

# Social Alienation and Delinquency of Children in Conflict with the Law as Moderated by Social Support

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the moderating effect of social support on the relationship between social alienation and delinquency among children in conflict with the law (CICL) in Davao City. A quantitative, Pearson's correlation and regression mode with path analysis was utilized, involving 204 CICL from two rehabilitation facilities. The results show that normlessness has the strongest association with delinquent behavior, particularly in high-risk activities like driving and alcohol use. A significant negative relationship was found between social alienation and social support, with powerlessness and normlessness strongly correlating with reduced support from family and others. Additionally, social support is negatively correlated with delinquency in activities like driving, alcohol use, and fighting. Path analysis confirmed that social alienation significantly predicts delinquency, while social support negatively correlates with delinquency. However, the moderating effect of social support on the relationship between social alienation and delinquency was not supported. These findings suggest that while both social alienation and social support independently influence delinquent behavior in opposite directions, their effects operate independently rather than interactively.

**Keywords:** criminology, social alienation, delinquency, social support, moderation analysis, Davao City, Philippines

SDG Indicator: #16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institution)

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## DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all the individuals who have been a source of inspiration and strength throughout this journey.

This work is especially dedicated to Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) in Davao City, whose experiences and resilience remind us of the importance of creating pathways toward rehabilitation, reintegration, and hope. May this research contribute, even in a small way, to understanding and addressing their needs.

Finally, to all who strive to make a difference through the pursuit of knowledge and compassion, this work is a testament to the collective effort for a better future.

## INTRODUCTION

Much research in recent years has sustained public and academic interest in criminality, focusing on antisocial behavior by children and adolescents. It was observed that during the pandemic teenagers could face increased vulnerability to victimization and be more prone to engaging in criminal activities. This heightened susceptibility is attributed to their restricted access to education and the loss of social connections, with these challenges being further intensified by mandatory quarantine and restrictive measures (Sauer, 2020). In the Philippines, according to the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, the annual Data on cases of Children at Risk (CAR) and Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) 2019-2020 was 328. If adolescents are unable to cope with developmental challenges, problematic behaviors such as delinquency are likely to emerge. If these are not addressed, they can result in increased crime rates, cycles of offending across generations, and weakened social cohesion. Isolated individuals are more likely to participate in antisocial behavior, which can lead to long-term instability and a loss of trust within communities.

Studying the spectrum of delinquency today is needed more than ever; there is a pervasive pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others, occurring from the age of 15 in the present generation; besides empathetic concern, Generation Z has also exhibited an increase in deceitful behavior (Valencia, 2021). Consequently, family structures and peer association may also contribute to the development of antisocial behavior. Environmental factors, such as physical and sexual abuse and neglect, may also affect delinquent behavior's progression (Fisher, 2020). This research will contribute to the realization of item 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the Philippine government.

The formation of social networks is critical during adolescence, yet the accelerating pace of modern life can hinder this process, leading to social alienation. Poor social attachment relationships among adolescents amplify the risk of delinquent behavior, underscoring the importance of social support during the developmental stage of adolescents transitioning into young adulthood (Ntim & Manu, 2019).

Support from family and friends plays a pivotal role in reducing delinquency. This can be achieved by fostering strong social bonds and deterring criminal behavior. In addition, family and peer support jointly reduce the detrimental effects of victimization on mental health, self-esteem, and delinquency, emphasizing its crucial role in promoting the overall well-being of adolescents (Tucker et al., 2020).

Juvenile delinquency has been recognized as one of the major societal problems rooted in both individual actions and environmental influences characterized by constant behavioral disorders among children and adolescents. Disruptive events occurring in one area of this relationship impact the other, highlighting the vital role of external factors such as social alienation in shaping delinquent behavior (Singh & Azman, 2020). Aside from that, several socioeconomic and psychological factors which significantly contribute to rebellious and antisocial behavior among adolescents, including *vehicle/driving, alcohol, cheating, disturb, fight, and media*.

Juvenile delinquency incorporates various behaviors influenced by social, developmental, and environmental factors, such as vehicle-related offenses, alcohol misuse, cheating, public disturbances, and media exposure. Reckless driving and alcohol-driven behaviors are rooted in impulsiveness and underdeveloped cognitive control, which is evident during adolescence and often linked to early exposure to delinquent behavior (Murray

et al., 2021). This greatly poses significant public health risks, escalating aggression, social isolation, and chronic conditions (Singh & Bhadra, 2022; Japari & Adamu, 2021). On the other hand, cheating, despite the fact that it is often viewed as selfish, can sometimes be morally justified, indicating its complex role in delinquency. Meanwhile, public disturbances, such as curfew violations and destruction of property, highlight the call for targeted interventions to address behaviors that challenge societal order (Alaimo, 2024). Exposure to media among adolescents who regularly engage with social media platforms is more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior and poorer behavioral conduct than their peers who do not use these apps. The idea that media exposure may contribute to patterns of delinquency is reinforced as social media platforms will act as vital influencers in shaping externalizing behaviors during early adolescence (Ohannessian & Vannucci, 2021).

