

Original Paper

The Importance of Preventing Juvenile Delinquency

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the importance of preventing juvenile delinquency and its profound impact on the social, economic and personal levels. This paper first clarifies the current trend and characteristics of juvenile delinquency, analyzes the root causes of juvenile delinquency from the perspective of the causes of juvenile delinquency, and mainly studies the psychological factors affecting juvenile delinquency from the perspective of values, which is of great significance to explore the causes of juvenile delinquency from the inner source. Therefore, the prevention of juvenile delinquency can not only protect the physical and mental health of minors, but also promote social stability and economic development. In addition, early intervention and education can effectively reduce the crime rate of minors and reduce the cost of crime in the future society. Finally, this paper proposes a series of prevention strategies based on the research results, including multi-dimensional intervention measures at the family, school and social levels, in order to provide reference for relevant policy formulation and practice.

Keywords

Delinquency, prevention strategy, early intervention

1. Introduction

With the frequent exposure of minors' vicious wounding incidents, the call for severe punishment of juvenile delinquents is getting higher and higher. The overwhelming condemnation is rooted in the legal system's treatment of juvenile delinquents, which is contrary to people's simple sense of justice. It makes people misunderstand the law's connivance of minors, and then questions the justice of the law, which is not conducive to the stability of social order. The "Criminal Law Amendment (XI)" has conditionally reduced the starting point of the age of criminal responsibility, responded to the public opinion caused by the malignant wounding of minors in recent years, in order to calm the public mood, protect the social order, and reflect a strong concept of social defense, but the effect may not be satisfactory. Jiang Qinqin points out the deep-seated contradictions between "social defense" and

“child welfare” in China’s juvenile justice system. How to achieve the balance between “child welfare” and “social defense” is an important task of juvenile justice reform. How to improve the system of juvenile protection and punishment under the background of law amendment has become an important issue to balance “child welfare” and “social defense”, which is related to social harmony and stability and the progress of national rule of law.

2. Proposing the Problem

Minors are the future of the motherland and the hope of the nation. The healthy growth of minors is related to family happiness and social stability. According to the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Minors, minors are a special group under the age of 18. This period is the key stage of personal development, but at this time, the individual’s physical and mental development is not yet mature, and the imbalance between physiological and psychological development is easy to make minors form many bad behaviors, and even go to the road of illegal crime. In recent years, school bullying, child sexual abuse, Internet addiction and other related issues have frequently entered the public eye, and have received more and more attention from all walks of life. The “White Paper on the Procuratorial Work of Minors (2022)” shows that juvenile delinquency is on the rise from 2020 to 2022, and it shows a trend of younger age and malignancy. In 2022, the procuratorial organs accepted the examination and prosecution of juvenile delinquency. The top five crimes are theft, affray, rape, robbery, and affray. The situation of preventing juvenile delinquency is still not optimistic and deserves continuous attention.

In the past, the academic circles discussed the causes of juvenile delinquency from individual, family, school, society and other factors. Abnormal family environment, lack of school education, bad interpersonal relationship, violent subculture atmosphere and so on are all important factors affecting juvenile delinquency. At the same time, the biological factors such as age, hormone, heredity and body shape of juvenile individuals and psychological factors such as personality, cognition, motivation and emotion also have an important influence on the formation of juvenile delinquency. Among many influencing factors, individual psychological factors play a vital role, and even to some extent, they can be said to be deep-seated root factors. Criminal acts are carried out under the control and influence of psychological factors, which are the external manifestations of psychological factors. Without the psychological factors that affect crime, criminal behavior will not occur. Studying the psychological factors that affect juvenile delinquency is of great significance for exploring the causes of juvenile delinquency from the inner source. There have been studies on the psychological factors related to juvenile delinquency, mainly focusing on the pathological personality, negative emotions, abnormal needs, and negative motives of juvenile offenders. These studies provide an important reference for explaining and responding to juvenile delinquency from a psychological perspective. Among them, the bad cognitive concept is a major psychological cause of juvenile delinquency, and values are the core content of personal cognitive concepts, which are people’s basic views and attitudes to identify things,

distinguish right from wrong, and distinguish good from evil. In particular, personal actions are dominated by their value judgments and value decisions. To some extent, values play the role of “master switch” in many psychological factors, which can guide, guide, correct and improve the remaining psychological factors.

