

PEER COUNSELING FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AMONG MEMBERS OF THE "MEKAR JAYA" YOUTH ORGANIZATION, TRAYEMAN VILLAGE, SLAWI DISTRICT, TEGAL REGENCY

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Abstract

This research was motivated by the prevalence of juvenile delinquency in rural environments, such as staying up late without a clear purpose, impolite language, wild street racing, alcohol consumption, and online gambling. This study aimed to: (1) describe the level of juvenile delinquency before the implementation of peer counseling, (2) describe the level of juvenile delinquency after the implementation of peer counseling, and (3) examine the effectiveness of peer counseling in reducing juvenile delinquency among members of the "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization in Trayeman Village, Slawi District, Tegal Regency. This study employed a quantitative experimental method with a Pre-Experimental Design using a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The research population comprised all 39 members of the "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization. The sample consisted of 15 members selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the criteria of exhibiting moderate to high levels of juvenile delinquency. The intervention was delivered in 6 sessions by 3 selected peer counselors who had undergone selection and basic peer counseling training. Data were collected using a 4-point Likert scale juvenile delinquency questionnaire (42 valid items, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.982) supported by observation sheets and documentation. Data analysis techniques included descriptive percentage analysis, Shapiro-Wilk normality test, and Paired Sample T-Test hypothesis testing using SPSS software. The results showed that: (1) the level of juvenile delinquency before (pre-test) receiving peer counseling was in the moderate category with an average score of 127.67 (73.3% moderate, 20% high, 6.7% low); (2) the level of juvenile delinquency after (post-test) receiving peer counselling decreased, with an average score of 111.80 (80% moderate, 13.3% low, 6.7% high); and (3) there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores with an average reduction of 15.87 points. The Paired Sample T-Test results indicated $t_{count} > t_{table}$ and a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05 , thereby accepting H_a and rejecting H_0 . Thus, it can be concluded that peer counseling is effective in reducing juvenile delinquency among members of the "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization in Trayeman Village, Slawi District, Tegal Regency.

Keywords: Peer Counseling; Juvenile Delinquency; Youth Organization;

1 INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains one of the serious social issues across various layers of society. Juvenile delinquency is defined as deviant behavior carried out by adolescents that can harm themselves or others, and contradicts religious values, social norms, and legal provisions, thereby potentially disrupting public order and tranquility (Susanti & Suryadi, 2024). Various forms of juvenile delinquency, such as social media addiction, free association, substance abuse, and involvement in brawls, show an increasing trend over time (Maesyaroh et al., 2025). Along with modern developments, the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency is no longer limited to urban areas but has expanded into rural environments. The development of information technology and easy internet access in rural areas has driven a shift in the nature of juvenile delinquency. While previously juvenile delinquency was predominantly physical and conventional, it has now evolved toward social-digital behaviors, such as cyberbullying and negative content consumption. This shift is influenced by a surge of information that is not balanced by adequate digital literacy skills among adolescents (Putri et al., 2025)). The emergence of juvenile delinquency is influenced by various factors, including family conditions, social environments, peer association, mental health, and media influence (Wahyuni & Nurfi Laili, 2025). Therefore, the social environment where adolescents interact plays a highly strategic role in efforts to prevent and address juvenile delinquency. A positive and supportive environment helps adolescents develop adaptive behavior. One such environment is village-level youth organizations, such as Karang Taruna.

Karang Taruna plays an important role in nurturing and developing youth potential through various constructive activities, such as social work, sports, arts, and other productive endeavors (Syukuri et al., 2024). Furthermore, Karang Taruna functions as social capital in community-based youth character building. This aligns with the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions Development, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2019, which emphasizes optimizing Karang Taruna's role in youth empowerment and the prevention of youth social issues (Tafsir et al., 2025). The "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization in Trayeman Village is one of the youth organizations under the village government that actively participates in community social activities. Its members come from diverse backgrounds, ranging from middle/high school students and university students to employed youth. However, based on initial observations and interviews with the Vice Chairman of "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization, instances of juvenile delinquency were still found among its members. The forms of delinquency varied from minor categories—such as staying out late without a clear purpose and using impolite language—to severe categories such as involvement in online gambling, alcohol consumption, visiting nightlife venues, and participating in wild street racing. The interview results revealed that juvenile delinquency among youth organization members is not a new phenomenon, but rather an ingrained problem. Previous handling efforts were informal, consisting of direct guidance from the chairman, while formal counseling services had never been conducted. On the other hand, youth organization members tend to be more open and comfortable sharing their problems with peers than with older authority figures. This interpersonal interaction among youth actually has the potential to be developed into peer counseling services.

