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Ionuț Virgil ȘERBAN, Nicola MALIZIA, Adrian-Nicolae DAN

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Designing Prevention Measures for Deviant Behaviour in Youth and Social Contexts: Family, School, Peer Groups, Sporting Environments

Ionuț Virgil ȘERBAN¹, Nicola MALIZIA², Adrian-Nicolae DAN³

Abstract

This article explores the prevention of youth deviance, both individually and in groups, often arising from spontaneous aggregation processes. Early approaches focused mainly on social, environmental, and legal contexts, while later research added cognitive-behavioural perspectives, showing that deviance results from the interaction between dysfunctional cognitive, emotional, and socio-environmental factors. For healthy development, minors must be supported in the family, school, and community, where they acquire moral rules and awareness of both rights and duties. Although peer interactions help overcome individualism, they can also facilitate deviance. Thus, comprehensive prevention programmes are needed, and sport should be considered a valuable tool for shaping personality. Conversely, weak family and school relations hinder the internalisation of norms and increase risks of deviance. In modern societies, juvenile delinquency remains closely related to structural complexity.

Keywords: youth; society; deviance; family; school; peer group; prevention.

¹ University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Str. A.I. Cuza, 13, Craiova, ROMANIA.

E-mail: johnutzserban@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-7240-9989

² University of Enna “Kore”, Faculty of Human and Society Sciences, Cittadella Universitaria, 94100, Enna, ITALY. E-mail: nicola.malizia@unikore.it, ORCID: 0000-0002-6182-4033

³ University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Bd. Schitu Măgureanu, 9, Bucharest, ROMANIA. E-mail: adrian.dan@sas.unibuc.ro, ORCID: 0000-0002-4033-3358 (*Corresponding author*)

Introduction

Adolescent deviance remains a central concern for contemporary societies, as it intersects with public security, social cohesion, and the fundamental rights of minors. Deviant and delinquent behaviours do not arise in a social vacuum but are rooted in complex interactions between individual vulnerabilities, family dynamics, school experiences, peer cultures, and broader socio-economic conditions. In this perspective, the minor is not simply the passive object of control measures, but an active subject engaged in constructing meanings, affiliations, and life trajectories. Understanding how young people come to adopt deviant patterns of behaviour therefore requires an integrated reading of personal, relational, institutional, and cultural factors.

Over the last decades, research has highlighted the decisive role of primary socialisation contexts -above all the family and school - in shaping developmental pathways that either increase the risk of deviance or strengthen protective factors. Parenting styles, supervision, and family cohesion can foster or inhibit behavioural problems, while school processes, climate, and educational practices influence academic success, social integration, and attitudes towards rules and authority. At the same time, peer groups acquire growing importance during adolescence: they can offer opportunities for support, recognition, and experimentation, but also function as settings in which antisocial models circulate and are reinforced. Finally, sport has been proposed both as a promising tool for prevention, capable of promoting self-esteem and prosociality, and as a potentially ambivalent context in which aggression, risk-taking, or substance use may be normalised.

In this multifaceted scenario, prevention cannot be reduced to isolated interventions or purely repressive responses. Rather, it must be conceived as a comprehensive social and educational strategy that coordinates the efforts of families, schools, community services, peer contexts, and, where necessary, juvenile justice institutions. The aim of this article is to synthesise the main theoretical and empirical contributions on deviant behaviour in adolescence and, starting from this literature, to outline a set of prevention measures articulated across the principal social and educational contexts: family, school, peer groups, and sporting environments. The objective is not only to describe risk and protective factors, but also to provide operational indications for designing prevention services and re-educational pathways that can support the positive development and social inclusion of minors.

The article is structured as follows. First, we review the main findings regarding the prevention of youth deviance in family settings, school contexts, and peer groups, with particular attention to the role of educational and social services. Second, we examine the literature on sport as a resource for, and sometimes a risk factor in, the prevention of deviance. On the basis of this review, we then propose a set of prevention measures and service models inspired by the empirical

and theoretical contributions discussed. Finally, we present some concluding reflections on the implications for social and educational policies aimed at minors in situations of risk or deviance.

