

Prevention and Correction of Juvenile Neglect

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Abstract

The problem of juvenile neglect in recent years has gained particular relevance since the phenomena of family's non-participation in the life of the child as well as children in their own lives have spread. The article reveals the essence, the main causes of neglect, or homelessness. Juvenile neglect is a reflection of the negative processes caused by economic factors, low spiritual and moral values of the population, the growing number of delinquency among adolescents and young adults, the problem of alcoholism and drug abuse, an insufficient number of methodological literature on this issue.

The article describes the characteristic features of neglected teenagers: intellectual rigidity, proneness to conflict and the inability to communicate with people, alienation, irresponsibility and indifference to the fate of others, self-doubt. It also considers a system of corrective and preventive measures to stop juvenile neglect. The experimental work involved 132 school teenagers from Kazan (Republic of Tatarstan). For the implementation of the experiment there were used the following techniques: "The High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) of Cattell, methods of "Diagnosis of the social and psychological adaptation" by Rogers and Diamond, Parental Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ) of Varga and Stolin, as well as methods of mathematical statistics, Student's t-test to check hypotheses for the reliability of mean difference.

Keywords: child neglect, juvenile neglect, homelessness, vagrancy, maladjustment, deviant behavior, preventive measures, correction

1. Introduction

1.1 Actualizing the Problem

At the present stage of social development the problem of juvenile neglect has become increasingly relevant as the educational role of the family in the life and development of the personality of their child has reduced, there is a growing number of dysfunctional families and a lack of readiness of the school to provide social and educational support and assistance for pupils at risk (Valeeva, 2013; Cheverikina et al., 2014, 2015). The lack of proper care, financial support, neglect of the interests and needs of a developing person in a sufficiently large number of families not only poses a real threat to the mental, physical and moral development of a child, but also causes a rise in the number of children and adolescents leaving the parental home and getting involved in deviant companies. Undoubtedly, the neglect of teenagers is a reflection of the negative processes caused by economic factors, low spiritual and moral values of the population, the growing number of delinquency among adolescents and young adults, the problem of alcoholism and drug addiction, lack of trained social and pedagogical staff for working with children at risk (Valeeva, 2012).

1.2 Status of a Problem

Great importance in the analysis of this problem is attributed to studies that reflect the essence of deviant behavior, as well as the principles, content and methods of preventive work with children and young people at risk (Valeeva, 2012; Zmanovskaya, 2004; Divitsyna, 2008; Ipatov, 2011; Kleyberg, 2004; Makarenko, 1990; Martynova, 2007; Fateeva, 2008). However, theoretical analysis of the sources showed no common approach to the definition of "a neglected child" notion.

Thus, for example, Selivanova (2004) considers a neglected teenager as a maladjusted person deprived of guaranteed access to housing and forced to find means of living himself. According to Tarkhanova (2007, p. 303), neglected children are those living in a family, but without proper control over their upbringing. Divitsyna (2008,

p. 139) states that “neglected and abandoned children are children deprived of care, attention, positive influence on the part of parents, or persons fulfilling their duties.” Having explored concepts of different scientists, such as Valeeva (2012), Zmanovskaya (2004), Makarenko (1990), Selivanov (2004), in our research we adhere to the concept reflected in the Russian Federation Law “On prevention of child neglect and juvenile delinquency” according to which “a neglected child is a minor, whose behavior is not controlled due to non-performance or improper performance of duties on his upbringing, education and financial support by his parents or legal representatives” (Federal Law, 1999, Article 1).

To analyze the phenomenon of homelessness, we have studied its causes. The scientists Pavlenok and Rudneva (2009) identify three main groups of child neglect causes: socio-economic, socio-psychological and psychological.

Socio-economic reasons include factors violating labor lifestyle and deforming the life of people: economic crisis, unemployment, hunger, epidemics, intensive migration processes due to military conflicts, or natural disasters. Social upheaval around the world and in Russia, in particular, is accompanied by the widespread increase in the number of neglected children.

Socio-psychological causes (factors) are associated with the crisis of the family institution, increasing divorce rates, loss of one of the parents, deterioration of the climate in the family, child abuse, physical punishment in families, sexual, physical and emotional (moral and ethical) adult violence.

Psychological causes of homelessness are associated with the increase in the number of children having personal anomaly manifestations of anti-social behavior.

Krasnova (2004) points out the following factors of family disadvantages and troubles, leading to the neglect of children:

- Socio-economic factors: low financial status of the family, poor housing conditions;
- Health factors: chronically-ill and hereditary tainted parents, neglect of household cleanliness and hygiene;
- Socio-demographic factors: incomplete and large families, families with elderly parents, remarriage and blended families;
- Socio-psychological factors: families with conflict relations of spouses, parents and children, pedagogical illiteracy of parents and their low educational, cultural level, deformed value orientations;
- Criminal factors: alcoholism, drug addiction, immoral and parasitic life of parents, brutality and sadism towards children, the presence of convicted family members who are committed to the criminal subculture.

