



Child Criminal Acts in the Legal Area of Garut Regency Based on Law Number 11 of 2012 Concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System

Yuli Susanti 

Sekolah Tinggi Hukum Garut, Indonesia

roulysusantio3@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the continuing occurrence of children in conflict with the law in Garut Regency and by the gap between the normative framework of Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and actual crime control practices. The research addresses two main questions: (1) what factors cause the emergence of juvenile crime in the jurisdiction of Garut Regency; and (2) how juvenile crime is prevented and controlled in this area based on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law. The research employs a descriptive-analytical method with a normative juridical approach, relying primarily on secondary legal materials (legislation, doctrine, and literature), supported by primary data obtained through field observation and interviews with relevant informants. The data are analyzed qualitatively, complemented by simple percentage descriptions of quantitative findings. The results show that the causes of juvenile crime are divided into internal factors, namely family conditions and individual psychological pressures, and external factors, consisting of the social environment, low educational attainment, economic difficulties, the influence of the internet/technology, and weaknesses in law enforcement. Crime prevention efforts concerning children in Garut Regency are carried out through both penal and non-penal approaches, formulated in moralistic and abolitionist strategies, as well as preventive and repressive measures grounded in the principles of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law, particularly diversion and restorative justice

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh masih ditemukannya anak yang berkonflik dengan hukum di Kabupaten Garut serta adanya kesenjangan antara kerangka normatif Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2012 tentang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak (SPPA) dengan praktik penanggulangan di lapangan. Rumusan masalah dalam penelitian ini adalah: (1) faktor-faktor apa saja yang menyebabkan timbulnya tindak pidana anak di wilayah hukum Kabupaten Garut; dan (2) bagaimana upaya pencegahan/penanggulangan terhadap tindak pidana anak di wilayah tersebut berdasarkan UU SPPA. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif analitis dengan pendekatan yuridis normatif, bertumpu pada data sekunder (peraturan perundang-undangan, doktrin, dan literatur) yang didukung data primer melalui

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 2026-04-12
Revised: 2026-07-11
Publihsed: 2026-08-29

KEYWORDS

Juvenile Crime; Children
In Conflict With The Law;
Crime Prevention;
Diversion.

KATA KUNCI

*Tindak Pidana Anak; Anak
Berkonflik Dengan Hukum;
Penanggulangan Kejahatan,
Diversi.*

observasi dan wawancara dengan pihak terkait. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif kualitatif, dengan bantuan persentase sederhana dari data kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyebab tindak pidana anak terbagi atas faktor internal, yaitu keluarga dan kondisi individu (tekanan psikologis), serta faktor eksternal berupa lingkungan sosial, rendahnya pendidikan, keadaan ekonomi, pengaruh internet/teknologi, dan faktor penegakan hukum. Upaya penanggulangan tindak pidana anak di Kabupaten Garut dilakukan melalui pendekatan penal maupun non-penal, yang dalam penelitian ini dirumuskan dalam bentuk cara moralistik dan abolisionistik, serta melalui langkah preventif dan represif yang berlandaskan prinsip-prinsip SPPA, khususnya diversi dan keadilan restoratif.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Juvenile offending constitutes a multidimensional challenge that cannot be understood solely through the framework of criminal responsibility. Its occurrence is closely shaped by children's developmental vulnerability, family circumstances, patterns of social interaction, and broader environmental influences, while simultaneously engaging the State's legal obligation to safeguard children's rights, welfare, and future development within the juvenile justice system.¹ Adolescence is particularly significant in this context because it constitutes a transitional stage in which individuals experience substantial psychological, emotional, and social changes. Exposure to dysfunctional family relations, weak social supervision, peer pressure, economic vulnerability, violence, and other adverse environmental conditions may increase the likelihood of children becoming involved in conduct that conflicts with legal and social norms. Consequently, juvenile delinquency cannot adequately be understood merely as an individual failure to comply with criminal law.² It must also be examined as a manifestation of broader social conditions affecting the development and behavior of children.

The legal response to juvenile delinquency presents a particular challenge because children cannot simply be positioned in the same manner as adult offenders. Criminal

¹ MY Anakotta, "ASI AND CYBERTERRORISM: NEW CHALLENGES TO INDONESIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND PENAL POLICY," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum: ALETHEA*, no. Query date: 2026-05-19 15:00:01 (2025), <https://ejournal.uksw.edu/alethea/article/view/15296>.

² MR Akbar, "... RUMAH TAHANAN ANAK DITINJAU BERDASARKAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 11 TAHUN 2012 TENTANG SISTEM PERADILAN PIDANA ANAK," *Causa: Jurnal Hukum Dan Kewarganegaraan*, no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:19:21 (2025).

justice intervention involving children carries consequences extending beyond the determination of guilt and punishment.³ Formal prosecution, detention, stigmatization, and punitive sanctions may affect children's education, psychological development, family relationships, and prospects for social reintegration. This characteristic requires juvenile justice policy to reconcile the state's legitimate interest in maintaining public order with the obligation to safeguard the best interests of the child. Accordingly, the legitimacy of juvenile justice should not be measured exclusively by its capacity to impose sanctions, but also by its ability to prevent reoffending, restore social relationships, protect victims, and facilitate the reintegration of children into society.⁴

This problem becomes particularly relevant when viewed through the competing orientations of retributive, restitutive, and restorative justice. A predominantly retributive response concentrates on wrongdoing and the imposition of punishment, whereas restorative justice expands the objectives of legal intervention by incorporating rehabilitation, accountability, victim recovery, and restoration of relationships within the community. For children in conflict with the law, this distinction is fundamental. The use of criminal punishment without adequate consideration of the child's developmental circumstances may reproduce social exclusion rather than resolve the underlying causes of delinquency. A child-sensitive justice system therefore requires differentiated intervention in which formal criminal proceedings operate as a measure of last resort and alternative mechanisms are utilized whenever legally appropriate.⁵

Indonesia has institutionalized this orientation through Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. The legislation represents an important transformation in the treatment of children in conflict with the law by incorporating diversion and restorative justice into the juvenile justice framework. Diversion provides an opportunity to resolve eligible cases outside conventional adjudication by involving the child, victim, families, and other relevant actors. Its normative objective is not simply

³ AD Abdullah, MZ Faturrahman, and ..., "Efektivitas Pemidanaan Non-Penjara Dalam Mengurangi Overcrowding Lapas Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Hukum ...*, no. Query date: 2026-07-12 16:02:48 (2025), <https://jurnal.umko.ac.id/index.php/legalita/article/view/2051>.

