

ANALYSIS OF CRIMINAL LIABILITY OF CHILDREN AS PERPETRATORS OF AGGRAVATED THEFT (A STUDY OF DECISION NUMBER 19/PID.SUS-ANAK/2025/PN.MGL)

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Abstract

One crime involving children as perpetrators is the crime of theft under aggravating circumstances, as decided by the Menggala District Court in Case Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl with a child defendant. The question is: What are the factors that cause children to commit the crime of theft under aggravating circumstances based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl? And how are children held accountable as perpetrators of the crime of theft under aggravating circumstances based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl? The research method is through a normative legal approach and an empirical approach using secondary and primary data. Next, a qualitative legal data analysis was conducted, namely by describing the resulting data in the form of explanations or sentence descriptions arranged systematically. The results of the study, that the factors causing children to commit the crime of theft under aggravating circumstances based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl include an environment that provides opportunities to commit crimes, a social environment that provides examples and role models and an economic environment, poverty and misery. The responsibility of the child as the perpetrator of the crime of theft under aggravating circumstances based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl was declared legally and convincingly proven guilty of violating Article 363 paragraph (1) 4th and 5th of the Criminal Code with a sentence of imprisonment in a Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) for 1 (one) month. Parents are advised to monitor their children's behavior, especially regarding the negative impacts of social interactions in their neighborhood, thereby minimizing the occurrence of aggravated theft by children.

Keywords: Accountability; Children; Crime; Theft; Aggravated.

INTRODUCTION

Children are the future generation of the nation and play a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of national development. Therefore, every child has the right to receive protection, guidance, and the fulfillment of their rights in order to grow and develop optimally. Protection for children is not only provided within social life but also when children come into conflict with the law as perpetrators of criminal offenses. Through Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, the Indonesian government emphasizes that the resolution of juvenile cases must prioritize the best interests of the child, apply a restorative justice approach, and regard imprisonment as a last resort (*ultimum remedium*). These provisions demonstrate that the juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia is intended not only to ensure legal certainty but also to safeguard the future of children.

Despite the existence of various legal provisions aimed at protecting children, social developments indicate that the involvement of children as perpetrators of criminal offenses remains a serious concern. Changes in the social environment, weak parental supervision, peer influence, and economic conditions frequently encourage children to engage in unlawful conduct. One of the criminal offenses that still commonly involves children is aggravated theft, as regulated under Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). Such offenses not only cause material losses to victims but also raise legal issues regarding the application of criminal liability to children who are still undergoing physical and psychological development.

This issue is reflected in the Menggala District Court Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl, which serves as the object of this study. According to the facts established during the trial, the child defendant, together with other perpetrators, committed theft by breaking the door of a shop using a crowbar and taking several items, including bolts and screws, which were subsequently sold to another party, causing the victim to suffer material losses amounting to approximately IDR 7,300,000. As a result, the child was charged under Article 363 paragraph (1) points 4 and 5 of the Criminal Code for committing theft jointly with others by damaging property to facilitate the commission of the offense. This case is particularly significant because, in addition to examining the fulfillment of the legal elements of aggravated theft, it also illustrates how judges impose criminal liability on children while upholding the principles of child protection within the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

Criminal liability serves as the legal basis for determining whether an individual may be subjected to criminal punishment for an act they have committed. A person may only be held criminally liable if it is proven that they have committed an act fulfilling all the elements of a criminal offense and that the act was committed with fault. According to Moeljatno, a criminal offense is an act prohibited by law and accompanied by criminal sanctions for those who violate the prohibition. Meanwhile, Van Hamel defines *strafbaarfeit* as a human act prescribed by law, unlawful in nature, punishable, and committed with fault. Therefore, fault constitutes the primary requirement for imposing criminal liability, including in cases involving children in conflict with the law.

The involvement of children in criminal acts cannot be separated from various factors influencing their behavior. A. Lacassagne argues that the environment plays a significant role in the emergence of criminal behavior, including opportunities to commit crimes, peer influence, and economic conditions. This view is reinforced by Romli Atmasasmita, who states that deviant behavior is influenced by both personal control and social control. When self-control and social supervision fail to function effectively, the likelihood of an individual committing a criminal offense increases. Therefore, analyzing the factors that lead children to engage in criminal behavior is essential for understanding the underlying causes of criminal acts and for determining the most appropriate form of criminal liability.

