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## FRUSTRATION THEORIES

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### Abstract

This article explains in detail about frustration, theories of frustration, S. Rosensweig's theory of frustration, J. Dollor's theory of frustration aggression, K. Lewin's field theory and Z. Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

**Keywords:** Frustration, aggression, defense mechanisms, needs, field theory, theory of aggression, depression, apathy.

### Introduction

In today's era of globalization, rapid changes in society, increased competition, excessive information flow and socio-economic pressures directly affect the human psyche. Especially among young people, the number of psychological problems such as internal conflicts, hopelessness, apathy, aimlessness, and decreased self-confidence is increasing. These situations are often associated with frustrating experiences and serve as serious obstacles to the personal and social development of young people.

Frustration often leads to stress, depression, aggression, social adaptation problems, and decreased motivation. This negatively affects not only individual but also social health. Therefore, studying the psychological mechanisms of frustration, identifying the factors that cause it, and developing ways to eliminate it are currently one of the important tasks facing psychology.

In modern psychology, the concept of frustration (i.e., frustration) is interpreted as the failure of a person to achieve the expected result, the disruption of plans, and the discrepancy between desires and goals and the possibilities of their implementation. Simply put, this is a state in which what a person expects does not happen, his dreams are shattered.

The term frustration comes from the Latin word *frustratio*, which means “to deceive” or “to disappoint”, “to disrupt plans”.



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One of the little-known facts is that one of the first psychologists to talk about this condition was the famous Austrian scientist Sigmund Freud. It was he who introduced the term “frustration” into scientific circulation and explained it as a condition that can cause psychological problems, arising from the inability to satisfy a person’s needs, in particular the need for love. Freud indicated this condition as a factor that causes the emergence of neuroses in a person.

Among the domestic scientists who first decided to study the phenomenon of frustration, N.D. Levitov called frustration “a mental state expressed in the specifics of experiences and behavior and caused by objectively unbearable circumstances on the way to achieving a goal or solving a problem.”

### **Sola Rosenzweig's Frustration Theory**

One of the most interesting and perfect theories is Sola Rosenzweig's theory. In 1934, Rosenzweig published a "heuristic" classification of types of reactions to frustration. He planned to use this classification as a basis for measuring personality projection. A more perfect form of the theory was presented in 1938. In a state of frustration, Rosenzweig considers a three-level psychological defense system of the organism:

The cellular (immunological) level is a psychobiological level of defense, based on the activity of phagocytes, skin antibodies and other similar elements. It deals only with protecting the organism from infectious agents.

The autonomous level, sometimes also called the level of immediate need (according to Cannon's typology). This level protects the organism against general physical aggression. Psychologically, this level corresponds to emotions such as fear, pain, and anger, and physiologically, it is expressed by biological changes of the “stress” type.

The upper cortical level (i.e., the “ego” defense) - this level protects the individual from psychological aggression. This level mainly includes the theory of frustration.

This distinction is, of course, schematic; Rosenzweig emphasizes that in a broad sense, the theory of frustration covers all three levels, and they are all intertwined. For example, the following sequence of mental states: pain, fear, anxiety - theoretically applies to all three levels, but in practice they manifest themselves



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as states that pass from one level to another; pain simultaneously applies to levels 1 and 2, fear to levels 2 and 3, and anxiety only to level 3.

Rosenzweig distinguishes two types of frustration:

Primary frustration, or deprivation. This condition occurs when a person is deprived of the opportunity to satisfy his need. For example: a feeling of hunger caused by prolonged starvation.

Secondary frustration. This type is characterized by the presence of obstacles or resistance on the way to satisfying a need.

The given definition of frustration mainly applies to secondary frustration, and it is on this type of frustration that most experimental studies have been conducted. An example of secondary frustration is the following: the subject is hungry, but cannot eat, because the arrival of a guest interferes with this.

It would be natural to classify frustration reactions based on the nature of the needs that are suppressed. According to Rosenzweig, the current lack of a classification of needs does not pose a serious obstacle to the study of frustration; on the contrary, the obstacle is the lack of sufficient knowledge about the frustration reactions themselves - it is this knowledge that could form the basis of the classification.

When considering the suspended needs, the following two types of reactions can be distinguished:

The reaction of the continuation of the need. This reaction occurs constantly after each frustration.

The reaction of the defense of the "ego". This type of reaction concerns the general fate of the personality; it occurs only in special situations when the individual is in danger

The goal in a response to a need is to satisfy that need in some way.