⁴ J. W. Caudill et al., "Decoupling the Labeling Tradition: Exploring Gang Affiliation and the Application of Law," *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 2017 (2017): 1–16, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204017689492>.

⁵ F. Azis et al., "Penerapan Restorative Justice Dalam Penyelesaian Tindak Pidana Anak Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Kolaboratif ...*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:02:02 (2025), <https://www.jurnal.unismuhpalu.ac.id/index.php/JKS/article/view/6901>.

to terminate criminal proceedings but to prevent unnecessary deprivation of liberty, avoid stigmatization, encourage responsibility, facilitate reconciliation, and promote the child's reintegration into the community.⁶ Consequently, diversion constitutes an important legal instrument for translating the principle of the best interests of the child into the administration of criminal justice.

Nevertheless, the existence of a progressive statutory framework does not automatically ensure consistent implementation. A substantial issue arises from the distance between the normative design of juvenile justice and the manner in which cases are handled at the local level. Law enforcement authorities must simultaneously consider the characteristics of the offence, statutory requirements for diversion, the interests of victims, the circumstances of the child, and broader considerations of public safety. These variables may result in different procedural outcomes among cases involving children. Some cases can be resolved through diversion, while others proceed through investigation and formal prosecution.⁷ The central issue, therefore, is not merely whether diversion exists as a legal mechanism, but how the statutory principles governing juvenile justice are translated into concrete law-enforcement decisions and why different cases generate different forms of intervention.

The experience of Garut Regency provides an important empirical setting for examining this problem. Police data referred to in this study record 11 cases involving juveniles between 2021 and 2023, encompassing minor assault, theft, offences related to child protection, public-order violations, violent theft, child abduction, assault, and possession of sharp weapons. The annual pattern was not linear: four cases were recorded in 2021, three in 2022, and four in 2023. More importantly, the cases produced different procedural outcomes. Several were resolved through diversion, while others proceeded to the formal criminal process until the case files were declared complete for prosecution. This variation demonstrates that juvenile justice in practice involves a process of legal differentiation rather than the application of a single response to every child-related offence.

⁶ G. RAHMATIKA HB, *STUDI KOMPARATIF PENGATURAN PERTANGGUNGJAWABAN TINDAK PIDANA ANAK PELAKU PERUNDUNGAN YANG MENYEBABKAN KORBAN MENINGGAL ...* (repository.unissula.ac.id, 2025), <https://repository.unissula.ac.id/42382/>.

⁷ Ismail Adha, Rio Bayu Riansyah Harahap, and Fauziah Lubis, "Peranan Advokat Dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana di Indonesia," *El-Mujtama: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 3, no. 3 (February 2023): 746–52, <https://doi.org/10.47467/elmutjama.v3i3.2932>.

The diversity of offences also indicates that juvenile delinquency in Garut cannot be adequately explained through a purely doctrinal understanding of criminal responsibility. The occurrence of child offending may be associated with interacting internal and external factors, including psychological development, family supervision, education, peer relationships, socioeconomic circumstances, and the wider social environment. The relationship between these factors is important because prevention policies based solely on criminal sanctions intervene only after unlawful conduct has occurred. An effective juvenile crime policy therefore requires the integration of penal and non-penal measures.⁸ Penal intervention remains necessary for offences requiring formal law enforcement, but preventive strategies involving families, schools, communities, social institutions, and local authorities are equally important in reducing the conditions that facilitate juvenile offending.⁹

From this perspective, the prevention of juvenile crime should not be separated from the implementation of juvenile justice. Prevention and case resolution form a continuum of child protection policy.¹⁰ Measures undertaken before an offence occurs seek to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective environments, while interventions after an offence must ensure accountability without unnecessarily undermining the child's future development. The effectiveness of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System should consequently be assessed not only through compliance with procedural rules but also through the extent to which law enforcement practices reflect proportionality, restorative justice, rehabilitation, and the best interests of the child.

Existing legal discussions on juvenile justice have predominantly examined diversion, restorative justice, child protection, and juvenile criminal responsibility as separate normative issues.¹¹ Such approaches are important for explaining the doctrinal

⁸ E. Erdin, A. Shofiana, and IJ Indar, "The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice in Resolving Juvenile Criminal Offenses in Indonesia," *HAKIM: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan ...*, no. Query date: 2026-05-10 19:33:40 (2025), <https://journal.stekom.ac.id/index.php/Hakim/article/view/2288>.

⁹ C. E. Frazier and D. M. Bishop, "The Pretrial Detention of Juveniles and Its Impact on Case Dispositions," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 76, no. 4 (1985): 1132–52, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1143504>.

¹⁰ M. Rayhan, "Restorative Justice in Resolving Juvenile Crimes in Indonesia," *Journal of Law and Humanity Studies*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:02:02 (2024), <https://journal.mediamandalika.com/index.php/jlhs/article/view/2>.

