

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.62.02.22>

How to Cite:

Overchuk, V., Liashch, O., Ihnatovych, O., Sarancha, I., Boiarskyi, N., & Boiarska, Z. (2023). Psychological resources of the individual style of overcoming stress in the conditions of military aggression. *Amazonia Investiga*, 12(62), 221-229. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.62.02.22>

## Psychological resources of the individual style of overcoming stress in the conditions of military aggression

### Психологічні ресурси індивідуального стилю подолання стресу в умовах військової агресії

Received: February 10, 2023

Accepted: March 12, 2023

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#### Abstract

Currently, world statistics clearly shows the growing relevance of stress-related issues as a result of military and peacekeeping operations, wars and conflicts. Both military personnel and persons who are representatives of other professional areas are subject to a significant influence of stressful factors in the conditions of military aggression leading to a violation of their mental activity, and, consequently, complete or partial loss of combat capability and ability to work. The effectiveness of overcoming stress in such a case is to a great extent determined by a person's ability to use available individual psychological resources. The purpose of the academic paper is to systematize the scientists' standpoints regarding the features of the individual style of overcoming stress during military aggression, as well as to clarify the

#### Анотація

Світова статистика сьогодні яскраво свідчить про зростаючу актуальність проблем, пов'язаних зі стресом внаслідок бойових і миротворчих операцій, війн і конфліктів. Як військовослужбовці, так і особи, що є представниками інших професійних напрямків, в умовах військової агресії підпадають під значний вплив стресогенних факторів, що призводять до порушення їх психічної діяльності, і пов'язаними з цим повною або частковою втратою боєздатності і працездатності. Ефективність подолання стресу в такому випадку багато в чому визначається здатністю особи до використання наявних індивідуальних психологічних ресурсів. Метою статті є систематизація точок зору науковців щодо особливостей індивідуального стилю подолання стресу під

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practical features of the issue outlined. Methodology. In the course of the research, system-structural, analytical-bibliographic, comparative, logical-linguistic methods, analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction were applied to process scientific information on applying individual psychological resources in war conditions. A questionnaire was used to study practical issues on the research topic. Along with this, idealization was used to study and process statistical, analytical data and the survey results. Results. Based on the research results, information in scientific works on applying individual psychological resources to overcome stress in the conditions of military aggression was selected and systematized; certain practical aspects of this process were also clarified.

**Keywords:** Stress, coping behavior, models of coping with stress, personal resources, stress resistance, personal potential, “military aggression”.

## Introduction

In the modern world, many people, especially military personnel, work in extreme conditions. During the war, the effectiveness of such activities is determined by professional knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as by the presence and level of developing relevant personal qualities, individual properties, in particular, stress resistance, which is a component of personality adaptability.

The theoretical part of the present research substantiates the concepts, components and main tendencies of the investigations in the scientific literature regarding the features of establishing individual psychological resources to overcome the stressful state in conditions of military aggression.

The practical part of the research includes revealing the most significant skills that determine a person's potential ability to individually overcome stress in conditions of military aggression, a person's psychological characteristics requiring special attention and shaping his personal adaptation potential from the perspective of stress resistance. The survey made it possible to establish the individuals' most negative psychological tendencies hindering the effective formation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress, as well as skills and forms of behavior contributing

час військової агресії, а також з'ясування практичних особливостей даного питання. Методологія. Під час дослідження застосовано системно-структурний, аналітико-бібліографічний, порівняльний, логіко-лінгвістичний методи, аналіз, синтез, індукцію, дедукцію при обробці наукової інформації з питань застосування індивідуальних психологічних ресурсів в умовах війни, анкетне опитування для вивчення практичних питань з теми дослідження, а також ідеалізацію для вивчення та обробки статистичних, аналітичних даних та результатів анкетування. Результати. За результатами дослідження виділено та систематизовано інформацію в наукових роботах з питань застосування індивідуальних психологічних ресурсів для подолання стресу в умовах військової агресії, а також з'ясовано окремі практичні аспекти даного процесу.

