

# *The influence of childhood and the environment on the development and formation of the offender's personality*

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***Liana SPYTSKA***

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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY,  
KYIV INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KYIV, UKRAINE  
E-mail: spytka\_l@ukr.net

## **Abstract**

*Increasing levels of crime and deviant behaviour threaten social stability, so it is important to study this topic, which will help develop effective measures to prevent problems and improve the social climate. The purpose of this study is to identify the links and key factors that can determine the ways in which a criminal's personality is formed in childhood. The following research methods were used in the study: analysis, generalization, normative-dogmatic method, and case study. The research has revealed that multiple factors, such as biological, social, pedagogical, and individual psychological aspects, determine the impact of childhood and the environment on the formation of a criminal's personality. The study highlights that the experience of childhood trauma can affect the social, psychological, and emotional aspects of a person's life, contributing to problems in psychosocial adaptation and the formation of interpersonal relationships. The modern interpretation of the impact of the social environment on crime-related factors identifies a significant influence of the spheres of youth activity on the criminogenic environment, where moral values and self-control determine the individual challenge to crime. The paper recognizes the influence of peers as one of the key factors in the formation of a criminal's personality. This research also examined the influence of childhood and environment on the*

*personality of criminals such as A.R. Chikatilo, A. Onoprienko, P. Kearney, and R. Chase from a psychoanalytic perspective. It is found that both criminals experienced traumatic events in childhood that affected their mental state and attitude to the world around them. The importance of the legal principles of childhood protection for preventing the formation and development of the criminal's personality is also investigated. The results of the study can serve as a basis for further research in the field of criminology, sociology, and psychology aimed at uncovering the causes and identifying means of preventing deviant behaviour among young people, as well as for practical application in legal and psychological practice to develop strategies and programmes for crime prevention and support for people with risky or problematic behavioural status.*

**Keywords:** Relationships; Deviant behaviour; Minors; Peers; Social and psychological determinants; Family.

## 1. Introduction

Understanding the influence of childhood and the environment on the development and formation of the offender's personality allows identifying key factors that may contribute to the formation of criminal behaviour. By analysing childhood experiences and interactions with various aspects of the environment, it is possible to understand what factors influence the development of certain personality traits that may lead to future offending. Understanding the factors that influence the formation of the offender's personality allows for the development of effective intervention measures aimed at preventing crime and social rehabilitation (Yanovska, 2023). The study of this issue contributes to deepening knowledge about the mechanisms of interaction between the individual and the environment, which helps to reveal important aspects of personality development in the context of social, psychological, and cultural influences. The problem of the study is the complexity and subjectivity of assessing the impact of childhood and the environment on the formation of the criminal's personality (Storozhuk et al., 2023). This is due to many factors, such as family conditions, social status, economic status, education, peer interaction and others, which are difficult to systematize and analyse. It is difficult to determine how certain events or conditions in childhood can influence the commission of crimes in adulthood, as this process is complex and multifaceted (Wojciechowski, 2024).

Researcher N. Sedova (2023) considers the decisive influence of the social environment of a person, in particular, the personality of the offender, on the formation of a personality at all stages of its socialization. According to the scientist, a special role in this process is played by the family, where children, observing the

false relationship between parents and periodic scandals, show an increased level of anxiety. This condition is associated with uncertainty about the reliability of their existence, causing feelings of dissatisfaction, irritation, and a sense of burden in the family. Conflict and demonstrative behaviour become typical for these children. According to the researcher, there is a rapid breakdown of psychological contact with parents, accompanied by a sense of anger. In adolescence, children often stand up to conflict parents, even expressing their protest as direct retaliation. It is important to note that the absence of a father or his immoral behaviour does not always lead to the formation of a personality that breaks the law.

The key role of the family in the formation of the ethical foundations of the offender's personality in childhood is pointed out by A. Syzonenko (2021). According to the research of the scientist, in the family environment, due to the complex and lengthy educational process, as well as the conditions of limited social control, negative social consequences are often manifested. These implications, in particular, can contribute to social deviance and criminal behaviour. The researcher notes that criminologists consider family well-being to be one of the key factors that actively influence juvenile delinquency. The researcher sees the family as a micro-environment that can both promote and limit socialization. A family experiencing difficulties poses a threat to society, as juvenile delinquency is often associated with deficiencies in family upbringing, and these individuals may choose an illegal path under the influence or with the participation of their parents.

R. Andrusyshyn (2022) defines the essence of deviant behaviour as a person's non-compliance with social norms and the choice of a behavioural option that differs from the requirements of the norm in a particular situation. The scientist notes that this leads to a violation of the interaction between the individual and society. According to the researcher, such behavioural deviations are often caused by conflicts of interest, divergence of values, and deformation of the means of satisfying them. In particular, the researcher points to the mistakes of upbringing, life difficulties and miscalculations as the factors underlying these deviations.

