

PERSONALITY, FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IN THE FAMILY OF ORIGIN, AS WELL AS THE EXISTING CLIMATE WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL CENTER IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH CONVICTED OF VIOLENT CRIMES. PILOT STUDY

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Flavia-Elena CIURBEA

Address correspondence to: Flavia-Elena Ciurbea, National Correctional Officers Training School Târgu Ocna, Department of Law, Social Sciences and Humanities, Tisești street, No. 137, Târgu Ocna, Bacău county, Romania. Ph.: +40-746-692-576; E-mail: ciurbeaflavia@gmail.com

Abstract

Objectives. This pilot study aimed to explore the personality of young people convicted of violent crimes, in relation to a series of variables, such as: family characteristics, the criminogenic potential of the group of friends, the situations of conflict and support experienced by them as a result of interaction with colleagues and employees in the educational center.

Material and methods. The sample was made up of 21 boys interned in Buziaș and Târgu Ocna educational centers. The data collection was carried out by the survey method based on questionnaires. For this study, the responses to the 5-Factor Personality Questionnaire were retained. The data analysis was carried out through Little's MCAR test, Chi-Square, T-test, Hedges' g index.

Results. Depending on the relationship with the primary caregivers, differences were identified in terms of the variables investigating the level of conscientiousness, amiability and desirability. At the level of the variable investigating autonomy, differences were recorded depending on the criminogenic potential of the group of friends. Regarding the period of deprivation of liberty, participants who came into conflict with colleagues in the educational center showed a lower level of desirability, and those who reported conflicts with employees scored higher for extraversion. At the same time, those who reported moral support from the cadres scored higher on the amiability and desirability scales.

Conclusions. The social reintegration steps in the educational centers targeting young people who have committed violent crimes can be adapted depending on the particularities of the family, the group of friends and the young person's relationship with colleagues and employees in the center. The partnership between the staff of the educational centres and the adults with whom the young internees have a close relationship becomes essential.

Keywords: personality, delinquency, violence, educational center, social reintegration.