**Ключові слова:** стрес, копінг-поведінка, моделі подолання стресу, особисті ресурси, стресостійкість, особистісний потенціал, «військова агресія».

to the most effective accumulation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression. In addition, a person's psychological characteristics have been singled out, which require more thorough scientific investigation and development of practical recommendations for effectively overcoming stress during the war.

Based on the research results, conclusions were made regarding the issues raised. In particular, it was revealed that the primary skills determining a person's potential ability to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression individually are self-control, endurance and the ability to “qualitatively” communicate. At the same time, a person's psychological characteristics, which need to be paid attention to and which form his personal adaptation potential from the perspective of stress resistance, are primarily the individual's stress resistance and personality self-esteem. The survey participants also determined people's negative psychological tendencies that make it difficult to effectively form individual psychological resources to overcome stress and require additional work. They are negativism, resentment, envy and hatred of others for real and imaginary actions, distrust and feelings of guilt. The components of resistance to stress, which should be paid particular attention and which form its personal

adaptation potential from the perspective of resistance to stress, and, accordingly, have the greatest significance in practical activities to overcome it, according to respondents' standpoints, are motivation, willpower and professional training, awareness and readiness of a person to perform specific tasks. The survey showed that the skills contributing to the most effective accumulation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression are the ability to mobilize effective efforts to overcome stress and the ability to reduce mental stress using state correction methods.

### Literature Review

Attempts to comprehensively understand the personal qualities responsible for successful adaptation and overcoming life difficulties are defined in modern psychology by the concept of personal adaptive potential and a person's determining resistance to external circumstances. At the same time, scientists consider adaptability mainly as a person's individual, personal quality (Steingraber et al., 2021).

Psychologists also consider the individual ability to overcome stress as a property of a living self-regulating system (Prykhodko et al., 2020).

Overcoming stress is the process of forming and implementing cognitive behavioral actions, efforts, as well as protective and adaptive emotional reactions intended to conduct external and internal requirements. This process includes the following phases: development of motivation and goal orientation to overcome stress in specific conditions; based on perceiving and comparing information, an assessment of the external situation and own resources is formed, the necessary preparation and decision-making on using appropriate behavioral strategies take place; mechanisms for regulating emotions and will are included to implement the chosen strategy; specific actions are taken to overcome stress; an assessment of the result of work with stress is issued (Kokun, Pischko & Lozinska, 2022).

In the process of overcoming stress, a successive change in the stages of psychological activity takes place for assessing a specific stressful situation and personal resources, as well as for selecting and implementing a relevant strategy of behavior in the conditions of stress development. There is a close interrelationship between these components, characterizing the regular

alternation of stages of overcoming stress (Nassif et al., 2019).

Individual stress coping should be considered taking into account the features of an individual's personal and social resources, depending on manifesting specific cognitive and behavioral strategies that a person uses to manage his emotional reactions in stressful conditions, as well as considering the individual ways and methods of coping with stress that a person uses most often (Osório et al., 2018).

The psychology of overcoming stress studies psychophysiological mechanisms, emotional and rational regulation of human behavior. The goal of the person's actions in this situation is the formation of optimal behavior depending on life circumstances or their transformation based on their intentions (Richardson et al., 2020).

The approach used to study how humans create their coping mechanisms to cope with stress takes into account each individual's capacity of natural coping instincts. One of the forms of a coping strategy for overcoming stress is a search activity that ensures the subject's participation in emotional and rational strategies in various situations (Sanders et al., 2019).

The choice of ways to overcome stress is influenced by individual and psychological features, namely: temperament, level of anxiety, way of thinking, features of the locus of control (Williams & Berenbaum, 2019).

