

# Moral and Psychological Features of the Motivational Sphere of Juveniles who Commit Crimes: Risk Assessment of Determining Communication

By Nataliia Yuzikova<sup>1</sup>, Tatiana Korniakova<sup>2</sup>, Svitlana Khomiachenko<sup>3</sup>,  
Tetiana Chasova<sup>4</sup>

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is the identification of moral and psychological features of the motivational sphere of juvenile offenders (delinquents) and identification of risks in the process of socialization of juveniles that have a determining connection with the illegal (deviant) behavior of the child. The article presents the results of empirical studies of the specifics of the motivational sphere of juvenile offenders; the assessment of the risks caused by the weakening of the socializing role of family institutions, education, and upbringing is submitted. In addition, the statistical analysis of the moral and psychological characteristics of juveniles serving a sentence associated with imprisonment compared to a control group of peers who are not in conflict with the law is given.

*Keywords: motivational sphere, addictive behavior, social roles, propensity to violence*

## 1. Introduction

The nature, orientation and social danger of juvenile delinquency is due to moral and psychological characteristics. Emotional arousal, incontinence, a tendency to copy, romanticism, hypertrophied idealization of life and other psychological features of minors and deformations of moral and spiritual education contribute to the emergence of social deviations in their behavior.

The question "are criminals born or become?", that is, the propensity for criminal behavior, arises at different times, in different countries, regardless of their level of economic development and security. That is why philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, criminologists study the nature of crime. The born or made argument, known as the «nature versus nurture» debate, arises the question, whether criminality is due to genetic factors, and therefore unavoidable, or whether it is the product of social, situational, environmental surroundings, and other external factors (Sinha, S. 2016).

Within psychological characteristics of the individual in the study of the need-motivational sphere of the person who committed the crime, the following concepts have such

<sup>1</sup>Doctor of Law, Professor of the Department of Administrative and Criminal Law of the Oles Honchar Dnipro National University of Ukraine

<sup>2</sup>Doctor of Law, Head of the Department of Administrative and Criminal Law of the Oles Honchar Dnipro National University of Ukraine

<sup>3</sup>PhD., Associate professor of the Department Theory and History of State and Law of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine

<sup>4</sup>PhD., Researcher of the Criminal law, procedure and criminalistics department of Academy of Labour Social Relations and Tourism of Ukraine

meanings: "personal meaning", as an individualized reflection of the true attitude of the individual to those objects for which its activities unfold, the subject's mastery of various knowledge of the world, including concepts, skills, actions and deeds committed by humans, social norms, roles, values and ideals; "personality's orientation" - as a dynamic system of attitudes and trends, needs and motives, interests and ideals that are in complex, including hierarchical relationships and relations (Kvachov, V. 1993).

Society has the right and the duty to protect itself. However, its superiority in strength over the individual delinquent is so overwhelming that it can afford to be generous. The least we owe the criminal is to make an attempt to understand him (Schmideberg, M. 1947). The methodological basis of the scientific article is composed by the data of criminal law and judicial statistics, selective analysis of judgments of courts of Ukraine for the period 2010-2019, placed in the Unified Register of Judgments, the results of the author's criminological study of the environment of minors and participants in the educational process in Dnipropetrovsk region. Sampling and its representativeness are based on the indicators of the juvenile delinquency structure in Ukraine for the studied period. The survey involved: 1200 students aged 13-18 and 286 convicted juveniles (persons serving a sentence of imprisonment in a juvenile correctional facility) aged 14-20. The sample of the survey represents general population by criteria: age, sex, place (city, village), where the respondent was interviewed, type of educational institution (school, lyceum, college). The obtained results were analyzed as a whole and by groups of respondents by age, sex, type of educational institution and type of settlement where the respondent lives. Judges, prosecutors, employees of the children's service, teachers, and social workers were involved as experts in the analysis of the survey results.

