

The Role of Peer Social Support in Reducing Adolescent Antisocial Behavior: A Study of Senior High School Students in Tomohon City

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Abstract

Antisocial behavior among senior high school students manifested through behaviors such as aggression, rule violations, social withdrawal, and lack of empathy poses challenges to socio-emotional development and school climate. Peer social support has been identified as a protective correlate of adolescent behavior, yet evidence from specific local contexts remains limited. This study aimed to describe (1) the level of antisocial behavior tendencies, (2) the level of peer social support, and (3) the relationship between peer social support and antisocial behavior among senior high school students in Tomohon City. Employing a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach, data were collected from 533 students selected through cluster sampling. Antisocial behavior and peer social support were measured using self-report scales with satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$ and $.84$, respectively). Descriptive analysis indicated low to moderate antisocial behavior tendencies and moderate to high peer social support. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between peer social support and antisocial behavior ($r = -0.23$, $p < .001$), indicating that students who perceived higher peer support tended to report lower antisocial tendencies without implying causality. These findings highlight the relevance of peer-based preventive strategies such as peer mentoring and structured peer-support groups particularly within the communal socio-cultural context of Tomohon City, where peer interaction plays a central role in adolescents' daily school life.

Keywords : *Peer social support; Antisocial behavior; Adolescents*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, particularly during the senior high school period, represents a critical developmental phase characterized by significant biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes. At this stage, individuals actively explore their identities and social environments, engage in increasingly complex peer relationships, and face heightened societal and academic demands

that may influence behavioral patterns (Anggrian, 2018). Within the school context, one phenomenon that frequently emerges with serious implications is antisocial behavior. Antisocial behavior encompasses aggressive actions, both verbal and physical, rule violations, manipulative tendencies, withdrawal from prosocial interactions, and a diminished sense of empathy toward others (Molero Jurado et al., 2017). Without appropriate intervention, antisocial behavior not only disrupts the quality of learning but also increases the risk of interpersonal conflict, delinquent tendencies, and declining academic achievement (Villafuerte-Díaz et al., 2024).

Longitudinal studies and systematic reviews have demonstrated that adolescent antisocial behavior arises from the interaction of multiple factors, including individual characteristics (such as emotional regulation, self-control, and patience), family-related factors (parenting styles and socioeconomic conditions), school climate (including the presence of clear and consistent rules), and peer-related influences (Raine, 2002). Among these factors, peer social support has been consistently identified as a robust protective factor (Gubbels et al., 2024; Molero Jurado et al., 2017). Peer social support provides adolescents with emotional reassurance, identity affirmation, meaningful and practical information, and instrumental assistance, all of which contribute to improved self-regulation and reduced vulnerability to aggressive responses and behavioral deviations (Malecki & Kilpatrick Demaray, 2003). Systematic reviews further confirm that the quality of peer relationships and the availability of prosocial peers are negatively associated with antisocial behavior, indicating that stronger peer support corresponds to lower antisocial tendencies (Gubbels et al., 2024).

The influence of peer social support on individual behavior can be understood through two primary mechanisms: the main effect and the buffering effect (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The main effect suggests that peer support enhances general social well-being, while the buffering effect emphasizes its role in protecting individuals from the negative impact of stressors. In school settings, these mechanisms are particularly relevant, as peer support not only fosters a sense of belonging and self-worth but also shields students from academic stress and interpersonal conflicts that may trigger antisocial responses. Therefore, understanding the quality and dimensions of peer social support emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental is essential for the development of effective interventions (Ogunwole et al., 2025). Given the central role of peers in

adolescent development, peer-based interventions can serve as a practical foundation for reducing antisocial tendencies through school guidance and counseling programs, such as peer mentoring, peer counseling, and socio-emotional role-playing activities (Wentzel, 1998).