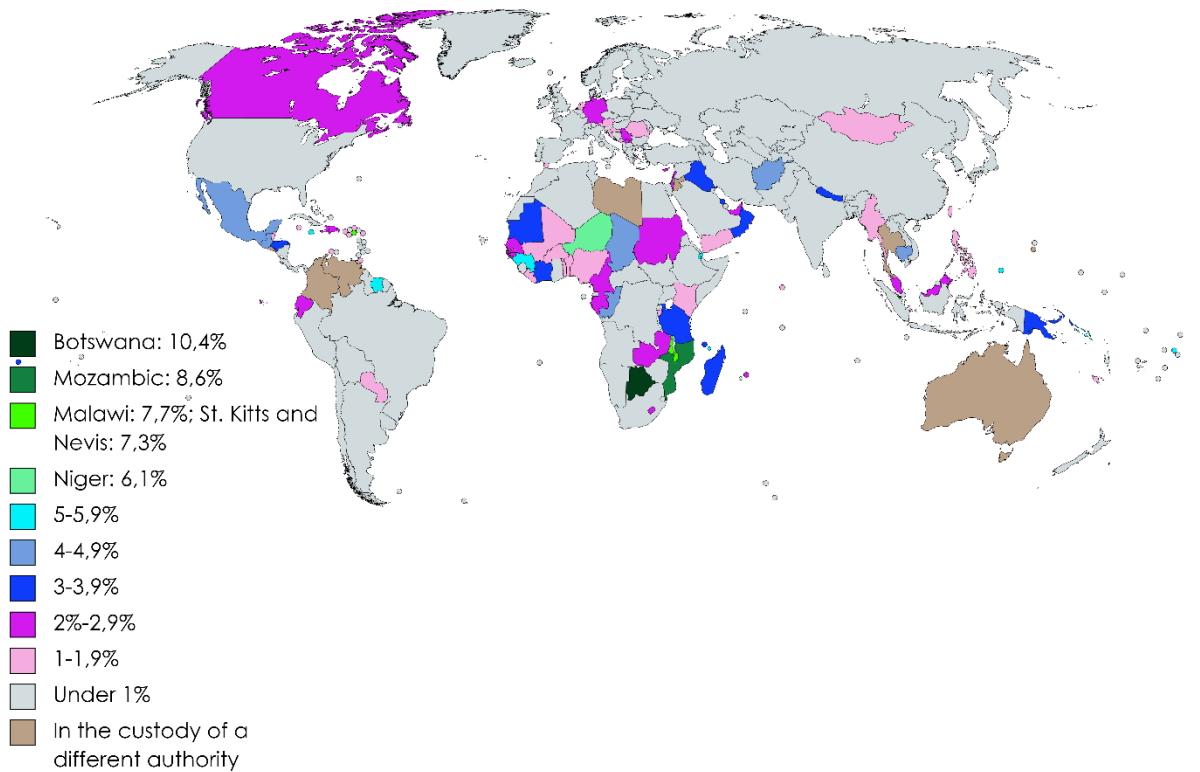
Introduction

Juvenile delinquency gained momentum with the Second World War, an aspect supported by the increase in the number of convictions among young people in certain countries (The Encyclopedia of World Problems & Human Potential, 2019, para. 3). Currently, Western Europe, the USA and Japan are registering high levels of this phenomenon, and one of the explanations could be that juvenile delinquency develops with the technological and economic advance, but also with the changes occurred at the social level (The Encyclopedia of World Problems & Human Potential, 2019, para. 3). However, compared to the presence of young people under the age of 18 in the prison population worldwide, the highest percentages are found in some states on the African continent (World Prison Brief, n.d.).

The percentage of persons under the age of 18 who are in the custody of prison systems belonging to different countries of the world is graphically illustrated in Figure 1, built on the basis of information provided by the World Prison Brief (n.d.) for the period between 2000 and 2021. However, a dose of caution is recommended in the interpretation of the map, as the data under which it was made are indicative, in the case of many countries the percentage being an estimated one.

Figure 1

Countries of the world according to the percentage of minors under the age of 18 in the total prison population, period 2000 – 2021



Looking at gender differences, it was observed that boys have a higher proportion of under-18s in the total prison population, with a ratio of 10:1 compared to girls. Regarding the criminal specifics, theft seems to be characteristic of young criminals, being followed by crimes committed with violence (crimes against the person, sexual and trafficking crimes) (The Encyclopedia of World Problems & Human Potential, 2019, para. 3).

Regarding the evolution of juvenile delinquency in Europe, between the years 2010-2013, Scotland represented the country with the highest share of juvenile offenders on the record of the justice system per 100,000 inhabitants, having annually between 82.55% and 54.61 % young people who came into formal contact with the police, prosecutor's office, courts or prisons (Eurostat, 2021a). Starting from 2014, however, a fluctuation in percentages was noted, the share of juvenile detainees or those who were in formal contact with the police in Poland exceeding that of Scotland for four years (between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019).

In 2019, Romania ranked 13th in terms of the percentage of young people in formal contact with the police and detained in the penitentiary administration system (Eurostat, 2021b). However, it is important to note that such a position in the ranking was occupied by Romania in the absence of information about young people on the record of the criminal justice system in Scotland, who were ahead of Romania in the years in which these data were available.

In November 2021, of the total number of young people between 18-21 years of age in the custody of the Romanian penitentiary system (779 boys and 23 girls), the majority (approximately 471) were convicted of crimes committed with violence (robbery, murder, rape, destruction) (National Administration of Penitentiaries [ANP], 2021). Of the 802 young people deprived of their liberty, 396 were interned in detention centers, and 213 were in the custody of educational centers.

The literature indicates that there are numerous factors that predict violent behavior: previous violence (violent behavior previously adopted makes subsequent violent manifestation more likely); emotions such as fear and feelings such as humiliation, boredom, helplessness; physical factors (lack of sleep, physical exhaustion, alcohol or drug use, etc.); situational factors (access to weapons, abuse suffered in childhood or the presence of aggression in the house) etc. (N.C. Division of Social Services and the Family and Children's Resource Program, 1998). Since among the main predictors of violence among young people are family difficulties and criminogenic neighborhood (Ciurbea, Rada, & Crînguș, 2021), the present paper aims to address these factors in relation to the five main personality dimensions in the Big Five paradigm, the main objective being to streamline the process of social reintegration carried out in educational centers. Finally, the identification of personality differences between young people deprived of liberty in terms of their relationship with the centre's employees is intended to highlight the obstacles that prevent the strengthening of a collaborative relationship between detainees and cadres in order to re-educate. The usefulness of this research approach will be materialized in the formulation of some recommendations to guide the efforts of the specialists from the penitentiary administration in order to prevent the risk of recidivism, through the harmonious restructuring of the personality in formation of the young internees.

