

## Specific Features of Life Situations in Teenagers and Young People, Predisposed to Deviant Behavior

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### ABSTRACT

The importance of the studied problem is determined by the fact that the influence of the deviant environment on society, the spread of its morality, a psychological «exposure» of a less stable part of the population, that is teenagers and young adults, all this is - a reality of the contemporary social situation. The study of problems connected with the personality formation in teenage years and adolescence, the effect of social relations on the deviance manifestation acquires a great significance. Due to it, this article is directed towards the study of life situations in teenagers and young adults who are predisposed to deviant behavior for the purpose of verifying the hypothesis about the presence of specific features in a person who is predisposed to deviant behavior which was linked to life situations which the person's life goes through. In the framework of completing the goals set before the study the comparison of types and categories of life situations was conducted as well as the average time of retrospection and anticipation in young people who are predisposed or not to deviant behavior. The results of the comparative analysis of various sample groups of teenagers and young people are given in the conclusions among which the most significant item is the lesser time of anticipating events in young people who are susceptible to deviant behavior which is explained by a less clear life prospect and as a sequence by a lesser level of purposefulness of their own life activity. The leading approach to the study of this problem is holistic, systemic and dialectic approaches which provide integrity and comprehensiveness of the study based on a holistic personal development that takes into account the history of a personality. The materials of the article are of practical importance for psychologists, social workers and staff members of educational institutions that carry out work with teenagers and young adults who are prone to deviant behavior.

### KEYWORDS

Deviant behavior, life situations, personality dispositions.

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## Introduction

Contemporary society poses a majority of problems of social and psychological aspects the most serious one is the problem of the deviant behavior

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manifestation in various forms. That is why, the study of the deviant behavior phenomenon insistently requires researchers' attention to its manifestation in all possible forms and at different stages of a person's development, however, it is especially important to study it in teenage years and in adolescence. In view of this, it requires theoretical understanding of the phenomenon "deviant behavior", and empirical verification of specific features of its manifestation in various conditions. In a theoretical aspect, at present, it is impossible to understand behavior beyond consideration of interrelation of personal and situational factors since there is an uninterrupted link between a person and his life's conditions.

The tradition of studying the man's mentality in interrelation with personal and situational factors was laid, without any doubt, by K. Lewin in his field theory (Lewin, 2000) and was developed by many renowned scientists. There are two main approaches to understanding situation: 1) understanding the situation as external conditions for the life activity flow at a certain stage. (Magnusson, 1983); 2) understanding the situation as a system of subjective and objective elements that are combined in life activity (Shibutani, 1999). The problem of proportion of personal and situational variables at present is solved by applying to a category of behavior which is the function of interaction between the personality and situation. Personal peculiarities can be presented as conditional possibilities which are implemented in the acts of behavior in a certain situation (Burlachuk & Korzhova, 1998).

In contemporary researches the study of a situational factor is primarily associated with the problem solution of coping with hardships or plights (Bandura, 2000; Baron, 2000). I.V. Romanova's (2013) work was dedicated to the problem of forming dependent behavior in the process of coping with difficult life situations. Optimistic outlook as a personal resource of coping with critical life situations is studied by V.V. Ponomaryov (2009), V.A. Kislitsina & A.A. Tsaryova (2014) study the problem of forming the students' readiness for difficult life situations, I.V. Kochkaryova's (2012) work is dedicated to the intrapersonal conflict resolution in the process of coping with difficult life situations. However, the specified works emphasize that in order to build up a holistic concept of coping with difficult life situations it is necessary to analyze different parameters: specific features and type of the situation; subjective perception and interpretation of events; personal features that was markedly presented in E.V. Bityutskaya's (2011) work. In this context, we again come to the necessity to analyze situational and personal factors in interaction which is, in E.V. Bityutskaya's (2011) opinion necessary to develop in the framework of a comprehensive approach that considers several factors- determinants. One of the most impressive concepts in this field is in V.A. Kislitsina & A.A. Tsaryova's (2014) opinion is the conception of self-regulation by A.O. Prokhorov (2005), that defines self-regulation as a process of governing a man by means of his own psychological and physiological states to achieve the equilibrium between the organism and environment. In our opinion, A.O. Prokhorov's (2005) position is oriented to a greater extent to mental states which undoubtedly is an original scientific approach to the studied problem. However, in our opinion, the investigation of the problem of interacting personal and situational factors would also be enriched through the emphasizing of a behavioral aspect, that is through the manifestation of various forms of behavior in interrelation with

personal and situational determinants (Efimova et al., 2015; Efimova, Oschepkov & Salakhova, 2015).

