

ANTISOCIAL DISPLAY OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH'S BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

The study deals with the antisocial display of children's and youth's behaviour at the contemporary school. The study characterizes the reasons (societal, economical, social and other) of these problems, it structures its categorization and describes the problems in detail. It concerns a hot issue not only at the contemporary school in the Czech Republic but in the international context as well. The article accentuates the necessary cooperation of the school, family and also the society. It emphasizes also the prevention of the children's and youth's objectionable behaviour.

Key words

Antisocial behaviour, delinquency, youth, school, prevention, family, community centres, behaviour problems, behaviour disorders, social rehabilitation

Introduction

Specialists and also the public pay attention to the increasing negative display of children's and youth's behaviour that can be met also at school (adapted and translated by Valisova, 2009, pp. 217-222). The character of the display of the undesirable behaviour ranges from problems manageable by the ordinary pedagogical measures, up to such behaviour disorders that due to the dangerousness both for the disorder bearer and his surroundings eliminate the individual from the normal social relations.

Conceptual specification and the terminological complicatedness

Definition and categorization of the socially undesirable display of behaviour in the professional literature are ambiguous, in the content specification it depends on the conception of the legal conscience, on the extent of the social relevance of such behaviour and on the criminal law liability for the effectuated acts. Quite often we can meet with the following terms:

- *Socially-pathological phenomena* (a summarizing concept for the undesirable, abnormal behaviour that with its negative consequences endangers both the bearer and the whole society);
- *Asocial behaviour* (an inconsiderate behaviour that does not correspond to the moral norms of the given society);
- *Antisocial behaviour* (it is characterized by a high degree of the social dangerousness, the realization of the criminal activity and used to be connected with a wilful verbal and also physical aggression);

- *Delinquent behaviour* (i.e. a socially undesirable up to wilful anti-social behaviour in the broader sense than criminality, it denotes both the commission of crimes and offences or another misconducts).

Attempts concerning explanation of the socially pathological phenomena led to searching of reasons lying in the biological factors, in the hereditary or innate disposition (criminal anthropology), in the racial influence (genealogical studies, theories of the racial inequality) in the psychological factors as are defects of the personality structure, extreme mental strain, inconsistency between the human instinctive character and the cultural requirements (id, ego and superego – psychoanalytical school), in the acquired social behaviour (the theory of learning, theory of imitation), and in the social factors, particularly in the pathological structure of the family and other primary social groups, in creation of specific subcultures and contra-cultures, in influence of the mass media, in origin of the welfare and consumerist society, in concentration of inhabitants in the metropolis (theory of the differential association, the theory of pressure, theory of inhibitions and other things).

In view of the fact that *at present does not exist an unambiguously accepted and used classification of the socially-pathological phenomena*, in the following characterization is our attention paid particularly to the psychological and social aspects of the undesirable display of children's and youth's behaviour in the context of the educational practice (Jedlicka 2011). In the process of prevention, diagnostics, re-education and also pedagogical and psychological support of children and adolescents in the difficult situations in life, it is necessary to keep in mind that displays of their behaviour, manners of their thinking and specifics of their experience are always complicatedly conditioned by many mutually intensifying or on the contrary counteracting circumstances.

1. Educational problems and disorders of behaviour

To these belong the disorders of behaviour that used to be an accompanying phenomenon or result of the disruption of the educational process or the broader social relations. The disorders differ in the intensity of the displays and the possibilities of its elimination; it can have a temporary character as such and are rectifiable by a proper activity. Should the behaviour disorders be unrecognized or overlooked it can develop to the more serious socialization problems in adolescence or in the adult age, and it can become a serious form of the pre-delinquent behaviour (Valisova, 2009).

- **Rebelliousness**

Concerns a *display of opposition towards the restrictive educational interventions* (round the age of three years – *1. period of defiance*, in the pubescence – *2. period of defiance*). Rebelliousness finds its expression either in a passive form – a flight to isolation, negativism or in an active form – aggressiveness up to the destructiveness. Excessive bans and commands, perfectionistic or authoritarian education cause *reactive behaviour* that results in rebelliousness, disobedience, and destruction. It is always necessary to

trace and search the cause why and against whom or in which situations the behaviour occurs.

