



LITERATURE REVIEW MLA FORMAT SAMPLE

STRESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES 1

The term stress, both in science and in everyday life, was so widespread that it took on a large number of meanings and forms. Many scientific disciplines have studied various aspects of stress, from biological sciences such as physiology, biochemistry and neurophysiology; through psychology with their disciplines: clinical psychology, mental hygiene, developmental psychology, social psychology, and others; to social sciences such as anthropology and sociology. It is not surprising that the notion of stress in these scientific disciplines is used in various meanings, contributing to such confusion as to its definition. However, even if the notion of stress is unclear or contradictorily defined in most cases, it nevertheless directs the attention of scientists to a number of interesting and important phenomena. The existence of a large number of different definitions can be viewed as an indicator of the significance of this term. Observed in a wider context, the fact that stress studies are performed at different levels of analysis can bring hope, not despair. Although this brings some difficulty in defining stress on the one hand, the other stress represents the point in which a large number of scientific disciplines are encountered and provides an excellent opportunity for interdisciplinary and integration. In psychological literature, as well as in formal and informal communication among experts, it can be noted that stress is most often understood in one of two ways, where within each of them there are two variants of definition. The first understanding of stress determines an event in an external environment, as follows: (1) as an event that poses a threat or loss to most people (or, less often, a challenge); or (2) as an event that constitutes a threat or loss (or challenge) for a particular individual. Another notion is that stress represents a reaction to an event in an external environment, namely: (1) the activation of intense feelings (usually unpleasant); and / or (2) a set of characteristic body reactions. The definition proposed by Lazarus & Folkman and Aldwin, representatives of the transactionalist understanding of stress, encompasses both the above-mentioned points; whereby, from the framework of the first determination of stress (as an event), a subjective assessment is particularly emphasized, due to which some events are characterized as threats, losses or challenges. This stress is the relationship between a person and the environment, within which a person estimates that some aspect of the environment includes a threat, loss or challenge for its strength, with characteristic changes in the psychophysiological balance. The threat is widely understood here. This can be an objective danger, i.e. a direct threat to life, but also a threat to other important people, for important support in life, a standard way of life, beliefs, and so on. The same applies to loss. In this context, loss means not only the death of a significant person, but can also involve a break in the relationship with a moving friend, a break in partnership, a loss of home in a refugee, and so on. Within the framework of a transactional approach, stress is stressed as a process, not an external environment or a state of the organism. The most important components of stress according to this definition are: (a) a particular event or situation in the outer environment; (b) a characteristic subjective assessment of the event; (c) changes in psychological functioning; (d) physiological changes and (e) the experience of the entire process. Among the components of stress, the transaction model emphasizes the importance of cognitive processes and individual differences in the assessment of events in the external environment. Also, it implies a special relationship between the components of stress, which is the interdependence of factors from the domain of the environment and from the domain of the person experiencing stress, as well as the variability of the above-mentioned factors under the influence of the current transaction.

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For stress can only be talked about when a person is exposed to an event that he / she assesses as a threat, loss or challenge, i.e. when a person estimates that the situation requires the investment of increased, extraordinary efforts to adapt. Situations or events that are subjectively assessed here are referred to as stressful events, stressful situations, or stressors. (Stress events include components a and b to the transactional stress determination.) This implies that a stressful situation involves a change in relation to the previous state; and that the duration of the stressor can be determined with a lower or higher precision, i.e. that stress situations do not include very long-lasting adverse living conditions, which may have different (adverse) effects on the psychophysiological functioning of the organism and development. Researchers in the field of stress have studied a large number of different events that can be characterized as stressful. The subject of the earliest studies is war and natural disasters. Later, studies of events involving lower intensity of threats for the exposed person began.

From the point of view of Lazarus, what is stressful for one person at a particular moment in her life does not have to be stressful for another person or for the same person at some other time. Loss of work is not equally stressful for a teenager and a middle-aged man. Stress arises from a combination of conditions in the outer environment and individual characteristics that are important for resolving the current situation. Among the environmental conditions of particular importance are cultural factors that shape both the types of events that can be exposed to members of the culture, as well as the subjective assessment of events. (In different cultures, some events are considered normal, normative, which reduces their perceived stress.) According to Lazarus, a subjective assessment of the event involves assessing the degree of demand that is set before an individual, as well as the support that an individual has at his disposal in the process of dealing with the problem. According to his model, a person first recognizes that there is a problem before it (primary assessment), and then judges what capacities it needs to solve the problem (secondary assessment). Stress is the result of an assessment that there is a discrepancy between the requirements in a particular situation and the person's ability to meet these requirements.

