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**STRATEGIES OF ADOLESCENTS' DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR  
AND REASONS FOR ITS EMERGENCE**

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**Abstract**

The article presents an analysis of factors and conditions leading to the emergence of delinquency and deviant behavior in adolescents. The social role of the family institution is investigated, family styles of behavior and decision-making are examined, and conclusions are made on the effect of family structure on adolescents' deviant behavior. The role of social norms including a wide variety of views and accepted socially significant standards of behavior is also disclosed in the study. The authors examine the social objectives of resolving the problems of deviances and delinquency in adolescents and analyze the effect of family and the quality of family relationships on adolescent's psychological and emotional stability.

**Keywords**

Family – Deviant behavior – Delinquency – Adolescents – Correction – Prevention

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## Introducción

In the modern conditions of social development, the most important factors affecting youth and adolescents are the socio-cultural background, factors determining the choice of behavioral reactions, and conditions of education and upbringing that institutionalize the reaction of adolescents and youth to the psychological and emotional challenges they face.

Modern psychological and pedagogical science highlights the significance of positive psychology concepts and the complex of correctional methods affecting various deviations in different social groups. This includes the following researchers<sup>1</sup>.

The research data allows us to identify the main approaches to the analysis of deviant behavior phenomena and to locate the complex of factors affecting the asocial manifestations in adolescent and youth behavior.

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<sup>1</sup> L. G. Aspinwall y U. M. Staudinger, *A psychology of human strengths: Fundamental questions and future directions for a positive psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003); M. Chedid; L. Romo y E. Chagnard, "Adolescents and marijuana: Links between the consumption level and family structure, cohesion and power", *Ann Medical Psychology* Vol: 167 num 7 (2009): 541-543; C. E. Cooper; S. S. McLanahan; S. O. Meadows y J. Brooks-Gunn, "Family Structure Transitions and Maternal Parenting Stress", *Journal of Marriage and Family* Vol: 71 num 3 (2009): 558-574; J. Farrington; D. Carney; C. Ashley y C. Turton., "Sustainable Livelihoods in Practice: Early Applications of Concepts in Rural Areas", *Overseas Development Institute. Natural Resource Perspectives* num 42 (1999): 1-15. Available at: <http://www.odi.org.uk>; M. J. Giuliodori y S. E. DiCarlo, "Myelinated vs. unmyelinated nerve conduction: a novel way of understanding the mechanisms", *Advances in Physiology Education*, num 28 (2004): 80-81; J. P. Guilford. *Creativity*, "American Psychologist" num 5 Vol: 9 (1950): 444-454; G. Gunzelmann y J. R. Anderson, "Problem-solving: Increased planning with practice", *Cognitive System Research* Vol: 4 num 1 (2003): 57-76; B. A. Hennessey, *The creativity-motivation connection*. In Kaufman, J. C., Sternberg, R. J. (eds.). *The Cambridge handbook of creativity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); M. Hovee; J. S. Dubas; J. R. Gerris; P. H. van der Laan y W. Smeenk, "Maternal and paternal parenting styles: unique and combined links to adolescent and early adult delinquency", *Journal Adolesc.* Vol: 34 num 5 (2011): 813-827; K. A. Khodabakhshi; L. H. Shaghelani; A. A. Soleimani y M. Rahmatizadeh, "Comparison Between Family Power Structure and the Quality of Parent-Child Interaction Among the Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Adolescents", *Int J High-Risk Behav Addict* Vol: 3 num 2 (2014); J. Kong y J. Lim, "The longitudinal influence of parent-child relationships and depression on cyber delinquency in South Korean adolescents: A latent growth curve model. *Child Youth Serv*", *Rev.* Vol: 34 num 5 (2012): 908-913; T. E. Moffitt; A. Caspi; H. Harrington y B. J. Milne, "Males on the life-course-persistent and adolescence-limited antisocial pathways: Follow-up at age 26 years", *Development and psychopathology* Vol: 14 num 1 (2002): 179-207; T. Moitra y I. Mukherjee, "Parent-Adolescent Communication and Delinquency: A Comparative Study in Kolkata, India", *Europe's Journal of Psychology* Vol: 8 num 1 (2012); R. E. Johnson, "Family structure and delinquency: general patterns and gender differences", *Criminology* num 24 (1986): 65-84; K. B. Sanni; N. A. Udoh; A.A. Okediji; F. N. Mado y L. N. Ezeh, "Family types and juvenile delinquency issues among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: Counseling implications", *Journal of Social Science* Vol: 23 num 1 (2010): 21-28; M. Wadsworth, "An Indirect Effects Model of the Association Between Poverty and Child Functioning: The Role of Children's Poverty-Related Stress", *Journal of Loss and Trauma* Vol: 13 num 2-3 (2008):156-185; L. E. Wells y J. H. Rankin, "Families and delinquency: A meta-analysis of the impact of broken homes", *Social problems* Vol: 38 num 1 (1991): 71-93 y G. Zimmermann, "Delinquency in male adolescents: the role of alexithymia and family structure", *Journal of Adolescence* Vol: 29 num 3 (2006): 321-332.

