

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CRIMINOLOGY IN INDONESIA: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency remains a growing social challenge in Indonesian society, encompassing various forms of deviant behavior such as student brawls, drug abuse, illegal street racing, and acts of group violence frequently occurring within educational environments and urban communities. This phenomenon not only poses a threat to social stability but also signals the weakening of social control functions and the failure of character-building systems for adolescents. This study aims to identify the causal factors of juvenile delinquency, evaluate the countermeasures that have been implemented, and analyze the relationship between criminological theory particularly the Differential Association Theory and the practice of juvenile delinquency prevention in Indonesia. The method used is a systematic literature review (SLR) of various scientific publications from the past five years, sourced from open-access databases and reputable journals. The data were analyzed using a content analysis approach to synthesize thematic patterns from relevant empirical and theoretical findings. The results indicate that juvenile delinquency is primarily triggered by negative social environments, weak emotional bonds within families, and close association with deviant peer groups. Repressive approaches to addressing delinquency have proven ineffective, as they overlook the sociological roots of such behavior. This study concludes that preventive, community-based interventions that emphasize value education are key to addressing juvenile delinquency systemically. These findings provide an important contribution to the development of evidence-based policy strategies and the design of more contextually relevant social intervention programs in Indonesia.

Keywords: Criminology; Juvenile Delinquency; Systematic Review

1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency has become an increasingly complex and widespread social phenomenon in Indonesia, with a growing number of cases involving various forms of deviant behavior such as student brawls, drug abuse, illegal street racing, and violence among peers. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) indicate a significant increase in legal violations committed by children and adolescents in recent years, highlighting a failure in the effectiveness of current preventive systems against such deviant behaviors (Nurhadiyanto, 2020; Suhendar & Halimi, 2023). Juvenile delinquency not only affects the perpetrators themselves but also generates social unrest and presents serious challenges to law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, and the broader community in maintaining social stability and legal norms. This situation is further exacerbated by globalization and technological advancement, which have expanded adolescents' social interactions and access to negative content that may encourage deviant behavior (Li et al., 2024; Suhendar & Rambe, 2023; XinYing et al., 2025). Therefore, a more in-depth and systematic study is required to understand the dynamics and root causes of juvenile delinquency as it evolves in Indonesia.

Several criminological theories have attempted to explain juvenile delinquency, including social control theory, strain theory, and subcultural theory. However, within the Indonesian context, these approaches have not fully captured the diverse causes and socio-cultural dynamics underlying youth deviance. For instance, the Differential Association Theory developed by Edwin H. Sutherland emphasizes the importance of social learning through interaction with deviant groups. Nevertheless, many studies in Indonesia have yet to comprehensively integrate this theory into their analyses (LaFree, 2023; Maulidi & Ansell, 2021). The available literature also tends to examine this phenomenon in a fragmented manner through legal, psychological, or sociological lenses without a comprehensive interdisciplinary synthesis that fully reflects the empirical reality (Acar et al., 2024; Scheaf & Wood, 2022). As a result, policy formulation and intervention strategies often become reactive and lack evidence-based support. This highlights the urgent need for a systematic review of the existing literature to achieve a more integrated understanding.

This study aims to fill that gap by conducting a systematic review of previous research on juvenile delinquency in Indonesia from a criminological perspective. The main objectives are to identify and classify the various causal factors of juvenile delinquency as revealed in prior studies, and to evaluate the strategies that have been implemented across different local contexts. Furthermore, this research seeks to analyze the connection between criminological theories particularly Differential Association Theory and the practical approaches to delinquency prevention implemented thus far (Kholil et al., 2024; Lee & Choi, 2025; Suhendar et al., 2023). By synthesizing findings from existing studies, this

research is expected to serve as an essential reference for designing more targeted and evidence-based public policy. It is also expected to open new avenues for deeper research in the future.

Given the high incidence of juvenile delinquency, the weak policy responses, and the fragmented theoretical and conceptual approaches in the literature, it is crucial to conduct a systematic and interdisciplinary study. The main argument for this research lies in the need for a strong empirical foundation to formulate more effective prevention and intervention strategies. This study is designed not only to map out the problem but also to provide theoretical contributions to the development of criminological approaches for understanding deviant adolescent behavior in Indonesia (Juliana et al., 2025; Suhendar et al., 2024). By combining theoretical analysis with empirical evidence from published literature, this research provides a rational basis for evidence-based policymaking. Therefore, this study is not only academically significant but also practically relevant for addressing the issue of juvenile delinquency in Indonesia in a more holistic and sustainable manner.