T.D. Warner et al. (2023) consider adverse childhood experiences as traumatic events that can negatively affect youth development and be associated with chronic health problems, mental illness, and risky behaviour in adulthood. Researchers have shown that adverse childhood experiences can be avoided, but effective response strategies require a comprehensive conceptualization and measurement of adversity. While adverse childhood experiences are typically measured as individual experiences in the family and home, such as abuse or neglect, researchers note that adversity can also occur outside the home, in various contexts where youth development takes place, such as communities. The research also indicates that societal disadvantage amplifies the negative effects of adverse experiences of individuals and families.



Understanding the impact of childhood adversity and its intergenerational effects is crucial to developing effective strategies to mitigate risk and improve outcomes for vulnerable individuals and families, as noted by J.M. Craig et al. (2021). This study points to the complexity of the links between intergenerational adverse childhood experiences and their impact on offending behaviour. The researchers emphasized that it is important to consider the impact of risk factors across generations and their potential impact on outcomes such as offending behaviour.

Thus, it is important to additionally consider the peculiarities of the formation of the offender's personality, in particular, to pay attention to the emotional attitude of parents to the child, which determines the process of socialization and affects the formation of the personality in the context of offences. Factors that may influence crime, especially in relation to certain life circumstances, require more detailed research in order to better understand the peculiarities of the formation and development of the offender's personality during childhood. It is important to consider the peculiarities of the development of deviant behaviour at an early age and focus on the joint efforts of the family environment and social environment to prevent the negative impact of childhood and reduce its consequences in later life. An in-depth study of this issue is crucial for the development of effective strategies to prevent and treat the effects of negative childhood experiences across generations. The aim is to identify the interrelationships and relevant factors that may influence the formation of the criminal's personality in childhood.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *2.1. Research Design and Data Collection*

This study employed a systematic review to examine how childhood experiences and environmental factors influence the development of criminal behavior. The research design aimed to capture both theoretical perspectives from criminology, psychology, and pedagogy, as well as tangible examples illustrated by known offenders. The scope included scholarly articles, monographs, official legal documents, and empirical case studies documenting the biographical details of individuals who committed serious crimes. Emphasis was placed on understanding childhood adversities, family dynamics, and socioeconomic circumstances that may shape deviant behavior in later life.

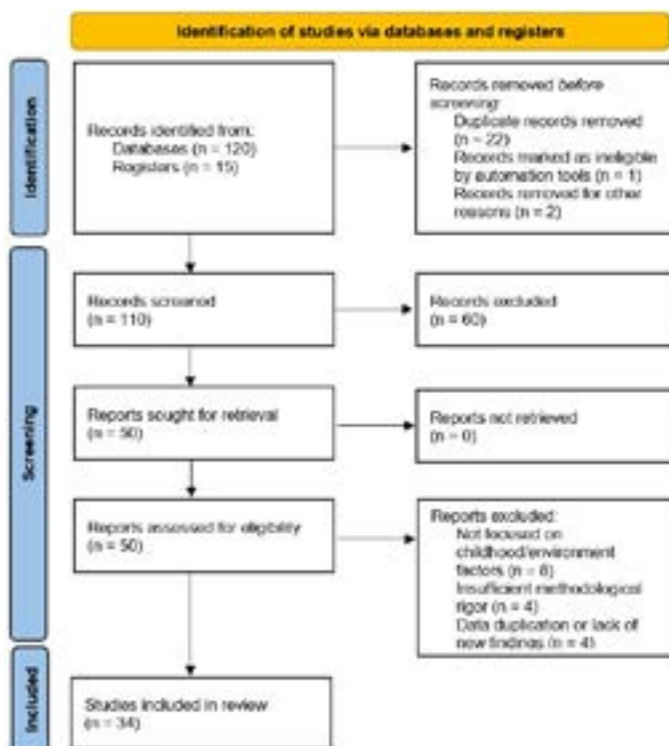
Data were collected from scientific databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar by using targeted keywords in both English and Ukrainian. Official documents, including international conventions and national legislative acts, were also considered to contextualize legal standards for child protection.

Case studies of notable offenders were analyzed using documented sources like psychiatric evaluations, court materials, and interviews with professionals. The selected materials were critically assessed to determine their relevance and methodological rigor, with attention given to the reliability of data and the clarity of reported findings regarding early childhood adversity and subsequent criminal tendencies.

## 2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were included if they directly addressed the relationship between childhood or environmental factors and subsequent deviant or criminal behavior. Priority was given to peer-reviewed studies, official reports, and research demonstrating a clear link between adverse childhood experiences and the emergence of behavioral disorders leading to crime. Fundamental or classical texts were also considered if they provided significant theoretical insights. Studies focusing solely on economic analyses or strictly medical aspects without clear relevance to the formative role of childhood were excluded. Sources deemed unreliable or lacking a transparent methodological framework were likewise excluded to ensure a coherent and evidence-based foundation for the discussion (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1.** A systematic review flow chart (in accordance with PRISMA-like guidelines)



### 3. Results

Childhood and the environment play a key role in the development and shaping of the offender's personality. These factors can determine not only moral and ethical values, but also affect the social and psychological aspects of an individual's life. In particular, the experience of childhood trauma is a common phenomenon faced by children around the world. Traumatic experiences that occur in early childhood can affect various aspects of life and lead to a variety of developmental problems that accompany a person throughout their life. Children who experience negative influences in early childhood are more prone to problems in psychosocial adaptation, learning, and the formation of interpersonal relationships. This influence can manifest itself in various areas of life, such as social behaviour, emotional state, adaptation to stress and the development of interpersonal skills.

