Crime of the Personal Closeness: Characteristics Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse

Henky Fernando¹, Yuniar Galuh Larasati², Mustaqim Pabbajah³, Syahrul Akmal Latif⁴, Riky Novarizal⁵
¹ Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
² Faculty of Art, Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic
³ Fakultas Pendidikan, Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta, Indonesia
⁴,⁵Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia
Email: fhenky92@gmail.com

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Abstract: The characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children appear in complex patterns of relationships. Studies that had discussed this phenomenon have only focused on the existence of victims, so they have not comprehensively explained the characteristics of the perpetrators. This study focuses on the question "How are the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children?" To answer this question, this study uses a qualitative descriptive approach in exploring cases of sexual abuse against children through online media coverage. The reading of the news is focused on news headlines that contain cases, victims, and perpetrators of sexual abuse against children. Important findings in this study show that the perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are not least carried out by those closest to the child biologically, socially, and structurally, such as parents, neighbors, and teachers at school. Based on these findings, it is possible to formulate a concept of the crime of personal closeness as a contribution to this study. This study also recommends the importance of comparing cases, victims, and perpetrators of sexual abuse by interviewing groups of girls and boys on a more macro and more empirical basis.

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The introduction
Crime of personal closeness is a concept that highlights a person's potential to become a perpetrator of a crime by manipulating his interpersonal intimate relations in a biological, social, and structural way. This context can be seen through cases of sexual abuse against children committed by parents, neighbors, and teachers (Mennicke et al., 2022; Mokoena, 2022; Devries et al., 2022). In Indonesia, The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection reported that there were 11,952 cases of sexual abuse experienced by children in the last two years, where victims were afraid to report them because the perpetrators were the closest people to
the victims (Agatha, 2022). Koçtürk dan Yüksel (2019) also said that perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are often committed by biological fathers, siblings, stepfathers, neighbors, and even teachers at school. Given the prevalence of sexual abuse against children, the discussion regarding the characteristics of perpetrators who have the potential to commit sexual abuse is very (Koçtürk dan Yüksel, 2019), especially those that explain the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse who are the close people for the victim.

The characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against minors appear in complex patterns of relationships. The context is a very important phenomenon to explain. However, so far studies that discuss sexual abuse against children have only focused on three aspects: First, studies that focus on explaining the physical and psychological impact of sexual abuse on children (Banyard et al., 2022; Iorfa et al., 2022; Edwards et al., 2022); Second, studies that focus on explaining sexual abuse in the context of law enforcement (Taylor et al., 2022; Rashid dan Barron, 2022; Pitre dan Lingam, 2022); Third, studies that focus on explaining the prevention of sexual abuse against children (Kemer dan İşler Dalgıç, 2022; Rudolph et al., 2022; Lievesley dan Harper, 2022). In general, studies that discuss sexual abuse against children tend to focus on implications, law enforcement, and prevention of sexual abuse against children, so an understanding of the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children has not been carried out comprehensively and even tends to be neglected in studies that have been conducted.

Globally, the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children appear in complex patterns of relationships. Koçtürk dan Yüksel (2019) also said that sexual abuse against children is not only shown through patterns of contextual actions but also shown through the complex characteristics of the perpetrators. However, so far studies that discuss the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children have not been carried out comprehensively, especially those that explain the involvement of the closest people who become perpetrators of sexual abuse against children. Considering that there has not yet been a discussion on the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children, this study, in addition to responding to the shortcomings of previous studies, also analyzes and reflects on the relationship between perpetrators and victims in cases of sexual abuse. Fernando et al., (2022) also said about the importance of studies that explain the characteristics of perpetrators of crimes against minors, which are often overlooked in studies of sexual abuse against children (Koçtürk dan Yüksel, 2019).

The characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children appear in complex patterns of relationships. This context is a very important phenomenon to explain and reflect on as a lesson learned. Therefore, to analyze and reflect on the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children, this study focuses on three questions: First, how did sexual abuse against children occur in their family environment?; Second, how does sexual abuse against minors occur in their social environment?; Third, how did sexual abuse against children occurs in the school environment? In line
with that, this study is also based on the argument that the relationship patterns and characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are not least carried out by people who are biologically, socially, and structurally close, so that acts of sexual abuse against children are often done by parents, neighbors, and even teachers at school. The context is a very important phenomenon to explain.

