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**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE FORENSIC STUDY OF AGE-
RELATED CHARACTERISTICS OF MINOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES
AND THEIR PRACTICE IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

Specialty 5.1.4 – Criminal Law Sciences

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
for the degree of Doctor of Law

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Relevance of the dissertation topic. The investigation of crimes committed against minors has always been a pressing issue and remains a serious challenge for modern society due to the specific age of minors. Analysis of statistical data shows that the number of registered crimes committed against minors is not decreasing; on the contrary, an increase is observed. In 2020, there were 90,347 cases, in 2021 – 103,335, in 2022 – 103,185, in 2023 – 98,833, and in 2024 – 95,843. Understanding the vulnerability of minors is largely due not only to the difference in physical development between adults and minors, but also to the immaturity of a minor's psyche and their ability to accurately assess acts committed against them, which may be criminal in nature. Protecting minors and ensuring their legal rights, freedoms, and interests in the Russian Federation is a serious issue requiring the close attention of government agencies and the public. The increase in serious and particularly serious crimes over the past five years suggests that minors remain the most vulnerable category of victims. This necessitates the improvement of not only the legislative framework presented in the development of new provisions of the criminal procedure law, but also the unification of knowledge that forms the basis of the practical activities of law enforcement officers and the court not only in the field of forensic science, but also criminal procedure, criminology, legal psychology and developmental psychology.

We believe there is a pressing need to utilize knowledge from related sciences in criminal justice. Working in symbiosis with forensics, this knowledge will create a tandem of specialists whose professional activities will focus exclusively on interactions with minors. Understanding the characteristics of all age groups from 0 to 18 years old will enable investigators, inquiries, and judges not only to solve crimes and administer justice, but also to minimize the negative impact on the psyche of minors involved in criminal proceedings.

At the current stage of development of forensic science, which plays an invaluable role in the field of criminal justice, it seems necessary to study the age-related characteristics of minors as “specific properties of an individual’s

personality, including cognitive, motivational, emotional, perceptual and other characteristics of the individual, as well as the features of the child's sphere of communication and activity," and to apply this knowledge for more effective use in the investigation of crimes committed against minors. Gaining knowledge about these factors is necessary to develop a set of tactical approaches used in the investigation of crimes committed against minors, and to utilize them according to the age range of the victim and witness where their application is not only appropriate but also effective. Forensically relevant information about the age characteristics of minors will allow investigators, psychologists (as specialists or experts), and the court to more accurately and objectively evaluate the testimony, behavior, and condition of minor victims and witnesses during the preliminary investigation and trial.

The necessity of forming a private forensic theory presented in the dissertation research, as a set of knowledge enriching forensic science, is caused, firstly, by negative tendencies connected with the continuing high quantitative indicators of crimes committed against minors, and secondly, by the necessity of training modern investigators, investigators and judges in mastering the knowledge of the basics of not only jurisprudence, but also psychological and pedagogical knowledge about the personality of minors, which may also be in demand by the employees of operational units directly carrying out operational-search activities.

The relevance of the research topic is also due to the complexity of a comprehensive scientific and theoretical understanding and legal definition of the significance of age-related characteristics of minors, the difficulty of scientific knowledge and studying the influence of these characteristics of minors on the detection and investigation of a crime, as well as the need to develop tactical methods of judicial investigation according to the age period (3-7 years, 7-11 years, 11-15 years, 15-18 years) and the type of crime committed against them, as well as the mental state of the minor participant in criminal proceedings and his individual characteristics. We believe that the importance of psychological knowledge in the work of investigative, inquiry, and judicial staff is currently

underrepresented. Many theoretical issues remain unresolved regarding the unique nature of such a category of participants in criminal proceedings as juvenile victims and witnesses. This places high demands on scholars in the field of forensic science, criminal procedure, and operational investigative activities to immediately understand the specifics of the investigation process for crimes committed against minors.

The above circumstances allow us to assert the significant relevance of the problem under consideration, the need to understand it and develop a set of forensic recommendations aimed at improving investigative and judicial activities, which determined the choice of the topic and content of the presented dissertation research.