In the study of juvenile delinquents, some domestic scholars have theoretically analyzed the characteristics and causes of juvenile delinquents’ values, and believed that bad values are an important reason for juvenile delinquents. Some scholars have also used empirical methods to find that values have a significant predictive effect on juvenile delinquency, and strong moral values and equality will inhibit the occurrence of juvenile problem behaviors. A large-scale survey of juvenile offenders in China also shows that the group’s values of money worship and utilitarian thinking are more serious, and they often hold a negative attitude towards national laws and moral concepts. The above studies provide evidence support for the close relationship between values and criminal behavior. The values of criminals are not consistent with the mainstream social norms. The standard for measuring right and wrong, good and evil is not the mainstream social values, but more to meet their own desires and needs as the starting point. Minors are in a critical period of personal growth, development and socialization. Their willpower is relatively weak, and their views on the problem are not yet mature. They are vulnerable to the wrong guidance of negative social factors, forming blind, naive and distorted values, which in turn leads to illegal and criminal acts. To discover and understand the characteristics of the values of juvenile offenders, we can analyze the causes of juvenile delinquency from the perspective of cognitive characteristics, correct the possible wrong ideas of minors, guide minors to establish correct and rational values, and better practice the core values of socialism.

3. Analysis of the Reasons for the Increase of Sexual Crimes Committed by Minors

3.1 The Direct Reason Is That the Crackdown Has Increased After the Amendment of the Law

The “Criminal Law Amendment (XI)” passed on December 26, 2020 revised the item of rape in Article 236 of the “Criminal Law” to read: “Whoever rapes a woman by violence, coercion or other means shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not less than three years and not more than ten years”. Whoever rapes a young girl under the age of 14 shall be given a heavier punishment on the basis of rape. After the amendment of this article, the public security organs have increased the crackdown and judgment on juvenile sexual crimes, which coincides with the time when the proportion of juvenile sexual crimes has risen sharply. In 2021, the number of newly detained juvenile sex offenders increased by 3.2 times compared with 2020, and the proportion increased by 1.4 times.

3.2 The Advance of Physical Development and the Lag of Psychological Growth Are the Objective Reasons

With the growth of body and the development of secondary sexual characteristics, sexual impulse and curiosity are the physiological causes of juvenile sexual crimes. According to the survey, in the Sichuan region, whether it is a juvenile offender of sexual crimes, or a minor female who has been

infringed, the height has reached or even exceeded the adult standard. In most cases, the choice of minors to commit sexual crimes is some young girls or girls who have advanced development or are relatively tall. Compared with the maturity of physiology, the psychology of minors is obviously immature. This shows that the physiological and psychological contradictions of minors are superimposed on sexual-related behaviors, which can easily lead to paranoid impulses, sexual misconduct, sexual assault and even sexual crimes.

3.3 Lack of Guiding Desire and Distorted Cognition of Sex Are the Root Causes

According to statistics, the age of the first sexual impulse of juvenile delinquents is mainly concentrated in the age of 12 to 16 years old, and it is more concentrated around the age of 14, which requires appropriate guidance and education. Otherwise, their cognition may be deformed and distorted until they break through the bottom line of social norms.

