

## THE IMPACT OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: CURRENT STATE OF THE PROBLEM

EL IMPACTO DEL COMPORTAMIENTO DESVIADO EN LA DELINCUENCIA JUVENIL: ESTADO ACTUAL DEL PROBLEMA

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**Abstract:** The relevance of this research stems from the fact that in the modern world, the problem of juvenile delinquency is especially acute. Economic inequality, mass globalization, free access to the means of communication, the development of democracy, as well as various social phenomena often cause negative reactions among adolescents. The research goal was to give a comprehensive scientific substantiation of the problem of juvenile delinquency, to consider the impact of deviant behavior on its emergence, to identify its causes and preventive measures, and to develop proposals for their improvement. The methodological basis of the research included a set of techniques and methods for studying this phenomenon of social life. The study revealed that juvenile delinquency remains a serious problem. The negative trend related to the worsening economic situation and lowering living standard in Russia, including minors, results in the higher psychological and emotional overload and the deepening crisis in family relations, which leads to the reemergence of such social phenomenon as

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child neglect. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that this paper assesses the criminological features of the current state of juvenile delinquency. The theoretical significance of the research includes the deeper scientific analysis of the problem, which provides a scientific basis for its further development. The practical significance implies that the theoretical conclusions obtained in this study can be used for further study of juvenile delinquency and developing measures for its prevention.

**Keywords:** Criminal Behavior, Deviant Behavior, Juvenile Delinquency, Determinants, Prevention, Preventive Measures

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**Resumen:** *La relevancia de esta investigación se deriva del hecho de que, en el mundo moderno, el problema de la delincuencia juvenil es especialmente agudo. La desigualdad económica, la globalización masiva, el libre acceso a los medios de comunicación, el desarrollo de la democracia, así como diversos fenómenos sociales, suelen provocar reacciones negativas entre los adolescentes. El objetivo de la investigación fue dar una fundamentación científica integral del problema de la delincuencia juvenil, considerar el impacto del comportamiento desviado en su aparición, identificar sus causas y medidas preventivas, y desarrollar propuestas para su mejora. La base metodológica de la investigación incluyó un conjunto de técnicas y métodos para estudiar este fenómeno. El estudio reveló que la delincuencia juvenil sigue siendo un problema grave. La tendencia negativa relacionada con el empeoramiento de la situación económica y la disminución del nivel de vida en Rusia da como resultado una mayor sobrecarga psicológica y emocional y la profundización de la crisis en las relaciones familiares, lo que conduce al resurgimiento de fenómenos sociales como el abandono infantil. La novedad científica del estudio radica en que este trabajo valora los rasgos criminológicos del estado actual de la delincuencia juvenil. El significado teórico de la investigación incluye el análisis científico más profundo del problema, que proporciona una base científica para su desarrollo posterior. La trascendencia práctica implica que las conclusiones teóricas obtenidas en este estudio pueden ser utilizadas para profundizar en el estudio de la delincuencia juvenil y desarrollar medidas preventivas.*

**Palabras clave:** *Conducta criminal, conducta desviada, delincuencia juvenil, determinantes, prevención, medidas preventivas*

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**Summary.** *I. Introduction. II. Literature Review. III. Materials and Methods. IV. Results. V. Discussion. VI. Conclusion. References.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a turning point in the development of each personality. During this period, a person changes not only physically, but also psychologically. Various factors affect this process, and they may have both positive and negative effects. Unfortunately, some teenagers, under the influence of others or due to unfavorable living conditions, choose the path of antisocial behavior. The media give stories about minors who have been caught smoking, drinking alcohol, using psychotropic substances, or committing crimes. These deviations in adolescent's behavior led to the formation of criminal behavior as such behavior gradually becomes normal for them. The criminal subculture promoted in social networks contributes to the development of deviant behavior in minors. From the perspective of criminology, the illegal behavior of minors traditionally denotes juvenile delinquency, ignoring the problem of deviant behavior, which is incorrect.

Despite the decrease in the number of crimes committed by minors or with their complicity, juvenile delinquency remains a serious problem. For instance, in 2019, 13.800 teenagers aged 14 to 15 years old committed crimes (of which 12.215 were boys and 1.579 girls), and in 2020, this figure was 11.300 (10.283 boys and 1.072 girls). In the period from January to November 2021, the number of crimes committed by minors or with their complicity amounted to 27.960.

