

MINORS AND DEVIANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FROM AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The present research aims to analyze the phenomenon of deviance among minors from the perspective of specialists who work with them. The context of the Covid-19 pandemic represented a good opportunity to analyze the dynamics of the phenomenon of juvenile deviance, as many aspects of daily life have acquired other nuances through isolation, distancing, etc. Following the research, it was found that there are multiple causes of the propagation of this phenomenon, namely the deficient family environment due to the lack of parental supervision, the influence of social media, the influence of the entourage, etc. Through this research, some characteristics of minors who commit acts of deviance were proposed, as well as a profile of those who are at risk of becoming deviant. The results of the research show that an inter-institutional collaboration between the town hall, school, church and police could facilitate the reduction of deviance among minors.

Keywords: teenagers, juvenile delinquency, isolation, institutions, cyberbullying, entourage, poor family climate

Sommaire

La présente recherche vise à analyser le phénomène de la déviance chez les mineurs du point de vue des spécialistes qui travaillent avec eux. Le contexte de la pandémie de Covid-19 a représenté une bonne occasion d'analyser la dynamique du phénomène de la déviance juvénile, car de nombreux aspects de la vie quotidienne ont acquis d'autres nuances par l'isolement, la distanciation, etc. Suite aux recherches, il a été constaté qu'il existe de multiples causes à la propagation de ce phénomène, à savoir l'environnement familial déficient dû au manque d'encadrement parental, l'influence des réseaux sociaux, l'influence de l'entourage, etc. À travers cette recherche, certaines caractéristiques des mineurs qui commettent des actes de déviance ont été proposées, ainsi qu'un profil de ceux qui risquent de devenir déviants. Les résultats de la recherche montrent qu'une collaboration interinstitutionnelle entre la mairie, l'école, l'église et la police pourrait faciliter la réduction des déviances chez les mineurs.

Mots clés: adolescents, délinquance juvénile, isolement, établissements, cyberharcèlement, entourage, mauvais climat familial

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Rezumat

Cercetarea de față își propune analiza fenomenului de devianță în rândul minorilor din perspectiva specialiștilor care lucrează cu aceștia. Contextul pandemiei de Covid-19 a reprezentat un bun prilej de analiză a dinamicii fenomenului de devianță juvenilă, întrucât multe aspecte ale vieții cotidiene au căpătat alte nuanțe prin izolare, distanțare, etc. În urma cercetării, s-a constatat că există multiple cauze ale propagării acestui fenomen, respectiv mediul familial deficitar prin lipsa supravegherii părintești, influența social media, influența anturajelor etc. Prin intermediul acestei cercetări au fost propuse câteva caracteristici ale minorilor care săvârșesc acte de devianță, precum și un profil al celor care se află în riscul de a deveni devianți. Rezultatele cercetării arată că o colaborare interinstituțională dintre primărie, școală, biserică și poliție ar putea facilita diminuarea devianței din rândul minorilor.

Cuvinte-cheie: adolescenți, delincvență juvenilă, izolare, instituții, cyberbullying, anturaj, climat familial deficitar

1. Introduction

The present research considers the analysis of the specialist's perspective on juvenile deviance in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, referring to the importance of collaboration between the institutions that prevent and manage juvenile deviance and the family of the deviant minor. Also, the new socio-economic context, namely the Covid-19 pandemic, brought a multitude of changes at the social level, thus, the phenomenon of juvenile deviance could have new determining factors.

Numerous post-pandemic research by universities and research centers have confirmed behavioral changes in the population due to isolation for long periods of time. These changes refer to the stress accumulated within the family through the limitation of social space, the role overload of the parents as well as the overcontrol over the children. These situations have contributed to increasing the risks of domestic violence, intra-family abuse as well as creating new forms of juvenile deviance (Mihalache, 2021, pp. 42-43).

The choice of this topic starts from the existence of numerous cases of juvenile deviance in Romania. This theme is topical, as the pandemic period has brought new forms of manifestation of the phenomenon of juvenile deviance, changing its dynamics, due to the restrictions imposed. Therefore, the present research presents the new forms and causes of juvenile deviance from the perspective of the institutions that monitor this phenomenon.