Peer counseling is a form of assistance provided by an individual to another through interpersonal interaction, leveraging their close relationship as peers (Romiaty et al., 2022). Numerous studies indicate that peer counseling is effective in addressing various adolescent issues, such as improving self-adjustment (Mauludah & Mohamat Hadori, 2025) and reducing negative behaviors like aggressiveness and norm violations (Romiaty et al., 2022). This theoretical foundation is supported by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Agustini et al., 2023), which posits that behavioral development is influenced by observing and imitating role models, including peers. (Salsabila et al., 2025), also found that the social environment significantly correlates with juvenile delinquency ($r = 0.556$). Nonetheless, studies on the application of peer counseling remain dominated by formal educational contexts and urban areas, while research in the context of village youth organizations is still very limited (Wulandari & Noviyanti, 2025). Based on this research gap, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of peer counseling in reducing juvenile delinquency levels among members of the "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization in Trayeman Village, Slawi District, Tegal Regency.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative experimental approach. The research design applied was a Pre-Experimental Design with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. In this design, outcomes are evaluated by comparing conditions before intervention (pre-test) and after intervention (post-test) within a single sample group. The population in this study comprised all 39 active members of the "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization, Trayeman Village, Slawi District, Tegal Regency for the 2025–2030 period (26 males and 13 females). The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) active members of Karang Taruna, (2) aged 13–24 years, (3) having moderate to high juvenile delinquency scores based on the pre-test, and (4) willing to participate in all intervention stages. Based on these criteria, a sample of 15 members was selected.

The selection of peer counselors was carried out in two stages: nomination by the Vice Chairman of Karang Taruna and screening using a peer counselor readiness questionnaire (21 items). Based on the selection results, 3 peer counselors with the highest scores meeting the eligibility threshold ($\geq 51\%$) were appointed. Prior to intervention implementation, the 3 peer counselors underwent basic peer counseling training for 2 sessions (total 90 minutes), covering lectures, discussions, and role-plays regarding counseling principles, active listening, empathy, as well as ethics and case referral procedures. The peer counseling intervention was carried out in 6 sessions over 3 weeks (2 sessions/week, 60–90 minutes per session) in Trayeman Village. The sessions included an initial phase (rapport building and contracting), a working phase (problem exploration, instilling impact awareness, exploring solutions, and adaptive behavior practice), and a termination phase (evaluation and commitment reinforcement).

The researcher monitored implementation quality using a structured observation sheet. Primary data collection was conducted using a 4-point Likert scale juvenile delinquency questionnaire (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) measuring 3 indicators: general delinquency, delinquency leading to violations, and special/severe delinquency. Instrument trial results (tryout) on 15 non-sample respondents

yielded 42 valid items out of 50 tested, with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.982 (very high category). Supporting data were gathered through observation and documentation. Data analysis techniques included percentage descriptive analysis to categorize juvenile delinquency levels (High, Moderate, Low), normality pre-test using Shapiro-Wilk (due to $n < 30$), and comparative hypothesis testing using Paired Sample T-Test at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level using SPSS software.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Level of Juvenile Delinquency Before Peer Counseling (Pre-Test)

Based on pre-test measurement results on the 15 sampled "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization members, the mean juvenile delinquency score was 127.67. The distribution of juvenile delinquency levels prior to intervention is presented in Table 1 below:

Category	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
High	$120 \leq$	3	20.0%
Moderate	$120 > - 136 <$	11	73.3%
Low	≥ 136	1	6.7%

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Pre-Test Juvenile Delinquency Levels

Pre-test data indicates that the majority of research subjects (73.3%) fell into the moderate juvenile delinquency category, and 20.0% were in the high category. Dominant deviant behaviors identified prior to treatment included gathering late at night without clear aim, using harsh language, initial involvement in online gambling, and alcohol consumption.

