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# Peculiarities of the Investigation of Juvenile Drug Trafficking Offences

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## Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine the mandatory requirements for the investigation of drug-related crimes imposed by the age category of the accused. The study involved the following methods: information analysis, systemic approach, descriptive analysis, pragmatic approach and prognosis. It was concluded that tactical techniques, stages, investigative situations in the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes are used in the same cases and in the same order as in relation to other categories of crimes. It is indicated that the following mandatory requirements to be met during the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes: 1) establishment of all necessary circumstances of the case of this category; 2) ensuring mandatory participation of an expert in forensic psychology at all stages of the investigation; 3) ensuring mandatory participation at all stages of the investigation of parents or other legal representatives of the minor, representatives of the Children's Service and juvenile police; 4) ensuring psychological and informational safety of the minor; 5) ensuring the most humane and tolerant attitude towards juvenile offenders.

**Keywords:** special knowledge; drug-related offenses; investigative mechanism; investigative situations; accused suspect.

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## Peculiaridades de la Investigación de Delitos de Narcotráfico Juvenil

### Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue determinar los requisitos obligatorios para la investigación de delitos relacionados con drogas impuestos por la categoría de edad del imputado. El estudio involucró los siguientes métodos: análisis de información, enfoque sistémico, análisis descriptivo, enfoque pragmático y pronóstico. Se concluyó que las técnicas tácticas, etapas, situaciones investigativas en la indagación de delitos juveniles relacionados con drogas se utilizan en los mismos casos y en el mismo orden que en relación con otras categorías de delitos. Se indica que los siguientes requisitos obligatorios que deben cumplirse durante la investigación de delitos juveniles relacionados con drogas: 1) establecimiento de todas las circunstancias necesarias del caso de esta categoría; 2) garantizar la participación obligatoria de un experto en psicología forense en todas las etapas de la investigación; 3) asegurar la participación obligatoria en todas las etapas de la investigación de los padres u otros representantes legales del menor, representantes del Servicio de Niños y la policía juvenil; 4) garantizar la seguridad psicológica e informativa del menor; 5) asegurar la actitud más humana y tolerante hacia los menores infractores.

**Palabras clave:** conocimiento especial; delitos relacionados con drogas; mecanismo de investigación; situaciones de investigación; sospechoso acusado.

### Introduction

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, drug addiction became one of the biggest global problems in the world, which currently affects every country without exception. Drug trafficking offences (these include production, transportation, sale, distribution, use, etc.) are no less widespread and extremely dangerous.

In addition to the fact that these offences affect the health of the population as a whole and individuals in particular, these offences are also a determinant for the commission of other types of crimes (crimes against property, against human honour and dignity, sexual freedom and inviolability, etc.). For example, it was established that there is a direct relationship between the use of psychoactive substances and criminal behaviour (Sharma *et al.*, 2016); between drug use and sexual crimes (Wen *et al.*, 2022), and also the impact of drug crimes, in particular drug use, on recidivism in general is studied (Papp *et al.*, 2016).

It is noted that the process of criminal prosecution for crimes related to illegal drug trafficking or use is extremely complex, which is primarily related to the interrogation of the accused (Vladova-Nedkova, 2018), detection and proof in cases on criminal offenses of this type (Matic Boskovic, 2020).

The investigation of drug-related crimes involving a juvenile suspect or accused raise additional difficulties related to the search for the types of punishments alternative to imprisonment in cases of minor drug-related crimes (Lilley, 2016), as well as the ineffectiveness of the application of juvenile system of methods and tactics of pre-trial investigation with adult accused (Loeffler and Grunwald, 2015). Besides, the criminal justice system of specialized courts for drug-related crimes committed by juveniles has also failed to justify itself and is ineffective (Caulkins and Reuter, 2017).

This determines a fairly large number of studies in this field, in particular, related to the search for new, more effective and universal measures to combat drug-related crime among juveniles (Charlier, 2015), including through the judicial system (Mustafa *et al.*, 2020).

