



SERIOUS CRIMES AMONG MINORS: CAUSES, TRENDS, AND PREVENTIVE MECHANISMS

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Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	8 th September 2025	<p>This research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of serious crimes committed by minors, drawing upon interdisciplinary perspectives from criminology, sociology, psychology, and education sciences. Using 2025 academic sources as the basis for the literature review, the study examines the determinants of violent and serious criminal behaviors among juveniles, including family dysfunction, social disorganization, digital influences, psychological instability, and the deterioration of educational environments. Particular emphasis is placed on the increasing severity of juvenile crime, the rise of group-based violent actions, and the growing involvement of younger adolescents.</p> <p>The paper also evaluates current prevention strategies implemented by educational institutions, law-enforcement agencies, social services, and digital safety programs, arguing for the need for an integrated preventive model that addresses the multi-causal nature of juvenile delinquency. The findings demonstrate that the most effective preventive strategy is a holistic system that combines family support, early psychological intervention, school-based prevention, and coordinated state policies.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains one of the most pressing socio-legal issues across the world, and recent social transformations have contributed to the increasing severity of crimes committed by minors. Globalization, economic hardship, urbanization, migration, the rise of online subcultures, and the expansion of digital access all play significant roles in shaping young individuals' behavior and moral development. In many countries, including those in Central Asia, a growing concern is the escalation of **serious crimes** among minors—offenses that involve violence, significant economic damage, or threats to public safety.

Research published in 2025 (Tileuov, 2025; Abdullayeva, 2025; Nazarov, 2025; Dösboyeva, 2025) highlights that the phenomenon is not only a legal matter but also a deep social and psychological issue. Minors differ from adults in cognitive maturity, emotional regulation, and susceptibility to peer influence, which makes them more vulnerable to engaging in impulsive or group-driven criminal activities.

This article aims to present an extended scientific exploration of:

1. the nature of serious crimes among minors;

2. the psychological, social, and structural causes;
3. the developmental features of young offenders;
4. the 2025 trends in juvenile crime;
5. comprehensive approaches to prevention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Global perspectives on juvenile serious crimes

International studies consistently show that serious juvenile crimes are linked to socio-economic deprivation, exposure to violence, lack of parental supervision, and limited access to quality education. A 2024–2025 global criminological review indicates that adolescents involved in serious crimes often come from marginalized communities characterized by high stress, poor housing conditions, and fragmented social support systems.

2.2. Regional scholarship (2025)

Recent academic publications from 2025 provide relevant insights:

- Tileuov (2025) analyzed socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile crime and highlighted the role of social inequality.
- Abdullayeva (2025) emphasized preventive strategies in family and school environments.



- Nazarov (2025) examined government-led prevention programs and identified gaps in institutional collaboration.
- Dösboyeva (2025) focused on psychological determinants such as emotional instability, trauma, and impulsivity.

These works collectively underscore the multifactorial nature of serious juvenile crimes.

2.3. Theoretical frameworks

Several theories help explain serious juvenile offenses:

- **Social Disorganization Theory:** crime emerges in neighborhoods lacking stable social institutions.
- **Strain Theory:** minors commit crimes when legitimate opportunities to achieve societal goals are blocked.
- **Social Learning Theory:** criminal behavior is learned from peers or digital environments.
- **Psychodynamic Theory:** unresolved trauma contributes to emotional dysregulation and violent behavior.
- **Routine Activity Theory:** opportunity and absence of capable guardians increase crime likelihood.

3. DEFINING SERIOUS CRIMES COMMITTED BY MINORS

3.1. Legal classification

Serious crimes typically include:

- aggravated assault;
- armed robbery;
- rape or sexual assault;
- homicide or attempted homicide;
- severe property crimes with major financial damage;
- participation in organized groups or violent gangs.

According to criminal codes in many jurisdictions, such crimes carry penalties ranging from 5 to 10 years of imprisonment, depending on severity, intent, and group involvement.

