

# Character and Emotional Intelligence Impact on Juvenile Delinquency: The Mediating Role of Interpersonal Intelligence

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## Abstract

**Background:** Adolescence is a crucial period filled with emotional, social, and academic challenges, which have the potential to trigger juvenile delinquency. Preliminary surveys show forms of delinquency such as truancy, smoking, and violating school rules. Dominant causal factors include academic and social pressure, peer influence, and lack of parental supervision.

**Research Objectives:** This study aims to determine the influence of character strength and emotional intelligence on juvenile delinquency, with interpersonal intelligence as a mediating variable in vocational high school students.

**Research Method:** This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The sample consisted of 250 vocational high school students in Cianjur City. Data were collected using a validated closed questionnaire and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) technique.

**Research Findings:** The results showed that character strength had a negative and significant effect on juvenile delinquency, with a coefficient value of -0.321, indicating that increasing character strength can significantly reduce juvenile delinquency. In addition, emotional intelligence also showed a negative and significant effect on juvenile delinquency. This confirms that increasing emotional intelligence also contributes to reducing juvenile delinquency. Interpersonal intelligence negatively and significantly impacts juvenile delinquency, with a coefficient value of -0.161, indicating that better interpersonal skills can reduce the tendency for delinquent behavior. Furthermore, character strength and emotional intelligence were found to have a positive and significant effect on interpersonal intelligence, with coefficient values of 0.370 and 0.484, respectively. Another important finding is the significant negative indirect effect of character strength and emotional intelligence on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence.

**Conclusion:** This study concludes that strengthening students' character and emotional intelligence and increasing interpersonal intelligence are essential strategies for reducing juvenile delinquency.

**Novelty/Originality/Value:** This study offers an integrative model that places interpersonal intelligence as a mediating variable that bridges the relationship between character strengths and emotional intelligence to juvenile delinquency. This study enriches the literature on the character and emotion-based juvenile delinquency prevention approach in the context of vocational education, which has not previously been explored specifically in new industrial areas.

**Keywords:** juvenile delinquency, character education, family environment, vocational high school students.

## How to Cite:

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time full of challenges and significant changes. It is when individuals search for their identity, feel anxious about academic and social pressures, and experience changes in relationships with peers, family, and the surrounding environment. It is during this time that adolescents are usually very vulnerable to negative juvenile delinquency behavior. Adolescence is a stage of development that is full of change and complexity. One of the main factors that influences the level of juvenile delinquency is the physical and hormonal changes they experience (Moreno et al., 2024). These changes can affect their mood, emotions, and behavior, making them more likely to take risks and engage in impulsive behavior. In addition, adolescents are also searching for their identity and identity. This search process often involves experimenting with new behaviors and searching for the correct identity. This is what makes them more vulnerable to juvenile delinquency because they are trying various options to find their identity (Jackson et al., 2022).

Many factors can cause an adolescent to commit juvenile delinquency; this can be in the form of academic and social pressure, which are essential factors. Adolescents often face high levels of stress in schoolwork and exams. In addition, peer pressure can also have a significant impact on their decisions. Teenagers who want to be accepted by their peers are likelier to engage in delinquent behavior to achieve that goal (Yu et al., 2022). Peer influence also plays a significant role. If teens are involved with friends who engage in delinquency, they are more likely to engage in similar behavior. Lack of supervision from parents or guardians can also be a risk factor. Teenagers without parental supervision may feel freer to engage in harmful behavior without apparent consequences. The home and school environments can also have an impact (Mancini et al., 2024).

An environment full of violence, conflict, or social instability can increase the risk of juvenile delinquency. Stress levels also play a role. Teenagers often face stress from various sources, such as academic pressure, family problems, or social problems. Some teens may seek ways to cope with this stress, and in some cases, this may mean engaging in delinquency. Lack of involvement in positive activities can also make teens more vulnerable to delinquency. Teens who lack positive activities or participation may have more unstructured free time, which can increase the risk of engaging in delinquent behavior (Niu et al., 2023).

The complexity and diversity of factors contributing to juvenile delinquency emphasize the importance of holistic understanding and integrated handling in addressing this problem. Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem faced by many adolescents throughout the world, including in Indonesia, because it can hurt their development and well-being and increase the risk of being involved in legal and social problems. The problem of juvenile delinquency in Indonesia is not only limited to big cities; Cianjur City, as an new industrial city, also experiences the same problem, as an illustration of the types of juvenile delinquency committed by vocational school students in Cianjur City, a preschool period. A survey was conducted on 100 vocational school students related to the types of juvenile delinquency, which was carried out to find out the typical behavioral patterns that occur in vocational school adolescents, the results of which are presented in the following table:

**Table 1.** Pre-Survey Results of Types of Juvenile Delinquency

No.	Types of Juvenile Delinquency	Percentage (%)
1	Skiping school	22
2	Smoking	18
3	Fighting with friends	15
4	Skiping extra classes	13
5	Breaking school rules	12
6	Drinking alcohol	10
7	Getting involved in fights	6
	Committing vandalism	4

From the results of a pre-survey conducted on 100 respondents of vocational high school students in Cianjur City, it was seen that most (22%) of them had skipped school. This shows a relatively high tendency among vocational high school students to leave without permission. Furthermore, smoking is a type of juvenile delinquency that is quite common, where 18% of respondents admitted to having done it. However, this percentage is still lower compared to the number of trancies. Fighting with friends 15% and skipping extra classes are also included in the types of juvenile delinquency that are often done, each reaching 13%. Meanwhile, the number of students violating school rules reached 12%. Although the percentage is lower, the presence of cases of drinking alcohol (10%), being involved in brawls (6%), and committing vandalism (4%) shows that some vocational high school students are also engaged in more serious juvenile delinquency behavior. These results provide an overview of the types of juvenile delinquency that need further attention among vocational high school students to prevent and overcome this damaging behavior.

