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THE PROBLEM OF EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND STRESS RESISTANCE IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

A. K. Shamshetova

Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Professor
Uzbekistan State University of World Languages (UzSWLU)

A. B. Tasova

PhD in Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor
Khoja Ahmed Yasavi International Kazakh-Turkish University
Faculty of Social and Humanitarian Sciences,
Head of the Department of Psychology

Abstract:

This article presents an analysis of scholars' views on the nature and causes of stress and misunderstandings encountered in contemporary educational processes.

Keywords: Stress, distress, physiological stress, psychological stress, mechanism, adaptation, nervous tension, emotional arousal, stimulus, stressor.

Introduction

In the current era of globalization and the intensification of information flows, educational processes are becoming increasingly complex. This, in turn, has a significant impact on the psychological well-being of pupils and students, particularly on their emotional stability and resilience to stress. Emotional stability refers to an individual's ability to regulate and manage their emotions in various stressful situations, while stress resilience denotes the level of

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psychological adaptation to difficulties and pressures. In the modern educational environment, it is widely observed that students and teachers are increasingly exposed to various stressors. It is natural for university students to encounter different challenging situations, such as academic requirements, examination pressure, social relationships, and family expectations. All of these factors inevitably affect their emotional state. Research indicates that in some countries, 66% of students aged 18–19 experience stress due to receiving poor grades, while 59% report anxiety related to the difficulty of taking tests and examinations. In the educational process, insufficient development of these two factors—emotional stability and stress resilience—can lead to a decline in academic performance, increased psychological strain, and even the emergence of mental health problems.

Indeed, stress is always regarded as the result of the physiological adaptation mechanisms of the human body, while biological mechanisms possess their own distinct nature and characteristics. Without clarifying the understanding of these two mechanisms, it is impossible to explain the complex and often contradictory reactions that individuals display in response to stressful influences.

In the educational environment, emotional stability and resilience to stress are not only essential for academic success but also represent skills that are necessary throughout life. Through the joint efforts of teachers, parents, and educational institutions, students should be supported in developing these important abilities. As is well known, the term stress was introduced into science as a scientific concept by Hans Selye (G. Selye). He first used this term in 1936 in the journal *Nature*. The author's research primarily focused on studying stress from an adaptive perspective (physiological and biological), with particular emphasis on interpreting its physiological aspects. One of the earliest and most influential works in this field was Selye's book *The Stress of Life*, which summarized many years of his observations and research.

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According to the author, the word stress, much like the words success, achievement, and happiness, carries a unique meaning for each individual. As Selye noted, “Although stress has become an integral part of our lives, it is impossible to provide a precise and universally accepted definition of it.” He further raised the question: “Is stress perhaps synonymous with distress?”. The term distress refers to sorrow, misfortune, exhaustion, emaciation, and deprivation, whereas stress denotes tension, pressure, strain, or exertion. Thus, while stress generally describes a state of psychological or physiological tension, distress represents its negative and harmful form that may adversely affect an individual’s well-being.

Taking these considerations into account within the educational process, one may either agree or disagree with Selye’s view mentioned above. Any of the situations listed can trigger stress; however, we cannot single out any one of them and say, “This alone is stress.” To date, many scholars have expressed their views regarding the essence of this concept, yet no consensus has been reached on a single definition that fully reflects its meaning. Therefore, rather than discussing what stress is, it may be more useful to consider what stress is not. In this regard, Selye’s ideas remain highly relevant:

Stress is not merely nervous tension (although nervous tension may indeed be a form of stress). This fact deserves special emphasis. Many specialists and even some researchers equate biological stress with intense emotional arousal. In humans, emotional stimuli that affect the higher nervous system are, in practice, among the most common stressors. Stress is not always the result of injury or harm. Whether a stressor is pleasant or unpleasant is not particularly important. Any ordinary activity—such as playing a game of chess or even receiving a firm embrace from someone—can produce a certain level of stress without causing any damage. Thus, stress is a natural component of human functioning and adaptation, rather than an exclusively negative phenomenon. Stress should not be avoided entirely—indeed, this is impossible. When people usually say that

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someone is “experiencing stress,” they often mean severe stress or distress. In reality, this expression is similar to saying, “His temperature is elevated,” because even a sleeping person experiences certain manifestations of stress: the heart continues to pump blood, the gastrointestinal system continues to digest the evening meal, and the respiratory system maintains the movements of the chest required for breathing. Even the brain does not rest completely.

