

VOLUME 1



# KAZGUU LIBERAL ARTS DIGEST

JUNE 2021



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# KAZGUU LIBERAL ARTS DIGEST

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Information about the journal



**"K L A D" IS A STUDENT JOURNAL FIRST PUBLISHED AT M. NARIKBAYEV KAZGUU UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS. THIS JOURNAL IS AIMED AT ENHANCING STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT INTO SCIENCE AND RESEARCH.**

**"K L A D" JOURNAL ADMITS FOR PUBLICATION VARIOUS TYPES OF ARTICLES: ORIGINAL RESEARCH, REVIEW ARTICLES, SHORT REPORTS OR ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS, CASE STUDIES, METHODOLOGIES AND CASES IN ENGLISH; CONTAINING THE RESULTS OF FUNDAMENTAL AND APPLIED RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF PHILOSOPHY AND IDENTITY, HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN, PEDAGOGY, LINGUISTICS AND METHODS OF TEACHING LANGUAGES, TRANSLATION, AND TOURISM.**

JUNE 2021

M. NARIKBAYEV KAZGUU UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

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# Research Articles

KAZGUU Liberal Arts Digest

June 2021

M. NARIKBAYEV KAZGUU UNIVERSITY

**“THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC-RELATED STRESS ON STUDENTS”***Dilyara Temirbulatova, Tomiris Lee, Bayan Rymkhan***Chapter 1. Introduction****1.1 Introduction**

Entering university is one of the most important events in a person's life. As the students enter the university, new obligations are imposed on them. However, due to high academic workload and high expectations, the emergence of stress is inevitable. The possible factors that increase the level of stress are family problems, difficulties in personal life, financial problems, or violation and bullying. Moreover, the intensity of the development of stress depends not only on the external factors but on the personality of each student as well. Low-stressed students cope better with behavior and emotions, compared to students with higher rates of stress. However, no one can remove stress from their lives since it is an integral part of everyone's life. As a result, excessive stress leads to a serious impact on a person's well-being, both mental and physical. The multiple stresses experienced by students can negatively affect learning outcomes and lead to terrible consequences, such as depression, unemployment, substance use, personal destruction, and suicide. Some of these effects may be short-term, and the student can avoid this by coping with the stress in time, however, some may notably affect their future.

**1.2 Background information**

The following chapters will present evidence that stress has a profound effect on the overall students' health and performance. Rana (2019) illustrates that university stress affects students in different ways: physically, mentally, socially, and academically. Hard study workload is sufficient for the occurrence of academic stress, which includes increased anxiety, sleep disorders, increase in blood pressure, and other health problems. Academic-related stress is a significant issue that should not be overlooked.

**1.3 Purpose of the study and research question**

The purpose of this study is to discover the impact of academic-related stress on undergraduate students. This study aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring the impact of stress related to education and academics on different aspects of students' life. This allows us to better understand the mechanism of stress, its sources, and effects, and how to deal with it. This paper is aimed to address the following research questions:

1. How does academic-related stress affect students' mental well-being?
2. What are the effects of stress on physical health?
3. How can academic achievement be influenced by stress?

**Chapter 2. Literature review****The Impact of Academic-Related Stress on Mental health**

There is a growing concern that students are prone to suffer from mental illnesses as a result of academic pressure. According to the World Health Organization, every fifth of adolescents in the world suffer from mental health disorders (WHO, n.d.). Conventional wisdom has it that stress can be considered as a stimulus for achieving goals. While it is true that experiencing minor stress might be beneficial as it results in an outstanding performance, it does not necessarily follow that feeling constant pressure is always advantageous (Rana, 2019).

Educational underachievement, hard academic workload, and failure at examination can contribute to mental problems such as depression, anxiety, and in the worst-case suicide (Sun, 2012, p.15). A bright example of mental health problems in the case of Amelia, a 17-year-old student, who suffers from depression and anxiety caused by academic-related stress. Taking an exam is always a stressful situation for Amelia as she feels cramps in her hands, and increased heart rate. Unfortunately, dealing with constant panic attacks makes her dependent on medications, such as Adderall. Amelia reports that day without taking drugs makes her stressed and anxious (CPR News, 2019). The case reported here illustrates that students' preference toward using drugs, alcohol, or smoking can be considered as the methods to deal with the hard workload and release tension. Indeed, it is highly likely that stressed students are more prone to have low levels of self-esteem and practice unhealthy habits (Hudd et al., 2000). Ultimately, mental health issues can follow students into adulthood which might result in further mental deterioration, unemployment, and dissatisfaction with their personality.

