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SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONS INFLUENCING SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS: THEORETICAL ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION

Abstract. *This article provides a theoretical analysis and systematization of the social-psychological characteristics of emotions influencing the manifestation of self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls. The structural components of emotions – type of feeling, intensity, level of regulation, and social context – as well as the dynamic stages of their transformation into self-destructive behavior are scientifically described. A typological classification of various forms of the relationship between emotional dysregulation and self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls is presented. The findings conclude with theoretical and practical recommendations for preventive intervention.*

Keywords. *self-destructive behavior, adolescent girls, emotions, emotional dysregulation, social-psychological characteristics, emotional regulation, prevention, emotional dynamics.*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary developmental psychology increasingly recognizes that emotional experience is not a passive internal state but an active social-psychological force that shapes behavior in profound ways. For adolescent girls, whose developmental trajectory is marked by heightened emotional sensitivity, identity formation, and intensified social comparison, the failure to regulate negative emotions can culminate in self-destructive behavioral patterns – ranging from self-harm and reckless risk-taking to substance misuse and suicidal ideation (World Health Organization, 2021; Hawton, Saunders, & O'Connor, 2012).

The social-psychological study of emotion-driven self-destructive behavior has gained considerable momentum in Western research since the early 2000s, yet systematic

theoretical analyses situated within Central Asian sociocultural contexts remain scarce. In Uzbekistan, where gender-role socialization norms encourage emotional restraint among girls and where mental health stigma limits help-seeking, the pathways from emotional dysregulation to self-destructive behavior may operate through distinct culturally mediated mechanisms that require dedicated theoretical examination (Resolution No. PQ-5430, 2022).

The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretically grounded analysis of the social-psychological characteristics of emotions that influence self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls; to systematize the structural components and dynamic stages of this relationship; to propose a typological classification; and to derive practical recommendations for school-based preventive intervention. The study addresses a genuine gap in the Uzbek psychological literature and offers a framework applicable to both research and applied contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The foundational theoretical framework for understanding emotion-behavior relationships was established by J.J. Gross (1998, 2002), whose Process Model of Emotion Regulation identifies five regulatory strategies – situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation – and demonstrates that habitual use of suppression (a response-modulation strategy) correlates with poorer psychological outcomes and higher rates of maladaptive behavior (Gross, 1998). This framework is directly applicable to the study of self-destructive behavior: adolescent girls who consistently suppress rather than reappraise negative affect are significantly more likely to engage in self-injurious acts as an alternative regulatory strategy.

M. Linehan's biosocial theory (1993) offers a complementary perspective, proposing that self-destructive behavior emerges from the interaction of biological emotional sensitivity with an invalidating social environment – one in which the individual's emotional responses are chronically dismissed or punished (Linehan, 1993). Within the Uzbek sociocultural context, gender-specific invalidation – the expectation that girls should not openly express distress, anger, or grief – may constitute a structurally embedded risk factor that amplifies the biosocial mechanism Linehan described.

A. Bandura's social learning theory (1977) contributes a further dimension: self-destructive behavior can be acquired through observation of significant others and peer

group members, normalized through repeated exposure, and maintained through negative reinforcement when it effectively – if temporarily – reduces emotional pain (Bandura, 1977). This social transmission pathway is particularly salient for adolescent girls, whose peer relationships are characterized by high emotional intimacy and strong conformity pressure.

The present study adopts a multi-theoretical methodology integrating the systems approach (analyzing emotion-behavior relationships as embedded in relational and institutional systems), the activity-based approach (emphasizing the role of social interaction in shaping emotional experience), and the person-centered framework (Rogers, 1961), which places the adolescent's subjective emotional world at the center of analysis. The research methods employed are: systematic review of scientific literature; theoretical analysis and synthesis; comparative analysis across cultural contexts; and typological classification. The study object is the emotional experience of adolescent girls in relation to self-destructive behavioral outcomes. The study subject is the social-psychological characteristics and dynamic stages of this emotion-behavior relationship.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Structural Components of Emotions Influencing Self-Destructive Behavior

A comprehensive theoretical analysis reveals that the emotions implicated in self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls are not uniform but constitute a differentiated set of affective states, each with distinct structural properties. These properties determine the regulatory demand placed on the adolescent and, consequently, the probability of self-destructive behavioral coping.

Table 1. Structural Components of Emotions Influencing Self-Destructive Behavior in Adolescent Girls

Component	Definition	Example in Adolescent Girls
Type of Emotion	The qualitative character of the affective state	Shame, hopelessness, suppressed rage, chronic grief
Intensity	The subjective magnitude of the emotional experience	Overwhelming distress vs. low-grade persistent sadness
Regulation Level	The degree to which the emotion is consciously managed	Dysregulated (impulsive) vs. over-regulated (suppressed)
Temporal Pattern	The duration and chronicity of the emotional state	Acute crisis vs. chronic background emotional pain

Social Context	The relational environment in which the emotion arises	Family conflict, peer rejection, school failure
Communicative Expression	Whether the emotion is disclosed or concealed	Emotional concealment increases self-destructive risk

Among these structural components, regulation level and social context emerge as the most powerful determinants of self-destructive behavioral outcomes. When an adolescent girl experiences high-intensity negative emotion (shame, hopelessness, rage) in a social context that prohibits its expression and lacks regulatory support, the probability of self-destructive behavioral coping rises sharply. This configuration – intense affect, social prohibition, and regulatory deficit – constitutes the core structural risk profile identified in the theoretical literature (Nock, 2010; Klonsky, 2007).