Within this research, three objectives were proposed, such as defining the profile of the deviant minor from the perspective of the specialists involved, identifying the causes of juvenile deviance during the pandemic and describing the methods of preventing this phenomenon during the pandemic.

Through this research, it was proposed to identify the difficulties of specialists in working with minors who commit criminal acts or misdemeanors, as well as their opinion about the phenomenon of minor deviance in the context of the pandemic. The research was carried out in 2021 on a group of professionals working with vulnerable minors.

Through the present research, it was possible to identify some aspects regarding possible cases of discrimination against minors in Romanian schools.

Discrimination manifested in the school space can be considered a form of deviance, as it represents a deviation from the social norm. For example, in the present research, aspects related to the theory of social labeling, marginalization or bullying were highlighted, these being part of the universe of the discriminated children.

2. Theoretical aspects

The term deviance appeared for the first time in the American specialty literature, in the last period of the 50s, when its definition changed, representing until then „pathology” or „social disorganization”, later giving it the meaning known today, respectively deviation from the norms (Ibiş, 2001, p. 7).

Deviance is defined in *the Dictionary of Sociology* „as any act, conduct or manifestation that violates or violates the written or unwritten norms of society or of a particular social group” (Zamfir, Vlăscenu, 1998, p. 165).

The first mention of the concept of deviance appeared in the writings of Emile Durkheim, in which it is specified its representation as a violation of social norms, however, noting that it can also be a regulatory phenomenon of society, having a positive meaning. From his perspective, deviance is a result of confirming the existence of inappropriate norms, not the absence of norms. This type of situation was defined by Durkheim as „anomie”, a phenomenon encountered when referring to „fundamental social changes, representing a crisis manifested in the individual's relationship with the system of values that normalizes his behavior” (Banciu et al., 1995, p. 65).

Also, there is a certain vulnerability of children who can become easy targets of delinquent adults by the fact that they present to them an imaginary world apparently without rules and libertine in which they will benefit from protection. (Mihalache, 2013, p. 135)

3. The methodological design of the research

3.1. The universe of research

This research has as its source the deviant acts from the social environment committed by minors during the pandemic period. Deviance is a phenomenon that will always be encountered, because society without deviance is unbalanced. There will always be two options regarding the behavioral pattern, the idea of good and the idea of evil. In the present case we can talk about deviance and non-deviance. The research started from this idea, because it is talking about a phenomenon that must be kept under control in order not to have a social imbalance.

In the framework of the research, the institutional perspective is taken into account, as it collaborated with the Iasi County Police Inspectorate, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Iasi, the Iasi School Inspectorate, the St. Mary's Children's Emergency Clinical Hospital and the

„Assumption of the Virgin Mary” Church. The target group of this research is made up of specialists in working with minors from the city of Iași.

3.2. Research sample

The research sample consists of ten people, including three police officers, three social workers, two psychologists, a school inspector and a priest. They were chosen according to a well-determined criterion, namely the degree of involvement in cases of deviance/juvenile delinquency. To begin with, it is proposed to identify the causes that lead young people to commit deviant acts and what was the dynamics of this phenomenon during the pandemic period. Also, this research can identify proposals for the prevention of deviance among minors. With the help of the opinions of the representatives of these institutions, an overview of the deviant phenomenon among minors is obtained. The perspective of specialists in working with minors is important for the present research, because they have an overall view, they do not look only at the level of the individual, but at the level of society, also presenting the consequences of the pandemic on the dynamics of the phenomenon of juvenile deviance.

3.3. The purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of the research:

The purpose of the research is to analyze the institutional perspective on juvenile deviance in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research objectives:

1. Defining the profile of minors who commit deviant acts from the perspective of the specialists involved.
2. Identifying the causes that lead to committing deviant acts by minors during the pandemic.
3. Description of the prevention methods of juvenile delinquency in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4. Research questions

Q1. Can the family environment and standard of living influence the growth of juvenile deviance?

Q2. Can institutional involvement prevent juvenile deviance in a pandemic context?

Q3. Can the Covid-19 pandemic bring consequences on juvenile deviance?

