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ARTÍCULO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

## Factores familiares del desarrollo personal criminógeno de los menores con discapacidad intelectual en conflicto con la ley /DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7382830

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#### Resumen

El propósito del estudio es la identificación de los factores relacionados con la familia en el desarrollo criminógeno de la personalidad de un delincuente juvenil con discapacidad intelectual y la elaboración de recomendaciones sobre esta base para su consideración en el procedimiento judicial. Se entrevistó a un total de 304 padres (152 madres de 34 a 54 años; 152 padres de 44,4 años de media), a 76 menores acusados por primera vez de delitos violentos: entre ellos, 38 menores de 13 a 16 años con discapacidad intelectual (F70,0, F78,0, F79,0; 56-70 puntuación de CI en Wechsler) y a 82 hijos hermanos y/o hermanas de menores delincuentes que no tienen discapacidad intelectual. Los resultados indican que la mayoría de las familias (68,42%) que crían a menores delincuentes con discapacidad intelectual acusados de delitos violentos tienen niveles bajos de su capacidad funcional; el 31,48% tiene un nivel medio, y no hay familias en este grupo principal con altos índices de capacidad de los miembros de la familia para satisfacer las necesidades familiares básicas de los demás. Como conclusiones, se destaca que las relaciones familiares disfuncionales, los estilos y las características de la interacción de todos los miembros de la familia deben ser considerados como la condición principal de la resocialización de un menor delincuente, con discapacidad intelectual.

**Palabras clave:** desarrollo criminógeno, relaciones familiares disfuncionales, delincuentes juveniles, factores relacionados con la familia, trastornos del desarrollo intelectual.

#### **Abstract**

### Family-related factors of criminogenic personal development of intellectually disabled minors in conflict with the law

The purpose of the study identification of family-related factors in the criminogenic development of the personality of a juvenile intellectually disabled offender and the development of recommendations on this basis for their consideration in court proceeding. A total of 304 parents were interviewed (152 mothers aged 34 to 54; 152 fathers aged 44.4 on average), 76 minors first time accused of violent crimes: among them, 38 minors aged 13 to 16 with intellectual disabilities (F70.0, F78.0, F79.0; 56-70 IQ score on Wechsler) and 82 children who were brothers and/or sisters of delinquent minors who do not have intellectual disabilities. The majority of families (68,42%) raising delinquent minors having intellectual disabilities accused of violent crimes have low levels of their functional capacity; 31,48% have a medium level, and there are no

families in this main group with high rates of family members' ability to meet each other's basic family needs. In conclusion, dysfunctional family relationships, styles, and features of interaction of all family members should be considered the primary condition of resocialization of a delinquent intellectually disabled minor.

**Keywords**: criminogenic development, dysfunctional family relationships, juvenile delinquents, family-related factors, intellectual development disorders

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#### 1.- Introduction

According to the latest evidence-based information, one of the acute problems of modern society is the problem of juvenile crime, which is steadily trending upward and mainstreaming (Burenkova, 2020).

According to statistics, over 140,000 crimes are committed by minors in one year alone in Russia.

Due to the urgency of the problem, its research deals with many issues: studying motives of juvenile crime (Ryzhova, 2020), causes of delinquent and criminogenic personality development of minors (Karimova, 2016), developing measures to counteract their delinquency (Strilec & Semenenko, 2016; Yakovchuk, 2017), juvenile measures of their punishment (Davydenko, 2009).

Great emphasis is given to family factors in the personal development of minors in conflict with the law (Agafonov & Ilyashenko, 2007). It has been noted that delinquent minors are usually raised in difficult families (Agafonov & Ilyashenko, 2007; Lau et al., 2021), in families with parents with criminal records (Makushkin, 2009; Demko & Pilipenko, 2017), in families where parents abuse alcohol and/or drugs (Chetverikov, 2014; Ren et al., 2021), in families where parents forbear from parenting (Karimova, 2016; Blankestein et al., 2019) or mistreat a child (Badmaeva, 2003).

The problem of delinquent minors having intellectual disabilities gains particular importance. According to official statistics, it accounts for at least 50% of juveniles' total crimes (Perezhogin, 2010; Bernard et al., 2013). This matter needs an interdisciplinary approach which contributes to detect psychological, social, moral and criminal issues (Zabryansky, 2004; Barylnik et al., 2016). Researchers note that crimes committed by mentally disordered persons are extremely vicious (Gorshkov & Nikolaeva, 2000;

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Yakovchuk, 2017; Altukhova & Elizarov, 2020), mild mental deficiency is a source of aggression (Butorina et al., 2002; Maskaeva et al., 2020; Bonkalo et al., 2021; Perruci et al., 2021), presence of intellectual disabilities may quite often have been a trigger itself to delinquent and criminogenic behaviour of teenagers (Shipova, 2013; Lin & Yi, 2016; Nasreldin et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is intellectual disabilities that become the extenuating circumstance that is taken into account when sentencing for the committed crime in the court (Davydenko, 2009; Kolemasov & Sergeeva, 2020).

