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SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSONALITY OF
JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

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Abstract

This article deals with issues of psychological aid to juvenile delinquents, provides data on the study of social characteristics and personalities of adolescents placed in the Center for temporary detention of juvenile delinquents (CTDJD). A group of adolescents with delinquent behavior requires close attention of all services involved in prevention of neglect and delinquency among the minors. Psycho-prophylactic work with adolescents shall be aimed at shifting social and personal values from negative to positive, at restoring self-esteem and self-respect. The article describes the results of empirical research aimed at studying the social characteristics of delinquent adolescents with account of the living environment and the type of committed offenses; shows the relationship of adolescents' tendency to deviating behavior with their personal characteristics. It was established that juvenile delinquents have high levels of neuroticism and psychopathization tending to impulsive behavior, aggressive attitude to the social environment; the number of juvenile delinquents residing in orphanages and two-parent families increased; property offences account for a higher percentage of juvenile delinquents. The conclusion was made that the study of social characteristics and personalities of adolescents allowed one to build an individual trajectory of preventive and corrective work, as well as to optimize psychological aid for adolescents in CTDJD.

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Keywords: Juvenile delinquents, social characteristic, personality.



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1. Introduction

The state of juvenile delinquency causes a reasonable concern in society, as juvenile delinquents become a reserve of future criminality. According to statistics, in January – June 2017, juvenile delinquency has decreased by 24.6% over the past two years. However, despite the decrease in relative share of juvenile delinquency, attention is drawn to the gravity of the crimes committed. In this regard, the matter of delinquency prevention among the minors and psychological prevention assistance to them remains urgent (Statistical Bulletin, 2017).

The center for temporary detention of juvenile delinquents provides reception and detention of minors for the purpose of their life protection and health preservation and prevention of re-offending. The need for self-affirmation and search for identity with overestimation, instability of disposition and influence of external factors leads adolescents to antisocial behavior, sometimes to commission of crimes (Baskakova & Danilova, 2014).

CTDJD carries out preventive and educational work among teenagers taking into account their age, a degree of social, psychological and educational neglect, public danger. Much attention is paid to revealing the causes and conditions of neglect; identification of criminally orientated groups; persons involving adolescents in committing crimes and antisocial actions; facts of child abuse. The lack of proper control on the part of the family or legal representatives, social deprivation of adolescents themselves (alcohol and substance abuse) when moral attitudes and positive personal values are not formed creates factors for involvement of minors in antisocial groups.

CTDJD provides medical care and counselling for minors, their parents and legal representatives, on health and healthy lifestyle, family relationships, and adolescent behavior in difficult situations. Regular training is provided to staff on how to interact with minors, how to organize the educational process, which facilitates contact with adolescents, and how to reduce the psychological tension on minors (Federal law, 1999).

2. Problem Statement

Psychological aid to adolescents includes socio-psychological diagnostics, psychological counselling and psycho-correction, psycho-prophylaxis.

The tasks of socio-psychological diagnostics include determining the focus for individual correctional and developmental work. Psychological diagnostics allows revealing aspects of cognitive, emotional and volitional spheres of the minor's personality, his/her characterological peculiarities, psychological problems, attitude to adults and peers, feeling about themselves. Psychological counselling and correctional and developmental work include correction of emotional and volitional disturbances (work with aggression, fear, anxiety, the consequences of sexual, emotional, physical abuse); correction of communicative impairments (structural communication training); correction of moral and emotional disturbances (work on changing the value orientation and ethical standards); correction of self-assessment (support and self-support skills training, correction of distorted perception of oneself) (Dudchenko, 2008; Kolesnikova & Tsvetkova, 2011; Tsvetkova, Kolesnikova, Rybakova, Petrova, & Fomina, 2016).

A number of authors have noted that adolescents with delinquent behavior are experiencing changes in the behavioral sphere - egocentrism, avoidance of solving problems, self-doubt, high levels of aspiration,

low self-criticism; in the affective sphere, it is emotional lability, low tolerance, rapid emergence of anxiety and depression, reduced or unstable self-esteem, phobias, and aggressiveness; they also have motivation and need distortions (Zmanovskaya, Rybnikov, 2011; Kleiberg, 2014; Lichko, 2016; Mendelevich, 2005).