3.2. Developmental characteristics of minors

Juveniles differ from adults due to:

- underdeveloped impulse control;
- heightened emotional reactivity;
- limited capacity for risk assessment;
- strong susceptibility to peer pressure;
- incomplete moral reasoning.

These developmental factors make minors prone to spontaneous and group-driven violent actions.

4. MAJOR CAUSES OF SERIOUS CRIMES AMONG MINORS

4.1. Family-related factors

2025 research confirms that family environment is the strongest predictor of juvenile delinquency. Contributing factors include:

- parental neglect or absence;
- emotional, physical, or psychological abuse;
- divorce, domestic violence, and chronic conflict;
- lack of supervision;
- parental criminal history;
- economic hardship.

Unstable family structures produce emotional insecurity, which often manifests in aggression or deviant behaviors.

4.2. Socio-economic factors

Poverty, unemployment, and limited access to social services increase minors' vulnerability to crime. Adolescents growing up in low-income neighborhoods often encounter:

- peers involved in criminal activities;
- exposure to street violence;
- lack of community resources;
- normalization of illegal means of income.

4.3. Educational system failures

Schools play a critical preventive role, but insufficient psychological support, high dropout rates, bullying, and weak disciplinary structures contribute to delinquency. Schools lacking extracurricular activities or mentorship programs often fail to engage at-risk youths.

4.4. Psychological determinants

Many young offenders exhibit:

- impulsivity;
- emotional dysregulation;
- depression, anxiety, or trauma;
- low empathy;
- identity crisis.

When untreated, these conditions can escalate to violent behavior.

4.5. Digital influences and cyber risks

The rapid spread of digital technologies presents new risks:

- exposure to violent or criminal online content;
- recruitment into extremist groups;
- cyberbullying;
- participation in online challenges promoting violence;
- darknet involvement.

In 2025, digital platforms became a major influencing factor in group-based juvenile crimes.

5. TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SERIOUS JUVENILE CRIMES



5.1. Increase in group crime

Most serious offenses involve two or more minors. Group dynamics reduce individual moral responsibility and increase risk-taking behavior.

5.2. Rising levels of violence

Studies from 2025 report an increase in crimes involving weapons, physical injury, and severe psychological harm.

5.3. Younger offenders

A worrying trend is the participation of 12–14-year-olds in serious crimes, often influenced by older peers or online recruitment.

5.4. Digital coordination of crimes

Many groups now use encrypted messaging apps to coordinate actions, making detection more difficult.

6. PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

6.1. Family-centered intervention

Recommended strategies include:

- parental education programs;
- early childhood psychological screening;
- strengthening family counseling services;
- increasing social support for at-risk families.

6.2. School-based prevention

Schools must adopt:

- strong psychological support units;
- anti-bullying programs;
- mentorship and peer leadership initiatives;
- expanded arts, sports, and technical clubs;
- regular monitoring of at-risk students.

6.3. Community and law-enforcement cooperation

Prevention requires:

- youth patrol programs;
- collaboration between schools and police;
- community centers offering supervised activities;
- rehabilitation programs for first-time offenders.

6.4. Digital safety and cyber-prevention

Programs should include:

- digital literacy education;
- parental training on monitoring tools;
- cooperation between authorities and tech companies;
- early detection algorithms for risky online behavior.

7. CONCLUSION

Serious crimes among minors are complex phenomena shaped by the intersection of psychological, social, economic, and digital factors. The analysis of 2025 research shows that such crimes increasingly involve violence, group participation, and younger offenders. Prevention cannot rely on punitive measures

alone; instead, it requires multifaceted approaches that address underlying causes.

Effective prevention strategies must integrate:

- stable family environments,
- supportive school systems,
- mental health services,
- secure digital spaces,
- coordinated community actions.

Only an integrated, evidence-based model can significantly reduce the incidence of serious juvenile crimes and support the healthy development of young generations.

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