Therefore, as Hans Selye stated, “The only way to be completely free from stress is death.” This conclusion may be considered more accurate, as stress is an inherent and unavoidable aspect of life and the functioning of the human organism [3, p. 75].

In studies on stress, researchers also provide a detailed analysis of the factors that cause stress. In particular, K.V. Sudakov presents the following explanation: while physiological stress arises directly as a result of physiological influences, emotional stress occurs when psychological stressors are associated with complex mental processes. These processes involve the evaluation of a stimulus and reliance on previous experiences when responding to or resisting it.

If, as a result of such psychological processing, an individual perceives a threat or danger, then the stimulus may acquire the characteristics of a stressor. Typically, this situation becomes significant when an individual evaluates the discrepancy between environmental demands and personal needs, or between the demands placed upon them and their available psychological and physiological resources. Such psychological appraisal plays an important role in determining whether a particular situation will be experienced as stressful [2].

According to R. Lazarus, many life events are appraised by individuals as threatening situations. The author includes among such situations illnesses, conflicts, threats to social status, the death of loved ones, and the breakdown of relationships with close people. These forms of loss may be perceived as significant stressors. Such “challenge” situations, which threaten an individual's social adaptation, require new strengths and resources and often lead to various

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forms of psychological strain. Even the achievement of one's goals—such as obtaining a new job, getting married, or being admitted to a higher education institution—may be regarded as a stress-inducing event [1]. According to contemporary psychological perspectives, the key issue is not the complete elimination of stress but rather its effective management. From this viewpoint, several approaches are particularly important. Within educational settings, it is necessary to implement psychological training programs that include practical exercises, relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, time-management skills, motivation enhancement strategies, and the development of positive thinking. Stress arising in the educational process negatively affects the psychological well-being of pupils, students, and teachers, as well as the effectiveness of learning activities and personal development. Therefore, the prevention of stress in educational environments has become one of the most pressing issues today. The relevance of stress in the educational process can be explained by the following factors:

- 1. Impact on the Quality of Education and Academic Achievement** – High levels of stress among students can lead to reduced concentration, impaired memory functioning, and difficulties in acquiring and retaining knowledge.
- 2. Maintaining Psychological Well-being in the Educational Process** – Continuous stress in educational and teaching activities may result in anxiety, depressive states, emotional tension, and psychological exhaustion.
- 3. Preventing a Decline in Motivation** – Stress can reduce students' interest in learning and lead to disengagement from educational activities.
- 4. Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers' Professional Performance** – Occupational stress and emotional burnout among teachers negatively affect the quality of education. Effective stress management contributes to better organization of teachers' professional activities and improves their overall performance.

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It is essential to create a healthy educational environment within the learning process. Whenever possible, a stress-free and supportive atmosphere should be fostered, as it promotes positive relationships among students and educators. At the same time, educational institutions must ensure adaptation to the demands of modern education. In this context, the widespread use of digital technologies, distance learning, high academic expectations, and the rapid flow of information naturally increase the number of stress factors. Therefore, stress prevention has become even more important. Preventing stress in the educational process is a crucial condition for ensuring students' academic success, psychological well-being, and teachers' professional effectiveness. Consequently, the development of stress-prevention programs, the strengthening of psychological support services, and the cultivation of stress-resilience skills in educational institutions have become urgent tasks.

In conclusion, the development of emotional stability and stress resilience in educational processes is one of the most pressing issues of our time. The formation of these skills enhances academic performance, strengthens individuals' psychological well-being, and facilitates social adaptation. Therefore, it is necessary to reinforce psychological support systems and preventive measures within the educational system.

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