### **The Impact of Academic-Related Stress on Physical health**

Academic-related stress has an adverse impact not only on the psychological state but on students' physical health as well. As the World Health Organization states, "there are interrelationships between depression and physical health. For example, cardiovascular disease can lead to depression and vice versa" (WHO, 2020). Experiencing stress for an extended period may lead to the development of chronic illnesses since a weakened immune system is more susceptible to colds and diseases. Consequently, physical symptoms manifest in fatigue, muscle tremors, vision difficulties, and headaches (Rana, 2019). Moreover, stress among students can be correlated with an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and poor sleep schedule. The relationship between educational stress and eating habits has been widely investigated by Hudd et al. (2000), who found that highly stressed students prefer convenience food over healthy one. Poor nutrition has an adverse effect on the gastrointestinal tract since stressed students are likely to be malnourished or overeat (Hudd et al., 2000). Problems related to digestive symptoms result in diabetes, nausea, or diarrhea. In the further investigation into physical health problems, Hudd et al. show that most students with higher levels of stress are less likely to be engaged in physical activities (2000). It is noteworthy that physical inactivity may lead to increased insulin rate and obesity. Therefore, long-term stress may lead to a poor sleep schedule. The main side effects of sleep disorder are exhaustion, low concentration, poor academic achievement, and communication problems. Pascoe et al. (2020) emphasized that most students in the USA experience an insufficient amount of sleep due to a hard study workload. Taking sleep pills, drinking, and smoking are the main students' methods to cope with sleep disorders (Pascoe et al., 2020). The essence of the problem is that physical health disorders caused by academic-related stress negatively impact body functioning, and, hence, lead to serious chronic diseases.

### **The Impact of Academic-Related Stress on Academic achievement and Dropout**

The combination of physical and mental health has a significant effect on poor academic performance and dropout level. Indeed, it is highly likely that prolonged and intense stress may lead to burnout, reduced productivity, which negatively affects students' outcomes. Leijden (n.d.) has shed new light on the relationship between stress and academic achievement. He observed that students in a highly stressed educational environment find it difficult to cope with their academic expectations. As a result of students' perfectionism in getting high grades the level of stress increases. Moreover, high competition, lack of sleep, and hard study workload may have an important contribution in losing motivation to study. According to the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), the rate of students drop-out from university due to mental health problems increased up to 210% in the years 2014 and 2015 (Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), 2017). This leads to the point that students are not able to endure academic pressure and, consequently, drop out of the university. Pascoe et al. (2020) found that there is a significant difference in overall health conditions between dropped out students and individuals with higher education. Students who dropped out from the university due to academic stress report that they have poor psychological health compared to graduated ones. Thus, students' low academic

achievements and increased dropout level are one of the consequences of academic-related stress, which may result in further health deterioration of overall health, low earning capacity, and unemployment.

### **Chapter 3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Instrument**

This survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire from university students in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. Twenty-two freshmen, 16 females, 5 males, and one who preferred not to answer, participated in this study. The mean age of the participants was 18 years old. The participants were sent a link to take a survey, and they were warned beforehand that the questionnaire was made anonymously. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary. However, because the applied methodology is in the form of a survey, it is difficult to capture the effects of stress caused by education through experience.

#### **3.2 Findings**

The survey was conducted among first-year KAZGUU University students. The purpose of this study was to discover the impact of academic-related stress on undergraduate students.

Firstly, students were asked to evaluate the level of stress on a 10-point scale during the academic year. In response to this question, the majority of those surveyed indicated that they feel stressed during studying. Around 22% of the respondents rated their stress at the point of 8 and 6 respectively. Only two students experience minor stress during the academic year (1 and 3 points, respectively). On the contrary, 4 students out of 22 experience higher rates of anxiety while studying.

When asked about how often do you feel stressed, half of the public responded that they rarely feel pressure. However, roughly 45% of students commented that they are often stressed. Only one student reported feeling pressure all the time.

