



Beyond Juvenile Delinquency: Youth Involvement as Perpetrators of Criminality

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A B S T R A C T

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has gone beyond the patterns of deviant behavior and actions categorized as juvenile delinquency. Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality has not been given much scientific attention in previous studies. This study focuses on the question, "How is the involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality that occurs in Indonesia?" This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to exploring the forms, characteristics, and factors that influence a teenager to become a perpetrator of criminality disseminated through online media coverage. The collection and reading of online news focused on news titles containing criminality cases involving teenagers by using the search keyword "Involvement of teenagers as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia" on the Google search engine. The findings in this study show that the involvement of teenagers as perpetrators of criminality has gone beyond the deviant behavior patterns of juvenile delinquency. The context can be reflected through the forms and characteristics of the acts committed by teenagers, ranging from maltreatment, drug abuse, to murder. This study also recommends the importance of looking at the welfare of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality and the law enforcement process to obtain a comprehensive and more empirical understanding.

A. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has exceeded the patterns of deviant behavior and actions categorized as juvenile delinquency. Doelman et al. (2021) juvenile delinquency is an act that deviates from the values and norms that apply in society. However, Olsson (2010) said that deviations committed by adolescents could no longer be conceptualized as a trend of delinquent behavior but rather as a form of criminality (Fernando et al., 2023; Payne & Roffey, 2020). This context is evidenced by the involvement of many adolescents as perpetrators of criminality, such as theft, persecution, and even murder, which are not a few in Indonesia (Saifullah, 2022; Pranita, 2023; Aisyah, 2023). The involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality in Rogan's (2021) view is a phenomenon that has complex and contextual

characteristics, so the phenomenon is critical to analyze and reflect on. Therefore, the focus of this study was the discussion of trends, characteristics, and factors that encourage adolescents to commit criminality.

Adolescent life is a topic that always attracts public attention, especially regarding moral panic and the criminal acts they commit (Bengtsson and Ravn, 2018). Kleemans and van Koppen (2020) said that adults and teenagers dominate criminality. Drug abuse, fights, theft, promiscuity, and even murder are not least committed by teenagers (Syah Putra and Kadarisman, 2016). In terms of impact, acts of criminality committed by adolescents have led to the stigmatization of adolescents (Pariseau and Supeno, 2019), especially for adolescents who have experienced social isolation while in prison (Strémy et al., 2019). Therefore, criminal acts committed by adolescents often threaten the future of adolescents in an increasingly negative direction (Airlangga PH et al., 2024; Ilyas et al.,

2019; Munjiah, 2023). Miller & Vuolo (2018) also said that criminal acts committed by adolescents can significantly affect their moral, psychological, and well-being conditions in a more negative direction so that these actions can no longer be categorized as juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency is an act of teenage children who violate social norms and disturb public order, causing harm to the perpetrator and society (Bobbio et al., 2020). In line with that, Utami and Santoso (2021) also said that juvenile delinquency is behavior that deviates from legal norms in the family, school, and community environment. Juvenile delinquency also disturbs the security of the community where they live (Ketut et al., 2022). Juvenile delinquency also appears in the form of deviant behavior such as smoking, motorcycle gangs, wild races, and being involved in fights (Andriyani, 2020; Widari et al., 2023). Juvenile delinquency by Een et al. (2020) is often influenced by identity, self-control, age, gender, school values, family, peer influence, socioeconomic class, and the quality of the living environment. However, in the view of Utami and Santoso (2021), juvenile delinquency no longer refers to patterns of behavior that are considered deviant from values and norms but instead to actions that lead to criminality.

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality is critical to analyze and reflect upon. However, so far, studies that have discussed the phenomenon of adolescent participation in criminality cases only focus on three contexts: First, studies that focus on discussing adolescent involvement as a criminal offender in the context of teenage experience (Barra et al., 2022; Bonner et al., 2020; DeLisi et al., 2019). Second, studies focus on youth criminal involvement in the context of gender (Pierce and Jones, 2022; Yun et al., 2022; Carvalho et al., 2021). Third, studies focus on youth criminal involvement in social implications (Antunes and Manasse, 2022; Sharma and Su, 2017; Loeber and Farrington, 2000). Generally, studies that discuss adolescent criminal involvement only focus on three contexts: experience, gender, and social implications. Thus, youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality has not been comprehensively discussed, especially those that discuss trends, characteristics, and causal factors.

Youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality is a critical context to analyze and explain. This context is also in line with what Rogan (2021) said: children's participation in criminal acts is crucial to clarify because this context has complex and contextual characteristics. However, studies that discuss adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality have not been conducted comprehensively, especially those that reflect the trends, characteristics, and factors that encourage adolescents to commit criminal acts, given the lack of discussion on adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality. Therefore, this study not only responds to the

shortcomings of the previous studies but also explains and analyzes the trends, characteristics, and factors that encourage adolescents to commit criminal acts because the involvement of adolescents in committing criminal acts by Olsson (2010) indicates that deviations committed by adolescents no longer appear as familiar behavior, but rather a form of criminal acts.

Deviations committed by adolescents no longer appear as delinquent behavior but rather as acts of criminality. Criminal acts committed by adolescents are exciting to explain and analyze the trends, characteristics, and factors that encourage adolescents to commit these acts. Therefore, to explain and analyze adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality, this study focuses on three questions: First, how is adolescents' involvement as perpetrators in criminal cases? Second, what do teenagers commit to the characteristics of criminality? Third, what factors encourage adolescents to commit criminal acts? In line with that, this study is also based on the argument that deviant behavior committed by adolescents is no longer shown through actions familiar with violations of values and norms that apply in a communal society. In other words, the actions and behaviors of adolescents no longer refer to deviations from values and norms in the form of delinquency but have emerged in the form of criminal acts.

B. METHOD

This study was conducted during rampant online media coverage of adolescents committing criminal acts in Indonesia. Adolescents in this study refer to the conception of Chan and Heide (2008) as a group of individuals aged 18 years and under. However, this study only analyzes trends, characteristics, and factors that influence adolescents to commit criminal acts through cases reported on online media. In line with that, this study is also based on three considerations. First, the involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality is a central issue that previous studies have not comprehensively addressed. Second, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality also reflects characteristics so unique and diverse that it is essential to analyze them. Thirdly, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality is critical to reflect on. These three considerations are the basis for this study to explore and reflect on adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality disseminated through online media coverage.

This study is descriptive qualitative based on primary and secondary data. Primary data used in this study are excerpts from descriptions of online news texts obtained through an in-depth reading process of 1,500 online news texts using the search keyword "Youth involvement as criminal offenders in Indonesia" (*Keterlibatan remaja sebagai pelaku kriminalitas di Indonesia*) through the Google search engine. Searching and reading

online news texts started from May 1 to June 3, 2023. The selection and reading of the online news was carried out by three authors, quickly focusing on online news titles that are relevant to the focus of the research. The reading process resulted in 499 online news articles that disseminated the trend of teenagers' involvement in criminality, 498 online news articles that disseminated the characteristics of criminality committed by teenagers, and 503 online news articles that disseminated the factors that influence teenagers to become criminals. Secondary data in this study was obtained through reading books, websites, and journal articles relevant to the focus of this study.

Data analysis in this study refers to the process carried out by Fernando et al. (2023), which focused on three processes: First, the process of reducing data, which is the process of rearranging data into a systematic form based on the classification of the data that has been obtained according to the trends, characteristics, and factors of the trends in the data. Second, verifying data is the process of thematically concluding the data that has been reduced. Third, displaying data is a process of describing the data obtained and then displaying it in the form of a table of online news text excerpts that the focus of the discussion has verified. From these three processes, the next step is to analyze the data inductively as a basis for interpreting the data that has been obtained (Fernando et al., 2021; Abdullah, et al., 2023; Galuh Larasati et al., 2023). The interpretation stage restates and reflects the data by the patterns, actions, and conditions described in the online news text. The process and stages of analysis made it possible to conclude the involvement of children as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has exceeded the patterns of behavior and actions defined as juvenile delinquency. The involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality by Dijk et al. (2022) is a pattern of behavior and actions with complex characteristics, both in trends, forms, and factors that influence adolescents in committing criminal acts. This context can be explained through the findings and discussion below.

1. Youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has been shown through a reasonably high trend from year to year. The high involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality, by Esposti et al. (2019), can be seen through the trend of youth involvement in criminal acts from year to year. This context can be seen through the display in Table 1.

