Professional Self-Fulfilment of Adults in Wartime Conditions: The Role of Coaching, Psychological Prevention and Intervention

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ABSTRACT:

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has established systemic factors of psychological load that devastatingly impact the professional self-fulfilment of educators – one of the most vulnerable professional groups in the conditions of armed conflict. The objectives of the study are to investigate the measures of professional self-fulfilment, anxiety and stress among the Ukrainian educators, to determine the correlation between coaching experience and psychological support and the self-fulfilment level, and to prove a differentiated model of implementing coaching, psychological prevention, and psychological intervention. The research design utilized a mixed approach that included an empirical online survey of 30 educational professionals through the Professional Self-Fulfilment Questionnaire (2014) which was created by Kokun, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) and Perceived Stress Scale-10 (PSS-10) scale, as well as secondary analysis of nine international and national studies and reports. The findings revealed that 60.0 % of teachers experience moderate levels of self-fulfilment (M=33.97), 86.7 % experience moderate or high levels of stress and 50.0 % experience anxiety that is clinically significant. Negative correlations were found to be statistically significant between self-fulfilment and stress (rs=–0.44; p=0.015) and anxiety (rs=–0.38; p=0.037), with a positive relationship between support experience and self-fulfilment (rs=0.41; p=0.024). On the grounds of the results, the differentiated three-level support model is suggested – coaching, psychological prevention, and psychological intervention as the supplementary means of retaining and recovering the professional potential of educators in wartime conditions.

Keywords: professional self-fulfilment, coaching, adult personality, psychological prevention, psychological intervention.

1. Introduction

The teachers are one of the most numerous and psychologically overloaded professional groups in the adult population of Ukraine. They, unlike many other experts, are simultaneously burdened with their own psychology, and at the same time, they are left responsible in maintaining the continuity of the educational process, and in the face of destroyed familiar infrastructure, displaced students, and the future that remains deep in a fog of uncertainty. It is this dual role as a bearer of personal stress and a guarantor of stability in others that makes educators a representative and priority group in investigating professional self-fulfilment of the adult personality in a long-term armed conflict.

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has placed the education system in the face of unprecedented challenges: not only educators are forced to cope with their own psychological burden but also to guarantee the continuity of the educational process in the face of combat operations, an exodus of students, and constant uncertainty. Prolonged stress, displacement, deprivation of the conditions of familiar life, incessant doubts about the future have created a complex of factors that ruin the ability of people to fulfil themselves in the professional life. How adults can retain or lose the ability to engage in professional self-fulfilment in circumstances of a long-term armed conflict, and what tools of the human psyche can help in this case, is becoming an urgent scientific and practical question.

The fact that teachers are one of the largest professional groups of the adult population in Ukraine makes them particularly representative to analyze these processes: they simultaneously experience the personal psychological burden and bear institutional responsibility towards the continuity of the educational process under the conditions of the armed conflict.

The magnitude of the psychological effects of the war on the adult population in Ukraine has been registered in several representative studies. In September 2023, a study by Martsenkovskyi et al. (2024) of 2,050 adults revealed that 36.3% of the respondents met the criteria of at least one mental disorder with the most common being generalised anxiety (15.2%). In a sample of 2,364 individuals, Wang et al. (2024) found even higher rates: 44.2% displayed depressive disorder symptoms, 23.1% anxiety disorder, and 38.6% reported a considerable loneliness rate. The analysis of the psychological effects of the conflict on Ukrainian adults by Khan and Altalbe (2023), indicated that the post-COVID syndrome and war trauma, combined, form a qualitatively new and unstudied form of psychological burden. Such data reveal that most adults in Ukraine are operating at levels of clinically significant distress that directly limits their professional potential.

The teachers are one of the most vulnerable population groups, both with their own mental load and holding the responsibility of continuing the educational process under the conditions of combat operations, air raid warnings, and the mass exodus of students. Tsybuliak et al. (2023), who examined the dynamics of burnout in Ukrainian academic personnel at two time points July 2022 and January 2023, reported considerable changes in emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, with women being more vulnerable to war-related stressors. A study by Pavlyk (2025) revealed that 17.6% of Ukrainian educators have a low level of psychological health that directly impairs their professional self-fulfilment, with early-career professionals under 35 being the most vulnerable group. As shown by Cherepanov (2022), even mental health professionals themselves, who should help others, were affected and required assistance, which shows that there is a deeper lack of the entire system in the current support system of psychological assistance in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the scientific base of the role of specific psychological interventions in the maintenance and recovery of professional self-fulfilment under the conditions of wartime in adults is still not developed. Most of the available research is devoted to the diagnosis of the extent of psychological distress, and the issue concerning which of the existing forms of support coaching, psychological prevention or psychological intervention is effective to different groups of educators under the influence of the level of their self-fulfilment and psychological

state has been virtually uninvestigated. The obstacles that educators do not want to approach the professional assistance in wartime conditions, as well as the very forms of assistance that they want to receive, have also not been explored. The lack of a differentiated support model that is able to differentiate between preventive, corrective and developmental interventions based on the current psychological condition of an individual is a huge gap in scientific knowledge and practice.

