



KAPITEL 5 / CHAPTER 5⁵ DETERMINISTIC AND PERSONALIZED APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF FRUSTRATION PHENOMENON

*ДЕТЕРМІНІСТИЧЕСЬКИ-ПЕРСОНІФІЦІРОВАННИЙ ПОДХОД В
ИССЛЕДОВАНИИ ФЕНОМЕНА ФРУСТРАЦИИ ДЕТЕРМІНІСТИЧНО-
ПЕРСОНІФІКОВАНИЙ ПІДХІД У ДОСЛІДЖЕННІ ФЕНОМЕНУ ФРУСТРАЦІЇ*

DOI: 10.30890/2709-2313.2022-09-02-011

Introduction.

The issue of psychological nature of frustration is related to the presence of multidirectional positions, which are characterized by heterogeneous interpretations and ambiguous assumptions. This fact adds relevance to the issue of developing general theoretical approach that would reveal the content, structure and dynamics of phenomenon of frustration states as widely as possible.

To reveal the essence of frustration states, we deem it appropriate to consider them through the lens of deterministic and personalized approach, which allows taking into account most of the variables that potentially affect the process of occurrence and course of individual frustration responses [20].

This analysis is based on the developed structural and dynamic model of determination of frustration states, which demonstrates frustration as a mental state that is the result of interaction of personal constructs and psychological factors determining its formation and impact on human behavior [21].

One of the central places in the personality structure is taken by motivational and incentive sphere with two hierarchical levels of existence: level of functional needs and level of motives for development, and the corresponding relations of human with the world around exist as an active form of interaction aimed at overcoming various obstacles that arise on the way to satisfying important needs. The logic of reasoning is that when frustrating situation occurs, the individual experiences a certain mental state, which by its nature is rather complex and unstable and is determined by a number of specific conditions and mediating factors [28].

We assume that situation, as a system, determines human behavior in a certain way, however, on the other hand, the latter acts as an active and constantly transcendent subject with specific needs, interests and motives, and this, in turn, indicates that the quality of individual regulation of behavior is not directly

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dependent on the situation structure [11]. This fact evidences that occurrence of frustration and its further manifestations are determined not only by objective circumstances, but also directly depend on a number of subjective characteristics.

5.1. Structural and dynamic model of frustration states

This issue is based on the statement that under the pressure of life circumstances (for example, changes in life goals and stereotypes) the satisfaction of usual human needs is violated [15]. In this perspective, the corresponding conditions (emotional manifestations of the person) arise, among which S. Rubinstein identifies three interrelated spheres: organic life of the person, material interests and their spiritual and moral needs[23]. At the same time, living conditions themselves are not isolated from their context and perception by certain individuals, because it involves a complex combination of factors that provoke a certain event and individual characteristics of human psyche.

The boundary separating ordinary living conditions from changing ones is such life situations in which, under the influence of relevant psychogenic factors, social and psychological mechanisms can no longer guarantee adequate reflection and human regulatory activity [22]. As a result, there are two possible options: in the first case, human satisfies their needs, motives and goals, and this, in turn, leads to the discharge of motivational system and leveling the problem situation through satisfaction; in the second case, human needs are not satisfied and the opposite process occurs – dissatisfaction manifesting itself in mental stress, which directly affects the effectiveness of productive human activity. The nature of this effect is determined both by situation itself and characteristics of the person, their motivation, etc. [17]. As a result, there is tension of human motivational system and frustrating situation is created.

The level of mental stress and later occurrence of frustration are directly related to the circumstances affecting the person at a particular time. One of the main factors is the goal and awareness of ways and means to achieve it [29]. L. Bozhovych calls for differentiation between frustration of the need associated with its violent suppression by social demands (from whoever they come – from other people or from the subject himself), and those cases when the need is not satisfied as a result of the subject's lack of appropriate ways to satisfy it [4]. Armenian researchers



E. Kirschbaum and A. Yeremieieva distinguish four categories of such contradictions that provoke dissatisfaction and corresponding tension of the motivational sphere (as a result of various frustrating agents): passive external resistance (presence of elementary physical barrier to achieving the goal), active external resistance (prohibitions and threats of punishment on the part of people around), passive internal resistance (conscious or unconscious inferiority complexes, inability to implement the plans), and active internal resistance (remorse) [12].

