

# Qanun, religious education, religiosity and sexual activity among Muslim youth



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Muslim youths must shun free sexual behaviours. However, these actions are highly prevalent, especially among the Muslim youth. This study aimed to determine the effect of *qanun* (local regulations based on Islamic law), religiosity and religious education on the sexual activity of Muslim youth. The study used a case-control design carried out in the province of Aceh, which applies the *qanun*, and in the province of North Sumatra, which does not apply the *qanun*. Researchers interviewed 552 Muslim youths using the snowball method and disseminating online questionnaires; data were analysed through logistic regression using Jeffeys's Amazing Statistics Program 16 (JASP) with a confidence interval (CI) of 95%. The results of this study indicated that *qanun* ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $\text{Exp } \beta = 4.628$ ), always prayed five times every day in the last 3 months ( $p = 0.027$ ;  $\text{Exp } \beta = 1.616$ ), and looking for various information about Islamic topics ( $p = 0.01$ ;  $\text{Exp } \beta = 1.747$ ) is associated with the prevention of sexual activity of Muslim youth. *Qanun* affected the prevention of sexual activities among youth; these activities were 4628 times higher in areas that do not have *qanun* for preventing sexual activities in Muslim youth. Muslim youth looking for various information about Islamic topics also affected the prevention of sexual activity among youth – it was 1747 times higher than those who did not seek information about various Islamic topics on preventing sexual activity in Muslim youth. Muslim youth in *qanun* areas were proven to have a lower sexual activity. Furthermore, Muslim youth with high religiosity (those who pray diligently and look for various information about Islamic topics) were proven to be able to prevent sexual activity. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the religiosity of Muslim youth.

**Contribution:** This article is expected to explain the impact of *qanun*, religiosity, religious education and the prevention of sexual activity among Muslim youth. This research is expected to be one of the solutions that can be applied to prevent sexual activity in Muslim youth, which is occurring increasingly.

**Keywords:** *Qanun*; religious education; religiosity; sexual behaviour; Muslim youth.

## Introduction

Premarital sex is one of the menacing problems highly prevalent among adolescents, especially middle adolescents (15–19 years) and late adolescents (20–24 years). Islamic moral values regulate sexual behaviours among youth. In Islamic teachings, sexual activities are only allowed after a marriage ceremony. Islam strongly recommends marriage and carefully charts out the norms and rules so that humans can live with dignity according to their position (Dina 2022).

If a man and a woman are alone in a place, this can be a trigger for premarital sex, which is prohibited in Islamic teachings. Even though humans are asked to interact or associate with each other as social beings, religious norms and social rules should be followed, especially in the modern context where the development of technology and science is advancing rapidly. In the context of globalisation, societal relations, especially relationships with the opposite sex, are becoming a matter of grave concern, especially for the younger Muslims. It is imperative under Islam to have arrangements that regulate the pattern of relations of the opposite sex especially, who are not *mahram*. Thus, the principles of Islamic teachings that maintain the sanctity and glory of humans are always well preserved (Gray 2004).

A survey conducted by the Government of Indonesia in 2019 on 10 203 teenagers in Indonesia indicates that while 2415 teenagers had never engaged in sexual behaviour, 7787 had engaged in sexual behaviour (holding hands, hugging, kissing lips, stimulating a partner) (The National Population and Family Planning Board, 2019). In 2017, the data from Indonesia Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) reported that 12% of the female adolescents in Indonesia had experienced unwanted pregnancies.

Sexual behaviour will lower one's honour as a noble creature. Honour is natural (*fitriah*), so protecting honour becomes necessary for everyone. Sexual activity (*khalwat*) can damage the lineage, and Islam focuses on maintaining the purity of lineage. Therefore, all actions that lead to adultery are prohibited, including sexual behaviours which are seen as a trigger to adultery (Dickson 2007).

Sexual activity is one of the prohibited acts in Islamic law. Sexual behaviour is also contrary to the customs of the Acehese people because such acts can lead a person to commit adultery. Even if a person has committed an act in a quiet place with someone who is not his and her mahram, and even though such an act does not result in adultery, the act is still prohibited.

Premarital sexual behaviour is highly denounced in Islam and is cursed by Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala [Allah SWT]. Offenders can be subject to severe penalties in the form of stoning: 'And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way' (QS. Al-Isra: 32).

Aceh province has different laws from other provinces in Indonesia. This is inseparable from the status of Aceh province, which has special autonomy through *Law No. 18 of 2001*, which is related to special autonomy for the province of the special region of Aceh, such as Nanggroe (state) Aceh Darusalam in State Gazette No. 114, dated 09 August 2001. The special rules of Aceh province in principle regulate the authority that functions specifically for Aceh to become a shari'a province that regulates the functions of the Syar'iyah Court whose regulation is delegated to *qanun* (regional regulations) (Sirajuddin 2011).

