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# Psychological and Pedagogical Features of Legal Professionals' Work with Teenagers with Deviant Behavior and Under-Age Criminals

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## Abstract

Nowadays the problem of efficiency of psychological and pedagogical work with teenagers with deviant behavior and under-age criminals has become very actual and urgent because of the importance of identifying and taking into account the psychological and pedagogical peculiarities of the teenagers with deviant behavior and under-age criminals in modern conditions, the need for social and pedagogical correction of their way of living, the need to train qualified legal professionals able to work with this category of young people. The aim of the article is to define professional competences of legal professionals, as well as to identify their personal and professional qualities, which are significant for carrying out professional activities successfully. The methodology of the research includes comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon "readiness of future legal professionals for a work with teenagers of deviant behavior", theoretical analysis of Russian and international literature on the research problem. In the article, the following methods were used: comparative and analytical methods and system method. The authors made an attempt to prove that the existence of professional and personal qualities such as social responsibility, mobility and reflexivity in the specialists of legal profession was intended to assist them in carrying out their professional activities more successfully. The authors also illustrate that these teenagers need thorough psychological and pedagogical maintenance, as well as patience, tolerance and support from the legal professionals in their work.

*Keywords:* psychological and pedagogical work, teenagers with deviant behavior, under-age criminals, competences, legal professionals.

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## **Introduction**

Teenage (behavioral) deviations are, most of all, connected with the period of a teenage socialization, and interaction in the interpersonal sphere. Normal teenage socialization is a complex, multi-faceted and complicated process, including a goal-centered focus; a constant motivation for interaction; an aspiration to become an active member of a certain youth community. In the context of socialization, we mean the process and the result of teenage psychological and social development.

Existence of the teenagers with deviant behavior in the modern society is one of the most significant social, economic, and political problems in the globalizing world. Teenagers' with deviant behaviour personal self-identification implies specific age features, such as: social immaturity and negative psychological properties of their moral, mental and physical development, which are a basis for their deviant reactions and deeds.

According to the scientific belief of Kondratyev (2008, p. 51), at a teenage age, "a high-quality re-organization of the "vision" of the surrounding reality at a developing personality is shaped, which is expressed in the rigid differentiation, based on the following oppositions: "the world of people" and "the world of things", typical for child / teenage worldview".

The experts among the legal professionals should consider the following deviant, teenage traits of character to perform their professional activity efficiently:

1. Most of teenagers with deviant behavior are not informed about the global events in Russia and abroad, they lack a comprehensive understanding of key, social and political ideas and their practical realization.
2. The movies, highlighting negative aspects of interpersonal relationship, are perceived emotional approvingly and non-critical by the teenagers with deviant behavior and promote solidarity with the acts of violence, cruelty, etc. So, that it is one of the most productive ways to transfer anti-social situations from cinematographic scenes to the real life.
3. Most of the teenagers with deviant behavior can be characterized according to the following criteria: increased social conflict, low level of self-control, constant struggle for self-affirmation and independence, disharmonious, individual development, as well.

While comparing the teenagers with deviant behaviour and the under-age criminals, it should be stressed that teenage and youthful ages differ in motives of interaction with peers, instability of value orientations, and vulnerability of mentality.

It should be taken into legal professionals' consideration that the aspiration to grouping with peers is peculiar to the under-age criminals. Free communication within a crime group is not only the way of spending leisure, but a means of individual self-affirmation and self-expression. An anonymous character of a crime group gives rise for their feelings of individual irresponsibility, and impunity.

A key social-psychological feature of an under-age, crime group is the following: an under-age, crime group shapes their anti-social world vision reflecting acceptance, and approval of the group's force that leads to the commission of offenses. Respectively, a crime group is a source for fast-forward appearance and distribution of a certain, crime "experience". Traditionally, the most serious crimes (robberies, thefts, hooliganism, and etc.) are committed in groups (gangs).

It is necessary to take into consideration that the under-age criminals lack a complete socialization process, i.e. their level of involvement into the public relations is still elementary, their knowledge concerning life experience, and informational processes is, in fact, poor. The under-age criminals are characterized by partial absence of individual and social self-control, so they estimate their behavioural acts differently: either they can't make an assessment of their crime deeds or they overestimate them.