**Research methods**

Children in this study refer to the concept of Fernando et al., (2022) as a group of individuals aged 18 and under or who are still in school. However, this study only focuses on the group of girls who experience acts of sexual abuse from those closest to them. This study is a descriptive qualitative study that relies on primary and secondary data. The primary data in this study is a description of the text which was obtained through the process of reading equivalent to 1,000 online news using the search keywords *Kekerasan seksual terhadap anak di Indonesia* (Sexual abuse against children in Indonesia) through the Google search engine. The process of collecting and searching for data was carried out from January 2 to January 21, 2023. The reading of the 1,000 online news was focused on news titles that contained the theme, namely forms of sexual abuse against children, the age of the victim, and the status of the perpetrator of sexual abuse. From these three themes, an in-depth exploration process of news content was carried out to find the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children as an important finding in this study. Secondary data in this study were obtained through websites and relevant journal articles.

The analysis process in this study refers to methods that have been used by Fernando et al. (2023) with a focus on three stages of analysis: First, the process of reducing data, namely the process of rearranging the data that has been obtained into a more systematic form based on the trends of the data that has been collected; Second, the process of verifying the data, namely the process of explaining and concluding the data according to the research questions obtained through the reduction process; Third, the process of displaying data, namely as a process of describing data that has been verified and then displayed in a tabular form containing excerpts from online news content as a novelty in this study. Of the three processes, then an inductive analysis of the data is carried out as a basis for the interpretation of the data. Interpretation is done by restating the data according to the ongoing conditions, situation, and socio-cultural context. The stages and analytical techniques used in this study make it possible to conclude the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children.

**Result and Discussion**

The findings in this study show that the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are not least carried out by people who are biologically, socially, and structurally close, such as parents, neighbors, and even teachers at school. This context can be seen through the discussion below.
Sexual Abuse by Parents

Acts of sexual abuse committed by parents against their children indicate that biologically close people have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual abuse. Koçtürk dan Yüksel (2019) also said that the involvement of biologically close people as perpetrators of sexual abuse can be seen through the actions taken by parents towards their children. As can be seen in the display of Table 1.

Table 1. Sexual abuse by parents against children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Girl (15)</td>
<td>The West Jakarta Metro Resort Police Criminal Investigation Unit arrested a suspect in a case of sexual abuse committed by a man with the initials AS 49 years old to his stepson, STA 15 years old, which occurred in the Tambora area, West Jakarta (Permana, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>Girl (18)</td>
<td>Child sexual abuse is happening again. In Padang, West Sumatra, 2 girls were raped by close relatives, namely their grandfather, older siblings, and even their uncle (Luthfan, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Elementary school student</td>
<td>Depraved acts of committing sexual abuse against children are happening again. This time, sexual abuse against children was allegedly perpetrated by a father against his biological child in Tegal City, Central Java (Newswire &amp; Saputra, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>Girl (12)</td>
<td>The police in Jembrana finally named the victim's uncle as a suspect in a case of sexual abuse against a child. The police have now started investigating the rape case of this 12-year-old child. It was even revealed that the perpetrator had repeatedly intercourse with his nephew (Baltribune, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>Girl (8)</td>
<td>It is known that the victim of rape was an 8-year-old girl named Mawar (not her real name). Meanwhile, the perpetrator was someone close to the victim, namely his cousin who was still ABG (teenager) with the initials SY, 19 years old (Kurniawan, 2021).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First, children under the age of 18 are the most vulnerable group to get acts of sexual abuse from their parents. Acts of sexual abuse committed by parents against their children indicate that biologically close people have the potential to become perpetrators. This context is also in line with what was reported by Newswire and Saputra (2021), which stated that a father in Tegal City, Central Java, had committed an act of sexual abuse against his biological child who was still in elementary school. Aside from the existence of power relations, children are also often positioned as objects in the family system, so the treatments children receive tend to appear in an intimidating form. Therefore, King et al., (2019) said that sexual abuse against children committed by those closest to the victim not least appears in the form of sexual aggression, where the act of sexual abuse is often normalized through the child’s biological relationships with his parents.

Second, sexual abuse perpetrated by parents against their children also appears in various forms of action. Rape and molestation, are actions that are not least done by parents against their children. This context is also in line with what was reported by Permana (2021) which stated that a father in West Jakarta had committed an act of sexual abuse against his 15-year-old stepdaughter in the form of molestation. The involvement of parents as perpetrators of sexual abuse against their children is also often based on the power relations of parents toward their children. Based on the view of Jin et al., (2019), the power relations of parents towards their children can normalize a deviation or even abuse that is manipulated by the power of certain ideologies and norms. Therefore, Lange et al., (2020) said that sexual abuse committed by parents against their children often works on the child’s subconscious so that the actions taken by parents against their children can be accepted as something normal by the victim.