The state of scientific development of the research topic. The depth and relevance of the problem associated with the use of knowledge about the age characteristics of juvenile victims or witnesses, applied when choosing tactics for investigating crimes, determines the need to turn to various theoretical sources not only in the field of forensic science, but also criminology, criminal law, criminal procedure, and developmental psychology. To understand what determines age-related features as properties (characteristics) of minors, we relied on the scientific research of such foreign and domestic scientists as: L. Kohlberg, W. Bronfenbrenner, J.-J. Rousseau, Z. Freud, J. Marcia, J. Bowlby, A.N. Leontiev, P.Ya. Galperin, V.V. Davydov, A.V. Zaporozhets, S.L. Rubinstein, B.G. Ananyev, A. Luria, L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin and others, who examined age-related characteristics in relation to changes in the functional systems of the brain, leading activity, moral development, individual characteristics, etc. Age-related characteristics that manifest themselves in a certain age period have attracted the interest of various researchers in the field of human development, for example, such scientists as: J. Piaget, J. Bruner, K. Conrad, E. Spranger, A.V. Petrovsky, L. Kohlberg, L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin, E. Erikson, I.S. Kohn, S. Hall, L.I. Bozhovich, A.E. Lichko, A.A. Rean, and others.

As early as the last quarter of the last century, criminologists L.M.

Karneeva, R.S. Belkin, A.A. Zakatov, M.L. Yakub, M.M. Kochenov, and N.R. Osipova emphasized the importance of age-related characteristics of minors and their influence on testimony depending on their stage of development.

Modern researchers such as N.N. Gorach and U.V. Galkina, I.N. Yakimov, E.V. Vaske, V.R. Safarov, V.S. Ramenskaya and others, in their scientific works reveal the importance of knowledge about age-related characteristics and argue that age-related characteristics influence the development of personality.

Of particular importance for our dissertation research are the works of G.A. Zorin, S.A. Tishkov, V.K. Babaeva, G.A. Vartanyan, Yu.P. Mikhailchuk, E.V. Streltsova, G.G. Dospulov, V.A. Dudarev, M.Yu. Florovsky, A.A. Sinyugina, Yu.V. Chufarovskiy, A.V. Dulov, N.I. Porubov, A.B. Soloviev, V.L. Vasiliev, A.A. Zakatov, O.V. Polstovalov and others, who in their studies examined the concept of "psychological contact" and its boundaries.

The concept of "establishing psychological contact" is of no small importance and is closely related to the concept of "psychological contact." This necessitated the study of opinions and views on this concept among such criminologists as G.G. Dospulov, E.A. Krivogornitsyna, G.A. Kornilov, V.M. Shevchenko, G.A. Vartanyan, V.G. Lukashevich, V.L. Vasiliev, V.K. Babaeva, and others, and the development of original concepts of "psychological contact" and "establishing psychological contact" in the context of criminal proceedings involving minor victims and witnesses.

G. Filippenkov, V.A. Lazareva, A.I. Bakurina, and S.V. Tetyuev wrote about the participation of psychologists (teachers) in criminal proceedings even in the pre-revolutionary period of the formation of the Russian state; Kh.A. Akkaeva, A.S. Medvedeva, and others wrote about the level of qualifications of psychologists. The issues of the participation of a psychologist in a preliminary investigation, the determination of their rights, responsibilities, specific functions, the use of special psychological knowledge in order to ensure criminal proceedings at the present stage of development of legislation have been dealt with by such scientists as V.Yu. Borodina, S.V. Surmeneva, M.A. Shuvalova, A.A. Usachev,

S.V. Tetyuev, Yu.M. Antonyan, R.S. Belkin, V.L. Vasiliev, F.V. Glazyrin, V.I. Goncharenko, Yu.M. Groshevoy, V.V. Guldan, A.V. Dulov, M.I. Enikeev, G.Kh. Efremova, V.E. Konovalova, M.V. Kostitsky, D.P. Kotov, I.F. Krylov, T.N. Kurbatova, B.D. Lyskov, R.A. Maruste, G.M. Minkovsky, A.R. Ratinov, V.V. Romanov, I.M. Reznichenko, T.V. Sakhnova, O.D. Sitkovskaya, I.N. Sorokotyagin, M.S. Strogovich, G.G. Shikhantsov, Ya.M. Yakovlev, I.O. Antonov, G.A. Mironova, L.A. Miftakhova, Yu.D. Lyagoshina, V.M. Bozrov, E.V. Markovicheva, L.G. Tatyana and others.

