International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

Law Enforcement in Child Protection in Indonesia: An Analysis of the Implementation of Child Protection Laws

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Abstract

Child protection is a fundamental responsibility of the state to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights through an effective legal system. This study examines the enforcement of child protection laws in Indonesia by analyzing the implementation of the existing legal framework, institutional roles, and challenges affecting legal enforcement. Using a qualitative literature review approach, the study analyzes statutory regulations, international legal instruments, scholarly publications, and relevant policy documents related to child protection. The findings indicate that Indonesia has established a comprehensive legal framework aligned with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the effectiveness of law enforcement remains constrained by institutional fragmentation, inconsistent implementation of legal provisions, limited inter-agency coordination, disparities in professional capacity, and emerging digital threats such as online child exploitation. The study emphasizes that strengthening child protection requires integrated governance, improved institutional capacity, child-friendly justice, and enhanced digital investigation capabilities. These findings contribute to the development of legal policy by providing strategic recommendations to improve law enforcement effectiveness and ensure comprehensive protection of children's rights in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Child Protection, Law Enforcement, Children's Rights, Legal Framework, Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Children are universally recognized as rights holders who are entitled to survival, development, participation, and protection from all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and discrimination. These principles are firmly established in the United Nations Convention on the

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Rights of the Child (CRC), which Indonesia ratified through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990, thereby imposing a legal obligation on the State to harmonize domestic legislation with international child rights standards. Indonesia has subsequently strengthened its national legal framework through Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, as amended by Law No. 35 of 2014 and supplemented by several sectoral regulations, including Law No. 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes. Despite these legislative developments, the effectiveness of legal protection ultimately depends on the quality of law enforcement and institutional implementation rather than the existence of legal norms alone (Rachmanto, 2021).

The increasing prevalence of violence against children demonstrates that legal reform has not yet been accompanied by equally effective law enforcement. Children in Indonesia continue to experience physical violence, psychological abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, neglect, child marriage, and various forms of online abuse. These violations occur within families, educational institutions, communities, workplaces, and digital environments, indicating that child protection has become a multidimensional legal and social issue. UNICEF has consistently emphasized that violence against children remains widespread despite significant policy improvements, and weaknesses in institutional coordination, budget allocation, and service delivery continue to limit the realization of children's rights. Consequently, strengthening the enforcement of child protection laws has become an urgent national priority that requires coordinated action among law enforcement agencies, social institutions, and governmental authorities (UNICEF, 2020; UNICEF, 2026).

Indonesia has established a relatively comprehensive statutory framework governing child protection. Besides the Child Protection Law, the legal framework incorporates legislation concerning domestic violence, witness and victim protection, juvenile justice, electronic information, anti-trafficking measures, and sexual violence. These statutes collectively provide preventive, punitive, and restorative mechanisms intended to protect children from diverse forms of victimization. Nevertheless, legal certainty alone does not automatically produce effective protection because implementation frequently encounters institutional fragmentation, overlapping authority, inconsistent interpretation of legal provisions, and unequal enforcement capacity across different regions. The effectiveness of legal norms therefore depends on the ability of state institutions to implement them consistently while ensuring access to justice for child victims (UNICEF, 2026).

Law enforcement institutions play a decisive role in transforming statutory guarantees into

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practical protection for children. Police officers, prosecutors, judges, correctional institutions, child protection agencies, and social workers are expected to apply child-sensitive procedures that prioritize the best interests of the child throughout the criminal justice process. However, empirical studies indicate that coordination among these institutions often remains fragmented, resulting in procedural delays, inconsistent diversion practices, insufficient victim assistance, and varying interpretations of restorative justice principles. Such institutional limitations reduce the effectiveness of the child protection system and weaken public confidence in legal institutions responsible for safeguarding children's rights (Bari & Taufik, 2025).