## 1. Literature Review

The problem of holding juveniles criminally liable for committing drug trafficking offences is connected with many factors. This is why a large number of modern research in this area deals with the activities of judges in drug-related crimes against juvenile offenders in order to create new programmes, in particular, treatment as part of the punishment and during the investigative process (Stein *et al.*, 2015). The low efficiency of specialized courts in cases involving crimes related to drug trafficking and use is noted (Sullivan *et al.*, 2016), and attention is drawn to the imperfection of the judicial system in relation to drug offenders, including juvenile accused (Rhode, 2019).

Special attention is paid to racial disproportionality in the investigation and punishment of juvenile offenders who have committed drug crimes (Lyons *et al.*, 2013). Some researchers focused on the racial and ethnic bias toward juvenile drug offenders (Leiber *et al.*, 2017) and the effect of race on arrest in drug trafficking cases (Ojmarrh, 2020).

It is especially relevant to study the issues of holding children criminally liable for drug-related crimes in the event that their guilt in committing drug trafficking offences not related to their use is not proven (Taqwim *et al.*, 2021). It is also noted that the insufficient evidence base and inappropriate assessment of the accused (Blair *et al.*, 2015), as well as the inadequacy of the judicial investigation mechanism in cases of juvenile drug-related offences (Long and Sullivan, 2017) are one of the problems during the pre-

trial and judicial investigation of juvenile delinquency related to illegal trafficking and use of drugs.

The mechanism of application of certain tactics and methods is also still insufficiently developed. The computer equipment and software products in the investigation of drug-related crimes, in particular with juvenile accused (Zelena, 2020) is poorly studied. Finding evidence and obtaining testimony in the detection and investigation of juvenile drug-related crime (Zharmagambetova *et al.*, 2019) are inadequately explored.

The individual techniques in the investigation of drug crimes (for example, hair analysis in drug use crimes (Sasaki *et al.*, 2021) and the stages of investigation of drug-related crimes in general (Pyrih and Chernetska, 2017) are also poorly studied).

All the foregoing may indicate, on the one hand, the imperfection of the national drug legislation (Bachmaier Winter and Demleitner, 2018) and the insufficient effectiveness of expanding criminal sanctions while simultaneously reducing procedural protection (Jensen and Gerber, 1996). In this regard, attention is focused on the need to develop promising tools in the forensic investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes with the use of nanotechnology to detect the involvement of the accused in drug use (Zharmagambetova *et al.*, 2019).

At the same time, the need for informational and psychological security in all spheres of a juvenile's life is emphasized from the point of view of how to make the actual investigation of cases concerning a juvenile drug offender safe (Salakhova *et al.*, 2019). The observance of the constitutional right to a defence attorney during judicial proceedings in drug-related cases for juvenile accused (Kirschenheiter, 2017), as well as the exclusive role of a lawyer in the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes (Meneses-Reyes, 2018) are also emphasized.

But, despite a fairly large number of studies on the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes, a number of issues related to the clear development of mandatory requirements for the investigation procedure of this category of criminal offences regarding the use of certain tactics and methods, as well as the effectiveness and consequences of their application in relation to juvenile accused remain unresolved (Loeffler and Grunwald, 2015).

## 2. Aim

In view of the relevance of the issue under research, as well as the unresolved issues related to the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes, the aim of this study will be to determine the mandatory requirements

imposed by the age category of the accused. The aim involved the following research objectives:

- determine the features of the stages of the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes;
- establish typical investigative situations;
- analyse typical investigative actions and special methods.