The causes of psychophysical stress (preceding the occurrence of frustration) can also be found in changes in status, social functions and roles, goals of activity and value orientations of the person, which allow understanding the degree of their dependence on specific social structures and determining the level of activity in the overall process of functioning of certain social formations. These states are not mass in nature and are integral changes of the person due to acute life crises (with other people, social prescriptions, institutions, etc.) or restrictions and losses (public goods, goodwill, reputation, social ties, etc.) [1].

From the moment of occurrence of frustrating situation, the activation of all elements of frustration begins, which puts a direct demand for the person to find new solutions, guidelines and specific forms of adaptation, and in general – new ideas, solutions and forms of behavior [18].

From such perspective, frustration is interpreted by B. Ananiev as a specific response to barriers, which block human activity, and which are facts of violation of coordination of social ties of the person, moral loss, and changes in social status and obstacle to performance of social roles. Frustration, like other affective states, occurs in acute critical situations, but its dynamics are largely determined by personality structure [1]. In this context, it is appropriate to mention the level of psychological stability, which is an integral characteristic of the person that ensures the person's resistance to frustrating and stressful effects of difficult life circumstances. Psychological stability is developed and formed simultaneously with development of the person itself and depends on a number of characteristics, among which the leading ones are the type of nervous system, experience and level of development of basic cognitive structures [25, 26]. At the same time, certain behavioral patterns are formed, which depend on the degree of overcoming the frustrating situation. In this context, E. Erikson notes that a child can overcome any frustrations if they are full of new experiences and accompany the process of integrating the individual life cycle with belonging to significant social groups and contexts [27].



It is important to correctly understand and interpret each specific situation, which can be interpreted by different characteristics, in particular, by parameter that defines such situations as a double-pole continuum. The first pole is represented by problem situations for the solution of which there are no a priori specific ways of behavior and thinking, and the solution is to create new ways of constructing reality. The second pole is characterized by so-called “boundary situations”, and frustration is just between these two poles of the presented continuum [11].

Having analyzed the approaches of various authors to this problem, we focused on the fact that most researchers understand the situation as a set of interrelated elements (various conditions and circumstances) determining the activity of the subject and setting the space-time boundaries of its implementation. This definition is also suitable for understanding the frustrating situation, but requires the use of additional variable – there should necessarily be an obstacle (frustrating agent) that prevents the achievement of significant goals of the person. Any frustrating situation is unique to each person and can differ in many criteria and principles. There are a number of approaches to their interpretation, grouping, and classification.

A. Nalchajyan limits all frustrating situations to a number of typical categories related to the process of socialization (with internalization of cultural prohibitions), activity of the person in social group (with isolation in reference group), struggle for social class and leadership at various hierarchical levels of social structure, difficulties in sexual life, etc. [18].

Another classification of frustrating situations is presented in heuristic theory of S. Rosenzweig, who divided them into several classes: internal privation (cases in which the individual feels the need for a certain object or final state, which was previously, but is absent in new conditions); external privation (general negative endogenous frustration); external deprivation (loss of a certain state or object that was important to the individual in the past); internal deprivation (specific negative endogenous frustration); conflict [30].

Returning to the structural components of frustration, it should be noted that if the need important to the person is not satisfied (under the influence of various frustrating agent), there is tension of the motivational system in the personality structure, which, in turn, becomes a factor for occurrence of frustration. We support the position of those authors (M. Levitov, A. Nalchajyan, F. Vasyliuk et al.), who distinguish between the concepts of frustration process and frustration, understanding by the first definition the process unfolding in the psyche when frustrating agent



begins to act, and by the second – mental state that arises as a result of frustration process [18].

Frustration process is associated with inability to directly satisfy the internal human needs (motives, aspirations, values, etc.) and is mediated by the inability of the subject to cope with external and internal living conditions.