Unlike adult offenders, criminal liability for children is not solely intended to impose retribution for the offenses committed but also emphasizes guidance, education, and rehabilitation. Muladi and Barda Nawawi Arief explain that the objectives of punishment extend beyond retributive purposes to include crime prevention through general and special deterrence, as well as the rehabilitation of offenders so that they may be reintegrated into society as responsible individuals. Consequently, the imposition of criminal sanctions on children must balance legal certainty, justice, utility, and the best interests of the child, as mandated by Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

Based on the foregoing, this study focuses on analyzing the factors that cause children to commit aggravated theft and examining the criminal liability imposed on child offenders based on the Menggala District Court Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl. This research is expected to contribute to the development of criminal law, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, and to serve as a reference for law enforcement officials in strengthening legal protection for children in conflict with the law.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Criminal Liability

Criminal liability constitutes the legal basis for determining whether an individual may be subjected to criminal sanctions for an act they have committed. In principle, a person may only be held criminally liable if they have committed an act that fulfills the elements of a criminal offense and if the act was committed with fault (*schuld*). Thus, fault is an inseparable element of criminal liability because punishment may only be imposed on an offender who is capable of being held legally accountable for their actions. This concept represents one of the fundamental principles of criminal law, ensuring that a person cannot be punished merely because an unlawful act has occurred; rather, there must also be a legally attributable relationship between the act and the offender's culpability.

According to Van Hamel, a criminal offense (*strafbaarfeit*) is a human act defined by law, contrary to the law, punishable, and committed with fault. This definition indicates that criminal liability is not solely concerned with the existence of an unlawful act but also requires that the offender possesses the capacity to be held accountable for that act. In other words, an act that satisfies the legal elements of a criminal offense does not necessarily result in criminal punishment if the element of fault is absent or if the offender lacks criminal responsibility.

In line with this view, Moeljatno defines a criminal offense as an act prohibited by law and accompanied by criminal sanctions for anyone who violates the prohibition. According to Moeljatno, criminal liability can only be imposed if the offender is proven to have committed the criminal act with legally attributable fault. Therefore, fault constitutes the primary basis for determining whether an individual may be subjected to criminal punishment. In judicial practice, this concept serves as the foundation for judges in assessing whether a defendant fulfills the legal requirements to be held criminally responsible.

In this study, the concept of criminal liability is employed to analyze the application of criminal responsibility to a child as the perpetrator of aggravated theft. The analysis examines whether the judge's legal reasoning is consistent with the provisions of criminal law and Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, thereby determining whether criminal liability has been applied in accordance with the prevailing legal principles.

Children in Conflict with the Law

Children in conflict with the law include children who are alleged to have committed criminal offenses, children who become victims of criminal offenses, and children who serve as witnesses to criminal offenses, as stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. This law provides special protection for children by emphasizing that juvenile cases must prioritize the best interests of the child, adopt a restorative justice approach, and regard imprisonment as a measure of last resort (*ultimum remedium*). These provisions demonstrate that the juvenile criminal justice system possesses characteristics that distinguish it from the criminal justice system applicable to adults.

This distinction is based on the consideration that children are still in the process of physical, emotional, and intellectual development and therefore require special protection from the state. Since children have not yet attained the level of emotional and intellectual maturity possessed by adults, the resolution of juvenile cases should prioritize guidance and rehabilitation rather than retribution. Consequently, every stage of the juvenile justice process must take into account psychological, social, and educational aspects in order to avoid hindering the child's future development.

The application of criminal liability to children must also consider the rights guaranteed to children under various statutory regulations. Judges play a crucial role in balancing legal certainty, justice, and social utility while ensuring the protection of the child's future. Accordingly, criminal sanctions imposed on children are intended not merely as punishment for unlawful conduct but also as a means of guidance and rehabilitation, enabling children to reintegrate into society and fulfill their social functions.

