

**Sexual Misconduct in Islamic Education: A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study Utilizing
Document Analysis**

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Abstract

This qualitative multiple-case study explored the phenomenon of educator sexual misconduct (ESM) within Islamic educational contexts by utilizing document analysis of 24 published misconduct reports, supporting documentation, and semi-structured interviews with two experts. This study contributes to educational practice by increasing knowledge related to the nature of ESM, victims' perceptions and experiences, and institutional responses in the Islamic context. The findings of this study were grounded in a conceptual framework developed from three empirical studies of ESM in the K–12 educational context. The results revealed that, while ESM in Islamic contexts shares qualitative similarities with other contexts, Islamic culture and practices influence certain aspects of ESM in unique ways. Key findings highlighted the existence of a culture of silence, clericalism, insularity, and lack of accountability in Islamic educational settings. This study contributes to the limited body of research on ESM in Islamic contexts and offers insights and recommendations to help educators better protect their students.

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Section 1: Foundation

Educators teach, develop, nurture, and protect students. Unfortunately, cases of educator sexual misconduct (ESM) have occurred in many contexts (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). ESM has also occurred in Islamic contexts (Chowdhury et al., 2022). ESM includes inappropriate sexual behaviors between educators and students, whether verbal, visual, or physical (Jeglic et al., 2023). Multiple studies have reported that victims of ESM suffer adverse

physical, psychological, behavioral, and academic effects that can affect their entire lives, regardless of their age, gender, race, or sexuality (de Weger, 2022a, 2022b; Heyder, 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lewandowski, 2022). Sexual misconduct connected to a religious context can amplify these adverse effects and cause victims to lose their religious identity (Cashwell & Swindle, 2018; Chowdhury et al., 2022). Not only can ESM cases cost schools millions of dollars in damages or settlements (Wurtele et al., 2019), ESM can also negatively affect other students, families, and community members (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019).

The true prevalence of ESM is unknown because of the lack of empirical data (Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2018). In addition, many ESM cases go unreported (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019; Wurtele et al., 2019; Young & Wiley, 2021). Even without true prevalence statistics, multiple studies have shown that ESM continues to be a significant issue in multiple educational contexts. Shakeshaft (2004) conducted the only generalizable study on ESM in the United States and found that 9.6% of students in K–12 schools experienced ESM. Nearly 2 decades later, Jeglic et al. (2023) estimated that 11.7% of K–12 students experienced ESM. Wurtele et al. (2019) estimated that between 0.05% and 5% of educators commit sexual misconduct. Approximately 10% of female graduate students experienced ESM (Bull & Page, 2022; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Young & Wiley, 2021). Hurcombe et al. (2019) found that 10.9% of participants experienced sexual misconduct in religious contexts.

Unlike the publicity surrounding the Catholic Church, most sexual misconduct cases in religious contexts go unnoticed (Rashid & Barron, 2019; Young & Wiley, 2021). There are several reasons ESM can thrive in religious settings (Rashid & Barron, 2019). First, the power imbalance between educators and students is greater in religious contexts because educators may

hold religious authority. The greater the power disparity between educator and student, the easier it is for educators to commit ESM and remain undetected (Hurcombe et al., 2019; Mancini, 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019). In addition, when religious schools lack a unified governing body, victims are less likely to report ESM (Rashid & Barron, 2019). Even if victims report, religious schools have no system available to report or track offenders. Finally, many religious schools are exempt from federal and state regulations that aim to protect students from ESM (Wurtele et al., 2019).

Multiple studies have identified the need for more research on ESM (Grant et al., 2019a; Jeglic et al., 2023; Rashid & Barron, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004). In addition, there is a lack of research on sexual misconduct in the Muslim community (Chowdhury et al., 2022). Multiple studies have reported that the Muslim community has been in denial about sexual misconduct (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019). Chowdhury et al. (2022) published the only known study related to ESM in the Islamic context. However, Chowdhury et al. (2022) did not focus on ESM. There are no available statistics on the number of students attending Islamic education nor the number of Islamic educators in the United States and Canada. However, there are about 3.5 million Muslims in the United States and 1.8 million in Canada, which is projected to more than double by 2050 (Mohamed, 2018; The Daily, 2022). Research on ESM in the Islamic educational context will increase the awareness and understanding of ESM, which can help educators prevent ESM (Lipson et al., 2019). This study will help researchers and educators gain an in-depth understanding of ESM.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is that ESM occurs in multiple educational contexts and can negatively impact all school stakeholders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc.,

2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019). Victims of ESM can suffer adverse emotional, educational, developmental, health, and spiritual effects (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004). In addition, schools can face expensive lawsuits and lose the community's trust (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Wurtele et al., 2019). Sexual misconduct in religious education can amplify these adverse effects (Cashwell & Swindle, 2018). Studies have estimated that 11.7% of K–12 students, 19% of college students, and 10% of female graduate students had experienced ESM (Jeglic et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2021; Young & Wiley, 2021). Multiple studies have shown that sexual misconduct also occurs in religious settings (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019). Since many cases of ESM go unreported and there is a need for further research on ESM, available findings do not reflect the whole nature and scope of ESM (Grant et al., 2019a; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2004).

To protect students, religious educators must better understand ESM in religious education. Rashid and Barron (2019) called for increased research on sexual misconduct in all religious contexts. Currently, Chowdhury et al. (2022) conducted the only study related to ESM in Islamic education and stated that there is a lack of research on sexual misconduct in the Muslim community. Islamic educators do not know the scope and nature of ESM in Islamic education. Increased understanding and awareness of ESM will contribute to prevention, reporting, support, and research efforts (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Dawson et al., 2018; Gardner, 2022; Grant et al., 2017; Hindi et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004; Vintrová, 2022).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the nature of ESM in the Islamic context. The target population included 33 published reports of misconduct cases in Islamic settings in the United States and Canada published since 2019 (FACE, n.d.; In Shaykh's

Clothing, n.d.). FACE and In Shaykh's Clothing (ISC) were the only organizations that worked directly with victims and publishing misconduct cases in the Islamic context. There were five experts in both organizations. Qualitative research and case study designs use purposive sampling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Merriam, 2009). Therefore, I used purposive sampling to select all cases that included ESM to perform document analysis and selected one topical expert from each organization to conduct semi-structured interviews. I accessed case documents and recruited experts via information published on each organization's website. Most of the published cases included ESM, which provided a large sample for this study. I excluded cases that did not contain evidence of ESM. Using a larger sample size increased this study's confidence and provided the maximum amount of information related to ESM in Islamic education (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2012). Documents are considered a significant source of data in qualitative and case study research (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, this study used published case documents as the primary data source. I used coding and a qualitative content analysis system to analyze themes of data related to ESM contained in the documents (Merriam, 2009). The collection of data from multiple cases and organizations provided a means for source triangulation (Yin, 2018). The semi-structured interviews provided methodological triangulation and improved the quality of the study (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). Grant et al. (2019a) stated that rigorous research is needed to understand how and why ESM occurs and how to improve ESM prevention. This study contributes to educational practice by increasing ESM knowledge in the Islamic context and providing recommendations to help educators protect students.

Research Questions

RQ1

What is the nature of reported ESM cases in the Islamic context?

RQ2

What are the perceptions and experiences of victims who reported ESM in the Islamic context?

RQ3

How have leaders of Islamic educational institutions responded to reported ESM cases?

Conceptual Framework

The themes identified in three empirical studies that analyzed ESM in K–12 schools formed the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework excluded the prevalence of ESM. Shakeshaft's (2004) seminal study on ESM examined the prevalence, offender descriptions, victim descriptions, patterns of misconduct, allegations, responses, legal impact, effects of ESM, consequences to offenders, union and professional organization roles, and prevention. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (2019) examined victim demographics, offender demographics, tactics, patterns of sexual offenses, discovery and disclosure, disciplinary actions, school demographics, media coverage, legal consequences, and victim impact. Jeglic et al. (2023) examined the prevalence, impact, and characteristics of misconduct, characteristics of victims and offenders, victim disclosure, and grooming. To coincide with the narrative published reports of Islamic ESM, I synthesized and organized the themes identified in the three studies in a timeline fashion, including the phases of pre-misconduct, misconduct, and post-misconduct.

For this study, the *pre-misconduct phase* was a category that included themes related to before an ESM incident occurred, such as setting, offender, and victim characteristics. The *misconduct phase* was a category that included themes related to the incident of ESM, such as grooming and ESM characteristics. The final category, the *post-misconduct phase*, included

themes related to events that occurred after an ESM incident, such as stakeholder responses, impact, and prevention. Table 1 presents the conceptual framework, which includes the three phases of ESM and associated themes. The framework is consistent with themes identified in the three studies that examined ESM (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2004).

Table 1

Conceptual Framework for Studying ESM

Category	Phase 1 Pre-Misconduct	Phase 2 Misconduct	Phase 3 Post-Misconduct
Themes	Setting Characteristics	Grooming Characteristics	Responses
	Offender Characteristics	ESM Characteristics	Impact
	Victim Characteristics		Prevention

Definitions of Key Terms

Clericalism

Clericalism is the concept in which religious leaders are morally superior to other adherents of the religion (Hickey, 2021).

Collectivism

Collectivism is a type of culture that values the welfare of the group over the individual (Sigad & Tener, 2022).

Countertransference

Countertransference is when a person seeking professional services develops strong feelings for someone who holds a position of power over them (Lipson et al., 2019).

Educator

An educator is any person older than 18 years old who works for an educational organization (Shakeshaft, 2004).

Educator Sexual Misconduct

Educator sexual misconduct (ESM) is any sexual behavior by an educator directed toward a student (Shakeshaft, 2004).

Grooming

Grooming is the process in which an offender selects, accesses, isolates, develops trust, desensitizes, manipulates, and breaks down victims' boundaries over time (Winters et al., 2022).

Imam

An Imam is a religious leader in a Muslim community (Hurcombe et al., 2019).

Insularity

Insularity is the concept in which religious leaders are detached from other adherents of the religion (Hickey, 2021).

Islamic Education

Islamic education refers to any entity that educates students based on the teachings of the religion of Islam (Taufik, 2020).

Mobile Offender

A mobile offender commits ESM at multiple locations (Grant et al., 2019b).

Negative Religious Coping

Negative religious coping is when individuals interpret adverse life experiences because of God's punishment (Ghorbani et al., 2021).

Opportunism

Opportunism is when an offender spontaneously takes advantage of a situation to offend victims (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Walter, 2018).

Passing the Trash

Passing the trash is when guilty educators move to other institutions without public knowledge of their past transgressions (Woods & Veil, 2020).

Positive Religious Coping

Positive religious coping is when individuals interpret adverse life experiences through their religion's loving and supporting elements (Ghorbani et al., 2021).

Secret Marriages

Secret marriages are marriages that did not meet the legal requirements of having witnesses or were not announced to the public (Baydar, 2023).

Standard of Care

A standard of care is the expected conduct that a reasonable and prudent person would exercise to avoid being negligent (Shakeshaft et al., 2019).

Student

A student is any person who gets an education from an educational organization (Shakeshaft, 2004).

Tariqa

A tariqa is a group that people join to follow a spiritual guide as a means to improve themselves religiously (In Shaykh's Clothing, n.d.).

Transference

Transference is when a person in a professional position of power develops feelings for those they are supposed to serve (Lipson et al., 2019).

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to describe the nature of ESM, explore victims' perceptions, and describe how educators responded to reported cases in the Islamic context. The problem addressed in this study is that ESM occurs in multiple educational contexts, including Islamic (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023; Rashid & Barron, 2019; Wood et al., 2021). In addition, ESM can negatively affect all school stakeholders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019). ESM in religious settings can amplify this negative impact (Cashwell & Swindle, 2018). Despite ESM's prevalence and negative impact, further research is needed (Grant et al., 2019a; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2004). Rashid and Barron (2019) called for increased research on sexual misconduct in all religious contexts. Chowdhury et al.

(2022) conducted a study on the abuse of individuals by religious authority figures and found a need for more research on sexual misconduct in the Islamic context. To protect students, educators must better understand ESM's nature (Jeglic et al., 2023). Currently, no studies have focused on ESM in the Islamic context. Studies related to ESM in the Islamic context can help school leaders protect students by increasing the knowledge, understanding, and awareness of ESM in the Islamic context, which will help educators protect students.

To build knowledge around ESM in the Islamic context, this literature review included the findings and themes identified in research studies related to ESM, sexual misconduct in religious contexts, and abuse in Islamic contexts. I conducted a systematic and haphazard search with the aim of selecting approximately 40 peer-reviewed articles published within the last 5 years. To identify ESM literature, I used the National University online library and found 12 articles containing the keywords *sex*, *misconduct*, and *education* or *school* in the title. In addition, I used the SAGE Online Journals database and found 10 articles that contained the phrase *educator sexual misconduct*. To identify articles related to sexual misconduct in religious contexts, I used the National University online library and selected the 15 most current articles out of the 178 that contained the keywords *religion*, *religious*, *clergy*, or *church*, *misconduct*, or *abuse* in the title, and *sex* in the abstract. I used the National University online library to find five articles about abuse in Islamic contexts that contained the keywords *Muslim* or *Islam* and *misconduct* or *abuse* in the title. By using this systematic process, I found 42 peer-reviewed articles, with 28 published within the last 5 years, nine published within the last 6 years, and one published in 2013.

I haphazardly searched the National University online library for relevant literature using various random assortments of the keywords. I reviewed abstracts and judgmentally selected 12

peer-reviewed articles. Five articles were published within the last 5 years and the remaining seven were published within the last 7 years. Of the 12 articles, seven related to ESM, three related to sexual misconduct in religious contexts, and two related to abuse in Islamic contexts. I also selected a grey-literature report about ESM and another about sexual misconduct in religious contexts. To identify seminal literature, I searched all selected articles for references to seminal works. Nineteen of the articles referenced Shakeshaft's (2004) study, and only one article referenced Shoop's (2004) book. By using systematic and haphazard searches, I identified 54 peer-reviewed articles, with 33 published within the last 5 years and 16 published within the last 7 years. I also identified two seminal works on ESM by Shakeshaft (2004) and Shoop (2004), one gray report on ESM by Grant et al. (2017), and one gray report on sexual misconduct in religious contexts by Hurcombe et al. (2019).

Literature on ESM

Of the 32 articles related to ESM, 24 addressed ESM topics in K–12 schools, and eight addressed ESM topics in higher education. Of the 24 K–12 ESM articles, 22 addressed ESM in the United States. One article addressed ESM in Canada, and one addressed ESM in Israel. Of the eight higher education articles, four address ESM in the US, and four address ESM in the United Kingdom. Overall, the subjects covered in the 32 ESM articles included the scope or nature of ESM (9), legal topics (5), prevention (5), responding and reporting (5), policy (4), perceptions (2), and training (2). The earliest literature covering ESM was the seminal works by Shakeshaft (2004) and Shoop (2004). Researching ESM remained relevant even up to the beginning of this study in 2022, 18 years later, which supports this study's need and relevance.

Literature on Sexual Misconduct in Religious Contexts

Out of the 19 articles about sexual misconduct in religious contexts, 13 related to the Roman Catholic Church, three related to other Christian denominations, and one article each related to Judaism, Buddhism, and general clergy sexual misconduct. The articles covered multiple countries, including the United States (5), Australia (3), United Kingdom (2), Poland (2), and one article each from Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Israel, and Spain. The articles covered topics related to scope or nature (8), reporting and responding (6), and one each on research framework, prevention, myths, legal topics, impact, and comparing ESM in the Catholic Church to other religious contexts. Similar to the articles on ESM, most of these studies have focused on the nature of sexual misconduct in religious contexts. Three articles related to clergy sexual misconduct with adult victims.

Literature on Abuse in Islamic Contexts

Most of the seven articles on abuse in Islamic contexts were related to the nature of abuse (4). Two articles related to reporting and responding to abuse in Islamic contexts. One related to coping with abuse. All but one article had a geographic context, including the United Kingdom (3), the United States (1), Afghanistan (1), and Malaysia (1). Most of the articles dealt with child abuse or child sexual abuse (4). The remaining articles focused on sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual behavior prohibited in Islam. There were no articles on ESM in the Islamic context. However, the literature review results showed that articles on abuse in Islamic contexts reported themes similar to those of articles on ESM and clergy sexual misconduct. For instance, the literature from all three categories focused primarily on Western Countries and related to the nature of sexual misconduct or abuse.

Clarifying ESM Offenses

Many terms related to ESM exist in the literature about ESM. These terms had overlapping meanings. School officials also expressed confusion with ESM terminology (Hernandez et al., 2021). The various terms attempted to address the type of sexual behavior and offender or victim. Regarding the type of sexual behavior, the Shakeshaft (2004) used sexual misconduct and (Shoop, 2004) used sexual exploitation. Several other articles, including the two seminal works, referenced the term sexual abuse (Abboud et al., 2020; Hernandez et al., 2021; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Rashid & Barron, 2019). Additionally, other articles used the terms sexual assault, sexual harassment, pedophilia, molestation, sexual relationships, and inappropriate relationships (Abboud et al., 2020; Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Bull et al., 2021; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Hernandez et al., 2021; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shoop, 2004). Heyder (2022) used the term spiritual abuse. Hernandez et al. (2021) stated that several terms are synonymous. However, these terms have different meanings and blurred lines of distinction (Abboud et al., 2020).

Sexual Behavior Terms. Sexual abuse and sexual assault are synonymous; for simplicity, I will use the term sexual abuse to encompass both terms. Unlike ESM, sexual abuse does not include all inappropriate sexual behaviors. *Sexual abuse* involves genital, oral, or anal penetration by a part of the offender's body or object using force without the victim's consent (Bhutto & Rind, 2019; Heyder, 2022; Shoop, 2004). Sexual abuse also includes molestation and pedophilia (Shoop, 2004). *Molestation* is a sexual activity with children below the age of consent, and *pedophilia* is a sexual activity with prepubescent children (Shoop, 2004). Sexual abuse is a crime, regardless of the victim's age. *Sexual harassment* is unwelcomed behavior that is severe, persistent, and pervasive and creates a sexually hostile environment (Shoop, 2004).

Sexual abuse does not entail inappropriate behaviors that may not be criminal. Sexual harassment does not necessarily entail all abuses of power or sexually harmful behaviors (Bull et al., 2021). Although sexual abuse and harassment are always considered sexual misconduct, sexual misconduct is not always sexual abuse or harassment. For example, a teacher engaging in consensual sexual behavior with an adult student may not have committed sexual abuse, but the behavior is still sexual misconduct. Sexual abuse and harassment also emphasize whether victims experienced harm and not the educator's violation of professional conduct (Henschel & Grant, 2019; Page et al., 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004).

Multiple authors have referenced varying sexual behaviors between educators and students as relationships (Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019). However, as Shoop (2004) stated, referring to these behaviors as relationships downplays the severity of the problem by depicting the behaviors as romantic affairs. Some even consider consenting sexual relationships with former students unprofessional and inappropriate (Shoop, 2004). Heyder (2022) used spiritual abuse as synonymous with sexual abuse. However, spiritual abuse does not always include sexual behaviors. *Spiritual abuse* is when an offender uses their religious position, divine authority, or scripture to take advantage of and manipulate victims to fulfill their psychological or sexual needs (Demasure, 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Rashid & Barron, 2019). In addition, spiritual abuse is predominantly used in religious contexts, which does not apply to all K–12 or higher education contexts. Therefore, referring to sexual behaviors between educators and students as relationships or spiritual abuse is inappropriate.

Offender and Victim Terms. ESM is the most appropriate term encompassing all types of offenses and educational contexts. The literature uses various terms to identify offenders and victims in sexual misconduct cases. In ESM cases, the offenders are educators, and the victims

are students. An *educator* is any adult who works in an educational organization (Grant et al., 2019b; Shakeshaft, 2004). Educators include teachers, school employees, faculty, staff, clergy, clerics, and Imams (Abboud et al., 2020; Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; de Weger, 2022a; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Page et al., 2019; Quarshie et al., 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Shakeshaft, 2004). An *Imam* is a religious leader in a Muslim community responsible for multiple religious duties, including religious education (Hurcombe et al., 2019). A *student* is any person who gets an education from an educational organization (Shakeshaft, 2004). A student can be a minor or an adult (Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; de Weger, 2022b; Page et al., 2019; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shoop, 2004; Sigad & Tener, 2022).

Issues With Consent. Consent is critical in determining whether a behavior is sexual abuse or harassment. Something is not consensual if an individual refuses, is forced, is powerless, unconscious, or incapable of giving consent due to age or mental deficiency (Shoop, 2004). Age of consent laws, which vary by jurisdiction, determine the age at which an individual can decide whether to engage in sexual behavior with an adult (Shoop, 2004). In the United States, the age of consent ranges from 15 to 18 years (Shoop, 2004). In Canada, the age of consent ranges from 16 to 18 years (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). In this study, minors were children below the age of consent, and adults were above the age of consent. Minors cannot fully comprehend and may not be developmentally prepared for sexual activity (Sigad & Tener, 2022). Minors cannot legally consent, whether or not the behavior was welcomed. Therefore, an offender who engages in sexual behavior with a minor has committed

sexual abuse. However, jurisdictions differ on whether sexual behavior between an educator and a welcoming student above the age of consent is criminal.

For this reason, it is important to consider an educator's power over minor and adult students when considering consent. Educators hold power over and have special access to students, which blurs the lines of consent for students of any age (Lipson et al., 2019; Shakeshaft, 2018). To determine whether a student can welcome sexual behavior, one must consider the student's age, the nature of the conduct involved, and the power dynamics between the teacher and student (Shoop, 2004).

Defining ESM

Shakeshaft (2004) defined *educator sexual misconduct* (ESM) as any sexual behavior by an educator directed toward a student. However, Shakeshaft (2004) applied ESM to the K–12 context, which does not include students in higher education or religious contexts. In this study, ESM encompassed the meanings of all the various terms related to the K–12, higher education, and religious education contexts. In addition, it is fitting to treat ESM as a type of professional misconduct encompassing all inappropriate sexual behavior (Abboud et al., 2020; de Weger, 2022b). Secular and religious teachers are professionals who must respect boundaries and expectations defined by their profession. Another benefit of looking at ESM from the professional misconduct lens is that the perspective eliminates the issues of considering consent and focuses on the power imbalance between educators and students.

ESM includes physical, verbal, and visual sexual behaviors (Abboud et al., 2020; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2004; Shoop, 2004). Physical ESM includes violations of personal space, brushing against, touching, patting, pinching, caressing, hugging, kissing, fondling, genital touching, oral-genital contact, vaginal penetration, and anal penetration (Canadian Centre

for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2004; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019). Sexual violence, sexual coercion, sexual abuse, and rape are all forms of physical ESM (Page et al., 2019; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Shakeshaft et al., 2019). Visual ESM includes staring, ogling, exhibitionism, indecent exposure, gestures, written communications, displayed materials, electronic communications, photos, images, giving gifts, and literature (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019). Verbal ESM includes innuendo, language, jokes, stories, requests, advances, invitations, requests for dates, comments, questions, conversations, comments about physical appearance, spreading rumors, discussing sexual activities, jeering, and taunting (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Jeglic et al., 2023; Page et al., 2019; Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004).

Title IX

In the United States, Title IX is the primary law establishing criteria for preventing and responding to ESM (Grant et al., 2017, 2019b). Title IX guidelines include provisions related to policies and procedures, prevention, training, reporting, investigations, and responding (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant et al., 2017; Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019). In addition, Title IX holds schools and school leaders liable for their negligence related to ESM cases (Abboud et al., 2020; Lee, 2022; Shoop, 2004). While Title IX establishes criteria to help educators prevent and respond to ESM, there are areas for improvement in Title IX implementation at the institutional level. For instance, Title IX has a limited scope and no system to enforce accountability. The law only applies to educational institutions that receive federal funds, excluding most private and religious schools (Grant et al., 2019b; Wurtele et al., 2019). Also, implementation of the Title IX guidance is left up to the discretion of educators, with no governing body to enforce accountability (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019). Since no governing

body provides oversight of Title IX compliance, each jurisdiction and institution vary in its application. Individuals can interpret laws and policies differently due to varying values, politics, institutions, and situations. Abboud et al. (2020) found differences in how state laws addressed ESM. For example, only eight states criminalized ESM regardless of the student's age (Abboud et al., 2020). In addition, multiple studies have found that school district policies did not adequately address critical components of Title IX guidelines (Grant et al., 2017, 2019b). The literature did not examine ESM laws in Canada. However, Canada faced issues similar to those in the United States—since legal interpretations of ESM varied by province (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). These weaknesses made it difficult for educators to address ESM and created loopholes for ESM offenders to circumvent regulations.

Prevalence

There is little national empirical data on ESM (Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2018). Shakeshaft (2004) conducted the only generalizable empirical study on ESM in the United States K–12 context. According to Shakeshaft (2004), approximately 9.6% of all K–12 students experience ESM. Jeglic et al. (2023) found a higher rate of 11.7% in their limited study. Approximately 10% of female higher-education graduate students experienced ESM (Bull & Page, 2022; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Young & Wiley, 2021). In the religious context, Hurcombe et al. (2019) found that 10.9% of participants experienced sexual misconduct in a religious context. These studies have showed that the prevalence rates of sexual misconduct in the K–12, higher education, and religious contexts may be similar. However, the true prevalence of ESM is unknown because of the difficulty in collecting reliable, consistent, and generalizable data. Other barriers included inconsistent definitions and standards, incomplete documentation, accessibility restrictions, and lack of reporting (Grant et al., 2019a; Jeglic et al., 2023). In

addition, there is no national data collection system to determine the prevalence rates of ESM (Lipson et al., 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019). For example, the U.S. Department of Education's database does not track licenses revoked because of ESM, and criminal records do not contain whether the offender committed ESM (Grant et al., 2019a). The biggest hurdle to finding an accurate prevalence rate for ESM is that most victims of ESM do not report the offense to authorities (Lamothe et al., 2022; Page et al., 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004; Shoop, 2004). The theme of non-reporting also exists in higher education and religious contexts (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Hindi et al., 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019). Due to these factors, ESM estimates are most likely lower than reality since many victims do not report the misconduct (Wurtele et al., 2019).

Although not generalizable, the literature provides other statistics that help provide a better idea of the prevalence of ESM. In Canada, 750 cases of ESM with K–12 students were reported between 1997 and 2017 (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). Hernandez et al. (2021) found that 2% of surveyed high school students, equally male and female, admitted to consenting to a sexual relationship with a teacher. In a nationally representative survey of Israeli K–12 students, 8% reported experiencing ESM (Sigad & Tener, 2022). In the United Kingdom, a survey of 1,839 students reported that 41% experienced ESM at the college level, and 5% were aware of other victims (Bull et al., 2021; Page et al., 2019). In a survey of 181,752 U.S. college students, 5.5% of undergraduates and 24% of graduate students experienced ESM (Bull et al., 2021). Adult sexual misconduct is 10 times more likely than child sexual misconduct in the Catholic Church (de Weger, 2022b). There have not been any large-scale studies on other religious groups, but the data suggest that sexual misconduct in other religious contexts is similar to rates in the Catholic Church (Mancini, 2022; Plante, 2020). Regarding offenders, 4% of clergy

(Lewandowski, 2022; Mancini, 2022) and up to 5% of educators have committed ESM (Mancini, 2022; Wurtele et al., 2019).

Most information on ESM cases comes from the media (Abboud et al., 2020; Grant et al., 2019b; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Shakeshaft, 2004). In the United States, sexual misconduct in the religious context has been covered extensively in the media, primarily focusing on the Catholic Church (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Mancini, 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019). There are both positive and negative aspects of media reports. Media reports can increase awareness of ESM problems. For example, the problem of sexual misconduct in the Catholic Church has existed for decades but has become mainstream because of the media (Plante, 2020). However, information obtained from the media may not always be accurate (Mancini, 2022; Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022). Media reports may also provide a glimpse of the prevalence rates. For example, in 2014, 459 school employees arrested for ESM were reported in the media, which increased to 498 in 2015 (Henschel & Grant, 2019). However, not all cases of ESM reach the media (Henschel & Grant, 2019; Young & Wiley, 2021). The prevalence estimates and available reports indicate that ESM is a significant problem in multiple contexts. To put things into perspective, at least four to five million K–12 students may experience ESM nationally if the estimates are correct (Abboud et al., 2020). More K–12 students report experiencing ESM while at school than those who experienced nonfatal physical violence (Gushwa et al., 2019). In addition, a child is 13 times more likely to experience ESM than be kidnapped (Shakeshaft et al., 2019). There is no accurate, up-to-date, and generalizable study on the prevalence of ESM (Shakeshaft, 2018). However, even one case of ESM can be detrimental to the victim, family, school, and community (Grant et al., 2019a).

Religious Power

Sexual misconduct is qualitatively similar in all researched educational and religious contexts (Lamothe et al., 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2022). However, little research has been conducted on sexual misconduct in religious contexts other than the Catholic Church (Chowdhury et al., 2022). The Muslim community has been in denial regarding sexual misconduct in their religious institutions (Rashid & Barron, 2019). Educators can act as teachers, counselors, confessors, therapists, and spiritual directors (de Weger, 2022b). However, religious educators can hold more power over students than secular educators because religious educators influence and control the student's morality, beliefs, social relationships, and daily lives (de Weger, 2022b; Hickey, 2021; Hurcombe et al., 2019). The greater the power difference between educators and students, the easier it is for religious educators to commit ESM and remain undetected (Hurcombe et al., 2019; Mancini, 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019).

Clericalism and insularity increase the risk of ESM in religious institutions (Hickey, 2021). *Clericalism* refers to the concept that religious leaders are morally superior, while *insularity* refers to the concept that religious leaders are detached from other adherents of the religion (Hickey, 2021). Clericalism and insularity can place religious leaders above the law without checks and balances (Hickey, 2021; Plante, 2020). Religious adherents consider religious teachers holy and knowledgeable representatives of God, whom adherents must submit to and trust in all affairs (de Weger, 2022b; Gardner, 2022). As representatives of God, religious educators can use spiritually abusive tactics to commit ESM, in addition to all the tactics available to secular educators (Pereda et al., 2022).

Islamic Culture

Islam is a religion that encompasses all aspects of life (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; O’Leary et al., 2020). However, Muslims worldwide interpret Islamic standards differently because of cultural influence and different religious understandings (Hindi et al., 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019; O’Leary et al., 2020). Islamic culture is conservative (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Hickey, 2021; Quarshie et al., 2022). For instance, Islamic standards encourage modest dress for males and females, discourage male and female fraternization, and prohibit sexual activity outside marriage (Bhutto & Rind, 2019; Ghorbani et al., 2021; Haboush & Alyan, 2013). Islamic culture is also a *collectivist* culture that emphasizes the welfare and honor of the group, family, and parents over the individual (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Sigad & Tener, 2022). Cultural factors influence ESM’s nature in the Islamic context. Conservative and collectivist cultures affect ESM reporting (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Sigad & Tener, 2022). Islamic standards related to fraternization and sexual activity outside of marriage can help define ESM in the Islamic context with adult students. In addition, similar to other religions, Islamic standards prohibit harming and abusing others (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022).

Offender Characteristics

The literature identified several common characteristics of ESM offenders. The most common characteristic of offenders was that they were primarily males (Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Grant et al., 2019b; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019; Quarshie et al., 2022; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shoop, 2004). In the K–12 context, Walter (2018) found that 75% of teachers who lost their licenses because of ESM were males. In Canada, 87% of offenders were males (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). In addition, even though male educators were

up to five times more likely to commit ESM, about 25% to 43% of ESM offenders were females (Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Shoop, 2004; Walter, 2018).

The offender's age, ethnicity, and race varied depending on the educational setting (Lipson et al., 2019). The literature presented mixed results for the average age of offenders, ranging from 20 to 42 (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Quarshie et al., 2022; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Walter, 2018). The age statistics of ESM offenders closely mirrored teacher age statistics. Most educators are adults older than 20, with the average age of teachers being 42 (Brady & Tajalli, 2018). Educator experience is a better indicator than educator age, although closely related. More than half of educators who committed ESM (53%) had less than 5 years of experience (Robert & Thompson, 2019).

In the K–12 context, teachers were likelier to commit ESM than other positions (Robert & Thompson, 2019). Most offenders were highly respected, adored, trusted, popular, and accomplished (Grant et al., 2019b; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004; Walter, 2018). Like clericalism and insularity in religious contexts, the educator's status made it easier to commit ESM and go undetected (Jeglic et al., 2023). In Canada, 86% of offenders were certified teachers (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). Hernandez et al. (2021) found that offenders typically had multiple teaching certifications. Most offenders were general education teachers (Henschel & Grant, 2019). However, the literature also identified many offenders as athletic coaches and music teachers (Henschel & Grant, 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Walter, 2018). In higher education, the literature only referred to offenders as college faculty or staff (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018). In the religious context, 54% of offenders were clergy, 27% were general staff, and only 7% were educational staff (Hurcombe et al., 2019). However, the literature did not show whether the clergy

participated in religious education. The common factor amongst all literature was that educators who spend extensive one-on-one time with students are likelier to commit ESM (Grant et al., 2019b; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Walter, 2018).

Victim Characteristics

All demographics are at risk of experiencing ESM. However, reports show that over 70% of ESM victims were females (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Grant et al., 2019b; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Quarshie et al., 2022). Social barriers may prevent males from recognizing and reporting ESM (Abboud et al., 2020). While most offenders were males and most victims were females, same-sex abuse also occurred (Shoop, 2004). When there were religious celibacy rules, like in the Catholic Church, victims were more likely to be male (Quarshie et al., 2022). Although there are no celibacy rules, Islam prohibits sexual activity outside of marriage and has conservative values like the Catholic Church. Most victims of sexual misconduct were between the ages of 10 and 19, with an average age of 14 to 15 years old (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Quarshie et al., 2022). Victims in a religious context were older than victims in other contexts, and male victims were younger than female victims (Hurcombe et al., 2019). Although children were the most vulnerable, not all misconduct was against children (Chowdhury et al., 2022). In higher education, most victims were women, and there were more victims among graduate students than undergraduate students (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018).

Offenders targeted vulnerability (Grant et al., 2019b; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Heyder, 2022; Lipson et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Poverty, parents with low levels of education, family distress, dysfunctional homes, bullying, and disabilities are examples of student vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities provided offenders easier access to victims and presented barriers to

reporting misconduct (Grant et al., 2019b; Mullaney, 2022; Shoop, 2004). Although students of color were minorities in the student population, a significant portion of ESM victims (44%) were students of color (Henschel & Grant, 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023).

Setting Characteristics

More ESM cases occurred in secular schools than in religious institutions (Jeglic et al., 2023). In religious contexts, only 16% of sexual misconduct cases occurred at religious schools (Hurcombe et al., 2019). In K–12, 55% of offenses occurred on school property or at school-related events (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Henschel & Grant, 2019). In the religious context, 67% of sexual misconduct occurred at religious facilities (Hurcombe et al., 2019). Sexual misconduct in the religious setting occurred in confessions, bridal exams, and retreats (Heyder, 2022). More ESM cases existed in the southern part of the United States (Henschel & Grant, 2019). According to media reports, Texas led the United States in ESM cases, followed by Pennsylvania, California, Florida, Ohio, and North Carolina (Hernandez et al., 2021).

Type of ESM Offenses

While the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (2019) found that 74% of ESM cases were physical ESM offenses, Jeglic et al. (2023) found that only 1% of study participants reported physical ESM. The difference may be due to how each study collected data. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (2019) used reported cases of ESM, and Jeglic et al. (2023) used surveys. Reported cases may contain more severe ESM offenses, while victims may be less inclined to report physical ESM and more inclined to report verbal and visual ESM in surveys. In higher education, more than half of the cases of college ESM involved physical ESM (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018). The nature of sexual misconduct against adults in the religious

context was like sexual misconduct against children (de Weger, 2022b). Most misconduct reported in religious contexts was physical (Hurcombe et al., 2019).