### **3. Methodology and Methods**

This study was carried out in a clear sequence, following the stages of studying the issue, based on the logic of the presentation of the material for achieving the aim set in the article and fulfilling the defined research objectives. The stages were the following:

- determining the topic and outlining the scope of the research;
- search and selection of literature and references;
- selection and study of statistical data;
- analysis of the material presented in the selected literature and evaluation of the results of these studies;
- identification of unresolved issues related to the peculiarities of the mechanism of investigation of juvenile crimes related to the trafficking and use of drugs;
- determining the aim of the article;
- drawing conclusions and providing practical recommendations for resolving the issues selected for research;
- outlining the prospects for further research in the specified area.
- This study was based on statistics on juveniles who were convicted of drug offences in selected countries, as well as statistics on drug use by juveniles in European countries (30 countries). The provisions of international and national regulatory legal acts, which determine the procedure for investigating juvenile drug trafficking offences, were studied in detail.
- The regulatory framework of the study consisted of the provisions of the following international legal acts:
- the UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 09 December 1975;

- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile (“The Beijing Rules”) of 29 November 1985;
- Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners of 14 December 1990;
- the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984;
- Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment of 09 December 1988;
- the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 04 November 1950;
- the European Prison Rules of 11 January 2006;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989;
- Disability Rights Convention of 13 December 2006.
- The following methods were used in this study to achieve its aim:
- the *information analysis* was used to analyse information sources and draw conclusions on the specifics of methods and tactics in the investigation of juvenile drug -related crimes, as well as opening prospects for further research in this area;
- *the system approach* was used to analyse the conclusions regarding the ineffectiveness of the existing mechanism of investigation of crimes in the sphere of drug trafficking, as well as proposals and recommendations for its improvement;
- *the anamnestic method* was used to collect data on the number of juvenile drug-related crimes;
- *the descriptive analysis* was used to survey the references for studying the peculiarities of the investigation of juvenile drug trafficking offences;
- *the pragmatic approach* to data collection and analysis was used to determine the main requirements for the investigation of juvenile crimes, in particular drug-related crimes;
- *the forecasting method* was used to develop proposals and recommendations for the improvement and universalization of the mechanism of investigation of juvenile drug trafficking and use offences.

#### 4. Results

The juvenile delinquency rates in the world are quite high. In particular, according to official statistics, about 2.08 million (8.33%) teenagers aged 12-17 use drugs every month in the USA; about 5,000 Americans between 15 and 24 die each year from a drug overdose (National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, 2020). In 2018/2019, 1,872 juveniles aged 15-17 were convicted of drug offences in England and Wales (Statista, 2021). In Ukraine, 74 juveniles were convicted of drug crimes in 2016, and 94 juveniles – in 2017 (Slutska, 2018).

This is an extremely negative trend, since juveniles who commit drug trafficking offences are, so to speak, the main source for replenishing the number of adult drug offenders. The drug use is characterized by the highest quantitative indicators among drug-related crimes. Their number varies depending on the country, but their share among the illegal use of different types of drugs is still quite large (see Table 1 for the example of 30 European countries (Mounteney *et al.*, 2015).

**Table 1: Share of juveniles (15-16 years old) who use different types of drugs (%).**

Country	Cocaine	Amphetamine	Ecstasy	Cannabis
Belgium	2	2	2	21
Bulgaria	4	5	4	22
Czech Republic	1	2	3	42
Denmark	2	2	1	18
Germany	3	4	2	19
Estonia	2	3	3	24
Ireland	3	2	2	18
Greece	1	2	2	8
Spain	3	2	2	28
France	4	4	3	39
Croatia	2	1	2	18
Italy	1	1	1	16
Cyprus	4	4	3	7
Latvia	4	4	4	24
Lithuania	2	3	2	20
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-



Hungary	2	6	4	19
Malta	4	3	3	10
Netherlands	2	1	4	27
Austria	-	-	-	14
Poland	3	4	2	23
Portugal	4	3	3	16
Romania	2	2	2	7
Slovenia	3	2	2	23
Slovakia	1	1	-	16
Finland	1	-	2	12
Sweden	1	-	1	5
Great Britain	2	1	2	22
Turkey	-	2	2	4
Norway	1	1	1	5

Source: This table is the author's development based on the available statistics.

