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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Misconceptions of the Punk Community in Indonesia Online Media Narratives

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**Abstract:** The punk phenomenon in Indonesia is often misunderstood as the behaviour of aimless street children. This study is significant due to such misconceptions are influenced by dominant narratives in online media, which frequently equate punk with street children. Previous studies have focused more on cultural or economic aspects without elaborating on the fundamental differences between punk communities and street children. Therefore, this research poses three central questions: (1) Why is punk often equated with street children? (2) Why is punk associated with violence? (3) Why is punk perceived as lacking clear purpose? This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on online media in Indonesia. Primary data were collected from 200 online news articles published between 2018 and 2024 using the keywords punk children and street children. The findings reveal three main themes: media narratives that equate punk with street children, portrayals of punk as a symbol of violence, and perceptions of punk as lacking a clear purpose. This research offers an important contribution to understanding the role of media in shaping cultural stigma. It recommends a more inclusive media policy approach and public education to reduce these misconceptions, while also opening pathways for further studies on the role of culture in shaping social perceptions.

**Keywords**: Punk, Street children, Misconceptions, Online media, Cultural stigma.

***Abstrak***: *Fenomena punk di Indonesia sering disalahpahami sebagai perilaku anak jalanan yang tidak memiliki tujuan. Penelitian ini penting karena kesalahpahaman tersebut dipengaruhi oleh narasi dominan di media daring yang sering menyamakan punk dengan anak jalanan. Penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya lebih banyak berfokus pada aspek budaya atau ekonomi tanpa menguraikan perbedaan mendasar antara komunitas punk dan anak jalanan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mengajukan tiga pertanyaan utama: (1) Mengapa punk sering disamakan dengan anak jalanan? (2) Mengapa punk diasosiasikan dengan kekerasan? (3) Mengapa punk dianggap tidak memiliki tujuan yang jelas? Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan fokus pada media online di Indonesia. Data primer dikumpulkan dari 200 artikel berita daring yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2018 dan 2024 dengan menggunakan kata kunci anak punk dan anak jalanan. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan tiga tema utama: narasi media yang menyamakan anak punk dengan anak jalanan, penggambaran anak punk sebagai simbol kekerasan, dan persepsi anak punk yang tidak memiliki tujuan yang jelas. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting untuk memahami peran media dalam membentuk stigma budaya. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pendekatan kebijakan media yang lebih inklusif dan pendidikan publik untuk mengurangi kesalahpahaman ini, sekaligus membuka jalan untuk penelitian lebih lanjut tentang peran budaya dalam membentuk persepsi sosial.*

***Kata kunci***: *Punk, Anak jalanan, Kesalahpahaman, Media daring, Stigma budaya.*

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## 1. Introduction

The punk community is often associated with negative stereotypes, such as street children, violence, and a lack of life direction. Punk youths are commonly found living on the streets, earning a living through busking, and engaging in behaviours that violate social norms and legal boundaries, such as alcohol and drug use. This condition is largely the result of a fundamental misunderstanding of the true essence of punk culture itself. The punk community is primarily concentrated in major urban centres across Indonesia, where members adopt a lifestyle that is considered ordinary within metropolitan contexts. Many punk youths view their way of life as a legitimate form of self-expression and as part of their social identity (Cano & Sklar, 2024; Sklar et al., 2019). This study is crucial for understanding the social realities behind these stereotypes and for providing a more objective perspective on the punk community in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, the punk movement is believed to have emerged and developed between 1989 and 1995, pioneered by bands such as Anti Septic and Young Offender, who were inspired by the band Stupid and frequently gathered at Pid Pub in Jakarta (Kumparan, 2017). The formation of punk as a counter-culture was built upon four main elements: music, fashion, community, and ideology. These elements served as the primary channels for the dissemination of punk culture across Indonesia (Moog, 2023). These early punk pioneers went on to establish punk communities that promoted punk culture through music and fashion. Shortly thereafter, punk communities began to proliferate in various regions throughout the country. Between 1996 and 2001, numerous punk bases emerged. One of the longest-standing bases was Poster Café, located in South Jakarta, which remained active from 1996 through the early years of the Reformation period in 1999. The punk gathering point at Poster Café, situated near the Satria Mandala Museum, was home to an estimated 2,000 members (Al Ramadhan, 2016).