The current interpretation of the impact of the social environment on the causation of crime is rudimentary at best. There is a significant link between the areas of activity of young people and their impact on the crime environment. It is also important to note a clear link between exposure to the criminal environment and participation in crime, with the impact of criminogenic factors depending on the criminal propensity of the individual. The presence of moral values that exclude crime and a high capacity for self-control seem to make young people almost immune to the situational influence of the criminal environment. On the other hand, morality, crime-prone behaviour, and a low capacity for self-control seem to make young people situationally vulnerable to the effects of a crime-ridden environment. It has been noted that the interaction between the social environment and personal traits is a key factor in shaping the criminogenic context and the individual challenge to criminal activity (Wikström et al., 2010). In general, the interaction between the social environment and personal characteristics plays an important role in shaping the criminogenic context and determining the individual level of predisposition to crime.

Peer influence is recognized as a key factor in criminology, existing in two main theoretical approaches that attribute an important role to peers in the aetiology of offending. From the first perspective, the normative influence is defined by the fact that deviant peers essentially influence the socialization of the adoption of deviant values and behaviours. The second approach, the situational perspective, emphasizes the direct influence of routine interactions with peers, whether deviant or not. In noting the differences in these approaches, it is important to consider control theories, which are an integral part of peer influence research. Theories of control emphasize the importance of the level of control and the absence of deviance in the personal sphere as factors that influence an individual's decision

to offend. One of the main conditions, according to current research, is time spent with friends and communication with peers who tend to offend. This aspect is becoming an important element of the relationship between age and delinquency, indicating that interaction with deviant peers can influence the adoption of deviant values and increase the chances of engaging in delinquency. It is important to note that time spent with friends in a criminogenic environment has been identified as a key element in the aetiology of crime, and this may explain the phenomenon of reduced crime after marriage. One possible explanation is that marriage reduces the time that individuals, especially men, spend in crime-ridden environments with friends, which reduces the opportunities for challenges to deviant behaviour (McGloin and Thomas, 2019).

When considering the role of the social environment and personal factors in shaping the criminal environment and criminal tendencies, it is important to consider that most individuals face adverse experiences from childhood. Undoubtedly, this has a significant impact on the further formation of their personality and, in the absence of appropriate support, can contribute to the risk of criminal behaviour. It is important to note that personal qualities, such as the ability to exercise self-control and moral values, become an important factor in determining how an individual responds to such experiences. For the majority of children who have experienced adverse experiences, it is important to provide adequate support and intervention to reduce the risk of criminal behaviour in the future. It has been established that more than half of all children experience at least one type of adverse experience (Leban, 2021; Perez et al., 2018). These experiences can include various forms of maltreatment, such as physical or emotional abuse, or negative aspects of the home environment, witnessing violence in the family, parental divorce, imprisonment of family members, mental illness in the family, or substance abuse.

The experience of negative childhood influences is identified as a key risk factor for offending and becomes an important component of the formation of the offender's personality. When children experience maltreatment, which can be measured by cumulative stress, it has a significant impact on their adult trajectories. The consequences of such childhood trauma include an increased risk of delinquency, including fighting, engaging in violence, and carrying weapons. In addition, mental health issues such as substance use, behavioural disorders and suicidal thoughts are also experienced. It is particularly important to consider that individuals who become offenders as children are more likely to report a negative childhood environment, mental health problems, aggressiveness, and difficulties in controlling their emotions. Young people who have experienced traumatic experiences are more likely to experience mental health problems, even after controlling for ethnicity and age (Baglivio et al., 2015). This fact indicates that traumatic events in childhood can have long-term consequences for the



mental state of an individual. The development of deviant behaviour in children is a complex process that is influenced by a variety of factors. Given the above context, it can be noted that traumatic experiences can play a significant role in the formation of such deviant behaviour. Children exposed to traumatic situations are at an increased risk of committing offences later in life. Thus, the connection between childhood trauma and deviant behaviour becomes apparent in the process of forming the personality of a criminal. It is important to take this aspect into account when analysing the factors that determine the criminal trajectory of individuals and improving crime prevention strategies. The development of deviant behaviour in children is a complex process that depends on a variety of characteristics (Table 1).

