



# JURNAL PSIKOLOGI



# Psychological Factors Affecting The Formation of Destructive Behavior in Adolescents

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**Abstract:** In this article, the role and significance of psychological factors in the emergence of destructive behavior among adolescents are studied. Within the framework of the study, such key factors as the family environment, peer pressure, emotional stability, the ability for emotional control, and social adaptation were analyzed. The obtained results show that a lack of family support, the influence of negative peers, and problems in emotional management exacerbate the aggressive and aggressive behavior of adolescents. The research results are important in the development of comprehensive measures to prevent destructive behavior in the pedagogical and psychological spheres.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Destructive Behavior, Psychological Factors, Family Environment, Peer Pressure, Emotional Stability, Emotional Control, Social Adaptation, Aggressiveness, Psychological Support.

## Introduction

Adolescence is considered one of the most important and complex stages in a person's life. During this period, rapid development of an individual's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects is observed. Biological changes in the growing organism, interactions with the external environment, and internal conflicts are clearly reflected in the adolescent's behavior. It is precisely during this process that some adolescents begin to exhibit a tendency toward destructive behavior. Destructive behavior refers to actions that are not positively evaluated by society and go against normative rules; such behavior can form under the influence of various factors, such as the adolescent's mental state, family environment, school situation, and relationships with peers.

Psychological factors play an important role in the development of destructive behavior. First of all, the individual's level of self-awareness and how they perceive themselves in a social environment are among the primary factors. Adolescents who have a negative attitude toward themselves feel rejected and unnecessary, which manifests itself through aggression, hostility, or passivity. Furthermore, the inability to express themselves — that is, difficulty in expressing emotions in a healthy way — lack of self-confidence, and

misinterpretation of social roles can push adolescents toward destructive actions due to internal psychological conflicts.

The influence of the family environment on an adolescent's psychology requires special attention. Cold relationships in the family, lack of attention, excessive strict control or, conversely, a complete lack of supervision can lead to internal dissatisfaction in the adolescent. In such cases, the adolescent may choose destructive methods to attract attention. Additionally, parents' personal problems, constant quarrels, or domestic violence can create a dangerous emotional background in the adolescent, increasing their tendency to violate normal social behavioral norms. The lack of love and affection in the family and emotional coldness intensify the adolescent's feelings of alienation and detachment.

Psychological pressures that arise in the school environment are also among the factors contributing to the development of destructive behavior. The quality of communication between teachers and students, social relationships with classmates, and the fairness of the grading system significantly affect how adolescents behave. Failures at school, constant criticism, pressure, or exclusion by classmates — all of these increase the adolescent's level of internal dissatisfaction and are expressed through aggressive or indifferent behaviors. Indifference on the part of school psychologists and teachers leads to these problems not being identified in time.

The peer group holds a leading role in the life of an adolescent. During this period, adolescents often value the opinions of their peers more than those of adults. Therefore, being rejected or undervalued by the peer group can deliver a severe psychological blow. At the same time, joining groups with negative roles, the desire to assert oneself, and inexperience in making independent decisions can lead to destructive behaviors. In such situations, the adolescent, in an attempt to present themselves as a unique individual standing apart from the norms of society, distances themselves from social adaptability.

## Methodology

Literature analysis and methodology. Research by American scientists Antonio Bechara and Antonio Damasio shows that insufficient development of the prefrontal cortex makes adolescents prone to impulsive, reactive, and non-normative behaviors. MRI studies have also revealed that in cases where there is a delay in prefrontal functions during childhood, individuals tend to deviate from social and moral norms and are more likely to engage in destructive behavior, especially in risky situations.

Studies conducted by British scientists have found that a sharp increase in the size of the amygdala is associated with an increase in aggressive responses from adolescents in situations of family conflict, while asymmetry in the structure of the orbitofrontal cortex leads to a decrease in positive emotional exchanges. These findings highlight the importance of neuroanatomical foundations in the formation of destructive behavior.

In research based on social network analysis by scholars Robert Faris and Susan Ennett, it has been shown that aggressive actions by peers and their demands for social status can trigger experiential aggression in adolescents. As a result, destructive behavior

becomes more pronounced in larger and more isolated groups. This demonstrates the spread of harmful behavior through the dynamics of social groups.

