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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

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## CORRELATION BETWEEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Zurriyatun Thoyibah<sup>1</sup>, Intansari Nurjannah<sup>2\*</sup>, Sumarni DW<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Master of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Psychiatric and Community Nursing Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Departement of Psychiatry, Universitas of Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

\*Correspondence:

**Intansari Nurjannah, S.Kp., MN.Sc., Ph.D**

Psychiatric and Community Nursing Department, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: [intansarin@ugm.ac.id](mailto:intansarin@ugm.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Adolescents who are in transition period have high risk behavior of juvenile delinquency. Communication between parents and adolescents effectively and openly could help adolescents to avoid delinquency behavior.

**Objective:** This study aims to examine the relationship between family communication patterns and juvenile delinquency in Junior High School.

**Methods:** This research employed a cross-sectional design with correlation description approach. There were 243 students selected using simple random sampling from the 7th and 8th grade students of Junior High School. A questionnaire of juvenile delinquency and family communication pattern were used in this study. Data were analyzed using Chi Square test.

**Result:** The research showed that the majority juvenile delinquency category was low (65%) and the majority of communication pattern was in functional category (73.3%). There was a significant relationship between family communication pattern and juvenile delinquency ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Communication pattern within family have significant association with juvenile delinquency.

**Key words:** Family communication pattern, juvenile delinquency, adolescent

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period in which adolescents experience emotional transitions, social transitions, family relations transitions, and morality transitions.<sup>1</sup> This period causes

adolescents to have a high risk of behavioral disturbance, delinquency, and the occurrence of violence both as victims and as perpetrators of violence.<sup>2</sup> The transition period can cause a crisis if

supported by a less conducive environment and a less good personality will trigger the emergence of various behavioral aberrations. These behaviors include teenagers involved in fighting, drugs, promiscuity, even to criminal acts, where those example can be categorized as a form of juvenile delinquency.<sup>3</sup>

Juvenile delinquency is not a new phenomenon of adolescence but a continuation of the pattern of asocial behavior that begins in childhood. A social behavior is influenced by parenting and communication in the family, therefore, is required an effective communication between children and parents since early stage. The role of communication within the family is very important for transferring values and culture.<sup>4</sup> Lack of intimacy of parents and adolescents, lack of parental involvement, lack of guidance, blame, and scolding adolescents can lead to juvenile delinquency behavior.<sup>5</sup> The support of parents through communication and supervision is believed to reduce the use of drugs and juvenile delinquency.<sup>6</sup> Parental and juvenile communication problematic is consistently associated with improvement in three types of risk behavior in adolescents such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, and sexual behavior risky.<sup>7</sup>

## **METHODS**

### *Design*

This research used a cross-sectional design with correlation description approach.

### *Setting*

The research was carried out in Junior High School of Gunungsari, West Lombok Regency, Indonesia.

### *Target Population and Sample*

The target population of this study was all students from grade 7 and 8 Junior High

School of Gunungsari, West Lombok Regency, Indonesia. There were 234 students selected using simple random sampling.

### *Instruments*

Two instruments were used in this research, namely: a questionnaire of juvenile delinquency and family communication pattern. The juvenile delinquency questionnaire was designed by the researchers and modified from other researches.<sup>8,9</sup> In this instrument, there are three different scores as the following: 0 means never been done, score 1 means have been done for 1-2 times, score 2 means have been done for > 1 times. While family communication pattern's questionnaire was also designed by the researchers based on family communication theory,<sup>10</sup> using four options: 4 means always; 3 means often; 2 means sometimes; and 1 never. Both instruments were tested for reliability with Cronbach's Alpha value of juvenile delinquency questionnaire was 0.942, and family communication patterns was 0.901.

### *Data analysis*

The data were analysed using Chi Square test using SPSS 16.

### *Ethical consideration*

The study was approved from the Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

