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**II Spring International Scientific and Practical ONLINE
Conference “Innovative Approaches of Language Teaching:
Bridging Theory and Practice”**

**«Тілдерді оқытудың инновациялық тәсілдері: теория мен
практиканы ұштастыру» атты II көктемгі халықаралық
ғылыми-практикалық конференция**

**II весенняя международная научно-практическая
конференция «Инновационные подходы преподавания
языков: слияние теории и практики»**

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«Тілдерді оқытудың инновациялық тәсілдері: теория мен практиканы ұштастыру» атты ІІ көктемгі халықаралық ғылыми-практикалық конференция материалдар жинағында шетел тілдерін оқыту саласындағы озық тәжірибелермен алмасуға, мәдениетаралық қарым-қатынасты нығайтуға, цифрлық дәуір жағдайында шетел тілдерін оқытудағы инновациялық технологияларды таратуға, сондай-ақ халықаралық ғылыми-академиялық ынтымақтастықты кеңейтуге бағытталған ғылыми-практикалық зерттеулердің нәтижелері енгізілген. Материалдарда білім алушылар мен жас ғалымдардың осы бағыттағы зерттеулерге белсенді қатысуын ынталандыру мәселелері қарастырылған.

В сборник материалов ІІ весенней международной научно-практической конференции «Инновационные подходы преподавания языков: слияние теории и практики» включены результаты научно-практических исследований, направленных на обмен передовым опытом в области преподавания иностранных языков, укрепление межкультурной коммуникации, распространение инновационных технологий обучения в условиях цифровой эпохи, а также расширение международного научно-академического сотрудничества. В материалах рассматриваются вопросы стимулирования активного участия обучающихся и молодых ученых в исследованиях в данной области.

The proceedings of the ІІ Spring International Scientific and Practical ONLINE Conference “Innovative Approaches of Language Teaching: Bridging Theory and Practice” include the results of scientific and practical research aimed at sharing advanced experience in foreign language teaching, strengthening intercultural communication, disseminating innovative teaching technologies in the digital age, and expanding international scientific and academic cooperation. The materials also address issues related to encouraging the active participation of students and young researchers in this field.

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II Spring International Scientific and Practical ONLINE Conference “Innovative Approaches of Language Teaching: Bridging Theory and Practice”

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теории и практики»**

The Main Themes of the Conference:

1. Teaching foreign languages for professional and interdisciplinary purposes.
2. Innovative technologies in foreign language teaching methodology.
3. Language training in the context of multilingualism and lifelong learning.
4. Language education based on digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

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**STRESS RESILIENCE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS:
AN ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC
CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES**

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Human life is a continuous process of learning. We learn every second, acquiring new skills and adapting to a changing world; therefore, entering a university seems like just another natural step on this path. It would seem that with years of schooling behind, a student should arrive at the university already prepared for the academic workload. However, the university environment offers a fundamentally different level of complexity and responsibility, for which a freshman often lacks the necessary psychological preparation. As a result, what should be a place for acquiring knowledge turns into a source of stress, testing not only the student's intellect but also their psyche.

As noted by the Kazakhstani researcher R. Sh. Sabirova: “...first and final study years are the most stressful for students. <...> In the first year, this is due to the need for quick and effective adaptation to the new social environment, the requirements of the university, and a significant increase in the number of educational tasks performed” [1]. According to a study published in the PMC database, up to 88% of surveyed students experience academic stress, and more than 75% show depressive symptoms of varying severity [2]. This demonstrates that university education requires not only knowledge but also psychological readiness from a young person.

The question arises: what difficulties do freshmen encounter, and how do they overcome them? The answer lies in the mechanism of the psychological response to

stress.

