

УДК 159.9

DOI: 10.35750/2713-0622-2024-1-85-92



Recidivists rehabilitation through interpersonal interaction



Bayarbaatar Puntsagsuren

Center for the Study of the Execution of Judicial Decisions of the Research Institute of the University of Internal Affairs of Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)

bayarbaatar405@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0006-2214-0057

Abstract

Introduction. The issues of re-socialization of individuals serving criminal punishment in Mongolian correctional institutions are discussed. The area of the research is the problem of reducing the number of repeat offenses due to interpersonal problems as well as interaction and communication skills of individuals being under criminal punishment. The subject of the study is to prove the importance of interpersonal interaction skills in counteracting recidivism. The statistics of repeated crimes in the Republic of Mongolia are described and social and psychological problems of this category of individuals are analyzed. Theoretical approaches to prevent recidivism are examined. The author states the necessity of empirical analysis of socio-psychological causes, including interpersonal interaction leading to recidivism. **The method of research** was sociological survey, and the technique is a questionnaire to study the skills of interpersonal interaction. **Results.** Interpersonal skills of 1.416 recidivists confined in open and closed regime prisons under the General Executive Agency of Court Decision were assessed by a special test, and the assessment results were analyzed using SPSS 26 software. Skills study revealed socio-psychological factors influencing repeated criminal behavior and offer practical recommendations to reduce the risk of recidivism. **Conclusion.** The findings of the study proves the need to conduct socio-psychological work with inmates to develop their interpersonal communication skills.

Keywords

inmate, preparation for release from prison, social work in prisons, inmate rehabilitation, rehabilitation and training

For citation: Puntsagsuren, B. (2024). Recidivists rehabilitation through interpersonal interaction. *Russian Journal of Deviant Behavior*, 4 (1), 85–92. doi: 10.35750/2713-0622-2024-1-85-92.

Реабилитация рецидивистов посредством формирования навыков межличностного взаимодействия

Баярбаатар Пунцагсурэн

Центр исследования исполнения судебных решений

Научно-исследовательского института Университета внутренних дел Монголии

(Улан-Батор, Монголия)

bayarbaatar405@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0006-2214-0057

Аннотация

Введение. Обсуждаются вопросы ресоциализации лиц, отбывающих уголовное наказание, связанное с лишением свободы, в исправительных учреждениях Монголии. Областью исследования выступает проблематика снижения количества повторных преступлений, связанная с межличностными проблемами и навыками взаимодействия и коммуникации лиц, подвергнутых уголовному наказанию. Предметом исследования является обоснование значения навыков межличностного взаимодействия в противодействии рецидивной преступности. Описывается статистика рецидивных преступлений в Республике Монголия, рассматриваются социальные и психологические проблемы данной категории лиц. Исследуются теоретические подходы к предупреждению рецидивной преступности. Делается вывод о необходимости эмпирического анализа социально-психологических причин, в том числе межличностного взаимодействия, побуждающих к рецидивным преступлениям. **Методом исследования** выступает социологический опрос, а методикой является анкета изучения навыков межличностного взаимодействия. **Результаты исследования.** Изучены межличностные навыки 1416 заключенных-рецидивистов, содержащихся в тюрьмах открытого и закрытого режимов при Главном исполнительном агентстве судебных решений Монголии. Навыки были оценены с помощью специального теста, а результаты оценки проанализированы с помощью статистической программы SPSS 26. Изучение навыков позволило выявить социально-психологические факторы, повлиявшие на повторное преступное поведение, сделать практические выводы и дать некоторые рекомендации по снижению риска рецидива. **Выводы** исследования обосновывают необходимость проведения с осужденными социально-психологической работы, нацеленной на формирование у них навыков межличностной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова

заключенный, подготовка к освобождению из тюрьмы, социальная работа в тюрьмах, реабилитация заключенного, реабилитация и обучение

Для цитирования: Пунцагсурэн, Б. (2024). Реабилитация рецидивистов посредством формирования навыков межличностного взаимодействия. *Российский девиантологический журнал*, 4 (1), 85–92. doi: 10.35750/2713-0622-2024-1-85-92.

Throughout our lives we engage in antisocial behavior in some way. A child crying to get what he wants by throwing a tantrum is an example of a unique behavior. Any children have sufficient aggressive and self-interest to gain success (Myagmar, 2016, p. 41).