Significant contributions to the study of investigative tactics involving minors were made by criminologists such as R.S. Belkin, L.M. Karneeva, L.V. Bertovsky, A.M. Larin, N.P. Yablokov, A.I. Vinberg, I.N. Yakimov, A.A. Zakatov, M.L. Yakub, M.M. Kochenov and N.R. Osipova, E.V. Vasque, R.I. Zainullin, A.F. Khaliullina, G.A. Mironova, V.S. Ramenskaya, V.R. Safarov, O.N. Lazarenko, V.L. Vasiliev et al. drew attention to the importance of taking into account the psychophysiological, emotional, and cognitive characteristics, behavioral characteristics, and communication of minors, and proposed a number of recommendations for working with minor victims and witnesses, which they developed taking into account the characteristics of their age, which indicates a deep understanding of the knowledge about the personality of a minor.

Over the past 20 years, interest in the issues of participation of minor victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings has increased significantly, as evidenced by the number of dissertations in this area for the degree of candidate of legal sciences, in particular the work of O. Yu. Skichko (2005), A. F. Khaliullina (2018), G. A. Mironova (2022), E. Yu. Rodin (2024), V. A. Treksel (2024). All authors emphasize the importance of studying the personality of a minor witness and victim during the preliminary investigation in order to improve the system of tactical techniques in investigative actions.

The need and timeliness of conducting a dissertation research in light of our chosen topic, related to improving forensic support for the detection and investigation of crimes involving minors, is highlighted by the small number of

dissertations in this area. Among the most significant are the doctoral dissertation of I.A. Makarenko (2007) and the dissertation of R.I. Zainullin (2022). To date, no monographic studies have been conducted dedicated to taking into account knowledge about age-related characteristics, presented in our dissertation research as “specific properties of an individual’s personality” at each age stage from 0 to 18 years, which must be taken into account when choosing tactics for conducting an investigative or other procedural action, which indicates an urgent need to develop a holistic concept for the theoretical and applied study of age-related characteristics in the areas of: cognitive, motivational, emotional, perceptual, communication and activity of the child, and the further development and application of tactical techniques at the stages of preliminary investigation and judicial investigation.

The purpose of the study is to formulate the conceptual foundations of a private forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses based on the study of forensically significant periodization of the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses and the possibility of implementing knowledge about them during criminal proceedings, which will not only enrich the theoretical foundations of forensic science, but also improve investigative and judicial practice, the basis of which is the activity of the investigator (inquiry officer) in investigating crimes and the judge in resolving criminal cases involving minors.

To reveal the prerequisites for the formation of a private forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses, to formulate its concept and develop a structure, and to determine the place of this theory in the system of general forensic theory.

The purpose of the study determined the formulation of the following tasks:

- substantiate the prerequisites for the development of a specific forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses;
- formulate the concept and develop the structure of a specific forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses;

- determine the place of a specific forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses within the general theory of forensic science;
- analyze scholarly opinions on the concept of age-related characteristics of minors and the importance of using this knowledge in investigative and judicial proceedings;
- identify the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses of preschool, primary school, adolescence, and youth, and the potential for using this knowledge in investigative and judicial proceedings;
- examine the concept of "psychological contact" and the influence of the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses on its establishment in criminal proceedings;
- develop a methodological foundation for enhancing the managerial and professional competencies of investigators (inquiry officers) and the court through the acquisition and implementation of forensically relevant information about the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses;
- Explore the effectiveness and functionality of forensic thinking among investigators, interrogators, and judges in criminal proceedings involving minor victims and witnesses, taking into account their age characteristics;
- Analyze the criminal procedural status of psychologists as the primary provider of psychological support in criminal proceedings, with knowledge of the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses;
- Present the specifics of interrogating minor victims and witnesses, taking into account age-related knowledge, to select investigative tactics;
- Develop tactics for on-site verification of testimony and examinations involving minor victims and witnesses, taking into account their age characteristics.

The object of the dissertation research is the activity of the subject of pre-trial and judicial proceedings in a criminal case to determine forensically

significant information about the severity of age-related characteristics of the personality of a minor victim and witness and their subsequent implementation in the legal space of the crime being investigated involving a minor.

The subject of the study is the patterns of emergence of forensically significant information on the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses, their possible manifestation during pre-trial and trial proceedings in a criminal case, as well as practice-oriented patterns of implementation of knowledge on the age characteristics of a minor victim and witness by the investigator (inquiry officer) and the judge, both during the performance of individual investigative actions and in resolving the criminal case as a whole.

Methodology and research methods. The methodological basis of this academic monograph represents a body of knowledge developed across various branches of the humanities. Of significant importance to this dissertation are the ideas expressed in the works of philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and educators.

To understand objective reality, general scientific and specific scientific methods of cognition were implemented, organically adapted for use in legal sciences.