Grooming

Offenders used opportunism and grooming. Opportunism is when an offender spontaneously takes advantage of a situation to commit an offense (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Walter, 2018). *Grooming* is when an offender selects, accesses, isolates, develops trust, desensitizes, manipulates perceptions, and breaks down ESM victims' boundaries over time (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Winters et al., 2022). Offenders also used grooming behaviors to keep victims silent (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Shoop, 2004). In Canada, 70% of the cases of ESM in the K–12 context involved grooming (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). Half of the accounts of college ESM involved grooming (Bull & Page, 2022). Identifying signs of grooming can be difficult because the behaviors that create a successful teacher-student relationship can also create an environment where ESM can occur (Grant et al., 2019b; Henschel & Grant, 2019). Examples of grooming include flirting, seducing, texting, buying gifts, showing personal attention, isolation, inappropriate communication, convincing the student that they are in love, and giving rewards (Lipson et al., 2019; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shoop, 2004; Walter, 2018). Grooming includes intimidation, threats, and shaming (Demasure, 2022; Shoop, 2004). In the religious context, offenders used spiritually abusive behaviors to groom their victims (Demasure, 2022; Heyder, 2022).

During grooming, offenders moved from non-contact offenses to contact offenses as they break down the victim's boundaries. Victims sometimes complied with ESM because they enjoyed the extra attention from the educator, and they may have developed romantic feelings

(Shoop, 2004). When victims developed romantic feelings, the offenders reciprocate (Shoop, 2004; Walter, 2018). *Transference* is when a person in a professional position of power develops feelings for those they are supposed to serve (Lipson et al., 2019). *Countertransference* is when someone seeking professional services develops strong feelings for someone who holds a position of power over them (Lipson et al., 2019). Transference and countertransference can happen in teacher-student relationships (Lipson et al., 2019). Offenders manipulate the victim's positive feelings into sexual behavior over time (Shoop, 2004). An offender will use the trust and respect that a student has to engage in intimate conversations with the victim. Vulnerable students may seek advice about personal affairs from offenders, or offenders may seek personal information about victims (Walter, 2018). The offender will then engage in behaviors that appear inadvertent, like hugging, brushing up against the victim, or making sexual comments or jokes (Shoop, 2004). Offenders used technology, such as the internet, emails, texting, and social media, as tools to groom students (Gushwa et al., 2019; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Walter, 2018).

Offenders often isolate their victims from friends and family (Shoop, 2004). In religious settings, clericalism made it easier for offenders to isolate victims (Hurcombe et al., 2019). Victims felt welcomed, supported, and dependent on their offenders, which made it difficult for victims to recognize the harmful behavior (Demasure, 2022). Offenders may repel their victims with negative behavior and then attract them again with positive behaviors (Demasure, 2022). It is important to note that grooming becomes sexual misconduct once the behaviors become sexual. However, it is difficult to recognize non-sexual grooming behaviors because we do not know the educator's intent. For example, a teacher may or may not have sexual intent when spending extra time with a student who needs help. Also, not every inappropriate behavior is

sexual misconduct. For example, a teacher communicating with a student on social media may be considered misconduct, but it might not be sexual misconduct. However, sharing sexual pictures on social media is sexual misconduct.

Nature of Reporting

There are many reasons victims reported. Reporting gave a voice to victims, informed the community, and helped make institutions safer for children (Heyder, 2022). Victims reported ESM because they wanted to prevent further misconduct, increase awareness, and get justice, healing, validation, and financial help (Bull & Page, 2022; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; de Weger, 2022a; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Vintrová, 2022). When reporting ESM, victims told friends, family, educators, religious leaders, or legal agencies (Hindi et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). In all contexts, victims were more likely to report to their family, friends, educators, and religious leaders than report incidents to legal agencies (Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hindi et al., 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shoop, 2004). Third-party witnesses also reported misconduct to educators or legal agencies (Bull & Page, 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023). For example, a third party reported 47% of the ESM cases in Canada (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). More than half of the cases in Ghana were referred to the police by a family member (Quarshie et al., 2022). Reports to legal agencies were only between 1% and 5% of all ESM cases (Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019). Some leaders may assume that sexual misconduct reports are fictitious (de Weger, 2022a; Shoop, 2004). However, it is more likely that sexual misconduct reports are accurate. Hernandez et al. (2021) reported that only about 7.5% of ESM accusations were false.

Barriers to Reporting. Educators are mandated reporters, so they must report reasonable suspicions of ESM to authorities (Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004; Walter, 2018). States

provide immunity to mandatory reporters and threaten fines and imprisonment for those who do not report ESM (Shoop, 2004). However, mandatory reporting laws do not address students' and staff's fears and misunderstandings (Grant et al., 2019b). In addition, mandatory reporting laws do not address ESM with adult students. Shakeshaft (2004) and Shoop (2004) estimated that approximately 5% of ESM cases were reported to authorities. Years later, Shakeshaft (2018) estimated that 10% of ESM victims reported the incidents to authorities. Unfortunately, some barriers prevented victims, witnesses, and teachers from reporting ESM cases.

Perceptions. Perceptions of sexual misconduct varied depending on many factors, such as cultural differences, race, customs, media influence, power imbalance, and the sex and age of the victim and offender (Grant et al., 2019a; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Mustapha et al., 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Sigad & Tener, 2022). Perceptions of ESM affected how parties define, understand, report, and respond to ESM cases (Grant et al., 2019a; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Sigad & Tener, 2022). For example, in Poland, most people in Poland believed pedophilia was the biggest problem of the Poland Catholic Church (Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022). The focus on pedophilia may have caused the Poland Catholic Church authorities to ignore ESM with adult victims. Mustapha et al. (2021) defined sexual misconduct from the Islamic perspective as any sexual behavior that violates Islamic standards. According to this definition, sexual misconduct includes consenting sexual relationships between two adults outside of marriage (Mustapha et al., 2021).

In the Islamic context, Chowdhury and Winder (2022) found that Muslim victims of domestic violence felt that a misogynistic perspective dominated the Muslim community. A misogynistic culture could present a barrier for women victims to report ESM and result in inappropriate responses by leaders. For instance, some Muslims considered domestic violence a

natural part of married life (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022). Minimizing the severity of one type of abuse or misconduct minimizes other forms of misconduct. It is important to note that religious groups are not monolithic. Each religious group has multiple subcultures. Even with religious organizations, there can be multiple subcultures. Culture and religion can also influence how ESM affects victims. For example, Pereda et al. (2022) found that victims who perceived that their belief in God declined were more likely to have more mental health and social problems.

Media coverage can influence societal trends and public perception of ESM cases (Russell & Gruys, 2022). Perspectives may differ even within the same household. For instance, societal trends may influence children to develop values different from those of their parents (Mustapha et al., 2021). An excellent example of how the media influences perceptions is how negative media narratives in the West influence how society views Muslims (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022). Selective media coverage can skew perceptions and cause misconceptions about ESM. For example, media coverage of sexual misconduct in the Catholic Church has caused several misconceptions in the public (Plante, 2020). In addition, the sex of victims, offenders, and bystanders affects perceptions of ESM, as shown by how females perceived sexual misconduct cases more negatively than men (Hernandez et al., 2021; Knoche & Russell, 2021). The public viewed male offenders as worse than female offenders (Hernandez et al., 2021; Russell & Gruys, 2022). The media labeled reported cases of ESM with female offenders as relationships and not misconduct, rape, or abuse, which could have influenced these perceptions. Male offender-female victim ESM cases were perceived as worse than female offender-male victim cases (Knoche & Russell, 2021). Some male victims of female offenders viewed the misconduct as praiseworthy and a “rite of passage” (Knoche & Russell, 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Walter, 2018). In the Catholic Church, adherents blamed adult female victims

for sexual misconduct cases because of the belief that women are considered the source of sin (Heyder, 2022). Russell and Gruys (2022) found that respondents perceived ESM cases with heterosexual pairings as more acceptable than same-sex pairings. In addition, those with homophobic beliefs were more likely to blame victims of same-sex offenses (Russell & Gruys, 2022). Since Islam forbids homosexuality, Muslims may treat ESM cases based on the sexual orientation of offenders and victims (Ghorbani et al., 2021). Despite the differences in perceptions, Page et al. (2019) found that 80% of respondents did not approve of educators having sexual or romantic relationships with students.

Guilt and Shame. The stigma associated with sexual misconduct is a significant barrier to reporting (Lipson et al., 2019; Russell & Gruys, 2022). *Stigma* refers to negative societal perceptions associated with guilt, fear, embarrassment, victim-blaming, disbelief of the victim, self-blame, and shame, which can cause victims to remain silent (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2019b; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Heyder, 2022; Hindi et al., 2022; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Shoop, 2004). For example, male victims may fear the stigma of being emasculated, and female victims may fear the stigma of being labeled promiscuous (Russell & Gruys, 2022). In the religious context, victims may fear discussing sexual issues because of cultural and religious values (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Hindi et al., 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Sigad & Tener, 2022). For example, Mustapha et al. (2021) found that Muslim parents resisted having their children attend sex education classes offered at school because they believed discussing it was inappropriate. When communities and families remain silent regarding sex, victims learn to associate negativity with sex, which discourages reporting (Haboush & Alyan, 2013).

Lack of Knowledge. Many victims did not recognize sexual misconduct because of their lack of knowledge (Grant et al., 2019a; Page, 2022). Victims who understood appropriate and

inappropriate behavior were more likely to report sexual misconduct (Shoop, 2004). In addition, teachers lacked knowledge about the signs of sexual misconduct and lacked the confidence to make reports (Gushwa et al., 2019). Conservative and religious cultures look down upon talking about sexual issues. When individuals do not discuss sex, victims find it difficult to recognize sexual misconduct (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019). Limited access to essential sexual terminology reduces the child's ability to identify misconduct (Hindi et al., 2022).

Miseducation of sexual issues can prevent victims from reporting misconduct. For example, Mustapha et al. (2021) defined sexual misconduct as any sexual behavior outside of marriage and recommended seeking solitude as a prevention measure. With this definition, students could interpret ESM as the same as consensual sex with another student and believe that seeking solitude means keeping silent. Lamothe et al. (2022) found that international students lacked knowledge about sexual misconduct and their legal rights, which prevented them from reporting it.

Institutional Response. Leaders represent and lead their institutions through incidents of ESM (Lipson et al., 2019). Unfortunately, many religious leaders and secular educational leaders have responded inadequately to reports of sexual misconduct (Bull et al., 2021; Bull & Page, 2022; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Page, 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022; Wurtele et al., 2019). Leaders must balance priorities when addressing stakeholders' needs during ESM incidents (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Woods & Veil, 2020). The two main stakeholders are the victim and the institution. All other stakeholders fall into these two categories. For example, the accused offender is a stakeholder, but when leaders consider the needs of accused offenders, they are looking out for the institution's best interests. Leaders should prioritize and act ethically toward victims when responding to allegations of

sexual misconduct (Mancini, 2022). However, many leaders prioritized the institution (Lamothe et al., 2022; Page, 2022; Woods & Veil, 2020). Prioritizing the institution can cause leaders to directly or indirectly prioritize the offender's rights over the victim (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Heyder, 2022; Mullaney, 2022). Leaders may use similar tactics as offenders to discourage victims from reporting, such as stalling, deception, coercion, and deflection to cover up sexual misconduct reports (Bull et al., 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2022; de Weger, 2022a; Gardner, 2022; Page, 2022; Shoop, 2004). Bull and Page (2022) found that 40% of interviewees reported being blocked or dissuaded from reporting ESM by college authorities. Leaders in religious contexts may avoid ESM cases to protect the reputation of victims, families, and religious institutions (Sigad & Tener, 2022). In addition, leaders may fear retaliation. For example, in Israeli-Arab society, reporting teachers have experienced physical harm because of retaliation from family members (Sigad & Tener, 2022).

Institutions can face long-term negative consequences when they do not respond appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct. For example, because the Catholic Church did not initially respond appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct, the Catholic Church still faces problems with its public image (de Weger, 2022a; Plante, 2020; Przeworski, 2022). The negative public image presents further barriers to reporting. For instance, leaders in the Catholic Church have attempted to cover up adult sexual misconduct to avoid causing further harm to the institution's negative public image (de Weger, 2022a). Unfortunately, leaders in other religious institutions have responded similarly to how leaders in the Catholic Church responded (Gardner, 2022; Hickey, 2021; Mullaney, 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019).

Religion and Culture. Barriers exist in Islamic education because of cultural and religious factors. For example, victims can be reluctant to talk about sexual issues and may feel

that they should handle cases outside the legal system (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Hindi et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). Cultures that protect youth from sexual behavior can lack the resources to deal with sexual misconduct when it occurs (Haboush & Alyan, 2013). Muslim culture is collectivist (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Sigad & Tener, 2022). Victims in collectivist cultures will involve family, friends, and community members to avoid reporting to authorities (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022). However, the Muslim community resisted hearing about sexual misconduct complaints (Chowdhury et al., 2022). In addition, there is no accessible grievance system nor a central body of authority for Western Muslim communities. Rashid and Barron (2019) found that the lack of a central body of authority was a cause for non-reporting. Muslim victims can face difficulties reporting sexual misconduct to secular authorities (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022). Difficulties can include victim resistance to sharing details with non-community members, structural bias, discrimination, and negative stereotypes (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Hindi et al., 2022; O'Leary et al., 2020).

Impact on Victims

ESM harms victims, institutions, and other stakeholders in the school community (Grant et al., 2019; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Shoop, 2004). Victims of ESM suffer detrimental physical, psychological, behavioral, and academic effects which can affect their entire life, regardless of their age, gender, race, and sexuality (Abboud et al., 2020; Bull et al., 2021; de Weger, 2022a, 2022b; Heyder, 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lewandowski, 2022; Lipson et al., 2019; Page et al., 2019; Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019). Physical consequences of ESM can include pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, injuries, chronic headaches, and fatigue (Abboud et al., 2020; Demasure, 2022; Grant et al., 2019b; Quarshie et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). Psychological effects can include depression, emotional trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder,

fear, loss of identity, anxiety disorders, shame, guilt, and self-doubt (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023; Pereda et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). Behavioral effects can include drug and alcohol abuse, criminality, promiscuity, self-harm, attempted suicide, relationship issues, and eating disorders (de Weger, 2022b; Grant et al., 2019b; Gushwa et al., 2019; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Victims of ESM typically struggle academically, lose the urge to go to school, participate less in class, and have trouble concentrating (Grant et al., 2019a; Gushwa et al., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019).

When sexual misconduct happens in a religious context, victims experience additional adverse effects. Since faith is a significant part of a person's identity, victims in the religious context lose connection with their religion and experience conflict with their identity (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Demasure, 2022; de Weger, 2022a). Similar to how victims distanced themselves from school, victims in religious contexts distanced themselves from the faith and the religious institution to protect themselves from further abuse (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Gardner, 2022). When someone loses the security that their faith provides, they may lose their faith altogether (Demasure, 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Pereda et al., 2022). Losing faith is a significant issue because a decline in faith correlates with many mental health and social problems (Pereda et al., 2022). When trauma happens in religious contexts, religion can help recover or compound the harm (Ghorbani et al., 2021). Victims who believed that adverse life experiences result from God's punishment or *negative religious coping* suffered more trauma (Ghorbani et al., 2021). Victims who interpreted their experiences through their religion's loving and supporting elements, referred to as *positive religious coping*, had better mental health (Ghorbani et al., 2021).

The aspect of reporting sexual misconduct presents additional harm for victims. On the one hand, reporting sexual misconduct can have benefits, such as stopping the misconduct, helping protect other students, increasing knowledge and awareness, encouraging others to report, and helping with healing (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Heyder, 2022). However, the response of school leaders, religious authorities, teachers, family members, and friends can positively or negatively affect the victims (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Wurtele et al., 2019). Appropriate responses and recognition of the injustice of sexual misconduct can help the victim overcome the trauma (Heyder, 2022). Inappropriate responses can be a source of additional trauma (Chowdhury et al., 2022; de Weger, 2022a, 2022b; Gardner, 2022; Page, 2022). When reporting, victims can experience feelings of helplessness, pain, guilt, shame, confusion, self-blame, and a loss of faith due to encountering breaches of trust, victim blaming, and strained relationships (Chowdhury et al., 2022; de Weger, 2022a; Gardner, 2022; Sigad & Tener, 2022).

Impact on Institutions

Schools and religious institutions are responsible for their employees and can be liable for damages for not fulfilling their responsibility of protecting students and ensuring offenders face the consequences. Schools not complying with Title IX standards can be liable for civil damages (Grant et al., 2019b; Shoop, 2004). Examples of Title IX violations include ignoring allegations of sexual misconduct, not properly investigating, responding inappropriately to sexual misconduct reports, giving offenders positive referrals, and being negligent in hiring practices (Grant et al., 2019b; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019). Mishandling sexual misconduct cases can cause lawsuits and settlements in the millions, which puts a financial burden on institutions (Gushwa et al., 2019; Lee, 2022; Lewandowski, 2022; Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Schools and religious organizations could struggle for years to recover

financially after incidents of sexual misconduct (Hickey, 2021; Wurtele et al., 2019). Besides the possible financial impact, institutions can lose credibility and the trust of stakeholders after ESM incidents (Shoop, 2004). In the religious context, adherents show less support, approval, and involvement with religious institutions (Mancini, 2022; Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022). For example, Mancini (2022) found that approximately 30% of the Catholic community reduced their involvement and donations to the Catholic Church after incidents of sexual misconduct. Reduced financial support and involvement are significant in private institutions that rely heavily on donations and fundraisers to finance operations.

Impact on Stakeholders

It only takes one offender to disrupt an entire school community (Grant et al., 2019a; Gushwa et al., 2019; Wurtele et al., 2019). Family members, especially parents, suffer from emotional issues when a member suffers from ESM (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Family members may blame and doubt themselves, lose trust in the institution, and feel embarrassment, guilt, anger, anxiety, and sadness (Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Other students may lose trust in teachers and face a disrupted education (Shakeshaft et al., 2019). All stakeholders enter a state of shock and denial when learning about sexual misconduct (Hurcombe et al., 2019; Rashid & Barron, 2019). Educators felt confused and angry because they trusted the offender (Grant et al., 2019a). Educators also doubted their judgment and worried about false allegations (Shakeshaft et al., 2019). The school community can receive adverse media reports, and distrust can fester and increase within the community (Grant et al., 2019a). Community members expressed their discontent by reducing donations and involvement (Mancini, 2022).

Impact on Offenders

There was no consistent method for how educators and legal authorities deal with ESM cases. Consequences for offenders included loss of employment, formal discipline, informal counseling, suspension, loss of licenses, civil liability, registration as a sex offender, and criminal punishments (Abboud et al., 2020; Quarshie et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019). Shoop (2004) reported that 38.7% of accused offenders left the school, 17.5% received informal counseling, 15% were terminated, and 8.1% were suspended. In Canada, 67% of offenders lost their teaching certificates, 23% received a reprimand, and 10% resigned (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019). Walter (2018) found that 60.66% of licenses revoked between 1967 and 2017 in North Carolina were because of ESM. However, only 1% of ESM offenders lose their licenses (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Lipson et al., 2019). The lack of revoking teaching licenses for ESM offenders increased the risk of mobile offenders. In addition, revoking teaching licenses does not address educators without certificates or licenses, such as unlicensed teachers, coaches, librarians, aides, volunteers, and other school employees (Abboud et al., 2020). Suspected offenders can be placed on administrative leave or suspended without pay (Henschel & Grant, 2019; Shoop, 2004). However, getting rid of suspected offenders may be challenging without sufficient evidence to prove that ESM occurred (Shoop, 2004).

Many ESM offenders were not adequately investigated, prosecuted, or punished for their offenses (Walter, 2018). Most offenders avoided trial by pleading guilty to a lesser charge (Grant & Heinecke, 2019). In addition, prosecutors may resist pursuing cases of ESM if there is no clear evidence or the behavior between an educator and student appears to be mutual (Shoop, 2004). Most offenders were convicted when ESM cases went to trial (Henschel & Grant, 2019). However, offenders faced light consequences instead of criminal charges (Jeglic et al., 2023).

When there were legal punishments, fines for ESM ranged from \$10,000 to \$300,000, and imprisonment was up to 30 years (Abboud et al., 2020). However, offender age and sex, victim age and sex, type of offense, and recidivism played a part in the punishment's severity (Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Shoop, 2004). For instance, men were more likely to receive harsher punishments than women (Brady & Tajalli, 2018; Knoche & Russell, 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019).

Passing the Trash. School administrators are ethically obligated to help ensure offenders are not hired elsewhere and endanger more students (Woods & Veil, 2020). *Passing the trash* is when offenders leave an institution with the ability to pursue new jobs and commit future offenses (Hernandez et al., 2021; Lipson et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004; Young & Wiley, 2021). An offender who committed ESM at multiple locations is called a *mobile offender* (Grant et al., 2019b; Shoop, 2004). A teacher can work at three different schools before being stopped (Grant et al., 2019b; Lipson et al., 2019). Passing the trash occurs because of many loopholes in the legal system, insufficient employee screening, and the lack of monitoring, state cooperation, a national database, and sufficient procedures (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Walter, 2018). School administrators may allow offenders to leave the school without facing the consequences due to shame, embarrassment, and fear of retaliation (Grant & Heinecke, 2019). Even if legal authorities charged the offender, court resolutions can take up to 2 years, allowing offenders to find employment before they lose their licenses (Grant & Heinecke, 2019). Even after facing legal consequences, offenders looked for institutions that had lax controls or did not require background checks to find new employment (Shoop, 2004). Often, accused educators left the institution before facing the consequences (Young & Wiley, 2021).

Many states have adopted legislation to help prevent the passing of trash (Grant et al., 2019b; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2018). For instance, some states have adopted laws that require schools to inform the state if an educator leaves because of suspicions of ESM (Shoop, 2004). School administrators cannot help employees find another job if they suspect the employee of committing ESM (Shakeshaft, 2018). However, sometimes administrators wrote positive references for teachers accused of ESM (Shoop, 2004; Walter, 2018). Also, unions and confidentiality, non-disclosure, and private settlement agreements prevented school leaders from disclosing information related to ESM accusations (Grant et al., 2019b; Shoop, 2004; Woods & Veil, 2020). When dealing with accusations, school leaders may fear legal ramifications for wrongfully terminating an educator (Shoop, 2004).

Training and Awareness

Increasing ESM training and awareness are the most effective prevention measures (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lamothe et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). Increased awareness will contribute to prevention, reporting, support, and research efforts (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Dawson et al., 2018; Gardner, 2022; Grant et al., 2017; Hindi et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004; Vintrová, 2022). For example, because of the increased awareness, research about sexual misconduct in the Catholic Church has increased (Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022). Even in the Islamic context, the Quran identifies the lack of knowledge and awareness contributing to sexual misconduct (Mustapha et al., 2021). However, limited resources, lack of engagement, and competing needs limited efforts to increase training and awareness (Grant et al., 2019b).

Educators. Educators in the secular and religious contexts are the first line of defense to protect victims from offenders. Therefore, it is essential to train educators to prevent, recognize,

and respond to ESM (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Hernandez et al., 2021; Shakeshaft, 2018; Shoop, 2004). While educators may appear receptive and knowledgeable about ESM, most do not receive training and lack sufficient knowledge about ESM (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Page, 2022). For instance, many educators lack knowledge about ESM policies and procedures within their institutions (Lipson et al., 2019). Educators who lack knowledge and awareness of ESM, school policies, and legal requirements are less likely to recognize and report ESM (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant et al., 2019b; Gushwa et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Educators should also understand appropriate boundaries with students (Knoche & Russell, 2021; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shoop, 2004). Teachers and students are more likely to engage in inappropriate behaviors without clearly defined boundaries. Religious educators can help prevent ESM by educating themselves and others about religious and secular prohibitions of sexual misconduct (Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Hickey, 2021; O’Leary et al., 2020).

Some states (18) require schools to provide training focused on mandatory reporting requirements (Gushwa et al., 2019). However, there are more comprehensive online training courses available about ESM (Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019; Gushwa et al., 2019). Educators who took ESM training had higher knowledge and awareness of ESM than those who did not and were more willing to report ESM suspicions (Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019; Gushwa et al., 2019; Lipson et al., 2019). Training will help school employees recognize the misconduct, identify victim and offender risk factors, understand the consequences of ESM and their responsibility as mandated reporters, protect themselves and students, understand ESM regulations, and make better decisions (Lipson et al., 2019).

Students, Parents, & Community. Grant et al. (2017) found that many schools did not provide student training. Some legal restrictions prevent schools from exposing students to ESM training (Gushwa et al., 2019). In addition, conservative and religious parents resist having sex education offered at school because they believe it is inappropriate to discuss (Mustapha et al., 2021). However, students need training related to ESM and sex education to get a healthy understanding of sex and recognize and report ESM (Hernandez et al., 2021; Mustapha et al., 2021; Shoop, 2004). Students who know appropriate and inappropriate behavior are more likely to report ESM because knowledge empowers students to speak up (Jeglic et al., 2023; Shoop, 2004). Schools have not typically provided training for parents or other stakeholders (Grant et al., 2017, 2019b). The lack of parental training may be attributed to low parental engagement, especially in low-income areas (Grant et al., 2019b). Haboush and Alyan (2013) recommended community outreach as an effective strategy to help prevent and report misconduct. Any actions that encourage open and honest communication at all levels about ESM help prevent ESM and increase reporting (Shoop, 2004).

Legislative Issues

The literature recommended legislative change on the state and federal levels (Lamothe et al., 2022; Page et al., 2019; Shakeshaft, 2018; Young & Wiley, 2021). Coordinated state and federal legislation can help reduce legal loopholes (Grant & Heinecke, 2019). For instance, age of consent laws should protect children, but these laws vary by jurisdiction (Abboud et al., 2020). In addition, age of consent laws do not protect adult students. Legislation should address the position of trust, power, and authority educators have over students of all ages (Abboud et al., 2020; Shakeshaft, 2018). Federal and state authorities have not established a national publicly accessible database that tracks cases of ESM, which can help prevent ESM, provide reliable

prevalence data, and lead to more empirical studies (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2018). The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification has a database of educators who lost their licenses because of disciplinary actions (Shakeshaft, 2018; Wurtele et al., 2019). However, access is limited, and the database only tracks licensed teachers (Wurtele et al., 2019). In addition, ESM documentation often lacks essential information (Robert & Thompson, 2019). Public databases can face scrutiny for violating the privacy rights of victims and accused offenders (Shoop, 2004; Woods & Veil, 2020). Despite the scrutiny, multiple studies have called for increased transparency regarding reporting cases of ESM to help protect the public from future crimes (Bull & Page, 2022; Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Lamothe et al., 2022; Lewandowski, 2022; Shoop, 2004; Woods & Veil, 2020).

Organization Culture and Policy

School leaders must self-regulate by taking steps to change the culture in their institutions from a culture of silence to a culture of reporting and zero tolerance (Gardner, 2022; Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Lamothe et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). Policies help influence culture. Therefore, school leaders should adopt policies related to ESM prevention (Lamothe et al., 2022). For example, the Catholic Church, the largest organization in the world that has implemented policies to help prevent sexual misconduct, has seen a decline in sexual misconduct cases (Przeciszewski, 2022). In addition, policies help protect schools from lawsuits (Shoop, 2004). The education field lacks model policies, best practices, and prevention programs related to ESM (Lipson et al., 2019). However, the literature recommends establishing policies related to hiring, student-educator boundaries, and reporting (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022;

Shoop, 2004). In addition, school leaders should ensure that policies comply with Title IX requirements (Grant et al., 2017, 2019b).

School leaders must protect students by ensuring that they thoroughly vet potential employees by requiring fingerprinting, background checks, reference and documentation verifications, and asking direct questions about work history and ESM (Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shoop, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019; Young & Wiley, 2021). In addition, educators must establish and agree upon professional boundaries (Grant et al., 2019b; Hernandez et al., 2021; Shoop, 2004). Some educators may believe it is appropriate to hug, console, or show other signs of physical affection, while others may interpret the behavior as inappropriate (Grant et al., 2019b). A standard of care refers to the expected conduct that avoids negligence (Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Depending on the context, professional expectations will differ (Hickey, 2021; Shakeshaft et al., 2019). However, Shakeshaft et al. (2019) found that school leaders, ESM specialists, and attorneys agreed on most items to include in a standard of care. The standard of care should include clear, consistent, and repeatable reporting policies and procedures that all students and educators understand and have access to (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2017; Grant et al., 2019b; Page et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004). Students are more likely to report ESM when they can access formal reporting mechanisms (Shoop, 2004). School leaders must ensure that policies are implemented by establishing accountability measures and providing policy training to educators, students, and stakeholders (Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019; Grant et al., 2019b). Without proper policy training, educators, students, and school stakeholders will lack awareness and understanding (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant et al., 2019b; Young & Wiley, 2021). Grant and Heinecke (2019) even recommended including local communities in policy implementation to help prevent ESM. Adopting and implementing policies does not guarantee

that ESM will not occur. However, policies will help promote a school culture committed to protecting students from ESM.

Faith-Based Support

School leaders must take proactive steps to help ensure ESM victims, families, and educators receive the support they need following incidents of ESM (Bull et al., 2021; Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Grant et al., 2019b; Mullaney, 2022). Support efforts must be contextually appropriate and consider the values, beliefs, and attitudes of those involved (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; O’Leary et al., 2020; Pereda et al., 2022; Sigad & Tener, 2022). No support strategy fits every situation, and a lack of knowledge about the contextual implications involved in ESM cases could cause further harm (Hindi et al., 2022; O’Leary et al., 2020). For example, Muslim victims relied on faith-based principles and preferred working with professionals who understood their culture and faith (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022).

Calls for Research

The lack of research on ESM makes it challenging to implement informed prevention efforts (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019; Grant et al., 2019b; Gushwa et al., 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Jeglic et al., 2023; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2018). Articles called for further research on ESM in topics such as causes, prevalence, victim and offender characteristics, prevention efforts, laws, policy development, training, adult victims, higher education, effects on victims and stakeholders, legal responses, offender consequences, and perceptions (Bull & Page, 2022; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Dawson et al., 2018; de Weger, 2022a; Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant et al., 2017, 2019b; Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019; Gushwa et al., 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Jeglic et al., 2023; Knoche & Russell, 2021; O’Leary et al., 2020; Quarshie et al., 2022). Most studies about ESM were from a secular context

(Hurcombe et al., 2019). Therefore, many articles called for research on ESM in different contexts (Bull & Page, 2022; Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Ghorbani et al., 2021; Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hindi et al., 2022; Page et al., 2019; Pereda et al., 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019; Russell & Gruys, 2022; Sigad & Tener, 2022). The literature pointed out a need for more research to help understand sexual misconduct in the religious context (de Weger, 2022a; Hindi et al., 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Plante, 2020; Quarshie et al., 2022). Specifically, there was a lack of research on sexual misconduct in the Islamic context (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; O’Leary et al., 2020; Rashid & Barron, 2019). Chowdhury et al. (2022) published the first study about abuse by Muslim authority figures, and Chowdhury and Winder (2022) published a study about domestic violence in the Muslim community. However, neither study specifically addresses ESM. Studying ESM in the Islamic context can help inform prevention, intervention, and support efforts, not only in religious education but also in secular education.

Ethical Assurances

I received approval from National University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before collecting data from document reviews and semi-structured interviews. I did not need permission to collect and analyze data from the case reports because the reports were publicly available on each organization’s website (FACE, n.d.; In Shaykh’s Clothing, n.d.). In addition, the published cases were from the perspectives of adults. Although not needed, I got written informed consent from both organizations to use their published case reports in the study. In addition, I got written and verbally informed consent from both topical experts who participated in the semi-structured interviews.

Studying ESM came with ethical issues. In particular, this study collected and analyzed data from abuse cases and reported findings. Reporting this data could have caused further harm to human subjects and violate their privacy. Ethical issues in research revolve around protecting human subjects from harm and ensuring their privacy (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). This study did not include any victims as direct participants. I used document analysis as the primary method for analyzing data, which mitigated the risk of causing additional harm to victims during data collection. Focusing on document analysis and semi-structured interviews with experts instead of directly including victims of ESM in the study was the most effective way of protecting human subjects. To protect human subjects' privacy (anonymity and confidentiality), I assigned non-identifying references for both expert participants and all human subjects mentioned in the published reports and interviews. I used member-checking with the experts to ensure the data was accurate and private. To protect data from unauthorized access and use, I converted all data to an electronic format and stored all data in two separate cloud locations dedicated to the study. All data will be stored for at least 3 years to meet IRB requirements.

Qualitative research recognizes that the researcher's subjectivity influences the entire research process (Dean et al., 2018), and the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis (Saldana, 2018). My personal experiences added value to the study. I connect to the field of Islamic education in several ways. I am a Muslim pursuing a career in Islamic education, have attended several Islamic schools, and have children who receive an Islamic education. Besides my experiences of being Muslim and my connections with Islamic education, I have experience with dealing with misconduct and abuse in the Muslim community. I am part of an organization that helps victims of Islamic-based cults and provides resources to prevent abuse and misconduct. Abuse in cults results from power imbalances, similar to ESM

(Young & Wiley, 2021). Since I already work in preventing abuse and misconduct and am pursuing a career in Islamic education, this study addresses a problem relevant to my current and future practice. My knowledge, experiences, values, biases, assumptions, and interests could have influenced aspects of the research process. Therefore, I have been transparent about my subjectivity, assumptions, biases, stereotypes, and prejudices (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Documenting my position in the research and my research decisions and performing member-checking has helped improve the study's trustworthiness.

Summary

Protecting students is a responsibility shared by administrators, teachers, staff, coaches, students, policymakers, and legal agencies (Shakeshaft, 2018). ESM is a problem that exists in multiple educational contexts, including Islamic education (Chowdhury et al., 2022). Studies have shown that the rates of sexual misconduct in the K–12 (11.7%), higher education (10%), and religious contexts (10.9%) were similar (Hurcombe et al., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Young & Wiley, 2021). However, as most victims do not report the offense, prevalence rates are underestimated (Lamothe et al., 2022; Page et al., 2019). In addition, the Muslim community has been in denial regarding sexual misconduct in their religious institutions, and there are no existing studies on ESM in the Islamic educational context (Rashid & Barron, 2019). Even one case of ESM can disrupt the entire school community, including victims, family members, teachers, students, school leaders, and the entire school community (Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft et al., 2019; Wurtele et al., 2019). When ESM happens in the religious context, the negative impact increases (Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Demasure, 2022; de Weger, 2022a). While educators increase prevention efforts after an incident of ESM (Grant et al., 2017, 2019b), educators should take a more proactive approach to protecting

students. Multiple studies have identified the need for more research on ESM (Grant et al., 2019a; Jeglic et al., 2023; Rashid & Barron, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2004). The lack of research on ESM presents challenges for educators to implement informed prevention efforts (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Grant, Wilkerson, et al., 2019; Grant et al., 2019b; Gushwa et al., 2019; Hernandez et al., 2021; Jeglic et al., 2023; Robert & Thompson, 2019; Shakeshaft, 2018).

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to describe the nature of ESM, explore the perceptions and experiences of victims, and describe how educators responded to reported cases in the Islamic context by examining published reports of misconduct in Islamic settings. Because of the ethical issues presented with studying ESM and collecting first-person perspectives from victims, the study collected data using document analysis of selected published misconduct reports and semi-structured interviews with experts. The published misconduct reports contained perceptions and experiences of victims and investigation results of experts. This study used purposive sampling to select reports containing ESM and experts. Using published misconduct reports and experts from two organizations provided source and methodological triangulation (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). A literature review revealed multiple facets related to ESM. These facets include offender, victim, setting, and ESM characteristics, institutional response to reports, the impact of ESM, and ESM prevention. The literature provided recommendations on training and awareness, laws and policies, and support for victims (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Walter, 2018; Wurtele et al., 2019). The study's findings will help educators, faith leaders, therapists, and other professionals protect and support students and institutions, and increase the understanding of ESM. Overall, the general environment and culture in all educational contexts, secular and religious, regarding ESM is a culture of silence (Heyder, 2022; Page et al., 2019; Wurtele et al., 2019). This study has helped increase the

knowledge and awareness of ESM in Islamic education, which will help change the existing culture of silence.

