

The Gradual Expression of Stress and Its Impact on Individual Activity

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Received: 27 February 2026; **Accepted:** 24 March 2026; **Published:** 15 April 2026

Abstract: This article provides a theoretical analysis of the meaning of the term stress, the scientific foundations of its application in psychological science, the factors causing it (stressors), and its impact on human life and activity.

Keywords: Stress, distress, physiological stress, psychological stress, emotional stress, informational stress, stressor, psychological tension, etc.

Introduction: In human activity, it is often possible to observe states of anxiety, fear, and nervousness. The socio-economic changes occurring in the world, the increasing intensity of labor, the growth of information flows, and the emergence of new technologies are among the most important factors influencing human life. No individual is guaranteed protection from failures, obstacles, dangers, or emotional excitement. Many people cannot avoid conflicts, disagreements, and disputes in interpersonal relationships. As a result, such situations lead to stress, an emotional condition that disrupts both psychological and physical health.

The word stress originates from the English term stress, meaning "tension" or "pressure." Stress is considered a set of unusual adaptive reactions of the organism to various unfavorable factors. The concept of stress was first used at the end of the nineteenth century by Walter Cannon in his scientific studies devoted to investigating the "fight or flight" reaction of humans to various situations and problems.

If we look at the history of the term stress, according to V. I. Petrushin, this term was first used in 1303 by the poet R. Mann, who applied it in one of his poems. In the poem, the term was expressed as follows: "This suffering was sent by God to people who spent forty winters in the desert and experienced great stress" [6].

The famous Canadian physiologist Hans Selye published his first scientific work on the "General Adaptation Syndrome" in 1936, but for a long time he

did not use the term stress, instead referring to it as "nervous psychological tension" [7]. Only in 1946 did he begin to use the term stress to describe a state of general adaptive tension. H. Selye [7] identified three stages of stress as an adaptation syndrome:

1. Alarm reaction;
2. Resistance stage;
3. Exhaustion stage.

The stages mentioned above represent a specific mechanism of an individual's adaptation to the environment. One of the earliest major works devoted to the study of stress was Selye's book *The Stress of Life*. According to the author, the word "stress," like the words "luck," "success," and "happiness," carries different meanings for different individuals. Therefore, although stress has entered human life, it is extremely difficult to give it a precise and universally accepted definition [7;8].

Today, stress is understood as a state of high tension in the organism caused by the influence of certain stimuli known as stressors. The word stress is also used to describe an individual's emotional condition in problematic situations.

Stress is not simply nervous tension, although nervous tension may also be considered a form of stress. It is important to emphasize this fact. Many specialists and even some scholars consider biological stress to be identical to strong emotional arousal. In reality,

emotional stimuli affecting the higher nervous system are among the most common stressors, and such stressors are frequently observed in individuals who seek psychological or psychiatric help.

Nowadays it is difficult to find a person who has never experienced stress. Life is complex, and processes within it do not always proceed smoothly. Some stressors may intensify to such an extent that they lead to health problems and psychological instability. Just as humans cannot live without water, air, or food, they also cannot live entirely without stress. However, stress may accumulate to such a degree that an individual becomes unable to cope with it and may develop illness. An important factor here is that the level of emotional stress largely depends on how an individual perceives, interprets, and reacts to stressful situations. In many cases, strong emotional stress increases an organism's susceptibility to diseases.

The problem of stress and affect manifested in human activity is considered one of the widely recognized issues of the modern era. It is argued in scientific literature that emotional stress cannot be completely avoided, and individuals cannot fully escape stressors. The problem lies in the difficulty of adapting to these stressors. According to E. Mironov, when translated from English, the word stress means "psychological tension" or "pressure" [7;8]. The term distress is used in the meanings of "sorrow," "need," or "fatigue." Stress is not merely nervous tension, although nervous tension can indeed be classified as stress. Many specialists and some scholars equate biological stress with strong emotional excitement. Emotional stimuli affecting the higher nervous system are among the most common stressors and are frequently observed in patients who consult psychiatrists.

Stress does not always lead to damage or illness. Any normal activity may produce a certain level of stress that does not harm the organism. According to the Dictionary of Psychological Terms, stress (from the English stress meaning pressure or tension) is a term used to describe a wide range of conditions that arise in response to various extreme influences (stressors). Initially, the concept of stress was used in physiology to describe the organism's non-specific reaction to unpleasant stimuli. Later, the concept began to be applied to describe the physiological, psychological, and behavioral states of individuals in extraordinary situations.