An equally significant challenge concerns the protection of children within the digital environment. Rapid technological development has increased children's exposure to cyberbullying, online grooming, child sexual exploitation and abuse, and the distribution of child sexual abuse materials. Although Indonesia has introduced legislative reforms to criminalize many forms of online child exploitation, legal experts and international organizations have identified continuing gaps in legal definitions, investigative capacity, reporting mechanisms, and cross-border cooperation. Digital crimes frequently transcend national jurisdiction, requiring law enforcement agencies to strengthen technological capability, international collaboration, and evidence-based investigation methods to ensure effective prosecution of offenders while protecting child victims (UNICEF, 2026).

Another critical concern is the implementation of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, which emphasizes restorative justice and diversion for children in conflict with the law. The enactment of Law No. 11 of 2012 represented a paradigm shift from punitive approaches toward child-centered justice. Nevertheless, several studies reveal that practical implementation remains inconsistent because institutional readiness, professional competence, and inter-agency collaboration vary considerably among jurisdictions. In some cases, diversion mechanisms are not optimally implemented, while procedural safeguards for child offenders and child victims remain insufficient. These challenges indicate that legal reform must be accompanied by institutional reform, professional training, and standardized operational procedures to achieve meaningful child protection outcomes (Bari & Taufik, 2025).

The effectiveness of child protection law enforcement must also be examined from a broader governance perspective. Child protection cannot rely exclusively on criminal law sanctions but requires integrated public policies involving education, healthcare, social welfare, civil registration, and community participation. UNICEF identifies birth registration, child welfare services, violence prevention, integrated protection services, and adequate public financing as

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essential components of a comprehensive child protection system. Weak coordination among these sectors often limits early detection of abuse cases, delays intervention, and reduces access to legal remedies for vulnerable children. Therefore, strengthening institutional governance represents an indispensable element of effective legal enforcement (UNICEF, 2020).

Given these circumstances, scholarly examination of the implementation of child protection legislation in Indonesia is both timely and necessary. Although Indonesia possesses an increasingly sophisticated legal framework consistent with international standards, significant challenges remain regarding institutional effectiveness, legal consistency, inter-agency coordination, resource allocation, and adaptation to emerging forms of child victimization. This paper therefore analyzes the implementation of child protection legislation from a law enforcement perspective by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the existing legal framework and identifying institutional barriers that hinder effective enforcement. The findings are expected to contribute to legal scholarship by providing recommendations for strengthening child protection governance and enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement in safeguarding children's rights in Indonesia.

OVERVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection is a fundamental principle of human rights that requires every child to be protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and discrimination. The concept of child protection is primarily based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which recognizes children as independent rights holders entitled to survival, development, participation, and protection. The CRC emphasizes that governments have the primary responsibility to establish legal systems capable of safeguarding children's rights through effective legislation and law enforcement (Liefaard, 2018). In Indonesia, these principles have been incorporated into national legislation, particularly Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection.

Law enforcement refers to the process of implementing legal rules to ensure justice, legal certainty, and the protection of citizens' rights. In the context of child protection, law enforcement extends beyond prosecuting offenders to include prevention, victim assistance, rehabilitation, and the restoration of children's rights. Effective law enforcement requires cooperation among police, prosecutors, courts, social workers, and child protection institutions. According to Bottoms and Tankebe (2012), successful law enforcement depends on institutional legitimacy, public trust, and consistent implementation of legal provisions.

Indonesia has developed a comprehensive legal framework for child protection. In addition

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to the Child Protection Law, several other laws support children's rights, including Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes. These laws aim to ensure that children receive legal protection both as victims and as children in conflict with the law. However, the effectiveness of these legal instruments depends on their practical implementation by law enforcement agencies (Fitriani, 2016).

