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MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOSTAGANEM**

**FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**MASTER
“DIDACTICS AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS”**

**Exploring the Causes of Exam Stress Among First
Year Pupils in BenguellaTouati' High School in
Mostaganem**

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2018/2019

Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother may Allah bless her soul.
To my dear parents, to my brother and to all my family. I could never have done this without
your support.

Special thanks go to all my friends.

Thank you all for your help, encouragement and support

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Mustapha Boudjelal for his continuous support, guidance and patience throughout the stages of this research.

I would also like to thank MrTouami and MsBendoukha for accepting to be in the board of examiners and for reading my research.

Last and not least, I would like to express my deep gratitude to DrDjoub for her advice.

ABSTRACT

Exam stress is a feeling of pressure that most pupils face coming to exam time. It generally happens during the revision period before exams and the day of the exam. The purpose of this study is to identify the main causes and features of exam stress among Secondary School pupils, as well as to determine some suitable measures to manage it. The main problematic of this work is that pupils are facing stress in exams, one of the reasons behind this, is the poor preparation for exams, pressure from parents and time management leading up to exams. The required data was gathered by two main research instruments, the pupils' questionnaire and interview which were conducted to first year pupils, BenguellaTouati's Secondary School in Mostaganem during the academic year 2018-2019. The sample consisted of 20 pupils for the questionnaire and 10 pupils for the interview. There were sufficient findings about the causes and features of exam stress. The results showed that the majority of the participants have experienced exam stress and that it affects their academic performance. All in all, two hypotheses were confirmed while one hypothesis was not.

Key words: stress, exams, pressure, stress features, stress causes, secondary school pupils.

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General Introduction

Working towards exams can create feelings of worry and pressure, especially at secondary school. In the field of education, one of the main problems that affects the majority of students is exam stress, which is the experience of feeling an intense moment of fear and panic before and during an examination.

Among the reasons that motivated me to choose this topic which is concerned as an educational phenomenon, is that the majority of the students are experiencing exam stress, and it is affecting their academic performance and their lives. The main objectives of this research study is to identify the factors that causes stress among students as well as to determine some suitable measures to solve this problem and to find techniques to deal with stress during exams.

In order to identify the causes and effects of exam stress on students, it is necessary to ask the following questions:

- Does exam stress affect pupils' academic success?
- Does the lack of preparation cause stress?
- Do pupils have the same way of expressing their stress in exams?

According to the research questions and sub-questions, the following answers have been suggested:

- An effective preparation for exams can be a good tool to avoid exam stress.
- Stress may not affect pupils' academic performance.
- Stress can differ from one pupil to another.

To identify the main causes and features of exam stress, and to confirm or disconfirm our hypotheses, we selected two main tools for the data collection which are the questionnaire and interview.

This research is relied on different theories such as Hans Selye's theory about stress and his development of the concept of the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), in addition to its stages which are the alarm reaction, the resistance and the exhaustion.

In order to know to what extent the hypotheses are true, the choice of population was selected randomly, which included students from BenguellaTouati's Secondary School in Mostaganem. Both of the questionnaire and the interview intended to know the pupils' opinions and views about what cause exam stress and how it can be managed.

The present dissertation consists of three chapters; the first chapter is concerned with the literature review of the topic, it gives a general understanding of stress in general and exam stress in specific, it is also concerned with the history of stress, its causes and features and its effects on pupils' academic performance. In addition, the second chapter deals with the data collection and the description of the tools that are used in order to obtain results. Finally, the third chapter is devoted for the analysis of the data tools, the questionnaire and the interview, it concludes with some recommendations for secondary school pupils to minimize their stress in exams.

CHAPTER ONE

The Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will introduce a general background of exam stress, then we pass through the history and the definition of stress. The main purpose of this study aims at identifying and examining the causes of exams stress, furthermore we move to the impacts it has on student's academic performance, and finally we will try to give some advices and steps to manage the stress.

1.2 History of Stress

The first and most inclusive definition of stress was suggested by Hans Selye, and was acquired from the field of physics. According to Hans Selye (1982): "stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made to its internal equilibrium". (n.d.). Hans Selye, while still a medical student in 1926, noticed that patients who had diversity of diseases had many of the same non-specific effects that were a typical reaction to stressful stimulation tested by the body. After these observations and some laboratory experiments, Selye developed a concept called GAS, "General Adaptation Syndrome" that led him to assert that extended exposure to stress results in diseases of adaptation. He observed that regardless of what his patients experienced, they had all one thing in common, they all looked sick. In his opinion, all of his patients were under what he called physical stress or pressure.

1.3 The Stages of General Adaptation Syndrome

The stress damage results from prolonged exposure to the stressor and happens in three stages:

- The alarm reaction
- The resistance
- The exhaustion

The first phase, the alarm reaction, when encountering a stressor, the body prepares with a "fight-or-flight" response as it is trying to protect itself or flee from a challenging situation or stimulus. In this stage the heart rate increases and the adrenal organ discharges a stress hormone called 'cortisol' in result, the individual's adrenaline will increase, which will augment the energy as well.

According to Karl Albrecht (1986):

Stress reaction is a coordinated mobilization of the entire human body to meet the requirements of life and death struggle or of rapid escape from the situation. The intensity of the stress reaction depends on the brain's perception of the severity of the situation. (p.796)

Second, the resistance stage, if the first stage, (the alarm reaction stage), keep on going, the body will start becoming used to the fact of being stressed, otherwise this adaptation is dangerous for the health due to the fact that energy is concentrated on stress reactions. The body starts off to restore itself and it releases a lower quantity of the stress hormone 'cortisol' and the heart rate and blood pressure start to standardize. In spite of the fact that the body enters this recuperation section, it stays on excessive caution for some time. If the person conquer pressure and the situation is no more a problem, the body will keep on fixing itself until the hormones levels, heart rate, and blood pressure attain a pre-stress state. To conclude, if the resistance period proceeds for a really long time without delays to counterbalance the impacts of pressure, this could result in the exhaustion level.