The prevention of juvenile delinquency is a priority of the state's social policy. Social work on prevention of juvenile delinquency is aimed at creating favorable conditions for the development, self-development and socialization of the minor's personality; his/her involvement in social activities. A specific feature of social prevention of juvenile delinquency is the necessity to consider psychological characteristics of the adolescent, and the nature and circumstances of the offence he committed, and to act as intermediary between family and public services, when entering relations with a juvenile delinquent and his/her family. (Gilinsky, 2013; Kovalchuk & Tarkhanova, 2010; Likhovaya & Uzikova, 2015; Svintsitskaya, 2015; Tsvetkova & Kolesnikova, 2012).

3. Research Questions

The empirical study proceeded from the fact that the juvenile delinquents have their psychological characteristics. A socially adverse living environment of the minor (unfavorable intra-family situation, asocial family, single parent family) contributes to reducing the level of emotional contact in the family; to weakening the control over the teenager's behavior from the family; to involving minors in crimes. The objectives of the study were to obtain answers to the following questions: 1) what is the relationship between the juvenile delinquents' tendency to deviate behavior and their personal characteristics; 2) what are social characteristics of adolescents, placed in CTDJD, who committed a greater percentage of crimes for a certain period.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine social characteristics of minors who have committed offences from 2015 to 2017; to reveal the relationship between the juvenile delinquents' tendency to deviate behavior and their personal characteristics.

5. Research Methods

The study was conducted in 2015-2017 in the Center for temporary detention of juvenile delinquents. 158 teenagers took part in the research. They were 49 people in 2015; 52 people in 2016; 57 people in 2017. Males amounted to 82% (129 people) of the sample. The average age for juvenile delinquents was 16 years.

Methods of documentation analysis and testing were used to collect empirical material. The technique "Determination of deviating behavior tendency" was used (A.N. Oryol). The following scales were analyzed: attitudes to socially desirable answers, propensity to overcome norms and rules, propensity to addictive behavior, to self-damaging and self-destructive behavior, to aggression and violence, volitional control of emotional reactions, propensity to delinquent behavior. Freiburg Personality Inventory FPI - B (short version-114 statements, 12 scales). Modified questionnaire to identify the types of accentuations of adolescents' character, MPDO test (A. E. Lichko) analyzed the types of accentuations: hypertemic, cycloid,

labile, asthenic-neurotic, sensitive, anxiety-pedantic, introverted, excitable, demonstrative, and unstable. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to study the relationships.

6. Findings

At first, the analysis of social characteristics of juvenile delinquents held in CTDJD in the period from 2015 to 2017 was carried out. There is a significant predominance of males among offenders (2015 – 82.0%; 2016 - 90.4%; 2017 - 89.7%). Analysis of the living environment of juvenile delinquents showed that the percentage of juvenile delinquents from single-parent families is 50.5% on annual average. An increase of 6.2 times in the number of offenders living in orphanages and an increase of 4.1% in the number of juvenile delinquents who live in complete families are noted. Figure 1 shows the results.