It is these gaps that inform the objective of the current research: to determine the measure of professional self-fulfilment, anxiety, and stress among Ukrainian teachers during the full-scale invasion; to determine the correlation between experience of coaching and psychological support and level of self-fulfilment; and to determine the primary obstacles of seeking help and most desired formats of assistance – with the aim of supporting a differentiated model of coaching, psychological prevention, and psychological intervention application.

The proposed hypotheses of the study are as follows: (1) the level of professional self-fulfilment can be higher among teachers who have been coached or psychologically supported than among the teachers who have not been helped; (2) the anxiety levels and the perceived stress are negatively related to the level of professional self-fulfilment; (3) the majority of educators, despite an objective need for support, do not seek help due to psychological rather than resource-based barriers.

2. Literature Review

Professional Self-Fulfilment of Adults: Essence and Specificity under Crisis Conditions

One of the key constructs of the psychology of adulthood is the professional self-fulfilment that shows the ability of a person to realise their potential in the field of professional activity. Conceptualised by Kokun (2014) in terms of ten features divided into two types (internal professional (motivational-semantic sphere, goal-setting, satisfaction) and external professional (recognition, influence on others, creative contribution). It is the model that is especially productive when it comes to the analysis of self-fulfilment in the conditions of crises since it enables the distinction of a preserved internal resource and the limited conditions of its realisation outside. Adulthood, namely, that interval between 25–55 years old, is the most professionally active period in the life of a human being, at which point self-fulfilment is the main-life-meaning construct and at which its impediment by external factors becomes a direct threat to the psychological wellbeing of the individual. In times of a long military conflict, this relationship is particularly acute: the system of chronic stress, uncertainty, and the inability to control one's own life systematize the destruction of both types of self-fulfilment the inner and the outer preconditions of its implementation.

The subject of adult personality of professional self-fulfilment is characterised by certain psychological peculiarities which are the essential reasons of the essential deviation of this topic in comparison with the other age groups. Adulthood (25–55 years) is marked by a fully developed professional identity, conscious value system, and an established ability to reflect on the personal experience, which is why this group is both more resilient to situational stressors and more susceptible to chronic burden that endangers the semantic core of personality. In contrast to the young people, where crisis is an element of normative development, the adult is shattered by the loss of an already developed life project, the loss of accumulated status, the breaking of a career path, and the revaluation of the meaning of his own activity.

Erikson described this stage by the opposition of generativity, the desire to make a difference in their career and community, and stagnation, which follows in case of an obstacle to this desire. It is even because of this reason that armed conflict is, above all, destructive to the adult personality: it not only destroys the external conditions of self-fulfilment but also the inner belief that one can go ahead with his professional project. Simultaneously, adults have one potent tool that younger people cannot have: the experience of overcoming the past crises, worked out coping mechanisms, and the ability to find the sense in activity even in bad circumstances. The resource is what is the point of application of

coaching, psychological prevention and psychological intervention: these instruments do not produce a resource where none exist, but rather stimulate, maintain or recover the potential that already exists within the personality of the adult.

These propositions take another dimension in the context of adult education due to the andragogical approach. In contrast to pedagogy, andragogy is based on the assumption that the adult is a self-directed learning individual who relies on their own experience and is focused on the practice of knowledge. Coaching integrates organically into the andragogical paradigm: it does not teach the adult, but helps them actualise their resource and direct it towards the achievement of specific professional goals.

Coaching as a Tool for Activating Professional Potential

The body of psychological practice in coaching as a particular field has garnered a lot of evidence on its effectiveness in facilitating professional self-fulfilment. A meta-analysis of 37 randomised controlled trials (n=2,528) by de Haan and Nilsson (2023) was able to confirm the statistically significant effect of coaching on the leadership and personal indicators with an effect size of g=0.59. In the meta-analysis of 20 studies (n=957), Wang et al. (2022) have determined the most significant effect on psychologically informed coaching methods specifically on goal achievement (g=1.29) and self-efficacy (g=0.59) – the two constructs that are at the centre of professional self-fulfilment. In a study of IT professionals, Zelenin (2026b) discovered that engagement in coaching programmes has statistically significant positive effects on the indicators of professional self-fulfilment, and the effect remains even when the stress levels are high. A meta-review by Zelenin (2026a) quantitatively validated the effect of coaching on professional performance, achievement of goals, and emotional competence with an overall effect size of Hedges' g≈0.58, whereas Zelenin (2023) was the first to examine the use of coaching under armed conflict conditions in Ukraine and found it to lead to the development of leadership qualities and stress resilience in business. Together, these results provide evidence that coaching is an evidence-based instrument that can not only be used in professional development but also help to maintain the potential of a professional in the conditions of a systemic crisis.