That is why the consideration of the display of behavior in interrelation of personal and situational factors is possible in the framework of the disposition concept of adjusting the social behavior offered by V.A. Yadov (2013). In the framework of the given concept behavior is represented by various levels regulated by the system of dispositions that are formed in situations of various difficulty levels. In this context, various forms of behavior are expressed thanks to peculiarities of the dispositions system which are formed in different situations of social interaction with the social milieu (Oschepkov, 2014). That is why we suggested a hypothesis according to which a personality predisposed to deviant behavior has definite peculiarities which are connected with life situations through which such person's life passes.

Moreover, it should be noted that the person's orientations of values (Leontyev, 2005) are the regulating mechanism of a man's behavior. They are represented as the highest hierarchy level of dispositions responsible for the most important landmarks of the person's life activity; a system of social mindsets is responsible for a definite behavior in social situations. At the same time, social mindsets are the system of a more complex level in comparison with the system of basic mindsets: if the system of mindsets builds up the person's readiness to act in a certain way to satisfy simple, basic (physiological) needs then, the system of social mindsets forms readiness for a certain behavior in social situations to satisfy social needs that is, of higher level. Within the outlined concept deviant behavior of teenagers and young adults can be explained in the following way. In the personality structure of a young person in the process of accumulating social experience in various situations the system of social mindsets is formed as an interrelated system of mindsets for a certain social behavior. This system adjusts the young person's behavior since it represents readiness for the system of deeds in this or that situation. In its turn, the system of social mindsets is interconnected with the system of values which are higher level of behavioral adjustment and determining the orientation of a personality to the most important fields of life activity. Thus the specific features of the system of values in teenagers and young adults who are prone to deviant behavior determine the orientation of a personality to a deviation from the social norms and in social behavior the peculiarities of social mindsets are linked to an inclination of demonstrating deviance in behavior (Salakhova et al., 2016a).

In view of the above-mentioned the following objectives were set for the study:

1. To conduct an empirical investigation of types and categories of life situations in young adults who are prone to deviant behavior.
2. To analyze the peculiarities of situations encountered by young adults who are prone to deviant behavior.
3. To work out the conclusions that will enable us to interpret revealed specific features of life situations encountered by young people who are prone to deviant behavior.

### **Methodological Framework**



The empirical part of the investigation was conducted at the Dimitrovgrad Institute of Engineering and Technology- a subsidiary of the National Nuclear Research University "Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute ", the city of Dimitrovgrad of the Ulyanovsk region. Students of the 1 – 4 years were respondents, aged 17 – 22 , total number of people - 98. To diagnose the internal picture of life the technique «Psychological autobiography» offered by L.F. Burlachuk & E.Yu. Korzhova (1998) was used, which gives a possibility to investigate happy and sad events taking place in the life of a tested person as well as future events the anticipation of which has a significant influence on the life of a person. The scale of predisposition to the violation of commonly accepted norms and rules in the textbook “Methods of diagnosing the predisposition to deviant behavior” (the author – A.N. Oryol, 2002) was also used by us. It is a standardized test questionnaire designed for measuring the susceptibility to various forms of deviant behavior (Shapar, 2006). For the purpose of convenient presenting the material further the following abbreviations will be used: PNPDB – a personality, not prone to deviant behavior, PPDB – a personality prone to deviant behavior.

## Results

For the purpose of analyzing the components of the internal picture of young people’s life who are not susceptible to deviant behavior we conducted a comparison of the mean group values of event types in a psychological autobiography with the use of Student’s statistical t-criterion. As a result, statistically significant differences of values of events types were found that are associated with personal and psychological changes ( $t_{emp}=2,2390$  with  $p\leq 0,01$ ) and a change of the social milieu ( $t_{emp}=2,6730$  with  $p\leq 0,01$ ) (table 1).