Various foreign studies indicate that violent and non-violent delinquent behavior mainly increases in late adolescence (17-18 years old). Researchers signify<sup>2</sup>, that adolescent deviant behavior commonly leads to a higher probability of criminal behavior in adulthood. Adolescent offenders are people whose adaptation to social challenges and situational problems arising in the process of transition from childhood and adolescence to a conscious, adult life leads to serious problems with parents and psychological difficulties and challenges, such as anxiety and depression, as well as destructive behavioral social and psychological conditions, including drug use or antisocial activity.

The research<sup>3</sup> provides strong evidence of family traditionally playing the leading role in the emergence of criminal activity in adolescents. According to scientists<sup>4</sup>, difficulties in communication and poor relationships with parents, low and self-contradictory parental control, lack of social supervision, negative role models in resolving social and psychological issues, inconsistent family composition, and poverty are the basic family factors commonly associated with violent and non-violent delinquent behavior. In other words, additional information on family sociotype, the type of family unions, factors, such as family flexibility, cohesion, and satisfaction, provide more information on youth behavior. Various scientific schools, theories, and concepts of family systems propose specific methods and terminology for the evaluation and resolution of complex family influences and contextual approaches to the psychological, emotional, and behavioral problems of children.

## Materials and methods

### Research methods

The study presents the analysis of adaptational strategies suggested by foreign authors in the field of delinquent behavior and its prevention and correction from the standpoints of educational psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. A theoretical analysis of the main approaches and concepts of positive psychology and other methodologically applicable theories devoted to the modern psychological and sociological studies of delinquency and deviances is conducted.

### Research stages

The first research stage involved the identification of the complex of issues and factors largely affecting the psychoemotional stability in different social groups, including adolescents and youth, and the identification of the complex of reasons determining the emergence of delinquent and deviant behavior.

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<sup>2</sup> K. A. Khodabakhshi; L. H. Shaghelani; A. A. Soleimani y M. Rahmatizadeh, "Comparison Between Family Power Structure and the Quality of Parent-Child Interaction Among the Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Adolescents", *Int J High-Risk Behav Addict* Vol: 3 num 2 (2014) y R. E. Johnson, "Family structure and delinquency: general patterns and gender differences", *Criminology* num 24 (1986): 65-84.

<sup>3</sup> R. E. Johnson, Family structure and delinquency... y J. Kong y J. Lim, "The longitudinal influence of parent-child relationships and depression on cyber delinquency in South Korean adolescents: A latent growth curve model", *Child Youth Serv. Rev.* Vol: 34 num 5 (2012): 908-913.

<sup>4</sup> J. P. Guilford, "Creativity", *American Psychologist* num 5 Vol: 9 (1950): 444-454 y J. Kong y J. Lim, "The longitudinal influence of parent-child relationships and depression on cyber delinquency in South Korean adolescents: A latent growth curve model", *Child Youth Serv. Rev.* Vol: 34 num 5 (2012): 908-913.

The second research stage included the secondary analysis of the data from research in the fields of psychology, the effect of family relationships between the child and parents, and adult crime and delinquency as the basic conditions for deviation emergence. The data presented in the analyzed studies are summarized.

## Results

Adolescent behavior dysfunctionality arises when parents neglect the exercise of their authority, duties, and competencies in the family. The reasons for parents' refusal to act proactively and use their family authority are numerous and include substance abuse, psychological issues, family disagreements, professional problems, being too young, and lacking parental skills. Regardless of the reason for the inferiority of parental authority in a family group, it can be a factor of predisposition to violence against children, especially when accompanied by child neglect or abuse in marital and parental relationships. In such a case, children will include the phenomenon of violence in their behavior as a natural reaction, resulting in the manifestation of addictive behavior as a regressive form of psychological protection.

Studies demonstrate that family styles of behavior and decision-making and their structure have a great influence on deviant behavior in adolescents. V. Satir implies that in a family where parents communicate with their children with an ambiguous and incomprehensible behavioral style of attachment, parents can have low self-esteem and use children to achieve their own values and satisfy their own ambitions. In such cases, adolescents are prone to family adaptation difficulties, including delinquent behavior demonstration, which may result in criminal offense and the emergence of psychological problems. On the basis of a study conducted on school students, a researcher from Iran presents an interesting characteristic of non-offender adolescents: the age category of 16-year-olds constitutes the largest portion of adolescent offenders (42.5%) and the group of non-offenders is largely composed of 15-year-olds (35%). Moreover, most adolescent offenders were second children in their families (26.25%) and the firstborn children were the staidest and demonstrated obedience with ethics and law (37.5%). The middle school education category prevailed in the delinquent group (52.5%) and the ninth grade students constituted the majority of the delinquent group (31.25%). Self-employment was the most common form of employment in the fathers of adolescent offenders (52.5%) and the fathers of non-offenders were mostly hired employees (57.5%). Being a housewife (88.75%) was the most popular form of employment among the mothers of adolescent offenders and the same form of employment prevailed among the mothers of non-offenders (78.75%).