Psychological Prevention: The Preventionist Vector of Support

Psychological prevention as a professional activity is taken to be a framework of responses that are designed to avert the onset of psychological disorders, safeguard mental health and hold on to the functional resources of an individual, before they are in a state of clinical significance. In a systematic review and meta-analysis of psychological prevention programmes in workers with increased risk of psychotrauma, Di Nota et al. (2021) affirmed the effectiveness of these in alleviating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (further – PTSD) symptoms and enhancing psychological wellbeing. In a systematic review of resilience-based workplace interventions in the public sector, Hollaar et al. (2025) reported that training employees on stress management and developing psychological resilience is consistently associated with increased engagement and decreased burnout. In 101 randomised controlled trials with 20,010 participants, the analysis by Schaefer et al. (2024) proved that digital preventive interventions have a large positive impact on distress levels (Standardized Mean Difference (further – SMD)= – 0.24) and resilience (SMD=0.27), and therefore they are especially promising in circumstances when access to in-person services is limited due to war. In the case of the educational setting, psychological prevention, in particular, is particularly applicable since burnout progresses and that it takes a long time before it is identified, which proves the need to take institutional-level preventive actions systematically.

Psychological Intervention: The Restorative Vector of Support

Targeted psychological intervention as a means of psychological prevention to restore impaired functions and restore individuals to productive functioning gains certain importance in a situation of prolonged armed conflict, when a significant

percentage of specialists are already in the state of clinically significant burnout or maladaptation. Pinchuk et al. (2022) reported the acute condition of the mental health professionals in Ukraine at the very beginning of the invasion, which means that the corrective measures are necessary immediately. The development and pilot testing of an online psychological intervention programme to Ukrainian medical workers in the war environment demonstrated that this method is valid and effective even during active military conflicts (Rusanov et al., 2025).

A fundamental difference should be made between psychological intervention and psychotherapy within the pedagogical context: the former is not oriented towards curing disorders but rather at restoring the degree of functioning that was in existence before the crisis state, namely restoring motivation to professional activity, ability to set goals and the perception of personal effectiveness. This is the reason why psychological intervention is a requisite condition in further coaching: in the absence of the restoration of the primary resource, there is no way in which developmental and activation instruments can be successfully employed.

As it is shown in the literature review, coaching, psychological prevention, and psychological intervention are not conflicting but complementary methods, which make up a single line of personal support. Prevention is a primary protection level, which protects the resource before it is used up. The resource is recovered through intervention after loss (partial or significant). Coaching mobilizes and focuses the resource that has undergone restoration or preservation to particular professional objectives and self-fulfilment. Although this triad seems rather logical, there are practically no scientific studies in the literature that test the effectiveness of all three approaches combined in a single support programme of the educational staff. Specifically, the issue of what rate of intervention (at what level) is needed by the number of educators, and what differentiation criteria are the most justified in wartime conditions, has not been resolved. The main idea of the given research is to fill this gap.

3. Materials and Methods

To achieve the aim of the study, a mixed design was employed, combining empirical, psychodiagnostic, and statistical methods of primary data collection and processing with secondary analysis of published research and reports.

Teachers were chosen as the empirical group as they represent one of the largest and most psychologically vulnerable professional groups of the adult population in wartime Ukraine, and are therefore a representative sample to study professional self-fulfilment under chronic stress conditions.

The empirical foundation of the research was 30 educational workers of general secondary and higher education institutions in Ukraine. The data were gathered in 2026 using an online survey in Google Forms, shared using pedagogical communities in the Telegram and Facebook social media. Table 1A (Appendix A) provides a detailed demographic picture of the sample. Inclusion criteria included the following: age: 25–55 years, teaching experience of 1 year, active professional activity on the territory of Ukraine or internally displaced persons (further – IDP) status since February 2022. The exclusion criteria were: no teaching activity during the survey period, living abroad (except the IDPs in Ukraine), and failure to fill in the questionnaire. It was a non-random purposive sample. The study is pilot in nature. The small purposive sample (n=30) is a limitation and has to be confirmed on a large representative sample in subsequent studies. The research was done in line with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Informed consent was given by all participants to participate. The questionnaire was anonymous. The collection of data was made solely scientific.

