

ETHNOPSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF STRESS AND FATIGUE AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS**Xalilova Kamola Muxammadjon qizi**kamolaoff@gmail.com

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Abstract: This article analyzes the formation and development of stress and fatigue in higher education teachers from a scientific perspective, as well as their ethnopsychological foundations. The professional activity of higher education system teachers is characterized by a high level of intellectual load, constant communication, responsibility, and various social expectations. The article details the ethnopsychological factors that exacerbate stress and fatigue - national mentality, the value of "patience and endurance", the idealization of the teacher's image, collectivism, hierarchical relationships, gender stereotypes, and pressures associated with family roles.

Keywords: stress, fatigue, higher education teachers, ethnopsychology, mentality, patience and endurance, burnout, collectivism, hierarchy, gender stereotypes, psychological well-being, professional stability.

Introduction. The higher education system is one of the most important areas that determine the intellectual and cultural potential of modern society. Teachers working in this system are not only knowledge providers but also the main subjects shaping students' worldview, values, and professional orientation. Therefore, their mental state, emotional well-being, and levels of stress and fatigue directly affect the quality of education. In higher education teachers, the issue of stress and fatigue is often attributed to workload, working conditions, salary, and management systems. However, the deep roots of these phenomena are often closely related to ethnopsychological factors, namely national mentality, value systems, upbringing methods, and societal stereotypes about the image of a teacher.

Literature review. Stress is the body's adaptive response to internal and external demands, pressures, threats, or changes, and is not always negative. A certain level of stress can activate activity and increase motivation. However, if stress factors become chronic and intense, the person's mental resources gradually deplete, resulting in signs such as fatigue, emotional exhaustion, indifference, and a negative attitude towards work. Fatigue itself can manifest in physiological and psychological, short-term, and chronic forms. In the activities of higher education teachers, high intellectual load, classroom communication, diverse student characteristics, scientific work, reports, and confirmation and accreditation processes collectively act as sources of stress.

From an ethnopsychological perspective, it is insufficient to explain these processes solely through individual characteristics. Every teacher is a person belonging to a specific ethnocultural space, shaped from childhood by certain social norms and values. Even when entering the profession, they carry this same mental "baggage". Therefore, how they perceive stress, react to it, acknowledge or deny fatigue, and their readiness to seek help - all these are connected to ethnopsychological factors.

For higher education teachers, interpersonal communication is at the core of professional activity. Each lesson is a unique psychological process: students' mood, level of knowledge, motivation, group dynamics, the teacher's personal state, and many other factors interact with each other. In such conditions, the teacher must constantly manage their emotions, control communication, mitigate conflicts, and adapt to the expectations of students and management. This creates constant psychological tension. Here, the ethnopsychological aspect is crucial: the behavioral

norms, tone, distance, and “teaching” style expected from a teacher in a particular cultural space also determine the nature of stress and fatigue.

Research Methodology. In many Eastern societies, including Uzbek culture, the image of “ustoz” is often idealized. The teacher is portrayed not only as an educator but also as a spiritual leader, a decisive speaker, and a “perfect person”. Higher education teachers are compared to this idealized image in everyday life. While this elevates the profession’s prestige, it also places a significant psychological burden on teachers. They feel they have no right to make mistakes, get tired, complain, or openly express their emotions. This leads to concealing fatigue and internalizing stress. Consequently, stress manifests not overtly, but through internal conflicts, emotional detachment, irony, indifference, and psychosomatic illnesses.

In ethnopsychology, the value of “patience and resilience” holds a special place. In Uzbek upbringing, children often grow up with ideas of “enduring”, “not crying”, “not complaining”, and “persevering through work to completion.” Adults, especially teachers, may think “it’s inappropriate for me” or “I’ll set a bad example for students” if they complain about fatigue. As a result, teachers strive to wear a “strong mask” for others rather than acknowledging their own feelings. A tendency develops to perceive stress and fatigue not as normal human conditions, but as internal weaknesses. This leads to failure in recognizing early stress signals, indifference towards them, and delayed detection of professional burnout.

Another ethnopsychological aspect of the culture is collectivism and community spirit. In collectivist societies, the idea that “collective interests supersede individual interests” is strong. Higher education teachers often prioritize the interests of the faculty, department, or university over personal circumstances: meetings, events, additional classes, conferences, plans, celebrations - all these are often perceived as “mandatory participation”. Teachers find it difficult to say “no” because it might be interpreted as disrespect for the team or “lack of activity”. Consequently, excessive workload is not refused due to ethnocultural feelings such as “discomfort” or “avoiding shame”, which exacerbates chronic fatigue.

