



# Development of a Juvenile Delinquency Assessment Tool to Assist School Counselors in Providing Counseling Services

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a juvenile delinquency assessment instrument, in the form of a questionnaire, to assist school counsellors in systematically and accurately identifying juvenile delinquent behaviours. This research employed a quantitative descriptive approach. Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with LISREL 8.80, while item validity was examined using Pearson Correlation. The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The sample consisted of 324 students from six senior high schools in Cimahi City. The results showed that the instrument comprises four dimensions, namely theft and vandalism, interpersonal aggression, school delinquency, and substance abuse, with a total of 18 items proven valid and reliable. The study concludes that the developed instrument is feasible for systematically and accurately measuring the level of juvenile delinquency among senior high school students. This study suggests that the instrument can support school counsellors in early detection, in designing appropriate interventions based on students' needs, and in strengthening evidence-based counselling services in schools.

## KATA KUNCI

Instrumen Kenakalan Remaja;  
Konselor Sekolah;  
Penyediaan Layanan Konseling

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan instrumen kenakalan remaja berbentuk kuesioner guna membantu konselor sekolah dalam mengidentifikasi perilaku kenakalan remaja secara sistematis dan akurat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif. Uji validitas konstruk dilakukan menggunakan Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) melalui program Lisrel 8.80, sedangkan validitas item diuji menggunakan Pearson Correlation. Reliabilitas instrumen diuji menggunakan Cronbach's Alpha. Sampel penelitian terdiri atas 324 siswa dari enam SMA di Kota Cimahi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa instrumen terdiri atas empat aspek, yaitu pencurian dan perusakan, agresi interpersonal, kenakalan di sekolah, dan penyalahgunaan substansi, dengan 18 item yang dinyatakan valid dan reliabel. Kesimpulan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa instrumen yang dikembangkan layak digunakan untuk mengukur tingkat kenakalan remaja di sekolah menengah atas secara sistematis dan akurat. Implikasi penelitian menunjukkan bahwa instrumen ini dapat dimanfaatkan oleh konselor sekolah untuk melakukan deteksi dini, menyusun intervensi yang sesuai kebutuhan siswa, serta memperkuat layanan bimbingan dan konseling berbasis asesmen yang efektif di sekolah.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents exhibit a high degree of emotional immaturity (Jobson, 2020), and those who have not yet achieved emotional maturity are unable to control their emotions, which can potentially lead to aggressive behaviour (Goleman, 2016). Uncontrolled aggressive behaviour can lead to behavioural symptoms that contribute

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to juvenile delinquency (such as skipping school, vandalism, and even theft). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), juvenile delinquency refers to unlawful behaviour committed by minors (typically defined as those under 18) that would be considered a criminal offence if committed by an adult (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2026). According to Kartono (2017), juvenile delinquency refers to behaviour that leads to social pathologies among adolescents, caused by social neglect, which in turn drives behaviour that deviates from existing social norms (Kartono, 2017). Thus, juvenile delinquency can be defined as behaviour that violates social norms and the law, committed by students under the age of 18.

Several factors contribute to juvenile delinquency, including permissive parenting within the family (Moitra, 2017), the influence of a family's social capital such as the provision of affection and communication patterns (Hoffman, 2018; Rosita, T., 2023), low family harmony (Rasidah, 2018), and poor parent-child attachment as well as low social control (Hoge et al., 1994). Among these many factors, the roles of family and social control are the most significant contributors to juvenile delinquency. Therefore, comprehensive counselling services provided by school counsellors are necessary to address this issue.

School counsellors in Indonesian schools are often referred to as Guidance and Counselling Teachers. According to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 111 of 2014, Guidance and Counselling Teachers have the primary responsibility of providing guidance and counselling services to students to help them resolve their problems and support them in achieving independence in their lives. Counsellors are also expected to serve as role models and possess the competencies necessary to fulfil their duties. One of a counsellor's duties is to provide counselling services to address juvenile delinquency in schools. Effective intervention requires tools that help counsellors identify the types of juvenile delinquency, so that counselling can be tailored to the students' needs.

Counsellors can provide counselling services, either individually or in groups, to help students address their misbehaviour. However, before counselling begins, counsellors need tools to identify the specific aspects of the misbehaviour and the severity of the issue so that their counselling efforts are targeted and effective. Juvenile delinquency can be measured using several methods, one of which is a self-report survey in which adolescents are asked to report their involvement in various types of delinquent behaviour voluntarily. Conducting surveys on juvenile delinquency requires caution because many constructs of interest—both theoretically and empirically in the behavioural and social sciences are latent. Constructs typically reflect key aspects of the social behavioural phenomena that the field of psychology seeks to study. Although we cannot directly measure or observe these constructs, they have specific theoretical and empirical relevance.