The use of the dialectical method in the study made it possible to examine the investigative activity carried out by an individual in correlation with the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses as participants in criminal proceedings, to trace the manifestations of personality characteristics expressed in communication and in activities, and to determine the directions for choosing investigative tactics to obtain forensically significant information about a crime. The historical method was used to analyze the processes of personality development in fundamental works by scientists in the field of developmental psychology, as well as to develop knowledge about the symbiosis of psychological knowledge in forensic science. To justify the need to utilize the scientific principles of developmental psychology in resolving forensic problems, to develop theoretical foundations for applying knowledge about the age-related

characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses, and to develop tactical approaches for use by investigative bodies, inquiry agencies, and the court in criminal proceedings, it was necessary to employ the comparative legal method.

A logical method of cognition was employed in the analysis and subsequent logical interpretation of the obtained results, as well as in the process of formulating and structuring the author's conceptual and terminological framework that directly addresses the subject of the study. The algorithms for the actions of persons handling criminal cases involving minors, presented in the dissertation, were developed using methods of analysis and synthesis. Conducting a survey of investigative and inquiry officers, judges, and subsequently processing the results would have been impossible without the use of a sociological method. A modeling method was used to develop a forensic predictive model of the probable behavior of juvenile participants in criminal proceedings and to develop practical recommendations and tactics for investigative actions based on the age of juvenile victims and witnesses. A systematic approach allowed us to examine the age-related personality traits of juvenile victims and witnesses in relation not only to patterns in the generation of information about criminal activity but also to patterns in the formation and implementation of activities related to the detection and investigation of crimes. To systematize the results of the study of materials and court decisions published on the official websites of courts of general jurisdiction, as well as to summarize statistical data on the quantitative indicators of crimes committed against minors published on the official websites of the Prosecutor's Office, the Investigative Committee, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, we turned to statistical analysis.

The theoretical basis of the study was formed by systematized scientific knowledge presented in the works of domestic and foreign scientists dealing with the following issues:

- victimological causes of crimes committed against minors;
- operational investigative support for these crimes;
- criminal-legal assessment of acts committed against minors;

- criminal-procedural regulation of activities to solve and investigate crimes involving minors;
- the possibility of effectively adapting knowledge of general, developmental, and legal psychology to criminal proceedings.

Regulatory framework for dissertation research are the norms of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, ratified normative legal acts of an international nature in the sphere of interaction between foreign and domestic law enforcement agencies in the framework of criminal proceedings, the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Laws of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On operational-search activities", the legal positions of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, comments of judges of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation set out in the Resolutions of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, normative legal acts of law enforcement agencies in terms of regulating criminal proceedings.

Empirical basis of the study presents a summary of the results of an analysis of 480 sentences and other court decisions published on the official websites of courts of general jurisdiction in criminal cases involving minors between 2019 and 2025. A survey was conducted among 60 investigators of the inquiry bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 80 investigators of the investigative bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 78 investigators of the investigative bodies of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, and 130 judges of courts of general jurisdiction. The results of personal experience of participating as a specialist psychologist at the stages of preliminary and judicial investigation were used.

At the same time, a systematization and subsequent comparison of the results of scientific research works was carried out, which were presented by various scientists dealing with problematic aspects of the investigation of crimes committed against minor victims, and the development of tactical methods of interaction with minor participants in the preliminary investigation and the resolution of a criminal case on the merits.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation research is the first developed and scientifically substantiated conceptual basis for studying the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses and the practice of its implementation in criminal proceedings, which is formed from two interdependent and interconnected blocks:

- the first block is "Theoretical and forensic foundations for studying the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings";
- the second block is "Forensic and criminal procedural aspects of implementing knowledge about the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses during pre-trial and trial proceedings in a criminal case".

The study developed its own conceptual and terminological framework and proposed definitions of such concepts as "psychological contact" and "establishing psychological contact" with minor victims and witnesses during criminal proceedings. Fundamental methodological requirements for a comprehensive study of the age-related personality characteristics of minor victims and witnesses were formulated.

Based on the understanding of forensically significant information about the age characteristics of the victim and witness as a complex of characteristics of each age stage, up to adulthood, it is recommended to use this knowledge in such investigative actions as interrogation, verification of testimony on site, examination, as well as in establishing psychological contact, depending on investigative situations that may arise during the inquiry, preliminary and judicial investigation; the author proposes his own tactical approaches to achieving the goals of investigative actions, taking into account the age characteristics of such participants in criminal proceedings as juvenile victims and witnesses. Based on personal experience and an analysis of investigative practice, the dissertation emphasizes the need to enhance the status of psychologists, define their rights and responsibilities, as well as their functions and level of qualifications, allowing the investigator (interrogator) to select a specialist who will not only promote the observance of the legal rights and interests of juvenile victims and witnesses, but also prevent the possible negative impact of the justice process itself on the psyche

of minors.