**Table 1.** Comparison of the mean group values in event types of the internal picture of young people’s life who are not prone to deviant behavior and young adults prone to deviant behavior

№	Event types	Mean group values		$t_{emp}$
		PNPDB	PPDB	
1.	Biological	4,2110	3,1510	0,1610
2.	Personal and psychological	8,2330	14,5520	2,2390**
3.	Changes of the physical environment	4,0120	6,9910	0,9810
4.	Changes of the social environment	9,1230	4,2250	2,6730**

\*\* - significant differences with  $p\leq 0,01$

Much higher values of the internal picture of life connected with personal and psychological changes demonstrate a greater influence of life situations associated with personal determination in young adults who are prone to deviant behavior (determination of walk of life, choice of free time activities – leisure).

Much lower values of the internal picture of life linked to changes of the social environment in young adults who are prone to deviant behavior testifies to insignificant perception of events that take place in their lives in interaction with the social environment – whether it is the promotion of their social status

or the achievement of social recognition. According to the studies conducted by L.F. Burlachuk & E.Yu. Korzhova (1998), much lower values in event types connected with changes of the social environment are associated with a greater degree of social disadaptation and inclination to somatic diseases. All this proves in favour of a special perception of life by young people who are prone to deviant behavior which determines their orientation to behavioral deviance.

Our further analysis was dedicated to the event type's comparison of the internal picture components of young people's lives who are not prone to deviant behavior and young people who are prone to deviant behavior with the use of Student's statistical t-criterion. As a result, statistically significant differences were found in values of event types -Parental family ( $t_{emp}=3,3120$  with  $\rho \leq 0,01$ ), Marriage ( $t_{emp}=2,3190$  with  $\rho \leq 0,05$ ), Me ( $t_{emp}=3,3540$  with  $\rho \leq 0,01$ ), Job ( $t_{emp}=2,1470$  with  $\rho \leq 0,05$ ) (table 2).

**Table 2.** Comparison of mean group values in event types of the internal picture of young people's life who are not prone to deviant behavior and young people who are prone to deviant behavior

№	Event types	Mean group values		$t_{emp}$
		PNPDB	PPDB	
1.	Parental family	8,53140	5,0120	3,3120**
2.	Marriage	5,5430	1,5770	2,3190*
3.	Children	8,1950	6,2560	0,8320
4.	Place of residence	4,1120	2,5520	0,5410
5.	Health	2,5650	0	1,8710
6.	Me	0	3,5870	3,3540**
7.	Society	2,1120	0	1,8710
8.	Interpersonal relations	5,0000	5,0000	0
9.	Material well-being	0	0	0
10.	Studying, refresher courses	8,8330	12,6510	1,8840
11.	Job	6,9750	2,1140	2,1470*
12.	Nature	0	1,3330	0,4840

\* - significant differences with  $\rho \leq 0,05$

\*\* - significant differences with  $\rho \leq 0,01$

The data of difference show that young people who are prone to deviant behavior have a less bright or joyous perception of events linked to the parental family. Major forms of events which are named by young people prone to deviant behavior are parents' bickering, one parent's abandonment of the family. All these are the main causes of the normal development deformation and inclination to deviance from a commonly accepted way of life. Not good relationship in the parental family tells without fail upon the attitude of the young people to marriage and this can be seen from lower values in event types "Marriage" among young people prone to deviant behavior. Common deviant orientation of young people also tells upon a less positive attitude to a job. However, it is worth noting that we see greater values in young people prone to deviant behavior in the type of events "Me" that is associated first of all with the identity search and an aspiration to assert themselves which also explains higher values of personal and psychological event types.

Further, our analysis was dedicated to the comparison of mean group values in the average time of retrospection, anticipation of life situations in young people prone to deviant behavior with the use of Student's statistical t-



criterion. As a result, the statistically significant difference was found in values of the average time of anticipation ( $t_{emp}=2,6370$  with  $p\leq 0,01$ ) (table 3).