In the dictionary compiled by B. G. Meshcheryakov, stress is defined as "a state of psychological tension that appears in individuals under relatively complex, difficult conditions and important situations during everyday activities" [4].

The causes of stress formation threaten both the biological integrity of the organism and the psychological state of an individual. Based on this, researchers distinguish two major groups of stress: physiological stress and psychological stress. Physiological stress arises from physiological factors such as obstacles, loud noises, intense light, high temperatures, vibrations, and similar influences.

Psychological stress occurs when a person's reaction to an extraordinary situation, the evaluation of its complexity, or feelings of helplessness toward the problem determine the emotional response. Unexpected changes in tasks, lack of necessary preparation, time pressure, the high importance of work, and personal responsibility for tasks are typical conditions that lead to psychological stress. Psychological stress is also divided into informational stress and emotional stress.

Informational stress arises when information overload occurs, when individuals face great responsibility for decision-making outcomes and cannot find the necessary algorithm for solving problems or fail to make correct decisions within the required time. The work of operators in technical management systems is often cited as an example of informational stress.

Several studies indicate that the functional reliability of an individual's activity depends on how accurately and promptly a person can introduce changes in the state of the controlled object. The success of work activity is determined by its usefulness, functional reliability, and the adequacy, completeness, and level of development of the actual content of the activity. When disruptions occur in these conditions, difficulties inevitably arise in managing and performing the activity.

The concept of the informational basis of labor activity refers to a set of information that characterizes the objective conditions of activity and allows it to be organized within the framework of goal and result.

The informational basis of labor activity is formed at three levels:

1. Sensor-perceptual level;
2. Cognitive level;
3. Imagery-operational level.

Tensions and overloads in the formation of the informational basis of labor activity create conditions for the development of stress.

Informational stress depends on how the subject evaluates the potential danger of stress influences during extreme signals or situations. It should be noted that not only real stressful situations but also their mental representation may be perceived as threatening and may therefore cause informational

stress.

V. A. Bodrov studied the factors causing informational stress in operator activities. According to his research, informational stress in operator activity is considered a type of professional stress. Its causes are associated with extreme influences, stressogenic factors in the work process, and the organizational, social, environmental, and technical characteristics of labor activity. According to its developmental mechanism, informational stress in operators may be classified as psychological stress related to disturbances in informational cognitive processes involved in organizing activity. Any life events accompanied by psychological tension can serve as sources of informational stress regardless of whether they are directly related to labor activity or not [1;2;3]. Therefore, the development of informational stress in management is determined not only by the characteristics of the work process but also by various life events, worldview, communication environment, and different spheres of the individual's activity. Consequently, when identifying the causes of informational stress in operator activity, it is necessary to take into account various life events that may serve as sources of stress. Based on the analysis of relevant literature, the main causes of informational stress in management may be divided into the following categories:

1. Direct causes – negative factors in human–technology information exchange that serve as the initial source of stress development.
2. Primary causes – individual characteristics that determine the probability of stress occurrence and the person's ability to manage and overcome it.
3. Additional causes – factors that facilitate the emergence and manifestation of stress and contribute to the individual's adaptation to this condition.

One of the main causes of informational stress is insufficient control over work situations. Several studies have examined the relationship between informational stress and individual personality traits. The foundation for studying this problem lies in the data concerning personal differentiation based on the degree of psychological tension manifested in complex working conditions and problematic situations. Research results show that an individual's response to unexpected influences depends on how the harmful or dangerous factor is perceived and evaluated, which is closely connected with the individual's psychological characteristics.

Emotional stress occurs when threats arise to a person's physical safety (wars, crimes, accidents, disasters, serious illnesses) or when their economic

status, social position, and interpersonal relationships are endangered (family conflicts, illnesses, and similar conditions).

Stress reactions may be divided into two types based on their external manifestation, although they may lead to similar outcomes. The first type is the inhibitory reaction, which is characterized by a slowdown in motor activity, difficulty perceiving and remembering new information, and even an inability to perform simple actions. The dominant emotions in this reaction are fear, helplessness, and apathy.

The second type is the impulsive reaction, which appears externally as increased activity. In such situations, individuals display excessive movement, speak rapidly, attempt to perform several tasks simultaneously, and often fail to complete any of them. Thinking becomes rapid and sometimes focused on insignificant details. Mood becomes highly unstable, and excitability may quickly turn into aggression.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of scientific studies devoted to problems related to individual activity demonstrates that research in this field remains highly relevant today. The fact that foreign, Russian, and Uzbek psychologists have studied different aspects of this problem further confirms its significance across different historical periods.

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