

**PRRAEPGDA 2020****Personal and Regulatory Resources in Achieving Educational and Professional Goals in the Digital Age****PERSONAL RESOURCE AS A FACTOR OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR PREVENTION AMONG STUDENTS OF DIGITAL GENERATION**

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***Abstract***

The history of students' deviant behavior problem and the phenomenon's aspects studies is defined by ambiguous understanding of the phenomenon occurrence nature. Widespread digitalization in educational environment and social life introduces new factors determining modern adolescents' behavior. A promising approach to solving a number of research and practical tasks in preventing deviant behavior among adolescents may consider the possibility of identifying a personal resource as a factor in preventing violations in adolescent behavior. To that end, we developed and tested a technique (based on psychometric analysis) including 4 scales identifying personal predictors of abnormal behavior and 7 scales evaluating positive personal resources. The sample comprised 402 students from Moscow secondary school. The research revealed negative correlations in self-confidence and obsession with computer games, browsing social networks (Spearman's correlation coefficient - .583), as well as with volitional control of emotional reactions - .598. A significant correlation was also found between teenagers' dissatisfaction with significant adults' attitude and obsession with computer games, browsing social networks: problems with teachers - Spearman's correlation coefficient .458 and, accordingly, dissatisfaction with family relationship .431. All correlations are significant at the level of 0.01. Basically, the analysis results allow us to state that the questionnaire being developed can be useful both to identify the adolescent's personal resource that enforce normative behavior and to identify deviant behavior risk predictors for students in grades 7–11. It can also be used as a tool for targeted planning in psychological and pedagogical support aimed at leveling various behavior violations and intrapersonal destructive states of adolescents.

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**Keywords:** Personal resource, deviant behavior, obsession with computer games.



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## **1. Introduction**

Modern researchers note that the problem of students' deviant behavior and the study of the phenomenon in its various aspects have their own history, determined by ambiguities in understanding the causes of its development. The wide digitalization within the educational environment and children's social life introduces new factors that determine the younger generation normative/deviant behavior. As a result, it becomes necessary to analyze these factors, as well as the conditions essential for preventing deviant behavior among children.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In its most general form, deviant behavior is a system of actions or individual acts that are contrary to the conventional societal legal or moral standards, as well as behavior that does not meet societal expectations for a certain period (Polskaya, 2018; Reshetnikov & Ulasen, 2018). Acts of socially undesirable behavior among students include aggression, substance abuse, obsession with computer games and social networks that interfere with learning and active life, as well as delinquency, self-harm and suicidal intentions – all these phenomena remain the modern school life reality. On a separate note, new “modern” deviant behavior manifestations appear regularly, including bullying, cyberbullying, dangerous reality games like “Run or Die” or “Blue Whales” internet communities. The specifics of children and adolescents engagement dynamics for these types of behavior requires separate studies (Kopovaya, 2016). Despite numerous scientific approaches towards deviant behavior and varied existing pedagogical forms of work with children at risk, as well as the existing system of social work, the task to prevent abnormal forms of children behavior remains relevant.

## **3. Research Questions**

As a promising approach to solving numerous existing research and practical problems in the abnormal behavior prevention among adolescents, we can consider the possibility to identify a personal resource as a condition for preventing violations in adolescent behavior, as well as predictor of deviant behavior. Based on the practical experience of consulting adolescent schoolchildren, we believe that it is necessary to shift the focus from abnormal adolescent behavior diagnostics to identifying conditions conducive to such behavior and developing appropriate measures to prevent delinquency manifestations.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The main idea is to “have time” to identify those beginning intrapersonal changes in adolescents that, under unfavorable external and internal conditions, can predetermine the further personality development towards a destructive, deviant behavior model. The theoretical task is to determine personal characteristics that can be considered as a positive resource determining the normative behavior, as well as to identify deviance predictors. The methodological task is to create a psycho-diagnostic tool that includes both listings in accordance with the theoretical model.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodology with operating name “Personal characteristics as predictors of deviant behavior” consists of 14 scales. The results of the first three tests, questionnaire and scales assessment are presented in the article (Sunnatova, 2019). As part of the fourth pilot study, we conducted a survey based on the created methodology. The sample comprised 402 students in one of Moscow secondary schools. The methodology scales aimed at identifying the adolescents’ resource, considered as a condition for normative behavior, include the following personality characteristics: “Responsibility”, “Self-confidence”, “Empathy”, “Self-management”, “Volitional control over emotional reactions”. Such indicators as "Satisfaction with teachers’ attitude towards students" and "Psychological well-being of adolescents in the family" can also be considered as a resource for teenager.