Academic studies on the punk community and street children in Indonesia have grown substantially, with numerous works examining the phenomenon from various regions and perspectives. Bestari & Wirman (2016) studied punk youths in Pekanbaru and found that the punk community was perceived as a means of continuing life, although the deeper motivations for joining the community were not thoroughly explained. Berek's (2014) research in Semarang focused on the fashion aspect, revealing that many punk community members lacked a deep understanding of punk ideology and instead used it as a medium for public visibility. Agung (2021) argued that the punk phenomenon stems from past neglect that forced individuals to live on the streets. Becoming punk, in this context, is viewed as a form of survival, a rejection of dominant cultural norms, and an attempt to build group loyalty. However, these studies have yet to clearly differentiate between punk youths and street children.

Building on previous studies, many researchers have tended to conflate street children with the punk community in Indonesia. Therefore, this study focuses specifically on the misconceptions surrounding the distinctions between street children and punk communities. It is designed to address three key research questions: first, why is the punk community often equated with street children; second, why is punk in Indonesia frequently associated with violence; and third, why is the punk community perceived as lacking clear purpose. This research is grounded in the argument that there is a widespread misconception about punk culture in Indonesia, which is often portrayed negatively in online media narratives. Accordingly, the study aims to offer a more accurate and in-depth understanding of the identity and public perception of the punk community in Indonesia.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. The history of punk

Punk culture is a form of popular culture that emerged as a resistance to dominant cultural norms (Guerra, 2020; Sharp & Threadgold, 2020; Storey, 2009). The term PUNK has been interpreted as an acronym for "Public United Not Kingdom." The core ideology embraced by punks is anti-establishment. They seek to live independently and reject the capitalist culture promoted by the upper class (Logan et al., 2024). The punk movement originated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, rooted in rock and garage rock music (Street et al., 2018). Bands such as The Velvet Underground, The Stooges, and MC5 are considered pioneers of the proto-punk movement, known for their raw sound and anti-establishment attitude (Mattson, 2019). By the mid-1970s, punk had developed in cities like New York, with bands such as The Ramones, and in the United Kingdom with groups like the Sex Pistols and The Clash. These bands introduced a fast and minimalist musical style that expressed social and political dissatisfaction. In the UK, punk evolved beyond a music movement into a symbol of resistance against authority and the entrenched class system (Ervin, 2016; Savage, 1991).

By the late 1970s, punk had evolved into various subgenres, including hardcore punk, which was faster and more aggressive, pioneered by bands such as Black Flag and Dead Kennedys in the United States. Alongside this, post-punk also emerged—an experimental fusion of punk and avant-garde elements—represented by bands like Joy Division and Siouxsie and the Banshees (Haddon, 2020; Marcus, 1990). Punk also carried a strong political dimension, particularly in its embrace of anarchism and resistance to capitalism, as evident in the anarcho-punk movement led by Crass (Binns, 2023). At the same time, punk created space for feminist expression, most notably through the Riot Grrrl movement in the early 1990s, represented by bands such as Bikini Kill and others (Blush, 2001). In the 1990s, punk experienced a resurgence through the subgenre of pop punk, with bands like Green Day and The Offspring achieving commercial success (Bernhard, 2024). Despite this mainstream visibility, the DIY (do-it-yourself) spirit remained alive in underground punk communities (Bennett & Guerra, 2018). Although punk has continued to evolve and transform, it remains a symbol of social and cultural resistance across many countries around the world (Gilfedder, 2024; Goshert, 2022; Trevisan et al., 2022).