*Qanun* is a normative legal instrument; thus, the implementation of the establishment, standard methods and accountable standardisation in all institutions has a role in the formation of *qanun* (Dian 2021; Khalsiah 2018). The purpose of the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh province is to restore the past glory of Islam. Islamic shari'a has been ingrained in the people of Aceh since the 16th century. The implementation of Islamic law in the form of official rules is expected to realise good governance (Azzubaili 2014; Otto 2010; Sukiman 2012).

Sexual activity is one of the problems regulated in *Qanun* No. 14 of 2003 concerning sexual activity (*khalwat*) which is based on the formulation of the *qanun* in the Qur'an and Hadith. *Khalwat* can lead to adultery; therefore, the *qanun* related to the prohibition of sexual activity (*khalwat*) is aimed at preventive efforts at an optimal level for restraining (repressive) efforts by giving punishment in the form of *uqubat takzir*, namely whips and fines (*garamah*). Sexual activity is an act that is prohibited by religion, custom and nation. It is a despicable behaviour carried out by people who are unable to hold in their lust in quiet places, which triggers the possibility of sexual disobedience or the possibility of adultery.

The province of Aceh annually resolved the problem of free sex with a total of 96 cases of *khalwat* in 2016, 33 cases in 2017, 26 cases in 2018, eight cases in 2019, and zero *khalwat* case in 2020 (BPS-Statistic of Aceh Province 2021).

Most of the *qanun* violations related to sexual activity are dominated by teenagers (high school students) and university students in Banda Aceh city (Zulkarnaen 2016). Many teenagers in Banda Aceh city go to quiet places and carry out the *khalwat*; even junior high school children are indulging in such activities in quiet places such as rice fields, empty houses and Internet cafes. It is shameful on the part of the parents that they have not imparted sufficient Islamic teachings to their children (Zulkarnaen 2016).

A person who engages in sexual behaviour will be sanctioned by the *qanun* regulation (an Islamic-based local regulation). A woman in East Aceh Regency 2022 was caned 100 times at the Office of the Islamic Sharia of East Aceh Regency for making out at home with a non-*mahram* partner (Rachmawati 2022). Caning was carried out on perpetrators in public places and witnessed by the public, and the incident was spread in the community by publishing it on social media (Voa Indonesia 2022). When *khalwat* is committed involving children, the perpetrator gets caned 100 times and is imprisoned for 75 months (Voa Indonesia 2022).

Incidents of violations of Islamic law for sexual behaviour occurred in Central Aceh Regency with a penalty of 60 public canings and serving 6 months in prison. The provision of canings received the community's attention, when passers-by stopped travelling to watch the provision of canings (Romadani 2022). Interpreter Quraish Shihab revealed that a person who commits adultery would get a sanction of 100 lashes if the perpetrator is not married. In contrast, if the perpetrator is married, he or she will get a sentence of being stoned until the perpetrator dies.

The high incidence of free sex is because many teenagers in Aceh province read pornographic stories or watch pornographic films. Lack of supervision from parents (mother and father), family, friends and teachers will likely encourage teenagers in their searching of their identity, hence increase the risk to fall into free-sex behaviours (Hamid 2015).

## **Qanun as an Islamic law in Aceh**

The people of Aceh in their long history have been known as people who are very strict and even fanatical about Islamic teachings; therefore, Islam becomes a cultural identity and self-awareness of Acehese people (Utama 2021). The Acehese people unite religious teachings into customs and customary law in such a way that they integrate and blend, which in the customary proverb is stated by the expression that the relationship between shari'a and custom is like the relationship between a substance (object) and its nature, which is inherent and cannot be separated (Haq 2020).

*Qanun* is a regional regulation made by the Aceh government, ratified by the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia and signed by the governor (provincial level) and the regent or mayor at Level II regions. The basis for the enactment of the *qanun* is the law on special autonomy. In *Law No. 18*, it is stated that the Syar'iyah Court implements the Islamic law as outlined in the *qanun* first. Thus, the *qanun* was made by the Aceh government to implement Islamic law for Muslims (Rakib 2019). An action that often occurs in society is *khalwat*, which is also challenged by many problems to solve. Thus, this problem requires a keen view of the legal social phenomenon in a society that must be placed in the view of Islamic law in depth (Salim 2015).