Section 2: Methodology and Design

To better protect students, educators must gain a better understanding of educator sexual misconduct (ESM). Multiple studies have shown that ESM continues to be a significant issue in multiple educational contexts, including K–12 schools (Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2004; Wurtele et al., 2019), higher education (Bull & Page, 2022; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Young & Wiley, 2021), and religious contexts (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Hurcombe et al., 2019; Rashid & Barron, 2019). Cases of ESM can negatively affect all school stakeholders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019), especially victims who suffer adverse emotional, educational, developmental, and health effects (Shakeshaft, 2004). Due to the lack of empirical data, the true prevalence of ESM is unknown (Jeglic et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 2018). However, studies have estimated that 11.7% of K–12 students (Jeglic et al., 2023), 19% of college students (Wood et al., 2021), and 10% of female graduate students have experienced ESM (Young & Wiley, 2021). The problem addressed in this study is that ESM occurs in multiple educational contexts and can negatively impact all school stakeholders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019). The problem of ESM also occurs in the Islamic context (Chowdhury et al., 2022). Currently, educators do not know the scope and nature of ESM in the Islamic context. Research on ESM in the Islamic context will increase the awareness and understanding of ESM, which can help educators prevent ESM among the 3.5 million Muslims in the United States and 1.8 million Muslims in Canada (Lipson et al., 2019; Mohamed, 2018; The Daily, 2022). The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to describe the nature of ESM, explore the perceptions and experiences of victims, and describe how educators responded to reported cases in the Islamic context.

This section outlines the study's research methodology and design, population, sample, materials and instrumentation, data collection and analysis techniques, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. After justifying the use of a qualitative methodology and multiple-case study design, details regarding the study's population and purposive sampling are provided. Details are then provided related to the materials and instruments that the study used, as well as the procedures related to collecting and analyzing the data. Finally, this section discusses the study's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Design and Method

This study used qualitative research methodology and a multiple-case study design. There is no simple and agreed-upon definition of qualitative research (Ghiara, 2020; Merriam, 2009; Pearse, 2021). Privitera (2019) defined qualitative research as a systematic process that aims to understand something using non-numeric data. Since there is no agreed-upon definition of qualitative research, the best way to understand qualitative research is to identify its key characteristics. In qualitative research the researcher makes observations and draws conclusions without the use of statistical analysis to describe, interpret, and explain the behaviors or events being studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Qualitative research produces thick, rich, in-depth, and holistic information that helps give insight into complicated topics by identifying themes in the data (Merriam, 2009; Salkind, 2010; Yin, 2018). Holistic information pertains to the process, understanding, and meaning of a phenomenon in its real-world context with all its nuances and complexities (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Merriam, 2009). Although qualitative research produces in-depth knowledge, the findings are not as generalizable as in quantitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Quantitative research covers a topic by going a mile long and an inch deep, and qualitative research is similar to going an inch long and a mile deep.

Qualitative research focuses on accurately describing a phenomenon by obtaining the perspectives of the individuals in the study (Saldana, 2018). Quantitative research can overlook the nuances of subjective experiences and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Also, contrary to quantitative research's goal of objectivity (Dean et al., 2018), in qualitative research the perspectives and interpretations of the researcher become a vital part of the research process (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Salkind, 2010). Qualitative research acknowledges that researchers have different interests, experiences, values, theories, skills, and knowledge, which influence all aspects of the research process and improve the understanding of the research topic (Dean et al., 2018; Komalasari et al., 2022). As the primary instrument of analysis that collects, analyzes, interprets, and presents data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2018), I have acknowledged my positionality within the research of ESM in Islamic education (Dean et al., 2018). I am an outsider because I do not have personal experience with ESM. However, I am an insider because of my experience with Islamic education and spiritual abuse. Qualitative research allowed my experience to add value to the research, while quantitative research did not.

While quantitative research is best for testing theories of causal relationships, qualitative research focuses on meanings, motivations, personal experiences, and processes in the social world (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative research was more suitable for this study than quantitative research because quantitative research required sufficient numerical data to test hypotheses and show relationships between variables (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). By focusing on numerical data, quantitative research can lack the depth, context, complexity, and richness that qualitative research can achieve (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Also, developing and testing theories without a real-world understanding of a phenomenon would be challenging. Qualitative research is best for producing new knowledge related to a phenomenon (Durdella, 2019; Salkind,

2010), which this study intended to do. In addition, using a qualitative methodology addressed the problem by looking at the phenomenon in its real-world context (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Powell, 2019).

In qualitative research, researchers get close to subjects in their natural environment to understand better the phenomenon (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Ghiara, 2020). The closer a researcher gets to a phenomenon, the more flexibility they will need to account for changes during the research process (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The flexibility of qualitative research allows the researcher to adapt during the research process by adjusting the design, methods, and analysis as needed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Adjustments during the research process must be justified, transparent, and approved. The flexibility in qualitative research that does not exist in quantitative research allows researchers to get as close as possible to complex and sensitive topics such as ESM, without violating any ethical barriers.

Typical qualitative research designs include narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case studies (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Generic research is another qualitative design (McLeod, 2001; Salkind, 2007). A case study design was most suitable for this study. Case study research aims to understand a unique, complex, and bounded phenomenon in its real-world context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Case studies can be exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or evaluative (Yin, 2012). Case studies are best when aiming to develop an in-depth description and holistic information (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). In addition, case studies allow for a deep analysis of a phenomenon while considering its context (Stake, 1995). Case studies also allow the flexibility to use multiple methods of gathering data, including documents, archived records, interviews, observations,

participant observations, and artifacts (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Using multiple sources helped with triangulation and increased the trustworthiness of the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Due to the sensitive nature of studying ESM, the typical data collection methods of narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, and ethnography were unsuitable for this study. Narrative research focuses on the meaning individuals assign to their experiences by working directly with participants to collect their stories, typically through conversations, interviews, and other methods to collect personal data that triggers memories (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenological research investigates the common meaning of the lived experience of several individuals who have experienced a phenomenon, typically involving in-depth interviews with those individuals (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Grounded theory research aims to generate theories of a phenomenon involving multiple interviews in the field with many participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ethnography is a form of qualitative research focused on describing the culture of a group, which typically requires extensive fieldwork (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). As shown, the designs involve some form of direct involvement of study participants, either by conversations, interviews, or fieldwork, which all come with ethical implications when dealing with victims of ESM.

I considered using a generic design. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) briefly discuss descriptive qualitative research under the context of a narrative design. Salkind (2007) defines generic research as research that provides complete descriptions of a phenomenon while focusing on factual details. Generic research does not conform to any specific design (McLeod, 2001). It is not restricted by any parameters, giving the research the flexibility needed to adopt methods as needed to improve the research (McLeod, 2001). For instance, the primary data source in generic

research typically comes from interviews (Holly, 2013). However, generic research's flexibility allows the researcher to gather data from many sources, such as questionnaires, focus groups, and documents (Salkind, 2007). McLeod (2001) claimed that generic research is easier for novice researchers due to its flexibility, which initially attracted me to this design. However, the lack of parameters and structure in generic designs increases the risk of misalignment (Kahlke, 2014).

A case study can examine single or multiple cases (Yin, 2018). Both single-case study and multiple-case study designs have their unique strengths and applications. Multiple-case studies are more appropriate for identifying patterns and variations across multiple cases (Yin, 2018). Limited access to victims and limited published data on individual ESM cases prevents using a single-case study design. In addition, using a multiple-case study design will produce more compelling, robust, and transferable findings than a single-case study (Yin, 2018). There are feasibility concerns that came with using a multiple-case study design due to resource and time limitations. However, using document analysis as the primary method reduced the resources and time typically required by multiple-case study designs (Yin, 2018). In addition to document analysis, the study used semi-structured interviews with experts who worked directly with ESM victims, increasing the study's trustworthiness. I used an iterative thematic coding process to analyze data from the published case documents and interview transcripts.

Population and Sample

The population for the study was all reported cases of ESM in the Islamic context. However, it was infeasible to access this population. There are approximately 3.5 million Muslims in the United States and 1.8 million in Canada (Lipson et al., 2019; Mohamed, 2018; The Daily, 2022). There were no available statistics on the number of students attending Islamic

education or Islamic educators in the United States and Canada, and there was no centralized reporting mechanism for victims of ESM in the Islamic context. FACE and ISC were the only two organizations that published reports of misconduct and abuse cases in the Islamic context. Therefore, the accessible sub-group of this study's population, or source population, was all reports of ESM published by FACE and ISC and the topical experts who worked for each organization. The sampling frame for this study was all 33 published reports and five topical experts from these two organizations.

This study used purposive sampling, which is used in qualitative research and case study designs (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Merriam, 2009). From the sampling frames identified, I purposively select a census of published reports that included ESM and one expert from each organization to include in the study's sample. I anticipated identifying more than 12 reports containing ESM, which would have been sufficient to achieve data saturation (Guest et al., 2020). Selecting a census provided the maximum amount of information related to ESM in Islamic education, and the findings represent the sampling frame (Privitera, 2019). The purpose of including experts was to increase the study's trustworthiness and provide a means of methodological triangulation in addition to the source triangulation provided by selecting reports and experts from both organizations (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). Selecting one expert from each organization, which will be 40% of the sampling frame, will meet the sampling criteria identified by Yin (2018).

The reports and organizations' contact information were accessible to the public on each organization's website (FACE, n.d.; In Shaykh's Clothing, n.d.). No recruitment strategy was needed for selecting the case samples since the documents were available to the public. I recruited expert participants by sending recruitment letters (see Appendix A) to each

organization's email address, and selected participants based on the availability of experts. The reports were not limited to cases of ESM. Therefore, the inclusion criteria for the sample of reports were reports that contained evidence showing that the victims and offenders had a student-teacher relationship prior to, during, or after the offense. The exclusion criteria for the sample of reports were reports that lack evidence of the victim and offender having a student-teacher relationship. In addition, for the semi-structured interviews, the inclusion criteria were experts who were 18 years or older and worked directly with victims to conduct interviews and investigate, document, and report cases of ESM represented in the reports published by FACE or ISC. The exclusion criteria were experts who were not at least 18 years old or did not work directly with victims represented in the reports. Since I used published reports online, I did not need informed consent to collect and analyze the reports. After selecting expert participants, I got written and verbal informed consent (see Appendix B) from both expert participants.

Materials/Instrumentation

I collected data from documents, semi-structured interviews, and member-checking questionnaires. Documents included all published case reports, supporting documentation, and supporting content from the websites of FACE (<https://www.facetogether.org>) and ISC (<https://inshaykhsclathing.com>). I copied documents from each website and saved them as PDF files on two secured cloud storage platforms. Using multiple storage locations allowed periodic backing up of the documents to prevent data loss. Recruitment letters (see Appendix A) were emailed to each organization to recruit expert participants. Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, I sent consent forms (see Appendix B) to each expert participant. The interview protocol (see Appendix C) included open-ended questions that served as a guide to elicit rich and detailed responses from the expert participants regarding their perceptions, experiences, and

strategies in dealing with ESM in the Islamic context. The protocol was developed based on the research questions and conceptual framework. The research questions aimed to address the nature of ESM in the Islamic context and the response of Islamic educational leaders. The conceptual framework addressed the research questions by identifying information related to offender, victim, setting, and offense characteristics, victim-offender engagement, responses to ESM reports, perceptions and experiences of victims, and prevention. The interview questions in the protocol addressed all areas of the conceptual framework. Additional questions based on the analysis of the published reports were included in the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted via Microsoft (MS) Teams video conferencing, which allowed for rich verbal and nonverbal communication cues. MS Teams recorded and transcribed the interviews which were reviewed and analyzed. Participants received copies of the transcription and had the opportunity to provide feedback to ensure the information's accuracy, clarity, and confidentiality. In addition, participants received a member-checking questionnaire (see Appendix D) to review and provide feedback about the research findings.

All documents used in the study were converted to PDF and then manually copied using MS Word. I used the security, editing, note-taking, highlighting, and commenting features of Adobe Acrobat and MS Word to protect documents from data loss and to systematically analyze and code the data. I developed a codebook which assisted with data analysis and improved the study's credibility (Roberts et al., 2019). I developed a preliminary codebook (see Appendix E) based on the conceptual framework and themes identified from the literature review. I updated the preliminary codebook during each iteration of thematic data analysis of the documents, transcribed interviews, interview feedback, and member-checking questionnaires to arrive at the finalized codebook (see Appendix F).

Data Collection and Analysis

After I received approval from the National University IRB (see Appendix G), I began participant recruitment and document collection. Documents are considered a significant source of data in qualitative and case study research (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, document analysis provided the study's primary source of data. I collected documents published on each organization's website (FACE, n.d.; In Shaykh's Clothing, n.d.) and converted the documents to PDF. I saved all documents on two cloud storage platforms. Researchers can use document analysis as a stand-alone method (Bowen, 2009; Frey, 2018). However, including data from semi-structured interviews increased the study's trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). Collecting data from multiple cases and organizations provided source triangulation (Yin, 2018), and collecting data from document analysis and semi-structured interviews provided methodological triangulation (Merriam, 2009).

I recruited participants for the semi-structured interviews by emailing a recruitment letter (see Appendix A) and a copy of the consent letter (see Appendix B) to each organization via the contact information provided on each organization's website. The recruitment and consent letters included all relevant information regarding the study and participant details. After receiving contact information for an expert from each organization, I scheduled the semi-structured interviews. Participants electronically signed consent letters and gave verbal consent at the beginning of the semi-structured interview. Initially, I planned to conduct the semi-structured interviews after analyzing the documents. However, due to the limited availability of the FACE expert, the semi-structured interview was scheduled before completing document analysis. The semi-structured interview with the ISC expert was scheduled after completing document analysis.

While recruiting participants, I began the systematic coding and qualitative content analysis process to analyze themes of data related to ESM contained in the documents (Merriam, 2009). The first step of analysis involved reading each report to identify cases that contained ESM. I only included cases containing ESM in the study. I then gathered all documents for each case. I transcribed supporting video content and saved the transcriptions as documents. I then converted documents into PDF files. The next step of analysis included manually copying the documents into one MS Word file for each case and moving any confidential and identifying information. I used the track changes feature in MS Word to help prevent inadvertent edits to the text and the commenting feature to analyze and manually code the data. I followed a thematic coding and analysis process based on the framework presented by Roberts et al. (2019), which included deductive and inductive coding (see Table 2). I used the same iterative process to analyze all documents, semi-structured interviews, and member-checking questionnaires. I performed several iterations of analysis which included;

1. Reading the reports to identify cases of ESM
2. Collecting and converting documents to PDF
3. Copying content into MS Word
4. Completing the 1st round of coding the data from documents and the 1st semi-structured interview
5. Completing the 2nd round of coding and compiling codes and content into MS Excel
6. Completing the 3rd round of coding and summarizing individual case findings
7. Summarizing the study findings after the 2nd semi-structured interview
8. Summarizing the study findings after receiving member-checking questionnaires from expert.

Table 2*Coding and Analysis Process*

Step	Task	Description
Step 1	Initial Code Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a literature review • Summarize and identify themes
Step 2	Preliminary Codebook Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use deductive coding from the literature review • Develop initial codes with definitions
Step 3	Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the codebook to analyze the data • Use inductive coding to identify new themes and codes
Step 4	Update Codebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the codebook with inductive codes
Step 5	Repeat steps 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat multiple iterations of steps 3 and 4 until achieving thematic saturation
Step 6	Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop conclusions, findings, interpretations, and recommendations

I scheduled the semi-structured interview with the FACE expert at the beginning of document collection and analysis. I scheduled the semi-structured interview with the ISC expert at the end of document analysis, which was after the point of thematic saturation of document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were scheduled and conducted via MS Teams. I used an interview protocol to guide the semi-structured interviews. I reviewed the consent letters and got verbal consent from each participant while recording. I used MS Word to take notes during the interviews. After each interview, I reviewed the transcriptions and recordings of interviews produced by MS Teams to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Transcripts were then sent to each participant to receive feedback regarding the transcription's accuracy, clarity, and confidentiality. I then removed any identifying information and saved the final transcripts as PDF versions in both cloud storage platforms. I used MS Word to analyze and code copies of the final transcripts using the codebook.

I performed multiple iterations of analysis and coding. After each iteration of analysis, I updated the codebook and recoded the data using the newly identified codes. I used MS Excel as a database to organize all the codes, relevant extracts, and references from documents and transcriptions. After interpreting the codes, identifying themes, and documenting findings, I developed a member-checking questionnaire. I sent the member-checking questionnaire with the summary of findings to both experts via email. After receiving the completed questionnaires, I performed another iteration of analysis and updated the findings and MS Excel database based on the experts' responses. Finally, I used the findings to answer the research questions by arranging all codes and relevant extracts from case documents, semi-structured interviews, and completed questionnaires in accordance with each research question.

Assumptions

Assumptions in research are the critical beliefs and ideas that researchers hold to be true (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The first assumption for this study was that ESM in the Islamic context is qualitatively similar to sexual misconduct in other educational and religious contexts. The second assumption was that the documents were truthful and accurate representations of the victims' experiences. The third assumption was that the expert participants possessed sufficient knowledge of ESM in the Islamic context, found the topic valuable, and would participate in the study. The fourth assumption was that the participants would provide truthful and accurate information regarding their knowledge of published and unpublished cases of ESM in the Islamic context, which would corroborate findings from the document analysis. The final assumption was that I had sufficient skills and knowledge as a researcher to conduct document analysis and semi-structured interviews effectively and would be able to identify themes in the data that answer the research questions.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses and restrictions that are out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The first limitation of this study was the lack of literature specifically on ESM in the Islamic context. Therefore, the literature review included literature related to ESM, sexual misconduct in religious contexts, and abuse in Islamic contexts. The literature helped provide a conceptual framework for the study. The study was limited by my ethics, skills, knowledge, experiences, and biases as a researcher since I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). In addition, using a qualitative case study design presented limitations related to trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). I worked closely with my dissertation committee to mitigate these concerns throughout the research process. In addition, utilizing methodological and source triangulation, member-checking, and documenting my positionality increased the study's trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). The study's findings are not generalizable and are limited to ESM cases published by FACE and ISC. However, qualitative research does not aim to produce generalizable results (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study used purposeful sampling, provided a detailed discussion of the findings, and provided thick descriptions so readers could assess the study's transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

The data in the study was limited to the details published in the documents and provided by participants during the study. Due to the sensitive nature of ESM, some relevant details regarding ESM incidents may have gone unreported. In addition, the different levels of memory, bias, knowledge, and experience of humans limit the data, which could have affected the data quality. To mitigate these limitations, I relied on expert participants to provide relevant information by reassuring them that the study would protect the privacy of all human subjects. In

addition, participants had the opportunity to review interview transcripts and complete a member-checking questionnaire to help ensure the data and findings were sufficient, accurate, and private. The published documents contain secondary data and were limited to the description, interpretation, and presentation of those who published the documents (Merriam, 2009). The documents may have also contained irrelevant data because they were not produced for this research. However, published documents were the most reliable source for representing victim's perspectives and experiences without including victims in the study. The study included semi-structured interviews with experts who worked directly with victims.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries or limitations the researcher sets regarding what to include and exclude from the study to help ensure that the research objectives are achieved (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The study was designed to describe the nature of ESM in the Islamic context since there is a lack of research on this phenomenon (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; O'Leary et al., 2020; Rashid & Barron, 2019). The research process focused on answering the research questions and addressing the problem of ESM. The study's scope was limited to ESM cases published in the United States and Canada since 2019 by FACE and ISC (FACE, n.d.; In Shaykh's Clothing, n.d.). This delimitation excluded cases of ESM in the Islamic context published by other organizations. However, there were no other known organizations that published reports of misconduct specifically related to the Islamic context. Due to ethical implications and the sensitive nature of ESM, no victims were included as participants in the study, which prevented the gathering of first-hand data. Data from publicly available documents provided the primary source of data. The analysis only included publicly available documents and excluded confidential information. The only human participants were experts from both

organizations who worked directly with victims. Semi-structured interviews with the experts provided a secondary source of data. I excluded published reports without evidence of ESM and experts who did not work directly with victims. The data sources for this study were limited to published documents, semi-structured interviews, interview feedback, and member-checking questionnaires.

Summary

This section outlined the study's planned research methodology, design, and other actions that I took to describe the nature of ESM in the Islamic context. The study used a qualitative methodology and a multiple-case study design, producing thick, rich, in-depth, and holistic information that helped give insight into the complicated topic of ESM in the real-world Islamic context (Merriam, 2009; Salkind, 2010; Yin, 2018). In addition, using a qualitative multiple-case study design provided the flexibility needed to get as close as possible to the phenomenon of ESM without violating ethical barriers. Limited access to victims and limited published data on individual ESM cases prevented the use of a single-case study design.

The study used purposeful sampling and collected data using multiple sources and methods, increasing its trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). The study's target population and sampling frame was 33 published reports and nine topical experts from FACE and ISC. I purposively selected a census of published reports with ESM and one expert from each organization to include in the study's sample. Selecting a census of published reports to perform document analysis provided the maximum amount of information related to ESM in Islamic education, and the findings represent the sampling frame (Privitera, 2019). Selecting an expert from each organization to conduct semi-structured interviews provided a means of methodological and source triangulation. To collect and analyze data for the study, I used

recruitment letters (see Appendix A), informed consent forms (see Appendix B), interview protocols (see Appendix C), codebooks (see Appendix E, Appendix F), Adobe Acrobat, MS Excel, Teams, and Word, interview feedback, and member-checking questionnaires. I stored all documents and data on two secure cloud storage platforms. Documents, interview transcriptions, interview feedback, and member-checking questionnaires were analyzed using a systematic and iterative qualitative thematic coding and analysis framework provided by Roberts et al. (2019).

For the study, I assumed that ESM in the Islamic context was similar to sexual misconduct in other contexts. In addition, I assumed that the details in the documents provided by the participants were truthful, accurate, and sufficient to answer the research questions. Assuming I possessed the skills and knowledge to conduct the research, the study provides sufficient information related to ESM in the Islamic context. There is limited research available on ESM in the Islamic context. However, literature on sexual misconduct and abuse in other contexts provided a sufficient understanding of ESM and a framework for the study. Since I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009), the trustworthiness of qualitative data and the use of secondary data presented additional limitations to the study. I mitigated these limitations by using multiple sources and methods of collecting data and allowed participants to provide feedback on interview transcripts and complete member-checking questionnaires. Finally, to ensure the research objectives were achieved, I have limited the study's scope to ESM cases published in the United States and Canada since 2019 by FACE and ISC. In addition, the study did not include any victims as participants. Public documents provided the primary data source, and semi-structured interviews with experts provided a secondary source.

Section 3: Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the nature of educator sexual misconduct (ESM) in the Islamic context. The problem addressed in this qualitative study was that ESM occurs in multiple educational contexts and can negatively impact school stakeholders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019; Rashid & Barron, 2019). This study addressed the problem by implementing a qualitative multiple-case study design using semi-structured interviews with two topical experts and document analysis of 24 published misconduct reports and supporting documentation. Accordingly, Section 3 aimed to answer the following three research questions: What is the nature of reported ESM cases in the Islamic context? What are the perceptions and experiences of victims who reported ESM in the Islamic context? How have educators in Islamic education responded to reported ESM cases?

Section 3 has five main subsections. The following subsection is Findings, which includes a description of the source data and study participants, an explanation of how this study achieved trustworthiness, and a comprehensive presentation of findings organized by research question. The second subsection is the Evaluation of Outcomes, which discusses how the findings addressed the study's problem and purpose and relate to existing literature. The third subsection is Implication and Recommendations for Practice. This section describes the implications of the conclusions drawn from the study's findings and recommendations for educators in the Islamic context. The fourth subsection, Recommendation for Future Research, presents ideas for future research related to ESM in the Islamic context and how future researchers can build upon this study. Finally, the Conclusion subsection summarizes the previous sections and presents the study's central message.

Limitations are the characteristics of a study's design or methodology that may have impacted or influenced the findings, which may have weakened a study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Three limitations may have influenced the interpretation of the data for this study. First, there was a lack of literature on ESM in the Islamic context. The literature review included topics related to ESM in the Islamic context to address the lack of literature on ESM in the Islamic context. The literature review for this study included literature related to ESM in other contexts, sexual misconduct in religious contexts, and abuse in Islamic contexts. In addition, I used concepts identified in three empirical studies that analyzed ESM in K–12 schools as the conceptual framework for this study (see Table 1). The second limitation was using published case reports as the primary data source. Since the published documents contained secondary data, they were limited to the description, interpretation, and presentation of those who published them (Merriam, 2009). Finally, potential researcher bias may have been the third limitation. I addressed the limitations of using secondary data and the potential of research bias by using methodological and source triangulation and conducting member checks on interviews and study findings to increase the study's trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018).

Findings

This study used a qualitative multiple-case study design and described the nature of ESM, explored the perceptions and experiences of victims, and described how educators responded to reported cases in the Islamic context by using document analysis of published reports of ESM. This study used purposeful sampling to select reports from eight ISC reports and 25 FACE reports published between October 2018 and August 2022 in the United States and Canada. The 25 FACE reports included seven investigative reports and 18 reports of historical transgressions. The investigative reports documented the results of investigations conducted by FACE staff due

to formal submissions made by victims or first-hand sources alleging abusive misconduct by religious leaders (FACE, n.d.). The reports of historical transgression were compiled by FACE staff from information already publicly available information (FACE, n.d.). I then assigned an identifier for each report based on the source. The identifier for reports from ISC included ISC and a number. The identifier for FACE investigative reports included FIR and a number, and FACE historical transgression reports included FHT and a number.

The population of published reports included a total of 33 reports, with 25 reports based in the United States, seven in Canada, and one with an unknown primary location. I selected all 24 reports that included ESM. The other nine reports included spiritual abuse (4), sexual misconduct (3), and financial abuse (2). Although FIR-6 did not include ESM, the report was combined with FIR-1 since both cases were about the same offender and primary location and included data relevant to this study. The resulting sample included 17 reports in the United States and seven in Canada for 24 cases (see Table 3). After selecting the sample of 24 cases, I collected all supporting documentation from each report. Supporting documentation included news articles, social media posts, video transcripts, and other miscellaneous documents (certifications, court documents, letters, press releases, inmate records, public statements, articles, marriage documents, police records, policies, resignations, resumes, victim statements, and web pages).

Table 3*Population and Sample Select*

Report Number	Publish Date	Location	Type of Misconduct	Selected for Sample ^a	Case Number
ISC-1	12/17/2019	USA	ESM	Yes	1-ISC-1
ISC-2	12/24/2019	USA	ESM	Yes	2-ISC-2
ISC-3	1/15/2021	USA	SA	No	n/a
ISC-4	9/23/2021	USA	SA	No	n/a
ISC-5	No date	USA	ESM	Yes	3-ISC-5
ISC-6	No date	USA	FA	No	n/a
ISC-7	No date	USA	SA	No	n/a
ISC-8	No date	USA	SA	No	n/a
FIR-1 ^b	11/11/2019	USA	ESM	Yes	4-FIR-1-6 ^b
FIR-2	6/8/2022	Unknown	FA	No	n/a
FIR-3	8/15/2021	USA	ESM	Yes	5-FIR-3
FIR-4	4/10/2021	USA	ESM	Yes	6-FIR-4
FIR-5	10/29/2020	CAN	ESM	Yes	7-FIR-5
FIR-6 ^b	8/11/2022	USA	ESM	Yes	4-FIR-1-6 ^b
FIR-7	10/9/2018	USA	ESM	Yes	8-FIR-7
FHT-1	8/25/2021	USA	ESM	Yes	9-FHT-1
FHT-2	1/20/2021	CAN	ESM	Yes	10-FHT-2
FHT-3	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	11-FHT-3
FHT-4	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	12-FHT-4
FHT-5	10/9/2020	CAN	ESM	Yes	13-FHT-5
FHT-6	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	14-FHT-6
FHT-7	10/9/2020	CAN	ESM	Yes	15-FHT-7
FHT-8	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	16-FHT-8
FHT-9	10/9/2020	CAN	ESM	Yes	17-FHT-9
FHT-10	10/9/2020	CAN	ESM	Yes	18-FHT-10
FHT-11	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	19-FHT-11
FHT-12	10/9/2020	USA	SM	No	n/a
FHT-13	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	20-FHT-13
FHT-14	10/9/2020	USA	SM	No	n/a
FHT-15	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	21-FHT-15
FHT-16	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	22-FHT-16
FHT-17	10/9/2020	CAN	ESM	Yes	23-FHT-17
FHT-18	10/9/2020	USA	ESM	Yes	24-FHT-18

^a ESM=Educator Sexual Misconduct, SA=Spiritual Abuse, FA=Financial Abuse, SM=Sexual Misconduct

^b The report for FIR-6 was combined with FIR-1 since both cases were about the same offender at the same primary location and included data relevant to this study.

In addition to case reports, I purposely selected one expert from ISC and FACE to participate in semi-structured interviews based on their availability. According to each organization's website, there were two staff members from ISC and three from FACE (FACE, n.d.; In Shaykh's Clothing, n.d.). Only one expert from each organization was available to participate in the study. Each expert was recruited via email (see Appendix A) and sent the study information, recruitment letter, psychological resources, and a letter of consent. Each expert signed a consent letter to confirm eligibility and willingness to participate. Both experts met the eligibility criteria. They were 18 or older and collaborated directly with victims to conduct interviews and investigate, document, and report cases of ESM published by ISC or FACE. The expert from ISC has worked in the field of addressing spiritual abuse since 2009 and founded ISC in 2017. The expert from FACE has been a licensed social worker since 2017 and has worked with FACE for 5 years (see Table 4).

Table 4

Expert Participant Demographics

Expert Participant	Position With Organization	Years With Organization
ISC Expert	Founder	More than 7 years
FACE Expert	Director of Case Management	More than 5 years

One-on-one semi-structured interviews were scheduled and conducted with each expert via MS Teams. In addition, MS Teams recorded and transcribed the interviews. The interview with the FACE expert occurred before completing the document analysis of the primary data due to the experts' limited availability. The interview lasted 52 minutes and produced a transcription document of 88 pages. The interview with the ISC expert occurred after document analysis. The interview lasted 50 minutes and produced a transcription document of 94 pages. Each expert participant received interview transcripts for feedback and to correct any inaccuracies. Neither expert provided feedback after receiving the interview transcripts. In addition, each expert participant received and returned member-checking questionnaires (see Appendix D) via email with feedback on the findings. To protect human subjects' privacy (anonymity and confidentiality), I assigned non-identifying references for both expert participants (ISC Expert and FACE Expert). I included interview transcriptions and member-checking questionnaires as documents for data analysis. The study's data sources for the 24 selected cases included 160 documents (1,858 pages) from 25 reports (see Table 5).

Table 5*Document Inventory*

Document Type	ISC Cases		FACE Cases		Totals	
	Items	Pages	Items	Pages	Items	Pages
Case Reports	4	29	22	181	26	210
Certification	0	0	1	4	1	4
Court Document	0	0	15	364	15	364
Letter	0	0	1	2	1	2
Press Release	0	0	4	13	4	13
Inmate Record	0	0	4	11	4	11
Institution Letter	0	0	1	2	1	2
Institution Statement	0	0	9	37	9	37
Legal Press Release	0	0	1	3	1	3
Marriage Document	0	0	1	2	1	2
News Article	0	0	49	295	49	295
Police Record	0	0	13	52	13	52
Policy	0	0	4	32	4	32
Resignation	0	0	1	1	1	1
Resume	0	0	1	5	1	5
Social Media Post	0	0	8	275	8	275
Victim Statement	0	0	3	4	3	4
Video Transcript	1	41	12	293	13	334
Website	0	0	1	21	1	21
Expert Interview Transcript	1	94	1	85	2	179
Expert Member-Checking Questionnaire	1	6	1	6	2	12
Totals	7	170	153	1688	160	1858

I followed a thematic coding and analysis process based on the framework presented by Roberts et al. (2019), which included deductive and inductive coding (see Table 2). I used the same iterative process to analyze all reports, supporting documents, semi-structured interviews, and member-checking questionnaires. I performed multiple iterations of analysis and coding. After each analysis iteration, I updated the preliminary codebook (see Appendix E). I then analyzed documents using the newly identified codes until I finalized the codebook (see Appendix F). All codes and relevant text extracts from case documents, semi-structured interviews, and completed member-checking questionnaires were compiled and arranged by

research question and theme. Relevant text extracts provided examples of the findings and thick descriptions. However, the number of text extracts presented for each finding was limited to avoid redundancy. At most, three examples of text extracts were randomly selected and presented.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Qualitative research must be trustworthy to have significant value (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Qualitative research must address four criteria to obtain trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Bloomberg and Volpe (2018) explained that credibility refers to whether the results of the study are accurate; dependability refers to whether the study is documented and consistent; transferability refers to the extent to which the study can relate to other contexts; confirmability refers to whether the study findings came from the data. Each of the four criteria was addressed in multiple ways to improve the trustworthiness of this study (see Table 6).

Table 6
Procedures Addressing Trustworthiness Criteria

Procedure	Credibility	Dependability	Transferability	Confirmability
Thick Descriptions	x		x	
Member Checking	x			
Triangulation	x	x		x
Purposeful Sampling			x	
Accessible Documentation			x	

Qualitative research must demonstrate that portraying the participants' perceptions is accurate to achieve credibility (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). For this study, credibility means extracting and portraying the perceptions and experiences of ESM victims from ESM reports and supporting documentation. Procedures that ensure credibility include thick descriptions, member checking, triangulation, documenting reflexivity, seeking negative instances, and peer debriefings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). This study established credibility using thick descriptions, triangulation, and member checking. Thick descriptions provide enough information for the reader to understand the phenomenon and research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). This study achieved methodological triangulation by interviewing two topical experts and source triangulation by selecting reports and topical experts from two organizations. In addition, both expert participants completed member-checking questionnaires.

Dependability refers to the extent to which the study's findings would be similar if repeated (Privitera, 2019). For example, if another researcher repeated this study, they would have similar findings. The study must document the research process and ensure consistency to achieve dependability. In addition, a study is dependable if the data answers the research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Procedures that help ensure a study is dependable include triangulation, peer debriefings, and audit trails (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). This study established dependability by utilizing methodological and source triangulation.

Transferability refers to whether the research findings could be used or applicable in other contexts (Privitera, 2019). For this study to achieve transferability, the findings should be useful in other ESM contexts. Providing thick descriptions and accessible documentation and using purposeful sampling are methods that address transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). This study utilized all three methods. This study used purposeful sampling to select ESM reports

and topical experts. In addition, this report documented the research process, and the raw data will be stored and available for at least 3 years to meet IRB requirements.

Research is confirmable when the findings come from the research rather than the biases and subjectivity of the researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Researchers must be transparent (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). According to Nowell et al. (2017), research achieves confirmability when it is credible, dependable, and transferable. Triangulation, which addresses credibility and dependability, also addresses confirmability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Research Question 1

RQ1: What is the nature of reported ESM cases in the Islamic context?

This study identified five themes related to the nature of ESM cases in the Islamic context: setting, offender, victim, grooming, and ESM characteristics. The findings for RQ1 were presented at the case and offender levels to provide a general overview of the nature of ESM since victim, grooming, and ESM characteristics relate to RQ1 and RQ2. RQ1 presented victim characteristics per offender, while RQ2 presented victim characteristics per victim. In addition, RQ1 presented findings related to characteristics of grooming and ESM committed by offenders, while RQ2 presented findings related to characteristics of grooming and ESM experienced by each victim. There were 680 codes related to RQ1 themes. The finalized codebook (see Appendix F) detailed all codes for each research question.

Theme 1: Setting Characteristics. For sexual misconduct to become ESM, the setting in which the offender and victim encountered each other must have been educational. Therefore, the first aspect of describing the nature of ESM cases in the Islamic context was to describe the educational setting in which the 24 cases occurred. The theme of setting characteristics included 21 codes identified 130 times (see Table 7).

