



# The relationship between family communication and peer interaction with juvenile delinquency

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# The relationship between family communication and peer interaction with juvenile delinquency

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## ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency remains a concerning social issue in Teluk Merbau Village, manifested in behaviors such as fighting, bullying, smoking, and substance use among adolescents. This study aims to examine the relationship between persuasive family communication and juvenile delinquency, the relationship between peer social interaction and juvenile delinquency, and the simultaneous association of both variables with juvenile delinquency. The research employed a quantitative correlational design involving 56 adolescents aged 10–19 years selected from a population of 186 adolescents using area cluster random sampling across three hamlets. Data were collected through structured questionnaires measuring persuasive family communication, peer social interaction, and juvenile delinquency, which were tested for validity and reliability. The results indicate that persuasive family communication is negatively associated with juvenile delinquency, while negative peer social interaction is positively associated with delinquent behavior. Simultaneously, both variables show a significant relationship with juvenile delinquency, explaining a substantial proportion of behavioral variation. These findings suggest that strengthening family communication and fostering positive peer environments are important considerations in adolescent delinquency prevention efforts.



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## Introduction

Juvenile delinquency remains a persistent and multifaceted social problem, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. Adolescence is recognized as a critical developmental phase characterized by rapid biological maturation, heightened emotional reactivity, and expanding social roles, which increase vulnerability to environmental influences (Sawyer et al., 2020; Dahl et al., 2022). During this stage, adolescents actively explore identity and autonomy while possessing limited self-regulatory capacity, making them more susceptible to risk-taking and deviant behaviors when protective social factors are weak (Steinberg & Morris, 2021). Empirical evidence indicates a rising prevalence of juvenile

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delinquency, including aggression, bullying, substance use, and other antisocial behaviors across rural and urban settings (Farrington et al., 2021; Rezapour et al., 2023), highlighting the need for preventive strategies grounded in family and peer environments.

The family remains the most influential social institution in shaping adolescents' moral development, emotional regulation, and behavioral norms. Recent family-systems and ecological studies emphasize that the quality of family interactions, rather than structure alone, significantly affects adolescent behavioral outcomes (Pinquart, 2021; Lansford et al., 2022). Persuasive family communication characterized by openness, empathy, mutual respect, and constructive dialogue promotes internalization of parental norms and values, fostering self-control and reducing delinquent tendencies (Schrodt et al., 2020; Ledbetter et al., 2021). Conversely, ineffective communication patterns, such as emotional neglect, harsh control, and inconsistent discipline, weaken parental influence and increase adolescents' reliance on peers for social validation (Yoon et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023).

Peer social interaction also plays a critical role in adolescent development. Peer groups provide key reference points for identity formation, social belonging, and behavioral modeling (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2023). Social learning and network theories suggest that adolescents adopt behaviors prevalent in their peer groups through observation, reinforcement, and conformity (Vitaro et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Positive peer interactions encourage prosocial behavior, whereas association with deviant peers normalizes risk-taking and antisocial conduct (Kretschmer et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2024). Meta-analytic evidence confirms that peer delinquency is among the strongest predictors of adolescent antisocial behavior across cultural contexts (Gardner & Steinberg, 2022).

In Teluk Merbau Village, recurring incidents of fighting, bullying, substance use, and other delinquent behaviors among adolescents aged 10–19 years reflect the interaction between family communication patterns and peer social dynamics. These patterns are consistent with studies showing that juvenile delinquency often arises where informal social control within families and communities is weak (Meldrum et al., 2020; Sampson & Laub, 2021). Consequently, preventive interventions must engage families, schools, and community-based environments collectively.

Recent research emphasizes the combined influence of family communication and peer interaction on juvenile delinquency. Adolescents are more likely to internalize prosocial values when parents convey messages through respectful and supportive interactions (Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2022; Rivadeneira et al., 2023), and behaviors modeled within peer networks are particularly influential when family attachment is weak (van Hoorn et al., 2021; Kim & Wang, 2022). Studies in Southeast Asian contexts further show that weak family bonds coupled with negative peer affiliations elevate the risk of delinquency (Putri et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2024).

