

INTEGRATION OF LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY DIMENSIONS IN THE REHABILITATION MODEL FOR CHILD PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Andy Parawansa¹ Musakkir¹ Wiwie Heryani¹ Abd Asis¹ Ratnawati¹

¹Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: andyparawansa45@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Child perpetrators of sexual violence have become an important concern in Indonesia because they challenge the juvenile justice system to balance legal accountability with rehabilitation. This study examines the factors contributing to child perpetrators of sexual violence and explores the integration of legal psychology dimensions into rehabilitation practices through an empirical legal study conducted at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. The study involved 24 male juveniles aged 14–17 years and 2 LPKA officers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis and were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The findings indicate that children's involvement in sexual violence results from the interaction of internal factors, including psychological, biological, and spiritual aspects, and external factors, such as family conditions, social environment, and limited legal and sexuality education. These findings demonstrate that rehabilitation should extend beyond legal sanctions by incorporating legal psychology to address the underlying causes of offending behavior. This study contributes to the development of a rehabilitation model that integrates legal and psychological perspectives to support recovery, reduce recidivism, and strengthen the social reintegration of child perpetrators of sexual violence.

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INTRODUCTION

Children are legal subjects with distinctive characteristics and therefore cannot be

equated with adults in terms of physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects.¹ These differences imply the necessity of providing legal protection to children, both when they are positioned as victims and when they act as perpetrators of criminal offenses. The phenomenon of *juvenile delinquency* shows an increasing trend and encompasses various forms of criminal conduct that are also committed by adults, such as theft, assault, drug abuse and trafficking, and sexual violence.² Sexual violence constitutes a serious and urgent global issue because it not only places children as victims but also reveals the reality of children as perpetrators. The position of children as perpetrators of sexual violence presents complex legal challenges, as it requires a balance between the protection of children's rights, the principle of the *best interest of the child*, and the necessity of law enforcement and the realization of substantive justice.³

Sexual violence constitutes a violation of human rights, a crime against human welfare, and a form of discrimination that must be eliminated.⁴ Meanwhile, the involvement of children as perpetrators raises serious issues related to age, legal responsibility, psychological conditions, and the influence of the social environment. This phenomenon poses significant challenges to the juvenile criminal justice system as regulated under Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA), the child protection framework, and the broader social order. Indonesia's social reality demonstrates that weak *social control*, low levels of sexual literacy, unrestricted access to pornographic content through digital media, limited sex education within families and schools, and a lack of understanding of the legal system significantly increase the potential for deviant behavior among children.⁵ This situation is further complicated by a *positive law* system that has not fully accommodated adaptive and comprehensive approaches, thereby giving rise to tensions between the demands of law enforcement and the psychosocial interests of children who are still in a developmental phase.⁶

Data released by the National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) in 2018 identified sexual violence as the second most prevalent form of crime after physical violence, accounting for 31 percent of all reported cases. This figure reflects the high level of vulnerability experienced by women and children within domestic and personal relationships. National data also indicate that children continue to represent a significant proportion of individuals in conflict with the law in Indonesia, with sexual offences constituting one of the recurring categories handled within the juvenile justice system. This trend suggests

¹ Suseno, Sigit, Mien Rukmini, and Aulia Iskandarsyah. "Legal Protection of Child Victims of Sexual Crimes from a Legal and Psychosocial Perspective." *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review* 5, no. 1 (2025): e02719. <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n01.pe02719>. <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n01.pe02719> sose

² Sitompul, A. H. "Legal Study on Sexual Violence Against Children in Indonesia." *Lex Crimen* 4, no. 1 (2025): pp. 46–58.

³ Achmad Kadarisman, Alfarid Fedro, and Zainal Arifin, "Best Interest of the Child in Islamic Family Law: Integrating Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah and Double Movement Theory in Ḥaḍānah Cases," *Jurnal Al-Dustur* 8, no. 2 (2025): 155–74.

⁴ Riza Chatias Pratama, Rusli Muhammad, and Trisno Raharjo, "Developing a Family-Based Rehabilitation Model for Juvenile Victims of Narcotics Abuse in Indonesia: Strengthening Child-Centered Justice through Legal Reform," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 9, no. 2 (2026): 766–91.

⁵ Arif, Fasli, and Sri Wahyuni. "The Correlation among Attachment to Mother, Father, and Peers with the Tendency of Children to Become Perpetrators and Victims of Bullying," *Jurnal Psikologi Ulayat* 4, no. 2 (2017): pp. 122–140. <https://doi.org/10.24854/jpu58>

⁶ Indonesia. *Explanation of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes*. Jakarta: Government of Indonesia, 2022.

that child-perpetrated sexual violence is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a broader national concern. This reality is further corroborated by a series of cases involving children as perpetrators, including the Yuyun tragedy in 2016, in which the majority of offenders were minors; the Probolinggo case in 2019 and the Murung Raya case in 2020, both of which revealed patterns of repeated sexual violence committed by underage offenders; and the Palembang case in August 2024, where all perpetrators were children, most of whom were under the age of fourteen. These circumstances are documented in Decision No. 51/Pid.Sus-Anak/2024/PN Plg, which linked the criminal conduct to addiction to pornographic content. This situation underscores that sexual violence perpetrated by children constitutes a systemic problem that requires serious legal and social interventions oriented toward protection and prevention.⁷