Aggravated Theft

Aggravated theft is regulated under Article 363 of the Indonesian Criminal Code, which prescribes more severe penalties than ordinary theft because it is committed under aggravating circumstances, such as being committed jointly by several persons, at night, or by means of breaking, damaging, climbing, or using false keys. The existence of these aggravating circumstances reflects the legislature's view that such conduct poses a greater danger to society and therefore deserves heavier criminal sanctions.

The elements set forth in Article 363 of the Criminal Code must be lawfully established during trial before a judge may impose criminal punishment upon the offender. In cases involving child offenders, the evidentiary process is conducted in accordance with the applicable criminal procedure, while sentencing must comply with the provisions of Law Number 11 of 2012. Accordingly, even if a child is proven to have committed aggravated theft, the judge remains obligated to prioritize the best interests of the child when determining the type and severity of the sentence.

This concept demonstrates that the application of Article 363 of the Criminal Code to child offenders cannot be separated from the child protection principles embodied in the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. Therefore, judges are required to strike a balance between the enforcement of criminal law and the objective of rehabilitation, ensuring that judicial decisions provide legal certainty without neglecting the rights of child offenders.

Theory of the Causes of Crime

According to A. Lacassagne, the social environment plays a significant role in the emergence of criminal behavior. Peer associations, economic conditions, opportunities to commit crimes, and weak social supervision may all contribute to an individual's involvement in criminal activities. This theory maintains that criminal

behavior is not solely attributable to individual characteristics but is also influenced by the environment in which a person grows and interacts. Consequently, an unfavorable social environment may increase the likelihood of unlawful conduct.

This perspective is reinforced by Romli Atmasasmita, who argues that crime control is influenced by both personal control and social control. Personal control refers to an individual's ability to regulate their own behavior and refrain from committing unlawful acts, whereas social control concerns the supervision exercised by families, schools, and society. When these forms of control fail to function effectively, the probability of criminal behavior increases.

In this study, the theories advanced by A. Lacassagne and Romli Atmasasmita serve as the analytical framework for examining the factors that lead children to commit aggravated theft. These theories facilitate an analysis of the relationship between environmental conditions, peer influence, economic circumstances, and children's involvement in criminal activities, as reflected in Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl.

Theory of the Purpose of Punishment

According to Muladi and Barda Nawawi Arief, the purpose of punishment is not limited to retribution (retributive theory) but also encompasses crime prevention (preventive theory), behavioral improvement, and rehabilitation so that offenders may be successfully reintegrated into society. Punishment essentially functions as a means of protecting society while simultaneously reforming offenders to prevent future criminal conduct. Therefore, criminal sanctions should be imposed proportionately by considering the interests of victims, offenders, and society. In addition to the retributive and preventive theories, the combined theory (verenigings theorie) recognizes that the objectives of punishment should balance the protection of society with the rehabilitation of offenders. This theory views criminal punishment as an instrument for achieving legal certainty, justice, and social utility simultaneously, rather than focusing exclusively on retribution.

Within the context of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, the theory of the purpose of punishment is particularly relevant because children still possess substantial opportunities for personal reform. Accordingly, punishment imposed upon child offenders should emphasize guidance, education, rehabilitation, and social reintegration, enabling them to resume their roles as responsible members of society while maintaining legal certainty and ensuring justice for victims and the wider community. This theory serves as the basis for analyzing the judge's considerations in Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl.

METHOD

This study employed both normative juridical and empirical approaches. The normative juridical approach was conducted through library research by examining statutory regulations, legal doctrines, scholarly literature, and other legal materials related to the criminal liability of children as perpetrators of aggravated theft. Meanwhile, the empirical approach was carried out through field research to obtain primary data directly from informants who were relevant to the object of the study. The data used in this research consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews using open-ended interview guidelines with informants selected through purposive sampling. The informants included an Assistant Investigator at the Mesuji Regional Police, a Public Prosecutor at the Mesuji District Prosecutor's Office, and a Judge at the Menggala District Court. Secondary data were collected through library research and consisted of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials included the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, Law Number 48 of 2009 concerning Judicial Power, and other statutory regulations relevant to the subject matter of this research. Secondary legal materials comprised books, scientific journals, previous research, and legal literature, while tertiary legal materials included legal dictionaries, Indonesian language dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other supporting references.

