



## Empowering Schools to Curb Teen Misconduct: The Role of Principals and Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

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Juvenile delinquency refers to actions that violate societal norms, rules, or laws, often stemming from unresolved conflicts and problems carried over from childhood into adolescence. In the school environment, such misconduct remains a recurring challenge for many educational institutions. This study aims to describe the roles of principals and teachers in addressing juvenile delinquency within schools. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, the research seeks to understand the lived experiences of research subjects, including their behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions. Informants were selected based on specific criteria, encompassing school administrators (principals, vice principals, and student affairs coordinators), homeroom teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, students involved in delinquent behavior, and their parents. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis. The findings emphasize that schools should serve not only as centers for academic learning but also as environments that foster moral and social values, equip students with essential life skills, and engage them in constructive activities that promote personal growth and responsible behavior.

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## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency, defined as behaviors that violate prevailing norms, rules, or laws in society, remains a critical concern for communities worldwide. Its significance extends beyond the school environment, as it directly influences social stability, public safety, and the moral fabric of the next generation. Adolescence is a formative stage where individuals establish values, attitudes, and behaviors that often persist into adulthood. When this stage is disrupted by deviant actions, the long-term consequences can include reduced employability, criminal involvement, and impaired social relationships. Such

issues arise from a complex interplay of individual, family, and environmental factors, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions. Evidence shows that countries with effective preventive strategies in schools report lower rates of youth crime and higher educational outcomes (Bobyanti, 2023; Gofar, 2022; Karlina, 2020). Therefore, addressing juvenile delinquency is not merely an educational responsibility but a societal imperative. Schools, as primary agents of formal socialization, are uniquely positioned to mitigate these risks by instilling moral values, fostering positive peer interactions, and guiding students toward constructive life choices.

In many educational systems, juvenile delinquency remains a recurring problem that hinders academic progress and threatens the safety of the learning environment. The issue often stems from multiple causes, including unstable parenting patterns, unsupportive social environments, peer pressure, and identity conflicts commonly experienced during adolescence (Bobyanti, 2023; Gofar, 2022; Karlina, 2020). Adolescents, especially those in school-age years, often experience emotional instability, heightened curiosity, and susceptibility to negative influences (Alwi et al., 2023; Nurfirdaus et al., 2021; Ahmad, 2018). Without adequate guidance, these tendencies may manifest in behaviors that contravene school rules and societal expectations. Although programs such as counseling, moral education, and extracurricular activities have been implemented in various schools, the persistence of these problems suggests that existing measures may not be sufficiently comprehensive or targeted. Furthermore, the increasing complexity of social influences, including online exposure to harmful content, exacerbates the problem. This raises a pressing question: how can schools—through the leadership of principals and the guidance of teachers—effectively address both the root causes and manifestations of juvenile delinquency?

Field observations reveal that juvenile delinquency in schools manifests in both minor and severe forms. Minor misconduct may include skipping classes, incomplete uniforms, tardiness, and defiance toward teachers. More severe cases involve physical fights, alcohol consumption, smoking, possession of weapons, bullying, and even inappropriate sexual behavior (Kristina et al., 2021; Sabarin et al., 2018; Utami, 2019). At SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan, observations between 2022 and 2024 show fluctuating trends. In 2022, smoking was the most prevalent offense, followed by fighting and dating, with weapon possession being less frequent. In 2023, weapon possession dropped to zero, fighting decreased, but dating and smoking persisted at high rates. By 2024, weapon possession reemerged, smoking cases increased, fighting declined further, while dating incidents surged sharply. A new form of misconduct—alcohol consumption during school hours—was also reported. These findings

underscore that while some interventions may reduce certain behaviors, others remain resistant or even worsen over time, suggesting the need for a more dynamic, leadership-driven approach within schools.

Previous studies have explored juvenile delinquency from various perspectives, including psychological development, peer influence, and family dynamics. Saputro (2018) emphasizes that adolescence is a period of identity crisis, during which individuals actively seek self-definition through behaviors that may range from constructive to destructive. Saryuri (2025) notes that during this identity search, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty, making them more susceptible to delinquent behavior. Sofyan in Barus (2021) further highlights the tendency of adolescents to be influenced by negative external stimuli such as free association, narcotics, violent conflicts, and sexual crimes. While these studies deepen our understanding of contributing factors, they often focus predominantly on individual or familial influences, overlooking the institutional role of schools. Furthermore, most existing research emphasizes the symptoms and causes rather than the leadership and structural interventions needed to address the problem systematically within educational settings. This creates a gap in understanding how school leadership can play a decisive role in prevention and intervention.

