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Sexual Harassment in Boys: An Overview of Child Victims and Child **Perpetrators in Indonesia**

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN BOYS: AN OVERVIEW OF CHILD VICTIMS AND CHILD PERPETRATORS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

There are still few studies on sexual harassment toward boys. In society, there is still a lot of skepticism and stigma about whether boys can be perpetrators or victims of sexual harassment. The purpose of this study was to explore the occurrence of sexual violence towards boys, such as the dynamics of the perpetrators and victims, the motivation of the perpetrators to commit sexual violence, and the impact of sexual violence on victims. This study used a descriptive qualitative method, with 17 subjects aged 0–18. The data collection used a study of documents collected from trial facts in the Directory of Supreme Court Decisions. The data were analyzed by the N-Vivo application for data processing, management, ideas, queries, visualization, and reporting. This study found that imitation was the main trigger for perpetrators to commit sexual harassment. From the victim's side, the impact the victim feels is a feeling of trauma, depression, and sensitivity. The role of the environment and online media needs attention in preventing and handling sexual violence against children.

Keywords: Boys; Sexual Harassment; Victim; Perpetrator.

Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023

A. Introduction

Sexual harassment and sexual abuse phenomena experienced by children are similar to icebergs; what appears on the surface does not represent the whole truth. The term "sexual harassment" was developed from an interrelated multidisciplinary background, either law or psychology, starting in 1970 (Young & Hegarty, 2019). This development is due to the need to look deeper into the problems in viewing sexual harassment. Culture becomes one of the obstacles in resolving sexual harassment cases. Many stigmas around sexual harassment cases amongst boys remain to exist. Most notably, people believe that it is impossible to happen or that, in the small instance they become victims, it happens due to their weaknesses (Hohendorff et al., 2017). Those social beliefs inhibit boys who fall victim to sexual harassment from asking for help because it threatens their masculine identity (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2016).

Records from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission show that the number of child sexual harassment victims and perpetrators increases yearly with various sexual harassment activities carried out by children. Unlike the previous years that show no report related to sodomy/ pedophilia committed by children, in 2020, KPAI noted there were child perpetrators of such sexual harassment. It is reported that there were 11 cases of child perpetrators of sodomy/pedophilia, which had never happened in the previous year. Additionally, the number of cases of children as owners of pornographic videos (e.g., mobile phones/ videos) increased significantly from 94 people in 2019 to 389 people in 2020. The full details can be seen in figure 1.

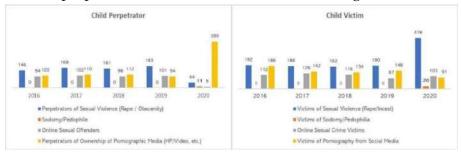


Figure 1. The number of sexual harassment cases

Figure 1 shows the number of sexual harassment cases among children, both perpetrators and victims. The figure shows a rapid increase in cases for

four consecutive years. In 2016 cases of children victims were 192, which increased to 188 victims in 2017, 182 victims in 2018, 190 victims in 2019, and 419 victims in 2020. This 200% increase shows Indonesia is experiencing an emergency in child sexual harassment cases. Prior research has provided data on harassment against both girls and boys. However, limited studies have specifically explored how boys become victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment. Figure 1 also shows that in 2020, there were 11 cases of children as perpetrators of sodomy and 20 children who became victims of sodomy (KPAI, 2020). This situation raises the question about the dynamics of perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment and possible preventive efforts.

Talking about sexual violence against men as victims is also exciting, without reducing the concern for all male and female victims. Questions arise on whether the solid patriarchal culture in Indonesia causes male victims to receive less support because they are considered weak and unable to take care of themselves. When boys experience abuse, it threatens their masculine identity, affecting their health and social life (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2016).

Another challenge in revealing sexual harassment cases in boys is the silent nature of boys, as they keep their thoughts to themselves. Other inhibiting factors for men's sexual abuse disclosure include interpersonal factors, unassertiveness, rigid family structure, solid patriarchal systems, and family communication patterns that are not open (Alaggia et al., 2019). Those factors contribute to the underreported sexual violence cases experienced by boys. Besides cultural factors, it is also challenging to file sexual harassment cases because the perpetrator is often a close person to the victim. The perpetrator can exploit children considered weak and unknowledgeable of the sexual activity.

