

# PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION: THE INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS FACTORS ON EXHAUSTION

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**Abstract:** The study is devoted to the study of the manifestations of emotional exhaustion. The study showed that the level of emotional exhaustion of people at different stages of professionalism is different, and this is a factor that deserves serious attention. In modern psychology and pedagogy, the tendency to determine the relationship between a person's mental state and his behavior outside the professional environment has been widely studied. Studies show that the impact of emotional exhaustion on non-professional behavioral reactions is reflected in the organizational level of personality activity. Emotional exhaustion is manifested in teachers and students in higher vocational education in a wider range, which, if not prevented, can lead to serious problems. Teachers suffer from excessive workload, and the increase in the number of lessons associated with the transition from school to university and the increase in the number of social roles make it difficult for students to cope. Facts show that the presence of stages of tension, resistance and exhaustion can be considered important manifestations of emotional exhaustion.

**Keywords:** emotional exhaustion, teachers and students, psychological analysis, manifestations of emotional exhaustion, factors of exhaustion

## Introduction

A number of studies show that a number of psychological defense mechanisms are activated

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during emotional exhaustion. The psychological defense function inherent in emotional exhaustion was brought into focus in the works of G. Selye. However, along with its psychophysiological aspects, we consider emotional exhaustion as the main aspect characterizing it as a psychological phenomenon. In order to determine the conceptual foundations of emotional exhaustion and the formulation of the problem, its psychological essence should be clarified. In this regard, the definition of emotional exhaustion in modern psychology includes various types of personal and social problems. However, in most cases, the concept of “emotional exhaustion” was used in connection with the psychological state of representatives of auxiliary professions.

In the 1970 s, the American psychologist G. Freudenberger used the term “burnout” to describe the health status of physically and emotionally exhausted workers in medical rehabilitation institutions [Freudenberger, 1974]. In the 1980s, with the growth of academic empirical research, a scientific paradigm emerged that showed that emotional exhaustion is a psychological process that develops dynamically over time. A significant role in the establishment of this approach was played by K. Maslach, who defined “emotional exhaustion” as an employee’s long-term reaction to chronic interpersonal stress in the workplace [Maslach, 1978].

In this regard, “emotional exhaustion, unlike burnout, has been defined as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment that can occur among professionals engaged in various helping professions” [Maslach, 1982]. This formula is aimed at the manifestation of signs of emotional exhaustion in the field of professions aimed at social welfare.

E. Edelvich and A. Brodsky have clarified the causes of emotional exhaustion in the institutional and communication aspects. In their opinion, insufficient wages, irregular working hours, career stagnation, lack of recognition in the team, the collapse of illusions under the influence of emotional exhaustion, loss of ideals, and excessive loss of energy at work can cause emotional exhaustion.

A number of studies show that emotional exhaustion deepens with increased aggression and is closely related to emotional intelligence (Jabbarov et.al, 2023). It was found that the higher the

ability to control emotions and manage the intrapersonal state, the less aggressiveness is observed in the behavior of students. Finally, the study showed that the relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression index allows the ability to control emotional manifestations to demonstrate less aggressiveness towards people around them. (Jabbarov et.al, 2023). Studies show that emotional exhaustion depends on various factors. The main goal of this study is to identify the factors that cause emotional exhaustion.

## Literature review

The authors recommend that organizations create personnel training strategies to reduce institutional costs associated with the impact of emotional exhaustion and to prevent it [Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980]. A. Pines and I. Aronson understand “career burnout” as a symptom of physical and mental exhaustion that develops as a result of an employee’s prolonged feeling of injustice [Pines and Aronson, 1988]. The identification of a number of “burnout” factors related to the sphere of professional communication led to the scientific naming of emotional exhaustion as a “disease of communication professions” [Ermakov, 2010; Jabbarov et al, 2018].

B.G. Ananyev initially revealed the clinical and social nature of the phenomenon of burnout. Ananyev used the term “emotional exhaustion” to denote the negative effects of communication in professional activity from a medical point of view [Ananyev, 1986]. At the same time, a number of researchers use the concept of mental exhaustion along with emotional exhaustion. Regarding “mental exhaustion”, A.A. Rukavishnikov defines psychoemotional exhaustion as the process of exhaustion of emotional, physical and energy resources of employees in auxiliary professions [Rukavishnikov, 2001].