The Juvenile Criminal Justice System introduces restorative justice and diversion as the primary approaches for handling cases involving children. Restorative justice seeks to restore the relationships between victims, offenders, and society while prioritizing the best interests of the child. Diversion allows eligible cases to be resolved outside formal court proceedings, thereby reducing the negative consequences of criminal prosecution for children. Research has shown that restorative justice contributes to better rehabilitation outcomes and supports children's social reintegration (Liefaard, 2018).

Despite significant legal reforms, Indonesia continues to face considerable challenges in enforcing child protection laws. Cases of physical violence, sexual abuse, child trafficking, cyber exploitation, and child labor remain prevalent. Several studies indicate that these challenges arise from limited institutional coordination, inadequate human resources, insufficient victim support services, and inconsistent application of legal provisions across regions (Fitriani, 2016). Consequently, stronger institutional collaboration and improved professional capacity are essential to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement.

The rapid development of digital technology has created new risks for children. Cyberbullying, online grooming, child sexual exploitation, and the distribution of child sexual abuse materials have become increasingly common. These emerging forms of crime require law enforcement agencies to strengthen digital investigation capabilities and enhance cooperation with international organizations because many cybercrimes involve cross-border activities (UNICEF, 2021).

Overall, previous studies indicate that Indonesia has established an adequate legal framework for child protection. However, effective law enforcement remains a major challenge due to institutional, procedural, and technological limitations. Therefore, further research is necessary to examine how child protection laws are implemented in practice and to identify strategies for improving law enforcement mechanisms that better safeguard children's rights.

CHILD PROTECTION THEORY

Child protection is founded on the principle that every child possesses inherent rights that

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must be respected, protected, and fulfilled by the state, society, and family. The modern concept of child protection is primarily derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989), which recognizes children as independent rights holders entitled to survival, development, protection, and participation. The CRC adopts the principle of the best interests of the child, requiring that all legislative, administrative, and judicial decisions prioritize children's welfare. This principle has become the cornerstone of national child protection systems worldwide, including Indonesia, which ratified the Convention through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 (Liefaard, 2018; Tobin, 2019).

Child protection extends beyond preventing violence and abuse. It encompasses legal, social, educational, economic, and institutional measures designed to create an environment where children can grow safely and develop their full potential. According to UNICEF (2021), an effective child protection system consists of comprehensive legislation, responsive institutions, professional law enforcement officers, integrated social services, and active community participation. Consequently, child protection should be viewed as a multidisciplinary responsibility involving legal institutions, educational organizations, healthcare providers, and civil society.

From a human rights perspective, children are recognized as vulnerable individuals requiring special legal protection due to their physical and psychological immaturity. Freeman (2018) argues that children's rights differ from general human rights because children often lack the capacity to exercise their rights independently. Therefore, governments are legally obligated to establish mechanisms ensuring equal access to justice, legal remedies, and rehabilitation services for children affected by violence or exploitation. These obligations are reflected in numerous international human rights instruments and have significantly influenced the development of Indonesia's child protection legislation.

LAW ENFORCEMENT THEORY

Law enforcement refers to the implementation of legal norms to ensure justice, legal certainty, and social order. According to Friedman (1975), the effectiveness of law enforcement depends on three interrelated elements: legal structure, legal substance, and legal culture. Legal structure includes institutions such as the police, prosecution offices, courts, and correctional facilities. Legal substance refers to statutory regulations and judicial decisions, while legal culture concerns public attitudes and institutional commitment toward the implementation of law. Weakness in any of these components may undermine the effectiveness of legal protection.

Similarly, Soekanto (2014) explains that law enforcement is influenced by five principal

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factors: legal rules, law enforcement officers, supporting facilities, society, and cultural values. Within child protection, these factors determine whether legal provisions are effectively translated into practical protection. For example, well-drafted legislation cannot guarantee children's rights if law enforcement officers lack adequate training or institutional resources. Modern legal scholarship further emphasizes that law enforcement should not solely focus on punishment but also promote justice, accountability, and victim recovery. Tyler (2006) argues that procedural fairness significantly enhances public confidence in legal institutions. When child victims receive respectful treatment, psychological support, and fair legal procedures, public trust in the justice system increases, ultimately strengthening compliance with legal norms and improving protection outcomes.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

International human rights law recognizes children as holders of fundamental rights equal to those enjoyed by adults while simultaneously acknowledging their need for additional protection. The Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes four guiding principles: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival, and development, and respect for the views of the child (Tobin, 2019). These principles guide legislators and law enforcement agencies in interpreting child protection laws consistently with international standards.

