having experienced sexual violence as a survivor so that they could describe their experiences narratively; (3) having gone through the initial crisis phase so that they could describe their experiences narratively; (4) willing to participate in the study voluntarily by signing an informed consent; and (5) having the ability to write. Participant recruitment was conducted online through: (1) distributing a Google Form link through social media with a clear introductory message about the purpose of the study; (2) coordinating with Islamic-based institutions supporting victims of sexual violence, such as counseling institutions in Islamic boarding schools or Muslim women's organizations; and (3) using an online snowball sampling technique where participants could share the link with acquaintances who met the criteria.

The primary instrument for this study was an open-ended essay questionnaire created using Google Forms. Each question was open-ended and intended to elicit reflective, lengthy, and personal narratives from participants, including Islamic aspects of their recovery experiences. Google Forms was the best choice because it was easy to use, provided greater anonymity, did not require face-to-face meetings, and automatically and securely stored data.

The data were examined using a dual-lens method, combining Islamic perspective analysis and narrative thematic analysis. The analysis was conducted in stages. First, researchers read respondents' narratives thoroughly to understand their experiences better. Then, they coded narrative sections to cover the experience of sexual violence, psychological consequences, social support, and the recovery process experienced by perpetrators. Third, codes with similar meanings were grouped into main themes, each describing a narrative pattern that led to self-rescue. Fourth, these themes were analyzed to identify the recovery storyline from the participants' experiences. Fifth, the results of the analysis were interpreted from an Islamic perspective, particularly through the concepts of patience, *tawakkul* (reliance in trust), *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (self-reliance), and *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the heart). The final stage was to combine the findings to explain how life narratives contribute to the psychological recovery of sexual violence survivors.

The dual-lens method of narrative thematic analysis and Islamic perspective analysis was used to analyze the data in this study. This dual method enabled researchers to identify patterns and themes in participants' narratives and interpret them within the framework of Islamic values. Researchers began the second stage of analysis by creating narrative themes. This is an interpretation from an Islamic perspective. A series of strategies, adapted to the characteristics of online, text-based qualitative narrative research, ensured the validity of the data. To ensure data

validity, this study employed repeated readings of participant narratives, theoretical triangulation using trauma psychology and Islamic perspectives, and systematic documentation of the analysis process (audit trail). These steps were taken to increase the credibility and consistency of the interpretation of the research data. Strict research ethics are crucial because this study involves a vulnerable group of survivors of sexual violence. Because the topic under study involves traumatic and sensitive experiences, this study took research ethics into account. Before enrolling, each participant was informed of the study's purpose, data collection procedures, benefits, and risks. They were also given the right to discontinue participation at any time without consequence. Before completing the questionnaire, participants provided informed consent through an online form. Respondents' identities were disguised with codes or pseudonyms and not included in the research report to protect their privacy. Each story was securely stored and used only for research purposes, maintaining the confidentiality of the information provided by participants.

Results

This study involved five respondents who voluntarily completed the questionnaire, all of whom were female. This aligns with national data showing that women are the group most vulnerable to sexual violence. The Women's Committee recorded 289,111 cases of violence against women in 2024. (Putri et al., 2024)

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Category	Percentage%
Age	18 years	20%
	20 years	80%
Gender	Woman	100%
Last education	High	60%
	School/Equivalent	
	S1	40%

The questionnaire results showed variation in the time since the incident. 40% of respondents said the incident occurred less than 6 months ago, 40% between 1 and 2 years ago, and 20% more than 2 years ago. This timeframe indicates that respondents are at various stages of recovery.

Table 2. Respondents' Psychological Recovery Status

Recovery status	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes, in the process of recovery	2	40%
Yes, it has gone through the recovery process.	1	20%
Not yet, but I want to start	1	20%

Not undergoing recovery	formal	1	20%
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According to the data, 40% of respondents were still recovering; 20% had already completed the recovery process; 20% had not yet formally begun recovery; and 20% had not recovered at all. This demonstrates that survivors' experiences vary, as research by Febrianto et al. (2022) found that the healing process for victims of sexual violence varies from person to person.

3. "What forms of support have you received in the recovery process?"

The questionnaire results showed that 60% of respondents received primary support from their families, 20% received support from friends and family, and 20% stated that they had not received any support. None of the respondents reported receiving professional counseling or psychotherapy, indicating a gap between survivors' psychological needs and formal mental health services. These findings align with those of Saragi et al. (2023), who stated that family support is the most important method of recovery for victims of sexual abuse in Indonesia. Most respondents lacked access to professional support, highlighting the importance of strengthening a survivor-friendly mental health service system.

4. "How would you describe yourself before the event you experienced?"