Defining the concepts

Within the Big Five paradigm, personality is evaluated following five main dimensions: extraversion, agreeability, conscientiousness, emotional stability and autonomy. The extraversion variable indicates the extent to which the person tends to relate to others (Nedelcea, 2015, p. 204,

as cited in Ciurbea, Dina, & Rada, 2022, p. 245; VandenBos, 2013/2020a, p. 219, as cited in Ciurbea, Dina, & Rada, 2022, p. 245). Agreeableness or amiability (according to Albu & Porumb, 2009, pp.148-149) refers to the degree of social adaptability of the person, referring to the person's willingness to act cooperatively (Nedelcea, 2015, p. 205, as cited in Ciurbea et al., 2022, p. 245; VandenBos, 2013/2020b, p. 29, as cited in Ciurbea et al., 2022, p. 245). Conscientiousness is related to self-control, being rather understood as a process by which the person gets from planning tasks to completing them (Nedelcea, 2015, p. 205). Emotional stability is the dimension that provides information about the ability to control strong emotions, in other words, to manifest emotional balance in tense situations (Butucescu & Vercellino, 2015, p. 283). Autonomy is a term used by Albu (2008) to indicate mental openness (Butucescu & Vercellino, 2015, p. 283) or openness to experience (Nedelcea, 2015, p. 204; VandenBos, 2013/2020c, p. 160), the authors defining it as a predisposition of the person towards intellectual, aesthetic or cultural activities.

According to Jean Pinatel, when traits such as aggressiveness, emotional lability, affective indifference or egocentrism are taken individually, they do not represent specific characteristics of the offender. The personality of the young delinquent is therefore the result of a constellation of factors (Stănoiu, 2002, as cited in Liiceanu, Săucan, & Micle, 2008, p. 74; Stănoiu, 1997, as cited in Liiceanu, Săucan, & Micle, 2009, p. 194).

Regarding the family, this study refers to the participants' family of origin, that is, to those adults who raised them. To avoid confusion, the specific items were formulated as follows: "your parents (or those who cared for you)".

In order to list the items related to the group of friends, the definition offered by Renna, Grafova, and Thakur (2008) was taken into account: the close circle of friends to which the respondent relates.

The educational center, being subordinate to the ANP, was defined on the basis of Law 254/2013, article 141, paragraph 1 and represents "the institution specialized in the social recovery of interned persons, in which they follow school training programs and professional training, according to their abilities, as well as other activities and programs aimed at social reintegration" (Parliament of Romania, 2013).

Research methodology

Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of the present investigation was to explore five major personality traits in relation to family characteristics, the criminogenic potential of the group of friends and the conflict and support situations experienced during the execution of the educational measure of deprivation of liberty, in young people in the custody of educational centers subordinated to the ANP for crimes committed with violence. This scientific approach aims to adjust the process of reintegration into society of young people convicted of acts of a violent nature, depending on personal, family, and social peculiarities.

The objectives that guided this investigation were the following:

O1: Shaping the personality differences between young people convicted of violent crimes, depending on the family characteristics, the group of friends, and according to the relationship with colleagues and employees in the educational center.

O2: Formulating some recommendations for the efficiency of the social reintegration process of young people convicted of violent acts.

Research methods and instruments

The data were collected through the survey method, using a set of questionnaires, as follows:

- an omnibus questionnaire with 58 simple or compound questions (summing up several items). This questionnaire included questions intended to capture some general socio-demographic data, such as age, gender, marital status, place of origin, etc., but also questions specific to the purpose of the research, such as those related to situations within the family in which the participant grew up, within the group of friends, within the educational or detention center, a section dedicated to alcohol consumption, one for drug use, another section for sexuality and a final section for risky behaviors;
- The 5-Factor Personality Questionnaire (CP5F), with 130 items grouped into six scales, validated by Albu (2008, as cited in Albu & Porumb, 2009) on the Romanian population;
- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Robu, 2013);
- The Affective Distress Profile (PDA) (Opriș & Macavei, 2007);
- a final question on the description of the commission of the deed in about 200 words.

In order to achieve the research objectives of this paper, the answers collected through the following instruments were used: CP5F, items from the section related to situations within the family where the participant grew up, items related to situations within the group of friends and those who referred to situations encountered within the educational center.

The CP5F assesses through five scales the five big dimensions of personality – extraversion, conscientiousness, amiability, emotional stability and autonomy – the last three factors being the equivalent of agreeableness, neuroticism and openness within the Big Five paradigm. The sixth scale of the questionnaire is intended to measure the level of desirability of the respondent. The answer options vary from 1 - "it suits me very little" to 5 - "it suits me a lot" (Albu & Porumb, 2009). The scoring is done both directly and indirectly, and the total score for each scale is obtained by summing the scores related to the answer variants selected by the participant for each item of the scale separately.