Literature review

Preventing Deviance in Family Contexts

Parent-child interaction, especially parenting style, has a major impact on the likelihood of deviance. Patterson (2000) showed that coercive family systems-where parents complain, threaten, or punish inconsistently-often reinforce misbehaviour. Because of this, prevention programmes have been developed to train parents to manage conflicts more constructively. Kazdin (1997) demonstrated that parental management training significantly improved children's behaviour and reduced deviance, as reported by parents, teachers, and institutional records. Farrington (1994) also emphasised the effectiveness of home visiting programmes to support mothers during pregnancy and early childhood.

The well-known New York study by Olds *et al.* (1986), involving 400 mothers, showed that nurse visits during pregnancy reduced smoking, premature births, and later child abuse. Only 4% of mothers receiving visits were guilty of abuse or neglect compared to 19% of those without support. Johnson and Walker (1987) found similar benefits: mothers who received visits praised their children more, created a more stimulating home, and by age 11 their children were rated less aggressive by teachers. Lally *et al.* (1988) also showed that early family support combined with day care reduced later delinquency, especially in girls.

Research consistently confirms that poor supervision, parental disharmony, rejection, or lack of involvement predicts behavioural problems. Conversely, parent education reduces antisocial behaviour. Observations revealed that parents of antisocial children often failed to teach social rules, did not monitor behaviour, and relied on shouting or threats. Patterson (1976) tested structured parent training, showing reduced theft and aggression in children (Dishion *et al.*, 1992). Similarly, functional family therapy (Alexander & Parsons, 1973) trained families to communicate and negotiate more effectively, cutting recidivism in half compared to other methods. Barton *et al.* (1985) confirmed its success with serious offenders. Later studies (Muratori *et al.*, 2008) further highlighted the role of parenting in both externalising and internalising problems.

A particularly influential model is the Triple P – Positive Parenting Programme (Sanders *et al.*, 2014), developed in Australia. It combines prevention, training, and family support to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective ones. The programme promotes positive parenting, emotional resilience, coping skills, and non-violent family environments. It covers stages from infancy to adolescence and includes five levels: (1) information campaigns, (2) advice for concerned parents,

(3) specific skills training, (4) broad-based parent education, and (5) behavioural family intervention for severe problems. Its goal is to strengthen both carers' abilities and children's socio-emotional, linguistic, and behavioural competences.

Preventing Deviant Behavior in School Settings

Schools play a fundamental role in preventing, treating, and controlling juvenile delinquency. Longitudinal studies indicate that low intelligence, poor academic performance, limited vocabulary, and weak verbal reasoning predict occasional and chronic delinquency. Impaired executive functions, such as planning and organizing behavior, are also associated with stable adolescent aggression (Séguin and Tremblay, 2013). While low cognitive ability may precede deviant or criminal behavior, early aggression could also lower IQ, or other factors (e.g., parental psychopathology) may explain the association (Fergusson and Lynskey, 1996). Current evidence is insufficient to establish a clear causal relationship (Yoshikawa, 1994), though poor cognitive skills may indirectly contribute to delinquency through school performance. Low school retention, truancy, and dropout are linked to later violent crime. Behavioral problems in school - such as aggression, hyperactivity, attention deficits, impulsivity, and oppositional behavior - disrupt learning, reduce academic achievement, and may signal future delinquency (Tremblay *et al.*, 1994).

School processes and climate also influence achievement and delinquency (Figuera-McDonough, 1992). Delinquency rates vary across schools, with competitive achievement, rigid disciplinary procedures, and lax supervision associated with higher rates than environments emphasizing learning, informal management, and close supervision (Rutter & Giller, 1983). School-based interventions offer broad reach, as most children attend preschool and school, allowing early identification of behavioral and academic difficulties predictive of later delinquency (Stattin & Klackenber-Lasson, 1983). Interventions targeting classroom behavior, skill development, or student attitudes exist, but few measure delinquency directly or include long-term follow-up, limiting evidence of sustained impact. Italy's youth information policy - engaging experts, law enforcement, universities, and specialized organizations - has reduced vandalism, bullying, and substance use, highlighting the value of training both students and teachers. Behavioral methods using rewards and penalties have produced short-term behavioral improvements and long-term reductions in delinquency (Bry, 1982), while interventions promoting moral reasoning show promise in reducing criminal behavior.