To determine the factors causing vocational school students in Cianjur City to commit juvenile delinquency, the results of a preliminary survey of 100 vocational school students were obtained, as presented in the following table:

**Table 2.** Pre-Survey Results of Factors Causing Juvenile Delinquency

Factors Causing Juvenile Delinquency	Number of Respondents (%)
Academic and social pressure	30%
Peer influence	22%
Lack of parental supervision	18%
Home and school environment	15%
Stress levels	9%
Lack of involvement in positive activities	8%

The results of the pre-survey showed that academic and social pressures were the dominant factors influencing juvenile delinquency, with 30% of respondents citing it as the leading cause. Peer influence was also significant, with 22% of respondents stating that interaction with peers played a role in juvenile delinquency. In addition, lack of parental supervision also played an important role, as acknowledged by 18% of respondents. Factors such as residence and school environment 15%, and stress levels 9%, also had significant contributions. Meanwhile, lack of involvement in positive activities had a lower impact, as acknowledged by 8% of respondents. Therefore, this survey highlights the complexity and diversity of factors influencing juvenile delinquency among vocational high school students. Reducing the impact of juvenile delinquency on school students requires a holistic approach involving schools, families, and communities.

This is a serious problem that can have long-term implications for adolescent development. One practical approach is to incorporate character education into the curriculum. Character education programs help students understand honesty, responsibility, empathy, and integrity. Students can develop positive and responsible behavior by understanding and implementing these values. Through character strength education and development, adolescents can gain the tools and skills to cope with the stresses and challenges they face during the transition. This helps them avoid delinquent behavior and make healthier and more responsible decisions in their lives (Bu, 2022). Therefore, increasing the development of character strengths can be an effective strategy for reducing juvenile delinquency.

This is also supported by previous research conducted by Okwuduba et al., (2021), where this study was conducted by following a group of adolescents for several years. The study results showed that adolescents with higher levels of character strengths such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy tended to have lower levels of delinquency. They were more likely to avoid delinquent behaviors such as drug abuse, law violations, and aggressive actions. Character strengths play a role in helping adolescents make wise and responsible decisions. Likewise, research conducted by Guerra-Bustamante et al., (2019), where this study involved several schools that implemented character education programs in their curriculum and schools that did not.

The results of the study showed that schools that implemented character education programs had lower levels of juvenile delinquency compared to schools that did not implement character education programs. Students in this program tend to understand better character values, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. Thus, their delinquency rate is lower. In addition to character strengths, emotional intelligence factors also play an essential role in preventing adolescents from engaging in juvenile delinquent behavior. Emotional intelligence includes recognizing, understanding, managing, and expressing emotions in a healthy and productive manner (Gautam et al., 2024). Adolescents with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to better cope with the pressures and challenges they face in everyday life. They can handle conflict effectively, manage stress, and build positive relationships with others (Zhang, 2023). In addition, emotional intelligence helps adolescents be more sensitive to their feelings and needs, as well as their needs so that they can better maintain emotional balance and make the right decisions in challenging situations. Thus, developing emotional intelligence can effectively reduce the risk of juvenile delinquent behavior and help adolescents develop the skills needed to succeed in life (Mercader-Rubio et al., 2022).

Interpersonal intelligence helps adolescents interact with the world around them positively and healthily. This creates a strong foundation for avoiding juvenile delinquency because they are better able to cope with social pressures, conflicts, and negative emotions productively. Therefore, encouraging the development of interpersonal intelligence can be an effective strategy for preventing delinquency (Sánchez-Núñez et al., 2020). The importance of the role of interpersonal intelligence in juvenile delinquency is supported by previous studies, such as research conducted by Asri et al., (2024), which identified that adolescents with higher levels of interpersonal intelligence tend to have lower levels of juvenile delinquency. Over several years of observation, findings showed that adolescents who were better at communicating, had higher empathy, and were able to resolve conflicts healthily were less likely to engage in delinquent behavior, such as breaking the law or using drugs. On the other hand, research conducted by Bi & Wang (2021) showed that low levels of interpersonal intelligence in adolescents have a more significant potential for committing juvenile delinquency.

The results of the research gap related to the study of interpersonal intelligence variables with juvenile delinquency conducted by Jackson et al., (2023) concluded that interpersonal intelligence interpersonal intelligence influences juvenile delinquency. Meanwhile, Sulthon & Munir (2023) ended the opposite. Chandran & Nair (2015) views character strength as a positive aspect of yourself that is an integral part of a person and influences how you think, feel, and behave. This definition suggests that character strength is an essential part of an individual and influences all aspects of their life. Travis Hirschi argues that juvenile delinquency occurs due to a lack of social ties between adolescents and society, making them less concerned about social norms. In this context, delinquency results from a lack of commitment to these norms. Collado-Soler et al., (2023) suggests that juvenile delinquency occurs due to the process of associating with individuals who have antisocial values and norms. According to him, delinquency is the result of interactions with friends that stimulate antisocial behavior. Hirschi and Gottfredson developed a theory of self-control, which states that juvenile delinquency occurs due to a lack of strong self-control. They assume that individuals with weak self-control are likelier to engage in delinquent behavior (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).