- **Lying and deceptions**

A lie is conceived as a knowingly or intentionally displayed untruth. The action of a person that speaks untruth pursues in substance a certain objective. To the right lie does not belong the wholly causeless lying, fable lying, nor the various assertions of persons with a low intellect and some mentally ill persons (Mynarikova, 2017). At the earlier school age, the lie can be a display of an uncontrolled imagination, such a lie of children and adolescents can represent an attempt to protect oneself, to avoid some troubles or it can be a desire to attract somebody's attention. The lie cannot be underestimated as it can be a significant display of a psychical disease (for example psychical disease delusions or thinking disorders as a consequence of taking drugs), or it could be a serious form of a pre-delinquent behaviour.

- **Thefts**

As far as a man has a need to get *something, for what he is longing, what he wants to possess and what does not belong to him, it is a matter of stealing to the detriment of somebody else. It can often concern deliberateness, the purpose of which is to do harm to somebody else.* A child can steal in order to be accepted by a social group, to which it wants to belong in order not to be alone, to resist, or it tries to turn the attention of adults to itself and to experience adventure or excitation. The thefts can be divided into *occasional* (impulsive, without any rational deliberation of reasons and consequences), *thought-out in advance* (planned with already more serious signal of socialization disorder) and *repeated thefts in a group* (the members of a party do not consider it as a serious breach of standards).

- **Truancy and flights**

As truancy is considered a pupil's repeated unexcused absence at school. It is usually developing in a group and is characterized by the asocial and even antisocial features of the behaviour. The reasons of truancy can be the following ones:

- *School maladaptation* (inadequate school preparedness of the child, the neurotic influence of the classmates, requirements of the teacher or inconvenient school environment and other things);
- *Inadequate mental level* (cognitive abilities and voluntary motivation characteristics of the individual do not correspond to the type of the school, further it can concern undisclosed eye and hearing disorders, learning disability and other things);
- *Educational effect of the parents* (broken home, unfavourable social conditions or violence in the family, lack of parents' interest in the child and other things).

About the so called *hidden truancy* can be spoken in case when *the child's absence at school is tolerated by the parents* (for example the teacher becomes a notification from the parents that the child is ill but it is actually on holiday with the parents during the school year).

The flights represent a child's or adolescent's forbidden depart from the care of educators. According to the specifics of the displays and motivation, it can be divided into (Vagnerova 2004):

- *Reactive, impulsive flights* (these represent a curt reaction on a certain situation);
- *Chronic flights* (these are planned and result from long-term problems);
- *Wandering* (usually follows the flights and used to be a long-term abandonment of the home).

A primary thing in elimination of the truancy, flights, and wandering is to extricate the individual from the influence of the pathological environment, diagnose the endogenous (internal) disorder and correct the disrupted relation to learning by seeking the most proper motivation.

- **Bullying**

Bullying belongs to the special forms of aggressive and manipulative behaviour through which the aggressor causes physical or psychical suffering, with abuse and enslavement in addition, in order to secure and keep supremacy over the victim. Besides bullying in the school environment there exists also bullying at the workplace – *mobbing* on the part of the superior – *bossing* on the part of the colleagues or bullying in the partnership relations or families – *domestic violence*.

The professional literature distinguishes *five stages of bullying development*: ostracism, physical aggression and tightening of the manipulation, creating of the core, adoption of the aggressor's norms and totality or absolute bullying (Kolář, 2011). The higher stages of bullying can be viewed as a *delinquent behaviour*, and therefore it requires cooperation with the psychologists and sometimes the help of the police. Notorious are cases when the overlooked or hidden bullying among the classmates at school resulted in a serious mental disorder, injury or suicide of the victim (Bendl, 2009).

2. Socially undesirable phenomena endangering the children and youth

As socially undesirable or even pathological phenomena are denoted such *forms of behaviour that have a relatively mass character and with its negative consequences present a danger not only to the individual in question but also to the society.* To this category belongs primarily behaviour caused by addiction, more serious disorders of the social inclusion represented by the delinquency and criminality, membership of the radical movement or religious sect and selected disorders of self-recognition, conditioned by the fashionable Euro- American trends (Jedlicka, 2015).

a) Addictive behaviour and addictions

Addiction is viewed as a *more serious state of psychical and somatic character.* It results from the *repeated contact with the addictive substance or the activity giving rise to addiction,* it is uncontrollable by volition and rational arguments. It used to be often an uncontrolled reaction to a demanding situation in life and mental strain (Wrobel, 2006).

