

Community-Based Non-Formal Education to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency: A Case Study of Rumah Pintar Kokoda in West Papua

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study explores the implementation and impact of the *Rumah Pintar* (Smart House) initiative in Kokoda, West Papua, which aims to address juvenile delinquency through community-based non-formal education. The research is significant as it responds to urgent social concerns by offering a culturally grounded educational strategy that enhances adolescent literacy, moral awareness, and social behavior.

Design/methods/approach – This study employs a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study method to explore the effectiveness of the *Rumah Pintar* in Kokoda Village in mitigating juvenile delinquency through non-formal education. Data were collected through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, with participants selected purposively. Thematic analysis was employed, and data validity was ensured through triangulation and member checking.

Findings – The findings reveal that strategic planning by community leaders—focused on addressing alcohol consumption, poverty, and lack of religious knowledge—significantly contributes to reducing delinquent behavior. Despite facing operational challenges and the absence of a formal evaluation system, the initiative has succeeded in lowering school dropout rates and promoting positive behavior through religious education and practical job training.

Research implications – This study highlights the need for additional support and resources to improve educational infrastructure. Future research should focus on developing structured evaluation mechanisms and exploring further community-based strategies for youth development, emphasizing the critical role of education and moral guidance.

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1. Introduction

The importance of addressing juvenile delinquency within the broader social framework must be emphasized. As societies worldwide grapple with the consequences of adolescent deviant behavior, the exploration of innovative and culturally sensitive interventions becomes increasingly crucial. In this context, the *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda initiative in West Papua stands as compelling evidence of the potential of non-formal education and community-based learning strategies in reducing juvenile delinquency. This approach highlights the urgent need for sustainable, community-driven solutions to address the complex socio-economic and cultural dynamics that influence youth behavior. The successful management of such an initiative not only fosters a conducive environment for positive youth development but also significantly contributes to the community's social and moral fabric, underscoring



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the global relevance of localized interventions in combating juvenile delinquency (Khilmiyah & Masruri, 2020; Mohammad & Nooraini, 2021; Sadovnikova et al., 2019).

To comprehensively understand the complexity of juvenile delinquency, it is essential to review literature that addresses various risk and protective factors. Extensive studies have delineated these factors, emphasizing the intricate interplay between individual, familial, and societal influences. For instance, peer involvement in deviant behaviors has emerged as a strong predictor of self-reported delinquency, often surpassing the impact of parental supervision (Mohammad & Nooraini, 2021). Meanwhile, the development of valid and reliable measures for assessing juvenile delinquency constructs reflects a growing understanding of such behavior across diverse contexts (Khilmiyah & Masruri, 2020). Additionally, interventions rooted in orthodox anthropo-social principles have demonstrated promising outcomes in preventing adolescent deviance, revealing the effectiveness of culturally and contextually tailored strategies (Kokoravec et al., 2021; Sadovnikova et al., 2019; Tan, 2023). Household conflict, exacerbated by adolescents' mental health disorders, is a predominant driver of delinquency in urban areas (Tan, 2023).

Furthermore, the influence of media and social environments, coupled with mental health and family dynamics, adds layers of complexity to the juvenile delinquency landscape. Intensive use of social media correlates with increased violations of social norms among adolescents, amplified by mass media representations that normalize deviant behavior (Jabbar & Al-Juboori, 2020). The spillover effects of marital conflict on juvenile delinquency—mediated by mental health issues and associations with deviant peers—underscore the multifaceted nature of these risk factors. These findings suggest that addressing juvenile delinquency requires a holistic approach that accounts for the wide range of influences shaping adolescent behavior (Gearhart & Tucker, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022).

Beyond social and media influences, physical and environmental factors also deserve attention in understanding juvenile delinquency. This is evidenced by differing impacts of risk and protective factors in urban and rural contexts (Kokoravec et al., 2021). The interaction between antisocial motivation and criminal opportunities, for instance, helps distinguish between deviant and non-deviant adolescents (Bobbio et al., 2020). Cross-cultural comparative studies also emphasize the importance of contextual analysis in identifying effective strategies (Pattnaik & Mishra, 2019). Consequently, interventions that consider the physical and social environments of adolescents are essential for designing sustainable solutions.