Despite strong conceptual and empirical evidence supporting the relationship between peer social support and antisocial behavior, further investigation within specific local contexts remains necessary. Social interaction patterns and peer relationship structures are often shaped by socio-cultural characteristics, including collectivist values and local practices, meaning that findings from international contexts may not be directly applicable to local settings (Carroll et al., 2023). Additionally, research focusing on multidimensional antisocial behavior encompassing rule violations, social manipulation, withdrawal, and lack of empathy remains limited. Many previous studies have concentrated on specific behaviors such as aggression or bullying, even though senior high school students often exhibit combinations of antisocial behaviors (Villafuerte-Díaz et al., 2024). Furthermore, empirical studies examining the relationship between multidimensional antisocial behavior and peer social support among Indonesian senior high school students remain relatively scarce.

As a mid-sized city in North Sulawesi, Tomohon possesses distinctive educational and social dynamics. Several studies and institutional reports addressing adolescent well-being—covering bullying, juvenile delinquency, and social media addiction indicate that adolescent mental health constitutes a significant concern in the city (Wicaksono et al., 2022). Although much of the existing evidence is derived from undergraduate theses and institutional reports, these findings collectively underscore the need for systematic and structured efforts to address adolescent behavioral issues, particularly antisocial tendencies.

Methodologically, recent trends in adolescent behavior research emphasize the use of comprehensive, rigorously validated instruments to accurately capture the complexity of psychosocial phenomena, including antisocial behavior (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This study employed a cross-sectional design to allow for an accurate mapping of behavioral dimensions while simultaneously examining inter-variable relationships within a single time frame (Ciputra et al., 2025). The antisocial behavior instrument used in this study was developed based on a multidimensional framework encompassing aggressive behavior, rule violations, social withdrawal,

manipulative tendencies, and lack of empathy, and underwent initial validity and reliability testing (Molero Jurado et al., 2017). Similarly, the peer social support instrument was developed from a four-dimensional support framework emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental support and subjected to rigorous psychometric evaluation (House, 1983).

This study was positioned to address several empirical gaps: (1) providing evidence from a school-based context in Tomohon City, North Sulawesi, which remains underrepresented in both national and international literature; (2) examining the relationship between antisocial behavior and peer social support among senior high school students; and (3) utilizing rigorously tested instruments that are culturally appropriate and psychometrically sound. Rather than merely testing a basic association, this study also aimed to map interdimensional patterns that may inform future research. Practically, the findings are expected to contribute directly to school counselors, principals, and local education policymakers.

Based on the above considerations, the objectives of this study were formulated as follows: (1) to describe the level of antisocial behavior tendencies among senior high school students in Tomohon City; (2) to describe the level of peer social support among these students; and (3) to analyze the relationship between antisocial behavior tendencies and peer social support. By focusing on a local population and validated instruments, this study is expected to provide empirically grounded evidence to support peer-based strategies for preventing antisocial behavior in schools with similar contexts.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the relationship between antisocial behavior and peer social support among senior high school students in Tomohon City, North Sulawesi. Data were collected in November 2025 from 533 senior high school and vocational high school students selected through cluster sampling based on participating schools. Antisocial behavior was measured using an 18-item Likert-scale instrument encompassing aggressive behavior, rule violations, social withdrawal, manipulative tendencies, and lack of empathy, while peer social support was assessed using a multidimensional scale covering emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental support. Both instruments demonstrated acceptable to strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$). Data were collected online using

Google Forms after obtaining informed consent from participants. Responses were screened, coded, and reverse-scored where necessary before analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to identify variable levels, and Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between peer social support and antisocial behavior after confirming normality and linearity assumptions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Finding

The analysis was directed toward addressing the research objectives, particularly examining the relationship between antisocial behavior tendencies and peer social support among senior high school students in Tomohon City. Descriptive analysis was conducted prior to correlational testing to determine the general levels of both variables.

The mean score for antisocial behavior among the 533 respondents was 2.41 (SD = 0.57) on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. The skewness value of 0.30 indicated a slight tendency toward higher scores, though still within acceptable limits for parametric analysis. This pattern suggests that most students did not exhibit high levels of antisocial behavior, while sufficient variability remained for further analysis.