## 2. Moral and Psychological Features of the Motivational Sphere of the Juvenile

It is important to know moral and psychological characteristics of the juvenile who commits a crime - its needs, interests, worldview, and level of spiritual development, motivational sphere and priority of social values. *First*, this is a level of the formation of needs and interests (socially useful or harmful), expectations about the possibilities of their satisfaction, and hence the means of their satisfaction, which allows or consciously assumes the adolescent - legitimate, borderline, illegal (anti-social, socially dangerous, criminal). Deformations in the process of socialization of the minor's personality contribute to the formation of its needs, interests and means of achieving and implementing them as a driving force (motivation) to socially unacceptable, including criminal behavior. *Second*, it is the establishment of attitudes to various social, moral values (life, property, public order) and their priorities to various spheres of life (education, work, family and household environment, leisure, etc.).

*Motivation sphere* acts as a central element in the formation of personality: its needs, intentions, aspirations and interests. Needs require satisfaction depending on the level of their importance and complete formation, which creates the need for a set of tools to meet them. The juvenile is motivated to perform certain actions in a specific life situation, which is due to the degree of the formation of its moral and psychological base. Thus, a properly formed level of needs and interests of the minor generates a certain type of behavior, including criminal (such behavior is mainly caused by distorted needs and destructive

interests), which is the center of the internal structure of the juvenile's personality. Needs motivate the minor to the activity, on the unconscious level, needs force the formation of goals (vital, temporary, intermediate, etc.), and satisfaction of needs, respectively, is possible only by achieving a certain goal. Therefore, needs can be formed on the unconscious level, depending on the conditions in which the socialization of the minor and their satisfaction occurs only on the conscious level.

*Moral and psychological features* of the motivational sphere of the juvenile are formed in the process of its socialization under the influence of the following factors: a) general situation in the country and its reflection in all spheres of the juvenile's public life; b) the role and importance of the society's institutions in the process of creating conditions for acceptable development of the minor and formation of its motivation for acceptable, socially useful behavior and reproduction of norms, rules of conduct and values; c) systems of social values, norms and rules of conduct that have developed and dominate in society. At the same time, double standards, which are openly demonstrated at all levels, have a direct negative significance in the process of forming the individual psychological qualities of the minor; d) a set of social roles within the status determined by gender and age; e) social communities (family, school, street company, informal group, other public group), which determine the opportunity to implement social roles and acquire a specific status.

June Price Tangney, Jeff Stuewig, and Debra J. Mashek rightly point out that moral standards are related to the knowledge and assimilation of moral norms. In their work "Moral Emotions and Moral Behavior", they emphasize the influence of cognitive and emotional processes on moral standards and behavior. Of primary interest are prohibitions against behaviors likely to have negative consequences for the well-being of others and for which there is broad social consensus that such behaviors are "wrong" (e.g., interpersonal violence, criminal behavior, lying, cheating, stealing) (June Price Tangney, Jeff Stuewig, and Debra J. Mashek, 2007).

Defining moral standards in society is not enough, it is important to bring them to the community and form the motivation to be ready to adhere to these standards in different situations. In the relationship between the motivational sphere and the completion of the juvenile's acquisition of social, moral and legal values, there are certain risks that manifest themselves in the juvenile's attitude to restrictions and prohibitions established by law, willingness to comply with these prohibitions in a given situation and understanding of responsibilities. The author's study of the motivational sphere in relation to social and legal norms of juveniles with law-abiding behavior (students of schools, lyciums, colleges) and convicts serving sentences in prisons is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Comparison of the motivation of behavior of juveniles in relation to the law (in %)**

Under what circumstances will you break the law? (no more than three answer options)	Students	Convicted
Under no circumstances	34	20
To protect friends	56	41
If there is confidence that no one will know about it	21	41
If you need money	15	51
For company with friends	17	18
To take revenge on those who offended	34	13
To make everybody to be afraid and respect	10	17
When very drunk	24	33

