

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS IN ENHANCING WOMEN'S ACTIVITY

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Abstract

This scientific article provides an in-depth analysis of the major socio-psychological characteristics influencing the enhancement of women's activity. The research focuses on the mechanisms that stimulate women's personal, family and professional engagement in the context of gender equality, social development, and economic growth. The impact of traditional stereotypes, self-esteem levels, motivation, and social support on the dynamics of women's activity is examined based on theoretical and empirical evidence.

Keywords: Women's activity, socio-psychological characteristics, gender equality, self-esteem, motivation, social stereotypes, women's professional development.

Introduction

Relevance of the Study

The development of modern society, sustainable economic growth and the success of democratic reforms are directly linked to the full participation of women in socio-political and economic life. Within the global agenda, particularly the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5) is considered a fundamental priority. At the current stage of Uzbekistan's development, strengthening the social status of women and effectively utilizing their intellectual potential have become core directions of state policy.

In this regard, women's level of activity — their participation and initiative in education, labor, entrepreneurship, politics, and civil society institutions — is of strategic importance not only for ensuring gender justice but also for increasing the overall economic capacity of the country. Despite significant progress, women's activity remains constrained by a number of socio-psychological barriers, requiring comprehensive scientific analysis and the development of practical mechanisms to remove such obstacles.

Problem Statement

The dynamics of women's activity is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon shaped not only by macro-level socio-economic conditions but also by micro-level socio-psychological barriers and motivational factors.

Although many women possess high potential, they often face difficulties in fully realizing their abilities. The main socio-psychological barriers include:



Traditional stereotypes and social pressure:

Gender stereotypes that assign domestic and caregiving roles as a woman's primary responsibility restrict their professional and political ambitions and generate feelings of guilt when pursuing self-development.

Low self-esteem and reduced self-efficacy:

Especially in rural areas, many women demonstrate low levels of self-confidence, self-efficacy, and willingness to take risks. This prevents them from starting new initiatives, competing for leadership positions, or launching personal businesses.

Motivational factors:

Women's activity depends on the balance of internal motivation (self-development, desire for mastery) and external motivation (material incentives, social recognition). Imbalance between the two results in unstable activity.

Lack of social support:

The level of emotional and practical support from the family, workplace and social environment plays a decisive role. The absence of such support — especially pressure to choose between family and career — increases stress and reduces activity.

Therefore, this research aims to conduct a comprehensive socio-psychological analysis of the above-mentioned barriers, identify mechanisms influencing women's activity, and propose practical recommendations to enhance it.

Scientific Novelty

The scientific originality of this research is reflected in the following contributions:

1. A comprehensive psychological model in the context of Uzbekistan:

While many studies analyze women's activity from socio-economic or legal perspectives, this work is the first to propose a three-component socio-psychological model combining internal motivation, the mechanism of self-esteem formation, and the quality of social support.

2. Traditional role expectations as a psychological filter:

The article conceptualizes traditional stereotypes not only as external barriers but also as psychological filters that distort women's self-perception and internalize social expectations. This dual impact highlights the need for both social and psychotherapeutic interventions.

3. Differential approach to enhancing women's activity:

The research proposes differentiated psychological strategies tailored to demographic and professional groups — for example, risk-taking and leadership training for entrepreneurial women, and social significance-based empowerment programs for homemakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW**Meaning and Forms of Activity**

In academic literature, human activity is defined as purposeful behaviors aimed at self-development, influence on the environment, and participation in social transformation. In the context of women, several major forms of activity can be distinguished:



- **Social activity:**

Participation in NGOs, community initiatives, charity, and civic engagement — reflecting women’s contribution to solving social problems and protecting their rights.

- **Political activity:**

Involvement in governance, parliament, local councils, political parties, as well as participation in elections (as voters and as candidates). Political activity determines women’s influence on decision-making processes.

- **Economic (professional) activity:**

Participation in the labor market, entrepreneurship, and innovation. This form of activity contributes not only to personal income but also to GDP growth and employment at the national level.

Each form of activity plays a critical role in women’s empowerment, independence, and social representation. Limitations in any of these areas generate significant barriers to achieving gender equality.

Gender Analysis through Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory posits that society assigns different behavioral expectations to men and women. These expectations directly influence women’s participation in social and professional domains.

Traditional gender roles (homemaker role):

Women are expected to perform emotional and caregiving tasks, prioritizing household duties and child-rearing. Such expectations reduce the psychological and temporal resources needed for professional and political activity.

Non-traditional roles (leader, entrepreneur):

These roles require instrumental behaviors — initiative, assertiveness, decision-making and competitiveness — often perceived as “masculine traits.”