The questionnaire results indicated that respondents were asked to reflect on their psychological and social conditions before the sexual assault incident occurred. One respondent stated, "I am a calm person, but I am not quite ready to face such a big problem" (R2) and described herself as cheerful and easy to interact with others. Another respondent stated, "I am a cheerful person, easy to get along with, and trusting of others" (R1). Most respondents described themselves as emotionally stable, open in social interactions, and feeling safe in their environment. However, some respondents defined themselves as calm but unprepared to face major problems. Furthermore, several respondents stated that before experiencing sexual violence, they felt safe and comfortable in their social environment. Based on these narratives, it can be concluded that most respondents consider themselves relatively emotionally stable, open in social interactions, and feel safe. However, some respondents acknowledged their limitations.

5. "Was there a particular person, event, or value that was very influential in your life before this incident?"

Most respondents mentioned that family is the main source of resilience and values. Such as "Family is very influential in my life, especially in teaching patience and responsibility." (R2), "Family is the main reason I keep going and trying to get back up." (R4), showing how the family value structure serves as a narrative basis that helps in self-recovery after trauma.

6. "Tell us about your recovery process from the beginning until now."

One respondent detailed her recovery process as follows: “After the incident, I initially experienced emotional changes such as anxiety and difficulty focusing on daily activities. Over time, I began to understand my condition, talked to people I trusted, and slowly returned to my routine. I also learned to manage my emotions and maintain boundaries in interactions. Currently, my condition is more stable than before, although sometimes I still feel uncomfortable in certain situations, but I am better able to cope.” (R1)

Other respondents described their recovery process more briefly, such as “It was difficult to accept the situation” (R2), “It was difficult to accept at first” (R3), “Just wanted to start” (R4), and “There was no process” (R5).

These quotes demonstrate that the narrative pattern of recovery moves from disorientation to acceptance and self-reconstruction. Some respondents have demonstrated the ability to understand their traumatic experiences, manage their emotions, and return to daily activities more adaptively. However, others are still in the early stages of the recovery process, characterized by difficulty accepting their experiences, or are just beginning to build resilience.

7. “How do you view yourself now compared to before the recovery process?”

Respondents expressed varying perspectives on themselves after undergoing the recovery process. One respondent stated that she had not experienced any significant changes, saying, “It is just like usual” (R1). Another respondent revealed a more profound change: “I used to be confident and open, but after the incident, I became more withdrawn and hesitant. Now, I see myself as more self-aware, more cautious, and better able to manage my emotions, although I am still developing.” (R2) Furthermore, another respondent stated, “Now I am stronger and more patient” (R3), while another described herself as “just normal” (R4).

As these quotes demonstrate, each survivor's experience during the recovery process varies. Some respondents stated that their self-identity did not change significantly. In contrast, others reported beneficial changes, such as increased self-awareness, improved emotion management, mindfulness, and a stronger, more patient attitude towards life. The results suggest signs of post-traumatic growth (PTG), the positive psychological growth that occurs after someone successfully overcomes a traumatic event.

8. “What was the hardest part of the recovery process you ever faced, and how did you get through it?”

Respondents revealed various challenges they faced during the recovery process. One respondent explained: “The most difficult part is managing thoughts and emotions that often arise suddenly, such as anxiety and overthinking. This is quite disruptive to daily activities. I overcome this by trying to understand emotional triggers, maintaining a routine, and seeking support from those closest to me. Over time, I began to be more able to control my responses

to these situations.” (R1) Other respondents mentioned the obstacle of a lack of social support, stating, “Not supported by friends” (R2) and “Not supported by those closest to me” (R4). Meanwhile, several respondents revealed strategies they used to cope with the situation, such as “I got through it by being patient” (R3) and “Telling stories” (R5).

These quotes indicate that some of the main challenges in the recovery process are managing sudden resurfacing emotions and thoughts, lack of social support, and coming to terms with the trauma they have experienced. Survivors address these challenges by managing their emotions, following routines, seeking support from trusted people, being patient, and sharing their stories. The results indicate that social support and the ability to manage feelings are crucial in the trauma recovery process.

9. “Is there anything else you would like to tell or convey that is not covered in the question above?”

Most respondents stated that they had no additional information to share in this section. However, some respondents offered reflections and hopes about their recovery process. One respondent stated, “I also wish there was more attention and support for individuals experiencing similar experiences, so that the recovery process does not have to be so lonely.” (R1)

Another respondent expressed positive meaning from the experience, stating: “This experience made me stronger.” (R3). Meanwhile, other respondents answered, “I do not think there was any” (R2), “Hmm, I do not

think there was any” (R4), and “Nothing” (R5). Some survivors emphasized the importance of social support in the recovery process, as demonstrated by these quotes, although some respondents did not have additional information to provide. Furthermore, positive reflections emerged, suggesting increased resilience following a traumatic event. The results suggest that the processes of making sense of experiences and of receiving social support are important components in helping survivors navigate the recovery process.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that survivors' narrative patterns progress from a phase of disorientation to acceptance and self-reconstruction. During the disorientation phase, survivors described anxiety, difficulty accepting their situation, and emotional changes following sexual violence. Over time, some survivors began to demonstrate acceptance of their traumatic experiences and attempted to return to their daily activities. In the next phase, some survivors demonstrated self-identity reconstruction, characterized by the emergence of a more positive,

stronger, and more patient self-view. These findings suggest that trauma recovery is not a linear process, but rather progresses through different stages for each individual.

