

# A study on Stress among University Students, Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** *This cross sectional study was conducted with the purpose to find out the causes of stress among university students. This study was carried out in Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh during the period of November 2017 to January 2018. Convenience sampling technique was adapted for the selection of respondents for data collection. A quantitative method was used in gathering and analyzing the data. For this purpose, structured questionnaires were distributed to the students of Jahangirnagar University.*

*The results obtained show the different factors that cause stress among the students of Jahangirnagar University. According to 86% of 200 respondents, future worry was the most effective factor causing stress. 70.5% respondents thought examination tension as a major cause of stress. According to 61% respondents, working with news people also was a source of stress. 61% respondents said that, lots of group work caused stress among them. Relationship conflict was admitted as a major source of stress by 59.5% respondents. 55.5% respondents felt stressed due to financial crisis and also for failure in combining job with study. Misunderstanding class lectures, bad living condition, lower academic grade were also major causes of stress among respondents. This study also identified the level of stress among the respondents. It revealed that, among 200 respondents, 61.5% were moderately stressed, 18.5% were stressed with low level and 20% respondents had high level of stress.*

**Keywords:** Stress, Young Adult

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The very mention of the word 'stress' brings thoughts such as increased rate of depression, anxiety, cardiovascular disease, and other potentially life-threatening issues to one's mind. Oftentimes, a student rushes from one end of campus to the other, trying to make their next class on time. Since classes are scheduled back-to-back, there is less or no time to even eat. Take, for instance, it is three o'clock and a student is extremely hungry. This week, they have got three mid-semester examinations to study for, and a backlog of 300 pages to read. They are meeting with a study group tonight to finish studies on a rushed research presentation. Too bad they have also got three other assignments due tomorrow, so it looks like they will not be getting much sleep tonight.

The fact is indisputable that, having the above introductory paragraph as a schedule, in reality, will certainly make a student be tensed up. Yet, those are the hectic routines we experience as students these days. We feel lost, overwhelmed, frozen, or unable to cope when confronted with so many tasks. Busy schedules crammed with studies, study, and extracurricular activities can take a toll on student's physical and mental health, especially if one is not eating or sleeping properly. If untreated, these stressors can compound over time, leading to even greater levels of stress. It is also worth noting that stress is an inevitable part of student-life; as it takes a toll on most students' physical health, emotional wellbeing, and academic performance. The rise of this pandemic in students is on account of factors such as the somewhat sudden change in lifestyle, increased study load, new responsibilities among others. A publication

on stress by the University of New York [Retrieved March 14, 2016] buttresses the notion that, extreme levels of stress can hinder studies effectiveness and lead to poor academic performance and attrition. It goes on to affirm that, students who experienced stressful life events also reported worse health outcomes and reduced quality of life. Even as we delve into the core of the subject matter, ample attention needs to be accorded the proposal that, introducing successful coping strategies may help students to avoid the destructive consequences of excessive stress.

Stress is the process by which an individual or a person reacts when opened to external or internal problems and challenges. "the organism processes numerous systems to coordinate such adaptive responses both at systematic and cellular levels "by this, stress has direct effect on the brain and the whole anatomy of the body as such failure to adapt to a stressful condition can result in brain malfunction, physiological problem and also many areas of psychological challenge's in the form of depression, anxiety, pain and burnout.

Physiologically, stress-related diseases in the form reproduction, cardiovascular, metabolism and gastrointestinal diseases are determined by great areas of genetic and developmental factors which are different from a person to a person but also symptoms of this disease may be similar sometimes among individuals (Hellhammer&Hellhammer 2008. vii).

According to (Wheeler 2007,2), stress is physics word which refers to the amount of force used on an object and it relates in real life as to how certain issues that carry force applied to

human life. Examples financial difficulties, health challenge issues, conflicts with friends, all carry force or pressure on person's body -mind and spirit. Some of the pressure or force originates from the environment but most often comes from within a person's head in the form of worry, anxiousness, regret, discouragement and low confidence.

Stress is explained by (Pargman 2006, 5) as "An uncertain reaction to external and internal factors" that means a negative or positive reaction to environmental stimuli. In this regard; it is how the totality of your body relates to changes and unfamiliar situations that present it in the course of time. During such a period, vital organs such as sexual organs, heart rate, blood pressure, stroke volume, respiratory rate in the body react speedily. Many hormonal responses are at peak.

Students will always see something wrong with what their fellow mates will do because they are in a situation whereby their critical annalistic instinct and drive are fully not functions as they are supposed to. They do not have the zeal or interest to look at what their mate has done and give critical analysis. All these social effects, in the long run, give bad names and status to students who exhibit this behavior which will have an adverse effect on their academic life.