Holding the guilty persons criminally liable with the appointment of an appropriate punishment is one of the main directions of combating the spread of drug-related crimes among juveniles. The problems arise in the process of holding juveniles criminally liable for drug trafficking offences. The reason is that the process of investigating drug-related crimes is associated with certain complications, which relate primarily to the identification and investigation of the factual background of the case, obtaining evidence, and the need to involve forensic experts.

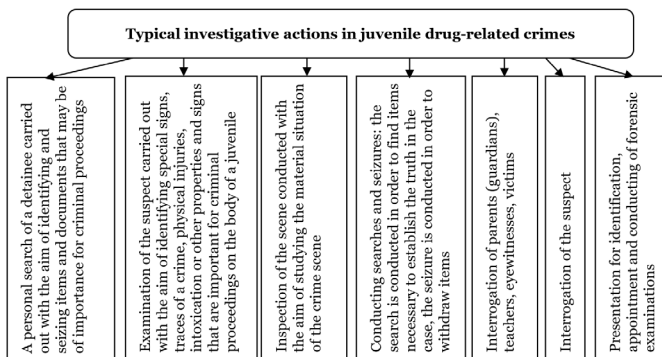
This is especially true for the investigation of crimes related to the illegal drug circulation, in which the suspects (accused) are juveniles – in these cases, additional mandatory procedural actions appear, which require the use of special procedural methods and tactics in carrying out investigative actions during the investigation of these crimes.

It is obvious that the investigation of any crime as a whole consists of separate investigative actions, which represent a certain activity of investigators carried out in accordance with the criminal procedural law. The investigative action itself is a measure provided for and clearly regulated by the criminal procedural legislation.

It is carried out with the purpose of gathering evidence through a searching and discovery method by a specially authorized official who carries out criminal proceedings in a specific case, which is combined with

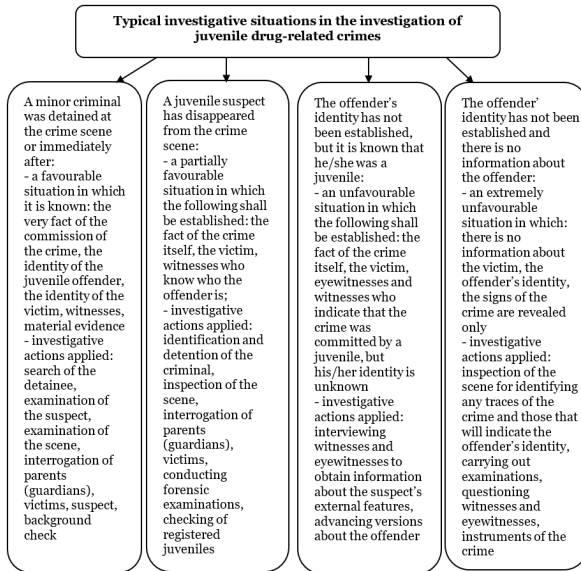
the possibility of applying procedural coercion enshrined at the legislative level (Kolomiets, 2019). There are seven typical investigative actions in the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes (see Figure 1).

Investigative actions are used in relevant situations when investigating juvenile drug-related crimes, and are the main method of obtaining and collecting evidence in the case. Therefore, they are the main means of establishing the truth in criminal proceedings regarding drug circulation involving a juvenile accused. These situations vary in complexity and the need to apply a particular investigative tactic (see Figure 2).