3.5. Research methods and techniques

The methodology represents a theoretical analysis of the entire research by describing the techniques used within it, the purpose and objectives it pursues, the research questions and, of course, specifying the target group. To carry out the research, the method of bibliographic documentation, official documentation and statistical documentation was used in the first part of the research. Also, the sociological survey was used as a research method, with the semi-directive

interview applied individually, in order to obtain the most elaborate answers. This research technique was used because the institutional perspective on the phenomenon of deviance among minors was followed, and qualitative research is necessary for a more precise analysis. Interviewees were assigned a code consisting of numbers and the abbreviated name of the profession. Social workers will be identified by the codes Sw1, Sw2 and Sw3, police officers by the codes Pol1, Pol2 and Pol3, psychologists will be assigned the codes Psh1 and Psh2, the school inspector will be identified by the code SchInps1, and the priest will be assigned the code Pr1. The interview guide was applied between May 14 and June 14, 2021 and contains 14 questions directed at three central themes, as follows: the perception of specialists on the phenomenon, the causes and determining factors and the institutional role in the prevention and management of the phenomenon. This interview guide has been pre-tested for possible improvements. Pre-testing was carried out on a single person, also a specialist in working with minors, who provided information suitable for the present research, but not sufficiently detailed. Following the conduct of that interview, one of the questions regarding the influence of the minor's material situation on committing deviant acts was modified. Before the pretest, the question referred only to those with a precarious situation, but the interviewee believes that children from wealthy families can also be deviant. Thus, taking into account his opinion, the respective changes were made.

The themes pursued in the interviews are:

T1: *Specialists perception of juvenile deviance*

Q.1.1 An increase in juvenile deviance/delinquency has been observed in recent years. Can you tell me your opinion about this phenomenon?

Q.1.2. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, how do you personally think the number of crimes committed by minors has evolved? Did the torts manifest themselves in the usual forms or did they take other forms?

Q.1.3. Could you provide us with a portrait of the deviant minor?

Q.1.4. How would you call a deviant minor in one sentence?

Q.1.5. Can a deviant/delinquent child be brought on a straight path or will he be a delinquent later?

T2: *Delineation of the causes and determinants of juvenile deviance*

Q.2.1. What do you think are the causes of juvenile delinquency/deviance, both in general and in the context of the pandemic?

Q.2.2. Can the material situation of the family from which the minor comes influence his behavior in a negative sense?

Q.2.3. To what extent can the material situation of the family influence the deviant behavior of the minor?

Q.2.4. What do you think about the role of education in deviant behavior?

Q.2.5. What do you think is the role of the Internet in deviant behavior, both normally and in the context of the pandemic?

Q.2.6. Do you think that lack of socialization can be a contributing factor to deviance among minors? How do you assess the role of the group in the development of behaviors in children and young people?

T3: *Institutional intervention in the prevention of juvenile deviance*

Q.3.1. In your experience, how can we prevent deviance/delinquency among minors?

Q.3.2. How can we help minors to overcome this situation, or deviant behavior?

Q.3.3. Can the church have a role in prevention and intervention in the case of deviant children? Which?

3.6. Presentation and analysis of results

As part of this research, ten interviews were conducted with specialists in working with minors. Thus, in the following, the data obtained from the interviews are presented and analyzed, according to the previously proposed themes.

T.1. Specialists perceptions of juvenile deviance

The opinion of the interviewed people about the phenomenon of juvenile deviance is predominantly the same, namely all ten specialists interviewed believe that deviance among minors has increased in recent years, but it is not necessarily a consequence of the pandemic. Juvenile deviance has existed and will always exist, according to one of the psychologists interviewed. Also, juvenile delinquency is currently one of the most serious social problems facing our country, because, regardless of whether we are talking about crimes or misdemeanors, the involvement of children or adolescents in committing them represents a much greater responsibility on the part of the state, through its institutions.