The *qanun* applies to all people in Aceh province, both Muslims and non-Muslims (Halim 2022). The *qanun* in Aceh province also aims to protect all people in Aceh province, including non-Muslim communities (0.93% of the population is Christian; 0.01% of the population is Hindu). The *qanun* is expected to bring justice and prosperity to the people in Aceh province, including women and marginalised communities (Din 2021; Febriandi 2021).

Regarding the practice of enforcing *qanun* against the perpetrators of *khalwat* violations in Aceh, there are three *qanuns* related to jinayah which were ratified by the Aceh government in 2003, namely *qanun khamar*, *qanun maisir* (gambling), *qanun khalwat*. It was enforced from 2004 to 2008, through the decision of the Syar'iyah Court with whipping or a fine. Since 2009, the enforcement of *qanun khalwat* has been resolved by local community customary courts. The important question here is what factors are hindering the enforcement of *qanun Khalwat* in Aceh; what the implications are of not enforcing the legal system in implementing *qanun khalwat* in Aceh and what legal system is used in enforcing *qanun khalwat* in Aceh.

## Qanun of sexual behaviours (*khalwat*)

Religion and positive law do not at all forbid people to do something that otherwise would not damage or be harmful to those who disobey. Many people who carry out free sex are infected with deadly diseases. Such diseases are the signs of Allah's greatness for people who can think. The desire to pass biological needs is human nature, but conducting them needs to be regulated. Islam has set limits or boundaries so that there is no violation of the law. Islam has determined this through legal marriage (Bukhari 2018). The words of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala are the first source in the study of Islamic law, including the prohibition of sexual acts.

*Qanun* No. 14 of 2003 concerning *Khalwat* is based on the Qur'an and Hadith. In the *qanun*, *khalwat* is limited to all activities, actions and circumstances that lead to adultery. Anyone who intentionally commits *jarimah khalwat* is threatened with 'Uqubat Ta'zir whipping of a maximum of 10 times or a fine of a maximum of 100 g of pure gold or imprisonment for a maximum of 10 months. Anyone who

intentionally organises, provides facilities or promotes *jarimah khalwat*, is threatened with 'uqubat takzir' whipping, at most 15 times, and/or a maximum fine of 150 grams of pure gold and/or imprisonment, at most of a period of 15 months. *Jarimah Khalkha* (*forbidden sexual act*), which is the authority of the customary court, is completed according to the provisions of the *qanun* of Aceh concerning the development of customary life and customs and/or other laws and regulations concerning customs.

The *qanun* regulates that every person who engages in sexual activity will receive sanctions in the form of being whipped for a maximum of nine times, a minimum of three times and/or a fine of a maximum of IDR 10 000 000 – and a minimum of IDR 2 500 000. The *qanun* also imposes sanctions on perpetrators of free sex by giving maximum imprisonment of 6 months, a minimum of 2 months and/or a maximum fine of IDR 15 000 000.

In sentencing fines for sexual activity offenders, the village Customary Judicial Council considers customary punishments based on the sincerity of the parties and their agreement at the sexual activity case's deliberative session (Nasyiah 2019). One of the violations of *khalwat* (sexual acts) occurred in Aceh Tamiang Regency, which was carried out by a teenager who received a fine of one goat and a fine of IDR 2 000 000 (Yusrizal 2019). A sexual activity violation in Ateuk Jawo was resolved with the payment of customary fines by the parties (perpetrators); each party paid IDR 15 000 000.

## Methods

### Study design and administration

The study used a case-control design and analysed causal relationships using reverse logic, namely determining the problem of sexual activity as a case first and then identifying the cause (risk factor) of sexual activity problems (Sastroasmoro 2017). This study used a control case with no matching design. The cases of this study were focused on Aceh province, which applies *qanun* in carrying out provincial regulations, and North Sumatra province, which has a Muslim majority population but does not implement *qanun* as a provincial regulation. This research was conducted in two Islamic-based universities in Aceh province and North Sumatra province. This study was conducted from March to July 2022.

### Participants

The researchers conducted interviews with 552 Muslim youth, consisting of 276 Muslim youth studying in Aceh province and 276 Muslim youth studying in North Sumatra province. Researchers conducted interviews with respondents and then used the snowballing method to find other respondents.

The inclusion criteria in this study were youths in Aceh and North Sumatra provinces, aged 18–24 years, unmarried, who had completed high school studies and were willing to participate in the study until the end. Researchers conducted

interviews using a structured questionnaire about *qanun*, adolescent religiosity and sexual activity using Google Forms, which were distributed through social media applications such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, to ask about their willingness. Thereafter, the participants who met the criteria of the studies were invited to attend an interview related to *qanun*, religiosity and sexual activities of Muslim youth.