One-third of law-abiding students and one-fifth of convicts realize that the law cannot be broken under any circumstances. Along with this, adolescents express a willingness to break the law under certain conditions (situations). The dominant motive that, according to students, justifies criminal behavior is the protection of friends (which explains the choice of 56% of violations of the law for the sake of friendship and respect). Selfish motivation prevails among convicts - 51% believe it is permissible to violate the law when money is needed. According to criminal law and judicial statistics, the rate of theft by minors remains consistently high (selfish motivation) (the average share of minors convicted of theft for the period 2010 - 2019 is 62%) (The Report on Juvenile Convicts for 2010-2019).

The answers of students and pupils of the colony show a clear distinction between the motivation of friendship - in 56% of the answers of students and 41% of the answers of convicts, and the same lack of tendency to passively imitate the behavior of friends and subordinate the company in committing a crime - 17% of students' answers and 18% of convicts' answers. In the situation of breaking the law for company with friends, it is important to note the following. If you are ready to comply with the prohibitions of the law based on the correct moral and legal worldview in a particular situation - obeying the pressure of the group, for the company, out of fear, minors are presumed illegal behavior. In such circumstances, volitional qualities become important along with psychological ones. Therefore, correcting the behavior of such minors, it is important to pay attention to the deformation of moral and volitional spheres.

Among the answers of convicts, along with selfish motivation and protection of friends, (41%) of the surveyed are confident that no one will know about the crime, and such motivation as revenge on those who offended (13%) takes the last place in their answers. While serving their sentences for the crime, the convicts hope that next time no one will see them and they will avoid responsibility for the crime. At a minor age, despite the application of measures of a criminal legal nature, they again commit a crime, showing resistance to socio-psychological deformation, unwillingness to adhere to socially accepted social norms and rules of conduct, neglecting the rights and interests of others. Statistics show that the most common recurrence of juvenile delinquency is rape, murder and property crimes.

Moreover, among the answers of students, there is a different distribution of motivation: 34% is the motivation for revenge for the insult, and half less than 15% is selfish motivation and 21% chose impunity for the crime, if no one finds out about it. The choice of such an option for resolving personal conflict of resentment, especially among students, is a concern and indicates that more than a third of adolescents do not have the skills to solve problems legally.

In general, the predominance among students of such motivation as friend protection and revenge indicates the inability of respondents to find legal ways out of conflict situations. In addition, psychologists, who are in almost every school, do not work properly with adolescents, or do not have appropriate professional skills and knowledge and do not carry out appropriate preventive and corrective work, which, given the high professional level of the psychologist, is important in preventing juvenile delinquency. Small percentage of choosing the guarantee of irresponsibility latency of the crime, once again indicates a low percentage of preventive measures in the prevention of juvenile delinquency where, a fear

plays a role of possible punishment. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that convicts choose this answer (41%) twice as often as students do. A quarter of the students, 24%, and a third of the inmates of the colony, 33%, determine the state of severe intoxication as the motivation that justifies criminal behavior of adolescents. Thus, juvenile delinquency may occur under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The use of alcohol, drugs, psychotropic substances and toxins by minors is a problem of the social and psychological nature. Deficiencies in the activities of social institutions of society (family, education, upbringing), blurring of social values and norms of behavior, unformed life skills, needs, interests among minors, hidden propaganda of "adult" life, insufficient cultural and educational level, lead to negative consequences - the commission of crimes. Between 2010 and 2019, half of particularly serious crimes were committed by minors under the influence of alcohol (The Report on Juvenile Convicts for 2010-2019).