The meaningfulness of certain ways to respond in difficult life situations depends on the degree of a person's self-fulfillment. The higher the personality development level is, the more successfully a person overcomes psychological difficulties (Chen, Yang & Chiang, 2018).

Scientists pay attention to the significant role of the ability to assess the situation, which determines the correct choice of stress management strategy. The depth and correctness of assessing influences a person's confidence in controlling the situation and the ability to change it. The authors of studies on this topic introduce the term "cognitive assessment" and define it as an individual's activity, that is "...the process of recognizing the specifics of a situation, identifying its negative and positive sides, determining the content and meaning of what is happening" (Ligeza, Larson & DeBeliso, 2022). The strategies that a person will use to solve a difficult stressful situation depend on how the mechanism of cognitive evaluation works.

Cognitive assessment is an integral part of the emotional state (Nindl et al., 2018).

**Aims**

The purpose of the research is to determine the standpoint of scientists conducting studies in the sphere of stress management and practicing psychologists regarding the specifics of the individual style of overcoming stress during military aggression.

**Materials and Methods**

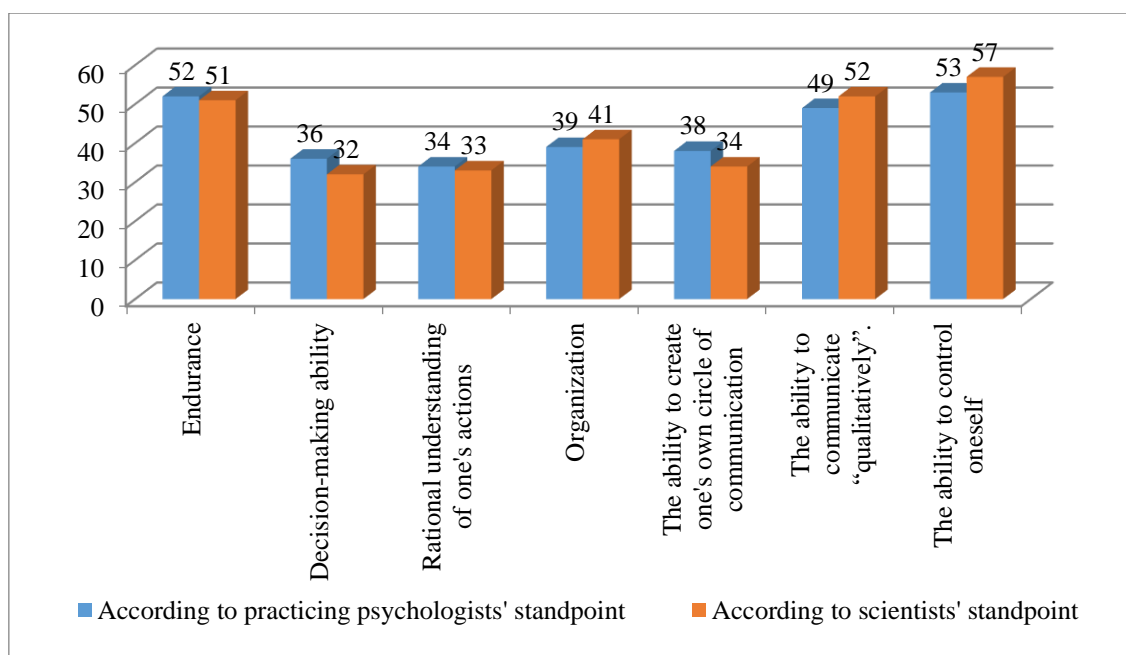
A practical study of modern tendencies in using individual psychological resources to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression was conducted by interviewing 228 practicing psychologists, as well as 204 scientists conducting studies and teaching activities in 12

higher educational institutions in Khmelnytskyi, Sumy, Poltava and Kyiv regions of Ukraine. The research was conducted using the Google Forms service.

