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Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN, Philippines: A Demographic-Based Analysis

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This study examined the demographic profiles and factors influencing juvenile delinquency in the SOCCSKSARGEN region using a quantitative correlational design. Data were collected through structured questionnaires from 58 Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) residing in three rehabilitation centers. Respondents were profiled by age, gender, location, and ethnicity, while factors assessed included socioeconomic status, family dynamics, school experiences, individual characteristics, peer pressure, and substance abuse. Findings showed that all respondents were male, mostly aged 14–18, and predominantly Ilonggo. Overall, the six factors were perceived to have low influence on delinquent behavior. No significant relationships were found between demographic variables and the identified factors, except for age and substance abuse, with younger respondents reporting slightly higher influence. The study proposes the RISE-UP Program to support rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, providing practical guidance for agencies and institutions in developing community-based intervention strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains a persistent global problem that demands extensive intervention. It is legally defined as actions committed by individuals under 18 that would be illegal if committed by adults (Kratcoski et al., 2019). Young offenders worldwide face unique challenges, as they are both perpetrators and victims with diverse needs. To reduce recidivism, developed countries like the UK have implemented evidence-based forensic child and adolescent psychiatry, which combines developmental, psychiatric, and legal approaches. This therapeutic strategy has proven more effective than punitive models in addressing juvenile delinquency (Zai & Wani, 2020).

In the Philippines, Susas (2024) highlighted various social and legal interventions addressing juvenile delinquency. A proposed amendment to the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, which seeks to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 12, has sparked significant debate. Contributing factors to juvenile delinquency include lack of parental supervision, association with delinquent peers, and socioeconomic pressures. Previous studies showed that theft and curfew violations are common offenses, often stemming from financial need, peer pressure, or rebellion. Children who commit crimes frequently come from broken homes, are school dropouts, or live in poverty (Aguilar & Gumiran, 2020). Gonzales et al. (2023) assessed intervention programs for children in conflict with the law (CICL) in Cabuyao, finding many to be ineffective due to insufficient resources and a focus on punitive rather than preventive measures.

National police statistics indicate a decrease in juvenile delinquency charges in South Cotabato, with 44 cases reported in 2023 a 67% drop from 146 cases in 2018 (Cabrido, 2019). However, theft and curfew violations continue to persist, influenced by economic and social factors. Challenges remain, including inadequate facilities and insufficiently trained personnel to manage CICLs. Despite regulations, teenage crime is rising globally. Children in conflict with the law commit both minor infractions and serious crimes. Juvenile delinquency in General Santos City involves various offenses such as theft, robbery, rape, and drug-related crimes, with prohibited drug use being the most common offense among children in conflict with the law (CICL) from 2019 to 2021. Factors contributing to juvenile delinquency include family issues, peer influence, and community environment. The city has rehabilitation centers like Bahay Pag-Asa and St. Marcelline that provide residential care, life skills training, and reintegration programs for CICLs. Despite efforts, repeat offenses and drug-related crimes remain a challenge, highlighting the need for continued community and government support (Buena-Villa, et. al., 2024).

In the SOCCSKSARGEN region, there has been a significant increase in CICL cases, totaling 1,516 between 2019 and 2023. Common crimes include theft, robbery, motorbike theft, rape, assault, and drug-related offenses (Rendaje Jr., 2024). Socioeconomic factors, particularly poverty and limited access to education, contribute significantly to this rise. Many CICLs are "street children" who have been exposed to or are experiencing violence.

Republic Act No. 9344 features diversion and intervention programs designed to address juvenile delinquency. Diversion programs determine CICL responsibility and treatment based on social, cultural, economic, psychological, or educational backgrounds, thereby avoiding formal court proceedings. Intervention programs include counseling, skills training, and education to address underlying issues. The effectiveness of these programs is directly linked to their social acceptance and legitimacy in resolving CICL issues (Sanchez, 2020).

There is limited research specifically on juvenile delinquency in South Cotabato, which creates a gap in understanding how local social and cultural factors affect youth behavior. Most studies focus on national trends and overlook regional differences. Juvenile delinquency is a complex problem influenced by personal traits, family environment, mental health, and substance abuse. Factors such as poor parenting, family conflict, and exposure to violence or neglect increase the risk of delinquent behavior. Additionally, low cognitive skills, impulsiveness, and lack of empathy contribute to delinquency. Poverty and lack of resources worsen the issue, creating a cycle of social problems. To better address juvenile delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN, it is necessary to study how socioeconomic status, family, school, individual traits, peer pressure, and substance abuse affect youth behavior. This study aimed to explore these factors based on the demographic profiles of juvenile delinquents in the region and to develop improved intervention programs tailored to their needs.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study is grounded on established criminological and psychosocial theories that explain juvenile delinquency as a result of interacting individual, social, and environmental factors.

