



ANALYSIS OF FACTORS ENABLING DRUG-RELATED CRIMES ON ONLINE PLATFORMS WITHIN THE TQF FRAMEWORK AND MEASURES FOR THEIR DETECTION

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Abstract: This article analyzes the main factors enabling drug-related crimes on online platforms from the perspective of operational search activities. Anonymity in the digital environment, encrypted communication channels, "dead drop" logistics, rapid account switching, and uncontrolled social network algorithms are shaping new models of drug trafficking. The article comprehensively examines the role of these factors in facilitating covert crime commission, their impact on the effectiveness of operational search measures, and the challenges of collecting electronic evidence and identifying digital traces. Based on the analysis, practical recommendations aimed at reducing online drug crime and increasing the effectiveness of operational search activities have been developed.

Keywords: online drug crime, cyber environment, anonymity, cryptocurrency, encrypted communication, digital traces, dead drop, internet monitoring, cybersecurity, electronic evidence, international cooperation, messengers, social networks.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, improving the spirituality and worldview of every citizen based on modern requirements, as well as preventing various vices that arise in the spirituality of certain categories of individuals, is of particular importance in state policy. Therefore, drug addiction, which negatively affects an individual's spirituality, is one of the urgent problems of our time. As a result of these vices, which negatively impact society's development, many crimes are committed, families are destroyed, and children are born with disabilities.

Unfortunately, this scourge is not bypassing our country either. Since the beginning of the year, more than 11,000 drug-related crimes have been identified, and about 2.5 tons of narcotics have been seized. The fact that the forms and types of such crimes are increasing year by year, and their scope is expanding, shows that organizing a comprehensive fight against drug crime and drug addiction is an urgent task [1].

As we all know, those who commit these crimes through social networks, that is, those who illegally handle narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, first and foremost pose a serious threat to human health and safety. They negatively affect the socio-economic and cultural foundations of society, leading to the physical, mental, and spiritual decline of the population, personal degradation, and harm to the reproductive capacity of the population and the health of future generations. At the same time, this vice exacerbates the criminogenic situation in our country, leads to the creation of mass bases for crime, and as a result, to the entrenchment of organized crime.

As is known, narcotic drugs are substances of synthetic or natural origin, included in the list of narcotic drugs and subject to control in the Republic of Uzbekistan, preparations and plants containing narcotic substances, while psychotropic substances are substances of synthetic or natural origin, included in the list of psychotropic substances and subject to control in the Republic of Uzbekistan [2].

Today, it is no exaggeration to say that the most common crimes related to the illegal trafficking of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances are related to their acquisition and sale via the Internet. This method of committing a crime has become convenient for criminals in every way.

Firstly, the identity of the criminal in the sale and transfer of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances will not be clear.

Secondly, it is much more convenient to sell drugs or psychotropic substances to the buyer by burying them in a certain place and transferring money to the seller's plastic card in return.

Thirdly, the detection of a crime by this method requires a certain amount of time and often leads to its failure to be detected.

Fourthly, law enforcement officers are required to have strong knowledge and a specialist in this field.

The dangers of social networks are growing day by day, for example, analysts from the American company "Incogni" compiled a table "Social Networks Privacy Rating - 2024"[5]. The ranking reveals which global social networks collect and store more information about users.

In this case, 15 social networks were carefully studied, and it was determined which of them collected more information about the user.

At the top of the table are a total of 15 social networks and messengers, including Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Discord, YouTube, and others. The assessment was conducted according to 14 criteria in five categories. These criteria include violations, data collection and storage, transparency, and ease of privacy management.

The social networks that collect the most information about users include:

Facebook - 18.9 points out of 20 were assigned to the privacy level (the lower the scores, the better);

Facebook Messenger - 16.5 points;

LinkedIn - 16.3 points;

Instagram - 15.8 points;

X (Twitter) - 15.2 points.

Reddit, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Discord collect the least information about users.

To the social networks where the most information leaks and violations occurred:

LinkedIn; Facebook; X; Whatsapp; Snapchat social network platforms have been included.

Data leaks were less frequently observed on Discord, Telegram, and Reddit.

"The final rating of the most dangerous social networks is as follows:

- 1st place - Facebook;

- Facebook Messenger and LinkedIn in 2nd and 3rd places, respectively;

- 6th place - Telegram;

- 8th place - Whatsapp;

- 9th place - YouTube;

- Reddit, Snapchat, and Pinterest are recognized as the safest."[4]

Currently, there are modern methods of drug trafficking in the above-mentioned social networks, which include:

- trading through closed groups using code words such as "bong," "klad," "zakladka";

- use of hidden advertising and content that quickly disappears in "stories";

- making payments through virtual payment services;

- includes actions such as transferring the location of the product using geo tags and photo data.