Numerous cases indicate weak parental involvement in supervision, religious education, and concern for children's social environments, thereby increasing children's vulnerability to negative influences from their surroundings, peers, and digital media. Previous studies have similarly found that inadequate parental supervision, exposure to harmful online content, and dysfunctional family environments are significant risk factors associated with juvenile sexual offending and delinquent behavior.⁸

Conventional legal approaches continue to require children to be held criminally accountable as perpetrators, as stipulated under Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (*SPPA*); however, the prevailing orientation remains largely punitive, albeit within a special framework. This condition underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach, particularly through the integration of perspectives from legal psychology, to better understand and address deviant sexual behavior among children in a manner that is more appropriate and oriented toward rehabilitation, as emphasized in studies advocating multidisciplinary interventions for children in conflict with the law.⁹

Many child perpetrators do not act solely out of conscious criminal intent but are shaped by permissive environments, exposure to pornography, or previous experiences of violence.¹⁰ Understanding these life contexts is therefore essential for developing rehabilitation strategies that address the underlying causes of offending rather than merely imposing legal sanctions. Although Indonesian law provides special protection and treatment for children in conflict with the law, the limited understanding of legal psychology among law enforcement personnel and officers at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros often results in formalistic handling that fails to address the root causes of offending behavior.

⁷ Amri, Sri Rahayu, and Sari Ratna Dewi. *Legal Protection for Children as Offenders of Narcotics Abuse*. Bandung: Widina Media Utama, 2024.

⁸ Seto, Michael C., and Martin L. Lalumière. "What Is So Special About Male Adolescent Sexual Offending? A Review and Test of Explanations Through Meta Analysis." *Psychological Bulletin* 136, no. 4 (2010): pp. 526–575. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019700>

⁹ Assink, Mark, Claudia E. van der Put, Machteld Hoeve, et al. "Risk Factors for Juvenile Delinquency: A Meta Analytic Review." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 43, no. 1 (2015): pp. 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2015.02.004>

¹⁰ Rizanizarli Rizanizarli et al., "The Application of Restorative Justice for Children as Criminal Offenders in the Perspective of National Law and Qanun Jināyat," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023): 21–39.

METHODS

This study employs empirical legal research, focusing on verbal and observable human behavior. The research was conducted at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros because of its relevance to the rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, particularly perpetrators of sexual violence. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met the research criteria and could provide in-depth information. The study population consisted of 24 male child perpetrators of sexual violence aged 12–17 years and five LPKA staff members. The final sample included five children and three staff members selected based on their relevance, experience, and willingness to participate, as data saturation was achieved.¹¹

This study utilizes primary, secondary, and tertiary data within an empirical legal research framework. Primary data were obtained through interviews and observations conducted at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. Secondary data were collected through document analysis and literature review, including statutory regulations, court decisions, books, legal journals, and relevant online sources, while tertiary data served as complementary conceptual and terminological references. Data collection techniques consisted of in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis.¹²

The research data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The analysis involved data reduction, coding and categorization of interview, observation, and document analysis findings, followed by data presentation and interpretation to identify recurring themes and patterns. Conclusions were drawn by comparing and synthesizing the findings to explain the factors influencing child perpetrators of sexual violence and the relevance of integrating legal psychology into rehabilitation.¹³

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Field Data on Children as Perpetrators of Sexual Violence in the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher presents data on sexual harassment cases recorded during the 2023–2024 period, along with interview findings from relevant stakeholders. The research was conducted at the Maros Class II Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) as a comparative research site to obtain representative data and support the analysis of relevant factors. The findings identified the following cases of sexual violence committed by children.

Data on sexual violence committed by children at Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Data on sexual violence committed by children in the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros

No.	Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Religion	Law	Final Decision Number
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¹¹ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Legal Research: Revised Edition* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2019), pp. 11.

¹² Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji, *Normative Legal Research: A Brief Overview* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2003), pp. 23.

¹³ Kadarudin, *Research in the Field of Law* (Semarang: Formaci, 2021), pp. 183.

1	Respondent 01 (IR)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	19/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN.MK S
2	Respondent 02 (MDA)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN.ML L
3	Respondent 03 (MAR)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	3/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN.Mrs
4	Respondent 04 (ODS)	17	Male	Catholic	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	29/PID.SUS- ANAK/PN MKS
5	Respondent 05 (SAC)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN Mks
6	Respondent 06 (RBS)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	39/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN Mks
7	Respondent 07 (MHK)	14	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	52/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN Mks
8	Respondent 08 (MRF)	15	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	52/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN Mks
9	Respondent 09 (MRS)	14	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	52/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN Mks
10	Respondent 10 (STS)	15	Male	Protesta nt	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	1/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Mak
11	Respondent 11 (RH)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	1/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Tak
12	Respondent 12 (NPM)	17	Male	Catholic	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	7/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Tak
13	Respondent 13 (RFM)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	15/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Mak
14	Respondent 14 (AB)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	7/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Pin
15	Respondent 15 (SBH)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Mll
16	Respondent 16 (RLP)	15	Male	Protesta nt	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	6/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Mll
17	Respondent 17 (EA)	15	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	7/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Mll
18	Respondent 18 (MFB)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	2/Pid.Sus- Anak/2024/PN Msb