Russian researchers (Bocharova, 1994; Galaguzova, 2014; Mudrik, 2013) offer the following classification of motives of the under-age criminals:

1. *The biological motives* provide teenage, physiological survival (oftentimes teenagers need to feed themselves: they have either alcohol-addicted parents, or younger brothers / sisters to support). The need to survive promotes them for stealing food, making a firewood, etc.
2. *The all-humane motives* satisfy either personal, or family needs. For example, they have stolen a bicycle for themselves or their brothers, toys - for their sisters, etc.
3. Money (*Mercenary*) motives are aimed at the under-age criminals' enrichment and getting profit, the robbery or theft is done to become more noticeable by the other members of a crime group.
4. *Hedonistic motives*. If there is no direct purpose for life support or getting profit, hedonistic (*hedonism* – pleasure) purposes with a romantic and adventure shade are prevailing.

5. *Motives of self-affirmation* reflect positive reaction and improvement of the reference group on the act of a crime, various options of group illegal acts tend to raise their self-esteem.

6. *Aggressive motives* lead to diverse hooliganism, acts of vandalism, revenge, murders, and etc., they can be differentiated, or non-differentiated by the actor.

7. *Motive of fear* can be realized in two options: a) submission, owing to psychological dependence on members of the group or their head (leader) and b) coercion, owing to physical dependence and direct threats of punishment.

The existence of the listed problems with the teenagers of deviant behavior and the under-age criminals in the society reflects the need to reconsider pedagogical approaches on training future legal professionals and search for innovative and appropriate, pedagogical technologies. Thus, the constant psychological and pedagogical support of moral, mental and physical (individual) development of the teenagers with deviant behavior and the under-age criminals should be an integral part of the legal professionals' everyday activity.

Need for psychological and pedagogical training of a legal professional is caused by the following factors: need for high-quality specialists, able to work with the teenagers of deviant behavior and the under-age criminals; the growing number of offenses and crimes committed by them; low level of pedagogical and psychological knowledge and competences of the legal professionals.

### **Purpose and objectives of the study**

The purpose of the study is to determine legal professionals' competences and to identify their personal and professional qualities, which are significant for the realization of their professional activity efficiently.

### **Literature review**

In the scientific works of foreign authors (Becker et al., 1967; Bessel, 2006), the scientific opinion reflecting their attitude towards teenagers with deviant behavior is vividly represented. It is noted that at the present stage, the number of the teenagers that need constant psychological-pedagogical support in the course of legal professionals' activity is constantly increasing.

In the scientific works of Russian scientists (Arshinova, 2014; Bocharova, 1994; Galaguzova, 2014; Mardakhayev, 2011; Mudrik, 2013; Zagvyazinsky, 2002), the results and findings of social and

pedagogical research on work with deviant teenagers is represented. The range of the actual, up-to-date problems connected with teenage deviance and delinquency of behavior is defined by them.

The most important factors influencing formation of the teenagers with deviant behavior self-identification, presented in the course book “Social Pedagogy” written by Galaguzova et al. (2016), are the following: grouping with peers; emancipation; feeling of a protest; imitation.

Mukhametzyanova, Bogovarova and Maslennikova (2017) treat the problem of the relevance of the new approaches on development personality’s psychological support. The factors of personality’s autonomy and subjectivity are revealed, they are opposed to the aggressive ideas and stereotypes, typical for the under-age criminals.

Prevention of teenage, deviant behavior, according to the scientific belief of Yershova (2005), is the complex of actions aimed at organization of the comprehensive work with teenagers of deviant behavior; these preventive measures are aimed to control development of personality’s destructive changes and to form psychological stability (“immunity”) from external influence.

Istrofilova (2006) revealed pedagogical conditions for effective teachers’ training to perform professional activity with the deviant teenagers, focused on their aggressive behavior in the society who need comprehensive, psychological and pedagogical support for the successful socialization in the society. Based on a cross-disciplinary approach, the author defines the concept “aggressive behavior”, revealing its functional, structural, and substantial characteristics.

Some of the most actual problems of interaction within educational institutions, family and public relations connected with prevention of the under-age criminals’ offenses were investigated by Grishchuk (2005). The author focuses his research attention on social and pedagogical management as an effective remedy for the prevention of the under-age criminals’ offenses.

