

STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FAMILY VIOLENCE ON THE FORMATION OF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This article examines the influence of psychological violence within the family on the formation of destructive behavior in adolescents. The causes and consequences of adolescents' destructive behavioral patterns are analyzed, highlighting the psychological mechanisms through which family disharmony and dysfunctional role structures contribute to maladaptive outcomes.

Keywords: Family violence, destructive behavior, adolescents, family disharmony, role structure.

Introduction

The problem of deviant behavior among children and adolescents has become particularly urgent, as it necessitates the development of effective measures for social control, prevention, correction, and rehabilitation of youth exhibiting behavioral deviations. Another important dimension of this issue concerns the social adaptation of individuals in modern society, where the key characteristic is the alignment of individual and group goals and value orientations. Deviant behavior in adolescents is typically accompanied by social maladaptation expressed through various forms of behavioral deviation. Therefore, developing new approaches to studying and correcting the psychological characteristics of adolescents with deviant behavior is a relevant and significant task.

According to official UN statistics, approximately 2 million children under the age of 14 around the world are subjected to violence by their parents each year. For 10% of these children, such experiences result in death, and for 2%, in suicide. More than 50,000 children run away from home annually in an attempt to escape their own parents. It is important to note that these figures do not fully reflect the true extent of the problem, as domestic violence and, consequently, crimes committed within the family environment are highly latent.

While adult family members who experience violence often refrain from seeking help due to fear, shame, or the desire to preserve the family, adolescents face an even more vulnerable situation. In addition to psychological barriers, many simply do not know where to seek help. Yet the family is supposed to serve as the primary protective system for adolescents—both



psychosocially and physically. But what should an adolescent do when the threat comes not from outside but from within the family itself?

Lacking the ability to resist an abusive family environment, adolescents begin to develop destructive behavioral patterns, expressed both verbally and through actions.

Adolescence is a sensitive developmental period, during which young people are especially vulnerable to various adverse factors and conditions. When combined with accelerated and uneven development, these factors can significantly burden their physical and psychological well-being, which most often manifests as behavioral deviations, including unlawful acts. Compared to other institutions of socialization, the family possesses unique characteristics. “Family–adolescent” relationships are stable and long-lasting, accumulating a substantial history of communication and influence from parents and other family members.

The family is a multifaceted social group with diverse gender and age composition, where the adolescent acquires essential experiences of interacting with individuals of different ages and sexes. The influence of the family encompasses all aspects of the adolescent’s personality— affective, cognitive, and behavioral—and continues almost continuously, just like the socialization process itself.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of deviant behavior has been extensively examined in both foreign and domestic sociological and psychological literature. Deviant behavior in adolescence represents a complex phenomenon; therefore, its study has an interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature. Numerous foreign scholars have contributed to the study of deviant behavioral manifestations, including É. Durkheim, R. Merton, E. Goffman, E. Lemert, H. Becker, N. Smelser, A. Cohen, Z. Freud, C. Lombroso, W. Sheldon, and others. In Russia, various aspects of deviant behavior have been studied by researchers such as Ya.I. Gilinsky, Yu.A. Kleiberg, E.V. Zmanovskaya, L.B. Schneider, V.I. Kudryavtsev, I.S. Kon, V.D. Mendelevich, A.E. Lichko, S.A. Belicheva, among others.

The founder of the cultural approach to deviant behavior in Russia, Ya.I. Gilinsky, introduced the term “deviant behavior” into scientific discourse. According to Gilinsky, the primary source of deviance in modern society lies in the existence of social inequality and significant differences in the ability of different social groups to satisfy their needs [2]. Each theoretical perspective has merit, as it reflects certain aspects of real social relations. At the same time, all authors aspire to identify a unified causal foundation for various forms of deviance. The socially negative nature of deviance is destructive both for the individual and society. It is precisely this type of deviant behavior that attracts the greatest attention from researchers and is widely discussed in socio-psychological literature by scholars such as I.V. Dubrovina, A. Ignatenko, A.A. Radugin, K.A. Radugin, Zh.T. Toshchenko, S.S. Frolov, who elaborate on mechanisms of deviance and deviant behavior.

The concept of destructive behavior is widely addressed in both foreign and Russian sociological literature. Deviant behavior in adolescence is a multifaceted phenomenon, and its investigation integrates sociological, psychological, pedagogical, and criminological perspectives. Scholars commonly define “deviance” as a deviation from norms governing



behavior in a given community. Accordingly, the term “deviant” is traditionally applied to describe an action or process—typically a set of actions committed by an individual or group—that violates social norms. A closely related term is “deviation.” According to T.V. Kuchits, these concepts are not identical: “*deviation*” reflects the quantitative aspect of the phenomenon, whereas “*deviance*” describes its essential qualitative dimension—the fact of norm violation.