Social Disorganization Theory explains that delinquency emerges in communities with weak social institutions, poverty, and limited social control. In SOCCSKSARGEN, economic disadvantage and unstable community structures may reduce supervision and increase youth vulnerability to delinquency.

Strain Theory states that juveniles may engage in delinquent behavior when they experience frustration from unmet needs or blocked opportunities, such as poverty, limited education, or family instability.

Social Learning Theory asserts that delinquent behavior is learned through interaction with peers, family members, or others who model and reinforce antisocial behavior. Peer influence and family exposure play a key role during adolescence.

Control Theory suggests that weak attachment to family, school, and conventional activities increases the likelihood of delinquency. Poor parental supervision and school disengagement weaken social bonds that normally restrain delinquent behavior. Collectively, these theories justify examining how demographic characteristics and social factors influence juvenile delinquency and inform the development of appropriate intervention programs.

General Hypothesis. H_0: There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of juvenile delinquents and the factors influencing juvenile delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between the demographic profile of juvenile delinquents and the factors influencing juvenile delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN.

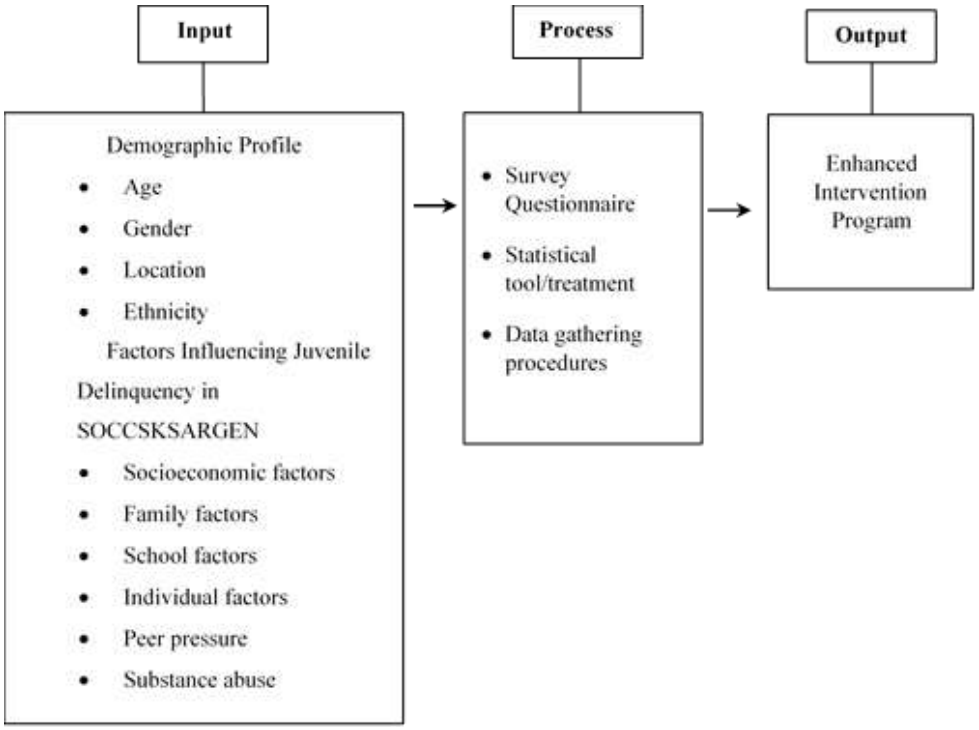

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the Bahay Pag-Asa Center in Koronadal City, the Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth (RRCY) in Barangay Bukay Pait, Tantangan, and the Marcellin Foundation Center in General Santos City, all located in SOCCSKSARGEN, due to their critical roles as established rehabilitation facilities for children in conflict with the law (CICL). These centers offered a supportive environment equipped with educational programs, life skills training, and psychosocial support, which were essential for the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents were children in conflict with the law (CICL) who were residing at the Bahay Pag-Asa Center, the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY), and the Marcellin Foundation Center in the SOCCSKSARGEN region. The study targeted fifty-eight (58) respondents who were undergoing rehabilitation while their legal cases were being processed. The estimated time to complete the survey questionnaire was between 30 and 60 minutes.

Inclusion Criteria: To ensure the relevance, appropriateness, and reliability of the collected data, the study required that respondents met specific criteria. They had to be aged between 12 and 18 years old, have been officially admitted and residing in one of the three identified rehabilitation centers for a minimum duration of three months prior to the commencement of the study, have had no

documented or observable severe cognitive impairments that might have impeded comprehension, attention, or meaningful participation, and have been deemed psychologically stable and emotionally fit to participate based on recent behavioral observations and assessments conducted by the center's professional staff.

Exclusion Criteria: Potential respondents of the study were excluded if they were younger than 12 years old or older than 18 years old, were not residents of the three specified rehabilitation centers, had documented cognitive impairments or diagnosed intellectual disabilities that interfered with their ability to understand and answer questions, or exhibited unstable psychological or behavioral conditions that might have posed risks to their well-being or to the integrity of the data collected.