Table 7*Setting Characteristics Codes*

Code	Meaning	Count
sc-inst	type of institution of the primary incident	25
sc-loc	country, state, province of the primary location	24
sc-other loc	other institutions and locations involved in the case	17
sc-sil	culture of silence	8
sc-cons	conservative culture	3
sc-imm	immigrant community	4
sc-stigma	culture of victim stigmatization	5
sc-West	distrust of the West	5
sc-marry	emphasis on marriage	5
sc-sect	sectarian	4
sc-honor	emphasis on purity/respect/honor	4
sc-phobia	dealing with Islamophobia	3
sc-imp inst	importance of institution	4
sc-priv	culture of keeping sins private	5
sc-know	lack of abuse knowledge	1
sc-prom inst	prominent institution	3
sc-rep	culture of protecting reputations	4
sc-gend	strict gender separation	2
sc-mix	mixed community	2
sc-acc	no leadership accountability	1
sc-ref	refugee community	1

The three cases from ISC (1-ISC-1, 2-ISC-2, and 3-ISC-5) did not provide geographical information. All the remaining 21 cases from FACE reported the primary location, which included the city and state or province. For example, case 19-FHT-11 reported the location as “Location of violation: Flushing, New York, USA.” The primary location of 15 cases was in the United States and six in Canada. Most cases in the United States were in the Southwest (6), followed by the Midwest (3), the West (3), the Southeast (2), and the Northeast (1). Texas had the highest number of cases, with five. Florida, Illinois, and California all had two cases, and New York, Michigan, Arizona, and Oregon each had one. Regarding most cases being in Texas,

the FACE expert said, “The findings of Texas having the most cases is not going to be very helpful considering we (FACE) were based in Texas and, therefore, more connected to that community.” Of the six cases in Canada, four were in Ontario, and two were in British Columbia; all were in the Atlantic region (see Table 8).

Table 8

Location of Cases

Country	State/Province	# of Cases	Region
United States	New York	1	Northeast (1)
	Florida	2	Southeast (2)
	Illinois	2	Midwest (3)
	Michigan	1	
	Arizona	1	Southwest (6)
	Texas	5	
	California	2	
	Oregon	1	West (3)
Totals	8 states	15 cases	5 regions
Canada	Ontario	4	Atlantic
	British Columbia	2	
Totals	2 provinces	6 cases	1 region

The next step in describing the setting was to identify the type of primary institution of the ESM offense (see Table 9). There were 11 masjids identified as the primary institution in the study. This study identified masjids by institutions referred to as masjid, mosque, or Islamic center. For example, case 18-FHT-10 reported, “The offender...was the spiritual director at Masjid.” Case 24-FHT-18 reported, “The offender...served as a youth coordinator at the Islamic Center CA.” This study identified six primary institutions as schools because the institution’s name or references to the institution included the term school or institution. Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “He was accused of performing multiple sex acts on a 10-year-old student in his school.” Case 16-FHT-8 was the only case that used the term institution to identify the school by reporting, “Offender was a religious instructor at an institution he founded.”

Four cases identified the primary institution as a masjid and school combined in the same facility by reporting the institution as a mosque or Islamic center combined with a school or academy. For example, case 22-FHT-16 reported, “Land and school facilities used by the school are used in conjunction with an Islamic Mosque operated by Academy.” Two spiritual groups were identified as the primary institutions by cases that used the term *tariqa*. A *tariqa* is a group that people join to follow a spiritual guide to improve themselves religiously (In Shaykh’s Clothing, n.d.). Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “The following accounts come from people in a *tariqa*.” One case (23-FHT-17) identified the primary institution as a homeschool by reporting, “He began sexually abusing victim B when the homeschooling commenced.”

Table 9*Types of Institutions*

Type of Institution	Reported Term	Number Identified
Masjids	Masjid/Mosque (8)	11
	Islamic Center (3)	
School	School (5)	6
	Institution (1)	
Masjid-School Combination	Mosque/Academy (2) or School (1)	4
	Islamic Center/School (1)	
Spiritual Group	Tariqa (2)	2
Homeschool	Homeschool (1)	1

For this study, secondary institutions were masjids and organizations other than primary institutions. The offenders in cases 4-FIR-1-6 and 8-FIR-7 committed ESM offenses at primary institutions and secondary masjids. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “Subject engaged in a concealed marriage with a convert to Islam (Wife 2), whom he provided spiritual guidance to while serving as the Imam of the masjid, OH.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Masjid - Tampa Florida - Additional violation” and “Islamic Center in Virginia - Additional violation.” A total of six cases involved 17 secondary institutions (10 masjids and seven organizations).

Case 4-FIR-1-6 included three secondary institutions (two masjids and one organization). Case 5-FIR-3 included four secondary institutions (three masjids and four organizations). Case 8-FIR-7 included three secondary masjids. Case 9-FHT-1 included one secondary masjid. Case 22-FHT-15 included two secondary organizations, and case 24-FHT-18 included one secondary masjid. The terms masjid or mosque (5), center (2), society (2), or foundation (1) identified masjids. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, “Several masjids did rescind their invites, but some allowed him to continue.” Seven institutions were organizations. Four did not include the terms used to identify masjids. Three organizations included organization, convention, or association in

their names. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, “Appeal organization UK announces the termination of their relationship with Subject.”

Six of the 17 secondary institutions were national or international institutions. Two organizations were in the United States, three in South Africa, and one in the United Kingdom. Organizations were in New Jersey (1), Florida (1), Virginia (1), Illinois (2), Indiana (1), Ohio (1), Arizona (1), Texas (2), and California (1). For example, case 5-FIR-3 identified an internationally based organization by reporting, “Appeal organization UK announces the termination of their relationship.” Case 4-FIR-1-6 identified a state-based organization by reporting, “He was the Imam at the previous community of the Islamic Society here in Ohio.” Table 10 shows the location, type, and number of secondary organizations.

Table 10

Location, Type, and Number of Secondary Institutions

Locations	Type of Institution	Number
National and International Locations		
United States	Organizations	2
South Africa	Organizations	2
South Africa	Masjid	1
United Kingdom	Organization	1
State Locations		
New Jersey	Masjid	1
Florida	Masjid	1
Virginia	Masjid	1
Illinois	Organizations	2
Indiana	Masjid	1
Ohio	Masjid	1
Arizona	Masjid	1
Texas	Masjids	2
California	Masjid	1
Total Secondary Institutions		17

The most important finding relating to setting characteristics is the culture of each setting. This study identified 18 cultural characteristics that appeared 52 times (see Table 11). Of the 24 cases, 14 included codes related to cultural characteristics, and 10 cases had multiple codes. The FACE expert made a critical statement regarding the difference between Islam and Muslims, which is relevant when discussing the cultural aspects of the various Muslim communities in these cases. First, the FACE expert said, “Culture, in general, is so important.” When I asked about ESM in the Islamic context, the FACE expert said, “I wouldn’t say it’s an Islamic context. I’d say it’s a Muslim context.” Individuals make up Muslim communities and develop their community’s culture. Religion is one of many factors that influence culture.

Table 11

Cultural Characteristics

Characteristic	Number of Cases
Culture of Silence	7
Immigrants	4
Victims Stigmatization	4
Distrust of the West	4
Emphasis on Marriage	4
Values Purity, Respect, & Honor	4
Conservative	3
Sectarian	3
Institution is Important	3
Keeps Sins Private	3
Deals With Islamophobia	2
Prominent Institution	2
Protects Reputations	2
Strict Gender Separation	2
Diverse Community	2
Lacks Knowledge About Abuse	1
No Leadership Accountability	1
Refugees	1

A culture of silence was the most common characteristic. Seven cases were in communities with a culture of silence. For example, case 8-FIR-7 reported, “For the past year, Muslim women activists and scholars have warned that their communities are being left out of the #MeToo reckoning because of traditions that enforce a culture of silence.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “Community members and investigators hope religious or cultural differences don’t keep other alleged victims, whom they definitely believe exist, from coming forward.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “There’s a lot of silence around these taboo topics.” The ISC expert said, “Victims remain silent... Victims may not report because they believe reporting is considered backbiting, they want to forgive the offender, or they do not want to destroy the offender’s career.”

Four cases involved immigrant communities. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The scandal would’ve been devastating for a group of Muslim immigrants trying to plant roots.” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “Many congregation members come from countries like war-torn Afghanistan.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “The arrest...was especially shocking given the offender’s [Offender 1] stature in his community made up largely of Islamic immigrants from India and Pakistan.”

This study also identified four cases in communities where victims were stigmatized. Case 10-FHT-2 reported, “It would be untruthful to say victim shaming doesn’t happen in certain communities.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “In my culture, if anything happens to an unmarried girl, whether it’s her fault or not, there’s a big scarlet letter on her.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “According to a psychologist working on the case, when the secret got out at the Islamic private school, the girls were mocked by students, teachers, and the school president.” The FACE expert said, “If you have a culture of protecting men, you know, over women, which is unfortunately very prevalent, then it also is easier to get away with.”

Four cases had communities that did not trust Western society. For example, case 11-FHT-3 reported, “There’s a lot of people still in this country that really don’t trust law enforcement.” Case 19-FHT-11 reported, “The girl told police that she had first told her mother about the abuse, but her mother didn’t want to involve the police until she spoke to her Imam first.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “The fear is of becoming Americanized, and that includes a decline in morality, losing a person’s Islam, a person’s faith.” The FACE expert said, “People generally did not trust police.”

Four cases showed there was a cultural emphasis on marriage. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Such gossip can hurt a family’s social standing and limit marriage prospects.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “A lot of the attitudes around sexuality and marriage, I would literally describe them as ultra-Victorian.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “Offender took their virginity and told them he would marry them. That was a serious promise for a young girl whose virginity, what made them ‘pure’ in the Muslim faith, was taken from them.” The ISC expert said, “The girl wants to get married to someone else later on, and she’s afraid that this will hurt her chances of getting married.”

Four cases showed that the culture valued purity, respect, and honor. For example, case 10-FHT-2 reported, “It would be untruthful to say victim shaming doesn’t happen in certain communities. Why does this happen? Partly, it is a misconstrued sense of honor.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “If a child in the Muslim community is assaulted in any way sexually, that may be considered unclean. Will that child be able to get married in the future?” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “That was a serious promise for a young girl whose virginity, what made them ‘pure’ in the Muslim faith, was taken from them.”

Three cases had settings with a conservative culture. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “Family and faith is the core and the nucleus of our culture and society.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

The community retained many of its beliefs and customs. Purity and honor were paramount. Girls wore head scarves, kept their arms and legs covered, and were excused from school health classes where puberty and reproduction were discussed. In some families, talking about sex in any way was unthinkable.

Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “She is a member of a conservative Muslim community.”

Three cases involved sectarian Muslim groups. For example, cases 1-ISC-1 and 2-ISC-2 were spiritual groups. Case 1-ISC-1 described joining a spiritual group involves taking a *bayah*, an oath of allegiance to the leader of the group, by reporting, “It is critically important for a person to study their religion and know exactly what they are seeking and getting into when they join a tariqa or give bayah to a spiritual guide.” Case 2-ISC-2 described the spiritual group as a cult. It reported, “I actually had a really bad experience with the Muslim organization [spiritual group], which I consider a cult looking back at it. I feel like it was a cult.” Case 6-FIR-4 occurred in an Ahmadiyya community. It reported, “All of the parties involved in this report are part of the Ahmadiyya community, a distinct sect within the Muslim community. It is comparatively small but very organized.”

Regarding spiritual groups, the ISC expert said, “They (members of spiritual groups) don’t want to lose that spiritual high. They don’t want to lose the community and all they’ve invested in. So, the shaykh (spiritual leader) can get away with anything in these groups.” The ISC expert explained that spiritual groups differ from general Muslim communities. He said, “Sufi groups are very much zealously following these people (their leaders). It’s not like they just attend Jummah (Friday prayer).” The ISC expert also said:

It is very easy to shift blame on other people in these groups, mainly because these spiritual groups get people who are looking for a figure in their lives. At the same time, the groups market themselves as having that figure to fill those voids. So, they target these people.

The ISC expert also pointed out the influence and control that the leaders of spiritual groups have by saying, “It is more difficult to take preventative measures in spiritual groups than in other institutions because the spiritual leader is the focal point who establishes what is right and wrong.”

Three cases identified the importance of the institution within the community. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “The job of the masjid was to protect these values, be a place where the children go to practice their faith, and to provide a safe environment.” Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “The Foundation of Toronto is one of the largest and oldest Islamic community centers in Canada, but it also serves as a mosque, educational institution, and social services facility.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “The community has spent millions of dollars to build up the institution. The community has a right to protect the institution.” The ISC expert said, “They don’t want to lose the community and all they’ve invested in.” The FACE expert said, “There can be a culture of protecting institutions which makes it easier for offenders to get away with misconduct.”

Three cases identified the importance of keeping sins private. For instance, in case 5-FIR-3, someone asked the FACE representatives why they were exposing the offender’s sin. The FACE representative responded by saying:

One of the biggest questions that we get all the time is the concept of covering sin. “Why are we not covering this person’s sin? Why are we not giving them 70 excuses?” When you say, ‘covering of sin,’ it refers to a private, personal sin that does not abuse or violate

another person. Islamically speaking, we are not supposed to speak about evil except when it is in the case of somebody who has been wronged or oppressed.

Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “Most leaders in the community...refused to comment formally, citing a belief that it was unethical and/or religiously impermissible to comment until a legal verdict had been made.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The public airing violates Islamic traditions of handling problems without creating a spectacle.” The ISC expert said, “Victims may not report because they believe reporting is considered backbiting.” The FACE expert said, “Community members blame victims and gaslight victims with the misapplied concept of covering up sins. Even some victims believed that it was wrong to expose the offender’s sins.”

Two cases involved elements related to Islamophobia. Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “The Canada Revenue Agency said the masjid is also linked to a Qatari foundation with ties to Hamas, an organization on the Government of Canada’s list of terrorist groups.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “Activists understand that Islamic extremists have already placed Muslims under intense scrutiny. Negative publicity, they know, only angers those who want to burnish Islam’s reputation.” In addition, the FACE expert said:

We are a traumatized people who have had stuff weaponized in our community. So, I get that, but it nevertheless like there are still very real victims, and they’re kind of just ignored and dismissed for the larger context of avoiding making the Muslim community look bad.

Cases 8-FIR-7 and 21-FHT-15 both reported prominent institutions. Case 8-FIR-7 described the institution as “One of the biggest mosques in Texas.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “The community has spent millions of dollars to build up the institution.” In addition, both cases referenced protecting the reputations of offenders, institutions, the community, or Islam. Case 8-

FIR-7 reported, “Serious allegations, if addressed, are hushed so that the reputation of the offenders, the institution, and the community are not harmed.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “Negative publicity, they know, only angers those who want to burnish Islam’s reputation.” The ISC expert said a barrier to reporting is “Not wanting to destroy the person’s career.” The FACE expert said, “There are still very real victims, and they’re kind of just ignored and dismissed for the larger context of avoiding making the Muslim community look bad.”

The settings in cases 2-ISC-2 and 21-FHT-15 emphasized strict gender separation. Case 2-ISC-2 reported:

Also, this group was strict on gender separation. When strict gender barriers are observed as a norm, it oftentimes makes it hard for people to believe that women are abused or that there are illicit relationships between spiritual leaders and students.

Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “He [Offender 1] is said to espouse a code of separation between genders and discourages even handshaking.” Both these cases also had diverse communities.

Case 2-ISC reported, “This group, like many other abusive groups, has doctors, wealthy professionals, and people from different social and educational levels.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “In recent months, lawyers, therapists, and scholars encouraged alleged victims to share their stories.”

The cultural characteristics of lacking knowledge about abuse, leadership without accountability, and refugees were identified in one case each. Case 4-FIR-1-16 identified a lack of knowledge about abuse by reporting, “The board members stated they did not report this to the police or to Child Protective Services and were not aware of an obligation to do so.” Case 8-FIR-7 showed a lack of leadership accountability when it reported, “For too many years, there has been scant accountability of leadership.” Finally, case 9-FHT-1 identified a refugee

community by reporting, “Many congregation members come from countries like war-torn Afghanistan.” Tables 12 summarizes the setting characteristics of each case.

Table 12

Case Setting Characteristics (Type, Location, Secondary Institutions, and Culture)

Case	Institution	Country	State or Province	Sec. Inst.	Sec. Org.	Culture Codes ^a
1-ISC-1	tariqa	USA				sect
2-ISC-2	tariqa	USA				sect, gen, mix
3-ISC-5	school	USA				
4-FIR-1-6	masjid	USA	AZ	2	1	imm, know
5-FIR-3	school	USA	TX	3	4	sil, priv
6-FIR-4	masjid	USA	TX			sil, priv
7-FIR-5	masjid-school	CAN	ON			
8-FIR-7	masjid	USA	TX	3		sil, imm, West, marry, priv, prom inst, rep, acc cons, imm, imp inst, ref
9-FHT-1	masjid	USA	FL	1		sil, stigma, honor
10-FHT-2	masjid	CAN	BC			sil, stigma, West, marry, honor
11-FHT-3	masjid	USA	TX			
12-FHT-4	school	USA	IL			
13-FHT-5	masjid	CAN	ON			
14-FHT-6	masjid-school	USA	TX			
15-FHT-7	masjid-school	CAN	ON			imp inst
16-FHT-8	school	USA	OR			
17-FHT-9	school	CAN	ON			
18-FHT-10	masjid	CAN	BC			phobia
19-FHT-11	masjid	USA	NY			West
20-FHT-13	masjid	USA	CA			
21-FHT-15	school	USA	IL		2	sil, cons, imm, stigma, West, marry, honor, phobia, imp inst, prom inst, rep, gen, mix
22-FHT-16	masjid-school	USA	FL			sil, cons, stigma, marry, honor
23-FHT-17	homeschool	USA	MI			
24-FHT-18	masjid	USA	CA	1		

^a See Table 7 for culture code definitions.

Theme 2: Offender Characteristics. The 24 cases identified 25 offenders. Case 21-FHT-15 reported two offenders. The theme of offender characteristics included 16 codes appearing 196 times (see Table 13).

Table 13

Offender Characteristics Codes

Code	Meaning	Count
oc-sex	offender's sex	27
oc-pos	offender's position	26
oc-age	offender's age	24
oc-yrs	years at position	15
oc-int	offender could leave the country	14
oc-mv	multiple victims	14
oc-stat	offender status within the community	12
oc-nat	offender's nationality	11
oc-offkey	offender and institution are strongly tied	11
oc-sm	sexual misconduct	8
oc-ms	marital status	8
oc-\$	financial misconduct	7
oc-pa	physical abuse	5
oc-other	workplace violations	5
oc-sa	spiritual abuse	5
oc-sec marry	secret marriage	4

All 25 offenders were males. Thirteen cases identified offenders as males by referring to them as males or men. For example, the offender's inmate records in case 12-FHT-4 reported, "Gender: Male." Five cases identified offenders as male using masculine pronouns. For instance, Case 5-FIR-3 reported, "Subject is a well-known international Qur'an reciter who completed his Quran memorization studies at the Baltimore masjid." Four cases referred to offenders as shaykhs (male teachers or spiritual leaders). For example, case 2-ISC-2 reported, "One had to do a lot of service to the shaykh and his representatives." Two cases referred to offenders as Imams, which refers to the leader of a masjid or prayer. Islam only permits males to be Imams. Case 10-FHT-2 reported, "Offender served as the Imam at the masjid." Finally, case 18-FHT-10 identified the offender as a father by reporting, "Offender, who is a married father of five...denied all of the allegations."

Although this study did not identify female offenders, the ISC and FACE experts confirmed that there are some female offenders. The ISC expert said, "Men and women fondle them in that way, and they will realize later on what happened, even if they were uncomfortable in the moment." The FACE expert said, "We did have reports on female leaders. Unfortunately, the most prevalent was males. I would say at least 85% of the people that were reported to us were males."

Twenty-one cases included data to determine the offender's exact age at the ESM offense's reporting time. For example, the police press release in case 12-FHT-4 reported, "The state's attorney's office approved charges against the offender, 32 years of age." Case 24-FHT-18 had the youngest offender at 21 years old. Offender 1 in case 21-FHT-15 was the oldest offender identified at 76. The average age of these 21 offenders was 42.38 years old. Two cases did not provide data to determine the exact age of the offender and indicated that the offenders

were adults. For example, case 21-FHT-15 reported, “He [Victim D] was sexually assaulted by an adult male staff [Offender 2].” Cases 2-ISC-2 and 3-ISC-5 did not have any data to determine the age of the offenders.

Regarding offender age, the FACE expert said, “Offender age ranged from men who were younger to men who were older, and it ranged across ethnicities. It was pretty universal across the board.” The case data did not provide sufficient information to determine the offenders’ race or ethnicity. However, 10 cases included data to determine the offender’s nationality. For example, case 6-FIR-4 reported, “Offender, of Bangladeshi origin, has been in Canada since 2008.” Two offenders were Egyptian. In addition, there was one offender of the following nationalities: Bangladeshi, British, Cambodian, German, Ghanaian, Indian, Pakistani, and Somali.

Most offenders, 12 out of 25, held teacher positions in their institutions. For example, case 11-FHT-3 reported, “He was informally teaching many students the Quran.” Case 16-FHT-8 reported, “The offender was a religious instructor at an institution he founded.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “This is a legal action against the institution for knowingly harboring and retaining a sexual predator as their head of high school and teacher.” Three offenders were Imams. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The primary report of abuse occurred while the offender was performing his duties as the Imam for the masjid.” Case 10-FHT-2 reported, “The offender served as the Imam.” Case 13-FHT-5 reported, “The offender, an Imam in the Toronto area, was arrested at the airport while boarding a flight to leave Canada.”

Three cases referred to offenders as teachers and Imams. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The masjid elected to terminate the offender from his employment as Imam. The offender is currently serving in the teaching capacity for youth at the masjid.” Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “He began

working as an assistant Imam and Quran memorization teacher at the mosque.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The offender was an Imam and teacher at the masjid.” Two offenders were youth directors. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “The offender served as a youth director at the masjid.” Case 24-FHT-18 reported, “The offender served as a youth coordinator at the masjid.”

Two offenders were shaykhs. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “The following accounts come from people in a tariqa who have come forward with complaints of an abusive shaykh.” Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “The victim was in a controlling spiritual group for 13 years and parted ways when he learned of his shaykh’s abusive behavior.” Case 14-FHT-6 identified the offender as a security guard by reporting, “The offender was a security guard and a shura council member at the masjid.” Case 21-FHT-15 identified Offender 2 as a staff person, reporting, “He [Victim D] was sexually assaulted by an adult male staff person [Offender 2] whom the school employed as either a bookkeeper or office manager or some other similar job title.” Finally, case 18-FHT-10 identified the offender as a spiritual director by reporting, “The offender...was the spiritual director at the masjid.”

Ten of the offenders held key positions within the institutional setting. Four offenders were the institution’s owner, founder, or head. Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The offender was the owner and teacher of the school.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “The offender [Offender 1], 77, who founded the school, must also register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The victims are former students at the school and were each a student of the offender, the school’s former teacher and head of high school.” Three of these offenders represented the institution individually by operating independently. Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “The offender toured internationally and contracted with multiple Islamic institutions and organizations to speak, recite Quran, and teach.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “The offender would

visit different homes and teach the Quran. Essentially, we would call the offender a freelancer.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The offender offered to tutor the girls, as he was well-versed in the Quran. He began sexually abusing the victim when the homeschooling commenced.”

Two cases identified the offenders of shaykhs of tariqas. It is important to note that the shaykh of a tariqa differs from a shaykh outside of a tariqa. Tariqas revolve around the shaykh, and members join the spiritual group to gain access to the tariqa shaykh. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “The entire group exists and revolves around the shaykh, so it is unlikely to find support within it.” In case 2-ISC-2, a former member of a tariqa explained how tariqas revolve around the shaykh. When asked about how tariqas spiritually control students, he said:

The Shaykh would tell us how dirty we are and how much we need to become connected with God. They begin with the premise that we are not connected; once we are connected, we have nisba. Nisba is a vague concept that once a student is given, they are connected to God. To earn nisba, one had to do a lot of service to the shaykh and his representatives, along with prayer and other devotional acts.

The ISC expert said, “In tariqas, they are zealously following the shaykhs.” In addition, the ISC expert said, “Some victims still believe the shaykh is a saint...and believe if they go against the shaykh, if they speak against him, God will declare war against them, or they will be punished.” Finally, the offender in case 14-FHT-6, who worked as a security guard at school and masjid as a security guard, also served as a council member. Case 14-FHT-6 reported, “The offender was a security guard and a council member at the masjid.”

There was information in the cases to identify the offenders’ years of experience for 15 offenders. The experience was determined by how long the offender served in a position until the ESM was reported. For example, case 9-FHT-1 reported, “I think if you do the math and the

exposure rate of how many boys circulated through that youth program, and the offender was it. He was it for 5 years.” The average experience of the 15 offenders with data was 11.67 years. The offender in case 6-FIR-4 had the least experience, with 3 years, and Offender 1 in case 21-FHT-15 had the most experience, with 33 years. Most offenders (13) had 5 or more years of experience.

Eighteen cases included other relevant details related to offenders. For example, 13 offenders had international characteristics. Case 13-FHT-5 showed that the offender attempted to flee the country by reporting, “Police said the offender tried to leave Canada and was arrested at the airport.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported that Offender 1 “Returned from India to cooperate with law enforcement.” Case 23-FHT-12 reported, “Authorities suspect there were many more (victims) abroad, as the offender had also worked and taught in countries around the world, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Germany, and Hungary.” Eight cases included details indicating that the offenders had a positive status in the community and institutions. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “The offender is a high spiritual ranking saint. He can do whatever he wants.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “A community member described the offender as a good person and found the charges difficult to believe.” Case 21-FHT-13 reported, “The offender [Offender 1] was a very prominent religious leader.” The ISC expert said, “Some victims still believe the shaykh is a saint...and believe if they go against the shaykh, if they speak against him, God will declare war against them, or they will be punished.” Two cases showed that the offenders had a negative status. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “I also discovered that community leaders knew of the offender’s bad character long before he abused me but chose to keep quiet about it.” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “There have been some signals that this guy’s actions have been very suspicious for quite some time.”

Seven cases provided information about the offenders' marital statuses. Cases 4-FIR-1-6 reported, "The offender had sexually battered a woman he was pursuing for marriage as he presented himself as a single man. Although he was concurrently married to two other women." Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "The offender was still legally married under U.S. law to his first wife." Case 10-FHT-2 reported, "The offender's subterfuge with immigration officials also involved multiple marriages aimed at achieving residency in Canada. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the offender already had a wife and five children, which he never disclosed to immigration officials."

The ISC expert said, "Sometimes the first wife will help an offender get other temporary wives." In addition, the ISC expert said, "Offenders can target other men and be married." Three cases reported the offenders as volunteers at the institution. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, "The offender volunteered as the youth director at masjid." Case 11-FHT-3 reported, "The offender was informally teaching many students the Quran, volunteering his services at people's homes." Case 20-FHT-13 reported, "The offender was accused of luring victims as a volunteer at the masjid." Regarding the scope of ESM in the Islamic educational context compared to other religious contexts, the FACE expert said:

It is actually about the same. It feels like a lot because it is the first time we have seen it and really uncovered so much of it, but it lines up with the proportion that every other religious and non-religious group said they have also experienced.

Thirteen offenders committed ESM offenses with multiple victims, ranging from two to five victims. The average number of victims per offender, including offenders with only one victim, was 2.16 victims per offender. When only considering offenders with multiple victims, the average number of victims per offender was 3.23. Four cases (2-ISC-2, 3-ISC-5, 7-FIR-5, and 16-FHT-8) identified the offenders as having at least two victims each. The most victims

reported for a single offender was five, which occurred in three cases (1-ISC-1, 9-FHT-1, and 22-FHT-18).

Eleven offenders committed acts of misconduct other than ESM. For instance, seven offenders committed sexual misconduct outside of the scope of ESM. Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “This number includes at least 13 victims who have made credible allegations that include physical assault, rape, child molestation, spiritual abuse, manipulation, and financial abuse.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “All three masjids who employed the offender ... either terminated him or requested his resignation for sexual exploitation, spiritual abuse, counseling malpractice, secret marriage, and/or a serial breach of fiduciary duties as an Imam.” Case 14-FHT-6 reported, “The offender is currently charged with aggravated sexual assault of a child and three charges of possession of child pornography.”

Six offenders committed financial misconduct. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “These allegations included physical abuse of minors, in addition, instances of sexual battery, firing from previous employment, domestic violence, and misappropriation of zakat [charity] funds.” As stated, case 5-FIR-3 reported that the offender committed financial abuse, and case 8-FIR-7 reported that the offender breached the fiduciary duties as an Imam. Three offenders committed physical abuse. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “These allegations included physical abuse of minors ... domestic violence, and misappropriation of zakat [charity] funds.” Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “This number includes at least 13 victims who have made credible allegations that include physical assault, rape, child molestation, spiritual abuse, manipulation and financial abuse.” Case 13-FHT-5 reported “Violations: Physical Abuse, Sexual Assault, Spiritual Abuse.” Three cases identified offenders who also committed spiritual abuse, as indicated in the excerpts from cases

5-FIR-3, 8-FIR-7, and 13-FHT-5. The FACE expert said, “Sexual misconduct is usually paired off with spiritual or physical abuse.”

Regarding secret marriages, the ISC expert responded to the member-checking questionnaire with, “I think secret marriage is nuanced and requires more defining.” For this study, secret marriages were marriages identified in the case documents as being concealed from public knowledge or identified as secret. In the Islamic context, *secret marriages* are marriages that did not meet the legal requirements of having witnesses or were not announced to the public (Baydar, 2023). Three offenders engaged in secret marriages. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The offender engaged in two concealed marriages without witnesses while presenting himself as a single man.” Case 7-FIR-5 reported:

The offender was already in a concealed marriage with one victim. Upon hearing the first victim’s statements, receiving the anonymous, undated letter, and later learning of a concealed marriage to another former teaching assistant. The community delegated the matter to the council of Imams.

As stated, case 8-FIR-7 reported that the offender was terminated or requested to resign for engaging in a secret marriage.

This study identified other miscellaneous violations committed by offenders. Case 1-ISC-1 reported that the offender was guilty of:

Laxity with the prayer (often praying at a later time without reason), lacking focus on spiritual progress beyond gatherings of prayer and spiritual songs sung in a group, backbiting students in the company of the inner circle, divulging students’ business that they shared with him privately, basic violations of Islamic law in monetary transactions

where others were strong-armed through his authority into breaking contracts they had with others, and rudeness.

Case 5-FIR-3 reported the offender:

Offered and consumed marijuana with masjid youth while he was at paid speaking engagements ... consistently conducted himself in a manner that was a violation of his trust and position of leadership ... was let go for his general incompetence in the position (religious leader and Quran teacher).

Case 7-FIR-5 reported, "The offender exhibited unprofessional and unethical behavior at his workplace by appointing his own assistants, one of whom he pursued for a concealed marriage, as well as leaving minor children unsupervised in classrooms and committing repeated attendance violations." Finally, Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "All three masjids who employed the offender ... either terminated him or requested his resignation for sexual exploitation, spiritual abuse, counseling malpractice, secret marriage, and/or a serial breach of fiduciary duties as an Imam." Table 14 shows a summary of offender characteristics.

Table 14*Summary of Offender Characteristics*

Offender ^a	Age	Position ^b	Marital Status ^c	Other Misconduct	# of Victims
1-ISC-1 ⁺	older man	sufi shaykh* ²⁰		Yes	5
2-ISC-2 ^{+ int}		sufi shaykh* ¹³		Yes	2
3-ISC-5 ⁺		teacher			2
4-FIR-1-6 ^{int}	32	teacher-Imam ¹¹	mm-p	Yes	3
5-FIR-3 ^{+ int}	25	teacher* ⁸	mm	Yes	1
6-FIR-4 ^{- int}	36	teacher ³			1
7-FIR-5	42	teacher/Imam ⁷	mm	Yes	2
8-FIR-7 ^{+ int}	48	Imam ²²	p	Yes	3
9-FHT-1 ^{- int}	51	youth director ⁵			5
10-FHT-2 ^{int}	43	Imam ⁴	mm		1
11-FHT-3 ^{+ int}	59	teacher* ⁶			4
12-FHT-4 ⁺	32	teacher* ⁵	m		1
13-FHT-5 ^{int}	49	Imam ¹¹		Yes	1
14-FHT-6	25	security guard*		Yes	1
15-FHT-7	24	teacher			1
16-FHT-8	50	teacher*			2
17-FHT-9	41	teacher			1
18-FHT-10	52	spiritual director		Yes	1
19-FHT-11	46	teacher ⁷			1
20-FHT-13	53	teacher ²⁰			3
21-FHT-15 (1) ^{+ int}	76	teacher* ³³		Yes	3
21-FHT-15 (2)	adult	staff			1
22-FHT-16 ^{int}	36	teacher*			5
23-FHT-17 ^{int}	49	teacher-Imam*	m	Yes	3
24-FHT-18 ^{int}	21	youth director			1

^a All offenders were males. (+)=positive status, (-)= negative status, int=international implications

^b The superscripted numbers represent the number of years the offender served at the position.

^c mm=multiple marriages, p=polygyny

* Offender held a key position or was a key figure in the primary institution.

Theme 3: Victim Characteristics. The theme of victim characteristics included 19 codes appearing 155 times (see Table 15). This section only presents general data about victims' sex, age, nationality, position, background, and vulnerabilities. The RQ2 section provides more details and thick descriptions of victim characteristics.

Table 15*Victim Characteristics Codes*

Code	Meaning	Count
vc-age	victim age	42
vc-sex	victim sex	39
vc-pos	victim position in institution	36
vc-nat	victim nationality	4
vc-know	victim had knowledge of ESM	4
vc-marry	victim was married	4
vc->5	victim was student of offender for > 5 years	3
vc-sufi	belonged to a sufi group	3
vc-new Mus	new Muslim	3
vc-marry iss	had marital issues	3
vc-rel	victim was related to the offender	2
vc-pers	had personal issues	2
vc-ref	refugee	2
vc-low \$	low income	2
vc-no fam	no family in the country	2
vc-new stud	new student	1
vc-fam iss	had family or home issues	1
vc-ment	had mental health issues	1
vc-disc	disciplined by institution	1

The 24 cases identified 54 victims of ESM. In total, there was an average of 2.16 victims per case. The majority of victims were females. Eighteen cases identified 40 female victims, averaging 2.22 females per case. Five cases identified nine male victims, averaging 1.8 victims per case. Case 21-FHT-15 identified both male and female victims. Case 21-FHT-15 had two offenders; Offender 1 had three female victims, and Offender 2 had one male victim. Two cases did not identify the sex of five victims. The majority of victims (32) were minors (ages 16 and below). Nineteen victims were adults, and the remaining three victims did not have age-identifying data. Only seven victims had data to identify their nationality. Five were Afghan-

Syrian, one was Middle Eastern, and one was an immigrant. The majority of victims were students (39), followed by 14 congregants. One victim was both a student and a congregant.

Seven cases provided relevant information about 11 victims' backgrounds. For example, three cases identified four victims who were married. One case identified three victims who were related to their offender. Two cases identified two victims who had prior knowledge of the possibility of their offender committing ESM prior to their own experience of misconduct. Finally, two cases identified two victims who were students of their offender for more than 5 years.

Nine cases identified 21 victims with vulnerabilities. There were 11 vulnerabilities. Seven victims belonged to a tariqa. The ISC expert explained why belonging to a tariqa is a sign of victim vulnerability by saying:

We have to understand that a lot of these people [members of tariqas] are desperate in their circumstances. A lot of times, the tariqa targets somebody who doesn't really have a family or anyone. Now, she feels she's part of a family and that they're vulnerable. Those people are easier to manipulate. It's very easy to shift blame on other people in these groups, in particular, because of the Three Cs [control, confusion, and compromise]. They get people who are looking for a figure in their life. But at the same time, the groups market themselves as having that figure to fill those voids. So they target these people. They get people they can easily blame afterward and say, "It is your own shortcomings." So, the victims are not very believable, or it is easy for people to be unsympathetic towards them.

Six victims were refugees. Five victims were from low-income families. Two victims were new Muslims, two had personal issues, and two had marital issues. There was one victim who was

either a new student, had family or home issues, did not have family in the country, had mental health issues, or had disciplinary problems at the school. The findings section for RQ2 provides thick descriptions of victim vulnerabilities. Table 16 provides a summary of victim characteristics by offender.