19	Respondent 19 (BB)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	3696K/Pid.Sus/2025
20	Respondent 20 (TG)	15	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	3812K/PID.SUS/202 5
21	Respondent 21 (MAN)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	15/PID.SUS- ANAK/2024/PN MKS
22	Respondent 22 (RAK)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5079K/PID.SUS/202 3
23	Respondent 23 (MRZ)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	57711K/PID.SUS/20 23
24	Respondent 24 (MIB)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5713K/PID.SUS/202 3

Source: Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. Taken on April 29, 2025

The data indicate that there are 24 male children undergoing rehabilitation at the Class II Maros Special Development Institution for Children (*Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak/LPKA*) due to sexual violence offenses. All of them are aged between 14 and 17 years, with a predominance of 17-year-olds, reflecting the vulnerability of late adolescence to environmental influences and deviant behavior. The majority of the offenders are Muslim, in line with the demographic profile of South Sulawesi, and all cases were processed under the child protection legal framework, particularly *Law No. 17 of 2016* as an amendment to *Law No. 23 of 2002*, which emphasizes a protective orientation despite the children's status as perpetrators of serious crimes. The distribution of regional origins shows that the Class II Maros *LPKA* accommodates children from various regencies and cities across South Sulawesi.¹⁴

Factors and Legal Analysis of the Causes of Child Sexual Violence in the Class II Special Child Development Institution (LPKA), Maros

Based on interviews with Head of the Administration and Counseling Section and Head of the Rehabilitation Section at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros, child-perpetrated sexual violence was found to result from the interaction of multiple factors, including family circumstances, peer influence, social environment, exposure to digital media, limited sexuality education, and psychological conditions. These findings indicate that children should not be viewed solely as intentional offenders but as individuals whose behavior is shaped by complex personal and environmental influences. Accordingly, the rehabilitation model implemented at *LPKA* Class II Maros emphasizes counseling, character development, and social reintegration, reflecting the integration of legal accountability with legal psychology to reduce the risk of reoffending.¹⁵

¹⁴ Lewoleba, Kayus Kayowuan, and Muhammad Helmi Fahrozi. "Study of Factors Causing Sexual Violence Against Children." *Esensi Hukum* 2, no. 1 (2020): pp. 27–48. <https://doi.org/10.35586/esensihukum.v2i1.20>.

¹⁵ LPKA Officer 1, Administration and Counseling Guidance Section, LPKA Class II Maros, interview by author on March 5, 2025

Table 2: Sample of child crime as perpetrators of sexual violence in Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II, Maros

No.	Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Religion	Law	Final Decision Number
1	Respondent 01 (SA)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5/PID.SUS-ANAK/2024/PN Mks
2	Respondent 02 (RH)	16	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	1/Pid.Sus-Anak/2024/PN Tak
3	Respondent 03 (RAK)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection	5079K/PID.SUS/2023
4	Respondent 04 (MRZ)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection	57711K/PID.SUS/2023
5	Respondent 05 (MI)	17	Male	Islam	Law No. 17 of 2016 on Child Protection	5713K/PID.SUS/2023

Source: Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. taken On April 29, 2025

The data show that the five child perpetrators of sexual violence were all male, Muslim, and aged between 16 and 17 years, with 80% being 17 years old, indicating that late adolescence is a particularly vulnerable stage for deviant sexual behaviour. Three cases (60%) were prosecuted under Law No. 17 of 2016, while the remaining two were processed under Law No. 23 of 2002, reflecting the transition in the implementation of child protection legislation. All cases had obtained final and binding legal force, as evidenced by the respective court decisions.

To identify the factors contributing to child-perpetrated sexual violence, in-depth interviews were conducted on 29 April 2025 with five children undergoing rehabilitation at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. The participants were selected through purposive sampling to represent different case backgrounds and judicial decisions. The interview findings are summarized as follows:¹⁶

- a) S.A. (17 years old, Maros, junior secondary school education) was convicted under Article 81(1) of Law No. 17 of 2016. The contributing factors included psychological conditions, family circumstances, social media exposure, and peer influence.
- b) R.H. (16 years old, Takalar, junior secondary school education) was prosecuted under Article 81(2) of Law No. 17 of 2016. The factors associated with his offending behaviour included peer influence, exposure to social media, family circumstances, and limited awareness of the legal and social consequences of sexual behaviour.
- c) R.K. (17 years old, Jeneponto, junior secondary school education) was charged under Article 81(1) of Law No. 23 of 2002. The identified contributing factors consisted of psychological conditions, social media exposure, peer influence, limited sexuality education, and family background.

¹⁶ Subhan, Rabil and Tomy Michael. "Faktor Penyebab Terjadi Tindak Pidana Kekerasan terhadap Anak di Kabupaten Lembata: Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Terjadinya Tindak Pidana Kekerasan terhadap Anak di Kabupaten Lembata." *Journal of Indonesian Comparative of Syari'ah Law* 7, no. 1 (2024): pp. 19-34. <https://doi.org/10.21111/jicl.v7i1.11948>

- d) M.R. (17 years old, Jeneponto, junior secondary school education) was prosecuted under Article 81(1) of Law No. 23 of 2002. His offending behaviour was influenced by psychological factors, social media exposure, peer influence, inadequate sexuality education, and family circumstances.
- e) M.I. (17 years old, Jeneponto, junior secondary school education) was prosecuted under Article 81(3) of Law No. 23 of 2002. The dominant contributing factors included psychological vulnerability, social media exposure, peer influence, limited sexuality education, and family environment.