¹¹ VI Atmaja, "Optimalisasi Restorative Justice Dalam Penanganan Tindak Pidana Ringan Di Indonesia: Analisis Efektivitas Dan Tantangan Implementasi," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:02:02 (2026), <http://ejournal.yayasanpendidikandzurriyatulquran.id/index.php/AlZayn/article/view/3202>.

architecture of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System but provide a more limited explanation of how preventive policy, criminogenic factors, and law-enforcement decision-making interact within a particular locality. Furthermore, focusing exclusively on the normative obligation to conduct diversion may obscure an important practical question: why do cases arising within the same juvenile justice framework result in different pathways, with some being diverted and others proceeding through formal prosecution?

Juvenile criminal justice scholarship in Indonesia has developed along several different lines of inquiry. Nashriana et al. place diversion at the center of their analysis and examine the institutional difficulties affecting its effectiveness as a mechanism for resolving juvenile delinquency,¹² whereas Putri approaches the issue from the position of children within restorative justice and questions whether restorative mechanisms consistently produce substantive justice for the parties involved.¹³ At the local level, Hirohito, Saefullah, and Mardani specifically examine a juvenile criminal case decided by the Garut District Court and assess restorative justice as an instrument for protecting children in conflict with the law.¹⁴ Nugraha, Mahmutarom, and Prakoso subsequently broaden the discussion by evaluating the effectiveness of restorative justice in resolving juvenile criminal cases and identifying continuing difficulties in translating the normative framework of juvenile justice into effective practice.¹⁵ Taken together, these studies demonstrate that contemporary scholarship remains strongly concentrated on diversion, restorative settlement, and legal protection within or after the criminal process, while considerably less attention has been directed toward preventing the social conditions that initially bring children into conflict with criminal law.

The problem examined in Garut Regency requires a different analytical orientation. Juvenile offending cannot be adequately addressed only by determining how cases should be resolved once children have entered the criminal justice process. The

¹² Nashriana Nashriana et al., "Enhancing Restorative Justice in Indonesia: Exploring Diversion Implementation for Effective Juvenile Delinquency Settlement," *Sriwijaya Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2023): 318–34.

¹³ D. Putri, "Sounding the Justice for Child: Does Restorative Justice Matters?," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 4, no. 3 (2023): 303–24.

¹⁴ Alfonico Hirohito, Saefullah Saefullah, and Mardani Mardani, "Penerapan Keadilan Restoratif Bagi Anak Pelaku Tindak Pidana," *VISA: Journal of Vision and Ideas* 4, no. 3 (2024): 2240–52.

¹⁵ Agung Setya Nugraha, Mahmutarom Mahmutarom, and Adityo Putro Prakoso, "Effectiveness of Implementing Restorative Justice in Resolution of Child Crimes," *International Journal of Law Reconstruction*, 2025.

recurring involvement of children in unlawful conduct requires an examination of why such conduct occurs, how local institutions respond before and after offending, and whether existing interventions are capable of preventing repetition. This dimension distinguishes the present research even from the Garut-based study of Hirohito, Saefullah, and Mardani, which focuses on restorative justice in a particular judicial decision. Rather than centering the analysis on a single adjudicated case, the present study examines juvenile offending within the broader jurisdiction of Garut Regency by connecting its patterns with familial conditions, peer environments, education, social circumstances, and institutional responses. Law No. 11 of 2012 is consequently examined not merely as a procedural framework governing children already in conflict with the law, but as part of a wider legal policy requiring protection, intervention, diversion, rehabilitation, and prevention of repeated involvement in criminal conduct.

The distinctive contribution of this research therefore lies in repositioning prevention as the analytical starting point of juvenile criminal justice in Garut Regency. Its novelty is not the introduction of another discussion of diversion or restorative justice, but the integration of causal identification with penal and non-penal prevention strategies within a specific local legal environment. The study aims, first, to determine the dominant factors associated with juvenile offending in Garut Regency and, second, to evaluate how preventive responses involving law-enforcement institutions, local government, families, schools, and communities can be integrated with diversion and restorative justice under Law No. 11 of 2012. By doing so, the research seeks to develop a locally responsive framework that operates across prevention, intervention, case resolution, and prevention of recidivism, thereby extending juvenile justice scholarship beyond the conventional question of how child offenders should be treated toward the more fundamental question of how legal and social institutions can prevent children from entering and repeatedly returning to the criminal justice system.

2. Research Questions

This study focuses on the factors contributing to juvenile offending in Garut Regency from psychological, familial, social, and environmental perspectives, as well as the implementation of penal and non-penal measures, including diversion and restorative justice, in preventing and addressing juvenile offending under Law Number

11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

3. Research Methods

This study employed a socio-legal research method with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine juvenile offending and its prevention in Garut Regency by integrating legal analysis with empirical investigation. The legal analysis focused on Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, relevant criminal law principles, and legal doctrines concerning juvenile justice, diversion, and penal and non-penal policies.¹⁶ Empirical data were obtained through field observations, interviews with relevant informants, including law enforcement officers, community counselors, and families, as well as official data from the Garut Police Criminal Investigation Unit concerning juvenile cases during 2021–2023. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively by examining the relationship between applicable legal norms, factors contributing to juvenile offending, law-enforcement practices, and the implementation of diversion and other preventive measures.¹⁷ Quantitative case data were used descriptively to support the qualitative findings without inferential statistical analysis. The analysis ultimately assessed the consistency of juvenile crime prevention and case-handling practices with the principles of restorative justice and the best interests of the child.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Factors Contributing to Juvenile Offending in Garut Regency: Psychological, Familial, Social and Environmental Dimensions

Juvenile offending in Garut Regency cannot be attributed to a single cause because the behavior of children and adolescents develops through the interaction of personal circumstances and the social environment in which they live.¹⁸ The empirical findings obtained from interviews and data from the Garut Police Criminal Investigation Unit

¹⁶ MS Rana, "The Invisible Crime: A Comparative Analysis of Enforced Disappearance, Human Rights, and Criminal Justice Systems in Bangladesh, India, and Australia," *Lex Humana* (ISSN 2175-0947), no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:18:05 (2026), <https://seer.ucp.br/seer/index.php/LexHumana/article/view/3427>.

