

Integrating Criminology and Law Enforcement: Explaining Child Sexual Violence in Indonesia

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Abstract

Child sexual violence remains a significant challenge in Indonesia despite the existence of comprehensive legal protections. Previous studies have predominantly emphasized normative legal analysis or crime statistics, while limited attention has been given to integrating criminological perspectives with local law enforcement practices. This study aims to identify the criminogenic factors contributing to child sexual violence in Gorontalo City and evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement responses in addressing such crimes. An empirical legal research design with a qualitative approach was employed. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with investigators from the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the Gorontalo City Police, supported by field observations and document analysis. The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive techniques to identify recurring patterns and institutional challenges. The findings reveal that child sexual violence is driven by multiple interrelated factors, including inadequate parental supervision, permissive social environments, offenders' psychological characteristics, and weak social control mechanisms. Most cases occur within close interpersonal relationships, particularly involving family members or intimate partners, where manipulation, persuasion, and abuse of trust constitute the dominant modus operandi. Law enforcement responses combine repressive measures through criminal investigation and prosecution with preventive initiatives, including public awareness campaigns and inter-agency collaboration. However, these efforts remain constrained by evidentiary limitations, victims' psychological trauma, and low levels of public legal awareness. This study demonstrates that integrating criminological analysis with local law enforcement practices provides a more comprehensive understanding of child sexual violence and highlights the need to strengthen family-based prevention, institutional capacity, and community-based child protection mechanisms to improve criminal justice policies and victim protection.

Keywords: Child Sexual Violence; Criminology; Law Enforcement; Child Protection; Empirical Legal Research; Indonesia.

Abstrak

Kekerasan seksual anak tetap menjadi tantangan signifikan di Indonesia meskipun ada perlindungan hukum yang komprehensif. Studi sebelumnya sebagian besar menekankan analisis hukum normatif atau statistik kejahatan, sementara perhatian terbatas diberikan untuk mengintegrasikan perspektif kriminologis dengan praktik penegakan hukum setempat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor kriminogenik yang berkontribusi terhadap kekerasan seksual anak di Kota Gorontalo dan mengevaluasi efektivitas respons penegakan hukum dalam mengatasi kejahatan tersebut. Desain penelitian hukum empiris dengan pendekatan kualitatif digunakan. Data primer dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan penyidik dari Unit Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (PPA) Polres Kota Gorontalo, didukung oleh



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observasi lapangan dan analisis dokumen. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik deskriptif kualitatif untuk mengidentifikasi pola berulang dan tantangan kelembagaan. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa kekerasan seksual anak didorong oleh beberapa faktor yang saling terkait, termasuk pengawasan orang tua yang tidak memadai, lingkungan sosial yang permisif, karakteristik psikologis pelanggar, dan mekanisme kontrol sosial yang lemah. Sebagian besar kasus terjadi dalam hubungan interpersonal yang dekat, terutama yang melibatkan anggota keluarga atau pasangan intim, di mana manipulasi, persuasi, dan penyalahgunaan kepercayaan merupakan modus operandi yang dominan. Tanggapan penegakan hukum menggabungkan langkah-langkah represif melalui investigasi dan penuntutan kriminal dengan inisiatif pencegahan, termasuk kampanye kesadaran publik dan kolaborasi antarlembaga. Namun, upaya ini tetap dibatasi oleh keterbatasan pembuktian, trauma psikologis korban, dan rendahnya tingkat kesadaran hukum publik. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa mengintegrasikan analisis kriminologis dengan praktik penegakan hukum setempat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang kekerasan seksual anak dan menyoroti perlunya memperkuat pencegahan berbasis keluarga, kapasitas kelembagaan, dan mekanisme perlindungan anak berbasis masyarakat untuk meningkatkan kebijakan peradilan pidana dan perlindungan korban.