Stepanishev (2008) states features of a group crime and specifics of work with the under-age criminals. In the research, the author points out such individually- important qualities as stability, formation of internal hierarchical structure, presence of a crime group leader, etc.

## **Methodology**

The goal of the study is to determine legal professionals’ competences, and also to identify their personal and professional qualities, significant for the realization of their professional activity efficiently.

The methodology of the research includes comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon “*readiness of future legal professionals for work with teenagers of deviant behavior*”, theoretical analysis of Russian and international literature on the research problem. The following research methods were used: comparative, analytical, and system methods. The methodological foundation of our research rests on a *system approach, competence-based approach, axiological approach, personal and activity approaches*.

The methodological basis of a *system approach* (Averyanov, 1985; Blaumberg & Yudin, 1993; Uyemov, 1978), is a term “system” which is characterized by an integral unity and is expressed in inter-relation of all systemic components. An indicator of an integral unity of the system is the presence of the unified goal for all components of the system.

*Competence-based approach* (Belyayeva, 1999; Zimnyaya, 2005) is based on a methodology which provides enhancing of a higher (professional) education system. The general and professional competences which are formed in the course of the training are meaningful for their individual and professional development.

*Axiological approach* (Mardakhayev, 2011; Slastenin & Chizakova, 2003) is an integral characteristic of the higher education humanization in Russia, which is a basis for the humanistic paradigm that is realized in perception of each, individual person as a unique personality, possessing a certain value for the society.

*Person and activity approach* (Asmolov, 1990; Shadrikov, 1996) assumes two components: personality and activity, which are treated in psychology separately. Person and activity approach suggests that individual and psychological properties of future legal professionals’ personality should take a central position and are meaningful for the successful realization of a future professional activity. Among them: search for motivation, training purposes, development of personal and professional qualities, significant for a sustainable success in a professional activity.

## **Results**

As a result of our research, we defined 3 types of competences, necessary for a legal professional: *preventive competence, human-rights competence, social and pedagogical competence*.

The preventive competence is based on the concept “to prevent” (Latin of *praeventio* – I advance, and protect), which means to forecast, protect and support. For performing professional activity efficiently, preventive measures are being introduced and aimed at prevention of each adverse event connected with teenagers of deviant behavior that is of a particular importance. The legal professionals should take

preventive measures to exclude / reduce emergence of socially-dangerous situations in order to create an environment where a teenager with deviant behavior can feel more comfortable, and get social realization.

As far as human-rights competence is concerned, 3 types of aspects should be taken into consideration: value aspect, essential-legal aspect, and functional-activity aspect. The integral unity of these aspects presupposes comprehension of the human-rights activity towards teenagers, acceptance of rights value and personal freedom. Respectively, the legal professionals should be able to reveal cases of human-rights violation of a child / teenager, be able to take supportive measures to protect their human-rights, and freedom, these measures are aimed to create a feeling of safety at a teenager with deviant behavior.

A social-pedagogical competence reflects features of teenage socialization in the context of a process of self-affirmation. The legal professional should learn the reasons of teenage deviation; master knowledge necessary for interaction with deviant teenagers; implement social-pedagogical methods of influence on a teenage self-identification in an unusual, real-life situation; be able to use various pedagogical forms, methods and technologies while working with teenagers of deviant behavior.

Our theoretical analysis on the research problem literature and practical experience allowed us to distinguish 3 key qualities necessary for a legal professional, working with deviant teenager: *social responsibility, mobility and reflexivity*.

By the term “responsibility” we assume control and supervision of the legal professional on the realization of a professional activity from a standpoint of established norms, rules and regulations. The sociality defines key property of the personality’s self-identification as the communicative-centered focus of the personality on search for interaction in the interpersonal system. Social responsibility is the level of formation of the settings, knowledge, abilities and moral qualities significant for the responsible attitude and realization of the professional duties.