### 2.2. Street children

The term street children was first introduced in South America, specifically in Brazil, under the term Meninos de Rua, referring to children who live on the streets without familial ties (B.S., 1993). However, in other countries, the term varies: in Colombia, they are called Gamin (meaning urchin or vagrant) and Ehinehes (bed bugs), while in Bolivia, they are referred to as Polillas (moths). These terms reflect the marginal status and social perception of street children in each society (Riyadi, 2016). UNICEF defines street children as follows: "Street children are those who have abandoned their homes, school, and immediate communities before they are sixteen years of age, and have drifted into a nomadic street life" (H.A. Soedijar, 1988 in Saputri et al., 2023). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs (2005), street children are defined as those who spend most of their time engaging in daily life activities on the streets, either to earn a living or loitering in public spaces. In Indonesia, street children remain a persistent social issue for both the government and society. According to a report by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs (2020), there are approximately 67,000 neglected children, including those living on the streets.

According to Fonseka & Malhotra (2020), there are three categories of street children: children on the street, children of the street, and children in the street, sometimes also referred to as children from families of the street. Children on the street are those who engage in economic activities on the streets but maintain family ties (Fonseka & Malhotra, 2020; Kiran et al., 2022). Tata (1999) classifies street children into three groups based on their relationship with their parents: first, children who have severed ties with their parents, do not attend school, and live entirely on the streets (children of the street). Second, children who have irregular contact with their parents, do not attend school, but return to their families once a week, biweekly, or monthly, commonly referred to as children on the street. Third, children who are still in school or have dropped out but are vulnerable to becoming street children (vulnerable to be street children).

### 2.3. Misconception

Literally, the term misconception derives from the root word “concept” (Ismail et al., 2024). A concept refers to objects, events, situations, or characteristics that possess distinct features and are represented in each culture by certain signs or symbols (Abrahams et al., 2015). According to Dellantonio & Pastore (2021), a misconception is defined as an understanding of a concept that does not align with its scientific meaning or the consensus of experts in the relevant field. Thompson & Logue (2006) describe misconceptions as errors in an individual’s understanding of ideas or concepts, often shaped by personal experiences. Socio-cultural conditions significantly influence public misconceptions regarding a culture. This phenomenon is evident in Indonesia, where the majority of society still conflates punk culture with street children, despite these being fundamentally distinct groups.

Misconceptions can be categorized based on their origin, types of errors, and the context in which they develop. From the perspective of origin, misconceptions often arise due to inadequate initial understanding, dissemination of inaccurate information, or oversimplification of material (Gurgun et al., 2024). In terms of error types, misconceptions may be conceptual errors or procedural errors, related to incorrect steps or methods in processing information (Trotskovsky & Sabag, 2015). Furthermore, social factors such as popular culture, as well as educational factors like ineffective teaching methods, also contribute to the context in which misconceptions emerge (Çelikkaya & Kürümlüoglu, 2023; Ferrero et al., 2020; Pieschl et al., 2021). Understanding the categorization of misconceptions can help individuals more accurately recognize and address misconceptions toward certain individuals or groups.

### 2.4. Media online

Media serves as a means of delivering information (Fernando, Larasati, et al., 2023; Hakim et al., 2024). With the rapid advancement of technology, particularly the internet, media can be categorized into two types: conventional media and online media (Tasruddin, 2020). Conventional media, which once served as the primary daily source of information, has increasingly been displaced by online media, which offers convenience and various ease of access that appeal to a wide range of audiences. Online media refers to mass media presented online through internet websites. This type of media is also a product of online journalism. Online journalism, also known as cyber journalism, is defined as “the reporting of facts or events produced and distributed via the internet” (Mustika, 2017).

Online media can be categorized based on various aspects, including content type, business model, and target audience. Based on content type, online media is divided into news media, entertainment media, educational media, and community media. Each serves information relevant to specific user groups (Dodda et al., 2024). From a business model

perspective, online media may rely on paid subscriptions, advertising, or reader donations, which influence how the media generates revenue and sustains its operations (Vara-Miguel et al., 2021). Furthermore, based on target audience, online media is categorized into general media and specialized media targeting specific segments such as sports news or technology (Harry & Muthusamy, 2024; Iglesias-Sánchez et al., 2020; Rojas Torrijos, 2023).