Deviance is also considered a unique form of behavior—more specifically, a lifestyle or behavioral pattern—while simultaneously representing a social judgment whose subject is the culture of a society and whose object is both the behavioral form and its bearer. A sociological analysis of adolescent deviance enables the development of more effective social and psychological technologies for influencing children with deviant tendencies, as well as recommendations for preventing adolescent deviations. Adolescent deviance can be seen as the result of an inability to align negative internal impulses with culturally established norms and rules of self-realization and self-affirmation in society.

A significant role in the development of destructive behavior is played by socio-psychological factors of the environment, such as the level of parental education, social status, quality of family relationships, parent–child interactions, child-rearing styles, and other aspects of family life. E.V. Zmanovskaya obtained compelling data indicating disturbances in meaningful parental relationships across all studied groups of adolescents with deviant behavior:

- among adolescents committing violent offenses, a *deficit of positive paternal influence* predominates;
- in groups with drug addiction, the primary disturbances occur in relations with the mother, expressed as a *lack of care, authority, and consistency*;
- in groups characterized by household alcoholism, *general dissatisfaction* with both parents is observed.

Overall, an intensification of deviant tendencies corresponds with a decline in the total level of positive emotional attitude toward both parents [5].

Manifestations of Parental Indifference and Its Role in the Development of Deviant Behavior
Parental indifference, rejection, hostility, disrespect, excessive demands, and the child’s exposure to systematic punishment—all of these factors can contribute to the development of basic hostility toward parents, emotional withdrawal, distrust, and various forms of deviant or addictive behavior. Most scholars analyzing the causes of adolescent deviance emphasize the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors.

In his work “*The Origin of Childhood Neuroses and Psychotherapy*,” A.I. Zakharov [4] identifies several characteristics of parental attitudes and parameters of improper upbringing:

- parental non-acceptance of the child;
- parents’ lack of understanding of the child’s personality and age-specific developmental features;
- mismatch between parental expectations and the child’s actual capabilities and needs;
- inconsistency in parental attitudes;
- inconsistency and lack of coordination in parenting actions;
- rigidity, emotionality, and anxiety;



- dominance, hypersocialization, and insensitivity.

The dissertation research of A.Ya. Varga systematizes the typology of improper parental attitudes and makes a significant contribution to the psychology of parenting errors. Based on extensive clinical practice and careful data analysis, the author [1] distinguished the following four types of parental relationships:

1. accepting–authoritarian;
2. rejecting;
3. symbiotic;
4. symbiotic–authoritarian.

Improper parental attitudes can lead to severe consequences. V.M. Tseluyko [6] concludes that distortions in parental attitudes—either through weakening behavioral control or through deterioration of emotional attitudes—can lead to profound personality defects in the child. The child may become a tool of rivalry between adults, a means of exerting influence or pressure, or a vehicle for punishment or revenge.

According to A.N. Elizarova, the destruction of parent–child relationships arises in situations where the child experiences rejection. Indifference, emotional coldness, rejection, a hostile home atmosphere, and lack of family cohesion generate in the child aggression, resentment, running away from home, and vagrancy [3].

CONCLUSION

Family violence can manifest in the following forms: physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and emotional abuse. Violence may also be expressed in the form of neglect of the child’s needs. These forms of domestic violence can provoke the development of deviant behavior in adolescents, and in its most extreme form, delinquent behavior. Importantly, the adolescent does not need to be the direct victim of violence—being a witness alone may initiate psychosocial deformation.

During adolescence, parent–child relationships undergo a qualitative transformation. If an adolescent becomes a victim or witness of family violence, their fundamental psychological needs cannot be fulfilled, leading to cognitive dissonance. When psychological violence—such as insults, humiliation, degradation of personal worth, negative evaluations, and other forms of emotional abuse—is directed at the adolescent, their need for respect and emotional support remains unmet. This may lead to the development of psychological complexes and deformation of psychosocial consciousness.

Deviant behavior, as a consequence of such influences, may manifest itself in various ways:

- mirrored hostility toward others;
- social passivity and lack of initiative;
- withdrawal and isolation;
- heightened resentment and aggression toward family members and other individuals in society.

In conclusion, an in-depth conceptual understanding of the influence of psychological family violence on the formation of destructive behavior in adolescents makes it possible to develop a comprehensive technology of parental error management, which may include: symptom



identification, diagnostic assessment, prognosis, prevention, early intervention, risk minimization, and correction.

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