Moving on to the next question, it was found that the main and common causes of stress among students are deadlines and procrastination (63.6% respectively). In second place were poor time-management (around 60%) and heavy academic workload (50%). Students are least concerned about communication problems with peers (4.5%) and professors (9%).

Students during the academic period indicated an effect of stress on their mental condition. Primarily, it manifests in increased irritability and aggression (almost 73%) and feeling of guilt and self-dissatisfaction (just over 68%). Therefore, students revealed that they feel depression and low self-esteem as consequences of stress (31% and 27% respectively). Fortunately, struggling with a study did not cause suicidal thoughts among the respondents.

Therefore, the survey indicated the impact of stress on physical health. The majority of those surveyed noticed excessive sleepiness (just over 77%), and increased fatigue (roughly 73%), and low concentration (59%). The next significant issues were related to headaches, insomnia, and problems with the gastrointestinal tract (45% each). Moreover, some students complain about heartache and dizziness (around 27% each).

On the whole, a significant number of students can cope with academic workload (around 90%), whereas only 9% of freshmen faced some difficulties.

To the question "how do you deal with stress?", 77% of respondents indicated that they go to sleep. Moreover, 72% of respondents chose either eating or meeting with family and friends. Only a third of all respondents are enrolled in physical activities. In contrast, some students cope with stress by drinking and smoking (around 4.5% and 23% respectively). Just 2 of those questioned have a session with a psychologist.

The main way to overcome stress among students is to take a rest (77%) and to reconsider the situation (45%). About a third of the respondents seek support from relatives and friends. The least of them start to panic or use drugs and alcohol (13 and 9% respectively).

In the pre-examination period, most students usually experience academic stress (roughly 77%), compared with those who stay calm before exams (just under 23%).

When the students were questioned about the influence of stress on the emergence of bad habits, over 68% of those surveyed answered positively. Bad habits might be considered as alcohol intake, smoking, or overeating and inactivity. Meanwhile, approximately 27% did not notice an appearance of those habits. One student preferred not to answer.

In conclusion, it is clear that stress has a significant impact on students' mental and physical health. Unfortunately, there is a high possibility of the emergence of bad habits among students. Most freshmen feel under the pressure for a continuous period of time, which is associated with academic achievement.

#### **Chapter 4. Conclusion**

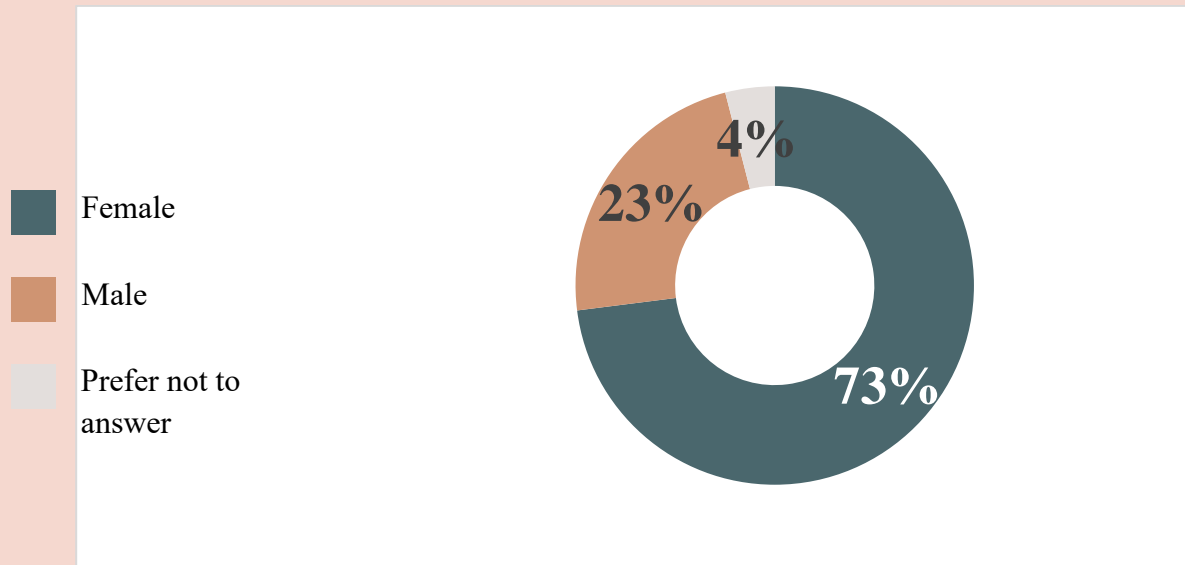
To conclude, stress is an integral part of every student's life. The main goal of the current study is to determine the significant impact of experiencing academic-related stress among students. The most obvious finding from this study is that the majority of students experience stress and struggle with its consequences, such as high alcohol consumption, smoking, and eating disorders. Nonetheless, the methods of dealing with stress among students are individual. Since academic-related stress has a detrimental impact on students physical and mental health, it should be mentored by parents and teachers.