Psychological conflicts:

Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) explains the conflict between expected feminine traits and the instrumental traits required for leadership. This leads to:

- **Role expectation conflict:** Women are expected to be both emotionally warm and assertive leaders, creating psychological strain.
- **Social penalty:** Women adopting non-traditional roles often experience negative evaluations — such as being labeled “too assertive” or “neglecting family” — which discourages activity.



Key Psychological Mechanisms Influencing Women’s Activity

1. Self-efficacy (Bandura):

Self-efficacy refers to a woman’s belief in her ability to perform tasks successfully and overcome obstacles.

High self-efficacy correlates with:

- ✓ leadership aspirations
- ✓ business initiation
- ✓ resilience to failure

Low self-efficacy leads to withdrawal from opportunities despite potential.

2. Motivation:

There are two types of motivation:

- Intrinsic motivation: desire for personal growth, competence, autonomy.
- Extrinsic motivation: material rewards, recognition, external pressure.

Sustainable long-term activity is grounded in intrinsic motivation.

3. Social support:

Strong support from spouses, family members, colleagues and mentors increases:

- persistence
- stress resilience
- willingness to pursue leadership roles

Lack of support intensifies role conflict and reduces activity.

Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Quantitative tools:

- Self-Efficacy Scale
- Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation Inventory
- Author’s Social Activity Index

Qualitative tools:

- Focus groups (6 groups of 6–8 women)
- In-depth interviews

Sample:

300 women from various regions of Uzbekistan, divided into three groups:

Group	Activity Level	Activity Level	Activity Level
1	High professional (leaders/entrepreneurs)	High professional (leaders/entrepreneurs)	High professional (leaders/entrepreneurs)
2	Low/medium activity (homemakers, low-skill workers)	Low/medium activity (homemakers, low-skill workers)	Low/medium activity (homemakers, low-skill workers)
3	Highly socially active (NGOs)	Highly socially active (NGOs)	Highly socially active (NGOs)

Data Collection Methods

- Standardized questionnaires:



- **Self-Efficacy Scale:** Used to measure women’s belief in their own abilities and their confidence in performing various tasks.
- **Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation Test:** Assesses the primary motivational factors driving women’s activity.
- **Social Activity Index (Author’s scale):** Measures the level of participation in political, economic, and social activities.
- **Focus groups:** Six focus groups consisting of 6–8 participants were conducted within each sample category. The purpose was to reveal subjective experiences related to gender role conflict and social pressure.

4. **Main Findings: Analysis of Socio-Psychological Characteristics Influencing Women’s Activity (Results and Discussion)**

The research results indicate that the dynamics of women’s activity are directly connected to the socio-psychological mechanisms theoretically proposed earlier. Below is an analysis of the main characteristics.

Relationship between Activity and Self-Efficacy

Key finding: Women who demonstrated high levels of activity (particularly in professional and entrepreneurial fields) showed significantly higher self-efficacy scores ($r = 0.68, p < .001$) — statistically confirming a strong positive correlation.

Analysis: In the group of rural women (Group 2) with low self-efficacy, fear of failure was prevalent. Even tasks requiring minimal qualifications were perceived as major psychological obstacles. This significantly restricted their initiative in pursuing education and employment opportunities.

Problem: Traditional role expectations reduce women’s confidence in their leadership and assertiveness capabilities, which are essential for achieving success, thereby narrowing their scope of activity.

Impact of Motivation Types on Activity Sectors

(You may send the remaining text if you want the next section translated as well.)

Type of Motivation	Type of Motivation	Type of Motivation
Intrinsic motivation (personal growth, interest)	Professional and political activity (Group 1)	Ensures stable and long-term activity. These women continue their work even without social recognition.
Extrinsic motivation (material incentives, social recognition)	Social activity (Group 3)	Generates rapid but temporary activity. Once external incentives diminish, activity quickly declines.

More than 70% of the study participants indicated that their initial motivation to engage in activity was driven by external factors (such as a good salary or family expectations). However, the findings show that intrinsic motivation played a decisive role in achieving high and sustainable results.



Interaction Between Role Conflict and Social Support

Analytical Conclusion:

One of the strongest psychological barriers to women's activity is traditional role conflict arising from insufficient support from their spouse. This conflict limits women's ability to maintain consistent engagement in professional, social, or civic activities.

Punitive Stereotype:

During interviews, highly active women (Group 1) reported that they were often labeled by society as “neglecting their family” or as women who had “lost feminine qualities.” These findings confirm the applicability of Role Congruity Theory in the sociocultural context of Uzbekistan.