According to Part 1 Article 89 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, when sentencing a juvenile, the court must take into account "the conditions of his life and upbringing." Owing to the lack of specific instructions about what exactly courts should take into account and how when sentencing minors, on the one hand, and on the other hand, due to the necessity, if possible, to commute punishment of a juvenile (Ivanova, 2018), actual jurisdiction demonstrates a formal attitude toward compliance with these instructions. The fact that family relations have not fully been considered when imposing a suspended sentence on minors with psychophysiological organic disorders has been mentioned in many studies (Dolmatov, 2013).

A study was conducted to identify family-related factors of criminogenic personality development of a juvenile offender with intellectual disabilities and develop guidelines on this basis for consideration in judicial proceedings.

#### 2. Materials and methods

Four research groups were formed for the study: two main groups, each with 38 two-parent families of minors in conflict with the law having organic disorders (Main Group1) and not having organic disorders (Main Group2), and two control groups, each with 38 two-parent families of minors with intellectual disabilities (Control Group1) and without intellectual disabilities (Control Group2) but distinguished by prosocial behaviour. The criteria to be included in the study groups are two-parent families of minors in conflict with the law and the absence of evident social deprivation.

A total of 304 parents were interviewed (152 mothers aged 34 to 54; 152 fathers aged 44.4 on average), 76 minors first time accused of violent crimes: among them, 38 minors aged 13 to 16 with intellectual disabilities (F70.0, F78.0, F79.0; 56-70 IQ score on Wechsler) and 82 children who were brothers and/or sisters of delinquent minors who don't have intellectual disabilities. The examination of minors was conducted during the forensic psychiatric examination of accused minors assigned during the trial. All of the juveniles selected for the study do not have psychotic disorders.

The study has been carried out using diagnostic tools, including 1) methods for identifying features of inter-spousal relations: Functional capacity of the family by T.I. Bonkalo (2011); 2) methods for revealing features of parent-child relationships: Types and levels of emotional rejection of a child in the family by T.I. Bonkalo (2011); Parent-Child Interaction by I.M. Markovskaya (Bonkalo, 2011); 3) the author's method to reveal

features of sibling relationships; 4) methods of studying individual psychological features of parents: Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI), Cattell's questionnaire (Form C) (Raygorodsky, 2011).

All of the used psychodiagnostic techniques comply with their reliability and validity requirements.

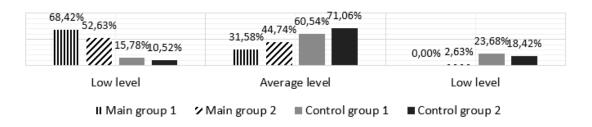
The author's methods have been psychometrically verified and have demonstrated compliance with the criteria of the accuracy of psychological measurements, reproducibility of research results and their stability (reliability coefficient > 0,75). Psychometric testing of the author's methods also included testing for pragmatic, conceptual, predictive, retrospective and construct validity (internal consistency and discriminatory power of affirmative questions). The methods were tested on representative samples of more than 200 respondents. Statistical methods included calculation of Student's t-test, Mann-Whitney U-test, and Spearman's correlation coefficient.

#### 3. Results

The results of the comparative analysis of the level of functional capacity of the families of the four research groups demonstrate that, first, it is significantly lower in the Main Group than in the Control Group. Second, it is considerably lower in the families raising minors in conflict with the law having intellectual disabilities than in the other families being tested (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Percentage distribution of families by the level of their functional capacity
(%)



Source: Authors development

The functional capacity of the family is understood as the ability of the spouses to meet each other's needs and carry out essential intrafamilial functions. Traditionally,

there are four main functions of the family: domestic, educational, psychotherapeutic and leisure function of the family and the personal growth of spouses (Bonkalo, 2011).

The majority of families (68,42%) raising delinquent minors having intellectual disabilities accused of violent crimes have low levels of their functional capacity; 31,48% have a medium level, and there are no families in this main group with high rates of family members' ability to meet each other's basic family needs.

Analysis of the study results of the characteristics of parent-child interaction in the families being tested indicates that minors in conflict with the law having intellectual disabilities suffer lack of sense of emotional security in the family (Table 1).