For peer social support, the mean score was 3.74 (SD = 0.63), with a skewness value of -0.32, indicating that many students perceived a relatively high level of support from their peers. Reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency for both instruments, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.84 for antisocial behavior and 0.84 for peer social support after reverse scoring. These results reinforce confidence in the stability and accuracy of the measurements.

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between peer social support and antisocial behavior ($r = -0.23$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that students who perceived stronger peer support tended to report lower levels of antisocial behavior. Although the magnitude of the correlation was modest, the relationship was consistent and theoretically meaningful.

Further analysis using simple linear regression showed that peer social support significantly predicted lower levels of antisocial behavior ($b = -0.21$, $t = -5.48$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 value of 0.054 indicated that peer social support accounted for approximately 5% of the variance in antisocial

behavior, suggesting that while it is not the sole determinant, it functions as a meaningful protective factor. Visually, this relationship was illustrated by a downward-sloping regression line, consistent with the negative coefficient obtained.

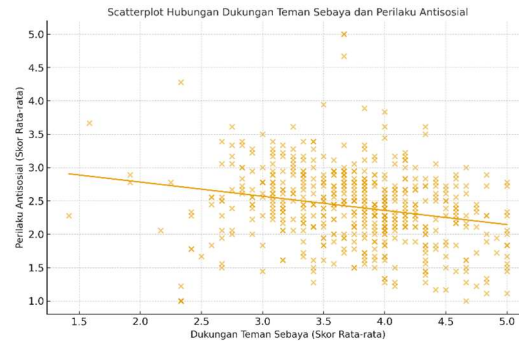


Figure 1. The Relationship Between Peer Social Support and Antisocial Behavior.

3.2. Discussion

The findings indicate that antisocial behavior tendencies among senior high school students in Tomohon City were generally low to moderate. This suggests that while severe antisocial patterns were not dominant, a meaningful degree of behavioral risk remains present. Such patterns align with previous research indicating that adolescence is characterized by fluctuating behavioral regulation due to developmental, social, and academic pressures (Villafuerte-Díaz et al., 2024). The observed variability further supports the need for preventive rather than purely corrective interventions within school settings.

Peer social support among participants was found to be moderate to high, indicating that most students perceived their peers as emotionally supportive, reliable, and helpful. This finding is consistent with collectivist-oriented social environments, where peer connectedness and group belonging play a central role in adolescents' daily interactions. In the socio-cultural context of Tomohon City, peer relationships may function not only as social companionship but also as informal regulatory systems that shape acceptable behavior.

Correlation and regression analyses revealed a significant negative relationship between peer social support and antisocial behavior tendencies. Although the effect size was modest, the direction and consistency of the relationship align with social support theories, particularly the

main effect and buffering models (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Peer support appears to enhance adolescents' capacity to manage stress, regulate emotions, and internalize social norms, thereby reducing the likelihood of aggressive, manipulative, or rule-violating behaviors. These findings reinforce prior evidence that peer support functions as a protective correlate rather than a sole determinant of antisocial behavior, especially within complex ecological systems involving family, school climate, and individual regulation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to describe antisocial behavior tendencies, assess peer social support levels, and analyze the relationship between these variables among senior high school students in Tomohon City. The results indicate that antisocial behavior tendencies were generally low to moderate, while peer social support levels were relatively high and stable. Correlational and regression analyses confirmed a significant negative relationship between peer support and antisocial behavior, suggesting that stronger peer support corresponds to lower behavioral risk.

These findings are consistent with theoretical perspectives emphasizing the regulatory function of social support in adolescent development. Peer social support operates not only as emotional reassurance but also as a social mechanism that constrains aggressive, manipulative, and rule-violating behavior. By contributing empirical evidence from a local socio-cultural context, this study enriches the national literature on adolescent antisocial behavior.

Future research may employ longitudinal designs or mixed-method approaches to explore causal mechanisms and incorporate additional variables such as emotional regulation, family dynamics, and school climate. From a policy perspective, schools are encouraged to develop systematic peer-based programs as preventive strategies. School counselors and administrators can utilize these findings to foster supportive peer environments that promote adaptive socio-emotional development and reduce antisocial behavior.

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