# "PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN GENDER IDENTIFICATION IN THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL ROLES OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS"

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Abstract: This article theoretically and empirically analyzes the psychological differences in gender identification in the formation of social roles among adolescent girls and boys. During adolescence, the intensification of the identification process, the development of the "Self-concept," as well as the influence of the family environment, parenting styles, and peer relationships are considered important factors in shaping gender-specific social roles. The findings serve as a basis for developing practical recommendations aimed at fostering healthy gender relations within the family, ensuring adolescents' psychological stability, and supporting their social adaptation.

Keywords: gender identification, social role, adolescence, masculinity, femininity, androgyny, family upbringing, parenting style, social adaptation, self-concept, gender stereotypes, psychological differences.

The issue of psychological differences in gender identification in the formation of social roles among adolescent girls and boys is directly related to the most significant developmental processes of adolescence, since it is precisely at this stage that an individual begins to comprehend their "Self-concept," their place in society, and their future social roles. Gender identification is the process through which a person perceives themselves as belonging to a particular gender and internalizes behaviors, values, and norms associated with that gender. It is shaped not only by biological sex but also by socio-cultural factors. During adolescence, the process of identification intensifies because, as emphasized by Erik Erikson, this period corresponds to the stage of "identity vs. role confusion," when adolescents strive to

determine who they are, what values they hold, and what roles they will assume in society.

Certain differences can be observed in the psychological mechanisms of gender identification between adolescent girls and boys. These differences are reflected in their emotional development, self-perception styles, social adaptation, and role acceptance. Adolescent girls tend to demonstrate a relationship-oriented model of identification: they understand themselves through interpersonal relationships, emotional closeness, and social approval. Consequently, their social roles are often associated with care, cooperation, and social adaptability. In contrast, adolescent boys are more likely to express themselves through independence, individuality, and the pursuit of social status. Masculine traits—such as assertiveness, competitiveness, and leadership aspirations—are more prominently developed in boys.

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, gender roles are acquired through observation and imitation. Boys are more likely to model their behavior after their fathers, while girls tend to orient themselves toward their mothers. At the same time, parental expectations and reinforcement patterns either accelerate or constrain the development of gender identification. In line with Sandra Bem's gender schema theory, children internalize societal stereotypes about "masculinity" and "femininity" and shape their behavior according to these cognitive schemas. As a result, gender roles tend to be more rigid in traditional families and more flexible in modern families.

Psychological differences between adolescent girls and boys are also evident in self-esteem patterns. Girls' self-esteem is more closely linked to the quality of interpersonal relationships and external validation, whereas boys' self-esteem is more associated with achievement, independence, and status. Additionally, girls are more likely to display indirect forms of aggression and internalized emotional experiences, while boys more frequently exhibit direct aggression and overt competitive behaviors.        The family environment—particularly parenting style, parental attitudes toward gender stereotypes, the distribution of roles within the

household, and the overall emotional climate—has a significant influence on the formation of gender identification. In democratic and supportive family settings, adolescents are more likely to develop androgynous characteristics, meaning a harmonious integration of both masculine and feminine traits, which in turn enhances social adaptability. In contrast, in traditional families based on rigid control, boys and girls may develop gender-stereotypical but sometimes limited models of social roles.

In general, gender identification serves as the psychological foundation for adolescents' selection and enactment of social roles. Its content is shaped by family upbringing, the broader social environment, and individual personality traits. Differences between adolescent girls and boys arise not only from biological factors but also from socio-cultural influences. Scientific research in this area is therefore essential for fostering healthy gender relations within the family and supporting adolescents' social adaptation.

A deeper analysis of psychological differences in gender identification also requires modern socio-cognitive and neuropsychological approaches, since adolescence is not only a social but also an кезең of intensive biological and cognitive restructuring. Recent studies indicate that the development of the prefrontal cortex during adolescence influences decision-making, self-regulation, and social evaluation processes, which play an important role in shaping gender-specific behavioral strategies. Adolescent girls often demonstrate higher activity in the limbic system, which is responsible for emotional processing; as a result, they may be more sensitive to subtle social cues and construct their social roles more on the basis of empathy. In contrast, boys tend to exhibit stronger neuropsychological mechanisms associated with risk-taking and competition, directing their social roles toward independence and status.