Solution:

Women who reported strong family support demonstrated not only higher levels of professional activity but also lower stress levels and greater job satisfaction. This shows that family support is a central protective factor against role-related psychological strain.

These components fully reflect the empirical basis and theoretical implications of your research.

Social Factors: External Environment and Influence

- Social norms and stereotypes: The psychological pressure created by gender stereotypes in shaping women's choices and levels of activity, as well as mechanisms for overcoming them.
- Role of the family environment: Partnership and mutual support in marital relationships positively influence women's activity.
- Collective support: The role of mentorship, networking, and professional communities in stimulating women's engagement.

Literature Review: Theoretical Foundations

Enhancing women's activity from a socio-psychological perspective relies largely on two fundamental theories: Social Role Theory and Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. Together, these frameworks explain both external (social) and internal (psychological) determinants of women's activity.

1. Gender Roles and Activity Conflict

Social Role Theory examines the behavioral norms and expectations imposed by society based on gender. In traditional societies:

- Women are assigned expressive roles (emotional, nurturing, domestic).
- Men are assigned instrumental roles (goal-oriented, assertive, leadership-related).

Role Conflict:

When women strive for professional or political activity, they frequently face a conflict between the traditional homemaker role and the career role. This conflict generates psychological pressure and often discourages women from aspiring to high-responsibility or leadership positions.

Pressure of Role Expectations:

If society expects women to prioritize motherhood and domestic tasks, their leadership or professional engagement may be viewed negatively—e.g., being judged as “neglecting the family.” This fear of social sanctions becomes a powerful psychological barrier to activity.



Analytical conclusion: To enhance women's activity, it is essential not only to empower individual women but also to transform social stereotypes and normalize women's participation in non-traditional roles.

2. Self-Efficacy Theory

Developed by Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to achieve desired outcomes through specific actions. It plays a central role in women's activity.

Activity–Confidence Link:

Women who believe they can successfully operate a business, pursue political roles, or engage in public life are significantly more active. Conversely, low self-efficacy (“I cannot do it,” “I am not capable”) acts as a major internal inhibitor.

Sources of Self-Efficacy (Bandura):

- Mastery experience: Previous successes.
- Vicarious experience: Observing successful female role models.
- Social persuasion: Encouragement from mentors or significant others.
- Physiological/emotional states: Managing stress and anxiety.

Analytical Conclusion:

Improving women's self-efficacy should be a primary psychological objective of empowerment programs. Leadership development, role-model exposure, and structured encouragement are powerful tools.

Psychological Factors: Internal Capacities and States

Women's socio-political and economic activity depends not only on external opportunities but also on their internal psychological preparedness. Two core components of this preparedness are:

1. Motivation: The Initial Driving Force

The degree of activity is determined by women's goals and their need to achieve them. Motivation can be categorized into:

Intrinsic Motivation:

Originates internally and is independent of external rewards. Includes the desire for:

- personal growth
- mastery
- independence
- contributing to society

Intrinsic motivation results in long-term, stable activity.

Extrinsic Motivation:

Driven by external factors such as:

- social recognition
- financial rewards
- promotions



- social expectations

It may initiate activity but can lead to psychological burnout if not supported by intrinsic motivation.

Analytical Conclusion:

Programs aimed at enhancing women's activity must strengthen intrinsic motivation by reinforcing their belief in their own abilities and reinforcing the meaning/value of their work.

2. Resilience: Coping with Barriers

The path to activity is rarely smooth. Women face stereotypes, role conflicts, and workplace discrimination.

Resilience — the ability to recover quickly from setbacks — is therefore critical.

Attitude toward Failure:

Resilient women view failures as learning opportunities rather than final barriers.

Stress Management:

Resilience ensures emotional stability during high-stress situations, especially when balancing family responsibilities with professional demands.

Analytical Conclusion:

Developing resilience is an essential psychological investment. Training in coping mechanisms and stress management must be part of any women's empowerment program.

3. Self-awareness and Goal Setting

Highly active women have a strong understanding of their values, strengths, and weaknesses.

- Clarity: Clear personal and professional goals prevent wasted effort and help maintain focus.
- Adaptability: Self-awareness makes it easier to adapt to changing societal demands and assume new roles effectively.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarize the findings of the research and highlight the key socio-psychological characteristics identified in the study.

Practical Recommendations:

Propose practical socio-psychological programs and mechanisms aimed at enhancing women's activity (for example, leadership development trainings, self-esteem enhancement programs, and initiatives to improve men's understanding of family-based support).

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