**Results**

The survey participants believe that currently, in the conditions of economic and political instability in the world, acts of military aggression and, accordingly, an increase in stressogenic factors, the primary skills determining a person’s potential ability to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression individually are as follows (Figure 1):

- self-control;
- endurance;
- the ability to communicate “qualitatively”.

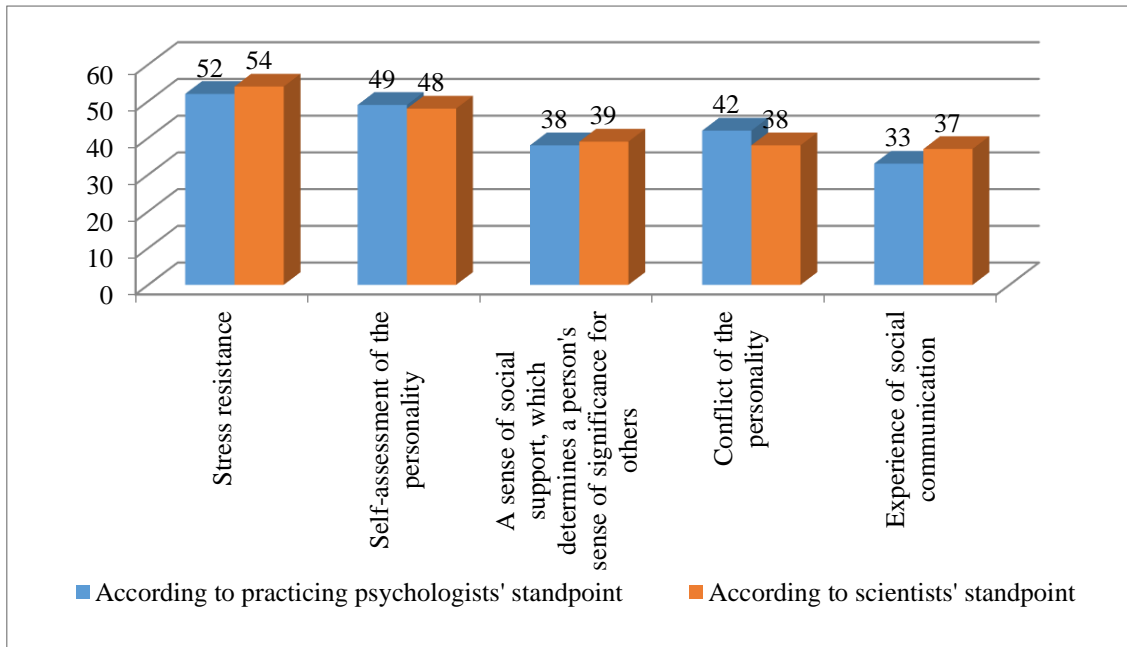


**Figure 1.** The primary skills determining a person’s potential ability to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression individually, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

The survey respondents also identified a person’s psychological features that should be taken into consideration and that determine their individual

capacity for adaptability in terms of stress resistance (Figure 2).