Across all five cases, psychological vulnerability, family conditions, peer influence, social media exposure, and limited sexuality education consistently emerged as the dominant factors. These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that juvenile sexual offending is shaped by the interaction of individual, family, and environmental risk factors rather than by a single cause. However, this study extends the existing literature by showing how these factors are reflected in the lived experiences of children undergoing rehabilitation at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. This finding reinforces the importance of integrating legal psychology into rehabilitation programmes to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour and reduce the risk of reoffending.¹⁷

In connection with the variety of causes of the occurrence of children as perpetrators of sexual violence, sexual violence is caused by internal and external factors, including:

1. Internal Factors

Internal factors refer to aspects that originate within the child as the perpetrator of sexual violence, including psychological, biological, and spiritual dimensions, which are shaped by life history, family relationships, and interactions with peers, and directly influence the child's behavior.¹⁸

- a) Psychological Factors: play a significant role because immaturity of mental condition, distortion in understanding values, and sexual curiosity can drive the occurrence of sexual violence, which more reflects curious behavior rather than mere sexual urges. Handling at Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros shows the implementation of a multidisciplinary approach through the use of official records from the regional health service, so that the child's psychological condition is considered in the coaching and judicial process to prevent the repetition of similar behavior.
- b) Biological Factors: related to the child's physical development and biological maturity that affect deviant behavior.
 - 1) Age is a determining factor because the stage of a child's development greatly affects self-control, emotional maturity, and understanding of norms, so during adolescence, children are more vulnerable to committing sexual violence offenses.

Table 3: Age and sex Data of child inmates in the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros

¹⁷ Napitupulu, Yeremia Richardo, and Bryan Astro Julio. "Pelecehan Seksual Anak di Bawah Umur pada Anak Indonesia." *Jurnal Multidisiplin Indonesia* 2, no. 10 (2023): pp. 3088-3095. <https://doi.org/10.58344/jmi.v2i10.582>

¹⁸ Rochmah, Khoirunita Ulfiyatun, and Fathul Lubabin Nuqul. "Dinamika Psikologis Anak Pelaku Kejahatan Seksual." *Jurnal Psikologi Tabularasa* 10, no. 1 (2015): pp. 89-102. <https://doi.org/10.26905/jpt.v10i1.245>

No.	Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender
1	Respondent 01 (IR)	17	Male
2	Respondent 02 (MDA)	16	Male
3	Respondent 03 (MAR)	16	Male
4	Respondent 04 (ODS)	17	Male
5	Respondent 05 (SA)	17	Male
6	Respondent 06 (RB)	17	Male
7	Respondent 07 (MH)	14	Male
8	Respondent 08 (MR)	15	Male
9	Respondent 09 (MRS)	14	Male
10	Respondent 10 (STS)	15	Male
11	Respondent 11 (RH)	16	Male
12	Respondent 12 (NP)	17	Male
13	Respondent 13 (RFM)	17	Male
14	Respondent 14 (AB)	17	Male
15	Respondent 15 (SH)	16	Male
16	Respondent 16 (RLP)	15	Male
17	Respondent 17 (EA)	15	Male
18	Respondent 18 (MF)	16	Male
19	Respondent 19 (BH)	17	Male
20	Respondent 20 (TG)	15	Male
21	Respondent 21 (MAN)	16	Male
22	Respondent 22 (RAK)	17	Male
23	Respondent 23 (MR)	17	Male
24	Respondent 24 (MI)	17	Male

Source: Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros. Taken on April 29, 2025

Based on Table 3, 24 children who commit sexual violence who become inmates of Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros, with an age range of 14-17 years, all of them are minors. These findings indicate that the crime of sexual violence is not only committed by individuals who have reached the age of majority and are legally responsible, but also by children who are normatively still in parental custody.

- 2) Gender: Sexual violence crimes against children can be committed by both boys and girls, but in practice, cases are more often dominated by boys aged 14-17, indicating a particular vulnerability in that age and gender group to sexual violence behavior.¹⁹
- c) Spiritual Factors: Spiritual factors are related to weak moral, spiritual, and mental development in children, which should first be cultivated within the family environment as the initial space for education in values and character. A lack of spiritual development causes children to lack a strong ethical foundation in controlling impulses and distinguishing between right and wrong actions.

¹⁹ Kristiani, Ni Made Dwi. "Kejahatan Kekerasan Seksual (Perkosaan) Ditinjau dari Perspektif Kriminologi." *Jurnal Magister Hukum Udayana (Udayana Master Law Journal)* 3, no. 3 (2014): pp. 371-382. <https://doi.org/10.24843/JMHU.2014.v03.i03.p02>.

According to an interview with coaching section of the Head of Guidance at Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros, children of sexual violence offenders generally experience mental immaturity, identity crises, excessive sexual curiosity, and weak self-control, which are exacerbated by low religious education and lack of family role modeling. These conditions are often reinforced by experiences of emotional wounds, trauma, or a conflicted family environment, prompting children to channel their psychospiritual issues through deviant behavior, including sexual violence.

2. External Factors

External factors are factors that come from outside the child and contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence, including the loss of a father's role (fatherless), the influence of social media, economic instability, as well as low legal knowledge and awareness.

- a) Factors of Father Role Loss (Fatherless): The family is the first space for shaping a child's morals and character, especially through the father's role, which ideally should be actively involved in parenting. The fatherless condition, where the father is absent both physically and psychologically, causes the child to lose a figure of authority, affection, and a role model that influences physical, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and moral development. Continuous lack of paternal involvement has implications for weak control, supervision, and affection toward the child, thereby increasing vulnerability to juvenile delinquency, including deviant behaviors such as sexual violence.