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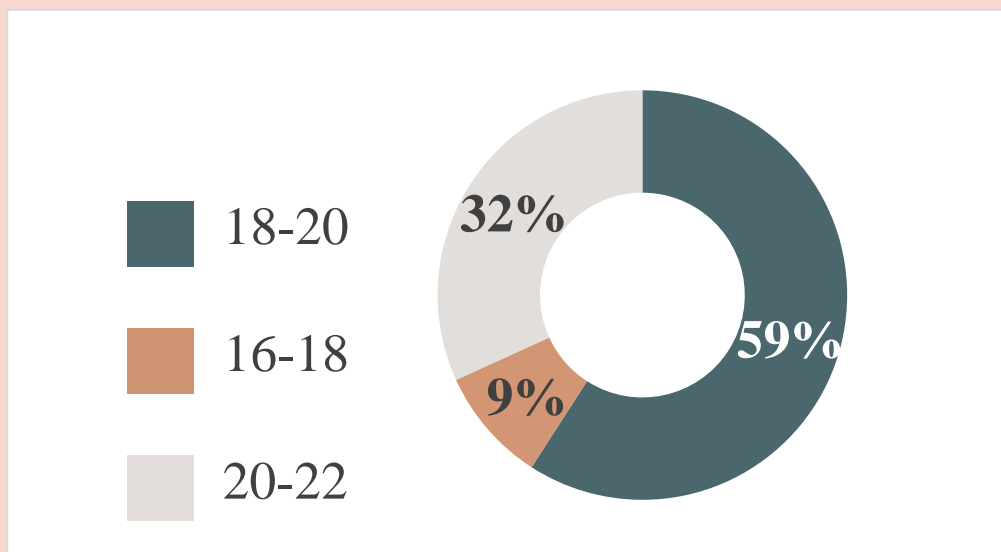
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## Appendices