When creating prevention, efforts to investigate the dynamics of perpetrators and victims of underage sexual violence are essential. This is because, often, perpetrators of sexual violence were also victims in the past. Therefore, this cycle needs to be cut to prevent the simultaneous creation of a victim and perpetrator. In addition, there is still a lack of studies looking at cases of harassment done by children of the same sex (male). Due to the sensitive manner of sexual harassment cases, it needs to be emphasized that obtaining data directly from subjects is not easy. Therefore this study analyzes data provided

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<i>Vol.</i> 11, No. 1, January 2023	e-ISSN: 2443-2067	

on the Indonesian Supreme Court's website, which contains sexual harassment cases among boys, both perpetrators and victims, in various regions in Indonesia. The dynamics found are expected to complement existing research.

B. Method

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative method. According to Jackson & Bazeley (2019), this method can obtain or find a theory or an abstract analytic schema of a process (action or interaction). The data collection methods used secondary data (documents, records) taken from the Indonesian Supreme Court Trial Decision Directory (https://mahkamahagung.go.id), which contains cases of sexual harassment among children that fall into the particular criminal category.

The characteristics of research subjects are boys as perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment with an age range of 0-18 years and spread throughout the Provinces of Indonesia.

The Nvivo 12 Plus software was utilized to support the coding process, an essential element of the data analysis process (Dollah et al., 2017). Nvivo software eases data management, ideas, query, data visualization, and reporting (Edhlund & McDougall, 2019). From the supreme court's directory, 17 cases that provided data on incidents of sexual harassment from the statements of witnesses from various provinces in Indonesia were obtained. The data collection procedure can be seen in Figure 2.

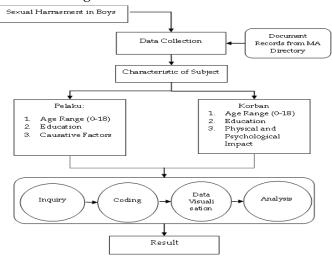


Figure 2. The Collecting Data Procedure

C. Result and Discussion

This study found several findings from the aspect of the perpetrator and the victim, namely the perpetrator's motivation in committing sexual harassment and the risk factors experienced by the victim.

1. Result

a. Sexual Harassment Cases Distribution

The distribution of cases in Indonesia is centred not only in big cities but also in several other regions. The locations in the distribution of cases can be seen in figure 3.



Figure 3. Sexual Harassment Case Distribution (N=17)

Cases of sexual harassment were spread across five provinces and ten regencies. The highest cases are in East Java Province (N= 4), spread in Kediri Regency, Ngawi Regency, Tuban Regency, and Lamongan Regency. Apart from East Java, the highest amount of total sexual harassment cases is two cases. This can be found in Riau province (Pekanbaru City), West Kalimantan Province (Mempawah Regency and Sambas Regency), North Sumatra Province (Sibolga Regency and Asahan Regency), Lampung Province, Central Java (Tegal Regency).

b. Data on Education and Age Range of Child Sexual Harassment Perpetrators

Based on the 17 cases, this study can summarize the trend distribution based on education level and age range, as seen in table 1.

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Jurnal Urniak Peuradeun	<i>p</i> -ISSN: 2338-8617	
Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023	<i>e-ISSN:</i> 2443-2067	

Education		Age (Group
Junior HighSchool	Senior High School	12-16	17-20
(11)	(6)	(13)	(4)
62.50%	37.50%	75%	25%

Table 1. Education and age range of child sexual harassment perpetrators

From the data obtained, it is known that 62.50% of the perpetrators of sexual violence were junior high school students, and 37.50% were high school students. Regarding perpetrator age, 75% (13 people) are 12-16 years, and 25% (4 people) are 17 years old. Referring to the perpetrator's age in table 1, the age of early puberty becomes a determinant. One of the reasons for this is that the child's curiosity regarding sexual activity, search for identity, and genetic formation is higher during that age. Due to that, parents and the environment (school and community) need to provide the appropriate knowledge about sexual education at this critical time.

c. Causative Factors of Committing Child Sexual Harassment

The factors causing perpetrators to commit sexual harassment were imitation, experience and parenting. What causes children to commit sexual harassment is environmental mistakes (both family and society). Therefore perpetrators are also considered victims. Based on the trial documents, imitation is the most dominant factor contributing to children becoming perpetrators of sexual harassment. This form of imitation is adopted by watching videos or having been a victim of sexual harassment.

