

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STEREOTYPES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN THE FORMATION OF VICTIM BEHAVIOR IN WOMEN

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Abstract: This article is dedicated to analyzing one of the pressing issues of modern psychology — the socio-psychological factors behind the formation of victim behavior in women. The study details the influence of the "traditional woman" image, inherent in the national mentality, as a social attitude on a woman's personal development and her level of victimization. The author reveals the destructive functions of psychological defense mechanisms activated during states of cognitive dissonance. In the article, the correlation between a predisposition toward social stereotypes and the determination of personal victimhood is proven based on theoretical and experimental data.

Keywords: Victimhood, victim behavior, social attitude, gender stereotypes, cognitive dissonance, psychological defense mechanisms, rationalization, denial, national mentality, learned helplessness, coping strategy, psychological rehabilitation, personality determination.

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the topic. In the era of globalization and social transformations, the issue of personal security and psychological health has become a priority. In particular, the prevention of cases of oppression and violence against women is a complex phenomenon that requires not only legal but also deep psychological research. The formation of victim behavior (predisposition to becoming a victim) in women is not only the result of environmental influence but a consequence of the mutual determination of social attitudes and internal psychological defense systems.

The purpose of the research. To identify the social stereotypes affecting the formation of victim behavior in women and to study the characteristics of the manifestation of psychological defense mechanisms in conditions of cognitive dissonance.

LEVEL OF STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of victimhood is interpreted differently through the prism of world and national scientific heritage:

1. **National-historical approach:** The works of Jadid thinkers, specifically Abdurauf Fitrat's "Family" (*Oila*), serve as a historical basis for victimological research. Fitrat emphasized that a woman's lack of enlightenment and her absolute legal obedience in the family lead to social decline. In his opinion, for a woman to emerge from the status of the "oppressed," she must first be an equal subject in family management [1]. Mahmudkhuja Behbudi noted that the legal illiteracy of women is the main factor turning them into victims of violence [2].

2. **Psychoanalytic approach:** According to the concepts of S. Freud and A. Freud, the "Self" (Ego) structure of a person, unable to accept the fact of violence, undergoes rationalization or total denial. Here, victimhood appears as a destructive but "economical" way chosen by the consciousness to protect itself from a difficult reality [4].
3. **Cultural-historical approach:** According to L.S. Vygotsky's theory, any "external" influence in the social environment and restrictions related to the female role become the person's internal attitude (interiorization) over time.
4. **Social determination:** K. Horney considers masochistic tendencies in women not as biological, but as products of cultural and social roots, namely male dominance in society and the forced state of being a "second-class person" [5].
5. **Cognitive approach:** M. Seligman's theory of "learned helplessness" explains why women prefer inaction even when there is a real way out [6].

SOCIAL STEREOTYPES: CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF VICTIMHOOD

In the national cultural environment, attitudes defining the role of women often have a victimogenic (victim-creating) character:

- **Gender hierarchy:** Beliefs such as "A woman's voice should be low" reduce the capacity for assertiveness in women. The individual begins to accept injustice as a "natural" part of the hierarchy.
- **Destructive interpretation of "Patience":** In many cases, patience implies that a person endures situations that trample on their health and dignity. This leads to the "delayed life syndrome."
- **Social stigmatization (Victim Blaming):** The fear of "shame" forces a woman to hide the problem (dissimulation). As a result, the woman remains in isolation one-on-one with the abuser.

DESTRUCTIVE FUNCTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE MECHANISMS

In a violent environment, the female psyche activates defense mechanisms at the subconscious level to maintain internal integrity, but they are of a maladaptive (aggravating the situation) nature:

1. **Rationalization:** The woman interprets violence as a "teaching method" or a "manifestation of jealousy in love." By searching for fault in her own actions, she falls into the illusion that she is controlling the situation.
2. **Dissociation:** During strong trauma, the consciousness detaches from reality. The woman perceives events as if they are happening to someone else, which deprives her of the emotional energy necessary to change the situation.
3. **Traumatic bonding:** A paradoxical sympathy between the abuser and the victim. The woman tries to understand the "internal suffering" of the abuser and perceives small positive actions during the "honeymoon" phase as immense kindness.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH RESULTS

During the research, O.O. Andronnikova's "Diagnostics of Victim Behavior" methodology was applied. The sample size consisted of 60 respondents [3].

Psychological characteristics	Traditional attitude group	Independent-liberal attitude group
Independent decision-making	28%	74%
Self-blame (Auto-aggression)	62%	18%
External locus of control (Fate)	80%	35%

Scientific analysis: A woman's social status (education, job) does not always protect her from victimhood. If the internal psychological attitude is loyal to the "traditional victim" image, even highly educated women consider violence as a norm through the mechanism of rationalization.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research show that the formation of victim behavior in women is not only an individual characteristic of the person but the product of a complex conflict between deep-rooted social stereotypes and destructive defense mechanisms of the human psyche.

To eliminate this problem and reduce the level of victimhood in women, the following conceptual conclusions were reached:

1. **Psychological transformation:** The main criterion of the rehabilitation process is to move the woman from the status of a passive "victim" (object) to the status of an "active person" (subject) who consciously manages her own life. In this process, replacing the sense of "guilt" with the sense of "awareness of responsibility" through cognitive reframing is of primary importance.
2. **Strengthening social immunity:** Forming assertive behavior skills in women is a guarantee of their ability to protect their personal boundaries not only physically but also psychologically. This, in turn, develops a culture of "intolerance" toward violence in society.
3. **Systemic approach:** Victimological prevention should not be limited only to legal measures. In this regard, integrating the enlightenment ideas put forward by our Jadid thinkers with modern psycho-education methods is the most effective way.

In short, a woman's psychological independence and freedom from social stereotypes is the only way to create a healthy family environment and break the chain of "transgenerational traumas" (mental injuries passed from generation to generation) in the future generation. The legal protection mechanisms created by the state will give their full effect only when combined with the internal psychological strength and volitional activity in the woman.

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