## 6. Findings

The research results include descriptive statistics for scales focused on identifying the adolescents’ personal resource considered as a condition for normative behavior (Table 1). We identified a number of personal characteristics promoting normative behavior, including responsibility (Molchanov & Almazova, 2017), self-confidence, empathy (Agosta, 2014; Yudina, 2017) and self-management (Morosanova, 2014; Vlasova, 2017). We should also pay special attention to the volitional control over emotional reactions as one of the personal regulatory capacities, though difficult to realize, especially when emotions are running high. We also note that due to the adolescence specifics, such as puberty emotional status peculiarities, identification of problems teenagers face and corresponding psychological support are an important resource for his successful socialization. A study by Padun (2019), analyzing strategies for emotion regulation and their correlation with the individual’s emotional well-being, points out that “individual strategies cannot be considered in terms of their functional / dysfunctional role outside the situational context, as well as without understanding of micro- and macrosocial backgrounds” (p. 39). Of course, the author’s conclusion stresses the importance of studying the strategies developed for controlling emotional reactions in the context of relationships, in this case with peers, tutors and school teachers.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics Indicators on Methodology Block – positive resource

Scales	Asymmetry	Kurtosis	Cronbach’s Alpha
Responsibility	-.056	.079	.576*
Self-confidence	.187	-.085	.747
Self-management	.050	-.276	.567*
Volitional control over emotional reactions	.019	-.410	.707
Empathy	.343	.334	.567*
Satisfaction with teachers’ attitude towards students	.146	-.420	.701
Psychological well-being of adolescents in the family	-.457	-.319	.737

Note: Asymmetry error .122; Kurtosis error .243; \* – values of unsatisfying reliability are marked.

As can be seen in Table 1, the questionnaire text still needs a substantial revision. We conducted an analysis not only on scales, but also on each questionnaire item (114). The analysis of methodology individual points allows for targeted adjustment the ways of statement for the cases where the distribution differs from the normal one; in the case with scales - where the coefficient of intra-scale consistency is reduced. For subsequent testing, we need substantial revision of scales “Responsibility”, “Self-management” and “Empathy”.

In the list of teenager personal deviant behavior predictors, the analysis include such characteristics as susceptibility to delinquency (Reshetnikov & Ulasen, 2018); susceptibility to suicidal behavior (Randall et al., 2015; Syrokvashina & Dozortseva, 2016) and obsession with computer games (Li et al., 2016; Mehroof & Griffiths, 2010; Rubtsova, et al., 2018) to the extent that it seriously hampers teenager’s success in schooling and social life (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics Indicators on Methodology Block - Personal predictors of deviant behavior

Scales	Asymmetry	Kurtosis	Cronbach’s Alpha	
Susceptibility to delinquency	-.201	.049	.736	
Obsession with computer games	.099	-.382	.796	
Susceptibility to suicidal behavior	Displays and affectivity	-.072	-.320	.764
	Inadequacy and social pessimism	-.153	-.483	.721
	Time horizon	-.311	-.503	.720
	Overall on the scale	-.190	-.341	.745
Socially desirable responding mindset	.088	-.344	.475*	

Note: Asymmetry error .122; Kurtosis error .243; \* – values of unsatisfying reliability are marked.

The values of the Cronbach’s alpha statistics for the three scales presented in Table 2 reach good (but not excellent) points - from .720 to .764; it indicates sufficient reliability and consistency of the items included in these scales.

After discussing the questionnaire contents with high school students, we concluded that it is necessary to add a subscale with the operating name “The personal aspect of obsession with gadgets”. This scale will be aimed at identifying compensating possibilities for social maladaptation and difficulties with fulfilling teenager’s need for success and his desire to like himself.

At the next stage of questionnaire testing, we’re going to add another scale aimed at identifying "teenager’s difficulties in interpersonal interaction with peers." As a rule, dissatisfaction with relations at this age can be a rather serious internal condition impeding successful socialization and causing such socialization difficulties as withdrawal into oneself, and/or rejection of oneself. The importance of this aspect is indicated not only by the adolescents’ reflections and revelations, but also by data from a number of psychological studies (Agosta, 2014; Panov, 2017, 2019; Syrokvashina & Dozortseva, 2016).