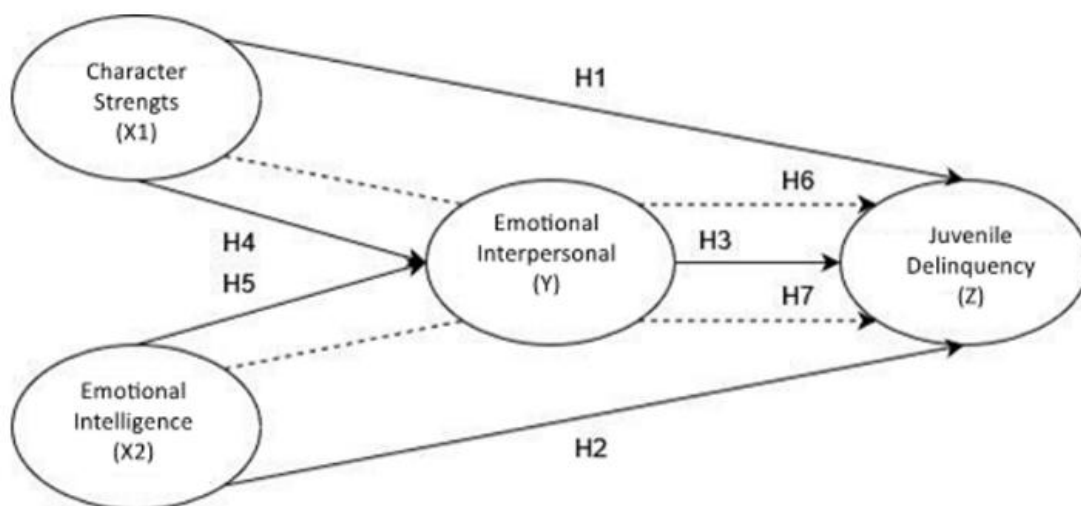
These experts' opinions suggest that juvenile delinquency is antisocial behavior or a violation of social norms carried out by adolescents. Some experts associate it with a mismatch between goals and opportunities, lack of social ties, association with individuals with antisocial values, or lack of self-control. Understanding these factors is essential in efforts to reduce the level of juvenile delinquency in society. From the explanation, it can be concluded that juvenile delinquency, which includes antisocial behavior, drug use, aggressive and violent behavior, neglect of responsibility, and negative peer influence, is a complex phenomenon that has a long-term impact on adolescent development. These indicators play an essential role in identifying and measuring juvenile delinquency. Each indicator reflects various aspects of delinquency, ranging from violations of social norms to non-compliance with rules and the negative impacts of drug use.

To improve understanding and contribute significantly to the literature on adolescent development, this study will dig deeper into the strength of character, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence and their influence on juvenile delinquency behavior in school students. It is important to remember that adolescents are a very heterogeneous group, and the impact of these factors can vary from individual to

individual. Therefore, this study will involve a sample of vocational high school students in Cianjur City to understand individual differences in this context. Thus, this study is expected to provide deeper insight into the factors that influence adolescent behavior and can be a basis for developing more effective interventions to support the positive development of adolescents in Cianjur City and society in general.

## METHODS

Based on the presentation of the theoretical study, a framework of thought was created that describes all variables that the framework of thought that will be developed in this study is as shown in the Fig.1.



**Figure 1.** Constellation of Relationships Between Research Variables

Character strength and emotional intelligence directly affect interpersonal intelligence and juvenile delinquency. Interpersonal intelligence can have a direct impact on juvenile delinquency. Interpersonal intelligence can also mediate the relationship between character strength and emotional intelligence with juvenile delinquency. Based on the theoretical study problems above, the following research hypotheses can be proposed:

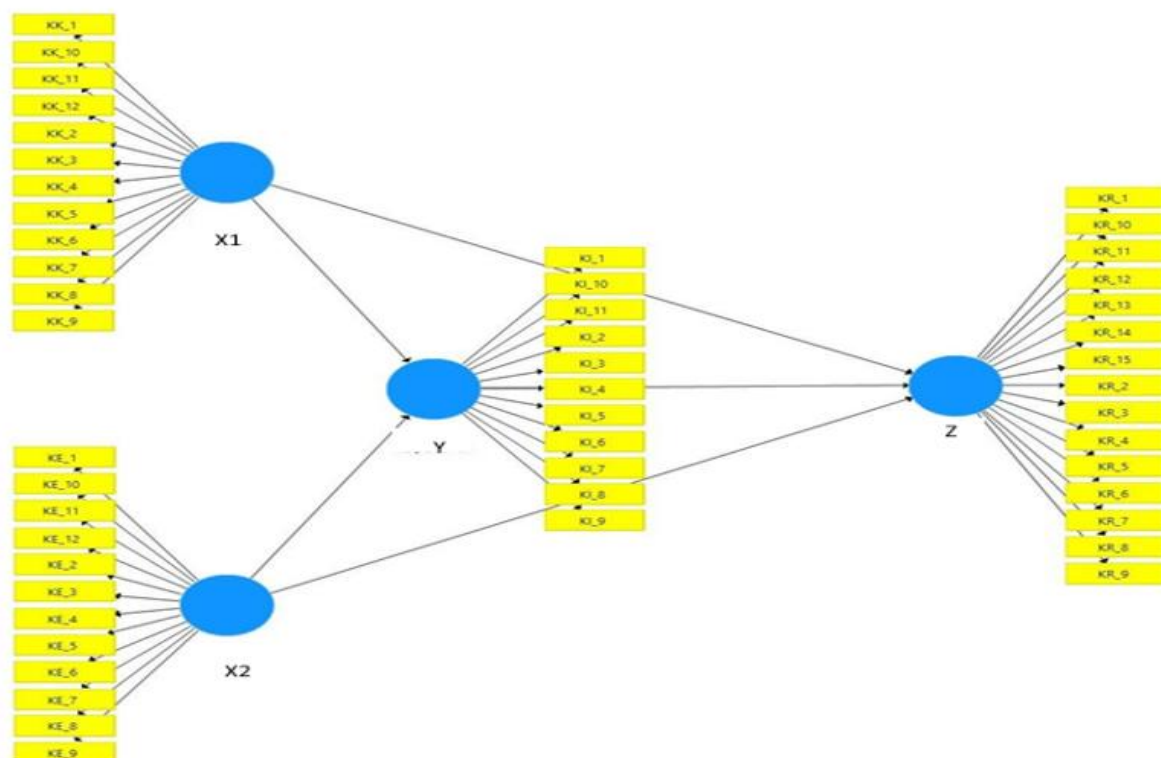
- H1: It is suspected that character strength affects juvenile delinquency.
- H2: It is suspected that there is an effect of emotional intelligence on juvenile delinquency.
- H3: It is suspected that interpersonal intelligence affects juvenile delinquency.
- H4: It is suspected that character strength affects interpersonal intelligence.
- H5: It is suspected that emotional intelligence affects interpersonal intelligence.
- H6: It is suspected that character strength has an influence and is significant on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence.
- H7: It is suspected that emotional intelligence has an influence and is significant on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence.