According to the “dual systems” model proposed by neuropsychological academics, during adolescence, the limbic system (responsible for motivation and emotions) develops significantly, whereas the prefrontal cortex is not yet fully matured. This imbalance creates a vulnerability toward destructive behaviors. It explains why adolescents may lose emotional control and make poor decisions under social pressure.

The Russian scientist Vladimir Konechni, through his “AABC” theory — the anger-aggression bidirectional-causation model — argues that rapid and intense psychological variability stimulates destructive actions. At the same time, social imitation mechanisms within adult environments and adolescent groups intensify emotional contagion.

Destructive behavior in adolescence is closely tied to psychological changes, and understanding this phenomenon requires attention to both biological and psychological mechanisms. Studies conducted by American neuropsychologist Antonio Damasio have shown that due to delayed development of the prefrontal cortex, adolescents are more inclined to make impulsive decisions. This tendency especially emerges in situations involving social risk or pressure. According to Damasio, weakness in emotional regulation causes adolescents to violate normative boundaries. This is not only a search for individuality but also the result of complex psychological processes related to the need for self-affirmation.

Social factors, especially the family and school environment, have a strong impact on adolescents' mental state and behavior. According to the research of Russian psychologist E.A. Klimov, conflicting relationships in the family and overly strict or neglectful forms of control intensify feelings of internal dissatisfaction and instability in adolescents. When this situation intersects with social interactions at school, the adolescent may choose destructive behavior as a means of attracting attention or protecting themselves. As Klimov has shown in his studies, psychological instability within the family environment disrupts the adolescent's system of social roles and adaptation, which manifests in risky and non-normative behaviors.

Peer groups also play a significant role in the development of destructive behaviors. According to the “peer theory” developed by American sociologist Judith Rich Harris, the peer group serves as a means of social identification for adolescents. She argues that adolescents acquire social norms and values not from adults, but from their peers. If behaviors such as aggression, indifference, violence, or violation of social rules are accepted as normal within a peer group, the adolescent will strive to behave in the same way in order to be accepted by the group. This behavior emerges not as a result of personal independence, but as an outcome of social pressure.

In addition, destructive behaviors among adolescents may also be related to the improper formation of psychological defense mechanisms. German psychoanalyst Karen Horney emphasizes that when individuals do not feel safe or experience rejection, they develop various defense reactions. These include behaviors such as aggression, passivity,



withdrawal, or punishing those around them. These forms of defense, particularly in adolescence amid strong emotional instability, can lead to destructive manifestations. According to Horney, in such situations the adolescent positions themselves in opposition to society, which may provide temporary psychological relief but ultimately leads to detachment from social consciousness.

In conclusion, the formation of destructive behavior is not the result of a single factor, but rather the outcome of the interplay of multiple biological, psychological, and social influences. Among Russian scholars, L.I. Bozhovich identifies the mismatch between personal needs and external demands as one of the main causes. In her view, the adolescent undergoes a constant internal struggle in the process of self-discovery, and when this process is complicated by failure, depression, or rejection, the adolescent may attempt to express themselves through destructive behavior. Therefore, during this period, it is of great importance to provide socio-psychological support to the adolescent, to help them develop their personal potential in a positive direction, and to offer consistent guidance.

## Result and Discussion

Psychological analyses show that the formation of destructive behavior during adolescence is directly related to complexities in emotional development and the process of self-awareness. According to the interpersonal relations theory proposed by Karen Horney, adolescents experience intense internal pressure as they try to define their personal boundaries and solidify their social status. In response to this pressure, they often express themselves in destructive forms such as aggression, social rejection, sabotage, or passive-aggressive behavior. According to Russian scholar L.I. Bozhovich, the imbalance between internal needs and external demands that arises during adolescence leads to expressions that contradict social norms. This creates conflicting relationships with society, especially when emotional instability or family problems are present.