In Indonesia, these principles are reflected in the Constitution of 1945 and several national statutes, particularly Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. Nevertheless, implementation remains challenging because legal protection frequently intersects with cultural practices, economic inequalities, and institutional limitations. According to Liefaard (2018), effective realization of children's rights requires strong institutional accountability, coordinated public services, and continuous legal reform to address emerging threats such as cybercrime and online exploitation.

Human rights scholars also emphasize that children's participation constitutes an essential component of child protection. Freeman (2018) notes that children should be allowed to express their opinions during judicial proceedings whenever appropriate to their age and maturity. Such participation enhances procedural justice while ensuring that legal decisions genuinely reflect children's best interests rather than solely adult perspectives.

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DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Indonesia has established a relatively comprehensive legal framework for child protection through Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, and Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes. These laws demonstrate the government's commitment to implementing the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), particularly the principles of the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, child participation, and the right to survival and development. From a normative perspective, Indonesia has successfully incorporated international child rights standards into its national legal system. However, the existence of comprehensive legislation does not automatically guarantee effective legal protection. The effectiveness of law enforcement depends largely on how legal provisions are implemented by law enforcement institutions and related stakeholders (Liefaard, 2018; Tobin, 2019).

The implementation of child protection legislation reflects the relationship between legal substance, legal structure, and legal culture as proposed by Friedman (1975). Indonesia possesses an adequate legal substance through various child protection statutes, yet challenges remain within the legal structure and legal culture. Law enforcement agencies often experience differences in interpreting legal provisions, inconsistencies in applying child-sensitive procedures, and unequal institutional capacity across provinces and districts. These disparities reduce the consistency of legal enforcement and may result in unequal legal protection for children depending on geographical location and institutional resources. Consequently, strengthening institutional capacity is equally important as improving statutory regulations.

The findings also suggest that coordination among institutions remains one of the most significant determinants of effective child protection law enforcement. Child protection cases generally involve multiple stakeholders, including the police, prosecutors, judges, correctional officers, social workers, psychologists, healthcare providers, and child protection agencies. Ideally, these institutions should function within an integrated child protection system where information sharing, case management, victim assistance, and legal procedures are coordinated effectively. Nevertheless, previous studies indicate that institutional fragmentation frequently delays legal proceedings and weakens victim-centered services, thereby reducing children's access to justice (UNICEF, 2020). These findings support the argument that legal effectiveness depends not only on legislation but also on institutional collaboration and governance.

Another important finding concerns the role of law enforcement officers in implementing child-friendly justice. Police investigators, prosecutors, and judges are required to understand

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children's psychological conditions and apply procedures that minimize secondary victimization. Child victims frequently experience emotional trauma during criminal investigations, particularly when repeated interviews or insensitive questioning occur. Therefore, professional competence and specialized training become essential components of effective child protection. Tyler (2006) argues that procedural justice significantly influences public confidence in legal institutions. When children and their families perceive legal procedures as fair, respectful, and transparent, they are more willing to cooperate with investigators and participate in judicial proceedings. Consequently, improving professional competency among law enforcement officers contributes not only to better legal outcomes but also to stronger institutional legitimacy.