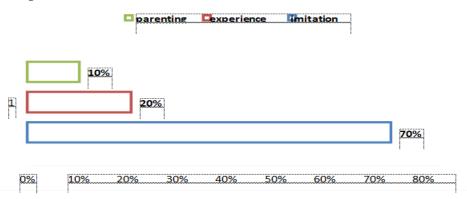


Figure 4. Perpetrators' motivation in committing sexual harassment

As seen in figure 4, the most significant causative factor is imitation, with a percentage of 70%. This finding was revealed from a perpetrator's confession during a trial, who explained that sexual behaviour was learned from watching accessible pornographic videos found on mobile phones. The perpetrators stated that accessing pornographic videos stimulated them to commit sexual harassment toward the victim. In the case of perpetrator 13, the perpetrator was invited to a Whatsapp group named "Childbest Party", which provided same-sex pornographic videos. This case is in line with research conducted by Katz (2013) that suggested that the internet is an entry point for sexual harassment, both for victims and the making of perpetrators.

The second-largest causative factor is experience, which amounts to 20% of the reasons for committing sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a vicious cycle. It occurs because the perpetrators have also experienced or been victims of sexual harassment. Examination of trial documents shows that perpetrators have also been victims. As stated by perpetrator 10, his experience as a victim of his friend triggered his desire to commit sodomy. A similar case happened to perpetrator 13, who became a victim of sodomy from a friend he recently got acquainted with on the internet. In another case, perpetrator 14 had a traumatic experience because he was sexually harassed by his friends and uncle several times.

The third causative factor is parenting, which amounts to 10% of sexual harassment causative factors. It was revealed through witness testimony that parents were neglectful of their children. As experienced by perpetrator 6, the lack of supervision from parents who were busy working to fulfill their daily needs resulted in them becoming ignorant of their child's behaviour. The same factor was also experienced by perpetrator 9. He explained that his parents did not supervise their children.

d. Sexual Harassment Victim

Victims of sexual harassment are often considered as people who are weak or can be controlled. They are considered weak due to their age or psychological state. Based on the data, victims are children under the perpetrator's age or in the same age group. Full details can be seen in table 2.

Jurnal Uniah Peuradeun

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Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023

e-ISSN: 2443-2067

Education			Age Rang	ge		
Not yet in	Pre-	Elementary	Junior High	0-5	6-11	12-16
School	School	School	School			
(3)	(2)	(11)	(1)	(4)	(10)	(3)
17.65%	11.76%	64.71%	5.88%	23.53%	58.82%	17.65%

Table 2. Education level & age range of victims of sexual harassment

Most victims were found in the 6-11 age range, with a total number of 10 children (58.8%), followed by children aged 0-5 years old, with four victims (23.53%), and children aged 12-16 with three victims (17.65%). Meanwhile, based on the level of education, 11 victims were children in elementary school (64.71%), three victims were in kindergarten (11.76%), and one child was in junior high school (5.88%).

e. Physical and Psychological Impact of Boys Who Became Victims of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment against boys has a significant impact on them. Apart from physical impacts such as cuts and abrasion to vital organs, psychological impacts are also found in victims of sexual harassment. Based on the result of this study, it was found that there were four impacts felt by children who experienced harassment-trauma, fear, sensitivity, and depression. The details can be seen in figure 4.

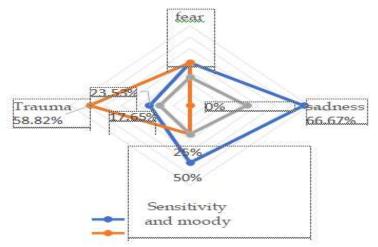


Figure 4. Impact of sexual harassment on victims

In the 17 cases of sexual harassment, most acts were found to be sodomy. Based on a confession from parents or psychiatrists that examined the victim, the impact of experiencing sodomy varied. This impact varies from developing trauma, becoming fearful (e.g., fear of relationships with new people), and exhibiting a change in attitude (i.e., becoming more sensitive and moody).

The most common change in children aged 0-5 is adopting a moody attitude. This finding was revealed by a mother's testimony as a witness who became suspicious of her child and became moodier and more sensitive. This situation is understandable because children of this age group are unable to express their emotions. Thus, what typically appears is a feeling of sadness, followed by fear, sensitivity, and trauma. Furthermore, the most visible psychological changes in children aged 6-11 years are trauma, fear, and sensitivity. While in the 12-16 age group, the most common changes can be seen in moodiness, sensitivity, fearful behaviour or traumatized state.