Kata Kunci: Kekerasan Seksual Anak; Kriminologi; Penegakan Hukum; Perlindungan Anak; Penelitian Hukum Empiris; Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence against children is a form of crime that has a multidimensional impact, both on the physical, psychological, and social development of the victim. Children who are victims of sexual violence are at risk of experiencing prolonged trauma, emotional disturbances, decreased self-confidence, and obstacles in their growth and development process. Therefore, the handling of this criminal act cannot be seen solely as a legal problem, but also as a social problem that requires a comprehensive approach.¹

Nationally, cases of sexual violence against children are still showing a worrying trend. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission and the National Commission on Anti-Violence against Women have consistently reported high rates of sexual violence against children in various regions in Indonesia.² The data shows that children are still a very vulnerable group to violence, especially when the perpetrators come from the closest people, such as family members, relatives, and partners. This condition confirms that the existence of regulations, such as Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection and Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence, has not been fully able to prevent the occurrence of these crimes.

The same phenomenon also occurred in Gorontalo City. Based on data from the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the Gorontalo City Police, the number of cases of sexual violence against children has increased from 20 cases in 2023 to 31 cases in 2024, and will increase again to 38 cases in 2025. This increase shows that sexual violence against children is still a serious problem that requires special attention, both from a criminological perspective and from the aspect of law enforcement effectiveness.

Even if legal instruments are adequate, the reality on the ground shows that the number of cases of sexual violence against children remains high. Ironically, perpetrators often come from internal circles such as family or close relatives who should be the main

¹ Sulastris Sulastris, "Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak: Relasi Pelaku- Korban, Pola Asuh Dan Kerentanan Pada Anak," *Jurnal Psikologi Malahayati* 1, no. 2 (11 Oktober 2019), <https://doi.org/10.33024/jpm.v1i2.1961>.

² Duwini Irawati and Grahadi Purna Putra, "Law Enforcement Effectiveness for Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse Reviewed from Criminal Law," *Bureaucracy: JOURNAL OF LAW AND CONSTITUTIONAL SCIENCES* 2, no. 4 (2024): 280–90, <https://doi.org/10.55606/birokrasi.v2i4.1663>.

protectors. This phenomenon indicates that it is not enough to overcome sexual violence only relying on a juridical approach, but must touch the root of the problem in social and environmental aspects.³

Sexual violence against children knows no spatial boundaries, occurring both in the public and domestic spheres. Alarming facts show that homes, ideally safe zones, are often the locations of such crimes. Given that these cases are even found to occur under parental supervision, it can be concluded that children have a very high level of vulnerability to various manifestations of sexual violence.⁴

The reality in Gorontalo City proves that cases of sexual violence against children have experienced a continuous surge from year to year. Data from the PPA Unit of the Gorontalo City Police shows that in 2022 there were no cases, then increased to 20 cases in 2023, and again experienced a significant increase to reach 31 cases in 2024, and continue to increase to 38 cases in 2025. The data shows a significant upward trend, so it is a serious concern for various parties. The escalation in the number of cases indicates that legal protection for children has not been optimally supported by adequate regulations. This phenomenon shows a discrepancy between the level of legal norms and the existing social reality. On that basis, an in-depth study is needed to identify the triggering factors for sexual violence against children.

In this context, criminology as a science that studies crime is a relevant approach to use. Criminology not only examines crimes from a legal aspect, but also from a social, psychological, and environmental aspect. With this approach, it can be known various factors that affect a person to commit acts of sexual violence, such as weak supervision, an uncondusive social environment, and the psychological condition of the perpetrator. In addition, the criminological approach also emphasizes the importance of analyzing the perpetrator's motives, which are not only driven by biological factors, but also by life experiences, psychological conditions, and social environment. By understanding these factors, prevention efforts can be carried out more effectively through preventive and rehabilitative approaches.⁵

Various previous studies have discussed sexual violence against children from different perspectives. Ida Bagus Subrahmaniam Saitya highlighted the factors that cause sexual violence against children, Sulastris examined the relationship between perpetrators and victims and parenting, while Isyana Kurniasari Konoras analyzed policies for the protection and prevention of sexual violence against children. However, these studies generally still focus on causative factors or normative protection policies, and not many have integrated criminogenic factor analysis with the evaluation of law enforcement practices at the local level. Thus, there is still a research gap on how criminological factors interact with obstacles and law enforcement strategies in handling cases of sexual violence against children.