N.V. Maltseva studies the relationship between emotional exhaustion and personal qualities of an employee at different stages of professionalism [Maltseva, 2005]. It has been established that the level of emotional exhaustion of an employee at different stages of professionalism is different, and

this is a factor that deserves serious attention.

In modern psychology and pedagogy, the tendency to identify the relationship between a person's mental state at work and his behavior outside the professional environment has been widely studied. V.E. Orel puts forward a hypothesis that the impact of emotional exhaustion of teaching staff on their non-professional behavioral reactions is reflected at the organizational level of personality activity [Orel, 2006]. To analyze this relationship, the term "mental exhaustion" was introduced into scientific terminology, denoting the process of psychoemotional exhaustion. This process initially develops in the sphere of professional activity and over time covers the entire life of a person [Polyakova, 2013].

Concepts that suggest a shift in emphasis in favor of professional stress when analyzing the causes of emotional exhaustion are criticized by researchers who have identified signs of "burnout" outside of professional activity. Thus, Kmit and Popov referred to foreign studies describing observations of emotional exhaustion in married couples in aspects of marital relations and child rearing [Kmit and Popov, 2013].

The study showed that mothers can develop signs of partial or complete emotional exhaustion in the process of raising children. Most often, this occurs as a result of prolonged mental and physical overload associated with caring for unhealthy children [Belughina, 2020].

Emotional exhaustion is more widespread among teachers and students in higher vocational education, and failure to prevent it can lead to serious problems. Teachers suffer from excessive workload, and the increase in the number of lessons associated with the transition from school to university and the increase in the number of social roles makes it difficult for students to cope [Jabbarov and Ibrahimova, 2013; Lavrenteyeva and Sorokina, 2021]. Of course, these studies overlap by 80-85%, even taking into account cultural differences. Using the method of assessing emotional exhaustion, Boyko revealed the presence of fully formed stages of tension, resistance and exhaustion in a certain number of psychologist students [Boyko, 1999; Jabbarov, 2021]. An attempt has been made to more comprehensively study the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion against an existential

background. A number of researchers write about such manifestations of emotional exhaustion as a lack of existential meaning and a violation of the value-semantic sphere.

According to N.V. Grishina, emotional exhaustion is formed as a result of reflecting the complex process of interaction of a person's personality with a multidimensional professional environment [Grishina, 1997]. It should be borne in mind that many authors refer to the concept of existential motivations of the most prominent representative of the existential approach A. Lenge, who gave the following definition of emotional exhaustion: "a type of depression (exhaustion) that occurs without trauma and organic disorders, but as a result of the gradual loss of life values" [Lenge, 2008].

E.V. Ermakova defines emotional exhaustion as "a violation of the value-semantic regulation of a person, a violation of the experience of higher life values, a violation leading to the destruction of the practical level and meaning of labor activity." [Ermakova, 2010]. Taking into account the dynamics of the application of the existential approach in modern psychology, some authors suggest that in the future the study of diagnostic signs of emotional exhaustion should be directed to the level of semantic structures and the semantic space of the individual. suggest that it will be reduced.

It can be noted that the main causes of emotional exhaustion are considered to be prolonged exposure to unfavorable social conditions and an existential identity crisis. However, it should be noted that existential problems arise as a reaction to alien and imposed motivation. Within the framework of a professional career, this crisis is associated with the demands of superiors and corporate ethics that do not correspond to the ideological attitudes of the individual [Jabbarov et al, 2018; Jabbarov et.al, 2021].

If in the psychological paradigm, emotional exhaustion is perceived as a reaction of the psyche to traumatic events, then within the framework of the medical approach, emotional exhaustion is given the status of a syndrome accompanied by certain symptoms. The symptomatic nature of the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion is reflected in most scientific works devoted to the analysis of the causes of the occurrence and prevention of "burnout". Most of the statements about the phenomenon

of emotional exhaustion result in its being a syndrome of physical fatigue and frustration resulting from the negative impact of professional activity on a person [ Ritenko, 2013].

The first mentions of the symptoms of “burnout” are found in scientific works of the middle of the 20th century, when the concept of emotional exhaustion did not yet have a terminological meaning [Kmit and Popov, 2013]. In clinical practice of that time, the psychological state of emotional exhaustion was determined taking into account the social context and was detected with the help of unsystematic and unstandardized observations.