This research was conducted in all vocational schools in Cianjur City. The research lasted three months, from February 2024 until April 2024. The research method used was a quantitative approach. Population refers to the entire collection of individuals or elements that are the focus in the context of research or statistical studies. This includes all members or elements with characteristics or traits relevant to the research question or the purpose of the data analysis. The population in the study was all vocational school students in Cianjur City based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture up to the eighth semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. Data sources were obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires, usually in the form of opinions of individual or group subjects, results of observations of an Object, activity, or event arranged in the form of statements or questions related to the research variable indicators. The questionnaire



in this study was closed and designed logically according to the problems faced. Respondents' answers in this study used a Likert scale. Secondary data, namely data sources obtained from various literature such as books, journals, magazines, social media, websites, and other sources of information that are still relevant to this study. Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares is used for data analysis and to test relationships between variables in a conceptual model. This powerful and flexible approach is used in the social sciences, business, and other sciences to test theories, identify complex relationships, and understand how certain variables affect other variables.

Building a path diagram based on the design of the outer model and the inner model. The results of the design of the outer and inner models are presented in the form of a path diagram to make it easier to understand. By the conceptual framework of the research that was made, a structural equation analysis model was created as in the following Fig 2.

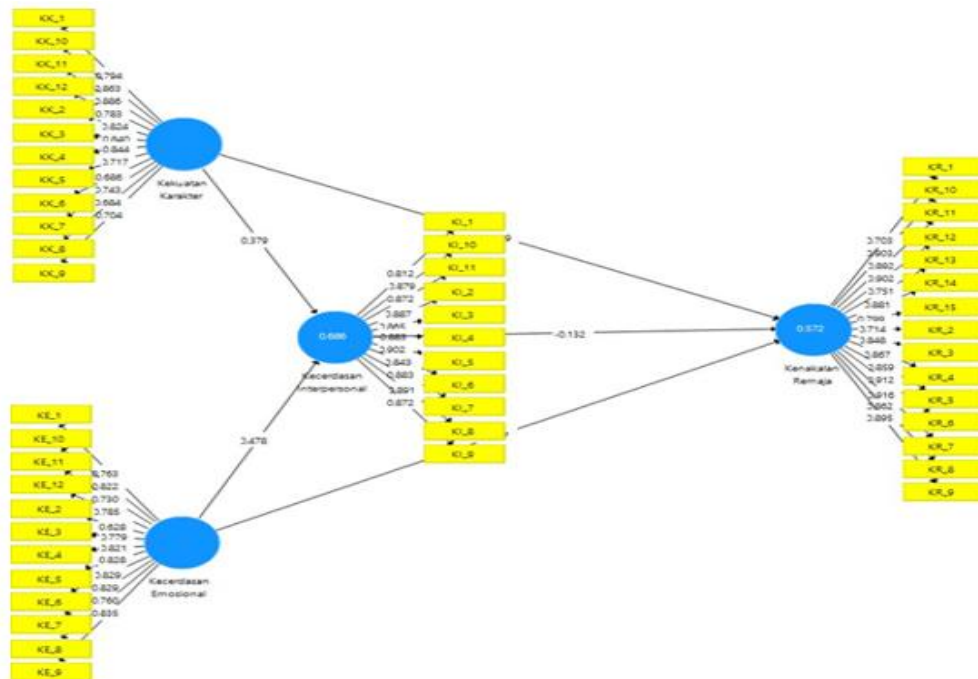


**Figure 2.** Path Diagram

Hypothesis testing is carried out to determine whether the hypothesis or assumption that has been proposed can be accepted or must be rejected based on the sample results obtained. Decision-making is seen from the t-statistic and probability values in basic hypothesis testing. The criteria used are as follows: (1) If the t-statistic value  $> t_{table}$  (1.96) and  $p < 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted (2) If the t-statistic value  $< t_{table}$  (1.96) and  $p > 0.05$  then  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_a$  is rejected. In SEM-PLS does not assume that the data must be normally distributed, then hypothesis testing is carried out using the bootstrapping resampling method.