Dynamic Stages of the Emotion-to-Self-Destructive-Behavior Pathway

The pathway from emotional experience to self-destructive behavior is not instantaneous but unfolds through a predictable sequence of stages. Identifying these stages is essential for designing stage-appropriate preventive interventions.

Table 2. Dynamic Stages of the Emotion-to-Self-Destructive-Behavior Pathway

Stage	Psychological Characteristic	Observable Sign in Adolescent Girls
1. Emotional Accumulation	Repeated negative experiences without adequate processing	Social withdrawal, declining academic engagement
2. Regulatory Failure	Inability to manage emotional intensity through available strategies	Irritability, dissociation, self-reported numbness
3. Crisis Point	Emotional pain exceeds the individual's regulatory threshold	Impulsivity, expressions of hopelessness, help-seeking failure
4. Behavioral Act	Self-destructive behavior as emergency emotional regulation	Self-harm, reckless behavior, substance use episode
5. Post-Act State	Temporary relief followed by shame and intensified distress	Concealment, increased social withdrawal, cycle continuation

The post-act stage is particularly significant from a preventive standpoint: the temporary relief that self-destructive behavior provides – what Linehan termed negative reinforcement – is precisely the mechanism that perpetuates the cycle. Unless intervention

disrupts this reinforcement pattern and builds alternative regulatory capacities, the behavior is likely to recur with increasing frequency and severity (Gratz & Roemer, 2004).

Typological Classification of Emotion-Driven Self-Destructive Behavior Patterns

A theoretical synthesis of the literature reveals three primary patterns through which emotional dysregulation manifests as self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls. These patterns differ in their predominant emotional type, regulatory mechanism, and social-contextual trigger, and therefore require differentiated intervention approaches.

Table 3. Typological Classification of Emotion-Driven Self-Destructive Behavior in Adolescent Girls

Pattern Type	Predominant Emotion	Regulatory Mechanism	Primary Social Trigger
Shame-Based Pattern	Chronic shame, self-contempt	Self-punishment as shame reduction	Public humiliation, social comparison, academic failure
Hopelessness-Based Pattern	Hopelessness, emotional numbness	Sensation-seeking to restore feeling	Perceived entrapment, loss of relationships, social isolation
Suppressed Aggression Pattern	Suppressed rage, resentment	Redirecting anger onto the self	Family conflict, peer victimization, powerlessness

The shame-based pattern is the most prevalent among adolescent girls in collectivist cultural contexts such as Uzbekistan, where social reputation and family honor norms amplify the experience of shame following relational failures or academic underperformance. The suppressed aggression pattern is particularly associated with gender-role socialization that prohibits direct expression of anger in girls, redirecting this energy destructively inward (Karimova, 2018).

Functional and Dysfunctional Dimensions of Emotional Influence

It is theoretically important to recognize that not all intense emotional experience leads to self-destructive behavioral outcomes. Emotions also serve adaptive functions – motivating help-seeking, signaling distress to significant others, and facilitating identity development. The critical variable is regulatory capacity: the same intensity of emotional experience produces constructive or destructive behavioral outcomes depending on the adolescent's available regulatory resources and the responsiveness of her social environment.

Research consistently shows that the presence of at least one emotionally responsive adult – a parent, teacher, or school psychologist – functions as a significant protective buffer, moderating the relationship between emotional dysregulation and self-destructive behavior (Umarov, 2021). This finding has direct implications for school psychological practice: systemic efforts to improve the emotional responsiveness of the school environment may reduce self-destructive behavioral risk even without targeting the individual adolescent directly.

CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical analysis conducted in this article yields the following conclusions. First, the emotions influencing self-destructive behavior in adolescent girls are structurally differentiated across six components – type, intensity, regulation level, temporal pattern, social context, and communicative expression – and it is the configuration of these components, rather than any single factor, that determines behavioral risk.

Second, the pathway from emotional experience to self-destructive behavior unfolds through five dynamic stages – emotional accumulation, regulatory failure, crisis point, behavioral act, and post-act state – each offering a specific window for preventive intervention. Early-stage intervention, before regulatory failure occurs, is both more feasible and more effective than crisis-response approaches.

Third, three typologically distinct patterns of emotion-driven self-destructive behavior are identifiable in adolescent girls: shame-based, hopelessness-based, and suppressed-aggression-based. Each pattern requires a differentiated intervention approach targeting its specific emotional substrate and social-contextual trigger.

Fourth, the presence of emotionally responsive adults in the adolescent's environment constitutes the most robust structural protective factor identified in the literature, with implications for school psychological service design, teacher training, and family-focused intervention. Future empirical research should test the typological classification proposed in this study and evaluate the effectiveness of stage-targeted preventive programs within the Uzbek school context.

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