Concept and Manifestations of Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency refers to deviant behavior committed by individuals in the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, which violates social norms or legal regulations within society. In the legal context of Indonesia, this term encompasses a wide range of offenses, from minor acts such as truancy to more serious crimes like theft and physical violence (Steffensmeier et al., 2025; Vadivel et al., 2023). The definition of juvenile delinquency also highlights the importance of the age dimension of offenders, specifically children or adolescents who have not yet reached legal adulthood. This concept is rooted in the understanding that adolescents are a vulnerable age group highly susceptible to environmental influences and social pressures, which may push them toward deviant behavior (Cioban et al., 2021; Laursen & Faur, 2022). Therefore, juvenile delinquency is not only viewed as a violation of the law but also as a complex and multidimensional social phenomenon.

The manifestations of juvenile delinquency are diverse and can be categorized into several main types, such as individual delinquency, group delinquency, and instrumental versus expressive delinquency. In practice, such delinquency may take the form of aggressive acts like brawling, bullying, substance abuse, or deviant sexual behavior (Dalimunthe et al., 2024; Marenyenya, 2023). Research by Widayati et al also classifies four primary types of delinquency: isolative, neurotic, psychopathic, and moral defect delinquency each reflecting different psychological motives and backgrounds of the offenders (Widayati et al., 2022). This classification is important to understand delinquency patterns and to develop

suitable intervention strategies for each type of offender and behavior background.

Concept and Manifestations of Criminology

Criminology is a branch of social science that studies crime, offenders, victims, and society's responses to crime, including the criminal justice system. In the context of juvenile delinquency, criminology plays a vital role in analyzing the causal factors, underlying social processes, and consequences of deviant behaviors (Basuki et al., 2023). Modern criminology emphasizes the importance of understanding crime as a product of complex social interactions and positions the offender within the socio-economic and cultural contexts that influence them (Mihăilă et al., 2025). Thus, criminological approaches to juvenile delinquency aim not only to explain criminal behavior but also to formulate prevention and rehabilitation strategies.

In criminological studies, the manifestations of crime analysis can be classified into several approaches, including biological, psychological, sociological, and structural approaches. The sociological approach such as the Differential Association Theory suggests that juvenile delinquency arises from social learning processes within deviant groups (Archer & Flexon, 2022). On the other hand, structural approaches highlight poverty, unemployment, and social disorganization as key structural causes of juvenile crime (Antunes & Manasse, 2022). These classifications enable researchers and legal practitioners to develop more contextual and cause-based responses to addressing juvenile delinquency.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The main object of this study is the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in Indonesia, which has evidently become a multidimensional social issue. Juvenile delinquency not only affects the individual offenders but also has broader societal impacts through actions such as gang violence, drug abuse, illegal street racing, violations of legal norms, and group-based crimes. This reality demonstrates that such deviant behaviors are not merely forms of adolescent rebellion but rather complex symptoms influenced by a range of social, psychological, and environmental factors. Within this context, the study seeks to go beyond the visible forms of delinquency by exploring the structural and symbolic dimensions underlying these behaviors. The complexity of the issue is compounded by the fact that current intervention policies are often sporadic, fragmented across sectors, and lack a foundation in comprehensive academic synthesis. Therefore, the primary focus of this research is to systematically reassess relevant academic literature on juvenile delinquency from a criminological perspective, with the aim of gaining a deeper, more comprehensive, and structured understanding of the causes, forms, and intervention strategies proposed or implemented in Indonesia.

This approach enriches the scientific knowledge base and forms a foundation for more contextual and effective public policies to reduce juvenile delinquency sustainably.

This research uses a library-based approach with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, a structured approach designed to identify, select, and synthesize various relevant studies systematically to answer the research questions (Yunus et al., 2025). Primary data in this study consist of scholarly journal articles, theses, dissertations, and other academic publications that examine juvenile delinquency from a criminological perspective in Indonesia. These sources were collected from various electronic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, SINTA, and Garuda. Meanwhile, secondary data include criminological theories, concepts of juvenile delinquency, and systematic approaches used in academic studies. The focus of the search included literature discussing the causes of delinquency, forms of delinquency, and intervention strategies implemented in Indonesia. The SLR method differs from traditional narrative reviews by applying strict protocols, such as clear inclusion and exclusion criteria and quality ranking of literature. This method aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of scholarly understanding and identify areas that require further exploration. It is particularly well-suited for the study of juvenile delinquency due to the complexity of the phenomenon and the fragmented nature of existing research across different academic disciplines.