Based on an interview with MFS, as the section of Administration and counseling guidance Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros that:²⁰

“For some children as perpetrators of criminal acts due to juvenile delinquency in Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros who are involved in sexual violence cases, the absence of a father figure in their lives is not just a loss of a family figure, but also a loss of a source of guidance, supervision, and security. Without a father, they grow up with gaps in parenting that make them more susceptible to unhealthy environments, peer pressure, and the increasingly unstoppable flow of information from social media. The lack of affection and attention from parents adds to the inner burden, making them seek recognition or escape in the wrong places. Slowly, the psychological resilience of children as perpetrators of sexual violence against deviant behavior was weakened, until finally they fell into the act that brought them behind bars, Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros.

Interview findings revealed that the absence of the father's role (*fatherless*) is proven to contribute significantly to children's involvement in sexual violence offenses. The absence of a father figure does not merely signify the loss of family structure but also the lack of guidance, supervision, and moral role modeling, which results in emotional voids and encourages children to seek recognition outside the family environment. This condition is further exacerbated by limited parental affection, negative peer associations, exposure to pornography, and the absence of adequate sexuality education.²¹

The fatherless phenomenon has become a significant issue in Indonesia. Data from BPS and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) show that 8.3% of children in 2018 lived only with their biological mothers, while National Population and Family

²⁰ LPKA Officer 1, Administration and Counseling Guidance Section, LPKA Class II Maros, interview by author on March 5, 2025.

²¹ Wagati Soetodjo, *Juvenile Criminal Law* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2006), pp. 1.

Planning Board (BKKBN) reported that 20.9% of children in 2025 grew up without a father figure. The absence of paternal involvement may hinder children's emotional development and behavioral regulation, increasing the risk of poor parenting outcomes, juvenile delinquency, and conflict with the law. This finding is supported by Widyastuti et al., who reported that weak emotional attachment between children and their fathers is associated with sexual violence involving children and recurrent offending.

3. Social Media Factors

- a) **Broad and unrestricted access:** The development of the internet and social media has facilitated easy access to information and communication; however, it has simultaneously created significant opportunities for children to be exposed to negative content, including pornography and online-based sexual violence.
- b) **High intensity of use among children and adolescents:** Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024) indicate that internet users in Indonesia reached 221.5 million people, with children and adolescents constituting the largest user group (34.40%). Approximately 70.8 percent of social media users spend between one and seven hours per day online, thereby increasing the risk of exposure to deviant content.
- c) **Popularity of social media platforms:** Social media platforms such as *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *Instagram*, *WhatsApp*, and other instant messaging applications are among the most frequently used platforms. These media are often exploited to disseminate sexual content, facilitate risky interactions, and normalize deviant behavior among children.
- d) **Exposure to pornography and behavioral imitation:** Children who are frequently exposed to pornographic content tend to imitate the behaviors they observe. Such exposure influences children's perceptions of sexuality and encourages the emergence of sexually violent behavior.
- e) **Lack of supervision and digital literacy:** Insufficient parental supervision and low levels of digital literacy hinder children's ability to critically filter the content they consume. As a result, children become more susceptible to engaging in sexual violence offenses, including repeated acts, as emphasized in the research of Andi Suci Syifawaru (2022).²²

4. Economic Factors

- a) **Family economic conditions:** Economic factors are classified as external factors because they are closely related to family financial conditions, such as income level, employment status, and limited resources, which indirectly influence children's development and behavior.
- b) **Poverty as a source of vulnerability:** Data from the Central Statistics Agency (*BPS*, March 2025) indicate that the number of people living in poverty in Indonesia reached 23.85 million (8.47 percent), despite a decline compared to the previous year. Poverty remains a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior committed by children, including sexual violence.

²² Amarulloh, Reza. "Criminological Study of Children Who Commit Murder (Study in East Jakarta Metro Police Area)." *Recidive: Journal of Criminal Law and Crime Prevention* 3, no. 1 (2014): pp. 97-105. <https://doi.org/10.20961/recidive.v3i1.40486>.

- c) Low levels of education and limited access to parenting: Economic deprivation often results in low educational attainment and inadequate parental supervision and guidance. Children from economically disadvantaged families tend to have a limited understanding of moral values, legal norms, and the consequences of their actions.
- d) The relationship between poverty and criminality: Difficult economic conditions, both directly and indirectly, generate social and psychological pressures that may increase the risk of deviant behavior. Poverty contributes to rising levels of criminality, including sexual violence offenses involving children.
- e) Low awareness of children's rights and protection: Children who grow up in poverty and lack access to education often have limited awareness of children's rights and the importance of protecting others, making them more vulnerable to involvement in sexually violent behavior.

As expressed by the respondent during the interview, most of the children as perpetrators of sexual violence come from families who are unemployed, unable, and do not have a decent job with a daily income just enough to eat while other needs are very difficult to meet.²³ It can be concluded that poverty is a structural factor that contributes to children's involvement in sexual violence, because economic limitations limit children's access to education, moral guidance, and parental supervision, thereby increasing vulnerability to negative association and exposure to pornographic content, which ultimately increases the risk of deviant behavior even though it is not the sole cause.