Participants

The questionnaires were applied to 21 boys interned in the two educational centers subordinated to the ANP - the Buziaș Educational Center and the Târgu Ocna Educational Center.

Procedure

From the Buziaș Educational Center, the contact person (psychology officer) selected those interned persons whose levels of cognitive development allowed participation in the research without great difficulties. At the Târgu Ocna Educational Center, the selection procedure involved the announcement on the section of the youth interned about the possibility of participating in the study, following that all those who wanted to register to be involved in the research.

The data from the youth interned in the Buziaș Educational Center were collected between 15-19 and 22-26 November 2021. In their case, the application of the questionnaire was carried out online, through the Skype platform.

At the Târgu Ocna Educational Center, the data were collected on February 24-25, 2022. The questionnaires were applied physically, by the investigator and by one of the center's employed psychologists; those with limited comprehension skills were assisted in the completion.

Ethical aspects of research

The study was carried out based on the approval of the Ethics Commission of the "Constantin Rădulescu-Motru" Institute of Philosophy and Psychology of the Romanian Academy no. 80 of 19.03.2021 and based on the principle agreement of ANP no. 7786 of 29.04.2021. In order to carry out the activity at the Buziaș Educational Center, a collaboration protocol was necessary, concluded between the center (no. 36381/02.12.2021) and the "Francisc I. Rainer" Anthropology Institute of the Romanian Academy (775/19.11.2021).

The effective involvement of the youth in the two educational centers was achieved only after informing them about the purpose of the research, possible risks, possible rewards, the possibility of withdrawal and after their prior signing of the informed consent, respectively of the acceptance form, which accompanies the research carried out within the units subordinated to the ANP.

For the CP5F instrument, the approval of its application for research purposes was obtained from COGNITROM organization.

Research hypotheses

H1: The average scores obtained on the CP5F scales by youth with difficult family situations differ significantly from the average scores obtained by youth who did not report such difficulties.

H2: There is a difference between the scores obtained on CP5F scales depending on the criminogenic potential of the group of friends.

H3: Youth employed in conflict situations within the educational center obtain significantly higher scores on the extraversion and autonomy scales and lower scores on the conscientiousness, amiability, and emotional stability scales.

H4: Youth who receive moral support from their peers and from the cadres in the educational center, obtain significantly higher scores on the extraversion, conscientiousness, amiability, emotional stability, and autonomy scales.

Data analysis

The processing of the obtained data was carried out in the SPSS Statistics 17.0 program (SPSS 17.0 Statistical analysis for social science, 2022).

Since some participants either failed to respond to some CP5F items or circled multiple responses to a single item, little's MCAR test was performed to check if the data was missing in a completely random way. Following the results of the test, the null hypothesis was not rejected (Chi-Square = 0,00; $DF = 1154$; $p = 1,00$), and the missing data were replaced by the expectation-maximization algorithm. To increase the accuracy of the predicted data, the algorithm was applied separately to each of the six subscales of the CP5F. The resulting datasets were later merged into a single spreadsheet.

For hypothesis testing, the T-test for independent samples was used. In addition, since the SPSS variant used did not automatically generate the estimates for the effect sizes, they were

calculated separately via the online calculator available at Social Science Statistics (n.d.). Because the number of participants in the groups compared was different, the Hedges' *g* index was chosen.

Results

The participants were aged between 18 and 22 years ($M = 18,81$; $Mdn = 18,00$; $SD = 1,20$) and were serving the educational measure of deprivation of liberty for crimes committed with violence: attempted aggravated robbery, qualified robbery, complicity in robbery, robbery, attempted rape, rape, trafficking in minors, beatings or other violence, destruction, outrage. The one who entered the center most recently was serving the educational measure of one month and 22 days, and the one with a longer experience in the center had completed approximately two years and two months until the time of completing the questionnaire.

Of the total participants, 20 considered themselves to be clinically healthy, and only one replied that he was recorded with a chronic/psychiatric condition. The latter, aged 21, stated that he has health problems, but without mentioning them.