Regarding juvenile deviance during the Covid-19 pandemic, there are different opinions, as some of the specialists believe that it has decreased, as educational institutions were closed, classes were held online, and freedom of movement was restricted, while others are of the opinion that the phenomenon has increased in 2020. According to the statistics mentioned by Sw1 „for 100 defendants sent to court in 2020, six are minors”. However, six out of the ten specialists believe that criminality has transferred to the online environment, as cyberbullying has gained momentum. Teenagers receive threats through social networks, children access pornographic websites and post statements inciting hatred or with suicidal tendencies, according to the psychologists interviewed. On the other hand, four of the ten specialists say that the crimes committed by minors fell into the same criminal segment, namely thefts, robberies, assaults. Thus, it can be mentioned that 60 percent of those interviewed claim that juvenile deviance has undergone transformations, while 40 percent of them believe that the phenomenon has not undergone major changes.

Regarding the portrait of the deviant/delinquent minor, the interviewees have a common point of view, more precisely, they believe that the deviant minor is a child or teenager who deviates from the norm by committing various antisocial

acts, such as the consumption of alcohol or hallucinogenic substances, use of vulgar language, aggression, poor material situation, school absenteeism or school dropout. However, depending on the category of specialists interviewed, differences in the characteristics provided can be observed. Thus, the police believe that deviant minors are „*young people who have emotional deficiencies and can be easily manipulated by those around them*”, terrible, lacking parental supervision and control, with communication deficiencies, more precisely with parents, teachers or other people who they can help correct inappropriate attitudes and behaviors. The emotional baggage of deviant/delinquent minors can be characterized by emotional or material needs, frustrations, traumas or we can talk about a „*genetic predisposition*” to commit deviant acts. Minors are subjective in making decisions, due to the lack of life experience and the correct information package. They „*often do not understand the consequences of his actions, they try to minimize them*”.

The perspective of the social workers, regarding the portrayal of the deviant minor, emphasizes his abnormal biopsychosocial development, considering him socially maladjusted, as he has no affection and attention in the family environment.

From a psychological point of view, the deviant minor is characterized by social immaturity, emotional-behavioral instability with difficulties in adapting to society, being introverted. He has „*an unfinished, unpolished behavior, traits that lead him to not shy away from anything, referring to the commission of crimes*”.

Following this detailed portrayal of the deviant minor, the experts were asked to state what they would call such a minor in one sentence. The expressions used by them are similar or even identical. Thus, four of the ten specialists consider the deviant minor a „*victim*”, two others say that he is „*lost*”, and the opinions of the other four specialists are as follows: „*unhappy*”, „*in need*”, „*adrift*” and „*vulnerable*”. According to these data, it is observed that 40 percent of the specialists characterize the minor as a victim, 20 percent consider him lost, and 40 percent of the total is distributed equally to each of the four opinions of the specialists, thus representing ten percent of the total number of the interviewed people.

Regarding the delinquent future of this category of minors, all the specialists interviewed are of the opinion that a minor with deviant behavior can be reformed, but only under certain circumstances. Thus, the risk of recidivism can be reduced with the help of specialized programs, through psychological counseling, closer supervision by parents and teachers, as they notice the child's or adolescent's deviant tendencies from the early stages. However, in the applied interview, Pol1 supports the existence of two categories of deviant minors, the classification criterion being the types of crimes or misdemeanors they have committed. There were situations in which the children realized the mistakes they made and corrected their behavior, of course, benefiting from the support of the family, the school, etc. In this category are those who usually commit out of fear, under the influence of their entourage, certain crimes with a lower degree of social danger. For them, „*the experience they went through, namely the visits to the police,*

represented a life lesson from which they learned". We can also discuss a category, smaller in quantity, who adopted delinquent behavior from an early age, minors who did not benefit from prevention or intervention services at the appropriate time or for whom the services did not prove to be effective. For them, *„inappropriate behavior has become a way of life, since the social and family environment in which they lived did not offer them other alternatives „*. According to the data provided by Psh2, *„the internal statistics of the National Penitentiary Administration show us that a considerable percentage of children admitted to educational centers are later found in prisons for adults”*.

So, in most of the cases, a deviant minor can correct his behavior or his deviant behavior can get worse. In order not to become a criminal later, family support and acceptance of specialist help is very important.

T.2. Delineating the causes and determinants of juvenile deviance

The causes of juvenile deviance/delinquency are multiple, more precisely, genetic or biological, psychological, social, family, educational. All the people interviewed believe that these are the main causes of juvenile deviance. However, it could be observed that in all the discussions held with the specialists in working with minors, the emphasis was placed on two more common causes, namely those of a family nature, implicitly educational and those of a social nature.

