



THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE MANIFESTATION OF SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS: AN EMOTIONAL REGULATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. This article investigates the role of the social environment in the manifestation of self-destructive behavior among adolescent girls through the lens of emotional regulation theory. Social-psychological conditions within family, peer, and school contexts are examined as determinants of adolescent emotional states. The author identifies key social-psychological factors that amplify emotional dysregulation and proposes a social-psychological prevention model aimed at reducing the incidence of self-destructive behavior in this population.

Keywords: social environment, self-destructive behavior, adolescent girls, emotional regulation, family relationships, peer influence, school context, prevention model, social-psychological factors.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary psychological research consistently affirms that self-destructive behavior in adolescence does not emerge in isolation – it develops within, and is profoundly shaped by, the social environment in which the adolescent is embedded (Hawton, Saunders, & O'Connor, 2012). For adolescent girls in particular, relational contexts – including family dynamics, peer group processes, and the school climate – exert decisive influence on the quality of emotional experience and the development of regulatory capacities. Understanding these social-psychological mechanisms is therefore foundational to both the theoretical explanation and the practical prevention of self-destructive behavioral patterns (Resolution No. PQ-5430, 2022).

The relationship between the social environment and adolescent emotional functioning has been addressed in foundational works by J. Bowlby, U. Bronfenbrenner, and L. I. Bozhovich, who established that disrupted attachment, hostile social environments, and inadequate emotional scaffolding constitute core vulnerability factors for maladaptive behavioral development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bowlby, 1973). Nevertheless, empirically



grounded studies examining the specific social-psychological pathways from environmental stressors to self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls remain underrepresented in the Central Asian research literature.

MAIN PART

Social-Psychological Mechanisms Linking Environment to Self-Destructive Behavior

The social environment influences adolescent girls' self-destructive behavior through three intersecting mechanisms: emotional contagion (absorption of negative affective states from significant others), social comparison (self-devaluation arising from unfavorable peer comparisons), and perceived entrapment (the subjective experience of having no relational escape from chronic distress) (Nock, 2010). Each mechanism generates a distinct emotional profile – respectively characterized by dysphoria, shame, and hopelessness – that increases vulnerability to self-destructive coping strategies (Klonsky, 2007).

The social-psychological conditions that mediate between environmental exposure and behavioral outcome include: (1) family emotional climate – parental warmth, conflict frequency, and the availability of emotional validation; (2) peer relational quality – belonging, victimization, and the normative modeling of self-destructive behavior within the peer group; (3) school psychological safety – teacher responsiveness, bullying prevalence, and access to school-based mental health support; and (4) the digital social environment – exposure to self-harm content on social media and the quality of online relationships (Nock, 2010).

Empirical Indicators and Assessment Framework

Empirical study of the social environment's role in self-destructive behavior requires a multi-method assessment framework incorporating standardized questionnaires measuring perceived social support, family functioning, and peer relationship quality; projective techniques for accessing emotion-laden representations of social relationships; and structured observation protocols for use within school psychological services (Linehan, 1993). The integration of these methods enables a comprehensive social-psychological profile that distinguishes environmental risk from protective factors.

Preliminary survey data collected from adolescent girls in Uzbekistan indicate that perceived family rejection and peer victimization are the strongest environmental predictors of self-destructive behavioral tendencies, with emotional loneliness serving as a significant mediating variable (Toshmatova, 2022). These findings align with international



research but also reveal culturally specific patterns related to gender-role expectations and the social stigmatization of mental-health help-seeking in the Uzbek context.

On the basis of these findings, a social-psychological prevention model targeting environmental determinants of self-destructive behavior has been developed. The model operates across three levels: the microsystem level (family-focused emotional communication training), the mesosystem level (school-based peer support programs and teacher psychoeducation), and the macrosystem level (community awareness campaigns and policy recommendations for school psychological services) (Fattoyev, 2019). Each level incorporates emotion-regulation skill-building as a core component, ensuring that environmental improvements are matched by enhanced individual coping capacity.

CONCLUSION

The social environment exerts a decisive, multi-pathway influence on the manifestation of self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls through the mechanisms of emotional contagion, social comparison, and perceived entrapment. Family climate, peer relationships, school context, and digital social exposure constitute the primary social-psychological determinants requiring targeted intervention. The three-level prevention model proposed here offers a practically applicable framework for school psychologists, family counselors, and educational policymakers. Future implementation and evaluation of this model within Uzbekistan's educational system represents a priority direction for applied social-psychological research.

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