
Divergence In Adolescent Criminal Behavior From The Perspective Of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model And Teachers' Interpretations: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Juvenile delinquency is a complex social phenomenon triggered by the dynamics of multidimensional interaction between psychological factors, the social environment, and the cultural value order. This literature review article aims to describe the conceptual framework of juvenile criminal behavior, synthesize criminological and developmental psychology perspectives, and analyze the relevance of Bronfenbrenner's System Ecological Theory in describing the role of teachers as protective agents in schools. The results of the study show that adolescent criminal behavior is constructed not only by the failure of individual emotional regulation (person), but also by interaction dysfunction at the microsystem level (family, peers, school), mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem (local cultural norms), and chronosystem (development of digital technology). Teachers occupy strategic positions in ecological systems to detect early, prevent, and strengthen adolescents' social bonds. This study provides important implications for the development of character-based curriculum and holistic synergy of adolescent mentoring.

Keywords: *Juvenile Criminal Behavior, Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory, Teacher's Perspective, Criminology, Literature Review.*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a phase of cognitive, emotional, and social transition that is colored by the search for self-identity. In this phase, immaturity of emotional regulation that interacts with environmental pressures often triggers the emergence of behavioral deviations. Juvenile criminal behavior, ranging from acts of physical violence, theft, to addictive substance abuse. It is not only a form of formal law violation, but an indicator of dysfunction in the social system in which adolescents grow up.

To fully understand the complexity of this phenomenon, a monodisciplinary approach is often inadequate. The synthesis between the perspectives of criminology, developmental psychology, and socio-ecological systems is crucial. Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Systems offers a comprehensive framework for tracking how the stratified order of interactions from family upbringing to the macro value of buday shapes individual behavior patterns. In the midst of this ecological order, teachers in schools play a central role as direct observers as well as agents of social-emotional intervention. This article aims to present an in-depth review of the literature related to the manifestations of adolescent criminal behavior, the ecological dynamics that influence it, and the urgency of teachers' perspectives in prevention schemes.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a systematic narrative review approach to reputable scientific literature. Source search was conducted through academic databases (such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, ResearchGate, and Institutional Repositories) with combination keywords: juvenile delinquency, Bronfenbrenner ecological theory, teacher perspective, peer pressure, and cultural social control. The inclusion criteria include scientific journal

articles, reference textbooks, and research documents that contain criminological analysis, developmental psychology, and the application of ecological theory in juvenile delinquency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptualization of Juvenile Criminal Behavior

Juvenile delinquency is defined as acts that deviate from social norms and criminal law committed by individuals in the age range of adolescence. The form of manifestation is categorized into two main groups, namely Formal Law Violations (Crime), which include acts with criminal implications such as theft, persecution, vandalism, and narcotics abuse, and Status Offenses, which refer to deviant behavior tied to age restrictions, such as skipping school, running away from home, or consuming alcohol. The etiology of juvenile delinquency is triggered by a major two-dimensional interaction, consisting of the Internal Dimension and External Dimensions. The Internal Dimension involves immaturity of the prefrontal cortex area responsible for executive function, triggering high impulsivity, risk-taking behavior, and low self-control skills. Meanwhile, the External Dimensions include lack of secure attachment in the family, permissive-neglected parenting patterns, and conformity pressure from peer groups (Puspita et al., 2024; Asnuddin and Haryono, 2020).

Integration of Criminology and Psychology Perspectives

An explanation of the determinants of juvenile criminal behavior requires a cross-disciplinary synthesis. Anomi/Strain Theory (Robert Merton) explains that delinquency arises from the gap between cultural goals and limited legitimate means. This social unrest triggers adolescents to choose deviant adaptation. Social Control Theory (Travis Hirschi) holds that an individual's disattachment to social institutions (family, school) breaks down social bonds (affection, commitment, involvement, and trust), thus encouraging criminal acts. Differential Association Theory (Edwin Sutherland) asserts that criminal behavior is the result of learned behavior from close interactions with groups that adopt anti-social values. Psychosocial Theory (Erik Erikson) identifies adolescence in the Identity vs. Role Confusion crisis. Failure to navigate roles triggers an identity crisis that is often expressed through acts of defiance.