## Measure

The independent variables in this study are: *Qanun* which consists of adolescent's perceptions and knowledge, and adolescent's support about *qanun* on sexual activity and religiosity. Three items were used to assess religiosity, defined by this study as an individual's devotion and related religious behaviours (Hall, Meador & Koenig 2008). The religiosity of Muslims can be seen from the various activities recommended in Islamic religious teachings, such as congregational prayers, fasting Sunnah, following recitations and almsgiving (Nasution 2022; Nurhayati 2021). Religiosity was seen in Muslim participants conducting religious experiences over the past 3 weeks, participants' experience discussing Islamic topics for the past 3 weeks and participants' experiences in participating in religious studies directly or indirectly for the past 3 weeks. Islamic education can be seen in the schools that have been attended by participants where the religious education in question is from madrasah aliyah and Islamic boarding schools.

The dependent variable in the study is: Sexual activity (*khalwat*) contains questions about sexual activities that have been carried out by youth with someone with holding hands, kissing, petting, fondling, and sexual intercourse based on the confession of the participant (The Central Bureau of Statistics 2017).

## Data analysis

Normality analysis was carried out using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test with a confidence interval (CI) of 95% (Murti 2011). If the value of  $p > 0.05$ , then it implies that the data are normally distributed. Researchers conducted the validity and reliability test of 30 Muslim youths with questions about *qanun*, religious education, religiosity and sexual activity of Muslim youth. The researcher conducted a validity test with the corrected item-total correlation value with the  $r$  table value of 0.361. The reliability of the data followed the Cronbach's alpha method to measure the instrument from one measurement, provided that if  $r$  count  $> r$  table or a significant value of 0.8, then it is declared reliable (Murti 2011). Data analysis was performed using logistic regression to determine the effect of *qanun*, Islamic education and religiosity on the sexual activity of Muslim youth with a 95% CI. Data analysis was carried out using Jeffeys's Amazing Statistics Program 16 (JASP) software.

## Results

This research was conducted on 552 Muslim youths who are still students at Islamic-based universities regarding the

prevention of sexual activity among Muslim youths. The results of this study indicated that the results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test showed that it has a  $p > 0.05$ , which means a normal distribution, that is, always prayed five times every day in the last 3 months, always gave alms for the last 3 months, always fasted sunnah (fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months), always fasted sunnah (fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months) and always followed the recitation of Islam for the last 3 months (see Table 1).

This study's results indicated that the validity test results with the corrected item-total correlation value showed a value of  $r > 0.361$ , which means that the entire questionnaire instrument is declared valid. The results of this study indicated that the reliability test with  $t$  the Cronbach's alpha method value showed a value of  $r > 0.8$ , which means that the entire questionnaire instrument was declared reliable (see Table 2).

The results of this study showed that female Muslim youth tended to have sexual activity in areas that did not have *qanun* rules (120 Muslim girls), had religious education (94 Muslim girls), sometimes prayed five times a day (95 Muslim girls), sometimes gave alms in the last 3 months (112 Muslim girls), fasted sunnah Monday to Thursday (59 Muslim girls) and never attended recitation in the last 3 months (59 Muslim young women). Male Muslim teenagers tended to have sexual activity in areas that have *qanun* rules (10 Muslim teenage boys), had religious education (14 Muslim young men), sometimes prayed five times a day (10 Muslim young men), sometimes gave alms in the last 3 months (15 Muslim young men), fasted sunnah Monday to Thursday (13 Muslim young men) and sometimes followed the recitation in the last 3 months (11 Muslim young men) (see Table 3).

The results of this study show that *qanun* (regional regulation based on Islamic law) ( $p < 0.001$ ) affects the sexual activity of Muslim youth, always praying five times every day in the

**TABLE 1:** Results of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.

| Variables   | Sign  | Information                 |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|
| Always prayed five times every day in the last 3 months                 | 0.341 | Test distribution is normal |
| Always gave alms for the last 3 months for the last 3 months            | 0.429 | Test distribution is normal |
| Always fasted Sunnah (fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months) | 0.436 | Test distribution is normal |
| Always followed the recitation of Islam for the last 3 months           | 0.369 | Test distribution is normal |

**TABLE 2:** The results of validity and reliability test ( $N = 30$  persons).

| Variables   | Corrected item-total correlation | Cronbach's alpha if item deleted |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Always prayed five times every day in the last 3 months                 | 0.634                            | 0.854                            |
| Always gave alms for the last 3 months for the last 3 months            | 0.769                            | 0.843                            |
| Always fasted Sunnah (fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months) | 0.837                            | 0.856                            |
| Always followed the recitation of Islam for the last 3 months           | 0.663                            | 0.892                            |