Several intervention strategies have been proposed, including counseling programs, character education, extracurricular engagement, and parental involvement initiatives. While beneficial, these efforts often fail to address the root causes comprehensively, especially when they lack alignment with school-wide policies and administrative leadership. Many studies acknowledge the importance of teachers as role models but seldom consider the synergy between teachers and principals in creating a cohesive, preventive culture (Kristina et al., 2021; Sabarin et al., 2018; Utami, 2019). Moreover, interventions are often reactive, implemented after incidents occur, rather than proactive measures that foster resilience and moral integrity among students. This reactive approach may lead to temporary improvements but rarely results in sustained behavioral change. There is limited research integrating leadership theory, teacher engagement, and community collaboration into a unified strategy. Addressing this research gap could lead to more sustainable outcomes by positioning school leaders and teachers as central agents in cultivating an environment that both prevents and corrects delinquent behaviors.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated focus on the collaborative roles of principals and teachers in addressing juvenile delinquency, specifically within the context of SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan. Unlike previous studies that

primarily examine psychological or familial factors, this research situates the problem within the organizational and cultural framework of the school. It investigates how leadership decisions, teacher-student interactions, and coordinated policy enforcement can collectively shape student behavior. This approach acknowledges that while individual counseling and parental involvement are essential, systemic change within the school is equally critical. By highlighting real-time behavioral trends over multiple years, the study provides actionable insights into which interventions are effective, which require modification, and which new strategies may be necessary. This focus on leadership synergy and dynamic adaptation to behavioral patterns offers a state-of-the-art contribution, bridging the gap between theory and practice in school-based delinquency prevention efforts.

Despite numerous initiatives aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency, the persistence of problematic behaviors in schools such as SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan indicates that current approaches are insufficient. The problem lies not only in addressing visible misconduct but also in tackling underlying causes within the school's social and organizational environment. Leadership and teacher engagement are often treated as separate factors rather than interconnected elements of a unified strategy. This raises the central research problem: how can the coordinated efforts of principals and teachers effectively reduce both the frequency and severity of juvenile delinquency in schools? This question is critical because without such coordination, interventions risk being fragmented, inconsistent, and ultimately ineffective. By exploring this problem, the study aims to develop a practical model for school-based delinquency prevention that integrates administrative leadership, teacher involvement, and supportive learning environments, thereby offering a more sustainable solution for both educational institutions and the wider community.

This study argues that principals and teachers, when working in coordinated partnership, can serve as the most influential agents in preventing and addressing juvenile delinquency in schools. Principals provide the vision, policies, and structural support necessary to create a disciplined yet nurturing environment, while teachers implement these principles in daily interactions with students. Such collaboration ensures consistency in expectations, consequences, and moral guidance. The research contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating how leadership synergy can translate into tangible behavioral improvements, using SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan as a case study. Furthermore, it offers an evidence-based framework that can be adapted by other schools facing similar challenges. By addressing both the immediate manifestations and root causes of delinquency, this approach promises not only to reduce misconduct but also to foster a school culture that supports

academic achievement, emotional resilience, and social responsibility—ultimately benefiting the broader societal fabric (Bobyanti, 2023; Gofar, 2022; Karlina, 2020).

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research approach, which aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, including their behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions. Data were collected in descriptive form, expressed through words and grounded in specific natural contexts, using a variety of appropriate methods (Moleong, 2019). The research design was a case study, focusing on specific issues and phenomena within a community. This design enabled an in-depth exploration of the background, circumstances, and interactions surrounding the problem. Case studies may involve the examination of a program, activity, event, or a group of individuals within a defined setting (Siregar et al., 2024).