The reaction of defending the "I" is associated with much more complex facts. Rosenzweig proposed dividing these reactions into three groups and based his test on this classification:

Extrapunitive (blaming) responses. In a test with such responses, the participant aggressively blames external obstacles and other people. These responses are accompanied by emotions such as anger and irritation. Sometimes aggression is



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initially hidden, but then it is expressed indirectly - this happens through the mechanism of projection (imposing one's own feelings on others).

Intrapunitive (self-blaming) responses. In this case, a person blames himself, is associated with feelings such as guilt and remorse.

Impunitive responses. In such a response, a person does not recognize criticism from others or himself. He evaluates the frustrating situation in a conciliatory, compromising way.

Frustration reactions can also be analyzed according to their directness.

Direct reactions are responses that are directly related to the frustrating situation and are a continuation of the initial needs.

Indirect reactions are responses that are partially or completely substitute, and in some cases symbolic (symbolic) responses.

Responses to frustration can also be considered in terms of their adequacy (adequacy). In fact, any frustration reaction is considered adaptive from a biological point of view. Reactions can be called adequate if they serve the individual's progress, that is, progressive development, and not regressive (regressive).

Two completely opposite types of responses to the need for continuation can be distinguished:

Adaptive persistence: A person continues his action directly, despite obstacles.

Non-adaptive persistence: The action is repeated in the same way, meaninglessly and in vain.

Two types of responses to the protection of the "I" are also distinguished:

Adaptive response: The response is justified by the existing circumstances. For example, if a person fails because he does not have the necessary abilities and blames himself for this - this is an adaptive response.

Non-adaptive response: The response does not correspond to the existing circumstances. For example, if a person blames himself, but in fact the failure was due to the mistakes of others - this is a maladaptive response.

Rosenzweig distinguishes three types of frustrators:

The first type includes deprivations, that is, the lack of the means necessary to achieve a goal or satisfy a need.



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### **Deprivations are of two types - internal and external**

As an example of external deprivation, Rosenzweig gives the following situation: a person is hungry, but cannot find food. In this case, the frustrator (obstacle) is located outside the person himself.

Internal deprivation means that the frustrator is located within the person. For example, the following situation is given: a man feels attracted to a woman, but at the same time he understands that he is not attractive enough and therefore is deprived of hope for reciprocity.

Rosenzweig distinguishes three types of frustrators (factors that cause frustration):

Type 1 - Deprivations, that is, the lack of the necessary means to achieve a goal or satisfy a need.

Deprivations are divided into two types: external and internal.

An example of external deprivation: a person is hungry, but cannot find food. Here the obstacle (frustrator) is located outside the person.

An example of internal deprivation: a man feels sexual or romantic attraction to a woman, but at the same time he understands that he is not attractive enough and cannot hope for reciprocity. In this case, the obstacle is inside the person, that is, within himself.

Type 2 - Losses, which are also divided into two types: external and internal.

Examples of external losses: the death of a loved one, becoming homeless as a result of a house fire.

Rosenzweig gives the following example of internal loss: according to legend, Samson, whose strength is in his hair, loses his hair, as a result of which he loses his strength - this is an internal loss.

The third type of frustrator is conflict: external and internal.

Rosenzweig gives the following example of external conflict: a man loves a woman, but this woman remains faithful to her husband. Here the obstacle is outside the person.

An example of internal conflict is given: a man wants to seduce the woman he loves, but this desire clashes with the following idea in his mind: what would happen if someone seduced his mother or sister? In this case, the obstacle lies in the person's internal moral and emotional contradictions.



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Frustration as a mental state can take the following forms:

It can be typical for a person's character.

For example, aggression is usually characteristic of rude, uncontrollable people.

It can be unconventional (unusual), but it can represent the formation of new character traits.

That is, a person can react in a way that has not been seen before.

It can be episodic (temporary, transient).

For example, a person who lacks self-confidence may experience a temporary state of depression.

Rosenzweig introduced an important concept into his concept: frustration tolerance, that is, tolerance for frustrating situations.

This is the ability of a person to experience frustration without losing their psychobiological flexibility, that is, without succumbing to inadequate reactions.

There are several forms of frustration tolerance:

The most "healthy" and acceptable form - in this case, a person, despite the presence of frustration, remains calm, thoughtful and perceives the incident as a life lesson, does not blame himself.

Tolerance is expressed through tension, internal struggle, that is, a person tries to restrain unpleasant, impulsive reactions in himself.

Tolerance in the form of bravado (showing off one's strength), in which a person pretends to be indifferent, but in fact hides hidden anger or disappointment.

Frustration theory contains a hypothesis that early (childhood) frustration affects a person's behavior in later life - this is reflected not only in reactions to subsequent frustrations, but also in other aspects of behavior.