Framework for Analysis of the Ecological Theory of the Bronfenbrenner System (PPCT Model)

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecological Theory describes individual development through the PPCT (Process, Person, Context, Time) Model (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). The environment of adolescent growth and development is divided into five intersecting systemic orders. Microsystems refers to the direct environment (family, classroom, peer group) (Fitriani and Hastuti, 2017; Puspita et al., 2024). Family communication patterns and the climate of interaction in the classroom are the main driving factors for students' social behavior. Mesosystems refer to reciprocal relationships between microsystems, such as collaboration or misalignment between parents and school teachers (Coronel, 2024; Liu and Zhang, 2023). Ecosystem refers to an environment in which adolescents are not directly involved, but whose decisions have an impact on them (e.g.: curriculum policies, parental workload, area public facilities) (Adillah et al., 2024; Rulmuzu, 2021). Macrosystem refers to local wisdom values, culture, legal norms, and community ideologies that determine the tolerance limit of deviant behavior (Suwarni and Selviana, 2015; Mahmudah et al., 2016). Chronosystem refers to the dimension of time, including the impact of the era of digital transformation and social media on changes in adolescent moral behavior standards.

Relevance and Role of Teachers in Ecological Systems

In the framework of ecology, teachers occupy important nodes in the school microsystem and the family-school communication mesosystem.

Table 1. Matrix of Teacher Roles Based on the Order of the Bronfenbrenner Ecological System

Ecological Order	Sphere of Influence	Forms of Teacher Intervention Roles
Microsystem	Classrooms and Schools	Become role models, build an inclusive classroom climate, design Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) learning, and early detection of behavioral deviations (Ngo, 2021; Hoferichter et al., 2021).
Mesosistem	School–Family Relations	Build communication networks with parents/guardians, harmonize child mentoring patterns, and facilitate joint counseling (BK) (Coronel, 2024; Xiong et al., 2025).
Exosystem	School Institution	Propose humanist school discipline, design extra-curricular activities to accommodate adolescents' interests, and prevent bullying practices (anti-bullying) (Shek et al., 2022).
Macrosistem	Cultural and Moral Transmission	Transforming local wisdom and moral norms into students' character to fortify from the influence of the deviant subculture (Suwarni and Selviana, 2015).
Chronosystem	Temporal Changes and Life Transitions	Monitor changes in students' behavior over time, recognize the impact of major life events such as parental divorce or residential changes, provide adaptive emotional support during developmental transitions, and guide students in navigating changes associated with digital technology and social interactions (Zubaidillah, 2020; Istima et al., 2023; Sunarti et al., 2017, 2018).

Synthesis of Previous Research and Novelty of Studies (Research Gap)

A literature review of various global and local study results shows the following mapping:

Table 2. Mapping Matrix of Past Research Findings

Researcher and Year	Key Focus	Key Findings
Fitriani and Hastuti (2017); Rosdarni et al. (2015)	Family Attachment and Parenting Patterns	Insecure attachment with parents correlated positively with an increase in adolescent behavioral deviation.
Puspita et al. (2024); Asnuddin and Haryono (2020)	Peer Group Influence	Negative conformity towards peers triggers the adoption of deviant norms and acts of mass violence.
Suwarni and Selviana (2015); Mahmudah et al. (2016)	Cultural Factors and Community Norms	The transmission of cultural values and social control of society effectively restrain the impulse of delinquency.
Xiong et al. (2025); Hoferichter et al. (2021)	Integrated Support for Teachers and Parents	The synergy of support in the microsystem and the mesosystem significantly reduces the rate of juvenile delinquency tendencies.

Novelty:

Most of the previous literature placed adolescents solely as subjects/objects of suffering or used partial quantitative variables. The novelty of this study focuses on the qualitative meaning of teachers as educator agents who experience and directly observe the ecological dynamics of students. Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, the meaning of teachers is able to connect the relationship between family dysfunction, peer pressure, and the influence of local cultural norms in one integrated analytical framework.

CONCLUSION

Criminal behavior in adolescents is the result of systemic dysfunction involving the individual's internal cognitive factors and the fragility of social bonds in the surrounding environment. Through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's System Ecological Theory, juvenile delinquency is shown to be influenced by the simultaneous dynamics between microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems. Teachers occupy a central position in this ecological order to act as a protective fortress through early detection, character strengthening, and the formation of communication synergy with parents.

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