## 3. Method

The selection of the theme regarding misconceptions that discussed punk in Indonesia as the focus of this study is based on three considerations. First, punk in Indonesia is often equated with street children; this narrative equivalence is particularly prevalent in online media coverage, resulting in the punk community being continuously stigmatized negatively. Second, punk in Indonesia is identified with violence, even though not all punk groups promote violence as a form of expression. Most punk groups in fact reject violence and emphasize anti-authoritarian values and solidarity. Third, punk in Indonesia is perceived merely as a fashion statement without clear purpose. Such narratives clearly reduce punk to a group of rule-breakers, overlooking its true meaning as a space for social critique and resistance.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, relying on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through the review of 200 online news articles from reputable mass media outlets such as CNN Indonesia, Detik News, and other trusted news portals, covering the period from 2018 to 2024, using the keywords "*anak punk*" (punk children) and "*anak jalanan*" (street children). The data review process was conducted quickly, focusing specifically on articles that portrayed the narrative equating punk children with street children. From this review, three dominant themes emerged regarding misconceptions of punk in Indonesia, which constitute the key findings of this study. Secondary data were gathered by reviewing relevant journal articles related to the research questions.

The data analysis process was carried out through three stages according to Fernando et al. (2023): (1) Data reduction, which involves organizing data systematically; (2) Data display, which refers to presenting the research results in the form of tables containing images extracted from online news articles on trusted mass media platforms; (3) Data verification, which is the stage of drawing conclusions based on existing patterns. The collected data were then analysed inductively and described as the basis for interpretation Fernando, Abdullah et al. (2023). These analytical stages and techniques enabled the formulation of conclusions regarding misconceptions regarding punk in Indonesia.

## 4. Result

This study reveals three significant findings related to misconceptions regarding the punk community in Indonesia as portrayed in online media narratives. First, punk is often equated with street children, leading to a lack of accurate understanding of their identity and cultural values. Second, the punk community is frequently associated with violence and criminal acts, reinforcing negative stigma in society. Third, punk is perceived as lacking a clear purpose, resulting in a public view that is stereotypical and marginalizing toward the community. These findings highlight the need for a more objective and in-depth understanding of punk as part of Indonesia's cultural diversity, as reflected in the three main themes uncovered in this study.

### 4.1. Indonesian punk often equated with street children

This study reveals a significant finding regarding a common misconception: the punk community in Indonesia is often equated with street children. The research shows that

this conflation arises from widely spread negative stereotypes in both media and society, which overlook the differences in identity, goals, and values upheld by the punk community. This misconception leads to a biased public perception that fails to understand the cultural complexity of punk, resulting in the social marginalization of the community. The finding highlights the need for deeper education and clarification to accurately and objectively distinguish between punk and street children (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Punk community in Indonesia often equated with street children

| Category | Description | Figure |
|---|---|---|
| Punk Stigma | In the adjacent screenshot, street children are equated with punk children, as the news narrative states "… street children or punk children …" |  |
| Street Stereotype | A news report posted by the regional news portal Espos narrates that Ganjar Pranowo met with "street children with punk style" during a campaign at the market. |  |
| Identity Conflation | The news posted by the portal jatengprov.go.id alongside uses a narrative that equates street children and punk children. |  |

Source: Online news observation.

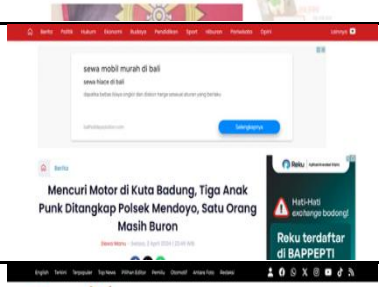
Table 1 above presents three screenshots demonstrating a common narrative in the media equating street children with punk children. The news posts use narratives that conflate punk children with street children. For instance, a news article posted by the DetikBali portal titled "*Tinggal di Kolong Jembatan, 6 Anak Jalanan di Buleleng Diangkut Satpol PP*" (Living Under the Bridge, 6 Street Children in Buleleng Taken by Satpol PP) mentions at the beginning, "Six street children or punks inhabiting under the Seririt Bridge, Seririt District, Buleleng Regency, Bali, were taken by the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP)." This narrative, using "… street children or punks …," clearly indicates the conflation between street children and punk children. Similarly, a news post by the Espos Regional portal titled "*PILKADA 2018: Kampanye di Jepara, Ganjar Sambangi Pasar dan Jumpa Anak Punk*" (PILKADA 2018: Campaign in Jepara, Ganjar Visits Market and Meets Punk Children) states, "When meeting a group of street children with punk style, Ganjar …," portraying punk children merely as street children who dress in punk fashion. A similar narrative appears in a news article from the official provincial portal of Central Java, jatengprov.go.id, titled "*Satpol PP Tertibkan Anak Jalanan*" (Satpol PP Clears Street Children) which states, "as many as nine street teenagers or punk children …". Based on