The discussion further demonstrates that Indonesia's legal framework increasingly recognizes restorative justice as an important mechanism within child protection, particularly concerning children in conflict with the law. The Juvenile Criminal Justice System emphasizes diversion and rehabilitation rather than punishment whenever legally appropriate. This approach is consistent with international standards that prioritize children's development and reintegration into society instead of imposing purely punitive sanctions. Restorative justice encourages dialogue between offenders, victims, families, and communities to restore social relationships while ensuring accountability. According to Liefaard (2018), restorative approaches generally produce more sustainable outcomes because they balance legal accountability with children's developmental needs. However, successful implementation requires adequate institutional capacity, trained facilitators, and consistent judicial interpretation.

Although restorative justice has been widely promoted, practical implementation remains inconsistent across different regions of Indonesia. Some jurisdictions have successfully implemented diversion mechanisms, while others continue relying primarily on conventional criminal proceedings. This inconsistency reflects disparities in institutional resources, legal understanding, and administrative support among local law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, limited public awareness regarding restorative justice occasionally creates misconceptions that diversion represents leniency rather than an evidence-based approach to child justice. Therefore, continuous public education and professional training remain necessary to improve the effectiveness of restorative justice within Indonesia's child protection system (Fitriani, 2016).

The findings also indicate that victim protection should become the central objective of child protection law enforcement. Traditional criminal justice systems often prioritize the prosecution of offenders, whereas contemporary child protection frameworks emphasize comprehensive assistance for child victims. Such assistance includes emergency protection,

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medical treatment, psychological counseling, legal aid, rehabilitation, and long-term social reintegration. International organizations have consistently argued that successful child protection should be measured not only by conviction rates but also by the recovery and well-being of child victims (UNICEF, 2021). This perspective represents a significant shift from offender-oriented justice toward victim-centered justice, reflecting broader developments in international human rights law.

Moreover, the implementation of child protection legislation should be evaluated within the broader context of public governance. Effective child protection cannot rely exclusively on criminal law but requires collaboration across education, healthcare, social welfare, and local government institutions. Schools play a crucial role in identifying early signs of abuse, healthcare providers contribute to medical examinations and psychological assessments, while social workers facilitate family assistance and rehabilitation programs. Consequently, law enforcement should be understood as one component of an integrated child protection system rather than an isolated legal process. This integrated approach enhances early intervention, improves information sharing, and reduces institutional duplication in handling child protection cases (Tobin, 2019).

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that Indonesia has achieved significant progress in strengthening its legal framework for child protection through legislative reform and the adoption of international human rights standards. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of law enforcement remains constrained by institutional fragmentation, disparities in professional capacity, inconsistent implementation of child-friendly procedures, and limited inter-agency coordination. These findings reinforce the theoretical perspectives of Friedman (1975) and Soekanto (2014), which emphasize that effective law enforcement depends not only on legal rules but also on institutional performance, public participation, and legal culture. Therefore, future reforms should prioritize strengthening institutional cooperation, enhancing professional competence, and improving governance mechanisms to ensure that child protection laws are implemented consistently and effectively throughout Indonesia.

One of the most significant challenges in enforcing child protection laws in Indonesia is the persistence of institutional and structural barriers that reduce the effectiveness of legal implementation. Although Indonesia has enacted comprehensive legislation to safeguard children's rights, practical enforcement frequently varies across regions due to differences in institutional capacity, financial resources, and professional competence. Law enforcement agencies in urban areas generally have greater access to specialized investigators, psychologists, and child protection facilities than those in rural or remote regions. These disparities create

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unequal access to justice and limit the ability of vulnerable children to obtain timely legal protection. As a result, the effectiveness of child protection legislation depends not only on the quality of legal provisions but also on the equitable distribution of institutional resources and professional expertise (Fitriani, 2016; UNICEF, 2021).