Dysfunctions in the family environment, such as single-parent families, blended families, the existence of domestic violence, represent a major influence in the behavior and personality of the minor, since this is the model provided by the parents, and the child considers it to be suitable and will take it over. This situation can also be possible when we are discussing parents with a criminal history. Although this parental model is not worthy of following, the minor may consider it suitable, since it is his only educational landmark. Another cause is represented by the child's entourage, which, in turn, can offer a way of negative socialization, through his involvement in activities that violate the law, not necessarily of great gravity. In general, *„minors end up committing such acts out of fear or to avoid being laughed at in front of their friends”*, according to Pol1.

The lack of connection between family and school is an important cause of juvenile deviance, since the child carefully monitored and directed towards appropriate behavior will not be as prone to deviant behavior as a child neglected by both family and school. Thus, there are cases where parents denigrate the school in front of their children, as their educational level is precarious. Also, three of the ten specialists believe that the mass media can have a great influence in the formation of an opinion, regarding the school environment in Romania. In the news bulletins, we hear how teachers often commit misdemeanors or crimes in schools, how students bully each other, or there are discussions about the school curriculum, which is considered outdated or too busy. Unfortunately, the mass media does not support the school environment or education as much as it should, and this can be seen at a social level, by conducting opinion polls regarding the

school satisfaction of students. These factors definitely influence in making a decision about school absenteeism or school dropout.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, school units were closed, and classes were held online. This caused changes in the daily life of a family, influencing the child's behavior as well. The interviewed specialists support a common point of view regarding this aspect, namely, the restriction of the movement of people, both during the day and at night, led to spending a much longer time within the family. When discussing dysfunctional families, time spent within such a family can be a prime determinant of a minor's deviant behavior. Also, the closure of playgrounds and malls delimited the social environment of the child or teenager, which is limited to the family or the street. These restrictions favored the emergence of inappropriate or deviant behaviors, as minors lacked an important component of life, namely socialization.

Regarding the material situation from which the minor comes, specialists believe that this can influence the conduct of the minor in a negative sense. Thus, according to what was mentioned by Pr1, *„there can certainly be this influence, both in the poor environment and in the wealthiest, if there is a body-soul imbalance in the family”*. When a child is raised with only materialistic ideas, he will always try to find opportunities to earn easily and quickly, but if he has financial education from the family or school, he will not act inappropriately. During the pandemic period, in addition to the imposed restrictions, it can be mentioned that many activities were blocked and went bankrupt, and many parents became unemployed. This fact can be a determining factor of criminality, since the lack of necessary resources can change a person's thinking, especially when we talk about minors, who have no life experience. The sudden change these children/adolescents may go through may lead them to commit acts against the law in order to obtain food or other necessities.

However, *„a precarious situation is not a preamble to a criminal career, just as a good material situation is not an insurance for a lifestyle free of delinquent behaviors”*, according to what Pol3 said. Regarding this fact, all ten specialists interviewed confirmed that a good material condition does not guarantee success in life, but money can help support a child's education. The well-to-do family, who wants to correct their child, will have an additional asset to facilitate the correction of the minor. Thus, he will have the opportunity to ask for specialized help, he will be able to travel more with the deviant minor in order to distance him from the negative influence coming from the environment and he will be able to encourage him to perfect certain artistic or intellectual qualities, occupying the minor's time with constructive activities.

After analyzing the answers provided by the specialists, it can be said that both children from financially disadvantaged families can look for sources of income through illegal activities, and those from families with good and very good material possibilities can look, under the influence of their surroundings, to supplement their income for entertainment (consumption of substances with psychoactive effects, company material goods, such as telephones, clothes, etc.).

The common factor in both situations is the lack of permanent supervision by the parents, the lack of knowledge of the surroundings, the places and environments frequented by minors and the lack of a permanent connection between the family and the school.