1.3 Contradictions, Objectives and Hypothesis of the Research

Analysis of the status of the problem in psychological and pedagogical literature and practice revealed a number of contradictions:

- 1) Between the harmonious development of adolescents and the insufficient democratic style of family education;
- 2) Between the focus of teachers and psychologists on handling the problem of the adolescents’ neglect and the insufficient development of the content, forms, methods and means of ensuring effective prevention and correction.

The objective of the research is theoretical validation and experimental verification of content, forms and methods to ensure the effective prevention and correction of juvenile neglect.

Analysis of theoretical studies and practical activities in the aspect of the developed problem showed that the issues related to the prevention and correction of neglected teenagers are today an understudied area of scientific knowledge and practical activities that enabled us to formulate the hypothesis of the research. The efficiency of the prevention and correction of neglected teenagers may increase providing that:

- Essential characteristics of the concepts of “neglected child”, “maladjustment” are found upon;
- Characteristics of the personality of a neglected teenager are taken into account;
- Forms and methods of prevention and correction of juvenile neglect are studied;
- The program containing effective forms and methods aimed at reducing the level of maladjustment and propensity to vagrancy for the prevention and correction of juvenile neglect is developed and implemented.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 The Tasks of the Research

In accordance with the hypothesis based on the understanding of the problem the following objectives were formulated:

- 1) To reveal the essence and content of the notions of “neglect”, “social maladjustment”, “deviant behavior” on the basis of the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature;
- 2) To explore the characteristics of the individual of a neglected teenager;
- 3) To develop the content of the program, including a variety of forms and methods of prevention and correction of homeless adolescents;
- 4) To test the effectiveness of the developed program, which aims to reduce the propensity to vagrancy (dromomania) and the number of neglected children, in the experimental work.

2.2 Theoretical and Empirical Methods

In accordance with the tasks of the research, we used the following methods:

- 1) Theoretical: study and analysis of psycho-pedagogical and methodological literature, legislative, instructional and teaching documents and procedural materials on the problem of the research, study and generalization of innovative social and teaching experience, analysis, synthesis;
- 2) Empirical—observations, questionnaires, tests, experiments;
- 3) Methods of qualitative interpretation and processing of the data (parametric Student’s t-test for dependent samples).

2.3 Diagnostic Tools

For the implementation of the experiment there were used the following methods:

- 1) High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) of Cattell, which aims to evaluate the development of personal qualities such as flexibility, adaptability, impulsivity, anxiety, etc.;
- 2) Diagnosis of the social and psychological adaptation by Rogers and Diamond, which aims to determine the level of adaptation and maladaptation, acceptance or rejection of self, others, emotional comfort or discomfort, internal or external control, domination and submissiveness, avoiding solving problems.
- 3) Parental Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ) of Varga and Stolin. Reliability of the hypothesis is supported by statistical processing using parametric Student’s t-test for dependent samples. Comparing the results obtained at the stating and the controlling stage of the experiment, we identified the effectiveness of methods and forms of prevention and correction of juvenile neglect, and the extent to which they have reduced levels of maladjustment and propensity to vagrancy (dromomania).

2.4 The Implementation of the Research

The research was conducted in three stages:

At the first (searching and theoretical) stage, the analysis of the problem in pedagogical and psychological literature on the research was done; scientific basis and trial infrastructure of the research were defined; methodology of experimental study was selected.

The experimental work involved 132 school teenagers from Kazan (Republic of Tatarstan).

After a pilot study, we selected sample teenagers at risk—those from dysfunctional families, which amounted to 21% of all respondents.

At the second (experimental and pilot) stage the hypothesis was tested, forms and methods of pedagogical interaction with teenagers and their parents were evaluated in order to reduce the propensity to vagrancy and adjust the negative style of relationships “parent - teenager”.

At the third (summarizing) stage systematization and analysis of the results of the research were carried out, theoretical and experimental findings were formulated.

2.5 Experimental Procedure and Its Description

Stating stage included determination of the initial values of the studied parameters.

The pilot study allowed us to identify juveniles at risk, which included teenagers from socially—disadvantaged families (21%), to analyze the causes of neglect, such as the crisis in the family, parental antisocial lifestyle,

increasing child abuse in families, conflicts and parents' neglect of their children's needs, age and personality characteristics of adolescents.