Key aspects of social alienation, such as social isolation, powerlessness, and normlessness, play a crucial role in influencing delinquency. Social isolation can manifest as negative attitudes or lead to self-medication, often resulting in increased substance use. For instance, during the pandemic, intensified social isolation created significant challenges, with social, economic, academic, and religious factors shaping students' behaviors in various ways. This isolation was associated with a rise in delinquent behaviors, including absenteeism, violence, bullying, and substance abuse. While social factors were positively correlated with delinquency, economic disruptions showed a negative relationship, highlighting the complex and multifaceted effects of isolation and related experiences on behavior (Abiona et al., 2024). Similarly, powerlessness, defined as a perceived inability to influence outcomes, fosters delinquency through psychological distress. A sense of powerlessness negatively affects self-concept and promotes destructive attitudes, which can contribute to delinquent behaviors. Structural inequities within the criminal justice system exacerbate these issues by diminishing agency and reinforcing a persistent sense of helplessness, thereby perpetuating cycles of delinquency (Beneby et al., 2020). Normlessness emerges as a key factor influencing delinquency, as the lack of clear values and norms can lead minors to deviate from societal expectations. This internal disorganization is further compounded by external influences from families, schools, and communities that fail to instill or reinforce positive values. Early intervention and education can mitigate the effects of normlessness by promoting stable values and reducing delinquent tendencies among youths (Zhuoma, 2024). Addressing these interconnected dimensions requires interventions that build social connections, address trauma, and promote structural reforms to reduce delinquency and enhance social cohesion.

Social support, encompassing instrumental and expressive provisions from significant others, family, and peers, is crucial for adolescent development and behavior (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2019). The relationship between significant other support, particularly through romantic partners, and adolescent delinquency is intricate, as healthy romantic relationships are often undervalued despite their critical role in adolescent development. Active monitoring and positive involvement from romantic partners can promote delinquent behavior, aligning with findings that underscore the importance of having a reliable and supportive partner when needed (Zedaker et al., 2023). Nevertheless, these outcomes are contingent on the attitudes and behaviors of the partner, as romantic relationships can either mitigate or exacerbate delinquent tendencies. Strong parental attachment provides emotional security, serving as a protective factor against deviant behaviors. Effective parental supervision further reduces the likelihood of delinquency by promoting accountability and guidance. Supportive and low-conflict family environments are also crucial in fostering positive behavior, while dysfunctional parenting practices, such as harsh discipline, neglect, or inconsistency, significantly contribute to delinquent tendencies. Additionally, socioeconomic challenges, including financial instability and stress, exacerbate the risk of delinquency by creating unstable home environments (Papakitsou, 2024).

The dynamics within peer groups, including communication intensity, group structure, and shared activities, create a fertile environment for shaping behaviors. Peer approval of delinquent acts and sanctions for non-conformity, such as ridicule or ostracism, often push adolescents towards actions that deviate from societal norms. Additionally, peer pressure can disrupt a child's capacity to adhere to lawful behavior, as acceptance within a group may outweigh the perceived consequences of delinquent activities. This influence is particularly profound during middle childhood when social bonds are formed and the need for acceptance is heightened. While peer groups can provide essential social development, their capacity to normalize or encourage delinquency underscores the need for interventions that promote positive peer associations and resilience against negative influences (Rao, 2021). Furthermore, peer support helps individuals, especially former inmates, manage the stressors they face upon reintegration, sustaining their commitment to desistance (Chouhy et al., 2020).

This study is aligned with the social support theory by Francis Cullen (1994), which serves as the anchor theory to explain the interplay between social alienation, social support, and delinquency. The theory posits that social relationships provide emotional and instrumental support that buffers the negative impacts of alienation, reducing the likelihood of delinquent behaviors. Complementing this, Karl Marx's Alienation Theory emphasizes how feelings of powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation—key dimensions of alienation from structural inequalities, often lead to deviant behavior unless mitigated by meaningful social connections (Seeman, 1959).

Similarly, Robert Agnew's General Theory of Crime and Delinquency (GTCD) highlights how strain and stressors, such as alienation, increase the propensity for delinquency, which can be counteracted by the presence of social support acting as a protective factor (Agnew, 2005). Finally, Durkheim's Anomie Theory reinforces the idea that disconnection from societal norms fosters deviance, but strong social networks and supportive relationships restore stability and deter delinquency (Durkheim, 1897). Together, these theories emphasize the critical role of social support in mitigating the adverse effects of alienation on delinquency. Moreover, this resonates with the importance of fostering positive relationships and community engagement to address the root causes of delinquency and empower vulnerable populations toward resilience and reintegration.

This study addresses the limited research on how social support moderates the relationship between social alienation and delinquency. Examining these variables in a single framework fills gaps in understanding their interplay, particularly in local contexts. Focusing on the Davao Region, the study provides localized insights to enhance understanding of these dynamics.

Figure 1 illustrates the study's conceptual framework, highlighting the relationships between independent, dependent, and moderating variables. The independent variable, social alienation, includes three indicators: *powerlessness* (inability to control one's life), *normlessness* (refusal to accept societal restrictions), and *social isolation* (feelings of exclusion, loneliness, and impaired communication). The dependent variable, delinquency, is characterized by behaviors such as *vehicle/driving*, *alcohol*, *cheating*, *disturb*, *fight*, and *media-related* activities among Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) in the Davao Region. Social Support, the moderating variable, encompasses *significant other support*, *family support*, and *friend support*, influencing the relationship between social alienation and delinquency.

