

## HOW DOES THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE IMPACT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH?

Student: **Tamina Karsliyeva,**

Kimyo Internation University in Tashkent

Scientific adviser: **Fozilbek Orzibekov**

Senior Lecturer, Head of English Language Department,

Kimyo International University in Tashkent

**Annotation:** This article will address the transition from school to college as an important period in the life of a student with respect to its effect on their mental health and academic performance. This study covers the issues faced by students as well as the learning load and social adaptation affecting their well-being. Qualitative research techniques were adopted for this task, and interviews with students of Kimyo International University in Tashkent (Samarkand Branch) were conducted. Also included in this article are all the results of interviews. The study focuses on university education, overcoming obstacles and family support as the most significant predictors of successful transition. The way forward is improving school preparation programs, providing psychological and academic guidance in universities, and teaching students stress management. Overcoming such obstacles will help students perform well academically and enjoy psycho-emotional stability.

**Key words:** transition from school to university, student mental health, academic performance, study load, social adaptation, family support, stress management, psychological counseling, academic guidance, school preparation programs.

### Introduction

The transition from high school to college is a very important stage for every student. It has a significant impact on academic performance, mental health, and many other aspects of life. During this time, students have to work hard on themselves to achieve good results, but at the same time, they need strong motivation and support

from their loved ones, parents, and teachers. This is because, during this transition, many things in their lives can change, and they may struggle with a lack of time.

In school, students are used to being under the control of their parents and teachers. However, in college, they must become independent and take responsibility for themselves, their behavior, studies, and grades. Many of them face serious difficulties. Some students have to leave their homes and move to another city for their education.

As a result, they encounter even bigger problems— financial difficulties, lack of time, and missing their loved ones. Adapting to a new place can be very challenging for them. This marks their first steps into an independent life.

#### Literature review

Literature indicates that college transition has a tendency to lead to increased stress and anxiety due to academic demands, social adjustment, and independence. Studies indicate that students may experience a decline in academic functioning while adapting to these concerns. Additionally, social support and coping skills are important variables that buffer negative consequences. And research shows that parent involvement can affect the moral and physical performance and health of the students in order to make the transition from high school to college.

The research indicated a few significant themes regarding the role of family relations on university students:

**Family Support System:** Research indicates that students who have a healthy family support system have less depression and anxiety rates, which correlates positively with educational performance (Ai, 2024; Cole, 2021).

**Negative Family Interactions:** Conversely, dysfunctional family relationships can contribute to increased stress and mental illness. Studies have confirmed that negative family interactions, such as high expectations and communication failure, can adversely affect students' mental well-being (Guo, 2024; Wyatt et al., 2017). Negative interactions typically lead to students feeling isolated and insufficient.

Cultural Influences: Family relationship influence may vary significantly across different cultures. In collectivist cultures, for example, family is often prioritized and students are likely to experience greater pressure to meet family expectations, which may lead to anxiety and stress (Brandy et al., 2015; Permatasari et al., 2022).

Social Support Role: The quality of social support from family members is crucial in ensuring mental well-being. Appropriate family support can make students feel secure and safe, which is required to deal with the demands of college life (Lombardi et al., 2016; Zhao, 2023).

### Methodology

This article is a representation of data collection as per the qualitative research method. The study was conducted through interviews, and the outcome was good.

A qualitative interview is a research method of data collection using open-ended questions that provide scope for obtaining in-depth understanding of experience, opinion, and feeling. It was used as an option for making the research more reflective so that nuances would be preserved which had to be inserted into this case study.

Students of the 2nd year of the English Education 323 group of Kimyo International University in Tashkent (Samarkand branch) were interviewed in order to assess their academic performance and mental well-being. 10 students were interviewed in order to better understand their experiences. Questions and answers of this interview are presented below in this case study and can be read in detail.

On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the difficulty level between school and college?

What were your biggest challenges in college?

Do you think that school prepared you well enough for college? Why or why not?

Have your grades changed?

How has adjusting to going from school to college affected your health?

Did you ever feel stressed due to the workload in college?

Did you notice any change in your sleep pattern?

## Findings

During the transition from high school to college, many significant changes occur, affecting both students' academic performance and mental health. Based on qualitative interviews, the following findings were identified:

### Academic performance:

90% of students believe that studying was easier in high school, while they find college more challenging. However, 10% of students reported no noticeable difference between them.

70% of students struggle with managing their time and workload.

95% of students think that high school did not adequately prepare them for college, and they had to do additional preparation on their own.

40% of students noticed changes in their grades due to the increased difficulty, while the remaining 60% did not experience any changes.

### Mental health:

The transition from high school to college negatively impacted the mental health of 75% of students, leading to increased stress and fatigue.

85% of students experienced stress due to the academic workload in college.

65% of students reported changes in their sleep patterns.

## Discussion

### Academic performance:

90% of students believe that studying in college is more difficult than in high school due to higher academic requirements, increased independence, heavier workload, a more complex system, and adaptation to a new environment.

70% of students struggle with time management and workload because of greater independence, increased academic pressure, a fast-paced learning process, and multiple courses being taken simultaneously.

95% of students think that high school did not adequately prepare them for college due to differences in teaching methods and a lack of essential academic skills.



40% of students believe their grades have changed due to the increased difficulty because of more challenging assignments and exams, as well as a new grading system.

Mental health:

85% of students experienced stress due to academic workload because of a greater number of assignments, high expectations, limited time for completing tasks, and pressure from grades and future career prospects.

65% of students reported changes in their sleep patterns due to stress, anxiety, and the challenge of balancing studies with work.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to help students adapt to the transition to college, improving their mental health and academic performance.

Recommendations for schools:

Schools can strengthen programs for senior students to better prepare them for college.

They can provide mental health counseling to help students adapt.

Schools can introduce lessons using various teaching methods to improve learning efficiency.

They can also focus on developing students' critical thinking skills.

Recommendations for colleges:

Colleges can offer academic and psychological support to help students manage stress and workload.

They can organize various adaptation programs to assist students in adjusting to new academic demands.

Recommendations for students:

Students can work on developing effective study habits.

They should focus on self-improvement and time management to handle their workload efficiently.

If they face any difficulties, they should not hesitate to \*\*seek support from professors, counselors, or academic advisors.

### Conclusion

The transition from school to college is a serious challenge for students, affecting their academic performance and mental health. Based on the obtained results, it can be said that studying in college is more difficult due to academic requirements, increased independence, and heavier workload.

Moreover, most students believe that school did not adequately prepare them for college, which causes significant difficulties in mastering new learning methods and grading systems. Many students also experience stress and mental health issues due to academic pressure. This stress often leads to sleep disturbances and fatigue, negatively impacting their well-being and academic performance.

Solving these problems will allow students to achieve academic success while maintaining their mental health.

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