

Psychological characteristics of families of juvenile offenders

Tatyana Vyacheslavna Maltseva^{1*}, *Oksana Azatovna Teregulova*¹, *Nikolai Nikolaevich Gorach*^{2,3}, *Sergei Aleksandrovich Khmelev*³, and *Zlatoslava Aleksandrovna Khmeleva*⁴

¹Academy of Management of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, Department of Psychology, Pedagogy and Organization of Work with Personnel, Moscow, Russia

²Moscow Academy of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, Department of Forensic and Investigative Activities, Moscow, Russia

³Kikot Moscow University of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, Department of Preliminary Investigation, Moscow, Russia

⁴Kikot Moscow University of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, Department of Criminal Law, Moscow, Russia

Abstract. Offenses committed by minors constitute a danger to society, as they threaten its future prosperous development. The purpose of the research is to study the psychological characteristics of a family of a juvenile offender, influencing the formation of personality. The hypothesis consists in the assumption that the psychological characteristics of family social space are the conditions for the involvement of minors in delinquency. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that for the first time the psychological characteristics of the family of minors with delinquent behavior were studied. Research methods used in the work include psychological analysis of documents – materials of cases of administrative offenses. The materials of 300 cases of administrative offenses, initiated under the articles of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation against minors and their parents, were studied by the authors. The conducted psychological analysis of the objective characteristics of juvenile offenders and their families according to the protocols on administrative offenses, made it possible to draw up their approximate profile. Thus, regarding minors with delinquent behavior, the authors note that these are most often males at the age of 17, schoolchildren. In most cases, they come from two-parent families with 2-3 children, in which most often parents have formal or informal employment, but abuse alcohol. The level of the financial situation of the family directly affects the quality of education, health and harmonious physical and aesthetic development of minors, however, the material potential is not a guarantee of absolute success.

Keywords: law, juvenile delinquency, family, family environment, crime prevention

1 Introduction

*Corresponding author: mtv-psy@mail.ru

In modern times, one of the most acute and socially significant problems that need to be addressed is the search for ways to reduce the number of offenses among minors and increase the effectiveness of their social and psychological adaptation [1-4]. This need is due to the fact that an increasing number of minors are involved in crime [5-7]. Asocial attitudes and habits acquired at an early age can lead to significant demoralization of the individual and, as a result, to an increase in crime and recidivism [8-10].

According to scientists representing various fields of scientific knowledge, the personality of the offender appears as a set of negative socially significant, individual typological qualities that determine his criminal behavior. It is indicated that in most cases a juvenile offender is a person who has inclinations, habits, sustainable stereotypes of antisocial behavior.

In modern psychology, the characteristics of the personality of a minor with delinquent behavior, which is most often due to the psychological and physiological characteristics of adolescence associated with the rapid physical development of the body, activity, increased excitability, imbalance, susceptibility to external influences, both positive and negative, uncriticality to themselves and others, moral instability. These features reduce the effectiveness of psychological regulation of behavior and make it difficult to form socially useful attitudes and adapt in society.

Currently, despite a significant number of studies on the selected issues, there is a large number of unresolved scientific problems that cause an acute contradiction between the many preventive measures being taken and the high level of offenses committed by minors. Such a contradiction may be due to the lack of unity in understanding the psychological problems of involving minors in offenses, the incompleteness of reliable information about the reasons for the involvement of minors in offenses, insufficient organization of the system for preventing the involvement of minors in offenses, incompleteness of studies of personality traits of a minor involved in offenses.

The revealed contradiction made it possible to determine the purpose of the study, which is to study the psychological characteristics of the family of a juvenile offender that affect the formation of personality.

The hypothesis of the study lies in the assumption that the psychological characteristics of the social space of the family are the conditions for the involvement of minors in delinquency.

In psychology, a large number of studies of minors with criminal and deviant behavior have been carried out, but for the first time we have studied the psychological characteristics of a family of minors with delinquent behavior.