Preventing Peer Deviance: the Role of the Educator

The influence of deviant or high-risk peer groups is particularly pronounced during adolescence, a critical period for social, emotional, and identity development. While early interventions with younger children can reduce later aggressive behaviour, empirical findings remain mixed, with some group interventions producing limited or even negative outcomes (Hudley and Graham, 1993). During early adolescence, peer approval often outweighs adult guidance, and adolescents engaging in antisocial or illegal behaviours may be especially sensitive to social validation from their peers. Group composition is crucial in determining intervention outcomes: Feldman (1992) found that integrating one or two at-risk youths into prosocial groups could reduce antisocial behaviour and increase prosocial engagement, whereas interventions composed entirely of at-risk youths tended to exacerbate misbehaviour. The underlying mechanism involves social reinforcement, whereby deviant behaviour can be normalized and actively strengthened within peer interactions, particularly when such behaviour receives attention or discussion (Dishion *et al.*, 1997).

Deviant behaviour emerges from complex interactions between personal, familial, and social conditions. Simplistic, single-factor explanations -such as family breakdown, parental deprivation, urbanisation, industrialisation, social competitiveness, and consumerist myths- fail to account for the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon (Lupidi & Lusa, 2014). Adolescents facing unmet needs experience profound discomfort, often manifesting as rebellion, withdrawal, or antisocial conduct. Preventative and educational interventions must therefore address these needs holistically, encouraging communities to provide genuine support, while services act as cultural promoters. Central to this approach is the need to offer minors meaningful life prospects, hope, and guidance in making conscious and informed decisions. Empowerment strategies aim to foster self-worth, purpose, and social awareness, helping young people recognise their rights, responsibilities, and potential roles within society (Malteser, 2020).

Contemporary research emphasises that punitive measures, such as incarceration, often perpetuate marginalisation, diminish self-esteem, and hinder the development of responsibility in minors (Cardinali, 2017). Masucci (2022) highlights offender-victim mediation as a tool for promoting personality development and behavioural change, arguing that penal responses, particularly incarceration, are largely ineffective. Detention removes minors from their natural developmental and social contexts, limits socialisation, and can intensify deviant tendencies through labelling and stigma. Consequently, punitive measures should be reserved as last-resort interventions, while educational and rehabilitative strategies prioritise re-education and resocialisation. Re-education seeks to correct deficiencies arising from adverse upbringing, realign minors with socially recognised values, and promote internal

change in attitudes and behaviour (Macrillò and Balducci, 2021; Giostra, 2021). Effective juvenile justice interventions now emphasise personalised planning, involving the minor, family, environment, social services, and judicial authorities in a coordinated recovery process.

From an educational standpoint, there has been a gradual move away from behaviourist models centred on reinforcement, which assumed that deviant behaviour could be shaped primarily through rewards and punishments. Modern approaches recognise that behavioural change is contingent upon identity construction and reconstruction. Adolescents must be offered opportunities to adopt alternative cognitive and behavioural patterns before they can abandon maladaptive roles. Educational interventions should therefore address three interconnected dimensions: the relationship with the educator, the creation of change-oriented experiences, and the temporal and spatial structuring of educational opportunities (Dozza & Cerocchi, 2018). The educator-minor relationship is foundational, requiring emotional investment, the management of transference, availability, acceptance, and a supportive containment function. Stability and daily engagement in this relationship are essential for the internalisation of norms, rules, and authority.

Future-oriented planning helps minors recognise and test their abilities and competencies, reinforcing identity formation and agency. Goals and projects serve as instruments for exploring alternative ways of thinking and acting, allowing adolescents to internalise prosocial patterns. Communication must follow a circular model, whereby minors negotiate their own pathways, participate in rule-making, and transition from authority-centred obedience to internalised normative understanding (Bastianoni, 2021). Educator competence, reliability, availability, and the stability of the relationship increase the likelihood of authoritative caregiving, providing a reference framework that guides, supports, and regulates behaviour (Mariani, 2021).

Re-educational experiences focus on individuals with pre-existing patterns of meaning, often shaped by prior maladaptive contexts. Interventions introduce new social environments and structured experiences, allowing minors to engage with adults in supportive roles without substituting their agency. Daily shared activities enable educators to understand the interpretive frameworks that minors use to navigate reality and to design interventions that are responsive to these frameworks (Pandolfi, 2021). Participation in natural group settings allows the redefinition of interpersonal dynamics, promotes social cohesion, and integrates deviant members, thereby preventing exclusionary cycles previously experienced by youth. Group experiences also facilitate the acquisition of social skills and moral reasoning, offering opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, empathy development, and peer accountability.