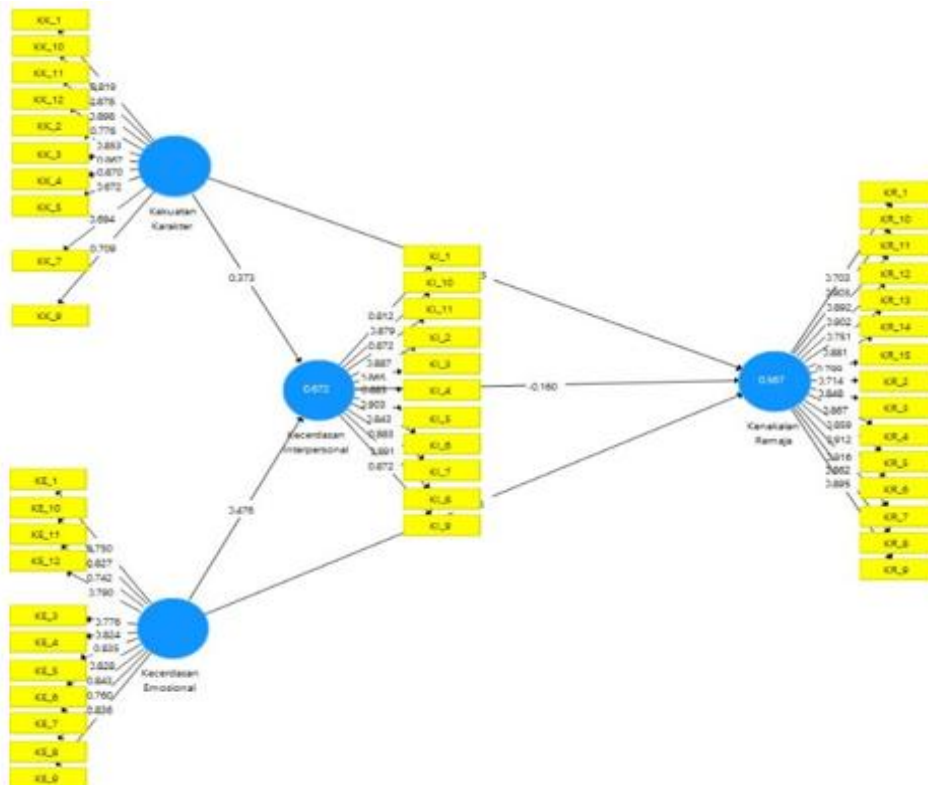
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At this stage, analysis requirements testing is carried out to ensure the validity and reliability of the data before applying the SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares) analysis approach. SEM-PLS is a valuable method for modeling complex relationships between latent variables measured by visible indicators. This approach is ideal for small to medium samples and does not require strict data distribution assumptions. In this test, confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted to check the construct's validity and reliability and ensure the instruments' internal consistency.



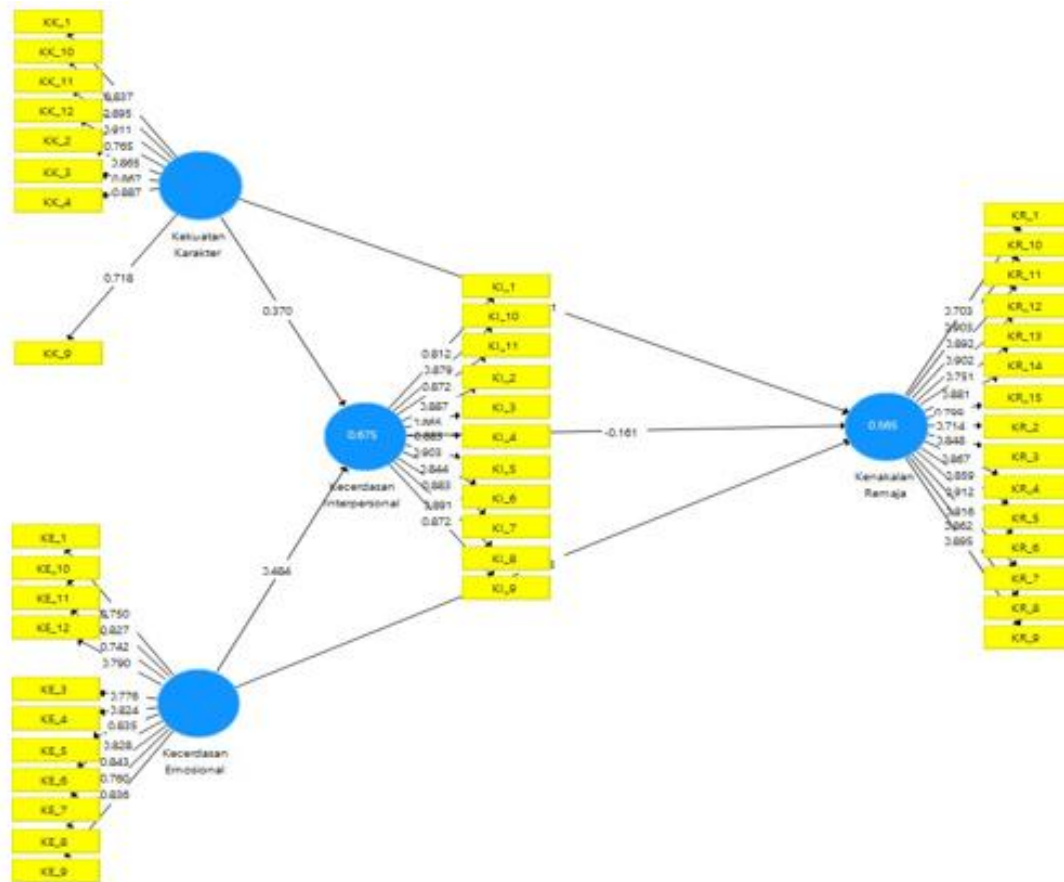
**Figure 3.** Initial Convergent Validity Testing