Table 1. Trends in adolescents as perpetrators of criminality

Criminality	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Brawl	76	74	88	84	7
Rape	146	168	161	183	44
Maltreatment	108	112	107	121	58
Theft	43	57	75	55	22
Murder	48	51	54	46	8
Abortion	48	53	67	44	10
Psychic abuse	170	157	159	77	23

Source. KPAI (2022)

Table 1 describes the trend of youth involvement in criminality in Indonesia over the last five years, as reported by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI). In line with that, Table 1 also shows two critical contexts regarding the trend of youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia.

First, in the last five years, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has been addressed through a reasonably high trend. The involvement of teenagers as perpetrators of criminality appears in various case characteristics ranging from minor crimes, such as brawls, to severe criminality, such as rape and murder, which teenagers slightly commit. Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of minor and severe criminality indicates that adolescent behavior can no longer be categorized as a deviation but as a form of criminality.

Secondly, rape is one of the most common crimes committed by teenagers in the last five years in Indonesia. Criminality in the form of rape committed by teenagers was the case with the highest stability in 2019, with 183 cases, 168 cases in 2017, 161 cases in 2018, and 146 cases in 2016. The high trend of involvement of teenagers as perpetrators of rape indicates that rape in Indonesia is not only potentially committed by the adult age group but also by the increasingly massive teenager age group.

From these two contexts, adolescents' involvement in criminal cases has consistently increased over the last five years. The involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality is not only shown through a very high trend in the previous five years but also shows patterns and changes in the behavior of adolescent age groups that go beyond an act of deviation. In other words, the involvement of teenagers as perpetrators of criminality positions teenagers as potential victims and perpetrators of criminality.

2. Characteristics of Criminality Committed by Youth

Criminality committed by adolescents in Indonesia has been shown through complex patterns and characteristics. The characteristics of criminality committed by adolescents by Huang et al. (2020) can be seen through the patterns and acts of criminality

committed by teenagers. This context can be seen through the display in Table 2.

Table 2. Criminality characteristics of juveniles

Criminality	Cases
Deprivation	"The incident, which occurred in the early morning, victimized an employee who had just returned from work. The victim was forced to give up his motorcycle due to being threatened with sharp weapons by a group of teenage begal (deprivation)." (Hapsari, 2020).
Murder	"Last week, it was reported that two teenagers in Makassar, South Sulawesi, stabbed and killed an 11-year-old boy." (Aisyah, 2023).
Rape	"The four perpetrators of the rape of teenager P (13) in the Urban Forest area, North Jakarta, who were arrested by the police, are underage." (Sutrisna, 2022).
Maltreatment	"Violence against teenagers and perpetrated by teenagers has been rampant lately. One case of teenage violence that caught the public's attention was the assault committed by Mario Dandi (20)." (Pranita, 2023).
Robbery	"Polda Metro Jaya arrested RTS (26) at his relative's house in Bogor. RTS is suspected of being the mastermind of the robbery and rape of a teenage girl named ASA (15)." (Mansur, 2021).
Theft	"The Banda Aceh City Police arrested a gang of teenage boys and an adult man for alleged theft at the State Junior High School." (Saifullah, 2022).
Drug abuse	"Recently, the Drug Investigation Unit of Purwakarta Police arrested a 15-year-old teenager for allegedly being involved in drug differences. The perpetrator, whose initials are RD, is allegedly the son of a senior dangdut singer." (Mulyaningtyas, 2023).

Source. Online news

Table 2 describes cases of criminality committed by teenagers in Indonesia with complex characteristics published in several online media news. In line with that,

Table 2 also shows two critical contexts regarding the traits of criminals committed by teenagers in Indonesia.

First, in the last five years, the behavior patterns of adolescents have emerged in the form of actions that go beyond deviant behavior. This context can be seen through the involvement of adolescents in increasingly massive criminal cases such as robbery, murder, rape, persecution, drug abuse, and even theft, which are behaviors that are not only carried out by adolescents in Indonesia. This context indicates that the behavior patterns of the adolescent age group in Indonesia have experienced a crisis of morality and compliance with the legal system.

Second, criminality committed by teenagers in Indonesia in the last five years has emerged as very complex. Using sharp weapons, committing violence, and making threats are criminality that teenagers in Indonesia, not least. This context not only indicates a form of behavior pattern that goes beyond the deviant actions of the adolescent age group but also illustrates the low awareness of the adolescent age group in understanding and complying with the applicable laws and social norms.

