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Juvenile Delinquent Behavior

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Abstract: *Juvenile deviant behavior is the set of material or symbolic actions committed persistently, repeatedly, or continuously by the minor often considered a response to the frustration they experience while interacting with the environment and affecting negatively social values. The types of problematic behavior can be classified into the following categories: offenses against property, offenses against individuals, offenses against morality, juvenile delinquent conduct, juvenile crime. Considering the influence of individual variables on criminal behavior, criminology introduces the notion of offender personality as a component of the human personality within a bio-psycho-social framework. The individual's psychological profile cannot be fully understood without the biological infrastructure on which he develops and outside the social superstructure in which it is embedded.*

Keywords: *juvenile deviant behavior; offenses against property; offenses against individuals; offenses against morality; juvenile delinquent conduct; juvenile crime.*

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Introduction

Juvenile deviant behavior is the set of material or symbolic actions committed persistently, repeatedly, or continuously by the minor often considered a response to the frustration they experience while interacting with the environment and affecting negatively social values.

Deviant behavior is an atypical behavior characterized by the following behavioral trends:

- *the reaction of opposition to increased expectations;*
- *the passive behavior or, on the contrary, the aggressive behavior of the parents, leads to an alienation of the minor, the tendency to run away from home, a bad entourage, or even sometimes the emergence of antisocial behavior;*
- *the reaction of imitation;*
- *the reaction of denial;*
- *the compensation reaction;*
- *the hyper-compensation reaction;*
- *the emancipation reaction;*
- *the reaction of adherence to the group;*
- *the passionate response to an area that leads to the establishment of a youth subculture* (Cusson, 2002).

The types of problematic behavior can be classified into the following categories:

a. *oppositional behavior* - is characterized by the defiant attitude of children towards the authority of parents or teachers and the display of inappropriate reactions; this behavior mainly concerns minors between 3-6 years of age;
b. *aggressive behavior* - is characterized by a tendency to cause damage or hurt someone showing a permanent desire for destruction; this behavior is present during classical stages of adolescence;
c. *delinquent behavior* - through this behavior, norms are violated by young people aged 10-18 - consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, psychoactive substances;
d. *criminal behavior* - is the behavior that violates legal norms through serious offenses such as theft, robbery, vandalism, destruction, and assault; the target group presenting this behavior are those aged 15-18.

Depending on the nature of the behavior and its relationship with social and legal normality, we can distinguish the following types of behavior, namely: antisocial behavior and delinquent behavior.

Concerning the dangerous nature of the deviant behavior, the following are distinguished:

- occasional deviant behavior;
- structural deviant behavior;
- recurrent deviant behavior.

The forms of deviant behavior by type are:

- aggressive and violent behavior (states of rage, anger, fierceness, lack of restraint in words and actions);
- acquisitive behavior (approaching goods and items belonging to others and appropriating them for personal purposes);
- perverse behavior (hysterical crying, rape, sexual perversions, hatred and cruelty);
- self-harming behavior (juveniles direct their violent acts towards themselves);
- non-culpable or involuntary behavior (juveniles with mental disorders).

Offenses against property

Offenses against property are regulated by the criminal legislation which states that they have as their generic legal object the social relations that guarantee the protection of patrimony as a sum of assets and this category includes theft, aggravated theft, robbery, piracy, abuse of trust, fraudulent management, fraud, embezzlement, vandalism and destruction, aggravated destruction, fraudulent deeds, disturbance of possession, concealment, appropriation of lost property (Cusson, 2002). In the case of offenses against property, statistics are the most representative documents that can exemplify the actual situation and its seriousness. Theft, defined by the Penal Code, constitutes" the act of taking a movable asset from another person's possession or control, without the latter's consent, to unlawfully appropriate it. The action is theft also when the asset belongs fully or partly to the perpetrator, but at the time of the offense, the asset in question was in the legitimate possession or control of another person. Any document, electrical energy, or any form of energy with economic value, shall be deemed movable assets." In Romania, shoplifting represents 4% of all offenses against property (Cusson, 2002). Burglary is another important form of theft among juveniles. In Romania, this type of theft accounts for 30%. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that after 1989 in Romania, a thriving black market emerged, creating opportunities for many young individuals to steal valuable items from various homes such as TVs, telephones, electrical appliances, computers, music players, or similar items to sell them on the black market at prices far

below the quality of the products or their official prices. Therefore, shoplifting and burglary are the most predominant forms of theft, but besides these, there are other forms of theft, though less common among juveniles.

Offenses against individuals

The unlawful act committed against an individual is a particular delinquent conduct, individualized by an aggressive reaction and the absence of theft. This type of attack is a fairly common type of juvenile delinquent conduct, with a tendency towards a slight increase compared to traditional delinquent conduct. Offenses against individuals can be grouped into:

- homicide and attempted homicide;
- blows or any other acts of violence, infliction of bodily harm, blows or bodily harm which result in death;
- other crimes committed with intent, such as assault, or illegal deprivation of freedom (Grecu & Rădulescu, 2003).