According to social identity theory proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, adolescents internalize social roles by perceiving themselves as members of particular social groups, and gender is one of the most fundamental social categories

in this process. Peer groups thus become powerful agents reinforcing gender stereotypes. During adolescence, the need for peer acceptance intensifies: boys may experience "masculinity pressure," feeling the need to appear strong, emotionally restrained, and independent, while girls often face pressure related to physical appearance and social desirability. These pressures significantly influence their social role choices.

From a cognitive developmental perspective, the transition to the formal operational stage described by Jean Piaget enables adolescents to think about abstract concepts such as gender equality, role flexibility, and social justice. Consequently, adolescents growing up in a modern information environment may be more inclined to reconsider traditional gender roles. Media and digital social networks have emerged as new influential factors in gender identification, as online gender representations are often stereotypical or idealized. Adolescents shape their social roles by comparing themselves with these images. Research suggests that social media use among girls is strongly linked to self-esteem and body image, whereas for boys, online gaming and competitive virtual environments tend to reinforce masculine identification.

From a social constructionist perspective, gender identification is viewed less as a product of biological determinism and more as an outcome of cultural discourse and social experience. For example, if major family decisions are primarily made by the father, boys may internalize authority and leadership as markers of masculinity, while girls may adopt more passive or supportive roles. Conversely, in families based on equality, flexible social role models tend to develop in both genders.

Indicators of stress and psychological adaptation are also connected to gender identification. Adolescents raised under rigid stereotypes may experience role conflict and internal tension, potentially leading to anxiety, depressive states, or aggressive behavior. Within the androgyny model, however, adolescents who integrate both masculine and feminine traits demonstrate higher levels of social adaptability, cognitive flexibility, and resilience to stress.

Thus, gender identification functions not only as a determinant of social role formation but also as a complex system supporting adolescents' psychological stability and social success. A comprehensive study of differences between adolescent girls and boys provides an important scientific foundation for creating a healthy social environment within families, schools, and society at large.

The topic of our research is "Gender Characteristics Influencing the Formation of Adolescents' Social Roles in the Family." The study experimentally examined the psychological differences in gender identification in the formation of social roles among adolescent girls and boys. Surveys were conducted among 300 adolescents and their parents in the Namangan, Andijan, and Fergana regions.

During the research process, adolescents' group status, personality traits, and family relationships were assessed using several diagnostic tools: T. Leary's Interpersonal Relations Diagnosis; the original version of the Social-Psychological Adaptation Scale (SPA); Moreno's Sociometry Method; the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) developed by E. S. Schaefer and R. K. Bell (modified by M. Salayeva); the Conflict Level Assessment Questionnaire; B. Qodirov's "Who Am I?" questionnaire; and Sandra Bem's method for assessing masculine and feminine traits.

The statistical reliability of the obtained results was confirmed using mathematical statistical methods, including the Mann–Whitney U test, the Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Charles Spearman's nonparametric correlation analysis (Spearman's rho).

1-table

### Information on the Gender of the Participants

|        | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Boys   | 180    | 60,0       |
| Girls  | 120    | 40,0       |
| Total  | 300    | 100,0      |

The study included a total of 300 respondents. Among them, 180 were boys, accounting for 60.0% of the total sample, while 120 were girls, representing 40.0%.

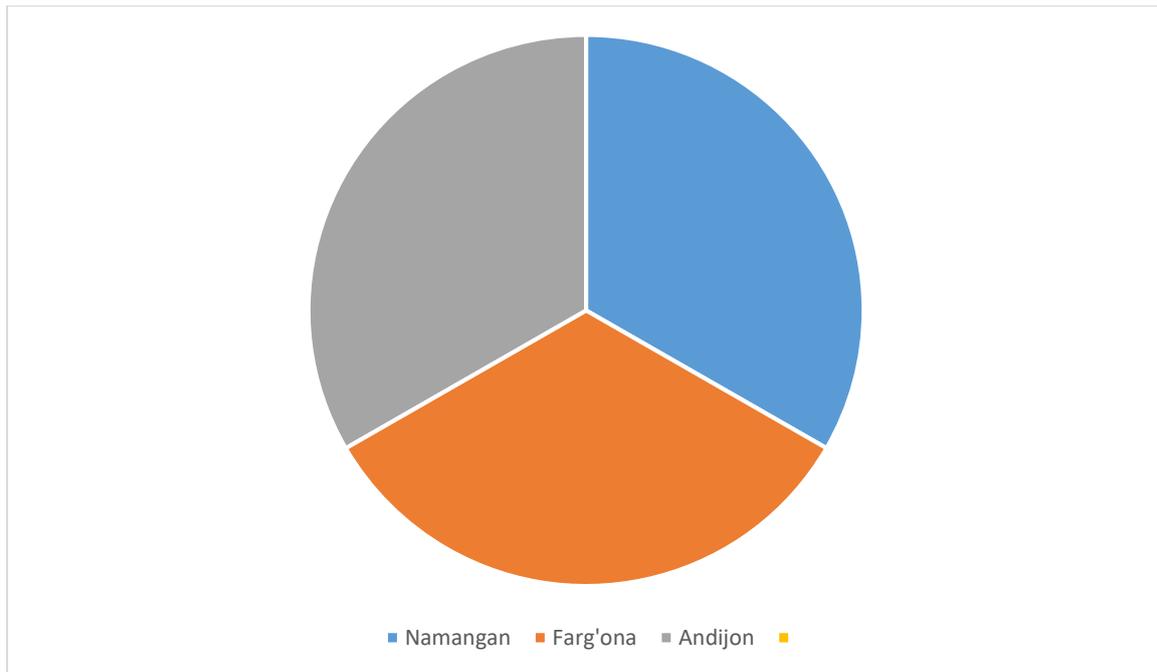**2**                    **Information on the Age of the Participants**