Table 16

Case Level Victim Summary

Offender	Females ^a	Males ^a	Unknown Sex ^a	Positions ^b	# With Vulnerabilities
1-ISC-1	5 adults			stud* ^k	5
2-ISC-2	2 adults			stud ^m	2
3-ISC-5	2 [?]			stud	
4-FIR-1-6	3 adults			cong ^m	3
5-FIR-3	1 ¹⁵			stud	1
6-FIR-4		1 ¹⁴		cong	
7-FIR-5	2 adults			stud	
8-FIR-7	3 ^{18, 19, adult}			cong and stud*	2
9-FHT-1		5 ^{11, 12, 13, 14, 15}		cong	5
10-FHT-2	1 adult			cong	1
11-FHT-3			4 minors	stud	
12-FHT-4	1 ⁹			stud	
13-FHT-5	1 adult			cong	
14-FHT-6		1 ⁷		stud	
15-FHT-7		1 ¹⁰		stud	
16-FHT-8	2 ^{14, 14}			stud	
17-FHT-9	1 ¹⁷			stud	
18-FHT-10	1 adult			cong ^m	1
19-FHT-11	1 ⁹			stud	
20-FHT-13	3 ^{6, 7, 9}			stud	
21-FHT-15 (1)	3 minors			stud	
21-FHT-15 (2)		1 ¹¹		stud	
22-FHT-16	5 ^{13, 14, 15, 15, ?}			stud ^k	1
23-FHT-17	3 ^{9, 11, 12}			stud ^r	
24-FHT-18			1 minor	cong	

^a Superscripted text and numbers show the ages of the victims.

^b stud=students, cong=congregants, *=one victim was a student or congregant of the offender for at least 5 years, k=one victim had prior knowledge of the offender committing ESM, m=at least one victim was married, r=victims were related to the offender

Theme 4: Offender Grooming Tactics. Fourteen codes appeared 112 times related to offender grooming tactics (see Table 17). This section presents findings about grooming characteristics based on what offenders committed. RQ2 presented findings based on what victims experienced. For example, an offender with multiple victims could engage in multiple grooming tactics while each victim may not experience each tactic.

Table 17

Grooming Characteristics Codes

Code	Meaning	Count
g-iso	Grooming-Isolation	18
g-spirit	Grooming-Spirituality	17
g-int	Grooming-Intimidation	15
g-fam	Grooming-Familial Relationship	12
g-marry	Grooming-Marriage	10
g-talk	Grooming-Sex talk	10
g-elec comm	Grooming-Electronic Communication	6
g-att	Grooming-Special Attention	6
g-couns	Grooming-Counseling	4
g-fav	Grooming-Favors	4
g-norm	Grooming-Normalization	4
g-ign	Grooming-Ignoring	3
g-touch	Grooming-Touching	2
g-drug	Grooming-Drugs	1

Twenty cases included data identifying 14 types of grooming tactics offenders employed. Seventeen offenders used multiple grooming tactics, averaging 3.8 per offender. Four cases had no grooming data (10-FHT-2, 16-FHT-8, 19-FHT-11, and 24-FHT-18). Fourteen offenders used isolation. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, “The offender took the victim to the rooftop of a parking garage instead of the restaurant they planned to meet at.” Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “The offender will begin asking to see the mother in private, outside of class time, first with her child, then alone under the guise of discussing the child’s progress.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

The offender developed a code that he would write on the board to arrange times to meet the victim outside of school. ... The offender immediately grabbed her in the small room. ... The offender made a concerted effort to subdue her with harassment and intimidation and to have time alone with her.

The ISC expert explained that some offenders use the tactic of marrying victims by isolating them from their family and friends. The ISC expert said, “The woman doesn’t need a wali [family representative], and kind of convincing her that way to get into a marriage. [Saying it] is not in her interest nor friends helping her.”

Offenders used spirituality as a grooming tactic in 12 cases. For example, Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The offender was a trusted spiritual guide who’d counseled her since she [the victim] was 13.” Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “While counseling a woman who was struggling with mental health issues, he sexually assaulted her under the guise of removing an evil curse from her.” Case 20-FHT-13 reported, “The offender went to the home where the two girls were staying and lured them one after the other into a room in which he was supposedly praying.”

The ISC expert described how offenders used spirituality to groom victims. The ISC expert said offenders would avoid accountability by saying, “It’s like that in Musa [Moses], so

you just don't understand it [like how Moses did not understand the actions of a saint named Khidhr]." The ISC expert explained, "[They] ignored the outward transgressions, which they would admit were transgressions, but that this is a spiritual matter. It's like Musa." The ISC expert also explained that many of the cases he encountered came from victims of *ruqya*. *Ruqya* is a practice in Islam where Muslims use prayer and verses from the Quran to provide spiritual and physical healing. *Ruqya* is also used to exorcise *jinn*, spiritual beings that can possess humans. The ISC expert said:

I'll get it [cases] through *ruqya* ... men and women both, a religious figure, or someone even who is not someone of knowledge, but just says he does *ruqya* right. They'll say you have a *jinn* and put oil on them [their bodies], tell them to undress ... men and women, and [the offenders] fondle them in that way and they'll [victims] realize later on what happened, even if they were uncomfortable in the moment. ... And obviously, we have to understand ... a lot of these people are desperate in their circumstances. So they go through with it. *Ruqya* is a common way to do these things. I do get a good amount of outreach on sexual abuse through *ruqya*. ... It's not even always the woman going out looking [for *ruqya*]. ... He'll [offender] just convinces her she needs one.

The ISC expert said, "If people can get spiritual feelings around the shaykh. . . then that to them, that feeling, means more than any rational argument and they just don't want to lose that. They don't want to lose that spiritual high."

Ten offenders used intimidation to groom victims and prevent exposure. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, "Someone who identified himself as the offender's manager, and another individual who claimed to be an attorney, called FACE in an apparent attempt to intimidate us." Case 6-FIR-4 reported, "The offender is reported to have begun distancing himself from the

victim, engaging in cycles of rejection, gaslighting, and manipulation while continuing sexual overtures towards the victim.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The offender ensured the victim’s silence by threatening that in their culture if a girl, if she’s not a virgin, then the parents, this is how they can get her killed.” To silence victims, the ISC expert said, “There are even pictures of them together and he [offender] threatens to release those pictures.” The FACE expert said, “Harassment leads to abuse.”

Seven offenders used a familial relationship with their victims as a grooming tactic. For example, case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The victim recalled she began identifying the offender as a father figure, becoming so emotionally dependent on him that she began referring to him as baba, the Arabic word for father. ... The offender and the victim’s family were neighbors as well as family friends.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “I guess you could say it was all through grooming, but he was invited to a lot of these places by the parents and that’s kind of how we ended up here.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported:

They [victims] had to respect their uncle, the Imam, even while he was sexually assaulting them. ... Later, the victim and the offender forged an agreement that she would have a “relationship” with the offender if he left the victim’s sister alone. ... The offender guaranteed the victim’s silence by forcing her to take an “oath” that she would “let him do whatever he want[s] and I cannot tell him no,” in exchange for the offender’s agreement to fix a computer that she incorrectly believed she had broken.

The FACE expert highlighted trust as an important grooming component, saying, “Trust is a common trait involved in cases.” The ISC expert said:

[Offenders] develop a spiritual father relationship. ... The men kissed their [shaykh’s] hands. The women can also kiss his hands, and [the shaykh] says things like, “I’m your

spiritual father.” And then ... they’ll, a lot of times, target somebody who doesn’t really have a family or anyone. And then now she feels she’s part of a family and that they’re vulnerable.

Seven offenders also had sexual conversations with victims. Case 1-ISC-1 reported: Then he [the offender] asked me a strange question. “I know this will make you feel uncomfortable,” he said, “but are you a virgin? I’ll ask you something else: Do you see images of men in your dreams?” I said, “No.” He then said, “You have never been touched by a man? Have you had sexual thoughts about anyone in classes?”

Case 5-FIR-3 reported:

The victim asked the offender if they were going to the restaurant. The offender said “no” and stated that the romantic view was “making him feel some type of way physically towards her.” The offender told her, “This is how love is expressed and, the pain is something you should feel good about because it makes me feel good.”

Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “A former student told investigators the offender has frequently engaged in inappropriate sexual conversations while at the school. He has also made sexual gestures and ‘rubbed his own penis’ during classes, the judge was told.” The ISC expert said, “[Offenders] groomed them and even pick out which ones are more receptive to their own advances, which would be either words to test them out or even kissing and touching to see how far it can go.”

Five offenders used the topic of marriage to groom victims. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students and soliciting secret marriage proposals and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The offender engaged in a concealed marriage with a convert to Islam (Wife 2) whom he

provided spiritual guidance to while serving as the Imam of the masjid.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The offender took their virginity and told them he would marry them.” The FACE expert reported:

In the Muslim context, secret marriages stand out as a grooming tactic which offenders used to take advantage of victims. Using marriage as a tactic helps the offender avoid sexual abuse since the victim is seemingly consenting to the sex. ... The loophole, which isn't even a real loophole, right ... I would say definitely that [secret marriages] is like a very unique aspect of how this shows up in Islam.

Four offenders used electronic communication to facilitate grooming. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] and soliciting secret marriage proposals and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “The offender approached her ... requesting her number and Instagram handle.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The victim detailed a year-long exchange of phone, text, and video-conference communications between the offender and her, which became increasingly sexual and explicit in nature.”

In addition, four offenders gave their victims special attention as a way of grooming them. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “He called me, batul (chaste/virgin/pure), and praised me. He held both my hands and kissed them, and then kissed me on my forehead.” In addition, case 1-ISC-1 reported that the offender said to the same victim, “You are so beautiful.” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “By counseling, praying, traveling with them, camping, and spending a great deal of time with him. ... So, the efforts were designed by how to integrate himself with the victim.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “Grooming included singling out favorite students, hugging them, and special privileges.” When discussing grooming tactics, the ISC expert said:

This is another type now, a new one I'm about to say is flirtatious ... confusing ways of talking to women. I studied pickup artists for this, actually, and it helped me understand the way these people work. So they'll say things like, "If you go to the Bahamas, you can see when maghrib [sunset] comes in, you can see fajr [dawn]. Clearly, we should go." And he says it to just a girl. And then she's confused. [She thinks] "Does he mean 'we' as in like a group or just me and him?" And that's how you get it [the idea] in her. That's how you get it in her head to think of these romantic things ... to get her with the goal of getting her to think about them. Him also mentioning, "I had a dream of us being married." Saying it in a way where he thinks it's funny but shows no intention of doing it ... But to test her, I can't tell you how much this kind of stuff comes up. ... It's pickup artistry.

The grooming tactics of counseling, favors, and normalization appeared in three cases. Regarding counseling, 4-FIR-1-6 reported, "After counseling a woman and her husband through their divorce, the offender engaged in a marriage with that woman." Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "The victim's mother asked the offender to provide counseling services for the victim." Case 18-FHT-10 reported, "While counseling a woman who was struggling with mental health issues, he sexually assaulted her under the guise of removing an evil curse from her." The ISC discussed how many conflate counseling with non-counseling interactions. The ISC expert said:

[They claim] this Imam was a counselor. ... Well, was he really a counselor, or was he just a religious figure, an Imam, who was close to you? He gave you advice, and then he expressed interest ... because that [the conflation] can also be someone [a victim] taking the blame off of themselves for what they got into knowingly.

Regarding favors, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “He [offender] offered her more zakat [charity] money, as much as she wanted. The victim was unsure whether the money was offered in exchange for sex or in exchange for remaining silent.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “He [offender] continued to exhibit behavior indicative of a close relationship, such as loaning the victim money for items such as a laptop and offering to cosign a loan for a vehicle for the victim’s personal use, amongst other things.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The offender guaranteed the victim’s silence by forcing her to take an oath ... in exchange for the offender’s agreement to fix a computer.” The ISC expert said offenders will use “Surprise moments like even giving a gift [to the victim].”

Finally, regarding normalization, case 1-ISC-1 reported:

All of those behaviors [misconduct] are either ignored or interpreted to either minimize them or make them seem as perfections. The fault is branded as a perfection. For example, the offender’s kissing was seen as tarbiya [training], helping people, etc. Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “They [other members] would somehow justify the fact that the woman could meet with the shaykh in private.” As stated, the offender in case 5-FIR-3 attempted to normalize the victim’s pain by equating it to love by saying, “This is how love is expressed, and the pain is something you should feel good about because it makes me feel good.” The ISC expert said offenders will say, “It’s God testing their sincerity and the test for them. ... I’ve seen groups trying to convince the woman [the victim] that it was just a test.”

Two offenders ignored victims after engaging with them as a grooming tactic. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “The offender then engaged in a cycle of rejecting the victim and attempting to distance himself, followed by continued sexual overtures.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The victim alleged that the Imam’s interactions became more sexualized once she turned 18 – including

lurid texts, phone calls and video exchanges, culminating into an alleged coerced sexual ... encounter, after which he cut off contact with her.” The ISC expert said, “Hot, cold, that’s [ignoring] part of keeping the confusion up. ... [ignoring] then surprise moments like even giving a gift or addressing [them as] something special, they talk in private ... hot, cold, hot, cold.”

Only case 9-FHT-1 showed the offender using drugs to groom victims by reporting, “He [offender] has been accused by multiple minors of giving them sedatives and then molesting them at his home.” One case, 22-FHT-16, showed the offender using touch as a grooming tactic by reporting, “The offender repeatedly, on multiple occasions, smacked this victim on her back.” The ISC expert said:

[The offender] groomed them. ... kissing and then touching to see how far it can go. ... They’ll kiss his hand. I consider that enough, to be honest. And then when he wants to go further, as you can imagine, going from a kiss on the hand to a kiss on the face, and that much of a transition. Then also, the ways of touching ... I don’t know why, but what’s come up multiple times is picking up a cup at the same time and then touching her finger like that.

Table 18 summarizes grooming tactics, the number of offenders who used the tactics, and the number of victims who experienced the tactics.

Table 18*Grooming Tactics by Number of Offenders and Victims*

Grooming Tactic	# of Offenders	# of Victims
Isolation	14	27
Spirituality	12	31
Intimidation	10	16
Familial Relationship	7	25
Marriage	5	11
Sex talk	7	9
Electronic		
Communication	4	7
Special Attention	4	11
Counseling	3	3
Favors	3	3
Normalization	3	8
Ignoring	2	2
Touching	1	1
Drugs	1	5

Theme 5: Types ESM Offenses. Eleven codes related to types of ESM offenses appeared 87 times (see Table 19). As with Theme 4, this section presented findings related to ESM characteristics based on what offenders committed, not what victims experienced. RQ2 presented findings related to victims' experiences with different types of ESM.

Table 19*ESM Characteristics Codes*

Code	Meaning	Count
esm-aslt	sexual assault	15
esm-off	committed offsite	12
esm-on	committed onsite	11
esm-sex	sexual intercourse	10
esm-no sex	no sexual intercourse	9
esm-verb	verbal ESM	8
esm-abuse	sexual abuse	5
esm-vis	visual ESM	5
esm-sec marry	secret marriage	5
esm-elec	electronic ESM	4
esm-?	unknown	3

This study categorized ESM into two major categories: physical and non-physical.

Physical ESM included sub-categories of secret marriages, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.

Non-physical ESM included sub-categories of verbal, visual, and electronic ESM. Twenty-one cases involved physical ESM and only one case solely involved non-physical ESM (3-ISC-5).

Nine cases reported that offenders committed physical and non-physical ESM. Two cases did not specify which type of ESM. Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “The main shaykh overseas, he had been accused of some very inappropriate behavior interactions with women.” Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “The offender abused his position of power by pursuing his female subordinates, his adult female students, his students’ mothers, and teachers in his congregation for concealed marriages or extramarital relationships.” These two cases highlight the importance of defining ESM in the Islamic context. The ISC expert said:

Maybe you can ... define how you’re using the term sexual misconduct. ... Maybe he’s [committing] inappropriate behavior by boundary violation because the boundaries are known, and they’re still violating it. ... Defining all these intervals and ... maybe make it scale. ... You have to have the Muslim voice in there. That’s important.

Two offenders engaged in secret marriages with their victims. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The offender engaged in a concealed marriage with a victim.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “A community member disclosed to them that the offender had secretly married one of his female students.” The ISC expert said:

It was like manipulation, which would include things like secret marriages, short-term marriages that were intentional ... and manipulation to, you could say, convince those women to marry the man and then later on you’d find out. ... Once you start seeing things like pushing towards the secret marriage, even saying things like, “We’ll marry. We’ll make it public soon.” You have to know it’s a lie. ... Anything secret is not in your best interest.

As stated, the FACE expert said that secret marriages were used as a grooming tactic and a loophole to avoid sexual abuse since victims appear to have consented to the sex. Regarding secret marriages, the FACE expert added:

I didn’t see it all the time, but it happened often enough that I remember. ... [They] engage in what they think of as consensual sexual relations. ... Some would classify it as sexual abuse or taking advantage of another person. Given the fact that so many of these people who engage in this have Islamic knowledge, there is already this trust. ... That [trust] was taken advantage of. The aspect of having that power and having that trust in the community is very much preyed upon.

Cases referred to ESM offenses as sexual abuse or sexual assault. Five cases identified the ESM offenses as sexual abuse. For example, case 16-FHT-8 reported that the offender committed “Sexual abuse of two minors.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “She was the victim of sexual abuse on school grounds.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “He began sexually abusing the

victim when the homeschooling commenced.” The FACE expert said, “Sexual abuse was the highest, usually paired off with spiritual or physical abuse.” Eleven cases reported the ESM as sexual assault. For example, case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The offender sexually assaulted the girl more than 10 times.” Case 13-FHT-5 reported that the offender committed “Multiple counts of sexual assault.” Case 18-FHT-10 reported that the offender committed “Sexual Assault.”

Only four cases identified that the offender had sexual intercourse with their victim. These cases included the two cases of secret marriages (4-FIR-1-6 and 8-FIR-7) since marriage implies sexual intercourse. Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The offender used the relationship he formed with her as a student to facilitate forcing her into a sexual relationship, abusing her on multiple occasions, up to and including sexual intercourse.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The victim testified that the offender began touching her breasts and vagina within days of his arrival and penetrated her with penis his penis a week later.”

Five cases identified physical ESM that did not include sexual intercourse. For example, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “When the victim began cleaning the kitchen, she stated that the offender approached her, grabbed her, and held her tightly, removed her hijab [head scarf], and tried to kiss her.” Case 5-FIR-3 reported:

The offender began forcefully kissing the victim, groping her breasts to the point of leaving finger marks and bruises on her chest and breasts, and attempting to rip her clothes off, even though she expressly stated multiple times that he was hurting her and that she didn’t want to do this.

Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “He has been accused by multiple minors of giving them sedatives and then molesting them at his home.”

Thirteen cases involved non-physical ESM. Six cases included verbal ESM. Case 1-ISC-1 reported:

Then he [offender] asked me a strange question. “I know this will make you feel uncomfortable,” he said, “But are you a virgin? I’ll ask you something else, do you see images of men in your dreams?” I said, “No.” He then said, “You have never been touched by a man? Have you had sexual thoughts about anyone in classes?”

Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The victim detailed a year-long exchange of phone, text, and video-conference communications between the offender and her, which became increasingly sexual and explicit in nature.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

The lawsuit claimed that, for at least one of the girls, the offender allegedly would write in “code” on the blackboard in class to arrange times to meet up with her and also communicated with her through social media and late-night phone calls.

Four cases involved visual ESM. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] and soliciting secret marriage proposals and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “A former student told investigators the offender has frequently engaged in inappropriate sexual conversations while at the school. He has also made sexual gestures and ‘rubbed his own penis’ during classes, the judge was told.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

He [offender] would put his hand in front of his face and stick his tongue out between his index finger and middle finger, making a sexual gesture. He would also spread his legs as he stared at her, grabbing his crotch area with his hand.

Three cases included electronic ESM. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students and soliciting secret marriage proposals and

exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The victim detailed a year-long exchange of phone, text, and video-conference communications between the offender and her, which became increasingly sexual and explicit in nature.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The lawsuit claimed ... the offender ... communicated with her through social media and late-night phone calls.”

Sixteen cases identified the locations of ESM offenses. The offenders in three cases committed ESM offenses both at the site of the educational institutions and offsite. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “The offender was reported to have sexually abused the victim at his apartment, in his car, and during community events and youth group trips they both attended.” Case 20-FHT-13 reported:

The offender was accused of oral copulation and touching the victim’s vagina at the masjid. ... The offender was accused of going to the home of the first and second victim ... where he allegedly lured the 9-year-old into a room and performed lewd acts on her.

Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

She exited her class, and he [offender] approached from the other side of the building. ... He then advised her to go to the mosque ... met him in the common meeting area where the offender immediately grabbed her in the small room. ... The complaint said the pair [offender and victim] met almost every weekend at either a Publix to have sex in the offender’s car or at his home.

Seven cases indicated that ESM offenses only occurred offsite. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, “The offender picked up the victim 5 in his car. The offender took her to the rooftop of a parking garage instead of the restaurant they planned to meet at.” Six cases indicated that ESM offenses only occurred on the institution’s site. For example, case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The

offender would take the girl to an isolated room in the school building away from the other students.” Concerning whether ESM occurred onsite or offsite, the FACE expert said, “It would be both.” Table 20 provides a summary of ESM offenses by offender.

Table 20

Type of ESM and Number of Victims by Offender

Offender	Physical				Non-Physical			Onsite or Offsite
	Sex*	Secret Marriage	SA ^a	No Sex	Verbal	Visual	Electronic	
1-ISC-1				5	2			
2-ISC-2				Unknown Type of ESM				
3-ISC-5		No Physical ESM Data				2	2	
4-FIR-1-6		2		1				Off
5-FIR-3				1	1			Off
6-FIR-4			1		1			Both
7-FIR-5				Unknown Type of ESM				
8-FIR-7	1	1		1	1	1	1	Off
9-FHT-1				5				Off
10-FHT-2			1					
11-FHT-3			4					
12-FHT-4			1		1	1		On
13-FHT-5			1					Off
14-FHT-6			1					On
15-FHT-7			1					Off
16-FHT-8			2					
17-FHT-9			1					Off
18-FHT-10			1					On
19-FHT-11			1					On
20-FHT-13			3					Both
21-FHT-15 (1)			3					On
21-FHT-15 (2)			1					On
22-FHT-16	3		1		2	2	2	Both
23-FHT-17	2		1					On
24-FHT-18			1					

*Offender had sexual intercourse with a victim without engaging in secret marriage.

^a SA=Sexual Abuse or Sexual Assault

Research Question 2

RQ2: What are the perceptions and experiences of victims who reported ESM in the Islamic context?

The findings related to victims' perceptions and experiences included five themes: victim, grooming, and ESM characteristics, victim impact, and victim disclosure and reporting. As mentioned in RQ1, RQ2 presented the findings related to victim, grooming and ESM characteristics by each victim's perspective and not from the case and offender level as in RQ1. There were 61 codes appearing 575 times related to RQ2. The finalized codebook (see Appendix F) detailed all codes for each research question.

Theme 1: Victim Characteristics. As mentioned in Theme 3 of RQ1, the theme of victim characteristics included 19 codes appearing 155 times (see Table 15). There were 54 victims, of which 40 were females, nine were males, and five were unknown. The case documents referred to 11 females as women. For example, 1-ISC-1 reported, "During Sha'ban [Islamic month] of 2019, a leader in the tariqa, still serving as a murid [student] of the offender, received a message from a woman whom we will Victim A." Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, "After counseling a woman [Victim C] and her husband through their divorce the offender engaged in a marriage with her [Victim C]." Case 13-FHT-5 reported, "The 49-year-old came to the attention of investigators in early 2019 when a woman [Victim A] came forward alleging the Imam had sexually assaulted her [Victim A], police say."

The case documents referred to nine females as girls. Case 5-FIR-3 reported, "One of the individuals present was a 15-year-old girl, hereinafter known as Victim A." Case 19-FHT-11 reported, "9-Year-Old Girl [Victim A] Groped by Teacher at Queens Mosque After-School Class." Case 20-FHT-13 reported, "A former mosque volunteer faced new sexual assault charges

Tuesday after a 7-year-old girl [Victim C] saw media reports and came forward, according to the Orange County District Attorney.” Documents referred to eight females as females. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] and soliciting secret marriage proposals and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “Victim C is currently an adult female who was a student of offender [Offender 1] when she was a minor.”

Pronouns identified six females. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Victim A reported to FACE that she has known the offender since 2010 when she was approximately 13 years old.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

In or about the fall of 2007 and continuing into 2008, when Victim B was 14 to 15 years old, the offender developed a sexual relationship with her while she was a student in his class at the school. ... The offender also sought to attack a fifth victim [Victim E], first asking for her phone number and then sending her sexually inappropriate electronic transmissions attempting to have sex with her, asking her if she “shaved down there” and other inappropriate content, and then repeatedly trying to get her to participate in a threesome sexual experience with one of the other victims.

Four victims had family titles that indicated that they were females. For example, case 8-FIR-7 reported:

According to the Ameer [masjid leader], the brother-in-law of a 19-year-old (approx.) student and congregant (hereinafter Victim B) of the mosque, came to the Ameer and explained that the offender had taken advantage of his sister-in-law’s innocence to manipulate her into an illicit romantic relationship with explicit promises of marriage.

Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The complainants were the offender’s young nieces [Victims B and C].” Finally, two women were wives. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

The second allegation of sexual battery was made on July 15th, 2019, and the masjid representative informed FACE that a widowed refugee [Victim A] ... came to the masjid in Ramadan of 2019 to apply for zakat [charity] assistance and to disclose that she had been sexually assaulted by the offender. ... The offender engaged in a concealed marriage with a convert to Islam (Wife 2) [Victim B], to whom he provided spiritual guidance while serving as the Imam of the masjid.

Case documents identified the nine males by referring to those victims as boys (seven) or males (two). For example, case 9-FHT-1 reported, “From what we know ... all boys ... it varies from the age of 11 [Victim A] 12 [Victim B] and up as far as 15 [Victim C].” Case 14-FHT-6 reported, “The boy [Victim A] was a seven or 8-year-old.” Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “Private school teacher accused of sexually assaulting boy [Victim A], 10, in Scarborough.” Regarding males, case 6-FIR-4 reported, “Victim [Victim A], age 14, juvenile, sex m [male], race Middle Eastern.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “John Doe #1 [Victim D] is currently an adult male who was a student at the school and an overnight boarder from Mondays to Fridays when he was a minor.”

Regarding males committing ESM against male victims, the ISC expert said, “These Imams and shaykhs ... even if they’re married ... they have an inclination towards men, and they will lure in other men [to offend].” The FACE expert said:

I think they just ranged across ... all demographics. ... most were women. There were a decent number of male victims of sexual abuse. I don’t think those reports (male) are

really out yet. ... [You] just see male to female [offender to victim] ... I think what surprised us was how many male victims there were.

Case documents referred to four victims just as victims and one as a child, without any sex identifying information. For example, case 11-FHT-3 reported, "An investigation which began in September 2019 uncovered at least four victims [Victims A, B, C, and D] of sexual abuse dating back to 2013." Case 24-FHT-18 reported the offender's charge as "Lewd or lascivious acts with child [Victim A] under 14 years of age by force or fear."

The case documents included age-related data for 51 victims. Three victims did not have data to determine their age nor whether they were minors or adults. These victims were from cases 3-ISC-5 (2) and 22-FHT-16 (1). Case 3-ISC-5 referred to the two victims as "female students," and the case referred to Victim E as a "fifth victim." Twenty-eight victims had data to determine their specific age. For example, case 9-FHT-1 reported, "From what we know, that all boys ... it varies from the age of 11 [Victim A] 12 [Victim B] and up as far as 15 [Victim C]." Case 21-FHT-15 reported, "John Doe 1 [Victim D] is an adult who was enrolled as an 11-year-old student." Case 22-FHT-16 reported, "The complaint also notes that police made contact with another former student [Victim D] who said that she also had a sexual relationship with the defendant when she was 15 to 16 years old." The youngest victim with a specific age was 6 years old. Case 20-FHT-13 reported, "The two girls were 9 [Victim A] and 6 [Victim B] years old." The oldest victim with a specific age was 19 years old. Case 8-FIR-7 reported Victim B as a "19-year-old (approx.) student and congregant." The average age of victims with specific identifiable ages was 12.36 years old.

The case documents provided data to determine that the remaining 23 victims were either adults or minors. Sixteen of these victims were adults. Case documents referred to nine victims

as women. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “A tariqa leader, still serving as a murid of the offender, received a message from a woman whom we will call [Victim A].” Case 10-FHT-2 reported that the charges against the offender included “assaulting a woman [Victim A] in July 2016.” Case 13-FHT-5 reported, “The 49-year-old [offender] came to the attention of investigators in early 2019 when a woman [Victim A] came forward alleging the Imam had sexually assaulted her, police say.” Three victims were either a mother, widow, or wife. Case 1-ISC-1 reported that the offender asked Victim D, “Where did your father use to kiss you?” Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

A masjid representative informed face that a widowed refugee (hereinafter victim 2) [Victim A] came to the masjid in Ramadan of 2019 to apply for zakat [charity] assistance and to disclose that she had been sexually assaulted by the offender. ... The offender engaged in a concealed marriage with a convert to Islam (wife 2) [Victim B].

The case documents referred to three victims as adults. Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “Subject abused his position of power by pursuing ... his adult female students [Victims A and B] ... for concealed marriages or extramarital relationships.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Even though the woman [Victim A] involved was an adult, people were uncomfortable with how religious guidance allegedly had turned into a secret, polygamist romance.” Case 1-ISC-1 referred to Victim D as “S3’s [Victim C] college-aged daughter.” Cases 11-FHT-3 and 21-FHT-15 referred to victims as minors. Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “They [Victims A, B, C, and D] were all juveniles at the time of the allegations.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

Jane Doe #2 [Victim A] is currently an adult female who was a student at the school when she was a minor [when the misconduct occurred]. ... Jane Doe #3 [Victim B] is currently an adult female who was a student of the offender [Offender 1] when she was a

minor [when the misconduct occurred]. ... Jane Doe #4 [Victim C] is currently an adult female who was a student of offender [Offender 1] when she was a minor [when the misconduct occurred].

The ISC expert confirmed that offenders target adults. The ISC expert said:

These Imams and shaykhs [offenders] ... they [can] have an inclination towards men, and they will lure in other men. ... What I mentioned to you about the guys, they're all adults because I am separating from kids and adults.

The FACE expert said that victims "ranged across all ages." Regarding FACE's investigative report, the FACE expert said, "We spoke with very few people underage. ... If we did speak with them, it was like through proxy of their parents."

As mentioned in the Victim Characteristics section in RQ1, only seven victims had data to identify their nationality. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, "[They were] kids [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] that sought refuge, their family sought refuge from war zones such that Afghanistan and Syria." Case 6-FIR-4 reported, "Victim [Victim A]: Age-14, juvenile, Sex-M, Race-Middle Eastern." Case 10-FHT-2 referred to Victim A as "the woman who has no family in the country." The FACE expert said, "Victims range across all demographics."

Thirty-nine victims were students, 14 were congregants, and one was a student and a congregant. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "The brother-in-law of a 19-year-old (approx.) student and congregant (hereinafter Jane Doe 2) [Victim B] of the mosque ... and explained that offender had taken advantage of his sister-in-law's innocence." The case documents referred to 29 victims as students. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported:

In the Fall of 2012, the offender, 17 years old at the time, was invited to a high school's Muslim student group as a guest speaker to give the Friday khutbah [sermon]. One of the individuals present was a 15-year-old girl, hereinafter known as Victim 5 [Victim A].

Case 7-FIR-5 reported, "Subject [offender] abused his position of power by pursuing ... his adult female students [Victims A and B] ... for concealed marriages or extramarital relationships."

Case 11-FHT-3 reported, "He [offender] was informally teaching many students [Victims A, B, C, and D] Quran, volunteering his services at people's homes."

The case documents included data to determine that nine victims were either students of offenders who were teachers or attended a school during the misconduct. For example, 19-FHT-11 reported, "9-Year-Old Girl Groped by Teacher at Queens Mosque's After-School Class." Case 20-FHT-13 reported, "The defendant is accused of teaching ... classes at the school and befriending the victims [Victims A, B, and C] and their family members." Case 23-FHT-17 reported, "Defendant [offender] offered to tutor the girls [Victims B and C], as he was well-versed in the Koran." Case 14-FHT-6 identified a victim as a school attendee. The case reported, "The boy [Victim A] was a 7- or 8-year-old who attended the school at the time of the alleged assaults."

Regarding the 14 congregants, case documents referred to nine victims as congregants or provided details of the victims attending a masjid. For example, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, "Subject [offender] sexually battered two separate female congregants [Victims A and B]." Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "She [Victim A] and her family regularly attended the masjid." Case 9-FHT-1 reported, "Now, a two-count Hillsborough County civil complaint details accusations involving an unstated number of young masjid congregation members [Victims A, B, C, D, and E]."

The case documents included data to determine that ESM offenses committed against three victims were either by an Imam or masjid employee or the primary institution was a masjid. Case 10-FHT-2 reported, “In 2017, he [the offender] was charged with assaulting the woman [Victim A], whom he came to know through his work [as an Imam] in the Muslim community in Surrey, B.C.” Case 13-FHT-5 reported, “In a news release Wednesday, police said the woman [Victim A] first met the Imam at a mosque over a decade ago in 2008.” Case 24-FHT-18 reported, “[The offender] served as a youth coordinator at the masjid.” Two victims were masjid attendees. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “[Victim A] became a regular attendee of the masjid.” Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “The offender was charged with one count of sexual assault against a female attendee [Victim A] at the mosque.”

The case documents 11 victims with other relevant details. For example, four victims were married. Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “By the way, a lot of the inappropriate stuff that’s happening was with the wives [Victims A and B] of their students.” Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “After counseling a woman [Victim C] and her husband through their divorce, the offender engaged in a marriage with that woman.” Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “He [the offender] had been counseling the victim [Victim A], who was married.” Three victims were related to the offender. Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The complainants were the offender’s young nieces [Victims A, B, and C].”

Two victims had some knowledge of other ESM offenses committed by their offender or others. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “I [Victim A] remembered back to a story about another shaykh who had harassed one of my friends.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

This victim [Victim D] was particularly intimidated by the offender’s actions because she was aware of widespread rumors on the school campus that the offender had sexually

abused students in the past, to the point that students would write graffiti on bathroom walls that the offender was a ‘pedophile.’ She naturally feared that his behavior towards her meant that she was marked as his next victim.

Two victims knew their offenders for 5 years or more. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “S5 [Victim E] had been a murida [student] for 5 years.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Jane Doe [Victim A] was only 13 when her concerned mother sought counseling [with the offender for Victim A] ... When she [Victim A] turned 18, she asked the Imam [offender] advice on marriage.” The ISC expert said, “Sometimes victims don’t recognize that they are being abused immediately, even if they feel uncomfortable in the moment.”

Twenty-one victims had vulnerabilities, of which eight victims had multiple vulnerabilities. Seven victims were vulnerable because they already belonged to a tariqa. Case 1-ISC-1 reported:

A shaykh [offender] is supposed to be a guide for his students [Victims A, B, C, D, and E]. Therefore, it is easy to exploit the concept of being a spiritual healer and a guide to those who sincerely want to improve by getting them to open up about uneasy topics.

Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “Victim [non-ESM victim] was in a controlling spiritual group [tariqa] for 13 years and parted ways when he learned of his shaykh’s [offender] abusive behavior [ESM offenses against Victims A and B].” The ISC expert said:

We have to understand that a lot of these people [members of tariqas] are desperate in their circumstances. A lot of times, the tariqa targets somebody who doesn’t really have a family or anyone. Now, she feels she’s part of a family and that they’re vulnerable. Those people are easier to manipulate. It’s very easy to shift blame on other people in these groups, in particular, because of the Three Cs [control, confusion, and compromise].

They get people who are looking for a figure in their life. But at the same time, the groups market themselves as having that figure to fill those voids. So they target these people. They get people they can easily blame afterward and say, “It is your own shortcomings.” So, the victims are not very believable, or it is easy for people to be unsympathetic towards them.