¹⁷ E. M. Restrepo, "The Pursuit of Efficiency and the Colombian Criminal Justice System," *Criminality, Public Security, and the Challenge to Democracy in Latin America*, 2009, 173–202, Scopus.

¹⁸ A. Kurniawan, "Restorative Justice and Customary Law Studies in Juvenile Cases: Why Should Indonesia Learn from Various Countries?," *Lex Localis*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:02:02 (2025), <https://search.proquest.com/openview/8b1b6becd7f91a96b608a3389208e223/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=55210>.

indicate that juvenile cases involve various forms of conduct, ranging from interpersonal violence and theft to narcotics-related conduct, possession of sharp weapons, damage to public facilities, and other violations. This variation suggests that juvenile offending should not simply be understood as deliberate non-compliance with criminal law. Rather, it reflects a broader interaction between adolescent development, family circumstances, peer relationships, education, socioeconomic conditions, and the surrounding community. Such an understanding is particularly relevant in juvenile justice because children are still undergoing psychological and social development and therefore require a legal response that takes account of both responsibility and their capacity for rehabilitation.

The empirical findings show that the pattern of juvenile offending in Garut has developed dynamically. Information obtained during the research indicates that cases during 2022–2023 were particularly associated with interpersonal conflict, including fights occurring in school and community environments, alongside other offences involving narcotics, property, and public order. Garut Police Criminal Investigation Unit data for 2023 recorded 17 cases involving children, with narcotics-related cases constituting the largest category. Eight cases concerned methamphetamine-related conduct, while three involved assault. Other recorded cases included possession or carrying of sharp weapons, theft, conduct disturbing public order, damage to public facilities, and an offence involving sexual misconduct. The cases also produced different forms of institutional response, including coaching, rehabilitation, completion of case handling, withdrawal, and continuation of certain cases into the formal criminal justice process.¹⁹ These variations are important because they demonstrate that children entering the juvenile justice system do not constitute a homogeneous group and that their conduct occurs within different factual and social circumstances.

The predominance of certain forms of offending also illustrates the importance of examining psychological and developmental factors. Adolescence is a period characterized by the formation of identity, emotional development, increased interaction with peers, and a growing desire for social recognition. These characteristics

¹⁹ R. Fathonah, BR Husin, and M. Farid, "Rehabilitasi Terhadap Penyalahguna Narkotika Sebagai Upaya Dalam Mengatasi Overkapasitas Lapas Di Indonesia," ... *Ilmu Sosial & ...*, no. Query date: 2026-07-12 16:02:48 (2026), <http://ejournal.yayasanpendidikandzurriyatulquran.id/index.php/AlZayn/article/view/4575>.

do not automatically produce criminal conduct, but they may increase vulnerability when combined with inadequate supervision, problematic social relationships, or environments in which risky behavior has become normalized. The findings concerning interpersonal fights are particularly relevant in this regard. Group-based conflict among adolescents may involve not only individual aggression but also peer solidarity, social recognition, and pressure to conform to group expectations. In such circumstances, participation in violence may be perceived by adolescents as part of group membership rather than fully evaluated in terms of its legal consequences.

The findings are consistent with a social-learning explanation of juvenile offending. Peer relationships become increasingly influential during adolescence, and repeated interaction within a particular social group may shape attitudes toward acceptable and unacceptable behavior. The theoretical analysis used in this study similarly recognizes peer groups as important sources of recognition and behavioral learning. This provides a relevant explanation for cases involving collective fights and other forms of group misconduct found in Garut. When aggression, substance use, or other risky conduct receives recognition within a peer environment, the informal social control ordinarily exercised by families and schools may become less effective. Prevention should therefore address not only individual offenders but also the social relationships within which problematic behavior develops.

Family conditions constitute another important dimension identified through the research. Interviews indicate that inappropriate parenting patterns, insufficient attention, family disharmony, and weak moral guidance may increase children's vulnerability to behavioral problems. Excessive demands within the family may also create psychological pressure and affect the child's ability to exercise self-control.²⁰ These findings reinforce the proposition that family supervision can operate either as a protective factor or as a source of vulnerability depending on the quality of communication, emotional support, and behavioral guidance available to the child. The conceptual analysis similarly establishes that weak supervision and dysfunctional family

²⁰ T. Efrillia, LY Krisnalita, and ..., "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Anak Dalam Tindak Pidana Pembunuhan Berencana: Analisis Yuridis Putusan Nomor 3/Pid. Sus-Anak/2022/PN. Bnt," *Krisna Law: Jurnal ...*, no. Query date: 2026-05-02 10:16:40 (2025), <https://ejournal.hukumunkris.id/index.php/krisnalaw/article/view/1035>.

communication may reduce a child's resilience against external pressures.²¹

Nevertheless, the relationship between family conditions and juvenile offending should not be interpreted deterministically. The occurrence of an offence cannot automatically be attributed to parental failure because children interact simultaneously with schools, peers, communities, digital environments, and broader socioeconomic structures. A family may provide adequate supervision while still facing difficulties in controlling external influences encountered by adolescents. Conversely, difficult family circumstances do not inevitably produce juvenile offending.²² The significance of the family lies primarily in its capacity to strengthen or weaken protective mechanisms available to children when they encounter risks originating outside the household.

Economic circumstances further intersect with family and environmental factors. The empirical findings indicate that economic difficulties and urgent material needs may contribute to certain forms of property-related offending. However, poverty cannot independently explain juvenile crime.²³ Socioeconomic disadvantage becomes more relevant when combined with limited educational opportunities, weak supervision, problematic peer relationships, and inadequate community support. This interpretation is consistent with the broader analytical framework of the study, which recognizes that economic hardship may restrict access to developmental opportunities without establishing a direct causal relationship between poverty and criminal behavior. Such a distinction is necessary to avoid stigmatizing economically disadvantaged children and families.