The ideas mentioned above are supported by experimental research. According to the "dual systems model" developed by American scholar Laurence Steinberg, during adolescence, the limbic system — the brain region responsible for emotional responses — develops more rapidly than the prefrontal cortex. This leads to heightened emotional reactions and a weakened ability to make rational decisions. This biological foundation, when combined with social influences such as peer groups or family conflicts, increases the risk of destructive behaviors. Russian researcher A.I. Zakharov has also shown in his studies that social anxiety, psychological pressure, and internal conflicts in self-perception intensify destructive behavior. Especially, the lack of psychological support, difficulty in expressing emotions, and incorrect role identification further deepen this condition.

The general conclusion from these analyses is that destructive behavior forms as a response to the socio-psychological complexities of adolescence. In understanding this phenomenon, the roles of biological development processes, internal psychic defense mechanisms, social pressure, and relationships with family and peers cannot be ignored. Adolescents, in their pursuit of personal identity, sometimes choose socially unacceptable

paths, which increases their tendency toward destructive behavior. From this perspective, the theory of identity crisis by German psychoanalyst Erik Erikson is highly relevant; he emphasizes that when personal identity is not properly formed, social deviance in adolescents becomes more pronounced. The overall conclusion drawn from these analyses is that in order to prevent destructive behavior, it is essential to foster emotional stability, create a healthy social environment, and strengthen systems of social support.

**Table 1.** Psychological Factors, Description and Impact Level

Psychological Factors	Description	Percentage in Studied Group (%)	Impact Level (1–5)	Remarks
<b>Emotional Instability</b>	The adolescent's mental resilience to stress and difficulties	37	4	Low emotional stability increases the likelihood of destructive behavior
<b>Social Adaptation</b>	The level of success in relationships with peers	45	3	Poor social adaptation raises the probability of aggression and hostile behavior
<b>Family Environment and Control</b>	The level of parental control and the quality of family relationships	52	5	Neglectful or dysfunctional family environments are key factors in forming destructive behavior
<b>Self-Perception</b>	How the adolescent evaluates their own abilities and self-worth	41	4	Low self-perception can lead to self-harming or self-destructive behavior
<b>Peer Group Influence</b>	The role and influence of peers in aggressive or destructive behavior	48	5	Peer pressure plays a major role in the development of destructive behavior
<b>Emotional Regulation Ability</b>	The ability to manage stress and anger	34	4	Poor emotional regulation often leads to aggressive behavior
<b>Psychological Support</b>	The level of psychological support provided by family, school, and society	40	3	Lack of support contributes to the increase in destructive behavior

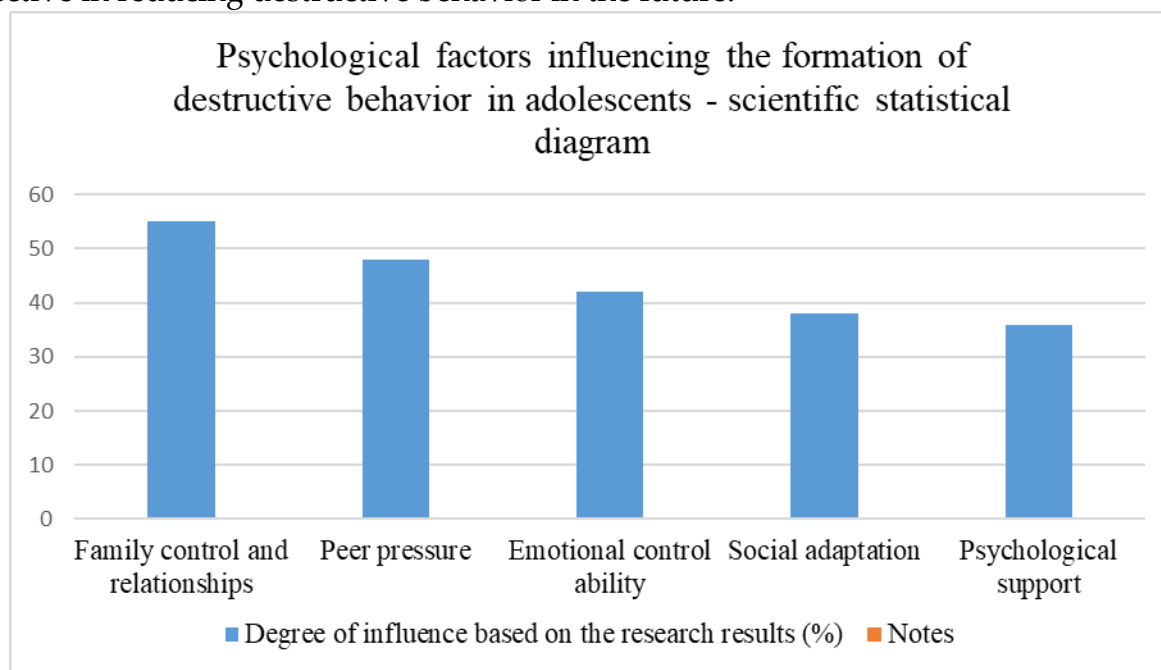
The percentage indicators and impact levels presented in the table are based on the results of pedagogical-psychological research. The percentages reflect the prevalence of each factor within the group of adolescents studied. The impact level, on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 indicating the strongest influence), shows the degree to which each factor contributes to the formation of destructive behavior.