**Figure 1: Typical investigative actions in juvenile drug-related crimes**

Source: This figure is the author’s development based on the literature survey

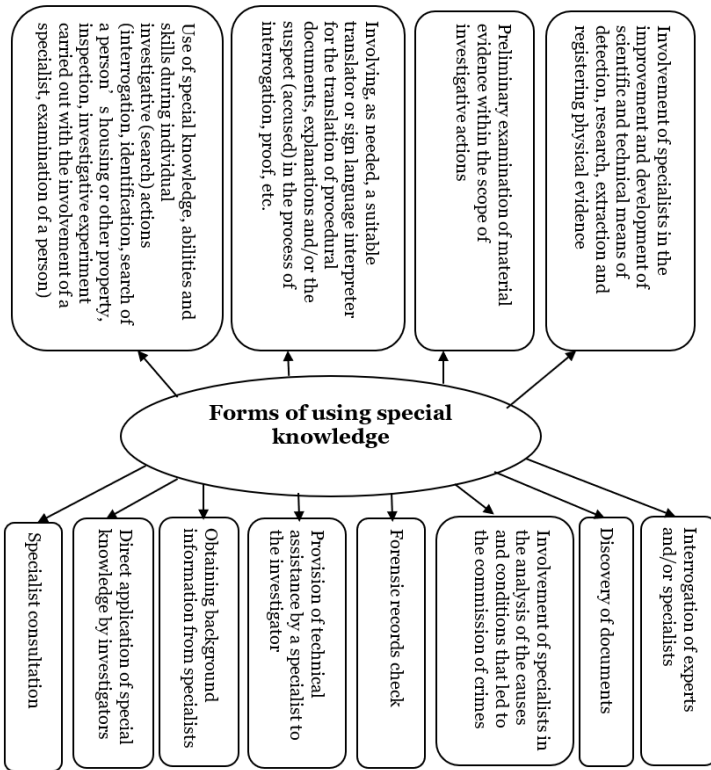


**Figure 2: Typical investigative situations in the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes**

Source: This figure is the author's development based on the literature survey.

Investigative actions, although typical for almost all types of crimes, have their specifics depending on the type of crime being investigated. In particular, with regard to juvenile drug trafficking offences, their investigation requires the use of a number of special knowledges that contribute to establishing the truth in the case, as well as obtaining and researching real, reliable evidence.

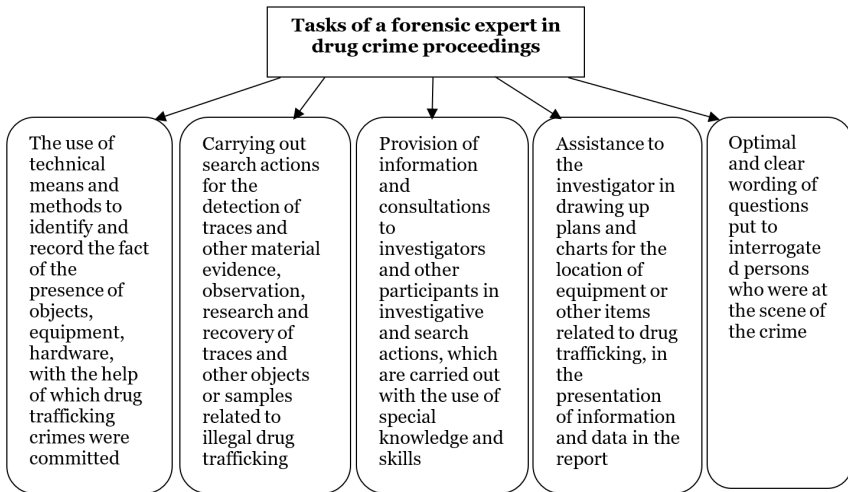
Special knowledge is a set of theoretical and practical knowledge, abilities and skills in the relevant field of science, acquired as a result of professional training and professional experience, used in the process of investigating crimes, as well as their prevention and counteraction (Colodras and Sylenok, 2021). Special knowledge is used in clearly defined procedural forms (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Forms of using special knowledge in the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes**

