



## **Digital Era as a New Challenge: The Role of Schools in Preventing Juvenile Delinquency at SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru**

**Neri Widya Ramailis\*<sup>1</sup>, Dini Tiara Sasmi<sup>2</sup>, Rio Sundari<sup>3</sup>, Yuda Setiawan<sup>4</sup>,  
Siti Rodiyatul Rohimah<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1,4,5</sup>Department of Criminology, Universitas Islam Riau

<sup>2,3</sup> Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Riau

\*) Corresponding Author

neriwidyaramailis@soc.uir.ac.id

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### **Abstract**

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly influenced adolescent behavior, including the emergence of various forms of misconduct in school settings. The increasing accessibility of the internet and social media has created new challenges in supervising student behavior. This study aims to analyze the role of schools in preventing juvenile delinquency in the digital era, with a focus on SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Data were collected through interviews with school personnel and observations of student discipline and the implementation of school regulations. The analysis focuses on identifying forms of student misconduct, examining the influence of digital technology on adolescent behavior, and analyzing the strategies schools implement to control student behavior. The results show that several forms of student misconduct still occur, including tardiness, truancy, inappropriate use of mobile phones, and disrespectful behavior toward teachers and peers. Social media and peer influence were also found to affect student behavior. To address these issues, the school implements various measures such as enforcing school regulations, monitoring gadget use, providing counseling services, and strengthening cooperation between teachers and parents. The findings indicate that strengthening social bonds within the school environment plays an important role in preventing juvenile delinquency in the digital era.

**Keywords** : juvenile delinquency, digital era, student behavior, school supervision, social control

## Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, including adolescent behavior. As an age group susceptible to environmental influences, adolescents often face social pressures that lead to deviant behavior—commonly known as juvenile delinquency. This delinquency encompasses a range of actions, extending from violations of school norms to minor criminal offenses (Ngatini, 2025).

Such deviant behavior typically begins with violations of school discipline—conduct that contravenes the rules and norms of the educational environment. While school disciplinary infractions cannot always be classified as juvenile delinquency, repeated offenses that lack effective intervention have the potential to escalate into more serious forms of delinquent behavior (Rahmadani et al., 2023). In the digital age, juvenile delinquency has become increasingly complex due to unrestricted access to information, social media, and virtual communication channels that are not always positive (Nurhidayah, 2022).

The use of the internet, social media, instant messaging apps, online games, and various digital platforms offers significant benefits for students' learning processes, communication, and creative development. However, these technological advancements also present new challenges in the form of rising juvenile delinquency, which is no longer confined to the physical school environment but has extended into the digital realm. This evolution in digital technology has led to a greater diversity of delinquent behaviors, creating new challenges for schools regarding the supervision and guidance of students (Azahra & Prima, 2026).

Adolescents are in an age group characterized by the phase of identity seeking. At this developmental stage, they possess a strong sense of curiosity, tend to be influenced by peer groups, are easily swayed by social media trends, and have not yet fully developed mature self-control. These factors render adolescents vulnerable to both engaging in and falling victim to various forms of deviant behavior in the digital realm. This vulnerability is further heightened by the intensity of digital media usage, which facilitates easy interaction, information gathering, and the imitation of behaviors encountered in digital spaces (Azhar et al., 2021).

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency has transformed in the digital era. While deviant behavior previously manifested primarily as street brawls, truancy, smoking, or vandalism, new forms have now emerged—such as cyberbullying, the dissemination of hate speech and misinformation (hoaxes), social media misuse, online gambling, the sharing of indecent content, and violations of digital communication ethics (Fiftiyansyah & Ali, 2025). High-intensity social media usage is a key factor increasing the likelihood of such behaviors arising. Among these various forms of juvenile delinquency, cyberbullying warrants particular attention due to its potential impact on students' psychological well-being, social relationships, and learning processes.

The nature of juvenile delinquency within the school environment has also undergone a shift in characteristics. Many infractions no longer occur directly on school premises but are instead committed via digital media—such as creating anonymous accounts to insult peers or teachers, engaging in plagiarism using artificial intelligence (AI), circulating exam answers through social media groups, or engaging in cyberbullying. These forms of misconduct impact the learning climate, students' mental health, and the quality of social relationships within the

school. This situation indicates that schools must adapt their guidance and supervision strategies to effectively address the various forms of disciplinary infractions and juvenile delinquency in the digital era (Rahmadany et al., 2026).