Based on the results of the initial stage of testing on the concurrent validity analysis using the outer loading value, several indicators from various variables showed values below the 0.7 limit. In the emotional intelligence variable, indicators that were less than 0.7 included KE\_2 (0.628). In character strength, several indicators were also below 0.7, namely KK\_6 (0.686) and KK\_8 (0.684). These indicators must be removed to increase the validity of the model.



**Figure 4.** Second Stage Convergent Validity Testing

The results of the second stage of convergent validity testing showed that there were still several indicators whose outer loading values were still below 0.7, namely in the character strength variables, namely KK\_5 (0.672) and KK\_7 (0.694), so all of these indicators had to be removed from the model.



**Figure 5.** Thrid Stage Covergent Validity Testing

The results of stage 3 testing show that all indicators in each variable have an outer loading value above 0.7. This indicates high convergent validity, good indicator reliability, and statistical significance. This means that these indicators strongly and consistently reflect the latent constructs being measured, thereby increasing the reliability and validity of the overall measurement model. The following outer loading values for each research variable are presented in the following table:

**Table 3.** Outer Measurement

Indicator	Emotional Intelligence	Interpersonal Intelligence	Character Strengths	Juvenile Delinquency
KE_1	0,750			
KE_10	0,827			
KE_11	0,742			
KE_12	0,790			
KE_3	0,776			
KE_4	0,824			
KE_5	0,835			
KE_6	0,828			
KE_7	0,843			
KE_8	0,760			



KE_9	0,836	
KI_1		0,812
KI_10		0,879
KI_11		0,872
KI_2		0,887
KI_3		0,865
KI_4		0,883
KI_5		0,903
KI_6		0,844
KI_7		0,883
KI_8		0,891
KI_9		0,872
KK_1		0,837
KK_10		0,895
KK_11		0,911
KK_12		0,765
KK_2		0,865
KK_3		0,867
KK_4		0,887
KK_9		0,718
KR_1		0,703
KR_10		0,903
KR_11		0,892
KR_12		0,902
KR_13		0,751
KR_14		0,881
KR_15		0,799
KR_2		0,714
KR_3		0,848
KR_4		0,867
KR_5		0,859
KR_6		0,912
KR_7		0,916
KR_8		0,862
KR_9		0,895

From Table 3 above, it can be seen that the outer loading value of all indicators is more significant than 0.7. This indicates that each indicator in the Character Strength, Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, and Juvenile Delinquency variables has high convergent validity. Each indicator strongly and consistently reflects its latent construct, thus providing good reliability and strong statistical significance. Therefore, the measurement model used can be valid and reliable because the indicators measured accurately describe each latent construct. This increases confidence in the results of data analysis and interpretation. Discriminant validity shows that the latent constructs differ; this is measured through the cross-loading value to ensure that each indicator has the highest loading on the intended variable construct, not on other variable constructs. Test results that show good discriminant validity indicate that the constructs in the model are unique and do not overlap conceptually.

Cross-loading values for four variables: Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Interpersonal Intelligence (IC), Character Strengths (CW), and Juvenile Delinquency (CW). Based on the data, it can be seen that each indicator has the highest loading on the intended variable construct compared to other variable constructs, which shows good discriminant validity. For example, the EQ\_1 indicator has the highest loading value on

Emotional Intelligence (0.750) compared to different variables such as Interpersonal Intelligence (0.735), Character Strengths (0.735), and Juvenile Delinquency (-0.625). Likewise, other indicators include EQ\_1, which has the highest loading value on Interpersonal Intelligence (0.812), and CW\_1, which has the highest loading value on Character Strengths (0.837). The KR\_1 indicator also has the highest loading value on Juvenile Delinquency (0.703). The results indicate that the constructs in the model are unique and do not overlap conceptually, thus ensuring that each construct is measured with appropriate indicators according to theory.

Composite Reliability (CR) measures the internal consistency of the indicators that form a construct. CR is calculated by considering the loading factors of each indicator and its error variance. A CR value above 0.7 indicates good reliability, meaning the indicators consistently reflect the measured construct. This suggests that the construct has high internal consistency and can be relied on to measure the desired concept.

**Table 4.** Reliability Test

Variable	Reliability Test
Emotional Intelligence	0,952
Interpersonal Intelligence	9,972
Character Strengths	0,952
Juvenile Delinquency	0,975

**Table 5.** Cronbach Alpha Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha Test
Emotional Intelligence	0,994
Interpersonal Intelligence	9,968
Character Strengths	0,942
Juvenile Delinquency	0,972

Table 5 shows the Cronbach's Alpha value of all variables far above 0.7, with Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Character Strength, and Juvenile Delinquency having values of 0.944, 0.968, 0.942, and 0.972. These values indicate that the indicators in each construct show very high internal consistency. Thus, all constructs in this study are reliable and can be relied on for accurate measurement.