Working from this perspective, a number of psychologists (in particular, B. Ananiev, M. Levitov, etc.) divide frustration states into three elements: pre-frustration, frustration and post-frustration states, which are provoked by the direct presence of frustrating agent [1]. This position is appropriate, but requires clarification and deeper analysis of the structure of frustration phenomenon. In particular, psychological side of interpretation of the process of human transition from complicated situation to the actual frustrating situation triggers some questions. According to F. Vasyliuk, this process occurs in two dimensions: along the line of loss of control on the part of the will (disorganization of behavior) or along the line of loss of control on the part of consciousness (loss of expediency of motives). At the same time, there is an opinion that frustration is caused by internal conflicts. According to A. Leontiev, contradictions of different motives (caused by different types of activities) can provoke conflicts, which under specific conditions are fixed by the person and are part of their internal personality structure. In this perspective, K. Levin identified the following types of conflicts: conflict of equal positive opportunities, equal negative opportunities, and conflict of positive and negative opportunities [13].

Thus, frustrating situations are internalized by the person and create internal conflicts between motives and reality, provoking a response that depends on the success (in terms of constructiveness) of overcoming the frustration threshold. At this point, three important components are included: conditions (external and internal) under which a specific frustrating situation occurs, hereditary psychophysiological features, and personal social and psychological features that are already present in the psyche of the person.

According to the conditions determining the course of frustrating situation (and directing the type and direction of potential response), there are such characteristics as type, strength and degree of randomness of frustrating agent, depth of dissatisfaction, strength of motives, number of repetitions, stage of activity, age peculiarities, level of expectations and aspirations, degree of aversion to object or goal, intensity and variability of various frustrating variables. All these circumstances



are situational and unstable parameters of a particular situation, which makes them independent variables in the equation “frustration – frustration threshold – response”. However, the second component – social and psychological features (personal and adaptive) – is one that has a diametric polarity and can change over time (or with the help of organized psychological support). Among the latter, we mean such characteristics as level of anxiety, self-esteem, locus of control and social and psychological adaptation, character accentuations and individual personality traits.

In this regard, it can be assumed that for each person there should be an optimum level of frustration process, which favorably affects the process of their formation and in case of level shift leads to destructive manifestations of frustration [18]. The leading role in this case is played by the above social and psychological features of a particular person, which affect both the assessment of situation and response to it (constructive or unconstructive). This position is supported by various authors. In particular, O. Kuzmina in her works clearly points out that some individual characteristics and personal qualities contribute to overcoming the frustration (for example, strength of “I”), while others, on the contrary, are the obstacle (exaltation, conformism, etc.). Position on the connection between personality type and ways of conscious response to problem situation is supported by I. Nikolska and R. Hranovska, who point out that when building their defensive behavior, a person (and especially a child) will rely on those personality traits that are more characteristic of them [19].

The specific response of the individual to frustrating situation is situational in nature and is a mode of behavior determined by the position held by this person based on their own (currently existing) concept of the existing situation. V. Iliin aptly notes that “action of a certain factor can change the person's state only if inertia of the previous state is overcome or significance of a particular stimulus or situation is realized” [9]. This goes about certain threshold duration of this factor, which determines the degree of person's tolerance to frustrating agent. So, if usual set of needs can be reorganized in various interchangeable ways or actions (plus appropriate conditions and personal characteristics), then frustration threshold can be overcome successfully, which leads to a constructive response and leveling the frustrating situation, and may result either in minor frustration process, or not cause frustration at all. In this case, the motivational system is discharged (as in case of satisfying the need) and the person's behavior will be adaptive (it will remain within the normal range). This is a consequence of tolerance (patience and resistance to frustrating



agents), which is based on the ability to more or less adequately assess the situation and the ability to predict possible ways out [5].

