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Mass Media as Crime Determinants

Проаналізовано криміногенність інформаційно-психологічного впливу телебачення на свідомість людини, охарактеризовано методи психологічного впливу, наприклад, такі як ефект праймінгу та культивування емоцій, розглянуто механізм впливу інформації від початку її сприйняття до завершального етапу – використання особою «отриманих знань» для формування моделей соціальної поведінки. Запропоновано заходи протидії криміногенного впливу телебачення на свідомість людини.

Ключові слова: засоби масової інформації, криміногенність, інформаційно-психологічний вплив, телебачення, протидія злочинності.

Проанализировано криминогенность информационно-психологического влияния на сознание человека, охарактеризовано методы психологического влияния, например, такие как эффект прайминга и культивация эмоций, рассмотрен механизм влияния информации от начала её восприятия до завершающего этапа – использования лицом «полученных знаний» для формирования моделей социального поведения. Предложено меры противодействия криминогенному влиянию телевидения на сознание человека.

Ключевые слова: средства массовой информации, криминогенность, информационно-психологическое влияние, телевидение, противодействие преступности.

The authors have analyzed criminal situation of information and psychological impact of television, namely the influence of harmful information flow of the mass media on the mind of a person, which motivates him/her to criminal activity, or vice versa - raises a tendency to become a victim of a crime. Television in this article is considered as the mass media source, which disseminates information of various kinds, including criminogenic one. The problem nature of the article is criminogenic informational and psychological impact of television on the mind of a person and the possibility of negative effects of such an impact, as well as legal and organizational ways to address this issue. For revealing the content of criminogenic factor of information and psychological influence the authors of the article have characterized the methods of psychological influence, for example such as the effect of priming and cultivation of emotions; they have considered the mechanism of information influence from the beginning of its perception to the final stage – the use of “received knowledge” to form the models of social behavior. Perception by an individual of asocial models of behavior under the influence of television has been considered in the diverse way. So the person may not have intentions to commit a crime without specific preconditions (personal, economic, cultural), in this case it is impossible to state the degree of criminogenic influence of television on a person without individual characteristics.

Existing mechanisms for combating criminogenic influence of television on a person have been studied in the article, basically a series of prohibitions consolidated at the level of legislation and control function of the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting, which supervises over the compliance of broadcasting companies with laws in the field of protection of public morals. But considering the present situation such measures are not enough. Countering criminal situation of information and psychological impact should be organized in several ways, namely, - legal, social and cultural, scientific. It is necessary to develop a clear

national strategy aimed at minimizing or eliminating the criminogenic factors of the mass media and the results of the impact on an individual and society.

Keywords: *mass media, crime situation, information and psychological impact, television, crime counteraction.*

Mass communication is a powerful source of information, through which the information and psychological impact on both a wide audience and an individual is carried out. We should add that the danger in this case is the fact that the information containing the propaganda of aggression, harmful models of social behavior to society (criminal awareness of committing specific crimes), affects both the person's awareness, including legal one, i.e. presses gradually and in doses, and the moral and ethical criteria. Thus, in terms of the development of information society consideration of mass media deserves separate attention as a determinant of crime, it is primarily about information and psychological impact of television (hereafter – TV) on the criminal situation.

Actualization, analysis and search for solutions of problematic criminological issues of mass media was done by such scholars as: R. Ankhimova, V. Vynievskiy, V. Dromin, Yu Hololobova, H. Herbner, P. Vinterkhoff-Shpurk, S. Feshbakh, L. Betskovich, H. Schiller, S. Kara-Murza, A. Ovcharov, N. Osipova and others.

The following scholars took part in studying the problems of information and psychological impact on human legal awareness: A. Zelinskyi, D. Mayers, M. Pozner, Ye. Pavlova, S. Thompson, J. Bryant and others.