Most of these actions on the Internet are carried out using automated bots.

In our country, preventive measures are being carried out at the state and government levels to combat crime, including crimes related to the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances through social networks, and their timely prevention.

In particular, as a result of the analysis by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan of crimes related to the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances through social networks, the following can be attributed to the factors contributing to the emergence of this type of crime:

1. Socio-economic factors:

- Low incomes and unemployment force people to seek alternatives, including illegal ones.
- High demand for drugs creates a sales market, especially among young people.
- The free use of the Internet and gadgets, even by minors, increases the desire to engage

in criminal activity.

2. Technical factors.

- Anonymity. Social networks and messengers allow concealing a person (using fake accounts, VPNs, anonymous bots).

- Lack of strict control. Even the state cannot always effectively block the channels of drug distribution on social networks.

- Cryptocurrencies. The use of anonymous payment systems makes it difficult to track cash flows. strong desire to earn income through illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances;

3. Problems in the application of law.

- Insufficient legal framework or imperfect legislation makes it difficult to hold accountable.

- The difficulties in the investigation are explained by the complexity of proving the perpetrators.

- The international nature of crimes, the presence of criminal groups abroad, complicates the investigation.

4. Psychological and criminological cause.

- Lack of legal awareness. Young people often do not realize the seriousness of the consequences of such events.

- Social influence. Promotion of prohibited substances on blogs and social networks (musical videos, streams, memes).

- Recruiting vulnerable groups. Criminals attract minors, students, and low-income citizens as "depositors" and intermediaries.

These forces are supporting the scale of the international community associated with the illicit trafficking of drugs via the Internet. To combat them, it is necessary to take comprehensive measures, including tightening legislation and accelerating the conduct of operational-search activities in cyberspace.

This can also be caused by the following additional factors:

- upbringing in an unhealthy family;
- negative influence of other persons;

- to strive to eliminate a particular material shortage that has arisen in a short period of time;

- lack of legal knowledge;
- accustoming oneself to behavior contrary to moral principles.

From these, the habit of behavior contrary to moral rules begins in the family. An unhealthy atmosphere in the family is explained by the fact that the heads of the family do not fulfill their duties in promoting good deeds, such as humanity, morality, and traditions. That is, the proper upbringing of family heads, first of all, is the first step towards improving the family environment. Also, the sincerity in the relationships of all family members with each other serves to further improve the environment.

Warm relationships between parents or negative relationships between children and parents cause an unhealthy environment in many families. To create a healthy atmosphere in the family, first of all, it is necessary to eliminate small conflicts in the family. In any situation, every family member should be involved in mutual relations. For people to always maintain sincere relationships with each other, everyone should have a sense of gratitude. Grace and grandeur ensure the heart's constant satisfaction with all material processes.

Environmental conditions also play a special role in the commission of any crime. Correct identification of the conditions that allowed for the commission of each crime will serve the correct organization of the prevention of these crimes in the future and will have a more positive impact on the effectiveness of crime prevention.

Measures to eliminate the causes and conditions that contributed to the commission of a crime - a set of legal, social, organizational, educational, medical, and other measures aimed at preventing the commission of a crime in the future[5].

It should be noted that the causes that led to the commission of the crime, in turn, under certain conditions, give rise to certain consequences. The interdependence of cause and effect, and the interconnectedness of these factors with the circumstances, allows for a thorough scientific and theoretical analysis of crime.

Some legal scholars have expressed various opinions regarding the causes of crime and the conditions that contributed to it. In particular, Professor Z.S. Zaripov, in his scientific research, investigating the causes and conditions of crime, put forward the idea that "the causes of crime, as a socio-psychological reality, are a system of specific processes that give rise to crime and crimes, and the conditions of crime, in a peculiar way, include conditions that accelerate the emergence of its causes"[6]. Indeed, the author clearly and vividly demonstrates the interconnectedness of cause and circumstance, which plays a crucial role in the emergence of crime, that not every circumstance leads to an independent crime and crime, and that, given the circumstances, a single crime cannot be committed without a cause.

V.D. Malkova, on the other hand, interpreted the causes and conditions of crime in a peculiar way, that is, in her opinion, the cause of a crime is understood as such an event or phenomenon that, under certain conditions, gives rise to other phenomena that give rise to consequences. The conditions of crime are various circumstances in social life, which do not give rise to independent crimes, but rather contribute to their occurrence, commission, and create opportunities[7].