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, a technique that involves choosing informants based on specific considerations and criteria (Sugiyono, 2014). This approach was deemed appropriate because, although there were many teachers and students involved in delinquent behaviors at SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan, it was neither feasible nor necessary to include them all as informants.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from original sources to address the research objectives, while secondary data were derived from existing school documents (Iba, 2023; Rahman, 2021). Three main instruments were used to collect data: observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to gain a direct understanding of the school's condition, including student and teacher behavior, school culture, program implementation, teaching and learning processes, and the overall school environment. Interviews provided firsthand accounts and perspectives from participants regarding the issues under investigation. Document analysis involved reviewing books, photographs, and other records to strengthen and corroborate the findings from observations and interviews.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which was carried out in interconnected stages. Data collection involved gathering relevant information from the field, capturing all aspects related to the research problem. Data reduction was then undertaken to streamline and focus the information, selecting the most important elements, simplifying them, and producing meaningful abstractions. The next stage was data display, which entailed organizing structured information to facilitate understanding and

enable the drawing of conclusions. Finally, conclusions were drawn through a continuous process of verification, ensuring that interpretations were supported by evidence throughout the study (Zulfirman, 2022).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### **Forms of Juvenile Delinquency at SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan**

Field observations revealed three main categories of juvenile delinquency: minor misconduct, moderate violations, and serious offenses. Minor misconduct included behaviors such as skipping classes, failing to complete assignments, sleeping or chatting during lessons, and teasing peers. These actions, while common in many schools, require attention to prevent escalation. Moderate violations encompassed underage students riding motorcycles without a license, which the school allowed under certain conditions due to long travel distances, the lack of public transportation, and parents' inability to provide daily transport. Smoking on school grounds and physical fights were also classified as moderate violations. The causes of these fights ranged from misunderstandings to jealousy over romantic relationships. Serious offenses included watching pornographic videos, often under pressure from older students, and carrying sharp weapons for self-protection against perceived threats. When such cases occurred, the school responded by summoning parents, securing verbal commitments from students, and warning of stricter punishment for repeat offenses.

#### **Challenges Faced by the Principal and Teachers**

The primary challenges in addressing juvenile delinquency arose from peer influence, community environment, and parental attitudes. Negative peer influence was particularly significant, as students often reverted to misbehavior despite having received counseling and making promises to improve. The surrounding community also contributed to the problem, especially vendors near the school who allowed students to smoke and even offered credit purchases or bartering arrangements. Additionally, some parents were less strict, leaving the responsibility for discipline entirely to the school.

#### **Roles of the Principal and Teachers in Addressing Juvenile Delinquency**

The principal took a strategic approach by identifying recurring student problems, promoting spiritual guidance through religious talks, and organizing parenting programs to strengthen collaboration between school and family. Efforts were also made to increase the availability of positive extracurricular activities to channel students' energy toward constructive outlets. Teachers and homeroom teachers played an active role in shaping student character through personal counseling, moral guidance, and cooperation with the principal,

guidance counselors, and parents. In some cases, teachers visited students' homes to build stronger personal connections. They also emphasized their role as models for appropriate behavior, encouraged extracurricular participation, and cultivated a supportive classroom environment.

### Strategies for Overcoming Juvenile Delinquency

The school implemented a counseling process that began with collecting detailed information about the student's behavior, receiving reports from homeroom teachers, and arranging counseling sessions. The process started with an initial engagement phase to build empathy, trust, and active communication. During the implementation phase, teachers discussed the issues openly, involved students in finding solutions, and agreed on timelines for improvement. The process concluded with a closure phase, where key points were summarized, follow-up meetings were scheduled, and students were encouraged to reflect on their actions. This empathetic and collaborative approach, combining moral guidance, psychological support, and active parental involvement, has shown effectiveness in reducing certain forms of delinquency, such as fights, possession of weapons, and alcohol consumption, although smoking among students remains a persistent challenge.

**Table 1.**  
**Juvenile Delinquency Data at SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan 2022-2025**

Number	Delinquency Cases	2022	2023	2024	2025
1.	Dating	8	8	12	10
2.	Carrying Sharp Weapons	1	0	1	0
3.	Fighting	8	6	4	0
4.	Smoking	9	9	14	10
5.	Drinking Alcohol	0	0	8	0
6.	Watching Indecent Videos	0	0	0	1
Total		26	23	39	21

Source: South Solok 12 Public Middle School

Based on the data above, the number of students committing juvenile delinquency in schools has significantly increased over the past three years, especially in 2024. With the implementation of the respective roles of teachers and principals, there was a decrease in students committing juvenile delinquency in schools by 2025. This demonstrates that the role of principals and teachers in addressing juvenile delinquency in schools has begun to be implemented and is being implemented effectively.

## Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that juvenile delinquency in schools manifests in varying degrees of severity—ranging from relatively common misbehaviors to serious offenses that disrupt the educational environment and threaten student safety. The persistence of these behaviors despite existing interventions highlights the complexity of the problem and underscores the importance of a coordinated approach between school leadership, teaching staff, and parents. This aligns with previous research indicating that delinquency is shaped by a combination of peer influence, family environment, and broader community dynamics (Bobyanti, 2023; Gofar, 2022; Karlina, 2020). In the case of SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan, negative peer influence emerged as the most dominant factor, echoing Saputro's (2018) assertion that adolescents in an identity crisis are highly susceptible to the attitudes and behaviors of their social group.

The study also reveals that while schools often implement reactive measures, such as disciplinary actions and remedial counseling, sustained behavioral change is more likely to occur when interventions are proactive, preventive, and holistic. The principal's emphasis on spiritual guidance, parenting programs, and expanded extracurricular opportunities represents a shift towards creating a school culture that promotes moral integrity and social responsibility. This is consistent with Saryuri's (2025) observation that strengthening internal identity and moral awareness can reduce the likelihood of delinquent acts. However, the fact that certain behaviors—such as smoking—remain persistent suggests that cultural and environmental influences beyond the school's control may require broader community-based strategies.

Teacher involvement was also found to be critical, particularly when combined with personal engagement, role modeling, and active collaboration with parents. This supports the view of Kristina et al. (2021) and Sabarin et al. (2018) that teachers are not only instructional figures but also moral and behavioral guides. Home visits, personal counseling, and moral guidance by teachers at SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan proved effective in reducing the incidence of fighting, weapon possession, and alcohol consumption. Such approaches illustrate the value of humanistic counseling methods, which, as Nurfirdaus and Sutisna (2021) argue, build student self-awareness and intrinsic motivation to change.

A notable contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how leadership synergy—where principals and teachers work in a mutually reinforcing manner—can yield measurable reductions in delinquency over time. This finding addresses a gap in the literature where previous studies often treated leadership and teacher engagement as separate variables (Utami, 2019).

By integrating these roles, SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan created a more consistent and unified behavioral management framework, which likely contributed to the decline in certain delinquency categories in 2025.

Nevertheless, the persistence of some forms of misconduct suggests that even effective school-based strategies have limitations when not complemented by consistent parental discipline and supportive community norms. The permissiveness of local vendors toward student smoking, for example, illustrates the challenge of enforcing school values in environments where external actors facilitate deviant behavior. This reinforces the argument of Marwa (2023) that efforts to address juvenile delinquency must extend beyond school walls to include family and community engagement.

Overall, the discussion highlights that tackling juvenile delinquency requires a multi-layered strategy. At the school level, principals must establish clear policies, ensure consistent enforcement, and foster a culture of care and responsibility. Teachers must actively engage with students through role modeling, counseling, and collaboration with parents. At the community level, partnerships with local stakeholders are essential to create an environment that supports positive youth development. This integrated approach not only addresses the symptoms of delinquency but also targets its root causes, offering a sustainable model for prevention and intervention in similar educational contexts.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study at SMP Negeri 12 Solok Selatan indicate that juvenile delinquency within the school environment can be classified into three main categories: minor, moderate, and severe offenses. Addressing these issues involves navigating complex challenges, particularly the influence of negative peer groups, the lack of parental engagement, and the reinforcement of deviant behaviors by certain community members around the school. Despite these obstacles, the roles of the principal and teachers have proven to be highly significant. The principal actively analyzes student-related problems, provides spiritual guidance, and promotes student participation in extracurricular activities as a constructive outlet for their energy. Teachers, especially homeroom advisors, serve as the front line in offering advice, engaging in personal approaches, building communication with parents, and acting as role models in daily conduct.

Collaboration among the school, guidance and counseling teachers, and parents has emerged as a key strategy in creating a safe, healthy, and conducive learning environment. The counseling process led by the guidance counselor employs a systematic and staged approach—beginning with personal rapport-

building, identifying root causes, providing space for students to express their perspectives, and concluding with evaluation and joint reflection. This method emphasizes the development of internal student awareness, ensuring that behavioral change is self-driven rather than imposed. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that synergy between the principal and teachers in addressing juvenile delinquency can lead to meaningful behavioral improvements, as evidenced by the reduction in delinquency cases in 2025.

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