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THE STUDY OF GIRLS' SOCIAL ACTIVITY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURE: A REVIEW OF THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL APPROACHES

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Abstract

The issue of girls' social activity has become one of the central topics in contemporary psychological research due to its importance for personal development, social integration, gender equality, and societal progress. Social activity is understood as the active participation of individuals in social, educational, cultural, political, and community-related processes. Girls' social activity is influenced by a wide range of psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors that shape their behavior, motivation, self-perception, and engagement in society. The purpose of this study is to analyze the extent to which girls' social activity has been investigated in psychological literature and to identify the major theoretical and empirical approaches that explain this phenomenon. The study is based on a systematic review of psychological theories and scientific publications. The findings indicate that self-efficacy, social identity, motivation, family support, peer relationships, and gender socialization are among the most significant determinants of girls' social participation. The review also reveals a growing interest among researchers in promoting girls' leadership, civic engagement, and social empowerment. The study concludes that a comprehensive psychological approach is essential for understanding and enhancing girls' social activity in contemporary society.

Keywords: Social activity, girls, psychological research, social participation, self-efficacy, gender socialization, motivation, leadership, social development.

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Introduction

The active participation of girls in social life represents a fundamental condition for achieving social development, gender equality, and individual well-being. In modern societies, girls are expected not only to achieve academic success but also to participate actively in community life, social organizations, cultural activities, volunteer movements, and decision-making processes. Social activity contributes to the development of leadership skills, communication competence, self-confidence, and social responsibility. Consequently, understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying girls' social activity has become an important area of research in psychology. The study of social activity originates from broader investigations into social behavior, personality development, socialization, and motivation. Researchers have long recognized that active participation in social life enhances psychological well-being and facilitates successful adaptation to social environments. However, girls often encounter unique challenges related to traditional gender expectations, social stereotypes, cultural norms, and unequal opportunities, which may affect their willingness and ability to participate actively in society.

Psychological literature demonstrates that girls' social activity cannot be explained by a single factor. Instead, it emerges through the interaction of personal characteristics, social experiences, family influences, educational environments, and cultural contexts. The growing emphasis on women's empowerment and gender equality has further stimulated scholarly interest in understanding how girls develop social competence and become active contributors to society.

This article examines the current state of research on girls' social activity in psychological literature and explores the major theoretical frameworks and empirical findings that contribute to understanding this phenomenon.

Methods

The study employed a qualitative literature review methodology. Scientific publications, psychological theories, empirical studies, and scholarly articles related to girls' social activity were analyzed. The review focused on major

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psychological approaches that explain social participation, social competence, identity formation, motivation, and gender-related development.

Theoretical sources included Social Cognitive Theory, Psychosocial Development Theory, Social Identity Theory, Ecological Systems Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Positive Youth Development Theory. Publications from international psychological journals and academic databases were examined to identify common findings and emerging trends in research related to girls' social engagement.

Content analysis and comparative methods were utilized to synthesize the findings and evaluate the contribution of various theoretical perspectives to understanding girls' social activity.

Results

The analysis of psychological literature revealed that girls' social activity has been investigated from multiple theoretical and empirical perspectives.

One of the earliest approaches to understanding social activity can be found in developmental psychology. Erik Erikson emphasized the importance of identity formation during adolescence. According to his theory, successful identity development contributes to greater confidence, social responsibility, and active participation in society. Researchers have found that girls who develop a strong and positive sense of identity are more likely to engage in community activities, leadership roles, and civic initiatives.

Another influential perspective is Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks successfully. Numerous studies indicate that self-efficacy is one of the strongest predictors of social participation among girls. Girls who believe in their abilities tend to demonstrate greater initiative, leadership, communication skills, and social involvement. Conversely, low self-efficacy often leads to social withdrawal and reduced participation.

Research based on Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory highlights the role of intrinsic motivation in promoting social activity. According to this theory, individuals are more likely to engage actively in social contexts when

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their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Studies suggest that girls who experience supportive relationships and opportunities for personal growth exhibit higher levels of social engagement and community participation.

