

**PSYCHOLOGY OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS***Oteniyazova Gulzada Jumaniyazovna**19.00.05 Social psychology. Ethnopsychology*

**Abstract:** This article explores the psychological dimensions of professional activity among women and girls, focusing on how gender roles, societal expectations, and internal psychological factors influence their career development and professional experiences. It examines the impact of early socialization, self-efficacy, and gender stereotypes on career choices and advancement. The article also highlights common challenges faced by women, such as role conflict, work-life balance, and the glass ceiling, as well as internal struggles like imposter syndrome. Additionally, it outlines empowering strategies, including mentorship, supportive policies, and leadership training, that can help women overcome these barriers and thrive in professional environments. The goal is to foster a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms at play and to promote gender equality in the workplace.

**Key words:** Psychology of work, gender roles, career development, women in leadership, gender stereotypes, self-efficacy, work-life balance, role conflict, imposter syndrome, mentorship, glass ceiling, professional identity, empowerment of women, occupational psychology.

The psychology of professional activity in women and girls encompasses the ways in which gender influences career development, aspirations, and achievements in the workplace. It is shaped by societal expectations, historical gender roles, personal motivations, and environmental factors. Understanding the psychological dynamics that impact women and girls in their professional lives is essential for addressing gender inequalities and promoting a more inclusive and equitable work environment. This article explores how identity, socialization, stereotypes, leadership styles, work-life balance, and barriers to advancement affect women and girls in professional settings. [1,23]

From a psychological standpoint, the formation of career identity in girls begins early in life. Research suggests that children internalize gender norms and roles through socialization processes, which influence their future career aspirations. For example, girls are often encouraged to pursue professions that are deemed "appropriate" for their gender, such as teaching, nursing, or administrative roles. This can limit their career choices and impact their professional growth. The theory of **self-efficacy**, developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, plays a significant role in this context. Self-efficacy refers to the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks. Girls who grow up with positive reinforcement and opportunities to explore various fields are more likely to develop high self-efficacy and pursue ambitious careers. Conversely, those who are discouraged from entering male-dominated professions may experience lower self-confidence and self-doubt.

Gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained in society and continue to shape perceptions of women's professional abilities. These stereotypes often involve the belief that women are less competent in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), [2.34] or that they are better suited to roles that emphasize care and empathy. Such stereotypes can limit women's opportunities, as they may not be considered for positions that require technical skills or leadership. Moreover, societal expectations regarding women's behavior in the workplace can also be restrictive. For example, women who exhibit assertiveness and decisiveness may be labeled as "bossy" or "aggressive," while similar behavior in men is often seen as leadership. This double standard creates an uneven playing field for women who aspire to leadership roles, making it more difficult for them to be taken seriously and advance in their careers.

Communication and leadership styles are areas where gender differences often manifest. Research indicates that women tend to adopt more collaborative and inclusive leadership styles, focusing on teamwork and consensus-building. While these traits are valuable in many professional contexts, they are sometimes undervalued in comparison to more traditionally masculine traits, such as decisiveness, authority, and independence.

The **role congruity theory**, proposed by Alice Eagly and Steven Karau, suggests that women face a "double bind" in leadership roles: they are judged by both their ability to lead and their conformity to traditional gender norms. Women who exhibit behaviors associated with effective leadership, such as assertiveness, may be seen as violating expectations of femininity, leading to backlash or criticism. On the other hand, women who display nurturing or collaborative traits may be perceived as less authoritative, limiting their chances of attaining top leadership positions. [3]

Work-life balance remains a significant challenge for women, particularly those in dual-career households or single-parent families. The psychological stress of balancing professional responsibilities with family and caregiving duties is well-documented. Many women experience **role conflict**, where the expectations of their personal life clash with the demands of their professional life. This can lead to feelings of guilt, stress, and burnout. Cultural attitudes towards motherhood also play a critical role. In many societies, there is an expectation that women should prioritize their family and caregiving roles over their careers. This societal pressure can lead to women stepping back from their careers or choosing part-time employment, which may limit their professional growth and earning potential.

Several strategies can empower women and girls to succeed in their professional lives and overcome the psychological barriers they face.

**Mentorship and Sponsorship:** Having access to mentors and sponsors can significantly enhance women's career development. Mentors provide guidance, advice, and support, while sponsors advocate for women within organizations, helping them access new opportunities.

**Policy Interventions:** Gender-sensitive policies, including affirmative action and quotas, can help level the playing field. These policies ensure that women are fairly represented in leadership roles and have equal access to career opportunities.



**Training and Education:** Programs focused on building leadership skills, assertiveness, and negotiation tactics can empower women to navigate workplace challenges more effectively. Training can help women overcome the psychological barriers of self-doubt and imposter syndrome.

**Workplace Flexibility:** Implementing flexible work policies, such as telecommuting and flexible hours, can reduce role conflict and help women balance their professional and personal lives more effectively.[4,56]

The psychology of professional activity for women and girls is shaped by a complex interplay of societal expectations, gender stereotypes, personal aspirations, and environmental factors. While progress has been made in many areas, significant barriers to women's professional advancement remain. By addressing these psychological and societal challenges, we can create a more inclusive and equitable environment where women and girls have the freedom to pursue their professional dreams without being limited by outdated gender norms. By fostering self-efficacy, challenging gender stereotypes, and implementing policies that promote work-life balance, we can empower the next generation of women and girls to succeed in any profession they choose

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