## **RESULTS**

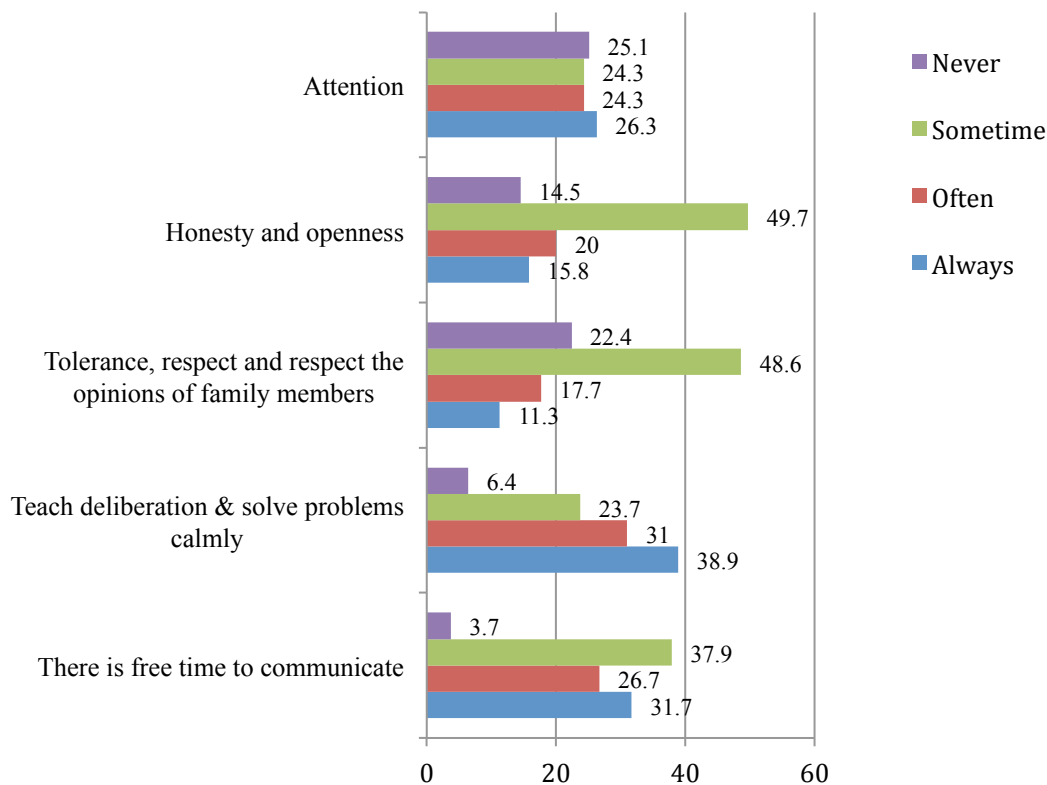
Results showed that that juvenile delinquency was mostly in low level of delinquency which was 65.0%. The number of females and males respondents were almost equal. The majority of respondents have parents who are not divorced 80.2% (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents based on Research Variables (n=243)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Juvenile delinquency	High	19	7.8
	Medium	66	27.2
	Low	158	65.0
Communication Pattern	Dysfunctional	65	26.7
	Functional	178	73.3
Gender	Male	120	49.4
	Female	123	50.6
Marital status of parents	Divorced	48	19.8
	Not divorced	195	80.2

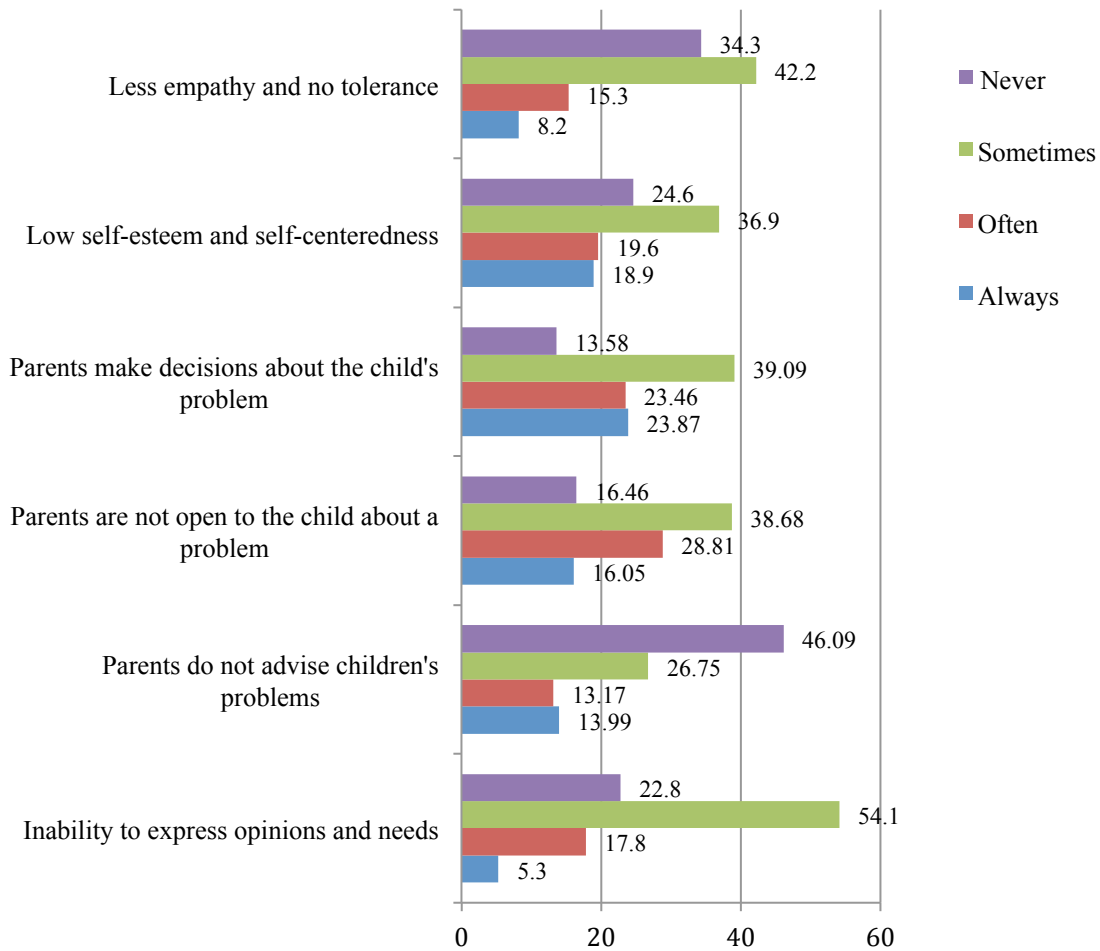
The functional communication pattern shows that most respondents' parents had free time to communicate with family members (58.4%) and teach deliberation and solve problem calmly (69.9%). The next indicators were related to tolerance, mutual respect, and respect

