



SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CRIMINOLOGICAL FACTORS OF TRANSPORT CRIMES COMMITTED BY YOUNG DRIVERS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the main social-psychological and criminological factors contributing to transport crimes committed by young drivers. Young drivers represent one of the most vulnerable groups in road traffic because limited driving experience is often combined with impulsiveness, overconfidence, insufficient risk perception, emotional instability, and susceptibility to peer influence. The study analyses the influence of individual psychological characteristics, family environment, peer groups, driver education, social attitudes, and road conditions on unlawful and dangerous driving behaviour. Particular attention is paid to speeding, dangerous overtaking, distracted driving, aggressive driving, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and failure to comply with traffic regulations. The thesis also considers preventive measures aimed at reducing transport crimes among young drivers. It is argued that effective prevention requires an integrated approach combining psychological assessment, improved driver training, practical risk-oriented education, family and community involvement, differentiated preventive supervision, and continuous criminological monitoring. The development of responsible driving behaviour should begin during the training process and continue after obtaining a driving licence.



KEYWORDS

Young drivers, transport crimes, road safety, criminology, social psychology, traffic violations, dangerous driving, prevention, driver education, risk behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Road traffic safety is one of the important issues of modern society. The rapid growth of the number of vehicles, urbanisation, increased mobility, and the expansion of transport infrastructure have created new opportunities for social and economic development. At the same time, these processes have also increased the number of traffic accidents, administrative violations, and transport-related crimes. A significant proportion of such offences is committed by young drivers. Young drivers are usually understood as persons who have recently obtained a driving licence or who have limited practical driving experience. Their participation in road traffic is associated with a number of specific risks. In many cases, young drivers possess sufficient theoretical knowledge but lack the practical experience necessary to assess dangerous situations correctly. They may also demonstrate excessive confidence in their driving abilities, a desire to prove themselves, emotional impulsiveness, and a tendency to underestimate the possible consequences of their actions. Transport crimes committed by young drivers should not be explained only by technical mistakes or insufficient knowledge of traffic rules. Such offences are influenced by a complex combination of psychological, social, criminological, educational, and environmental factors. Therefore, the study of these factors is important for developing effective preventive measures and improving road safety. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the social-psychological and criminological factors of transport crimes committed by young drivers and to identify effective directions for their prevention.



The objectives of the thesis are as follows:

- to examine the psychological characteristics of young drivers;
- to identify the main social factors influencing dangerous driving behaviour;
- to analyse the most common types of transport offences committed by young drivers;
- to determine the role of family, peer groups, and driver education;
- to develop preventive recommendations aimed at reducing transport crimes.

MAIN PART

Psychological Characteristics of Young Drivers

The behaviour of a driver on the road is influenced not only by knowledge and technical skills but also by psychological characteristics. Young drivers often have limited experience in recognising and responding to dangerous situations. They may not be able to predict the behaviour of other road users or correctly evaluate the distance, speed, and direction of moving vehicles. One of the most important psychological factors is impulsiveness. An impulsive driver tends to make rapid decisions without considering their possible consequences. This may lead to sudden overtaking, speeding, abrupt lane changes, ignoring traffic lights, or aggressive reactions to other drivers. Impulsive behaviour becomes especially dangerous in stressful or emotionally tense situations. Another important factor is overconfidence. Some young drivers believe that they possess excellent driving skills even when they have limited experience. Overconfidence may encourage them to drive at excessive speed, perform risky manoeuvres, or ignore weather and road conditions. Such drivers often believe that accidents happen only to other people and that they are able to control any situation.



Inadequate risk perception is also common among young drivers. They may understand that certain actions are prohibited but fail to recognise the real danger associated with them. For example, a young driver may consider driving at high speed to be exciting rather than dangerous. Similarly, using a mobile phone while driving may be perceived as a minor violation, although it significantly reduces attention and reaction time. Emotional instability can also influence driving behaviour. Anger, frustration, anxiety, excitement, and fatigue may reduce the ability to make rational decisions. Aggressive driving is often connected with emotional reactions to traffic congestion, criticism, competition, or perceived disrespect from other road users.

CONCLUSION

Transport crimes committed by young drivers represent a serious social and criminological problem. Their causes are connected with psychological characteristics, social environment, family influence, peer pressure, insufficient driving experience, alcohol and drug use, fatigue, inadequate driver education, and weak risk perception. The most common dangerous behaviours include speeding, aggressive driving, dangerous overtaking, distracted driving, driving under the influence, illegal racing, and failure to comply with traffic regulations. These actions may lead to serious injuries, deaths, property damage, and criminal liability.

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