Schools, as primary agents of socialization, play a crucial role in shaping adolescent behavior and preventing the emergence of deviant conduct. Through formal education, counseling, and supervision, schools are expected to instill positive social values in students. In this context, Hirschi's social control theory is highly relevant, as it emphasizes the importance of social bonds as a key factor in preventing deviant behavior (Rahayu, 2022). The application of this theory is increasingly vital in the digital age, given that strengthening the relationships among schools, teachers, and students can serve as a strategy to prevent various forms of juvenile delinquency, including cyberbullying and the misuse of social media.

In fulfilling this role, schools must remain grounded in the national educational philosophy that prioritizes the principle of *\*Tut Wuri Handayani\**, as articulated by Ki Hajar Dewantara. This concept emphasizes the importance of leading by example, empowerment, and providing adaptive guidance to students. The maxim—"leading by example from the front, fostering spirit from within, and providing encouragement from behind"—serves as a moral foundation for educators as they support adolescent development, including when addressing the challenges of delinquency in the digital age (Anany, 2010). Consequently, schools must create an environment that not only provides academic instruction but also strengthens students' character and morality, thereby embodying the *\*Tut Wuri Handayani\** values. Such efforts aim to cultivate students who are not only proficient in utilizing digital technology but also act responsibly and ethically in their digital interactions.

This study focuses on SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru, a public school that exemplifies the educational challenges of the digital era. The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency at this school is inextricably linked to urban social dynamics, advancements in information technology, and shifting patterns of adolescent interaction within the school environment (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). These conditions make SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru a relevant setting for examining how the school fulfills its role in preventing and addressing various forms of juvenile delinquency in the digital age. Consequently, it is crucial to analyze the school's role in regulating adolescent behavior, particularly in the face of massive digitalization challenges.

Based on the preceding discussion, the author is motivated to conduct research on the role of schools in addressing juvenile delinquency in the digital era, specifically at SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru. It is crucial to examine how educational institutions respond to the increasingly complex phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in this digital age. As formal educational institutions, schools serve not only as venues for knowledge transfer but also bear the responsibility of shaping students' character and regulating their social behavior. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the school's role in preventing juvenile delinquency—a new challenge in the digital era—with a specific focus on SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide insight into the efforts schools are making to address the various forms of juvenile delinquency that have emerged alongside advancements in digital technology.

Several previous studies have examined the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in the digital era from various perspectives. A 2018 study titled "The Role of Teachers and the School Community in Addressing the Influence of Social Media on Juvenile Delinquency at SMA Negeri 1 Mauponggo" found that social media usage influences the emergence of various

forms of juvenile delinquency, such as addiction to pornographic content, smoking, brawling, and cyberbullying (Sabarin & Djunaidi, 2019). The study also emphasized the importance of the roles played by teachers and the school environment in monitoring and guiding student behavior. However, this research focused primarily on the impact of social media on juvenile delinquency and did not detail specific strategies that schools could implement to prevent juvenile delinquency in the digital era.

Penelitian lain yang dilakukan oleh Rahmawati dan rekan-rekan pada tahun 2024 dengan judul "*Psikoedukasi Ketahanan Keluarga sebagai Solusi Penanganan Kenakalan Remaja di Era Digital*" menyoroti pentingnya peran keluarga dalam mencegah kenakalan remaja melalui program psikoedukasi yang bertujuan meningkatkan pemahaman orang tua mengenai karakteristik perkembangan remaja serta strategi pengelolaan perilaku remaja (Syam et al., 2024). Meskipun demikian, penelitian tersebut lebih menekankan pada peran keluarga, sedangkan penelitian ini berfokus pada peran sekolah sebagai institusi pendidikan dalam mencegah *juvenile delinquency* di era digital.

While various studies have made significant contributions to understanding the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in the digital era, research specifically focusing on the role of schools—as formal educational institutions—in preventing juvenile delinquency remains relatively limited. Furthermore, the role of schools in addressing digital-based forms of juvenile delinquency, such as cyberbullying and social media misuse, requires deeper investigation. Therefore, this study aims to further analyze the role of schools in preventing juvenile delinquency—viewed as a new challenge in the digital era—with a specific focus on SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru.