5. Factors of Legal Knowledge and Legal Awareness

- a) The importance of legal knowledge: Legal knowledge and understanding are essential in shaping children's legal awareness, particularly about sexual violence. Through adequate legal education, children who have undergone punishment are expected to comprehend legal norms, moral values, and the boundaries between lawful and unlawful (*halal-haram*) conduct in social life.
- b) The role of educational institutions: Educational institutions play a strategic role in providing education on sexuality, law, and ethics. Such education is crucial in preventing the recurrence of criminal behavior and in fostering legal maturity and a sense of responsibility among children.
- c) Low levels of public literacy: Data from UNESCO and the Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) indicate low levels of reading interest and literacy in Indonesia. This condition has a significant impact on the limited level of legal knowledge and legal awareness within society, despite the relatively adequate availability of educational infrastructure.
- d) Legal awareness and criminal behavior: The level of legal awareness strongly influences legal compliance. Low levels of legal understanding tend to correlate with higher rates of legal violations, including criminal offenses.

²³ LPKA Officer 1, Administration and Counseling Guidance Section of LPKA Class II Maros, *Interview*, on March 5, 2025.

- e) Soerjono Soekanto's perspective: According to Soerjono Soekanto, the highest level of legal awareness is not merely the knowledge of the law, but the ability to understand and internalize legal norms so that they are reflected in everyday behavior.²⁴

Empirical data obtained through interviews show:

"If we look at the assistance in Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros, the factor of knowledge and legal awareness of children who commit sexual violence is still low. Most of them do not really know that what they are doing is a sexual crime. They only understand in general that there are rules of law, but do not come to the realization of why the act is prohibited and what impact it has on the victim. For children, the law is often perceived simply as fear of the police or fear of being imprisoned, rather than a deep understanding that the law aims to protect them and others. Therefore, his legal consciousness is still superficial. Coupled with the lack of sexuality education in families and schools, many children do not know the limits of behavior that are still reasonable, with those that have entered the category of violations of the law. So, in our opinion, coaching in the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros should touch on this aspect: provide a simple understanding of the law, easy to understand, and teach about responsibility for their actions. That way, it is hoped that they can realize their mistakes and not repeat them after returning to society."²⁵

Interviews conducted at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros revealed that low levels of legal knowledge and awareness constitute a primary factor in children's engagement in sexual violence offenses. Generally, children do not comprehend that their actions constitute criminal acts due to limited legal knowledge and inadequate sexual education, resulting in a perception of the law as merely a threat rather than as a framework for protection and social responsibility.²⁶

These findings align with Soerjono Soekanto's theory, which posits that children's legal awareness remains at the stage of merely knowing the rules without genuine understanding or compliance, as well as Satjipto Rahardjo's perspective emphasizing law as a means of humanistic justice.²⁷ This condition underscores the necessity of the active roles of the state, family, schools, and rehabilitation institutions in enhancing legal literacy and sexual education, thereby fostering a deeper and more comprehensive development of children's legal awareness. Furthermore, an interview coaching section, Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) Class II Maros that:

"Most child sexual offenders have limited legal knowledge and often fail to recognize that their actions constitute criminal offenses, perceiving them instead as experimentation or behavior influenced by their social environment. This finding suggests that inadequate legal awareness is not an isolated factor but is closely linked to insufficient legal education within the family and school. The interaction between weak legal understanding and negative environmental influences appears to be a dominant factor shaping offending behavior. According to LPKA officers, legal education provided during rehabilitation aims to strengthen children's awareness of the legal consequences of their actions, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending"²⁸

The case of S.A. demonstrates that low legal awareness and limited understanding of legal consequences were significant factors contributing to the child's involvement in sexual violence

²⁴ Zulkifli, Zulkifli, Zeni Luthfiah, Mustofa Umar, Harti Winarni, Zainul Arifin, and Supriati H. Rahayu. "Street Children in the Context of Indonesian Law." *Asas Wa Tandhim: Journal of Law, Education, and Religious Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (2023): pp. 95–108. <https://doi.org/10.47200/awtjhpsa.v2i1.1570>.

²⁵ Legal Officer 1, Administration and Counseling Guidance Section of LPKA Class II Maros, *Interview*, on March 5, 2025.

²⁶ Munjiat, Siti Maryam. "The Effect of Fatherless on Child Character in the Islamic Perspective." *Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2017): pp. 108–116. <https://doi.org/10.24235/tarbawi.v2i1.2031>.

²⁷ Soerjono Soekanto, *Kesadaran Hukum Dan Kepatuhan Hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1982).

²⁸ Legal Officer 2, Coaching Section of LPKA Class II Maros, *Interview*, on March 5, 2025.

offenses. Future prevention strategies should focus on strengthening legal education from an early age, while also improving the roles of family, schools, and the social environment so that children can internalize the law as a guide for responsible behavior.²⁹

Integration of Law and Child Mental Health as Perpetrators of Sexual Violence

Rehabilitation for children as perpetrators of sexual violence is generally carried out through diversion agreements, which may include both medical and psychosocial rehabilitation. Medical rehabilitation refers to an integrated treatment process aimed at restoring the physical condition of children in conflict with the law (*ABH*), child victims, and child witnesses. Although Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System does not explicitly define psychosocial rehabilitation, it is generally understood as a series of services designed to help children who have committed sexual violence and experience mental or psychosocial difficulties develop the emotional, social, and intellectual skills necessary for daily functioning. This form of rehabilitation also seeks to restore mental well-being, strengthen life skills, promote social reintegration, encourage active participation in society, and ultimately improve the child's overall quality of life.³⁰