**Table 1.**  
**The number of minors who committed crimes in the Russian Federation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Change +/-, %</b>
January- November, 2021	25.831	-13,2%
2020	33.575	-11,54%
2019	37.953	-7,11%
2018	40.860	-3,87%
2017	42.504	-12,52%
2016	48.589	-13,22%
2015	55.993	+2,99%
2014	54.369	-10,52%

Source: Crimestat.ru (January 9, 2022). Own elaboration.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the world's reaction to it negatively affected all spheres of life. About 1.5 billion children could not attend school. The annual *State of the World Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020* (World Health Organization, 2020) notes that movement restrictions, loss of income, isolation, and overcrowding have increased stress and anxiety in parents, caregivers, and children. What is more, these negative trends cut families and individuals off from their usual sources of support. This confirms that the negative phenomena of modern life undermine the safety of adolescents, and there are systemic problems. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive analysis and study of the formation of juvenile delinquency.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Legal and other social sciences have explored the problems of deviant and criminal behavior of minors. Despite the obvious relevance of the study, scientists have examined only some aspects of the impact of deviant behavior on juvenile delinquency.

V. Yu. Golubovsky, E. V. Kunz, and M. F. Kostyuk (2020), Ya. Gilinsky (2007), and A. I. Dolgova (2018) considered general theoretical approaches while studying various criminal law and criminological aspects of juvenile delinquency. The scientific views presented in these publications formed the conceptual and methodological basis of this paper.

Russian scientists L. V. Gotchina (2021), E. V. Kunz (2008), A. S. Kazakova (2018), D. Yu. Romashin (2019), A. I. Saveliev (2017), I. V. Uporov, and Yu. N. Grechishkina (2018) studied juvenile delinquency. Some international researchers also examined this problem, for example, E. Fernández-Molina (2020), who explored juvenile delinquency in Spain. H. Yehui and X. Rui (2021) studied the prevention and containment of violence, including that against minors, in China. D. A. Kreager (2011), E. K. V. Levey, C. F. Garandeau, W. Meeus, and S. Branje (2019), K. L. Chan (2014) identified the features of criminal behavior and self-assessment of juvenile delinquents.

S. U. Dikaev (2020), E. V. Kunz (2021), D. A. Andrews, J. Bonta (2010), M. Evans-Chase, and H. Zhou (2014), S. L. A. de Vries, M. Hove, J. J. Asher, and G. J. Shtams (2018), and L. Kohlberg (2008) studied some aspects of the criminal policy regarding the reaction to juvenile delinquency.

V. Yu. Golubovsky (2020), K. V. Zlokazov, E. I. Ilyankova, and A. A. Rozhkov (2021), I. P. Kutyanova, T. A. Novikova, L. A. Starikova, and N.

V. Fomin (2014), and S. L. Sibiriyakov (2002) considered sociological and other aspects of deviant and criminal behavior of minors.

The findings of these authors have great theoretical and practical significance, enormously contributing to the study of this problem. However, the research papers by both Russian and international experts do not cover the impact of deviant behavior on the formation and prevention of juvenile delinquency. Our study aims eliminate this gap.

### **III. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

For many decades, dialectical and historical materialism was the methodological basis of Russian criminology. This method made it possible to consider the criminal behavior of minors, its causes as a social phenomenon and their historical development. When selecting research methods, we assumed that social, criminological, international, psychological, economic, legal, and organizational factors are interconnected and dependent on each other. This approach ensures effective protection of the safety of minors and requires using a set of specific methods and techniques. We applied the principle of historicism to examine the conditions that triggered the criminal behavior of minors and its changes at various stages of social development. The philosophical law of the universal interconnection and interdependence of natural and social phenomena allowed us to study the criminal behavior of minors in connection with deviant behavior. A systemic approach based on the law of universal interconnection and interdependence of phenomena enabled us to consider the criminal behavior of minors as a combination of interacting elements. We used the structural and functional analysis to investigate the prevention of criminal behavior in minors along with other elements in the system of prevention measures. Sociological methods (document analysis) were used to study public opinion, the opinions of scientists and practitioners on juvenile delinquency and to give the forecast for the future.

### **IV. RESULTS**

In the course of the study, we revealed that in the last decade of this century, minors tend to demonstrate the behavior that deviates from the norms established by society and the state. These deviations may have different content, forms, and types. Conducting the research, we found out that the main forms of deviant behavior of minors include crime, the

commission of socially dangerous acts, prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, begging, and vagrancy, in other words, the background causes of crime.

We established that there are differences in the deviant behavior of adolescents, depending on the forms of its manifestation. The most common forms and consequences they entail are the following:

(i) The hyperkinetic disorder, which is a heterogeneous group of neuropsychic development disorders grouped according to the phenomenological principle on the basis of weakly modulated behavior, accompanied with hyperactivity not typical for this age, attention deficit, impulsivity, and lack of sustainable motivation to do activities that require willpower; it complicates adaptation in various spheres of life, resulting in a low self-esteem of a teenager.

(ii) The unsocialized conduct disorder, which manifests itself in difficult relationships with all people around. The minor becomes uncontrollable and prone to destruction. A teenager tries to harm those who provoked aggression, and they may fight, destroy or damage property, and insult others verbally. This form of deviant behavior either occurs within a family, or it may spread to the society and environment the adolescent lives in.