The process of defining or developing a construct is called operationalisation. To define it operationally, one must first determine which types of behaviour constitute juvenile delinquency according to experts' theories. The next step is assigning meaning to the scores generated by a measurement procedure, which is the most important task in developing a psychological measurement (e.g., achievement tests, interest inventories, or personality scales). This process, commonly referred to as construct validation, involves a series of methods and procedures to assess the extent to which a test measures a trait or theoretical construct (Cronbach, 1971; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Messick, 1980).

The measurement process aims to distinguish between the unknown positions along this dimension and, perhaps, to attempt to place them there. This is because the dimension in question cannot be directly observed or measured, unlike body weight. Therefore, surveying juvenile delinquency requires an instrument that includes indicators capable of providing a comprehensive and valid picture of juvenile delinquency. This measurement can provide counsellors with insights to guide their counselling efforts, helping to prevent more serious behaviours and serving as a reference for educational evaluations. In addition, the purpose of counselling students who exhibit disruptive behaviour is to promote their mental health and psychological well-being and to help them optimise their career prospects.

This study aims to develop and validate a juvenile delinquency assessment instrument for high school students. The instrument is intended to assist school counsellors in accurately identifying delinquent behaviours and to provide valid baseline data for planning appropriate counselling services and intervention programs.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design. The development of the research instrument adopted a systematic measurement framework combining theoretical and psychometric approaches. The primary

objective of this study was to develop a juvenile delinquency assessment instrument that measures four aspects of delinquent behaviour: theft and vandalism, interpersonal aggression, school delinquency, and substance abuse (Hirschi, 2017).

## 2.2 Participants

The study population consisted of high school students in Cimahi City, Indonesia. The sampling technique used was random sampling. The final sample comprised 324 students from six senior high schools, including 219 males and 105 females.

## 2.3 Data Collection

The instrument development process followed a systematic questionnaire development framework that integrates theoretical and psychometric approaches to scale construction (DeVellis, 2003; Wilson, 2003). The instrument was designed in the form of a self-report questionnaire intended to identify various forms of juvenile delinquency among adolescents. The questionnaire items were developed based on four dimensions of juvenile delinquency: (1) theft and vandalism, (2) interpersonal aggression, (3) school-related delinquency, and (4) substance abuse. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of their behaviours using a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to very often.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using both validity and reliability testing procedures. Construct validity was examined through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using the LISREL 8.80 program. CFA was used to evaluate the measurement model and the relationships between the instrument items and the latent constructs (Byrne, 1998). In addition, item validity was analysed using Pearson's correlation test with IBM SPSS Statistics 22 for Windows. The instrument items were considered valid when the significance value was less than 0.05. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the instrument (Cronbach, 1951). Furthermore, item evaluation procedures included fit analysis using INFIT and OUTFIT mean-square statistics, item-person separation indices, and construct validity analysis using the ConQuest computer program (Wright & Masters, 1982).

# 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Results

The juvenile delinquency instrument is a questionnaire containing statements that describe juvenile delinquency, that is, actions that result in punishment for the perpetrator, such as theft and vandalism, interpersonal aggression, school delinquency, and problems with parents (Hirschi, T., 2017). Based on the results of the instrument development, the delinquency addressed in this study refers to delinquency committed by adolescents at the high school level, encompassing four aspects: (1) theft and vandalism, (2) interpersonal aggression, (3) school-related delinquency, and (4) substance abuse. The instrument consists of 18 items.

On this scale, respondents are asked to select one of five possible answers that best reflect their situation: never, rarely, sometimes, often, or very often. Additionally, the instrument includes an explanation of the scale: "never" means never having committed an offense; "rarely" means having committed an offense 1–2 times; "sometimes" means having committed an offense 3–4 times; "often" means having committed an offense 5–6 times; and "very often" means having committed an offense 7 times or more.

To measure juvenile delinquency, the validity of the measurement tool must be ensured. A valid instrument can be used to measure what it is intended to measure. The validity measures used were a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the LISREL 8.80 program to assess construct validity and Pearson's correlation analysis in IBM SPSS Statistics 22 for Windows. The CFA test was conducted to identify the appropriate model that explains the relationship between the items and the construct they measure (Byrne, 1998). The following are the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test:

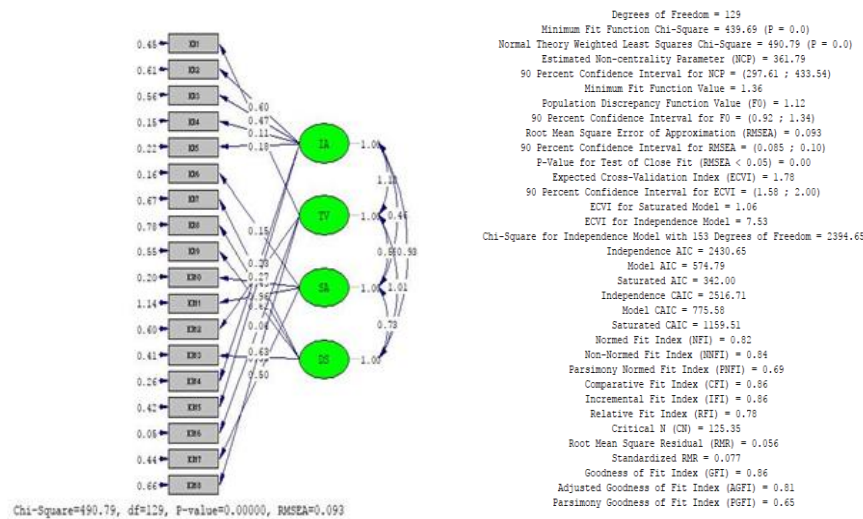


Figure 1. Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

According to Hooper et al. (2008), a measurement instrument can be considered a good fit if the P-value is greater than 0.50; the RMSEA is less than 0.08; the GFI is greater than 0.90; the SRMR (Standardised RMR) is less than 0.08; the NFI is greater than 0.90; and the CFI is greater than 0.90. Thus, the measurement results in Figure 1 indicate that this instrument meets the SRMR criteria for a well-fitting, valid instrument, with an SRMR value of 0.077. Next, a Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess the relationship between each item score and the total score.

If the significance value (Sig. (2-tailed)) < 0.05, then the instrument is valid.

If the significance value (Sig. (2-tailed)) > 0.05, then the instrument is invalid.

Based on the Pearson correlation test results, each item in this instrument has a significance level of < 0.05; therefore, the instrument can be deemed valid. The next step is to test the instrument’s reliability. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test result for the juvenile delinquency instrument is 0.806, which falls within the “Highly Reliable” reliability category. The following is the distribution of items in the juvenile delinquency instrument that have undergone validity and reliability testing:

Table 1. Distribution of items in the juvenile delinquency instrument

No	Question Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	I took money without the owner’s permission.					
2	I made fun of others.					
3	I have physically hurt someone.					
4	I have committed sexual harassment, either verbal or physical.					
5	I have forced a friend to give me money.					
6	I have tried using illegal drugs.					
7	I have skipped school.					
8	I have been late for school.					
9	I cheated on a test.					
10	I drink alcohol.					
11	I smoke.					
12	I have scribbled on classroom desks or walls.					
13	I have argued with a teacher.					
14	I have been involved in a fight between schools.					
15	I have written negative comments on social media to scare, anger, or embarrass others.					
16	I have taken valuable items without the owner’s permission (e.g., cell phones, flash drives, laptops, etc.)					

No	Question Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
17	I vape.					
18	I have taken school supplies without the owner’s permission (e.g., pens, notebooks)					

Based on the distribution of items in the table above, the following is the distribution of the number of items by aspect of juvenile delinquency:

Table 2. Distribution of the number of juvenile delinquency items

Variable	Aspect	Item Distribution
Juvenile delinquency	theft and vandalism	1, 12, 16, 18
	interpersonal aggression	2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15
	school misbehavior	7, 8, 9, 13
	substance abuse	6, 10, 11, 17

Based on the overall process of content validity, construct validity, and reliability, evidence can be provided that the instrument can be used to measure adolescent delinquency. Measuring delinquency allows for the identification and description of behavioural factors that contribute to it, as well as its extent. Consequently, when conducting counselling, the counsellor can determine which aspects require immediate intervention and which require preventive measures to prevent the delinquency from worsening.

### 3.2 Discussion

The juvenile delinquency instrument developed in this study is an effort to identify various types of juvenile delinquency across the following dimensions: (1) theft and vandalism, (2) interpersonal aggression, (3) school delinquency, and (4) substance abuse. These dimensions are based on Wiatrowski’s (1980) theory of juvenile delinquency. It was then developed into an 18-item questionnaire, aimed at providing an overview of juvenile delinquency and, through the results, offering insights to teachers who will play a role in its prevention and management. This instrument serves as a measurement tool that meets the SRMR criteria for reliability and validity (SRMR = 0.077). Based on the Pearson correlation test results, each item in the instrument has a significance level of <0.05, indicating that the instrument is valid. Furthermore, the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for the juvenile delinquency instrument is 0.806, which indicates a very high level of reliability.