Also, stress causes the increase of alcohol, drugs and tobacco use among students. Some student has the habit of taking alcohol, drugs and smoking tobacco when they feel under pressure to calm them down. Stress worsen this because it increases the intake of whatever thing the student use and at the long run causes health implications for them. Some might even contact severe diseases which may be incurable. Lastly, stress causes fatigue in students. When students are stressed up, they are always tired because the use the energy they have in just thinking about whatever issue that's making them stressed. When this happens they have no energy left in them for academic purposes or to even do other this for them self. Being fatigue can make students mess up a whole lot of things which are supposed to help them in life.

By-products of stress hormones can act as sedatives (chemical substances which cause us to become calm or fatigued). When such hormone by-products occur in large amounts (which will happen under conditions of chronic stress), they may contribute to a sustained feeling of low energy or depression. Habitual patterns of thought which influence appraisal and increase the likelihood that a person will experience stress as negative (such as low self-efficacy, or a conviction that you are incapable of managing stress) can also increase the likelihood that a person will become depressed.

Some students with stress may show some outwards signs of anxiety fidgeting, biting their fingernails, and tapping their feet. In other people, chronic activation of stress hormones can contribute to severe feelings of anxiety examples are, racing heartbeat, nausea, sweaty palms feelings of helplessness and a sense of impending doom. These feelings make the student vulnerable to anxiety feelings. A Student who are stressed up also get discourage easily, this is

because they have a lot on their head and always have the feelings that whatever they will do will not go on well or has planned and due to this give up in the middle of whatever project they are doing. They also then to always make excuses for mistakes they do instead of taking responsibilities.

Mood swings is another common effect of stress on students. Students are unable to have a particular mood for a long period of time. Although mood changes are common for every student but the rate at which it changes is very fast with students who are stressed up and depressed. This mood swing makes it difficult for others students to even communicate or help them out. This frequent changing of moods ruins the days of student and makes them not to be able to concentrate.

## 2. METHODS

### Population of the study

The population was the students of Jahangirnagar University, Savar, and Dhaka, Bangladesh also to have balance gender equality both male and female was considered in this study.

### Sample size

Convenient sampling technique was used. Sample size was 201. Data were collected from 200 students among them 100 were male respondents and 101 were female.

### Study area

Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka.

### Research design

It was a cross sectional descriptive study.

### Data collection method

Questionnaire with structured questions was used to take interview of the respondents. The data collectors took face to face interview and respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire by themselves in the presence of data collectors. The questionnaire had two parts. Perceived Scale of Stress (PSS) was used to measure the level of stress among the respondents. It comprised the first part of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire was formed to collect information about the causes of stress among the respondent. This part of the questionnaire contained 31 structured questions.

### Data analysis

Microsoft Excel was used for data analysis.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to this study, worry about future was the most important cause of stress among the university student. We found that, 86% students felt stressed due to future worries. This stress becomes higher day by day.

Tension during examination was to be the second major cause of stress among university students. This is a common factor we know. Examinations are the process of assessing a

student's performance. It is the most important part of student life. During examination, students feel pressure on them. According to this study, 70.5% students said they felt stressed due to exam tension.

Working with new people also comprised major causes of stress among university students. It becomes tough for a new student to cope with the new environment and people of a university. It also becomes tough for a student who has just finished his campus life and enters into professional life. This study shows that, 62% students felt stressed during working with new people. Lots of group work was another major cause of stress among the university students according to this study. 61% of 201 students said they feel stressed when they have to complete lot of group work related to their academic study. A lot of group works created pressure on them, because they had fixed time limits to complete them.

Another major cause of stress among university students was trouble with boyfriend or girlfriend. It is now a common thing to have relationship in university level. According to the response of these students, most of relations often have troubles. It becomes a major cause of stress, depression among them. 59.5% students said that the often face trouble in their relationship. It hampers their daily life and also their academic performance.

Lower academic grade often becomes a great reason to be stressed for the university students. After examination, students are given result grade according to their performance. This result remains for the life time of a student to categorize his level. If a student obtains lower grade, he or she becomes worried about their ability to get apply for a job. According to this study, 57.5% students felt stressed due to their lower academic grade.

Financial crisis was a major concern to the stress among university students. Most of the students of public university come from middle class or lower middle class families. As a result, many of them have financial crisis. Financial crisis becomes a cause of stress among them. According to this study, 55.5% students said that, they feel stressed due to have financial crisis. To alleviate financial crisis, many students have part time job or work as a private tutor. Among the 201 respondents of this study, 36 respondents had part time job. Among these 36 respondents, 86% felt stressed while adjusting job with study. This was because they could not get enough time to study before examination or they became tired after returning from work place.