Despite growing international literature, studies examining persuasive family communication and peer social interaction simultaneously in rural settings remain limited. Most research focuses on urban populations or investigates family and peer factors separately. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by analyzing the relationships between persuasive family communication, peer social interaction, and juvenile delinquency among adolescents in a rural village context. The study specifically investigates: (1) the relationship between persuasive family communication and juvenile delinquency; (2) the relationship between peer social interaction and juvenile delinquency; and (3) the simultaneous influence of both variables on juvenile delinquency in Teluk Merbau Village. Findings are expected to inform theory and guide interventions that integrate family, school, and community strategies for preventing adolescent delinquency.

## Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationships between persuasive family communication, peer social interaction, and juvenile delinquency among adolescents. A correlational approach was selected to identify the direction and strength of associations among naturally occurring variables without attempting to infer causal relationships. This design is appropriate for examining social and behavioral phenomena that cannot be ethically or practically manipulated.

The study was conducted in Teluk Merbau Village, Kecamatan Dayun, Kabupaten Siak, Riau Province. The population consisted of 186 adolescents aged 10–19 years who were officially registered as village residents. This age range represents early to late adolescence, stages in which individuals are particularly sensitive to family and peer influences. From this population, a sample of 56 adolescents was selected using area cluster random sampling based on three hamlets: Becah Terentang, Bumi Rejo, and Demak Kuantan. Within each hamlet, respondents were selected proportionally to ensure representation across residential areas. However, this sampling approach may limit the generalizability of findings beyond the study context.

Data were collected using structured, closed-ended questionnaires developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks. Persuasive family communication was measured through indicators of openness, empathy, dialogue, and value internalization as perceived by adolescents. Peer social interaction was assessed through indicators of social communication, cooperation, emotional support, conflict resolution, and perceived peer influence. Juvenile delinquency was measured using self-reported indicators encompassing minor social deviance and more serious rule-violating behaviors. All instruments were subjected to validity and reliability testing prior to data collection, and only items meeting acceptable statistical criteria were retained.

Data collection was conducted directly by the researcher with permission from local authorities. Informed consent was obtained from respondents, and parental consent was secured for participants under 18 years of age. Respondent anonymity and data confidentiality were ensured to reduce response bias.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distributions, followed by inferential analysis using correlation and multiple correlation techniques. These analyses were used to examine partial and simultaneous relationships among variables. Given the correlational design, the findings are interpreted as associative rather than causal.

## Results and Discussions

### Relationship between Persuasive Family Communication and Juvenile Delinquency

The analysis indicates a significant negative association between persuasive family communication and juvenile delinquency. Adolescents who reported higher levels of open, empathetic, and persuasive communication with their parents tended to exhibit lower levels of delinquent behavior. Pearson correlation analysis showed a moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that effective family communication is associated with reduced delinquent tendencies. These findings align with interpersonal communication theory, which emphasizes the role of emotional bonds and value transmission in shaping adolescent behavior (Safitri & Safrudin, 2020). However, this association does not imply causation, as other unmeasured factors such as family economic status or individual self-control may also contribute to delinquent behavior.

### Relationship between Peer Social Interaction and Juvenile Delinquency

Peer social interaction was positively associated with juvenile delinquency. Adolescents who frequently engaged with peers exhibiting deviant behaviors demonstrated higher levels of delinquency, whereas those involved in cooperative and supportive peer relationships showed lower delinquent tendencies. The correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.53$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a moderate positive relationship. This supports social learning theory, which highlights that adolescent behaviors are often modeled and reinforced within peer networks (Bandura, 2018). Nonetheless, the analysis does not differentiate the quality and intensity of peer interactions, which may moderate the influence on delinquent behavior.