Theoretical foundations and methodological recommendations for using knowledge of age-related characteristics during preliminary investigations and court proceedings have been developed. Tactical investigative techniques have been proposed for their most effective use in obtaining information during crime investigations and resolving the merits of criminal cases.

Elements of scientific novelty also include the author's tactical techniques for increasing the effectiveness of the organization and conduct of verbal investigative actions and other investigative actions with the participation of minor victims and witnesses, and the developed proposals for using knowledge of age-related characteristics in establishing psychological contact with minor participants in criminal proceedings and obtaining forensically significant information from minor victims and witnesses at all stages of criminal proceedings.

In our opinion, the proposals made will not only allow for the most effective achievement of preliminary investigation and trial results, but also minimize the likelihood of negative consequences from the impact on the psyche of minor victims and witnesses during criminal proceedings.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation, reflected in the substantiated conclusions of the presented research, **allowed us to formulate and present for defense the following provisions:**

1. The concept of a private forensic theory on the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses, by which we mean a system of scientific (theoretical) provisions on the identification, analysis and use of information on the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses and the practice of applying tactical techniques developed on the basis of this knowledge, taking into account the investigative/judicial situation arising during the performance of investigative/judicial actions by an authorized person for the purpose of investigating a crime or resolving a criminal case on the merits.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

2. The interconnected structural elements of the forensic theory on the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses and the practice of their implementation in criminal proceedings represent a scientific and methodological basis and include:

- the grounds and conditions for the need to develop the forensic theory under consideration for studying the age-related personality traits of minor victims and witnesses;

- the place of the forensic theory for studying the age-related personality traits of minor victims and witnesses in forensic science;

- a comprehensive forensic presentation of the object and subject of the study, the stated purpose and objectives, the methodological basis, and the conceptual and terminological apparatus that reveals the main tenets of the presented concept;

- investigative situations arising during criminal proceedings involving minor victims and witnesses, taking into account their age characteristics;

- tactical techniques used during investigative and judicial proceedings involving minor victims and witnesses, taking into account the specific circumstances and age characteristics of the minor.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

3. Prerequisites for the formation of a private forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses and its place in the system of general forensic theory.

An analysis of specific theories (doctrines) in the field of studying the personality of participants in criminal proceedings and their characteristics allowed us to assert that knowledge about the personality of juvenile victims and witnesses, which significantly influences the quality of crime investigations, is a relevant area for research within the framework of a specific forensic theory on the age characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses as a body of knowledge that enriches forensic science. In general, this is due to:

- firstly, the persistently high number of crimes committed against minors of various ages;

- secondly, the need to train and improve the skills of modern investigators, inquiries, and judges in mastering not only the fundamentals of jurisprudence but also psychological and pedagogical knowledge about the personality of minors, which may also be in demand by officers of operational units directly involved in operational investigative activities;

- third, the insufficiently developed theoretical principles and concepts discussed within the framework of the topic under study, and the fragmented understanding and definition of the list of age-related characteristics of minors;

- fourth, the need to develop, within the framework of the presented specific theory, a set of forensic measures to combat crimes committed against minors.

The developed private forensic theory on the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses can be included in a system of private forensic theories, as well as organically integrated into the content of forensic science and claims to include its provisions in every section of forensic science.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

4. The range of forensically relevant knowledge about the age-related characteristics of juvenile victims and witnesses has been expanded, including cognitive, motivational, emotional, and perceptual development, as well as communication and activity characteristics. Information about a juvenile victim or witness represents an expanded range of properties (characteristics) that qualify them as full participants in criminal proceedings.

To successfully establish psychological contact with interrogated minor victims and witnesses, the investigator (interrogator) and the judge must take into account the following age-related characteristics:

- - perception of criminal actions directed at them or others;
- - awareness of criminal actions directed at them or others;
- - emotional response to criminal actions directed at them or others;

- - motivation to assist in establishing the circumstances of the crime;
- - independent communication with the person handling the criminal case.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

5. Sources of information on the age characteristics of a minor victim and witness and methods of obtaining it.

Firstly, the source of information on the age characteristics of a minor victim or witness is an objective assessment of the minor's personality and characteristics, obtained using psychological methods (interviewing, testing, observation, etc.). The person handling the criminal case receives this data from a specialist psychologist or expert using research methods that allow for an objective assessment of the severity of age-related characteristics and the level of mental processes.