The basic structure of the sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample structure

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Holding place		
Buziaș Educational Center	4	19.0
Târgu Ocna Educational Center	17	81.0
Criminal history		
Imprisoned for execution on the first conviction	16	76.2
Recidivists	5	23.8
Environment of origin		
Urban	13	61.9
Rural	8	38.1
Marital status		
Single	10	47.6
In an undocumented relationship	11	52.4

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Last school attended		
No school, primary school (4 classes)	6	28.6
General school (grades 5-10), vocational, apprentices	14	66.7
High school	1	4.8
Continuing school courses at the time of data collection		
No	6	28.6
Primary school (4 classes)	4	19.0
General school (grades 5-10), vocational, apprentices	11	52.4

Table 2 presents characteristics of the families in which the participants grew up. More than half of them reported long-term problems in the relationship between parents or primary caregivers, and more than 60% answered that their parents divorced before they arrived at the educational center. Over 40% of the young people surveyed had at least one of their parents or primary caregivers from the family of origin sentenced to custodial sentences, for crimes such as: outrage with serious violence and attempted murder, qualified murder, scandal (committed at the age of 18), aggravated theft, deception, and theft. Four of the respondents mentioned that the father was the one incarcerated, and four stated that they did not know the crime for which their primary caregivers were convicted. Also, more than 40% of the young people included in the study were separated from at least one of the primary caregivers before committing the crime for which they were serving the educational measure of deprivation of liberty. The reasons cited were the parents leaving to work abroad, divorce, the young man's admission to a foster care center, arguments between the young man and his parents, the death of one of the parents, respectively the criminal acts committed by the young man previously. The same percentage of respondents stated that there was a major event in the family that had a strong negative emotional impact on them. Six young people were emotionally impacted by the death of one of the family members (uncle, grandfather, grandmother, brother, mother), two cited the separation between their parents, and among the other reasons were arguments, conflicts, sexual abuse, the mother's diagnosis with a incurable disease, the father's hospitalization as a result of a stabbing, and the young man's drug use.

At the same time, more than 70% of participants said they had never experienced harsh discipline from their primary caregivers, such as physical punishment, and just over half agreed that their parents or caregivers "raised them in the fluff" , giving them everything they needed. Also, most of the respondents considered that they benefited from supervision from at least one of the caregivers, in the form of the interest shown in the school activity of the young person, in his friends, etc., and many stated that they used to respect the rules imposed by the main caregivers.

Table 2*Distribution of participants according to certain family situations*

Situations within the family in which the participants grew up	No		Yes	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Family difficulties (quarrels, disputes, aggressiveness; severe discipline applied by parents; the existence of an event in the family with a strong negative emotional impact for the young person)	36	57.1	27	42.9
Satisfaction of all needs by the main caregivers ("raised in fluff")	10	47.6	11	52.4
Disciplining the child (supervision by at least one of the primary caregivers; compliance with the rules imposed by the primary caregivers)	10	23.8	32	76.2
Separation from the main caregiver before committing the crime (through divorce, sentencing the caregiver to custodial sentences or other circumstances)	36	57.1	27	42.9

Most of the participants (19) were part of a teenage or youth gang. Table 3 summarizes the criminogenic characteristics of the group of friends. Most of them stated that they were involved in conflicts within the group of friends (quarrels, disputes, aggressive actions, etc.). Most of the participants had at least one friend in the group sentenced to custodial sentences. Nine of them declared that they had friends convicted of crimes committed with violence (robbery, murder, attempted murder, destruction). Other crimes committed by the friends included running away (with Interpol tracking), theft, bank fraud and drug trafficking. More than 40% of the young people surveyed said that they had been involved in activities with the group of friends where the police intervened, but only slightly more than 30% of them said that they had done some things against their will, being motivated by the fear of being excluded or rejected by the group. Among the actions taken under the pressure of the group of friends were mentioned thefts and other crimes, involvement in beatings, self-affirmation (through screams) and tobacco consumption.

Table 3*Distribution of participants according to the criminogenic potential of the group of friends*

Situations within the group of friends	No		Yes	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Involvement in conflict situations in the group of friends	4	19.0	17	81.0

Situations within the group of friends	No		Yes	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Carrying out activities with the group that resulted in police intervention	11	52.4	10	47.6
One or more members of the group sentenced to custodial sentences	8	38.1	13	61.9
Undertaking some activities as a result of pressure exerted by the group	14	66.7	7	33.3

Table 4 presents situations encountered in the educational center by the interned youth. Most of the participants had conflicts with their colleagues in the center, but less than 30% were involved in conflict situations with the center's employees. At the same time, most of the young convicts received moral support both from fellow detainees and from the cadres (supervisor, educator, psychologist).