Based on this foundation, this study seeks to address a gap in previous research by focusing on evaluating the role of schools—as formal educational institutions—in addressing juvenile delinquency in the digital era. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of criminological studies, particularly regarding the role of schools in preventing and addressing juvenile delinquency in the digital age.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to examine how schools work to prevent juvenile delinquency in the digital era. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru, a school chosen because it faces challenges common to many schools today: rapid technological change and shifting patterns of adolescent social interaction. Given that the phenomenon under investigation is complex and highly context-specific, a qualitative approach was better suited to this study than quantitative measurement, which would likely miss much of this nuance. Sugiyono (2019) explains that qualitative research takes place in natural settings, where the researcher functions as the primary instrument for collecting data. In line with this, data for the present study were gathered through triangulation, analyzed inductively, and interpreted to draw out the meanings participants attributed to their experiences, rather than to generate statistical generalizations. Such a design is well suited to examining how schools exercise social control and foster character development as part of their broader response to juvenile delinquency in the digital era.

## Data Collection and Participants

Data were collected from key informants representing stakeholders directly involved in students' educational and social environments. The participants consisted of the vice principal for student affairs, one guidance and counseling (BK) teacher, one homeroom teacher, one school security officer, one school canteen attendant, six students (three male and three female), and parents of students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling because they possessed firsthand knowledge of the school's strategies for preventing and managing juvenile delinquency. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain rich, context-specific information from individuals most directly involved in students' daily academic and social lives while remaining feasible within the study's time and resource constraints. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data from these participants were triangulated throughout the analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Schools are fundamentally social institutions that play a crucial role in shaping the character and behavior of the younger generation. However, schools cannot operate in isolation, independent of the surrounding systems (Azzahra & Khasanah, 2025). In the delivery of education, schools function within a broader framework—the national education system—which is governed by the government through various policies and regulations. Policies regarding secondary education management, as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, designate the management of senior high schools (SMA) and vocational high schools (SMK) as the authority of provincial governments. This indicates that schools operate within a formal public bureaucratic structure responsible for managing educational governance and enforcing student disciplinary regulations.

At SMAN 14 Pekanbaru, educational activities extend beyond the mere transfer of academic knowledge, serving also as a space for social interaction among students, teachers, and school staff. Within these interactions, behavioral dynamics often arise that lead to rule violations. To understand these dynamics objectively, it is necessary to make a conceptual distinction between school disciplinary infractions and juvenile delinquency. Theoretically, Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt define juvenile delinquency as individual behavior that deviates from societal norms. Meanwhile, Walter C. Reckless explains that juvenile delinquency encompasses adolescent behavior that contravenes the law, social norms, or rules established by social institutions, including schools. In the context of formal education, school discipline functions as a mechanism for fostering character and compliance. Disciplinary infractions may be viewed as an early manifestation of juvenile delinquency if they are repeated, intentional, and disruptive to the educational process.

Based on research findings at SMAN 14 Pekanbaru, forms of student misconduct can be classified into four main categories:

1. Academic Disciplinary Violations: Arriving late to school, skipping classes, failing to complete assignments, and cheating.
2. Administrative Disciplinary Violations: Not wearing the prescribed uniform, failing to bring required school items, or violating administrative rules.
3. Social Disciplinary Violations: Causing a disturbance in class, fighting, using abusive language, and displaying disrespectful behavior toward teachers or peers.

4. Digital Disciplinary Violations (Digital Delinquency): Unauthorized use of mobile phones during class hours, misuse of social media, dissemination of negative content, and cyberbullying.

From the perspective of Erik Erikson's developmental psychology, adolescents are in the identity-seeking stage (Identity versus Role Confusion), a period characterized by a tendency to test the boundaries of rules. Consistent with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, such deviant behavior is acquired through observation and imitation. In the digital era, this process of imitation is no longer confined to the physical environment but is reinforced by exposure to social media and digital platforms.