Ironically, this behavior is not always well preserved in human memory, as approaching the transition to adulthood, we face with the absolute truth of living on equal terms with other people and society rather than our self-interest. However, for a small group of people, by continuing to commit anti-social

crimes repeatedly, they grow to be mature criminals or repeat offenders (Berghuis, 2018). Until now, humanity has been trembling in fear of the negative social phenomenon called crime, no less than natural disasters, and has made various attempts to protect human lives and materials properties from crimes (Munkh-Erdene, 2021, p. 38). At the same time, the attempt that is considered to be the most effective is to reintegrate a prisoner into society¹ within the framework of laws and legal acts.

In the history of imprisonment in Mongolia, multi-faceted measures have been implemented in the field of rehabilitation and education of criminals. After the People's Revolution, in August 1924, the third meeting of the People's Party of People's Republic of Mongolia tackled specific issues on improving the living conditions in prisons (Dashzeveg, 1976, pp. 37–39). Since this time, actions to integrate criminals back to social life began to be enforced in the terms such as, training prisoners, providing them with labour skills, correcting, rehabilitation and rehabilitation.

The main focus reflected in the concept of criminal liability² and sentencing policy within the framework of the currently effective legal regulation is aimed at preventing prisoners from re-offenses through punishment, rehabilitation and preparing them for release and to positively impact them (Altangerel, 2018, p. 130).

This concept was not created out of nothing. Many scholars and researchers had been studying and discussing about repeat offences (Fazel et al., 2023; Henriksen, Bengtsson, & Henriksen, 2024; Calderoni et al., 2024). Professor N. Jantsan defined that: "Recidivism or repeat offenses means that a person who had been convicted of a specific crime commits a new crime before the end of the conviction term". He stated that recidivism or re-offense is a clear manifestation of the behavior of a criminal, a reflection of persistent negative views and habits in one's consciousness, and it is a complex social and legal phenomenon (Jantsan, 2000, p. 149).

Doctor and professor N. Jantsan classified recidivism or reoffending as criminal law recidivism, criminological recidivism, and prison recidivism. However, prison recidivism is defined as serving two or more sentences in a prison. Criminological recidivism is defined as having committed two or more crimes and not having been convicted of any of them, while prison recidivism is defined as serving two or more sentences in a prison (Jantsan, 2000, p. 209).

Also, based on the number of times a offender has been convicted, the offender is classified as one time offender and repeat offender. One time offender is the one who committed a crime and convicted again after being convicted once before, while a multiple repeat offender is convicted three or more times by the court. It considered that the pattern of antisocial behavior of a repeat offender is quite persistent.

According to the 2022 survey of the Statistics and Analysis Department of the Penitentiary Service, the number of people who committed crimes and were convicted is increasing, and the number of people who commit repeat offense after being released from prison is not decreasing (Altangerel & Bayarbaatar, 2022, p. 112). The repeat offenders cover 52.6 percent of the total prisoners, of which 1,011 cases or 22.5 percent were 2nd time offenders, 548 or 13 percent were 3rd time offenders, and 805 or 17.9 percent were 4th or more than 10th time offenders. This statistics show that the repeat offense rate dominates the overall imprisonment number, which means that there is a demand to analyze this issue thoroughly.

Compared to a person who has committed crime once, a repeat offender deeply developed anti-social behavior; is self-centered; does not have a socially beneficial mission, and his or her personal

¹ Article 195.5 of the Mongolian Law on Enforcement of Court Decision defines "A prisoner is a convict who is serving a prison sentence".

² Article 5 of the Criminal Law 5.1-1 "The purpose of criminal liability is to restrain the person and legal entity who committed the crime, to restore the rights violated due to the crime, to compensate for the damage, to prevent the crime, and to rehabilitate the person who committed the crime".

interests and demand are fueled by negative attitudes and limited in scope; shows no respect towards legally protected values; and extremely irresponsible regarding his or her social commitments.

There is a consensus among the prison psychologists and social workers that many of these repeat offenders have weakly developed moral senses and communication skills, such as the ultimate life mission that is beneficial to society, resilience against obstacles and challenges, relentless perseverance and endurance.

It cannot be denied that as the criminal activities of repeat offenders continue to increase, their anti-social views and habits tend to strengthen, so the optimal legal regulation for the rehabilitation of prisoners who repeat crimes is one of the issues of today's society (Garritsen et al., 2024).