It is worth emphasizing the need to present conflict resolution skills to minors, the need for a healthy lifestyle, motivation for positive behavior and awareness of the responsibility for illegal behavior. After all, minors do not correlate their behavior, and even more so its consequences, with the requirements of the current law on criminal liability. As it is shown by the results of the author's research, study of the materials of the criminal case and work in focus groups of the convicts (pupils of the colony), more than half of juveniles, who committed a crime for the first time, did not think about the possibility of criminal liability for their own behavior or thought that their crime would not be solved. Even teenagers who are imprisoned for the second time for a crime are convinced of the ineffective and unprofessional work of law enforcement agencies, so they believed that the crime would not be solved, and they would not be detained or prosecuted. Some teenagers believed that even if they were detained, they should be released because they were still minors.

It is necessary to form motivation and educate minors so that they develop a positive habitual to lawful behavior, regardless of circumstances and life situations. This should involve official institutions of socialization with clear measures and real actions, rather than declarative slogans and conditional promises.

The risk factor in the formation of the motivational sphere of the minor is the negative impact of the street company in terms of the dysfunction of social institutions (family, education, and upbringing). These institutions are designed to protect the rights and interests of the child, create conditions for their normal socialization. Adolescents, who have not found protection and support in the family, school, assert themselves outside official institutions of socialization. Children unite and seek understanding and support in the street company. Results of the empirical study comparing responses of the minors with lawful behavior (students of schools, lyceums, colleges) and illegal behavior (convicts) regarding the role of the street company in the development of personality, skills, protection and support are presented in Table 2.

**Table. 2 Comparison of the results of the survey of minor students of schools, lyciums, technical schools and inmates of the colony (in %)**

What is your attitude to the following statements?	Students			Convicts		
	Agree	Do not	Partially	Agree	Do not	Partially
A teenager is valued more in the street company than in the family	8	71	21	25	61	14
In the street company the teenager is valued more, than at school (class)	26	37	37	49	29	21
In adolescence, all disputes can be resolved by force	11	63	26	29	47	24
The teenager appreciates the street company for the fact that it feels protected in it	23	38	39	37	30	33
If you do not have enough money for entertainment, you can take it from others	4	91	5	31	49	20
In the street company, the teenager receives lessons on independent living	34	27	39	45	28	27
The street company does not value the qualities that parents and teachers like	48	16	36	55	28	17

Within the street company and in the informal group, there are norms and standards of behavior that do not find acceptance in society. They have a significant impact on the formation of value orientations and legal awareness of both group members and other adolescents. This is evidenced by the responses of students and convicts. The largest percentage agrees with the statement that street companies do not value the qualities that parents and teachers like: among students - 48%, convicts - 55%. Thus, adolescents distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable values and qualities, compare them with the assessment of parents and teachers and realize that the assessment will be negative. However, they understand that it is the street company that gives them the opportunity to assert themselves, get protection and opportunities that will not be approved by adults. They are also attracted to the company by the fact that they are not required to do what parents and teachers ask for, namely: adhere to responsibilities that correspond to their status, be responsible for unacceptable behavior and violations of social norms, and follow certain rules. There is a significant difference in the answers of students and convicts in determining their own significance and value by the official institutions of socialization (family, educational institution). Characterizing the dominance of motivation and strength in resolving conflicts and problems, it should be noted that 11% of juveniles with lawful behavior agreed with the total use of violence in resolving disputes and 4% - with the opportunity to withdraw money for entertainment.

The street company performs a protective function for 23% of students and 37% of convicts. At the same time, disagreement and partial agreement with the feeling of security in the street company is almost the same: 38% and 39% among students and 30% and 33% among convicts, respectively. This indicates that adolescents cannot determine whether such a company protects or insults them. This risk factor can be minimized by effective preventive activities of the subjects of the educational process, by directing the advantage to ensure a *real protective and educational function* of the family and educational institutions.