Research findings indicate that the recovery process experienced by survivors can be understood through Islamic values, such as patience, *tawakkul* (trust), *hifz al-nafs* (relief from the heart), and *tazkiyatun nafs* (obedience to the heart). Patience is evident in survivors' efforts to endure and face various difficulties during the recovery process. *Tawakkul* (trust) is reflected in accepting past experiences and in believing that one will continue to live a better life. Meanwhile, efforts to maintain mental health and survival demonstrate the value of *hifz al-nafs* (relief from the heart). Self-change, becoming stronger and more able to manage emotions, reflects the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (relief from the heart) as a form of purification and self-strengthening in the context of post-traumatic stress.

Victims of sexual trauma may withdraw from their communities due to various unfavorable social responses. The absence of social support or even responses that blame, belittle, or doubt the victim can significantly hinder their psychological recovery. In such circumstances, many female trauma survivors choose to avoid social interactions, such as with friends and family. Victims of sexual violence often feel rejected and isolated from those around them. These feelings of loneliness and isolation add to the psychological burden for victims, making them less confident and less willing to seek help (Ullman, 2023). Furthermore, victims often experience internalized stigma, the belief that negative societal views of them are justified. Furthermore, victims feel the need to hide their traumatic experiences, which reduces their chances of receiving support, leading to a self-reinforcing cycle. The experience of trauma and negative social responses leads to social isolation, which, as a result, worsens the psychological effects of trauma (Putri et al., 2024).

According to research, the psychological impact of sexual violence is highly diverse and depends on various factors. One of the most common primary effects is profound psychological trauma, which can develop into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Common symptoms of PTSD include hypervigilance, emotional numbness, recurring nightmares, and flashbacks of the traumatic event. Furthermore, psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety are also common, characterized by drastic mood swings and uncontrolled anxiety. Emotional instability, a tendency to withdraw from social circles, irritability, or even self-harm are all common problems experienced by victims. Low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority are also common, leaving victims feeling unworthy or contaminated. Victims may experience cognitive problems such as difficulty thinking logically, loss of focus, frequent daydreaming, and feelings of emptiness. In

more severe cases, psychological trauma can lead to suicidal thoughts. Sexual violence can also lead to other disorders such as phobias, excessive anxiety about others, insomnia, and disturbing nightmares (Deviana et al., 2025).

This study shows that survivors of sexual violence require comprehensive legal, medical, and social support to understand their rights and obtain protection and justice. The findings also indicate that medical and psychological services are necessary to aid the trauma recovery process. Furthermore, survivors require social support, including a safe environment, family support, and a community that values their situation. Furthermore, the results indicate that recovery takes a long time. Therefore, ongoing support is crucial for survivors to return to independent and dignified lives.

The protection of a person's honor and chastity (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) is a central principle of Islamic criminal law. As reflected in Surah An-Nur (24:2), the Qur'an explicitly condemns acts of sexual violence and violations of honor. Furthermore, Surah Al-Maidah (5:45) emphasizes the importance of upholding justice and imposing sanctions in proportion to the offense, aiming to deter the perpetrator while protecting the victim's rights. Islamic criminal law also considers sexual violence a violation of the rights of Allah (*ḥuqūq Allāh*) and the rights of human beings (*ḥuqūq al-'ibād*). While human rights include respect for the dignity and security of every person, the rights of God oblige humanity to maintain morality and social structure.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that life narratives play a crucial role in the recovery process of psychological trauma experienced by individuals who have experienced sexual violence. Survivors can move from a phase of disorientation to a phase of acceptance and self-identity reconstruction by independently writing narratives. This demonstrates that recovery is not merely a clinical process requiring therapy, but also a personal and social meaning-making process. None of the five female respondents surveyed had access to professional mental health services, while all relied on family support for recovery. This situation indicates a significant gap between the availability of formal services in Indonesia and the psychological needs of survivors. Several respondents also showed signs of post-traumatic growth (PTG), namely the ability to develop psychologically in response to suffering, characterized by increased values of patience, resilience, and self-acceptance. From an Islamic perspective, the recovery process identified in this study aligns with the values of patience, *tawakkul* (trust), *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (obedience to the heart), and *tazkiyatun nafs* (respect for the heart). These values not only strengthen survivors' spiritual resilience but also

serve as a source of meaning, helping them reinterpret traumatic experiences in a more constructive framework.

Recommendation

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that health and psychological service institutions in Indonesia strengthen access and availability of support services for survivors of sexual violence, given the limited access to professional services identified in this study. Furthermore, it is necessary to strengthen the role of the family and social environment as the primary support system in the survivor's recovery process. Future researchers are advised to further examine the effectiveness of self-narration as a trauma recovery method and to integrate psychological approaches and Islamic values more comprehensively in the context of recovery for victims of sexual violence.

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