2 Materials and methods

To confirm the hypothesis put forward, as well as to identify the psychological characteristics of families of minors with delinquent behavior, the characteristics of their family upbringing and the disclosure of objective differences from families of law-abiding minors, the authors collected empirical data using a psychological analysis of documents – materials of cases of administrative offenses.

In the course of a psychological analysis of the materials of cases of administrative offenses, the social and legal status of minors with delinquent behavior and their parents was studied.

The materials of 300 cases of administrative offenses against minors and their parents were studied under the following articles of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation.

The features of the social and legal status of parents that affect minors, for example: the level of education of parents, the completeness of the family, the presence of a criminal

record among family members, family composition, professional activities of parents were examined by the authors using psychological analysis of documents.

3 Results

According to the results of the analysis of protocols on administrative offenses, the majority of juveniles with delinquent behavior are males – 86% (258 people), the percentage of female representatives with delinquent behavior is 14% (42 people). Moreover, the authors note that 14-year-old minors with delinquent behavior make up 10.7% (32 people), 15-year-olds – 16.3% (49 people), 16-year-olds – 25% (75 people), 17-year-olds – 48% (144 people).

Most of the minors with delinquent behavior are schoolchildren – 64.3% (193 people), the rest are students of vocational schools – 35.7% (107 people).

The analysis revealed that 39.7% of juveniles with delinquent behavior live in incomplete families or one-parent families – 119 people, of which 78% come from divorced families. Thus, the majority of juveniles with delinquent behavior live in two-parent families (60.3%).

The information about the professional activities of parents is also of great interest. 72% of fathers and 53% of mothers have formal or informal employment. Among the surveyed, 30% of fathers and 47% of mothers do not have a stable job, a permanent income, which, of course, has a significant impact on the socio-psychological relationships in the family of minor adolescents.

Consider information about the educational level and legal characteristics of parents. The majority of parents of offenders have a secondary or secondary specialized education – 62.5%. 12% of parents have below-secondary education, 25.5% of parents have higher education.

A diagram of the objective characteristics of minors with delinquent behavior and their families was compiled by the authors based on the analysis (Fig. 1).

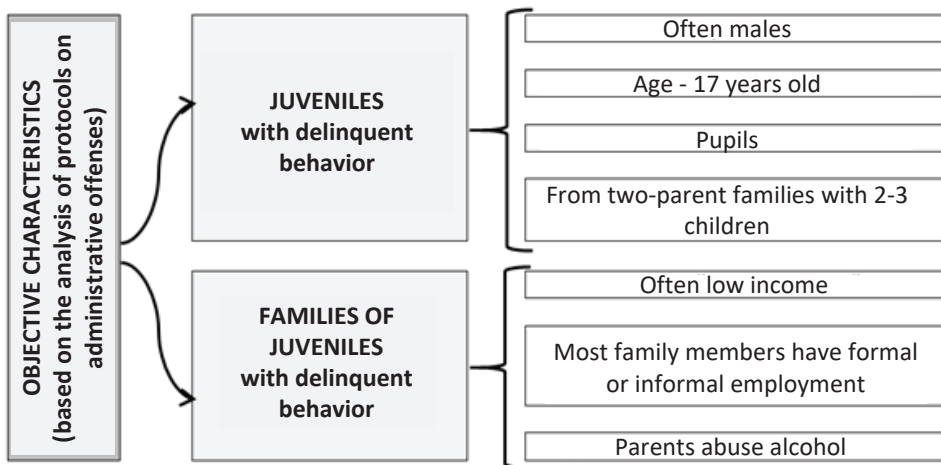


Fig. 1. Scheme of objective characteristics of minors with delinquent behavior and their families based on the analysis of protocols on administrative offenses (compiled by the authors).

4 Discussion

The majority of juveniles with delinquent behavior live in complete families, so that, not the role of single-parent families in the occurrence of delinquency among minors, but the problems of improper upbringing and unfavorable relationships in the family where the teenager is brought up should be considered.