³ Fitria Ramadhani Siregar, Muhammad Juang Rambe, and Vicky Ardiansyah, "Criminal Law Policy Against Perpetrators of Sexual Violence Against Children in Medan City," *Jurnal Rectum: Juridical Review of Handling Criminal Acts* 5, no. 2 (May 2, 2023): 28, <https://doi.org/10.46930/jurnalrectum.v5i2.3144>.

⁴ Kayus Kayowuan Lewoleba dan Muhammad Helmi Fahrozi, "Studi Faktor-Faktor Terjadinya Tindak Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak-Anak," *Esensi Hukum* 2, no. 1 (27 Juli 2020): 27–48, <https://doi.org/10.35586/esensihukum.v2i1.20>.

⁵ sulastris Sulastris, "Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak: Relasi Pelaku- Korban, Pola Asuh Dan Kerentanan Pada Anak," *Jurnal Psikologi Malahayati* 1, no. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.33024/jpm.v1i2.1961>.

This research has novelty in its efforts to integrate criminology theory, especially routine activity theory, social control theory, and differential association theory with law enforcement practices carried out by police officers in Gorontalo City. This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the factors that cause crime, the pattern of perpetrator-victim relationships, and the effectiveness of case handling by law enforcement officials.

Based on this description, the research questions asked are: (1) what criminogenic factors cause the occurrence of sexual violence against children in Gorontalo City; (2) what is the pattern of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim in these cases; (3) how the law enforcement efforts are carried out by the police; and (4) what obstacles are faced in handling the case. This research aims to answer these questions while providing a scientific contribution in the form of integrating criminological analysis with local law enforcement practices, as well as policy recommendations to strengthen the child protection system more effectively and sustainably.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an empirical legal research design using a qualitative approach to examine the criminogenic factors underlying child sexual violence and to evaluate law enforcement responses in Gorontalo City, Indonesia. An empirical legal approach was selected because the study sought to investigate the implementation of law in practice by integrating legal norms with the social realities surrounding criminal behaviour and institutional responses. The research was conducted at the Women and Children Protection Unit (Unit Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak/PPA) of the Gorontalo City Police, the institution responsible for investigating child sexual violence cases. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement, professional experience, and relevance to the research objectives. Primary informants consisted of investigators from the PPA Unit and victims of child sexual violence, or where appropriate, family members representing victims, to obtain comprehensive perspectives on criminogenic factors, law enforcement practices, and the consequences experienced by victims.

The study relied on both primary and secondary legal data. Primary data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentary review of police records, case statistics, and institutional reports concerning child sexual violence. Secondary data comprised statutory regulations, judicial decisions, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, and previous empirical studies on criminology, child protection, victimology, and criminal law enforcement. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied source triangulation and methodological triangulation by systematically comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, documentary evidence, and relevant legal literature.

Data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis following an interactive analytical framework. The analytical process involved data reduction, open coding, categorization, theme development, data display, and interpretative conclusion drawing. This approach enabled the identification of recurring patterns relating to criminogenic factors, offender–victim relationships, modes of offending, institutional law enforcement strategies, and challenges encountered during criminal investigations. The findings were subsequently interpreted through criminological theories and the Indonesian child protection legal framework, thereby producing a comprehensive socio-legal

understanding of child sexual violence and providing evidence-based recommendations for strengthening prevention strategies, victim protection, and criminal justice policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Criminological Analysis of Factors and Patterns of Sexual Violence Against Children in Gorontalo City

The findings of the study show that there is a tendency to increase cases of sexual violence against children in Gorontalo City in recent years. This condition indicates that the effectiveness of prevention and child protection efforts has not been optimal, even though the regulatory framework regarding child protection has been strengthened. The increase in the number of cases also reflects the gap between the legal norms governing child protection and the implementation of law enforcement and protection mechanisms at the community level. Thus, the development of this case not only shows the high vulnerability of children as victims, but also hints at the need to evaluate the effectiveness of policies, inter-agency coordination, and prevention strategies that have been implemented.

To provide an empirical picture of the development of this phenomenon, Table 1 presents the trend in the number of cases of sexual violence against children in Gorontalo City over the last four-year period. This data is the basis for analysis in identifying patterns of increase in cases as well as evaluating their relationship with criminogenic factors and law enforcement responses that are developing in the research area.