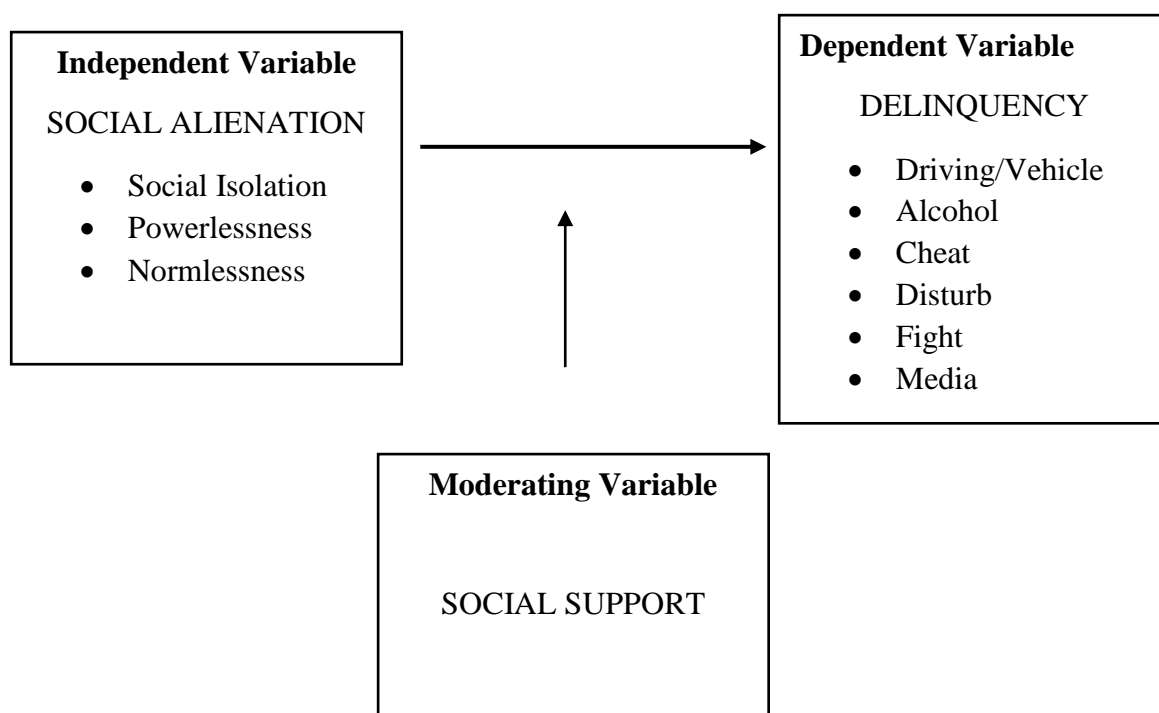


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework Showing the Variables of the Study.



The study highlights a critical research gap in understanding how social support moderates the relationship between social alienation and delinquency, particularly among Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). While previous studies have extensively examined social alienation and delinquency as separate constructs, limited attention has been given to how social support influences this relationship. This oversight leaves significant gaps in addressing the nuanced interplay of these factors, especially in local contexts like the Davao Region, where socio-cultural dynamics and systemic challenges shape the experiences of CICL. The study's uniqueness lies in its integrative approach, focusing on the moderating role of social support, which has been underexplored. Its urgency stems from the high prevalence of CICL cases in the region and the need for evidence-based interventions tailored to their social and emotional contexts. Addressing this gap is essential for developing targeted programs that foster resilience and rehabilitation, contributing to a more inclusive juvenile justice system.

The primary purpose of this study is to determine whether social support has a moderating effect on the relationship between social alienation and delinquency. Specifically, this study addressed the following objectives: first, to assess the level of social alienation in terms of *social isolation, powerlessness, and normlessness*.

The second is to ascertain the level of delinquency in terms of *driving/vehicle, alcohol, cheat, disturb, fight, and media*. Thirdly, to assess the level of perceived social support in terms of *significant others, family, and friends*. Another objective is to determine the significant relationship between social alienation and delinquency, social support and delinquency, and social alienation and social support. Lastly, to find out if social support has a moderating effect on the relationship between social alienation and delinquency.

Furthermore, the formulated null hypotheses will be tested at the level of significance of 0.05. It assumes that there is no significant relationship between social alienation and delinquency, social support and delinquency, and social alienation and social support. Lastly, the moderating effect of social support in the relationship between social alienation and delinquency is not significant.

This study holds global significance by contributing to the literature on social alienation, delinquency, and the moderating role of social support, offering a nuanced understanding of these dynamics in the context of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). Its findings provide actionable insights for various institutions and sectors. The study will benefit every government, public, and private institution or agency worldwide, particularly those responsible for combating delinquent behavior. Furthermore, the Philippine National Police's Women and Children Protection Desk can use the study to design evidence-based approaches for addressing the needs of CICL, enhancing their strategies for prevention and intervention. The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council can adopt the findings to inform policy development and improve rehabilitation frameworks that prioritize social reintegration.

This study contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions, by examining the factors contributing to delinquency among Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). It specifically investigates the role of social support in mitigating the negative effects of social alienation on delinquent behavior, providing empirical insights that can strengthen institutional interventions for juvenile rehabilitation. The research underscores the need for inclusive and rehabilitative environments through collaboration among families, social workers, rehabilitation centers, and law enforcement agencies, particularly the Philippine National Police's Women and Children Protection Desk. Such coordinated efforts are essential for developing effective and accountable institutions, ensuring that vulnerable populations like CICL are not overlooked. On a global level, this study enriches the literature on social alienation and delinquency, offering evidence-based recommendations for youth development and juvenile justice agencies. For instance, the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council can leverage these insights to enhance policy formulation and rehabilitation frameworks, while law enforcement units can implement targeted prevention programs. By advancing the understanding of the socio-psychological factors influencing juvenile delinquency and the protective role of social support, this research serves as a valuable resource for promoting sustainable peace and justice.