Regarding the indicator "number of children in the family", attention is drawn to the fact that the predominant part of juvenile delinquents come from a family with 2-3 children. The number of children in families affects the formation of personality and social behavior. Its pedagogical and socio-psychological significance is undeniable, but the total number of children in the family, including the problem of the only child, has no criminological significance [11].

However, sometimes this results in a decrease in control over the child. With the weakening of social control and neglect, the basic social values are distorted [12, 13]. The maladaptive behavior of a teenager can cause the formation of both asocial and antisocial types of behavior in him.

The educational level of parents in the overwhelming majority of cases determines the moral and psychological outlook and educational opportunities of parents. In combination with other unfavorable factors, the low educational level of parents significantly hinders the creation of favorable conditions for upbringing in the family.

In the overwhelming majority, such parents are most often focused not on raising children, but on the material support of the family. Although more than 80% have their own housing, according to the analysis of protocols on administrative offenses, in 81.5% of cases the living conditions of the studied families of minors are characterized by disorder and uncleanness.

With minor exceptions, it can be accepted that offenses may not be generated by material difficulties, but are explained by selfish and greedy motives and unwillingness to take into account public interests, lack of moral standards, and the negative example of peers and adults.

According to T.V. Ivanova, the causes of delinquency of adolescents who come from middle-class families are the loss of constant control on the part of the family, the lack of activity in a teenager and a young man, his desire for inactivity, a tendency to hedonism and the influence of people who are on the lower stages of social development, that is, those who do not have education, a permanent place of work and residence [13].

The legal description of the parents shows that 11.5% of families have one or two convicted adults. This is a particularly strong negative factor in the unfavorable development of minors and the direction towards the asocial formation of personality.

The data of our analysis make it possible to single out two more significant socio-psychological factors that directly affect the socio-psychological status of an individual in the family – these are urbanization and migration. The socio-psychological phenomena of this order can be stated in 15.1% of cases.

Moreover, analyzing the materials of protocols on administrative offenses, it can be concluded that 80.7% of parents held accountable for improper performance of parental duties abuse alcohol. This is one of the strongest factors influencing the formation of a negative socio-psychological status of an individual in a family.

Parental alcoholism leads to significant destructive changes in the structure of family relationships, which directly influence the formation of an unfavorable personality status. Social degradation of the personality, negative moral and psychological development, asocial attitude, neuropsychic deviations, criminal behavior are symptoms of alcoholism. Alcoholism of the father and especially of the mother has a detrimental effect on the position of minors in the family, injures their moral and psychological development, leads to the development of internal anxiety and neuroticism in them.

According to the study by A.A. Shabunova, the amount of social and material resources of the family also directly affects the quality of education, health and harmonious physical and aesthetic development of minors. Although sufficient material potential cannot be called a guarantor of the absolute success of these indicators, nevertheless, its presence, as a rule, creates favorable conditions for their development and implementation. Families with low resource potential are distinguished by a large number of children with a lag in neuropsychic development [14].

In turn, the level of neuropsychic development directly affects the success of training. According to the results of the study by A.A. Shabunova revealed that in families with high and medium income, the number of minors who get “A” and “B” all the time is one and a half times higher than in families with a low level of resources [15].

Moreover, this study revealed the fact that in families with low income, control over the educational progress of children is significantly lower, and the level of their enthusiasm for the educational process, as a rule, is quite low, that is, almost two times lower than in families with high resources. At the same time, it should be noted that families with high resources often also have a group of minors with low involvement in education, but 17% of such minors study exclusively under the strict supervision of their parents.

5 Conclusion

Summarizing the analysis of the objective characteristics of juvenile offenders and their families according to the study of protocols on administrative offenses performed by the authors, an approximate profile of them can be compiled.

Juveniles with delinquent behavior are most often males at the age of 17, schoolchildren. In most cases, they come from complete families with 2-3 children. Most of the parents of juveniles with delinquent behavior have a formal or informal employment, but abuse alcohol. The level of the family's income also directly affects the quality of education, health and harmonious physical and aesthetic development of minors, however, the material potential is not a guarantee of absolute success.

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