**Table 6.** Hypothesis Testing: Path Analysis

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (( O/STD V)	P Values
Character Strengths → Juvenile Delinquency	-0,321	4,306	0,000
Emotional Intelligence → Juvenile Delinquency	-0,318	4,398	0,000
Interpersonal Intelligence → Juvenile Delinquency	-0,161	2,631	0,000
Character Strengths → Interpersonal Intelligence	0,370	5,425	0,000
Emotional Intelligence → Interpersonal Intelligence	0,484	6,720	0,000

The test results show a path coefficient value between character strength and juvenile delinquency of -0.321 with a t-statistic of 4.306 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, which means that character strength has a negative and significant effect on juvenile delinquency, so H1 is accepted. A coefficient value of -0.321 indicates that increasing character strength significantly reduces juvenile delinquency. Character strength has a significant influence on adolescent behavior, including delinquency. Strong character includes self-control, moral courage, empathy, responsibility, and resilience. These aspects are essential for adolescents in dealing with various social, emotional, and ethical pressures around them. Character strength is an important protective

tool for adolescents. Strong character helps them make wise decisions, manage social pressures well, and protect themselves from negative influences (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). Conversely, a lack of strong character can make adolescents more vulnerable to delinquency because they do not have a solid foundation to face the dynamics of everyday life.

The test results show a path coefficient value between emotional intelligence and juvenile delinquency of -0.318 with a t-statistic of 4.398 and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which means that emotional intelligence has a negative and significant effect on juvenile delinquency, so H2 is accepted. A coefficient value of -0.318 indicates that increasing emotional intelligence significantly reduces juvenile delinquency. Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a vital role in the lives of adolescents, especially in managing their behavior and social interactions. Emotional intelligence refers to a person's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions and understand the feelings of others. This ability dramatically influences coping with life's pressures, social conflicts, and other emotional challenges in adolescents. Emotional intelligence significantly impacts juvenile delinquency because it helps them manage their emotions, understand other people's feelings, healthily resolve disputes and make wise decisions. Adolescents who have high EI tend to be more emotionally stable, more empathetic, and better able to cope with life's pressures in a positive way. On the other hand, adolescents who lack emotional intelligence are more prone to engage in delinquency because they tend to be more impulsive, indifferent to others, and more easily provoked by difficult emotional situations (Pachot, 2024). By improving emotional intelligence, adolescents can avoid negative behavior and live healthier and more productive lives.

The test results show a path coefficient value between interpersonal intelligence and juvenile delinquency of -0.161 with a t-statistic of 2.631 and a p-value of  $0.009 < 0.05$ , which means that interpersonal intelligence has a negative and significant effect on juvenile delinquency, so H3 is accepted. The coefficient value of -0.161 indicates that increasing interpersonal intelligence significantly reduces juvenile delinquency. Interpersonal intelligence refers to a person's ability to understand and interact with others effectively and harmoniously. For adolescents, interpersonal intelligence plays a significant role in shaping their social behavior and influencing how they adapt to various social situations. Adolescents with high interpersonal intelligence tend to be better able to establish positive relationships, manage conflicts, and communicate well, influencing their tendency towards delinquency. Interpersonal intelligence significantly impacts juvenile delinquency because it helps them understand, communicate, and interact with others effectively. Teenagers with high interpersonal intelligence can better build positive relationships, manage conflicts peacefully, and avoid negative behaviors that are often part of delinquency (Windarwati et al., 2022). In contrast, teenagers who lack interpersonal skills tend to have difficulty relating to others, which can lead them to engage in delinquent behavior as a form of outlet or due to social pressure. By improving interpersonal intelligence, teenagers can build healthy relationships, overcome social challenges, and avoid harmful delinquent behaviors.

The test results show a path coefficient value between character strength and interpersonal intelligence of 0.370 with a t-statistic of 5.425 and a p-value of  $0.009 < 0.05$ , which means that character strength has a positive and significant effect on interpersonal intelligence, so H4 is accepted. The coefficient value of 0.370 indicates that increasing character strength will significantly increase interpersonal intelligence. Character strength and interpersonal intelligence are two concepts that are closely related to a person's self-development, especially in adolescents. Character strength includes internal values that guide a person in making good decisions, such as integrity, honesty, responsibility, and self-control. Meanwhile, interpersonal intelligence is the ability to interact with others effectively, understand other people's feelings, and build positive and constructive relationships (Nada et al., 2023). These two things influence and reinforce each other, where character strength can be essential in shaping a person's interpersonal intelligence. Character strength is significant in shaping a person's interpersonal intelligence. Strong character allows adolescents to interact with others more honestly, empathetically, and responsibly, strengthening their ability to build positive social relationships. On the other hand, a lack of good character can hinder their ability to interact effectively with others, increasing the likelihood of conflict or unhealthy relationships (Gao, 2023). Therefore, developing character strengths is very important in helping adolescents develop their interpersonal intelligence, supporting their success in interacting in various social and life contexts.

The test results show a path coefficient value between emotional intelligence and interpersonal intelligence of 0.484 with a t-statistic of 6.730 and a p-value of  $0.009 < 0.05$ , which means that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant influence on interpersonal intelligence, so H5 is accepted. The coefficient value of 0.484 indicates that increasing emotional intelligence will significantly increase interpersonal intelligence. Emotional and interpersonal intelligence are essential to individuals' social and psychological development. Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to a person's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate their own and others' emotions. Interpersonal intelligence (II) is related to the ability to interact with others effectively, build positive relationships, and understand the feelings and perspectives of others (Sumiharsono et al., 2022). These two abilities are interrelated, and emotional intelligence plays a vital role in developing interpersonal intelligence. Emotional intelligence significantly influences interpersonal intelligence because managing emotions, empathizing with others, and communicating constructively are essential in building and maintaining positive social relationships. Emotional intelligence provides a strong foundation for individuals to interact with others more effectively, avoid conflict, and resolve social problems satisfactorily (Pérez-Torres, 2024). Conversely, a lack of emotional intelligence can hinder a person's ability to understand others' feelings, communicate well, or interact healthily, ultimately affecting the quality of their social relationships. Meanwhile, to test the mediation effect or indirect influence, it is presented in Tab 7.

