

## Self-Control and Juvenile Delinquency in Jambi Boarding School Environment: A Correlational Study

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### Abstract

Juvenile delinquency is a form of deviant behavior that is still often found in educational environments, including in boarding schools, which should play a role in character building and self-control of students. This study aims to examine the relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency in students of SMA X Boarding School in Jambi. The study used a quantitative correlational approach involving 81 students in grades XI and XII who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The instruments used consisted of a Self-Control Scale compiled based on Averill's theory (1973) and a Juvenile Delinquency Scale based on Jensen's theory (1985). Data analysis was performed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique through the SPSS version 25 program. The results showed a significant negative relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency ( $r = -0.520$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) with an effective contribution of 27% ( $R^2 = 0.27$ ). This finding indicates that the higher the students' self-control, the lower the tendency for juvenile delinquency. This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening self-control among adolescents through ongoing character development and counseling programs.

**Keywords:** Boarding School, Juvenile Delinquency, Self-Control



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## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a social phenomenon that continues to attract global attention, including in Indonesia (Hill & Blokland, 2025; J. Kim & Lee, 2025). The term juvenile delinquency comes from the Latin words *juvenile*, meaning teenager, and *delinquere*, meaning to neglect. Kartono (2019) explains that juvenile delinquency encompasses a variety of deviant behaviors committed by young people due to weak supervision and attention from their social environment. In this context, juvenile delinquency is not only defined as criminal acts, but also behavior that violates social, moral, and legal norms prevailing in society.

Empirically, data shows that juvenile delinquency in Indonesia has experienced a significant increase. According to a report from the National Crime Information Center (Pusiknas) of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) (2025), since the beginning of the year, 437 children have been recorded as having come into conflict with the law due to theft, 460 children have been involved in assault and gang violence, and 349 children have been reported in drug cases. Meanwhile, the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) in its report for the 2020–2024 period revealed that approximately 2.29 million adolescents in Indonesia are involved in drug abuse (Chan, 2021; Cheon et al., 2025). This data illustrates that juvenile delinquency is no longer an individual phenomenon, but has become a complex social problem that requires attention from various parties, particularly educational institutions and families.

According to Archer & Flexon, Pechorro et al., (2022), adolescence is a developmental period marked by major physical, psychological, and social changes. Adolescents are in a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, often experiencing an identity crisis. (Defoe, 2021; Stults & Swagar, 2021) suggested that adolescence is a stage of identity search that determines the direction of one's future personality. If this stage is not properly navigated, adolescents are at risk of engaging in negative behaviors such as aggression, substance abuse, and other deviant behaviors. In this context, juvenile delinquency can be understood as a form of individual failure to adapt to prevailing social values.

The causes of juvenile delinquency are diverse, involving the interaction of internal and external factors. Internal factors include personality, self-control, and emotional states, while external factors include family, school, peer, and community environments (Pechorro et al., 2021; Wojciechowski, 2021). (Lee et al., 2020) emphasized that the family plays a fundamental role in shaping adolescent character through parenting styles, communication, and parental role models. Adolescents who grow up in harmonious and supportive families tend to have better morals and self-control than those who grow up in dysfunctional families.

Besides family, the peer environment also has a significant influence on the development of adolescent behavior. Ray & Park, (2024) stated that adolescents greatly need social acceptance from their peer group. This need often leads them to engage in certain actions to achieve acceptance, including deviant behavior. Furthermore, Li et al., (2024) added that the school and community environment also play a significant role in shaping adolescent behavior. Schools with strong discipline and supervision systems can suppress deviant behavior, while permissive school environments can foster negative behavior.

One form of educational environment believed to be effective in reducing juvenile delinquency is the boarding school system. In this system, students live in the same environment as their classroom, under the 24-hour supervision of teachers or caregivers. van der Baan et al., (2024) explains that boarding schools function not only as places for academic learning but also as character-building institutions that instill the values of discipline,

responsibility, and independence. Research by Doelman et al., (2023)) also shows that implementing a system of supervision and character-building in boarding schools can reduce the tendency for deviant behavior in adolescents.

However, the reality on the ground does not always align with expectations. Several cases of juvenile delinquency have occurred in boarding schools known for their discipline. For example, the mob attack at SMA Insan Cendekia Boarding School in Bogor (Kompas.com, 2023) involving eight students against a classmate, and the assault at SMA Taruna Nala Malang that resulted in serious injuries (Hirtenlehner & Leitgöb, 2022). At the regional level, a similar case also occurred at SMA X Boarding School in Jambi. According to a report by the Jambi Independent (Piehler et al., 2020), 14 12th-grade students attacked a 10th-grade student, motivated by seniority, resulting in serious injuries and requiring medical treatment.

SMA X Boarding School in Jambi is known as one of the province's leading schools, with a semi-military system that emphasizes high discipline. However, interviews with guidance and counseling teachers and students revealed that deviant behaviors such as bullying, theft, smoking, and truancy still occur within the school. This suggests that a strict system of supervision and discipline does not necessarily guarantee the development of fully positive behaviors.