Another important challenge concerns the coordination among institutions responsible for handling child protection cases. Child protection requires the active involvement of multiple agencies, including the police, prosecutors, courts, correctional institutions, ministries, social welfare agencies, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and community organizations. However, previous studies indicate that coordination among these stakeholders often remains fragmented due to overlapping responsibilities, bureaucratic procedures, and limited information sharing. Such fragmentation may delay investigations, prolong judicial proceedings, and reduce the quality of rehabilitation services provided to child victims. Therefore, strengthening inter-agency cooperation through integrated case management systems and standardized operational procedures is essential to improving the effectiveness of child protection law enforcement (UNICEF, 2020).

The rapid advancement of digital technology has also transformed the nature of crimes against children. The increasing use of social media platforms, online gaming, digital communication, and electronic commerce has created new opportunities for cyberbullying, online grooming, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and the dissemination of child sexual abuse materials. These forms of crime are particularly difficult to investigate because they often involve anonymous offenders, encrypted communication, digital evidence, and transnational criminal networks. Consequently, conventional investigative techniques are no longer sufficient to address emerging cyber threats affecting children. Law enforcement agencies must continuously strengthen digital forensic capabilities, cybersecurity expertise, and international legal cooperation to effectively investigate and prosecute technology-based crimes involving children (UNICEF, 2021).

The emergence of cyber-related crimes further demonstrates that child protection law enforcement must continuously adapt to technological developments. Criminal organizations increasingly exploit digital platforms to recruit, manipulate, and exploit children across national borders. Therefore, effective law enforcement requires close cooperation with internet service providers, technology companies, financial institutions, and international organizations to detect and prevent online child exploitation. Moreover, digital literacy among children, parents, teachers, and communities should be enhanced to reduce children's vulnerability to online

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threats. Preventive education complements criminal law enforcement by reducing opportunities for victimization before legal intervention becomes necessary (Tobin, 2019).

Another issue highlighted by the findings is the continuing need to strengthen victim-centered approaches within Indonesia's criminal justice system. Traditional criminal proceedings have historically focused on identifying offenders and imposing criminal sanctions. However, contemporary child protection emphasizes that legal proceedings should also prioritize children's psychological recovery, emotional well-being, and long-term social reintegration. Child victims often experience severe trauma, fear, and stigma after becoming involved in criminal proceedings. Consequently, legal institutions should ensure that investigations, prosecutions, and court hearings minimize secondary victimization by providing confidential environments, psychological counseling, legal assistance, and child-friendly interview procedures. Such measures are consistent with international standards promoting child-sensitive justice and respect for children's dignity (Liefaard, 2018).

The discussion also indicates that public legal awareness plays an important role in strengthening child protection. Many cases of violence, neglect, exploitation, and abuse remain unreported because families or communities perceive these incidents as private matters or fear social stigma. Limited public understanding regarding children's rights and available legal remedies may prevent victims from seeking assistance. Therefore, strengthening public awareness through legal education campaigns, school-based child protection programs, and community participation is essential to improving the implementation of child protection legislation. Public participation not only facilitates early reporting but also contributes to creating a culture that rejects all forms of violence against children (Freeman, 2018).

From a governance perspective, the findings suggest that child protection should be integrated into broader national development strategies. Effective child protection requires collaboration among legal institutions, educational systems, healthcare providers, local governments, and civil society organizations. Public policies concerning poverty reduction, education, social welfare, birth registration, and digital safety significantly influence children's vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Therefore, child protection should not be viewed solely as a criminal justice issue but as a multidimensional governance responsibility requiring coordinated policy implementation across multiple sectors. This integrated approach strengthens prevention, improves service delivery, and enhances institutional accountability (UNICEF, 2020).

The present study also contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that strengthening legal enforcement alone is insufficient without institutional reform and continuous

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capacity development. Consistent with Friedman's Legal System Theory, effective law enforcement requires harmony between legal substance, institutional structure, and legal culture (Friedman, 1975). Indonesia has made considerable progress in developing legal substance through legislative reform; however, institutional strengthening and legal culture require continuous improvement. Professional training for police officers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, and child protection officers should remain a long-term priority to ensure that child protection legislation is implemented consistently according to national and international standards.