Concerning the offences against individuals committed by minors, it stands out as a common denominator, the decrease in the age and the increase in the degree of cruelty of the perpetrators. The most significant offense against a person is homicide, which is the killing of a person, with considerable seriousness in the sphere of collective disturbances of conscience. These crimes are often committed under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive substances. Homicide offenses usually occur as impulsive and disorganized acts.

Offenses against morality

Offenses against morality can be organized into three categories, as follows:

- sexual assault or gang rape;
- pandering and prostitution;
- incest.

Offenses against morality have shown a decrease of 4-5% in recent years, nevertheless, specialized studies concerning sexual offenses still record a very high figure. According to certain surveys, the sexual offenses reported to the police account for less than 5% of the actual number of such offenses. The vast majority of these crimes go unreported, known only to the victim and the perpetrator, often due to fear of retaliation, punishment, or due to fear of public humiliation.

1. Sexual assault:

Rape or sexual assault is typically carried out by juvenile delinquents who lack constructive leisure activities and who exhibit deviant behaviors before committing the offense. It is a remnant of the ancestral sexual drive to represent the woman as a sexual object (Grecu & Rădulescu, 2003). Rape or sexual assault is a sexual act involving one or several individuals, carried out without the victim's consent and committed by constraint, regardless of gender. Forensic proof of the crime of sexual assault is based on the reality of the sexual act and the victim's opposition. This early maladjustment is often associated with emotional disturbances such as infantilism, instability, and egocentrism, as well as family disturbances such as rejection and overprotectiveness. Additionally, there are cases of sexual assault linked to puberty-related disorders.

2. Pandering and prostitution:

Prostitution is an ancient practice marking the decadence of morals by degrading women and objectifying them, as a means of satisfaction to men. In Romania, pandering and prostitution are not particularly significant among minors. In recent years, several methods have been developed to understand and prevent this phenomenon, given the fact that there is a strong worldwide expansion of this problem, which affects more and more children, involved in pornographic activities.

3. Incest:

The incest represents a particular type of sexual assault which, the Chinese call a" confusion of relationship". This form of sexual assault occurs in all societies and concerns father-daughter, brother-sister, or mother-son relationships. As a rule, these sexual relations are heterosexual and less often homosexual. This also happens in the case of incest, where the relations between sister and brother are hidden due to the fear of liability, revenge, or public humiliation. Specialists claim that incest is a temporary crisis involving frustrated and deviant teenagers, brought together by a dubious lifestyle or lack of education. This form of sexopathy and sexual deviance remains unreported in 90% of cases and is only brought to the attention of the authorities when harmful consequences occur such as pregnancy, social exposure, marital conflicts, or flagrant offenses. Incest can represent the cause for disturbances in the development of the adolescent's thinking and affectivity, sexual behavior disorders, or depression. In addition to these offenses against morality, we can also talk about homosexuality in juveniles, trans-sexuality, sexual deviations, pornography, etc. Goethe asserted that "homosexuality is as old as humanity, as one can rightfully assume it is part of nature". Adolescence is the time when minors set a series

of fundamental objectives such as establishing their physical and mental identity, i.e. their sexual identity, as well as shaping relationships between them and their parents, the outside world, and their future (Coca-Cozma et al., 2003). Achieving a stable sexual identity involves accepting a firm sexual and emotional orientation towards people of the same sex or people of different sex. The development of these considerations can be influenced by environmental, familial, educational, or social factors. The trans-sexuality is represented by the immense, sometimes obsessive desire of an individual to align their physical bodies with their gender identity, which is different from the one assigned at birth. Transsexuals are under the impression that they belong to the opposite sex from childhood, and during adolescence, they cannot get used to their role or their secondary characters. Adolescent girls display trans-sexual tendencies by feeling more comfortable around men, who besides accepting them, also offer them the quality of leaders.

Sexual perversions refer to sexual gestures or acts of a sexual nature performed in public that lead to public condemnation. This includes any sexual behavior that is not accepted by the partners involved. Such deviations are sadism, masochism, voyeurism, narcissism, gerontophilia, necrophilia, incest, and pedophilia. Sexual perversions are very rarely encountered in juvenile behavior. Recent studies show that sexual perversion depends on the particular structure of the personality, even on a special psychological economy, which must be seen in a general context, while the personality of the adolescent is undergoing a structural process and their knowledge concerning sex is modest. Most of the time, children or teenagers are victims of sexual abuse and perversions committed by adults (Cusson, 2002). A series of cases appeared in which minors overcame the condition of victims, becoming aggressors, and committing sexual assaults against minors, thus acquiring deviant sexual behavior. Abusive minors originate in all social environments and go through the same stages of deviance such as inappropriate conduct, hyper-sexuality, orgasmic orientation, as well as sexual aggression. Abusers are usually shy, have few sexual relations due to lack of communication, are lonely, suffer from anxiety, inhibition of feelings, existential anguish, low aggressiveness, low self-esteem, lack of self-assertiveness, etc.