Psychologists Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman became key figures in the study of this process [3]. According to their theory, no external event is a stressor in itself. Whether it is a difficult exam or moving to a new city, a situation turns into stress only when a person perceives it as a threat. This appraisal process occurs in two stages [3]:

1. **Primary Appraisal:** The student determines the level of danger. If they feel that the academic workload exceeds their resources (time or knowledge), the situation becomes stressful.
2. **Secondary Appraisal:** The student analyzes their capabilities ("What can I do?"). At this stage, specific methods of struggle, known as coping mechanisms, are activated.

Based on this, two main types of strategies are distinguished [4]:

1. **Problem-focused coping** involves working directly with the problem. Examples include planning, time management, and proactive task-solving.
2. **Emotion-focused coping** focuses not on the problem itself, but on the student's internal state.

It is crucial to distinguish between two opposite paths here [5]:

1. **Healthy path:** The student directs energy toward restoring resources through sports, hobbies, social support, or meditation.
2. **Unhealthy path:** An attempt to "escape" from reality through procrastination, emotional eating, substance use, etc. This approach does not solve the problem but only temporarily masks the stress, ultimately worsening the situation.

Thus, a student's mental health directly depends on how they evaluate difficulties and which strategies they choose to adapt to the new environment.

Key Terminology

Based on the studied material, key terms were identified that form the foundation of this project:

- **Adaptation** – the process of a student's adjustment to new learning conditions and the social environment of the university.
- **Stress** – a state of mental and physical tension that arises as a response to excessive environmental demands that exceed an individual's resources.
- **Stressor** – any factor (event or object) that triggers a stress response.
- **Coping or Coping Mechanisms** – methods of dealing with stress, which can be either healthy (beneficial to the individual) or unhealthy (worsening their condition).
- **Problem-focused coping** – strategies aimed at changing the source of the problem itself.
- **Emotion-focused coping** – strategies aimed at regulating one's own feelings and emotions.

Research Methodology

An empirical study was conducted, consisting of 22 questions. The survey involved 84 respondents. To ensure the accuracy of the findings, only first-year students were surveyed. The questionnaire included the following items:

1. What is your faculty or field of study?
2. Do you currently live in a dormitory?
3. Do you feel that the rhythm of life at the university is fundamentally different from that of high school?
4. Have you noticed a change in your general emotional state since entering university?
5. Do you believe that stress is an inevitable part of a freshman's life?
6. Have you previously encountered the concept of "coping mechanisms"?
7. What difficulties do you face at the university or in life after admission?
8. What changes in your state do you notice when facing these difficulties?
9. Do you experience physical ("bodily") symptoms of stress?
10. On average, how often do you catch yourself having these thoughts or being in these states?
11. How do you usually evaluate your capabilities when academic or life difficulties begin to accumulate?
12. When there are too many problems, which of these actions do you take most often?
13. Do you ever try to "escape" from stress using the following methods?
14. Comparing your answers in the previous two points, which tactic prevails in real life most often?
15. How do you rate your ability to control your emotions in a stressful situation?
16. Do you feel that your stress responses happen "on autopilot"? (For example: do you catch yourself scrolling through TikTok for 20 minutes just because you are afraid to start studying?)
17. How effective do you consider your habitual ways of dealing with stress to be?
18. Do you feel the need to acquire new skills that will help you cope with stress more effectively?
19. Do you feel support from the university during difficult moments?
20. What kind of assistance from the university would be most useful to you?
21. If you had the chance to give advice to yourself on the first day of classes, what would you say?
22. Rate how confident you are that you will successfully complete this academic year despite all the difficulties. (Scale of 1–5, where 1 is "not confident at all" and 5 is "completely confident")

Here are the findings on the most interesting questions:

1. Do you feel that the rhythm of life at the university is fundamentally different from that of high school?

More than half of the respondents (51.2%) believe that the rhythm of life at the

university has become much more difficult compared to high school. Meanwhile, 23.8% of students did not feel significant changes, and a quarter of those surveyed (25%) found the university format of education to be simpler.