Secondly, subjective sources of information about the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses include character references from educators, teachers, coaches, school principals, etc. They are subjective because the person characterizing expresses an opinion about the minor based on their attitude toward them, their relationship, and, in characterizing them, describes age characteristics based on their sympathy or antipathy.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

6. The system-activity approach to the study of forensically significant age-related characteristics of the personality of a minor victim and witness as an object of forensic research, revealing the depth of internal content and organically manifested in behavior, communication and activity, is based:

- first, based on the results of scientific and theoretical research on the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings;
- second, based on the interdependent interdisciplinary relationships that constitute the structure of the methodological study of forensically significant data on the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses;

- third, based on the activity-based nature of the reflection of age-related characteristics of the personality of minor victims and witnesses;

- fourth, based on the inevitability of changes in the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses as objects of forensic research and their transition to a new age stage of development.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

7. A systemic-activity approach to the study of forensically significant age-related characteristics of the personality of a minor victim and witness allows us to present and reveal, based on the stated research objectives, the author's scientifically substantiated contents of three typically developing investigative situations (favorable, conditionally favorable, unfavorable):

- **firstly**, the author's scientifically substantiated content of a favorable typical investigative situation. A minor witness and victim, as the victim of a criminal offense, confidently, truthfully, and consistently recounts the circumstances of the crime with the intent to convict the perpetrator. This situation demonstrates the conflict-free nature of the interaction between the investigator (inquiry officer) and the judge with the minor, and, accordingly, the use of tactical techniques that allow for maintaining an optimally comfortable environment during the investigative or judicial proceedings is sufficient;

- **secondly**, the author's scientifically substantiated content of a conditionally favorable typical investigative situation. A minor witness and victim, as a person subjected to a criminal offense, distorts forensically significant information for the investigation, being misled or dependent on an adult who does not allow them to tell the truth, or is under the influence of the traumatic circumstances of the crime committed;

- **third**, the author's scientifically substantiated description of an unfavorable typical investigative situation. A minor witness and victim, as the victim of a criminal offense, does not tell the truth or says nothing at all due to fear of the suspect, or has been diagnosed with mutism, or the minor's speech is

underdeveloped due to age (under 5 years), or there are delays in speech development.

In relatively favorable and unfavorable situations, to overcome these obstacles, it is necessary, using knowledge of the age characteristics of minor witnesses and victims, to correctly select and implement a set of tactical techniques, and, if necessary, to resort to consultation with a psychologist, who acts as a specialist during pre-trial and trial proceedings.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

8. The forensic algorithm of activities in criminal proceedings involving a minor victim or witness to establish the circumstances of the crime can be presented in the form of the following structure:

8.1. Identification and understanding of the content of the initial typical situation involving a minor victim and witness.

8.2. Obtaining and analyzing information about the personal characteristics of a minor victim or witness: age; place of residence (living conditions); educational institution (attendance, academic performance, social circle, etc.); clubs, sections; friends and hobbies; physical and mental state (frustration, stress, PTSD, etc.); temperament and character (individual qualities), type of accentuation (from the age of 9); value orientations (13-14 years); hereditary and biological factors; immediate social environment; personal characteristics; degree of interest in the case; relationship with the accused and other participants in the process.

8.3. Collection of information on age-related characteristics (personality traits at each age stage) of a minor victim or witness, including the level of mental processes (attention, perception, memory (memory type), thinking, imagination), speech development (verbal intelligence) (from age 5), development of self-esteem (from age 7), determination of the leading type of activity (play, educational, educational and professional).

8.4. Selection of a set of tactical techniques and their implementation

during investigative actions involving a minor victim or witness.

8.5. **Understanding a typical investigative situation involving** a minor victim or witness at the initial stage of the investigation.

8.6. **Conducting investigative actions with the participation** of a minor victim or witness at the initial stage of the investigation.

8.7. **Analysis of the results of investigative actions** carried out with the participation of a minor victim or witness at the initial stage of the investigation.