Looking at the role of education in deviant behavior, it represents „*the basic pillar of a person's psycho-social development, influencing his development and the outcome composed of personality and character traits, when he becomes an adult*”, according to the information provided by Pol2. Seven of the ten specialists interviewed believe that the role of education is very important in influencing deviant behavior, whether we are talking about education in the family, education in the school environment or education in other informal environments. Three other specialists believe that other factors are more important, such as the family, more precisely the affection in the family environment. Thus, 70 percent of the studied sample considers the role of education to be essential in the behavior of minors. An educated young person will have the ability to respond to complex needs and situations. Education takes place in the family, which is the environment in which a huge influence is exerted on minors, both directly and indirectly. The power of example is very great, because children will adopt the behavior of their parents, the family environment being the first factor that forms a person. Psh1 believes that „*from a certain age it is more difficult to educate a child, so the education of the seven years at home must be effective in order not to have a child with behavioral disorders later on*”.

By analyzing the responses of the interviewed specialists, it was found that the role of education is important in the formation of minors, but the difference is made by how the child receives the education. There must be continuity between the education received in the family and that received in the academic environment, these being complemented by the affective factor, mentioned by three of the ten specialists in working with minors.

Regarding the role of the Internet in deviant behavior, the interviewees mentioned some important aspects, such as the beneficial part of its use by minors, since the information on the Internet can be helpful for the intellectual development of minors, but there is also a harmful part of its use, accessing sites with inappropriate content for minors, excessive use of social networks and some purposes for which minors use them, namely for threatening, inciting or sexually explicit messages and for connecting with toxic entourages . Thus, all ten specialists believe that the Internet has an important role in the manifestation of deviant behavior. Next, their perspectives are presented, depending on the field in which they operate.

With its appearance, „*the Internet became a real Pandora's box for society*”, bringing, in addition to countless benefits, a lot of possibilities for breaking the rules. Pol3 mentioned in the interview information regarding criminality in the online environment, namely its very fast development and diversification, representing a field/being in constant innovation. Thus, the expansion of the types of devices that make it possible to access the mobile Internet has led to a major and

continuous increase in the number of users, most of whom are children or teenagers, and in recent years there has been a decrease in the age from which minors start using the internet. Considering this fact, the victim risk potential is much higher, also taking into account the psycho-social characteristics of children/adolescents, namely curiosity, fearlessness, naivety, the need for socialization and affection.

Starting with the period of the state of emergency generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the young people had to conduct online courses. In this context, they had the opportunity to surf the Internet unsupervised, where they could access age-inappropriate audio-video information, this fact increasing the curiosity to try new things or to follow the challenges launched by social networks.

From the perspective of psychologists, during the pandemic period there was an increase in the number of children and adolescents suffering from various ailments due to models promoted on the Internet or messages on social networks. Thus, Psh1 believes that „*the Internet is a model for young people, and they, not being totally defined, are easily influenced and do not have a filter to absorb information, so they take inappropriate information*”. Also, many children and adolescents have been found to have anxious predispositions caused by the Internet, and in extreme cases to suicide attempts.

Another important aspect observed after data collection, would be the common point of view of three of the ten specialists regarding mandatory control filters for minors in the virtual environment. Thus, they believe that their lack combined with poor parental supervision favors the minor's deviant behavior.

So, according to Pr1, „*the internet, like a knife, can have a beneficial role, but also an evil role, it depends on who uses it and how*”. On the one hand, it is an infinite source of information, on the other hand, it creates addiction and leads to the development of deviant behaviors.

Socialization is a very important factor in the manifestation of deviant behavior, since socializing with inappropriate people or entourages with concerns outside the norm encourages deviant behavior, and its lack, following the creation of the pandemic context, causes personality disorders, anxiety, depression, etc. All ten specialists interviewed agree on this statement. Also, Sw1 believes that „*when we talk about socialization we think of a process that takes place from the individual to society, but also vice versa; each needs the other*”. Thus, the lack or deficiency of one of these processes disrupts the balance and favors the phenomenon of deviance, especially among minors. Being personalities in the making, minors put a lot of emphasis on group opinion.

During adolescence, socialization is very important, because minors in this category believe that they have enough experience and can make decisions on their own in borderline situations. Adolescents' tendency to choose reference persons from their surroundings, generally of the same age, can lead them to make not the best choices and to have informal, often deviant, behavioral benchmarks.