Table 1

Comparative analysis of indicators of emotional security of adolescents in the surveyed families

Basic needs of the child in the family	Main group 1	Main ssgroup 2	Control group 1	Control group 2	P (MG 1-2)	P (MG- CG)
The need for parental love and care	2,26 ± 0,4	4,48 ± 0,5	5,56 ± 0,6	6,09 ± 0,6	0,000	0,000
Need for understanding	2,22 ± 0,3	1,96 ± 0,2	4,78 ± 0,6	3,46 ± 0,4	0,042	0,002
Need for help and protection	2,02 ± 0,2	3,32 ± 0,4	5,52 ± 0,6	5,84 ± 0,6	0,061	0,000

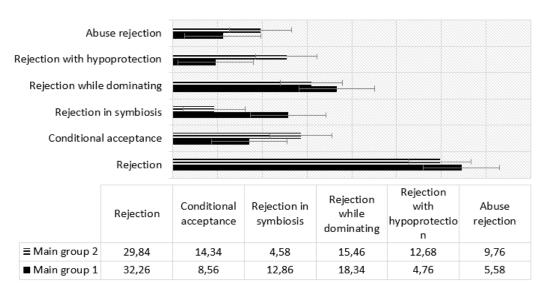
Source: Authors development

The statistics significantly differed between the main first and the main second groups regarding the juvenile's satisfaction with his parents' love and care (p = 0,000) and their understanding of the child's problems (p = 0,042).

A study conducted using the Questionnaire by T.I. Bonkalo, showed the presence of hidden emotional rejection of a "special" child in families raising delinquent minors having intellectual disabilities (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Results of the study of the level and type of emotional rejection of juvenile delinquents in the family (average score)



= Main group 2 ■ Main group 1

Source: Authors development

Significant differences were found between the first and second main groups on almost all of the Questionnaire indicators, except for the level of emotional rejection (p = 0,119). The families, raising minors in conflict with the law having an intellectual disability and conditionally healthy children, have a high level of emotional rejection, including psychological deprivation (the mean group values are in the range of borderline state acceptance of the child (30,26 and 29,84 of 36 maximum possible points).

The scores on the Symbiosis Rejection (p = 0,000) and Parental Dominance Rejection (p = 0,022) scales were significantly higher in the first main group than in the second main group. In contrast, families, raising conditionally healthy minors in conflict with the law, had significantly higher child rejection rates with overprotection (p = 0,004) and child abuse (p = 0,037).

It is important to point out that one of the dominant factors of criminogenic personal development of the minor with intellectual disabilities is a disagreement factor in communicative processes in the family.

Thus, the study revealed that the parents in the families with minors being accused have markedly more overestimated children's impunity, that is, their ability to

understand and accept the meaning of parental prohibitions, than the parents in the control group ( $t=3,44,\ p<0,01$ ). The parents in the experimental group clearly underestimated the tendency of their children with intellectual disabilities to completely waive themselves from the conflict that has arisen, shifting it to adults; to react aversively to obstacles; to expect a solution of the problem from other people. The most typical form of perception of parental prohibition in the experimental group was a protest in the form of verbal aggression (27,12%) or disagreement in the form of justification (24,82%).

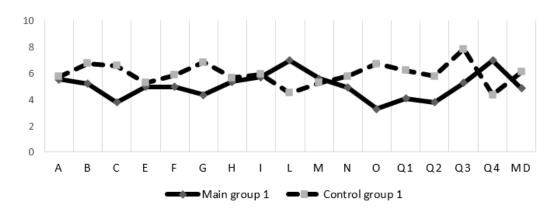
The study also showed the presence of reliable correlations between family upbringing styles and personal traits of parents.

It was revealed that mothers of minors in conflict with the law having intellectual disabilities who established a close relationship with their child while emotionally rejecting him were characterized by anxiety (r = 0.4521, p < 0.001), neuroticism (r = 0.2322, p < 0.05), timidity (r = 0.2031, p < 0.05), and shyness (r = 0.3029, p < 0.01), combined with spontaneous aggressiveness (r = 0.3121, p < 0.01), irritability (r = 0.3877, p < 0.001), and unbalance (r = 0.4234, p < 0.001). Dominant overprotection with a high degree of emotional rejection of the child is due to such individual psychological personality characteristics of mothers of minors with intellectual disabilities who have committed violent crimes as: masculinity (r = 0.4635, p < 0.001), dominance (r = 0.4041, p < 0.001), tension (r = 0.4735, p < 0.001) combined with emotional instability (r = 0.3130, p < 0.01) and sensitivity (r = 0.2294, p < 0.05).

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the characteristic profiles of parents (both mothers and fathers) differ significantly from each other in the general study groups (Figure 3). The characteristic profiles of the mothers of minors with intellectual disabilities who have committed crimes and, on the contrary, who have prosocial behavior, are completely opposite.