The timing and duration of educational interventions are critical. Identity construction and behaviour change are medium- to long-term processes, requiring

sustained commitment and continuity. This temporal dimension often conflicts with economic constraints imposed on social services, where time-limited projects prioritise resource efficiency over pedagogical effectiveness. For interventions to succeed, educators must have sufficient time to foster stable relationships, structure meaningful experiences, and create environments conducive to reflection, skill acquisition, and prosocial experimentation.

In addition, the educator plays a mediating role between the individual and broader social systems. Through daily interaction, modelling, and scaffolding, educators can assist adolescents in developing emotional regulation, conflict-resolution skills, and moral reasoning. They provide a safe space for reflection and experimentation, enabling minors to rehearse prosocial behaviours and internalise socially valued norms. The educator also facilitates the transfer of learning from controlled interventions to naturalistic settings, helping minors navigate challenges in their peer and community contexts. By combining relational stability, structured experiences, and opportunities for agency, the educational approach addresses both the immediate behavioural concerns and the underlying developmental needs that contribute to deviance.

Ultimately, preventing peer deviance requires an integrative approach that recognises the complex interplay of individual, familial, peer, and community influences. Educational interventions must be personalised, relationship-centred, and sustained over time, while addressing broader social inequalities and providing meaningful opportunities for growth, achievement, and social inclusion. When implemented effectively, such interventions not only reduce antisocial and delinquent behaviour but also support the broader goal of fostering responsible, autonomous, and socially engaged citizens.

Sports as an Antidote to Youth Deviance

Adolescence is a period of profound change, often described as a time of metamorphosis during which individuals strive to recognise themselves as distinct and to assert their individuality. This developmental phase is characterised by both self-discovery and insecurity, as adolescents navigate the fear of social rejection and self-criticism. One manifestation of this struggle is the intense focus on the body, which becomes a site for experimentation and control through clothing, physical activity, piercings, tattoos, and dietary behaviours (Confalonieri and Olivari, 2021). Such practices often convey underlying psychological distress or serve as a call for help. For both males and females, bodily manipulation frequently reflects an attempt to regulate physical strength, muscularity, and the aggressive potential associated with maturation. Adolescents often ritualise these aggressive tendencies through structured activities such as sports, challenges, competitions, and performance arts, particularly contact sports, providing socially sanctioned outlets for their energy (Bellantonio, 2020).

Participation in sports contributes not only to physical development but also to cognitive and mental growth, personality development, and the formation of social relationships. Adolescents who engage in sports continually solve problems, strategize, and collaborate, which promotes balanced psychological development. However, restrictions imposed by parents or caregivers, particularly in response to failure, may inhibit participation and impede developmental benefits. Instead, it is crucial to understand individual performance profiles and to leverage sporting success as a motivational tool to enhance other domains, including academic performance (Casolo *et al.*, 2018).

Sports participation can foster resilience, self-awareness, autonomy, motivation, and cooperative skills. Human development encompasses cognitive, organic-motor, emotional-affective, and social domains, all of which are interconnected and mediated through physical activity (Montemurro, 2021). Empirical research consistently confirms that structured physical education supports normal and harmonious physical development while simultaneously contributing to psychological well-being and the formation of a complex, balanced personality. In contexts with prevalent deviant youth groups, such as gangs in Italy, organised sport offers a structured, health-promoting activity that can counteract deviance and promote prosocial behaviour.

Participation in sport has been shown to influence physical self-esteem and overall self-concept in children and adolescents. Begg *et al.* (1996) found that individuals with low physical fitness or high body composition indices often exhibit low perceived competence, diminished motivation, negative attitudes towards physical activity, and increased anxiety. Conversely, appropriate physical education can foster positive body image and self-esteem, encouraging lifelong engagement in healthy physical activity. Cameron and MacDougall (2000) demonstrated that young people involved in organised sports are less likely to engage in violent behaviour, substance abuse, or other risky behaviours, and are more likely to take responsibility for their health compared to non-participants.

Motor development, a central aspect of physical maturation, encompasses the acquisition of skills and abilities and is shaped by the interplay of neuromuscular maturation, physical growth, behavioural characteristics, prior movement experiences, and socio-cultural context. Sport provides structured opportunities to integrate these factors, promoting coordination, control, and adaptive behavioural responses. Beyond physical benefits, sport also serves as a protective factor against deviance, including drug use and suicide, addressing behaviours that represent serious risks to adolescent health and social integration (Kwan *et al.*, 2014).