Juvenile delinquency is a truly complex scientific problem that reveals many of the expected causes of crime. Multiple studies were conducted in order to determine the differences in family hierarchical and role structure, as well as the quality of family relationships between parents and children in 15 to 18-year-old adolescents not showing signs of delinquent behavior. The results demonstrate that a lower level of power hierarchy prominence in the family role structure is related to behavioral delinquency in adolescents. For example, research by Chedid and Chagnard<sup>5</sup> demonstrated weak hierarchical relations with great "intergenerational coalitions" in the families. The non-equilibrated

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<sup>5</sup> M. Chedid; L. Romo y E. Chagnard, "Adolescents and marijuana: Links between the consumption level and family structure, cohesion and power", *Ann Medical Psychology* Vol. 167 num 7 (2009): 541-543.

family structure (with extreme levels of cohesion and power) correlated significantly with the use of light forms of narcotic substances (marijuana) and might show even greater correlation with the use of this type of narcotic on a larger sample<sup>6</sup>. These results are consistent with the previous studies showing that family breakdown contributes to the deviant behavior of children and adolescents in the family and to the manifestation of criminal offense<sup>7</sup>. Wells and Rankin raise the topic of broken family structure as one of the main theories of crime widely discussed in research<sup>8</sup>.

Parents and other socially significant authority figures (teachers, older peers, church leaders, etc.) in the adolescent's life may have a great impact on the development of a healthy self-esteem via positive role-modeling (i.e. by setting a good example through responsibility and personal positive life strategies) and reduce the unreasonable negative background of children. Parents must state and illustrate the positive qualities they identify in their child's personality and openly show praise as a stimulus to the manifestation of these qualities. In most cases, higher levels of conflict with parents are observed during adolescence, which does not always indicate a serious breakdown in relationships between parents and children. Even at times of high emotional intensity both parents and adolescents often signify that the overall quality of their family relationship is highly attached and remains strong, based on common family values and mutual affection, respect, and family obligations, which are the important factors in reducing delinquent and deviant behavior.

A young person can take on roles that often do not match their personality because they are socially expected or as a result of impulsive behavior. Stereotypes in the individual's behavior become more of a demonstrative pattern, which often limits their life possibilities. Facing such difficult social and psychological challenges, the adolescent prefers to leave the stability of family relations, the compensatory social-psychological mechanisms are being chosen more often due to the potential of its immediate satisfaction, and such form of energy channeling as brothels, gangs, bars, sex salons, and discotheques with drugs and alcohol as an island of individual comfort appear in their lives. The progress of a deviant career is oftentimes in dramatic conflict with the adolescent's environment.

An important role is played here by social and cultural norms including a wide variety of views, beliefs, standards of behavior, cultural traditions, public morals, practices, general beliefs, and behavioral patterns. The power of social and cultural norms lies in its influence on people's choices and life paths.

## Discussion

The conducted analysis of research allows us to conclude that early contact with the justice system is one of the strongest factors affecting adolescents that introduces lifelong crime-related attitudes and causes difficulties in the adaptation of such

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<sup>6</sup> M. Chedid; L. Romo y E. Chagnard, "Adolescents and marijuana: Links between the consumption level and family structure, cohesion and power", *Ann Medical Psychology* Vol: 167 num 7 (2009): 541-543.

<sup>7</sup> G. Zimmermann, "Delinquency in male adolescents: the role of alexithymia and family structure", *Journal of Adolescence* Vol: 29 num 3 (2006): 321-332.

<sup>8</sup> L. E. Wells y J. H. Rankin, "Families and delinquency: A meta-analysis of the impact of broken homes", *Social problems* Vol: 38 num 1 (1991): 71-93.

adolescents<sup>9</sup>. In the USA, 6% of men go through their first arrest before reaching adolescence. This presents the worst prognosis for future longterm delinquent behavior<sup>10</sup>.

The factor of poverty is also one of the most important stimuli for delinquent behavior manifestation in children, which is evident from the example of the countries of America and Africa. Poverty produces several direct and indirect effects that may increase all problematic behavior risks. The individual's isolation from external cultural impact in the modern highly urbanized city environment may limit their access to alternative ways of active social behavior and overcoming life difficulties.

The low level of material equipment of schools and their poverty often do not ensure employment opportunities for future graduates, leading to deficit in economic and social needs of the individual that can justify or even highlight the "necessity" (among minors) of their participation in street gangs of deviant and delinquent behavior<sup>11</sup>. Poverty in the family of origin often allows predicting early manifestation of adolescent substance abuse<sup>12</sup>.

## Conclusions

As a result of the conducted analysis, we can state that the array of protective elements (friendly relations with adults, loyal and respectable friends, positive communication with peers at school, positive learning outcomes, participation in social activities, commitment to religion and faith, intolerance to demonstrations of deviant and delinquent behavior) shows the need for its exploitation in order to mitigate the factors that plunge an adolescent into a stressful situation (for example, low self-esteem, personality disorders, low expectations of success, social alienation, negative peer influence, negative connection with traditional social institutions, rise in violence subculture, relative economic deprivation, and lack of academic achievements).

The study of risk and protection factors provides a social platform for testing cultural and esthetic practices of developing appropriate goals for deviation and delinquency prevention and stimulates the activity of juvenile institutions and social services.

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