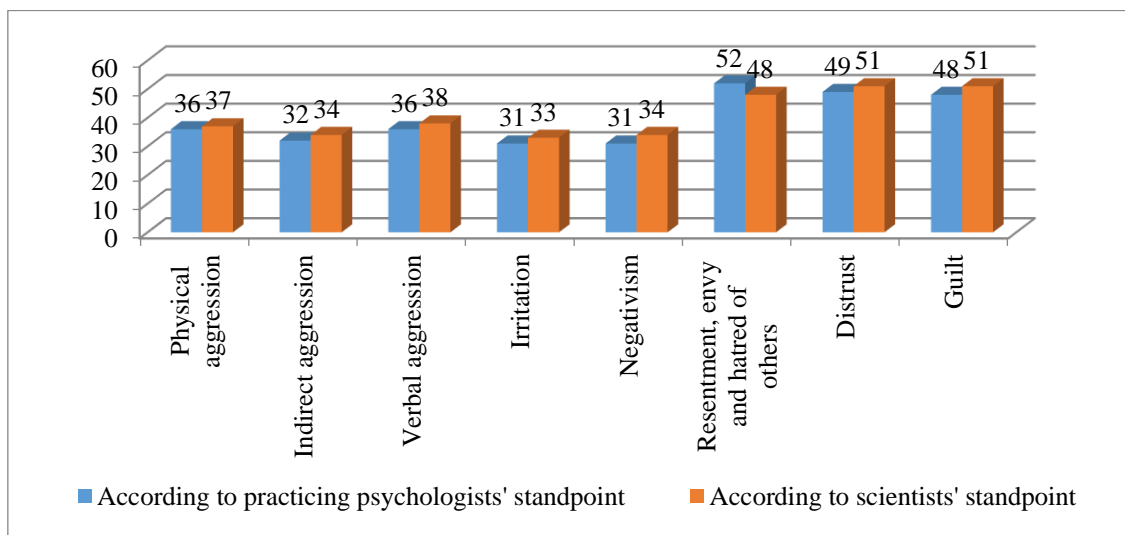


**Figure 2.** Psychological features of a person, which should be paid attention to and which form his personal adaptation potential from the perspective of stress resistance, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

It can be observed from Figure 2, based on scientists' and practical psychologists' standpoints, that the individual's stress resistance and self-esteem are the most significant features.

An important aspect of the research was studying the survey participants' viewpoint regarding persons' negative psychological tendencies, hindering the effective formation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress and requiring additional measures (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Persons' negative psychological tendencies hindering the effective formation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

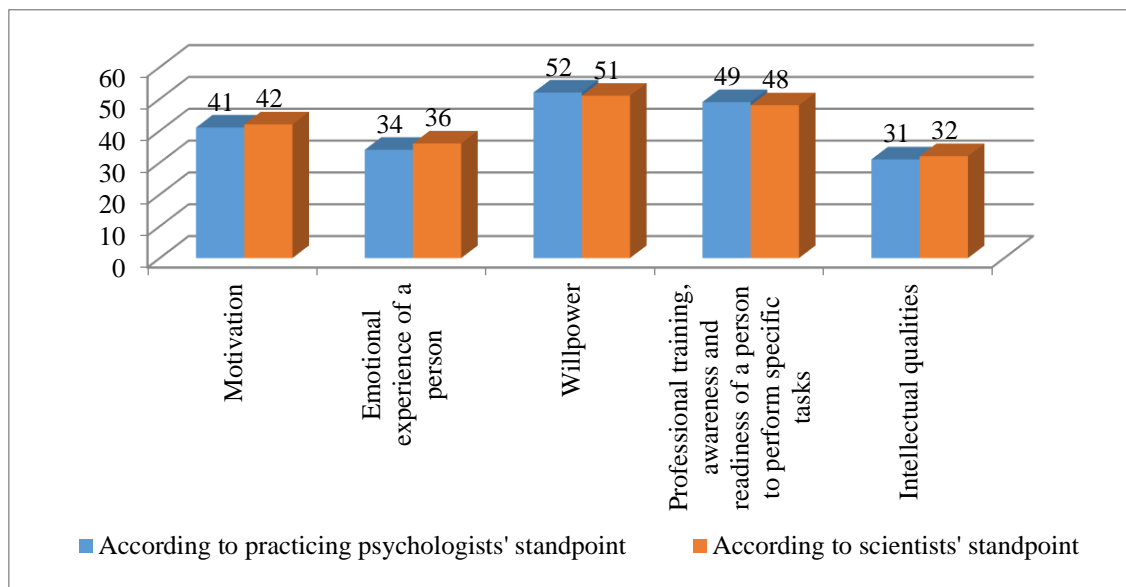
Based on the survey, there are the following tendencies:

- negativism – a form of oppositional behavior from passive resistance to active struggle with established customs and laws;
- resentment, envy and hatred of others for real and imaginary actions;
- distrust – from being wary of people to believing that other people are planning and causing harm;

- guilt, expressing the belief of the subject that he or she is a bad person, doing bad things, and also experiencing remorse.