2. Discussion

Cases of sexual harassment or abuse that occur in children need to be comprehensively examined. This study indicates that seeing the perspective of perpetrators and victims of harassment is equally needed to understand the dynamic. It should be noted that these perpetrators are also victims, based on the understanding that minor perpetrators of sexual harassment are created due to a dysfunctional environment (i.e., family, society). It was found that the perpetrators' actions were initially motivated by their experience of accessing pornographic/adult content. Therefore, parental supervision of gadgets and digital literacy in children and adolescents needs to be instilled. This phenomenon serves as a reminder that parents are expected to attend and see their child's growth and development, especially children growing up rapidly. Parents must be aware of sexual harassment and the importance of educating their children on proper sex education. Families need to know whom their child spends time with, teach which body parts are not allowed to be touched, encourage children to share their stories, and increase their

Jurnal Uniah Peuradeun	<i>p-ISSN:</i> 2338-8617
Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023	<i>e-ISSN: 2443-2067</i>

confidence to voice opinions. The latter is significant because sexual harassment perpetrators can be people closest to them (Neanaa & Faten, 2015).

In line with this statement, children who are victims of sexual violence find it difficult to express what happened to them for various reasons such as fear, shame, guilt or lack of understanding from the victim about what was experienced (Gewirtz-Meydan & Finkelhor, (2020) that implies child-friendly counselling needs to be considered. In addition, it was found that the perpetrators of sexual violence against children also turned out to be victims. Therefore, the prevention and treatment of perpetrators and victims must be integrated. Victims of sexual violence often do not dare to report what they experienced, which results in delayed disclosure (Alagia et al., 2019). Thus, the environment is expected to be able to provide a safe space for victims to be able to tell about what they have experienced.

It was found through this study that sexual harassment phenomena toward boys were not only carried out by adults but also by peers. Therefore, it is essential to educate boys and male adolescents about friendships. Attention needs to be directed to same-sex friendships because sexual harassment occurs between the opposite sex and between the same sex (in this case, the male sex) and is carried out by minors to underage victims. This sexual harassment behaviour illustrates several problems that happened to be the perpetrator's background. The most obvious one is the power relations of the perpetrator. The average perpetrator is an older or a child with a higher social status than the victim (Department for Education, 2018). This finding provides a view that acts of sexual harassment are not always caused by sexual orientation. Information regarding the background of the perpetrators will help those who handle harassment cases to develop intervention steps for perpetrators and victims to break the chain of sexual violence. Several studies found that men can experience higher traumatic impacts and require long-term treatment (Glasser et al., 2001). To overcome the traumatic impact faced by victims of sexual harassment, it is necessary to build awareness by strengthening community norms and culture (Lalor, 2004; Muzdalifat et al., 2014).

Based on the trial documents, imitation is the most dominant triggering factor for committing sexual harassment. This form of imitation includes watching videos or being a victim of sexual harassment. Another factor that triggers the act of sexual harassment is experience. The facts in this study provide a vivid illustration of the importance of sexual education for children and parental supervision of children's environment. Guidance for children perpetrators of sexual violence is essential. First is anticipatory guidance, so they do not repeat their actions. Secondly, education is needed to provide a comfortable space for children to express their feelings openly (Gewirtz-Meydan & Finkelhor, 2020). Based on the finding, in many sexual harassment cases, children do not dare to seek help. This tendency to not tell their problem challenges adults and parents to be more aware and play an essential role in a child's psychological development. Victims of sexual harassment in general, especially boys, usually keep quiet about what happened to them. Boys aged 7 to 13 years stated that they did not report sexual harassment because they feared their parents would overreact or doubt that they are telling the truth (Scrandis & Watt, 2014; Valente, 2005).

This finding aligns with Fathya et al. (2020) and Schaeffer et al. (2011), who stated that the many missed documentation of sexual harassment cases was partly due to the victim's unwillingness to report the harassment. Perpetrators of sexual violence can be anyone, from parents to adults to children (Klot et al., 2003). Victims are believed to be afraid to admit being victims because of the fear of being labeled as gay. On the other hand, this allows perpetrators to carry out more sexual harassment acts freely. This situation is especially true in Indonesia, where talking about sexual harassment is culturally viewed as taboo, especially when the victim is a male. As such, many cases become unsolved.

Due to social stigma, perpetrators, victims, and even victims' families, often deny that a sexual harassment act has happened (Hohendorff et al., 2017). There is a fear of being ostracized by the community, leading to cases of sexual harassment being unreported. Also, because cases are not directly reported as soon as it happens, it becomes more difficult to prove as the scars are no longer identifiable (Fathya et al., 2020).