**TABLE 3:** Distribution of *Qanun*, religious education and religiosity with sexual activity of Muslim youth.

| Variable   | Had sexual activity   |      |               |                     |      |               |
|--|-----------------------|------|---------------|---------------------|------|---------------|
|  | Muslim youth (female) |      |               | Muslim youth (male) |      |               |
|  | <i>n</i>              | %    | Sign <i>p</i> | <i>n</i>            | %    | Sign <i>p</i> |
| <b>Qanun</b>   |                       |      | < 0.001       |                     |      | 0.004         |
| Had <i>Qanun</i>   | 30                    | 6.6  | -             | 10                  | 10.5 | -             |
| Not had <i>Qanun</i>   | 120                   | 26.3 | -             | 8                   | 8.4  | -             |
| Religious education  | -                     | -    | -             | -                   | -    | -             |
| <b>Religious education</b>   | 94                    | 20.6 | < 0.001       | 14                  | 14.7 | 0.498         |
| Not had religious education  | 56                    | 12.3 | -             | 4                   | 4.2  | -             |
| <b>Always pray five times every day in the last 3 months</b>                 |                       |      | 0.001         |                     |      | 0.079         |
| Always   | 11                    | 2.4  | -             | 6                   | 6.3  | -             |
| Sometimes  | 95                    | 20.8 | -             | 10                  | 10.5 | -             |
| Never  | 44                    | 9.6  | -             | 2                   | 2.1  | -             |
| <b>Always give alms for the last 3 months</b>                                |                       |      | 0.966         |                     |      | 0.273         |
| Always   | 34                    | 7.4  | -             | 2                   | 2.1  | -             |
| Sometimes  | 112                   | 24.5 | -             | 15                  | 15.8 | -             |
| Never  | 4                     | 0.9  | -             | 1                   | 1.1  | -             |
| <b>Always fast Sunnah (fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months)</b> |                       |      | 0.023         |                     |      | 0.080         |
| Always   | 14                    | 3.1  | -             | 1                   | 1.1  | -             |
| Sometimes  | 89                    | 19.5 | -             | 13                  | 13.7 | -             |
| Never  | 47                    | 10.3 | -             | 4                   | 4.2  | -             |
| <b>Always follow the recitation of Islam for the last 3 months</b>           |                       |      | < 0.001       |                     |      | 0.042         |
| Always   | 9                     | 2    | -             | 2                   | 2.1  | -             |
| Sometimes  | 59                    | 12.9 | -             | 11                  | 11.6 | -             |
| Never  | 82                    | 17.9 | -             | 5                   | 5.3  | -             |

**TABLE 4:** The effect of *Qanun*, religious education and religiosity on sexual activities of Muslim youth.

| Variable   | Never engage in sexual activity ( <i>N</i> = 552; CI 95%) |                    |                              | 95% CI for Exp( $\beta$ ) |       |
|--|---|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
|  | $\beta$   | Signs <sup>†</sup> | Exp ( $\beta$ ) <sup>†</sup> | Lower                     | Upper |
| <i>Qanun</i> (local regulations based on Islamic law)                      | 1.532   | < 0.001            | 4.628                        | 3.432                     | 8.510 |
| Religious education  | 0.080   | 0.718              | 0.915                        | 0.705                     | 1.802 |
| Always pray five times every day in the last 3 months                      | 0.480   | 0.027              | 1616                         | 1.141                     | 2.512 |
| Always give alms for the last 3 months for the last 3 months               | 0.363   | 0.152              | 0.696                        | 0.482                     | 1.264 |
| Always fast Sunnah (Fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months)      | 0.180   | 0.582              | 1.114                        | 0.738                     | 1.623 |
| Always follow the recitation of Islam for the last 3 months                | 0.311   | 0.130              | 1.364                        | 1.007                     | 2.216 |
| Looking for various information about Islamic topics for the last 3 months | 0.558   | 0.010              | 1.747                        | 1.164                     | 2.287 |

<sup>†</sup>, CI 95%

$\beta$ , beta.

last three months ( $p = 0.027$ ) affects the sexual activity of Muslim youth, looking for various information on Islamic topics ( $p = 0.01$ ) that affect the sexual activity of Muslim youth. Religious education ( $p = 0.718$ ), always giving alms for the last 3 months ( $p = 0.152$ ), always fasting Sunnah (fasting Monday to Thursday for the last 3 months) ( $p = 0.582$ ) and always following the recitation of Islam ( $p = 0.130$ ) were proved not to affect the sexual activities of Muslim youth (Table 4).