**TABLE 1.** Determinants of the formation of deviant behaviour in children

Determinants of deviant behaviour	Description
Biological factors	Biological factors are manifested in the presence of physiological or anatomical features that complicate the child's social adaptation, in particular inherited genetic features, and mental abnormalities.
Social factors	Social factors – include external social conditions, such as social, political, economic problems, which negatively affect society and the formation of the personality of minors. Among them are social processes and characteristics of social groups to which a person belongs.
Pedagogical factors	They are manifested in shortcomings in the system of school and family education, which leads to deviations in the socialization of the child, which includes the indifferent attitude of the teacher to the child and the nature of education both in school and in the family. Many of these children develop skills that can be signs of social maladjustment, such as idleness, laziness, running away from home, or even vagrancy.
Socio-psychological factors	Cover intrapersonal causes and mechanisms, such as deformation of the value-motivational sphere and deviations in the cognitive sphere.
Individual and psychological factors	This includes aspects of the individual's interaction with the immediate environment and its influence on the formation of psychosocial identity.

Source: Samsin and Hachak-Velychko (2021)

The influence of childhood and the environment on the development of the offender's personality needs to be considered in the context of these five factors. The interaction between them forms the basis for understanding the processes that lead to deviant behaviour and criminal tendencies in childhood and later life. However, it is important to consider the individual characteristics of each case and its context, as they can vary from person to person.

It is worth paying attention to the peculiarities of the formation and development of the personality of the offender – A.R. Chikatilo – a serial killer



known for his brutal crimes committed in the period from 1978 to 1990 in the USSR, including Ukraine. His life story shows the influence of various factors on his personality, including his childhood and environment. He was born into a poor family in Ukraine at a time when the country was being tortured by famines that led to mass starvation. A.R. Chikatilo grew up in an atmosphere of constant hunger, poverty, and repressed emotions. It is also known that he suffered from violence and bullying by his peers. All these factors may be key in shaping his psychological state and behaviour in later life. From a psychoanalytic perspective, childhood played an important role in shaping the personality of A.R. Chikatilo. According to the conclusions of the psychoneurological dispensary and the V.P. Serbsky Research Institute, he did not have chronic mental illness, but sexual developmental disorders and sexual perversions were detected (Murashko, 2022). These disorders may be related to negative childhood experiences, such as psychological pressure in the family or trauma he may have experienced. It is also important to consider the influence of the environment on the development of the offender's personality. A.R. Chikatilo grew up in a time of severe social and political instability in the USSR, which may have contributed to the emergence of traumatic events and stress in his life. Undoubtedly, these factors could have influenced the formation of his mental structure and attitude to the world around him. Thus, the childhood and environment of A.R. Chikatilo had a decisive influence on the formation of his personality and his becoming a serial killer. Negative childhood experiences, including a lack of family support and stressful circumstances, were likely to be the determining factors that contributed to the development of pathological tendencies in his behaviour.

Another example is A.Y. Onoprienko, who was born into a difficult family situation and experienced some childhood traumatic events that determined his further psychosocial development and behaviour. The loss of his mother at an early age, lack of family support and lack of attachment in childhood caused significant emotional and psychological distress. While living in the orphanage, A.Y. Onoprienko was subjected to physical and emotional abuse, experiencing a constant uncomfortable environment devoid of emotional comfort. These negative experiences affected his view of the world and contributed to the formation of aggressive and antisocial defence mechanisms. By engaging in criminal activity, he sought a means of expressing his emotions and sought to provide protection in a world that lacked stability and support. At the same time, P. Kearney, born in Los Angeles, seemed to have a happy life in a prosperous family. However, despite this, he was subjected to psychological trauma at a young age. As a thin and sickly child, he was the subject of ridicule and bullying at school. This sense of vulnerability and insecurity probably contributed to his feelings of insecurity and alienation from others. The constant stress and