Having lack of computer knowledge was also an important cause of stress according to this study. 49% respondents said they feel stressed due to having no or a little knowledge about computer. At present, computer has become an integral part of daily life. We also see the massive use of computer technology in our classroom or in other academic sectors. When a student does not have enough knowledge about computer, he feels stressed while coping up with academic life.

Some students feel stressed due to misunderstanding class lectures. According to this study, 38.5% respondents said that they felt stressed because they did not understand clearly what their teacher says in their lectures. So it was also an important cause of stress among university students.

Stress due to overweight or underweight was also a major cause of stress among university students. This was high in female students. According to this study, 37.5% students felt stress about their body weight. Poor living condition also a cause of stress among university students. Specially, the first year students have to live in a bad condition in hall. The rooms are often over crowded, noisy and unhealthy. According to this study, 17.5% respondents felt stressed due to bad living condition.

Journey to campus sometimes becomes a cause of stress among the students who live away from campus. Often, they stuck in traffic jam hour and hour, become tired. They feel stressed about whether they could attend their classes in time or not. 10.5% respondent said that they felt stressed during journey to their campus from their residence.

9.5% respondents said that they felt stressed due to conflict among their parents.

This study was also conducted for assessing the level of stress among university students. According to this study, we found 61.5% respondent with moderate stress. The percentage of students having low stress was 18.5% and 20% students had low level of stress.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Stress has harmful effect on university students. It hampers both academic and personal life of a student. Not only mental but also physical status of university students is intensively affected by stress. Putting effective measures in place is pertinent to their academic success and general life. I hope this research will help to understand the main causes of their stress from different aspect and take initiative by concerned people to help them to find the way of alleviating stress and to enjoy an excellent academic career.

#### 5. DECLARATIONS

*Funding: None*

*Conflict of interest: None declared*

*Ethical approval: taken from Ethical approval committee of Jahangirnagar University.*

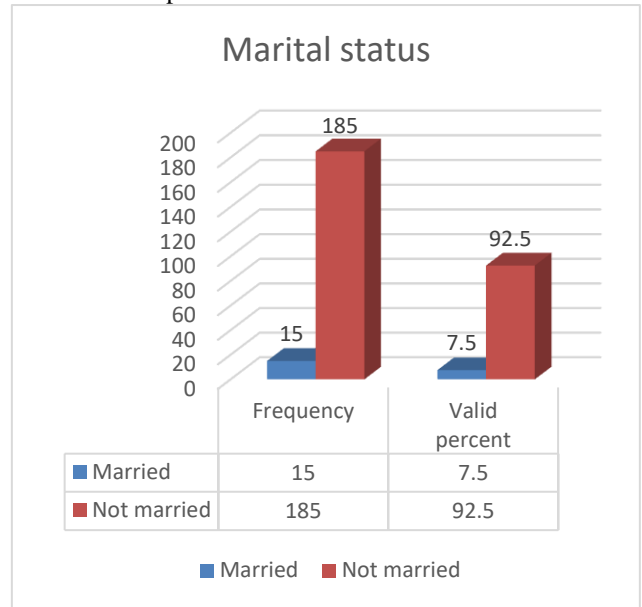
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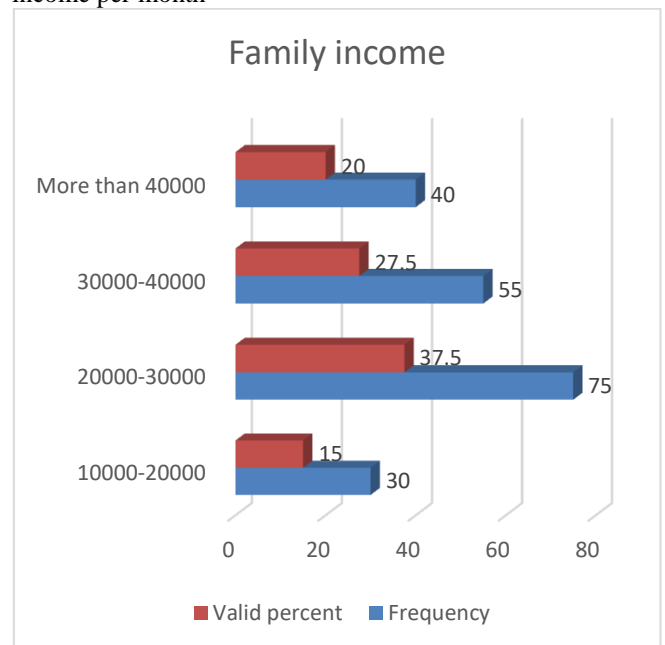
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Figure 1: Distribution of the respondents by their marital status of the respondents