This study's results show that areas with *qanun* (local regulations based on Islamic law) affect the prevention of youth sexual activities 4628 times more than areas that do not have *qanun* (local regulations based on Islamic law) in preventing sexual activities in Muslim youth (CI 95% 3.432–8.510) (Table 4).

Muslim youth looking for various information about Islamic topics affect the prevention of youth sexual activity 1747 times more than those who do not look for various information about Islamic topics (CI 95% 1.164–8.510). Muslim youth who always pray five times every day in the last 3 months affect the

prevention of youth sexual activity 1616 times more than Muslim youth who do not always pray five times every day in the last 3 months (CI 95% 1.141–2.512) (Table 4).

## Discussion

### *Qanun* and preventing sexual activity among Muslim youth

The Acehese people have utilised Islamic shari'a and Acehese customary law since the sultanate era. At that time, the ulama and leader took an active part in resolving problems relating to the governance of the Aceh government and managing social life among the Acehese people, including through shari'a-based regional ordinances known as *qanun* (Azzubaili 2014).

The comprehensive implementation of *qanun* in Aceh province has been implemented since mid-2015 (Aditya 2019). The application of the *qanun* as a law confirms the application of Islamic shari'a in the Aceh area. The implementation of the *qanun* is not only a ceremonial tool for the inauguration of Islamic shari'a in Aceh alone, but the goal

is more than that; namely, the *qanun* as *jinayat* law can eradicate *jinayah* perpetrators in Aceh and also form an Islamic character in every Acehnese society. The existence of *qanun* is expected to shape the character of the Acehnese people to carry out behaviours recommended in Islam, including preventing sexual acts that occur in various places.

The purpose of the prohibition of sexual activity in this *qanun* is to enforce Islamic law and the prevailing customs in society in the province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam; protect the public from various forms of activities and/or actions that damage honour, namely any actions that can cause disgrace to the perpetrator and his family; prevent community members as early as possible from committing acts that lead to adultery; increase community participation in preventing and eradicating acts of sexual activity; and stop the opportunity for moral damage, because if the sexual activity is left alone, then the morals of the Acehnese people will be damaged.

The results of this study indicate that a region that implements *qanun* (local regulations based on Islamic law) has affected the prevention of youth sexual activities among Muslim youth 4628 times more than a region that does not have *qanun* (local regulations based on Islamic law). A region that does not have *qanun* tend to have more youths engaging in sexual behaviour compared to a region that has *qanun*.

A region that does not have *qanun* has more teenagers who engage in sexual acts, because there are many locations where sexual acts can be carried out, such as holding hands, hugging and kissing in malls, beaches and hotels where unmarried couples can stay overnight.

The culture of sexual acts is often found in the region that does not implement *qanun*. Many parents living in such regions are very supportive of their children dating and going out together, either during the day or at night. Parents in the region that does not have *qanun* allow teenagers to be picked up by other teenagers who are non-*mahram*. Parents give permission as long as they do not come home too late; some girls come home the next morning, but the parents are calm as if nothing happened.

*Qanun khalwat* has the aim of protecting the community from an early age from committing acts that lead to adultery and damage honour. Currently, free sex has become one of the most common actions in various places in Indonesia by both adults and teenagers who are starting to experiment and look for identity. The firm attitude of the government through regional regulations such as *qanun* is very useful to prevent the phenomenon of free sex among the community. The government in Aceh province, through the implementing agency of Islamic law, continues to provide clear restrictions on any activities held in North Aceh that can be suspected of being a place for sexual acts by teenagers, such as permits to procure art activities (music concerts and others) so that men and women could be separated (Bukhari 2018).

Adolescents who are caught engaging in sexual activity by the community will be given advice, married and fined. Adolescents' emotions are still developing so they must be advised. They commit sexual activity because of the lack of guidance from parents, teachers, friends and the community. If the sexual activity is carried out by adults, they will get caned and taken around the village in the hope that the punishment given will make the sexual offender feel deterred and repent their action and that the punishment given also makes people afraid of committing such sexual acts.

In the case of traditional sexual activity (*khalwat*), there should be a regulation that explains the limits of giving customary fines so that it can be used as a guideline by the *gampong* [village] traditional court council. (Nasyiah 2019). A person who engages in sexual activity will get a customary fine or a maximum limit of fines imposed, but there is no definite fine arrangement.

According to Yusrizal (2019), during the completion of sexual activity (*khalwat*), the Acehnese community does not discriminate in applying rules related to sexual acts violations. Sexual misconduct perpetrators in Gayo Lues district are arrested and then dealt with according to the custom, but in *Qanun Jinayah*, the perpetrator of the sexual act (*khalwat*) should be whipped following Qanun's verdict (Yusrizal 2019).