Table 4

Distribution of participants according to conflict situations and moral support received within the educational center

Situations within the educational center	No		Yes	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Involvement in conflict situations with colleagues	6	28.6	15	71.4
Moral support from colleagues in difficult situations	5	23.8	16	76.2
Involvement in conflict situations with the cadres	15	71.4	6	28.6
Moral support from the cadres in difficult situations	3	14.3	18	85.7

The means of the groups obtained on the CP5F scales were significantly different only in the case of six of the investigated variables and only for four of the five dimensions of personality, respectively for the scale that measures the level of desirability. Thus, interned youth who considered that they were not raised "in fluff" had a higher mean score on the conscientiousness and amiability scales than those who appreciated that the main caregivers provided them with everything they needed. Those who were separated from a primary caregiver before committing the crime scored higher on the conscientiousness and desirability scales.

Regarding the situations in the group of friends, the participants who carried out activities with the group that resulted in police intervention obtained a higher mean score on the autonomy scale.

Regarding the situations encountered by the participants in the educational center, those who answered that they were not involved in conflicts with colleagues presented a higher average score on the desirability scale. Regarding the relationship with the employees of the center, the young people who had quarrels or disputes with the cadres obtained a higher average score on the extraversion scale, unlike those who were not involved in conflict situations with the employees of the center. At the same time, the young internees who stated that they received moral support from the center's employees when they had difficulties obtained a higher average score on the amiability and desirability scales compared to their colleagues who answered that they did not receive such support.

For all identified differences, an effect size of over 0.90 resulted (Table 5).

Table 5

Significant differences obtained by participants on the CP5F scales depending on the investigated variables

Logistic parameter	CP5F scale	No		Yes		<i>t</i> (19)	<i>p</i>	Hedges' <i>g</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Satisfaction of all needs by primary caregivers	Conscientiousness	98.12	11.38	87.44	11.67	2.11	0.04	0.92
	Amiability	91.06	10.21	77.91	13.07	2.55	0.02	1.11
Separation from the primary caregiver	Conscientiousness	86.55	11.49	99.10	10.44	-2.61	0.01	1.14
	Desirability	53.36	5.51	60.60	8.03	-2.42	0.02	1.06
Activities with the group that resulted in police intervention	Autonomy	71.10	8.41	79.85	9.67	-2.20	0.04	0.96
Situații conflictuale cu colegii	Desirability	62.50	7.39	54.53	6.62	2.41	0.02	1.16
Conflict situations with the cadres	Extraversion	68.33	7.23	78.41	10.29	-2.55	0.01	1.23

Logistic parameter	CP5F scale	No		Yes		<i>t</i> (19)	<i>p</i>	Hedges' <i>g</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Moral support received from the cadres	Amiability	69.67	6.02	86.59	12.70	-2.22	0.03	1.39
	Desirability	48.33	4.72	58.22	7.12	-2.29	0.03	1.43

Discussions

In the case of the comparison between the sub-samples made up of young incarcerated people, significant differences were noted in terms of kindness and conscientiousness, these being revealed in two situations each. Mean scores for autonomy and extraversion also differed significantly in only one situation each. In contrast, in none of the investigated situations, the sub-samples did not differ from the perspective of emotional stability. This result could be explained by reference to the developmental period in which the participants were at the time of the research. Veroude, Jolles, Croiset, and Krabbendam (2013) showed that the development of cognitive control for both emotional and non-emotional stimuli continues beyond the age of 18 years. Since most of the participants in this study are 18 years old, it can be assumed that emotional balance is age-specific and evolves as such, its development not depending on the family or social context, but on the level of brain development.

However, the most differences between subsamples emerged in the case of desirability, which may indicate different needs of the participants in terms of self-image. Even this result can be explained by the average age. As teenagers, one of their concerns may be related to the image they want to portray in society. According to Harwood (2010, as cited in Dobrescu, 2016, p. 68), adolescents are able to display even a hidden behavior, taking into account the specifics of the situation in which they are.

Consequences of pampering on adolescent personality development

A lower average score on the conscientiousness and amiability scales obtained by youth convicted of violent crimes who believe they were raised "in the fluff" seems to support Alfred Adler's theory of parental influence on children's personality formation. He pointed out the negative consequences of pampering children, suggesting the importance of adequate dosage of parental tenderness on the harmonious development of sons (Alba, 2017). In this sense, the study carried out by Capron (2004) on a sample of 200 students (half of the participants being male) identified positive correlations between certain types of pampering and narcissistic personality traits. The overindulgent type was associated with entitlement and exhibitionism, and the overdominant type correlated with exploitativeness.