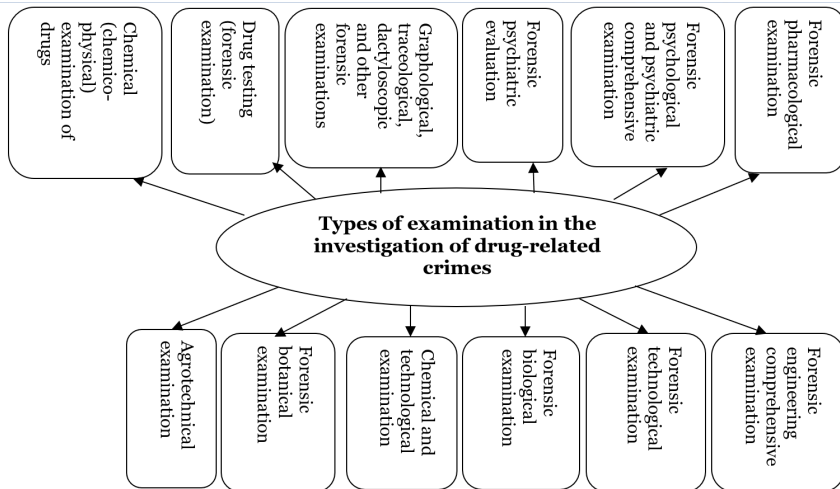
Source: This figure is the author’s development based on the literature survey.

The main forms are the involvement of forensic experts to provide opinions during criminal proceedings under their competence, and the consultation of an expert (specialist) who has the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities in pre-trial and judicial investigation. At the specified stages of the investigation, these experts perform various tasks provided for by the procedural legislation (see Figure 4), which is carried out as part of various types of examinations in the investigation of juvenile drug trafficking offences (see Figure 5).



**Figure 4: Tasks of a forensic expert in criminal proceedings for juvenile drug-related crimes.**

Source: This figure is the author's development based on the literature survey.



**Figure 5: Types of examination in the pre-trial investigation of drug crimes**

Source: This figure is the author's development based on the literature survey.

In general, the investigation of juvenile drug trafficking offences is carried out in the same manner as in other categories of cases. However, special rules must be followed at all stages of the investigation of juvenile drug-

related crimes. There are certain requirements for the proceedings in this category of cases provided for by the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules). The vast majority of the provisions of this document relate to the detention of juveniles in places of confinement, but this document also states that the investigation in the studied category of cases should be carried out only by those investigators who have the appropriate competence and special knowledge in the field of developmental (adolescent) psychology.

Part I, Article 3(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”

The initial stage of the investigation of juvenile drug trafficking offences shall involve the establishment of standard data and information (the fact of crime; the guilt of the accused person, the form and type of guilt, the motive and purpose of the crime; the type of damage and procedural costs in criminal proceedings; circumstances that affect the severity of the committed act and punishment, characterize the person of the accused, affect the course and closure of criminal proceedings, etc.). But the following circumstances must also be established:

- complex and comprehensive information about the juvenile accused (age — date of birth, level of intellectual and psychological development, health condition, presence/absence of mental illness or disorder or mental retardation, character and temperament, socialization level, ability to communicate with peers, proneness to conflict and other social individual traits);
- intellectual and volitional features characterizing the juvenile’s attitude to the illegal act committed by him/her, the level of awareness of the nature of the act and attitude to its consequences;
- social and living conditions (living conditions of the juvenile, family relations, settled/disadvantaged family, participation of parents in the juvenile’s life), as well as the level and quality of upbringing of the juvenile by parents or persons who replace them;
- information on whether a drug-related crime was committed by a juvenile alone (possible presence of accomplices, presence of an instigator, coercion to commit the crime). This information must be true, complete and comprehensive.

The matter is also about the fact that parents or other legal representatives of the juvenile, as well as representatives of the Children Service and the Juvenile Criminal Police are mandatory participants in criminal proceedings

involving a juvenile accused (suspect). It is also necessary at all stages of the investigation of such crimes to involve a forensic psychological expert, who finds out the following main points during the investigation:

- the juvenile's general psychological development level;
- the juvenile's emotional sphere and range of interests;
- the juvenile's logical and intellectual abilities and his/her ability to navigate in various life situations;
- the influence of age characteristics on the activities of juveniles and their psychological processes;
- correspondence of the indications with the junior's developmental age and intellectual development;
- presence/absence of influence on the juvenile in his/her testimony;
- the junior's ability to objectively perceive and evaluate circumstances that are important in the proceedings, as well as specific events;
- presence/absence of developmental delay;
- whether the juvenile could be fully aware of his/her actions and control them;
- correspondence of the development of a junior with his/her age.