Field findings substantiate this shift. Beyond conventional infractions such as tardiness and truancy, new forms of delinquency have emerged; for instance, students have been found bringing mobile phones to school and engaging in cyberbullying—behavior that causes victims to suffer from diminished self-confidence and social withdrawal. These cases demonstrate that the evolution of information technology has transformed the nature of juvenile delinquency from physical acts into digital behaviors with rapidly spreading consequences.

The increasing accessibility of digital devices has prompted SMAN 14 Pekanbaru to implement a specific policy regarding gadget supervision. The school has established a written rule prohibiting students from bringing and/or using mobile phones during class hours, unless instructed by a teacher for specific educational purposes. This rule is designed to maintain student focus and prevent distractions within the classroom.

Despite the established rule and its periodic communication to the student body, observations indicate that some students still secretly bring and use mobile phones. Students take advantage of lapses in supervision to access social media, play online games, or exchange messages while lessons are in progress. To enforce the rules and address these violations, the school employs a disciplinary enforcement mechanism based on a "Violation Point System." Each type of rule violation carries a specific point value, and sanctions are applied in a structured, progressive manner:

1. Minor Infractions: Students found using mobile phones without permission or arriving late to class will receive a verbal reprimand, an initial violation point entry in the student disciplinary log, and a warning from the subject teacher or homeroom teacher.
2. Moderate Infractions (Point Accumulation): If a student accumulates repeated violation points, the school will take firm action, including the temporary confiscation of the mobile phone and summoning the student's parents or guardians to the school to sign a written statement.
3. Serious Infractions / Corrective Measures: For high-point violations or those involving serious misconduct—such as cyberbullying or the dissemination of harmful content—students will be referred to the Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher for intensive guidance and may face suspension, in accordance with the point accumulation thresholds outlined in the code of conduct.

The enforcement of this point-based sanction system serves as a formal instrument of social control used by the school to maintain order and act as a deterrent.

Addressing juvenile delinquency and disciplinary infractions at SMAN 14 Pekanbaru involves the synergy of various school stakeholders through three primary approaches: preventive, repressive, and curative.

**Table 1. School Control Strategies**

| School Control Strategies |              |                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.                        | Preventive : | Character building, dissemination of rules and regulations, Civics education (PPKn)  |
| 2.                        | Repressive : | Enforcement of the demerit point system, mobile phone inspections, summoning parents |
| 3.                        | Curative :   | Individual guidance and counseling, perpetrator-victim mediation                     |

1. Role of the School Principal and Preventive Measures:

The school principal acts as the top policymaker, formulating disciplinary rules and guiding the creation of a conducive school climate. Preventive measures are implemented through character building, the reinforcement of moral values, and the dissemination of school regulations. However, evaluations indicate that this preventive function is not yet fully optimal, as the digital literacy curriculum and social media ethics education remain largely theoretical and lack sustained integration.

2. Role of the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs and Repressive Measures:

The Deputy Principal for Student Affairs is responsible for enforcing regulations, conducting checks to regulate gadget usage, and tracking the accumulation of disciplinary points against students. While these repressive measures are effective in maintaining order within the physical school environment, they face challenges in detecting anonymous digital violations.

3. Roles of Guidance Counselors and Homeroom Teachers, and Curative Measures:

Guidance counselors and homeroom teachers play a central role in curative measures. In instances of misconduct or cyberbullying, guidance counselors employ a personal approach involving individual counseling, mediation between the victim and the perpetrator, and parent consultations. Homeroom teachers are responsible for monitoring students' daily progress within the classroom. However, these curative measures remain reactive—implemented only after an incident has occurred—because the school lacks specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for reporting and handling cases of digital misconduct.

An analysis of the research findings reveals a significant reality: despite the school having established rules prohibiting mobile phone use and implementing a demerit point system, violations continue to occur among students.

This phenomenon indicates the existence of limits to the school's institutional authority:

- 1) Within the School Environment: The school possesses the formal legal authority, supervisory rights, and full mandate to enforce rules and impose point-based sanctions while students are on school premises and during school hours.
- 2) Outside the School Environment: When students are outside of school hours or interacting in digital spaces—whether at home or within the community—such activities fall outside the school's formal authority and scope of supervision.