Many researchers have developed a model that includes the analysis of the burnout syndrome, taking into account the symptoms of emotional exhaustion (physical fatigue against the background of emotional devastation), depersonalization (indifference to work responsibilities and colleagues at work) and a decrease in personal achievements (decrease in personal productivity). As the authors note, this model does not imply a departure from the etiological principle that determines the maintenance of the syndrome status for the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion, which is characterized from the point of view of the clinical approach [Maslach, 1982]. Researchers also pay attention to the existential roots of stress and classify emotional exhaustion as a special form of existential vacuum. A. Lengl, using the anthropological model of V. Frankl, described the symptoms of emotional exhaustion in three dimensions: somatic (physical weakness, insomnia, decreased immunity), mental (apathy, joylessness, emotional exhaustion, irritability) and netic (irresponsibility, socialism, decreased self-confidence) [Knyazev, 2017].

It is characteristic of Russian psychology to substantiate the clinical nature of the phenomenon of “burnout”. Professor V.E. Orel writes: “As a medical category, burnout is considered a state of complete exhaustion, consisting of a set of psychopathological, psychosomatic, somatic symptoms and signs of social dysfunction” [Oryel, 2005].

Indicators of dysfunctional signs of emotional exhaustion are widely present in the works of social psychologists. Rukavishnikov focuses on the so-called “mental exhaustion” in terminology and formulates it as a negative psychological phenomenon that is formed as a result of stress at work

and the presence of certain personality traits related to motivation and self-esteem. It can be said that modern Russian psychology is characterized by an emphasis on psychosomatic signs of emotional exhaustion. When studying the psychological state of students of higher educational institutions, signs of “burnout” are detected at the mental and physiological levels: insomnia, panic attacks, pathologies of the cardiovascular and digestive systems [Semenova and Balaban, 2021]. In the formed stage of emotional exhaustion in teachers, signs of irritability, neuroticism, emotional instability appear [Morozova, 2018]. A number of authors, studying the nature of emotional exhaustion, draw attention to the protective reaction of the organism exposed to stress. Canadian scientist G. Selye emphasizes that the impact of the stressor on the psyche causes a clinical stress reaction, and this reaction is gradually accompanied by a transition from the mobilization of the body’s defenses to the stage of resistance [Seyle, 1960]. According to this concept, the most appropriate term for determining the symptoms of emotional exhaustion in scientific use is “exhaustion”. When assessing stress, it is necessary to take into account not only its traumatic effect, but also its positive role in the adaptation process, provided that stress is used to develop and regulate the philosophy of life. Avoiding stress is understood as an unproductive reaction that does not allow activating the adaptive function. Experiencing stress for the purpose of adaptation, on the contrary, is classified as a sign of a healthy psyche and a necessary condition for preventing emotional exhaustion [Seyle, 1979 ].

One of the most prominent representatives of the functional approach in the analysis of the nature of emotional exhaustion is V.V. Boyko defined “burnout” as a psychological defense mechanism, emphasizing that its action is aimed at eliminating emotions in response to stress [Boyko, 1999].

## Results

In our study, the influence of individual psychological factors on the development of emotional exhaustion syndrome was analyzed. Here, the influence of factors such as demonstrativeness, stuckness, pedantry, excitability, hyperthymia, dysthymia, anxiety, exaltation, emotionality, cyclothymia, etc.

was revealed. In general, the percentage of accentuated personalities among creative workers is high, and the number of accentuations in one individual exceeds three. People with strongly expressed exaltation, emotionality, cyclothymia, demonstrativeness and stuckness are especially susceptible to emotional exhaustion syndrome. Since no statistically significant differences were found between women and men, their analysis was not given. However, the study showed that in women with EES, a combination of three strong accentuations (exaltation, emotionality, cyclothymia) was found. In men, a statistically significant relationship was revealed between two clear accentuations (demonstrativeness and stuckness) ( $p < 0.01$ ).

It was assumed that another important factor influencing the development of ETS would be the level of emotional intelligence. During the analysis of experimental data, the hypothesis was confirmed that people with a high level of EES development have a fairly high emotional intelligence, that is, above the average level for the population. In addition, it was possible to find out that 72.66% of subjects with high emotional intelligence did not show signs of emotional exhaustion.

A statistically significant relationship was established between EES and the formation of terminal values of an individual ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, for men, such values as the professional life and creative sphere are in the first place, and for women, the sphere of education and preserving one's individuality. Unpopular for men are self-development and preserving one's individuality, and for women, their reputation and social relations. In individuals oriented to the professional sphere (both men and women), signs of serious emotional exhaustion are observed in 26.4% of cases. The average percentage of cases of such emotional exhaustion is significantly lower (12.09%).