An original questionnaire designed by the authors (Appendix B), having four blocks and 39 items, was used as the primary data collection tool. The choice of the instruments was motivated by the necessity to discuss the three most important study constructs in a thorough way: the degree of professional self-fulfilment, psychological state of

the participants, and their experience working with the coach and psychological support.

Block 1 includes demographic questions (5 items). Block 2 The Questionnaire of Professional Self-Fulfilment by Kokun (2014) is a shorter version that includes a single indicator of each of the 10 characteristics of professional self-fulfilment, rated on a Likert scale (1–5), with total score 10–50. This measure was chosen because it is the only Ukrainian-language validated measure of professional self-fulfilment that has internal consistency confirmed (.902). Block 3 contains two internationally-validated scales: Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (further – GAD-7) (Spitzer et al., 2006) to measure the level of anxiety and Perceived Stress Scale-10 (further – PSS-10) (Cohen et al., 1983; Cohen & Williamson, 1988) to measure perceived stress, which have been extensively used in studies. Block 4 is an original block of 7 items that were created based on the conceptual frameworks of Zelenin (2023, 2026a; 2026b), and they include items on help-seeking experience, format of support received, barriers to seeking help (multiple choice), Likert-scale statements on the subjective effectiveness of the support, and one open-ended item. The findings of the surveys are given in Tables 1–6 of the main text. The operationalisation of psychological prevention and psychological intervention is not measured as independent variables in the study but differs into conceptual categories according to the differentiation of the target groups based on the obtained quantitative indicators.

This secondary analysis of nine open-access studies and reports was performed to put the findings into perspective and compare them with the trends on the national level: Cherepanov (2022), European Business Association (2023), Lushchak et al. (2023), Martsenkovskyi et al. (2024), OECD (2024), Powell et al. (2025), Prytulyk and Hirchenko (2024), Schäfer et al. (2024), and Wang et al. (2024). These sources will offer representative quantitative information on mental health, burnout, and psychological support needs in Ukrainian educators and the adult population in general, allowing evaluating to what extent the results of the current survey are representative of national trends.

The data were processed with the help of the descriptive statistics, such as means (further – M) and standard deviations (further – SD) to scale variables, frequency distributions, and percentage shares to categorical variables. Spearman rank correlation coefficient (further – rs) was used to test associations between the level of professional self-fulfilment and experience of psychological support, between self-fulfilment and anxiety and stress indicators, with a critical level of significance of $p < 0.05$. The content analysis and thematic categorisation were used to analyse responses to the open-ended item (item 39). The computer analysis was done in Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 27.

4. Results

Block 1. Results of the Empirical Survey of Educational Professionals

To empirically research the professional self-fulfilment of the adult personality, as a broad and psychologically overloaded section of the working adult population of Ukraine, educational professionals were used as the target population.

Data regarding primary data were collected via online survey (30 educational professionals, Ukrainian educational institutions, Table 1A, Appendix A). Results analysis was made on four dimensions including the level of professional self-fulfilment, level of anxiety, the perceived stress level, and experience of coaching and psychological support.

Table 1 provides results according to the Kokun (2014) scale. The average overall score was 33.97 (SD=7.84) which represented a moderate degree of professional self-fulfilment (range 26 to 37 points). The largest average scores were achieved in such items as striving to improve (M=3.87), usefulness of experience to others (M=3.73), which means that educators retained inner motivation to engage in professional activity even during wartime conditions. Meanwhile, the lowest scores were received in relation to the realisation of own potential (M=3.07; SD=1.14) and the satisfaction with achievements (M=3.10; SD=1.12), which indicates significant limitations in the external environment to full professional self-fulfilment. The level distribution showed that, only 23.3% (7

persons) of the respondents exhibit high degree of self-fulfilment, 60.0% (18 persons) moderate and 16.7% low. Accordingly, most teachers are not fulfilling their professional potential to the maximum, which is a typical feature of acting in the situation of chronic stresses and uncertainty.

Table 1. Level of professional self-fulfilment among educational professionals (n = 30)

No.	Indicator	M	SD
1	Striving for improvement in the profession	3.87	0.94
2	Having a professional development plan	3.13	1.07
3	Satisfaction with achievements	3.10	1.12
4	Setting new professional goals	3.53	0.97
5	Sense of organic connection between work and life	3.40	1.04
6	Attainment of professional goals	3.27	1.01
7	Recognition by colleagues and peers	3.60	0.93
8	Usefulness of experience for others	3.73	0.91
9	Realisation of one's own potential	3.07	1.14
10	Creativity in professional activity	3.33	1.09
–	**Total score**	**33.97**	**7.84**

Source: compiled by the authors based on the survey using the Kokun (2014) questionnaire

Tables 2 and Tables 3 respectively give the results according to the GAD-7 and PSS-10 scales. The average GAD-7 score was 9.73 (SD=3.86), which is the boundary of mild and moderate anxiety. Of concern is the finding that 50.0% of respondents (15 persons) exhibit moderate or intense anxiety, and only 20.0% (6 persons) are less symptomatic. These data suggest that most educators are operating within the framework of clinically significant anxiety load that has a direct impact on their ability to engage in professional self-fulfilment.