**Table 2. Institutional Jurisdictional Limits**

| Institutional Jurisdictional Limits     |                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| On School Premises / During Class Hours | --> School's Formal Authority (Point-based Sanctions) |
| Off School Premises / Digital Space     | --> Outside School's Authority (Parents)              |

Cyberbullying incidents involving students typically occur outside of school hours. Although the consequences—such as the victim's mental decline—carry over into the classroom, schools lack both the capacity and the legal authority to monitor students' personal social media accounts around the clock.

This underscores the fact that schools cannot act alone in addressing juvenile delinquency in the digital era. Supervision outside the school environment falls entirely within the purview and responsibility of parents and families. Consequently, a shift from a school-centric approach to a collaborative one is required. Schools need to establish regular, two-way communication with parents through digital parenting programs so that the supervision of gadget usage at home aligns with school disciplinary rules.

To explain the successes and challenges regarding the enforcement of discipline at SMAN 14 Pekanbaru, research findings were analyzed using Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory. Hirschi posits that juvenile delinquency occurs when an individual's social bonds to their social environment weaken. The four dimensions of these social bonds are interpreted within the digital context as follows:

**Table 3. Analysis of Hirschi's Four Dimensions of Social Bonds at SMAN 14 Pekanbaru**

| Dimension                        | Social Bonds Manifestations in the School Environment                                                        | Evaluation and Challenges in the Digital Era                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attachment (Emotional Closeness) | Communicative relationships between students and their teachers, homeroom teachers, and guidance counselors. | Strong closeness prevents students from engaging in actions that would disappoint their teachers. However, high levels of uncontrolled interaction in online groups can weaken this physical-world emotional bond. |
| Commitment (Academic Commitment) | A student's investment in their aspirations, academic                                                        | Awareness of the risk of penalty points encourages                                                                                                                                                                 |

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|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                       | achievement, and reputation.                                                                                                                                        | students to comply with rules. Conversely, low commitment leads students to disregard the accumulation of violation points.                                            |
| Involvement<br>(Activity Involvement) | Active participation in the teaching-learning process, the Student Council (OSIS), extracurriculars, and school activities.                                         | Engagement in positive activities limits students' free time. A lack of school-based physical activity results in free time being consumed by unproductive gadget use. |
| Belief<br>(Belief in Norms)           | Students' acceptance of and respect for rules of conduct and moral values. Belief in norms is strengthened when the point-based sanction system is enforced fairly. | A lack of digital ethics education leads students to view cyberbullying as merely "joking."                                                                            |

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*Source: Research data processing (2026).*

Overall, an analysis based on Social Control Theory indicates that the enforcement of the demerit point system and mobile phone monitoring at SMAN 14 Pekanbaru is essentially an effort to strengthen students' social bonds. However, given the school's limited authority beyond its physical premises, reinforcing these social bonds requires not only the efforts of teachers at school but also full support through parental supervision at home.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that juvenile delinquency—specifically the dynamics of infractions committed by students in the digital era—falls into two main categories: conventional school disciplinary violations and digital delinquency. Conventional disciplinary violations include tardiness, truancy, failure to complete assignments, and classroom disruptions. Meanwhile, digital delinquency manifests in new forms, such as the surreptitious use of mobile phones during class, the creation of anonymous social media accounts, and cyberbullying via chat groups, all of which inflict psychological harm and negatively impact the victims' academic performance.

Although the school has enforced a ban on mobile phone use and implemented a point-based disciplinary system, this research highlights the limits of the school's institutional authority. While the school possesses full formal authority and legal standing to supervise students and impose sanctions within the school premises and during school hours, students' digital activities outside of school hours fall beyond the scope of this formal authority. Viewed through the lens of Hirschi's Social Control Theory, strengthening the four dimensions of social bonds (attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief) within the school

environment cannot occur in isolation; it requires support through supervision and guidance from parents (families) at home, as well as social control from the surrounding community. Therefore, it is recommended that the school develop specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for handling digital-related incidents, integrate digital literacy and ethics into the curriculum, and institutionalize "digital parenting" programs. This would ensure that communication with parents is proactive and preventive, rather than merely reactive—occurring only after a student has accumulated disciplinary points. This study has limitations, as it focuses on a single case study at SMA Negeri 14 Pekanbaru—precluding direct generalization to other schools—and relies predominantly on the perspectives of school staff without quantitatively measuring cause-and-effect relationships.

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