American psychologist C. Izard adds the postulate about the leading role of emotions in the study of frustration phenomenon. In his works he notes that at the psychological level, emotions directly affect the person's tolerance to frustration, in particular, joyful emotions increase it, and sad emotions, on the contrary, can reduce frustration tolerance [8]. This position partially echoes with approach of L. Berkowitz (whose theory has already been revealed earlier), in particular, in his thesis that frustration creates aggressive tendencies only to the extent that they are experienced as negative emotions [3]. If a person thinks that the behavior of another person is directed against them personally, then the emotions associated with the inability to achieve the goal will increase.

M. Levitov also indicates emotionality as one of the typical features of frustration and adds that children are more emotional when frustrated than adults, because they are less able to adapt, and it is on this basis that the corresponding emotional response occurs [14]. Common in these positions is the statement that emotional regulation of human behavior in frustrating situation is determined by the cognitive component of a certain experience, which is caused by subjective interpretation of the ability to overcome obstacles to solving problems and forms an appropriate pattern of human behavior.

5.2. Frustration tolerance in the system of structural and dynamic models of occurrence of frustration states

Depending on the level of tolerance (low or high), the constructiveness of frustration responses is determined. If this level is too low, the person inadequately reacts to frustrating agent (even of little strength) [15]. A number of studies are devoted to this problem (V. Bielov, N. Bozhok, M. Vovk, etc.), which consider phenomenon of frustration tolerance from different positions: as a property, as a competence, as an attitude; which point out that frustration (and appropriate behavior) occurs only when feelings of dissatisfaction reach a degree of expression that affects the level of tolerance [2].

According to Russian researchers T. Dubovytska and A. Erbehieieva, who study frustration from the standpoint of constructive and destructive consequences,



constructive behavior in case of frustration includes the following: positive behavioral responses (overcoming obstacles, bypassing obstacles, compensation, etc.); healthy negative emotions (melancholy, sadness, anxiety, etc.); adaptive (search for support), active (assertive actions), prosocial (establishing social contacts) and indirect (manipulative actions) coping strategies. Destructive behavior, respectively, includes: negative aggressive responses to frustration (escape, regression), unhealthy negative emotions (depression, shame, guilt); maladaptive (self-blame, search for guilty person), passive (cautious steps, avoidance) and antisocial (aggressive actions) coping strategies [6]. A. Sobchik offers more general classification, identifying three possible manifestations of emotional states in frustrating situation: a) reaction of fear and anxiety; b) offensive, active and aggressive behavior; c) desire to suppress both responses, to treat the problem passively or indifferently and try to level the severity of conflict [24].

E. Iliin, considering all mental states through the lens of functional and psychophysical changes, identifies two possible scenarios for the development of events in frustrating situation (in terms of influencing the strength and stability of primary motive important to the person). In the first case, the person begins to blame themselves (intropunitive response), and as a result, repeated failures cause the person to change or stop. In the second case (extrapunitive response), the person directs the aggression toward external objects and this response is accompanied by a feeling of anger and stubbornness [10].

The further changes occurring with a person is associated with combination of different subsystems of the body, which are accumulated as a certain mental state manifesting itself through activity, behavior, communication and individual experiences of the subject. In case of unconstructive response to frustrating agent (if above conditions are present), frustration process develops into frustration, which in turn leads to a number of negative consequences affecting both behavioral and emotional-volitional spheres of the person. From this moment, frustration state becomes both the cause and the motive. As the cause, frustration initiates search activity, and as the motive, it directs behavior to overcome obstacles.

At the same time, adaptive actions are considered constructive and are aimed at solving the problem (they can include preventive efforts to prevent further frustration, or be aimed at overcoming or finding ways out of difficult situation) [31]. Modern psychologists identify the following points as psychological mechanisms ensuring constructive behavior in case of frustration: awareness of destructive and constructive



manifestations of frustration and its causes, behavioral flexibility, stress tolerance, self-adjustment and self-control of negative mental experiences, communicative culture; activation of internal resources to increase self-esteem and self-confidence, etc.

In contrast to adaptive actions, there may also be maladaptive actions manifesting themselves in behavioral disorders (affective, deviant, conflict, aggressive, etc.) and new (usually negative) mental states (in particular, depressive, anxious, aggressive, etc.).