- **Addiction to the psychoactive substances**

There exists a complete range of conceptions and definitions of the drug addiction or addiction to the addictive substances. Basically can be stated that it concerns a *psychical or physical addiction of an individual to a certain substance or category of substances*. The central described characteristic of the addiction syndrome is *the desire to take proactive substances, alcohol or tobacco* (Nespor, 2018). Addiction is a pathological state with the following typical characteristics:

- Uncontrollable compulsion or a feeling of need to take the substance;
- Physical inconvenience caused by discontinuation of taking the used substance;
- Need to raise the batch for achievement of the desired effects;
- Use of the drug in the context of neglecting the duties and also hobbies;
- Permanent use of the substance despite of being aware of its harmfulness and serious consequences.

Prevention of addiction to the addiction substances takes place on the following three basic levels:

- *Primary prevention* associates all activities upon which the contact with the addiction substance and the addiction itself did not have to arise at all (lectures, hobbies, development of the self-confidence, self-education and self-discipline);
- *Secondary prevention* entails early searching of children and also adults debilitated in a certain manner, who are in contact with the addiction substance;
- *Tertiary prevention* implies endeavour for mitigation of the impact of the drug abuse and consequences of the related lifestyle (medical examination of the drug edicts for sexually transmitted diseases, exchange of syringes for sterile ones or programmes of aggressive drugs substitution by less aggressive ones, the so called substitution therapy).

- **Computer addiction and pathological gambling**

Computer and Internet addiction is underestimated, however, it is widespread even at the small children. It concerns *compulsive spending of time at the computer or Internet, reduced self-control and loss of the count of time spent at it*. Children often oppose to the parental ban about playing, they get up early in the morning to the computer or on the contrary stay up late, and many of them suffer from nervousness and unease.

Pathological gambling on the gaming machines, as a relatively new form of addiction behaviour, is at the adolescents usually connected with the *joy from the game and also the feeling of satisfaction from overcoming the competitor*. Gambling causes similar changes as the drugs (debilitation of the volition, impulsiveness, and aggression, neglecting of the study and working duties, break-up of the social relations and other things). Should there not come to a timely action in the form of medical treatment and socially psychological intervention, the addiction of the adolescent can then end in a complete psychical, physical and economical breakdown.

- **Addiction on religious sects and psychical cults**

The sect used to be described as numerously small, initially in particular religiously oriented group, established as a critical and dissatisfied opposition towards the traditional church or respected ideology. It used to be characterized by the following features:

- *Authoritativeness of the leading personalities* (emphasis on acceptance of the norms and obedience);
- *Secretiveness* (isolationism and communication with the surroundings on a pragmatic level);
- *Concealing of the organizational structures* (or of the doctrine as a whole);
- *Fundamentalism* (intolerance towards the different or critical opinions).

Classification of the main movements can be divided into (Vojtisek, 2015):

- Sects with a Christian basis;
- Sects with an easterly basis;
- Sects with an occult basis;
- Sects with a psychotherapeutic basis.

In consequence of the young man's contact with a sect used to be a change of the social relations and the system of values and norms what is importantly reflected in the change of behaviour, thinking, emotions and volition.

b) Disorder of the self-recognition connected with a harming lifestyle

One of the substantial factors of the undesirable behaviour of the children and youth are doubts concerning the self-evaluation. These doubts create not only its casual background but also determine the final aspect: the pupil and adolescent tries to avoid the threatening failure and negative evaluation by a negative display of behaviour but sometimes their idea is to force the surroundings to give evidence concerning the importance of one's own, the so called policy of prestige.

- **Food intake disorders**

To the food intake disorders belongs:

- *Bulimia* (repeated episodes of overeating ended by stomachache and nausea (as a compensation manoeuvre);
- *Mental anorexia* (absence of appetite connected with restriction up to refusal of food, with the fear of obesity even at an extreme low weight).