The Ecological Systems Theory proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner has also contributed significantly to understanding girls' social activity. This theory emphasizes that development occurs through interactions between individuals and multiple environmental systems, including family, school, peers, community, and culture. Research findings consistently demonstrate that supportive family environments, positive peer relationships, and encouraging educational settings play crucial roles in fostering girls' social activity. Family influence emerges as one of the most extensively studied factors in psychological literature. Numerous investigations indicate that parental support, emotional warmth, democratic parenting styles, and encouragement significantly increase girls' confidence and social involvement. Girls who receive consistent support from parents are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, volunteer programs, and leadership initiatives. Peer relationships have also received considerable attention in psychological studies. Positive peer interactions contribute to the development of social competence, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. Researchers report that girls who maintain supportive friendships are more likely to engage in collaborative activities and demonstrate higher levels of social responsibility.

Gender socialization constitutes another major area of investigation. Psychological literature suggests that societal expectations regarding appropriate female behavior can either facilitate or restrict social participation. In many cultures, traditional gender stereotypes encourage girls to adopt passive roles, reducing opportunities for leadership and public engagement. However, recent studies indicate that changing social norms and increasing educational opportunities have contributed to greater social activity among girls. Researchers have also examined the relationship between leadership development and social activity. Findings reveal that participation in leadership programs enhances girls' self-confidence, decision-making abilities, communication competence, and civic engagement. Girls involved in youth

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organizations and leadership initiatives often demonstrate stronger social responsibility and greater commitment to community development. Positive Youth Development Theory provides additional insights into girls' social activity. This approach emphasizes the importance of fostering competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. Empirical studies indicate that programs designed according to Positive Youth Development principles effectively increase girls' social participation and psychological well-being.

Recent research has increasingly focused on digital technologies and social media as new contexts for social activity. Scholars note that online platforms provide opportunities for girls to express opinions, participate in social movements, build networks, and engage in civic discussions. At the same time, researchers caution that excessive exposure to social comparison and online criticism may negatively affect self-esteem and social confidence.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that psychological research on girls' social activity has evolved from simple descriptions of social behavior to comprehensive analyses of individual, interpersonal, and societal influences. Contemporary studies increasingly recognize that social activity is a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral components.

The reviewed literature suggests that self-efficacy serves as a central psychological mechanism connecting personal beliefs with social behavior. Girls who perceive themselves as capable and competent are more likely to seek opportunities for participation and leadership. This observation supports Bandura's assertion that efficacy beliefs influence both behavioral choices and persistence in challenging situations. The importance of social support identified across numerous studies confirms the ecological perspective that human development is shaped by environmental contexts. Family members, teachers, peers, and community leaders serve as significant sources of encouragement that facilitate social participation. Consequently, interventions aimed at increasing girls' social activity should focus not only on individual psychological characteristics but also on improving social environments. Research on gender

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socialization highlights the continuing influence of cultural expectations on girls' behavior. Although considerable progress has been made toward gender equality, stereotypes and traditional norms remain important barriers in many societies. Psychological programs promoting empowerment, leadership development, and gender awareness may help overcome these obstacles and encourage greater social engagement. The growing interest in leadership and civic participation reflects broader societal efforts to empower young women and increase their representation in decision-making processes. Educational institutions, community organizations, and policymakers play important roles in creating opportunities for girls to develop leadership competencies and engage actively in social life.

Conclusion

The analysis of psychological literature demonstrates that girls' social activity is a widely researched and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by numerous psychological and environmental factors. Studies consistently identify self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, identity development, social support, peer relationships, family influence, and gender socialization as key determinants of social participation.

Psychological research suggests that increasing girls' social activity requires comprehensive interventions addressing both individual development and social contexts. Educational programs, leadership training, family support initiatives, and efforts to challenge restrictive gender stereotypes can significantly enhance girls' engagement in social, cultural, educational, and civic activities.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of social participation on psychological well-being and professional development. Additionally, further investigation is needed into the impact of digital technologies, cultural diversity, and changing social conditions on girls' social activity in contemporary societies.

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