Table 1. Data on the Number of Cases of Sexual Violence Against Children in Unit IV PPA of the Gorontalo City Police

No	Year	Item Count
1.	2022	0 Case
2.	2023	20 Case
3.	2024	31 Case
4.	2025	38 Case
Total Cases		89 Case

(Data Source of Gorontalo City Police)

The data shows a significant upward trend from year to year. The increase in the number of cases from 20 cases in 2023 to 38 cases in 2025 shows that sexual violence against children is still a serious problem. This condition indicates that the existence of legal instruments, such as Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection and Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence, has not automatically been able to reduce crime rates. Criminologically, this shows that social, psychological, and environmental factors still play a dominant role in creating opportunities for criminal acts to occur.

Table 2. Criminological Analysis Matrix

Research Findings	Relevant theories	Analysis
Lack of parental supervision	Social Control Theory	Weak social ties and supervision increase children's vulnerability
Permissive social environment	Differential Association Theory	Deviant behavior is learned through social interaction

The perpetrator had access to the victim without supervision	Routine Activity Theory	Crime occurs when motivated perpetrators meet vulnerable victims without supervision
The perpetrator is a person close to the victim	Relational Crime	Closeness and trust are used as a means of committing crimes
Victim trauma and reporting delays	Viktimologi	Victims need psychological protection and legal support

Based on the data in Table 1 and Table 2, the increase in the number of cases of sexual violence against children cannot be understood solely as an increase in crime rates, but also as a manifestation of the interaction of various interrelated criminogenic factors. The analysis shows that weak parental supervision, a permissive social environment, and high access of perpetrators to victims are the dominant factors that create the opportunity for crime to occur. These findings are in line with Social Control Theory, Differential Association Theory, and Routine Activity Theory, which explain that criminal acts arise when social control is weakened, deviant behavior is learned through social interaction, and perpetrators have the opportunity to commit crimes against vulnerable victims without adequate supervision. In addition, the fact that most of the perpetrators are people who have a close relationship with the victim shows that the relationship of trust is actually the main instrument in committing sexual violence, so that the characteristics of this crime are more complex than conventional crimes committed by foreigners.

The findings also revealed that the increase in the number of cases recorded in the police not only reflects the high prevalence of crimes, but also shows that the effectiveness of prevention systems oriented towards child protection at the family, school, and community levels is still limited. From a victimization perspective, the psychological trauma experienced by victims and delays in reporting are serious obstacles in the process of proving and enforcing the law, so that many cases are difficult to follow up optimally. Therefore, the penal approach through law enforcement needs to be integrated with a non-penal strategy that focuses on strengthening family functions, sexual education that is appropriate for children's age, increasing community legal literacy, and closer collaboration between law enforcement officials, educational institutions, local governments, and child protection institutions. Thus, the prevention of sexual violence against children is not only oriented towards the punishment of the perpetrator, but also on reducing the criminogenic factors that are the root cause of crime and strengthening the child protection system in a sustainable manner.

Theory Based Criminogenic Factor Analysis

In the perspective of Social Control Theory, the weak bond between children and families leads to reduced supervision and control over children's activities. When parents do not carry out their supervisory functions optimally, children become more vulnerable to persuasion and manipulation by perpetrators. This finding is in line with research by Ida Bagus Subrahmaniam Saitya in Bali which shows that low family supervision is one of the dominant factors causing sexual violence against children.⁶

⁶ Fitriah, Ria, and Hudi Yusuf. "The Application of Criminological Theories in the Indonesian Criminal Justice System: An Analysis." *Journal of Intellectual and Scholars of the Archipelago* 1.2 (2024): 1498-1507.

Differential Association Theory explains that deviant behavior is learned through social interaction. In this study, a permissive and minimally controlled social environment allows perpetrators to develop deviant behavior without significant obstacles.⁷ Similar findings were also reported in studies in Yogyakarta and Makassar that showed that an unhealthy social environment increases the risk of sexual violence against children.