A survey of experts showed that there is a tendency in the city to transform street companies into negative groups, which are not only the bearer of the subculture of the offending adolescent, but also a risk factor that determines the commission of crimes in the group. The mechanism of group interaction remains a powerful factor influencing juvenile delinquency. By the nature and direction, group criminal behavior of minors is characterized by increased social danger, which consists in committing more serious and especially serious crimes in the group by them. The increased social danger of juvenile delinquency is associated with persistent manifestations of cohesion, common negative views and unacceptable forms of social activity and the stability of illegal ties. Ties to a delinquent peer group were significantly related to antisocial behavior, both bivariate and multivariate level: the more the deviant behavior in the peer group, the higher the probability of juvenile antisocial behavior. Similar to previous studies (Thomas J Dishion, Marie-Hélène Véronneau, Michael W. Myers, 2010) the group of friends in this study was a powerful risk factor for this type of problematic behavior.

According to criminal law and judicial statistics in the general structure of group crime of minors with high intensity of group participation are committed: robbery (80.2%), hooliganism (75.2%), illegal possession of a vehicle (64.6%); with average intensity: theft (49.9%), robbery (47.2%), rape (28.6%); with moderate intensity: murder (10%), intentional infliction of moderate bodily harm (8%), intentional infliction of grievous bodily harm (6.5%), crimes in the field of drug trafficking (5.9%) (The Report on Juvenile Convicts for 2010-2019).

The study of judicial practice shows that most often criminal groups of selfish and violent orientation are formed based on friendly, permissive and friendly relations. Nevertheless, almost a third of criminal groups are formed from the number of persons who together served sentences (mostly for homogeneous crimes) or previously jointly committed mercenary crimes (Golovkin, B. 2011).

Criminal groups usually arise on the basis of established informal groups. Informal groups include "associations of young people who do not have clearly focused goals and whose relationships are based on personal preferences and have a strong emotionality." (Peskov, A. 1981).

With a socially positive or neutral orientation, informal groups of minors act as an environment in which acceptable conditions for socialization are provided, positive personality traits, socially significant qualities, social norms and interests, motivation for acceptable behavior of the minor are formed. In some cases, in informal groups of minors, compared to formal ones (class, section, labor collective), the level of organization, sincerity of relations, mutual support, leadership of much higher level and quality are traced. However, informal groups of minors, along with positive characteristics, have a number of negative features. That is, a special problem is *the quality of informal groups of minors*, which means the degree of correspondence between the goals and social norms of behavior that prevails in the group and expectations of society.

Alienation of the family is an important indicator of group crime. Conflicts, violence, humiliation, neglect that accompany the minor at different stages of its socialization within the family, further lead to the break with the family. Deformation processes occurring in the family are confirmed by the survey of juveniles sentenced to imprisonment. Most of those who committed the crime as a group showed that they were raised outside the family

or were indifferent to their family, were abused and humiliated, especially by their stepfather and older brothers. The importance of family ties in the process of child socialization is emphasized in similar studies of the correlations between family and deviant behavior of the child. First, correlation analysis found that the presence of family conflict and the absence of family support and parental monitoring were significant risk factors for the expression of juvenile antisocial behavior, which was in agreement with previous studies (Derzon, J. 2010) with monitoring being the family variable most strongly associated to juvenile antisocial behavior. However, structural equation modelling revealed only the absence of parental monitoring was a significant risk factor of juvenile antisocial behavior (Olalla Cutrin, Jose Antonio Gomez-Fraguela, Maria Angeles Luengo, 2015).

The basis of antisocial behavior of the minor is its moral and psychological characteristics, which are characterized by intrinsically motivated behavior of disrespect for the rights of others, irresponsibility and selfishness. Antisocial orientation of motives cannot exist separately from the general negative orientation of the adolescent. At the same time, the content of the orientation of its behavior is the result of the long-term relatively constant dominance of motives and aspirations of the individual. Individual orientation is reflected in the unity of negative traits and qualities that determine the perspective of perception of external influences and motivation for criminal behavior. In this context, we agree with the definition of the anti-social personality presented by the DSM III-R. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Third Edition-Revised (DSM III-R) defines antisocial personality as follows: «... Individuals, who are basically unsocialised and whose behavior patterns bring them into conflict with society. They are incapable of loyalty to individuals, groups, or social values. They are grossly selfish, callous, irresponsible, impulsive, and unable to feel guilt or to learn from experience...» (James S. Wulach, 1988). DSM-V defines antisocial personality as “antisocial personality disorder characterized by long-standing patterns of a disregard for other people's right. It usually begins in childhood or as teen and continues into their adult life.” Antisocial personality disorder is often referred to as psychopathy or sociopathy in popular culture (Krueger, R. F., Markon, K. E., Patrick, C. J., & Iacono, W. G. 2005).