Among domestic and foreign researchers, we can find similar positions on the interpretation of typical responses caused by frustration states: reassessment of goals and desires (is the most constructive consequence), resistance, aggression (aimed at overcoming the real cause of frustration), self-aggression (can lead to neuroticism), aggression directed toward illusory and imaginary guilty person, escape, avoiding negative impact of the situation, passive and protective responses (apathy, subdepression and depression), etc.

Periodic repetition of frustration can cause internalization of objective situation into a certain set of internal changes and fix certain characteristic features in the person: aggressiveness and isolation – in some people; apathy, inferiority complex and lack of initiative – in others. If person remains frustrated for a long time, this can lead to neurosis – disease that occurs as a result of conflict between human and environment through the lens of meeting of desires and reality that does not satisfy them.

Frustration can result in a complex of emotions called the hostility triad. Such a triad of negative emotions can lead to changes in behavior under the pressure of hostility to self and other people and circumstances [8]. In turn, the level of violation of self-control of relevant mental state reflects in the maladaptation of behavior.

There are studies that emphasize a certain positive influence of frustration on the person's life. These studies indicate that person grows and develops when learning to overcome frustration, while mobilizing internal resources aimed at managing the environment to satisfy their needs. Moderate experience of frustration ensures that the person's attention is focused on the problem and ways to solve it. We support this position, but emphasize that frustration will have positive influence only on a strong person having appropriate set of individual traits and parameters (which need to be developed in students through psychological support). Otherwise, dominance of negative mental states (as a result of prolonged frustration) will destructively affect



the formation and development of all spheres of personality (opportunities for self-realization, formation of modes of behavior, thinking, emotional response, etc.) [7].

Detailed analysis and systematization of approaches to the determination of criteria of behavior in frustrating situations existing in the scientific literature made it possible to determine the main parameters of their assessment. Constructive responses are usually understood as those that are characterized as adequate and conscious responses aimed at positive solution to the situation with recognition of possibility to solve the problem without interference or prediction of independent steps to its successful solution. In turn, unconstructive responses have a pronounced self-protective type, aimed at fixing on the obstacle, are manifested in the refusal to find ways to adequately solve the problem; are directed at excessive blaming others or themselves for occurrence of frustrating situation. The harmonious profile of students should be represented by proportional distribution over all the above parameters. This evidences the person's ability to be flexible and adaptive, and to use various ways to overcome difficulties caused by a particular frustrating situation.

Conclusions.

In modern science, there are a large number of different approaches to the structure, content and categorical definition of frustration: phenomenological (as a separate psychological phenomenon), personalized (as a certain mental state), behavioral (as a response to external circumstances), deterministic (as a predictor and consequence of personal changes), interpersonal (as a conflict emotional state), structural and dynamic (as part of adaptation, psychological stress, experience), etc.

From the standpoint of deterministic and personalized approach, frustration phenomenon is a complex structural and systemic formation that is cyclic in nature and manifests itself in multilevel and complex process of transition from frustration process to frustration, the leading role in which is played by a complex combination of intrapersonal cognitive-informational, emotional-volitional and motivational-behavioral processes, which are the main determinants acting according to the social and normative context of a particular frustrating situation. The problem of their study is caused by a number of methodological difficulties that invariably arise in the process of finding optimum methods for registering and studying complex external and internal changes that are activated during systematic repetition of frustration



states.

Given the ambiguity and multidimensional nature of approaches to the determination of structure and essence of frustration states, the study of determining their occurrence and course becomes particularly relevant. Theoretical and empirical studies conducted in line with this problem demonstrate a wide variety of factors and mediating factors that are directly related to frustration states.

Among the large number of determinants, we have identified a number of psychological variables, which in case of negative polarity can act as a definition of personal vulnerability, which in turn are factors that to some extent determine the occurrence of frustration states. Among them, the leading place is occupied by biological factors, resources of adaptive potential (neuropsychic stability, social adaptation, level of interpersonal relations) and psychological factors (individual-characterological personalities, level of anxiety, character accentuations, parameters of self-esteem, locus of control, etc.).