Under the mental anorexia and bulimia are usually hidden problems with the self-evaluation, characteristic and excessive interest in outward appearance and weight or disability to enter into satisfactory relations with the peers. Atonement of the anorexia requires a complex medical treatment inclusive psychotherapy, however, the effect of the preventive educational work depends mainly on a good model that is from the adolescents point of view worthy of trust and following.

- **Bigarexia**

Muscular dysmorphia is a *behaviour disorder based on the inferiority complex that displays at the boys and young men by a pathological dependence on the fitness exercise and desire to have an attractive muscular body*. Bodybuilding training is usually not interrupted even in case of tendons and muscles inflammation.

- **Sexual deviations and prostitution**

Sexual deviations are disorders of behaviour connected with the satisfying of the human sexual needs. It is difficult to diagnose and classify it from the display point of view, importance, and social dangerousness but also with regard to the conception of “normality” of the sexual behaviour (Weiss, 2008).

Among the *basic disorders of the sexual behaviour* belongs fetishism, narcissism, voyeurism, exhibitionism, transvestism, the more weighty ones up to pathological seems to be sadism, masochism, paedophilia, and necrophilia.. To the socially ethical and legally unacceptable forms of sexual behaviour belongs also incest (sexual relation among the close relatives in particular between the parents and children or between the siblings).

As a current problem of the contemporary youth seems to be the *sexual promiscuity* that consists in frequent changing of sexual partners, when establishing relations with the partners is occasional, and the sexual intercourse occurs without any emotional relation. Promiscuity behaviour often precedes the *prostitution*, described as the provision of sexual services for money or another incentive. “Business with one’s own body” in adolescence concerns girls and also boys, the prostitution can be both heterosexual and homosexual.

Due to the public education and growth of the toleration to certain phenomena of sexually motivated behaviour, comes about a fundamental change of the attitude to some forms of the sexual behaviour. This concerns primarily the masturbation (onanism) and *homosexuality* that are nowadays understood as a form of normal sexual behaviour.

Educational possibilities, besides the public education, can be seen in the introduction of the sexual and partnership education to schools and also in the appropriate education of teachers in this sphere with regard to the professional, content and methodical aspects.

c) Social inclusion disorders

It concerns behaviour disorders that are connected with problems of the individual’s inclusion into the social environment and are characterized by a high level of social dangerousness (Fischer, Skoda, 2014).

- **Criminality**

Delinquency or criminality used to be defined as an *incidence of criminal behaviour expressed by the summary of criminal offences committed on a certain territory in the specified time period*. Due to the fact that different cultures differ in its values or standards, differs also the activity considered as a criminal offence.

The criminality of youth (juvenile delinquency) forms a part of the total criminality, it has its specifics with a view to the total immaturity and unfinished psychosocial evolution of the adolescents. A characteristic feature of offenders of the criminal offences used to be the disrupted relations to the society, to work and education. A great role here play also the personal characteristics, for example weak volition control, increased impulsiveness but also mutual instigation and consume of alcohol. The analyses of the delinquent behaviour and criminal offences take into account particularly the age of offenders, sex, social background and also the place of commission of the antisocial activities (Nielsen Sobotkova, 2014).

The criminal offences of adolescents used to be punished according to its character, seriousness and age of the offender by placement into a young offenders' institution or by the alternative non- custodial sentences.

- **Vandalism**

Vandalism is an intentional antirational damage of things the hidden reason of which is venting of the accumulated tension and aggression. Most often it has a group or mass character, it finds its expression in destruction of cultural values and damaging of valuable objects belonging to the private persons or to the society. The behaviour of vandals can have an entirely clear purpose (for example revenge) when the offender intentionally damages the value of the property or such behaviour assumes a form of an improper game (fulfilment of the leisure time and boredom, (demonstration of power), and when the offender does not altogether care about the value of the vandalized property (broken traffic signs, small trees in the parks, glass parts of the bus stops and the like. In the process of atonement of the vandalic youngsters a better measure seems to be the community service as an alternative punishments when the youngsters themselves must rectify the done damage.