the data above, it is evident that the media in Indonesia frequently perpetuate the narrative equating street children with punk children.

### 4.2. Punk in Indonesia identified with violence and criminality

This study found that misconceptions regarding the punk community in Indonesia often associate them with violence and criminal behaviour. Media narratives and public perceptions frequently link the punk lifestyle with anarchistic behaviour, fights, and unlawful acts. However, not all members of the punk community are involved in such actions, as many use punk as a form of self-expression and social critique. This misconception reinforces negative stigmas surrounding the punk community, hindering a more objective understanding of their existence and purpose. These findings emphasize the importance of adopting a more critical and inclusive approach when examining the punk phenomenon in Indonesia (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Public perception often associates the punk lifestyle with anarchistic behaviour

| Category | Description | Figure |
|---|---|---|
| Punk as Deviant | The adjacent news report states that punk children committed theft, specifically by stealing two mobile phones. |  |
| Punk as Threat | The adjacent screenshot reports that three punk children committed motorcycle theft. |  |
| Punk as Criminal | A negative narrative regarding punk is also presented by the Antara news portal, which reports that a punk child was the perpetrator of a murder in Tangerang. |  |

Source: Online news observation.

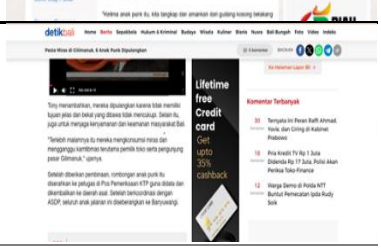
Table 2 presents three news reports that portray punk children as frequently involved in criminal activities. One article published by DetikBali, titled "*Butuh Ongkos ke Lombok, dua anak Punk Nekat Curi HP di Pasar Kreneng*" (Need Money to Go to Lombok, Two Punk Children Steal Phones at Kreneng Market) reports that two punk youths, aged 29 and 23, stole mobile phones due to financial constraints for their travel to Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Another report, posted on the POSBALI.NET news portal, states that four punk children were involved in motorcycle theft in the Badung area. Three suspects were apprehended, while one remained at large. Furthermore, a report from the ANTARA news portal titled "*Polisi Tangkap Dua Anak Punk Tersangka Pelaku Pembunuhan di Tangerang*" (Police Arrest Two Punk Children Suspected of Murder in Tangerang) states that the two individuals were involved in an assault that led to the victim's death in Tangerang Regency.

These media narratives depict punk children as frequently entangled in criminal activities ranging from theft to murder, therefore reinforcing the negative stigma that society holds toward the punk community in Indonesia.

### 4.3. Punk in Indonesia perceived as lacking of clear purpose

This study identifies a key misconception that the punk community in Indonesia is perceived as lacking a clear purpose. This perception arises from the public's limited understanding of the values and motivations underlying the punk lifestyle. While the media often depict punk as a directionless and nihilistic group, the research shows that many community members pursue meaningful social and cultural goals, such as self-expression, resistance to dominant norms, and group solidarity. This misconception leads to the punk community being frequently misunderstood and underestimated. The findings underscore the need for clearer articulation to better appreciate the diversity of meanings and purposes within punk culture in Indonesia (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Public perceptions of the values and motivations underlying the punk lifestyle

| Category | Description | Figure |
|---|---|---|
| Punk as Useless | The news on the right states that punk youths were sent back from Bali due to being perceived as lacking a clear purpose. |   |
| Punk as Disorder | The news excerpt alongside states that the Bengkalis Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) secured punk youths who were gathering. |   |
| Punk as Misguided | The news alongside narrates that punk youths were sent back from Bali since they were considered to have no clear purpose. |   |

Sources: Online news observation.