Withdrawal Criteria: A respondent could have been withdrawn from the study under the following circumstances: if the participant voluntarily withdrew assent or refused to continue participation at any point; if a parent, guardian, or center head withdrew consent; if there was a significant deterioration in the participant's medical or psychological condition, as assessed by the center staff; or if the participant was transferred to another institution or released before the study was completed.

Justification for the Involvement of Vulnerable Groups: The involvement of children in conflict with the law (CICL) in this study was needed due to the unique insights they could provide regarding their experiences, rehabilitation processes, and the factors influencing their behavior. These insights were important for developing evidence-based interventions, policies, and programs aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency and improving rehabilitation outcomes.

Research Instrument

The researchers developed a survey questionnaire, which was validated by content, quantitative, and language experts to ensure its validity before data collection. The questionnaire had two sections: Section 1 assessed the demographic profiles of juvenile delinquents (age, gender, location, ethnicity), the factors that influence juvenile delinquency (socioeconomic factors, family factors, school factors, individual factors, peer pressure, and substance abuse) in SOCCSKSARGEN, and the statistical relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the identified factors that influence juvenile delinquency. Section 2 analyzed existing intervention programs (enhancing parental supervision, community engagement, and educational initiatives). A 4-point Likert scale was used to measure the degree of application. The following items were utilized:

Table. 1 Research Instrument

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree (*Lubusang Hindi sumasang-ayon)*	**Disagree (*Hindi Sumasang-ayon)***	**Agree *(Sumasang-ayon)***	**Strongly Agree (*Lubos na Sumasang-ayon)***

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first secured ethical clearance from the Ethics Review Board (ERB) to ensure that the study complied with established ethical standards of the University. After obtaining the necessary ethical approval, they proceeded with acquiring authorization letters from the heads of the Bahay Pag-Asa Center, the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY), and the St. Marcellin Foundation Center to formalize the approval for the conduct of the study. Once all permissions were secured, data gathering was conducted at the three institutions—Bahay Pag-Asa Center under the Koronadal City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), RRCY under the South Cotabato Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Marcellin Foundation Center. Prior to participation, selected respondents/residents were informed about the voluntary nature of their involvement, with assurance of confidentiality and the guarantee that their responses would not be used against them, thereby creating a secure environment for open and honest feedback. The survey questionnaires were administered primarily through face-to-face interviews with the assistance of trained personnel/social workers, and completed questionnaires were collected immediately to maintain data integrity. The collected data were then analyzed using statistical techniques such as frequency distribution and weighted means to quantitatively assess the responses. This process ensured ethical compliance, accuracy, and relevance of the data, ultimately providing valuable insights into the rehabilitation experiences and needs of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) residing in these facilities, which could guide program development and policy formulation.

Data Analysis

Demographic-based analysis was used because it enabled the researchers to examine how various factors influencing juvenile delinquency interact with key demographic characteristics such as age, gender, location, and ethnicity. This approach helped identify patterns and differences in delinquent behavior across demographic groups, providing a clearer understanding of which factors are more significant for specific populations. By analyzing these relationships simultaneously, demographic-based analysis offered a comprehensive view of the complex interplay between individual backgrounds and risk factors, which was essential for designing targeted and effective intervention programs tailored to the unique needs of different demographic segments.

Ethical Consideration

This study strictly adhered to ethical research standards to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all respondents, particularly vulnerable youth in

rehabilitation centers. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent and assent obtained using age-appropriate language. Respondents were fully informed of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The study maintained transparency, integrity, and impartiality, with no conflicts of interest declared. Risks were minimal and appropriately managed, and these were outweighed by the potential benefits of improving rehabilitation programs and informing policy and practice. Overall, the research upheld ethical principles of respect, beneficence, justice, and accountability throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
9 - 13	4	7 %	7 %
14 - 18	53	93 %	100 %

The results in Table 1 revealed that the majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 14–18 years old, accounting for 93% (n = 53) of the total, while only a small proportion, 7% (n = 4) was in the younger age group of 9–13 years old. This suggested that juvenile delinquency is more prevalent among adolescents in their mid to late teenage years compared to younger children, highlighting that the risk of engaging in delinquent behavior tended to increase with age.

According to Mariano (2019), the majority of children in conflict with the law in a custodial-care center were aged 16–18 years old, confirming that juvenile delinquency tends to peak during later adolescence.

Table 2. Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Male	58	100 %	100 %

The results in Table 2 showed that all respondents (100%, n = 58) were male, with no female respondents recorded in the study. This indicated that juvenile delinquency in the indicated centers was largely male-dominated phenomenon, implying that gender might have played a significant role in the prevalence of delinquent behavior. The absence of female respondents could have suggested either a lower involvement of females in delinquent acts or possible under reporting of cases involving them.