Valid and reliable instruments for assessing juvenile delinquency are crucial for helping counsellors deliver counselling services to students. In the process of providing counseling services, counselors must also have a solid understanding of how to address juvenile delinquency, including the following: (1) counselors must establish non-judgmental communication to create a safe space for students to share their stories; (2) Counselors build trust with students so that every story they share remains confidential and the students’ self-esteem is preserved; (3) Counselors do not apply negative labels to students who have engaged in various forms of misconduct; and (4) Counselors need to uphold restorative justice policies aimed at facilitating dialogue between victims and perpetrators (Rosita et al., 2025).

In cases of juvenile delinquency at school, both the victim and the perpetrator need to receive counselling support to address the issue. Counsellors also need to work to prevent the perpetrator from engaging in delinquent behaviour, thereby minimising the recurrence of such incidents. Waitrowski et al. (1982) examined the prevention of juvenile delinquency within a theory of “Social Control and Juvenile Delinquency”. This theory explores how social control, which includes social bonds, relates to juvenile delinquency. Thus, based on Wiatrowski’s research, strong social bonds can help prevent juvenile delinquency. This study is also consistent with Hirschi’s (2017) research, which found that juvenile delinquency tends not to occur when individuals have strong social bonds and commitments. Thus, Hirschi’s theory emphasises four key components: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Strong attachments, particularly to family and school, along with involvement in conventional activities and a belief in the moral validity of the law, can prevent juvenile delinquency.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, research by Stein et al. (1993) indicates that environmental stressors can compound adolescents’ intrinsic vulnerability to engaging in certain delinquent behaviours. Adolescents who are susceptible to peer influence in engaging in delinquency may increase the frequency of delinquent behaviour. Warr, Mark (2002) found that during adolescence, individuals are increasingly exposed to delinquent behaviour by peers. This influence peaks during mid-to-late adolescence and then declines dramatically

as individuals transition from adolescence into young adulthood (Warr Mark, 2002; Elliott & Menard, 1996). Based on this, it follows that, psychologically speaking, peer groups during adolescence can serve as behavioural models for others. This is consistent with learning theories that suggest that communication, modelling, imitation, and reinforcement of delinquent attitudes and behaviours occur only within close-knit social groups. Therefore, teachers' prevention efforts are of the utmost importance.

#### **4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

The development of a juvenile delinquency assessment instrument has important implications for school guidance and counselling services. The instrument can assist counsellors in conducting early identification of students who exhibit tendencies toward delinquent behaviour, enabling counsellors to understand students' behavioural conditions more comprehensively. Through systematic assessment, counsellors can identify students' psychological, social, emotional, and behavioural needs, both individually and collectively, to determine more appropriate counselling interventions. In addition, the assessment results may serve as baseline data for designing preventive and intervention programs tailored to students' needs. The availability of a contextually relevant assessment tool also strengthens the implementation of evidence-based counselling practices in schools. Therefore, counsellors are not only able to respond to students' behavioural problems more effectively but can also develop collaborative interventions involving teachers and parents to prevent delinquent behaviour from developing into more serious problems.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The development of the juvenile delinquency assessment instrument in this study was intended to assist school counsellors in identifying various forms of delinquent behaviour among high school students. The findings revealed that the instrument consists of four dimensions of juvenile delinquency, namely theft and vandalism, interpersonal aggression, school-related delinquency, and substance abuse. The instrument contains 18 items that have demonstrated satisfactory construct validity and high reliability, as evidenced by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Pearson correlation analyses, and Cronbach's Alpha testing. Therefore, the instrument can be used as a valid and reliable tool for assessing juvenile delinquency in school settings.

The findings also indicate that juvenile delinquency among adolescents is influenced by various behavioural and social factors reflected in the identified dimensions of delinquency. The inclusion of behaviours such as cyberbullying and vaping strengthens the contextual relevance of the instrument to current adolescent conditions. In addition, the findings support previous theories emphasising the importance of social control, peer influence, and environmental factors in adolescent delinquent behaviour. Consequently, the instrument provides a comprehensive description of adolescent delinquency that can support more accurate behavioural assessment in schools.

This instrument has significant implications for school guidance and counselling services. Using this assessment tool, counsellors can identify students' behavioural problems earlier and determine appropriate counselling interventions based on each student's specific needs. The assessment results may also support preventive efforts, behavioural guidance programs, and collaboration among counsellors, teachers, and parents to address juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of assessment instruments in guidance and counselling and may serve as a reference for future research on adolescent delinquency assessment and intervention.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The author was responsible for the entire research process, including conceptualising the study, developing the instrument, collecting and analysing the data, interpreting the findings, and preparing the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author declares that there are no competing interests related to the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could influence the results or interpretation of the study.

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