(iii) The socialized disorder, which involves unacceptable actions towards other people. This form of disorder in adolescents is often associated with serious crimes, as well as drug or alcohol addiction.

(iv) Sexual deviation manifests itself in sexual promiscuity, having multiple sex partners, and teenage prostitution. The social circle and the feeling of acute guilt, combined with emotional immaturity in such adolescents, may lead to drug abuse and suicide. Crime, which is a specific type of deviation, should be considered separately in criminological terms, with a focus on those specific features of deviant behavior that reflect the commission of crimes by minors who have reached or have not reached the age of criminal discretion, revealing the connection of this form of deviant behavior with other forms of deviation.

As an extreme form of deviance, crime has the following specific features:

(i) The negative influence of the family. In 30-35% of the cases of juvenile crimes, parents and older family members have an immediate negative influence, which may include immoral lifestyle, alcohol abuse, cruelty, or violence. In addition to this, parents of juvenile delinquents are often uneducated and focus on prestige and consumerism. This attitude may also lead to criminal behavior and violence towards minors.

(ii) The negative influence of the immediate environment from peers and adults (in educational organizations, at home, or at work). This feature

is especially important as minors are strongly inclined to join the group for spending time together.

(iii) Young people develop the stereotypes of behavior that oppose social values (the propaganda of violence, drugs, and sexual promiscuity).

(iv) The destruction of the system of youth employment and the lack of leisure activities for young people.

The above factors contribute to the formation of a criminogenic personality, with such typical features as cruelty, indifference to social problems, education, employment, experiences and suffering of other people, deceit, misperception of social and legal norms, and values. After forming such a personality, one is ready to commit a crime, and in a certain situation one can commit it.

Many official bodies and organizations are responsible for the prevention of deviant and criminal behavior of minors. They are the Commission on Juvenile Affairs, custody and guardianship agencies, social welfare bodies, federal and regional authorities, educational municipal organizations, institutions of the penitentiary system, internal affairs bodies, health authorities, youth affairs authorities, and employment services. The collaborative work of these bodies should be aimed at identifying and eliminating changes in the personality and behavior of a teenager to prevent their turning into a criminal and correcting their behavior if possible. Wider application of educational coercive measures can be achieved by creating an infrastructure for providing efficient assistance, supporting the minors who find themselves in a socially dangerous situation, as well as training and retraining professionals possessing modern juvenile technologies.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

Having generalized scientific approaches to the problem under study, we could not establish the single factor provoking juvenile delinquency. According to D. Yu. Romashin (2019), the growing social tension is the main reason for it. Adolescents feel the mood of their parents who have to fight for survival and solve endless problems. Teenagers absorb this emotional stress, but they have not yet developed ways to cope with it, as adults do. Against the background of a general increase in juvenile delinquency, there is an alarming trend regarding especially grave and grave crimes.

**Table 2.**  
**The structure of juvenile delinquency**

Year \ Crime category	Especially grave	Grave	Average gravity	Minor offence
2015	2.168	11.276	30.895	17.494
2016	1.632	9.905	28.024	14.175
2017	1.863	8.375	24.269	10.781
2018	1.968	7.748	23.484	10.353
2019	2.103	8.010	21.517	9.918
2020	2.069	7.728	18.860	9.114
January- November 2021	1.710	6.459	12.972	6.819

Source: Crimestat.ru (January 9, 2022). Own elaboration.

The results of our study revealed that important causes of juvenile delinquency are homelessness and neglect of minors. This was also confirmed by the results of the analysis carried out by A. S. Kazakova (2018): annually, there are over 100.000 children who, for various reasons, were deprived of parental care. Most of them are social orphans, that is, abandoned by their parents or taken away from the parents who did not properly fulfill their duties of raising and supporting the child. Often, children from anti-social families who lost their means of subsistence get involved in prostitution, selling alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, as well as the pornographic business, or work in the streets in bad conditions. This negatively affects both the physical and mental health of adolescents. When parents fail to fulfill their child-rearing responsibilities properly, their children may get into bad company, commit a crime, or become a victim of a crime. The measures to combat neglect and homelessness taken by state authorities are often insufficient and cannot protect minors from returning to

their former way of life. Thus, the problem of homelessness and neglect remains unresolved.