Lack of socialization can have several effects, such as increasing the risk of victimization, referring to „*a withdrawn, introverted child who does not know how*

to relate to those around him and who can easily become the target of mean jokes from others or even the victim of a criminal". Also, the lack of socialization can also cause the appearance of inappropriate behaviors among minors. For example, due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, socialization suffered, the ways of spending free time were reduced, and for this reason, „against the background of fear and the desire to stand out, *they appeared inappropriate behavior of some groups of children in the public space, such as disturbances of order and public peace, aggression, destruction, robberies, etc.*, according to the information provided by Pol1. In this context, of the lack of socialization, Sw2 believes that „*parents should pay more attention to minors so they don't feel alone or abandoned*".

Following the presentation of these data, we believe that each of the causes and determining factors of deviance contributes to the same extent to its manifestation among minors.

T.3. Institutional intervention in the prevention of juvenile deviance

Within this theme, the specialists answered questions regarding prevention and intervention regarding juvenile deviance, as well as the role of institutions in these actions. Thus, the specialists included in the research sample believe that the prevention of deviance among minors is a long-term process involving several social and family factors. Pol3 believes that the prevention of deviant behavior among minors can only be achieved with „*the sustained involvement of the family-school-police-NGO partnership through participation in informative-preventive, mediation, debate and counseling activities*".

The prevention of the adoption of inappropriate or deviant behaviors among minors is achieved by intervening on the causes, conditions and circumstances that can generate or favor criminal acts, acting both on minors and on the environment to which they belong. This way of approaching the problem involves a collaboration of the Police with other institutions or organizations with attributions or concerns in the field of child protection. The prevention activity of the police is directed, above all, to children in risk situations.

First of all, it is necessary for parents to be attentive to the behavioral changes of children, not to treat them superficially, and if they cannot manage them by themselves, to request support, either from the extended family, or from teachers, social services, the police, NGOs, etc. Also, Sw1 considers „*knowing the dynamics of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and researching the field*" an important part of prevention, as information facilitates this process.

The deviance shown among minors can be prevented by „*education adapted to the normal principles of the functioning of a society, the development of the child's empathic instinct and emotional intelligence*", according to the information provided by Pol2. At the same time, „*ensuring a harmonious family climate can represent the best method of preventing juvenile deviance*", since a healthy environment does not stimulate deviant behavior, but a compliant one, says SchInsp1.

Regarding the institutional intervention, respectively the help offered in cases of juvenile deviance, the specialists emphasize institutional collaboration with the family of the deviant minor. Thus, we are talking about awareness and prevention programs that are carried out in all the institutions involved in combating this phenomenon, namely school, police, constabulary, public social assistance services, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the Center for Resources and Educational Assistance. Also, supporting the families from which the deviant minors come can help to reduce the phenomenon, especially when it comes to families with limited financial possibilities.

The school environment can help minors with deviant behavior by offering support services, such as adapted programs, differentiated work methods or the allocation of a support teacher. SchInsp1 claims that „*training and stimulating involvement in extracurricular activities adapted to individual passions*” helps minors to overcome the difficult situation in which they find themselves.

Sw2 mentioned in the interview, the importance of the community in terms of interventions aimed at deviant minors. Thus, the community contributes to the reduction of juvenile deviance through referrals made to institutions specialized in such cases. Community support complements family and institutional efforts in its involvement in reducing juvenile deviance. In this context, we are talking about a much more complex collaboration than the one previously mentioned, namely that between family and institutions. The frequenting of day centers in the community by minors can help them to know their environment better, to understand from the stories of other minors that deviating from society's norms or breaking the law are not suitable options.

The intervention of doctors in cases of juvenile deviance consists of counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy or occupational therapy. Juveniles are encouraged to practice work therapy because it distracts them from committing deviant acts, gives them responsibility and gives them a purpose in the community they belong to. Regular visits to a psychologist can help deviant minors understand the mistakes they have made and change their attitude in a positive way. However, the therapy cannot have an effect as long as the minor is not receptive and aware of his actions that do not conform to society.