Also, regional and city rehabilitation centers will benefit by using the study to tailor programs that address the psychological and social dimensions of alienation, fostering better outcomes for CICL under their care. Social

workers can integrate these insights into their practice, creating holistic support systems that mitigate alienation and promote resilience. Families of CICL will gain a deeper understanding of their pivotal role in providing emotional and social support, reducing the risk of delinquency. Additionally, future researchers can build upon this study to explore related dimensions, such as cultural and systemic influences, thereby expanding the scope of knowledge in juvenile justice and social welfare.

## METHOD

Presented in this section are the methods and procedures employed in this study, which include the research respondent, materials and instrument, and design and procedure.

### Research Respondent

This study focused on Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) residing in rehabilitation facilities within Davao City, selected due to its higher prevalence of delinquency compared to other areas. As the most densely populated city in the Davao Region, Davao City has consistently recorded the highest rate of CICL cases, as reported in the Situationer Report on CICL in Region XI. The respondents shared common attributes, including being minors who had committed legal offenses and were undergoing rehabilitation. A total of 204 CICL from the Children's Village of Bahay Pag-Asa and the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth comprised the sample. The study employed total enumeration sampling, wherein all eligible CICL within the selected facilities were included. This approach ensured a comprehensive representation of the population, aligning with recommendations by Burns (2000) that census sampling is suitable when the population size is manageable and specific. This technique was justified by the study's intent to capture the full scope of experiences and characteristics of CICL in these facilities, providing robust and inclusive data for analysis.

The study included Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) who were confined to the Children's Village of Bahay Pag-Asa and the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth in Region XI. The inclusion criteria specified that participants must have been 15 years old to 17 years old, or 18 years old but not more than 21 years old, provided they were under 18 years old during the commission of the offense. The offenses committed by the respondents involved crimes against persons, property, public order, drug-related offenses, and traffic-related violations. CICL from other rehabilitation centers or those not confined to the specified facilities were excluded from the study to ensure uniformity and relevance to the study area. Additionally, respondents who chose to withdraw participation during data collection or who were unable to sign the informed and assent form were also excluded. This comprehensive inclusion, exclusion, and withdrawal framework ensured the study's focus on a clearly defined and ethically managed population. Withdrawal criteria ensure participants can opt out of the study at any time without consequences, a right communicated clearly during recruitment and stated in consent and assent forms.

### Materials and Instruments

This study utilized a survey questionnaire adapted from established tools to measure social alienation, delinquency, and social support. Social alienation was assessed using Dean's Alienation Scale (1969), encompassing three indicators: Social Isolation (9 items), Powerlessness (5 items), and Normlessness (6 items). Delinquency was measured with Curcio's (2015) Australian Self-reported Delinquency Scale-Revised, covering six subscales: Driving/Vehicle (5 items), Alcohol (3 items), Cheat (4 items), Disturb (4 items), Fight (3 items), and Media (3 items). Social support was evaluated using Zimet et al.'s (2016) Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, which includes subscales for Significant Others (4 items), Family (4 items), and Friends (4 items).

The variables of the study will be rated using the 5-level Likert Scaling system as follows: A mean score falling within the range of 4.20 to 5.00 is categorized as "Very High," indicating that measures related to the variables are consistently manifested. In the range of 3.40 to 4.19, a mean score is labeled as "High," signifying that measures related to the variables are frequently manifested. "Moderate" category corresponds to mean scores within the range of 2.60 to 3.39, suggesting that measures related to the variables are occasionally manifested. Scores falling between 1.80 and 2.59 are classified as "Low," indicating that measures related to the variables

are rarely manifested. Lastly, mean scores within the range of 1.00 to 1.79 are labeled as "Very Low," suggesting that measures related to the variables are never manifested in the context of the study.

The questionnaire underwent a thorough validation process by a panel of experts who evaluated the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items to ensure their suitability for the study. This evaluation resulted in a mean score of 4.31, indicating a high level of agreement among the reviewers regarding the quality and appropriateness of the instrument's content. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted to further assess the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's alpha, a widely accepted reliability coefficient. The results revealed excellent internal consistency across all three scales: the Dean's Alienation Scale had an alpha of 0.982, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support had an alpha of 0.990, and the Australian Self-reported Delinquency Scale-Revised had an alpha of 0.972. Since all values exceed the commonly accepted threshold of  $\alpha \geq 0.70$ , the instrument can be deemed highly reliable. This indicates that it is a reliable and valid tool for measuring the relevant constructions in this study.

## Design and Procedure

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design with moderating analysis through path analysis to investigate the relationship between social alienation and delinquency among Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). Additionally, it examined the moderating role of social support. The descriptive aspect of the study involved collecting and analyzing data on the socio-demographic characteristics and personal experiences of CICL, which helped identify patterns and trends relevant to their psychosocial context. For the correlational analysis, Pearson's  $r$  assessed the relationship between social alienation and delinquency, while path analysis examined moderating effects. Moderation occurs when the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable change due to a third variable, known as the moderator (Kenny, 2018).