Another ethnopsychological factor is the attitude towards hierarchy and respect. In hierarchical cultures, the leader’s word is more absolute, decisions flow from top to bottom, and a culture of discussion may not be ideally formed. In such an environment, teachers are afraid to openly express their opinions, offer critical remarks, or voice dissatisfaction with working conditions or workload. The teacher seems to remain in a “subordinate” role. This intensifies internal depression, dissatisfaction with management, but also a feeling that nothing can change in practice. Such a psychological background can also be considered one of the ethnopsychological roots of stress.

The attitude towards family in the national mentality also significantly influences teachers' stress and fatigue levels. Many teachers, especially women, set themselves the goal of simultaneously being a “perfect teacher” and a “perfect mother, spouse, daughter-in-law”. This creates a double burden: higher education tasks, research work, reports, student problems on one side; housework, child-rearing, relationships with relatives on the other. According to ethnocultural norms, neglecting family obligations can be seen as “not being a good wife” or “not being a good son or daughter”. As a result, teachers, striving to be “ideal in every aspect”, completely neglect themselves. Mental resources are depleted before they can be replenished.

Analysis and results. In the analysis of the ethnopsychological foundations of stress and fatigue, ideas about spiritual values also occupy a special place. A higher education teacher is required to be a “guardian of spirituality”, a “possessor of high morality”, and a “pure person in thought and feeling”. He tries not to show his personal crises, fatigue, and even life problems in front of the student. Over the years, the strategy of “hidden emotions” can stifle a person’s inner life, weaken the ability for sincere communication, and lead to “playing a role” in relationships with loved ones. This intensifies feelings of inner emptiness, meaninglessness, and “no one understands me”, forming fatigue and burnout syndrome.

Another ethnopsychological factor of stress and fatigue is the cultural notion that “there is no success without difficulty”. Many teachers grew up hearing from childhood ideas like “you can work hard”, “you’ll achieve everything gradually”, “one who works doesn’t think about fatigue”. While the positive side of this idea is that it fosters diligence and determination, the negative side is that it limits the internal permission to rest, take breaks, and say no. A higher education teacher often thinks it’s inconvenient, I can’t refuse when accepting additional lessons, scientific articles, events, commissions, expert reviews, and other assignments. This leads to the perception of stress and fatigue as normal, and the perception of a level of tension above the healthy norm as normal. From an ethnopsychological point of view, it should also be noted that the style of stress expression is also culturally dependent. In some societies, people express stress in more psychosomatic forms - headaches, back pain, sleep disturbances, increased blood pressure, and increased heart rate. The same situation can be seen with university teachers: they often don’t say I’m in a bad mood, but live with complaints like I have a headache, I have a headache, I have a heavy heart. This is also one of the ethnopsychological manifestations of stress, which can be interpreted as a denial of mental pain, an attempt to "find a way to hide it from the body.

Understanding the ethnopsychological basis of stress and fatigue allows for the development of effective measures to reduce them. Firstly, it is necessary to increase psychological literacy in higher educational institutions. It is important to explain to teachers what stress is, its positive and negative aspects, the stages of fatigue, the symptoms and consequences of burnout syndrome, and to teach them to perceive this state not as a weakness, but as a natural psychological process. Thousands of teachers are ashamed to say I’m tired, because it seems to them that this doesn’t correspond to their professional or moral level. Mitigating this stereotype is one of the most important stages of prevention.

Secondly, it is necessary to form a model of patience and resilience that aligns with culture but is harmonized with healthy boundaries. It should be explained that being patient does not mean refraining from objections or denying one's needs, but rather consciously accepting difficulties and choosing rational strategies to solve them. Higher education teachers should be instilled with the ideas of self-care alongside patience, viewing rest as a duty, and not considering it shameful to ask for help. This is not a rejection of ethnopsychological values, but rather an integration of them with modern psychological knowledge.

Thirdly, developing a management culture based on humanitarian principles can significantly reduce stress and fatigue. Management should consider not only teachers' results and compliance but also their psychological state, fairly distribute workload, and offer participation as an opportunity rather than an obligation.

Fourthly, it is necessary to develop collectivism values in a healthy form. The collective spirit should be a supportive force, not one that pressures individuals. One of the effective means of reducing stress in higher education institutions is the exchange of experiences among colleagues, open discussion of one’s situation, listening to and understanding each other, relaxing together, and organizing informal meetings.

Conclusion. In conclusion, stress and fatigue in higher education teachers are not solely products of working conditions or individual vulnerability. These phenomena have deep ethnopsychological roots and are closely related to national mentality, values, upbringing, stereotypes about the teacher's image, collectivism, and hierarchy concepts. Any measures aimed at reducing stress and fatigue should be developed considering this ethnopsychological background. Attention to teachers’ mental health primarily serves to ensure quality education for students, sustainable development of the education system, and the intellectual potential of society. Caring for higher education teachers, alleviating their stress and fatigue, and forming a culturally appropriate yet healthy psychological approach is a strategic necessity today.

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