In the course of the research, the respondents were asked to identify the components of

individual psychological resistance to stress, which form personal adaptation potential. These are a person's psychological features, requiring more thorough scientific study and development of practical recommendations for effectively overcoming stress during the war (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** A person's psychological features, requiring more thorough scientific study and development of practical recommendations for effectively overcoming stress during the war, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

According to the survey participants' standpoint, such features are primarily motivation (by changing motivation, one can increase (or decrease) emotional resistance), willpower, which is expressed in conscious self-regulation of actions to bring them into line with the situation's requirements, as well as professional training, awareness and readiness of a person to perform specific tasks. Along with this, both psychologists and scientists rated such features as the emotional experience of the individual, accumulated in the process of overcoming the negative impact of extreme situations, and intellectual qualities – the ability to assess the requirements of the situation, predict their

possible change, and make decisions about the methods of action.

The skills contributing to the most effective accumulation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression are another important issue clarified during the survey (Figure 5).

The research has shown that the organization of resources, the ability to mobilize effective efforts to overcome stress, and the ability to reduce mental stress using state correction methods contribute most to the effective accumulation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression.

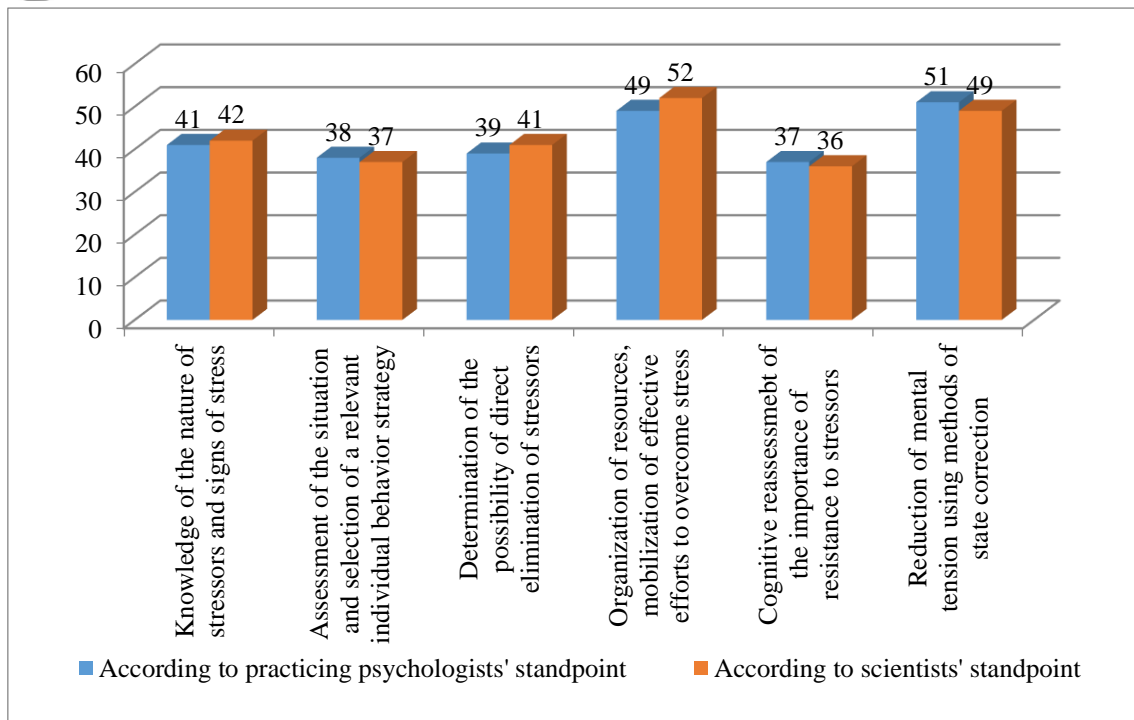


Figure 5. Skills and forms of behavior contributing to the most effective accumulation of individual psychological resources to overcome stress in conditions of military aggression, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

### Discussion

A person's social resources in a stressful situation are determined by moral support level of others, personal values and interpersonal relationships (Gray et al., 2018).

