

# The Experience of Studying Specific Features of Social Attitudes and Value Orientations among Normative and Deviant Teenagers

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## ABSTRACT

The topical problem of deviant behavior in the teen milieu is raised in the article. For this purpose, specific features of value orientations and social attitudes in normative and deviant teenagers are studied in the article. Empirical research was conducted with the use of psychological tests of values, the semantic differential and proneness to deviant behavior, and the results' processing and interpretation is carried out on the basis of a comparative analysis with application of the statistical criterion. Based on the data obtained the conclusions have been drawn about the specific features of value orientations and social attitudes in normative and deviant teenagers that are expressed in deviant teenagers' striving for the thrills and determine the manifestation of deviations in their behavior.

**Keywords:** a teenager's personality, teens, deviant behavior, value orientations, social attitudes, semantic differential

## INTRODUCTION

The teenage period is a transition period of a person's development which is filled with a vast number of contradictions, age conflicts, an extreme change in consciousness. In this period a specific relationship is formed between a child and social milieu, the so-called social situation of development determining the dynamic pattern of psychological development in one's teenage period [1]. In the framework of the teen years the child's attitudes to the world, to himself alter, and the process of self-cognition and self-determination develops [2]. However, the formation of a teenager's psyche is connected with a lot of problems among which – the manifestation of various forms of deviant behavior [3, 4, 5].

Deviant behavior differing both in content and in target orientation and in the degree of public danger can manifest itself in various forms – from morals disruptions and slight misdemeanors to serious crimes. Deviant manifestations are expressed not only in an external, behavioral aspect; the deformation of value and normative ideas i.e. the system of internal regulation lead to the development of deviant behavior. Among deviant manifestations the so-called pre-crime level is identified when a teenager has not become a subject of a crime yet but his deviations are manifested at the level of petty violations of behavior rules, in alcohol drinking, taking drugs that destroy the psyche. Deviations being expressed in criminal activities pose a more serious danger to the public. A noticeable ill-being in deviant teenagers is seen in the system of interpersonal relations in the family, in the school, in the street [6]. All this testifies that deviant behavior is a result of the unfavorable social development, the violation of socialization and it can arise at different age stages. The violation of external social ties is closely connected with the deformation of the internal behavioral regulation – values orientations and social attitudes [7, 8, 9, 10].

The phenomenon of a social attitude has been in the center of attention of psychology for many years though this interest fluctuates very often – it increases sometimes, sometimes it decreases. A possible cause of such state of things is the nature of the social attitude's phenomenon itself (its ability to manifest in the most different spheres of a person's psychic organization) and also the natural laws of the development of psychology as a science. Today along with differentiation of psychological consciousness the systematization of psychological ideas takes place at a philosophical level that lead to the re-thinking of the material collected and obtained [11].

A great number of works has been written on the problem of attitudes, a lot of empirical research has been done – from global Howland's studies at the Yale Research Center [12] to the study of religious bigots by Festinger [13]. G. Allport's works on the problem of an attitude are also known [14], M. Rokeach's works [15] and of many others. P. N. Shikhirev prophesied the social attitude the role of a central object in future psychological studies [16].

Without going into the analysis of a vast number of works on the study of the social attitude's phenomenon we would like to put emphasis on the most important ones from the point of view of understanding an attitude. First of all, the turning point in understanding an attitude from the positions of social psychology is the structure of the attitude offered by W. Thomas and F. Znanetsky as a «value» + «the attitude to value» [17]. W. Thomas and F. Znanetsky defined an attitude as «a psychological process treated in attitudes to the social world and taken first of all in connection with social values» [17]. Once A. G. Asmolov noticed that the social attitude is «determined by understanding the value as a social object being of importance to an individual» [18] or, otherwise, the social attitude describes the interaction between an individual and society in which society is represented by the social value and an individual – by the attitude to this value.

This position is important to us and helps to, firstly, consider the issue of the duality of the social attitude's nature – on the part of the world around and on the part of an individual, and , secondly, the issue of the attitude to values of society which is in every certain case substantiated by the needs of an individual. In this sense, the duality of the nature of social attitude enables it to be a regulating agent of social behavior and an individual's activity in society. On this basis we put forward a hypothesis of the interrelation between the system of social attitudes and teenagers' value orientations as a foundation of regulating their behavior that has influence on the manifestation of this or that form of behavior including deviant ones [19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27].

Taking into account the aforesaid our study undertakes the following tasks:

- 1) to study the data of social values in deviant and normative teenagers;
- 2) to study quantitative ratings of the social values system among teenagers with deviant behavior and teenagers without deviations in behavior;
- 3) to identify the interrelations of the system of social attitudes and teenagers' value orientations;
- 4) to analyze the differences in value orientations of a man's personality and social attitudes of teenagers without deviations in behavior and deviant teenagers.

## METHODOLOGICAL BASES AND METHODS

The empirical part of research was conducted at secondary school N 2, secondary school N 6 and pedagogical lyceum N 25 of the town of Dimitrovgrad, Ulyanovsk region. School students of the 9<sup>th</sup> grades aged 15-16 served as respondents with the total number of 119 people participating in the survey.