Children in conflict with the law (*ABH*) who are assessed through social reports by Probation Officers and professional social workers are entitled to receive medical rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and social reintegration. Social rehabilitation aims to restore children physically, mentally, and socially so they can resume their social functions. The implementation of rehabilitation must prioritize the best interests of the child through individual assessments based on their circumstances, needs, and specific conditions.³¹

Rehabilitation decisions for children as perpetrators of sexual violence must prioritize the best interests of the child through individual assessments involving competent professionals. The *Committee on the Rights of the Child* emphasizes that assessments should consider general elements applicable to all children and specific elements related to sexual violence cases, including recidivism risk and rehabilitation needs. These assessments aim to determine appropriate interventions based on the child's condition and circumstances.³²

The general elements that must be considered in determining the best interests of the child include the child's views, identity, family environment and relationships, upbringing, protection and safety, vulnerability, health, and education rights. In sexual violence cases, the child's ability to express their views may be limited due to the criminal process and restrictions resulting from detention or imprisonment. Meanwhile, aspects related to family relationships, protection, safety, and vulnerability can be addressed through the existence of Special Child Development Institutions (*LPK4*) as alternative child-care facilities that separate children from

²⁹ Ananta, Yusi Desia. "Handling Lack of Parental Attention on Early Childhood Behavior." *Lencana: Jurnal Inovasi Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2025): pp. 145–154. <https://doi.org/10.55606/lencana.v3i1.4507>.

³⁰ Korobu, Laury M. G. "Analisis Pelaksanaan Layanan Instalasi Rehabilitasi Psikososial di Rumah Sakit Jiwa Prof. Dr. V. L. Ratumbuang Provinsi Sulawesi Utara." *JIKMU: Jurnal Ilmu Kesehatan Masyarakat* 5, no. 3 (2015): pp. 179–186. <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/v2/index.php/jikmu/article/view/7435>

³¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 14 (2013) on the Right of the Child to Have His or Her Best Interests Taken as a Primary Consideration (Article 3, Paragraph 1)* (Geneva: United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013), pp. 32.

³² Putra, Made Ryan Permana, I Made Sepud, and Ketut Adi Wirawan. "Efektivitas Pembimbingan Kemasyarakatan Terhadap Anak Pelaku Pelecehan Seksual di Balai Pemasyarakatan Kelas I Denpasar." *Jurnal Preferensi Hukum* 5, no. 2 (2024): pp. 216–221. <https://doi.org/10.22225/jph.5.2.2024.216-221>.

adult offenders, reducing the risk of discrimination and negative influences. As stated by Abintoro Prakoso, children involved in criminal cases are more vulnerable to rights violations compared to adult offenders. Furthermore, children's rights to health and education are guaranteed under Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection.³³

Assessment of children involved in sexual abuse cases should include recidivism risk evaluation as a basis for determining appropriate rehabilitation interventions. R. Karl Hanson et al. classify recidivism risk into low, moderate, and high levels based on the likelihood of reoffending. One assessment method that can be used is the *Violence Risk Scale-Sexual Offender Version* (VRS-SO), which evaluates sexual offense risk, identifies treatment needs, and measures changes during rehabilitation through static and dynamic risk factors.³⁴

According to the researchers, recidivism risk assessment for children involved in sexual violence cases is necessary to determine the appropriate type and intensity of rehabilitation. Stephen C. P. Wong et al. explain that children or adults assessed as having a high risk of reoffending require more intensive treatment and psychological intervention compared to those with moderate or low risk. Furthermore, evaluating rehabilitation based on the best interests of the child requires examining the fulfillment of children's rights under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which can be divided into general rights applicable to all children undergoing rehabilitation and specific rights addressing the recovery, prevention of recidivism, and healthy development of children involved in sexual violence cases.³⁵

General rights for children undergoing rehabilitation refer to the protections under General Comment No. 24 of 2019, including the right to education, health services, family contact, vocational training, recreational activities, and protection from inhuman treatment. Meanwhile, specific rights for children in conflict with the law (*ABH*) in sexual violence cases include receiving rehabilitation tailored to their needs to support recovery, prevent recidivism, and facilitate reintegration into society. Appropriate intervention is essential because some sexual offenders begin their behavior during childhood or adolescence.³⁶

Placing juveniles in prison without adequate care or rehabilitation programs is insufficient to address their problems and support their reintegration into society. Children involved in sexual violence cases require therapeutic interventions that can modify maladaptive behavior patterns, reduce sexually aggressive tendencies, and improve psychological well-being. According to Phil Rich, rehabilitation should focus on developing positive mental health and strengthening the psychosocial functioning of children and adolescents. Rehabilitation is not limited to recovery but also involves the process of restoring, reforming, and reintegrating children into society, considering that many juvenile offenders have experienced emotional and behavioral difficulties

³³ Hanson, R. Karl, Andrew J. R. Harris, Leslie Helmus, and David Thornton. "High-Risk Sex Offenders May Not Be High Risk Forever." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 29, no. 15 (2014): pp. 2792-2813. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514526062>.

³⁴ Wong, Stephen C. P. "Assessing Risk Change in Sexual Offender Treatment Using the Violence Risk Scale-Sexual Offender Version: A Brief Overview." *Online Sexual Offender Treatment Journal* 8, no. 1 (2013): pp. 1-12.