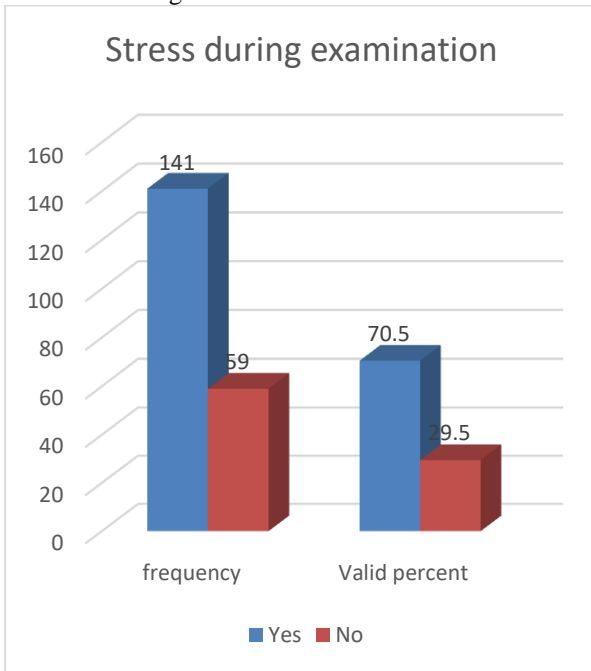
This bar diagram shows the marital status of the respondents where 15 were married occupying 7.5% and 185 were unmarried with a percentage of 92.5.

Figure 2: Distribution of the respondents by their total family income per month



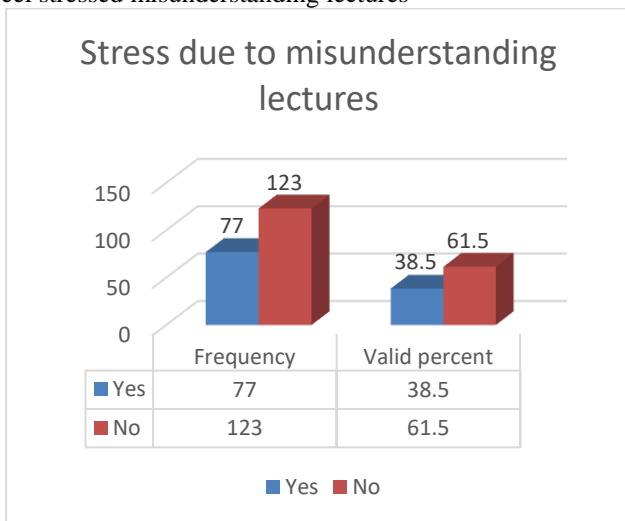
This bar diagram shows the family income distribution of respondents. Among 200 respondents, 30 respondents had 10000-20000 taka per month family income which occupied 15% , 75 respondents (37.5%) were in the range from 2000-30000 taka per month, 55 respondents (27.5) were in range 30000-40000 taka per month and more than 40000 taka was of 40 respondents (20%) family income.

Figure 3: Distribution of the respondents by whether they feel stressed during examination



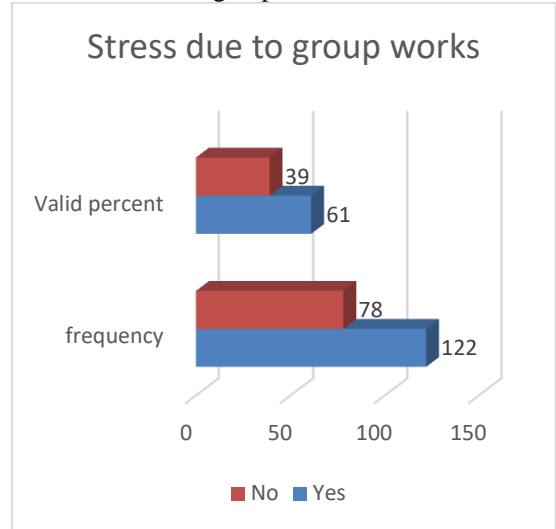
This bar diagram shows the respondents status of stress during examination where 141 (70.5%) respondents felt stressed during examination, 59 (29.5%) did not feel stressed.