for the opinions of family members, and the existence of honesty and openness had not been implemented optimally. The next indicator showed that some parents (50.6%) paid attention to the child by contacting the child by phone if they were late returning home (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Description of functional communication pattern**

The description of dysfunctional communication patterns can be seen in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2. Description of dysfunctional communication pattern**

The description of dysfunctional communication patterns shows that only a small percentage of respondents are unable to express opinions and wishes to their parents as well as lack of empathy and tolerance.

Dysfunctional communication is also characterized by almost half the parents of respondents not being open in communicating with their child and

making decisions on the problems facing the child.

Most respondents showed juvenile delinquency, such as: using uniforms and attributes that do not fit school rules, watching pornographic images, fighting, and disrespect and denied the elderly, reaching 71.21%, only 2.87% of respondents who engage in promiscuity and consume drugs (see Figure 3).

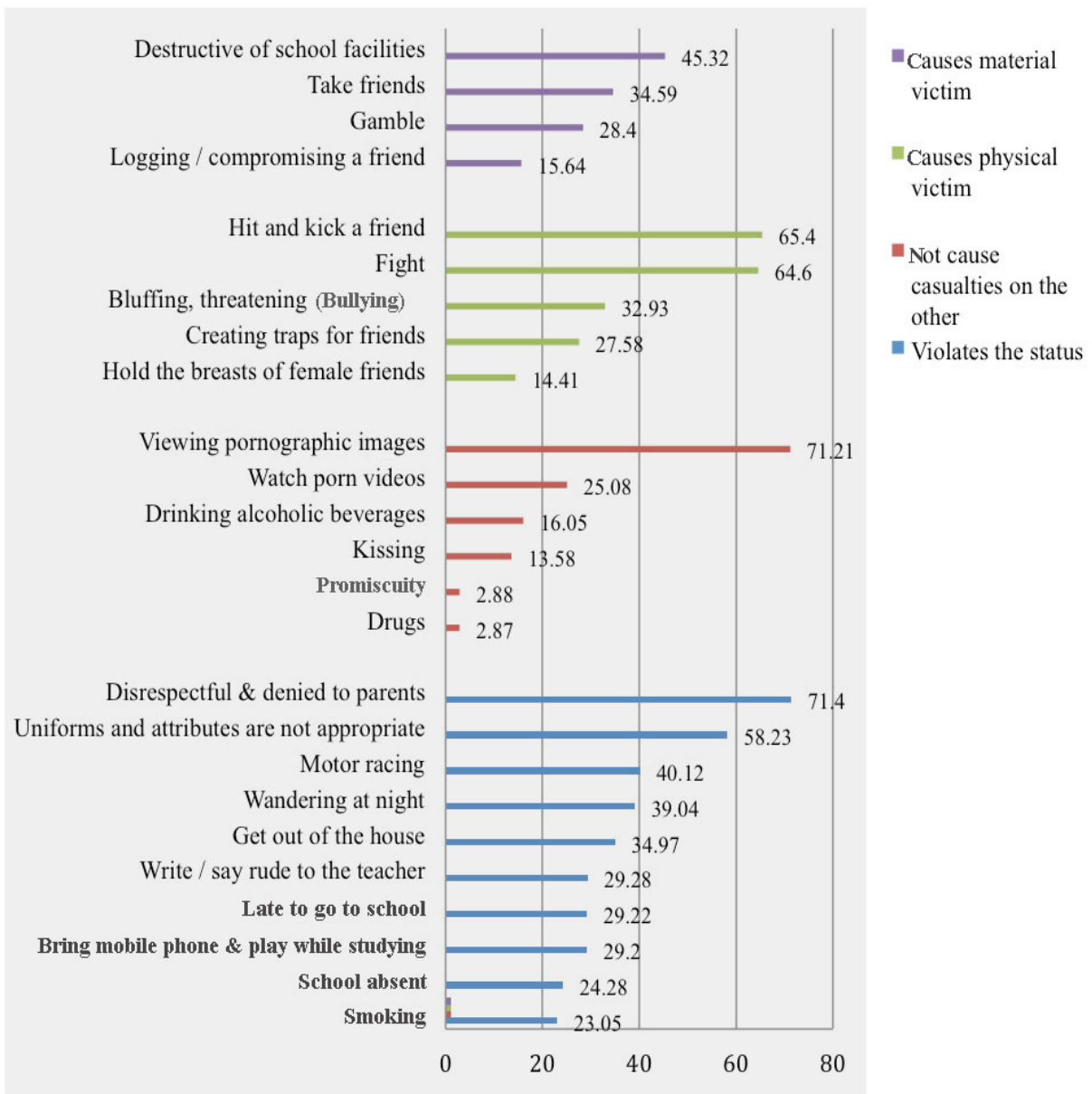


Figure 3. Description of juvenile delinquency

The dependent variable in this study consisted of 3 categories of high, medium, and low juvenile delinquency. Therefore, to see the value of Odds Ratio (OR) researchers used dummy variable refer to the group that did have any risk such as low juvenile delinquency. The grouping

was between high and low delinquency and low and average delinquency, so the result of analysis consisted of 2 OR values, they were OR for high and OR for medium delinquency. The result of bivariate analysis can be seen in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Results of Cross-tabulation of Independent and Outside Variables Against Adolescent Delinquency Level (n=243)**