According to Rendaje et al. (2024), juvenile delinquency in the SOCCSKSARGEN region is predominantly male, supporting the view that gender significantly influences delinquent behavior, with fewer female cases possibly due to lower involvement or underreporting. Likewise, Banzon-Librojo (2023) found that male juveniles dominate center-based populations of children in conflict with

the law in the Philippines, reinforcing the gendered nature of juvenile delinquency in the region.

Table 3. Location Distribution of the Respondents

Location	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Bahay Pag-asa	15	26 %	26 %
Gensan	23	40 %	67 %
RRCY	19	33 %	100 %

The results in Table 3 revealed that most of the respondents came from General Santos City (40%, n = 23), followed by those from RRCY (33%, n = 19) and Bahay Pag-asa (26%, n = 15). This distribution indicated that a higher concentration of juvenile delinquents was reported in urban areas such as General Santos, which might have been attributed to greater exposure to peer influence, limited supervision, and more opportunities for delinquent activities compared to more controlled environments.

Table 4. Ethnicity Distribution of the Respondents

Etnicity	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Blaan	12	21 %	21 %
Cebuano	13	23 %	44 %
Ilonggo	27	47 %	91 %
Maguindanaon	5	9 %	100 %

Table 4 shows that almost half of the respondents (47%, n = 27) were Ilonggo, followed by Cebuano (23%, n = 13), Blaan (21%, n = 12), and Maguindanaon (9%, n = 5). These findings suggest that juvenile delinquency cuts across different ethnic groups, but it is more pronounced among Ilonggo respondents in the study area. The variation in ethnic representation may reflect differences in population size, cultural background, and social environment, which could influence the likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior.

The study in SOCCSKSARGEN by Rendaje et al. (2024) revealed that children in conflict with the law come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, indicating that juvenile delinquency transcends any single community and is shaped by demographic, familial, and social factors. Similarly, Baloran and Mancha (2024) reported that adolescents from diverse cultural and social backgrounds exhibit delinquent behavior, with family dysfunction and peer influence emerging as shared factors across different ethnic groups. Together, these findings highlight that juvenile delinquency is influenced by complex social and familial environments regardless of cultural differences.

Table 5. Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. I live in a community known for its high crime rates and widespread poverty.	1.88	0.87	Low Influence
2. The lack of opportunities in my community contributes to juvenile delinquency.	2.00	0.87	Low Influence
3. I have trouble making friends due to my lower social status, which leads to feelings of isolation, and I worry this makes me more vulnerable to negative influences and potential involvement in delinquent activities.	2.00	0.80	Low Influence
4. I involve in anti-social activities because of my family's financial constraints.	1.70	0.91	Low Influence
5. I notice that the unemployment of my parents affects my behavior negatively.	1.68	0.83	Low Influence
Overall	**1.85**	**0.58**	**Low Influence**

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low Influence, 1.51 – 2.50 Low Influence, 2.51 – 3.50 High Influence, 3.51 – 4.00 Very High Influence

The results in Table 5 revealed that socioeconomic factors exert only a low influence on juvenile delinquency, as reflected in the overall mean of 1.85 (SD = 0.58). Indicators such as the lack of opportunities in the community (M = 2.00, SD = 0.87) and difficulties in social interaction due to lower social status (M = 2.00, SD = 0.80) scored the highest, yet still fall under the low influence category, while parental unemployment (M = 1.68, SD = 0.83) and financial constraints (M = 1.70, SD = 0.91) registered the lowest means. These findings suggest that although respondents acknowledged poverty, unemployment, and limited opportunities, they did not view these socioeconomic conditions as major determinants of delinquent behavior, implying that other domains such as family, peer pressure, or individual factors may have stronger influence on youth delinquency.

Saeed et al. (2020) highlighted that juvenile delinquency is closely linked to poverty, poor living standards, unemployment, and inadequate family care and supervision. In line with this, Ramillete et al. (2023) identified peer pressure, socioeconomic difficulties such as poverty and unemployment, and unfavorable home conditions as major contributors to delinquent behavior. Collectively, these findings underscore that both economic challenges and family dynamics are key factors shaping youth delinquency.