The process of overcoming stress involves the mobilization of personal and social resources. The use of behavior's certain strategies depends on the peculiarities of the influence of such factors as the demographic and personal characteristics of a person, the environment, life crises, the situation importance, the intensity of manifesting emotional and cognitive reactions. Ways to overcome stress include the ability to show constructive activity, to experience an event without avoiding it (Shiozawa et al., 2019).

In the psychological literature, the only resource of a person is considered to be a complex of a person's personal-psychological, professional and physical resources. Personal and psychological resources are psychological attitudes significantly influencing on the regulation of behavior in difficult situations (self-control, self-esteem, a sense of self-worth, optimism, a sense of humor, stereotypes, etc.), reflecting the specifics of the course of cognitive, psychological, emotional, volitional processes (Park & Colvin, 2019).

The role of personal, psychological and social resources in coping with stress is crucial for the choice of strategies and behavior in a stressful situation. However, this choice is influenced by situational factors, the cognitive assessment of which, together with the assessment of the individual potential of a person, allows determining the necessary resources to overcome stress (Keefer & DeBeliso, 2020).

Classical science assumes that the crucial elements of the psychological stress management strategy are as follows: real (cognitive or behavioral) problem solving; search for social support; reassessment of the situation; protection and problem prevention; bypassing the solution of the problem; emotional expression (Kalka et al., 2022).

At the same time, the most adaptive coping strategies are those aimed at solving the problem situation. These include: active coping – active measures to eliminate sources of stress; planning one's actions regarding a problematic situation; search for public support; positive interpretation – assessment of the situation from the perspective of its positive aspects; acceptance – recognition of the situation's real aspects (Chen, Yang & Chiang, 2018).

The second block of coping strategies can help a person adapt in a stressful situation. However, it differs from active coping strategies. Such

coping strategies are as follows: the search for emotional public support, that is, the search for sympathy and understanding; reduced activity in relation to other things and full concentration on sources of stress; waiting for more favorable conditions to solve the problem situation (Chen, Yang & Chiang, 2018).

Stress management depends not only on the choice and application of a relevant strategy of behavior, but also on the style of coping with stress, namely, an individual-specific stereotype (method, algorithm) of actions to solve a problem. The typical manifestations of these styles are a person's behavior (Tavakolizadeh, Yazdi & Akbary, 2019).

There are proactive and reactive styles of stress management. People with a proactive style seek to prevent stress from developing, while people with a reactive style take less preventive action and react impulsively to stress (Muntean et al., 2019).

Scientists note that any behavior aimed at overcoming stress begins with assessing the environment, which can be significant, harmful, useful, life-threatening (Abdullahi et al., 2020).

Preventive coping lies in preventing a stressor's impact and includes avoiding stressful factors by regulating living conditions and activities, optimizing the level of situational requirements, and developing personal resources to overcome stress (Chen, Yang & Chiang, 2018).

At the same time, some experts suggest that overcoming stress can be considered from the standpoint of operational and preventive consequences for the situation. Operational stress management is an attempt to eliminate or reduce the response to a stressor (Shiozawa et al., 2019).

## Conclusions

Therefore, the analysis of the scientific literature on the research topic and the questionnaire results showed that the process of overcoming stress is a logical change in the stages of psychological activity from assessing a specific stressful situation and personal resources to selecting and implementing a relevant strategy, behavior styles in conditions of stress development.

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