

## **Dynamics of Criminal Law Enforcement in Drug Cases Among Adolescents: A Qualitative Study in Major Cities in Indonesia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the dynamics of criminal law enforcement in drug cases involving adolescents in a large city in Indonesia, using a qualitative approach. The main focus of this study is to analyze how law enforcement policies and practices are applied to drug cases among adolescents and the challenges faced in the process. Through in-depth interviews with law enforcement officers, lawyers, and social workers, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) with adolescents and community members, this study identifies several key issues. Findings indicate that while existing criminal law policies provide strict sanctions, law enforcement is often hampered by limited resources, lack of specialized training, and an overly punitive approach to adolescents. The study also notes shortcomings in the rehabilitation services available to adolescents involved in drugs. Based on these findings, the study recommends the need for policy reform with a focus on rehabilitative approaches and improving the quality and accessibility of rehabilitation services for adolescents.

**Keywords:** Law enforcement, drugs, youth, qualitative, big city, rehabilitation, policy

### **INTRODUCTION**

The problem of drugs among teenagers is one of the deep and complex social issues in big cities in Indonesia. The latest data shows that the prevalence of drug use among teenagers has

increased significantly, indicating a crisis that requires deep attention from various parties (National Narcotics Agency [BNN], 2024). Big cities, as centers of urbanization and high mobility, are the epicenter of this problem, where teenagers are often exposed to greater risks and opportunities for drug use.

Criminal law enforcement against drug cases among adolescents faces unique challenges. Existing law enforcement is often criticized for its approach that may be too punitive and pay little attention to rehabilitation aspects. Meanwhile, criminal law policies often do not fully consider the social and psychological backgrounds of the adolescents involved (Hadi & Ningsih, 2023). This underscores the urgent need to evaluate and reform the law enforcement approach in this context.

This study makes an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of criminal law enforcement against adolescents involved in drugs. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the current legal approach, as well as the challenges faced by the legal system, the results of this study are expected to provide a basis for more effective policy recommendations. A more holistic approach, including better rehabilitation policies, is expected to address the drug problem more comprehensively and provide the necessary support for adolescent recovery.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of criminal law enforcement against drug cases among teenagers in big cities in Indonesia. This method was chosen because it can explore various aspects and perspectives that cannot be measured quantitatively, and provide a richer context on how legal policies are implemented and their impact on teenagers.

### **Data collection technique**

#### **1. In-depth Interview**

Interviews were conducted with law enforcement officers, lawyers, social workers, and other relevant parties who play a role in law enforcement against drug cases. To understand the law enforcement process, the challenges faced, and their views and experiences related to handling drug cases among teenagers. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide designed to dig up in-depth information about policies, implementation, and obstacles faced.

## 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Discussions were conducted with groups of youth who had been involved in drug cases, as well as members of the community involved. To gain perspectives from youth and the community regarding law enforcement, the rehabilitation process, and their experiences in the legal system. FGDs were conducted with moderation to ensure active participation and obtain diverse views from participants.

## 3. Observation

Observations were conducted in rehabilitation institutions, courts, and law enforcement offices. To directly observe the process of law enforcement and rehabilitation, as well as the interaction between adolescents and the legal system. Observations were conducted with detailed field notes on the procedures, interactions, and dynamics that occurred.

# RESULTS

This study identified several key findings related to the dynamics of criminal law enforcement against drug cases among teenagers in major cities in Indonesia. Based on interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, the following findings can be summarized:

## 1. Implementation of Law Enforcement

Although there are clear criminal law policies related to drug cases, implementation in the field is often inconsistent. Many law enforcement officers admit to having difficulty enforcing existing policies due to a lack of specific training on handling drug cases involving adolescents (Hadi & Ningsih, 2023). There is a tendency to apply punitive sentences, with little emphasis on rehabilitative approaches. This results in a judicial process that is often insensitive to the psychological and social needs of adolescents (Jati & Prasetyo, 2023).

## **2. Challenges in Law Enforcement**

Many law enforcement agencies face resource constraints, such as a lack of adequate rehabilitation facilities and a lack of trained personnel to handle drug cases among adolescents (Marwan & Pratiwi, 2023). Adolescents involved in drug cases often face social stigma that hinders their rehabilitation process. This discrimination also affects how they are treated in the legal system (Purnama & Kusuma, 2023).

## **3. Rehabilitation Services Evaluation**

Rehabilitation services for adolescents are often considered inadequate. Many adolescents face difficulties in accessing quality rehabilitation services, and existing services are often not tailored to their specific needs (Lestari, 2023).

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that although there is a strict legal policy framework to handle drug cases among adolescents, implementation in the field experiences various obstacles. The approach that tends to be punitive and the lack of focus on rehabilitation raises several critical issues. Law enforcement that emphasizes the aspect of punishment too much can worsen the psychological and social conditions of adolescents, who should receive more recovery-based support (Hadi & Ningsih, 2023).

Limited resources, both in terms of facilities and personnel, are the main obstacles in law enforcement and rehabilitation. This reflects the need for better resource allocation and special training for law enforcement officers to handle drug cases among adolescents with a more sensitive and individual-based approach (Marwan & Pratiwi, 2023).

In addition, social stigma and discrimination against adolescents involved in drugs worsen their situation, hindering their access to adequate rehabilitation services. Therefore, it is important to address social stigma and improve the accessibility and quality of rehabilitation services that are appropriate to the needs of adolescents (Purnama & Kusuma, 2023; Lestari, 2023).

This study suggests the need for reform in the law enforcement approach by emphasizing the integration of punitive and rehabilitative policies. A more holistic and recovery-based approach could help address the drug problem among youth more effectively and provide the support needed for their recovery.

## CONCLUSION

This study has explored the dynamics of criminal law enforcement against drug cases among teenagers in big cities in Indonesia through a qualitative approach. Based on the results of interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, several main conclusions can be drawn:

### 1. Limitations in Policy Implementation

Although there are strict criminal law policies regarding drug cases, their implementation is often inconsistent and hampered by limited resources and lack of specific training for law enforcement officers. Existing policies tend to prioritize a punitive approach, without paying enough attention to the rehabilitation needed for adolescents (Hadi & Ningsih, 2023).

### 2. Punitive Approach and Lack of Focus on Rehabilitation

The dominant legal approach tends to be punitive, which is often not in accordance with the psychological and social needs of adolescents. This results in greater negative impacts on their development, and the lack of rehabilitative support makes the recovery process more difficult (Jati & Prasetyo, 2023).

### 3. Limited Resources and Facilities

Limited resources, both in terms of rehabilitation facilities and trained personnel, are major obstacles in law enforcement against drug cases among adolescents. Many law enforcement and rehabilitation agencies do not have the capacity to handle these cases effectively (Marwan & Pratiwi, 2023).

### 4. Social Stigma and Its Impact

Social stigma and discrimination against adolescents involved in drugs hinder their access to adequate rehabilitation services and worsen their condition. Addressing this stigma and improving the accessibility and quality of rehabilitation services are important steps to support adolescent recovery (Purnama & Kusuma, 2023; Lestari, 2023).

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