Figure 4: Distribution of the respondents by whether they feel stressed misunderstanding lectures



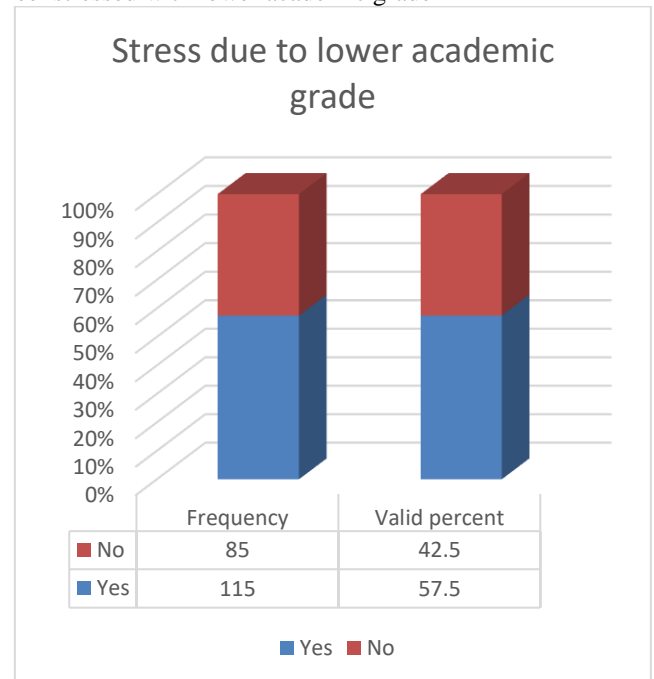
This bar diagram shows whether the respondent feel stress due to misunderstanding class lectures where 77 (38.5%) answered yes and rest 123 (61.5) answered no.

Figure 5: Distribution of the respondents by whether they feel stressed with lot of group work



This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to lots of group works where 122 (61%) respondents said that they felt stressed with lots of group works, 78 (39%) respondents answered they did not feel stressed with lots of group works.

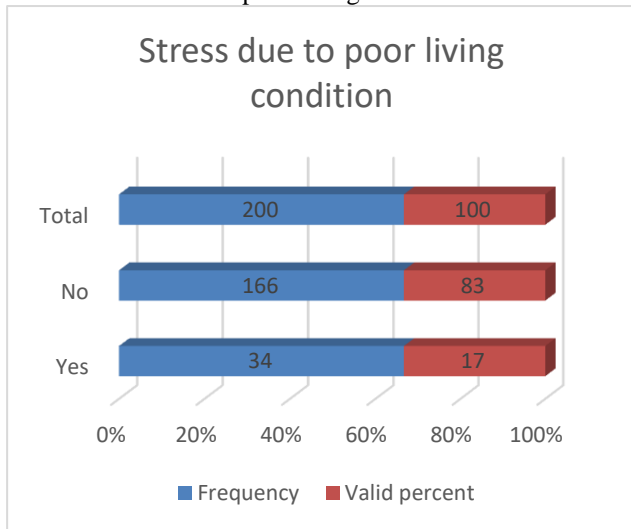
Figure 6: Distribution of the respondents by whether they feel stressed with lower academic grade



This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due lower academic grade where 115 (57.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed. On the other hand, 85 (42.5%) respondents

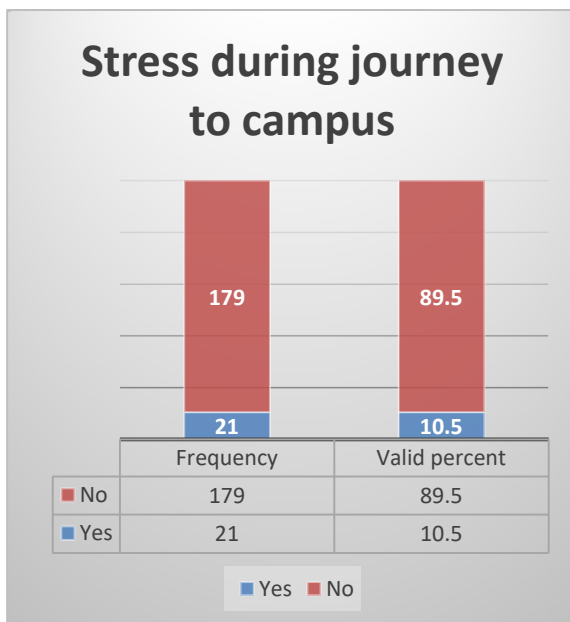
answered they did not feel stress due to their lower academic grade.

