



Comparative Analysis Of Psychological Issues Among University Instructors In Uzbekistan And The United States (Based On The Materials Of The American College Health Association)

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Abstract: The article presents a comparative analysis of psychological problems among university faculty in Uzbekistan and the United States. The study is based on a pilot survey conducted at the Uzbek State University of World Languages and the Tashkent Medical Academy, and on data from the American College Health Association (ACHA, 2023). The comparison shows that while stressors are structurally similar, Uzbek faculty are less likely to acknowledge the negative impact of anxiety, depression, and sleep deprivation on work performance, which may reflect cultural norms and institutional contexts. The study emphasizes the need to develop university psychological services in Uzbekistan in accordance with international standards and local conditions.

Keywords: University faculty, stress, anxiety, depression, international comparison, counseling services, ACHA, Uzbekistan, USA.

INTRODUCTION: The contemporary university environment is characterized by a high level of professional complexity and the dynamic nature of educational processes, which contributes to an increased psycho-emotional load on the teaching staff. Under conditions of digitalization, global competition, and ongoing reforms in higher education, the teaching profession acquires the features of a multifactorial

stressor encompassing cognitive, communicative, and emotional components. The psychological strain experienced by university instructors is determined not only by the volume of their professional duties but also by the constant demands for intellectual mobilization, personal engagement, and emotional resilience within pedagogical interaction.

In this context, the mental well-being of university instructors serves as a systemic indicator of the stability of the educational environment, reflecting both individual psychological resources and the quality of the organizational climate. According to L. I. Antsyferova’s concept [1], psychological adaptation in professional activity represents a process of personal integration under changing demands, in which internal self-regulation mechanisms ensure a balance between professional workload and the maintenance of mental equilibrium.

Despite the universal nature of stress factors, their perception and intensity are mediated by cultural-normative and institutional conditions. In different countries, university instructors operate within distinct socio-psychological contexts that vary in terms of academic autonomy, the degree of organizational support, the institutional maturity of psychological services, and societal perceptions of mental health. Thus, professional stress within the academic environment possesses a culture-specific character, and its assessment requires consideration of both individual and systemic determinants.

A pilot study conducted in Uzbekistan, involving university instructors (n = 120) from two institutions — the Uzbek State University of World Languages (UzSWLU) and the Tashkent State Medical University (TSMU) — aimed to identify typological characteristics of the psychological state of the teaching staff within the context of their professional activity. The diagnostic toolkit included multifactorial indicators reflecting both subjective well-being and the frequency of stress-related conditions, which made it possible to reconstruct the structure of psychological risks within the educational environment.

The results of the study revealed that the most pronounced difficulties experienced by university instructors include anxiety, chronic sleep deprivation,

emotional tension within the departmental environment, psychosomatic manifestations (particularly headaches), and symptoms of the depressive spectrum. These phenomena form an interconnected complex that reflects a combination of cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses to professional stressors. The systemic nature of their manifestation indicates the presence of stable stress-induced patterns characteristic of the academic environment, where high social responsibility is combined with insufficient resource support.

For cross-cultural verification of the obtained data, a comparative interpretation was conducted using the national study of university faculty in the United States carried out by the American College Health Association (ACHA, 2023), which included over 4,000 respondents from various academic institutions [2]. The use of ACHA data made it possible to examine the identified indicators within a broader context — as part of global trends in faculty mental health — reflecting the relationship between objective stressors and the subjective readiness to recognize and cope with psychological difficulties.

The comparison of data reveals both general patterns and culture-organizational differences. The table below presents the averaged prevalence rates of key psychological issues among university instructors in the two countries, as well as the proportion of those who report their impact on professional performance.

The comparative analysis of empirical data from university instructors in Uzbekistan and the United States revealed both structural similarities and differences in the intensity and subjective perception of psychological issues. Both samples demonstrated a high prevalence of anxiety, sleep disturbances, and signs of emotional tension, confirming the universality of these phenomena within the academic profession. However, distinctions emerged in the level of awareness and interpretation of psychological difficulties: instructors at Uzbek universities more frequently tend to rationalize or deny the impact of such difficulties on their professional performance, whereas American instructors show greater openness to self-reflection and acknowledgment of personal emotional challenges as a significant factor influencing their work effectiveness.

Comparative frequency of psychological problems among university teachers in Uzbekistan and the USA

№	Psychological issue	Uzbekistan Prevalence, %	Impact on work, %	USA (ACHA, 2023) Prevalence, %	Impact on work, %
1.	Anxiety	63,3	0,0	62,1	22,7
2.	Sleep deprivation	58,3	3,3	72,1	28,8

3.	Stressful departmental environment	46,7	10,0	45,3	17,4
4.	Headaches	41,7	8,3	39,2	10,1
5.	Depression	31,7	5,0	38,7	14,5
6.	Financial difficulties	26,7	13,3	25,9	9,8
7.	Loss or bereavement	23,3	5,0	19,5	12,0

This divergence can be interpreted as a result of differences in academic culture and institutional support for mental health. In U.S. universities, stable systems of psychological assistance for faculty members have been functioning for several decades, integrated into the corporate structure of higher education institutions. This has fostered trust in professional psychological services and reduced the stigma associated with seeking psychological help. In contrast, in Uzbekistan, the institutionalization of psychological services is still in its early stages, and the professional community tends to maintain attitudes of self-control, emotional restraint, and reliance on personal coping strategies.