Rehabilitation and correctional education of prisoners is a complex issue that is implemented through intersection of law, psychology, pedagogy, and social work sciences (Berghuis, 2018). Therefore, more attention should be paid to reducing the negative effects of the criminal's behavior, cultivating a positive character in them, and shaping their mind into a law-abiding citizen using possibilities to use communication skills is a priority.

While the criminal imprisonment system plays a vital role in protecting society from crime, and that rehabilitation activities enable them to become a productive member of society. Based on this concept it is important to build a coalition unit that support the prison system.

The conventional nature of social work, which has been addressing a certain segment of society, such as a target groups or the groups at-risk group, needs to be broadened and changed. Scientific community concludes that as social work is a state and social service it should be accessible to all prisoners.

Since 2017, the concept of prisoner rehabilitation was first reflected in the legislative acts of Mongolia, and it was enacted to provide professional social work services aimed at supporting, empowering, and developing the prisoner's conscious participation in social relations, as well as the sense of law-abiding³.

However, when analyzing the results of prisoner rehabilitation works, not much progress has been made, and the fact that prisoners who have re-offended make up more than 50 percent of the total prison population is explained by the fact that when designing rehabilitation and specialized programs the individual behavior patterns and communication skills are not taken account or considered.

Recent study on repeat offenders showed that the majority of them are young people who are at the age of active learning about social relations, and aspiring to create material and spiritual wealth and achieve their goals.

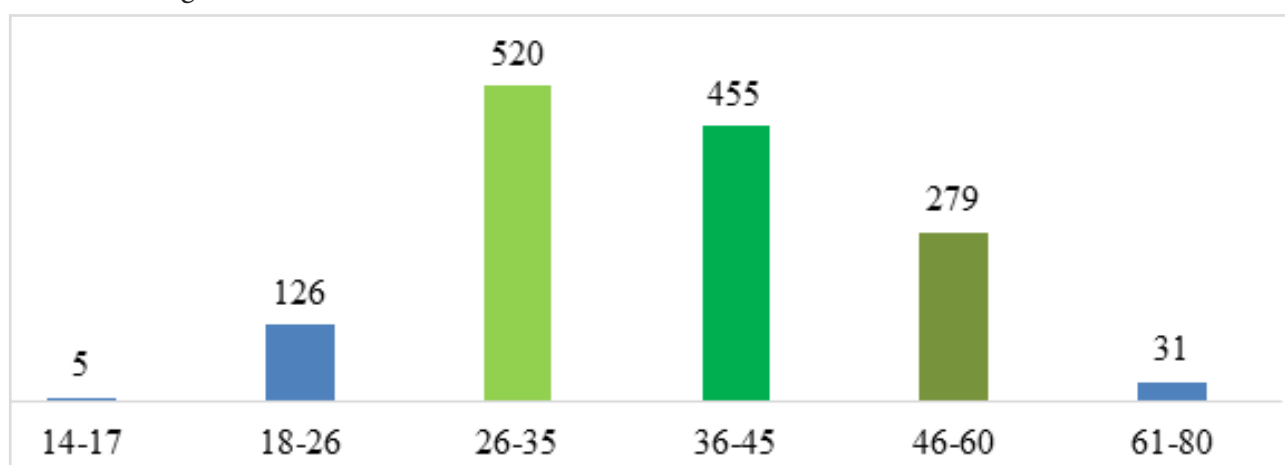


Fig. 1. Age structure of reoffenders

³ Articles 218 and 219 of the Law on Enforcement of Court Decision "rehabilitation work, form and organization of rehabilitation work".

Among the 1416 prisoners aged 14-80 who have reoffended, 61-81 years age group covers 2.2 percent, 14-17 years age group 0.4 percent or the least in percentage, and 26-35 years age group covers 36.7 percent or makes up the biggest population among the reoffenders. Further, above the age of 35, the intensity of reoffending rate decreases as age increases. It can be seen that biological age has the main effect on reoffending.

Criminologists have divided the age category of criminals into 3 stages based on age-related growth and development. It is divided as: childhood to adulthood, adolescence to and maturity, and old age. The study detected how age affects the behavior of starting to commit crime, reoffending and quitting crime (Zumberlham, 2022, p. 123).