From these two contexts, it can be reflected that the involvement of adolescents in criminal acts has been shown through complex characteristics in the last five years. The attributes of criminal behavior patterns committed by adolescents are demonstrated through various cases over the previous five years and through multiple modes, such as using sharp weapons accompanied by acts of violence. In other words, the characteristics of criminal behavior patterns carried out by the adolescent age group in Indonesia are situational and planned behavior.

3. Factors of Teenagers Becoming Criminals

The factors that cause the adolescent age group in Indonesia to become criminal offenders are complex and contextualized. According to Reil et al. (2021), factors that influence adolescents to become criminal offenders can be seen through the motives that underlie them to commit acts of lawlessness or criminality in their social environment. This context can be seen through the display in Table 3.

Table 3. Teenagers' motives for becoming criminals

Motif	Cases
Economy	"When a child is in a family with a low socioeconomic level, the child has a greater possibility of committing criminal acts, including stealing behavior." (Ihsan, 2022)
Family	"The family plays a role in instilling values and social norms in children. Lack of understanding of norms can also lead a child to commit theft

	because the child does not understand that this behavior is a criminality." (Ihsan, 2022).
Neighborhood	"Children who are raised in a neighborhood where there is much stealing behavior, or see shows related to theft, then children can also learn this behavior and imitate it." (Ihsan, 2022).
Self-control	"Children who have difficulty controlling themselves are more likely to violate rules, including committing criminality." (Ihsan, 2022).
Media	"One of the factors that trigger children to commit violence is the increasing and uncontrolled influence of technology and social media." (Kompasiana, 2021)
Disharmony	"Unharmonious family conditions are one of the causes of drug abuse in adolescents. The family environment is a big reason for teenagers to use drugs." (Aulia, 2019).
Mentality	"KPAI has noted many factors to be the cause of the increase in criminality cases. The involvement of a child in committing a criminal offense, among others, is mentally unstable." (Rachman, 2022).

Source. Online news

Table 3 describes the motives of the teenage age group involved in criminality cases in Indonesia with dimensional reasons published in online media news. In line with that, Table 3 also shows two critical contexts regarding the teenage age group's motives for committing criminal acts in Indonesia.

First, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminal acts in Indonesia is not least based on internal reasons. Family factors, family disharmony, mentality, and the lack of self-control of adolescents have dominantly influenced the behavior patterns of the adolescent age group in committing criminal acts in Indonesia. This context shows that an adolescent's circumstances and social position in the social system strongly influence the criminality committed by an adolescent.

Second, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminal acts in Indonesia is also based on external reasons. Economic factors, the media, and the conditions of the social environment have also dominantly influenced the behavior patterns of the adolescent age

group in committing criminal acts in Indonesia. This context shows that the situation and conditions of the social structure strongly influence the criminality committed by a teenager.

The two contexts indicate that internal and external factors influence adolescents' involvement in criminal cases. These factors suggest that the participation of teenagers in criminal cases does not only arise from the teenagers' desire but is also supported by situations and conditions that allow them to become perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia. In other words, the involvement of teenagers in criminal acts in Indonesia is a consequence of the prevailing or not prevailing social system and social structure in their environment.

4. Making sense of youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has gone beyond the patterns of deviant behavior and actions categorized as juvenile delinquency. This context can be seen through three critical findings in this study. First, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality is shown through a reasonably high trend in the last seven years, from 2015 to 2021. Second, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality appears in complex patterns and characteristics, ranging from cases of drug abuse to perpetrators of murder. Third, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality is influenced by various factors, such as individual, family, and social environment factors that are not accommodating to the interests of adolescents. This context is the basis for saying that deviant behavior committed by adolescents can no longer be categorized as juvenile delinquency that violates communal values and norms but rather a form of criminality that violates the law. From these findings, it can be concluded that adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia has gone beyond the patterns and behaviors of deviant actions categorized as juvenile delinquency.