Dysfunctionality of social institutions (family, education, upbringing) contributes to the improper assimilation of social norms and values prevailing in society, and, accordingly, to the lack of needs, social roles, interpersonal relationships and responsibilities. These factors are combined with the moral and psychological, age characteristics of minors (aggression, the desire for cruelty in achieving the goal, hypertrophied impulsivity, increased irritability and anxiety) are risk factors that determine the desire for rapid enrichment, leadership and self-affirmation, including by force.

The crisis in society, especially in the political sphere, determined a new subcultural direction among minors. Using social networks, minors are grouped against pedophiles. This phenomenon is gaining momentum, especially in large regional centers. Thus, youth groups "Fashion Verdict" were created in Kyiv, Odesa, Dnipro, and "Rights Moral Kharkiv" in Kharkiv. They found men on the Internet who were interested in underage girls and offered intimate relationships. Meetings were scheduled, during which the victim was attacked, and the robbery process was filmed on a mobile phone video and posted on a social network.

Constant insults of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies in the media, during

political debates, speeches, etc. have led to the functions of the investigation and the rulers of justice being taken over by teenagers. At the same time, they not only provoke the pedophile victim to certain actions, but also inflict bodily harm on him and rob him.

Risk factors are stress and conflict, laws of contrasts that accompany the process of the child's socialization. The motivational sphere of the modern teenager is formed in a complex process of socialization in its content and tendencies, which is connected with: *firstly*, with cardinal technogenic transformations that place the latest requirements to minors; *secondly*, with a powerful, multi-vector informational influence that carries out an acceptable or distorted worldview of minors; *thirdly*, with fleeting political and social and economic crises that cause the feelings of hopelessness, uncertainty about their future in this country, permissiveness, permanent responsibility by minors.

### **3. Features of the Motivational Sphere of Juveniles Serving a Sentence Related to Imprisonment in the Educational Colony**

Empirical study of the deviations in the behavior of juveniles made it possible to identify some individual traits and features of the motivational sphere of the colony's inmates, which can serve not only as a basis for identifying typical causes of delinquent behavior of adolescents, but also as a basis for the prevention and correction of their behavior within a typical model of the juvenile delinquency prevention. A typical model for preventing juvenile delinquency should be based on the theory of criminal personality. Some of the most studied researches into the origins of crime and personality have been done by Professor Hans Eysenck, who spent years defining whether criminal behavior had any relationship with personality. He identified that personalities have three dimensions. First, psychoticism describes people as being aggressive, egocentric, and impulsive. Second, neuroticism describes people with low self-esteem, anxiety, and wide mood swings. The third is extroversion, which describes the personality of an individual who is sensation-seeking, dominant, and assertive. A majority of these traits are found in criminals, which have been studied and classified (Sybil B. G. Eysenck and Eysenck H. J. 1971).

Convicts, who took part in the survey, are open in communication, answer questions quite openly. However, the general level of development and the opportunity to express their intentions, expectations, worldviews and interests are primitively limited. This is due to the *peculiarities of interpersonal relationships* that arise in the cognitive sphere based on deformations in the field of culture, education and upbringing, in the process of formation of consciousness and worldview of minors. At the same time, adolescents have a lack of skills to see the consequences of their actions, and, accordingly, to take responsibility for it. A low level of self-criticism borders on increasing demands on others for their attitude, care and responsibility (especially for parents, teachers). This limits and reduces the overall level of development of the juvenile, as the behavioral strategy and means of meeting the needs are limited to people with similar intellectual development. They, on the one hand, inhibit the development of intelligence and negatively affect the level of social interaction of minors, and on the other - limit the range of socially acceptable patterns of behavior in the presence of branched options for behavioral strategies.