To ensure instrument validity, an expert review and content validation were conducted, while reliability was established through pilot testing and analysis using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs meeting the acceptable threshold ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ). Ethical clearance and permission to conduct the study were obtained from the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO). Data collection was conducted face-to-face to ensure accuracy and sensitivity to context.

During the study, the researcher adhered to all ethical standards established by the University of Mindanao Professional Studies. The University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) reviewed the thesis proposal in accordance with key ethical principles, including voluntary participation, privacy, and confidentiality, recruitment, risk and benefit assessment, plagiarism prevention, fabrication and falsification, conflict of interest management, prevention of deceit, and proper permissions from organizations or locations involved. After the review, the study was granted certification under UMEREC Protocol Number 2024-334, confirming compliance with the University's ethical guidelines. This ensured that the research maintained the highest standards of integrity and respect for participants throughout its execution.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the interpretation, statistical analysis, and explanation of the research findings.

### Social Alienation among Children in Conflict with the Law

Table 1 presents a summary of the comprehensive assessment of social alienation among Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) with an overall mean score of 3.42 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.29, which indicates a high level of social alienation with moderate variability in responses, suggesting consistent experiences of alienation among the children. Normlessness, with the highest mean score of 3.56 (SD = 1.43), highlights a significant disconnection from societal norms, reflecting a critical area of concern. While social isolation and powerlessness reveal moderate ratings, social isolation emerges as the lowest-scoring indicator at 3.32 (SD = 1.17), it still represents a moderate level of alienation, with the highest variability among the indicators, indicating that while feelings of separation or loneliness are present, they are somewhat less intense compared to normlessness and powerlessness.

Table 1 Level of Social Alienation of Children in Conflict with the Law

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Social Isolation	1.17	3.32	Moderate
Powerlessness	1.36	3.39	Moderate
Normlessness	1.43	3.56	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>High</b>

The high level of social alienation experienced by Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) significantly shapes delinquency by fostering a disconnection between individuals and their surrounding environment, ultimately contributing to social and psychological instability. This is consistent with the study of Sahan (2021), which elucidates the concept of social alienation and highlights that the rupture between individuals and their built environment exacerbates feelings of isolation and disconnection, which, in turn, can fuel social problems, including delinquency.

The connection between normlessness and delinquency has long been established by Anomie Theory. Normlessness in individuals makes them experience alienation because the subject is less able to blend in in a group or when interacting (Rarahmawati & Astuti, 2022). According to Durkheim, normlessness arises from societal disorganization brought about by rapid social changes, economic inequality, and weakened institutions. These theoretical insights support the current study's findings by emphasizing how uncertain societal values and structures psychologically impact CICL, leading to a sense of disorientation and alienation. The lack of shared values or community stability caused by these uncertainties further heightens the risk of delinquency as individuals struggle to navigate and adapt to unstable environments.

### Social Support among Children in Conflict with the Law

Table 2 presents the Level of Social Support among Children in Conflict with the Law, with an overall mean score of 2.65, which reflects a moderate level of social support, indicating that CICLs generally perceive a considerable amount of support in their lives. The overall standard deviation (SD) of 1.31 suggests moderate variability in responses, showing some differences in perceived levels of support among participants. Among the indicators, Family demonstrates the highest mean score (2.91, Moderate), suggesting that family remains a relatively strong source of support for CICL. Conversely, support from significant others shows the lowest mean of 2.34, classified as low, indicating a notable gap in support from mentors, community leaders, or other influential non-family figures. This finding suggests that CICL faces significant barriers in receiving support from important adults outside their family and peers. Factors like stigma, lack of structured programs, limited resources, and trust issues weaken these crucial support networks. It highlights the need to develop formal mentorship and community programs to strengthen adult-youth relationships, which can help reduce social alienation and delinquency among CICL.

Table 2 Level of Social Support of Children in Conflict with the Law

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Significant Others	1.51	2.34	Low
Family	1.30	2.91	Moderate
Friends	1.34	2.69	Moderate
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>Moderate</b>



These manifestations are clear from the assertions made by a number of authors suggesting a relationship between social support and delinquency is complex. For instance, Singstad et al. (2021) highlight several key reasons underlying their perceived low social support and its connection to delinquency. Adolescents in rehabilitation youth centers commonly have histories of adverse life experiences and currently face numerous challenges that negatively impact their quality of life. These hardships often translate into weakened social support networks, which are crucial for healthy development and behavioral regulation.

Similarly, Haugstvedt's (2024) results highlight that social support from close family or friends can buffer the effects of risk factors like discrimination and delinquency, reducing tendencies toward violence or extremist behaviors. This protective aspect of social support suggests that positive relationships can act as a critical intervention point for at-risk youth. Moreover, Tucker et al. (2020) Family and friend social support as mediators of adolescent sibling victimization and mental health, self-esteem, and delinquency. It underscores the importance of strengthening familial support systems and fostering supportive relationships to reduce the risk of delinquency and promote psychological well-being among adolescents experiencing victimization. In addition, while non-family factors such as poverty, drug abuse, and educational disparities also contribute to delinquency, the foundational influence of family remains crucial. Therefore, addressing negative family dynamics through targeted interventions can be an effective approach to mitigating delinquent tendencies and fostering prosocial development in children.

### Delinquency among Children in Conflict with the Law

Table 3 highlights the level of delinquency among children in conflict with the law across six key indicators, with an overall mean score of 2.98, categorized as Moderate. Among the six indicators, Alcohol ranks the highest with a mean of 3.97 (High), indicating that alcohol-related delinquency is the most prevalent behavior in this group. Conversely, disturb-related delinquency is rated low, with a mean of 2.02.