This study reflects that adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality shows a change in increasingly massive trends and indicates a change in adolescent behavior from deviant behavior to lawlessness. This context can be seen through the increasingly massive involvement of adolescents in acts such as brawls and drug abuse (Ni Made and Ni Ketut, 2020), so this behavior is categorized as criminality rather than delinquency (Isnawan, 2020). Two factors influence children's involvement in criminal acts: personality, mentality, and social adaptation. Syah Putra and Kadarisman (2016) also said that adolescent criminal acts are not least influenced by external factors based on cultural conflicts, cultural distribution, ideological differences, population density, economics, and socio-emotional. However, in Dennison's (2019) view, internal factors are the dominant factors that

encourage teenagers to commit criminal acts in their social environment.

Adolescents' involvement in criminal acts also highlights the importance of comprehensive knowledge from parents and society in accommodating the interests of adolescents as subjects. In Dennison's (2019) view, the lack of the role of parents and the social environment in an adolescent's social adaptation can influence an adolescent's mentality to commit acts of criminality. Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality positions them as legally problematic individuals. It has a dominant impact on the changes and well-being of adolescents' lives in an increasingly negative direction in the future (Mueller et al., 2019). Therefore, Edge (2011) said adolescents aged 18 years and under must get special attention from their social environment, especially those involved in violating the law. This context is also in line with what Adriany et al. (2021) said, that an accommodating social system and regulatory system must support an adolescent in social adaptation.

The findings in this study differ from previous studies. Studies that discuss the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency only focus on aspects of social deviance in the context of experience (Barra et al., 2022), gender aspects (Pierce and Jones, 2022), and social implications (Antunes & Manasse, 2022). However, this study's findings show that adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality has gone beyond the patterns of deviant behavior and actions categorized as juvenile delinquency. In the view of Ni Made and Ni Ketut (2020), this context can be seen through the widespread involvement of adolescents who become perpetrators of criminality, such as drug abuse, to increasingly massive murder cases, so this behavior is categorized as an act of criminality rather than juvenile delinquency. Kleemans and van Koppen (2020) also said that adults and teenagers dominate criminality. This context is the basis for this study to say that adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality has gone beyond the patterns of deviant behavior and actions categorized as juvenile delinquency.

Given the potential and massive involvement of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality who have gone beyond patterns of behavior and deviant actions as a form of juvenile delinquency, the knowledge and role of parents and society are essential in preventing and minimizing adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality. Li et al. (2023) also said that the role of parents and society in dominantly accommodating the interests of adolescents is not only able to change adolescent behavior patterns but will also have long-term implications for the welfare of adolescents in the future. In line with that, the critical findings in this study can also be used as a lesson learned for parents and communities in positioning and accommodating adolescents' welfare in the future based on subjective and contextual interests. Therefore, in addition to accommodating the interests of the subject, the

knowledge and awareness of parents and society in treating adolescents in a social system and legal system is also a critical context in minimizing the occurrence of juvenile criminality.

D. CONCLUSION

Adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality has gone beyond the pattern of deviant behavior as a form of juvenile delinquency. This context can be seen through three critical findings in this study. First, there is a high trend of youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality in the last seven years, from 2015 to 2021. Second, criminality committed by teenagers, such as assault, drug abuse, and murder, are forms of law violation that can no longer be categorized as deviant actions. Third, adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality is influenced by various factors, including economic factors, family, and social environment. However, individual factors are the dominant factors that influence adolescents to commit criminal acts. From these three findings, it can be concluded that adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality has exceeded the pattern of deviant behavior as a form of juvenile delinquency.

In general, conversations about youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality focus on the experience, gender, and social implications of adolescents who deviate from social values and norms. However, the findings in this study show a different reality that adolescents' involvement as perpetrators of criminality has gone beyond the pattern of deviant behavior as a form of delinquency committed by a teenager. The findings in this study are expected to be a lesson learned for parents and society in accommodating and positioning adolescents in their social system. However, they are also likely to be a dialogical basis for other studies to inform policymakers in treating adolescents involved in problems or violations of the law.

This study also has weaknesses in the data collection process, which is only done through a search process through online media reports using the search keywords "Youth involvement as perpetrators of criminality in Indonesia" on the Google platform. Therefore, the data obtained and described in this study only refer to documents in quotations from online news texts disseminated through online media coverage. However, the weaknesses in this study are expected to be the basis or reference for future studies, especially for studies that focus on explaining the welfare of adolescents as perpetrators of criminality and the law enforcement process through in-depth interviews with adolescents, parents, and law enforcers, to obtain a comprehensive and more empirical understanding.

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