The specificity of interpersonal relationships is determined by the level of *intellectual*

*development and self-awareness* of adolescents (Kachur, 2020; Ladychenko, 2018). Characterizing the intellectual sphere of convicts, it is necessary to highlight the limited vocabulary, narrowed horizons, and difficulties by expressing their thoughts and expectations in the future after jail release, dominance of the concrete-situational thinking over the abstract, which is low.

The level of self-awareness of convicts is low, they are not confident; underestimate their own ability to fulfill themselves as individuals in life. They consider their own life to be pointless, devoid of meaning and perspective, and lose interest in living in freedom. Convicts perceive their stay in the colony as a normal life situation, that is, the implementation of imprisonment is not accompanied by deep feelings. Along with this, the positive fact is that *adolescents are able to assess the preventive and educational value of the educational colony (hereinafter – the EC), are aware of their role in the process of re-education and correction of criminal behavior, and show a desire to change their lives for the better.* Thus, to the question “The purpose of the EC is correction, education of convicts. In your opinion, does the colony fulfill this task?” respondents answered as follows: 31% of convicts rated the performance of educational tasks by the EC as good, satisfactory – 22 %, bad – 13 %, correction does not depend on the colony, but on the convict itself - 29%, there is no sense in correcting, because life does not change - 5%. One third of convicted adolescents are aware of both the possibility of correction and their own role in this process. Half of the convicts believe that educational work is carried out for "good" and "satisfactory", and therefore they feel such an educational impact and are able to assess it. A small number of adolescents do not appreciate the preventive activities of the EC, and only 5% do not realize the meaning of such activities and do not believe in their own strength and ability to change their lives for the better.

In order to obtain concrete positive results of preventive and educational activities of the EC, purposeful work is required both on the part of the psychologist and educator, and on the part of the convicts themselves (a third of them are aware of this), that the desire and interest to change for the better did not remain only at the level of desire, but passed to the level of active-positive, socially useful actions.

Characteristics of *the sphere of motivation and needs* of minors are determined by a low level of self-control and self-discipline, accompanied by the desire to be adults. The peculiarity of this area is the increased need of this age group for communication and self-affirmation, unstable nature of moral beliefs and inability to resist the negative influence of others, especially the elderly, who have criminal experience or flaunt knowledge of the laws of the criminal world, and who seek to introduce them among minors. In addition, the contradiction between desires and expectations and real opportunities for their fulfillment and satisfaction due to lack of proper knowledge, relevant skills, life experience, a positive example is a negative component in the formation of motivation and needs. Some convicts are characterized by unformed system of moral beliefs and deformation of value orientations, manifested in self-affirmation through violence against others (usually weaker or younger), distortion of the ideals of adult imitation of the behavior that the adolescent seeks. There are primitive needs (in food, sex, clothing, technical means, and primitive entertainment) of juvenile convicts, which are manifested in poverty of interests, simplified motivation of behavior. Deformed needs determine the desire to abuse alcohol, drugs, contributes to the fascination with criminal romance, and so on.

An important component of this area is the self-assessment of criminal behavior, which is accompanied by the presence of the self-justification factor.

Respondents justify socially unacceptable behavior and criminal motivation, mostly of a *selfish nature*, with such patterns as: "everyone does so, but not everyone gets caught"; "I didn't take much, there is still left"; "he won't become poor - the victim has a lot of everything, it is not a loss for him "; "stealing from someone who steals is not a crime - it's an opportunity to survive."