Six victims were refugees. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The masjid representative informed FACE that a widowed refugee, hereinafter victim 2 [Victim A], came to the masjid in Ramadan of 2019 to apply for zakat [charity] assistance and to disclose that she had been sexually assaulted by subject [offender].” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “Their [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] family sought refuge from war zones such that Afghanistan and Syria.” In addition, the five victims from case 9-FHT-1 had a low socioeconomic background. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “The common theme [among the victims] is low socioeconomic and [the offender] placed himself in a position to obtain access to these kids [Victims A, B, C, D, and E].” The FACE expert said, “A lot of the people that were victims and that were preyed upon were low income, already vulnerable.”

Two victims had personal issues that made them vulnerable. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “Seven months prior she [Victim B] had quit smoking, and when she complained about struggling with her temper, the shaykh [offender] advised her to return to smoking to curb her bouts with anger.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “He [offender] was privy to her [Victim A] biggest teenage problems; an absentee father, discord with her mother, and bullies at school.” Two victims were new converts to Islam. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The offender engaged in a concealed marriage with a convert to Islam's (wife 2) [Victim B].” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Officials learned that he’d [offender] secretly married a second wife [Victim C], a young

convert the Imam had been teaching.” The ISC expert said, “[A vulnerable] group would be like new converts or someone like a new convert, like wasn’t religious and became religious.”

Two victims had vulnerabilities related to marriage, both from case 4-FIR-1-6. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported Victim A as a “widowed refugee” and that the offender married Victim C “after counseling a woman [Victim C] and her husband through their divorce.” The FACE expert said, “A lot of the people that were victims and that were preyed upon were ... already vulnerable ... maybe you just previously divorced or struggling in their marriages.”

The other vulnerabilities were being a new student or disciplined by the school and having home or family issues, mental health issues, or no family support. Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “Victim 5 [Victim A] was new to the school and to the area and was hoping to make friends and get involved.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “It all started when she [Victim C] was suspended from school for three days because she slapped another student.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported:

Jane Doe 1 [Victim A] had experienced traumatic abuse as a young child and felt abandoned by her biological father. ... He [the offender] was privy to her biggest teenage problems: an absentee father, discord with her mother, and bullies at school.

Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “He [the offender] had been counseling the victim [Victim A], who was married and suffering from depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety.” Case 10-FHT-2 reported, “‘Nobody supports me,’ said the woman [Victim A], who has no family in the country.” The ISC expert said, “A lot of times [offenders] target somebody who doesn’t really have a family or anyone.” Table 21 provides a summary of victim characteristics.

Table 21*Victim Characteristics*

Victim	Sex ^a	Age	Position ^b	Vulnerabilities ^c
1-ISC-1-a	F ^k	adult	stud	sufi
1-ISC-1-b	F	adult	stud	sufi, pers
1-ISC-1-c	F	adult	stud	sufi
1-ISC-1-d	F	adult	stud	sufi
1-ISC-1-e	F	adult	stud ⁵	sufi
2-ISC-2-a	F ^m	adult	stud	sufi
2-ISC-2-b	F ^m	adult	stud	sufi
3-ISC-5-a	F		stud	
3-ISC-5-b	F		stud	
4-FIR-1-6-a	F	adult	cong	ref, marry iss
4-FIR-1-6-b	F	adult	cong	new Mus
4-FIR-1-6-c	F ^m	adult	cong	marry iss
5-FIR-3-a	F	15	stud	new stud
6-FIR-4-a	M	14	cong	
7-FIR-5-a	F	adult	stud	
7-FIR-5-b	F	adult	stud	
8-FIR-7-a	F	18	cong ⁵	pers, fam iss
8-FIR-7-b	F	19	cong and stud	
8-FIR-7-c	F	adult	stud	new Mus
9-FHT-1-a	M	11	cong	ref, low \$
9-FHT-1-b	M	12	cong	ref, low \$
9-FHT-1-c	M	13	cong	ref, low \$
9-FHT-1-d	M	14	cong	ref, low \$
9-FHT-1-e	M	15	cong	ref, low \$
10-FHT-2-a	F	adult	cong	no fam
11-FHT-3-a		minor	stud	
11-FHT-3-b		minor	stud	
11-FHT-3-c		minor	stud	
11-FHT-3-d		minor	stud	
12-FHT-4-a	F	9	stud	
13-FHT-5-a	F	adult	cong	
14-FHT-6-a	M	7	stud	
15-FHT-7-a	M	1	stud	
16-FHT-8-a	F	14	stud	
16-FHT-8-b	F	14	stud	
17-FHT-9-a	F	17	stud	
18-FHT-10-a	F ^m	adult	cong	ment
19-FHT-11-a	F	9	stud	
20-FHT-13-a	F	9	stud	

Victim	Sex ^a	Age	Position ^b	Vulnerabilities ^c
20-FHT-13-b	F	6	stud	
20-FHT-13-c	F	7	stud	
21-FHT-15-a	F	minor	stud	
21-FHT-15-b	F	minor	stud	
21-FHT-15-c	F	minor	stud	
21-FHT-15-d	M	11	stud	
22-FHT-16-a	F	15	stud	
22-FHT-16-b	F	14	stud	
22-FHT-16-c	F	13	stud	disc
22-FHT-16-d	F ^k	15	stud	
22-FHT-16-e	F		stud	
23-FHT-17-a	F	12	stud ^r	
23-FHT-17-b	F	11	stud ^r	
23-FHT-17-c	F	9	stud ^r	
24-FHT-18-a		13	cong	

^a k=victim had prior knowledge of the offender committing ESM,
m=victim was currently married

^b 5=victim was a student or congregant of the offender for at least 5 years,
r=victim was related to the offender

^c See Table 15 for definitions of victim vulnerability codes.

Theme 2: Victim Experiences With Grooming. As mentioned in Theme 4 of RQ1, 14 codes appeared 112 times related to offender grooming tactics (see Table 17). The case documents showed that 49 out of 54 victims experienced at least one type of grooming tactic, and 43 experienced multiple types. More than 20 victims experienced the grooming tactics of spirituality, isolation, or familial relationships. Thirty-one victims experienced spiritual grooming. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “This was when he [the offender] proceeded to do the ruqya [spiritual healing] despite the fact I [Victim E] had repeatedly refused it at the beginning when he had first asked.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The offender was a trusted spiritual guide who’d counseled her [Victim A] since she was 13.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “Detectives said the offender met his victims [Victims A, B, C, D] through different mosques, offering to teach them the Quran.”

Twenty-seven victims experienced isolation. Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “He [the offender] was accused of taking a young boy off campus and molesting him, returning him back to school the same day.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

[The school] knew or should reasonably have known that to allow the offender [Offender 1] who was sexually attracted to young girls at remote or private locations outside the presence of other adults or to allow the offender to have unfettered access to young girls created a risk of harm to those girls [Victims A, B, and C].

Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

A fourth identified victim [Victim D] was targeted on school grounds and during the school day by the offender to be his next apparent sexual abuse victim by engaging in a prolonged, concerted effort to subdue her with harassment and intimidation and to have time alone with her.

Twenty-five victims experienced grooming by familial relationships. For example, case 9-FHT-1 reported, “The suspect [offender] was trying to gain the family’s [of Victim A] confidence and trust.” Case 11-FHT-3 reported, “It was all through grooming, but he [offender] was invited to a lot of these places by the parents [of Victims A, B, C, and D] and that's kind of how we ended up here.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

In the conduct of directing, encouraging, and facilitating close relationships tantamount to trusting “family” relationships between students of the school and its teachers and administrators those activities, the defendant knew or should have known that the offender presented a profound risk of harm to the plaintiffs and other children [Victims A, B, C, D, and E].

More than 10 victims experienced the grooming tactics of intimidation, marriage, or special attention. Sixteen victims experienced intimidation. Case 5-FIR-3 reported:

Five days after FACE made a public announcement opening an investigation, someone who identified himself as the subject's [offender] manager, and another individual who claimed to be an attorney ... called FACE in an apparent attempt to intimidate us [FACE staff and Victim A] ... demanded FACE to stop defaming their client (Subject) [offender] through threat of litigation.

Case 6-FIR-4 reported, "Subject [offender] is reported to have begun distancing himself from John Doe [Victim A], engaging in cycles of rejection/gaslighting/manipulation while continuing sexual overtures." Case 22-FHT-16 reported, "The offender made a concerted effort to subdue her [Victim A] with harassment and intimidation and to have time alone with her."

Eleven victims experienced marriage as a grooming tactic. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, "The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] and soliciting secret marriage proposals." Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "Both former board members confirmed that a community member disclosed to them that offender had secretly married one of his female students [Victim C]." Case 22-FHT-16 reported, "The offender took their [Victims A and B] virginity and told them he would marry them."

There were also 11 victims whom offenders gave special attention to as a grooming tactic. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, "He [the offender] called me [Victim A] batul (chaste/virgin/pure) and praised me." Case 9-FHT-1 reported, "By counseling, praying, traveling with them [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] ... So, the efforts were designed by how to integrate himself with the victim." Case 21-FHT-15 reported, "Grooming included singling out favorite students [including Victims A, B, and C], hugging them, and special privileges."

Between five and nine victims experienced the grooming tactics of sexual talk, normalization, electronic communication, or drugs. Nine victims engaged in sexual talk with offenders. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “Subject [offender] is reported to have begun distancing himself from John Doe [Victim A], engaging in cycles of rejection/gaslighting/manipulation while continuing sexual overtures.” Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “A former student told investigators offender has frequently engaged in inappropriate sexual conversations while at the school [with Victim A and others].” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

The offender also sought to attack a fifth victim [Victim E], first asking for her phone number and then sending her sexually inappropriate electronic transmissions attempting to have sex with her, asking her if she “shaved down there” and other inappropriate content, and then repeatedly trying to get her to participate in a threesome sexual experience with one of the other victims.

Eight victims experienced situations where inappropriate behavior or ESM was normalized. Case 1-ISC-1 reported:

When someone [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] is in murid mode [mindlessly following the tariqa shaykh], all of those behaviors [grooming and ESM] are either ignored or interpreted to minimize them. ... The fault is branded as a perfection. For example, the offender’s kissing was seen as tarbiya [training], helping people, etc.

Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “They [tariqa members, including Victims A and B] would somehow justify the fact that the woman could meet with the shaykh in private.” Case 5-FIR-3 reported the offender told Victim A, “This is how love is expressed and the pain is something you should feel good about because it makes me feel good.”

Seven victims experienced grooming through electronic communication. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] ... and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “Subject [offender] approached her [Victim A] afterwards when they were all chatting as a group, requesting her number and Instagram handle.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The offender also sought to attack a fifth victim [Victim E], first asking for her phone number and then sending her sexually inappropriate electronic transmissions attempting to have sex with her.” The offender from case 9-FHT-1 used drugs to groom five victims. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “He [offender] has been accused by multiple minors [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] of giving them sedatives and then molesting them at his home.”

Less than five victims experienced the grooming tactics of counseling, favors, ignoring, or touching. Three victims experienced counseling as a grooming tactic. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “After counseling a woman [Victim C] and her husband through their divorce, the subject [offender] engaged in a marriage with that woman.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Jane Doe 1's [Victim A] mother asked the offender to provide counseling services for Jane Doe 1.” Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “While counseling a woman [Victim A] who was struggling with mental health issues, he [the offender] sexually assaulted her under the guise of ‘removing an evil curse’ from her.”

Three victims experienced favors as a grooming tactic. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “He [the offender] offered her [Victim A] more zakat [charity] money, as much as she wanted. Victim 2 [Victim A] was unsure whether the money was offered in exchange for sex or in exchange for remaining silent.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “He [the offender] continued to exhibit behavior indicative of a close relationship, such as loaning Jane Doe 1 [Victim A] money for items such as

a laptop and offering to cosign a loan ... amongst other things.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “Defendant [offender] guaranteed [Victim C] silence by forcing her to take an ‘oath’ ... in exchange for defendant’s agreement to fix a computer.”

Two offenders used ignoring as a grooming tactic with two victims. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “Subject [the offender] then engaged in a cycle of rejecting [ignoring] John Doe [Victim A] and attempting to distance himself, followed by continued sexual overtures.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Jane Doe [Victim A] alleged that the Imam’s [offender] interactions became more sexualized once she turned 18 ... culminating into an alleged coerced sexual encounter, after which he cut off contact with her.” One victim experienced touching as a grooming tactic. Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The offender repeatedly, on multiple occasions, smacked this victim [Victim D] on her back.” Table 18 summarizes victim experiences with grooming.

Theme 3: Victim Experiences With ESM. As mentioned in Theme 5 of RQ1, 11 codes related to types of ESM offenses appeared 87 times (see Table 19). All 54 victims experienced at least one form of ESM, while 37 experienced multiple forms. Two cases did not provide enough information to determine which type of ESM the four victims experienced. Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “We [tariqa members] found out ... he [the offender] had been accused of some very inappropriate behavior interactions with women [Victims A and B].” Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “Subject [offender] abused his position of power by pursuing ... his adult female students [Victims A and B] ... for concealed marriages or extramarital relationships.” Forty-seven victims experienced physical ESM. Case documents referred to the ESM experienced by most victims (19) as sexual assault. Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The offender sexually assaulted the girl [Victim A] more than 10 times.” Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “Violations: Sexual Assault of a Minor [Victim A].” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “On numerous occasions, while Jane Doc #3 [Victim B]

was a minor, the offender sexually assaulted Jane Doe #3.” Six victims experienced sexual abuse. For example, case 6-FIR-4 reported that Victim A experienced “Violations: Child sexual abuse.” Case 19-FHT-11 reported that Victim A experienced “Violations: Sexual Abuse in the First Degree.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “He [the offender] began sexually abusing [Victim B] when the homeschooling commenced.”

Offenders had sexual intercourse with nine victims. Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The offender used the relationship he formed with her [Victim A] ... forcing her into a sexual relationship ... up to and including sexual intercourse.” Case 22-FHT-16 also reported, “The complaint also notes that police made contact with another former student who said that she also had a sexual relationship with the defendant when she was 15 to 16 years old.” Case 23-FHT-17 reported, “The eldest [Victim A] testified that defendant [offender] began touching her breasts and vagina within days of his arrival and penetrated her with his penis a week later.” Two offenders who had sexual intercourse with their victims also secretly married the victim. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “Subject [offender] engaged in a concealed marriage with a convert [Victim B].” In addition, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “Wife 3 [Victim C] expressed concern to subject [offender] regarding the permissibility of intentionally concealing a marriage [their marriage] from the public.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “A community member disclosed to them that offender had secretly married one of his female students [Victim C].”

The case documents identified 13 victims who did not have sexual intercourse with their offenders. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “The shaykh [offender] went to the door and kissed me [Victim E] on my forehead first, then kissed me on my mouth.” Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “Subject [offender] began forcefully kissing Victim 5 [Victim A], groping her breasts to the point of leaving finger marks and bruises on her chest and breasts, and attempting to rip

her clothes off.” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “He [offender] has been accused by multiple minors [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] of giving them sedatives and then molesting them at his home.”

Non-physical ESM included verbal, visual, and electronic. All but three victims (Victims A and B from case 3-ISC-5 and Victim E from case 22-FHT-16) experienced non-physical ESM in combination with physical ESM. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school fired the offender for privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] and soliciting secret marriage proposals and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The offender also sought to attack a fifth victim [Victim E], first asking for her phone number and then sending her sexually inappropriate electronic transmissions ... asking her if she ‘shaved down there’ and other inappropriate content.”

Eight victims experienced verbal ESM. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “The offender began talking about a murida [student] who has sexual feelings when she sees men and asked if she [Victim E] also gets the same feelings.” Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The offender has frequently engaged in inappropriate sexual conversations [with Victim A] while at the school.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “For at least one of the girls [Victim B], offender allegedly would write in ‘code’ on the blackboard ... to arrange times to meet up with her and also communicated with her through social media and late-night phone calls.”

Six victims experienced visual ESM. For example, case 8-FIR-7 reported:

Doe [Victim A] was shocked, she says in the suit, but felt so indebted to him that she did whatever he asked, even as the requests grew increasingly lurid: Belly dance. Send a picture of herself in lingerie. Sext every day. Touch herself as he watched on video chat. Even as the requests grew increasingly lurid, belly dance, send a picture of herself in lingerie, sext every day, touch herself as he watched on video chat.

Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “He [offender] has also made sexual gestures and ‘rubbed his own penis’ during classes [in front of Victim A].” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

He [the offender] would put his hand in front of his face and stick his tongue out between his index finger and middle finger, making a sexual gesture. He would also spread his legs as he stared at her [Victim C], grabbing his crotch area with his hand.

Five victims experienced ESM through electronic communication. For example, case 3-ISC-5 reported that the offender was “privately contacting female students [Victims A and B] and soliciting secret marriage proposals and exchanging flirtatious and sexually explicit emails.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported a “year-long exchange of phone, text, and video-conference communications between offender and Jane Doe 1 [Victim A], which became increasingly sexual and explicit in nature.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported that the offender “communicated with her [Victim B] through social media and late-night phone calls.”

Thirty cases provided data to determine whether the ESM occurred on the premises of the institutions or offsite. Sixteen victims experienced ESM offsite. For example, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

Subject [the offender] led victim [Victim A] into his apartment and took her on a brief tour, showing her what he expected her to clean. ... the subject approached her, grabbed her, held her tightly, removed her hijab (head scarf), and tried to kiss her.

Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “He [the offender] has been accused by multiple minors [Victims A, B, C, D, and E] of giving them sedatives and then molesting them at his home.” Case 13-FHT-5 reported, “Police allege the woman [Victim A] was sexually assaulted at the Imam's [offender] home during what he claimed was a religious ceremony.”

Fourteen victims experienced ESM on the premises of the institutions. For example, case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The offender would take the girl [Victim A] to an isolated room in the school building away from the other students.” Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “She [Victim A] alleged offender led her into a storage room on the second floor of the mosque, where he first groped her and then sexually assaulted her.” Case 20-FHT-13 reported, “Offender was accused of oral copulation and touching the victim’s [Victim C] vagina at the Islamic center.” Only one victim experienced ESM on and offsite. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “Subject [offender] was reported to have sexually abused John Doe [Victim A] at his apartment, in his car, and during community events and youth group trips they both attended.” Table 22 summarizes victim experiences with ESM.

Table 22*Victim Experiences With ESM*

Offender	Sex*	Secret Marriage	SA ^a	No Sex	Verbal	Visual	Electronic	Onsite or Offsite
1-ISC-1-a				x	x			
1-ISC-1-b				x				
1-ISC-1-c				x				
1-ISC-1-d				x				
1-ISC-1-e				x	x			
2-ISC-2-a								Unknown Type of ESM (inappropriate behavior)
2-ISC-2-b								Unknown Type of ESM (inappropriate behavior)
3-ISC-5-a						x	x	
3-ISC-5-b						x	x	
4-FIR-1-6-a				x				Off
4-FIR-1-6-b		x						
4-FIR-1-6-c		x						
5-FIR-3-a				x	x			Off
6-FIR-4-a			x		x			Both
7-FIR-5-a								Unknown Type of ESM (pursued for secret marriage)
7-FIR-5-b								Unknown Type of ESM (pursued for secret marriage)
8-FIR-7-a	x				x	x	x	Off
8-FIR-7-b				x				Off
8-FIR-7-c		x						
9-FHT-1-a				x				Off
9-FHT-1-b				x				Off
9-FHT-1-c				x				Off
9-FHT-1-d				x				Off
9-FHT-1-e				x				Off
10-FHT-2-a			x					
11-FHT-3-a			x					
11-FHT-3-b			x					
11-FHT-3-c			x					
11-FHT-3-d			x					
12-FHT-4-a			x		x	x		On
13-FHT-5-a			x					Off
14-FHT-6-a			x					On
15-FHT-7-a			x					Off
16-FHT-8-a			x					
16-FHT-8-b			x					

Offender	Sex*	Secret Marriage	SA ^a	No Sex	Verbal	Visual	Electronic	Onsite or Offsite
17-FHT-9-a			x					Off
18-FHT-10-a			x					On
19-FHT-11-a			x					On
20-FHT-13-a			x					Off
20-FHT-13-b			x					Off
20-FHT-13-c			x					On
21-FHT-15-a			x					On
21-FHT-15-b			x					On
21-FHT-15-c			x					On
21-FHT-15-d			x					On
22-FHT-16-a	x							
22-FHT-16-b	x				x		x	Off
22-FHT-16-c			x			x		On
22-FHT-16-d	x							
22-FHT-16-e					x	x	x	
23-FHT-17-a	x							On
23-FHT-17-b			x					On
23-FHT-17-c	x							On
24-FHT-18-a			x					

*Offender had sexual intercourse with a victim without engaging in secret marriage.

^a SA=Sexual Abuse or Sexual Assault

Theme 4: Victim Impact. Seven codes related to victim impact appeared 71 times in the case documents (see Table 23). These codes identified 31 victims impacted psychologically, financially, legally, behaviorally, physically, or in their faith or reputation. Twenty-three of these victims experienced multiple types of impact. The case data did not provide data to show the impact on 23 victims.

Table 23*Victim Impact Codes*

Code	Meaning	Count
vi-b	behavioral impact	14
vi-f	faith impact	7
vi-\$	financial impact	9
vi-l	legal impact	8
vi-phys	physical impact	11
vi-psych	psychological impact	20
vi-rep	reputation impact	2

Most victims (29) experienced a psychological impact. For example, case 6-FIR-4 reported the following from Victim A:

I am still healing and recovering, but it feels as if a burden has been lifted off of me. As hard as it was [reporting the offender], I was ready to take on the pain. ... Standing up for myself took plenty of courage. ... After two long, painful years, I can finally rest. ... [Victim A and his father] anxiously awaited their opportunity to confront the accused [the offender], whom the victim described as “the man who stole my childhood.” ... I felt like I was the one being punished by the court. I am sick and tired of being yanked back and forth to address my abuser ... [and] the court being dismissive of his unwillingness to face me. ... I am not that same scared little boy, though. ... I am now 17, and by all rights, that should be the worst thing that ever happened to me, but the gaslighting that followed and the process of reporting what happened to my religious community resulted in even more trauma and emotional scars that I am still processing in therapy. ... Those nine months ... led me to my breaking point. ... While still struggling to acknowledge what had happened, I had to be in contact with my abuser on an almost daily basis. ... I sat in the shower feeling disgusted. No matter how much I showered, I couldn't feel

clean. I couldn't sleep for weeks. My heart breaks thinking that the offender had direct one-on-one access to the children I was responsible for. I have recurring nightmares about him hovering around them. Even though I have lost my connection with those children, my heart is at ease knowing they are finally safe from the offender. ... I think those are by far the scariest time of my life. I just didn't know what was going on. I mean, I was scared. I felt like I was in danger ... 24/7. I couldn't sleep at night. The impact on the people around me was just really heartbreaking, seeing my family going through such a painful experience. ... I don't think I still recovered from it [seeing his father cry]. I feel like I'm still living in a traumatic environment. There's still a long way to go.

Case 6-FIR-4 also reported, “John Doe [Victim A] stated that he experienced a roller coaster of emotions during these cycles, which included fear, grief, shame, and confusion. ...

[the experience] left the victim anxious, frustrated, angry, and scared.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported:

The loss of a central figure [the offender] in her life plunged Doe [Victim A] into despair, with weight loss, depression, and suicidal thoughts. ... Doe was confused and scared ... but she complied for fear of upsetting the offender and losing him in her life. ... Jane Doe [Victim A] told FACE that she was made to feel “like I was the one hurting people, rather than the person needing help.”

In addition, case 21-FHT-15 reported that Victims A, B, C, and D “suffered severe and permanent injury psychologically.”

The ISC expert said, “There's an embarrassment [felt by victims] ... because they invested so much [into the spiritual group]. ... the fear of losing community.” The ISC expert also said, “She [a victim] said the trauma ... the pain she felt from her brothers in arms [Muslim community], not defending her and not sticking up for her after she reported her rape was worse

than the actual rape.” The ISC expert also said, “[Male victims feel] emasculated, maybe for being the ones targeted for it. ... Some [male victims] also feel the regret of not doing anything about it if they didn't hurt the guy [offender].” The FACE expert said:

They [victims] had a lot of them [psychological effects]: PTSD, depression, anxiety, and probably a few other diagnoses. ... Some of them really feel isolated and alone from the communities. ... The other one [psychological effect] was fear of retaliation, fear of being targeted. They've already experienced so much trauma. ... [Some victims] were just afraid of participating [in the investigation].

Sixteen victims experienced a financial impact. Fifteen of these victims also experienced legal implications. For example, case 9-FHT-1 reported, “A lawsuit of \$5 million has been filed against the masjid [by Victim A, B, C, D, and E].” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “[Victim A, B, C, and D] have become obligated for substantial sums of money for psychological treatment expenses; and has lost significant sums of money as income.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The school and mosque have agreed to a multimillion-dollar legal settlement [with Victim A, B, C, D, and E].” Only case 10-FHT-2 reported that a victim experienced a financial impact without an associated legal impact. Case 10-FHT-2 reported, “[Victim A] has had to give up her job and many activities to avoid being ostracized.”

Thirteen victims experienced a behavioral impact. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “Within a few days of wife-3 [Victim C] speaking to FACE she asked not to participate further and ceased further communication with FACE.” Case 12-FHT-4 reported, “The girl [Victim A] did not disclose the ongoing sexual assaults to her parents because the offender told her they would beat her if she did.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

[By shaming the victim] the president of the school placed a chilling effect on Jane Doe 2's [Victim B] mental ability and willingness to report the full scope of the abuse against her to the proper authorities and to obtain necessary mental health services for the extreme conduct she had endured.

The ISC and FACE experts discussed the negative side of how family and community members impact victims' behavior. ISC expert said, "The worst feeling is no one ... stood by them. If that's the case ... that burns a lot. [Also there is] the betrayal ... from other people they thought was part of their community." The FACE expert said:

The most painful part was being removed by the community or shunned by their communities. ... For them, [the shunning was] worse than the abuse. That was a universal experience that many of them had. ... They came to try and report, and they were shunned by the masjid. They no longer felt safe there. ... Some [victims] ... just never tell them [their parents]. ... [They could be] in the same home as them and going through the process of [reporting to FACE] and ... never share with the parents. ... They [families] could lean into their cultural biases ... and behave a specific way.

The FACE expert also touched on the positive aspects of supportive families and communities. The FACE expert said:

Some of them [masjids and communities] ... probably aren't supportive. Most, I think, are. ... It was always very surprising, but for the families that were supportive, it was always fascinating to see that dynamic of them being supportive and working together, oftentimes really beautiful. Some of them really got it right. ... I'm thinking of [Victim A's family in case 6-FIR-4]. ... That family, regarding the victim, was amazing. ... [It is] not that there weren't issues, but [the family was] very supportive and very kind. ... [The

family was] with him [Victim A] until the very end and past that. That was always really fascinating to watch.

Eight victims experienced physical impacts. For example, case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The loss of a central figure [the offender] in her life plunged Doe [Victim A] into despair, with weight loss, depression, and suicidal thoughts.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “[Victim A, B, C, and D] suffered severe and permanent injury psychologically and physically.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “[Victim B] also needed substantial surgical repair of her private areas.” The FACE expert said, “Some of them [victims] walked away with STD’s that they dealt with lifelong. ... As a woman, I can't fathom trying to move on. ... To the point of having children and ... trying to live their life.”

Five victims experience an impact on their faith. Case 18-FHT-10 reported, “The judge told the court that she [Victim A] had lost her faith in her religion and feels guilt about what happened.” Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “Frightened, I [Victim E] kept silent, repeating ‘Astaghfirullah’ [may God forgive me].” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

I prayed that God would give me justice and hold the offender accountable in the next life. But in the past month, I have turned a new leaf. I realize that I can hold the offender accountable today, and he will answer for his crimes in this life and the next.

The ISC expert said:

[Regarding reporting misconduct, victims think] it’s backbiting. ... [Victims also think about] forgiving [the offender’s] sins and not wanting to destroy the person’s [offender’s] career. ... Some [victims] still believe he’s a wali [saint] despite all the stuff [misconduct]. ... They [some victims] say, “If I go against him [the offender], if I speak against him, God will declare war against me or I'll be punished.” ... That's the majority

of the counseling I do [is related to] how to move forward [and] make sure [victims know] it's not their fault. God doesn't hate them. [Some victims] want that person [offender] to repent instead of taking justice.

In addition, the FACE expert said:

Many of them [victims] really struggle with faith. ... What surprised me about them [victims] is so many folks that we spoke to ... had been through a lot obviously, but were really resilient, were still holding on to their faith. Even after questioning [their faith] or maybe leaving [Islam] for some time. ... But how determined they were to not let what had happened taint their image of the faith [Islam].

Only two cases provided data to identify two victims who experienced an impact on their reputations. Case 8-FIR-7 reported:

The family member [of the victim] categorically declined on behalf of Jane Doe 2 [Victim B] and her family to allow FACE to speak with Jane Doe 2 to prevent further trauma or endanger Jane Doe 2's reputation or relationship with her spouse.

Case 10-FHT-2 reported that Victim A said, "When people see me, they think I am not good woman." Table 24 summarizes the findings related to victim impact.

Table 24*Victim Impact Summary*

	Behavioral	Faith	Financial	Legal	Physical	Psychological	Reputation
1-ISC-1-a	x	x			x	x	
1-ISC-1-d						x	
1-ISC-1-e		x			x	x	
4-FIR-1-6-a	x					x	
4-FIR-1-6-c	x						
5-FIR-3-a	x	x				x	
6-FIR-4-a	x					x	
7-FIR-5-a						x	
7-FIR-5-b						x	
8-FIR-7-a			x	x	x	x	
8-FIR-7-b	x					x	x
9-FHT-1-a			x	x		x	
9-FHT-1-b			x	x		x	
9-FHT-1-c			x	x		x	
9-FHT-1-d			x	x		x	
9-FHT-1-e			x	x		x	
10-FHT-2-a	x		x			x	x
12-FHT-4-a	x						
18-FHT-10-a	x	x				x	
21-FHT-15-a			x	x	x	x	
21-FHT-15-b			x	x	x	x	
21-FHT-15-c		x	x	x	x	x	
21-FHT-15-d			x	x	x	x	
22-FHT-16-a	x		x	x		x	
22-FHT-16-b	x		x	x	x	x	
22-FHT-16-c	x		x	x		x	
22-FHT-16-d	x		x	x		x	
22-FHT-16-e			x	x		x	
23-FHT-17-a						x	
23-FHT-17-b						x	
23-FHT-17-c						x	

Note. This table does not include the 23 victims without impact data.

Theme 5: Disclosure and Reporting. Ten codes appeared 150 times in the case documents related to victim disclosure and reporting (see Table 25). These codes identified when an ESM offense occurred, and when and how victims reported the offense. Two victims (3-ISC-5-a and 3-ISC-5-b) did not have data to determine when the ESM offense occurred or was reported. The remaining 52 victims had data to determine their reporting date. For example, the ISC expert published the article reporting case 2-ISC-2 on “December 24, 2019.” Case 16-FHT-8 reported, “Tigard police began investigating the offender in 2017 after a parent contacted officers with concerns that he abused their daughter [Victim A].” Case 24-FHT-18 reported, “He [the offender] was registered as a sex offender in 2004.” Case 24-FHT-18 also had the oldest victim reporting, which was in 2004. The most recent victim report was in 2021. Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “In 2021, the Police Department received information that subject [the offender] had engaged in unlawful sexual acts with minors [Victim A, B, C, D, and E] at his residence in Florida.”

Table 25

Disclosure and Reporting Codes

Code	Meaning	Count
r-date	date reported/investigated	29
r-off date	date of offense	34
r-adult	child victim reported as adult	15
r-disc	disclosure	14
rv3	to 3rd parties	10
rvc	to community members	1
rvf	to family members	9
rvi	to the institution	9
rvl	to legal authorities	14
r-det	other reporting details	15

Forty-four victims had data to show when the ESM offense occurred. For example, Case 1-ISC-1 reported:

I [Victim A] came to [the city where the offender lives] last summer, 2018. ... The first time I met him, he asked me to sit next to him on the couch. ... He said, "Come close," and placed his hands on my back and recited some stuff. At the time, I thought it was the blessing and the ruqya [spiritual healing] of a righteous Shaykh.

Case 9-FHT-1 reported, "In 2021, the Police Department received information that subject [the offender] had engaged in unlawful sexual acts with minors [Victim A, B, C, D, and E] at his residence in Florida." Case 15-FHT-7 reported, "Police allege the man [the offender], a teacher at the school, took the boy [Victim A] from school property just after 11 a.m. on February 16, 2018." Victim B of case 21-FHT-15 experienced the oldest ESM offense in 1982. Case 21-FHT-15 reported, "[News article] Updated Sat, July 13, 2019. ... From the start of the year [2019] until the end of last month [June], the offender sexually assaulted the girl more than 10 times."

The average time between the misconduct and reporting dates for the 44 victims with complete data was 7.05 years. Ten victims reported the misconduct within the same year it occurred. For example, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, "The second allegation of sexual battery [by Victim A] was made on July 15, 2019. ... she had been sexually assaulted by Subject [offender] in Ramadan of 2018." Case 15-FHT-7 reported, "Posted: February 28, 2018, 5:47 p.m. EST. ... a teacher [offender] ... took the boy [Victim A] from school property just after 11 a.m. on February 16 [2018]." Case 18-FHT-10 reported, "In September 2013, offender was charged with one count of sexual assault ... The events [ESM offense] that led to the charge took place in June 2013." The most prolonged period between ESM offense and victim reporting was 33 years.

Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “[News article] Last updated: February 18, 2015, ... she [Victim B] was molested by the offender in 1982.”

Seventeen victims were children at the time of the misconduct and reported the offense as adults. For example, case 9-FHT-1 reported, “[The misconduct] Occurred From: 1/1/14 ... [The victims’ ages] vary from the age of 11, 12, and up as far as 15. ... Inquiry Date Range [reporting date]: July 10, 2020 - August 31, 2021.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “Jane Doc #3 [Victim B] is currently an adult female who was a student of the offender when she was a minor [when the misconduct occurred].” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “In early 2007 when Plaintiff JANE DOE NO. 1 [Victim A] was 15 years old [at the time of the misconduct]. ... Sheriff’s Office, [Misconduct] Reported 11/5/14.” The FACE expert said, “A lot of them [victims] were telling us [FACE] what had happened years and years ago [the misconduct].”

The case documents contained data that showed how 35 victims disclosed or reported the ESM offense. For this study, disclosure was when a victim told another party about the misconduct in secret. Reporting was when a victim told another party, usually in a position of power, about the misconduct with the intent for that party to act upon the information. This study classified minors reporting to their family or parents as disclosure and reporting since a minor would consider a family member or parent as in a position of power. Fourteen victims disclosed the ESM offense. For example, case 14-FHT-6 reported, “The boy’s [Victim A] family filed a complaint with police.” Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “The parents took exactly the right action by alerting the school and authorities when their child came forward.” Case 19-FHT-11 reported, “The girl told police that she had first told her mother about the abuse, but her mother didn’t want to involve the police until she spoke to her Imam first.” These three examples show that minors disclosed misconduct to their family or parents prior to reporting to authorities.

Most victims with reporting data (20 out of 35) reported misconduct to a legal entity, either law enforcement or the courts. For example, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “Wife 2 [Victim B] filed for divorce and obtained an order of protection against the Subject [offender].” Case 20-FHT-13 reported, “The 9-year-old girl [Victim A] told a family member about what happened, and they notified police, who arrested him [the offender] the next day.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The documents and links below show an ongoing lawsuit by the victims [Victim A, B, C, D, and E] against the school, which ... retaliated against the girls and covered up the abuse until it was publicly exposed.”

The ISC expert said, “There are cases that I get for pedophilia, which I always tell people to go to the police. Because that’s something you can actually address through the law, and people need to take action on that.” The FACE expert said:

[The] people who had been charged, convicted, and arrested, of course, the majority of them were arrested because it was pedophilia and it related to children. ... We [FACE] don’t really report to the police. We tell the victims if they want to, they can, but we don’t trust them [law enforcement with cases not related to children]. But the laws are still important, and we would never tell anyone to operate outside of that.