Figure 7: Distribution of the respondents by whether they feel stressed with their poor living condition



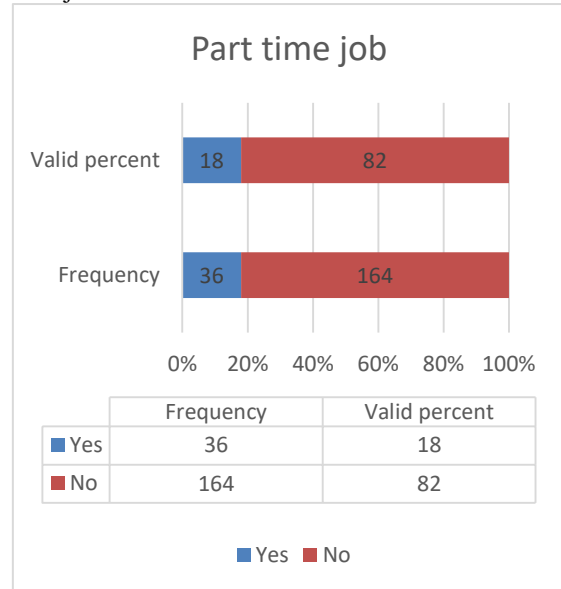
This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to poor living condition where 34 (17.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 166 (83%) respondents answered they did not feel stress due to bad living condition.

Figure 8: Distribution of the respondents by whether they feel stressed with their journey to campus



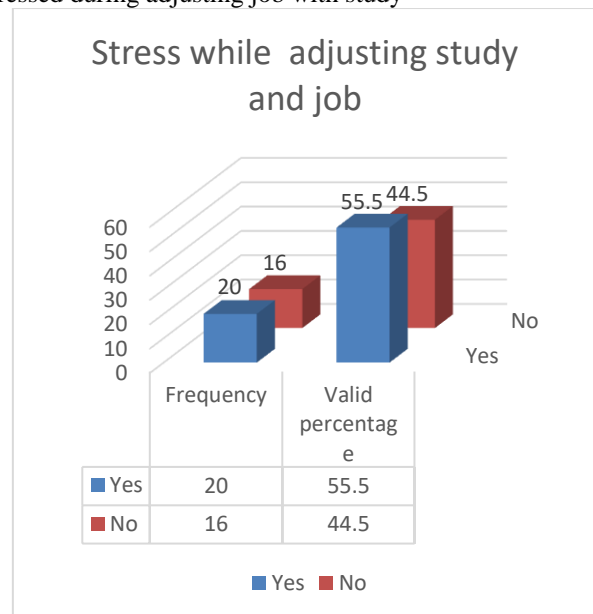
This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents during journey to campus where 21 (10.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 179 (89.5%) respondents answered they did not feel stress during journey to campus.

Figure 9: Distribution of the respondents whether they have part time job



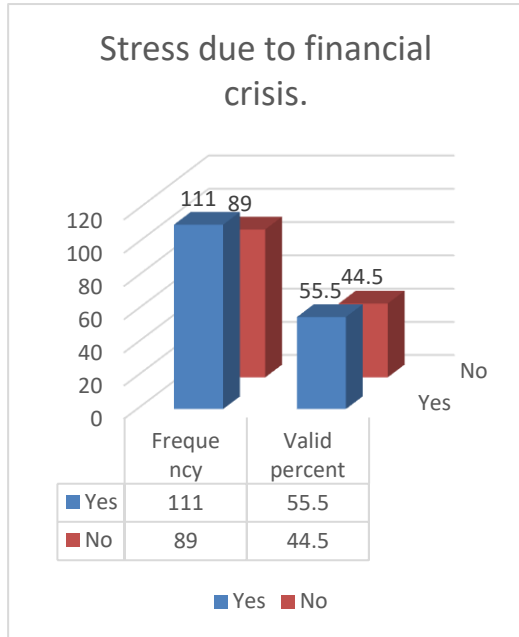
This diagram shows whether the respondents have part time job or not where 36 (18%) had part time job and 164 (82%) did not have any part time job.

Figure 10: Distribution of the respondents whether they feel stressed during adjusting job with study