The commission of *illegal possession of a vehicle* was accompanied by an excuse: "We didn't do anything wrong, we just rode."; "If we hadn't beaten the car, the owner wouldn't have seen it," "We have revenged so that the owner does not show off."

Justifying *hooliganism*, juvenile convicts usually said that: "It's a way to have fun," "they don't consider it a crime," "Politicians are allowed to fight and destroy, and activists are allowed to throw people in the trash, pour greenery, burn, destroy premises (all this in detail, very widely and constantly covered in the media) and it is not prosecuted, at least it is not reported in the media " All this is a consequence of double standards, which is destructively reflected in the minds of minors.

Describing *violent* behavior associated with infliction of bodily harm or death, the respondents justified their actions by: "fatal coincidence", "provocative or defiant behavior of the victim ", the phrase "did not want to, so it happened."

*The emotional and volitional sphere* of juvenile inmates of the colony is characterized by imbalance, impulsivity, a sharp change in emotional state.

Corresponding deformations in the behavior of minors occur gradually. At the first stage, the teenager begins to run away from home (the reasons for the escape were called different by the inmates of the colony). Then he starts missing classes and stops attending school. Lack of family control and weakening of the control by educational institutions is transformed into the next stage, where the teenager finds protection, the opportunity to assert itself, to be fulfilled - this is a street company, informal groups, usually of negative character (free use of alcohol, drugs, sexual immorality), including criminal orientation. After all, the need for security, communication, knowledge and skills of public life in minors remains not fully fulfilled, and ties to family and school are severed, so the street company acts as an integrative focus of the lost. At this stage, motivational orientation of the deformation of the minor's personality is formed, which has a violent, selfish, hooligan, sexual, mixed nature.

## Conclusions

By comparing moral and psychological characteristics, the motivational sphere of persons serving sentences in the educational colony, and law-abiding adolescents, we can identify the most typical features for juvenile convicts. They are associated with the alienation from normal social ties, deformed system of views, values, ideals, and hence the lack of life skills, low or very high self-esteem, despair and aggressive, consumerist attitude towards others. This is manifested in the dominance of violent and selfish motivation in the self-justification of criminal behavior. The low level of legal awareness is due to the dominant influence of informal sources of legal information.

It is established that the factors that determine criminal behavior of minors are individual-

age features, living conditions and way of living, destructiveness of the sphere of interests and needs, deformation of social roles, the authority of the street company (household environment) which generates a desire for cohesion in informal groups, including for criminal purposes. This trend has the corresponding statistical confirmation.

The destructive motivating link has been established between knowledge of the prohibitions of the law and readiness to commit a criminal offense in a certain situation (protection of friends, state of intoxication, need for money, revenge). It is determined that juveniles who are in conflict with the law and serve their sentences are characterized by low level of intellectual development and self-awareness, have a limited vocabulary, narrowed horizons, there is the dominance of concrete-situational thinking over the abstract one.

It is established that the weakening of the socializing role of the institutions of family, education, upbringing determines deformations in the process of the formation of consciousness and worldview of minors. At the same time, adolescents do not have the formation of household skills, they are not able to resolve conflict situations without the use of violence, there is a low level of responsibility and critical attitude to oneself, which borders on increased demands on others regarding their attitude, care and responsibility. Adolescents with a low level of critical thinking, primitive needs and a distorted social role sphere are most prone to committing crimes.

Theoretical and methodological analysis of the study of moral and psychological features of the motivational sphere of minors showed that in understanding the prohibitions of the law, minors are ready to commit a criminal offense in a given situation (protection of friends, state of intoxication) and justify their illegal behavior with a motive (selfish, violent, revenge). Weakening of the socializing role of social institutions (family, education, upbringing) and psychological changes in the personality gradually distort the motivational sphere of the minor. The obtained data of empirical, statistical, documentary analysis allow us to conclude that the development of destructive motivation affects the tendency to break the law and determines criminal (deviant) behavior.

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