Education also emerges as a significant protective variable. Children with limited educational engagement may have fewer opportunities to develop legal awareness, social competence, and constructive forms of participation. Schools therefore occupy an important position beyond their conventional educational function. They can identify behavioral changes, provide counseling, communicate with parents, and establish early intervention mechanisms before problematic behavior develops into an offence. The

²¹ Safaruddin Harefa, "Analisis Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Terhadap Anak Dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Hukum," *Sanskara Hukum dan HAM* 01, no. 01 (2022).

²² I. Karim, S. Nawir, and M. Kamal, "Efektivitas Sanksi Pidana Terhadap Anak Berdasarkan Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak," *Journal of Lex Philosophy (JLP)*, no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:19:21 (2024).

²³ M. Rapisarda and W. J. Kaplan, "Juvenile Competency and Pretrial Due Process: A Call for Greater Protections in Massachusetts for Juveniles Residing in Procedural Purgatory," *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 67, no. 4 (2016): 5–26, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jfcj.12078>.

empirical measures undertaken in Garut, including counseling concerning juvenile delinquency, narcotics, traffic awareness, and public security, as well as school-based order operations and patrols during vulnerable periods, demonstrate an attempt to move prevention beyond formal criminal enforcement.²⁴

The importance of educational and community institutions is particularly evident when juvenile offending is understood as a product of interacting risk factors. Weak coordination between families, schools, communities, and relevant authorities can allow early signs of behavioral problems to remain unidentified. The theoretical framework similarly emphasizes that juvenile crime prevention should be regarded as a shared responsibility rather than the exclusive function of criminal justice institutions. Accordingly, school-based programs should not operate independently from family supervision and community intervention. The effectiveness of prevention depends on whether these institutions are able to exchange information, identify vulnerable children, and provide appropriate support before formal law enforcement becomes necessary.

The development of digital technology adds another dimension to this problem. Interviews conducted in this research indicate concern regarding the accessibility of inappropriate online material and other forms of digital content that may influence adolescent behavior. Digital environments have expanded the social spaces occupied by children beyond their immediate family, school, and neighborhood. Social media and internet-based interaction may expose adolescents to new peer networks and behavioral models. The analytical framework of this study likewise recognizes that digital communication can intensify peer influence and facilitate exposure to harmful behavior. Nevertheless, internet access should not be treated as an independent explanation of offending. Its influence depends on digital literacy, parental guidance, individual circumstances, and the social context in which technology is used.

The findings concerning narcotics-related cases further demonstrate the need for multidimensional analysis. The relatively significant number of such cases recorded in 2023 suggests that substance-related behavior among adolescents cannot be approached solely through the perspective of criminal prohibition. The involvement of

²⁴ Acep Saepudin and Geofani Milthree Saragih, *Eksistensi Advokat Dalam Penegakan Hukum Pidana Dan Ketatanegaraan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2023).

children in such cases may intersect with peer influence, accessibility, family supervision, psychological vulnerability, and broader social conditions. The use of coaching and rehabilitation in several cases reflects recognition that responding to children requires attention to behavioral recovery in addition to legal accountability. Rehabilitation is particularly relevant where the circumstances indicate that addressing the child's condition and preventing repeated involvement require interventions extending beyond the conventional punitive response.

From a broader perspective, the empirical findings demonstrate that juvenile offending in Garut develops through cumulative and interconnected risks. Family difficulties may increase the influence of problematic peer groups; educational disengagement may weaken institutional supervision; economic pressure may interact with limited opportunities; and unrestricted digital exposure may reinforce behavioral influences originating from the child's social environment. This confirms that the interaction among factors is analytically more significant than any single factor considered separately. Consequently, prevention strategies directed toward only one variable are unlikely to produce sustainable results.

This multidimensional character has direct implications for the implementation of Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. Juvenile justice requires legal authorities to consider not merely the offence committed but also the circumstances surrounding the child.²⁵ The different outcomes found in the Garut cases ranging from coaching and rehabilitation to formal processing demonstrate the practical importance of differentiated intervention. The nature of the offence and applicable legal requirements remain fundamental considerations, but the child's family circumstances, educational background, social environment, and prospects for rehabilitation are also relevant to determining an appropriate response.²⁶ This corresponds with the broader juvenile justice principle that understanding the causes and circumstances of offending provides an important basis for proportional and rehabilitative intervention.

²⁵ FD Fareki and I. Yulianto, "... TERHADAP ANAK YANG BERKONFLIK DENGAN HUKUM BERDASARKAN UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 11 TAHUN 2012 TENTANG SISTEM PERADILAN PIDANA ...," *Jurnal Ilmiah AKSES*, no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:19:21 (2025), <https://unars.ac.id/ojs/index.php/akses/article/view/7132>.

²⁶ A. Sudewo et al., "Menakar Efektivitas Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak Dalam Perspektif Restorative Justice Di Indonesia," *Themis: Jurnal Ilmu ...*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:02:02 (2025), <https://publikasi.abidan.org/index.php/themis/article/view/1389>.

The preventive measures implemented in Garut can consequently be understood through the distinction between moralistic and abolitionistic approaches. The moralistic dimension emphasizes strengthening values, legal awareness, personal responsibility, and social guidance so that children are better equipped to resist circumstances that may encourage unlawful behavior. This orientation is reflected in counseling activities, moral and social guidance, and efforts involving families and educational institutions. The abolitionistic dimension, meanwhile, is directed toward reducing the conditions and opportunities that facilitate offending.²⁷ Patrols during vulnerable periods, preventive activities within schools, community supervision, and intervention against environments associated with juvenile misconduct represent practical manifestations of this approach.