2. Do you believe that stress is an inevitable part of a freshman's life?

81% of respondents agree that stress is inevitable during the first year of university. Only 19% of students believe that stressful situations can be avoided during this period.

3. What changes in your state do you notice when facing these difficulties?

The survey results show that stress negatively impacts productivity across three dimensions: cognitive (45.2%), emotional (42.9%), and motivational (38.1%). The prevalence of cognitive impairment indicates that nearly half of the students find it more difficult to memorize information and concentrate on assignments, which directly reduces their academic performance. A loss of interest in studies and apathy among a third of respondents signal a serious risk of burnout as early as the first year. Meanwhile, only 17.9% of respondents maintain a stable state, highlighting the emotional vulnerability of the majority of freshmen (82.1%)

4. Do you experience physical ("bodily") symptoms of stress?

Sleep problems are the most common physical sign of stress, reported by 56% of respondents. This indicates that stress directly hinders quality rest and physical recovery. A significant portion of students also experience changes in appetite (34.5%), headaches (29.8%), and muscle tension (26.2%). The fact that 75% of those surveyed record at least one somatic (bodily) symptom confirms the systemic impact of the adaptation period on the overall physical well-being of freshmen.

5. On average, how often do you catch yourself having these thoughts or being in these states?

For more than half of the respondents (56%), stress is chronic: a quarter of the students experience it daily, and nearly a third experience it several times a week. Meanwhile, only 19% link their state to "peak" periods such as exam sessions. Only 13.1% of respondents experience stress only a few times a month, or extremely rarely encounter such thoughts (13.1%), making them the smallest group.

6. Do you ever try to "escape" from stress using the following methods?

In the analysis of unhealthy coping mechanisms, procrastination and excessive use of social media or video games lead the way, with both options scoring 57.1%. These mechanisms work in close connection: digital consumption becomes the primary tool for displacing real-world tasks, creating an illusion of temporary relief. Additionally, a significant portion of students (27.4%) is prone to emotional eating, and 20.2% to spontaneous (impulse) buying.

A positive trend is the extremely low rate of explicitly aggressive or addictive behaviors: the use of alcohol and tobacco (7.1%), attempts to avoid loneliness in noisy companies (6%), and taking out frustration on loved ones (6%) received minimal votes. This indicates that the unhealthy coping of modern students has shifted toward passive

"digital escapism" and consumption, while classic socially hazardous habits are losing their relevance.

7. Do you feel that your stress responses happen "on autopilot"? (For example: do you catch yourself scrolling through TikTok for 20 minutes just because you are afraid to start studying?)

The analysis showed that more than half of the students (73%) become aware of their stress-related behavior too late, after they have already spent a lot of time on it. Only 27% can control their behavior. As a result, distractions like digital procrastination often become a common way to temporarily escape from stressful tasks.

8. How effective do you consider your habitual ways of dealing with stress to be? (Scale of 1–5, where 1 is "not helpful at all" and 5 is "extremely helpful")

The assessment of the effectiveness of habitual stress-coping methods revealed a serious gap between the effort applied and the actual result. Nearly half of the students (47.6%) rate their methods as a "3", indicating the low efficacy of the strategies used — they provide only temporary relief without addressing the root of the problem. Complete dissatisfaction or extremely low effectiveness (1–2 points) was noted by a total of 15.5% of respondents. High ratings for their methods (4–5 points) were given by just over a third of those surveyed (36.9%). These data confirm that the majority of freshmen (63.1%) are in search of functioning self-regulation tools, as their current habits do not allow them to fully recover or effectively manage the workload.

9. Do you feel the need to acquire new skills that will help you cope with stress more effectively?

The analysis of the need for new knowledge revealed a high readiness among students to learn self-regulation methods: a total of 69% of respondents experience a lack of tools to combat stress. Of these, 23.8% state a deficit of specific knowledge, and 45.2% are ready to try new approaches because their current methods are inconsistent. Only 31% of those surveyed consider their skills sufficient and see no need for additional training. These results highlight the urgency of implementing psychological support programs within universities.