These findings underscore that while the overall level of delinquency is moderate, alcohol use and risky driving behaviors are prominent concerns. The relatively high variability in fighting and driving-related delinquency points to the need for targeted interventions that address these specific behaviors. Media-related delinquency, being the least common, may require less immediate attention but still warrants monitoring, given its moderate variability and potential to escalate.

Delinquency includes behaviors such as driving infractions, alcohol use, cheating, disturbances, fighting, and media misuse, as evidenced by the presented results. Such results corroborate with Nurhadiyanto et al. (2024) that alcohol abuse among adolescents is an increasingly serious problem that continues to rise each year. Adolescents who drink alcohol tend to display harmful behaviors and are more likely to become involved in juvenile delinquency, which includes any criminal acts committed by youths that threaten their own safety or that of others. Solitary drinking among adolescents and young adults is often linked to various psychosocial issues and alcohol-related problems, as well as drinking as a coping mechanism. This trend may be largely attributed to the easy accessibility of alcohol in stores, which allows young people to obtain it with minimal effort (Sharma & Su, 2020).

Table 3 Level of Delinquency of Children in Conflict with the Law

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Driving/Vehicle	1.40	3.58	High
Alcohol	1.28	3.97	High
Cheat	1.20	2.66	Moderate
Disturb	1.18	2.02	Low
Fight	1.42	3.38	Moderate
Media	1.10	2.26	Low
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The findings in disturb-related delinquency are supported by Johnston et al. (2020) stating that adolescents are significantly more engaged in alcohol and drug use than in property-related offenses. This stark contrast highlights a troubling reality: while substance use is frequently accepted or even encouraged within peer groups, acts of vandalism and similar behaviors are typically frowned upon. It is crucial that we address this normalization of substance use among youth and work towards fostering healthier peer influences. Together, these findings seamlessly connect the presented data to existing research, highlighting the complexity and social underpinnings of delinquent behaviors. Overall, the data highlight key behavioral areas for focused intervention to reduce delinquency among children in conflict with the law.

### Significance on the Relationship between Social Alienation and Delinquency of Children in Conflict with the Law

Table 4 highlights a significant relationship between social alienation (with three dimensions: Social Isolation, Powerlessness, and Normlessness) and different forms of delinquency among Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) with an overall score of  $r=.891$ ,  $p=.000$ . The results reveal strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships across all indicators indicating that higher levels of social alienation are associated with increased delinquent behaviors. The findings on the relationship between social alienation and delinquency reveal significant roles for social isolation ( $r = .866$ ,  $p = .000$ ), powerlessness ( $r = .854$ ,  $p = .000$ ), and normlessness ( $r = .877$ ,  $p = .002$ ).

Social isolation and feelings of powerlessness are closely tied to risky behaviors, particularly vehicle-related offenses ( $r = .888$ ,  $p = .000$ ;  $r = .892$ ,  $p = .000$ ), while their connection to disturb-related delinquency is weaker ( $r = .400$ ,  $p = .000$ ;  $r = .380$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This indicates that socially isolated youths are more likely to engage in dangerous activities like unauthorized driving, seeking control, escape, or validation as supported by Bates et al. (2022) which states that driving delinquency, encompassing behaviors like driving under the influence (DUI), unlicensed driving, and high-speed offenses, is frequently associated with broader patterns of criminal behavior. While normlessness correlates with vehicle-related offenses ( $r = .902$ ,  $p = .000$ ) while weakly correlates with cheating-related delinquency ( $r = .656$ ,  $p = .000$ ), this weak association suggests that feeling powerless may not directly lead to minor, outward disruptions but is more related to internal distress or more significant rule-breaking (like theft, driving violations, etc.). Powerlessness correlates with media-related offenses ( $r = .281$ ,  $p = .000$ ), reflecting Barry's (2023) assertion that disempowerment drives delinquency. Normlessness aligns with Durkheim's anomie theory, linking societal disorganization to deviance, though Kratcoski et al. (2020) argue that supportive environments can reduce its effects.

Table 4 Significance on the Relationship between Social Alienation and Delinquency of Children in Conflict with the Law

Social Alienation	Delinquency						
	Driving /Vehicle	Alcohol	Cheat	Disturb	Fight	Media	Overall
Social Isolation	.888** .000	.808** .000	.660** .000	.400** .000	.807** .000	.555** .000	.866** .000
Powerlessness	.892** .000	.782** .000	.642** .000	.380** .000	.798** .000	.567** .000	.854** .000
Normlessness	.902** .000	.801** .000	.656** .000	.387** .000	.817** .000	.610** .000	.877** .000
Overall	.920** .000	.819** .000	.671** .000	.399** .000	.830** .000	.595** .000	.891** .000

These results have critical implications for policy, theory, and practice in addressing delinquency among children in conflict with the law. The need for targeted interventions, such as community engagement, mentorship, media literacy programs, and school-based initiatives to reduce feelings of alienation, and not forgetting family involvement and emotional support, are crucial in mitigating delinquency.