Table 2. Anxiety levels based on the GAD-7 scale (n=30)

Anxiety level	Score range	n	%
Minimal	0–4	6	20.0
Mild	5–9	9	30.0
Moderate	10–14	11	36.7
Severe	15–21	4	13.3
Total	–	30	100
M (sd)	–	9.73 (3.86)	

Source: compiled by the authors based on the survey using the GAD-7 scale (Spitzer et al., 2006)

The average level of perceived stress of 20.47 (SD=5.91) matched the PSS-10 score. It is important to note that 86.7% of the participants (26 persons) are experiencing moderate or high levels of stress and only 13.3% (4 persons) indicate low levels of stress. This distribution confirms that chronic stress is a near-universal phenomenon among educational professionals under the full-scale invasion and constitutes a systemic factor inhibiting professional self-fulfilment.

Table 3. Perceived stress levels based on the PSS-10 scale (n=30)

Stress level	Score range	n	%
Low	0–13	4	13.3
Moderate	14–26	19	63.4
High	27–40	7	23.3
Total	–	30	100
M (sd)	–	20.47 (5.91)	

Source: compiled by the authors based on the survey using the PSS-10 scale (Cohen et al., 1983)

The original questionnaire block (item 33–39) results are shown in Tables 4 and Tables 5. Only 43.4% of the respondents (13 persons) had any experience of consulting a psychological support or a coach, and 56.6% (17 persons) never addressed any specialist, as it is demonstrated in Table 4. The person session format dominates in those who did seek support (61.5%) which may be indicative of the ease of access and acceptability of the person session format by educators.

Table 4. Experience of seeking psychological support and coaching (n=30)

Response	n	%
Yes, a coach	3	10.0
Yes, a psychologist	8	26.7
Yes, both	2	6.7
No, never sought help	17	56.6
Total	–	100

Source: compiled by the authors based on survey results

Barrier analysis to seeking support (Table 5) found that the most common barrier is the belief that "I can manage on my own" (46.7%), which could be indicative of resilience to personal stress and the continued stigmatisation of psychological help-seeking in Ukrainian society. The second most prevalent obstacle is time shortage (36.7%), a direct result of the workload on educators that had gone up during the war. The third factor (30.0%), is the financial factor.

Table 5. Barriers to seeking psychological support (n=30, multiple choice)

Barrier	n	%
Feeling of "I can manage on my own"	14	46.7
Lack of time	11	36.7
Absence of financial resources	9	30.0
Distrust of specialists	7	23.3
Stigmatisation / social judgement	6	20.0
Lack of information about available services	5	16.7
No barriers – already seeking help	4	13.3

Source: compiled by the authors based on survey results

The subjective evaluation of the effectiveness of the support revealed that the greatest mean score was received on the statement "I feel the need to have regular systematic psychological support" (M=3.87; SD=0.97) where the explicit need of educators to receive regular professional help was given. In terms of preferred types of support (item 39), the content analysis of the answers indicates that individual online sessions with a psychologist (30%) and group stress resilience training (23%) are the most requested types of support, whereas 20% of respondents choose coaching to develop professionally and set goals.

Table 6 shows the results of the Spearman correlation analysis. It was statistically determined that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between experience of psychological support and the level of professional self-fulfilment (r_s=0.41; p=0.024): teachers who had received support with a coach or psychologist had a higher score on self-fulfilment. Negative relationships were also found to be statistically significant between self-fulfilment and anxiety level (r_s=–0.38; p=0.037) and perceived stress (r_s= –0.44; p=0.015), which supported the hypothesis that high levels of psychological distress are a great limiting factor to professional self-fulfilment among educators in wartime.

Table 6. Correlations between self-fulfilment level, support experience, anxiety, and stress (Spearman's rs, n=30)

Variable pair	rs	p
Self-fulfilment – support experience (yes/no)	0.41	0.024
Self-fulfilment – GAD-7 (anxiety)	−0.38	0.037
Self-fulfilment – PSS-10 (stress)	−0.44	0.015

Source: compiled by the authors based on statistical analysis results

Therefore, the findings of Block 1 substantiate the fact that most Ukrainian teachers are operating in the environment of moderate or high psychological load that has a statistically significant negative impact on the decrease in the degree of professional self-fulfilment. Meanwhile, coaching or psychological support experience is positively related to self-fulfilment scores, which supports the usefulness of systemic psychological support and coaching programmes in the educational setting.