Routine Activity Theory explains that crime occurs when there are motivated perpetrators, vulnerable victims, and the absence of effective supervision. Children, due to their age and dependence on adults, are vulnerable targets. When perpetrators gain unsupervised access, the chances of criminal acts increasing significantly. This similarity in pattern shows that criminogenic factors in cases of sexual violence against children tend to have relatively similar characteristics in various regions in Indonesia.⁸

The findings of the study show that most perpetrators have a close relationship with the victim, such as boyfriends, relatives, or family members. This pattern emphasizes that sexual violence against children is a form of relational crime, which is a crime that occurs in social relations that have been built on the basis of trust.⁹ Perpetrators generally use persuasion, attention, and certain promises to gain the victim's compliance. This mode shows that sexual violence against children is more done through emotional manipulation than physical violence. This emotional closeness makes victims often unaware of the threat in the early stages.¹⁰

This finding is in line with Sulastris's research, which shows that most of the perpetrators are people who have known the victim. Research in Central Java and South Sulawesi also found a similar pattern, namely that sexual violence against children generally occurs in a relationship of trust. Thus, relational crime is a common characteristic of sexual violence against children in Indonesia. The results of the study showed that the crime of sexual violence against children in Gorontalo City was influenced by three main factors, namely the lack of parental supervision, a permissive social environment, and the psychological condition of the perpetrator. These three factors interact with each other and form a situation that allows crime to occur.

Law enforcement in Gorontalo City is carried out through two main approaches, namely preventive and repressive. Preventive efforts are carried out through socialization, legal counseling, and education to parents and the community. Repressive efforts are carried out through investigations, investigations, arrests, and coordination with relevant institutions to assist victims.

Table 3. Evaluation of Law Enforcement against Child Sexual Violence

Aspects	Implementation	Evaluation
Preventive	Socialization and education	Not yet reaching all levels of society

⁷ Deny Guntara and . Budiman, "A Criminological Review of Perpetrators of Terrorism Crimes in Indonesia in the Perspective of Differential Association Theory," *Justisi Journal of Law* 3, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.36805/jjih.v3i1.553>.

⁸ Isyana Kurniasari Konoras, "A Criminological Review of Policies for the Protection and Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children in North Sulawesi," *SPECTRUM: Journal of Gender and Children Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 72–87, <https://doi.org/10.30984/spectrum.v3i2.674>.

⁹ Interview results of investigators of unit IV PPA Gorontalo City Police

¹⁰ "Reviewing Cases of Violence Against Children by Their Parents from a Criminological Perspective," *Scientific Journal of Aerospace Law* 6, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.35968/jh.v6i1.112>.

Repressive	Research and investigation	Procedurally it has gone well
Victim protection	Psychological and legal assistance	Requires strengthening coordination across sectors

Normatively, the law enforcement mechanism has been running in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations. However, its effectiveness is not optimal because the number of cases is still increasing. These findings show that law enforcement's success is measured not only by formal processes, but also by its ability to prevent crime and rehabilitate victims.

These results are in line with research by Isyana Kurniasari Konoras in North Sulawesi which shows that the effectiveness of law enforcement is greatly influenced by inter-agency coordination, resource availability, and community participation. Similar findings were also found in studies in Surabaya and Medan, which confirmed that handling sexual violence against children requires a cross-sectoral approach.

Table 4. Structural and Cultural Barriers

Types of Barriers	Barrier Formation	Impact
Struktural	Limitations of evidence	Slow down proof
Struktural	Limited supporting facilities and services	Reduces the effectiveness of treatment
Cultural	Trauma of the victim	The victim found it difficult to give information
Cultural	Low legal awareness	Families are late or reluctant to report
Cultural	Culture of disgrace	Hindering case disclosure

Structural barriers are related to the limitations of evidence, facilities, and technical support in the investigation process. Meanwhile, cultural barriers arise from social stigma, the culture of maintaining the good name of the family, and low awareness of the community's law. In many cases, families choose to hide the events that occurred because they are worried about social pressure.¹¹

This condition was also found in studies in Aceh, Lombok, and South Kalimantan, which showed that cultural factors are one of the biggest barriers to disclosure of cases of sexual violence against children. Thus, the obstacles found in Gorontalo City reflect a pattern that also occurs in various other regions in Indonesia.