If a person or persons who engage in sexual activity are found by the community, they will be sanctioned by marriage (Rizki 2020). The mechanism for resolving violations of sexual activity, both coaching and *jarimah*, actually underlies religious law and the law that applies in society so that there is no conflict between the two. The guidance carried out by the Wilayatul Hisbah institution (the institution that enforces the implementation of the *qanun*) aims to prevent the perpetrators of sexual activity from repeating the premarital sexual activity, because such an act is highly hated and prohibited in Islam (Azzubaili 2014). Perpetrators of sexual activity will get social punishment and even shame which is not only felt by the perpetrators of sexual activity (*khalwat*), but will be a disgrace to the families also.

The provision of customary fines in each *gampong* encountered obstacles when the violators of sexual activity were unable to pay the customary fines imposed by the village customary holders because of the economic conditions of the parties' families. There are no regulations that clearly state the minimum and maximum limits for the imposition of fines.

## Religiosity and preventing sexual activity among Muslims youth

Sexual activity is strongly rebuked in the Qur'an and Sunnah, but it is not regulated in terms of punishment in the Qur'an and Sunnah. All actions must be prohibited to fulfil the benefit of the society. This prohibition must of course be made based on an agreement or community deliberation in ways that are considered to meet the

requirements (Bukhari 2018). The prohibition of being alone with the opposite sex contained in the hadith has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Dina 2022).

In Islamic teachings, even though humans are asked to interact or associate with each other as social beings, there are religious norms and social rules that should be obeyed, especially in the modern context where the development of technology and science is advancing so rapidly. In the context of globalisation, it is clear how societal relations, especially relationships with the opposite sex, are becoming a matter of grave concern these days, especially for the younger Muslim generation, because it is important to have arrangements that regulate the pattern of relationships with the opposite sex who are not *mahram* so that the principles of Islamic teachings related to the sanctity and glory of humans are always well maintained.

Islam does not prohibit the interaction between men and women, as Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala mentions in surah an-Nisa' (4) verse 1, which means:

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer. (An-Nisa [4]:1)

Sexual activity can lead to adultery, so the *qanun* related to the prohibition of sexual activity aims to prevent (preventive) such acts at an optimal level, to restrain (repressive) by giving punishment in the form of whips and fines (*qaramah*). Sexual activity is an extremely despicable behaviour carried out by people who are unable to hold in their lust in quiet places where there is the possibility of sexual disobedience or the possibility of adultery (Hamid 2015).

The results of this study indicate that adolescent girls who often perform *fardhu* prayers can significantly prevent sexual behaviour compared to girls who do not regularly perform *fardhu* prayers. Muslim youth who always pray five times every day in the last 3 months have been prevented from carrying out sexual activity 1616 times more than Muslim youth who do not always pray five times every day in the last 3 months.

Muslims who pray diligently prevent the occurrence of heinous and cruel deeds as mentioned in QS. Al-'Ankabūt verse 45 which means:

Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allāh is *greater deterrent*. And Allāh knows what you do.

Tafsir ulemas such as Al-Sa'ady stated that *Fakhsya* is any act of fulfilling sexual desires outside the provisions of shari'a that can be avoided by Muslims who perform prayers (Shalat) (Al-Sa'ady 2002). Al-Thamthaway stated that consistent and sincere prayer could prevent heinous acts

from being committed, and that means that praying prevented the main factor of sin. If a Muslim performs prayers sincerely, the use of prayers can avoid bad deeds, including adultery (Al-Thamthaway 2002).

Even if some Muslims perform prayers but still do bad deeds, prayer is an instrument of deterrence from other sinful deeds. If he does not pray, then the more sins he commits. So the function of prayer here is to minimise other heinous and cruel deeds that he is likely to do. Prayer leads to minimising heinous and cruel acts. Al-Baghaway describes a young man who performed the five-time prayer but still performed *fakhsya* (adultery), in which the Messenger of Allah (the prophet) stated that the youth's prayer served one day to prevent heinous acts (Al-Baghaway 2002).

The results of this study indicate that adolescent girls who frequently seek information on Islamic topics can significantly prevent sexual behaviour compared to female adolescents who rarely seek information on Islamic topics. Muslim youth looking for various information about Islamic topics affect the prevention of youth sexual activity 1747 times more than those who do not look for various information.