The cross-cultural specificity of these differences reflects the influence of sociocultural behavioral regulators and the varying degrees of internalization of mental well-being as a social value. In contexts where emotional balance is perceived as an individual duty rather than an organizational responsibility, instructors tend to overlook latent forms of stress, which in the long term diminishes their adaptive capacities. Meanwhile, within the academic environment of the United States, acknowledgment of emotional difficulties has become part of professional self-reflection and a mechanism for preventing burnout.

The presented findings confirm the necessity of transitioning toward a systemic understanding of faculty psychological well-being as an institutional category, in which the development of university psychological services should be aimed not only at providing counseling support but also at fostering a culture of emotional awareness, preventing stress-related conditions, and strengthening the psychosocial resources of the academic community.

Organizational factors determining the dynamics of professional stress and attitudes toward psychological assistance differ considerably between the two countries. In U.S. universities, the system of faculty mental health care is institutional in nature. The structure of educational organizations includes specialized counseling centers, burnout prevention programs, and corporate resilience training initiatives [2; 3]. According to ACHA (2023), approximately 68% of university instructors and staff in the United States have either sought professional psychological support

at least once or participated in well-being programs, reflecting a high level of internalization of psychological competence as a professional resource [2].

Unlike in the United States, seeking psychological help in Uzbekistan remains largely an individual choice rather than a normatively supported practice. The conducted study showed that only 28.3% of university instructors had real experience interacting with a psychologist, while 74.6% expressed a willingness to seek help if necessary. This disproportion between potential readiness and actual engagement indicates the presence of hidden barriers—institutional, cultural, and value-based. Among them are insufficient awareness of the activities of psychological services and the weak integration of psychological support into university management systems, which aligns with G. B. Shaumarov's findings on the low level of psychological culture among educators in the post-Soviet educational context [4].

This tendency confirms that cross-country differences concern not only the prevalence of stress-related conditions but also the level of organizational support for emotional well-being. The American academic model is built on the principle of partnership between the instructor's personal responsibility for their mental state and the institution's obligation to create conditions for psychological balance [3]. In Uzbekistan, however, such an approach is only beginning to take shape. A priority task remains the transformation of the university environment toward recognizing faculty psychological well-being as a component of professional effectiveness [1, 4].

A noteworthy finding of the study is the negative correlation between self-rated health status and the demand for psychological assistance ($p = -0.469$; $p < 0.001$), as well as a positive correlation between stress levels and the willingness to participate in group counseling ($p = 0.341$; $p = 0.01$). These results are consistent with the empirical patterns described by E. V. Sidorenko [5], suggesting that university instructors view help-seeking as a tool for restoring professional resources. Nevertheless, the overall low awareness of the relationship between mental health and work performance remains a systemic issue within the university environment.

Thus, the identified differences highlight the

importance of institutional conditions shaping the culture of help-seeking. For universities in Uzbekistan, a key priority should be the development of a comprehensive model of psychological support for faculty, including regular monitoring of psycho-emotional well-being, the implementation of preventive programs, and the integration of mental health principles into human resource management strategies [1, 3, 4]. Such an approach would not only enhance the professional resilience of instructors but also contribute to the formation of a new model of the university environment—one in which care for mental health is regarded as an integral component of educational quality and academic culture.

The identified differences can be viewed as manifestations of two distinct models of psychological culture:

1. The model of conscious acknowledgment and prevention (United States), characterized by a well-developed system of institutional support and an open attitude toward psychological difficulties.
2. The model of latent tension and individual coping (Uzbekistan), in which university instructors rely primarily on personal resources and social support outside the professional environment.

The comparative analysis demonstrated that the psychological issues faced by university instructors have a universal nature, yet their awareness and interpretation are determined by sociocultural and institutional contexts. It was found that in both Uzbekistan and the United States, the leading stressogenic factors include anxiety, sleep deprivation, emotional tension, and professional stress. However, in American universities, these conditions are more often recognized and acknowledged by instructors as significant factors influencing work efficiency [2], whereas within the Uzbek academic community there remains a tendency toward rationalization and suppression of external manifestations.

This difference reflects varying models of attitudes toward mental health: the open preventive model (in societies with developed institutional support) and the latent-adaptive model (in cultures that prioritize self-control and personal resilience). Consequently, the issue of university instructors' psychological well-being in Uzbekistan requires solutions not only at the individual level but also at the systemic and

organizational levels.

The experience of U.S. universities, as reflected in the standards of the International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS) [3], demonstrates that the effectiveness of psychological support programs depends on the degree of their integration into the educational and human resource policies of the institution. For the Uzbek higher education system, a priority direction involves the institutionalization of psychological services, regular monitoring of faculty well-being, and the development of a professional culture of emotional competence [1, 4]. An important prerequisite for achieving these objectives is the preparation of qualified personnel—such as counseling psychologists capable of working within educational environments—as well as the establishment of interdepartmental mechanisms for cooperation among psychological services, university administration, and medical units.

Thus, the development of a faculty psychological support system in Uzbekistan should be based on scientifically grounded models of prevention, diagnosis, and counseling adapted to national and cultural contexts. Increasing attention to the mental health of academic staff should be regarded as an element of the strategic development of higher education, aimed at strengthening resilience, productivity, and the humanistic orientation of the educational process.

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