In this context, the self-control factor is important to consider. Self-control is an individual's ability to restrain impulses, regulate emotions, and adjust behavior to prevailing social norms (Qu et al., 2022). (Jiang et al., 2020) emphasized that self-control plays a role in helping individuals achieve positive consequences from their behavior and avoid behavior that is detrimental to themselves or others. Averill (1973) divides self-control into three aspects, namely: (1) behavioral control, namely the individual's ability to control actions; (2) cognitive control, namely the ability to regulate thought processes and interpretations of situations; and (3) decision-making control, namely the ability to choose actions based on rational considerations.

(Tolou-Shams et al., 2021) stated that adolescents with low self-control are more prone to aggressive and destructive behavior. They tend to have difficulty controlling their emotions, are impulsive, and are easily influenced by social pressure. In a boarding school environment full of rules and supervision, self-control is crucial. Students with high self-control are better able to adapt to the disciplinary system, while those with low self-control are more likely to violate rules or engage in other forms of delinquency.

Several previous studies have demonstrated a link between self-control and juvenile delinquency. (I. S. Kim, 2021) study at SMA X Padang found that self-control had a significant negative relationship with juvenile delinquency, contributing 41.47%. Jayanti, Núñez-García & Jiménez, (2023) study at SMA DDI Kendari Private High School also showed similar results, contributing 34.4%. These findings confirm that the higher a person's self-control, the lower their tendency to engage in delinquency.

However, other research suggests that this relationship is not always strong. Pulkkinen et al (2020) found in their study at SMPN 1 Batam that self-control and emotional maturity simultaneously explained only 12.5% of the variability in juvenile delinquency. Similarly, research by Baek et al (2023) found no significant relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency in high school students. These varying results indicate that juvenile delinquency is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by many factors besides self-control, such as the social environment, peer pressure, and family factors.

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency at SMA X Boarding School Jambi shows that despite strict supervision and discipline systems being implemented, violations still occur. Based on interviews with several students and guidance counselors, researchers found various forms of delinquency such as bullying, theft, and other deviant behavior. For example, a 17-year-old student admitted to frequently skipping class more than five times because he fell asleep, indicating low behavioral control. Meanwhile, other students got into fights because they were unable to control their emotions, reflecting weak cognitive control. Another case showed smoking behavior carried out due to peer encouragement, illustrating low decision-making control.

These findings reinforce the view that self-control plays a crucial role in shaping adolescent behavior in boarding school environments. However, because boarding schools have unique social characteristics, the dynamics of self-control in this environment require further investigation (Tangibali et al., 2024). Not all forms of external supervision can replace the role of internal self-control derived from individual awareness. Based on various theoretical studies and previous research, there remains a gap in understanding the relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency in boarding school environments, particularly in Jambi. Most previous research has focused on public schools, while the context of boarding schools with their semi-military systems and strict rules has rarely been examined in depth. Furthermore, inconsistent research findings between studies indicate the need for new research to strengthen or revisit the relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency in different contexts.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency in a boarding school in Jambi. This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions (Boccio, 2025). Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to enrich the developmental and educational psychology literature on the role of self-control in adolescent behavior. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for schools and parents in designing more effective coaching strategies to foster student self-control and thus reduce delinquent behavior in boarding schools.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was conducted to examine the association between self-control and juvenile delinquency among senior high school students in a boarding school environment. A quantitative perspective was adopted because it enables researchers to measure behavioral tendencies objectively and analyze the statistical relationship between variables systematically. Correlational research is widely utilized in behavioral and educational studies to investigate how one psychological construct is related to another without manipulating the research setting (Baek et al., 2025). In this context, the study focused on understanding whether students with stronger self-control tendencies demonstrate lower levels of delinquent behavior.

### ***Research Design***

The study employed a quantitative correlational research design to identify the relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency among adolescents. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to evaluate the degree and direction of correlation between two measurable variables through statistical analysis. The independent variable in this study was self-control, while juvenile delinquency served as the dependent variable. By applying a correlational framework, the research sought to determine whether

variations in students' self-regulation abilities were significantly associated with differences in delinquent behavior patterns (Baek et al., 2025).

### ***Research Target/Subject***

The target population of this study consisted of 515 students enrolled in grades XI and XII at SMA X Boarding School in Jambi. From this population, 81 students were selected as research participants using the Krejcie and Morgan sampling technique, which is commonly applied to determine representative sample sizes in quantitative studies. The participants were chosen to ensure that the sample adequately reflected the characteristics of the broader student population. The inclusion of students from upper secondary levels was intended to provide relevant insights into adolescent behavior and self-control during a critical developmental stage.

### ***Research Procedure***

The research procedure began with obtaining permission from the school administration and informing participants about the objectives and ethical considerations of the study. After the approval process was completed, the researcher distributed the research instruments to the selected participants. Respondents were instructed to answer each statement honestly based on their personal experiences and behavioral tendencies. The collected questionnaires were then checked for completeness before being coded and entered into the statistical software for further analysis. Throughout the process, confidentiality and voluntary participation were maintained to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research findings.