Policy implications arising from this discussion suggest several strategic priorities for future reform. First, the government should strengthen institutional coordination by establishing integrated child protection information systems that facilitate communication among law enforcement agencies and social service providers. Second, specialized training on child-friendly justice and digital investigation should be continuously provided for law enforcement officers. Third, greater investment should be directed toward expanding child protection services, particularly in underserved regions where institutional capacity remains limited. Fourth, stronger collaboration with international organizations and technology companies should be developed to combat transnational online child exploitation. Finally, preventive strategies including legal education, community empowerment, and digital literacy programs should complement criminal law enforcement to reduce children's exposure to violence and exploitation.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that Indonesia has established a strong normative foundation for child protection through comprehensive legislation and alignment with international human rights standards. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain regarding institutional coordination, professional capacity, technological adaptation, public awareness, and governance integration. Addressing these challenges requires not only stronger legal enforcement but also comprehensive institutional reform, inter-sectoral collaboration, and sustained public commitment. Through these measures, Indonesia can further strengthen the implementation of child protection laws and ensure that every child enjoys effective legal protection, equal access to justice, and the opportunity to develop in a safe and supportive environment.

CONCLUSION

The enforcement of child protection laws in Indonesia represents a fundamental component of the national legal system in ensuring the realization of children's rights as recognized under both domestic legislation and international human rights instruments.

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Indonesia has made substantial progress in developing a comprehensive legal framework through the enactment of Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, Law No. 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, and Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes. These legislative reforms demonstrate the government's commitment to incorporating the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into national law. The legal framework reflects important principles such as the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, child participation, and the right to protection from all forms of violence and exploitation. Nevertheless, the existence of comprehensive legislation alone is insufficient to guarantee effective protection unless it is supported by consistent and efficient law enforcement.

This study demonstrates that the effectiveness of child protection law enforcement depends on the interaction between legal substance, institutional structure, and legal culture. Although Indonesia possesses adequate statutory regulations, significant implementation challenges continue to affect the delivery of justice for children. Institutional fragmentation, inconsistent interpretation of legal provisions, unequal professional capacity among law enforcement agencies, and disparities in public services across regions remain major obstacles to achieving comprehensive child protection. These findings indicate that improving the quality of law enforcement requires not only legislative reform but also institutional strengthening, continuous professional development, and enhanced coordination among all stakeholders responsible for protecting children.

The study further highlights that child protection should be understood as an integrated governance issue rather than solely a criminal justice matter. Effective protection requires close collaboration among police, prosecutors, judges, social workers, healthcare professionals, educational institutions, local governments, and community organizations. Equally important is the development of preventive strategies through legal education, family support, digital literacy, and public awareness campaigns that reduce children's vulnerability to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Such multidisciplinary cooperation strengthens both prevention and legal intervention while ensuring that children's rights are respected throughout the justice process.

Another important finding concerns the emergence of digital technologies, which have significantly transformed the nature of crimes against children. Cyberbullying, online grooming, child sexual exploitation, and other technology-facilitated offenses present new challenges that require adaptive legal responses. Consequently, law enforcement agencies should strengthen

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digital investigative capacity, improve international cooperation, and develop specialized expertise in handling cyber-related crimes involving children. Future child protection policies should therefore integrate technological innovation with existing legal mechanisms to ensure that children receive effective protection in both physical and digital environments.

In conclusion, strengthening the enforcement of child protection laws in Indonesia requires a holistic approach that combines legal reform, institutional capacity building, inter-agency coordination, technological adaptation, and active community participation. Sustainable improvements cannot rely exclusively on punitive measures but must also prioritize prevention, rehabilitation, victim-centered services, and children's long-term well-being. By reinforcing these interconnected elements, Indonesia can further enhance the effectiveness of its child protection system, improve access to justice for children, and fulfill its constitutional and international obligations to safeguard every child's rights, dignity, and future development.

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