### Significance on the Relationship between Social Alienation and Social Support of Children in Conflict with the Law

Table 5 shows a very strong, negative, and statistically significant relationship across all dimensions and sources of social support ( $r = -.940$ ,  $p = .000$ ), indicating an inverse relationship — as social support increases, social alienation decreases, and vice versa with normlessness showing the highest correlation ( $r = -.917$ ,  $p = .000$ ), particularly affecting support from significant other ( $r = .899$ ,  $p = .000$ ) which reflects that the more social support CICL perceive, the less alienated they feel, particularly in areas related to disconnection from societal norms. Powerlessness is significantly linked to inadequate social support, with a strong negative correlation observed ( $r = -.913$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This relationship is most pronounced regarding support from significant others ( $r = -.902$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), while family support shows a weaker correlation ( $r = -.836$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This underscores the critical importance of emotional validation from mentors, teachers, and social workers for children in conflict with the law (CICL), as it alleviates feelings of powerlessness and enhances personal agency.

Table 5 Significance on the Relationship between Social Alienation and Social Support of Children in Conflict with the Law

Social Alienation	Social Support			
	Significant Others	Family	Friends	Overall
Social Isolation	-.889** .000	-.847** .000	-.853** .000	<b>-.911**</b> <b>.000</b>
Powerlessness	-.902** .000	-.836** .000	-.854** .000	<b>-.913**</b> <b>.000</b>
Normlessness	-.899** .000	-.849** .000	-.855** .000	<b>-.917**</b> <b>.000</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>-.923**</b> <b>.000</b>	<b>-.868**</b> <b>.000</b>	<b>-.878**</b> <b>.000</b>	<b>-.940**</b> <b>.000</b>

In addition, social isolation negatively correlates with social support ( $r = -.911$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), particularly from significant others ( $r = -.899$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), with family support reflecting a weaker association ( $r = -.847$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). CICLs, with strong connections to supportive figures outside their families, experience less social isolation, highlighting the need for robust support networks to improve the emotional well-being and resilience of these young individuals.

These results are consistent with Lee et al. (2020), who highlight the detrimental effects of isolation on social networks and well-being, particularly in vulnerable populations. Similarly, Lee et al. (2020) also state that social support buffers against the negative effects of loneliness and isolation. Overall, these results underscore the need for targeted interventions to reduce alienation and strengthen social networks, particularly peer and family connections, to enhance social integration and well-being among children in conflict with the law.

This underscores the critical role of social support, particularly from friends, in mitigating social alienation among children in conflict with the law. The strong correlations between social isolation, normlessness, and support from friends suggest that peer relationships are vital in addressing feelings of alienation. This underscores the need for peer support programs and school-based interventions that foster positive peer

interactions. While family support shows weaker correlations, efforts to strengthen family bonds remain important.

### Significance on the Relationship between Social Support and Delinquency of Children in Conflict with the Law

Table 6 explores the Significance of the Relationship between Social Support and Delinquency among Children in Conflict with the Law, revealing an overall significant inverse relationship ( $r = -.881$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This shows that all correlation coefficients are negative, meaning social support increases, delinquent behaviors decrease. The strength of the correlations ranges from moderate to very strong, clearly indicating that higher perceived support from significant others, family, and friends reduces the likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior.

The strongest overall relationship in social support comes from driving/vehicle delinquency ( $r = -.916$ ,  $p = .000$ ) this indicates that strong social support—regardless of source—is most effective in preventing unauthorized or risky vehicle-related behavior, which may symbolize rebellion, control, or independence among CICL while the lowest overall relationship stems from disturb-related delinquency and perceived family support ( $r = -.339$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Although statistically significant, this is the weakest association. It may suggest that family support does not directly deter less structured or spontaneous disruptive behavior, which might be more reactive and situational.

Table 6 Significance on the Relationship between Social Support and Delinquency of Children in Conflict with the Law

Social Support	Delinquency						
	Driving /Vehicle	Alcohol	Cheat	Disturb	Fight	Media	Overall
Significant Others	-.900** .000	-.796** .000	-.630** .000	-.364** .000	-.806** .000	-.572** .000	-.856** .000
Family	-.849** .000	-.740** .000	-.635** .000	-.339** .000	-.767** .000	-.541** .000	-.815** .000
Friends	-.852** .000	-.725** .000	-.631** .000	-.386** .000	-.783** .000	-.577** .000	-.831** .000
Overall	-.916** .000	-.797** .000	-.666** .000	-.383** .000	-.830** .000	-.595** .000	-.881** .000

The strong negative correlation between perceived social support from significant others and delinquency is consistent with Yang et al. (2021), who highlight how expanding social networks and high perceived support reduce risky behaviors, such as cyberbullying and deviance. This underscores the critical role of positive peer relationships in mitigating delinquency. These findings emphasize the need for multidimensional interventions targeting peer relationships, deviant influences, and supportive family and community environments to comprehensively address juvenile delinquency (Zhuoma, 2024).

These results show that an important factor in reducing delinquency among children in conflict with the law is support from a significant other. The strong inverse relationship with delinquent behavior highlights the protective value of having good social support. It is vital that attention be focused on providing programs that foster social support systems such as peer mentoring, community involvement, and family counseling in order to curb delinquency and foster positive youth development.