Block 2. Findings of Secondary Data Analysis

In order to put the empirical results into perspective and compare these results with the national trends, the secondary analysis of nine open-access articles and reports was performed, which are divided into three thematic directions: mental health of adults and educators in wartime conditions; burnout among educational staff; and differentiation of psychological intervention forms.

Table 7 shows national-level data that demonstrates the extent of psychological burden among adults of Ukraine. According to Martsenkovskyi et al. (2024), 36.3% of adults in Ukraine have met the criteria of at least one mental disorder. According to Wang et al. (2024), 44.2% and 23.1% exhibited depressive disorder and anxiety disorder, respectively. In March 2022, Lushchak et al. (2023) reported that anxiety affected 54% of Ukrainians, and depression affected 47% of the population, with indicators being critical the first year of the invasion. Our sample of GAD-7 (M=9.73) and the conclusion that half of the respondents are moderate or severely anxious are absolutely consistent with these national trends and show that the psychological burden on teachers does not differ significantly in comparison with the general adult population and at the same time, they are under increased professional pressure.

Table 7. Mental health indicators among Ukrainian adults under wartime conditions

Source	Sample	Indicator	Value
Martsenkovskyi et al. (2024)	2,050 adults	At least one mental disorder	36.3%
Martsenkovskyi et al. (2024)	2,050 adults	Generalised anxiety (GAD)	15.2%
Wang et al. (2024)	2,364 adults	Signs of depressive disorder	44.2%
Wang et al. (2024)	2,364 adults	Signs of anxiety disorder	23.1%
Lushchak et al. (2023)	Nationwide	Anxiety (march 2022)	54.0%
Lushchak et al. (2023)	Nationwide	Depression (march 2022)	47.0%
Present survey	30 educators	GAD-7 m (sd)	9.73 (3.86)
Present survey	30 educators	Moderate / severe anxiety	50.0%

Source: compiled by the authors based on Martsenkovskyi et al. (2024), Wang et al. (2024), Lushchak et al. (2023), and present survey results

Table 8 summarises data that confirms burnout is systemic among Ukrainian educators. Prytulyk and Hirchenko (2024) developed that 54% exhibit indicators of professional burnout. Powell et al. (2025) documented that 33% of them are highly stressed and 36% exhibit symptoms of burnout. It has an additional structural layer, according to the OECD (2024) report, about 80% of Ukrainian teachers note that their working load has increased since 2022, and the average wage in education (UAH 14,593) is much lower than the national average (UAH 21,473). These results are directly related to our data: the lowest self-fulfilment scores were achieved on the parameters of realisation of potential (M=3.07) and on the parameters of satisfaction with achievements (M=3.10) − exactly the parameters most vulnerable to external structural constraints. In terms of demand to support, Cherepanov (2022) recorded a desperate increase in the level of help-seeking after the invasion, whereas the European Business Association (2023) found that 49% of Ukrainian companies assisted employees with psychological aid after the invasion − compared with just 43.4% of educators in our sample who had ever sought help. In a systematic review of 101 Randomized Controlled Trials (further – RCTs) (20,010 respondents), Schafer et al. (2024) found positive effects of digital interventions on both distress (SMD= –0.24) and resilience (SMD=0.27), which directly confirm the online formats most welcomed by our respondents.

Table 8. Burnout and psychological health indicators among Ukrainian educational staff

Source	Sample	Indicator	Value
Prytulyk and Hirchenko (2024)	Nationwide (gradus research)	Signs of professional burnout	54.0%
Powell et al. (2025)	Ukrainian educators	High stress level	33.0%
Powell et al. (2025)	Ukrainian educators	Burnout symptoms	36.0%
OECD (2024)	Ukrainian educators	Increased workload since 2022	~80.0%
OECD (2024)	Ukrainian educators	Average salary in education (2024)	UAH 14,593
Present survey	30 educators	PSS-10 m (sd)	20.47 (5.91)
Present survey	30 educators	Moderate / high stress	86.7%

Source: compiled by the authors based on Prytulyk and Hirchenko (2024), Powell et al. (2025), OECD (2024), and present survey results

Both psychological prevention and psychological intervention can be operationalised using specific respondent groups, which is the result of the combined analysis of survey and secondary data shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Differentiation of target groups for psychological prevention and intervention among educators (n=30)