### Simultaneous Influence of Family Communication and Peer Interaction

Multiple correlation analysis revealed that persuasive family communication and peer social interaction jointly explained 61% of the variance in juvenile delinquency ( $R^2 = 0.610$ ,  $F = 41.381$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This result indicates that considering both family and peer factors together provides a stronger explanation of adolescent delinquent behavior than examining each factor separately. The simultaneous analysis underscores the importance of understanding delinquency as an outcome

influenced by multiple interrelated social contexts, consistent with [Bronfenbrenner's ecological model \(2005\)](#).

**Table 1.** Summary of Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	F value	F table	Sig.	R Square
Persuasive Family Communication (X1)	Juvenile Delinquency (Y)	41.381	3.17	0.000	0.610
Peer Social Interaction (X2)	Juvenile Delinquency (Y)	41.381	3.17	0.000	0.610

Note: F-test indicates simultaneous significance; R<sup>2</sup> indicates variance explained.

The findings indicate that persuasive family communication functions as a protective factor against juvenile delinquency. Open, empathetic, and value-oriented dialogue within families appears to enhance adolescents' internalization of norms and self-regulatory behaviors, consistent with interpersonal communication theory and prior Indonesian studies ([Safitri & Safrudin, 2020](#); [Perloff, 2020](#)). This supports the notion that family communication quality, rather than family structure alone, is critical in shaping adolescent behavior ([Pinquart, 2021](#)).

Peer social interaction also significantly contributes to adolescent delinquent behavior. Positive peer interactions encourage cooperation, empathy, and prosocial behavior, while negative peer influences normalize risk-taking and rule violations. This aligns with social learning theory and recent empirical research indicating that deviant peer affiliation increases the likelihood of antisocial conduct ([Kretschmer et al., 2021](#); [Bandura, 2018](#)). These findings highlight the dual role of peers as both risk and protective factors.

The combined influence of family and peer factors underscores the need to examine adolescent behavior within an ecological framework. [Bronfenbrenner \(2005\)](#) emphasizes that microsystems, such as families and peers, interact to influence developmental outcomes. In this study, adolescents with supportive family environments were better able to resist negative peer influence, indicating that strong parental communication may buffer peer-related risks.

Despite the significant associations, 39% of the variance in juvenile delinquency remained unexplained. Other factors such as self-control, school environment, community supervision, and socioeconomic status likely contribute to delinquent behavior, highlighting the multifactorial nature of adolescent development ([Meldrum et al., 2020](#); [Sampson & Laub, 2021](#)).

These findings have practical implications for intervention programs. Strategies to prevent juvenile delinquency should incorporate family-based communication training, parental guidance support, and peer mentoring initiatives. Encouraging structured, positive peer activities alongside empathetic family dialogue may create reinforcing protective environments for adolescents ([Farrington et al., 2021](#); [Kusumawati & Santosa, 2021](#)).

While the study provides evidence of significant associations, its correlational design limits causal inference. Longitudinal or mixed-method research is recommended to explore how family communication and peer interaction interact over time to influence adolescent delinquency, particularly in rural contexts with limited social services ([Rezapour et al., 2023](#); [Putri et al., 2021](#)).

## Conclusions

This study concludes that juvenile delinquency among adolescents in Teluk Merbau Village is significantly influenced by both persuasive communication within the family and peer social interaction. Effective family communication characterized by openness, empathy, and persuasion serves as a protective factor that helps reduce deviant behavior, while negative and uncontrolled peer interactions tend to increase the risk of delinquency. The simultaneous influence of these two factors indicates that adolescent behavior is shaped by the dynamic interaction between family and peer environments. Therefore, efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency should be carried out in an integrated manner through strengthening family-based persuasive communication, fostering positive peer

relationships, and enhancing collaboration among families, schools, and community institutions to support healthy adolescent development.

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