We agree with Ipatov (2011, p. 19), who argues that in socially-disadvantaged families parent-child relationships tend to be violated, there is an acute lack of care, love and respect for the personality of a child by adults. Teens in dysfunctional families suffer from lack of parents' attention and feel abandoned and forgotten. These children in particular, lack attention, praise, approval, care and love of relatives. Undoubtedly, these teenagers at school are aggressive, display defiant behavior, absenteeism, vagrancy, they are involved in deviant companies, all of these result in a negative attitude on the part of their peers and teachers. During a diagnostic test-questionnaire (parental attitude questionnaire) we received a high test score on a scale of "hypersocialising"—37%, which indicates that the parental upbringing style is clearly authoritarian, in which parents demand unconditional obedience, impose their will and do not take into account the needs and interests of the child. In these families the child is severely punished most likely because of the disobedience of parents' directives. There is a sufficiently high score on the scale of "infantilization"—33%, where in the parent-child relationships parents seek to infantilize their child, calling him personally and socially untenable. In such families parents do not trust their child, try to protect him from the hardships of life and strictly control his actions.

Using R. Cattell adolescent personality questionnaire we have identified significant criteria scales, such as: intelligence, conscientiousness, self-control, individualism, self-reliance. The experimental group identified the following characteristics of neglected adolescents, such as: intellectual rigidity, conflict, aggression and ostentation, as well as the inability to communicate with people, alienation, irresponsibility and indifference to the fate of others, self-doubt. Neglected teenagers are also characterized by: excessive anxiety and pessimism. This behavior, of course, prevents involvement in the society, complying with social norms and values, rules of conduct, is an obstacle to personal development, adaptation process and occurs mainly as a result of educational neglect, lack of proper education and careful and sensitive attitude to the child.

The forming stage was based on these results.

3. Results

3.1 *The Correction of Deviant Behavior and Balancing the Style of Parenting*

For the correction of deviant behavior and balancing the style of parenting we proposed directions of socio—pedagogical assistance of neglected teenagers and a program of correction and prevention work to correct the symptoms of deviant behavior, social maladjustment of teenagers. Objectives: the formation of psychological and social adaptation, harmonization of the emotional sphere of teenagers, raising the personal status of pupils, parental literacy, establishing relations in the "parent-adolescent" communication.

Our efforts were aimed at teenagers of 13-15 years old, prone to vagrancy. Future educational psychologists (the 5th year students), educational psychologist of the school and supervising teachers held classes with teenagers at risk. One lesson duration was—40-50 minutes, twice a week, for six months.

Methodological basis of our psychological and pedagogical activities included approved programs of correction work with adolescents: a program for the prevention and correction of students' behavior and emotions disorders by Fedoseenko (2006), life skills training for young people with difficulties in social adaptation under Shadura (2009). Correction and prevention program developed by us has five units, three of which are basic: the emotional block aims to change the prevailing positive attitude to vagrancy (dromomania) among teenagers to negative. The purpose of behavioral unit is to block the fueling negative experience in behavior and to generate other forms of behaviour and cognitive component, aimed at to reveal the moral aspects of the adolescent. During the program, we used the following forms and methods: role-playing games, training sessions, debates, competitions, tourist trips, which we carried out together with the parents of teenagers. With these forms and methods we trained adolescents to establish contacts with other people and render mutual aid, taught to analyze their own actions and the actions of their peers.

3.2 *The Controlling Stage of the Experiment*

The controlling stage of the experiment analyzed the results before and after the forming stage of the experiment, performed statistical processing of data to confirm the hypothesis (by Student's t-test for dependent samples). Repeated diagnosis was carried out after preventive measures, all the studied indicators of teenagers' socio-psychological adaptation and "parent-adolescent" relationships after the experiment has considerably changed, which means its improvement. The results have also changed after the forming experiment for the diagnosis of socio-psychological adaptation by Rogers and Diamond. By Student's t-test it was revealed: the difference between the mean values of adaptation before and after the experiment are reliable, since $t_{exp} > t_{cr}$

(temp = 18.19) at $p = 0.01$; differences between the mean values of emotional comfort before and after the experiment are reliable, since $\text{temp} > \text{tcr}$ (temp = 7.92) with $p = 0.01$ (shows some figures for individual scales).

4. Discussions

The problem could not be solved in its entirety, because it was difficult to meet some parents, but many families had socio—psychological assistance (advice, conversation, visiting the child at home, attracting professionals from social welfare services, and others.). After repeated diagnosis indicators on some scales (PAQ) have improved, “hypersocialising”—from 37% to 27%, “infantilization”—from 33% to 24% decreased respectively.

5. Conclusion

Thus, by analyzing and comparing the results of stating and controlling stages of experimental work, it was concluded that developed and tested program that includes a variety of forms and methods of prevention and correction of negative trends (especially juvenile neglect) is indeed an effective means of teenagers’ neglect preventing. There were identified areas for further work with parents, teachers, schools, psycho-educational centers for the prevention of deviant behavior among adolescents..

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