Data were collected through library research and interviews. Library research was conducted to establish the theoretical framework and identify the relevant legal provisions, while interviews were undertaken to obtain empirical information regarding the application of criminal liability to children as perpetrators of aggravated theft based on the Menggala District Court Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl. The collected data were subsequently processed through identification, classification, and systematic organization to ensure consistency with the research framework. The data were analyzed using a qualitative juridical method by describing and interpreting the data based on statutory regulations, criminal law theories, and the facts obtained from the field research. The findings were then presented descriptively, and conclusions were drawn using a deductive method of

reasoning, namely by deriving specific conclusions from general legal principles to address the research problems comprehensively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Causing Children to Commit Aggravated Theft Based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl

The findings indicate that the aggravated theft committed by a child in Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl was not caused by a single factor but rather resulted from the interaction of various factors influencing the child's behavior. Based on interviews with law enforcement officials and an analysis of the facts revealed during the trial, these factors include an environment that provided opportunities to commit crime, peer influence, and economic conditions that encouraged the child to engage in criminal conduct. These findings demonstrate that children's involvement in criminal activities is influenced not only by their personal intentions but also by the social conditions that shape their behavior. Therefore, the causes of juvenile delinquency must be understood comprehensively so that crime prevention efforts focus not only on imposing criminal sanctions but also on preventive measures through guidance, supervision, and child protection.

The first factor identified is the existence of an environment that provides opportunities to commit crime. The findings reveal that the child committed the offense together with other offenders who had planned to burglarize a shop. They took advantage of the opportunity by breaking open the shop door with a crowbar before stealing bolts and screws belonging to the victim. This demonstrates that opportunity plays a significant role in the commission of criminal offenses because criminal intent may not necessarily materialize without the availability of such opportunities. Furthermore, inadequate supervision by both the family and the community increased the likelihood of the child engaging in unlawful conduct. These findings indicate that effective social supervision is essential in preventing crimes involving children.

The second factor is peer influence. Based on interview results and the facts established during the trial, the child committed the offense after being persuaded by other offenders to participate in the theft. During adolescence, children are still in the process of developing their identity and are therefore more susceptible to peer influence. Their desire to gain acceptance within a social group often leads them to disregard legal and social norms. Consequently, children are more likely to become involved in criminal activities when they associate with peers who exhibit deviant behavior. Thus, the social environment plays a crucial role in shaping children's character and behavior.

The third factor is economic condition. The findings indicate that economic hardship constituted one of the reasons motivating the child to commit theft. Financial limitations and the inability to meet daily needs made the child more vulnerable to seeking quick financial gain through unlawful means. Although economic hardship cannot justify criminal conduct, it remains an important factor in understanding the background of criminal behavior. Therefore, improving community welfare and strengthening family economic resilience are essential components of crime prevention strategies involving children.

These three factors demonstrate that the aggravated theft committed by the child resulted from the interaction of opportunity, peer influence, and economic conditions. Interviews with an Assistant Investigator at the Mesuji Regional Police revealed that children generally lack the maturity possessed by adults, making them more susceptible to environmental influences. Inadequate parental supervision and weak control over children's social interactions increase their vulnerability to involvement in criminal activities. Similarly, the Public Prosecutor explained that most juvenile crimes are influenced by unfavorable social environments, particularly peer groups with tendencies toward unlawful behavior. Meanwhile, the Judge of the Menggala District Court emphasized that although economic hardship does not eliminate criminal responsibility, it may be considered as one of the underlying factors when understanding the causes of criminal conduct and determining an appropriate sentence aimed at the child's rehabilitation.

These findings are consistent with A. Lacassagne's Anthropological Theory, which argues that environmental factors exert a dominant influence on the emergence of criminal behavior. According to Lacassagne, individuals are more likely to commit crimes when they are exposed to environments that provide criminal opportunities, weak social control, and adverse economic conditions. The present findings demonstrate that this theory remains relevant in explaining the causes of aggravated theft committed by children, as reflected in Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl.