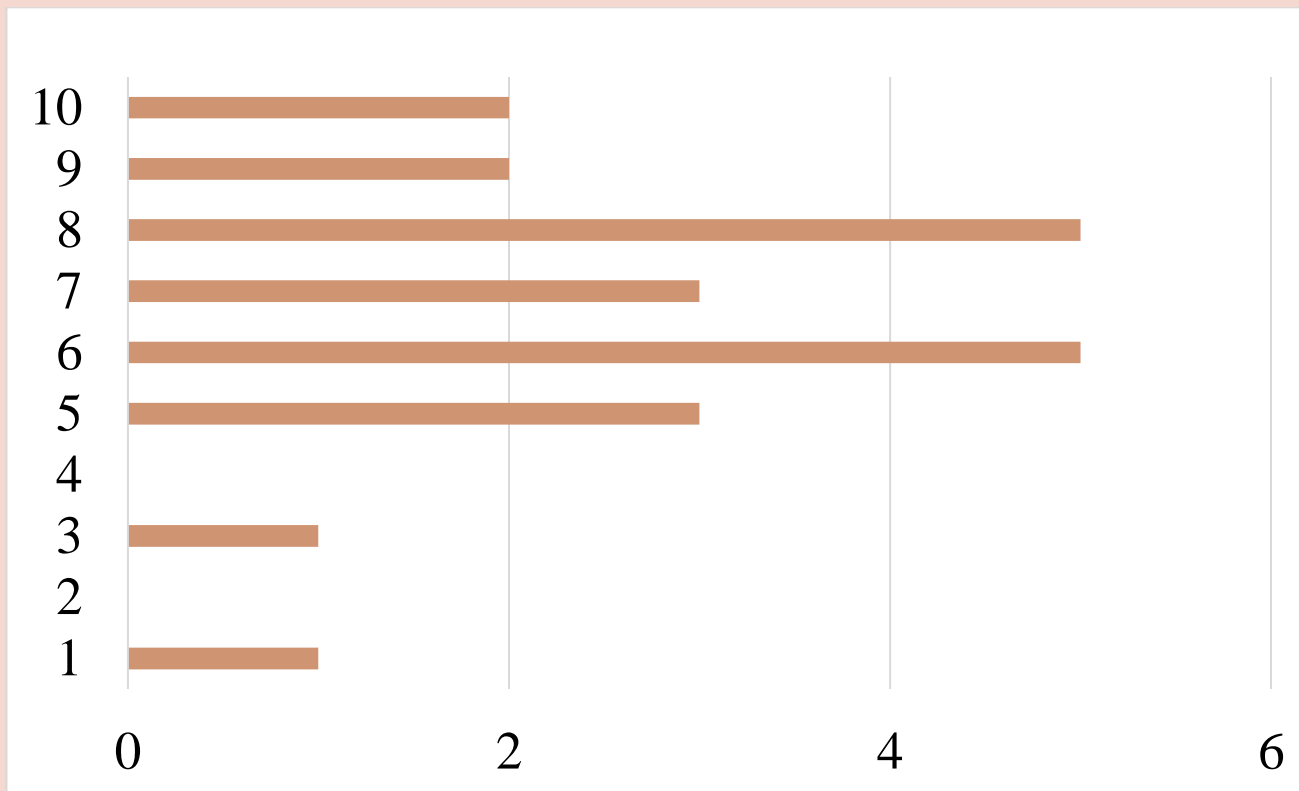
### Appendix №1. Sex



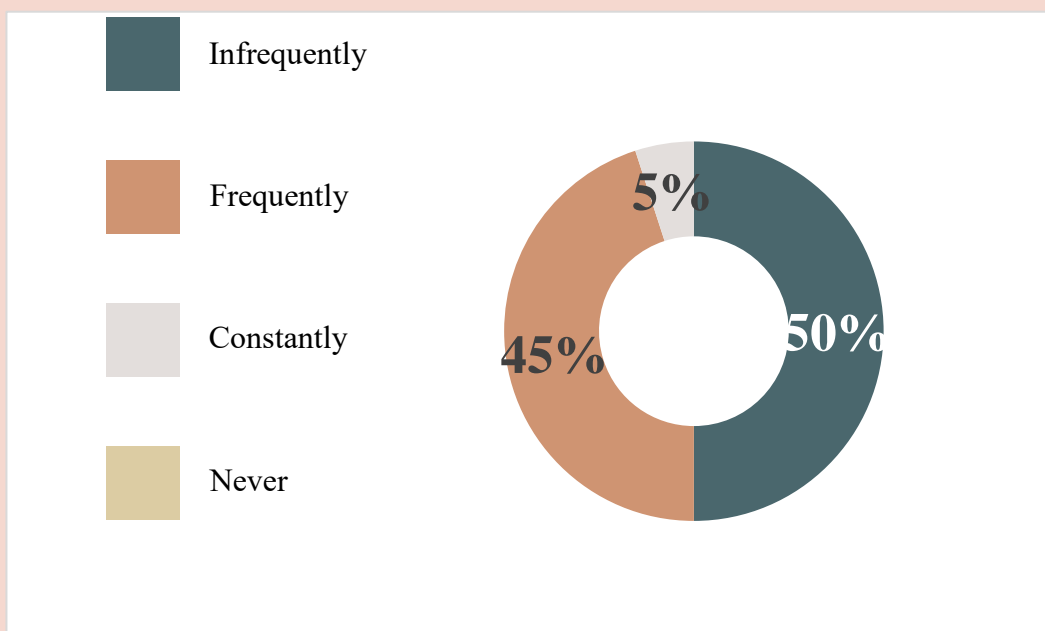
### Appendix №2. Age



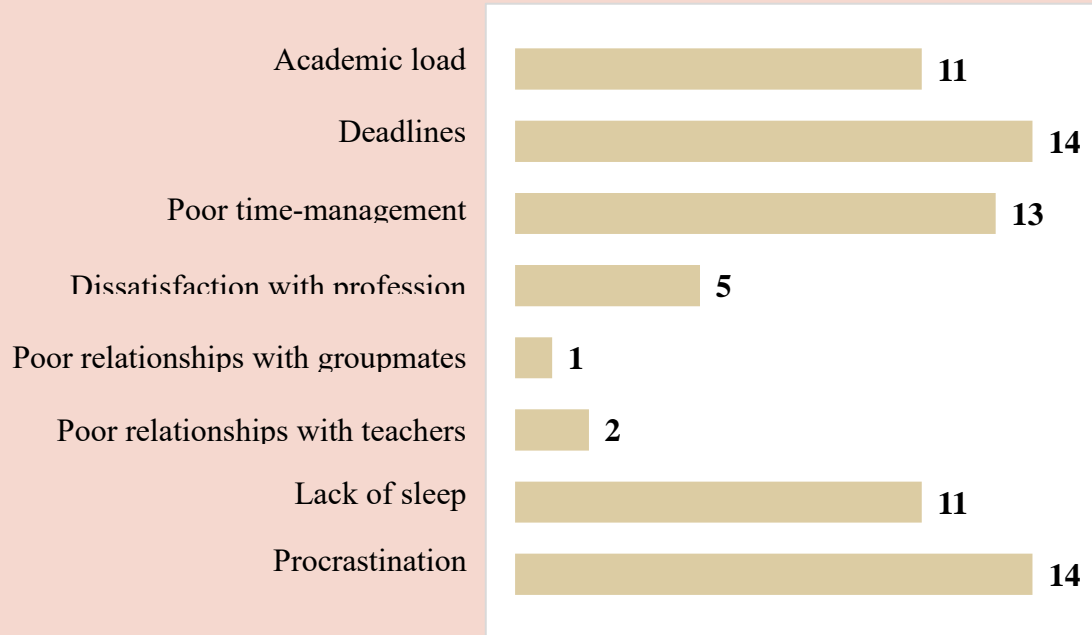