In a psychological science, a personality’s mobility is considered as his (her) ability to react quickly to the changing conditions, and self-reorganize, changing the mental structure, as well: value orientations, motives, settings, and attitudes. We understand professional mobility as the legal professionals’ readiness to work in an unusual situation, their ability to adopt to the new conditions and situations of work. Theoretical knowledge and practical skills of the legal professional are developed in accordance with preventive human rights and social-pedagogical competences, significant for the formation of a professional mobility. It is also necessary to make legal professionals familiar with the possible problems and risks occurring in a future professional activity.

In the dictionary of foreign words, the term “reflection” is defined as the consideration full of doubts, contradictions; analysis of one’s own mental state. One more definition is from the dictionary of Polonsky: “A reflection is an ability of the person to comprehend one’s own experience with the purpose to transfer to a new understanding, to estimate and prove his (her) own beliefs and the value relations” (Polonsky, 2004, p. 145). Although there are some differences in approaches towards the term “reflection”, it is characterized as the process of getting knowledge itself, while the reflexivity is treated as a quality of the personality which reflects the focus on the human, inner world and its properties.

Subsequently, we have introduced the definition to the concept “*readiness of future legal professionals for work with teenagers of deviant behavior*” which represents the process and the result of formation of preventive, human-rights, and social and pedagogical competences as well as professional and personal qualities – social responsibility, mobility, and reflexivity.

The number of the registered crimes committed by the under-age criminals or with their participation has rapidly increased in the recent decades. The process of rejuvenation of the under-age criminals with deviant behavior can be observed: the criminal activity of 14-15-year-old teenagers happens more often, than among 16-17-year-old teenagers.

Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the crimes committed by the under-age criminals are realized according to three key structures: thefts (little more than 60%), robberies (8-9%), and hooliganism (about 7%). The number of premeditated murders, deliberate cause of heavy damage to the health, is occurred less, than robberies and thefts. Among the under-age crimes, there are relevantly new types of crimes, such as taking hostages, extortion, drug trading, currency fraud, cyber- crimes, etc.

The concept of the under-age crime is connected with the certain age boundaries and includes four age categories: 14-15 years; 15-16 years; 16-17 years and 17-18 years. We have classified them in 5 major groups:

*Group 1.* The under-age criminals with anti-social focus. Their prevailing specific features are: high level of self-esteem; an expressed immaturity; egoism; a strong desire to become a crime group leader; physical, and verbal aggression; negative life attitude and etc.

*Group 2.* The under-age criminals with other forms of frustration. The sub-depressive reaction to the situations of detention / prosecution with a prolonged effect on their working capacity, immaturity, demonstrativeness, irritability is expressed. They have a strong aspiration to dominate, do everything



possible to feel self-assured, they are ready to prove their opinion, are hard at evaluating difficult situations honest and fair. They have a high level of aggression, but a sense of guilt can be also expressed.

*Group 3.* The mentally-retarded under-age criminals. It is hard to research their specific features as they often do not follow the given instructions. Their volume of memory is partially-reduced, the acts of deviant behavior with low self-assessment of the under-age criminals were noted in the course of our experimental work.

*Group 4.* The under-age criminals with organic, brain damage. Specific features of this group are not revealed.

*Group 5.* The healthy under-age criminals. The equal mood, good attention, personal maturity (at least, corresponding to the age characteristics), lack of opposition to the society, satisfying, public relations, low level of aggression, lack of inner, reproaching (psychological) settings, an ability to perform altruistic acts is typical for this group.

On the basis of the mentioned above competences, professional and personal qualities, which are significant for the sustainable success in a professional activity, we have introduced the main features of the advanced psychological and pedagogical technologies realized in the course of training the future legal professionals.

*The 1<sup>st</sup> feature.* Transformation from a passive course listener into an active independent actor of an educational cognitive activity in the process of mutual, pedagogical interaction in the system “teacher (tutor)-students” can be observed. For this purpose, the teacher creates professional problem-based situations set by both the teacher and other participants of the educational process where the listener is forced to search independently for the solution. Simultaneously, the listener does not only acquire the information and algorithms of actions presented by the teacher-tutors, but he (she) is also able to make some small, individual discoveries in the course of independent search for the appropriate algorithm. In the course of psychological and pedagogical technologies implementation, the listener is able to act completely as a master: his (her) informative cycle represents the integral unity of theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> feature.* Despite the need to keep in mind large amounts of the standardized legal information, psychological and pedagogical technologies of the legal professionals’ training are aimed at formation mechanisms of logical way of thinking (development of creative, operational memory). The ability to judge

the information and overestimate it logically is being shaped in the course of training, allowing the listener to improve his(her) professional development and orient easily in a rapidly-changing situation of work.