Sexual abuse committed by parents against their children indicates that biologically close people have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual abuse. This context is illustrated through the two trends in Table 1 which shows that the sexual abuse experienced by children is not least done by their parents. Rape and molestation are acts that are often committed by parents against their children who are under the age of 18. The potency of people who are biologically close to becoming perpetrators of crimes, according to McElvaney et al., (2022) occurs because an intense relationship has been formed between victims and perpetrators so that the actions taken by perpetrators can be accepted as something normal by victims. In this context, biological closeness is conceptualized as closeness as a family member, which has obscured an action, attitude, and the extent to which the norms and normal limits of parents treat their children. Therefore, the unclear boundaries of parents’ norms and norms for their children make parents become the potential to commit sexual abuse.

Sexual Abuse by Neighbors

Acts of sexual abuse against children committed by their neighbors indicate that socially close people have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual abuse. Elkin (2020) also said that the involvement of people who are socially close to perpetrators of sexual abuse can be seen through the actions
taken against victims by their neighbors. As can be seen in the display of Table 2.

Table 2. Sexual abuse by neighbors against children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Girl (10)</td>
<td>Anta Suparta alias Abah, a resident of Paledang Village, Central Bogor District, was forced to enjoy his old age in a jail, for sexually abusing his neighbor's child (Khatimah, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>Girl (6)</td>
<td>This time, a 6-year-old child becomes the victim. The perpetrator with the initials JM raped the child. The victim, along with her parents and attorney, reported her neighbor's lecherous act to the Jember Police (Setiawan, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Girl (18)</td>
<td>West Jakarta Police are investigating a case of sexual abuse against three girls that was perpetrated by their neighbor in West Jakarta. Commissioner Teuku Arsyia Gaddafi said cases of sexual abuse against children were overflowing from Regional Police Metro Jaya (Dewi, 2020).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Girl (11)</td>
<td>The head of the RT (Neighborhood Association) in Tangerang Regency doesn't deserve to be an example as a protector of the community. He committed sexual molestation against his neighbors. This incident occurred in Tangerang Regency (Qodir, 2020).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Girls (9) and (10)</td>
<td>An old man who is a Koran teacher has the heart to abuse three underage girls. The three victims, aged 9 and 10, were the children of the perpetrator's neighbors (Saputri, 2021).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows cases of sexual abuse against children committed by their neighbors. Accordingly, from the appearance of Table 2, there are also two trends regarding sexual abuse against children committed by their neighbors, including:

First, children under the age of 18 are the most vulnerable group to get acts of sexual abuse from their neighbors. Acts of sexual abuse against children committed by their neighbors indicate that socially close people have the potential to become perpetrators. This context is also in line with what was reported by Saputri (2021), which said that an old man who worked as a Koran teacher abused three of his neighbors' children who were aged 9 and 10 years. According to McGowan dan Elliott (2019), sexual abuse committed by those closest to the victim socially is a reflection of the weak awareness of community groups regarding the latent dangers of sexual abuse against children, it is also influenced by the social system of society which positions
children as a subsystem. Therefore, children often get various kinds of acts of exploitation, oppression, and even sexual harassment in their social environment. In the view of Bernard dan Carlile (2021), these actions can even be considered as something that normally happens in society.

Second, sexual abuse against children committed by their neighbors appears in various forms of action. Harassment, molestation, and rape are actions that are often committed against minors by their neighbors. This context is also in line with what was reported by Khatimah (2021) who stated that a perpetrator of sexual abuse in Bogor Tengah District was forced to enjoy his old age in prison because he had abused his neighbors' children. In the view of Banyard et al., (2019), sexual abuse perpetrated by the victim's neighbor, apart from being a legal issue, also reflects the weak collective values that bind the relationships among community groups. In other words, sexual abuse against children perpetrated by their neighbors is an implication of the dysfunctional social norms that exist in society. Kelling et al., (2021) also said that the prevalence of sexual abuse experienced by children is an implication of normal social dysfunction in society.

Sexual abuse against children committed by their neighbors indicates that socially close people have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual abuse. This context illustrates two trends through Table 2 which shows that the sexual abuse experienced by children is not least done by their neighbors. Harassment, molestation, and rape are acts that are often committed against children under the age of 18 by their neighbors. The potential for people who are socially close for becoming perpetrators of crime, in Thulin et al. ’s view, (2021) occurs because social interactions between groups of people are no longer based on collective values, so acts of sexual abuse against children are a consequence of dysfunctional communal norms. In this context, a social closeness which is conceptualized as a community closeness such society has opened up opportunities for acts of sexual abuse against children through intense interaction and communication by ignoring communal values agreed upon within the community.