Several theoretical frameworks attempt to explain the relationship between sport and juvenile delinquency. Hirschi's (1969) social bonding theory posits that stronger social bonds reduce delinquency risk, emphasising attachment, commitment, belief, and participation. Participation in sport reinforces these bonds by providing structured relationships with coaches, peers, and teams, while

promoting adherence to social norms and values. Agnew and Petersen (1989) and Hass (2001) further argue that sport strengthens each of these social bonding components. Similarly, the boredom theory (Schafer, 1969) and routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) suggest that structured engagement in sport reduces idle time and the opportunity for delinquent behaviour.

Sport is also theorised to “build character,” promoting virtues such as honesty, fairness, self-control, perseverance, cooperation, and moral judgement (Sage, 1983; Arnold, 2007). Participation in sports may increase initiative, emotional regulation, and self-esteem, which collectively reduce susceptibility to negative peer influence (Shields, 1995; Adachi and Willoughby, 2014). By internalising game rules and goals, adolescents practise ethical decision-making and prosocial behaviour, enhancing both individual and group-level competencies.

Empirical evidence on the protective role of sports against delinquency, however, is mixed. While some studies find negative associations between sports participation and delinquency (Sokol-Katz *et al.*, 2006), others report positive correlations (Segrave & Hastad, 1982) or no association (Gardner, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Competitive elements in sports, particularly in contact sports, may encourage immoral behaviour, such as cheating, aggression, or the use of performance-enhancing substances, which may mirror patterns observed in juvenile offenders (Kavussanu, Stranger & Ring, 2015). Team culture in certain sports can also promote alcohol consumption, further complicating the relationship between sport and deviance.

Critics argue that theories asserting that sport alone protects against delinquency are overly simplistic. Schafer’s (1969) claim that athletes are too busy to commit offences fails to account for underlying social, psychological, or familial risk factors. Similarly, the notion that character-building in sports transfers automatically to non-sporting contexts is questionable. Tappan (1949) emphasised that addressing juvenile delinquency requires interventions beyond recreation, asserting that highly organised activities alone cannot prevent criminal behaviour. Thus, sport should be viewed as a potentially beneficial component within a broader, multi-faceted strategy for delinquency prevention, rather than as a standalone solution.

In conclusion, the literature indicates that sports participation offers multiple pathways to support adolescent development, including physical, cognitive, emotional, and social domains. Sports can enhance resilience, self-esteem, social integration, moral reasoning, and adherence to societal norms. Yet, the relationship between sport and juvenile delinquency is complex, with contextual factors, type of sport, coaching quality, and peer group influences moderating outcomes. While participation in structured sport programmes can reduce delinquent behaviour in some cases, it is neither a guaranteed deterrent nor universally protective. Effective interventions should integrate sports within broader educational, familial, and community frameworks that address the underlying risk factors contributing to youth deviance.

Designing Prevention Measures for Deviant Behaviour in Youth: Inspiration for practices

Translating the literature reviewed above into concrete prevention measures requires a systemic and multi-level perspective. Evidence from family-, school-, peer-, and sport-based interventions suggests that effective prevention systems combine universal, selective, and indicated actions, coordinated across the main contexts of everyday life. Universal interventions are directed at the entire population of children and adolescents and aim to strengthen protective factors and social inclusion. Selective interventions target minors and families exposed to specific risk factors, while indicated interventions are designed for young people who already display deviant or antisocial behaviours and require intensive, personalised support. Within this framework, prevention services must be conceived not as isolated projects, but as interconnected components of a wider educational and social policy.

Family-based prevention services constitute a first strategic axis. Research on home-visiting programmes, parent management training, functional family therapy, and multi-level parenting support such as the Triple P model shows that reinforcing parenting skills can significantly reduce behavioural problems and later deviance. Early, flexible services are therefore needed to offer information, counselling, and structured training to parents in different developmental phases of the child. At a universal level, this may take the form of public campaigns and open-access parenting groups that normalise requests for help and disseminate non-violent, supportive educational practices. At a selective and indicated level, specialised teams can provide home visits, intensive family counselling, and evidence-informed programmes for families characterised by conflict, poor supervision, or previous involvement in the juvenile justice system. These services should focus on strengthening emotional communication, consistent limit-setting, monitoring of adolescents' activities, and the capacity to cooperate with schools and community services.