This forensic algorithm of activity can be structurally supplemented during the investigation process, for example, by the gender characteristics of minor victims and witnesses or the emerging investigative situation, and can be applicable not only to minors, since age-specific characteristics exist in each age period, thereby revealing its dynamic nature.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

9. The level of severity of age-related characteristics in a particular minor victim or witness is an important indicator that determines the form of interaction with this participant in criminal proceedings and the choice of tactical methods for conducting investigative or judicial actions.

To obtain forensically relevant information about the level of expression of age-related personality traits of a minor victim or witness, it is necessary to interact with: a caregiver, educational psychologist, teacher, class teacher, coach, etc.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

10. The author's tactical techniques for establishing psychological contact and conducting individual investigative and judicial actions have been developed, taking into account the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses (Appendix 2):

- tactical techniques used to establish psychological rapport with minors aged 2-6, 7-11, 12-15, and 16-18;
- tactical techniques used during interrogation of minors aged 2-6, 7-11, 12-

15, and 16-18;

- tactical techniques used to verify testimony on the spot of minors aged 2-6, 7-11, 12-15, and 16-18;

- tactical techniques used during examinations of minors aged 2-6, 7-11, 12-15, and 16-18. *Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences"*.

11. The level of managerial competence of the investigator (inquiry officer) and the judge is expressed:

- the ability to interact with such special categories of participants as minor victims and witnesses during the preliminary and trial stages;

- - determining the age range of a minor, taking into account their age-related characteristics;

- independently applying legal psychology methods (observation, interview, content analysis) as ways to study the personality of a minor participant in criminal proceedings;

- selecting and using a range of tactical approaches during investigative and judicial proceedings.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

12. A methodology has been developed for identifying the severity of age-related characteristics of minors at each age stage. This methodology is presented in the form of "Like Profiles" (forms) intended for independent use during surveillance of a minor participant in criminal proceedings by the person conducting criminal proceedings. Each of the indicators, correlated with the minor's age, serves as a "starting point" for selecting tactical approaches for investigative and judicial actions, taking into account the investigative and judicial situation. Forensically significant information on the severity of age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses obtained through the use of "Like Profiles" is applicable for use in criminal proceedings and for solving criminal

justice problems..

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

13. Forensically significant age characteristics of a minor victim and witness can only manifest themselves in conjunction with individual personality traits (temperament, character, abilities, etc.) and the leading activity that dominates in a given age period.

The definition of the leading activity (game, educational and cognitive, educational and professional) allows the investigator (inquiry officer) and the judge to form the basic conditions in which the most effective conduct of investigative or judicial actions will occur, and taking into account individual characteristics will allow, even before the start of the investigative and judicial action, to predict the pace, emotional coloring, reaction of the minor to the questions asked, which in this triad (age characteristics, leading activity, individual characteristics) will allow the most productive implementation of the activities of the investigator (inquiry officer) and the judge during the proceedings of the criminal case.

Provision No. 1, submitted for defense, corresponds to paragraphs 1, 5, 6, 10 of the Passport of scientific specialty 5.1.4. "Criminal and legal sciences".

The theoretical significance of the dissertation research is determined by the formation and disclosure of the theoretical and forensic foundations for studying the age-related characteristics of the personality of a minor victim and witness; the prerequisites for the formation of a forensic theory on the age-related characteristics of the personality of a minor victim and witness are formulated, which enriches forensic science with tactical techniques for establishing psychological contact and conducting investigative actions with participants in criminal proceedings, who are a special category due to their being at the stage of personality development and having various age characteristics that determine their belonging to a certain age stage.

The concept of a forensic theory on the age characteristics of a minor victim

and witness has been developed, its meaning and structure have been presented, and the place of this theory in the system of general forensic theory has been determined.

The conclusions and recommendations formulated during the dissertation research can be used and implemented in the process of conducting new forensically significant studies on the personality of a minor participant in criminal proceedings; they can be used in the development of specific forensic methods for investigating certain types of crime, the creation of which is based on the characteristics of the object of a criminal attack, identified on the basis of the age characteristics of the victim of crimes as determinants of the vulnerability of the latter:

- methods for investigating crimes against the sexual integrity or sexual freedom of minors;
- methods for investigating theft of property from minors;
- methods for investigating harm to the life and health of minors.

The practical significance of the dissertation research is represented by a set of developed practical recommendations on the interaction of the person in charge of the criminal case with minor participants in criminal proceedings.

