

**SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF THE
DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY IN YOUNG
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ABSTRACT

The article examines the social-psychological determinants that influence the development of cognitive activity in young school students. Cognitive activity is interpreted not only as an individual intellectual process, but also as a socially mediated form of learning behavior shaped by family communication, teacher-student interaction, peer cooperation, motivation, classroom climate, and cultural expectations.

Introduction

The development of cognitive activity in young school students is one of the central problems of educational psychology, because the first years of schooling determine the child's attitude toward knowledge, intellectual effort, independent thinking, and social participation in learning. Cognitive activity cannot be reduced to the mechanical acquisition of information or the formal performance of classroom tasks. It includes curiosity, attention, questioning, comparison, reasoning, problem solving, reflection, and the ability to apply knowledge in new situations. In this sense, cognitive activity is both a psychological and a social phenomenon. It emerges through the interaction of internal mental processes and external social conditions. The child does not develop as an isolated learner; rather, his or her intellectual behavior is gradually formed through communication with adults, cooperation with peers, participation in school routines, and interpretation of culturally accepted learning norms.

Materials and methods

One of the most important social-psychological determinants of cognitive activity is the family environment. In young school age, the family remains the primary emotional and communicative context in which the child's attitude toward learning is formed. Parents influence cognitive activity not only through direct help with homework, but also through speech culture, reading habits, emotional support, expectations, and the general value assigned to education. A child who regularly hears explanations, arguments, stories, and questions at home usually enters school with a stronger basis for verbal reasoning and conceptual thinking. Conversely, a communicative environment poor in dialogue may limit the development of curiosity and independent reasoning, even if the child formally attends school regularly.

Results and discussion

Parental expectations have a dual influence. Moderate expectations combined with emotional support can stimulate perseverance, responsibility, and interest in achievement. However, excessive pressure may produce anxiety and avoidance of difficult tasks. Cognitive activity requires psychological freedom: the child must feel that intellectual effort is valuable even when the result is imperfect. When parents interpret mistakes as natural elements of learning, the child becomes more inclined to experiment and search for new solutions. When mistakes are punished or ridiculed, the child may prefer safe, reproductive answers. Thus, the family acts as the first motivational regulator of the child's cognitive behavior.

The second major determinant is teacher-student interaction. In early schooling, the teacher is not only a transmitter of knowledge but also a socially significant adult who organizes the child's cognitive experience. The teacher's speech, emotional tone, feedback style, and method of questioning directly affect the level of students' intellectual participation. If the teacher uses open questions, encourages explanation, listens to children's reasoning, and provides constructive feedback, students are more likely to become active participants in learning. If the teacher dominates the lesson through rigid instructions and evaluates only correct final answers, students may become passive executors of tasks.

Teacher-student relationships are especially important because young children often identify the subject with the teacher's personality. A supportive teacher can turn even a difficult task into an attractive cognitive challenge, while an emotionally distant or punitive teacher may reduce interest in learning. Pianta, Hamre, and Allen argue that the quality of teacher-student relationships is fundamental for understanding student engagement in the classroom [6]. This idea is particularly relevant for young school students, whose self-regulation and academic self-concept are still developing. The teacher's approval, trust, and respect function as psychological resources that strengthen the child's willingness to think, speak, and act independently.

Peer interaction is another significant factor in the development of cognitive activity. In traditional pedagogy, classmates were often viewed mainly as a background to individual learning. Contemporary educational psychology, however, shows that peer cooperation can become a powerful source of cognitive development. When children discuss tasks, compare answers, explain their reasoning, and jointly search for solutions, they learn to coordinate different perspectives. This process develops not only academic knowledge but also argumentation, self-correction, and reflective thinking. Rogoff's concept of cognitive development in social context emphasizes that children learn through participation in culturally organized activity with more competent or equally engaged partners [4]. Therefore, peer communication should be considered not a secondary element of instruction, but an essential mechanism of cognitive growth.

Conclusion

The development of cognitive activity in young school students is determined by a complex system of social-psychological factors. Family communication, parental expectations, teacher-student relationships, peer cooperation, classroom climate, motivation, cultural norms, and task organization jointly shape the child's intellectual behavior. Cognitive activity does not arise automatically from schooling itself. It develops when the child is included in meaningful social interaction, receives supportive guidance, experiences success through

effort, and learns to regard mistakes as part of thinking. The most effective educational environment is one that combines intellectual challenge with emotional security. The teacher's role is decisive because the teacher organizes the social space in which curiosity, reasoning, and independent effort either develop or decline. However, the school cannot replace the family or peer group; all these contexts interact.

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