### Appendix №3. The level of stress



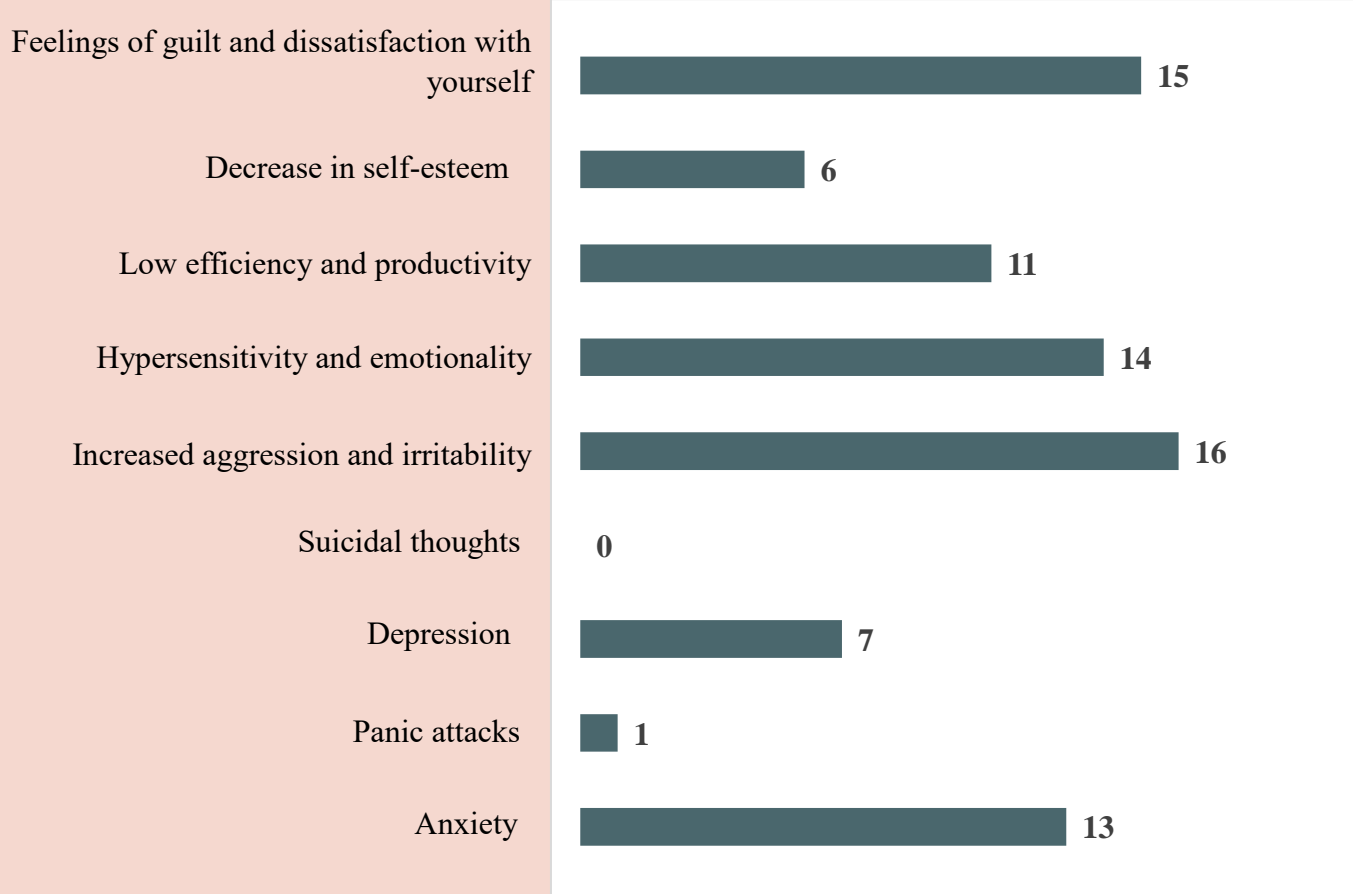
### Appendix №4. The frequency of experiencing stress