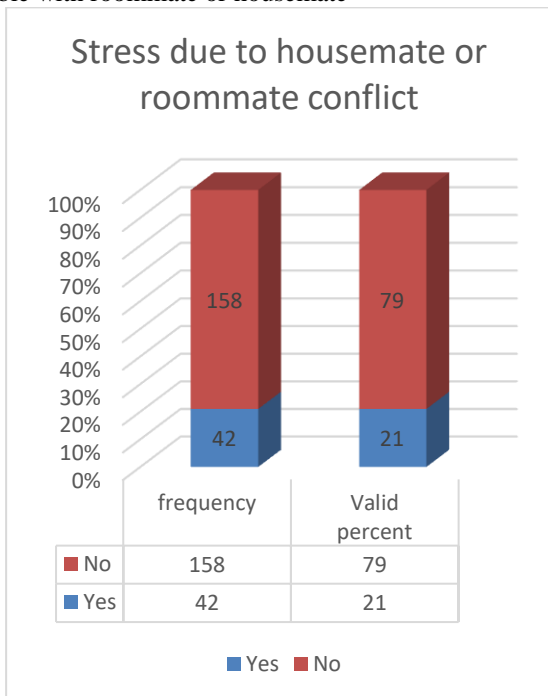
This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents while combining job with study where 20 (55.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 16 (44.5%) respondents answered they did not feel stress while combining job with study.

Figure 11: Distribution of the respondents whether they have financial crisis



This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to financial crisis where 111 (55.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed and 89 (44.5%) respondents answered they did not feel stress due to financial crisis.

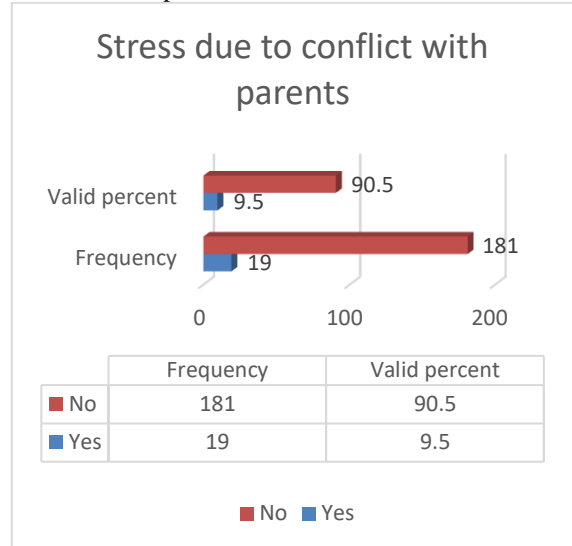
Figure 12: Distribution of the respondents whether they have trouble with roommate or housemate



This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to conflict with roommate or housemate where 42 (21%)

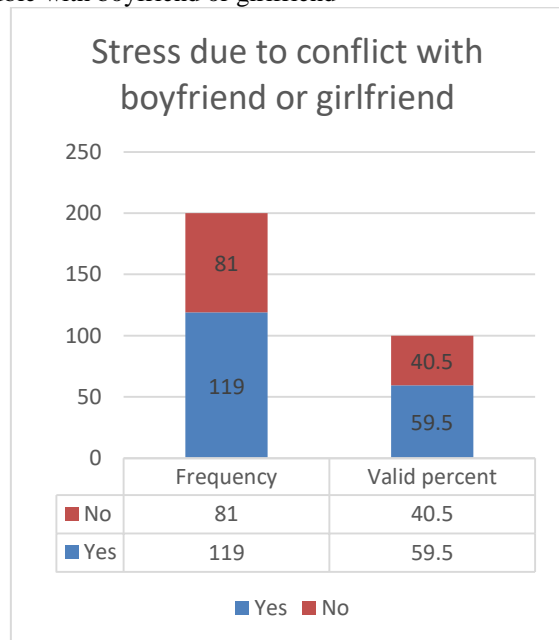
respondents said that they felt stressed, 158 (79%) respondents answered they did not feel stress due to roommate or housemate conflict.

Figure 13: Distribution of the respondents whether they have conflict with their parents



This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to conflict with parents where 19 (9.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 181 (90.5%) respondents answered they did not feel stress due to conflict with parents.

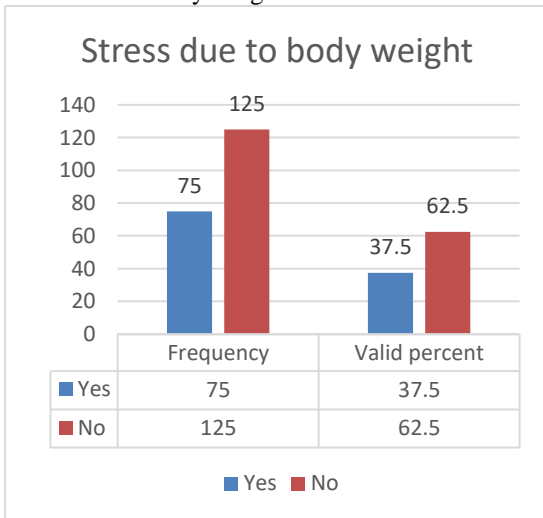
Figure 14: Distribution of the respondents whether they have trouble with boyfriend or girlfriend