Despite the growing body of research, certain limitations and gaps must be highlighted, particularly regarding the implementation and effectiveness of juvenile delinquency interventions across diverse cultural and geographic contexts. The varying impact of risk and protective factors, as well as challenges in applying restorative justice mechanisms, illustrates the complexity of addressing delinquency in an effective and culturally sensitive manner (Banjarani et al., 2023; Yin & Zhao, 2024). These gaps reinforce the need for research that expands cross-contextual understanding and enhances the inclusivity of intervention strategies.

Building upon this context, the study seeks to investigate how the *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda operates as a community-driven educational space that mitigates juvenile delinquency in Kokoda Village, West Papua. Specifically, the research addresses two key questions: (1) How are non-formal learning strategies designed and implemented within the *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda to respond to juvenile delinquency? (2) To what extent do these strategies influence behavioral transformation and moral development among adolescents in the community?

By evaluating the program's influence on literacy skills, moral consciousness, and reductions in school dropout and delinquent behaviors, this study contributes to the growing literature on community-based educational interventions. Additionally, it highlights the potential of localized and culturally responsive approaches to address complex socio-educational issues, offering transferable insights for

similar initiatives in other underserved regions (Morina et al., 2021; Rungfasangaroon & Borwornnuntakul, 2022; Xiong et al., 2020).

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study method to investigate the implementation and perceived outcomes of the *Rumah Pintar* (Smart House) initiative in addressing juvenile delinquency in Kampung Kokoda, West Papua. The intrinsic case study design was chosen due to the researcher's interest in the unique socio-cultural and religious dynamics of the community, particularly its majority Muslim population within a predominantly Christian province. This distinctive context provides a compelling lens through which to examine how local values, faith-based leadership, and non-formal education converge to shape adolescent behavior. The methodology allowed an in-depth exploration of the educational interventions undertaken, the engagement of local stakeholders, and the social impacts experienced. While findings are not generalizable, they offer valuable insights into the functioning of community-driven educational models in culturally specific environments.

2.2. Participants and Sampling Techniques

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on individuals with substantial involvement in the *Rumah Pintar* initiative and firsthand knowledge of juvenile behavior issues in the community. The sampling aimed to ensure diversity in role and perspective, encompassing structural leadership, religious authority, and educational implementation. Informants included the traditional village head (I.), the chairperson of the West Papua People's Assembly (Y.), the village imam (A.), and three active educators (S.I., M.D.P., and A.I.D.). Their inclusion was justified by their direct participation in program planning, delivery, and community engagement. The use of initials maintains confidentiality in accordance with ethical research standards. The composition of informants allowed for triangulation across social, spiritual, and pedagogical dimensions, ensuring a nuanced understanding of the initiative's context and impact.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted over one month, focusing on learning activities, counseling sessions, and religious events facilitated by *Rumah Pintar*. Each observation session lasted between 1–2 hours and was recorded in field logs. Interviews were conducted with six primary informants, each lasting approximately 45–60 minutes per session, using open-ended guides developed around themes of youth education and development. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Documents analyzed included activity modules, monthly reports, youth attendance records, and community meeting minutes. Triangulation was conducted to ensure data validity by comparing findings across the three techniques.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using a thematic approach following the six-phase framework: (1) thorough reading and transcription of data, (2) initial manual coding, (3) identification of potential themes, (4) reviewing themes based on data coherence, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) compiling the report of findings. Developed themes included: (a) educational strategies in social

interventions, (b) the role of local actors in shaping adolescent behavioral norms, and (c) changes in adolescents' religious and social behavior. The validity of findings was strengthened through methodological and source triangulation, member checking with informants, and the development of an audit trail to ensure transparency throughout the analysis process.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical principles of qualitative research. Formal approval was obtained from the village government and traditional leaders of *Kampung Kokoda*. Each informant received written information regarding the study's objectives, benefits, procedures, and their right to withdraw participation at any time. Informed consent forms were signed before the interviews were conducted. All data were safeguarded by ensuring the confidentiality of identities through anonymization in research reports and publications.

3. Results

3.1. Social Dynamics and Root Causes of Juvenile Delinquency in Kampung Kokoda

Juvenile delinquency in *Kampung Kokoda* is the result of multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing social factors. Based on the research findings, the primary causes of juvenile delinquency include structural poverty, limited access to formal education, low levels of religious knowledge, and weak parental supervision and parenting practices. The absence of stable employment for most parents contributes to minimal involvement in their children's education, which ultimately leads to a lack of social control within the family. Furthermore, the limited availability of proper learning spaces leads children to spend more time outside the home without supervision. This situation increases their exposure to social environments that do not support moral development.