In general, the participation of an expert psychologist in criminal proceedings in the juvenile drug trafficking cases should be reduced to the following:

- establishing contact and interaction with the juvenile in order to obtain information about the commission of a crime, to find out what was committed and for what reasons;
- provision of emotional and psychological protection of a juvenile accused who is in an unusually difficult life situation for him/her.

There are certain requirements for the interrogation in criminal proceedings as an investigative action. Interrogation of juveniles also has its own characteristics:

- the question must be formulated in a form that is understandable for the juvenile;
- the environment during the interrogation should be calm, rude provocative behaviour of the juvenile shall be stopped;
- the duration of the interrogation should be such that the juvenile does not get tired and adequately answers the questions;

- personal contact must be established with the juvenile by studying his/her hobbies and interests.

There are also certain differences regarding the application of preventive measures in proceedings in juvenile drug-related crimes. It is about the fact that, along with other preventive measures, juveniles are transferred for the supervision of parents, guardians or custodians, and those juveniles who are brought up in a children's institution – for the supervision of the administration of that institution.

It is worth adding that ensuring the informational and psychological safety of a juvenile shall be one of the requirements for the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes. Security in any field is a state of protection of the vital interests of a person, society and the state from any internal or external threats. Regarding the informational and psychological security of a juvenile accused in criminal proceedings, it is manifested in the following:

- the state of preservation of the juvenile's psyche during the investigation of the crime;
- preserving the psychological integrity of the juvenile;
- normal psychological interaction of the juvenile accused with the environment, and a stable psychological condition;
- preservation of the juvenile's ability to eliminate threats and prevent their occurrence in interaction with the environment;
- maintaining an environment free from manifestations of psychological violence in interaction with a juvenile, which will contribute to meeting the needs for personal and confidential communication in the investigation process.

Therefore, such conditions must be created in the process of investigating juvenile drug-related crime that will ensure the possibility of meeting juvenile's psycho-intellectual and informational needs, depending on individual characteristics, goals and age socialization; the use of technologies that will correspond to the physiological, psychological, intellectual and social characteristics and patterns of development of a juvenile.

So, the mechanism of investigation of juvenile drug trafficking offences should include not only certain tactical actions of the investigation, but also compliance with certain requirements set forth by the provisions of international and national regulatory legal acts, as well as those that are not yet provided for at the legislative level, but should be enshrined.



## 5. Discussion

There is no doubt about the need to develop new and improve existing mechanisms for investigating juvenile offences related to drug trafficking and use. First of all, there is a need to develop new methods and tactics for investigating this type of crime, which is associated with the use of the latest technologies, both from the perspective of their use for obtaining evidence and processing it (Lad *et al.*, 2016), and from the perspective of their study as an evidence base for obtaining reliable information about the commission of drug-related crimes (Zelena, 2020).

The proposal to direct the educational environment for the purpose of resocialization and prevention of drug-related crime among juveniles to create informational and psychological security of the suspected (accused) juvenile who is being investigated (Salakhova *et al.*, 2019) is worth mentioning. Such an approach will enable the development of a juvenile's personality as a mentally and morally healthy individual, while ensuring counteraction to the spread of drug-related crime among juveniles.

As regards the observance of the fundamental rights and freedoms of a child who is an accused during the investigation of crimes related to the trafficking and use of drugs, the position on the legislative enshrinement of the inadmissibility of biased treatment of such persons on racial, national or religious grounds (Leiber *et al.*, 2017) is worth supporting.

A biased attitude violates the juvenile's right to equality before the law, a fair and impartial trial, encroaches on the juvenile's honour and dignity. On the other hand, these discredits law enforcement agencies investigating drug-related crimes, and the judicial system in general.