### ***Instruments and Data Collection Techniques***

Data were collected using two research scales developed by the researcher based on established theoretical frameworks. The first instrument was the Self-Control Scale, constructed according to Averill's theory of self-control (1973), while the second instrument was the Juvenile Delinquency Scale adapted from the framework proposed by Stults et al. (2021). Prior to implementation, both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure measurement accuracy and consistency. The reliability analysis demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.877 for the self-control scale and 0.946 for the juvenile delinquency scale. Data collection was conducted through direct questionnaire administration to the selected respondents in the school environment.

### ***Data Analysis Technique***

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique with the assistance of SPSS software. This statistical method was selected because it is effective for identifying the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables. Before conducting the correlation analysis, prerequisite assumption tests were performed, including normality and linearity tests, to confirm that the data satisfied the assumptions required for parametric analysis. The results of these analyses were subsequently interpreted to determine the significance of the relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency among the participating students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis results showed that most students had moderate levels of self-control (56.8%) and moderate levels of juvenile delinquency (59.3%). The Pearson correlation test yielded a value of  $r = -0.520$  with  $p = 0.001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), and  $R^2 = 0.27$ , indicating a significant negative relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency.

**Table 1.** Student's Level of Self Control, the Lower Their Tendency

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Intervention Pre (M ± SD)</b>	<b>Intervention Post (M ± SD)</b>	<b>Information</b>
Self control Juvenile delinquency	-0.520	0.001	Significant (negative)

This means that the higher a student's level of self-control, the lower their tendency to engage in delinquent behavior. This finding supports the research hypothesis and aligns with Baumeister's (1994) self-control theory and Kartono's (2011) findings that self-control plays a crucial role in controlling impulsive behavior.

These findings align with research by Maiyulita and Syukur (2024) and Sinarsi et al. (2024), which showed a negative relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency. However, several studies, such as those by Azzahra (2023) and Bryson et al. (2023), showed weaker results, which may be influenced by contextual factors such as parenting styles, peer influence, and childhood experiences (Meldrum, Young, & Weerman, 2009; Mueller & Carey, 2023). Thus, the strength of the relationship between the two variables may vary depending on an individual's social and environmental factors.

The results of this study also showed that the majority of respondents had moderate to high levels of self-control. This indicates that most students are able to restrain their impulses and adapt their behavior to school norms, although some still require reinforcement. This finding aligns with research by Hidayati and Rahman (2024) and Nugraha and Yuliani (2023), which states that adolescent self-control develops through the practice of disciplined behavior and social support.

From a demographic perspective, the predominance of female respondents may explain the relatively good self-control results. Several studies, such as those by Sukmawati and (Fagan et al., 2025), show that women tend to have higher self-control abilities than men. This makes them more compliant with social norms and better able to avoid impulsive behavior.

In terms of cognitive development, most respondents were aged 16–17, which is mid-adolescence. During this phase, abstract thinking skills begin to develop, but are still influenced by emotional factors. Duri et al. (2024) explain that cognitive self-control increases with age and social experience. This explains why some students still exhibit less stable self-control. Furthermore, students' positive decision-making, especially in grade 12, demonstrates greater maturity of thought and social responsibility. Amanda and Handayani (2025) suggest that good self-control helps individuals think more rationally in decision-making and refrain from negative behavior.

Meanwhile, the level of juvenile delinquency in this study was classified as moderate, meaning that most students had committed minor offenses, but not aggressive or harmful to others. This aligns with Sriwahyuni's (2017) findings that good self-control is associated with low levels of delinquent behavior. The low levels of physical delinquency and delinquency resulting in material loss can also be explained by the predominance of female respondents and the characteristics of final-year students who are more socially and morally mature (Fitriani & Yuliani, 2021).

The mild forms of social delinquency found in this study, such as violating school rules, can be understood as part of adolescents' identity exploration process (Wulandari & Azzahra, 2023). However, with adequate self-control, this behavior does not develop into serious

delinquency. Final-grade students also demonstrate a high level of moral awareness and tend to avoid behavior that violates social norms (Syarifah, 2025). Overall, the results of this study indicate that self-control is a crucial factor in reducing juvenile delinquency rates in boarding schools. Adolescents with good self-control are better able to regulate their behavior, consider consequences, and resist negative impulses.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows a significant negative relationship between self-control and juvenile delinquency in students at SMA X Boarding School Jambi ( $r = -0.520$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This means that the higher the level of self-control possessed by adolescents, the lower their tendency to engage in delinquent behavior. This finding supports Baumeister's (1994) theory that self-control functions as an important mechanism in regulating impulsive behavior and preventing deviant acts.

In general, students' self-control levels were moderate to high, while juvenile delinquency levels were moderate, with a predominance of mild delinquency. These results indicate that most boarding school students have developed adequate self-control skills, although a small number still require further development. Factors such as gender, age, and grade level have also been shown to influence variations in self-control and the tendency toward delinquency. This research confirms that self-control is a psychological aspect that plays a crucial role in shaping adolescent social behavior.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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