In the aforementioned thoughts, we can examine the causes and conditions of a crime through the interconnectedness of the concepts of "cause," "condition," and "consequence." It

is known that the causal connection of phenomena usually manifests itself in the fact that one phenomenon gives rise to another.

In the course of the study, it can be concluded that at the heart of any phenomenon lies a certain cause, which means that there are no events without a cause. The cause and effect that gave rise to the consequence ensure the development of the phenomenon necessary for its occurrence in a certain way. It should be noted that the cause is always ahead of the consequence in terms of time. Certainly, the action taken at a specific time by the cause and circumstances that contributed to the crime creates a criminal consequence. Criminal consequence manifests itself in the form of socially harmful changes in the object protected by criminal law.

According to S.I. Danilova, the causes and conditions that contributed to the commission of a crime are a set of events of legal significance that objectively and reciprocally lead to the commission of a crime.

There are also specific psychological aspects of the causes and conditions that allowed the commission of the crime, which are related to the individual, their will, and freedom of will. It is known that events and processes occurring around a person influence them, and at the same time, they themselves can influence such events and processes. Of course, this situation is based on the causal relationship between the two cases. It should be noted that all the causes and conditions of offenses influence human psychology and consciousness, form antisocial views, behavior, or nourish and strengthen them. Therefore, the causes and conditions of offenses always have a socio-psychological character.

According to P.Kh. Dushanov, to understand the inner world of a criminal, it is necessary to know their place in life, their attitude to the surrounding reality, people, society, the state, law, labor, etc. Because any criminal activity is largely inextricably linked to the specific individual psychological characteristics of the person who committed the crime. For an honest person who obeys the law and is capable of self-government at a high level, there are no and cannot be "criminal" situations. The situation itself cannot give rise to a crime; it can only be suitable for the realization of certain views and goals of a person with an antisocial character [8]. The socio-psychological causes and conditions of offenses in society are caused by negative phenomena, events, and processes existing in all spheres of public life. In any society, at all stages of its development, there are objective and subjective causes and conditions that give rise to socio-psychological causes and conditions, but they are at different levels.

Socio-psychological phenomena underlying the commission of a specific crime, i.e., antisocial views, habits, skills, intentions, and behavior, are called subjective causes and conditions. Phenomena, events, and processes that exist outside a person and influence their psychology, forming and strengthening antisocial views, habits, and behavior in them, are called objective causes and conditions.

It should be noted that, depending on the specifics of the commission of crimes, the conditions that allowed them to be committed are also different.

Experts emphasize the following aspects of drug addiction today:

economically: significant expenditures, loss of income, sale of valuable household items, unemployment, debt to many, separation from family and children;

legal consequences: committing a crime unknowingly or unconsciously, murder, robbery, joining radical religious extremism, terrorist movements, and other types of crimes;

medical consequences: narcotic substances affect the entire body, the central nervous system, and the psyche, causing various changes in the individual.

In the future, the role of automated crime detection technologies in social networks is expected to increase.

In particular, in recent years, information has been spreading about the effectiveness of AI (artificial intelligence) and machine learning technologies in detecting online drug trafficking.

Fisher, a foreign expert, demonstrated the effectiveness of Deep Learning models in his article on the automatic detection of harmful content related to drugs on social networks [5]. Another scholar, Lee, noted that NLP and computer analysis technologies provided high accuracy in his research on automatic classification of Instagram posts [6]. At the same time, in the materials of ACM Proceedings, it was noted that multimodal analysis - that is, simultaneous study of text + image data - gives the highest result [8].

From this point of view, in our opinion, in the fight against the crime of illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, it is advisable to take the following measures:

Firstly, the organization of training courses to identify the circulation of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances through the Internet and global mass media;

Secondly, taking into account the fact that today there are services for the delivery of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances from one point to another as merchant shipments (Yandex Taxi, Uklon, MyTaxi, etc.), it is necessary to take prompt measures against pharmacy employees. By this, it is possible to stop the shipment of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances by pharmacy employees and staff;

Thirdly, combating the sale of narcotic drugs through the Internet and global mass media by organizing special groups of employees conducting operational-search activities on social networks. For this purpose, develop proposals for making appropriate amendments to the legislation on operational-search activities;

Fourthly, it is necessary to develop a new norm providing for administrative and criminal liability for the advertising and distribution of narcotic drugs through social networks, the Internet, and global mass media.

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