Table 6. Family Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. I rebel because my parents or guardians are too strict.	1.61	0.75	Low Influence
2. I witness my relatives' engagement in unlawful activities that affected my behavior.	1.65	0.83	Low Influence
3. I feel neglected by my parents, guardians and/or relatives and their lack of guidance affects my behavior.	1.61	0.77	Low Influence
4. I witness my siblings engaging in risky behaviors, which creates a challenging environment at home and influences me to consider similar actions.	1.58	0.78	Low Influence

5. Growing up in various family setups, whether traditional (e.g., two-parent families) or non-traditional (e.g., single-parent families, separated parents, gay/lesbian families, unmarried couples, or others) may impact behavior and influence the likelihood of engaging in delinquent activities.	2.12	1.05	Low Influence
Overall	**1.72**	**0.48**	**Low Influence**

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low Influence, 1.51 – 2.50 Low Influence, 2.51 – 3.50 High Influence, 3.51 – 4.00 Very High Influence

The results in Table 6 showed that family factors have a low influence on juvenile delinquency, with an overall mean of 1.72 (SD = 0.48). Among the indicators, the highest mean was observed in the influence of various family setups (M = 2.12, SD = 1.05), suggesting that non-traditional or unstable family structures may somewhat affect youth behavior. On the other hand, witnessing siblings engage in risky behaviors (M = 1.58, SD = 0.78) and strict parental control (M = 1.61, SD = 0.75) recorded the lowest means, indicating that these factors are less likely perceived as drivers of delinquent tendencies. Overall, while some aspects of family dynamics are acknowledged, respondents generally did not view family-related issues as strong determinants of juvenile delinquency compared to other possible influences.

According to Van der Put (2025), various family and parenting risk factors such as poor supervision, inadequate punishment, family conflicts, and unstable dynamics are interconnected, and while each factor alone shows a weak correlation with juvenile delinquency, their combined effect is significantly stronger. This study supports the idea that different family setups, through their complex and interrelated risk factors, may have a greater influence on juvenile behavior than any individual factor on its own.

Table 7. School Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. My school does not provide adequate support for students who are struggling academically.	1.79	0.88	Low Influence
2. My school lacks effective measures for a supportive learning space, with insufficient support for teachers and inadequate resources. This has significantly impacted me, contributing to my involvement in delinquent behavior as a juvenile.	1.75	0.83	Low Influence
3. My school lacks effective programs to address bullying and violence, which makes me feel unsafe and anxious, impacting my ability to focus on my studies.	1.75	0.89	Low Influence
4. I experience discrimination or bias at school, which has led me to skip classes or avoid attending school completely, disrupting my academic progress.	2.21	0.88	Low Influence
5. The school discipline policies are inconsistent and ineffective because some students seem to get away with breaking the rules, and it has lowered my motivation to participate in school activities.	2.00	0.91	Low Influence
Overall	**1.90**	**0.59**	**Low Influence**

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low Influence, 1.51 – 2.50 Low Influence, 2.51 – 3.50 High Influence, 3.51 – 4.00 Very High Influence

The findings in Table 7 revealed that school factors had a low influence on juvenile delinquency, with an overall mean of 1.90 (SD = 0.59). Among the indicators, the highest mean was observed in experiences of discrimination or bias in school (M = 2.21, SD = 0.88), suggesting that unfair treatment might have had a more notable effect on students' behavior compared to other factors. Meanwhile, the lack of effective measures to support learning spaces and address bullying both had lower mean scores (M = 1.75), indicating that while these issues existed, respondents did not strongly perceive them as major contributors to delinquent behavior. Similarly, inadequate academic support (M = 1.79) and inconsistent discipline policies (M = 2.00) were also rated as low in influence. Overall, the results suggested that although school-related issues such as discrimination and weak discipline were recognized, they were not viewed by respondents as highly significant drivers of juvenile delinquency.

Racial and ethnic minority and immigrant youth are disproportionately affected by contextual risk factors associated with bullying victimization, including adverse home, community, and school environments. Bias-based victimization, where youth are targeted due to a socially stigmatized identity or appearance, is particularly harmful (Xu et al., 2020).

Table 8. Individual Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. I struggle with anger management, which affects my interactions with others.	1.93	0.82	Low Influence
2. I frequently feel sad, impacting my daily activities.	2.16	0.96	Low Influence
3. I have poor problem-solving skills, which leads me to make unwise decisions.	2.39	0.92	Low Influence
4. I tend to engage in impulsive or risky behaviors, such as trying dangerous activities or making decisions without fully considering the consequences. This often puts me in situations that could lead to trouble or negative outcomes.	2.30	0.98	Low Influence
5. Having low self-esteem significantly influences my decisions and relationships, and I worry that this lack of self-worth could lead me to engage in risky behaviors or seek validation in unhealthy ways, potentially contributing to negative outcomes.	2.00	0.78	Low Influence
Overall	2.15	0.63	Low Influence

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low Influence, 1.51 – 2.50 Low Influence, 2.51 – 3.50 High Influence, 3.51 – 4.00 Very High Influence

The results in Table 8 showed that individual factors were perceived to have low influence on juvenile delinquency (M = 2.15, SD = 0.63). Among the indicators, poor problem-solving skills (M = 2.39, SD = 0.92) and engaging in impulsive or risky behaviors (M = 2.30, SD = 0.98) emerged as the highest-rated factors,

suggesting that difficulties in decision-making and impulsivity are viewed as stronger contributors to delinquent behavior. Conversely, anger management issues (M = 1.93, SD = 0.82) was rated the lowest, indicating limited perceived influence on delinquency. Overall, the findings suggest that while individual traits such as sadness, low self-esteem, and poor coping skills may contribute to negative outcomes, they are not regarded as highly significant compared to other possible influences, implying that external factors like family, peers, or environment may play a more critical role in juvenile delinquency.