A study by Chizhov and Alekseev (2019), dedicated to exploring the death discourse in adolescent suicidal Internet communities, showed that “the most frequent topics were related to other people - both significant others and society in whole. Other people arose both in the context of problem situations and suicidal factors (communication failure, lack of support, stigmatization, bullying), and in the context of

protective factors (love of significant others, support). This means that the suicidal behavior could either be provoked and stimulated by significant others, or be blocked by them. These results are consistent with the hypothesis on the leading role of others in adolescents' suicidal behavior displays" (Chizhov & Alekseev, 2019, p. 87). Therefore, in the context of our study objectives, we need to introduce a scale aimed at "satisfaction with peer relationships".

Based on the results of descriptive statistics on the data obtained, we can use the indicators meeting the reliability requirements and move on to solving research tasks. We expected to reveal a negative correlation between "self-confidence" and "obsession with computer games" and "browsing social networks", as well as "volitional control over emotional reactions". This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that the Spearman's rank correlation coefficients we obtained equal to  $-0.583$  (negative relationship between "self-confidence" and "obsession with computer games") and  $-0.598$  (negative relationship between "volitional control over emotional reactions" and "obsession with computer games" and «browsing social networks») correspondingly, are statistically significant at the level of  $.01$ . Similar results were obtained in a study by Chang and Kim (2019), focused on the correlation between gambling addiction and a low level of self-esteem. The authors believe that low self-esteem can be considered as a risk factor for gambling addiction. A study by Mehroof and Griffiths (2010) revealed a negative relationship between self-control and gambling addiction.

Our next hypothesis stated that the nature of the relationship to the adolescent by significant adults – parents and teachers, – correlates with the computer addiction development. We suggested that there may be a significant correlation between "teenagers' dissatisfaction with the attitude of significant adults" and "computer games obsession" and "browsing social networks". "Proneness to computer addiction" and "dissatisfaction with teachers' attitude", received Spearman's correlation coefficient equal to  $.458$  and "dissatisfaction with attitude in the family" -  $.431$  accordingly (correlations are significant at  $0.01$ ). The correlation obtained allows us to state that, as teenagers say, the nature of the relationship from significant adults within teenager's inner circle can be considered both as a resource and as a block for his development.

A block can be caused by overprotection from significant adults, as well as the authoritarian style in relations, triggering deprivation of the child's need for personal self-respect. The results of our study confirm the data obtained in the study of Chizhov and Alekseev (2019), demonstrating that adolescents' problematic topics are associated with significant others. Such relationships characteristics as communication failure, lack of support and neglect of adolescents' dignity, act as a condition for "estrangement" from significant others. Studies conducted by Chang and Kim (2019) and Kim et al. (2015) obtained similar results which allowed them to suggest that positive communication between parents and children has dissuasive effect on gambling addiction development.

## **7. Conclusion**

On the basis of empirical study results and practical consulting experience with teenage schoolchildren, we consider identifying a personal resource as a condition for preventing delinquency in adolescent behavior to be a promising approach. The shift from deviancy diagnostics in adolescent behavior to identifying conditions conducive to such behavior development allows taking targeted actions

aimed at preventing delinquency. Such personal adolescent's characteristics as responsibility, self-confidence, empathy, self-management, volitional control of emotional reactions can be considered as a resource for preventing delinquent forms of behavior. For a teenager, satisfaction with the teachers' attitude and psychological well-being in the family can also be considered as a personal resource. At the same time, if the parameters mentioned above are unformed or destructive, that can be considered as deviance predictors.

The questionnaire being created can be useful for identifying both the adolescents' personal resource providing normative behavior and for identifying delinquent behavior predictors for students of 7-11 grades. However, it requires further work aimed at improving reliability and validity. The obtained results gave the opportunity for providing consultations to adolescents participating in the study aimed at leveling various behavioral disorders and intrapersonal destructive conditions. But the main focus of psychological service was the work with significant adults - parents and teachers. Socio-psychological training and consultative conversations were aimed at creating the conditions for shaping / developing such important components of interaction with adolescents as accepting children as they are and accepting their right to make mistakes; creating trusting interaction, creating sense of personal empowerment in students and building teachers' capabilities to control themselves and not to pressure on adolescent's individuality.

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