School-based services represent a second pillar of prevention. Longitudinal studies highlight that school failure, early school leaving, truancy, and behavioural problems in the classroom are strong predictors of later delinquency. At the universal level, schools can implement whole-school approaches that promote a positive climate, participatory rules, and inclusive teaching practices, while also investing in teacher training on classroom management and early recognition of behavioural and learning difficulties. Selective measures may include tutoring, remedial education, and targeted support for students at risk of dropout, combined with close collaboration with families. Indicated interventions can involve the creation of individualised educational plans for students already displaying serious behavioural problems, activated by multidisciplinary teams composed of teachers, psychologists, social workers, and educators. These teams can monitor progress,

coordinate with external services, and design pathways that integrate academic support, counselling, and social skills training.

A third area concerns peer- and community-based services, particularly for adolescents who gravitate around high-risk groups or informal street contexts. The literature warns against interventions that group only high-risk youths together, which can inadvertently reinforce deviant behaviours through mutual modelling and approval. Consequently, prevention services should favour settings where at-risk minors can be integrated into mixed groups that include peers with prosocial orientations. Youth centres, after-school programmes, and community projects can function as laboratories of citizenship, offering structured activities (homework support, workshops, volunteering, cultural and recreational initiatives) under the guidance of trained educators. Street outreach and mobile educational teams can maintain contact with informal groups in public spaces, build trustful relationships, and gradually connect adolescents to more structured opportunities, while respecting their need for autonomy and recognition. In all these services, the educator plays a key mediating role between the young person, the peer group, and the institutional network.

Sport-based educational programmes constitute a fourth strategic dimension. The evidence indicates that participation in organised sport can foster resilience, self-esteem, cooperative skills, and adherence to shared rules, but also that certain sporting environments may normalise aggression, risk-taking, or substance use. Prevention-oriented sport services must therefore go beyond mere recreational provision and explicitly integrate educational objectives. This implies clear pedagogical projects, formalised rules of conduct, and coaches trained not only in technical aspects but also in relational, motivational, and ethical competences. At the universal level, schools and municipalities can promote accessible sport activities linked to health education and citizenship. At selective and indicated levels, targeted sport projects can be offered to youths in marginalised neighbourhoods, in residential care, or under juvenile justice measures, integrating training sessions with mentoring, life-skills workshops, and opportunities for reflection on rules, responsibility, and conflict management. Partnerships between sports clubs, schools, social services, and justice institutions are essential to ensure continuity and coherence of these pathways.

Across all contexts, some transversal design principles emerge. Prevention services should be personalised, starting from an assessment of each minor's resources, needs, and life story, and should involve the young person and their family in defining goals and activities. Continuity over time is crucial: identity construction and behavioural change are medium- to long-term processes that require stable relationships with significant adults and structured experiences that can be repeated and re-elaborated. Coordination between services is equally important; integrated case management and regular inter-institutional meetings can reduce fragmentation and prevent contradictory messages to minors and families. Finally, prevention systems should include mechanisms for monitoring

and evaluating outcomes, using both quantitative and qualitative indicators, so that practices can be progressively adjusted in light of evidence.

In summary, the design of prevention measures for deviant behaviour in youth calls for an integrated system of services that operates simultaneously in family, school, peer, community, and sport contexts. Such a system must combine universal, selective, and indicated interventions; ensure the educational orientation of all actors involved; and promote the participation and empowerment of minors. By grounding service design in the empirical findings and theoretical reflections discussed in this article, it becomes possible to move beyond sporadic or exclusively punitive responses and to build coherent, rights-oriented pathways that support the development of responsible, socially integrated young citizens.

Conclusion

The adoption of a new phenomenological paradigm in the study of adolescent deviance allows us to conceptualise “behaviour” as an integral aspect of the adolescent as a subject, rather than as an isolated phenomenon. From this perspective, the engagement of a minor in antisocial behaviour is not determined by a structural or innate affinity for deviance, but rather by a subjectively constructed relationship with the world, the actions they perform, and their identification with a deviant group or lifestyle that provides meaning and inspiration. Scholars argue that it is essential to adopt an interpretative approach, asking why the young person joins deviant groups, the significance they attribute to these affiliations, and the subjective link between their actions and identity. This represents a direct refutation of the aetiological determinism inherent in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that certain individual or social conditions inevitably lead to deviance - a notion that remains contested in contemporary sociology.