Criterion	Psychological prevention	Psychological intervention
Target group	Educators with moderate stress, no support experience	Educators with low self-fulfilment and clinical anxiety
Number in sample	17 persons (56.6%)	5 persons (16.7%)
PSS-10 (characteristic level)	Moderate (14–26 points)	High (27–40 points)
GAD-7 (characteristic level)	Mild–moderate (5–14 points)	Moderate–severe (10–21 points)
Self-fulfilment level	Moderate (26–37 points)	Low (10–25 points)
Intervention goal	Resource preservation, burnout prevention	Resource restoration, return to functioning

Recommended format	Group training, online programmes, coaching	Individual psychological work, therapy

Source: compiled by the authors based on present survey results

The most significant population 56.6% (17 persons) is that of educators who have never requested assistance regardless of moderate or high levels of stress, which would be the most important group of people to focus on in prevention. Prytulyk and Hirchenko (2024) verified that most educators who experienced burnout had no preventive programmes and Powell et al. (2025) showed that even temporary online prevention programmes are effective to decrease stress and increase wellbeing in educators when the conflict situation occurs. The patient group which needs psychological intervention as 16.7% (5 persons) demonstrated low self-fulfilment, GAD-7≥10, and PSS-10≥27 could not recover without specific external intervention, which Maruta et al. (2024) confirmed, as none of the psychiatrists who experienced full burnout recovered spontaneously. Portnytska et al. (2025) also determined that teachers who have the lowest wellbeing are often between the youngest (under 35) and the oldest (over 50) age groups, which is also in line with our results that 20.0% of the sample were in the 25–34 age bracket.

On the foundation of these results, a three-tiered support model is suggested: coaching among teachers whose self-fulfilment and stress levels are moderate (60.0%); psychological prevention in the form of groups and online (56.6%); and individual psychological intervention among those teachers whose self-fulfilment and stress are low (16.7%). It is the model that complies with the principle of a stepped-care that is acknowledged in evidence-based psychology and that offers the tangible practical framework to educational managers and creators of professional development programmes.

5. Discussion

The findings of the present research – done on a sample of teachers as a representative sample of the adult population under wartime conditions – allow making three main scientific claims that reveal the effectiveness of coaching, psychological prevention, and psychological intervention in helping to support the professional self-fulfilment.

Claim 1. Statistically significant predictors of increased professional self-fulfilment among educators even in chronic stress conditions are coaching and psychological support.

The key result of the study is the positive correlation between the experience of being psychologically supported or coached and the level of professional self-fulfilment among teachers (r_s=0.41; p=0.024). Those teachers that had turned to professional assistance had higher self-fulfilment scores although the general background of moderate and high stress (PSS-10 M=20.47) was characteristic of the vast majority of the sample (86.7%). Coaching and psychological support thus not only fulfil a therapeutic role, but also an activation role – they do not eliminate stress as such, but increase the ability of the individual to self-realise in the presence of the stress.

This finding is consistent with international evidence on the effectiveness of psychological interventions. In a systematic review of 101 randomised controlled trials, Schafer et al. (2024) confirmed a significant positive effect of support programmes on resilience and reduction of distress. Powell et al. (2025) showed how online interventions can be effective even in the face of unusual conditions of extreme armed conflict. As a goal-setting, resource activation, and self-efficacy development tool, coaching is able to sustain the vector of professional self-fulfilment even in the highly unfavourable conditions. It is in this sense that psychological prevention fulfils an anticipatory function: to prevent the exhaustion of the individual psychological resource before it falls below a clinically significant level; and to restore the resource by psychological intervention once it has dropped below a clinically significant level.

Claim 2. The main obstacle to getting assistance is not lack of resources but psychological orientation to self-sufficiency – that demands specific preventive efforts.

Although most participants (86.7%) exhibited moderate or high levels of stress and 50.0% of participants showed signs of clinically significant

levels of anxiety, the majority of educators (56.6%) had never undergone psychological support or coaching. The most common obstacle was actually not the absence of financial resources (30.0%) nor lack of information (16.7%), but the belief that "I can manage by myself" (46.7%). This is a very crucially important discovery that changes the line of reasoning in support programme design.

In a national study of the self-help-seeking behaviour in Ukrainian adults, Lushchak et al. (2026) demonstrated that personal stigma and cultural predispositions towards being self-sufficient are the most prominent barriers even in individuals with pronounced symptomatology. The similar pattern was reported by Maruta et al. (2024): even among psychiatrists, 69.2% of whom indicated evidence of burnout, there were low rates of seeking personal support. This implies that the problem is systemic and not individual.