**Table 7.** Specific Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (( O /STD V)	P Values
Emotional Intelligence → Interpersonal Intelligence	-0,078	2,372	0,018
Character Strengths → Interpersonal Intelligence → Juvenile Delinquency	-0,059	2,332	0,020

The test results of character strength on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence obtained a coefficient value of -0.059, T-statistic 2.332, and p-value of  $0.020 < 0.05$ , meaning that character strength has a significant negative indirect effect on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence, so H6 is accepted. Increasing character strength can reduce juvenile delinquency through increasing interpersonal intelligence. Character strength and interpersonal intelligence are two factors that play an essential role in adolescents' social and behavioral development. Character strength refers to internal values that guide individuals in making decisions, such as integrity, self-control, honesty, and a sense of responsibility. On the other hand, interpersonal intelligence is the ability to interact and communicate effectively with others and understand the feelings and perspectives of others in a social context (Esterina et al., 2023). However, in some situations, there is a more complex relationship between character strength and interpersonal intelligence, which can lead to a negative indirect effect on juvenile delinquency. Before explaining the relationship, it is essential to understand how the two interact and influence adolescent behavior. Character strength, although necessary for adolescents' moral development and integrity, can negatively affect juvenile delinquency through limited interpersonal intelligence. Tensions between strong personal values and social group norms, inability to communicate effectively, and internal conflicts arising from feelings of isolation or unacceptance can lead adolescents to engage in delinquent behavior (Davai et al., 2022). Therefore, adolescents need to develop good character strengths and adequate interpersonal intelligence skills to face social challenges in a healthier and more constructive manner.

The results of the emotional intelligence test on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence obtained a coefficient value of -0.078, T-statistic 2.372, and p-value of  $0.018 < 0.05$ , which means that emotional intelligence has a significant negative indirect effect on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence, so H7 is accepted. Increasing emotional intelligence can reduce juvenile delinquency through increasing interpersonal intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal intelligence (II) are two main aspects of adolescents' social and emotional development. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate their and others' emotions. Meanwhile,

interpersonal intelligence relates to a person's ability to interact with others, build good relationships, and understand the perspectives and feelings of others. Both of these skills are very important in adolescent social development (Muzayanah & Sa'ad, 2023). Still, when emotional intelligence is not utilized correctly, it can affect interpersonal intelligence and potentially increase the risk of juvenile delinquency. Emotional intelligence has an indirect negative effect on juvenile delinquency through interpersonal intelligence due to the imbalance between the self-management of emotions and the social skills needed to interact effectively with others. Although emotional intelligence helps adolescents understand and manage their feelings, the inability to manage social relationships in a healthy and empathetic manner can lead to social isolation, conflict, and frustration that ultimately drives delinquent behavior (Martín et al., 2021). Therefore, emotional intelligence must be accompanied by good interpersonal intelligence so that adolescents can constructively overcome social challenges and avoid damaging behavior.

**Table 8.** R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Interpersonal Intelligence	0,675	0,672
Juvenile Delinquency	0,565	0,559

The R-squared ( $R^2$ ) results in Table 8 show how much construct variability can be explained by the independent variables in the model. The  $R^2$  value of 0.675 for Interpersonal Intelligence indicates that Emotional Intelligence and Character Strength can explain 67.5% of the variability in Interpersonal Intelligence. Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value of 0.565 for Juvenile Delinquency suggests that Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, and Character Strength can explain 56.5% of the variability in Juvenile Delinquency. The slightly lower Adjusted  $R^2$  value indicates an adjustment in the number of predictors in the model, but the difference is slight, indicating a good model. This study's results align with previous research conducted by Seneru & Wati (2024), who concluded that character strength is essential in protecting a teenager from juvenile delinquency. The results of this study support previous research conducted by (Jani et al., 2024), which emphasized that a high level of emotional intelligence can reduce the risk of adolescents committing juvenile delinquency. The results of this study support previous research conducted by (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016), which emphasized that character strength has a positive effect on interpersonal intelligence. The results of this study support previous research conducted by (Branje et al., 2021), which emphasized that the higher the level of interpersonal intelligence, the more it can prevent juvenile delinquency.

## CONCLUSION

Character strength, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence each have a negative and significant effect on juvenile delinquency, meaning that increasing any of these variables can substantially reduce delinquent behavior among vocational high school students. Character strength and emotional intelligence also positively and significantly influence interpersonal intelligence, indicating that improvements in these areas can enhance interpersonal skills. Furthermore, both character strength and emotional intelligence indirectly reduce juvenile delinquency through the mediating role of interpersonal intelligence. However, this study has several limitations: it was conducted only in Cianjur City, limiting generalizability to other regions with different social, cultural, or economic contexts; it used a cross-sectional design, restricting causal interpretations over time; and it relied on self-reported data, which may be affected by response bias. Additionally, unmeasured factors such as family background, peer influence, or socioeconomic status may have also played a role, potentially impacting the validity of the findings.



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