In addition to employing content analysis, this study also applies bibliometric analysis using the VOSviewer software. A .RIS-format bibliography file was extracted via the Publish or Perish application from Google Scholar (covering the years 2019–2024) and used as the data source. This analysis aims to map keyword relationships, frequency of topic appearances, and recent research trends in the field of juvenile delinquency. Visualization was performed using three models: network visualization to identify keyword networks and dominant themes; overlay visualization to monitor the temporal evolution of research topics; and density visualization to reveal the thematic concentration areas that draw the most scholarly attention. These data support thematic validity in the literature synthesis process.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

DATA DESCRIPTION: JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

In the literature review on juvenile delinquency in Indonesia, the most common forms of delinquency identified include student brawls, drug abuse, illegal street racing, and other deviant behaviors that disrupt social norms. A study by Fathoni et al (2024) developed a measurement instrument for juvenile delinquency based on four main dimensions: isolated delinquency, neurotic delinquency, psychopathic delinquency, and moral defect delinquency, indicating that

delinquency spans a complex spectrum from minor to severe deviant behaviors (Fathoni et al., 2024). This data is supported by network visualizations from the bibliometric analysis, which show that “juvenile delinquency” lies at the center of scholarly discussions and is closely linked to concepts such as “peer influence,” “family dysfunction,” and “criminology.”

Further elaboration of the literature indicates that juvenile delinquency in Indonesia reflects social dynamics and a deficit in character-building systems. A study by Yi et al (2025) highlights that the degradation of moral values and poor family communication exacerbate adolescent behaviors such as verbal aggression and defiance of social norms (Yi et al., 2025).

Findings from the VOSviewer density visualization demonstrate that scholarly discussions are highly concentrated around the theme of juvenile delinquency. A study by Muna. (2024) states that weak family and community control creates a space for deviant norms to thrive (Muna, 2024).

To strengthen the thematic mapping in this literature review, bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software. The results of this visualization are presented in Figures 1 through 3 below.