Critical Analysis of the Implementation of the TPKS Law in the Perspective of Victimology, Gender, Restorative Justice, and SDGs

From a victimization perspective, the crime of sexual violence against children is not only understood as a violation of criminal law norms, but also as an event that causes deep physical, psychological, and social suffering to the victim. Children who experience sexual violence have the potential to experience prolonged trauma, emotional

¹¹ Interview results of investigators of unit IV PPA Gorontalo City Police

disturbances, difficulties in building social relationships, and obstacles in the growth and development process. Therefore, the orientation of law enforcement cannot be solely directed at the punishment of the perpetrator, but must also ensure the recovery of the victim as a whole.¹²

The findings of the study show that one of the main obstacles in handling cases is the psychological condition of victims who often experience fear, shame, and trauma so that it is difficult to provide information consistently. This condition is in line with the victimology study which confirms that victims of sexual violence require a sensitive, child-friendly, and recovery-based approach. In this context, the role of psychological companions, social workers, and families is very important to support the judicial process.¹³

Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence has adopted a victim-oriented approach through regulations regarding the right to protection, assistance, restitution, rehabilitation, and integrated services. However, the implementation of these rights still requires strengthening, especially in the provision of psychological services and easily accessible recovery mechanisms. Thus, from a victimization perspective, the effectiveness of law enforcement must be measured not only by the ability to impose sanctions on the perpetrators, but also by the success of restoring the victim's condition.¹⁴

Sexual violence against children needs to be analyzed through a gender perspective because these crimes are often influenced by the inequality of power relations and patriarchal culture. In a social structure that still puts women and girls in a more vulnerable position, perpetrators take advantage of these inequality to dominate and control the victim.

In practice, girls are more likely to experience sexual violence and face severe social stigma. Victims are often blamed for the events they experienced, while families choose to cover up cases to maintain their good name. This condition shows that the problem of sexual violence is not only related to the behavior of individual perpetrators, but also to social constructions that normalize gender inequality.

The TPKS Law is a progressive legal instrument because it recognizes the existence of power relations, gender inequality, and victim vulnerability as the basis for legal protection. Thus, gender analysis shows that efforts to prevent and handle sexual violence must be accompanied by gender equality education, elimination of victim blaming, and cultural change that is more in favor of the victim.¹⁵

Restorative justice is a case resolution approach that emphasizes the recovery of victim losses, perpetrator responsibility, and community involvement. In many criminal cases, this approach can be an alternative to creating more humane justice. However, in cases of sexual violence against children, the application of restorative justice must be carried out very carefully.

The vulnerable position of the victim can cause the peace process to take place in an unbalanced situation. Children and their families can experience social, economic, and

¹² Rena Yulia and Aliyth Prakarsa, "Legal Protection for Victims of Crimes of Illegal Medical Practice," *Judicial Journal* 13, no. 1 (2020): 55, <https://doi.org/10.29123/jy.v13i1.341>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Nita Yuniati, "Legal Protection of Crime Victims," *Journal of Law, Humanities and Politics (JIHHP)* 4, no. 6 (2024): <https://doi.org/10.38035/jihhp>.

¹⁵ Isyana Kurniasari Konoras, "A Criminological Review of Policies for the Protection and Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children in North Sulawesi," *SPECTRUM: Journal of Gender and Children Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 72–87, <https://doi.org/10.30984/spectrum.v3i2.674>.

psychological pressure to accept settlements outside the judicial process.¹⁶ If not strictly controlled, restorative justice has the potential to ignore the rights of victims and normalize the impunity of perpetrators.

Therefore, the restorative justice approach can only be considered if it truly guarantees the best interests of the child, does not eliminate the victim's right to protection and rehabilitation, and still pays attention to the serious nature of the criminal act that occurs. In the context of sexual violence against children, the main orientation must still be directed towards victim protection and strict law enforcement.

This research has strong relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Goal 5 targets the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. This research shows that sexual violence against children is one of the manifestations of gender inequality that still occurs in society. Therefore, strengthening legal protection and gender equality education is an important part of supporting the achievement of these goals.