3.4 A Lack of Knowledge of the Law and Long-Term Bad Habits Are the Internal Reasons

63.3% of the juvenile delinquents did not know that the law prohibits sexual relations with women under 14 years old, 47.1% did not know to take protective measures when having sexual behavior, and 55.9% did not know how to prevent syphilis, AIDS and other sexually related diseases. From the interview in prison, it is found that the understanding of the law of juvenile delinquents of sexual crimes is still not in place. Some juvenile delinquents of sexual crimes defend themselves according to judicial interpretations, some do not sexually assault but assist in controlling the victim's body, some provide venues, record or participate in planning, and some instigate others to rape through the Internet. All of them think that the court's judgment of these acts is inappropriate. Legal constraints are the last "insurance" for uncontrolled desires, but minors' ignorance of sex-related laws, contempt for school and social rules, and long-term bad habits are the internal causes of their crimes.

3.5 Poor Supervision of Home and School and Lack of Social Governance Are the External Reasons

There is a prominent situation that there is no person, especially no guardian, in the home of juvenile offenders with sexual crimes. According to the data, 63% of the parents of juvenile offenders work in coastal areas such as Zhejiang and Guangdong for a long time, 12% work in Chengdu, and 7% work in other cities in the province. 30.2% of juvenile sexual crimes occurred in hotels. 67.3% of these people were not required to show identity documents. 14.0% issued juvenile identity cards but the staff did not stop. 7.6% used adult identity cards to register, indicating that the hotel management was not in place. The prevalence of drinking and smoking among minors before sexual crimes indicates that there are still many gaps in the prohibition of the sale of tobacco and alcohol to minors. 76% of the sexual crime minors did not receive sex education in school. At the same time, various temptations in society also impact minors from time to time. The majority of juvenile offenders and a small number of victims of sexual crimes have access to bars, Internet cafes, KTV and other entertainment venues, and meet young people who have dropped out of school and are unemployed. Some girls who are too open-minded, greedy for money, easy to become the object of infringement. 62.6% of juvenile delinquents have seen or heard sexual behavior, of which friends accounted for 65.2%, relatives accounted for 13.2%,

indicating that some of the juvenile dating circles lack supervision, and commercial entertainment venues do not strictly prohibit minors from entering.

4. The Implementation Path of Preventing Juvenile Delinquency

The protection of minors and crime prevention is a systematic and complex project, in which the prevention of sexual crimes cannot be ignored and avoided. We should work together from the government, society, schools, prisons, families and other levels to form a pattern of prevention and control of juvenile sexual crimes in which the government strengthens legal supervision and performance, the school carries out comprehensive sex education, the prison highlights special education and correction, the family pays attention to family education and guardianship responsibilities, and the society creates a healthy environment.

4.1 The Government Needs To Strengthen the Improvement and Implementation of Laws and Regulations

After the second revision of the Law on the Protection of Minors and its implementation on June 1, 2021, various government departments have successively issued many supporting rules and regulations, among which the provisions concerning the prevention of juvenile sexual crimes are scattered in various departmental regulations and rules. Relevant departments should strengthen supervision of performance and enhance the enthusiasm and consciousness of protecting minors and preventing crime.

4.1.1 In Terms of Network Prevention

(1) The General Administration of Radio and Television of the People's Republic of China issued the "Regulations on the Management of Juvenile Programs" on October 18, 2021, stipulating that juvenile programs must not contain sex-related topics and pictures other than healthy and scientific sex education. (2) The "Opinions on Strengthening the Protection of Minors in the Online Cultural Market" formulated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has been implemented since November 29, 2021, requiring resolutely blocking, timely and effective shielding, and cleaning up pornographic content. It is prohibited to induce minors by displaying vulgar pictures, "welfare", "information" and other suggestive information. (3) The "Notice on Further Strengthening the Management of Primary and Secondary School Students' Addiction to Online Games" issued by the General Office of the Ministry of Education and other six departments has been implemented since October 20, 2021, and it is required to resolutely eliminate pornographic and vulgar content in online games that hinder the physical and mental health of primary and secondary school students. (4) The "Mobile Internet Application Information Service Management Regulations" revised by the National Internet Information Office came into effect on August 1, 2022, requiring application providers not to produce, reproduce, publish, and disseminate information that endangers the physical and mental health of minors. (5) At the end of June 2023, the Secretariat of the Central Network Information Office carried out the special action of "Qinglang 2023 Summer Minors Network Environment Improvement". The key rectification is to use the algorithm to push the induced addiction content to the minors, and use AI

technology to generate vulgar pornographic pictures and videos involving minors.