Figure 3

Characterological profiles of mothes of adolescents with intellectual disabilities who have committed crimes and, on the contrary, differ in prosocial behavior (average score)



Source: Authors development

Significant differences were recorded for Factor C. Thus, parents of adaptive juveniles are generally more patient, efficient, emotionally mature and realistic than parents of minors in conflict with the law, characterized by a relatively low tolerance for frustration, susceptibility to feelings, and mood swings, irritability and fatigue.

Parents of delinquent minors tend to be fickle in their averages, influenced by chance and circumstance. They are characterized by a certain unprincipled, disorganized, flexible attitudes toward social norms to a greater extent than parents of adaptive teenagers, while parents in the control group act normally, insistent on achieving goals, accurate, responsible and business-oriented.

At the same time, parents of adaptive juveniles are more open, trusting and benevolent toward other people than parents of minors in conflict with the law. Lack of envy and ease of contact with people can refer to the parents who made up the control group.

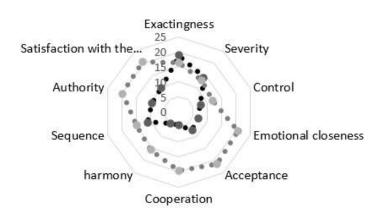
The most significant differences in the two groups of tested persons were found on the Factor O - self-confidence - anxiety. Anxiety, depression, vulnerability and impressionability were significantly higher in the main group than in the control group.

Parents of minors in conflict with the law are conservative, resistant to stereotypes, unacceptable to everything new and insufficiently informed. They are more dependent on public opinion and focused on social approval than parents of adaptive juveniles. Juveniles' perceptions of their parents and their attitudes toward them differ in many respects from the parents' self-assessment of their own style of family upbringing. Even in a symbiotic relationship, minors with intellectual disabilities perceive their parents as

quite strict and demanding; not sincere and "being strangers." A comparative analysis showed that the group of families raising minors in conflict with the law having intellectual disabilities, had both children assessed their parents diametrically opposite, whereas there were no differences in the teenagers' and their siblings' assessments of their parents' attitudes toward them in the control group (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Comparative analysis of assessments by juvenile delinquents with intellectual disabilities and their conditionally healthy siblings of the attitude of their parents towards them (average score)



● Juvenile delinquents with intellectual disabilities
 ● ● Their siblings

Source: Authors development

#### 4. Discussion

The conducted study correlates with some conclusions about the factors of criminogenic behaviour of minors with intellectual disabilities. The lack of ability to self-regulation, caused by intellectual disability, to an adequate assessment of life situations, a reduced level of criticism, and inertness of mental processes create the background that makes minors especially vulnerable to the negative influences of the environment.

However, modern research recognizes that the needs and motives for criminal acts of minors with intellectual disabilities are quite variable and reflect their malcondition rather than stable behavior (Gorshkov & Nikolaeva, 2000).

It is also recognized that the criminogenic personal development of a minor with an intellectual disability is caused by a family factor, i.e. the fact of upbringing in a difficult family, having dissolute lifestyle.

The results of the study suggest that one of the dominant factors of criminogenic personal development of a minor with intellectual disabilities is general family dysfunction, even if such dysfunction has a latent character. At the same time, it should be specified that dysfunctional interspousal interaction becomes a family-conditioned factor in the development of delinquent behaviour of juveniles who have no deviations in psychophysical development. Criminogenic development of minors with intellectual disabilities is determined by dysfunctional relations developing in the parent-child and sibling subsystems of the family.

Emotional rejection of a child with organic disorders occurs latently, independently of the parents, who outwardly try to care for the minor in a petty way, establishing a constant and rigid control over him, while not believing in him, not understanding his problems and can't help feeling being guilty for him. A child's unsatisfied need for parental love and care, their understanding, emotional help and protection, the emotional latent rejection of the child under the dominant overprotection and constant control, the opposition of the conditionally healthy child to the child with intellectual disabilities, even carefully concealed and implicitly disregarded for the latter, resulting in a psychological barrier which is almost impossible for a minor with intellectual disabilities to overcome: hence his inability to understand the requirements of parents, listen to them, respect them, reckon with their opinion.

Moreover, general family dysfunction becomes a source of development in the parents of those personality traits which have a negative influence on the emotional state and behaviour of the teenager.

#### 5. Conclusion

When imposing a suspended sentence or coercive measures intended to have an educative effect on a minor in conflict with the law, raised in a family with latent dysfunctional relationships, individual psychological assistance to the family and mandatory visits to a family psychotherapist should be provided, ensuring conditions for resocialization of minors in conflict with the law, having intellectual disabilities. Correction of dysfunctional family relationships, styles and features of interaction of all family members should be considered the primary condition of resocialization of a delinquent minor, having intellectual disabilities. Only then is the imposition of a suspended sentence for the committed crimes justified and effective.

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