The geographical location of *Kampung Kokoda*, which is close to the city and the airport, facilitates youth access to urban environments that bring in negative external influences. Harmful habits from outside the village, such as alcohol consumption, promiscuous lifestyles, and both verbal and physical violence, easily penetrate the lives of the youth in the village. Common types of deviant behavior include gang fights, theft, mugging, alcohol abuse, and cohabitation without legal marriage. All these forms of delinquency occur within the context of weak social structures that should function to uphold norms. The absence of institutional roles such as active schools or places of worship leaves adolescents directionless and without values.

"Many of the children drink; sometimes they get drunk at night and sleep during the day, so they don't go to school. Parents also don't supervise them properly—many are busy with their own concerns or simply don't know how to raise their children. And when they are given advice, they often resist, saying, 'We're grown up, we know what we're doing.' As a teacher, I'm confused about where to start," said A.I.D., a secondary school teacher who served as the primary informant in this study.

The religious aspect, which should serve as a source of moral values, has not yet played an optimal role in the lives of adolescents. Instead, customary values exert a stronger influence in shaping their perspectives and attitudes toward social behavior. In many cases, customary norms that are not entirely aligned with religious teachings cause confusion among youth in distinguishing right from wrong. Consequently, moral guidance from religious figures is often disregarded, as it is perceived to contradict local traditions. This situation reflects the weak internalization of religious values that should serve as a bulwark against delinquency.

"Children here listen more to customary rules than to religious ones. When I give advice, they say, 'It's allowed by tradition, why is it not allowed in religion?' So they are often confused because they

lack understanding. They don't know what is right according to religion because they have not been taught it regularly," explained the mosque imam of *Kampung Kokoda*, who also served as a resource person for this study.

Unstable family conditions, with large numbers of children and uncertain income, add complexity to the problem. Many parents are more focused on earning a daily income or are even involved in negative activities such as gambling, resulting in minimal attention given to their children. In households shared by multiple families, fostering healthy interactions among family members becomes difficult. Children spend more time outside the home without supervision and tend to seek affirmation within unproductive peer groups. In such situations, deviant behavior becomes the most accessible outlet for youth expression.

The inadequate physical living environment also affects the comfort and psychological stability of children and adolescents. Homes in *Kampung Kokoda* tend to be cramped and lack quiet learning spaces, resulting in a scarcity of learning activities at home. When domestic spaces do not support learning and character formation, children are more likely to seek alternatives outside the home, which are often unmonitored. In addition, the lack of child- and youth-friendly public facilities such as playgrounds or youth centers means they have limited options for positive activities. This underscores the importance of community-based interventions that can provide safe, educational, and nurturing spaces for holistic youth development.

Thus, the root causes of juvenile delinquency in *Kampung Kokoda* encompass socio-economic, cultural, spiritual, and physical environmental aspects that interact in complex ways. Delinquency is not solely caused by individual youth misconduct but by the absence of systems that support the formation of values, behavior, and a positive life direction. An approach that emphasizes community education based on religious values, local culture, and active community participation is highly relevant in responding to this condition. The *Rumah Pintar* initiative emerges in this context as a collective effort to improve the weak support structures. However, to ensure that this intervention is effective and sustainable, support from various stakeholders is absolutely essential.

3.2. *The Role of Rumah Pintar in Community-Based Non-Formal Education*

Rumah Pintar Kokoda serves as a concrete manifestation of local community efforts to create an alternative educational space responsive to juvenile delinquency issues. The intervention strategy implemented includes the provision of basic literacy services such as reading, writing, and drawing, alongside religious education and practical skills training. This program targets both school-aged children and those who have dropped out, with the primary aim of fostering educational awareness and productive life skills. Learning activities are conducted in an informal setting, integrated into community life, and are inclusive, without strict administrative requirements. This approach allows for broader participation from adolescents who have been overlooked by the formal education system.

The involvement of local figures is a central element in the successful operation of *Rumah Pintar*. Tribal leaders, mosque imams, and volunteer mothers play a pivotal role in designing, managing, and implementing various learning programs. They act not only as educators but also as respected moral guides within the community. These figures possess deep insights into local culture and community needs, making the learning materials more relevant and readily accepted. This collaboration demonstrates that non-formal education rooted in socio-communal structures possesses the strength to shape adolescent behavior more holistically.