Given the differences in personality between teenagers raised "in the fluff" and those who did not benefit from this type of approach from the primary caregivers, the emphasis falls on the role that parents have in the formation of children's personality. Thus, satisfying all the child's

wishes in the absence of rules for him to respect (e.g. being orderly, being polite to others), can have negative consequences on the development of certain areas of the personality.

Effects of separation from primary caregiver on adolescent personality development

The situation is more complex in terms of the difference in scores obtained on the conscientiousness scale by young people who have been separated from one or both parents compared to those who have not faced separation from parental figures. An investigation of data from the first four waves of a longitudinal study involving 18,000 British participants highlighted the negative effects of family disruption on children's personality development (Prevo & ter Weel, 2014). The parents' divorce had the strongest negative effect on the development of the child's personality. However, the boys' personality was more affected by the death of one of the parents. The findings of the study also showed that the severity of the effect of separation from a parent depends on the age the child had when it occurred, the consequences being less severe at an older age. However, it should be noted that Prevo and ter Weel (2014) investigated personality traits such as self-esteem, locus of control and behavioral problems, which are different from those pursued in the present research.

Lamb (1978) explained based on the studies analyzed in a review of the literature on this topic that the divorce of the parents can also have positive effects on the development of the child's personality, when it is followed by the cessation of hostilities, uncertainties and hatred.

Strictly related to the results obtained in the present study, the explanation of the lower level of conscientiousness registered by the young people who were not separated from their parents could start from the assumption that the parents were concerned with satisfying all their needs. Thus, the child may no longer have to or be motivated to plan his own actions to get what he wants, to no longer strive as much as a child who, in the absence of one or both parental figures, is forced to fight to get what he needs.

A dose of caution is, however, necessary in interpreting the higher level of conscientiousness shown by convicted adolescents who were separated from parental figures, as they scored significantly higher on the social desirability scale than their counterparts who did not experience separation from primary caregivers. It is therefore possible that the participants' answers were influenced, to a more or less conscious extent, by the prestige reaction: even if they were informed that their name would not be associated with the completed questionnaire, offering socially accepted answers about oneself can act as a psychological shield, designed to protect the young person's self-image.

Group power and autonomy in adolescence

A fundamental concept in the discussion of adolescence is that of individuation, defined as "adolescents' struggle for autonomy and personal identity" (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 1978/2010, p. 407). Adolescence represents that period of development in which the child begins to want more independence from the family. But there is a fragile line between the acquisition of a healthy autonomy and a total freedom. Then, it should also be taken into account that an extreme control exercised by the parent over the child, motivated by the intention to prevent the latter from making immature decisions, is as harmful as a high level of autonomy offered to the child in the absence of guidance from the adult (Davis & McQuillin, 2021, as cited in Bohnsack, 2021, para. 2). The results obtained by Goldstein, Davis-Kean, and Eccles (2005, as cited in Papalia et al.,

1978/2010, p. 407) following repeated interviews of 1,357 European American and African American adolescents between the summer before they enter high school and the 11th grade, are edifying. They showed that young people who benefited from a greater degree of autonomy spent more time with those of the same age, in the absence of parental supervision, being exposed to the emergence of problematic behaviors. An excessive involvement of parents in the lives of teenagers was also found to be problematic, young people who perceived their parents as too intrusive tending to be influenced in a negative way by the group of friends, thus reaching the manifestation of risky behaviors together with them.

This paper draws attention to the risks associated with a higher level of autonomy at this age period. Whereas young people who stated that they had been involved in activities with the group of friends that resulted in police intervention obtained a significantly higher mean score on the autonomy scale than those who did not have such an experience, there is the question of the degree of parental supervision they benefited from. Also, an important aspect is the quality of the guidance received from the adult, which consists in finding a balance between the autonomy offered to the adolescent and the control exercised over him.

The role of the personality traits of young convicts in relation to the cadres and colleagues in the educational center

The present work shows that young convicts who had fights or disputes with cadres scored significantly higher on extraversion. This result indicates that a higher level of expansiveness and participation in relationships with others does not always have beneficial effects. Previous research has shown that argumentativeness is associated with extraversion, while verbal aggression is characteristic of introverts (Hample, 2008, p. 5255).

What is noteworthy, however, is the significantly higher level of social desirability shown by the youth who answered that they did not engage in arguments, disputes, aggressive actions or other conflictual behaviors with fellow detainees. It is possible that the fear of the consequences of the cazon environment in which they find themselves, governed by strict rules, as well as the desire to avoid the exercise of additional control by the cadres, had some influence on the answers given by the participants to this question.