The Law on the Execution of Court Decisions regulates that rehabilitation works for prisoners have to be organized in a different ways, taking into account the crime nature, personality and age features of prisoners, which was the first ever judicial framework the offers solutions to facilitate rehabilitation activities in more effective and differentiated ways.

According to the age classification of Mongolians and mental development theory by psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (Ragelienė, 2016), the current age structure of the prisoners show that they reoffend during their prime years or at most important and decisive youth age, when they are supposed to work and engage in employment effectively.

Erik Erikson mentioned in his work that if a person is not properly guided at this prime age stage, he may develop a life-long attitude of cynicism, selfishness, and disrespect for others. In other words, they can grow up to be a chronic criminal who is inclined towards reoffending. During the research, the majority of the prisoners who reoffended expressed that they were psychologically unstable, weak, inconsistent, aggressive, had high alcohol consumption, had mental abnormalities in childhood, or had a domineering, neglectful, overly needy, indulgent, and overly caring upbringing in a family with a lack of love (Cauffman et al., 2023).

Thus, according to the results of the research, for the age group of 26-35-year-old reoffenders, rehabilitation activities should be aimed to improve communication skills, self-expression capabilities, team work and survival skill by combining the rehabilitation work with more creative and labor trainings. there is reason to believe that it is appropriate.

Rehabilitation work for relatively young people under the age of 26 should aim at ensuring their family stability, improving their livelihood competence, providing advices, preparing for change, influencing positively and supporting them.

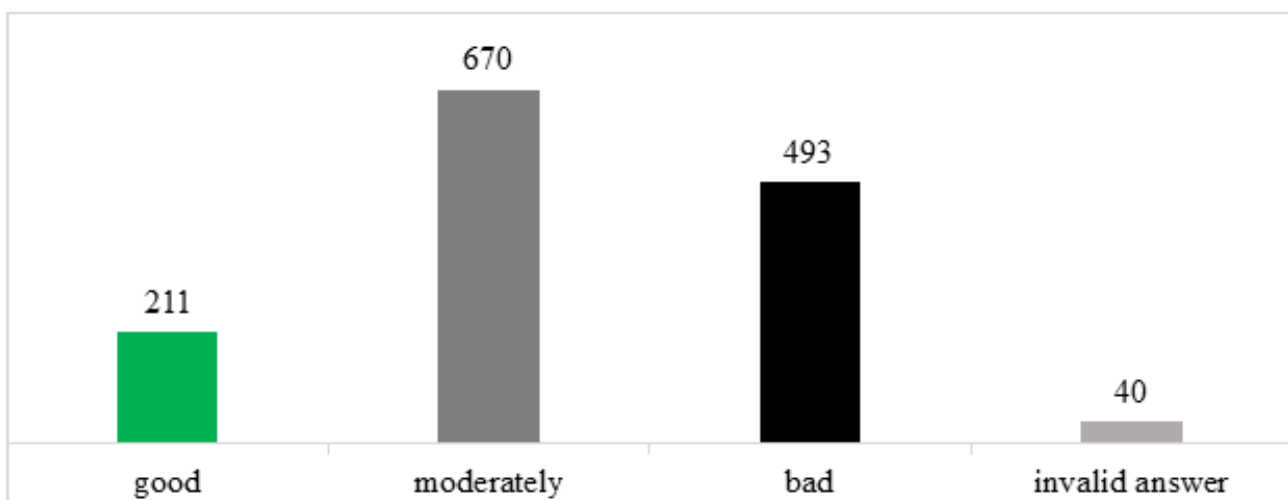


Fig 2. Level of communication skills of reoffenders

14.9 percent of the 1416 respondents or 211 had good communication and interpersonal skills, 47.3 percent or 670 need to pay attention on their communication skills, and 34.8 percent had poor communication skills, which shows that more than 80 percent of the respondents should concern about their interpersonal and communication skills.

Communication is a link between two or more parties to exchange information and influence each other, and is manifested through speech and actions.

Scientists conclude that 70-80 percent of success in a person's life depends on communication skills, and the abilities to manage oneself, live together with others, work in a community, and organize activities are directly related to human interpersonal skills. This shows prisoners' communication skills must be assessed before rehabilitation begins in order to ensure its effectiveness.