Goal 16 emphasizes the importance of access to justice and the development of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. Law enforcement efforts by the Gorontalo City Police PPA Unit, although they have been running, still require strengthening human resources, supporting facilities, and cross-sector coordination in order to be able to provide optimal protection for victims. Thus, this research contributes to the global development agenda through policy recommendations aimed at eliminating sexual violence and strengthening a justice system that is responsive to the needs of victims.

Policy Analysis of Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence

Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence is a significant legal policy reform in the victim protection system in Indonesia. In contrast to the previous arrangement which was more oriented towards punishing the perpetrator, the TPKS Law places the victim at the center of attention through the regulation of the right to protection, assistance, restitution, rehabilitation, and rehabilitation.

Normatively, the TPKS Law has several advantages. First, this law expands the types of sexual violence crimes recognized by law. Second, the law adopts a victim-based approach and a gender perspective. Third, this law requires coordination between agencies in the provision of protection services.

Nevertheless, the results of the study show that the implementation of the TPKS Law still faces various obstacles. Limited evidence, lack of support staff, lack of psychological service facilities, and a culture of society that tends to blame victims are the main obstacles. In addition, not all law enforcement officials have adequate capacity to implement a victim-sensitive approach.

Thus, in policy, the TPKS Law can be considered progressive and comprehensive, but its effectiveness depends heavily on the readiness of institutions, resources, and community support. Therefore, continuous training for the apparatus, improvement of facilities and infrastructure, and strengthening public education are needed so that the goal of victim protection can be realized optimally.

¹⁶ Diaz Riady Bukoting, Dian Ekawaty Ismail, and Avelia Rahmah Y Mantali, "The Position of Children

who are victims of the crime of obscenity in the perspective of victimology,"

Legal Bridge: Study of Law, Social and State Administration 1, no. 1 (March 27, 2024):

42–50, <https://doi.org/10.62383/jembatan.v1i1.92>. p. 47

Based on the perspective of victimology, gender analysis, restorative justice approach, and policy evaluation of the TPKS Law, it can be understood that sexual violence against children is a multidimensional problem that requires a comprehensive legal response. Law enforcement is not sufficiently oriented towards criminalizing perpetrators, but must ensure the protection, recovery, and empowerment of victims. In addition, this research supports the achievement of SDGs Goal 5 regarding gender equality and Goal 16 regarding access to justice and institutional strengthening. Thus, the effectiveness of law enforcement in cases of sexual violence against children can only be realized if it is supported by progressive policies, capable officials, and a community that is in the best interests of children.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the crime of sexual violence against children in Gorontalo City is influenced by a combination of criminogenic factors in the form of lack of parental supervision, permissive social environment, the psychological condition of the perpetrator, and the opening of opportunities due to weak social control. Most cases occur in close relationships between the perpetrator and the victim, such as dating, kinship, and family environment, with the modus operandi of persuasion, emotional manipulation, and abuse of trust. These findings show that sexual violence against children is a form of relational crime that occurs in certain social relationships, so that children's vulnerability is not only determined by individual factors, but also by weak family and community supervision functions.

This research also shows that law enforcement by the Gorontalo City Police PPA Unit has been carried out through preventive and repressive approaches, but its effectiveness has not been optimal because it is still faced with structural and cultural obstacles. Structural barriers include limited evidence, facilities, and technical support, while cultural barriers include victim trauma, low public legal awareness, and a culture of covering up family shame. The scientific contribution of this research lies in the integration of Routine Activity Theory, Social Control Theory, and Differential Association Theory with local law enforcement practices, which shows that crime occurs as a result of interactions between motivated perpetrators, vulnerable victims, and social environments that are unable to carry out control functions effectively.

The policy implications of this study are the need to strengthen the child protection system through institutional reform of PPA Units, increasing the capacity of investigators and support staff, providing adequate psychological and forensic services, and developing school- and community-based community education. In addition, it is necessary to build a reporting mechanism that is safe, accessible, and child-friendly so that victims and their families are encouraged to report the events experienced. These measures are expected to increase the effectiveness of prevention, law enforcement, and victim recovery in a more comprehensive and sustainable manner.

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CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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