At the same time, it is difficult to fully agree with the view regarding the ineffectiveness of punishing juveniles accused of drug-related crimes, and regarding a higher effectiveness of the rehabilitation of a person in the cases of illegal use of drugs, rather than holding a person criminally liable and applying legal sanctions (Taqwim *et al.*, 2021). Likewise, a means of reducing the number of drug-related crimes and drug users in society cannot be as effective, if arrest or other types of restriction (deprivation) of freedom are not used (Charlier, 2015; García *et al.*, 2021).

Despite the fact that criminal prosecution is the most severe measure of influence on the offender, failure to apply it in legitimate cases can create an illusion of impunity among offenders. This, in turn, will contribute to an increase in the number of crimes. So, the proposition on complete decriminalization of certain types of drug trafficking offences is also debatable (Glenn, 2009). But the expansion of sanctions along with the reduction of procedural protection (Jensen and Gerber, 1996) and the artificial reduction of the role of the defence attorney during the

investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes (Kirschenheiter, 2017) is also unacceptable.

There are also doubts about the truth of the conclusions regarding the lack of connection between crimes related to drug trafficking and use and recidivism (Papp *et al.*, 2016) and other types of criminal behaviour (Sharma *et al.*, 2016). It has already been pointed out that drug-related crimes are closely related to other types of crimes, in particular property crimes, which are usually committed repeatedly, as they provide an opportunity to illegally obtain funds for the use of drugs. Quite a large number of sexual crimes are committed against the background of illegal use of drugs or substances (Wen *et al.*, 2022; Shcherbina *et al.*, 2022).

At the same time, we fully agree with the proposal regarding the need to develop new tactics in the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes (Vladova-Nedkova, 2018). This will contribute to the comprehensive detection, search and proof of drug trafficking offences, which is accompanied by certain difficulties, while simultaneously ensuring the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of suspects (accused) (Matic Boskovic, 2020). But it should be noted that the mechanism of investigation of drug trafficking offences is imperfect not only because of insufficient testimony or difficulties in obtaining the evidence (Zharmagambetova *et al.*, 2019). It is also related to the need to take into account the peculiarities in the investigation of this type of juvenile crimes at the stages of the investigation and when applying certain methods.

## Conclusions

The conducted research leads to the conclusion that the tactical methods, stages, investigative situations of the investigation of juvenile drug trafficking offences are applied in the same cases and in the same order as in relation to other categories of crimes. The main tactical actions in criminal proceedings for juvenile drug trafficking offences are:

- personal search of the detainee, examination of the suspect, examination of the scene, searches and seizures, interrogations of parents (guardians), teachers, eyewitnesses, victims, interrogation of the suspect, presentation for identification, appointment and conducting of forensic examinations.

Based on the research results, it was determined that the following mandatory requirements must be observed during the investigation of this type of juvenile crime:

- 1) establish all the necessary circumstances (comprehensive and comprehensive physiological-social and psychological-psychological

information about the juvenile accused; intellectual and volitional characteristics; social and living conditions; the level and quality of upbringing of a juvenile by parents or persons who replace them; information on whether a drug-related crime was committed by a juvenile);

- 2) ensuring the mandatory participation of a forensic psychological expert at all stages of the investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes, with the main tasks of establishing contact and interaction with a juvenile and ensuring the emotional and psychological protection of the juvenile accused; 3) ensuring the mandatory participation of the parents or other legal representatives of the juvenile, as well as representatives of the Children's Service and the Juvenile Criminal Police at all stages of the investigation of these crimes;
- 4) ensuring informational and psychological security of a juvenile;
- 5) ensuring the most humane and tolerant treatment of the juvenile accused at all stages of the investigation;
- 6) inadmissibility of torture, mental or physical violence, humiliation and other types of encroachments on the honour and dignity of the juvenile accused.

This study is not comprehensive and does not resolve all the issues associated with special tactical actions and methods of investigation of juvenile drug-related crimes. The proposition to ensure the informational and psychological security of a juvenile accused in criminal proceedings opens up prospects for further research in this area. This will contribute to the improvement of both the legislative framework and the practical implementation of its provisions on ensuring the normal mental development of juveniles and their socialization/resocialization.

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