The relationship between the level of psycho-emotional exhaustion and orientation to learning is approximately the same in 27.23%, while the relationship between the orientation to preserving one's individuality and emotional exhaustion is the opposite in 59.98% of cases. In the context of this study, it was not possible to identify a pattern regarding the relationship between other terminal values and emotional exhaustion.

Table 1. Study of levels of emotional exhaustion

Components of Emotional Exhaustion	Levels of Components of Emotional Exhaustion		
	Low	Medium	High
<b>Depersonalization</b>	<b>68,20</b>	<b>20,12</b>	<b>11.68</b>
<b>Assessment of professional effectiveness</b>	<b>58.18</b>	<b>27,82</b>	<b>14.00</b>
<b>Psycho-emotional exhaustion</b>	<b>42,12</b>	<b>31,26</b>	<b>26.62</b>

EES and the volitional qualities of the individual is interesting ( $p < 0.01$ ). Only 25.12% of respondents demonstrated volitional qualities above the average level.

The persistence of the majority of respondents is very weak. There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between such a factor as persistence and psycho-emotional exhaustion ( $p < 0.05$ ). Among individuals with low persistence and low motivation for complex activities, the proportion of respondents with high levels of emotional exhaustion increases to 76.5%. The relationship between these factors requires further study. Statistically significant relationships ( $p < 0.05$ ) were identified between the propensity to take risks and the level of psycho-emotional exhaustion. Thus, it can be said that an increase in risk-taking, despite being an element of creativity, leads to an increase in the level of psycho-emotional exhaustion. Although a high level of risk-taking is not characteristic of individuals with high ETS, the significance of these data is confirmed by the fact that in 20.76% of creative workers, a high risk-taking tendency was associated with high rates of psycho-emotional exhaustion. A statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) was also observed between the tendency to refuse complex activities and psycho-emotional exhaustion. The control group showed a significant (medium and high) level of development of ETS, most often expressed in the form of depersonalization. It was found that the percentage of accentuated personalities among the respondents was high, and respondents with high expressiveness, emotionality, cyclothymia, demonstrativeness and stuckness demonstrated high rates of development of ETS.

The fact that respondents with low burnout index scores did not show accentuation also indicates a close relationship between these indicators. Respondents with more than one pronounced

accentuation were not identified in the control group. The emotional intelligence of respondents with a high level of development, resistant to ETS, was above the average for the population. Consequently, an emotionally developed person is less susceptible to emotional exhaustion. The relationship between the level of development of terminal values and the degree of manifestation of ETS was as follows: The most pronounced signs of ETS are observed only in people who are seriously focused on the professional field. These data allow us to assume that respondents with a wide range of terminal values are more resistant to the development of ETS. However, this position requires further research. In this study, it was not possible to identify a significant relationship between the volitional qualities of a person and the tendency to develop ETS.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

A number of researchers, including L. Demina and I. Ralnikova, think similarly, observing the process of conserving energy and psychological resources in emotional exhaustion [ Demina and Ralnikova, 2005 ]. N.E. Vodopyanova and E.S. Starchenkova defined emotional exhaustion as “a negative reaction to work stress, including psychological, psychophysiological and behavioral components” [Vodopoyanova and Starchenkova, 2020 ]. An analysis of special studies devoted to the study of the “burnout” syndrome shows that the main efforts of psychologists are aimed at identifying the factors that cause burnout. Traditionally, these symptoms are grouped into two large blocks: the characteristics of professional activity and the individual characteristics of the professionals themselves. The study showed that the nature of emotional exhaustion is considered in the science of psychology in the paradigms of mental states and psychological processes. The most important aspects in studying the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion are the causes of its occurrence, symptoms and functional characteristics [Jabbarov, 2018].

The work environment can act as a significant factor of emotional exhaustion and can be caused by stressful conditions arising when performing professional duties. Emotionally charged

situations outside the profession are not excluded. The conditions of the work environment, as a factor of “exhaustion”, affect behavior in a wide range of life activities and the process of implementing various social roles. The clinical nature of the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion is revealed at the theoretical and empirical levels. Studies show that the symptoms of “exhaustion” are interpreted in psychology from the point of view of the theory of psychological adaptation. Based on the results of psychological studies, it can be argued that emotional exhaustion performs a psychological protective function aimed at preventing the traumatic impact of stress on the psyche. Emotional exhaustion develops against the background of an existential crisis of the personality.

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