Television – is the production of audiovisual programs or acquisition (packaging) of acquired audiovisual programs and their spreading regardless of the technical means of distribution [1]. There is no objections to the fact that a large number of scenes of aggression and violence broadcasting on TV, cause (determine) the brutal and often criminal behavior of a person influencing the criminal situation. TV has a wide arsenal of methods of information and psychological pressure. “Priming effect” is the perception of information that causes a person to have certain associations with the revised and creates a sense of reality of events. A person watching scenes of violence, associates them with the events of his/her life experience, which affects the mental state of a person. This effect can cause undesirable antisocial behavior of the audience. One of the worst consequences of this effect is crimes-

copies. The cultivation theory explains the impact of media violence on regular viewers, leading to distorted perception of reality [2, p. 66-70]. Thus, TV can cause a person increased anxiety, exaggerated demonstrating uncontrolled criminal activity in society (impact on victimity) or, on the contrary, to establish impunity in the minds of people and encourage it up to criminal activity. For example, the emphasis of TV on inaction of law enforcement agencies, their low professional training and commission of official crimes creates negative evaluation of law enforcement system in the mind of a person and motivates to criminal activity. But the criminogenic of mass media is not conditioned by its “evil nature”, but like most of phenomena has its own reasons, which are dependence of mass media, subjectivity of personnel, the pursuit of popularity [3, p. 39].

Viewers perceive manifestations of violence and remember them as potential examples of future behavior. Under certain circumstances people with latent aggression follow this model. If aggressive behavior is socially successful, that is, the aggressor reaches the objective, then it becomes the standard of his/her behavior [4, p. 201]. In this case there is a causing link of crime determination. TV itself cannot push for committing the offense, provoke misconduct, but under certain circumstances, i.e. in case of joint interaction with internal (wrongful intents, imbalance, etc.) and external (environment, predicament, etc.) factors, one can talk about potential threat of a crime commission.

Special attention has to be paid to the impact of TV on minors, since in the age of 14-16 years the so-called “individual minimum” is formed and “minimum of social maturity of a person” is formed in the age of 16 to 18 years. However, it is in these formative ages minors are extremely vulnerable, especially regarding the perception of information they receive. Herewith the media products with elements of violence and cruelty creates patterns of behavior of this category of persons, including illegal one [4, p. 88]. Minors make up a high risk group because TV affects their educational process, as a result, propensity for crimes is increased.

The issue of criminogenic of mass media in Ukraine as in many countries remains relevant since the last century, but still we cannot solve it. Ukrainian legislation norms established the mechanism for combating the negative impact of the mass media. So, **it is prohibited:** unlicensed products distribution of pornographic and sexual nature (there is also a ban on its sale to minors), dissemination of information, which promotes anti-social behavior [5], threatens the development of a minor (except for air time from 23:00 to 6:00 and channels with limited access) and unreasonable demonstration of violence [1]. Supervision over broadcasting companies the compliance with the legislation in the sphere of protecting public morals is carried out by the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio. However, everything mentioned is not enough to protect the population from criminogenic impact of the mass media.

Analysis of domestic and foreign experience in combating the negative impact of the mass media makes it possible to distinguish the following main areas of special and criminological prevention, which are necessary for the implementation of the state policy in the sphere of combating crime, namely: prevention and suppression of illegal activities carried out by persons responsible for the release of information products, the inevitability of their liability; organization of the state control over media scene; functioning of the system of detection, recording and systematization of mass media criminogenic factors, involving minimization or elimination of the mass media criminogenic factors and the results of the impact on an individual and society [6]. If we exclude from airtime such negative elements as scenes of violence and aggression, and

fill the vacuum with useful information, such as legal, which provide the high level of legal culture and with information that assists the improvement of the positive psychological state, it would create a barrier to misleading (within law enforcement field) factors. Unfortunately, the modern reality is the failure of their citizens to respond the threats of information influence of TV, so there is a need of the state control and legal regulation of TV programs. This means that the state not only at the legislative, but also at the level of the mass media should form the legal awareness of citizens by establishing the necessary restrictions on broadcasting harmful information in terms of criminal situation, (i.e. demonstrating unjustified aggression, promoting criminal subculture, etc.) and should conduct legal informing of citizens, to improve the image of law enforcement agencies and strengthen control over the information flow from abroad, because one cannot ignore the threat from external information flow, which in some cases can be very harmful and has a significant impact on the crime situation.

Therefore, measures of counteracting the influence of mass media on the criminogenic situation should be used simultaneously and comprehensively, as non-compliance with these two principles it will be impossible to achieve qualitative results in combating this impact. By reducing the negative impact of mass media through the above recommended measures, the state increases the legal culture of citizens, i.e. reduces the crime rate.

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