Providing information on Islamic topics will provide awareness to Muslims about sexual behaviour (Mohamad 2015). Shaitan will whisper negative things to encourage someone to carry out sexual acts (*khalwat*). One of the forms of sexual acts (*khalwat*) that is often carried out today is free sex (*khalwat*) carried out through chat and video calls. Chatting with the opposite sex is allowed on the condition that one does not use words or send photos and videos that cause feelings which may lead to adultery. The act of sending messages to one's partner through excessive emoticons and chatting is only limited to discussing something important. Video calls with the opposite sex should be avoided because it is feared that this will trigger sexual acts (*khalwat*) in the future (Dina 2022). The phenomenon that occurs today is that many teenagers and even adults chat and video call without paying attention to religious law so that their actions violate Islamic religious law.

Sexual behaviour started by the failure of family function and its role in educating adolescents, this functions and roles consists of family roles in practising religion. The role of religious education is very important for teenagers who have just grown up because religious education will develop good characters in teenagers. This is very important because adolescents are still looking for identity, and when it is not based on religion, then they will fall into negative things. Religion plays a strategic role in developing personality of the adolescents. It should be understood that adolescence is a period where young people are still looking for self-identity, and if not guided properly, teenagers will lose their way.

Religion has both a direct and indirect impact on sexual behaviour. Religion becomes a means of social control of the behaviour carried out by a person. Religion will make individuals sensitive and aware of norms, problems of

moral order and appropriate standards of behaviour. Religion will instil individual personalities and ideologies that will act as a control over various existing stimuli (De Andrade Verona 2011).

Religious awareness and religious experience will lead to religious attitudes. Religious attitude is a condition that exists within a person that encourages him or her to behave by the level of obedience to religion. Moral life cannot be separated from religious belief. Moral values are firm, certain and fixed, and they do not change because of circumstances, place and time.

Providing information about religion becomes a fortress that strengthens character. The provision of religious education, which has been taught since childhood and has been practised by the closest people, such as family and friends, will help teenagers in socialising and taking action properly and prevent them from engaging in sexual acts. The importance of collaboration between religious education at home and school is an important factor in preventing sexual acts. Religion becomes a filter tool for teenagers when they receive various stimuli and information from various directions that can direct them to fall into sexual acts.

Families and environments that tend to be obedient in worshipping Islam will make teenagers accustomed to carry out religious activities. This will help teenagers to become close to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala and will help them lead a well-behaved and proper life. Adolescents who are religiously obedient will be able to place themselves and control themselves so that they do not carry out activities that are contrary to the teachings of Islam, including sexual activity (*khalwat*). Recitations conducted with teenagers will be a reminder for teenagers not to commit deviant actions that are very common around teenagers, both in the real world and in the virtual world (social media).

When teenagers have an understanding and practise religious teachings well, they will carry out everything that is in the teachings of Islam, including staying away from sexual acts (*khalwat*). Teenagers who practise Islamic teachings such as praying *fardhu* and attending recitations will consider sexual acts to be a major sin and hated by Allah, so teenagers will stay away from sexual acts (*khalwat*).

## Conclusion

Sexual activity can eliminate honour. Honour is natural for people, especially Muslims, as noble creatures, so protecting lineage and honour is a must for every Muslim. *Khalwat* is against the customs of society in Indonesia, but it is still common in Indonesia.

Local governments have the power to enforce justice and give punishment to perpetrators who commit sexual offences, so the government needs to enforce the fairest punishment based on Islamic law. Perpetrators of *Jinayat*

sexual activities need to be given punishment to provide a deterrent effect, and the community should also be taught about the dangers of sexual activity. The local government needs to give the fairest punishment based on certain considerations and also its policies in giving sanctions to the perpetrators.

*Qanun* is proven to be effective in preventing *khalwat*. *Qanun* can prevent teenagers from being alone in either a quiet place or a crowded place so that it reduces the risk of carrying out a sexual activity. The existence of a *qanun* on sexual acts will restrain teenagers from participating in sexual relations, and the imposition of *qanun* sanctions will make teenagers afraid to perform sexual acts.

The phenomenon that occurs today is that many teenagers and even adults are chatting and video calling without paying attention to the rules of religious law, so their actions violate Islamic religious law. Understanding religious beliefs will act as self-control for adolescents when receiving stimuli and information from outside related to sexual activity, which is increasingly easy to find. Religiosity is one of the filters for teenagers to prevent sexual activity (*khalwat*); teenagers who observe *fardhu* prayers and who often attend the Qur'an recitations are proven to be able to prevent sexual activity (*khalwat*).

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The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

### Authors' contributions

M.M. contributed to the conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, the writing of the original draft, supervision, funding acquisition and writing in review and editing. J.J. contributed to the conceptualisation, the writing of the original draft, visualisation, project administration and funding acquisition. P.A.S. contributed to the methodology, formal analysis, software, validation, data curation and writing in review and editing. E.F.H. contribution was toward software and writing in review and editing.

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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