Among the changes in the psychological plane characteristic of stress, the most prominent changes in the sphere of emotional processes. Emotional reactions characteristic of stress are most commonly anxiety, anger and sorrow, and they can also show shame, guilt, overdose (dullness). After traumatic or other intense stress (associated with loss or diagnosis of incurable disease), emotional bruising may occur. Changes in psychological functioning during stress can be so intense that they take on the dimensions of the psychological crisis. Crises are turbulent and dramatic psychological conditions that call into question the entire functioning of a person, its choices, beliefs, and so on. (The beginnings of the use of this term in psychology and psychiatry are related to the establishment of suicide prevention centers, which are also known as centers for crisis intervention). The crisis always indicates a change, which is not partial, but comprehensive and essential. The crisis is most studied in the humanist-existentialist theoretical context, in which it is emphasized that the changes that have emerged after the crisis can be positive, and the personality is enriching.

The state of the body during stress also involves certain physiological reactions. Although the usual assumption is that stress involves negative physiological effects, it would be more accurate to say that it implies an activating effect, which may occasionally be positive. The direction of the effect depends on a large number of personal and contextual factors.

Physiological reactions within the stress of the process can be divided into two interrelated categories: neuroendocrine and immunological. The neuroendocrine category includes reactions of the autonomic nervous system (sympathetic and parasympathetic), together with reactions of the endocrine system. Observation of a stress event triggers a hypothalamus that stimulates the release of the pituitary hormone. These hormones activate the secretion of adrenaline and noradrenaline (an adrenaline hormone) that stimulates the activity of the sympathetic nervous system. When the danger stops, parasympathetic activation returns the body to the state of homeostasis by reducing blood pressure and pulse, reducing the number of breaths and restoring reduced gastrointestinal activity to the normal level. This process was described by Cannon. Selye considered that physiological response in stress, i.e. "General adaptation syndrome", takes place in three phases. The first is the alarm phase, with the changes described by Cannon. In the second phase there is an adaptation, i.e. return to physiological homeostasis. The third is a phase of exhaustion, when a disease or death occurs, if stress continues. Today, neuroendocrine changes characteristic of stress are generally known. Current dilemmas in this area are: whether there are individual differences in physiological response to stress; and whether physiological changes are specific or not, i.e. whether all the stressors are related to one general reaction or are different stressors related to different types of reactions. Cannon and Selye's model implies that physiological reactions that are part of the stress of the process are universal. Recent research, however, suggests that there are differences in the response that are the source of individual characteristics, as well as the differences that are related to different types of stressors. Disorders in the functioning of the immune system are another category of changes in the body that are characteristic of stress. They are very complex and insufficiently examined. There are data on the higher incidence of various disorders and diseases in people experiencing frequent and / or severe stress. However, it is about the data of correlation studies, which say nothing about the mechanisms of the disease and the direction of possible causality.

A modern version of the old debate between James and Cannon is that between Lazarus and Zajonc, about whether the primary cognitive or emotional processes are in the context of stress. Lazarus believes that cognitive processes are central in determining whether the situation is dangerous or threatening, so cognition determines whether or not stress will occur and what emotional reactions will be (Lazarus & Folkman). Zajonc, however, indicates that simply the existence of consciousness should not be called cognition; and believes that emotional reactions characteristic of stress occur before and may be incompatible with cognitive. At the heart of this debate is the disagreement about defining emotions and cognition. Zajonc's implicit definition of cognition is very close to the definition of rational, logical thinking, while Lazarus is close to simple consciousness. It is true that a person must be aware of events before he reacts to it. However, is this awareness primarily emotional or rational? In other words, do people become angry or frightened first, then find the reason for their feelings, or they first recognize and define the situation as a threat, then react to it? Both of these questions can be given a confirmatory answer. In some situations, it first reacts emotionally, and then ponders, and in other situations, it can happen that a person does not react until he fully understands the threat posed by the situation.

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