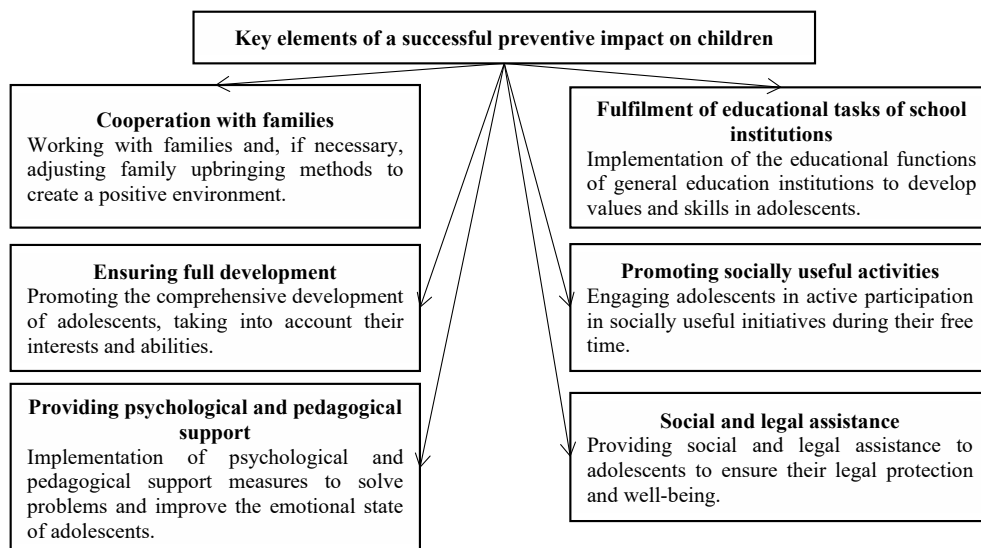


sense of insecurity he experienced at school led to psychological defences in the form of violent fantasies. Fantasies about murder were an attempt to control a situation that looked uncontrollable and threatening. In adolescence, when the personality is formed and the influences from childhood begin to manifest themselves, these fantasies became more realistic. Gradually, P. Kearney decided that murder was the only way to solve his problems or to feel power and control over his life. His childhood, where he constantly felt insecure, could have provided the basis for the development of his criminal personality. He felt that violence was the only way to feel strong and protected in a world where he felt defenceless and helpless. Thus, P. Kearney's childhood, which was filled with stress, vulnerability, and psychological trauma, could have contributed to the formation of a criminal personality that uses violence as a way of expressing himself and gaining control.

Another example is R. Chase, known as the "Sacramento Vampire", who was born into a military family and who spoke about the horrors of war since childhood. The life of R. Chase also illustrates important aspects of the influence of childhood and the environment on the formation of the criminal's personality. From the point of view of psychoanalysis, R. Chase's childhood was a period when the basic mental structures and mechanisms that influenced his future behaviour were formed. In particular, relationships in the family, especially with parents, are of great importance for the mental development of a child. Richard's father talked about the horrors of war, which could have influenced the formation of fear and anxiety in him. Additionally, R. Chase had problems with bed-wetting and showed aggression by killing a pet cat. These events can be considered psychologically traumatic and influenced the formation of his mental structure. The diagnosis of schizophrenia, although not confirmed, is also important for understanding R. Chase from a psychoanalytic perspective. His mother's negative attitude towards doctors and the lack of treatment may indicate additional stress for him during his childhood. The five basic psychic mechanisms identified by R. Chase reflect his mental state and the strategies he used to manage his own emotions and power over others (a sense of omnipotence, sadistic fantasies, ritual actions, dehumanization, and symbiotic fusion) (Fouché et al., 2015). R. Chase's childhood and environment had a significant impact on his mental development and personality formation, which was reflected in his subsequent criminal actions.

Preventing the formation of a criminal's personality in childhood requires a comprehensive approach and attention to various areas of children's life. The main task in combating deviant behaviour, in particular, among adolescents, should be not just responding to specific cases, but, above all, their systemic prevention to avoid the emergence of deviant behaviour (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1.** Ways of preventing the development of negative personality traits and avoiding deviant personality behaviour



Source: Dmytrieva and Hryban (2022)

The overall goal of preventing the development and formation of a criminal personality is to create conditions for the full development of a child, taking into account his or her needs and characteristics. An integrated approach and joint activities of the family, school, community, and professional staff can effectively contribute to the prevention of criminal behaviour.

One of the most effective means of preventing the formation of a criminal personality in childhood is the development of measures in the educational sphere. Preventive education opportunities in higher education institutions are extremely effective compared to other prevention methods, which are usually intervention-based (intervention, correction, rehabilitation). For these prevention methods to work, they need to become part of the young person's consciousness and be woven into their life beliefs and experiences. This can only be achieved through the systematic educational influence of the immediate social environment, including teachers. Creating a sociological culture of thinking among student teachers will allow them to humanize the relationship between teachers and students. Understanding the social laws and patterns of social behaviour and social activity will help student teachers to better understand the personal and social needs and interests of children, adolescents, and young people. This, in turn, will contribute not only to preventing the negative consequences of the spread of antisocial and anti-social behaviour in the adolescent environment, but also to improving the educational work in the school education system in general (Kushnir et al., 2019).

This approach, focused on the formation of a sociological culture of thinking among student teachers, can significantly contribute to the transformation of the secondary education system. The formation of a sociological culture of thinking contributes to the understanding of social processes and interactions in society, which can lead to improved interpersonal relations in the education system, the creation of a favourable environment for cooperation and emotional support. Modern society is undergoing rapid changes in the socio-economic sphere, and it is important to take these changes into account in the education system. Mastering sociological culture will allow teachers to better understand current trends and needs of students, as well as to adapt the learning process more effectively. Sociological culture includes an understanding of civic rights and responsibilities. Developing this culture among teachers can help educate students in the spirit of active citizenship and participation in social processes. Incorporating sociological aspects into the educational process helps prepare students for social reality and understand the causes of social phenomena. This makes education more vital and practical. Modern pedagogical methods require an innovative approach. The perception of sociological knowledge can open up new opportunities for the use of modern technologies and methods in the educational process. Thus, the introduction of a sociological culture of thinking in the higher education system can be a key factor in improving the educational process, making it more adapted to modern challenges and contributing to the humanization of relationships in the educational environment.