The FACE expert also explained how some people in the Muslim community incorrectly believed that FACE had some enforcement power or authority. The FACE expert said:

After it was published and all done [investigation and report], we [FACE] would get messages years later. [Asking] What's happening with this case? We [FACE] did our part. We’re not police. We don’t have a ‘hammer’ where we can go and enforce these things. What the community needed to understand is it’s really up to them at this point because our job is to report and to warn.

Thirteen victims reported misconduct to the institution. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “After speaking with [Victim A] about her experiences, [a leader in the spiritual group] learned of four other women [Victim B, C, D, and E] who had been abused by the offender.” Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “Community [institution] leaders were called to an urgent meeting ... [Victim A and B] provided detailed formal statements [of the misconduct] at that meeting.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The Ameer [masjid leader] spoke with Jane Doe 2 [Victim B] directly, her family, and eventually offender, who admitted to the relationship.”

Eight victims reported misconduct to a third party. A third party was any individual or institution, not law enforcement or associated with the primary institution. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, “FACE [third party] conducted 58 interviews of relevant individuals including victims [Victim A and non-ESM victims], sources, community leaders, and community members where the Subject [offender] was based.” Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “John Doe [Victim A] begins sessions with a therapist [third party] and discloses the abuse to them.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “FACE [third party] received reports from the principal claimant [Victim A].”

In regard to victims in spiritual groups reporting to third parties in other spiritual groups, the ISC expert said, “Shaykhs [spiritual leaders] from other groups cooperate and defend one another. ... Sometimes victims report to other shaykhs and then join their groups, then believe it was a blessing to find a better shaykh.” As mentioned, the FACE expert explained how some people in the Muslim community incorrectly believed that FACE had some enforcement power or authority. The FACE expert said, “We’re [FACE] not police. We don’t have a ‘hammer’ where we can go and enforce these things. ... It’s really up to them [Muslim community] at this point because our job is to report and to warn.”

Seven victims reported misconduct to family members. As mentioned, this study included all minor victims who told family members as a disclosure and report. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “John Doe [Victim A] and Source 1 then disclosed the matter to John Doe’s father.” Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “The parents took exactly the right action by alerting the school and authorities when their child [Victim A] came forward.” Case 20-FHT-15 reported, “The media coverage of the original charges is what convinced the 7-year-old [Victim C] and her family to come forward.” Regarding disclosing or reporting to family members, the ISC expert said:

Sometimes with [reporting to] friends or parents ... [the friends or parents] weren’t very positive about them being close to this group in the first place. So they [victims] would they want to avoid, “I told you so.” And often do get told, “I told you so.”

The FACE expert said:

We spoke with very few people underage. A lot of times, if we did speak with them, it was through proxy of their parents. ... The sense I get is they [families of victims] experience a lot of helplessness, sorrow, and devastation. ... [Victims could be] in the same home as them [parents] and going through the process of [reporting to FACE] and ... never share with the parents. ... We've seen that before a lot, actually. ... Some [families] probably aren't supportive. Most, I think, are.

Finally, one victim reported misconduct to community members. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “Another old murida [female student] was there with her sons, and I [Victim A] went and told her what had happened.”

The case documents provided additional details relevant to the disclosure and reporting of 18 victims. For example, during an open question and answer session provided by FACE in case 5-FIR-3, the FACE representative said, “The number one reason victims cite as to why they

come forward is because they don't want this [misconduct] to happen to anybody else.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported that Victim A said:

The truth will always hold its own bearings; it will outlast all other lies and campaigns against it. It's only a matter of which generation is willing to face it and, in so doing, protect future generations from ritual abuse. Let that generation be ours.

Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

These kids [Victim A, B, C, D, and E] obviously were unable to come out. They had to wait years and years and years [to] come out, and they have to deal with this incredible pressure from the culture and the family. ... police reported that the victim [Victim A] did not disclose the sexual relationship sooner because “she is a member of a conservative Muslim community and it would have caused ‘shame and disgrace’ to her family.”

The FACE expert said, “A lot of people would come and report [misconduct] in the heat of a moment and then would try to retract their statement.” The ISC expert said:

A barrier to reporting is [when] the girl [victim] wants to get married to someone else later on, and she's afraid that this [misconduct] will hurt her chances of getting married. ... People just wouldn't normally report these things [misconduct] because they also feel foolish for not seeing things earlier. ... [Men may feel] emasculated, maybe for being the ones targeted for it. ... Sometimes with [reporting to] friends or parents ... [the friends or parents] weren't very positive about them being close to this group in the first place. So they [victims] would they want to avoid, “I told you so.” And often do get told, “I told you so.” There's an embarrassment that also happens [because] they invested so much. They were so much about this person [dedicated to the spiritual leader], and then this

happened [misconduct]. ... Also, the fear of losing community [is a barrier to reporting]. Some victims still believe the shaykh is a saint...and believe if they go against the shaykh, if they speak against him, God will declare war against them, or they will be punished. ... Victims may not report because they believe reporting is considered backbiting, they want to forgive the offender, or they do not want to destroy the offender's career.

Table 26 summarizes details related to victim reporting.

Table 26*Disclosure and Reporting Codes*

Victim ^a	Year of ESM	Year Reported	Years to Report	Disclosure to	Report to
1-ISC-1-a	2018	2019	1	friend and student	institution, community
1-ISC-1-b	?	2019	?		institution
1-ISC-1-c	?	2019	?		institution
1-ISC-1-d	?	2019	?	mother	institution
1-ISC-1-e	?	2019	?		institution
2-ISC-2-a	?	2019	?		
2-ISC-2-b	?	2019	?		
3-ISC-5-a	?	?	?		
3-ISC-5-b	?	?	?		
4-FIR-1-6-a ^f	2018	2018	0		institution, 3rd party
4-FIR-1-6-b	2015	2018	3		legal
4-FIR-1-6-c ^f	2018	2018	0		3rd party
5-FIR-3-a ^p	2012	2020*	8		3rd party
6-FIR-4-a ^p	2018	2020	2	family, friends, and therapist	legal, 3rd party, family
7-FIR-5-a	2012	2019	7	community	institution
7-FIR-5-b	2012	2019	7	community	institution
8-FIR-7-a ^p	2016	2017	1	spiritual leader	legal, institution, 3rd party
8-FIR-7-b ^f	2000	2018	18		institution
8-FIR-7-c	1996	2018	22		
9-FHT-1-a	2014	2021*	7		
9-FHT-1-b	2014	2021*	7		
9-FHT-1-c	2014	2021*	7		
9-FHT-1-d	2014	2021*	7		
9-FHT-1-e	2014	2021*	7		
10-FHT-2-a	2016	2016	0		legal, 3rd party
11-FHT-3-a	2013	2019	6		
11-FHT-3-b	2013	2019	6		
11-FHT-3-c	2013	2019	6		
11-FHT-3-d	2013	2019	6		
12-FHT-4-a	2019	2019	0	sibling	
13-FHT-5-a	2008	2019	11		legal
14-FHT-6-a	2016	2019	3	family	legal, family
15-FHT-7-a	2018	2018	0	parents	family
16-FHT-8-a	2016	2017	1		
16-FHT-8-b	2016	2017	1		
17-FHT-9-a	2017	2017	0		

Victim ^a	Year of ESM	Year Reported	Years to Report	Disclosure to	Report to
18-FHT-10-a	2013	2013	0	sister	3rd party
19-FHT-11-a	2016	2016	0	mother	3rd party, family
20-FHT-13-a	2015	2015	0	family	legal, family
20-FHT-13-b	2015	2015	0		
20-FHT-13-c ^m	2007	2016	9		legal, family
21-FHT-15-a ^p	2001	2015*	14		legal, institution
21-FHT-15-b ^p	1982	2015*	33		legal
21-FHT-15-c ^p	1985	2015*	30		legal
21-FHT-15-d	1995	2015*	20	parents	legal, family
22-FHT-16-a	2007	2014*	7		legal
22-FHT-16-b	2007	2014*	7		legal
22-FHT-16-c ^m	2004	2014*	10	friend	legal, institution
22-FHT-16-d	2008	2014*	6		legal, institution
22-FHT-16-e	?	2014	?		legal
23-FHT-17-a ^{fam}	2000	2011*	11		legal
23-FHT-17-b ^{fam}	2001	2011*	10		legal
23-FHT-17-c ^{fam}	2002	2011*	9		legal
24-FHT-18-a	?	2004	?		

^a f=feared reporting or backed out of reporting, p=reported to help prevent future ESM, m=reported after seeing media reports, fam=reported after another family member reported
 * The victim experienced ESM as a minor and did not report until after becoming an adult.

Research Question 3

RQ3: How have leaders of Islamic educational institutions responded to reported ESM cases?

The findings related to how Islamic educators responded to ESM cases included two themes: institutional responses and institutional impact. Twenty-two codes appeared 169 times related to institutional responses, and five codes appeared 19 times related to institutional impact, totaling 27 codes appearing 188 times related to RQ3. The finalized codebook (see Appendix F) detailed all codes for each research question.

Theme 1: Institutional Response. The case documents identified 41 institutions, including 24 primary institutions, 10 secondary masjids, and seven secondary organizations. Data was collected from the case documents to identify the responses of 35 institutions. Twenty-two codes related to institutional responses appeared 169 times in the case documents (see Table

27). Cases 5-FIR-3, 13-FHT-5, 16-FHT-8, 18-FHT-10, 20-FHT-13, and 23-FHT-17 did not have any data on the institution's response to the reported ESM. Twenty-seven of the 35 institutions with response data had multiple types of responses.

Table 27

Institutional Response Codes

Code	Meaning	Count
resp-ack	acknowledged wrong	4
resp-conf	confronted offender	4
resp-fire	fired offender	20
resp-inv	Investigated	5
resp-stmnt	issued statement	17
resp-leave	Leaders left	2
resp-notice	notified other institutions	3
resp-pun	punished leadership	2
resp-sup	supported victims	6
resp-act	took corrective action	7
resp-att rep	attacked reporter	3
resp-att vic	attacked/blamed victim	7
resp-hide	covered up	12
resp-defi	defended institution	5
resp-defo	defended offender	3
resp-deny	denied association/liability	6
resp-ign	ignored	3
resp-loyal	remained loyal	3
resp-none	no/minimal action	14
resp-norm	normalize/justify/minimize	4
resp-trash	passed the trash	27
resp-silence	silence	12

There were 22 types of responses; 12 were negative, and 10 were positive. Fourteen institutions performed more positive actions than negative or the same, and 21 institutions performed more negative actions (see Table 28).

Table 28*Positive and Negative Responses to ESM Reports*

Institution ^a	ESM at Institution?	Positive Actions	Negative Actions	Net +/-
Net-Positive and Net-Zero Institutions				
3-ISC-5 (PI)	Yes	3	3	0
4-FIR-1-6 (PI)	Yes	5	1	4
4-FIR-1-6 (SI2)	Yes	2	1	1
5-FIR-3 (SO1)	No	2	0	2
5-FIR-3- (SO2)	No	2	0	2
5-FIR-3 (SO3)	No	1	0	1
5-FIR-3 (SO4)	No	1	0	1
7-FIR-5 (PI)	Yes	5	4	1
8-FIR-7 (PI)	Yes	4	4	0
8-FIR-7 (SI2)	Yes	2	2	0
15-FHT-7 (PI)	Yes	3	0	3
17-FHT-9 (PI)	Yes	2	0	2
21-FHT-15- (SO1)	No	2	0	2
21-FHT-15 (SO2)	No	2	0	2
Net-Negative Institutions				
1-ISC-1 (PI)	Yes	2	8	-6
2-ISC-2 (PI)	Yes	3	7	-4
4-FIR-1-6 (SI2)	No	0	3	-3
4-FIR-1-6 (SO1)	No	0	2	-2
5-FIR-3 (SI1)	No	1	2	-1
5-FIR-3 (SI2)	No	1	2	-1
5-FIR-3 (SI3)	No	0	1	-1
6-FIR-4 (PI)	Yes	3	4	-1
8-FIR-7 (SI1)	Yes	1	3	-2
8-FIR-7 (SI3)	No	0	2	-2
9-FHT-1 (PI)	Yes	2	6	-4
9-FHT-1 (SI1)	No	0	2	-2
10-FHT-2 (PI)	Yes	2	4	-2
11-FHT (PI)	Yes	0	1	-1
12-FHT (PI)	Yes	0	1	-1
14-FHT-6 (PI)	Yes	1	2	-1
19-FHT-11 (PI)	Yes	0	1	-1
21-FHT-15 (PI)	Yes	2	6	-4
22-FHT-16 (PI)	Yes	4	6	-2
24-FHT (PI)	No	0	1	-1
24-FHT-18 (PI)	No	0	1	-1

^a PI=Primary Institution, SI=Secondary Institution, and SO=Secondary Organization

The most common negative response was passing the trash. The FACE expert did not believe that passing the trash was a term suitable for a research study. The FACE expert said, “Passing the trash feels like jargon not belonging to a research study. ... [I suggest] removing ‘passing the trash’ and finding a more suitable term.” This position is understandable; however, multiple peer-reviewed publications have used the term (Hernandez et al., 2021; Lipson et al., 2019; Shoop, 2004; Young & Wiley, 2021). This study identified three aspects of passing the trash:

1. Receiving-when an institution hired someone who had a history of committing ESM
2. Passing-when an institution allowed an offender who committed ESM to transition to a new institution easily
3. Retaining-when an institution allowed an offender to remain at the institution after an ESM offense

Twenty-two institutions engaged in at least one aspect of passing the trash. Seven institutions engaged in multiple aspects.

Seven institutions retained an offender after obtaining knowledge of the offender’s ESM offense. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “He [offender] still has loyalists [members of the primary institution (spiritual group)] who remain steadfast by his side, despite being confronted with the alarming truth [of the spiritual leader’s misconduct].” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “The offender said in the interview that he was still teaching at the school [primary institution].” Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

[The primary institution] maintained the offender in his capacity as a teacher and continued to cloak him with the authority and prestige of being the head of its high school and continued to allow him unfettered and unmonitored access to vulnerable children.

Five institutions passed an offender to another institution. For example, case 3-ISC-5 reported:

Eventually, the sister's [victim] claims reached a tipping point, and the school [primary institution] released a vague letter of "transition," and the Shaykh [offender] exited from the school. ... The Shaykh went on and established his own school and became its scholar-in-residence. There, he continued to pursue women in his new setting.

Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

Subject [the offender] was previously fired from a masjid [Secondary Institution 1] prior to employment at the masjid [primary institution] for ethical misconduct, lack of honesty and transparency, and the mishandling of his divorce from Wife 1 and subsequent remarriage to Wife 2 [Victim B].

Case 9-FHT-1 reported, "Individuals from the masjid [Secondary Institution 1] have stated that concerns were raised during his [offender] time there, but nothing was addressed, and he moved to Florida [primary institution] without consequence."

Four institutions received and retained an offender. Two institutions from case 4-FIR-1-6 received and retained offenders. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, "FACE [staff] encountered Subject [offender] at a convention [organized by Secondary Organization 1]. ... FACE escalated the issue to the convention organizers, but they hesitated and ultimately declined to take any authoritative action on the matter." In addition, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

Leaders were notified across congregations in an attempt to prevent Subject's [offender] hiring but ultimately were unsuccessful as he was hired at the masjid [Secondary Institution 2]. The masjid [Secondary Institution 2] hired Subject [offender] to work full-time with the youth at their facility. ... When FACE contacted the Board Chair of the masjid [Secondary Institution 2], he became defensive of his hiring of Subject. ... FACE

informed him that the masjid [primary institution] letterheads on the letters of recommendation were fabricated. ... He [Board Chair] disregarded that detail and insisted his part [hiring offender] was completed properly. ... A group of local Imams held a meeting after FACE's investigation findings were released to discuss the allegations. The group of leaders determined that the findings of the investigation could have been fabricated, and the Imams ultimately determined that they would take no action on prohibiting Subject's [offender] leadership involvement in the community. No attempt was made to contact FACE and inquire about the veracity of the investigation findings.

Case 5-FIR-3 reported, "Several masaaqid [Secondary Institution 2] did rescind their invites [for offender to speak or lead prayers], but some allowed him to continue." Case 8-FIR-7 reported:

The offender was hired last August by the mosque [Secondary Institution 3], shortly after leaving the masjid [primary institution] just 15 kilometers away. According to its [Secondary Institution 3] attorney, the mosque ran a thorough background check and was unaware of any misconduct allegations at the time of hiring, even though the masjid [primary institution] had issued its public letter eight months before. The mosque [Secondary Institution 3] board had also learned of Jane Doe's [Victim A] allegations in her lawsuit yet decided on keeping the offender.

Three institutions received an offender. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

Subject [the offender] was previously fired from a masjid [Secondary Institution 1] prior to employment at the masjid [primary institution] for ethical misconduct, lack of honesty and transparency, and the mishandling of his divorce from Wife 1 and subsequent remarriage to Wife 2 [Victim B]. ... The masjid [primary institution] verbally notified the

Muslim community in detail [of the] findings similar to those detailed as a result of this investigation [FACE report]. ... Leaders were notified across congregations in an attempt to prevent the Subject's hiring but ultimately were unsuccessful.

Two institutions received the offender from case 24-FHT-18. Case 24-FHT-18 reported:

He [the offender] was registered as a sex offender in 2004 for lewd and lascivious acts against a minor, and since then, served as a youth coordinator at the masjid [primary institution] and has continued to ... give khutbahs [speeches], lead prayers and hold leadership positions. He was also affiliated with Masjid 2 [Secondary Institution 1].

Two institutions received and passed an offender. Both institutions were from case 8-FIR-7. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "After his [offender]forced resignation from the masjid [primary institution], the masjid board released a statement that thanked the offender for his many years of service and expressed their well-wishes for him." Also, in case 8-FIR-7, an Imam of Secondary Institution 1, where the offender committed ESM prior to working at the primary institution, said, "This is all my fault [ESM at the primary institution]. If I had said something, this wouldn't have happened to this young girl [Victim A]." One institution retained and passed an offender.

Case 7-FIR-5 reported:

The leaders [of the primary institution (masjid and school)] present were also aware that five months prior, Subject [offender] had received a final warning letter of documented misconduct [ESM] from his employers at the masjid [masjid portion of primary institution], after which Subject submitted his resignation letter and began employment at the school [school portion of primary institution]. ... Subject co-founded his own school called [after the misconduct] ... and would be serving as the tahfeeth [Quran memorization] teacher there. ... In October 2020, [the primary institution] began

permitting Subject to use their space to conduct Qur'an Academy's [offender's school] operations on their campus.

The FACE expert said:

[Institutions] would let people go [fire offenders], or they wouldn't, or they would wait for a court case to happen. ... They [institutions] would completely disregard our report, but then they would realize ... this really did happen. ... Sometimes, it was really discouraging when masjids and institutions would continue to invite so many of these people [offenders] despite it [misconduct] being a very public record. ... Not a single person doesn't know about [the misconduct]. ... [For case 5-FIR3, there were] 100,000 hits on our website in two days. It was not little by any means. Our website was the platform that the actual report [5-FIR-3] was on, which was an issue. It [FACE's website] crashed because of how many people, and it [the report] was spreading in WhatsApp [messaging app]. ... I refuse to believe that like people didn't know about it [the misconduct]. Everybody knew. So, people now who [say], "I had no idea. I didn't know." ... So it was really hard to have hope. Sometimes [a person could think], "What was all of this [investigation and reporting] for?" when institutions are still inviting him [the offender]. ... But what I tried to remember and how I tried to reframe it for myself is [that] we see the people that continue to invite him [the offender], but I bet you there are ten others that will never invite him again.

Thirteen institutions took no or minimal action in response to an ESM incident. Case 7-FIR-5 reported:

However, the masjid [primary institution] did not appear to make any efforts to turn over the position [replace the offender] or mitigate the potential for harm [misconduct] but

instead announced on August 5, 2020, that the Subject [the offender] had voluntarily resigned, despite their efforts to retain him.

Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “Individuals from the masjid [Secondary Institution 1] have stated that concerns were raised [about misconduct] during his [offender] time there but nothing was addressed, and he moved to Florida without consequence.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

In spite of said knowledge or reasonably obtained knowledge [of offender’s misconduct], the school [primary institution], through its agents and employees, chose to take no action against the offender [Offender 1] or the other adult staff person [Offender 2] to report them to the police or to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Eleven institutions remained silent. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “Two out of four muqaddams [leaders in the spiritual group] admitted that the shaykh [offender] acted inappropriately, while one maintained the shaykh’s actions are not something the average Muslim can understand, and the fourth has remained silent about the issue.” Case 2-ISC-2 reported that an ex-member of the spiritual said, “One, it’s bad enough he [offender] did that [misconduct], but now on top of that ... why isn’t anybody addressing this problem and fixing it?” Case 19-FHT-11 reported, “Officials at the mosque [primary institution] could not be reached for comment.”

Ten institutions attempted to cover up the ESM. Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “FACE was informed that an agreement, protected by an NDA [non-disclosure agreement], was reached with Subject [offender] when the masjid [Secondary Institution 1] abruptly terminated his contract months prior to its completion.” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “The offender was removed [by the primary institution] from his position as Youth Director and reassigned as an Advisor [after the misconduct] ... without notice or any relevant disclosure to the congregation or families.” Case

10-FHT-2 reported, “The lack of intervention provided by the masjid [primary institution], which described his criminal case [ESM] as a personal matter.” The FACE expert said:

The covering of sin and the misunderstanding in our community about that [covering sin] because it's a huge one [issue]. ... There's ten of them [victims]. How much benefit [of the doubt] are you giving him [offender]? ... It's mostly men, unfortunately, who are like, “Give the benefit of the doubt,” which is extremely frustrating.

Five institutions attacked or blamed the victims. For example, 7-FIR-5 reported, “Victim 1 [Victim A] admitted to the relationship [with the offender] and was then fired from the mosque.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

In a statement posted on its website, the school [primary institution] attributed the accusations to ‘individuals outside our community’ seeking to discredit the school’s beliefs. “The individuals involved do not wish to seek privacy and resolution, but are actively seeking publicity for their claims,” the statement said, which has since been removed from the site.

Case 22-FHT-16 reported:

That retaliatory and abusive action [committed by the primary institution] included condemning her [Victim C] as a liar, ridiculing her as being an immoral person, shunning her socially, addressing her in a rude manner, encouraging other students to condemn her, and placing her back into offender's classroom - without any other adult supervision - for another eight months.

The ISC expert said:

It's very easy to shift blame on other people in these groups [spiritual groups], in particular, because of the Three Cs [control, confusion, and compromise]. ... They get

people they can easily blame afterward. ... It's easy for people to be unsympathetic towards them [victims]. ... There can even be pictures of them [offender and victim] together, and he [offender] threatens to release those pictures [to prevent the victim from reporting].

The FACE expert said:

[There was] victim blaming. ... Even when not publicly [reported], it's the woman's fault. It's the victim's [fault]. I felt like, "What about her [victim]?" But nobody was asking. What about the perpetrator? ... How much benefit [of the doubt] are you [institution and community] giving him?

Five institutions denied association with the offender or denied any liability for the ESM.

For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported:

FACE encountered numerous individuals in our attempts to communicate with official representatives of the masjid [Secondary Institution 3], who insisted that the Subject [offender] was never affiliated with them, despite it being publicly known that the Subject had served there in a formal capacity and was allegedly fired. When sources who were aware of his [offender] affiliation with an organization [Secondary Organization 2] were asked why administrators [of Secondary Institution 3] might misrepresent those facts, they cited concerns about past FBI scrutiny and political sensitivities as a possibility for their lack of cooperation.

Case 11-FHT-3 reported that a masjid member said, "He [offender] was looked at as a religious leader, possibly by his victims, but as far the Muslim community [of the primary institution], he's unknown to us." Case 14-FHT-6 reported, "The masjid-school [primary institution] issued a

news release Thursday about the arrest [of offender] on its website, saying mosque officials had no knowledge of the allegations and don't know who the boy [Victim A] is or what happened.”

Three institutions defended themselves. Case 6-FIR-4 reported:

I [Victim A] also discovered that jamaat [masjid] leaders knew of the offender's bad character long before he abused me but chose to keep quiet about it. The Jamaat sought to protect its image but didn't think of protecting me even once.

Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “They're [institution leaders] convinced that ... using the word volunteer [to refer to the offender] or calling someone a volunteer absolves them from liability.” Case 14-FHT-6 reported that masjid officials released a statement saying, “The offender was hired through a security company which is required to conduct background checks on personnel ... offender had no convictions.” The FACE expert said:

At most, we're [Muslim community] ... wanting to protect the institution. ... If you have a culture of protecting only the institution, this [misconduct] becomes easier to get away with. And if you have a culture of protecting men over women, which is unfortunately very prevalent, then it also is easier to get away with.

Three institutions tried to normalize, justify, or minimize the ESM. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “His [offender's] inappropriate actions [misconduct] were once again minimalized and categorized as normalized behavior.” Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “Some believe it [accusations of misconduct] was a conspiracy against the shaykh [offender], others think he should just be forgiven, and many justify staying due to the fact that they still benefit from him.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported, “Instead, she [teacher at the school] simply told the minor student [Victim A] that, ‘The offender is an old man and old people do things like that [misconduct], so just forget it.’”

The ISC expert described another way misconduct is normalized: misapplying religious scripture to explain misconduct. The ISC expert said offenders would avoid accountability by saying, “It’s like that in Musa [Moses], so you just don’t understand it [like how Moses did not understand the actions of a saint named Khidhr].” The ISC expert explained, “[They] ignored the outward transgressions, which they would admit were transgressions, but that this is a spiritual matter. It’s like Musa.” The ISC expert also said:

Also, what happens is that the [members] sufi groups [spiritual groups] can just admit that what he [the offender] did [was wrong]. ... This kind of stuff is hard for non-sufis [people who haven’t been in a spiritual group] to understand. ... The second [the offender or members] admit to everything, they just say, “He is a wali [saint]. He is not a prophet. He can commit a sin.”

Regarding how some members will praise the offender even more after the offender admits the misconduct, the ISC expert said, “Exactly! Then the lady who had no sin, and was just completely a victim, it doesn’t matter what happens to her. She’s easy to replace. He’s [the offender] not, and the show [spiritual group] must go on.”

Two institutions attacked or blamed those who reported the ESM. Both were the spiritual groups in the study. Case 1-ISC-1 reported:

Reporter [leader who reported the misconduct] and his wife have become the target of vicious slander and reproach from Leader 1 [leader and representative of the shaykh] for daring to speak out against such a noble shaykh [offender]. ... And despite the fact that it had been emphasized several times during the exchange that what the shaykh did was wrong and his behavior could not be justified ... the blame remained solely on the Reporter for not letting the issue go.

Case 2-ISC-2 reported:

Of the interesting things that happened was that a very prominent scholar ... issued a fatwa [religious ruling] against him [the offender], and you know what they did? ...

There was an attempt on that scholar's life. That's the kind of stuff they [spiritual groups] do.

Two institutions defended the offender. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, "Leader 1 [leader and representative of the shaykh] did not hesitate to remind Reporter [leader who reported the misconduct] that he had spent nearly 20 years with the shaykh [offender] and had full confidence in the shaykh's righteousness." Case 8-FIR-7 reported, "A mosque representative responded to a news query with a statement declining to comment on an open lawsuit and adding that the offender has hired an attorney to defend him against the 'baseless' allegations."

Two institutions attempted to ignore the ESM. Case 3-ISC-5 reported, "Initially they [primary institution] ignored the sister's [Victim A or B] evidence but due to public pressure, the Board conducted an investigation." Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported:

Masjid leaders were notified across congregations in an attempt to prevent Subject's [offender] hiring but ultimately were unsuccessful as he was hired at the masjid [Secondary Institution 2]. They did not release him [the offender] from his duties despite FACE's first investigation report. When FACE contacted the board chair of the masjid [Secondary Institution 2], he became defensive of his hiring of Subject [offender], as well as adamant that he followed protocol to hire him.

The ISC expert said, "Examples [of religious manipulation] would be saying that [members of spiritual groups should] ignore the outward transgressions [misconduct], which they would admit were transgressions, [because] this is a spiritual matter."

Two institutions remained loyal to the offender. These were in both cases with spiritual groups where the offender was also the focal point of the institution or group. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “He [the offender] still has loyalists who remain steadfast by his side, despite being confronted with the alarming truth [of the misconduct].” Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “Even some of his [offender] representatives [leaders in the spiritual group] have acknowledged that the transgressions are real, and many parted ways with him, while others did not.” The ISC expert said, “[When spiritual groups] have scandals [cases of misconduct] ... a lot of times the close people [to the offender], loyal followers, they will believe anything.” Table 29 provides a summary of institutional negative responses.

Table 29*Summary of Institutional Negative Responses*

Institution	Att Rep	Att Vic	Hide	Defi	Defo	Deny	Ign	Loyal	None	Norm	Trash	Silence
1-ISC-1(PI)	x	x			x			x	x	x	x	x
2-ISC-2 (PI)	x		x					x	x	x	x	x
3-ISC-5 (PI)			x				x				x	
4-FIR-1-6 (PI)											x	
4-FIR-1-6 (SI1)											x	
4-FIR-1-6 (SI2)							x		x		x	
4-FIR-1-6 (SO1)									x		x	
5-FIR-3 (SI1)			x								x	
5-FIR-3 (SI2)									x		x	
5-FIR-3 (SI3)						x						
6-FIR-4 (PI)		x		x					x		x	
7-FIR-5 (PI)		x	x						x		x	
8-FIR-7 (PI)			x		x				x		x	
8-FIR-7 (SI1)			x								x	x
8-FIR-7 (SI2)											x	x
8-FIR-7 (SI3)											x	x
9-FHT-1 (PI)			x	x		x			x		x	x
9-FHT-1 (SI1)									x		x	
10-FHT-2 (PI)			x						x		x	x
11-FHT-3 (PI)						x						
12-FHT-4 (PI)												x
14-FHT-6 (PI)				x		x						
19-FHT-11(PI)												x
21-FHT-15 (PI)		x	x						x	x	x	x
22-FHT-16 (PI)		x	x			x			x		x	x
24-FHT-18 (PI)											x	
24-FHT-18 (SI)											x	

Note. See Table 27 for definitions of institutional response codes.

^a PI=Primary Institution, SI=Secondary Institution, and SO=Secondary Organization

The most common positive response by institutions was firing the offender. Eighteen institutions eventually fired the offender. For example, case 3-ISC-5 reported, “The school [primary institution] fired the shaykh [offender].” Case 5-FIR-3 reported, “He [offender] secured a paid position at the masjid [Secondary Institution 1] until his contract was abruptly

terminated.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “In these instances of misconduct, official representatives of each masjid [primary institution and Secondary Institution 1 and 2] confirmed that offender was immediately terminated as a result of the misconduct, without the possibility of rehire.” The FACE expert said, “[Institutions] would let people [offenders] go or they wouldn't, or they would wait for a court case to happen. But then they would realize this [misconduct] really did happen.”

Sixteen institutions issued statements to the public. For example, case 5-FIR-3 reported, “Two organizations [Secondary Organization 3 and 4] in South Africa published statements of concern regarding Subject's [offender] visit.” Case 10-FHT-2 reported, “When [a journalist] reached out for comment, the masjid [primary institution] provided a full statement.” Case 17-FHT-9 reported, “The school's [primary institution] principal, released a statement on Sunday saying allegations of sexual assault were leveled against the teacher this week. The teacher was immediately suspended.”

Six institutions indicated that they took corrective action after the ESM incident. For example, case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The masjid [Secondary Institution 2] leadership and community members express their commitment to process improvement before the end of the year.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Since the time of the allegations [misconduct] first coming to light, the masjid [primary institution] has implemented some changes in the interim until they can implement a more formal approach.” Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “The Imam says the school plans to hold workshops in the near future to help ensure students know what abuse looks like and how to report it.”

Four institutions provided support for victims. For example, case 1-ISC-1 reported, “As a result of Reporter's [leader who reported the misconduct] tenacity and persistence in seeking truth to secure justice for the wronged women ...” However, the Reporter in case 1-ISC-1 was

the only institution leader supporting the victims. Case 15-FHT-7 reported, “The Imam [of the primary institution] says the school plans to hold workshops in the near future to help ensure students know what abuse looks like and how to report it.” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

A hotline has been set up by an expert legal team with trained professionals [organized by Secondary Organization 1] who will field calls and help connect you [victims and others in need] to the legal, social, and emotional resources and information you need to begin your journey of healing.

The FACE expert said:

Some of them [institutions] were slightly supportive, at most. They were on the air of being a little hostile or wanting to protect the institution. Some of them were a little bit helpful. ... [For some institutions], there would be just silence from them. I don't think there was a single institution that really, actually acknowledged what had happened. I think people [from institutions] internally were secretly helpful and wanted to be more helpful but were also limited by all the other people who weren't.

Four institutions investigated the ESM allegations. However, the thoroughness of the investigation differed. For example, case 3-ISC-5 reported:

Due to public pressure, the Board [of the primary institution] conducted an investigation. The Board's investigation included contacting the Imam, who had also previously worked alongside the shaykh [the offender] at the school and inquired about the evidence in connection with claims from the shaykh's actions at the school.

Case 7-FIR-5 reported:

Upon hearing the victims' statements [Victims A and B], receiving the anonymous, undated letter, and later learning of a concealed marriage to another former teaching

assistant ... the community leaders [of the primary institution] delegated the matter to a council of Imams ... who contacted leadership to meet about their concerns regarding Subject's [offender] employment.

Case 22-FHT-16 reported, "The masjid-school [primary institution] Jane Doe No. 3 [Victim C] that her claim was investigated by asking the offender if it was true."

Three institutions acknowledged that the offender's actions were wrong at some point after learning of the ESM. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, "Two out of four muqaddams [leaders in the spiritual group] admitted that the shaykh acted inappropriately." Case 2-ISC-2 reported, "Even some of his [offender] representatives [leaders in the spiritual group] have acknowledged that the transgressions are real, and many parted ways with him." Case, 22-FHT-16 reported:

In the following weeks, the president [of the primary institution] acknowledged to the parent of Jane Doe No. 2 [Victim B] that the offender had confessed to him having improper contact with female students, claimed to be remorseful to the point of tears, and had signed a letter of resignation that was placed in his personnel file to be used against him to justify his firing if he was caught again engaging in an improper relationship with another student.

The ISC expert explained how admitting or acknowledging the wrong can work in an offender's favor. The ISC expert said:

Also, what happens is that the [members of] sufi groups [spiritual groups] can just admit that what he [the offender] did [was wrong]. ... The second [the offender or members] admit to everything, they just say, "He is a wali [saint]. He is not a prophet. He can commit a sin."

Regarding how some members will praise the offender even more after the offender admits the misconduct, the ISC expert said, “Exactly! Then the lady who had no sin, and was just completely a victim, it doesn’t matter what happens to her. She’s easy to replace. He’s [the offender] not, and the show [spiritual group] must go on.”

Three institutions confronted the offender. Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “When one of his students, a khalifa [representative] of his [shaykh-offender], confronted him [shaykh-offender] about it [misconduct], the shaykh scolded him severely.” Case 7-FIR-5 reported, “The mosque [primary institution] administration learned of the relationship and confronted Victim 1 [Victim A] and Subject [offender]. Subject swore on the Quran to deny his involvement, absolving himself of all responsibility, and thus retaining his employment. Victim 1 admitted to the relationship and was then fired from the mosque.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported:

By the time the board members [of Secondary Institution 2] learned of and confronted the offender about the secret marriage, the offender admitted to the secret marital relationship with Jane Doe 3 [Victim C] but stated that he and Jane Doe 3 had already separated.

Two institutions tried to notify and warn other institutions about the offender. Case 4-FIR-1-6 reported, “The masjid [primary institution] verbally notified the Muslim community in detail findings similar to those detailed as a result of this investigation [FACE report]. ... Leaders were notified across congregations in an attempt to prevent Subject’s [offender] hiring but ultimately were unsuccessful.” Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The mosque [primary institution] took the unprecedented step of sending a letter to 2,000 mosques across the United States, detailing the circumstances of his [offender] resignation.” Leaders and representatives of one institution, a spiritual group, left. Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “Even some of his [shaykh-offender] representatives [leaders in the spiritual group] have acknowledged that the transgressions are

real, and many parted ways with him.” Finally, a leader in one institution who was not the offender resigned. Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “A community leader [of the primary institution] who supervised Subject [offender] and John Doe [Victim A] resigned from his position after repeated requests from John Doe's family.” Table 30 provides a summary of institutional positive responses.