These measures demonstrate that juvenile crime prevention cannot be confined to law enforcement after an offence has occurred. Preventive intervention must begin by strengthening the social environment surrounding children. Families require adequate capacity to supervise and communicate with adolescents; schools require mechanisms for early identification and counseling; communities need constructive spaces for youth participation; and relevant government institutions should provide social and rehabilitative support for children experiencing vulnerability. The conceptual framework similarly identifies family supervision, school counseling, community-based programs, legal education, digital literacy, and institutional coordination as essential non-penal strategies.

At the same time, the empirical findings indicate that institutional capacity remains an important consideration. Rehabilitation and social guidance require adequate facilities and professional support, while preventive programs depend on sustained coordination among law-enforcement authorities, educational institutions, families, social services, and community actors. Limited facilities may reduce the effectiveness of interventions even where the legal framework already provides a child-oriented direction. Consequently, implementation should not be evaluated solely by whether a particular case is formally completed. A more substantive assessment concerns whether the intervention addresses the factors that contributed to the child's behavior and

²⁷ MOH SISWANTO, *Rekontruksi Regulasi Sistem Peradilan Pidana Dalam Konsep Restoratif Justice Terhadap Anak Yang Konflik Dengan Hukum Berbasis Nilai Keadilan*, no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:19:21 (2024).

reduces the likelihood of repeated involvement in unlawful conduct.

The findings therefore position juvenile offending in Garut Regency simultaneously as a criminal justice issue and a child-protection concern. This is consistent with the analytical framework developed in this study, which cautions against treating juvenile offending exclusively as either criminal misconduct or a social problem. Criminal law remains necessary to establish accountability and protect legal interests, while social and child-protection interventions address the developmental and environmental vulnerabilities underlying offending. Neither dimension is sufficient when applied independently.

Overall, the empirical evidence strengthens the conclusion that juvenile offending in Garut Regency results from the interaction of psychological, familial, educational, economic, peer, technological, and wider environmental factors. The variation in the forms of offending and the different responses adopted by the authorities indicate that a uniform approach would be inadequate. The significance of these findings lies in connecting the actual local pattern of juvenile offending with the social conditions surrounding children and the differentiated responses of law enforcement institutions.²⁸ Rather than viewing prevention as an activity that begins only after a child enters the criminal justice system, the Garut experience demonstrates the need for intervention across the child's social environment. This supports a juvenile justice policy that combines legal accountability with early prevention, family and school involvement, rehabilitation, and social reintegration, thereby providing a more contextual implementation of the best interests of the child.²⁹

2. Penal and Non-Penal Measures in Preventing and Addressing Juvenile Offending: Diversion and Restorative Justice under the Juvenile Criminal Justice System

²⁸ DT Wardhani and LA Zainsyah, "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Anak Sebagai Pelaku Pelecehan Dan Cyberbullying Berbasis AI Dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak Indonesia," *Lex Journal: Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan*, no. Query date: 2026-05-19 15:01:15 (2025).

²⁹ A. Haynes et al., "Increasing Meaningful Participation of Children with Disability in Little Athletics: Development of a More Inclusive Competition Structure.," ... *Journal of Sport & ...*, no. Query date: 2026-05-06 12:27:26 (2025), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrnI=21527857&AN=186168183&h=4MVcROGhHOGKMgJeAlbKV71UAJ%2Bct5%2BuxnT8C5YnNCIaX5u3nEPkvabhzvP6VWd90%2FGBDneElIZpz4FEvZji%2Bg%3D%3D&crl=c>.

The prevention and handling of juvenile offending require a legal policy that does not rely exclusively on criminal punishment. Children who become involved in unlawful conduct occupy a distinctive position within the criminal justice system because their developmental characteristics, social dependency, and capacity for rehabilitation differ substantially from those of adults. Consequently, the response to juvenile offending must reconcile several objectives: maintaining legal order, protecting victims, ensuring accountability, preventing reoffending, and safeguarding the future development of the child. Within the Indonesian legal framework, these objectives are reflected in Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, which provides a basis for integrating penal measures with diversion, restorative justice, rehabilitation, and other forms of child-oriented intervention.³⁰

Penal measures remain an important component of juvenile crime policy because certain forms of offending require intervention through formal criminal justice institutions. Investigation, prosecution, adjudication, and the imposition of legally authorized measures provide mechanisms through which the state responds to violations of criminal law and protects the interests of victims and society. Nevertheless, the application of penal measures to children requires a different orientation from the conventional punitive model applied to adult offenders.³¹ The legal status of the child requires criminal justice authorities to consider age, developmental circumstances, the seriousness of the offence, the consequences suffered by victims, and the prospects for rehabilitation. Penal intervention should therefore function not merely as an instrument of punishment but as part of a broader system of accountability and social reintegration.

This differentiated approach is particularly relevant to the empirical situation in Garut Regency. The data examined in this study record eleven juvenile cases during the 2021–2023 period, involving different categories of offending and different procedural outcomes. Some cases were resolved through diversion, while others proceeded through the formal criminal process until the case files reached the prosecution stage. This

³⁰ M. Mubarrok and I. Koto, "Reconceptualization of Diversion Governance in Juvenile Justice Systems: A Restorative Justice Approach to Prison Overcrowding Reduction in Indonesia," *Abdurrauf Law and Sharia*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:02:02 (2026), <http://journal.abdurraufinstitute.org/index.php/arlash/article/view/505>.

³¹ Putri Dzahra Fatiha Anwar Sidiq, "Penerapan Sanksi Pidana Terhadap Anak Yang Berkonflik Dengan Hukum Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak," *Jurnal Risalah Kenotariatan* 5, no. 2 (July 2024): 13.

variation demonstrates that juvenile case handling cannot be reduced to a binary choice between punishment and non-punishment.³² Rather, the legal response operates along a continuum in which the characteristics of the offence, statutory requirements, circumstances of the child, and interests of the victim influence the appropriate procedural pathway.