4.1.2 Prevention in Special Places

(1) The “Measures for the Administration of Entertainment Venues” revised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has been implemented since May 13, 2022, requiring that entertainment venues should suspend minors’ entry or restriction signs in a prominent position. (2) The “Notice of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Public Security on Strengthening the Protection of Minors in the Management of E-sports Hotels” issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Public Security has been implemented since August 2023. The e-sports hotel is characterized as a place not suitable for minors’ activities, and it is strictly prohibited to receive minors. The next step is mainly to strengthen the implementation and supervision, strengthen the control of minors’ drinking, continue to crack down on social ugly phenomena such as “pornography, gambling and drugs”, focus on checking online games, live broadcasts, short videos, etc., which have more problems, and avoid bad subjects using pornographic information to induce and harm minors.

4.2 Primary and Secondary Schools Should Carry Out Comprehensive Sex Education for Minors

The term “sex education” in the new “Law on the Protection of Minors” was written into law for the first time. The school is the main position to carry out sex education for minors. It should pay close attention to the development of courses, the compilation of teaching materials, the training of teachers, the improvement of institutions and the systematic development of relevant education.

1) Schools should incorporate sex education for minors into their daily teaching content, guide them with the concept of “preventive treatment of disease”, and continue to promote sex education including life education, sex-related laws, and prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Sexual safety education should be carried out directly in middle school.

2) Cultivate and train a group of professional sex education teachers, integrate sex education into the training of teaching staff, strengthen the prevention awareness and coping skills of teaching staff, and at the same time provide relevant guidance and training to parents.

3) Explore the establishment of a comprehensive management system covering the early warning, detection, reporting and assistance of sexual assault of minors. The implementation of the law provides for the establishment of a special system for the prevention and control of student bullying and the prevention of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, the establishment of a zero-tolerance mechanism for the handling of student bullying, sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and the care and support mechanism for injured students. Special offices for prevention, handling and psychological counseling are set up to help minors and teaching staff cope with such incidents.

4) Extensively carry out mental health work including sexual morality and sexual psychology. Regularly carry out mental health assessment, strengthen mental health monitoring, improve psychological early warning intervention, etc., especially pay attention to the mental health of minors in the period of rapid height growth and secondary sexual development, and timely carry out education and counseling of sexual morality and sexual psychology.

4.3 Families Should Pay Attention to Family Tradition and Family Education and Fulfill Their Guardianship Duties

Parents are the earliest and best teachers for children. It is very important to create a good family style and fully perform guardianship duties to prevent and reduce juvenile sexual crimes.

1) Parents must do their own demonstration. We should set a good example, do not set foot in porn places, strengthen the management of computers, smart phones, network projectors and other networking equipment, do not talk about pornography topics in front of children, watch explicit “wipe” videos, and pay attention to avoiding children in the normal sexual life of husband and wife, so as to promote the healthy growth of children with their own good image.

2) Early sexual enlightenment education. Use the existing various types of sexual enlightenment books, related documentaries on the origin of life, human gestation, growth and development, open classes, etc., to carry out sexual enlightenment education for minors as early as possible, and to carry out physiological health education as early as possible during the peak period of growth and adolescence.

3) Pay special attention to the social situation of children. According to the characteristics of minors’ psychological and physiological changes, we should pay attention to their thoughts and emotions, hobbies and social interactions, and pay special attention to the use of social software, especially adult social software; attention should be paid to the regular inspection of the registration and binding of identity cards and social software for adults in the family, especially for the elderly in the left-behind family. When children are found to have misconduct, they should be considered and patiently guided.