The findings also support Romli Atmasasmita's theory concerning the importance of personal control and social control in preventing criminal behavior. Personal control refers to a child's ability to regulate his or her behavior and refrain from unlawful conduct, whereas social control refers to supervision provided by families, schools, and society. In this case, weak self-control combined with inadequate social supervision contributed to the child's involvement in criminal activities. Therefore, preventing juvenile crime is not solely the responsibility of law enforcement agencies but also requires the active participation of families, educational institutions, and communities in creating a supportive environment for children's development.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it can be concluded that the causes of aggravated theft committed by the child in Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl resulted from a combination of criminal opportunity, peer influence, and economic hardship. These factors are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Accordingly, efforts to prevent juvenile crime should adopt both penal and non-penal approaches. While law enforcement remains necessary to ensure legal certainty, it should be complemented by preventive measures through strengthening family functions, promoting character education, enhancing community supervision, and improving economic welfare in order to minimize the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency.

Criminal Liability of Children as Perpetrators of Aggravated Theft Based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl

Criminal liability constitutes the legal consequence imposed upon an individual who has been proven to have committed a criminal offense and possesses the capacity to be held legally responsible for such conduct. In criminal law, criminal liability is based not only on the existence of an unlawful act but also on the presence of fault (*schuld*) attributable to the offender. Consequently, criminal punishment may only be imposed when all elements of the criminal offense have been satisfied and the offender possesses the capacity to bear legal responsibility. This principle also applies to children in conflict with the law, although its implementation must comply with the special provisions stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. The law emphasizes that juvenile proceedings must prioritize the best interests of the child, adopt restorative justice, and regard imprisonment as a measure of last resort (*ultimum remedium*).

Based on Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl, the panel of judges declared that the child had been legally and convincingly proven guilty of committing aggravated theft as regulated under Article 363 paragraph (1) points 4 and 5 of the Indonesian Criminal Code. This decision was based on facts established during the trial, demonstrating that the child unlawfully took another person's property with the intention of possessing it, committed the offense jointly with others, and broke open the shop door using a crowbar to facilitate the theft. The stolen property consisted of bolts and screws belonging to the victim, which were later sold to another party, resulting in material losses amounting to approximately IDR 7,300,000. Based on witness testimony, the child's statement, physical evidence, and the judges' conviction, all legal elements of the charged offense were proven beyond reasonable doubt.

The fulfillment of these legal elements demonstrates that the panel of judges correctly applied the principles of legality and evidentiary law as provided under Indonesian criminal procedure. The judges assessed not only the existence of the criminal act but also the relationship between the act and the child's culpability. Accordingly, criminal liability in this case was established based on both the objective element of the criminal act and the subjective element of fault attributable to the child.

The findings further indicate that, in imposing the sentence, the judges considered not only juridical aspects but also sociological and philosophical considerations. From a juridical perspective, the judges relied upon Article 363 paragraph (1) points 4 and 5 of the Criminal Code and Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. From a sociological perspective, they considered the impact of the offense on both the victim and society while also taking into account the child's personal circumstances. Philosophically, the judges sought to balance legal certainty, justice, and social utility so that the sentence would not merely provide deterrence but also create opportunities for the child's rehabilitation and personal development.

The study also found that the judges considered both aggravating and mitigating circumstances in determining the sentence. The aggravating circumstance was that the child's conduct caused material loss to the victim and created public concern. The mitigating circumstances included the child's respectful behavior throughout the proceedings, admission of guilt, genuine remorse, lack of previous criminal convictions, and continued potential for rehabilitation. These considerations demonstrate that the judges were concerned not only with punishment but also with safeguarding the child's future and capacity for positive change.

Interviews with law enforcement officials further revealed that criminal liability for children should be implemented differently from that for adult offenders. Investigators, prosecutors, and judges agreed that children who satisfy the legal requirements for criminal responsibility must remain accountable for their actions. Nevertheless, juvenile proceedings should provide legal protection, appropriate assistance, and prioritize rehabilitation. This approach is intended to ensure that children recognize the consequences of their actions while preserving their opportunities to continue their education, improve their behavior, and reintegrate into society.