**Table 3.** Comparison of the mean group values of the average time of retrospection, anticipation of life events in young people not prone to deviant behavior and young people prone to deviant behavior

№	Event types	Mean group values		$t_{emp}$
		PNPDB	PPDB	
1.	Average time of retrospection, days	1865	1214	0,9324
2.	Average time of anticipation, days	730	430	1,9626*

\* - significant differences with  $p\leq 0,05$

The statistically significant difference of the average time of anticipation of young people not prone to deviant behavior and young people prone to deviant behavior shows that the potential extent in young people not predisposed to deviant behavior is very high. This means that young people not prone to deviant behavior are more motivated to succeed in the future, they make life plans, their future for them is quite clear. This also demonstrates the fact that young people not prone to deviant behavior to a greater extent foresee the consequences of their behavior. In its turn, these results make it possible to characterize young people prone to deviant behavior as personalities with a less orientation towards future life prospects that also has an influence on the decline of their life activity's purposefulness acting as a substantial factor of the orientation towards deviations in behavior.

### Discussions and Conclusions

The conducted empirical study and the results obtained show that young people predisposed to deviant behavior possess a number of specific characteristics of the internal picture of life. For example, young people who prone to deviant behavior tend to develop social and psychological disadaptation, which is proved by much lower values of the event significance associated with changes of the social environment. Young people prone to deviant behavior also demonstrate the tendency of a less joyous perception of the parental family in the internal picture of life events which points to their development in an unfavorable family. Further, the relations established in the parental family are shifted to perception of relations with a spouse that continues to determine inharmonious relations of young people prone to deviant behavior in their own families. And on the whole, a comparatively lower value of the anticipation time of future life events means that young people prone to deviant behavior do not see any clear life prospects, do not foresee the consequences of their activity which can favor their deviations from social norms in behavior.

Besides, revealed peculiarities of the type's significance and categories of life situations confirm the hypothesis of interrelation between personal and situational factors with the orientation to deviant behavior. This additionally testifies to importance of a chosen way of life on the personality formation and guiding his entire life and destiny. The importance of the social environment influence on the development of a non-deviant personality once again confirms the necessity of developing a planned preventive approach to young people's socializing.

## Recommendations

In a manifestation of deviations among young people their personal peculiarities are involved in certain conditions of the social environment (life situations) (Bratus, 1988). At the same time, personal peculiarities that determine the inclination for deviant behavior are formed in the process of unfavorable socializing which is determined by bad family relations, alienation at school, negative relations with peers and many other factors; personal specific features act in the form of an attitude to social norms that is an orientation to deviations from commonly accepted rules that builds up readiness for deviant behavior in a specific social situation (Zmanovskaya, 2004; Platonov, 2006).

Thus, deviant behavior in the young people's milieu is manifested in interrelation of a personality and life situations and in this context it acts as a social and psychological phenomenon (Kleiberg, 2004). Since it is in this period that the previous social experience is transformed into personal peculiarities that have a great influence on the choice by a person of an orientation towards a deviant way of life. For example, satisfying the needs of communication with peers by a teenager, of self-assertion, self-sufficiency can lead to a separation from the socially positive society and flocking into groups with a deviant orientation (Ageyeva, 2005). Demolition of links with the positively oriented society and being in the deviant milieu leads to the teenager's personality deformation in the context of his orientation to deviations from social norms. The personality oriented towards deviant behavior, further, will make a choice in social situations in favor of demonstrating deviance in behavior. Specific features of life situation types and categories of teenagers and young people prone to deviant behavior are formed owing to the interaction with the social milieu and participation in deviance-oriented groups (Salakhova et al., 2016b).

The obtained empirical investigation results can be used for the program development to prevent deviant behavior among teenagers and young adults. The investigation results can be useful for rendering psychological assistance to teenagers and young adults who encounter difficulties in social adaptation. The materials of the article are of practical value for psychologists, social workers and staff members of educational institutions that provide work with teenagers and young people prone to deviant behavior (Kalinina, N.V., Kalinin, I.V., Oschepkov, A.A., Salahova, V.B. & Sima, M.A.).

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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