If the social worker or psychologist does not determine the communication skills of the prisoner, the prisoner will have more conflicts during communication with other people, his sense of life purpose and value will degrade or he will get used to prison, he will lose self-confidence or increase social fear, he will be indifferent to the thoughts and feelings of other people or their humane nature will decline, he will experience difficulty sharing feelings, or anxiety, which hinders rehabilitation activities.

It has a direct impact on a person's ability to become a good citizen of society, the effectiveness of prison sentences, and community support for rehabilitation activities.

According to the 2022 study of Mongolia's imprisonment system, it can be seen that the number of people who commit crimes and are convicted is increasing, and the number of reoffending by people who have been released from prison is not decreasing.

After analyzing these 1416 prisoners, 47.3 percent or 670 prisoners needed to pay attention to their communication skills, while 34.8 percent or 493 prisoners had poor communication skills, while 82.1 percent of tend to solve problems with their criminal habits and had a probability to commit crimes again.

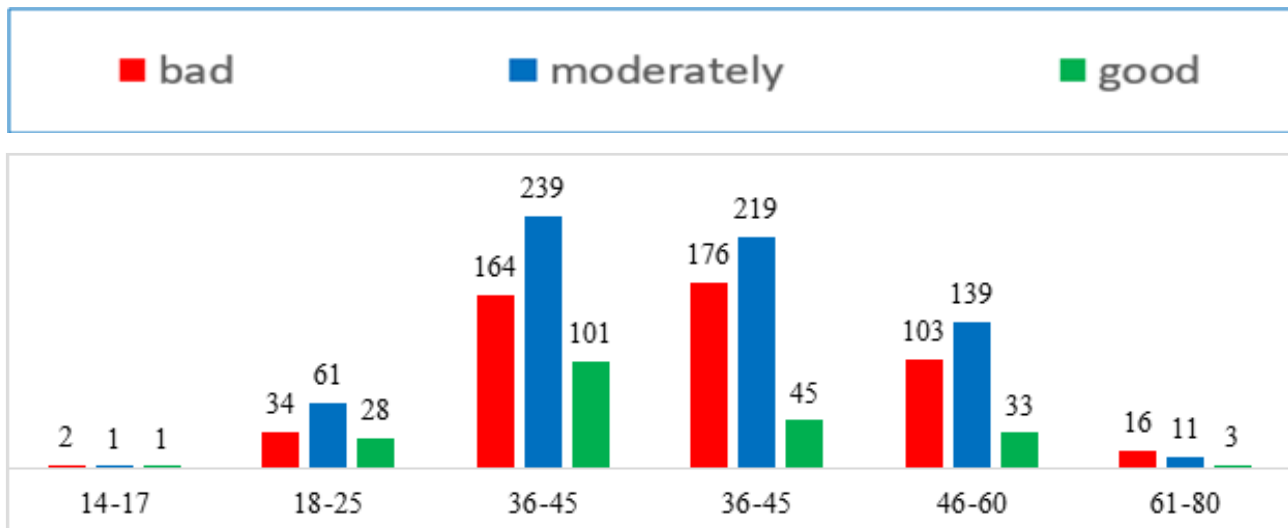


Fig 3. Indicators comparing prisoners' communication skills by age category

It was found that 50% of prisoners aged 14-17, 77.2% of age group 18-25, 79.5% of age group 36-45, 88% of of age group 46-60, and 90% of age group 61-80 had poor communication skills and needed more attention. As can be seen from the above indicators, as the age of the prisoner increases, the indicator that poor communication skills need attention increases. Because poor communication skills can be explained by years of living with recidivism as a lifestyle because someone didn't pay attention to fix it.

A detailed analysis of communication skills reveals that 78.6 percent have a poor ability to make themselves understood during communication, or tend to be awkward and confused, and 82.1 percent have poor listening skills and have lack of capacity to understand and analyze given information fully.

83.4 percent of the respondents have a low level of ability to express and accept opinions, which means that the prisoner has low self-confidence, optimism, and the ability to correctly solve the problems that arise, and 72.9 percent have a poor ability to cope with emotional reactions such as the four main emotions: happiness, fear, sadness, and anger.

Despite the fact that there are a fair amount of training and advocacy activities organized in the field of rehabilitation of prisoners and they reach a big number of prisoners, the rate of prisoners who commit crimes fail to decrease from 52.6 percent of the total number of prisoners. This is due to the lack of implementation of appropriate programs for communication skills (Orjiakor et al., 2017).