Figure 1. Network Visualization

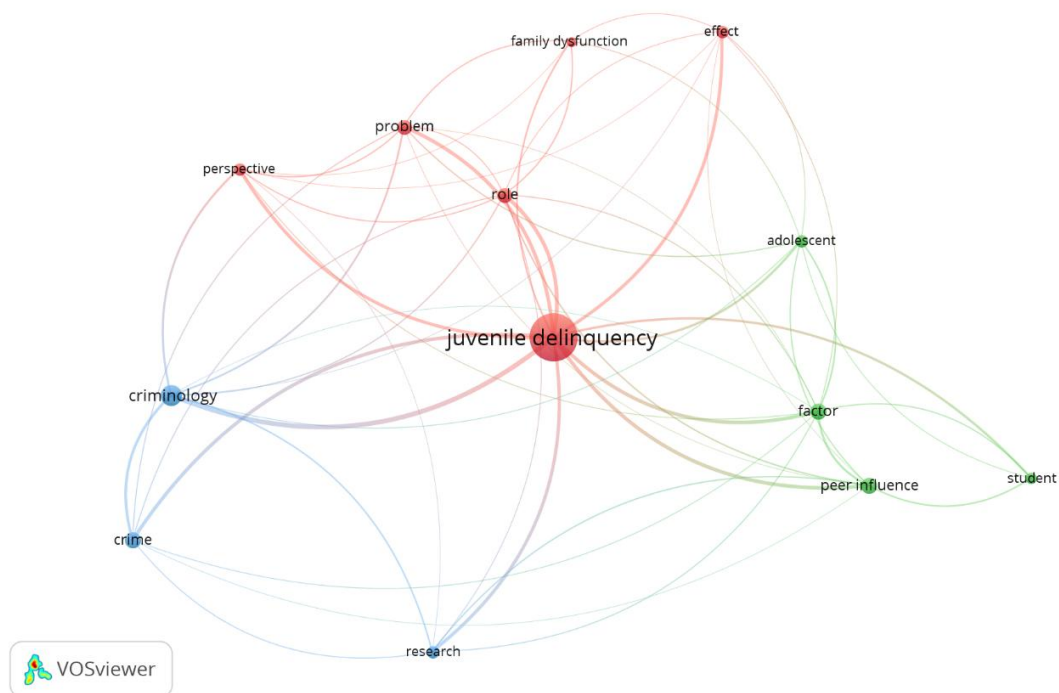


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

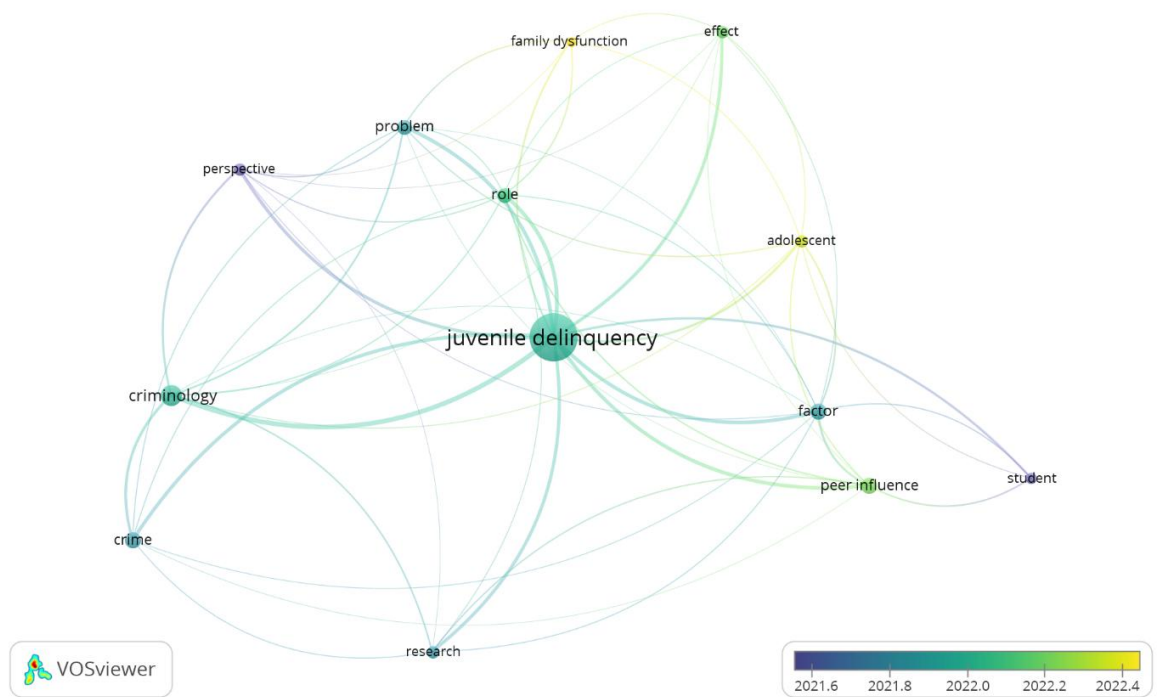
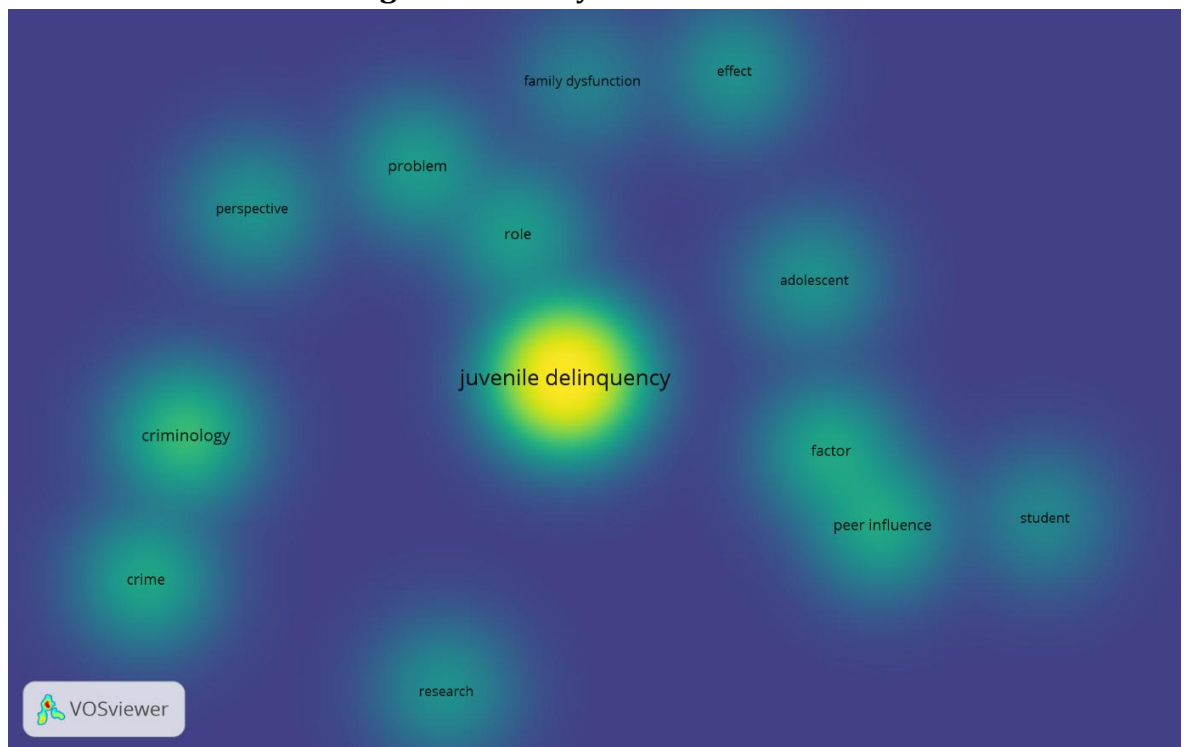