Table 3 above presents three news articles that highlight public opinions regarding punk in Indonesia. The news from Detik News titled "*Mengupayakan Punk sebagai Kendaraan Dakwah*" (Utilizing Punk as a Vehicle for Preaching) reveals that the image of punk in the eyes of Indonesian society is negative. Punk is perceived as free-spirited, wild, harsh, and provocative. It is also regarded as existing outside the norms of general social order. A similar tone is found in the DetikBali news titled "*Pesta Miras di Gilimanuk, 6 Anak Punk Dipulangkan*," (Drinking Party in Gilimanuk, 6 Punk Youths Sent Home) which reports that punk youths were sent back to their hometowns since they were considered to have no clear purpose, although they in fact went to Bali to attend an inter-group meeting. The news from Mediacenter.riau.go.id titled "*Satpol PP Bengkalis Amankan 5 Anak Punk*" (Bengkalis Satpoll PP Secures 5 Punk Youths) also conveys similar views, where the source states, "… Most admitted to having no clear purpose, they just wandered aimlessly…". From these three news excerpts and articles, it can be concluded that the majority of public perception

towards punk in Indonesia is that punk brings negative effects to society and lacks a clear purpose.

## 5. Discussion

This study reveals that misconceptions in Indonesian society regarding punk arise from mainstream media's portrayal that often equates street children with punk communities without a clear understanding of the distinctions between the two. For example, media narratives frequently conflate street children with punk groups, while reports regarding punk in Indonesia are almost always linked to issues of crime and delinquency. Furthermore, punk is often depicted as lacking a clear purpose and only causing negative impacts on society. This conflation is partly influenced by the visual appearance of street children who adopt punk attributes such as mohawk hairstyles and boots. The main reason for this narrative overlap is that both groups spend much of their time on the streets, which leads government institutions and media outlets to perceive and label them as street children. In reality, street children and punks differ significantly. All punks have families, some run businesses, or have their own households, yet their interest in punk culture is a form of personal expression that brings them into the punk community (Hasnadi et al., 2012). According to Gofar, as cited by Suryo, the punk anti-establishment stance refers to being anti-conformist in thought rather than opposing a successful life. This mindset encourages punks to continuously struggle and step out of their comfort zones to keep progressing in their lives (Suryo, 2019)

Another factor contributing to the conflation between street children and punks is their similar appearance and symbolism. In reality, punk children and street children have distinct differences. Some laypeople mistakenly assume that punk children are street children. However, punk is a lifestyle and a choice that carries many definitions, such as punks being identified merely by their fashion style, punk as a music genre, or punks who follow the scene without understanding the true meaning of punk itself. This has led to the punk label gaining a negative reputation within the community (Nabila, 2023). In Indonesia, punks are often identified by their unconventional fashion, such as mohawk hairstyles, tattoos, black or ragged clothing, and accessories like chains and spikes. This style is strikingly different from the general public, causing punks and street children to often be grouped together due to their similar appearances. Children living on the streets frequently wear old or worn-out clothes, which are later associated with punk's deliberately "messy" look as a form of resistance against mainstream norms. Moreover, not everyone who dresses like a punk—with accessories such as chains, piercings, mohawks, boots, or tattoos—is truly a punk, since at its core, punk is an ideology emphasizing the DIY (do-it-yourself) ethic and rejection of oppressive authority. To be punk, one cannot simply imitate the fashion but must also understand the ideology itself.