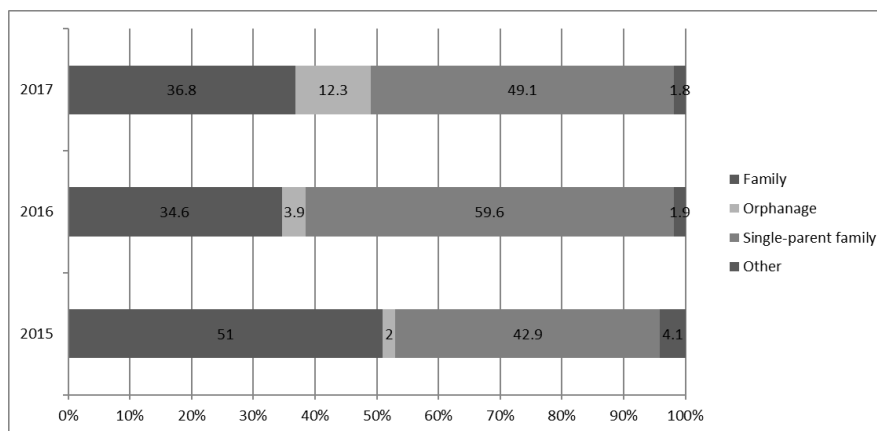


Figure 01. The juvenile delinquents' living environment

The main percentage of offenses is annually accounted for property offenses. There is a decrease in the number of such crimes in 2017, as compared to 2015; 2 times - among teenagers from complete families; 1.6 times - among teenagers from single-parent families; a 4.8 times increase - among teenagers from orphanages. Figure 2 shows the property offences.

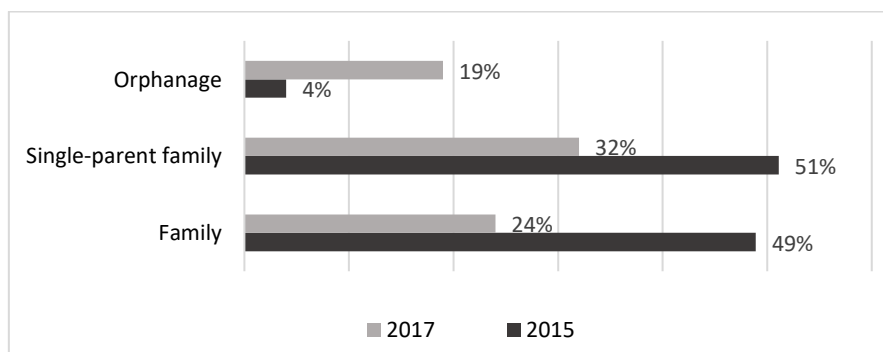


Figure 02. Property offences

The study of adolescents' tendency to deviate behavior has yielded the following results: focus on social desirability (58.2); tendency to self-damaging and self-destructive behavior (52.2); tendency to

aggression and violence (50.6); volitional control of emotional reactions (50.2); propensity to delinquent behavior (51.7).

The study of the personal characteristics of juvenile delinquents showed the following results on scales: neurotization (6.8); depression (7.0); irritability (7.0); reactive aggressiveness (7.2); shyness (6.5); openness (6.4); emotional lability (6.6).

Identification of character accentuations types allowed distinguishing demonstrative and hypertemic types of accentuations in 24% of teenagers; sensitive - in 6%; excitable - in 2%. 14% of adolescents showed mixed types of accentuations.

The study of indicators relationship allowed identifying the negative relationship between social desirability and irritability ($r=-0.286$ at $p=0.041$); sociability and aggression ($r=-0.340$ at $p=0.016$), self-harm ($r=-0.323$ at $p=0.022$), delinquent behavior ($r=-0.379$ at $p=0.007$); between masculinity/femininity and aggression ($r=-0.307$ at $p=0.030$); positive relationships between delinquent behavior and reactive aggression ($r=-0.322$ at $p=0.023$), irritability ($r=-0.342$ at $p=0.015$); between spontaneous aggressiveness and addictive ($r=-0.406$ at $p=0.003$), and delinquent behavior ($r=-0.364$ at $p=0.009$).

7. Conclusion

The results of the study allow one to draw the conclusions: a) adolescents who have committed offenses are characterized by a high level of neuroticism and psychopathization with propensity to impulsive behavior; the psychopathological signs of a depressive syndrome; unstable emotional state; aggressive attitude to the social environment; spontaneous and reactive aggression, irritability; b) an analysis of the offences that adolescents have committed with account of the environment showed that the adolescents from single-parent families commit approximately a half of annual offences; there is an increase in the number of offences committed by adolescents living in orphanages and complete families; there is a decrease in the number of property offences among adolescents from single-parent, complete families, and the number of such crimes among minors living in orphanages increases.

The study of social characteristics and personality of adolescents allows building an individual trajectory of preventive and corrective work and optimizing psychological aid to adolescents in the Center for temporary detention of juvenile delinquents.

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