Diversion occupies a central position within this framework because it provides an alternative to conventional criminal proceedings when the statutory conditions are satisfied. Its significance extends beyond procedural efficiency. Diversion seeks to prevent unnecessary exposure of children to the formal criminal justice process and its potentially stigmatizing consequences. It also creates space for the child, victim, family, and relevant community actors to participate in resolving the consequences of the offence. In this sense, diversion represents a mechanism through which the principle of the best interests of the child is reconciled with accountability and victim protection.

Restorative justice provides the substantive orientation underlying this process. Whereas a predominantly retributive model focuses on the violation of criminal law and the corresponding sanction, restorative justice directs attention toward the harm generated by the offence and the relationships affected by it.³³ The objective is not to eliminate responsibility but to reconstruct it in a manner that encourages acknowledgment of wrongdoing, restoration of harm, reconciliation where appropriate, and reintegration. For juvenile offenders, this approach is particularly relevant because it allows accountability to coexist with educational and rehabilitative objectives.

The implementation of diversion must nevertheless remain sensitive to the circumstances of each case. Not every juvenile case can or should produce an identical resolution. Differences in the nature and seriousness of offences, the consequences for victims, applicable statutory requirements, and the willingness of relevant parties may

³² AI Ramadhan, D. Mulyadi, and I. Setiawan, "IMPLEMENTASI PASAL 30 AYAT (2) UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 11 TAHUN 2012 TENTANG SISTEM PERADILAN PIDANA ANAK PENAHANAN OLEH JPU DI ...," *Pustaka Galuh Justisi*, no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:19:21 (2024), <https://www.ojs.unigal.ac.id/index.php/pustakagaluh/article/view/4365>.

³³ LM Armstrong, "Restorative Justice from a Children's Rights Perspective, by Annemieke Wolthuis and Tim Chapman (Eds.)," *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:05:08 (2026), https://brill.com/view/journals/tij/9/1/article-p141_9.xml.

affect the feasibility and form of diversion.³⁴ The variation observed in Garut Regency therefore needs to be understood within this differentiated legal framework. Cases that proceed to formal prosecution do not necessarily indicate the absence of child protection, just as cases resolved through diversion do not automatically demonstrate successful restorative justice. The quality of juvenile justice depends on whether the selected mechanism is legally appropriate, proportionate, procedurally fair, and responsive to the circumstances of both the child and the victim.

The relationship between penal intervention and diversion can consequently be illustrated as follows.

Table 1. Differentiated Legal Responses to Juvenile Offending

Dimension	Penal Measures	Diversion and Restorative Measures
Primary orientation	Formal legal accountability	Resolution, restoration, and reintegration
Institutional pathway	Investigation, prosecution, and adjudication	Resolution outside conventional adjudication where legally permitted
Position of the child	Subject of juvenile criminal proceedings with special legal protection	Active participant in the resolution and accountability process
Position of the victim	Protected through criminal justice procedures	Given space to participate in determining restorative resolution
Principal consideration	Nature of offence, evidence, legal responsibility, and proportionality	Harm, accountability, agreement, rehabilitation, and reintegration
Expected outcome	Legally appropriate criminal justice response	Restoration and reduction of unnecessary formal processing
Long-term objective	Prevention of reoffending and protection of legal order	Prevention of reoffending through social restoration and reintegration

Source: Authors' conceptualization based on the analytical framework of this study.

³⁴ M. Brady-Clark et al., "The Relationship between Healing and Justice for Survivors of Sexual Violence: Participants' Experiences of Restorative Justice," *Aotearoa New Zealand ...*, no. Query date: 2026-06-03 16:05:08 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.T2025111900013200837272413>.

Table 1 demonstrates that penal measures and diversion should not be conceptualized as mutually exclusive approaches. Both form part of the juvenile justice architecture, but they operate through different mechanisms and emphasize different dimensions of accountability. The essential issue is therefore the proportional allocation of cases to an appropriate mechanism. Where diversion is legally available and consistent with the circumstances of the case, restorative resolution can reduce unnecessary exposure to formal criminal proceedings. Where formal proceedings remain necessary, child-sensitive procedural safeguards and rehabilitative objectives should continue to guide the process.

The limitations of a purely penal response become more apparent when juvenile offending is examined in relation to its underlying causes. Criminal proceedings generally operate after an offence has occurred and therefore have limited capacity to address the conditions that precede offending. As discussed in the preceding section, juvenile behavior may be shaped by interactions among psychological development, family supervision, peer relationships, education, socioeconomic conditions, and the broader social environment. Criminal sanctions alone cannot substantially modify all of these conditions. This explains the importance of non-penal measures as a complementary component of juvenile crime policy.

Non-penal measures operate primarily through prevention and early intervention. Their objective is to reduce risk factors before they develop into conduct requiring criminal justice intervention. Family-based measures may include strengthening parental supervision, improving communication, and facilitating access to social assistance where necessary. Schools can contribute through counseling, legal awareness programs, early identification of behavioral problems, and coordination with families. Communities can provide positive social environments, youth activities, and informal mechanisms of supervision. Government institutions and social services can complement these initiatives by developing coordinated interventions for children identified as vulnerable to offending.

The distinction between penal and non-penal measures can be further clarified through their respective stages of intervention.