Juvenile delinquent conduct

As far as juvenile delinquency is concerned, the behavioral typology based on the number of perpetrators holds significant importance, distinguishing between individual delinquency and group delinquency, while incorporating both gender-related behaviors and those of prejudicial nature (Ciobanu, 2006).

a) Individual delinquency

Individual delinquency is an individual act, a human action committed by a minor and determined by a series of psychological elements, certain goals, motivations, or even tendencies or needs.

The term "individual delinquency" is not encountered in specialized literature nor criminal legislation, so for its definition, we will take into account certain features that differentiate it, namely age, deviant behavior which in this case has certain specific features, and last but not least the number of participants in the illegal act. Therefore, individual delinquency is characterized as the accumulation of criminal or civil offenses committed by a single individual under the age of 18.

It should be mentioned that juvenile delinquency is more pronounced in urban environments. One of the causes resides in the material inequalities in urban communities, by contrast with rural ones, where the material possibilities of individuals are substantially equal.

Juvenile offenders in urban environments are more likely to commit illegal acts due to the multitude of sites and environments favorable to committing crimes. They frequent various places such as bars, casinos, gaming machine clubs, cinemas, crowded areas, and gyms, thus having the opportunity to commit various criminal acts such as pickpocketing, car theft, robberies, and luggage theft.

Offenders from rural areas do not have such possibilities, therefore the level of criminality is lower due to the greater possibilities of recognition and detection.

b) Group delinquency

The concept of group delinquency represents the complete range of criminal and civil offenses conducted by a collective of individuals under the age of 18.

Among juvenile delinquents, notable attributes emerge that serve as distinguishing factors: a propensity for criminal behavior, unwavering persistence, manifestations of both physical and verbal aggression, and a blend of hostility and loyalty towards peers.

Group delinquency represents delinquent conduct specific to minors along with violence, offenses involving substance abuse, or theft of motor vehicles.

Currently, group delinquency accounts for 1/3 of all juvenile delinquency.

There are two different categories of delinquents, respectively two categories of delinquent acts, as follows:

- *Spontaneous groups* - these are formed by juvenile individuals, but because they are neither stable nor permanent, they do not present specific characteristics. Also, the acts committed by these groups are less common in the case of crimes such as aggravated theft or gang rape, being favored by various factors such as entourage or alcohol consumption.
- *Organized groups* - are also called gangs, represent a form of delinquency that presents specific characteristics due to the organization and its stability, being a collective group in which the members lead an antisocial life, and most of the actions they undertake are carried out in violation of the law.

The characteristics of the bands consist of:
- gangs consisting of minors can be controlled by adult gangs;
- gangs currently act with much more violence than in the past (to be integrated and admitted into a gang, the minor must undergo an initiation ritual which often involves aggression, rape, or even murder);
- the minor is integrated into the group's rhythm of life, constituting a cultural characteristic.

The organization in distinct gangs determines the following characteristics:
- the use of slang or coded communication;
- characteristic appearance of the group for easier individualization;
- the delimitation of the areas of interest of each zone using graffiti;
- the predisposition of a certain musical genre that includes texts describing neighborhood life, their relationship with justice, and the police;
- permanent hatred and enmity against opponents;
- contradictory ideologies;
- risky way of life (underpasses, subway stations, abandoned construction sites).

The characteristics that determine the gang phenomenon are increased immigration, the prevalence of the idea of social isolation and a person's inability to integrate, as well as the development of the drug scene and the associated underground economy.

It should be borne in mind that in the USA this phenomenon is quite widespread, but in Europe, it is still under control, probably due to the

cooperation between police and judicial bodies through the Schengen Agreement and the establishment of Europol, which provides the premises for the development of new ideas on the institution of extradition and the correlation of criminal legislation. Specialists foresee the emergence in the near future of such cooperation in the police and judicial field at the global level, taking into account the creation of the prerequisites to fight the spread of terrorism.

Youth violence is another delinquent behavior specific to minors. The studies carried out by criminologists or sociologists, show that in recent years there has been an increase in the phenomenon of insecurity among citizens both in highly developed areas and in less developed ones, thus, in the rural areas, this insecurity records a value of 52% while in the urban areas, it reaches 73%.