The curriculum content at *Rumah Pintar* is arranged flexibly, tailored to local needs and circumstances. Religious education constitutes a core component, implemented through *halaqah*

sessions, value-based discussions, and ethical simulations. Learning is not limited to memorization but emphasizes the internalization of *akhlakul karimah* values through dialogue and daily life practices. Furthermore, basic skills training such as sewing and carpentry is provided to enhance the economic competitiveness of adolescents. This learning model reflects the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in a contextual manner.

“We teach children to recite the Qur’an, perform prayers, and also discuss ethics and social behavior. Sometimes, we conduct simulations, for example, how to respond if a friend invites them to drink alcohol—they must know how to refuse. When teaching reading or writing, we use stories that relate to their daily lives. So, they’re not just good at reading, but also understand how to live properly,” explained I., one of the volunteer teachers at Rumah Pintar Kokoda.

Despite the positive impact, the implementation of this program faces several challenges. Learning activities can only be conducted three times a week due to the limited number of volunteer teachers. Moreover, the absence of a standardized curriculum often causes the learning materials to rely on each teacher’s initiative and capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation by limiting physical interaction and reducing student participation. These conditions highlight the urgent need to strengthen the institutional framework of *Rumah Pintar*, including by providing more stable human resources, facilitator training, and the development of standardized yet contextual learning modules. Without sustained support, the achievements gained risk failing to continue consistently.

3.3. *The Impact of Community-Based Education on Adolescent Behavioral Change*

The implementation of community-based non-formal education through *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda has shown a positive impact on adolescent behavioral change in *Kampung Kokoda*. One of the most prominent changes is the reduction in school dropout rates and the increasing awareness among adolescents regarding the importance of education. Most adolescents who were initially reluctant to attend school have begun to actively participate in learning activities, ranging from basic reading and writing to moral development sessions. This program has also fostered learning motivation and a growing awareness of a better future among previously apathetic youth. Their involvement in the learning process has nurtured self-confidence and discipline, gradually eroding deviant behavior.

In addition, there has been a significant improvement in adolescents’ social behavior, particularly in terms of politeness, responsibility, and respect for religious norms. Through a learning approach that emphasizes spiritual and ethical values, adolescents have begun to exhibit changes in speech, dress, and self-restraint from promiscuity and alcohol consumption. Some parents and community leaders have stated that their children now show greater respect for their elders and actively participate in community activities. This illustrates that education rooted in local and religious values can substantively shape the character of adolescents. The internalization of these values becomes a vital foundation in nurturing a morally upright and responsible young generation.

“My child used to stay out late at night, sometimes drinking with his friends. But after joining *Rumah Pintar*, he began to change. Now he spends more time at home, helps his mother in the kitchen, and on study days, he enthusiastically heads out on his own. I feel this is a blessing, because previously I had given up hope,” revealed a mother who is part of the community that benefits from *Rumah Pintar*.

The community also views *Rumah Pintar* as a safe and productive space for their children. Beyond serving as a learning center, *Rumah Pintar* has become an alternative space that disconnects adolescents from environments potentially leading to negative influences. Youth who previously spent time loitering or idling on the streets now engage in more structured and beneficial activities. Activities such as value discussions, joint Qur’anic reading, and group projects on

handicrafts have become routine, replacing their former habits. This change in atmosphere not only affects individual adolescents but also contributes positively to the community's social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the program's effectiveness still encounters challenges in the area of evaluation. Currently, there is no systematic learning evaluation system in place to assess participants' development comprehensively. The reliance on informal observations by teachers and volunteers renders the measurement of the program's success non-standardized. Yet, the presence of a structured evaluation is essential to determine whether learning objectives have been achieved and to make necessary adjustments to methods or materials. Evaluation also serves as a foundation for program quality improvement and as an advocacy tool for obtaining policy or funding support from external parties.

The development of a learning evaluation system that is adaptive to the local context has become an urgent necessity to strengthen the sustainability of the *Rumah Pintar* program. This system must be capable of measuring the cognitive, affective, and moral aspects of learners holistically. Moreover, the evaluation should be designed in a way that does not overburden volunteer facilitators while still providing a valid picture of participant achievements and needs. If realized, *Rumah Pintar* could not only function as an alternative educational space but also as a replicable model of community intervention in other areas with similar characteristics. The success in shaping adolescent behavioral change in *Kampung Kokoda* serves as evidence that value-based and community-rooted education can be an effective preventive strategy in addressing the complexities of juvenile delinquency.