Programmes aimed at reducing levels of aggression and impulsivity in young people experiencing difficulties are also important, as they are effective in changing the trajectory of development towards crime. Interventions as early as primary school, aimed at preventing further problematic behaviour in adolescence, can influence the relationship between childhood difficulties and offending (Musci et al., 2014). Such programmes aim to provide young people with the necessary skills and resources to effectively resolve conflicts, control emotions and respond to stressful situations. They include social skills training, psychological support, anger management programmes and other forms of psychosocial support. Focusing on the prevention of problematic behaviour can also help to address the negative effects of childhood adversity. These programmes develop self-regulatory mechanisms and help young people find constructive ways to express their emotions and reactions to life challenges.

In order to prevent the formation and development of a criminal's personality, it is important to have a legal framework for the protection of childhood based on the principles defined in international documents and national legislation of each country. Every child has the right to be protected from any form of discrimination, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth, or any

other status. In accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child, all decisions concerning children shall be made with due regard to their best interests, which includes the right to life, health, education, proper upbringing, protection from violence and exploitation. Every child has the right to life, survival, and development to their full potential. Children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting their lives, and their views should be considered in accordance with their age and maturity. Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. Every child has the right to access to quality education that contributes to their development and self-realization. Children have the right to be treated with dignity and to have their dignity as individuals protected. These legal principles of child protection are set out in international instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), as well as in the legislation of each country to ensure the protection of children's rights and interests.

Ukraine recognizes and adheres to a number of international and national regulations aimed at protecting the rights and interests of children. The main ones are the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Constitution of Ukraine (1996), the Law of Ukraine "On education" (2017), the Law of Ukraine "On childhood protection" (2001), the Law of Ukraine "On prevention and counteraction to domestic violence" (2018). These legal instruments of child protection are important for preventing the formation and development of the offender's personality, as they create a legal framework for ensuring the rights and interests of children, as well as define the responsibility of the state for their protection.

There are certain shortcomings in the legal framework for child protection that can make it difficult to effectively safeguard children's rights and interests. In some cases, laws and regulations may not be sufficiently clear or enforceable, making it difficult to implement them effectively. Lack of financial, human, and material resources can make it difficult to provide quality child protection services and programmes. Many administrative procedures and formalities can impede access to protection for children and their families. Lack of effective mechanisms for monitoring and oversight of child protection can lead to insufficient detection and response to child rights violations. Certain cultural or social norms may impede effective child protection, especially in situations where certain forms of violence or exploitation are considered acceptable. Certain groups of children, such as children with disabilities, migrants, and children from low-income families, may have limited access to protection due to various social and economic factors. These shortcomings need to be addressed and improved in legal regulation and implementation to ensure effective protection of children's rights and interests.



## 4. Discussion

The findings presented in this article underscore the profound effect of childhood experiences and the surrounding environment on the development of deviant behaviour and criminal tendencies. Negative childhood experiences, including physical and emotional abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence, appear to play a key role in shaping future offending behaviour, as evidenced by both the theoretical framework provided and the real-life examples cited (e.g., A.R. Chikatilo, A.Y. Onoprienko, P. Kearney, R. Chase). These observations align with recent empirical studies suggesting that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) constitute a principal risk factor for adult criminality. In examining the multifaceted consequences of maltreatment in childhood, the work of Chen et al. (2024) is particularly instructive: their research demonstrates that childhood abuse can engender not only immediate trauma but also significant psychological sequelae, such as shame and diminished self-esteem. Both shame and self-esteem deficits heighten susceptibility to criminal behaviour, as they erode self-regulatory capacities and skew social-learning processes. Likewise, Bastien (2024) supports the argument that early traumatic experiences can be strong predictors of later deviance, providing evidence from criminal records that show a pattern of adverse early-life events correlating with criminal behaviour in adulthood.

The examination of socioeconomic, educational, and familial factors in this article corroborates the stance that crime cannot be explained through a single cause. Liu et al. (2023) echo this notion by emphasizing that a person's growth environment, encompassing social support, parental guidance, and access to stable educational resources, can either exacerbate or mitigate the trajectory toward deviance. Their findings point to the critical importance of early intervention strategies in family and educational contexts. The article's discussion of preventive measures, such as improving pedagogical practices and fostering a "sociological culture of thinking" among future teachers, resonates with the proposition that educational environments can serve as protective factors if they integrate social, emotional, and moral support.