## Moderation Analysis of the Relationships Between Social Alienation, Social Support, and Delinquency

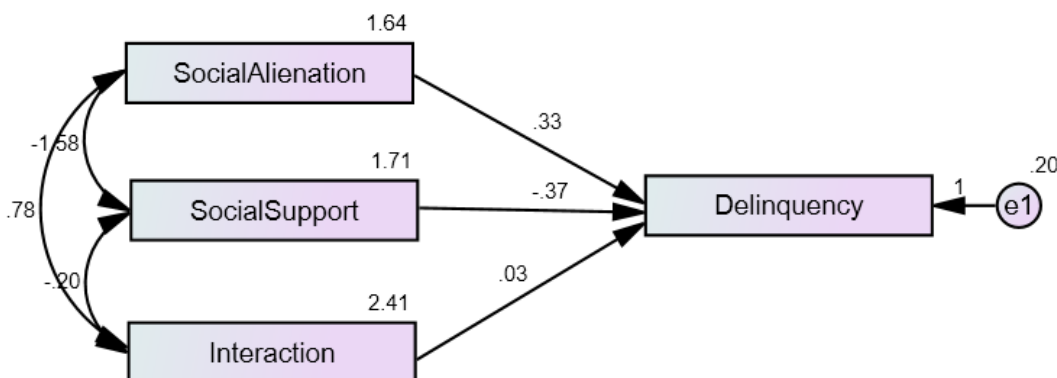
Table 7 examines the moderation analysis of the relationships between social alienation, social support, and delinquency. The first hypothesis (H01) is supported, demonstrating that social alienation has a significant positive effect on delinquency ( $\beta=.332$ ,  $p=.024$ ). This indicates that CICLs who experience higher levels of social alienation are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. The second hypothesis (H02) was strongly supported, showing that social support has a significant negative effect on delinquency ( $\beta=-.375$ ,  $p=.005$ ). This finding emphasizes that stronger social support systems can effectively reduce delinquent behavior. The third hypothesis (H03), which tested the interaction effect, was not supported ( $\beta=.031$ ,  $p=.458$ ), suggesting that the relationship between social alienation and delinquency is not significantly moderated by other variables in the model; therefore, there is no moderating effect. While there is a slight positive estimate, the lack of statistical significance suggests that simply increasing social interactions may not be sufficient to prevent delinquency. This underscores the need to focus more on other factors, such as social alienation and support, rather than solely on encouraging broader social interaction.

Table 7 Moderation Analysis of the Three Variables



### Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Delinquency	<---	Social Alienation	.706	.025	27.907	***	



### Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Delinquency	<---	Social Alienation	.332	.147	2.250	.024	H <sub>01</sub>
Delinquency	<---	Interaction	.031	.042	.741	.458	H <sub>03</sub>
Delinquency	<---	Social Support	-.375	.133	-2.808	.005	H <sub>02</sub>

Hypo 3 is not significant with the presence of a moderating variable; therefore, no moderation.

The finding shows that social support and social alienation each have their own direct effects on delinquency, but social support does not alter how social alienation impacts delinquency. It underscores the complexity of these relationships, suggesting that addressing delinquency requires not only reducing social alienation and enhancing social support but also understanding and managing the broader contextual factors that influence these dynamics. This is consistent with Stubbs-Richardson and May (2021), which states that social factors contribute to adolescents' progression from feelings of anomie (a sense of normlessness) to deviant behaviors. It highlights the role of social support systems in mitigating this transition, suggesting that strong social bonds can buffer the effects of social alienation. Furthermore, Sapp (2024) highlights the critical role of social support in influencing the relationship between early social alienation due to trauma and subsequent delinquent behavior, supporting the notion that enhancing social support can serve as an intervention strategy.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study reveal a high level of social alienation among CICL, primarily driven by normlessness. To address this, rehabilitation centers should offer programs that promote societal values, such as values-based workshops, mentoring, and group activities, to mitigate feelings of detachment and foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, delinquency among CICL is moderate, with alcohol-related and vehicle-related offenses being the most prevalent. Therefore, rehabilitation programs should incorporate alcohol prevention initiatives, driving safety education, and rehabilitation for vehicle-related offenses. Moreover, offering recreational and vocational training can provide positive outlets for their energy. Social support is found to be moderate, with family serving as the primary source. To enhance this, family-centered programs such as parenting workshops and counseling can improve communication. Furthermore, community-based peer support groups should be established to help CICL connect with others for mutual support.

Inferential analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between social alienation and delinquency, with social isolation and normlessness strongly linked to delinquent behavior. To counteract this, restorative justice practices can help CICL reconnect with their communities by fostering accountability and empathy. Additionally, educational programs focusing on conflict resolution and emotional regulation can equip CICL to manage alienation and reduce delinquency. A very strong, negative, and statistically significant relationship between social support and delinquency was also found, indicating that higher levels of social support are associated with lower levels of delinquency. Thus, rehabilitation centers should prioritize strengthening CICL's support networks by offering counseling, parenting workshops, and school-based programs that promote social integration and emotional well-being. Moreover, social support was shown to have a significant negative relationship with social alienation. In response, programs such as family anchor initiatives, monthly family therapy, and efforts to restore community-based support systems should be implemented. However, social support did not fully moderate the relationship between social alienation and delinquency, meaning that the effects of social alienation on delinquency remain consistent regardless of the level of social support. To address this, rehabilitation centers should integrate comprehensive social support systems into their programs, focusing on fostering positive peer relationships and encouraging family involvement. Structured group activities and family therapy sessions can strengthen these bonds and help reduce both alienation and delinquent behavior.

The results support Cullen's Social Support Theory, Agnew's General Theory of Crime, and Durkheim's Anomie Theory, highlighting social alienation's role in delinquency and the protective effect of social support. However, the lack of support for the moderating effect of social support suggests these factors independently influence delinquency without directly interacting.

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