Low self-control, impulsivity, and poor coping skills have consistently been associated with higher risks of juvenile delinquency, as these traits impair youths' ability to evaluate consequences and resist engaging in risky or unlawful behaviors (Xu, 2023).

Table 9. Peer Pressure Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. My peer influenced me to engage in anti-social behavior.	2.14	0.97	Low Influence
2. I have been pressured by my peer to do things that I felt are harmful or illegal.	2.19	0.95	Low Influence
3. I have peers in a group/squad that makes it hard for me to make healthy decisions because they encourage me to do things that aren't good for me.	2.23	1.04	Low Influence
4. Engaging in unlawful activities might help me afford things my peers have suggested.	1.74	0.81	Low Influence
5. My peer encourages me to use inhalants, nicotine, and/or alcohol which leads me to become delinquent.	1.93	0.98	Low Influence
Overall	**2.05**	**0.67**	**Low Influence**

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low Influence, 1.51 – 2.50 Low Influence, 2.51 – 3.50 High Influence, 3.51 – 4.00 Very High Influence

The results in Table 9 showed that peer pressure factors were perceived to have low influence on juvenile delinquency (M = 2.05, SD = 0.67). Among the indicators, the highest-rated was having peers who make it difficult to make healthy decisions by encouraging harmful behaviors (M = 2.23, SD = 1.04), suggesting that peer influence plays a role in decision-making challenges. Meanwhile, engaging in unlawful activities to afford things suggested by peers received the lowest rating (M = 1.74, SD = 0.81), indicating that financial-driven peer influence is the least significant. Overall, these findings suggest that while peers can influence behavior, respondents did not perceive peer pressure as a major driver of delinquency.

Yeng and Mohamad (2023) pointed out that while both peer influence and peer pressure contribute to delinquent behavior, their qualitative case study revealed important distinctions. The findings suggest that peer influence, which involves the subtle adoption of peers' attitudes and behaviors, often exerts a stronger effect than direct peer pressure, which is more overt and intentional. Moreover, the study emphasized that not all forms of peer pressure carry the same weight in leading adolescents toward delinquency. In many cases, family

dynamics and individual characteristics were found to play a more decisive role than peers alone. This highlights the importance of viewing delinquency as the result of multiple, interacting influences rather than attributing it solely to peer factors.

Table 10. Substance Abuse Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. I have found myself turning to substances such as inhalants (e.g., rugby, gasoline, paint thinners), alcohol, nicotine (cigarettes, e-cigarettes, tobacco), and/or other substances when I am overwhelmed by stress and struggling with my emotions. This coping mechanism affects my behavior.	2.09	0.95	Low Influence
2. Substance abuse (e.g. inhalants, nicotine, alcohol, household cleaners, etc.) contributes to my involvement in delinquent activities.	1.98	0.97	Low Influence
3. I have tried to stop using substances like inhalants, alcohol, nicotine, etc., but I found it challenging. This struggle with addiction has contributed to my involvement in delinquent behavior.	2.16	0.77	Low Influence
4. I am afraid of how my substance use is messing with my relationship at home and with my friends, and I worry that this could push me further towards doing things I will regret.	2.23	1.00	Low Influence
5. Using substances easily found at home, such as hand sanitizer, mouthwash, and household cleaners, as a way to cope has led to addiction. This addiction is now affecting my decision-making and behavior in negative ways.	2.11	0.90	Low Influence
Substance Abuse Overall	2.11	0.67	Low Influence

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Very Low Influence, 1.51 – 2.50 Low Influence, 2.51 – 3.50 High Influence, 3.51 – 4.00 Very High Influence

The results in Table 10 indicated that substance abuse factors were also considered to have low influence on juvenile delinquency (M = 2.11, SD = 0.67). The highest mean score was observed in worries about how substance use negatively affects relationships and may push individuals toward regrettable actions (M = 2.23, SD = 1.00). In contrast, the lowest mean was recorded for substance abuse as a direct contributor to delinquent activities (M = 1.98, SD = 0.97). This implies that while substance use is recognized as a challenge among juveniles, it is not seen as a dominant factor influencing delinquent behaviors, suggesting that other external influences may carry greater weight in shaping delinquency.

Social institutions such as schools, families, peer groups, and neighborhood environments are key risk and protective factors. School policies, discrimination, and the quality of academic support have been identified as contributing to youths' feelings of exclusion or marginalization, which in turn increase the risk of involvement in delinquent behavior (Cortel, 2020).