Additionally, the cases presented highlight that the digital age may introduce new dimensions in the formation of criminal personalities. While this article focuses primarily on traditional adverse experiences, such as maltreatment, family dysfunction, and peer influence, emerging literature posits that the digital environment can amplify or modulate these factors. Djubina (2024), for instance, discusses how constant exposure to online communities and digital content can shape an individual's worldview, either reinforcing existing antisocial tendencies or offering alternative pathways for socialization and support. Thus, in conjunction

with traditional preventive efforts, contemporary strategies should incorporate digital literacy and responsible media consumption to address the complexities of the modern social milieu. Taken together, these observations emphasize the urgent need for a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to preventing the formation of a criminal personality in childhood. Such an approach would span legal reforms that protect children's rights, school-based programmes aimed at fostering emotional regulation and moral development, and broader social policies that address socioeconomic inequalities. By integrating insights from diverse sources, including psychological studies on shame and self-esteem (Chen et al., 2024), longitudinal analyses on early-life trauma (Bastien, 2024), and sociological research on the growth environment (Liu et al., 2023), practitioners and policymakers can devise more targeted interventions. Furthermore, recognizing the influence of the digital context on an individual's behavioural development (Djubina, 2024) expands the scope of preventive measures, ensuring they remain effective and relevant in a rapidly evolving social landscape.

Scientists P.L. Brantingham and P.J. Brantingham (1993) argue that each event of criminal activity is the result of the interaction of various factors, including the law, the motivation of the offender and specific characteristics located in space and time. According to their research, each element of a criminal event emerges from its own historical trajectory, which is determined by experiences and future intentions, as well as by environmental constraints. The researchers emphasize that the routine activities of potential criminals play an important role in determining the areas and times when a crime is likely to occur. This approach indicates that the formation and development of criminal activity is closely linked to the daily life and routines of persons who may commit an offence. In the context of the research findings, it should be noted that the personality of a criminal is formed under the influence of many factors. Criminal activity events are determined not only by laws and motivation, but also by history, routine activities, and environmental constraints. This highlights the complexity of the interaction of various factors in shaping criminal behaviour.

At the same time, peer influence is an important force in adolescence, actively shaping both adaptive and maladaptive attitudes and behaviour. This is underlined by the research of B. Laursen and R. Veenstra (2021), who found a significant contribution of peer influence to the development of adolescent personality. The model of influence compatibility proposed by the researchers combines common views on early adolescence, considering this period as a time of increased responsibility, with evidence that peer influence contributes to the formation of similarities between partners. The interplay of these two developmental forces facilitates the ease of friendship, integration into the peer group, and promotes interpersonal and in-group harmony, eliminating differences that can lead to social isolation. Another important element, according to scientists, is the rapid





emergence of various forms of maladaptive behaviour in early adolescence, which occurs in tandem with important shifts in the social world. In particular, the role of peers is growing dramatically, which is becoming the most obvious factor in changes in the social environment of adolescents and influencing their attitudes and actions. In comparison with the results of this scientific study, it should be noted that the influence of the environment and the environment are the determining factors in the formation of personality. The results of the study indicate that the role of peers and the social environment has a significant impact on the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of personality development, in particular, as factors of development and formation of a future criminal.

S. Cioban et al. (2021) study the predictors of deviance, identifying the main categories that include family models, socio-demographic aspects, socialization, victimization, school, and individual factors. In particular, they emphasize that involvement in deviant and delinquent behaviour is partly determined by interaction with the level of antisocial behaviour of peers. Scientists view deviance as a consequence of communicating with peers who engage in antisocial behaviour. In line with the social control theory, they believe that involvement in crime can be a process that occurs without learning, but through interaction with peers and their influence. The results of the study confirm the significant links between offender profiles and patterns of family involvement. It is noted that those who avoid offending are more likely to belong to families with minimal problems, while serious chronic offenders are more likely to have families with various challenges, such as neglect. The authors are convinced that the escalation of offending is related to the influence of family functioning on deviant behaviour, especially in the context of peer deviance. In comparison to the findings of this study, it should be noted that the development of deviant behaviour can be strongly regulated by the interaction with surrounding social and family factors that determine the perceptions and behaviour of young people.

Child neglect and maltreatment are defined as actions or omissions by a mother, father, or guardian that are unethical and harmful, limiting the child's development, and according to Ayhan et al. (2024), these actions are most difficult for individuals in childhood, when their coping skills are not yet fully formed. Researchers note that children who experience sexual, physical, and emotional trauma in childhood face significant difficulties in regulating their emotions, and adolescents involved in crime have higher rates of childhood trauma compared to those without criminal experience. According to researchers, a history of childhood sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, the presence of people with psychological disorders in the family, and family instability due to divorce or unmarried parents are identified as the most common forms of violence. However, it is worth noting that chronic childhood trauma that begins at an early age increases the likelihood of developing violent behaviour by more than 200%, especially in the period before adulthood.



Based on the results of this study, in comparison with the conclusions of scientists, it should be recognized that the period of childhood and the environment have a decisive influence on the formation and development of the offender's personality. In particular, exposure to violence and traumatic experiences in childhood can determine the further course of life, increasing the risk of involvement in criminal behaviour and negative consequences for the mental state. These findings suggest the need to improve approaches to the prevention and treatment of individuals who have experienced traumatic scenarios in early life in order to prevent further involvement in criminal activity.