4) There should be different educational emphasis on male and female minors. In addition to sexual knowledge and sexual morality, male minors should focus on sexual responsibility and sex-related legal education, especially on popularization, which cannot be related to young girls under 14 years old. For female minors, we should focus on the education of anti-aggression awareness, so that they can learn to maintain a safe social distance, learn to refuse, protect themselves, understand self-esteem and self-love, not trust acquaintances, and consciously avoid being in a dangerous environment.

4.4 Society Should Create an Environment Conducive To the Healthy Growth of Minors

Creating a healthy social and cultural environment is an effective way to prevent juvenile delinquency, especially sexual crimes.

1) Vigorously promote public order and good customs. It advocates the socialist core values, resists the misconceptions such as excessive openness, unfettered sexual freedom, “laughing at the poor and not laughing at the prostitutes”, and educates and guides the elimination of stereotypes and customs, and cultivates a new style of civilization.

2) Build parent training school. In order to further implement the “Family Education Promotion Law”, prisons, schools, relevant departments such as the Work Committee and the Women’s Federation should explore the establishment of parent training courses, educate parents to correctly perform their guardianship duties, improve their educational ability, avoid misunderstandings in blind areas of parenting, strengthen physical education, change parenting methods, put an end to misunderstandings

in parenting, create a harmonious parenting environment, and encourage parents to use more scientific and reasonable methods to discipline their children and give full play to their exemplary role as parents.

3) Improve the construction of social security system. We should pay attention to the social security problems of migrant children, left-behind minors and released minors. It is suggested that the protection of minors should be included in the overall layout of economic and social development, included in the evaluation system of peace construction and spiritual civilization construction, and special funds should be allocated to support the development of the protection of minors. Actively cultivate a working team active around minors, and promote family inspection visits and problem discovery reports. Give basic social assistance to minors who are out of school, drop out of school and poor, care for the healthy growth of minors in special groups, and achieve academic guidance, life assistance, and psychological counseling to minimize the risk of juvenile delinquency.

5. Significance of Preventing Juvenile Delinquency

Preventing juvenile delinquency helps to protect them from criminal acts and ensure their physical and mental health and safety. Reducing juvenile delinquency helps to maintain social order and stability, reduce crime rates, and improve the overall sense of security of society. The prevention of juvenile delinquency can reduce the consumption of social resources in the judicial and disciplinary systems, thus releasing more resources for economic development. By preventing juvenile delinquency, the rate of return on investment in education can be improved, as more children can successfully complete their studies and become active contributors to society. The prevention of juvenile delinquency helps to maintain the harmony and stability of the family and reduce the pain and economic losses caused by criminal acts. Preventing juvenile delinquency can reduce the incidence of future crimes, because these minors will become adults in the future, and their criminal behavior will have a more far-reaching impact on society. By preventing juvenile delinquency, we can cultivate their awareness of the rule of law and moral concepts from an early age, and lay the foundation for building a society ruled by law. Prevention of juvenile delinquency helps to reduce the rate of recidivism, because early intervention can more effectively change the behavior patterns of minors. Preventing juvenile delinquency helps their mental health development and avoids psychological trauma and self-identity problems caused by criminal behavior. By preventing juvenile delinquency, we can cultivate their sense of social responsibility and make them become citizens beneficial to society.

6. Conclusion

Through in-depth study of the importance of preventing juvenile delinquency, this paper reveals the multiple values of prevention work for personal development, family harmony, social stability and economic development. Through comprehensive analysis and empirical research, this study emphasizes the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation and points out the key roles played by families, schools, communities and government agencies in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. By early

identification of risk factors, providing psychological support, enhancing the rule of law education and promoting social integration, minors can be effectively prevented from embarking on the road of crime. Finally, we call on all sectors of society to work together to take comprehensive preventive measures to create a safe, healthy and growth-friendly environment for minors. Through these efforts, we can look forward to building a more harmonious and just society, in which minors can give full play to their potential and become active contributors to society.

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