- **Graffiti vandalism**

Graffiti is a sort of art when the drawings or letterings are sprayed with spray colours on the walls or another surfaces. The place for the spray painting used to be carefully selected in order to attract the attention of the public as much as possible (houses, monuments, statues, railway carriages, underground, bridge constructions, and others). The writer can paint alone, what this is not quite usual, or in a clan (crew). On the basis of the majority's relation to the surface on which the painting was created, the production of graffiti can be considered as *legal* (for example decoration of the contact centre, club, advertisement billboards, panel walls approved by the municipal authorities) and *illegal ones* (tram stop, cemetery wall, residential buildings and so on). Spray painting used to be sometimes interpreted as a need of the adolescents for their self-expression and identity searching. However, from the affected subjects point of view it is concerned as damaging of the property, and in case of a cultural monument, it is qualified as a criminal offence.

- **Street violence and extremist movements**

As extremist are denoted groups holding extreme and eccentric opinions that are aimed at suppression of the civil rights, political and religious freedom.

Extremists often publicly exhibit nationalistically oriented fundamentalism, accompanied by xenophobic tendencies and racial intolerance. Inside of the groups is highly appreciated loyalty, orthodoxy towards the exhibited opinions and values, blind obedience to the authority, intolerance to differences and fighting spirit, their members are getting emotional support from the peers having the same views (for example sport club fans, supporters of the skinhead movement, street gangs). Experience of togetherness with a strong group is emphasized at actions where it is possible to vent the tension and anxiety by an approved form of aggression (during chanting at stadiums, at demonstrations, at celebrations and concerts of specific music groups). Various forms of extremism used to be connected also with street violence.

d) Self-harming and suicide behaviour

Self-harming (auto-destruction) represents an array of concrete displays of behaviour with a different degree of relevance based on the need of an intentional invasion of one's own health. To such displays belongs self-injuring, swallowing of strange objects, simulation of diseases and injuries, and suicide attempts. They can stem from the need to make one's presence felt or escape from an unsolvable or unpleasant situation, it expresses also disorders in relation to oneself as a consequence of social or psychogenic factors.

Suicide represents an intentional termination of one's own life by a spontaneous act that should cause death. It is usually a reaction to a difficult situation in life connected with the loss of the meaning of life, disappointment, lack of success, disorder of the self-preservation instinct, and it can also be connected with the psychical instability of the personality, and occurrence of mental diseases. The children's stimulus to a suicide behaviour used to be fear of punishment and anger of the parents (school failure), concern about abuse or sexual harassment, unhappy love in pubescence, and at some time in the future it could be a case of the disability to solve a conflict, manage a deep human loneliness and hopeless perspectives.

The process of the suicide behaviour prevention requires cooperation with the psychiatrist and psychologist, the adolescents should be approached individually and with understanding. After a suicide attempt, it is important to carry out changes in the living environment of the adolescent as otherwise such behaviour could be repeated. If the adolescent has someone with whom he can discuss the problems, the possibility of a suicide reduces.

Conclusion

The possibilities of the *teacher's educational intervention* are in case of the already developed behaviour disorders often limited with regard to the complexity of the causes of its origin (Tomkova, 2018; Prochazka, Viteckova, 2016). The causes can be found both at the psychological, biological and also social level. As substantial is considered the approach of the society, its legal and value system that finds its expression in the real

educational preventive and re-socialization care (Jedlicka, 2011). True models for the children and youth cannot be searched for only in the school environment but primarily among other adults, politicians, in the law, order, and system. The school as an institution, the management of the school and the team of pedagogical workers are able to develop a great deal of positive things at the youth but undoubtedly they cannot substitute a malfunctioning family, correct sensation-seeking media and stand in the activity of another social structures (Valisova, Kasikova a kol., 2015).

According to the educational law, however, the schools and the school institutions are obliged to create conditions for a healthy evolution of the children and students and create also prerequisites for prevention of the social pathological phenomena. The teacher often reveals the behaviour disorder, diagnose it, but the solution of the problem can be out of his reach and competency (Canter, 1978). However, just his diagnose and consultancy activity is very important.

Professionally more demanding consultancy for the pupils and parents usually provides the educational consultant and the school methodist for prevention (provision of consultancy services can also be secured by the school psychologist or by a special school pedagogue). There where the incurred problems exceed the limits and possibilities of the pedagogical workers at school, the right solution is to direct the pupil or his parents to the pedagogical-psychological advisory centre, centre of the educational care or to inform them about further institutions providing the necessary help (for example organs of the socially-legal protection of children, and the psychiatry for children and youth in case of problems with addiction substances).

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