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> feature.* The process of legal professionals' training is based on the synthesis of inductive and deductive ways of presenting knowledge; the transfer from common aspects to specific aspects and vice versa with a priority of the first position is noticeable.

In order to form a humanistic-centered focus of the legal professionals' self-identification, the following organizational-methodological forms of training were realized: modular-based curriculum with the opportunity for choosing individual elective courses; ranking of professional competences and their assessment; grants for profound, independent, (research) studies; mass digitalization of the educational process and implementation of intensive training courses. The listed above and some other forms were introduced in the context of modern pedagogical technologies realization, including an educational aspect of the development of legal professionals' personal qualities as well.

## **Discussions**

In our research, we have defined two key terms: "teenagers with deviant behavior" and "readiness of a future legal professional for professional activity with teenagers of deviant behavior". Deviant behavior is a set of personality's actions (acts), characterized by the deviation (violation) from the ethical (moral) or legal norms accepted in the society.

It is an integral scientific, pedagogical and philosophical problem to define violation according to the moral standards and determine the type of behavior (moral or immoral behavior). However, the definition of the term "violation of the legal norms" can be found out in most of the modern dictionaries; it stands for "a commitment of a deviant act (by a teenager with deviant behavior) without the subsequent crime responsibility. Thus, "the deviant behavior of teenagers" is characterized "by violation of moral and/or legal norms".

Thus, the term "readiness of a future legal professional for professional activity with teenagers of deviant behavior" is treated as a process and a result of competence formation, professional and personal qualities development necessary for a sustainable success in a professional activity with the following categories of teenagers. We apt to think that mastering psychological and pedagogical knowledge and practical skills is an essential factor for the formation of psychological and pedagogical legal professionals' readiness for the realization of successful professional activity.

The need to form psychological-pedagogical competence is caused by the following peculiarities of legal professionals' activity: high level of social and professional responsibility; considerable physical and mental overworks; a complex of professional and inter-personal inter-relations with different categories of youth; fast-forward change of professional activities; need to implement the variety of methods for work.

We defined the term "*professional competence of the legal professional*" as a special professional behavior based on a constant enlargement of the theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and the general culture of professional behavior allowing them to carry out professional activity efficiently. There are several types of professional competences: professional-legal; information; professional-ethical; communicative; professional-intellectual; organizational; psychological and pedagogical.

We also introduced the term "*Psychological-pedagogical competence of the legal professional*", a version and an independent type of professional competence; the peculiar psychological tool for the experts' identification suggesting a constructive realization of his (her) professional activity, resulting in finding out a solution for the pedagogical and psychological problems and typical professional tasks arising in real-life situations of legal professionals' activity (on the basis of life experience, professional qualification, moral and ethical values). The main diagnostic signs of psychological and pedagogical competence are the following: value-meaning reflection, with the convincing arguments and clear oral and written communication; skills of an oral (active) hearing; skills of emotional self-control; an ability to establish emotional contacts with various teenage categories on the professional terms; practical skills to involve them into interaction; an ability to forecast results of the ready-made decisions, and so on.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, in the modern conditions, the relevance of the research problem on training legal professionals for the psychological and pedagogical work is a matter of importance and can be substantiated by the following factors: the growing number of teenagers with deviant behavior and the under-age criminals; the increased number of the violations which are carried out by the teenagers with deviant behavior; crimes which are performed by the under-age criminals; the need to train competent legal professionals, able to work with teenagers of deviant behavior and/or under-age criminals; need for comprehensive preventive measures, performed in the work with the teenagers of deviant behavior and the under-age criminals.

As far as methodological approaches for the research of legal professionals' training are concerned, we have chosen and approved system, competence-based, personal and activity and axiological approaches which allowed us to enhance the system of legal professionals' training significantly.

Having defined and proved the key concept “readiness of future legal professionals for work with teenagers of deviant behavior”, the basic professional competences, as well as the leading professional and personal qualities treated in the integral unity, are significant for a sustainable success in their activity.

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