Jurnal Uniah Peuradeun	<i>p-ISSN: 2338-8617</i>
Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023	e-ISSN: 2443-2067

The social belief that society must change is that a man's identity is always depicted as a strong individual and that harassment towards men happens due to their inability to protect themselves. Other cases of sexual harassment were reported but not filed due to the assumption that victims only made up stories.

There are at least three forms of sexual harassment experienced by men and boys, namely: (a) genital violence, (b) coercion to witness sexual harassment against others, and (c) sodomy (Chynoweth et al., 2020). Victims of violence experienced by children are considered vulnerable due to age and psychological well-being. Sexual abuse happens as a form of dominance in the hierarchy. The strong individual feeds on the weaker children - frequently found in 5th-grade children (Petersen & Hyde, 2009). Puberty and sexual curiosity can also trigger an increase in sexual harassment.

The environment influences the occurrence of sexual violence. Stroem et al. (2022) explained that adolescents who do not get family support would seek recognition from their peers. This will undoubtedly negatively impact if the existing peer environment provides negative support. This is also a step to strengthen the school's alignment as a formal institution towards student problems (Horn & Poteat, 2022). It was also found that the role of online media can stimulate younger children to try deviant sexual behavior, so that healthy use of the internet needs to be a concern at a young age because internet access is now much more accessible (Raine et al., 2020).

It is revealed that psychoanalytic and psychosocial development theories are needed to explain cases of sexual harassment against men because of the difficulty of disclosing the matter openly (Etherington, 1995). Furthermore, this descriptive qualitative study found several reasons why men do not reveal much about their experiences to others. These reasons include the following:

- a. Cases are still rarely reported. Based on subjects of a study by Etherington (1995), it is stated that many cases are not included in the prevalence rate due to men's tendency not to open up.
- b. Patriarchal culture hinders men from reporting cases and tends to ignore what happened because they are unaware of its potential adverse

impact. Additionally, parents or other adults frequently defend perpetrators when men choose to report, stating, "women would not do that".

c. Psychodynamic theory has an ego defense mechanism called "repression or dissociation". People can adapt to abnormal conditions as a short-term mechanism by internally suppressing their negative feelings. However, such mechanisms cannot work long-term as they interfere with psychological well-being.

Based on Etherington (1995), boys' reluctance to disclose their experience stems from the social view of gender and sex roles that forces male victims to act accordingly as socially ideal "males". This belief leads to males' tendency to do "denial and minimization" or even accommodate the aggressor's negative experience to survive.

D. Conclusion

Sexual harassment, primarily perpetrated by children with same-sex victims (males), negatively impacts victims and perpetrators. The stigma that men or boys are less likely to be victims of sexual harassment must be removed to improve public awareness that anyone can become a victim of sexual harassment.

This study found 17 cases of sexual harassment involving children, with 75% of perpetrators coming from the 12 to 16 years old age range and 25% coming from the 17 years old age range. In terms of victim frequency, 58.8% (10 children) were found in the 6- 11 age group, 23.58% (4 children) in the 0-5 age group, and 17,65% (3 children) in the 12-16 age group. From the perpetrator's perspective, it was found that imitation became a trigger for committing sexual harassment. Children's most common imitation is gained by watching adult content online and accessing "adult groups" through social media. This situation sparks curiosity about sexual activity and develops a reason to commit sexual harassment.

Families and schools are important institutions that must provide sex education to increase understanding and awareness from an early age. Parents must also start prevention plans by implementing positive parenting strategies.

Jurnal Uniah Peuradeun

Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023

Additionally, guiding programs should be directed to children and adolescents to encourage them to disclose any sexual harassment they might experience. According to Sri (2018), establishing intervention programs such as home sharing can provide reinforcement or social support through groups for families with children who are victims of sexual violence. This group of parents will discuss among them which focus on sharing experiences in dealing with the problems of children who have experienced sexual violence or children who are vulnerable to sexual violence. Discussions were also held among family members, especially mothers with an essential role in child care.

Digital literacy also needs to be embraced and monitored as it plays a large part in children's discovery of information from external environments. The government program should be pro-healthy internet, including restrictions on adult content that children can access. These changes are necessary so that children are only provided information according to their appropriate age.

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Jurnal Uniak Puradum Vol. 11, No. 1, January 2023

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