Table 11. Independent Samples t-Test Results for Determining the Relationship Between Age and the Identified Factors

Factors	Age	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	Mean Difference	Interpretation
Socioeconomic Factor	9 - 13	4	1.75	0.62	-0.36	0.72	-0.11	0.30	No Significant Relationship
	14 - 18	53	1.86	0.58					
Family Factor	9 - 13	4	2.10	0.50	1.67	0.10	0.41	0.25	No Significant Relationship
	14 - 18	53	1.69	0.47					
School Factor	9 - 13	4	2.00	0.67	0.34	0.73	0.11	0.31	No Significant Relationship
	14 - 18	53	1.89	0.59					
Individual Factor	9 - 13	4	1.80	0.33	-1.18	0.24	-0.38	0.32	No Significant Relationship
	14 - 18	53	2.18	0.64					
Peer Pressure	9 - 13	4	2.60	0.57	1.74	0.09	0.60	0.34	No Significant Relationship
	14 - 18	53	2.00	0.67					
Substance Abuse	9 - 13	4	2.15	0.41	0.12	0.91	0.04	0.35	Significant Relationship
	14 - 18	53	2.11	0.69					

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' age and the identified factors influencing juvenile delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN. Results in Table 11 revealed no statistically significant differences in mean scores between age groups (9–13 years old and 14–18 years old) for Socioeconomic Factors, $t(55) = –0.36$, $p = .72$; Family Factors, $t(55) = 1.67$, $p = .10$; School Factors, $t(55) = 0.34$, $p = .73$; Individual Factors, $t(55) = –1.18$, $p = .24$; and Peer Pressure, $t(55) = 1.74$, $p = .09$, indicating no significant relationship between age and these factors. However, a significant difference was found for Substance Abuse, $t (55) = 0.12$, $p = .04$, suggesting that age is significantly associated with substance abuse as a factor influencing juvenile delinquency. Specifically, younger respondents (9–13 years old) reported a slightly higher mean ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.41$) compared to older respondents (14–18 years old) ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 0.69$).

The finding that younger respondents (9–13 years old) were more easily influenced by substance abuse than older adolescents is consistent with Pengpid et al. (2025), who observed higher rates of drug use among younger youth. This pattern suggests that early adolescence represents a particularly vulnerable stage in development. During this period, children are more likely to experiment due to heightened curiosity, limited understanding of long-term health and social consequences, and a stronger tendency to be swayed by peers. Compared to older adolescents who may develop greater self-control and awareness, younger individuals are more impressionable and less equipped to resist external influences. These insights emphasize the need for early prevention and

intervention strategies that focus on awareness, education, and the strengthening of protective family and community support systems.

Table 12. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results for Determining the Relationship Between Location and the Identified Factors

Factor	Location	N	Mean	SD	F	df1	df2	p-value	Interpretation
Socioeconomic Factor	Bahay Pag-asa	15	1.71	0.52	2.40	2	54	0.10	No Significant Relationship
	Gensan	23	2.05	0.61					
	RRCY	19	1.73	0.55					
Family Factor	Bahay Pag-asa	15	1.65	0.34	0.38	2	54	0.69	No Significant Relationship
	Gensan	23	1.78	0.53					
	RRCY	19	1.68	0.54					
School Factor	Bahay Pag-asa	15	1.88	0.51	0.17	2	54	0.84	No Significant Relationship
	Gensan	23	1.96	0.53					
	RRCY	19	1.85	0.72					
Individual Factor	Bahay Pag-asa	15	2.03	0.63	1.26	2	54	0.29	No Significant Relationship
	Gensan	23	2.31	0.65					
	RRCY	19	2.06	0.59					
Peer Pressure	Bahay Pag-asa	15	1.89	0.79	0.64	2	54	0.53	No Significant Relationship
	Gensan	23	2.15	0.61					
	RRCY	19	2.04	0.66					
Substance Abuse	Bahay Pag-asa	15	1.99	0.68	0.70	2	54	0.50	No Significant Relationship
	Gensan	23	2.08	0.69					
	RRCY	19	2.25	0.65					

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' location and the identified factors influencing juvenile delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN. Results in Table 12 revealed no statistically significant differences in mean scores across locations for Socioeconomic Factors, $F(2, 54) = 2.40$, $p = .10$; Family Factors, $F(2, 54) = 0.38$, $p = .69$; School Factors, $F(2, 54) = 0.17$, $p = .84$; Individual Factors, $F(2, 54) = 1.26$, $p = .29$; Peer Pressure, $F(2, 54) = 0.64$, $p = .53$; and Substance Abuse, $F(2, 54) = 0.70$, $p = .50$. These findings indicate that the location of the respondents (Bahay Pag-asa, General Santos City, or the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth [RRCY]) did not significantly influence their perceptions of the extent to which these factors contributed to juvenile delinquency. While mean variations were noted (e.g., respondents from General Santos City rated socioeconomic influence higher, $M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.61$, compared to Bahay Pag-asa, $M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.52$), these differences were not statistically significant.