3.2. Level of Juvenile Delinquency After Peer Counseling (Post-Test)

Following the 6-session peer counseling intervention, a post-test measurement was administered to the 15 sample subjects. The post-test results showed a decrease in the mean juvenile delinquency score to 111.80. The distribution of juvenile delinquency categories post-intervention is presented in Table 2:

Category	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Category	$107 \leq$	1	6.7%
High	$107 > - 117 <$	12	80.0%
Moderate	$117 \geq$	2	13.3%

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Post-Test Juvenile Delinquency Levels

A positive shift occurred in respondents' juvenile delinquency levels. The percentage of members in the high category significantly decreased from 20.0% to 6.7%, while the low category increased from 6.7% to 13.3%. Overall, the average juvenile delinquency score decreased by 15.87 points (from 127.67 to 111.80).

3.3. Peer Counseling Effectiveness Test (Hypothesis Testing)

Prior to hypothesis testing, pre-test and post-test data were tested for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test (since $n = 15$). Normality test results yielded a significance value (Sig.) of 0.712 for pre-test data and 0.654 for post-test data. Because $\text{Sig.} > 0.05$, it was concluded that the data were normally distributed, satisfying the prerequisite for parametric Paired Sample T-Test analysis. The comparative Paired Sample T-Test analysis results are shown in Table 3 below:

Measurement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t count	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test -	15	15.87	8.42	7.301	0.000

Post-test					
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Table 3. Results of Paired Samples Test Pre-Test and Post-Test

Based on statistical testing, a t count of 7.301 was obtained with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000. Since the significance value (0.000) < 0.05 and t count (7.301) > t table (2.145 at df = 14, $\alpha = 0.05$), the Null Hypothesis (H₀) was rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. This empirically proves that peer counseling intervention significantly reduces juvenile delinquency among members of "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization in Trayeman Village.

3.4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that community-based peer counseling is effective in reducing juvenile delinquency tendencies. The mean delinquency score reduction of 15.87 points indicates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes in members after attending 6 peer counseling sessions. The success of the peer counseling intervention in this study was influenced by the egalitarian nature of peer relationships. Adolescents tend to feel more comfortable, open, and unjudged when sharing personal issues with fellow Youth Organization members compared to adults or formal authority figures. This aligns with Carl Rogers' humanistic perspective (Romdhoni & Tristiadi Ardi Ardani, 2026) and Tindall & Gray (1985), who emphasized that a counseling atmosphere filled with empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness acts as a primary catalyst for behavioral change.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Agustini et al., 2023). In the peer counseling process, positively behaving peer counselors serve as role models observed and imitated by helpees. Reflective discussions during intervention sessions encouraged members to evaluate the negative consequences of deviant behavior (such as online gambling, alcohol, and wild racing) and adopt more adaptive coping strategies. This finding also supports (Salsabila et al., 2025), who asserted that restructuring the peer social environment significantly reduces juvenile delinquency.

Furthermore, these results expand the applicability of peer counseling, which has mostly been investigated in formal school settings (Mauludah & Hadori, 2025; Romiaty et al., 2022). Applying peer counseling within Karang Taruna proves successful in utilizing the social capital of rural youth as agents of social change. This approach aligns with Permendes PDTT No. 18 of 2019 in optimizing Karang Taruna's role for community-based youth character building in rural areas (Tafsir et al., 2025).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and discussion, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The level of juvenile delinquency among members of "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization in Trayeman Village before (pre-test) peer counseling implementation was in the moderate category with a mean score of 127.67 (73.3% moderate, 20.0% high, and 6.7% low).

2. The level of juvenile delinquency after (post-test) peer counseling implementation

decreased with a mean score of 111.80 (80.0% moderate, 13.3% low, and 6.7% high), representing an average decrease of 15.87 points.

3. Peer counseling services proved effective in reducing juvenile delinquency levels among

members of "Mekar Jaya" Youth Organization, Trayeman Village, Slawi District, Tegal Regency, as shown by Paired Sample T-Test results with t count (7.301) > t table (2.145) and a significance value (0.000) < 0.05.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. For Youth Organization Leadership: It is expected to institutionalize peer counseling as

a routine organizational program and continually train peer counselor cadres to foster a supportive and adaptive organizational climate.

2. For Trayeman Village Government: It is recommended to provide policy support and

budget facilitation for community-based youth mental health programs utilizing peer counseling at the village level.

3. For Future Researchers: It is suggested to expand the population scope, include a control group (true experimental design), and evaluate the long-term impact (follow-up test) of peer counseling interventions in rural youth communities.

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