If a child does not gradually learn to solve the problems that arise before him in the process of development - obstacles, limitations, deprivations - in a positive (adaptive) way, it will not be possible to raise him normally.

At the same time, one should not confuse normal resistance to frustration with simple tolerance (passive tolerance).

Frequent negative frustrations in early childhood can later lead to pathological (disease-causing) consequences.





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Therefore, one of the main tasks of psychotherapy is to help a person identify the source of his current or past frustration and teach him how to react to these situations.

In general, this is Rosenzweig's theory of frustration.

It was on the basis of this theory that the “drawing-association test” or “frustration reaction test” was created, first described in 1944.

This interpretation of frustration was shared by other domestic authors. So, V.S. Merlin wrote: "Frustration is understood as a state of disorder of consciousness and activity that occurs when the motive is not satisfied or prevents its satisfaction due to some obstacles and contradictions." In psychology, frustration is a psycho-emotional state that manifests itself when a person's desires do not correspond to his capabilities. The inability to turn a dream into reality is accompanied by a feeling of hopelessness and anger.

Perfectionists and sensitive individuals often face pathology. The term “frustration” was first used in the second half of the 20th century. According to Lyudmila Andropova<sup>1</sup>, The best way to overcome frustration is to be able to label and identify your feelings - this allows you to respond appropriately to your emotional state. “If you want to deal with frustration, you need to get to the root of the problem, the unmet needs and the feelings you are really experiencing. Then you need to understand the reasons for these feelings. They will not go away on their own, so you need to find out what caused them,” he says. The expert recommends talking to someone you trust. Honest conversation can help you come to terms with your feelings, rather than filling them in directly. You can also keep a journal of your feelings and experiences; you can use it to track the emergence of frustrating situations and your reaction to them. John Dollard One of the first American psychologists to analyze frustration on a deep scientific basis was John Dollard (1900–1980). He was a representative of the famous psychological school at Yale University, and in 1939 Miller, Doob, along with Mowrer and Sears, published a work called “Frustration and Aggression.” In this work, they argued that frustration leads to aggressive behavior in humans.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.ru/forbeslife/461871-obmanyvat-sa-rad-cto-takoe-frustracia-i-kak-ee-preodolet>



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**According to Dollard:**

“Frustration always leads to some kind of aggression, and aggression is always the result of some kind of frustration.”

This theory is known in psychology as the “Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis” and explains the causes of aggression and emotional disorders arising from internal conflicts of the individual. Dollard's approach has not lost its relevance today and is widely used in combating stress, mitigating social conflicts, and ensuring mental stability.

The book “Frustration and Aggression” (1939) written by the American psychologist J. Dollard and his colleagues (Neal E. Miller, Leonard W. Doob, Orval H. Mowrer, and Robert R. Sears) shows that the main cause of frustration is the inability of a person to achieve a goal. They put forward the hypothesis that “frustration always leads to aggression.” This theory explains the strong connection between frustration and aggressive behavior.

Kurt Lewin (1890–1947) is a German-American social psychologist who studied the influence of motivational processes and the social environment on the individual. one of the most important researchers in the history of psychology on the influence of motivation. He developed the concepts of "field theory", "directed forces model", and "learning motivation".

Kurt Lewin approached the issue of frustration from the perspective of motivational psychology. His "field theory" emphasizes that frustration arises from conflicts between the internal forces of the individual and the external environment. According to Lewin, frustration usually occurs when an obstacle appears in the path of a person's motivational forces. This is manifested in stress, anxiety, or regressive behavior.

One of the scientists who analyzed the state of frustration within the framework of the socio-psychological field is Kurt Lewin, who argues that a person is a social being moving towards a goal. According to his field theory, if a person cannot achieve the goal he has set for himself or encounters an obstacle, he becomes frustrated. Kurt Lewin's concepts of "vector forces", "obstacles" and "motivational tension" are used to explain frustration in psychology plays an important role in understanding.





The issue of frustration also plays an important role in Freud's psychoanalytic theory. He wrote that the internal conflict between human desires and social constraints causes frustration. According to Freud, these situations are called "Intrapsychic Conflict" and can lead to stress, depression, and even neurosis. Freud's thoughts on this are mainly expressed in the book "Human Nature and Society" (Civilization and Its Discontents).

The psychodynamic interpretation of frustration is explained by the famous German psychologist Sigmund Freud through his model of "Id, Ego, and Superego". According to Freud, when desires and needs hidden under the human mind are blocked, this internal conflict causes frustration. This, in turn, can lead to neurosis, anxiety, aggression, and even depressive states. Freud's theory of defense mechanisms explains the main mechanisms of psychological adaptation in overcoming frustration (for example: repression, sublimation, compensation, etc.).

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