Beyond theoretical frameworks, adolescent deviance emerges from a combination of internal and external factors. Personality traits, emotional development, and cognitive characteristics interact with environmental and situational influences, including family dynamics, peer networks, and socio-economic conditions. Prevention, therefore, must be understood as a comprehensive social response addressing both individual vulnerabilities and contextual stressors that may trigger deviant behaviours. While families are commonly regarded as the primary agents responsible for correcting adolescent deviance, their effectiveness depends on the quality of the family environment. Only families that provide consistent values, guidance, and adherence to social and legal norms can genuinely influence behavioural outcomes. In cases where family functioning is impaired, institutions play a crucial role in ensuring the rehabilitation, education, and positive social integration of minors.

Parental engagement is often limited by a lack of awareness, understanding, or capacity to respond to the distress and behavioural signals of their children. Parents may minimise or rationalise violent or antisocial acts, even when confronted by authorities, victims, or social services, unintentionally legitimising deviant behaviour. Additional challenges include competing career demands, lack of dialogue, and insufficient involvement in adolescents' developmental processes. Effective parenting therefore requires more than general moral exhortations; it necessitates active supervision, consistent behavioural guidance, and engagement in the slow, ongoing processes of adolescent maturation. Parents have a duty to cultivate balanced personalities capable of self-regulation, empathy, and respect for others, while correcting tendencies towards carelessness, recklessness, or antisocial conduct. This duty is most critical when a child's upbringing is deficient and evolves progressively as the child matures.

Schools represent the secondary socialisation environment, complementing family influence by exposing children to broader social interactions and norms. However, schools often struggle to meet the real needs of young people. Many academics advocate preventive measures that strengthen adolescents' moral frameworks, countering the decline of value internalisation during adolescence. Others argue for stricter punitive approaches, such as "zero tolerance" policies, lowering the age of criminal responsibility, or expanding juvenile detention. Yet another perspective emphasises educational and moral interventions capable of providing victims with a sense of justice while fostering the rehabilitation of offenders.

An effective approach begins with fostering "empathic literacy" in relation to social age peers and, where applicable, directing the energies of minors in residential or social service care toward prosocial engagement. Activities involving solidarity, assistance to vulnerable populations such as children with disabilities, and inclusion-oriented initiatives can channel adolescents' motivations constructively. Preventing early school leaving requires multifaceted strategies, including compulsory school attendance, enhanced supervision, and accountability measures for non-compliant parents. Participation in school and extracurricular activities - through full-day programmes, after-school sports, arts, theatre, music, drama, and digital skills - supports engagement, identity development, and social integration.

Early identification of at-risk children is crucial. Systematic monitoring of absenteeism, behavioural issues, and indicators of antisocial conduct allows for timely intervention by specialised teams, thereby addressing emerging deviance before it escalates. Reliance solely on repressive measures has long been criticised, as such strategies typically increase incarceration rates without reducing overall delinquency. An overemphasis on punishment often diverts resources from social prevention, undermining community-level interventions that can support at-risk families and children.

The social and economic disadvantages faced by many families- uch as poverty, unemployment, marginalisation, and exposure to habitual delinquency-highlight the need for targeted social inclusion initiatives. Investment in these areas must encompass not only children and adolescents, but also parents, adults, and community structures, utilising all available associations, services, and resources. Prevention systems should integrate insights from the sociology of law, deviance studies, and broader sociological research, providing a robust foundation for understanding the complex determinants of adolescent behaviour.

In sum, adolescent deviance should be approached as a multidimensional phenomenon, shaped by subjective meaning-making, familial context, educational experiences, and socio-cultural environments. Effective prevention and intervention strategies combine supportive parenting, structured educational opportunities, prosocial peer engagement, and community inclusion, rather than relying exclusively on punitive measures. By fostering skills, self-awareness, moral understanding, and social responsibility, these strategies aim to mitigate risk factors, reinforce protective mechanisms, and promote the positive development of minors. The overarching goal is not merely to reduce antisocial behaviour, but to cultivate resilient, responsible, and socially integrated individuals capable of navigating the challenges of adolescence while contributing constructively to society.

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