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Individual preconditions for behavioral risk of juvenile group offenders

The article indicates that behavioral risk of juvenile group offenders is determined by a disposition towards risk both as an individual characteristic and as a tendency of “shift to risk” under the influence of the group. Individual determinants of the behavioral risk of juvenile group offenders depending on their group status and their role in crime organization are defined.

Key words: are juvenile group offenders, a disposition towards risk, «shift to risk» phenomenon.

The situations of group decision-making connected with risk are very common in the life of every group. The research on this issue has great urgency in criminal psychology as committing a crime always presupposes a certain risk of penal sanction. The research in the particularities of juvenile group delinquency is also important as this synergy has more corrupting influence over accomplices than a single-handed crime [Bashkatov I., 2002]. Furthermore, the analysis of social-psychological mechanisms working in these groups with some part of extrapolation helps to discover in-depth processes in the groups which study faces certain methodological difficulties. One of them is that group in its constant form is not represented to the researchers. Being known it goes out of existence having become disclosed and undergone some irreversible changes [Ratinov A., 1979].

At present an extensive empirical material on particularities of group decision-making in the conditions of risk and indefiniteness is collected but it must be noted that practically all of the researches do not deal with the in-depth mechanisms of group decision-making.

We have conducted an empirical research which goal was studying the determination of behavioral risk display of the juvenile group offenders. The subject of the research is individual features and the value sphere of juvenile group offenders. The object of the research is 84 male juvenile offenders being in custody in the Azov youth colony at the Russian Federation Justice Ministry in Rostov region.

In our research we used the inquirer “The Disposition to Risk” by A. Shmelev, “A diagnosis of need for sensation pursuit” method, an authorial original inquirer variant “A Choice between Dilemmas”, a method of “A ratio of “value” to “accessibility” in different life spheres” (RVA), a method of “Q-sorting” and also a method of “The level of subjective control”.



It was supposed that the behavioral risk of juvenile group offenders is determined by the disposition to risk as an individual feature and their tendency for “shift to risk” under the group influence. Besides, we supposed that juvenile group offenders’ display of behavioral risk is determined by such individual features as the level of sensation pursuit need, the value sphere peculiarities and the nature of placing responsibility.

The research found that disposition to risk as an individual feature is connected not only with the group status of juvenile group offenders, but with their role in delinquency and in its highest degree it is typical of juvenile heads for group crime who show a higher level of individual disposition towards risk in comparison with actual doers. The disposition high level is connected with a strong need for sensation pursuit, a high value of risk, independency, a “struggle” acceptance and an internal nature of placing responsibility.

In its turn, the behavioral risk of juvenile group leaders is characterized by the tendency of “shifting to risk” under the group influence. The research found that the “shift to risk” phenomenon is influenced not so much by a leader’s position but a typical for the youth strong need for communication and recognition and also their high value, a high level of group orientation and an external locus control. Thus, a behavioral risk display of juvenile group offenders differs depending on the juveniles’ group status and their role in organizing and committing a concrete offence.

We suppose that the research in the issue of the decision-making in the conditions of risk and the research results can clarify the understanding of the group crime mechanisms and permit working out the optimum prevention strategies towards juvenile offenders.

Literature

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