³⁵ Ware, Jennifer, Andrew Frost, and Ann Hoy. "A Review of the Use of Therapeutic Communities with Sexual Offenders." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 54, no. 5 (2010): pp. 721-742. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X09343169>.

³⁶ Amanda, P. K., P. Riski, F. Sahputra, and M. N. Habib. "Mencegah dan Melindungi: Menangani Kekerasan Seksual terhadap Anak dengan Bukti." *Jurnal Peradilan Indonesia* 4 (2017): pp. 55-66.

before committing offenses. These difficulties are often associated with cognitive distortions, which are patterns of thinking that justify or normalize harmful behavior, such as believing that victims consented to or enjoyed the sexual acts. Therefore, rehabilitation must address these cognitive distortions to support behavioral change and prevent future offenses.³⁷

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) serves as the primary approach in the rehabilitation of child perpetrators of sexual violence because it focuses on changing distorted thought patterns and maladaptive behaviors, particularly cognitive distortions that may contribute to sexually aggressive actions. Meanwhile, Therapeutic Community (TC) functions as a supportive approach through a structured social environment that encourages positive behavior, openness, and mutual support among individuals. Providing rehabilitation based on children's specific needs through CBT and TC reflects the principle of the best interests of the child, as it promotes recovery, reduces the risk of recidivism, and supports children's reintegration into society.³⁸

Psychological and legal support for children in conflict with the law (*ABH*) is essential because they are still undergoing emotional and cognitive development and are vulnerable to trauma. Therefore, handling should prioritize rehabilitation, protection, and the best interests of the child rather than punishment alone. Based on Government Regulation No. 78 of 2021 concerning Special Protection for Children, children have the right to protection, services, and counseling assistance. However, its implementation for children as perpetrators of sexual violence remains unclear, resulting in a gap between regulations and practice.³⁹

The criteria for children in the juvenile justice system are determined primarily based on age. According to Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (*SPPA*), a child in conflict with the law (*ABH*) refers to a child aged 12 to under 18 years who is suspected of committing a criminal act. However, the definition of a child varies across Indonesian laws and legal perspectives. The Civil Code considers a person under 21 years old and unmarried as a minor, while Law Number 4 of 1979 concerning Child Welfare also defines a child as someone under 21 years old who has never married. Other regulations, such as labor law, use different age limits. Under customary law, adulthood is not solely determined by age but by independence, the ability to work, fulfill social responsibilities, and manage personal affairs. Meanwhile, in Islamic law, a person is considered a child (*ṣabī*) until reaching puberty (*akīl balīg*). These differences show that the concept of childhood in Indonesia is influenced by legal, social, cultural, and religious perspectives.⁴⁰

The definition of a child in Indonesian law has shifted from a punitive approach to a child protection and human rights-based approach. Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (*SPPA*) defines a child in conflict with the law (*ABH*) as a child aged 12 to under

³⁷ Moster, Ann, Danielle Wnuk, and Elizabeth L. Jeglic. "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Interventions with Sex Offenders." *Journal of Correctional Health Care* 14, no. 2 (2008): pp. 109-121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078345807313874>

³⁸ Firmansyah, B. "Strategi Pembimbing Kemasyarakatan Membangun Hubungan Baik (Rapport) dengan Klien Anak untuk Kepentingan Penelitian Kemasyarakatan (Studi Kasus: BAPAS Kelas I Malang)." *NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 8, no. 2 (2021): pp. 20-30

³⁹ Saragih, Marsel Agustino, and Janpatar Simamora. "Peranan Kejaksaan terhadap Kasus Tindak Pidana Pelecehan Seksual Anak di Bawah Umur." *Jurnal Media Informatika [JUMIN]* 6, no. 2 (2025): pp. 1021-1029. <http://ejournal.sisfokomtek.org/index.php/jumin>.

⁴⁰ Wardhana, Sindira Riefly. "Analisis Putusan Hakim terhadap Anak Pelaku Tindak Pidana Kejahatan Seksual (Studi Putusan Pengadilan Wonogiri Nomor: 4/Pid.Sus-Anak/2018/PN Wng)." *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum* 10, no. 3 (2019): pp. 1-10.

18 years suspected of committing a criminal offense. This change recognizes children's limited cognitive and emotional maturity and emphasizes rehabilitation, reintegration, and protection in accordance with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* and the *Beijing Rules*. Therefore, children at LPKA Class II Maros require educational and rehabilitative interventions to support behavioral change and prevent reoffending.

CONCLUSION

Preventing children from becoming involved in sexual violence requires an integrated approach that addresses both internal and external vulnerabilities. Findings from the Maros Class II Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) indicate that offending behavior is shaped by the interaction of family conditions, limited legal and sexual literacy, and negative environmental influences during adolescence. This study demonstrates that prevention cannot rely solely on the roles of families and schools but also requires active involvement from the state through a child centered juvenile justice system that prioritizes rehabilitation. Interventions such as *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)* as the core treatment, supported by the *Therapeutic Community (TC)* approach, together with restorative justice and structured guidance in LPKA, play an important role in reducing the risk of repeat offending and facilitating social reintegration. The academic contribution of this study lies in integrating legal, psychological, and social perspectives into a comprehensive prevention and rehabilitation framework for children in conflict with the law, providing evidence that effective prevention depends on coordinated efforts among families, schools, communities, and legal institutions.

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