This paper develops practice-oriented forensic algorithms for investigators (inquiry officers) and judges, taking into account the potential use of knowledge about the age-related characteristics of minor victims and witnesses during investigative and judicial proceedings. The application of the tactics that form the basis of these algorithms in the practical work of investigators (inquiry officers) and the court is scientifically substantiated and supported by the applicant's extensive personal experience working with minors as an educational psychologist (over 24 years of experience) and participation as a specialist psychologist in court hearings during criminal cases in the court of first instance.

In the course of this dissertation research, when developing tactical methods for conducting investigative and judicial actions, we relied on a comprehensive approach to the study of the age-related characteristics of minors, presented by

criminologists, psychologists, and criminologists. The main ideas of this approach are: the protection of the rights of minors by society, expressed in the inevitability of punishment for those guilty of committing a crime; consideration of the specific age stages of development of the victim or witness participating in criminal proceedings; the development of new and improvement of existing forms of interaction with both minor participants in criminal proceedings and other participants representing their interests (legal representatives, teachers, psychologists).

The results of this monographic study may be in demand in educational institutions that train specialists in the field of jurisprudence, and the conclusions and recommendations presented in the dissertation are organically included in legal disciplines containing topics touching on issues related to the participation of minor victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings, including in the development of original courses on issues of identification, prevention, qualification, disclosure and investigation, as well as operational-search support for the activities of a person in whose proceedings a criminal case is being conducted, involving a minor.

The validity and reliability of this dissertation research is confirmed by the extensive review of scientific sources, both from the humanities and legal disciplines. The research methods employed ensured a meaningful resolution of the stated objectives and the achievement of the stated dissertation goal. The analysis of the legal framework for the study allowed us to identify gaps in the legislative regulation of certain criminal procedural procedures and offer our perspective on their improvement.

An analysis of the empirical basis of the study, represented by sentences and other judicial decisions of courts of general jurisdiction, allowed the author to substantiate the conclusions and recommendations proposed in the dissertation, and the results of the survey confirmed the need for further scientific study of issues related to the improvement of both legal regulation and tactical and forensic support for the activities of persons conducting criminal proceedings, taking into

account knowledge of the age characteristics of minor victims and witnesses..

Testing and implementation of the results of dissertation research into practice. A significant part of the main provisions, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the dissertation research were tested in presentations at international, all-Russian and inter-university scientific and practical conferences: “Current problems of combating crimes and other offenses” (Barnaul, February 2010, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024, 2025), “From classical criminal procedure to modern legal proceedings” (Barnaul, October 2024), “Criminal procedural and forensic readings in Altai” (Barnaul, November 2016), «Improving the Activities of Law Enforcement Agencies to Combat Crime in Modern Conditions» (Tyumen, November 2011), «Legal Technologies in Modern Jurisprudence» (Novosibirsk, April 19, 2024), «Current State, Problems and Prospects for the Development of Specialized Knowledge» (Novosibirsk, November 19, 2024), «Problems of Forming a Legal Social State in Modern Russia» (Novosibirsk, December 2, November 28-29, 2022, 2023, 2024), «Problems of Legal Support for the Security of the Individual, Society and the State» (Novosibirsk, October 23-27, 21-25, 2015, 2016), "Current Issues of Countering Extremism and Terrorism at the Present Stage" (Novosibirsk, April 2024), "Legal Issues of Strengthening Russian Statehood" (Tomsk, December 2, December 26-28, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025), "II Baikal Legal Forum ("Criminal Policy at the Present Stage")" (Irkutsk, September 21-23, 2021), "Scientific Support for the Detection, Investigation and Prevention of Crimes" (Irkutsk, December 15, 2022), "Current Issues of Combating Crime: Theory and Practice" (Krasnoyarsk, April 7-8, April 20-23, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025), "Current Issues of Combating Crime in the Siberian Region" (Krasnoyarsk, April 2010), "High-Tech Law: Modern Challenges" (Moscow, February 17, 2023, 2025), "Problems of Combating Crime and Training of Personnel for Law Enforcement Agencies" (Minsk, April 18-19, 2024).

The most significant findings and recommendations of the dissertation research were presented and reflected in 71 scientific papers with a total volume of

66.9 pp, of which the following can be highlighted: 1 author's monograph and 1 co-authored monograph; 4 co-authored textbooks; 3 articles published in scientific journals indexed in the international databases Scopus and Web of Science; 19 scientific articles published in leading scientific journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation.

The structure of this dissertation follows the scientific logic of its content and consists of an introduction, two sections containing six organically interconnected chapters, each with a well-reasoned twenty-three paragraphs, a conclusion, a bibliography, and an appendix. This work complies with the scope stipulated by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation for dissertation research.