The role of the church, with regard to minors with deviant conduct, can be an important one for the purification of soul and body. All specialists support the importance of the church in correcting the behavior of deviant minors. Thus, attending places of worship can be a good practice for those children whose parents are familiar with the church or for those who refuse, due to fear, the interventions of specialized institutions. Pr1 believes that sometimes, „*the church has a more important role than the school or even the family of the deviant child*”, probably not having the necessary support from the two environments, some minors turn to the church with the hope that they will find some answers. Also, Pr1 mentions the existence of many associations generated by the church, among which are mentioned, „Provita”, „Glasul Vieții”, Placement centers for freckled people, Homes for abandoned children, Addiction centers, etc. Seminars, conferences, courses on

children with inappropriate behavior are permanently organized in the Church. On a smaller level, meetings are held periodically with young people, on various topics, in order to spend quality time with people who can truly represent a model for these minors.

Considering the analysis of these data, it can be established that prevention and institutional intervention regarding minors with deviant behavior require long-term collaboration with the family and the community from which the minor comes. The more means of supervision there are, the less misdemeanors or criminal acts committed by minors.

Conclusions

Following the collection and analysis of all the data obtained in this research, through bibliographic and statistical documentation, and with the help of semi-structured interviews, some conclusions of the research can be formulated.

The dynamics of the phenomenon of juvenile deviance changed with the emergence of the pandemic context. Changes were found in the form of its manifestation, namely the accelerated evolution of deviance in the online environment through social networks. The conduct of online courses led to spending a much longer time in front of the computer or other internet access devices, thus, the students being much more concerned with the virtual environment than they were before the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, the imposed restrictions caused an increase in the time spent at home, which created frustrations among minors, who did not have the opportunity to interact with friends, to spend free time in another environment. Reducing the recreational possibilities of minors favors the emergence of deviant behaviors, as they may feel trapped and accuse depressive states.

The purpose of this research was to analyze the institutional perspective on juvenile deviance during the Covid-19 pandemic. By performing this analysis, several ideas can be outlined regarding the dynamics of the phenomenon.

The objectives of this research were achieved. Thus, within this, a profile of minors who commit deviant acts was drawn with the help of specialists, it was possible to identify the main causes of the appearance of the phenomenon of deviance among minors and a series of methods were presented by which contraventions can be prevented or reduced / crimes committed by minors in the pandemic context.

Through this research, the three research questions were validated, demonstrating the influence of the family environment and the standard of living in increasing the phenomenon of juvenile deviance, the effectiveness of institutional help and the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on this phenomenon. Thus, in the following, some defining aspects of the research are briefly presented.

The family environment from which the minor comes has a major influence on deviant behavior (Medeleanu, Moron, 2022a), through the lack of essential factors in his life, namely education, affection or provision of daily

necessities. The material situation of the family from which the minor comes is a determining factor in the growth of juvenile delinquency, since a precarious situation can lead the minor to commit some contraventions in order to procure food or other necessary objects that are not provided to him in the family environment. Also, a good or very good material situation is a determining factor of deviance among minors, because the lack of financial education or the desire to assert themselves in front of the environment can lead them to purchase alcohol, hallucinogenic substances, etc.

Institutional involvement can help prevent the phenomenon of deviance, both in general and in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, but only with good collaboration with the minor and his family (Medeleanu, Moron, 2022b). During the interviews, the specialists in working with minors mentioned the existence of cases in which the family refuses specialized help, and the juvenile delinquent becomes an adult criminal later.

The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic certainly exist at the level of the phenomenon of juvenile deviance (Pîrju, 2019), both at the social level and at the mental and emotional level. The restrictions have led minors to spend most of their time indoors, surfing the Internet excessively. Online courses made many of the minors absent from them or even abandon their studies, not adapting to the new way of teaching. However, they preferred to spend time destructively on the Internet, taking on some negative or deviant patterns. This situation favored the emergence of stress, anxiety, depressive states, as they lacked face-to-face interaction, diversification of activities, etc.

So, the phenomenon of juvenile deviance during the Covid-19 pandemic has enriched its form of manifestation, existing both in the real and virtual environments. The prevention of deviance among minors may be possible, but it requires a collaboration between several environments, namely institutional ones, such as the school, the police, the town hall, the church and the family environment of the minor. The receptivity and cooperation of the minor and his family are very important in preventing and combating juvenile deviance.

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