Psychological prevention in the educational environment therefore does not require the establishment of new services but a change in attitudes towards help-seeking as a manifestation of weakness through institutional mechanisms: the integration of coaching and psychological sessions into professional development plans, the organization of group support formats at the institutional level, and awareness work with the leaders of schools and universities regarding the significance of the psychological wellbeing of the school staff.

Claim 3. Teachers are making clear a need to have certain forms of support and they are offering a direct foundation by which educational programmes are to be designed.

The content analysis of the answers to the open-ended question (item 39) revealed that educators do not only acknowledge that they need support (M=3.87 to the corresponding statement) but also have definite preferences regarding the forms: individual online consultations with a psychologist (30.0%), group stress resilience training (23.3%), and coaching as the professional development and goal-setting (20.0%).

Although Prytulyk and Hirchenko (2024) have reported that 54% of Ukrainian teachers exhibit signs of burnout and need support, the issue of formats of preference has been rarely mentioned in the previous studies. The given study fills this gap and gives educational managers and programme developers a tangible reference point: educators prefer to stay flexible and have access to online formats which do not necessitate any further displacement in case of wartime conditions. Portnytska et al. (2025) established that support programmes which are incorporated into the learning setting have a high degree of engagement by the participants in contrast to those who use external services.

Notably, professional development coaching was chosen by 20.0% of the respondents despite only 10.0% having any previous experience with a coach-indicating latent demand: educators have an intuitive sense of the need to have a goal setting and resource activation tool but lack access to it. This observation is the direct one that contributes to the revision of the methodological work system of the educational institution, including the inclusion of coaching programmes in the educational process.

The overall results of the findings confirm the fact that coaching, psychological prevention and psychological intervention are complementary and differentiated tools of assisting the professional self-fulfilment of teachers in the circumstances of the war. Lushchak et al. (2023) proved that the psychological condition of Ukrainians does not normalise on its own, without external intervention, and therefore, a strategy of waiting until the natural recovery will take place is ineffective. The three-level support model differentiated and proved in this study can serve as a response to this challenge and provide a convenient channel in which systematic work with educational workers is possible in the conditions of the prolonged armed conflict.

6. Conclusions

The research proved all of the three hypotheses that were developed at the beginning. The analysis under consideration was professional self-fulfilment of the adult personality on the sample of educators – a professional group that reflect the systematic problems of the working adult population of

Ukraine in full-scale invasion. The following gives the particular findings of the empirical studies that form the basis of the differentiated support model.

To begin with, the level of professional self-fulfilment among Ukrainian educators under the full-scale invasion is the most moderate (60.0% of the sample, M=33.97; SD=7.84), with the lowest scores being observed to realisation of potential (M=3.07) and satisfaction with achievements (M=3.10), which suggests a systemic blockage of the external conditions of self-fulfilment despite preserved internal motivation. This trend is a manifestation of the structural constraints of war time too much work, the lack of material security and general uncertainty not the loss of professional motivation.

Second, statistically significant negative relationships were developed between the level of self-fulfilment and indicators of anxiety (r_s= –0.38; p=0.037) and perceived stress (r_s= –0.44; p=0.015) which confirms that the chronic psychological distress is the primary factor limiting the process of professional self-fulfilment among educators under war conditions. These results highlight the interdependence of mental health and occupational performance in the adult personality.

Third, statistically significant positive relationship was found between experience of coaching or psychological support and the level of professional self-fulfilment (r_s=0.41; p=0.024), which confirms the effectiveness of these interventions as the means of activating professional potential even in the stressful conditions. Notably, this correlation was found throughout the entire spectrum of stress levels that were present in the sample, indicating that support is advantageous at both ends of the stress levels continuum observed in the sample.

Fourth, although there was an objective need of support (86.7% has reported moderate or high stress), 56.6% of the educators had never sought professional assistance. The main obstacle is a psychological attitude towards self-reliance (46.7%) as opposed to lack of resources, requiring a specific work to normalise the help-seeking behaviour in school.

Fifth, an empirically based differentiated three level support model is suggested: coaching of teachers who have moderate level of self-fulfilment (60.0%); psychological prevention in group and online formats of teachers who have not yet sought assistance (56.6%); and, individual psychological intervention of the teachers with low self-fulfilment and clinically significant distress (16.7%). This model symbolizes the initial input of the research and can be used as a basis to design support programmes to educational staff during a long-term armed conflict.

The results can be applied by the leaders of educational institutions, methodological services, and education departments in designing psychological support programmes to be used by teaching staff, integrated into the professional development system. One of the limitations of the study is the small purposive sample of the study (n=30), which does not allow generalisation to the larger population. The findings should be confirmed in future studies on a representative sample of at least 150–200 teachers in the various regions of Ukraine.

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