Protective factors such as strong parental support, positive peer relationships, and drug education were found to reduce the likelihood of illicit

drug use among Filipino adolescents. The study revealed that one in seven school-going adolescents reported using illicit drugs, with poverty and limited job opportunities pushing some young people into the drug trade as a means of income (Pengpid et al., 2025). While juvenile delinquency rates and forms differ between urban and rural areas, the main predictors such as individual tendencies, peer influence, and family background remain largely consistent across locations. In other words, location may shape certain patterns, but it does not change the fact that these risk factors are the most important (Kokoravec et al., 2024).

Table 13. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results for Determining the Relationship Between Ethnicity and the Identified Factors

Factor	Ethnicity	N	Mean	SD	F	df1	df2	p-value	Interpretation
Socioeconomic Factor	Blaan	12	1.90	0.57	0.83	3	53	0.483	No Significant Relationship
	Cebuano	13	1.97	0.44					
	Ilonggo	27	1.73	0.57					
	Maguindanaon	5	2.08	0.95					
Family Factor	Blaan	12	1.82	0.50	1.34	3	53	0.270	No Significant Relationship
	Cebuano	13	1.75	0.47					
	Ilonggo	27	1.73	0.50					
	Maguindanaon	5	1.32	0.30					
School Factor	Blaan	12	1.83	0.46	0.38	3	53	0.768	No Significant Relationship
	Cebuano	13	2.00	0.72					
	Ilonggo	27	1.85	0.61					
	Maguindanaon	5	2.08	0.46					
Individual Factor	Blaan	12	2.10	0.67	0.63	3	53	0.601	No Significant Relationship
	Cebuano	13	2.15	0.58					
	Ilonggo	27	2.11	0.65					
	Maguindanaon	5	2.52	0.54					
Peer Pressure	Blaan	12	1.90	0.45	0.48	3	53	0.699	No Significant Relationship
	Cebuano	13	1.97	0.82					
	Ilonggo	27	2.16	0.67					
	Maguindanaon	5	2.00	0.84					
Substance Abuse	Blaan	12	1.92	0.55	0.67	3	53	0.575	No Significant Relationship
	Cebuano	13	2.06	0.85					
	Ilonggo	27	2.18	0.65					
	Maguindanaon	5	2.36	0.57					

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' ethnicity and the identified factors influencing juvenile delinquency in SOCCSKSARGEN. Results in Table 13 revealed no statistically significant differences in mean scores across ethnic groups for Socioeconomic Factors, $F(3, 53) = 0.83$, $p = .48$; Family Factors, $F(3, 53) = 1.34$, $p = .27$; School Factors, $F(3, 53) = 0.38$, $p = .77$; Individual Factors, $F(3, 53) = 0.63$, $p = .60$; Peer Pressure, $F(3, 53) = 0.48$, $p = .70$; and Substance Abuse, $F(3, 53) = 0.67$, $p = .58$. These findings indicate that ethnicity did not significantly influence

respondents' perceptions of the extent to which these factors contributed to juvenile delinquency. Although some variations in mean scores were observed (e.g., Maguindanaon respondents reported the highest mean in peer pressure, M = 2.52, SD = 0.54, while Blaan respondents had the lowest, M = 1.90, SD = 0.45), these differences were not statistically significant.

Among juvenile justice-involved youth, family and peer influences regarding substance attitudes and use showed strength across broad demographic categories. Ethnic differences in these processes exist but often are secondary to the immediate family and peer factors in their impact (Zapolski, et. al., 2019).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the complex interplay of individual, family, peer, and community factors that influence juvenile delinquency in the SOCCSKSARGEN region. Findings revealed that family dysfunction, poverty, limited opportunities, and peer influence remain consistent predictors of delinquent behavior, while protective factors such as strong parental support, positive peer relationships, and access to education reduce the likelihood of risky involvement. Results also indicate that younger adolescents are more likely to engage in substance use, underscoring early adolescence as a critical period for prevention. The statistical results further showed that demographic characteristics such as age, location, and ethnicity did not have a strong relationship with most of the factors influencing delinquency, except that age was linked to substance use. This means that differences in demographic background did not greatly change how young people viewed the impact of family, peers, school, or economic conditions on their behavior. One reason for this may be the generally low ratings given to these influences, suggesting that respondents did not see them as the main drivers of delinquency. Instead, delinquent behavior may come from more complex and overlapping social, cultural, and psychological conditions that go beyond demographics.

FURTHER STUDY

further research may be encouraged. Future studies may involve larger sample sizes across more regions and may include qualitative interviews with CICLs, their families, and rehabilitation staff to gain deeper insights. Long-term outcomes of rehabilitation programs and the reintegration process may also be assessed to measure their effectiveness and sustainability.

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