|        | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| 11,00  | 18     | 6,0        |
| 12,00  | 51     | 17,0       |
| 13,00  | 31     | 10,3       |
| 14,00  | 71     | 23,7       |
| 15,00  | 79     | 26,3       |
| 16,00  | 50     | 16,7       |
| Total  | 300    | 100,0      |

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The age composition of the participants in the study ranged from 11 to 16 years old. According to the data: 11-year-olds: 18 participants (6.0%), 12-year-olds: 51 participants (17.0%), 13-year-olds: 31 participants (10.3%), 14-year-olds: 71 participants (23.7%), 15-year-olds: 79 participants (26.3%), 16-year-olds: 50 participants (16.7%). The largest age group consisted of 15-year-old adolescents, while 11-year-olds represented the smallest group.

**Information on the Participants' Region**                    **3-table**

|           | Number | Percentage |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Namangan  | 100    | 33,3       |
| Andijan   | 100    | 33,3       |
| Fergana   | 100    | 33,3       |
| Total     | 300    | 100,0      |

A total of 300 respondents participated in the study. Among them, 100 were from Namangan region, accounting for 33.3% of the total sample. Similarly, 100 respondents (33.3%) were from Andijan region, and 100 respondents (33.3%) were from Fergana region.

**1-figure**

**4-table**

**Information on the Participants' Grade Levels**

|       | number | percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|
| 5,00  | 23     | 7,7        |
| 6,00  | 71     | 23,7       |
| 7,00  | 71     | 23,7       |
| 8,00  | 82     | 27,3       |
| 9,00  | 53     | 17,7       |
| Total | 300    | 100,0      |

The distribution of participants by grade level was analyzed in the study. According to the data, 23 participants (7.7%) were studying in grade 5, 71 participants (23.7%) in grade 6, and 71 participants (23.7%) in grade 7. The largest group consisted of 82 students (27.3%) in grade 8, while 53 participants (17.7%) were in grade 9.

The results indicate that the relationship between adolescents' personality traits and their status within a group is generally weak. For example, among adolescents evaluated as leaders, only 3–5% showed a significant correlation with their personal traits; the correlation with popular adolescents ranged from 5–12%, and with outsiders from 5–17%. Family relationships also influence adolescents' social roles.

The study found that family conflicts or difficulties in cooperation affected the group status of popular adolescents in 12% of cases. Additionally, adolescents who suppressed aggression were evaluated as outsiders in 17% of cases. Traits such as flexibility and acceptance of others were also linked to group status: a decrease in flexibility increased the likelihood of being an outsider to 16–20%.

Gender characteristics—femininity and masculinity—may also influence the formation of adolescents' social roles, although this effect is not always clearly visible and manifests individually. The study showed that 14% of popular adolescents' social acceptance was associated with their ability to accept others, while those with low social "Self" scores were evaluated as popular less frequently (12%).

Overall, the findings suggest that adolescents' group status and social roles depend largely on family relationships, personality traits, and gender characteristics. At the same time, different methodological tools measure different aspects of adolescents' behavior, so results do not fully replicate each other. This research helps to better understand the family social environment and gender characteristics, providing valuable insights into adolescents' social development.

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