We established that one of the prerequisites for juvenile delinquency is alcohol abuse. For adolescents, alcohol is a means of liberation and overcoming shyness. At present, adolescents tend to consume more and more alcohol, drugs, and toxic substances. At the same time, the age of young people taking them is decreasing. If we compare the scale of drug addiction and alcohol abuse among adolescents, then the number of drug addicts is six times higher than the number of alcohol addicts. Adolescents tend to drink alcohol in groups. Frequently, youngsters are curious to try alcohol, and after satisfying their curiosity, they will never quit this habit. However, for other minors, it becomes a means of asserting themselves in the eyes of other peers and adults. Forming a group, drunken adolescents want to demonstrate their strength and commit acts of hooliganism, vandalism, and pick a fight. For some groups of minors, drinking alcohol is a traditional pastime. Some of them drink to experience the so-called alcoholic euphoria, while others analyze what kind of alcohol and how much should be consumed in order to get pleasure and enjoyment, and later they eagerly share this knowledge with friends. This group tends to involve girls in this activity, commit sexual assaults, and organize brothels. Their criminal behavior is only an additional element of alcohol abuse, since they cannot spend all leisure time, consuming alcoholic beverages.

We share the opinion of most scientists that alcohol abuse has a detrimental effect on all aspects of adolescent's lives: it destroys their psyche, seriously harms their health, and pushes them to commit crimes. This problem remains relevant for modern Russia and requires special attention of the state authorities and society.

Alcohol abuse and crime are antisocial phenomena that are closely connected and interdependent. It would be wrong to unequivocally name alcohol abuse the main cause of crime. Even at the statistical correlation level, the trends in alcohol consumption and crime do not match, so it is necessary to assess the impact of alcohol abuse on crime accurately. Alcoholism is a disease that affects various aspects of a person's life, undermines one's adaptive abilities, exhausts the nervous system, leads to the imbalance and drop in intelligence, lack of self-control, and inability to manage affective experiences and stressful situations, thereby stimulating the development of pathological responses and perception. Actions performed in the state of intoxication are inadequate and are regulated by affective logic. Nevertheless, they have a certain reason and a certain focus, which indicates that the person is aware of what they are doing and can manage their actions. Alcohol can act as an internal psychophysiological

condition triggering criminal behavior. In both types of the psychophysiological effect of alcohol (disinhibitory and inhibitory), it is a driver and a co-motive, while the dominant and leading motive is self-interest, hooliganism, aggressive disrespect, indiscipline, selfishness, and similar criminogenic motives that make up the social and criminal content of the crime. In criminology, these alcoholic co-motives are called crime provoking.

We established that alcoholic degradation of the personality is slightly different. In this case, the need for consuming alcohol becomes an equally significant criminogenic motive and even the leading one. Character disorders and dependence on alcohol disturbs one's activity structure, regulated by addict's needs. In this case, alcohol motivation underlies the behavior of the person and acts as a criminogenic factor. There is no agreement about the role of alcohol abuse in the genesis of crime. In the first case, it acts as a co-cause, co-motive with the dominant role of other criminogenic factors. In the second case, it takes the leading, determining position in the motivation of the personality and becomes the cause of crimes.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice—the Beijing Rules— (United Nations, 1985) define the basic requirements for protecting the rights of adolescents in conflict with the law. In accordance with the Beijing Rules, the purpose of educational work with minors in conflict with the law is to provide guardianship, protection, education, and training in order to assist them in fulfilling a socially useful and fruitful role in society. Prevention of criminal behavior of minors is a system of legal, pedagogical, social, and other measures aimed at identifying and eliminating the causes and conditions leading to neglect, homelessness, delinquency, and antisocial actions. These measures are implemented along with individual preventive work with minors and their families in a socially dangerous position.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Having conducted the research, we formulated some conclusions, recommendations, and proposals.

1. Before the moment when minor's behavior becomes delinquent, it is necessary to identify the person involving the adolescent into deviant behavior. Parents and schoolteachers play a significant role in identifying such individuals. Minor's misconduct is the behavior of persons under the age of majority that deviates from social and legal norms. The state, public,

and other bodies aim to regulate it, protecting the state and society from the negative consequences of this behavior of deviants, the subjects of deviant behavior, for the purpose of correction, treatment, and social rehabilitation.

2. Deviant behavior is connected with crime and includes vagrancy, begging, alcohol abuse, drug addiction, suicidal behavior, and prostitution. There is a close relationship between these forms of deviant behavior and juvenile delinquency, as at the general level they have similar social determinants. At the level of particular crimes, this may refer to the reason for their commission or the basis for the formation of a criminogenic personality. We performed the conceptual analysis of the current state of the problem and studied the impact of deviant behavior on juvenile delinquency. We established that this issue has not been properly explored in research publications. Deviant behavior occurs due to multilevel causes: macro and micro-social factors, the destructive influence of informal groups and criminogenic subcultures, as well as personal and individual characteristics.

3. Prevention of juvenile delinquency is a key priority and an interdisciplinary category that has socio-psychological, educational, legal, and medical aspects. Its basis should be the state ideology, which includes moral principles, legal culture, and compliance with the law. Future preventive measures should imply the priority of international law, as international control increases their efficiency.

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