4. Discussion

Efforts to address juvenile delinquency in *Kampung Kokoda* through the *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda project, which focuses on non-formal education and learning strategies, reveal a multifaceted approach to social issues that are not only endemic to this community but also reflect broader global challenges (Khilmiyah & Masruri, 2020; Mohammad & Nooraini, 2021). The integration of cultural, economic, and educational elements into the project's strategy highlights the complex interrelationship between social infrastructure and youth behavior. This aligns with findings indicating that peer engagement and family involvement play crucial roles in reducing juvenile delinquency (Sadovnikova et al., 2019; Tan, 2023). The project's emphasis on core issues such as alcohol influence, poverty, and religious knowledge demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of delinquency (Kokoravec et al., 2021).

The significant decrease in school dropout rates and the enhancement of moral and spiritual values among adolescents facilitated by *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda stand in stark contrast to conventional punitive approaches, which have proven less effective (Kang, 2023; van der Put et al., 2021). The project's success in engaging youth in constructive activities underscores the importance of offering positive alternatives to deviant behaviors, echoing findings on the detrimental role of social media (Jabbar & Al-Juboori, 2020). This suggests that educational interventions must be tailored and dynamic, addressing the root causes of delinquency in a holistic manner (Zhang et al., 2022).

The multifaceted approach of *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda, encompassing education, community engagement, and moral guidance, is consistent with effective practices in global literature (Dako-Gyeke et al., 2022; Gearhart & Tucker, 2020). The project's unique contribution lies in its integration of cultural and spiritual education—an aspect that remains underexplored in the context of delinquency reduction (Banjarani et al., 2023). This strategy also expands upon findings regarding the importance of community and organizational factors, by demonstrating that cultural alignment and local leadership have a significant impact on shaping youth behavior (Yin & Zhao, 2024).

The project's success in leveraging local cultural norms and community leadership for educational and moral purposes underscores the importance of contextual and locally grounded interventions (Włodarczyk-Madejska & Ostaszewski, 2021; Xiong et al., 2020). This is particularly relevant in regions with limited educational and economic access (Wu & Li, 2023). The emphasis on moral and spiritual education within the curriculum challenges reliance on punitive approaches and advocates for more empathetic and preventive methods (Morina et al., 2021).

The practical implications of this project are substantial: the *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda model could be replicated in other communities with appropriate contextual adaptations. Local governments, NGOs, and schools can adopt approaches that emphasize moral guidance, cultural education, and active community participation. This strategy underscores the potential of non-formal education in preventing delinquency and building positive youth character (Doelman et al., 2023).

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations in the project's implementation. The reliance on volunteers and the absence of a formal curriculum present significant operational challenges (Bobbio et al., 2020; Revital & Haviv, 2023). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for adaptive and resilient educational strategies (Allen, 2022). These limitations should be taken into account in the long-term planning and replication of similar projects.

The *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda project illustrates that addressing juvenile delinquency requires a deeper approach than merely responding to its symptoms. Interventions grounded in the cultural and moral values of the community, as well as local leadership, have proven capable of generating sustainable change (Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2022; Ucuz et al., 2020). This reflects a global trend increasingly emphasizing preventive and community-based approaches to support adolescent development and social resilience (Liu & Miller, 2020; Palma et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

This study affirms that juvenile delinquency in *Kampung Kokoda* is the result of an interaction between various structural and cultural factors, such as poverty, weak family supervision, low levels of religious education, and the influence of a permissive urban environment. In this context, *Rumah Pintar* Kokoda emerges as a form of community-based non-formal education that integrates the strengthening of basic literacy and life skills training. This initiative engages customary leaders, volunteer teachers, and parents in the learning process, and has demonstrated positive outcomes, such as increased youth participation in educational activities, decreased school dropout rates, and the growth of moral and spiritual awareness.

Nevertheless, the program's sustainability faces institutional challenges, particularly the absence of a standardized curriculum and a structured learning evaluation system. Therefore, this study recommends the development of a community-based adaptive evaluation system, training for local facilitators, and the strengthening of partnerships with religious institutions, local governments, and civil society organizations. These findings affirm that localized educational approaches grounded in cultural and spiritual values hold significant potential as inclusive and transformative preventive strategies in shaping moral, productive, and competitive youth.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Maemonah served as the main and corresponding author, leading the conceptualization, research design, and manuscript writing. Sari Hernawati contributed to data collection, analysis, and assisted in the revision and final editing of the manuscript. Dwi Pratiwi Markus provided critical input during the data interpretation phase and supported the refinement of the theoretical framework and discussion section.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.


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