The mainstream media portrayal of punk youth in Indonesia is consistently linked with criminality. Hebdige (1979) explains that media worldwide tend to depict the punk subculture as a threat because they reject established visual and social norms. This is similarly reflected in the portrayal of punk in Indonesia. Indonesian media often represent punk youth in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes, such as colourful mohawk hairstyles, tattoos covering the body, worn leather jackets, chains, piercings, and a lifestyle considered "reckless." This distinctive appearance becomes the primary focus of news coverage, while deeper discussions about their ideology or the socio-economic background behind their lifestyle choices are rarely presented. Unlike punk scenes in the United Kingdom or United States, where the majority of followers come from the middle class, punk adherents in Indonesia mostly come from lower-middle-class communities (Garbaye & Guibert, 2024). This situation naturally links criminality to both street children and punk youth. The high

crime rates among street children, combined with media narratives that equate street children with punk, along with elements of the punk ethos—such as the confrontational nature of their music performances (moshing and aggressive music)—are easily perceived as violent behaviour by the wider public. The excerpts from the three news articles above show punk youth involved in crimes ranging from theft to murder. Such reporting further strengthens the negative stigma attached to punk youth.

The main reason punk in Indonesia is perceived as lacking a clear purpose is due to its fragmented nature and the tension between its anti-authoritarian roots and local adaptation. Originally, punk was a form of rebellion against the New Order regime and societal norms, but over time, punk has become disconnected from broader social movements (Moog, 2023). The current punk movement in Indonesia tends to focus primarily on individual freedom of expression and rebellion against norms without a structured political or social agenda, which leads society to assume that punk is merely a deviant alternative lifestyle (Alkatiri et al., 2023; Donaghey & Xiao, 2018; Martin-Iverson, 2021). Media portrayals that only narrate punk negatively also significantly influence public perception. When the media reports events involving punk youth, such as fights or public expulsions, the resulting narratives often overlook the deeper context regarding the ideology or community solidarity behind their lifestyle. Instead, the coverage tends to focus more on chaos or disorder often associated with this group. This can be seen in the three news articles above, where the reports portray punk as merely a group engaging in unclear and purposeless activities.

Based on the explanation regarding the misconception issues surrounding the punk community in Indonesia, this study is expected to provide an important contribution to understanding how online media narratives in Indonesia influence public perceptions of the punk community negatively. The dominant negative narratives further worsen the public's unclear understanding of the fundamental differences between the punk community and street children, causing existing misconceptions to persist. This situation has the potential to reinforce inaccurate stereotypes and stigmas. Therefore, in order to address this issue, online media in Indonesia need to clarify and strengthen their narratives by objectively and fairly highlighting the distinctive characteristics between street children and the punk community. This effort is essential so that the public receives more accurate information, minimizing existing misconceptions and improving social understanding of the punk community.

## 6. Conclusion

Misconceptions regarding the meaning of punk in online media narratives are closely linked to how punk positions itself in society. The conflation of punk and street children in media reporting stems largely from their similar visual representations and the fact that both groups spend much of their time on the streets. Both punk and street children mostly come from lower-middle-class backgrounds, and their confrontational nature—expressed through musical performances and distinctive clothing—can easily be perceived as violent by society. Moreover, the current punk movement's focus on individual freedom, without clear political or social agendas, leads to perceptions that they lack purpose. These factors, combined with media narratives that fail to explain the differences between the two groups and predominantly report negative aspects, reinforce harmful stereotypes and further complicate their social position. In order to address these misconceptions, Indonesian online news portals must provide clear narratives that distinguish between street children and the punk community in their reporting.

This study has limitations, particularly in data presentation, due to its lack of depth and limited variation in data collection, which was conducted solely through searches on Indonesian news portals. This context arises due to research addressing misconceptions regarding the meaning of punk in online media is still scarce and relatively new. Therefore, this study focuses only on briefly analysing how online media in Indonesia construct misconceptions regarding punk. However, the shortcomings and weaknesses of this research are expected to serve as inspiration and reference for future studies, particularly for those aiming to explore more comprehensively how misconceptions about punk worsen the negative stigma they face in society.

**Author Contribution Statement**

Contributions of the authors in this article: Dean Rizky Saputra contributed as concepts and drafters of the article; as data analyzers and interpreters; as the drafter of the manuscript; and contributed in collecting data. Irwan Abdullah contributed critically revising the article. Author agree to take responsibility for all aspects of this work.

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No conflict of interest to declare.

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