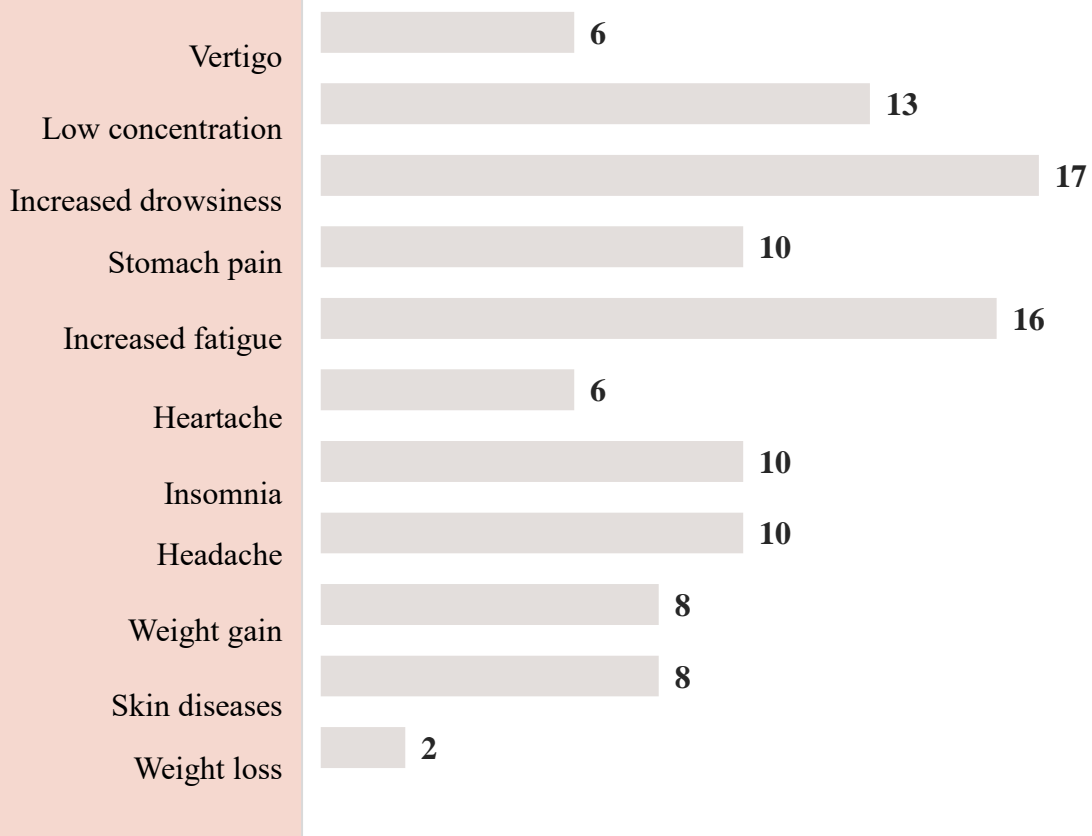
## Appendix №5. The main causes of stress