It's time to pay attention to the fact that social workers, psychologists, and non-governmental organization employees who organize rehabilitation services and training for prisoners are unprofessional and have no experience in providing professional services (Garritsen et al., 2024).

Therefore, within the scope of improving the quality and availability of training and rehabilitation services for prisoners, it is necessary to pay attention to the capacity building of social workers and psychologists to conduct research and analysis, to introduce programs and best practices designed for the personal development of experienced and qualified social workers into practical activities, to design rehabilitation level evaluation and scoring system to evaluate the prisoner's sociability, to decide whether to release the prisoner based on the results.

References

- Altangerel, B. (2018). *Exercising Prison Sentence*. Ulaanbaatar: University of Internal Affairs Mongolia.
- Altangerel, B., & Bayarbaatar, M. (2022). *Analysis on Rehabilitation Activities Carried Out in Prisons*. Ulaanbaatar: University of Internal Affairs Mongolia.
- Berghuis, M. (2018). Reentry Programs for Adult Male Offender Recidivism and Reintegration: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62 (14), 4655–4676. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X18778448>
- Cauffman, E., Gillespie, M. L., Beardslee, J., Davis, F., Hernandez, M., & Williams, T. (2023). Adolescent Contact, Lasting Impact? Lessons Learned From Two Longitudinal Studies Spanning 20 Years of Developmental Science Research With Justice-System-Involved Youths. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 24 (3), 133–161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15291006231205173>
- Calderoni, F., Comunale, T., van der Geest, V., & Kleemans, E. R. (2024). Comparing the criminal careers of organized crime offenders in Italy and the Netherlands. *European Journal of Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708241232980>
- Dashzeveg, B. (1976). *Pedagogical Aspect of Correctional Labour*. Ulaanbaatar: Court decision enforcement agency.
- Fazel, S., Burghart, M., Wolf, A., Whiting, D., & Yu, R. (2023). Effectiveness of Violence Prevention Interventions: Umbrella Review of Research in the General Population. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25 (2), 1709–1718. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231195880>
- Garritsen, K., Janković, M., Masthoff, E., Caluwé, E. D., & Bogaerts, S. (2024). The Role of Dynamic Risk and Protective Factors in Predicting Violent Recidivism: Intellectual Ability as a Possible Moderator? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 68 (2-3), 207–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X221079695>
- Henriksen, A. K., Bengtsson, T. T., & Henriksen, T. D. (2024). Crime Prevention, Support or Punishment? Introducing an Ambiguous System of Youth Justice in Denmark. *Youth Justice*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14732254241239016>

- Jantsan, N. (2000). *Criminology*. Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian Police Academy.
- Mongolian Law on Enforcement of Court Decision defines*. (2017, 06.09.). Retrieved from: legalinfo.mn: <https://legalinfo.mn/mn/detail/12701>
- Munkh-Erdene, B. (2021). *Theory of Criminology Studies*. Ulaanbaatar.
- Myagmar, O. (2016). *Lectures on Human Development Psychologies*. Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian National University of Education.
- Orjiakor, C. T., Ugwu, D. I., Eze, J. E., Ugwu, L. I., Ibeagha, P. N., & Onu, D. U. (2017). Prolonged incarceration and prisoners' wellbeing: lived experiences of awaiting trial/pre-trial/remand prisoners in Nigeria. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 12 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2017.1395677>
- Ragelienė, T. (2016). Links of Adolescents Identity Development and Relationship with Peers: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry = Journal de l'Académie canadienne de psychiatrie de l'enfant et de l'adolescent*, 25(2), 97–105.
- Zumberlham, D. (2022). *Theory of Criminology*. Ulaanbaatar.

About the author:

Bayarbaatar Puntsagsuren – Researcher and Doctorate student of the Center for the Study of the Execution of Judicial Decisions of the Research Institute of the University of Internal Affairs of Mongolia.

Информация об авторе:

Баярбаатар Пунцагсурэн – научный сотрудник, аспирант Центра исследования исполнения судебных решений Научно-исследовательского института Университета внутренних дел Монголии.

The author declare no conflicts of interests.

Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Submitted March 12, 2024; **Approved after reviewing** March 29, 2024; **Accepted** April 28, 2024

Поступила в редакцию 12.03.2024; **Одобрена после рецензирования** 29.03.2024;
Опубликована 28.04.2024