Table 30*Summary of Institutional Positive Responses*

Institution ^a	Ack	Conf	Fire	Inv	Stmnt	Leave	Notice	Pun	Sup	Act
1-ISC-1(PI)	x								x	
2-ISC-2 (PI)	x	x				x				
3-ISC-5 (PI)			x	x	x					
4-FIR-1-6 (PI)			x		x		x		x	x
4-FIR-1-6 (SI1)			x	x						
5-FIR-3 (SI1)			x							
5-FIR-3 (SI2)	x									
5-FIR-3 (SO1)			x		x					
5-FIR-3 (SO2)			x		x					
5-FIR-3 (SO3)					x					
5-FIR-3 (SO4)					x					
6-FIR-4 (PI)			x					x		x
7-FIR-5 (PI)		x	x	x	x					x
8-FIR-7 (PI)			x		x		x			x
8-FIR-7 (SI1)			x							
8-FIR-7 (SI2)		x	x							
9-FHT-1 (PI)			x		x					
10-FHT-2 (PI)			x		x					
14-FHT-6 (PI)					x					
15-FHT-7 (PI)			x						x	x
17-FHT-9 (PI)			x		x					
21-FHT-15 (PI)			x		x					
21-FHT-15 (SO1)					x				x	
21-FHT-15 (SO2)					x					x
22-FHT-16 (PI)	x		x	x	x					

Note. See Table 27 for definitions of institutional response codes.

^a PI=Primary Institution, SI=Secondary Institution, and SO=Secondary Organization

Theme 2: Institutional Impact. There was data in the case documents to identify ESM cases' impact on nine institutions, five of which had multiple impacts. Similar to victim impact in RQ2, this study documented financial, legal, behavioral, psychological, and reputation impacts on institutions. There was no physical or faith impact on institutions. Six codes related to

institutional impact appeared 19 times in the case documents (see Table 31). Regarding how much ESM cases impact institutions, the ISC expert said, “Sometimes it just depends on the degree to which it’s [misconduct] publicized.”

Table 31

Institutional Impact Codes

Code	Meaning	Count
ii-b	behavioral impact	4
ii-\$	financial impact	5
ii-l	legal impact	5
ii-psych	psychological impact	3
ii-rep	reputation impact	2

Four institutions experienced a financial and legal impact related to legal costs for attorneys or lawsuits. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “Jane Doe 1's [Victim A] attorney initiated correspondence with the masjid's [primary institution] attorney and proposed an agreement.” Case 9-FHT-1 reported, “A lawsuit of \$5 million has been filed against the masjid [primary institutions].” Case 21-FHT-15 reported for Victims A, B, C, D, and E, “The Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendant [primary institution] in excess of \$50,000 as shall represent fair and just compensation.” Case 22-FHT-16 reported, “The mosque and school [primary institution] have agreed to a multimillion-dollar legal settlement.”

Three institutions had a behavioral impact. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “Since these abuses [misconduct] have been made public, many of the shaykh's students have left him.” Case 2-ISC-2 reported, “Even some of his [shaykh-offender] representatives [leaders in the spiritual group] have acknowledged that the transgressions are real, and many parted ways with him.” Case 6-FIR-4 reported, “A community leader who supervised Subject [offender] and John Doe [Victim A] resigned from his position after repeated requests from John Doe's family.”

Two institutions had a psychological impact. Case 8-FIR-7 reported, “The amir [leader of Secondary Institution 1] expressed significant remorse and regret upon learning about the offender's recent conduct with Jane Doe 1 [Victim A].” Case 21-FHT-15 reported:

I am [the] co-founder and executive director of an organization [Secondary Organization 1]. As a mother and a longstanding member of the Chicago Muslim community, I am shocked and devastated that such a revered member of our community [Offender 1] can so grossly violate the responsibility he was entrusted with for the last several decades.

One institution had a reputation impact. Case 1-ISC-1 reported, “As the story spread, however, and the shaykh [offender] and his representatives' [leaders in the spiritual group] reputations

took a dive, they began claiming the allegations were all slander against the shaykh.” Table 32 summarizes details related to institutional impact.

Table 32

Institutional Impact Summary

Institution	Behavioral	Financial	Legal	Psychological	Reputation
1-ISC-1 (PI)	students left				negative effect
2-ISC-2 (PI)	leaders left				
6-FIR-4 (PI)	leader resigned				
8-FIR-7 (PI)		attorney costs	legal agreement		
8-FIR-7 (SI1)				leader felt remorse/regret	
9-FHT-1 (PI)		\$5 million lawsuit	\$5 million lawsuit		
21-FHT-15 (PI)		\$200 thousand lawsuit	\$200 thousand lawsuit		
21-FHT-15 (SI1)				leader felt devastated	
22-FHT-16 (PI)		million dollar settlement	million dollar settlement		

Evaluation of the Outcomes

This qualitative multiple-case study aimed to explore the nature of ESM in the Islamic context. The problem addressed in this qualitative study was that ESM occurs in multiple educational contexts, including Islamic, and can negatively impact all school stakeholders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019; Rashid & Barron, 2019). The findings of this study helped to increase the understanding and awareness of ESM in the Islamic context, which will help improve prevention, reporting, support, and research efforts (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Dawson et al., 2018; Gardner, 2022; Grant et al., 2017; Hindi et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004; Vintrová, 2022). The conceptual framework used for this study was based on common themes in three empirical studies that analyzed ESM in K–12 schools. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (2019), Jeglic et al. (2023), and Shakeshaft (2004) identified themes such as setting, offender, victim, grooming, and ESM characteristics, and stakeholder responses, impact, and prevention. The conceptual framework organized the themes into three phases of ESM: pre-misconduct, misconduct, and post-misconduct (see Table 1).

Research Question 1

The findings related to RQ1 included the themes of setting, offender, and victim characteristics (pre-misconduct phase), and grooming and ESM characteristics (misconduct phase). Previous studies have shown that ESM in other educational and religious contexts is qualitatively similar (Lamothe et al., 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2022). This study also found that the nature of ESM in the Islamic context is qualitatively similar to other contexts. However, this study also identified findings unique to the Islamic educational context.

Many of the unique findings from each theme highlights the existence of clericalism, insularity, and the lack of accountability in Islamic educational settings. For example, cultural characteristics such as a culture of silence, immigrant communities, distrust of Western society, keeping sins private, valuing marriage, stigmatizing victims, and valuing religious institutions fell under the umbrella of Islam's conservative and collectivist culture. Two institutions were spiritual groups which had blurred lines between students, institutional leaders, and the community. Not only was belonging to a spiritual group a victim vulnerability, both spiritual groups showed cult-like characteristics, and the students considered the offenders saintly figures. This study also identified that in spiritual groups other students, leaders, and community members attempted to normalize the offender's ESM behaviors. Other offenders were key figures within the institutions (10), famous (two), or an older relative of the victims. These positions increase clericalism and insularity.

As a result of the lack of accountability, the majority of offenders (13) had multiple victims. In addition, a significant number of offenders (11) committed other acts of misconduct such as sexual misconduct, financial abuse, secret marriages, spiritual abuse, and other behavioral or workplace misconduct. Two offenders were able to commit offenses against victims who had prior knowledge of ESM cases. While new educators (less than 5 years of experience) in other contexts are more likely to commit ESM, only two out of 15 offenders with data were new educators. Two victims were either a student or a congregant of their offender for more than 5 years. Two offenders were youth directors who spend extensive one-on-one time with students, similar to coaches and music teachers. Educator experience, one-on-one time, and the length of the student-offender relationship positively correlates with clericalism and insularity. These factors could also explain why this study found that approximately 42% of the

primary institutions were either schools or a combination of a school and masjid. Accordingly, the majority of victims were students with ages similar to victims in the K–12 context, with a significant number of victims being adult students, all females. Educators who engage in polygyny, have been married multiple times, or have wives in a different country may be at a higher risk of committing ESM. Finally, the majority of offenders were flight risks due to their ability to flee the country.

Unique grooming tactics in the Islamic context included using familial relationships, spirituality, and promises of marriage. When using spirituality, the concept of ruqya stood out, which is a practice unique to the Islamic context. Also, the cultural characteristic of emphasizing marriage aligned with how offenders used promises of marriage to groom victims and some offenders engaged in secret marriages. Secret marriages was a type of ESM that was not identified in the reviewed literature and exists in the Islamic context since secret marriages involve sexual behaviors that violate Islamic standards.

Research Question 2

The findings related to victims' perceptions and experiences included themes of victim characteristics (pre-misconduct phase), grooming and ESM characteristics (misconduct phase), and victim impact, disclosure, and reporting (post-misconduct phase). Similar to the nature of ESM, this study found that the perceptions and experiences of victims in the Islamic context were qualitatively similar to victims in other contexts. However, this study also identified findings unique to the Islamic educational context.

Unique findings relating to victim, grooming, and ESM characteristics were discussed in RQ1. This study found that victims were also impacted financially, legally, and in their reputations. The legal impact was mostly associated with lawsuits filed by victims and directly

connected to a financial impact from a settlement or monetary judgment in the victim's favor. This study found that a significant number of victims reported to legal authorities. It should be noted that 17 out of the 20 victims who reported to legal authorities were found in FHT cases. These cases were compilations of content already publicly available through news articles, police records, or court documents. Only three out of the eight non-FHT cases were reported to legal authorities. In addition, 10 of the victims who reported to legal authorities reported to either a third party, a leader in the institution, or a family member first.

Research Question 3

The findings related to how Islamic educators responded to ESM cases included the themes of institutional response and impact (post-misconduct phase). Similar to previous studies in other contexts, this study found that institutions have responded inadequately to reports of ESM and were negatively impacted (Bull et al., 2021; Bull & Page, 2022; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Hickey, 2021; Mancini, 2022; Page, 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022; Wurtele et al., 2019). The findings highlight the conservative and collectivist culture, the lack of accountability in Islamic settings. The lack of a central governing body of Islamic institutions in the West could be a possible cause of these findings.

Negative actions committed by institutions when responding to ESM cases included attacking victims and ESM reporters and defending offenders. Six of the seven institutions that responded positively were secondary institutions in which the offender did not commit ESM. This finding shows that institutions were more likely to respond with positive actions when the ESM incident did not occur within their institution. The existence of clericalism and insularity was highlighted in five institutions that retained offenders even after victims reported the ESM offense. Both spiritual groups had the most negative actions when responding to ESM cases. In

addition, there were instances where offenders would continue their educational services even after separating from an institution by continuing their independent services or opening their own schools or masjids. Two leaders experienced a negative psychological impact upon learning of an ESM incident.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

ESM is a problem that exists in multiple educational contexts (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019). However, this study identified only one other study related to ESM in the Islamic context (Chowdhury et al., 2022). This study aimed to explore the nature of ESM in the Islamic context to help educators protect students. Based on this study's findings, this section discusses four implications.

The first implication is that educators in the Islamic context can learn from studies of ESM in other contexts. This study found that the nature of ESM, the perceptions and experiences of victims, and how educational leaders respond to ESM cases in the Islamic context were qualitatively similar to other studied contexts. This implication aligns with other studies that have found ESM was qualitatively similar in all researched educational and religious contexts (Lamothe et al., 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Quarshie et al., 2022). Studies on ESM in religious contexts and contexts with conservative and collectivist cultures could give valuable insights to Islamic educators on how to protect students from ESM.

The second implication is that Islamic educational institutions with higher levels of clericalism and insularity, like in spiritual groups, present substantial barriers to holding ESM offenders accountable, similar to other religious contexts (Hickey, 2021; Plane, 2020). For instance, leaders of the two spiritual groups identified in this study committed ESM. However, they remained in their positions and still maintained a following. In addition, other leaders,

students, and members of the groups attacked the victims and reporters instead of holding the offender accountable.

The third implication is that Islamic educational leaders can better balance the needs of stakeholders during ESM incidents. In particular, educational leaders can better support victims, protect students, and protect the institution by avoiding negative responses to reported ESM cases. This study showed that most institutions responded negatively to reported ESM cases. Previous studies have also found that educational leaders respond inadequately to ESM reports (Bull et al., 2021; Bull & Page, 2022; Henschel & Grant, 2019; Page, 2022; Pereda et al., 2022; Sadlon & Nowotny, 2022; Wurtele et al., 2019).

Although not the focus of this study, the fourth implication relates to recommendations and best practices for educational leaders. The recommendations and best practices fell into three themes: education, controls, and victim support. The reviewed literature reported that increased training and awareness were the most effective ways to prevent ESM (Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lamothe et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). Regarding controls, multiple studies have reported that school leaders must self-regulate and adopt policies and controls to help prevent ESM (Gardner, 2022; Grant & Heinecke, 2019; Lamothe et al., 2022; Shoop, 2004). In addition, the education field generally lacks model policies, best practices, and prevention programs related to ESM (Lipson et al., 2019). In addition, school leaders must ensure that ESM victims receive the support they need following incidents of ESM (Bull et al., 2021; Chowdhury & Winder, 2022; Grant et al., 2019b; Mullaney, 2022).

This study found that Islamic educators should provide mandatory and voluntary training, workshops, and question-answer forums to educate leaders, staff, parents, and community members on topics related to ESM. Recommended training topics included:

- laws related to abuse and mandatory reporting
- sexual harassment, abuse, and assault
- crisis management
- abuse prevention in faith-based environments
- child safety
- power dynamics and control

Parents should also educate their children on proper boundaries, safe touching, and appropriate conduct of educators. These discussions will foster a relationship of trust and openness where children will feel safe to report inappropriate conduct by educators. In addition, parents and educators can help protect victims by providing sexual education, which will help create safe spaces for victims. Training topics specific to the Islamic context included:

- proper treatment of leaders in spiritual groups
- maintaining autonomy in spiritual groups
- Islamic standards of concealing and exposing sins
- Islamic standards for spiritual healing
- Islamic standards for marriage and the prohibition of secret marriages

This study found that leaders must provide better controls, oversight, and accountability.

Controls included:

- conducting thorough background checks on staff and volunteers
- adopting applicable policies, procedures, and codes of conduct
- implementing a licensing mechanism for religious teachers and Imams
- requiring counselors to be licensed and document counseling sessions
- cooperating with investigators and publicly endorse their reports

- documenting and implementing corrective action after ESM incidents
- cooperating with other institutions to establish a central database to report and track offenders
- preventing educators from being alone with students and congregants
- installing surveillance systems
- referring cases of abuse to law enforcement, if applicable
- encouraging potential victims to report
- establishing a reporting mechanism for victims
- issuing formal statements and notifying the community and other institutions about ESM incidents
- establishing an internal investigation process and publishing findings
- adopting a zero-tolerance policy
- terminating offenders and notifying other institutions

Many of these recommendations require community involvement and support. Multiple cases emphasized that communities will have the burden of improving controls in their institutions. There are limited resources for victims. As noted, this study only identified two organizations that worked directly with victims and published misconduct cases in the Islamic context, FACE and ISC. While conducting this study, FACE ceased providing services, which highlights the need for more institutions to provide these services. In addition, these institutions require funding and community support to function.

Finally, leaders need to improve on supporting victims of ESM. Central to improving victim support is for leaders to take steps to change the culture in Islamic educational institutions. Instead of reacting hostile toward victims, educational leaders need to foster a

culture of safety, compassion, empathy, and support for victims. Leaders should focus on victim-centered responses to ESM incidents. In spiritual groups, providing victims with resources outside of the group is important. In addition, victims in spiritual groups should find support in healthy Muslim communities. There is a need for more organizations that provide support services for victims, similar to FACE and ISC. Community members and educational leaders can provide support groups for victims. Muslims can volunteer to help law enforcement and counselors to work with and understand the needs of Muslim victims. Educational leaders can provide listings of mental health resources.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this qualitative multiple-case study provide 10 recommendations for future research. The first three recommendations relate to this study's limitations. The limitations of this study were the lack of literature on ESM in the Islamic context, the use of secondary data as the primary data source, and potential researcher bias. The first recommendation is for future research to include this study and any other studies published on ESM and other sexual misconduct in the Islamic context in their literature reviews. The second recommendation is to conduct research using primary data from educational leaders, victims, and other stakeholders. Researchers should consider the ethical issues of including victims as direct participants when obtaining primary data from victims. The third recommendation is to research these topics using a quantitative methodology.

The fourth recommendation is to conduct research on the nature of ESM, focusing on topics such as spiritual groups, famous offenders, female offenders, offenders with international flight risks, and secret marriages. Studies focused on these contexts may yield new findings. The fifth recommendation is to conduct research on other forms of misconduct by educational

leaders, such as sexual misconduct, physical abuse, spiritual abuse, financial misconduct, and workplace violations. Understanding other forms of educator misconduct can help leaders improve educational quality at Islamic institutions and protect stakeholders.

The sixth recommendation is to study victim experiences with negative and positive religious coping after an ESM incident. This research would involve the direct participation of victims, which has ethical implications. However, the findings of such research would be valuable to understanding how victims in the Islamic context use their faith to cope with adverse life experiences. The seventh recommendation is to research other stakeholders' perceptions and experiences after ESM incidents. This study focused on the perceptions and experiences of victims and the impact of ESM incidents on victims and institutions. The data showed evidence that ESM incidents impacted other stakeholders, such as family members, other students, community members, reporters, and offenders.

The eighth recommendation is to research whether masjids and Islamic schools in the West adopted appropriate controls, policies, and procedures to protect students. The ninth recommendation is to research institutions' corrective action efforts after ESM incidents. For example, future research could look at whether the institutions involved in FIR cases implemented the recommendations provided by FACE. These two recommendations will help inform educators on better protecting students from ESM. The tenth recommendation and next step in researching ESM in the Islamic context should be conducting a single-case study using firsthand data from educational leaders, victims, and other stakeholders as the primary data source.

Conclusions

The problem of ESM has occurred in many educational contexts (Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., 2019; Jeglic et al., 2023; Lipson et al., 2019). When connected to religious contexts, ESM can amplify the adverse effects on stakeholders (Cashwell & Swindle, 2018). Muslims have been in denial about the existence of sexual misconduct in their communities, and the literature review revealed a lack of research on ESM in the Islamic context (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Rashid & Barron, 2019). This qualitative multiple-case study contributed to educational practice by exploring the nature of ESM in the Islamic context. This study used semi-structured interviews with two topical experts and document analysis of 24 published misconduct reports and supporting documentation. This study contributes to educational practice by increasing the knowledge related to ESM in the Islamic context and providing recommendations to help educators protect students.

Using a conceptual framework based on themes identified in the empirical studies by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (2019), Jeglic et al. (2023), and Shakeshaft (2004), this study found the nature of ESM, the perceptions and experiences of victims, and the response of institutions are qualitatively similar other contexts. Some findings were unique to the Islamic context, but the findings highlighted the existence of a culture of silence, clericalism, insularity, and the lack of accountability in Islamic educational settings. These findings have significant implications for Islamic educators. In particular, Islamic educators can learn from this study and other studies of ESM in other contexts to educate stakeholders and implement efforts to better protect students in Islamic educational settings.

This study calls for Islamic educational leaders and community members to implement the recommendations of this study and for researchers to continue to research topics related to

ESM in the Islamic context. In particular, Islamic educators, parents, and community members should work towards implementing education, controls, and victim support recommendations. Researchers can continue researching ESM in the Islamic context by using different designs, methods, or data sources, focusing on narrower topics and findings identified in this study, or researching topics not explored in this study.

In conclusion, ESM poses a threat in all educational contexts, particularly within religious settings where clericalism, insularity, power dynamics, and religious identity can amplify the adverse effects. This study has helped increase the awareness and understanding of ESM in the Islamic context, which can help Islamic educators prevent ESM (Lipson et al., 2019). In addition, this study contributes to the broader literature on ESM, underscoring the importance of contextualizing such research within the specific cultural, religious, and social contexts in which it occurs. Further research is needed in the Islamic context and other educational contexts to help foster a safer environment for all students.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Letter

Date: (TBD)

To: Staff of (FACE or In Shaykh's Clothing)

Re: Interview and Research Participation Request

My name is James T. Griffin, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU). I am conducting research on educator sexual misconduct (ESM) in Islamic education for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of the research is to gain a better understanding of ESM to help Islamic educators protect students. The name of this research is "Sexual Misconduct in Islamic Education: A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study Utilizing Document Analysis." This research may increase the body of knowledge and awareness of ESM and help in prevention efforts.

I am formally requesting at least one volunteer from your staff to participate in the research who is at least 18 years old and works directly with victims from the published case of abuse on your website. Participation may require a few hours of your staff's time to complete the following activities.

1. Participate in at least one 1:1 semi-structured interview via Microsoft Teams for at least one hour.
2. Review your interview transcript and provide feedback via email.
3. Complete a Member-Checking Questionnaire to provide feedback regarding the study's findings and return via email.

I have attached an informed consent letter which provides more information about participating in the study. I would like to speak with a representative of your organization to

discuss details and get volunteer contact information. I can be contacted by replying to this email (J.Griffin1051@o365.ncu.edu) or by phone/text at +1 (607) 624-8100. If you have questions or concerns, please ask. I look forward to your assistance in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

James T. Griffin

Appendix B

Consent Letter

Introduction

My name is James T. Griffin, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU). I also hold a role as a Manager at the Office of the New York State Comptroller and a Board member of Return 2 Fitrah, a non-profit organization that educates and combats spiritual abuse in the Muslim community.

I am conducting research on educator sexual misconduct (ESM) in Islamic education. The purpose of the research is to gain a better understanding of ESM to help Islamic educators protect students. The name of this research is “Sexual Misconduct in Islamic Education: A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study Utilizing Document Analysis.” I am seeking your consent to participate in this research.

Please read this document to learn more about this research and determine if you would like to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and I will address your questions or concerns at any point before or during the research.

Eligibility

You may participate in this research if you meet all the following criteria:

1. You are 18 years or older.
2. You work directly with victims to investigate, interview, document, and report cases of abuse published by (FACE or In Shaykh’s Clothing).

I hope to include one representative from FACE and In Shaykh’s Clothing in this research.

Activities

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following activities:

1. Participate in at least one 1:1 semi-structured interview via Microsoft Teams for at least one hour.
2. Review your interview transcript for accuracy and provide feedback via email regarding any additional insights and which data should be kept confidential.
3. Complete a Member-Checking Questionnaire to provide feedback regarding the study's findings and return via email.

During these activities, you will be asked questions about:

- demographic and background information related to yourself,
- your knowledge related to ESM cases and ESM victim experiences,
- your recommendations for Islamic education leaders to help protect students from ESM,
- and your thoughts about the preliminary findings of this research.

All activities and questions are optional: you may skip any part of this research that you do not wish to complete and may stop at any time.

If you need to complete the activities above differently than I have described, please let me know, and I will attempt to make other arrangements.

Risks

Some risks include disclosing information about victims that should be kept confidential, and possible psychological discomfort by discussing cases of abuse. To decrease the impact of

these risks, you can skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participation. In addition, your review and feedback on the interview transcription and member-checking questionnaire will help mitigate the risk of disclosing confidential information. Also, no identifying information will be published in the study.

Benefits

If you participate, there are no direct benefits to you. This research may increase the body of knowledge and awareness of ESM and help in prevention efforts.

Privacy and Data Protection

I will take reasonable measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of your research data. Besides me, the following people and offices will have access to your data:

- My NU dissertation committee and any appropriate NU support or leadership staff, and
- The NU Institutional Review Board

This data could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

I will securely store your data for 3 years. Then, I will delete electronic data and destroy paper data.

How the Results Will Be Used

I will publish the results in my completed dissertation. I may also share the results in a presentation or publication. Participants will not be identified in the results.

Recording

I would like to audio/video record your responses with Microsoft Teams during the interview. You can disable the video function of the online meeting platform at any time.

Contact Information

If you have questions, you can contact me at: J.Griffin1051@o365.ncu.edu and +1 (607) 624-8100.

My dissertation chair, Dr. Watkins, who works for National University and is supervising me on the research, can be contacted at jwatkins@ncu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights in the research or if a problem or injury has occurred during your participation, please contact the NU Institutional Review Board at irb@ncu.edu or 1-888-327-2877 ext. 8014.

Voluntary Participation

If you decide not to participate, or if you stop participating after you start, there will be no penalty for you. You will not lose any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Project: Sexual Misconduct in Islamic Education: A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study Utilizing Document Analysis.

Date, Time, & Place of Interview: XX/XX/2023, XX:XX-XX:XX, Microsoft Teams meeting

Interviewer: James T. Griffin

Interviewee: XXX

Position of Interviewee: XXX

Reminders:

1. Remind about recording and get consent to record.
2. Discuss confidentiality.
3. Read relevant sections from the signed consent letter.
4. Obtain verbal consent.

Questions

Interviewee Background

1. Can you tell me about your background as it relates to ESM?
 - a. Education
 - b. Career experience
2. What is your position/role with (FACE/In Shaykh's Clothing)?
 - a. How many years?
3. What do you know about ESM?
 - a. What about in the Islamic context?

- b. What do you know about the prevalence of ESM in an Islamic context?

ESM

1. What are the characteristics of ESM?
 - a. Offenders
 - b. Victims
 - c. Settings
2. What are some patterns, themes, or unique traits about the characteristics of ESM in Islamic education versus other contexts?
3. How and why does ESM occur?
4. What kinds of ESM offenses have victims experienced?
5. What are the effects of ESM?
 - a. Victims
 - b. Schools/organizations
 - c. Offenders
 - d. Other stakeholders
6. How are ESM cases reported/disclosed?
 - a. Barriers
 - b. Culture/religion
7. What can you tell me about your knowledge of ESM cases versus the cases your organization has published?
8. How do stakeholders respond to reports of ESM?
9. What are the best strategies to help prevent ESM?
 - a. Legal

- b. Institution
- c. Training
- d. Communities
- e. Professionals

10. What information would you like to add about ESM?

**The questions listed above provide a guide for the semi-structured interviews.*

Unscripted follow-up questions will also be asked during the interviews.

**I will add more questions after performing document analysis of the published reports.*

Closing

1. Ask if there are any questions.
2. Reminder about confidentiality.
3. Let them know about email follow-ups for questions and clarification.
4. Reminder about transcript review and member-checking questionnaire.
5. Thank them for their time.

Appendix D

Member-Checking Questionnaire

This questionnaire includes questions about the preliminary findings of the study “Sexual Misconduct in Islamic Education: A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study Utilizing Document Analysis” conducted by James T. Griffin, and will take approximately 30 minutes to an hour to complete. Please read the questionnaire instructions carefully before beginning. Respond to all questions as honestly as possible. Your responses will be confidential. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

Questionnaire instructions: The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain feedback about the study’s preliminary findings. Read the attached document (pages 2-7) that summarizes the findings of the study and answer the questions below. There are spaces for notes and comments provided at the end of each section in the findings document. You may provide your answers in the spaces provided or in a separate document. Take as much space as needed to thoroughly answer the questions.

1. After reading the findings, what are your general thoughts?
2. How accurately do you feel the findings captured the nature of educator sexual misconduct (ESM) in the Islamic context?
3. What could be added to the findings to capture the nature of ESM in the Islamic context better?
4. If there is anything you would like changed or removed, what would that be and why?

Next Steps: Due to the time constraints of this study, **all responses are due by Friday, August 16, 2024.** After the response due date I will be closing the data collection portion of the study and begin analyzing and finalizing findings. Your responses will be considered when

analyzing and finalizing the study's findings. I may contact you again for clarification on your responses. If you have any questions please contact me at jamesgriffin786@yahoo.com or 607-624-8100. Once you complete the questionnaire save the document and send it to the email address listed above.

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this study and complete this questionnaire.

James T. Griffin

Email: Jamesgriffin786@yahoo.com

Phone: 607-624-8100

Appendix E

Preliminary Codebook

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning
1	Pre- Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc	The location and time of the incident (e.g., country, state, region, and year)
1	Pre- Misconduct	setting classroom	sclass	The type of class that the offender and victim engaged in educational activities (e.g., Islamic studies, Quran, or secular studies)
1	Pre- Misconduct	setting institution	si	The type of institution where offender and victim engaged in educational activities (Muslim school, homeschool, or masjid)
1	Pre- Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc	offender's age, sex, race, and nationality
1	Pre- Misconduct	offender history	oh	offender's background (e.g., previous cases, teaching history, and family history)
1	Pre- Misconduct	offender position	op	offender's position in the institution (e.g., teacher, Imam, or administrator)
1	Pre- Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc	Victim's age, sex, race, and nationality
1	Pre- Misconduct	victim history	vh	Victim's background (e.g., academics and family history)
1	Pre- Misconduct	victim vulnerabilities	vv	Victim's pre-existing risk factors for targeting by offenders (e.g., low income, popularity, academics, and home life)
1	Misconduct	grooming	g	Grooming activities (e.g., gifts, pictures, or jokes)
1	Misconduct	ESM contact	esmC	ESM involving physical contact (e.g., fondling, kissing, or intercourse)
1	Misconduct	ESM location	esmL	The location where misconduct occurred (e.g., classroom, home, or hotel)
1	Misconduct	ESM no contact	esmNC	ESM without physical contact (e.g., inappropriate conversations, texts, or pictures)
1	Misconduct	multiple victims	mv	Instances where the offender had multiple victims at the same institution
2	Post-Misconduct	impact community	ic	The impact on the school community
2	Post-Misconduct	impact family	if	The impact on the victim's family members
2	Post-Misconduct	impact institution	ii	Impact on the institution after the ESM incident (e.g., lawsuits, media exposure, or changes in policies)
2	Post-Misconduct	impact offender	io	Experiences of the offender after the ESM incident (e.g., termination, passing the trash, or jail time)

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning
2	Post-Misconduct	impact students	is	The impact on other students in the institution
2	Post-Misconduct	impact victim	vi	Experience of victim after ESM incident (e.g., depression, academics, and religious identity)
3	Post-Misconduct	discovery	d	The manner ESM was discovered (e.g., witnesses or reported)
3	Post-Misconduct	media	m	ESM case had media coverage
3	Post-Misconduct	report 3rd party	r3	ESM reported by anyone other than the victim or family member
3	Post-Misconduct	report family	rf	ESM reported by a family member
3	Post-Misconduct	report victim	rv	ESM reported by the victim
3	Post-Misconduct	response community	rspC	The community's response after the discovery of ESM
3	Post-Misconduct	response family	rspf	The victim's family response after the discovery of ESM
3	Post-Misconduct	response institution	rspI	The institution's response after the discovery of ESM
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional prevention	instp	Prevention methods related to institutional actions (e.g., policies, procedures, or culture)
3	Post-Misconduct	legal prevention	lp	Prevention methods related to laws
3	Post-Misconduct	professional prevention	pp	Prevention methods related to professional actions (e.g., counselors, therapists, advocates, or religious leaders)
3	Post-Misconduct	training prevention	tp	Prevention methods related to training

^a RQ1=What is the nature of reported ESM cases in the Islamic context? RQ2=What are the perceptions and experiences of victims who reported ESM in the Islamic context? RQ3=How have educators in Islamic education responded to reported ESM cases?

Appendix F

Final Codebook and Code Count

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-inst	type of institution of primary incident	25
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-loc	country, state, province of primary location	24
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-other loc	other institutions and locations involved in the case	17
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-sil	culture of silence	8
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-cons	conservative culture	3
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-imm	immigrant community	4
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-stigma	culture of victim stigmatization	5
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-West	distrust of West	5
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-marry	emphasis on marriage	5
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-sect	sectarian	4
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-honor	emphasis on purity/respect/honor	4
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-phobia	dealing with Islamophobia	3
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-imp inst	importance of institution	4
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-priv	culture of keeping sins private	5
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-know	lack abuse knowledge	1
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-prom inst	prominent institution	3

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-rep	culture of protecting reputations	4
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-gend	strict gender separation	2
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-mix	mixed community	2
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-acc	no leadership accountability	1
1	Pre-Misconduct	setting characteristics	sc-ref	refugee community	1
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-sex	offender's sex	27
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-age	offender's age	24
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-nat	offender's nationality	11
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-pos	offender's position	26
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-offkey	offender & institution are strongly tied	11
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-yrs	years at position	15
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-stat	offender status within the community	12
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-\$	financial misconduct	7
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-pa	physical abuse	5
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-sec marry	secret marriage	4
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-sm	sexual misconduct	8
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-other	workplace violations	5
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-sa	spiritual abuse	5

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-int	offender could leave the country	14
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-ms	marital status	8
1	Pre-Misconduct	offender characteristics	oc-mv	multiple victims	14
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-sex	victim sex	39
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-age	victim age	42
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-nat	victim nationality	4
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-pos	victim position in institution	36
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-know	victim had knowledge of ESM	4
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc->5	victim was student of offender for > 5 years	3
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-marry	victim was married	4
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-rel	victim was related to the offender	2
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-sufi	belonged to a sufi group	3
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-pers	had personal issues	2
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-ref	refugee	2
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-new Mus	new Muslim	3
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-marry iss	had marital issues	3
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-new stud	new student	1
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-fam iss	had family or home issues	1

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-low \$	low income	2
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-no fam	no family in the country	2
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-ment	had mental health issues	1
1 & 2	Pre-Misconduct	victim characteristics	vc-disc	disciplined by institution	1
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-couns	counseling	4
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-drug	drugs	1
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-elec comm	electronic communication	6
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-fam	familial relationship	12
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-fav	favours	4
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-ign	ignoring	3
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-int	intimidation	15
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-iso	isolation	18
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-marry	marriage	10
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-norm	normalization	4
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-talk	sex talk	10
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-att	special Attention	6
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-spirit	spirituality or religion	17
1 & 2	Misconduct	grooming characteristics	g-touch	touching	2
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-?	unknown	3

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-sex	sexual intercourse	10
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-no sex	no sexual intercourse	9
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-abuse	sexual abuse	5
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-aslt	sexual assault	15
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-verb	verbal ESM	8
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-vis	visual ESM	5
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-elec	electronic ESM	4
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-sec marry	secret marriage	5
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-on	committed onsite	11
1 & 2	Misconduct	esm characteristics	esm-off	committed offsite	12
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-b	behavioral impact	14
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-f	faith impact	7
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-\$	financial impact	9
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-l	legal impact	8
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-phys	physical impact	11
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-psych	psychological impact	20
2	Post-Misconduct	victim impact	vi-rep	reputation impact	2
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	r-date	date reported or investigated	29
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	r-off date	date of offense	34
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	r-adult	child victim reported as adult	15
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	r-disc	disclosure	14
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	rv3	to 3rd parties	10

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	rvc	to community members	1
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	rvf	to family members	9
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	rvi	to the institution	9
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	rvl	to legal authorities	14
2	Post-Misconduct	reporting	r-det	other reporting details	15
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-ack	acknowledge wrong	4
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-conf	confront offender	4
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-fire	fired offender	20
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-inv	investigate	5
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-stmnt	issue statement	17
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-leave	leave	2
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-notice	notify other institutions	3
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-pun	punish leadership	2
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-sup	support victims	6
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-act	take corrective action	7
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-att rep	attack reporter	3
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-att vic	attack or blame victim	7
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-hide	cover up	12
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-defi	defend institution	5
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-defo	defend offender	3
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-deny	denied association or liability	6

RQ ^a	Category	Theme	Code	Meaning	Count
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-ign	ignore	3
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-loyal	loyal	3
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-none	no or minimal action	14
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-norm	normalize, justify, or minimize	4
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-trash	passed the trash	27
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional response	resp-silence	silence	12
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional impact	ii-b	behavioral impact	4
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional impact	ii-\$	financial impact	5
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional impact	ii-l	legal impact	5
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional impact	ii-psych	psychological impact	3
3	Post-Misconduct	institutional impact	ii-rep	reputation impact	2
3	Post-Misconduct	recommendations	rec-ed	educational recommendations	13
3	Post-Misconduct	recommendations	rec-vs	victim support recommendations	14
3	Post-Misconduct	recommendations	rec-cont	control recommendations	14

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