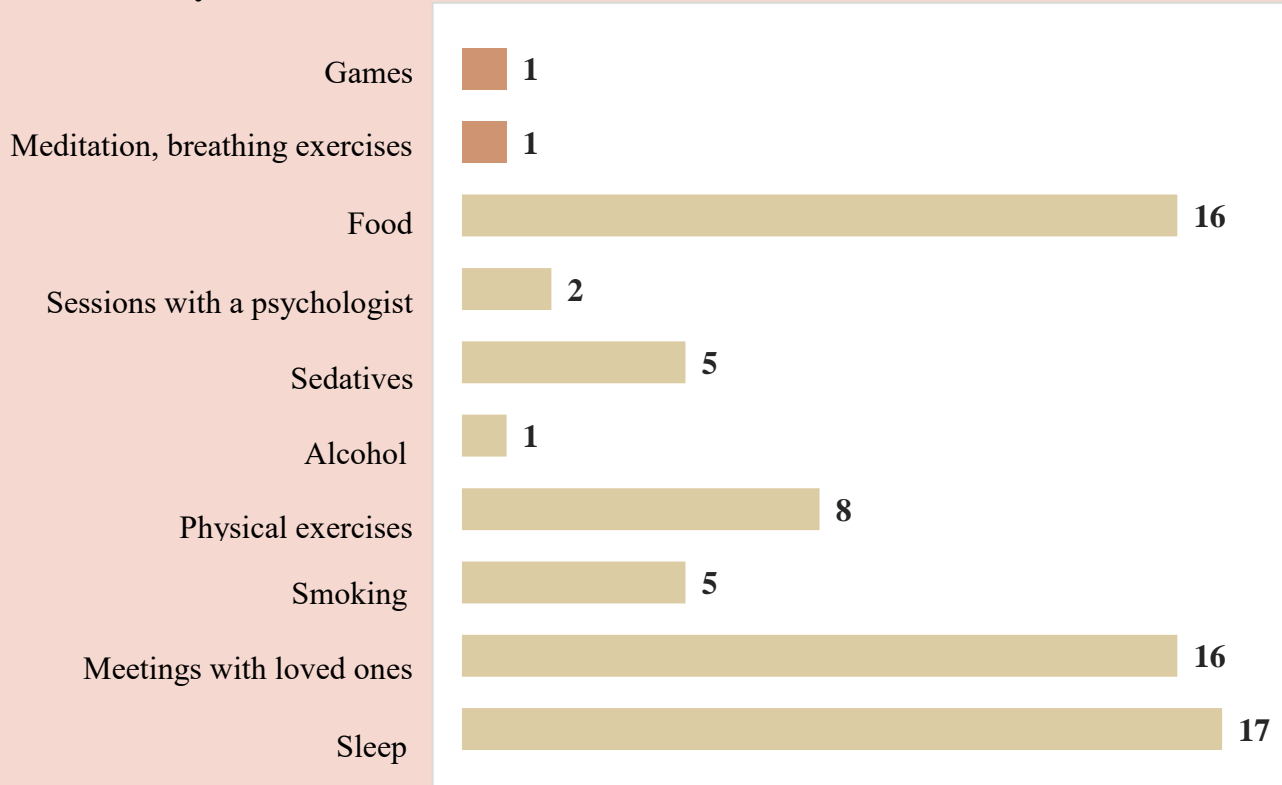
## Appendix №6. The effects of stress on mental health



## Appendix №7. The effects of stress on physical health



## Appendix №8. The ways to handle stress



**Appendix №9. The behavior during a stress****Appendix №10. The impact of stress on the emergence of bad habits**