Variable	Juvenile Delinquency Level						X <sup>2</sup>	P value	Odds Ratio (OR)	
	High		Medium		Low				High	Medium
	n	%	n	%	n	%				
Communication Pattern										
Dysfunctional	13	20.0	25	38.5	27	41.5	28.5	0.001	10.5	2.9
Functional	6	3.4	41	23.0	131	73.6				
Gender										
Male	16	13.3	51	42.5	53	44.2	45.6	0.001	10.5	6.7
Female	3	2.4	15	12.2	105	85.4				
Marital status of parents										
Divorced	11	22.9	14	29.2	23	47.9	20.2	0.001	8.1	1.6
Not Divorced	8	4.1	52	26.7	135	69.2				

The results of analysis in table 2 shows that there was significant relation between communication pattern, gender, marital status of parent and juvenile delinquency ( $p < 0.05$ ). Dysfunctional communication patterns, male sex, and divorce of parents cause teenage opportunities to experience higher levels of delinquency to be greater. Adolescents with a dysfunctional communication pattern have a 10.5 chance of experiencing high levels of delinquency compared to adolescents with functional communication patterns. Male adolescent have a 10.5 chance of experiencing high levels of delinquency compared to female adolescents.

## DISCUSSION

### *Description of juvenile delinquency*

The results showed that the majority of juvenile delinquency rates were at a low level. This might be influenced by the age factor of respondents; 12-14 years. At the age of 12-14 years is puberty phase which is also called "negative phase", in which the behavior of children become unpredictable and often against the prevailing social norms.<sup>11</sup> The children at age of 12-14 years are an early period for children to try to do misbehavior so that the frequency of delinquency was low.