**Sexual Abuse by Teachers**

Acts of violence that children receive in their school environment indicate that structurally close people have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual abuse. Steiner et al., (2021) also said that the involvement of people who are structurally close to perpetrators of sexual abuse can be seen through the actions that children receive in their school environment. As can be seen in the display of Table 3.
Table 3. Sexual abuse by teachers against children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>High school girl</td>
<td>The police have examined several witnesses concerning a case of sexual abuse at a school in Batu City, East Java. Some of the witnesses who have been examined include the principal of the school and teachers (Yohanes, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Middle school girl</td>
<td>A school principal and priest in Medan, North Sumatra, with the initials BS, is suspected of sexually abusing children. However, the suspect is still at large until now (Andriansyah, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Elementary school girl</td>
<td>Cases of alleged harassment by teachers against their students have occurred again in Jembrana. The police in Jembrana are now handling the alleged harassment case by an elementary school principal (Mahendra, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Vocational high school girl</td>
<td>The Head of a Private Vocational School in Surabaya AF was reported to the Big City Resort Police of Surabaya regarding allegations of harassment and molestation of his student AR, in the principal's room, at the school (Infonews.id, 2021).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molestation</td>
<td>Islamic school girl</td>
<td>Islamic boarding schools, which are supposed to be safe places for students, are used by caretakers to commit sexual abuse. The most recent cases that were revealed occurred in West Java and Central Java, namely Bandung, Tasikmalaya, and Cilacap (CNN Indonesia, 2021).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows cases of sexual abuse perpetrated against children who are still in school by their teachers. In line with that, from the appearance of Tabel 3, there are also two trends regarding sexual abuse against children in schools carried out by their teachers, including:

First, children who are still in school are the group most vulnerable to sexual abuse by their teachers. Acts of sexual abuse against children committed by their teachers indicate that structurally close people have the potential to become perpetrators. This context is also in line with what was reported by Mahendra (2021) who stated that a teacher in Jembrana had
abused his students who were still in elementary school. Acts of sexual abuse experienced by children in their school environment, in the view of Steiner et al., (2021), can occur in the form of sexual coercion and transactional sex perpetrated by teachers and school staff. Ferrara et al., (2019) stated that the prevalence of acts of violence that children receive in the school environment occurs because of the intensity of children spending more time at school than at home, so the potential for children to experience conflict, physical, psychological violence, and harassment also increases because of the weak control of the child's parents. Therefore, the more time a child spends at school the higher the potential for a child to be exposed to sexual abuse.

Second, sexual abuse against children at school by their teachers appears in various forms of action. Harassment and molestation are actions that are often carried out against children at school by their teachers. This context is also in line with what was reported by Andriansyah (2021) who said that a teacher who was also the principal of a school in Medan, had sexually abused his students. In the view of Edwards et al., (2020), sexual abuse perpetrated by teachers against their students occurs due to an imbalance of power relations between teachers and students, so the domination of teachers over students becomes the dominant factor that causes sexual abuse to occur in schools. In line with that, Baker-Henningham et al., (2021) also said that the potential for children to become victims of violence at school by their teachers is very high, this action not least appears in the form of physical and psychological violence against children. Therefore, sexual abuse perpetrated by teachers at school against their students is an act that is common globally (Baker-Henningham et al., 2021).

The violence that children receive in their school environment indicates that structurally close people have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual abuse. This context illustrates two trends through Table 3 which shows that the sexual abuse experienced by children at school is not least done by their teachers. Harassment and molestation are acts that are often committed against children under the age of 18 in the school environment by their teachers. According to Draugedalen (2020), the potential for people who are structurally close to becoming perpetrators of crimes occurs due to an imbalance in power relations between teachers and students, so this domination provides opportunities for perpetrators to carry out actions that harm victims physically and psychologically. In this context, structural closeness is conceptualized as an institutionalized closeness, which has created a power relation by emphasizing hierarchical actions. Therefore, sexual abuse perpetrated by teachers in schools is not least based on structural (Krek, 2020).

Conclusion
This study highlights three important findings regarding the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against minors: First, some perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are carried out by people who are biologically close to the child, so parents can also be involved in becoming perpetrators of sexual abuse against their children; Second, some perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are carried out by people who
are socially close to the children so that not least acts of sexual abuse against children are committed by their neighbors. Third, the perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are not least carried out by people who are structurally close to the child so that not a few perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are carried out by their teachers at school. These three characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children are important findings of this study in explaining the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children.

The involvement of those closest to the child as perpetrators of sexual abuse is a phenomenon that has been discussed a lot in previous studies, but the conception regarding the involvement of those closest to children as perpetrators of sexual abuse has not been comprehensively formulated in previous studies. Therefore, in addition to showing the pattern of relationships and characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse against minors, this study also provides a conceptual contribution regarding the widespread involvement of those closest to children as perpetrators of sexual abuse, with the concept of Crime of personal closeness highlighting a person's potential. become perpetrators of crimes by manipulating their interpersonal intimacy relations biologically, socially, and structurally. The conceptual contribution is expected to be a reference for the development of the concept of the sociology of law.

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