Table 2. Integrated Penal and Non-Penal Framework for Juvenile Crime Prevention

Stage	Main Objective	Relevant Measures	Key Actors
Primary prevention	Prevent risk factors from developing into offending	Family supervision, education, legal awareness, youth development, community activities	Family, schools, community, local government
Early intervention	Respond to indications of behavioral vulnerability	Counseling, mentoring, social assistance, school-family intervention	Schools, families, social workers, community institutions
Juvenile justice intervention	Respond proportionately after an offence occurs	Diversion, restorative justice, investigation, prosecution where legally required	Police, prosecutors, judges, community counselors
Rehabilitation	Address behavioral and social consequences	Guidance, education, counseling, skills development	Social institutions, correctional institutions, families
Reintegration	Prevent recurrence and restore social participation	Family support, return to education, community acceptance, continued mentoring	Family, schools, community, government institutions

Source: Authors' conceptualization based on the findings and legal-policy framework of this study.

As shown in Table 2, effective juvenile crime prevention requires intervention before, during, and after contact with the criminal justice system. This continuum is significant because the prevention of reoffending cannot begin only after a court decision has been issued. Early intervention can reduce the likelihood that vulnerable children enter the justice system, while rehabilitation and reintegration can reduce the possibility that children who have already experienced legal proceedings become repeatedly

involved in offending.³⁵ The integration of these stages therefore transforms juvenile crime policy from a reactive model into a more comprehensive preventive framework.

The Garut context further illustrates the importance of institutional coordination. Juvenile offending involves legal and social dimensions that fall within the responsibilities of different institutions. Law-enforcement authorities are responsible for applying criminal procedure and determining legally appropriate responses, while families, educational institutions, social services, community counselors, and local government institutions contribute to prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Fragmented intervention may reduce the effectiveness of the overall policy because the factors contributing to offending frequently extend beyond the competence of a single institution. Coordination is therefore necessary to ensure continuity between crime prevention, case handling, and post-case support.

Another important consideration is the position of victims within juvenile justice. A child-oriented approach should not be interpreted as disregarding the harm experienced by victims. Restorative justice derives much of its legitimacy precisely from its attempt to incorporate victim interests into the resolution process.³⁶ An appropriate restorative mechanism should provide opportunities for acknowledgment of harm and proportionate forms of restoration while ensuring that participation remains consistent with legal safeguards. The protection of children and the protection of victims should consequently be understood as complementary objectives rather than competing principles.

The same reasoning applies to the concept of accountability. Diversion does not mean the absence of responsibility. On the contrary, restorative mechanisms can require a more direct form of accountability because children are encouraged to understand the consequences of their conduct and participate in repairing the resulting harm. Formal

³⁵ A. Sugiarto, "TINJAUAN KRITIS TERHADAP IMPLEMENTASI DIVERSI DALAM SISTEM PERADILAN PIDANA ANAK DI INDONESIA," *Cerdika: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, no. Query date: 2026-06-11 23:19:21 (2025),

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrnI=27746291&AN=186298130&h=6T%2FDeTqoUgKItSaKxMmDtmvK0I%2BHc%2Boab5WEmkwQ5gz7sLt4XolmiEw2UzwTb5w%2FvBB4acFmvPC7JNUOHnMZkA%3D%3D&crl=c>.

³⁶ R. Banwell-Moore, "Restorative Justice: Adopting a Whole System Approach to Address Cultural Barriers in Criminal Justice," *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, no. Query date: 2026-05-10 19:33:40 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958241268005>.

punishment may establish legal responsibility, but restorative intervention can add an educational dimension by connecting responsibility to the actual consequences of the offence. For children whose moral and social development is continuing, this educational function is particularly important.

The implementation of juvenile justice must therefore avoid two extremes. An excessively punitive approach risks treating children as equivalent to adult offenders and may undermine rehabilitation and reintegration. Conversely, an approach that focuses exclusively on protection without meaningful accountability may insufficiently address the interests of victims and the seriousness of unlawful conduct. The Juvenile Criminal Justice System requires a balanced approach in which accountability, proportionality, restoration, rehabilitation, and child protection reinforce one another. The choice between diversion and formal proceedings should consequently be understood as a legal determination within this broader framework rather than as an indication that one mechanism is inherently superior in every circumstance.

From a policy perspective, the findings indicate that strengthening juvenile crime prevention in Garut Regency requires greater integration between penal, restorative, and non-penal measures. The formal justice system should continue to ensure legal accountability where required, while diversion should be optimized for cases meeting the statutory conditions. At the same time, preventive interventions should be strengthened through family participation, school-based programs, community involvement, counseling, and institutional coordination. Post-case rehabilitation and reintegration should receive comparable attention because successful case resolution does not necessarily eliminate the social conditions associated with offending.

The analysis ultimately demonstrates that the effectiveness of juvenile justice cannot be assessed solely from the number of cases diverted or prosecuted. A more substantive assessment concerns whether each intervention contributes to the broader objectives of juvenile justice: protecting children, recognizing victims, maintaining accountability, reducing repeated offending, and facilitating successful reintegration. The principal contribution of this study is therefore the construction of an integrated local juvenile justice framework in which diversion is positioned not as an isolated procedural alternative, but as an intermediary mechanism connecting crime prevention,

legal accountability, restorative resolution, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. Applied to Garut Regency, this framework provides a basis for evaluating juvenile case handling beyond procedural outcomes and for developing a preventive legal policy consistent with the best interests of the child while maintaining proportionality, victim protection, and the integrity of the criminal justice system.

C. CONCLUSIONS

Juvenile offending in Garut Regency is influenced by various factors arising from the child's personal circumstances, family, peer relationships, and social environment. The findings also show that the response to juvenile cases cannot rely solely on formal criminal proceedings. Diversion under Law Number 11 of 2012 provides an important alternative for cases that meet the legal requirements, particularly because it allows the settlement process to consider the interests of the child and the victim. At the same time, prevention needs to involve families, schools, communities, and relevant institutions to address the factors that encourage juvenile offending from an early stage. Therefore, the handling of juvenile cases in Garut Regency should combine appropriate law enforcement with prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration so that children remain accountable for their actions without losing the opportunity to continue their development and return to society.

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