Another result that must be taken into account is the average score obtained on the amiability scale, which was significantly higher for young people who stated that they received moral support from the employees of the educational center in contrast to those who considered that they did not receive support. An explanation in this sense can be offered through the prism of the results previously obtained by Branje, van Lieshout, and van Aken (2004) in the longitudinal investigation of 285 Dutch two-parent families that had at least two children at the age of adolescence. They observed that participants who were more agreeable perceived that they received more support from other family members. In addition, longitudinal research conducted by Udayar, Urbanaviciute, and Rossier (n.d.), involving 1,309 adults (48.1% male), showed that people who perceived that they received more support from those around them showed a higher level of agreeableness after four years.

However, in the case of young people interned in the penitentiary system, the affirmative answers in relation to the support received from the cadres may also be driven by the desire to avoid possible sanctions, given the higher average of the scores obtained by them on the social desirability scale.

Conclusions

Adolescence is an age when the personality is not yet crystallized, and young people interned in the educational centers of the penitentiary system for crimes committed with violence need support from adults so that the transition to the next stage of development is carried out in a healthy way. The data obtained within this research approach partially confirm the formulated hypotheses, indicating the existence of personality differences between young people convicted of violent crimes according to family history, the criminogenic potential of the group of friends and the conflict and support situations experienced within the educational center. At the same time, they show the need to pay special attention to four of the big five personality dimensions: conscientiousness, amiability, autonomy, and extraversion. The role that falls, therefore, to the staff specialized in working with young people interned in educational centers is to ensure a balanced development of the adolescent's personality, taking into account their family situation, the situations within the group of friends and at the same time paying attention to the way they interact with colleagues and center employees.

The results of this study indicate the need to develop the level of conscientiousness, by involving violent youth in activities that require self-discipline, planning, perseverance, depending on the interests of each one (strategy games, sports competitions, creative contests, etc.). The purpose of carrying out such activities, however, also consists in reducing the level of violence, since they can contribute to the balancing of neurotransmitters, a fact that determines the maintenance of behavioral control (Lungu, 2022). Attention must also be directed to how adolescents who have committed violent crimes understand the concept of autonomy. In this sense, it is necessary to train them on the importance of respecting the rules of coexistence in society, and positive cognitive reframing can be an optimal technique: young people in institutions can be taught to see social rules as something that gives them the protection they need and not as an instrument of coercion. This technique could also be useful in reorienting more extroverted youth. They can be taught how to use the ease with which they make themselves seen in the community to establish healthy relationships with those around them, based on trust and mutual help. At the same time, they can be trained to invest this energy in the direction of dialogues based on arguments, at the expense of using it in quarrels, disputes or violent actions. In this sense, organizing some workshops on the topic of effective management of conflict situations, which include working in small groups and role-playing, could represent an agreed activity, especially by extroverted teenagers. The framework plan of activities elaborated by Ciurbea et al. (2022) can serve as a benchmark.

Finally, since there are evidences regarding the fact that kindness is determined by the level of perceived social support, it is recommended to train the staff from the educational centers who are in direct contact with the interned youth, in order to acquire some skills that facilitate their interaction with them. Organizing some training sessions on the topic of communication, the importance of identifying the difficulties faced by interned persons and coming to meet them, could represent an important step in increasing the efficiency of the social reintegration process of young people sentenced to custodial educational measures. However, it is important to continue the efforts during the execution of the custodial educational measure even after release. Therefore, reinforcing the statements made by Oancea and Micle

(2015), the involvement of the probation services and the adults with whom the interned youth have a close relationship becomes essential.

Limits

Although the effect sizes exceeded the threshold of 0.80, beyond which the effect is considered to be strong (Sava, 2011, p. 37), the small sample size is an important limitation. Given the number of participants, the sample could be considered unrepresentative even in the case of a pilot study.

Then, in the case of the groups of participants formed based on the answers given to the items related to the situations in the educational center, the major difference between the number of participants distributed in each group can influence the results obtained. Therefore, a dose of caution is necessary in generalizing the results obtained to the general population of young people convicted of crimes committed with violence.

Another limitation may be the low level of schooling in relation to the chronological age of the participants. Such a situation can affect the degree of comprehension of the items, which leads to an increased risk of giving random answers.

Finally, significant differences between means on the desirability scale suggest greater care in interpreting the results. For various reasons related to the person of the participants, it is possible that some answers do not comply with the requirement of representing reality as faithfully as possible.

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