Figure 3. Density Visualization



DATA DESCRIPTION: CRIMINOLOGY

Criminological literature indicates that the Differential Association Theory is frequently used to explain juvenile delinquency in Indonesia. Maksymova (2021) notes that family disharmony and negative social environments are the primary causes (Maksymova et al., 2021). This is supported by Basuki et al. (2023), who provide case examples of juvenile theft committed by children (Basuki et al., 2023).

Bibliometric analysis reveals that terms like “criminology” and “crime” are among the largest nodes directly linked to “juvenile delinquency.” This signifies that criminological concepts remain the dominant framework in explaining youth deviance. Differential Association Theory posits that deviant behavior is learned through social interaction with deviant peer groups.

The application of this theory aligns with the findings from the overlay visualization, which shows that terms such as “peer influence” and “adolescent” have become trending topics over the past five years. This suggests that future research will increasingly focus on adolescent social dynamics, rather than solely emphasizing legal or formal control aspects.

DATA DESCRIPTION: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

The systematic review in the literature was conducted using a structured protocol that included systematic searching, selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and thematic analysis. Yohros (2023) applied a similar method in their study (Yohros, 2023). A systematic review enables a comprehensive mapping of research approaches and relevant findings. The bibliometric analysis reinforces this by visualizing the relationships between keywords and the dominance of themes based on frequency of occurrence.

The results from the bibliometric analysis and literature synthesis demonstrate that Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is capable of providing an unbiased and comprehensive understanding. By identifying dominant themes and emerging trends, this method offers clearer direction for policy interventions and future research in the field of juvenile delinquency.

4. CONCLUSION

A striking finding from this study reveals that the focus of scholarly literature on juvenile delinquency in Indonesia consistently identifies social factors, particularly peer influence and family dysfunction, as the most dominant variables driving delinquent behavior. Bibliometric visualization using VOSviewer reinforces this finding by positioning keywords such as “juvenile delinquency,” “peer influence,” and “family dysfunction” as central nodes within the keyword network. Meanwhile, criminological theories such as Differential Association remain not only relevant but also serve as the principal theoretical framework in explaining this phenomenon. The systematic review successfully demonstrates

that this method is effective in comprehensively mapping dominant themes and trends in the academic literature.

This study makes a significant contribution in two dimensions: theoretically, it reinforces that social-interactionist approaches like the Differential Association Theory remain valid in the contemporary Indonesian context; and practically, it provides a solid foundation for designing evidence-based policy interventions focused on strengthening adolescents' social relationships. The integration of systematic review with bibliometric analysis also represents a methodological innovation that can be replicated by other researchers in socio-criminological studies.

This study has limitations, namely its exclusive focus on literature published within the past five years and written in either English or Indonesian, and its lack of direct field investigation. Nevertheless, these limitations present an opportunity for future research to combine SLR with qualitative fieldwork, in order to test the empirical relevance of the identified themes and trends, as well as to develop community-based social intervention models.

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