In Romania, the problem of citizens' insecurity exists, and some specialists claim that it represents a serious phenomenon. They claim that during the transition period, violence registered spectacular increases, especially among minors and young people, and represents the phenomenon that the population fears the most (Banciu & Rădulescu, 2002).

Violence in schools is a serious form of youth violence. There are situations when the student regards the school with aversion and antipathy, which will slowly lead to school failure and also to delinquency. Violence in schools is also referred to in the studies of the Council of Europe which state that acts of a criminal nature, which occur in schools, take different forms, from fights between students to robberies, rapes, or even murders.

The media is another source that influences young people to resort to antisocial acts, due to programs, movies, or even news or other similar programs that broadcast various violent acts and incidents of a violent nature at times when children can watch them, and from which minors can draw various conclusions and lessons, which are often contrary to social life.

In Romania, various measures were taken to stop the delinquency produced by the media. In consequence, the National Audiovisual Council regulated that films, shows, and cartoons containing violent scenes must display on the screen a notification on the minimum age recommended to the viewer and a series of such shows can only be broadcasted after midnight (Banciu & Rădulescu, 2002).

Theft of motor vehicles is represented by the theft of cars or motorcycles, another delinquent behavior specific to juveniles, representing 1/5 of the total offenses committed by minors and 1/3 of the crimes against property.

This type of theft is characterized by the fact that the perpetrators are in most cases juvenile boys, and is the only offense where the number of

acts committed by minors exceed the number of crimes committed by adults. Motor vehicle thefts occur in developed countries in order to use the stolen vehicles for various escapades, rides, speed races, and sometimes to evade and get home faster after committing various acts, while in less developed countries, such as Romania, this type of theft is aimed at obtaining material advantages, as stolen vehicles are usually sold, in whole or in sections, in various places on the black market at a price lower than the market price.

Drug and alcohol-related delinquency is another delinquent conduct specific to juveniles.

Juvenile crime

Criminology is the science that studies the social phenomenon of crime to prevent and combat it; has, on the one hand, as an object of activity: crime as a social phenomenon, the offense, the offender, the social reaction against crime, and on the other hand, the synthetic object is crime as a social phenomenon.

Juvenile crime represents the set of crimes committed in a certain period by minors in a society, taking into account the age of those who committed those crimes as a delimitation criterion.

The phenomenon of crime presents a higher gravity for society due to the fact that those who committed them are minors in the process of personality development and less in terms of the resulting material damage.

It should be mentioned that delinquency is a component of criminality, a phenomenon of deviance, which manifests itself through the inability of some juveniles or teenagers to adapt to society's norms of conduct. This inability is due to bio-psycho-social causes.

Youth and minors who take part in criminal activities often commit crimes such as: theft, rape, bodily harm, blows or bodily harm which results in death, homicide and attempted murder.

Juvenile crime has different causes compared to adult crime. Thus, the specific causes of juvenile delinquency are:

- the increase in school dropout of students with deviant behavior or certain antisocial concerns, as well as the lack of a useful activity;
- permanent lack of supervision of minors by parents, supervisors, guardians and grandparents;
- disorganized families where the parents have previously committed criminal offenses;

- the gaps and discontinuity in the education of minors by the school, protection units as well as other institutions with such responsibilities;
- neglect and parents' ignorance of the surroundings, places, or environments frequented by minors;
- the absence of permanent ties between family and school;
- the influence of major offenders in the entourage of minors by encouraging or determining them to perform antisocial acts;
- substance abuse by minors.

Crime is often an individual act, an individual phenomenon that comprises a series of acts of individuals who commit voluntarily, actions or inactions with a high degree of social danger and are prohibited by law.

The etiology of the crime presented as an individual act can be placed on the level of the offender's personality, on the level of life situations, or the level of the dynamic conjugation of the first two elements. So, the theories presented in the bio-psychological orientation are based on the importance of the offender's personality, and the pre-criminal situation is only what triggers the commission of the illegal act, thus emphasizing the negative traits of the minor that would sooner or later have shown themselves.

In the case of sociological theories, it is assumed that there are no differences between the personality of the offender and the personality of non-offenders unless environmental factors have caused the emergence of a deviant, discordant, or antisocial personality. Considering the influence of individual variables on criminal behavior, criminology introduces the notion of offender personality as a component of the human personality within a bio-psycho-social framework.

Personality is the consequence of the interactionist process through which the biological infrastructure was grafted with the main social vectors, a result of the dialectical interaction between the set of characteristics of the individual's internal organization and the set of factors of the social environment. The individual native dispositions that represent the basic idea of the creation of the individual's personality are influenced by various factors such as social, economic, cultural, and political conditions, under which the individual develops and grows (Grecu & Rădulescu, 2003).

The individual's psychological profile cannot be fully understood without the biological infrastructure on which he develops and outside the social superstructure in which it is embedded.

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