Previous research found that juvenile delinquency in children at the ages of 10-14 is about 28%, while 72% are from the 15-18 age group.<sup>12</sup>

Low juvenile delinquency rates might also be attributed to other factors such as school factors.<sup>13</sup> The subjects in this study were from a fairly good school with an accreditation, which has the facilities and complete in infrastructure aspect and adequate learning process. This school also actively accommodates learners with a variety of extracurricular activities. The school environment is one of the factors that influence the happening of juvenile delinquency, because the school is a second place of education for adolescents after their family environment.<sup>13,14</sup> Bad school conditions will cause teenagers to act delinquent. These conditions include the lack of learning facilities such as tools of practice, arts tools, and sports can also lead to various negative behaviors in the students.<sup>3</sup>

Another factor that affects the low level of juvenile delinquency in this study was family factor. Most respondents parents (81.2%) were not divorced. The results of this study were supported by research which explains that intact families produce less juvenile delinquency

compared with separated families.<sup>15</sup> Gibson (1969) cited in Ramadhani, also confirmed the same thing in which 55% of teenagers from separated families engage juvenile delinquency.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Parents communication pattern*

The results showed that most of the respondents' family communication patterns were categorized as functional patterns. The high functional communication pattern in the research can be influenced because the respondent lives with the parents. There were 79.4% (193) respondents living with their parents. This allows parents to have free time to communicate with their children. Staying with both parents who have free time to communicate becomes an important factor because the child will have the same socio-cultural background, the similarity of values, environment, and distance. Socio-cultural factors, values, environment, and distance are factors influencing interpersonal communication in the family.<sup>17</sup> These factors will minimize the differences in perception that can lead to errors in communication. Thus, effective and functional communication patterns in the family can take place well.

Although most of communication pattern was functional, however there were also respondents who were having dysfunctional communication pattern. This pattern may resulted there is no open communication between respondents and their parent as we know that one of the tasks of family development with adolescent children is to communicate openly.<sup>18</sup> Without open communication between teenagers and parent there will be no good relationships between them.<sup>19</sup> If parents are not open in communicating with teenagers, children will learn from the environment outside the family, which

can have a negative impact on adolescent development.

#### *Relationship of pattern communication and juvenile delinquency*

The result of analysis showed that there was a significant correlation between juvenile delinquency level and family communication pattern, where the chance of adolescent with dysfunctional communication pattern to experience high degree of delinquency equal to 10.5 times compared to adolescent with functional communication pattern in family. These findings support the previous research which showed that adolescents with less open communication and many communication problems with parents had higher rates of delinquency and more serious forms of delinquency.<sup>19</sup> Aggressive behavior and high juvenile delinquency influenced directly by low parent and juvenile communication.<sup>20</sup> Communication problems between parents and adolescents are identified as risk factors for delinquency behaviors such as consume drugs and promiscuity, and open communication between parents and adolescents is a protective factor for risk behavior.<sup>21</sup>

The juvenile delinquency can be caused by internal factors include identity crisis, negative self-concept and lack of self-control, and external factors comes from the family environment is less effective communication in the family. Adolescence is at the stage of identity crisis versus identity diffusion.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in the search for identity of adulthood, adolescents need parents who can guide them by using effective communication, so that messages are delivered properly and correctly. Adequate communication between parents and teens where children can express their opinions and feelings freely will

effectively reduce the stress experienced of adolescents in their daily lives, so that it can establish a positive identity in adolescents.<sup>22</sup> Teens who have a positive self-concept will be able to carry out the demands given by the environment. Conversely, when adolescents have a negative self-concept, the teenagers see the environment, parents and life negatively, so often violate the rules and norms that exist in society that leads to juvenile delinquency.<sup>23</sup>

The functional communication pattern in the family is very important for adolescent development, this pattern leads to open and effective communication so that it can guide the child to achieve a positive identity and develop good self-control.<sup>24</sup> While dysfunctional communication patterns cause an uncomfortable family atmosphere and poor family communication relationships may pose a danger to adolescents, as they will affect adolescent social development. Dysfunctional communication causes the child to fail to attain a positive self-identity, thus losing self-control over the negative effects of the environment and falling into a variety of delinquency. Lack of communication will make parents fail to understand what children will, and this will lead to the difficulty to monitor children's behavior and resulted in children to be involved in delinquency.<sup>25</sup> Communication pattern in the family have significant role in teaching, guiding, determining behavior, and shaping the child's perspective of values prevailing in society, so children can filter out the negative environmental influences and avoid juvenile delinquency behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Communication pattern within family have significant association with juvenile delinquency. Male adolescent and parents'

divorce also have significant association with juvenile delinquency.

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