Ch. Osgood's method of semantic differential was used in the study aimed at finding quantitative values of a person's social attitudes [28]; S. Schwarz's value questionnaire oriented to the measurement of motivational domains that determine the most significant value guidelines of a person's life and activity [29]. The technique of detecting the proneness to deviant behavior was also used (PDV) (the author – A.N. Oryol) which is a standardized test-questionnaire designed to measure teenagers' proneness to the realization of various forms of deviant behavior [30].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the purpose of analyzing the systems of values among the teenagers with deviant behavior and teenagers without deviations we conducted the comparison of mean group indexes of the values with the use of Student's t-test. Special attention was paid to significant differences of the values in the studied groups of teenagers. As a result, statistically significant differences were found in indexes of the values Achievement ( $t_{emp}=2.0212$  at  $p\leq 0.05$ ), Stimulation ( $t_{emp}=2.0643$  at  $p\leq 0.05$ ), Security ( $t_{emp}=1.9815$  at  $p\leq 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Comparison of the mean group indexes of the values among teenagers with deviating behavior and teenagers without deviations in behavior

№	Values	Mean group indexes		t <sub>emp</sub>
		normative	deviant	
1.	Enjoyment	8.5500	8.2857	0.3259
2.	Achievement	23.5500	26.7710	2.0212*
3.	Social power	15.5500	16.4290	0.2902
4.	Self-determination	29.8500	28.2860	1.0293
5.	Stimulation	14.0500	15.9430	2.0643*
6.	Conformism	16.4000	16.1430	0.2247
7.	Sociality	35.5000	34.0000	0.7101
8.	Security	31.4810	27.6230	1.9815*
9.	Maturity	32.7500	32.0000	0.4992
10.	Support of traditions	17.4000	17.0000	0.2690
11.	Social culture	25.7500	24.4290	0.6285
12.	Spirituality	21.5000	21.0000	0.3406

\* - significant differences at  $p \leq 0.05$ **Table 2.** Comparison of the mean group indexes of social attitudes in teenagers with deviant behavior and teenagers without deviations in behavior

№	Social attitudes to	Mean group indexes		t <sub>emp</sub>
		normative	deviant	
1.	Enjoyment	20.5000	20.8571	0.0675
2.	Achievements	25.4000	25.7143	0.1284
3.	Social power	12.8500	18.7143	1.0069
4.	Self-determination	22.1500	22.8571	0.1767
5.	Stimulation	21.8520	11.6571	2.0089*
6.	Self-limitation	8.4000	12.7143	0.7812
7.	Social justice	17.4561	25.8571	2.1487*
8.	Security	21.6000	23.1429	0.3165
9.	Maturity	13.2000	11.5714	0.3088
10.	Support of traditions	20.9760	14.2857	1.9878*
11.	Social culture	21.1500	21.5714	0.1018
12.	Spirituality	24.0500	22.5714	0.4156

\* - significant differences at  $p \leq 0.05$ 

Higher ratings of the value of achievement by deviant teenagers testifies about a greater orientation to social recognition, aspiration to the possession of material values whereas for normative teenagers this value is connected with the success of their activity that is expressed by their personal competence. Higher ratings of the stimulation significance for deviant teenagers are connected with the striving for thrills, the search for adventures and risk-taking. At the same time the significance of the value of security for deviant teenagers is less high in comparison with normative teenagers which characterizes deviant teenagers as less conscientious, trustworthy and, at the same time, deviant teenagers less tend to feel a sense of belongingness, being cared for by the people around.

Further analysis was devoted to the comparison of the mean group indexes of social attitudes in teenagers with deviating behavior and teenagers without deviations in behavior with the use of Student's t-test. With the use of Ch. Osgood's semantic differential teenagers' social attitudes were measured in terms of values according to S. Schwarz's typology [29]. As a result of this analysis statistically significant differences were found among the studied groups of teenagers in social attitudes to stimulation ( $t_{emp}=2.0089$  at  $p \leq 0.05$ ), social justice ( $t_{emp}=2.1487$  at  $p \leq 0.05$ ), support of traditions ( $t_{emp}=1.9878$  at  $p \leq 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

These differences testify that deviant teenagers have a lower attitude to social justice which in behavior is expressed in their deviance from candid and honest relations. Deviant teenagers also show a lower attitude to loyalty, adherence to the group in their relations with friends. On the other hand, a stronger attitude in deviant teenagers to the support of traditions speaks of the fact that they keep having respect for their parents, older people, honoring traditions. It is especially worth pointing out the attitude of deviant teenagers to stimulation that expresses the aspiration to the thrills, risk, which is realized in behavior filled with changes.

## CONCLUSION

1. The conducted theoretical analysis has demonstrated that social attitude expresses a definite attitude of an individual to the values of society. For deviant teenagers who are in the process of the personality formation this means a specific change of social values in consciousness that is later expressed in a definite orientation of their behavior.
2. The conducted empirical analysis has shown that deviant teenagers attach greater importance to the values of achievement and stimulation, less significance to the value of security. Probably, this is explained by deviant teenagers' striving for the achievement of material security, respect from the people around, the search for enjoyment, the thrill and at the same time the sense of belonging to, affinity with the people around them is lowered in them. The system of social attitudes of deviant teenagers demonstrates their lower attitude to social justice, at the same time, the support of traditions is significant for them.
3. It is worth paying special attention to the values of stimulation. A high significance of the value of stimulation corresponds to a high attitude to stimulation in deviant teenagers. Thus it turns out that a high significance of stimulation occurs with the positive attitude to it which, correspondingly, is expressed in behavior. Such position of the value and attitude is likely to be a distinctive feature of deviant teenagers' personality and behavior pointing to their striving for the thrills, risk-taking, the search for adventures and positive attitude to it which, in its turn, determines the manifestation of deviations in behavior.

The materials of the article are of practical value to psychologists-practitioners as well as staff members of educational institutions.

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