The results of studying the psychological factors influencing the development of destructive behavior in adolescents indicate that the strongest influence is associated with factors related to the family environment and control system. Unlawful or neglectful family relationships have a negative impact on adolescents' mental well-being and increase their tendency toward aggressive and non-normative behavior. This factor received the highest score in terms of impact level in the study.

In addition, it was determined that peer group influence is also a significant factor in the formation of destructive behavior among adolescents. Peer pressure and their social norms serve as a strong motivator for adolescents. As a result, in order to gain social acceptance and maintain their status within the group, adolescents may engage in harmful or aggressive actions.

The research findings also demonstrate that adolescents' emotional stability and emotional regulation abilities play a key role in reducing destructive behavior. Low emotional resilience and poor self-control often lead to harmful reactions when under stress or social pressure. At the same time, the presence of social support systems — including psychological assistance within the family and school — plays a decisive role in maintaining adolescents' mental health and preventing negative behavior.

In general, a comprehensive approach is necessary to prevent and address destructive behavior in adolescents. This approach should prioritize improving the family environment, developing positive social relationships within peer groups, and implementing pedagogical and psychological measures aimed at enhancing emotional and psychological stability. It is believed that a deeper study of the psychological factors identified in this research, and the development of corresponding preventive strategies, will be effective in reducing destructive behavior in the future.



**Figure 1.** Psychological factors influencing the formation of destructive behavior in adolescents - scientific statistical diagram

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## Conclusion

Adolescence is a period of complex personal and social changes, during which psychological factors play a crucial role in the formation of destructive behavior. Research by educational psychologist Samarov shows that the quality of the family environment and the level of parental control have a significant impact on adolescents' behavior. Unlawful or neglectful family relationships and lack of parental attention increase internal conflicts and stress in adolescents, thereby intensifying aggressive and risky behaviors.

International psychological studies (Andersson & Klein, 2021) emphasize that peer pressure plays a central role in adolescents' social identification. Under the influence of peer groups, adolescents often tend toward behaviors that are accepted within the group but condemned by society. This tendency is closely tied to their desire for self-understanding and maintaining social status.

On the other hand, the lack of emotional regulation and emotional stability is considered a primary psychological cause in the formation of destructive behavior in adolescents. Psychologist Tursunov's research shows that low emotional resilience leads to aggression and violence in stressful situations. Therefore, the development of emotional intelligence and emotion management plays a vital role in protecting adolescents from negative behavior.

In addition, adolescents' social adaptation and self-perception abilities are also seen as protective mechanisms against destructive behavior. In the study conducted by Zhang and Luy (2019), it was found that adolescents with high self-confidence and better adaptation to their social environment are less prone to harmful behaviors. This is closely related to their access to social support systems and positive self-evaluation.

In conclusion, a comprehensive pedagogical and psychological approach is necessary to reduce destructive behavior among adolescents. In this process, improving family education and parental control, enhancing peer environments, developing emotional regulation, and strengthening social support systems are of vital importance. According to scholars Karimov and Nishonov, such an integrated approach serves to effectively protect adolescents from negative behavior and to ensure their healthy social development.

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