The importance of negative experiences in childhood as a determining factor for further aggression and antisocial behaviour was studied by A. Meddeb et al. (2023). The researchers found that emotion management and regulation play a key role in the relationship between negative childhood experiences and manifestations of aggressive antisocial behaviour. The results of regression models indicate that negative childhood experiences largely explain the relationship between emotion regulation and aggressive antisocial behaviour, which shapes the personality of a future criminal. Given the findings of this study, this underscores the critical importance of early intervention and support for children who face traumatic experiences in order to reduce the impact of these negative experiences on their future life course.

In her own research, Connolly (2020) points to a strong link between negative childhood experiences and higher levels of antisocial behaviour in childhood, as well as with adolescent delinquency and an increased risk of becoming a victim of violent crime. After controlling for common genetic and environmental influences using a fixed-effect sibling comparison, the researchers found that those who experienced more negative childhood experiences did not show higher levels of antisocial behaviour, delinquency, or increased risk of future victimization. Compared to the results of the present study, it is worth noting that the hereditary factor is not the key factor in the development and formation of the criminal personality at an early age.

The results of this comparative analysis indicate that the formation of the offender's personality is the result of the interaction of a complex of factors. It is important to consider biological, psychological, and social influences in order to develop effective crime prevention and social rehabilitation strategies.

## **5. Implications for Research, Practice, and Society**

This study's findings underscore the importance of early interventions and support systems in reducing the likelihood of criminal behavior rooted in adverse childhood experiences. From a research perspective, the examination of specific



risk factors, such as family dysfunction, exposure to violence, and lack of emotional support, can inform future studies aimed at developing more targeted prevention models. These insights bridge theory and practice by highlighting not just the conceptual underpinnings of deviant behavior but also the tangible pathways for intervention. Researchers in fields like criminology, psychology, and social work can build on the presented evidence to design longitudinal studies or cross-sectional analyses that further clarify how environmental influences interact with individual predispositions.

In terms of practical application, the study emphasizes that educators, social workers, and mental health professionals can collaborate in implementing early screening and support programs for children at risk. Such measures can be integrated into school curricula or community-based initiatives, fostering a proactive approach to emotional and behavioral regulation in vulnerable populations. Policy makers can also draw upon these findings to advocate for legislation that invests in child protection services, mental health resources, and educational outreach, ultimately influencing public policy at both local and national levels.

The societal impact is evident in how this research informs a broader public understanding of the interplay between childhood adversity and delinquency. By shifting the focus toward prevention and early intervention, it contributes to changing societal attitudes that might stigmatize individuals with challenging childhoods. Offering data-driven strategies for youth support can enhance quality of life in communities, reduce recidivism rates, and encourage a more empathetic view of criminal behavior as rooted in complex psychological and social factors. These implications are consistent with the study's conclusions, which emphasize that a multifaceted, early-stage approach is crucial in interrupting the trajectory from childhood hardship to adult offending.

## 6. Conclusions

The study of the influence of childhood and the environment on the formation of a criminal's personality is an important area of scientific research. The results obtained confirm that the multifactorial nature of this influence includes biological, social, pedagogical, socio-psychological, and individual psychological aspects. Measures of preventive education and support for childhood, family, and school can effectively prevent the formation of negative personality traits and deviant behaviour. A systematic and comprehensive approach to this problem helps to create conditions for the full development and social adaptation of children and adolescents, contributing to the creation of a healthy and safe social environment.

The experience of childhood trauma can leave lasting marks, affecting the social, psychological, and emotional aspects of a person's life. Negative influences in early childhood can contribute to problems in psychosocial adaptation, learning, and the formation of interpersonal relationships. The modern interpretation of the impact of the social environment on the cause and effect of crime shows a significant influence of the spheres of activity of young people on the criminogenic environment. It is important to acknowledge that this influence depends on the criminal predisposition of the individual and the interaction between the social environment and personal characteristics. The importance of moral values and the ability to self-control in shaping an individual's call to crime is particularly emphasized. Peer influence is recognized as a key factor in criminology, where control theories emphasize the importance of the level of control and the absence of deviance in the personal sphere.

The study examines examples of the influence of childhood and the environment on the formation of the criminal's personality. From a psychoanalytic perspective, both criminals experienced traumatic events in childhood, such as family conflicts, psychological pressure, trauma, or stress, which affected their mental state and attitude to the world around them. The childhood of the offenders in question was a period when the basic mental structures and mechanisms were formed, which influenced their subsequent behaviour. Family relationships, parental influence, traumatic events, or stressful circumstances influenced the formation of their personality and attitude to the environment.

The importance of the legal framework for the protection of childhood to prevent the formation and development of the criminal personality was analysed. International and national regulations, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Ukrainian legislation, define the rights and obligations of the state to protect the rights and interests of children. However, there are gaps in the legal framework that can make it difficult to ensure effective child protection, such as insufficient resources, complex administrative procedures, and cultural constraints. Such shortcomings need to be addressed and improved to ensure effective protection of children's rights and interests. Future researchers should pay attention to studying the impact of modern technologies, in particular the use of media and the Internet, on personality development and the risk of deviant behaviour.

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