This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to conflict with boyfriend or girlfriend where 119 (59.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 81 (40.5%)

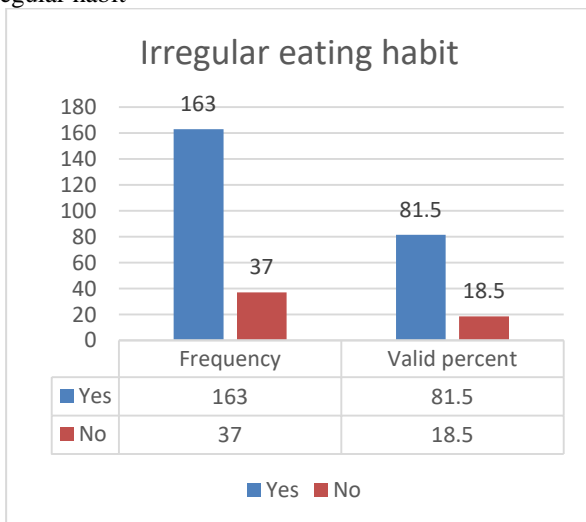
respondents answered they did not feel stress due to conflict with boyfriend or girlfriend.

Figure 15: Distribution of the respondents whether they feel stressed with their body weight



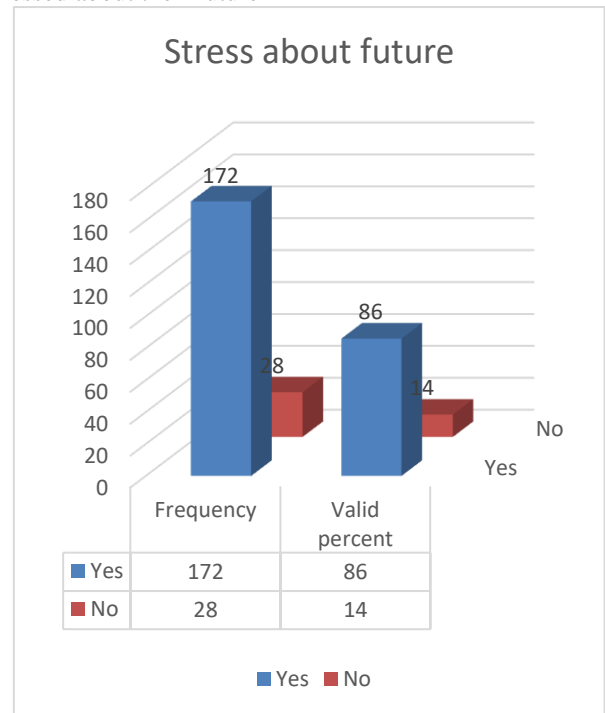
This diagram illustrates the stress of respondents due to their body weight where 75(37.5%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 125 (62.5%) respondents answered they did not feel stress due to their body weight.

Figure 16: Distribution of the respondents whether they have irregular habit



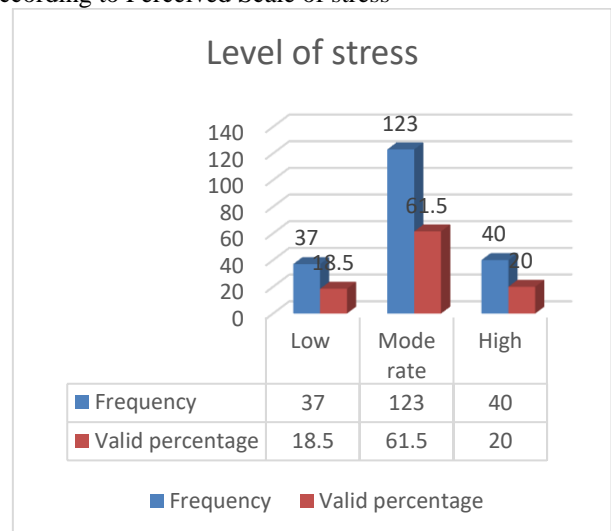
This diagram illustrates the irregular eating habit of respondents where 163 (81.5%) respondents said that they had irregular eating habit, 37 (18.5%) respondents answered they did not have irregular eating habit.

Figure 17: Distribution of the respondents whether they feel stressed about their future



This diagram illustrates the stress about their future where 172 (86%) respondents said that they felt stressed, 28 (14%) respondents answered they did not feel stress about their future.

Figure 18: Distribution of respondent level of stress according to Perceived Scale of stress



This diagram shows the level of stress among respondents according to their score by Perceived Scale of Stress where 18.5% had low stress, 61.5% had moderate stress and 20% had high level of stress.