10. Do you feel support from the university during difficult moments?

The assessment of the university's role in overcoming stress revealed a significant deficit in institutional support. The vast majority of students (69%) do not feel supported by the university, considering the existing support to be formal and unhelpful. Only 7% of respondents clearly know whom to turn to for help, while 24% have only a general idea of the existence of services or supportive faculty members. Such a low level of trust in university structures forces students to cope with the workload alone, which increases the risk of burnout and decreased academic performance.

11. Rate how confident you are that you will successfully complete this academic year despite all the difficulties. (Scale of 1–5, where 1 is "not confident

at all" and 5 is "completely confident")

A total of 67.8% chose ratings of 4 and 5. Meanwhile, about a quarter of respondents (22.6%) rate their confidence as average (3), and only a small portion of students (9.6%) experience low confidence (1–2). These data indicate that, despite difficulties and stressful workloads, the majority of freshmen maintain a positive mindset and belief in their own strength. Nevertheless, the presence of students with moderate and low confidence highlights the importance of providing support and developing healthy coping mechanisms.

Conclusion

The research findings confirm that for the majority of freshmen, the transition to university has become a factor of chronic stress, shifting from a situational occurrence (linked only to exam periods) to a daily background state. The primary impact is observed in the cognitive sphere (45%) and sleep patterns (56%), creating a vicious cycle: stress reduces concentration and disrupts sleep, which, in turn, hinders the learning process and amplifies anxiety.

The core issue lies in the lack of skills for the conscious application of healthy coping mechanisms. While students are not prone to dangerous addictions, they overwhelmingly choose the path of "digital escapism" (57%), where social media procrastination becomes an automatic defensive reaction. For half of the respondents, the ability to handle difficulties depends solely on their mood rather than on established skills.

The current coping strategies used by students provide only temporary relief and do not address the root causes of their stress. This results in a situation where students spend significant energy on managing their emotional state rather than focusing on their studies. Consequently, the majority of freshmen are functioning in a state of high anxiety, which limits their ability to engage fully in the learning process.

Recommendations

1. Creating Recovery Spaces

Given the high levels of fatigue and sleep disturbances, it is advisable to organize "quiet zones" for short-term rest within academic buildings. These specially equipped, low-noise spaces would allow students to restore their resources between classes.

2. Developing Accessible and Effective Psychological Support

There is a need to increase the practical relevance of the university's psychological services: providing clear navigation (where to go), anonymity, and consistent assistance. It is crucial to shift the focus from formal consultations to real-time support in situations of stress and overload.

3. Implementing Practice-Oriented Self-Regulation Programs

We must address an important gap: while 69% of students want these skills, only 17% explicitly asked for university workshops.

This suggests that students are already exhausted and fear that any new course

will just be 'extra work' or a formal, useless burden. Therefore, these programs must be short, highly practical, and integrated into the existing schedule. They should not feel like an additional weight, but like a real tool for survival.

It is recommended to introduce courses and workshops aimed at developing the following skills:

- Time management and planning;
- Overcoming procrastination and monitoring digital behavior;
- Managing anxiety and the fear of failure;
- Mastering healthy coping strategies (self-reflection, journaling, relaxation techniques, etc.).

4. Optimizing Academic Workload and the Educational Process

The results indicate a need for a more even distribution of the workload and an improvement in teaching quality. This may include:

- Revising the schedule to reduce peak loads;
- Coordinating deadlines between different disciplines;
- Increasing the transparency of requirements and the quality of instructional materials.

5. Introducing Flexible Mechanisms in the Learning Process

It is expedient to implement a system for considering emergency circumstances (e.g., flexible deadlines or opportunities for resubmissions). This would reduce excessive tension and prevent the accumulation of academic debt.

List of Sources

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