From the perspective of criminal liability theory, the court's decision is consistent with the principle that punishment may only be imposed upon individuals who have committed acts fulfilling all legal elements of a criminal offense and who possess the requisite culpability. In this case, the child was considered capable of understanding the legal consequences of his conduct and therefore capable of bearing criminal responsibility. This demonstrates that criminal capacity (*toerekeningsvatbaarheid*) constitutes an essential requirement for imposing criminal sanctions. Accordingly, the application of criminal liability in this case is consistent with the prevailing principles of criminal law.

Furthermore, the judges' decision is consistent with the theory of the purpose of punishment advanced by Muladi and Barda Nawawi Arief. According to this theory, punishment serves not only retributive purposes but also preventive, rehabilitative, and educational functions. In the present case, the sentence imposed upon the child was intended not merely as retribution but also as a means of rehabilitation to prevent future criminal conduct. Thus, punishment should be viewed as an instrument for correcting the child's behavior while simultaneously protecting the interests of society.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the application of criminal liability to the child in Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl is consistent with the provisions of the Indonesian Criminal Code and Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. The judges appropriately considered the principles of legality, evidentiary requirements, aggravating and mitigating circumstances, and the best interests of the child before rendering their decision. Consequently, the judgment reflects not only legal certainty but also the values of justice and social utility by emphasizing rehabilitation, guidance, and the social reintegration of child offenders as the primary objectives of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the factors causing children to commit aggravated theft, as reflected in the Menggala District Court Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl, include environmental conditions that provide opportunities for crime, peer influence, and economic circumstances. These three factors are interrelated and collectively contribute to shaping children's behavior, thereby encouraging their involvement in criminal activities. The findings support A. Lacassagne's theory, which emphasizes the significant role of the environment in influencing criminal behavior, as well as Romli Atmasasmita's theory regarding the importance of personal control and social control in preventing criminal offenses.

Furthermore, the application of criminal liability to the child in the Menggala District Court Decision Number 19/Pid.Sus-Anak/2025/PN.Mgl was found to be consistent with the provisions of Article 363 paragraph (1) points 4 and 5 of the Indonesian Criminal Code and Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. The panel of judges concluded that the child had been lawfully and convincingly proven guilty of committing aggravated theft based on valid evidence and the fulfillment of all legal elements of the offense. In rendering its decision, the court considered not only juridical aspects but also the child's personal circumstances, the objective of rehabilitation, and the best interests of the child. Consequently, the sentence imposed reflects an appropriate balance between legal certainty, justice, and social utility.

This study also demonstrates that juvenile criminal cases should not be addressed solely through a punitive approach. Effective juvenile justice requires a comprehensive strategy that combines law enforcement with preventive and rehabilitative measures. Strengthening family supervision, improving character education in schools, and creating a supportive social environment are essential steps in reducing children's involvement in criminal activities. Preventive efforts are particularly important because many child offenders are influenced by external social conditions rather than purely by criminal intent.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the development of criminal law studies concerning juvenile offenders by showing that environmental and social factors remain highly relevant in explaining juvenile delinquency. The findings confirm that theories of criminal causation and social control can be effectively applied to analyze aggravated theft cases involving children. In addition, the study reinforces the view

that criminal liability for children must be interpreted differently from criminal liability for adults because the juvenile justice system prioritizes rehabilitation and social reintegration.

From a practical perspective, the results of this study may serve as a reference for judges, prosecutors, investigators, and other law enforcement officials in handling juvenile cases. The findings suggest that sentencing policies should continue to prioritize educational and rehabilitative objectives while maintaining legal certainty and justice for victims. Greater coordination among law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, social services, and local governments is also necessary to ensure that children in conflict with the law receive adequate guidance and support throughout the judicial process.

Finally, this study recommends that future policies on juvenile crime prevention focus on strengthening community-based supervision programs, expanding counseling services for at-risk children, and improving economic support for vulnerable families. Through an integrated approach involving families, schools, communities, and government institutions, the objectives of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System namely child protection, rehabilitation, and social reintegration—can be implemented more effectively and sustainably.

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