The third and the final stage which is the exhaustion stage, the body's protection from stress is progressively diminished and falls as the immune system ends up inadequate. Hans Selye confirmed that patients who experience long-term stress could surrender to heart diseases or extreme contamination because of their diminished protection from illness. In addition, battling with worry and stress for lengthy durations of time can deplete the individual's bodily, emotional and mental assets to the factor where the body has no more force to fight stress, so he may feel his situation is unattainable or he may simply give up. The signs of this stage include depression and discouragement.

Since it is impossible to get rid of every stressor individuals face, it is vital to find out approaches to adapt to stress, regarding the signs and the stages of stress that can enable them to find out suitable operations to deal with their stress level and minimize the risk of complexities. Each person should know that it is fundamental for the body to fix and recover amid the resistance period. On the off chance that the individual cannot wipe out an unpleasant or stressful occasion, standard exercise can enable him to adapt and keep out a sound feeling of stress.

1.4 Definition of Stress

According to Sharon Horesh Bergquist, stress is the body's way of reacting to any kind of demand or threat. When the body feels stress, the hypothalamus, a tiny region in the brain, signals the adrenal glands, located atop the kidneys, to release a surge of hormones, which include adrenaline and cortisol, into the bloodstream. Stress is a feeling we all experience when we are challenged or overwhelmed, but more than just an emotion, stress is the physical response that travels throughout our entire body. In the short term, stress can be advantageous but when activated too often or too long our primitive fight-or-flight stress response not only changes our brain but also damages many of the other organs and cells throughout our body.

Some specialists and scientists have described stress as the following; Starting with Hans Selye (1936) he characterized stress as the explicit reply of the body to any demand for modification. Then in (1997), he explained further that "stress is a perception, it is the demands that are imposed upon us because there are too many alternatives". In addition, Skinner (1985) defined stress as "a response of a specific individual to a stimulus event" (para.4). Eliot (1988) completed that "stress may be viewed as the body's reaction to any realistic or unrealistic event perceived as necessitating some adaptive response and/or producing pressure" (para.4).

Moreover, Humphrey (1992) found that "stress deemed to be any element, acting inwardly or outwardly that makes it complicated to adjust and that prompt excessed effort on the part of the person to ensure a case of equation both with interior and exterior environment" (para.4).

Furthermore, Pearlin (1982) found that "there is a common agreement that stress refers to a response of the organism to a detrimental or menacing condition" (para.4). Bowman, natural therapist (1998) that "stress is the body's automatic response to any bodily or mental demand placed upon it. When pressures are threatening, the body rushes to supply protection by turning on 'the juices' and preparing to defend itself. It is the fight-or-flight response in action.

1.5 Definition of Exams

Exams were first invented by Henry Michel (1875-80), an American philanthropist, it is an essential control that students take to show their knowing or capabilities in a specific topic, or to gain a certain qualification. In addition to this definition, exams are a set of questions or exercises evaluating skills and knowledge. They are conducted to test student's knowledge or expertise in a specific subject.

1. 6 Definition of Exam Stress

Exam stress is a feeling of pressure that most students face coming to exam time. It generally happens during the revision period before an exam and the day of the exam. Some researchers have defined exam stress as the following, Zeinder (1998) defined exam stress as “the major predictor of academic performance and various studies have demonstrated that it has a detrimental effect”. Moreover, according to Gregor (2005), “exam stress is on the rise-possibly linked to the greater importance placed on exam outcomes. It is estimated that between 10-40% of all students experience from various levels of test anxiety”. According to Latifa and Safan (2012):

Stress is a normal human behavior but if it surpasses to a great extent it could become a problem and could be very dangerous. The chief noticeable indications of stress in students before they take an exam consist of less appetite and sleep, food cravings and sweaty palm. However, these do not constitute an alarming situation if a person is experiencing such symptoms. Existing literature has discovered that stress is the chief factor of low performance of students as some students complain that their minds go blank during examinations.(p.8)

In addition, according to Scot (2008), “exam stress can disturb students’ learning and their test performance but higher level of stress may even cause illnesses”. Then, according to Sarason et al, (1960) “we live in a test-conscious, test-giving culture in which the lives of people are in part determined by their test performance” (p.26). It means that society values grades over knowledge. Students falsely get judged by how well they do in tests and exams instead of their good character and overall performance in life.

It happens that we study hard and we are completely prepared for taking an exam and all the information appear understandable, we think that we have everything in mind. Therefore, when we sit for the exam, unexpectedly all the information we have learned is gone, we blank out, terrify, lose control and we cannot answer the questions that we are supposed to know them all, and we start battling to pull something up but the more we fight the further away the information escapes so, as a reaction, there are some of us who will start singing, drawing or maybe crying.

1. 7 Symptoms of Exam Stress

Exam stress symptoms can include difficulties getting motivated to answer, butterflies in the stomach, headaches, stomachaches, becoming frustrated, having clammy hands, feeling sick and confused in addition to feeling the heart racing or finding difficulties to breathe and having a feeling of prolonged tiredness.

1. 8 Factors of Exam Stress

Zeidner (1998) defined three factors of exam stress. The first factor is the cognitive; the passive thinking and decreasing self-confidence that happen amid assessments (e.g. If I fail this exam my whole life will be a failure) and the performance-inhibiting challenges that may emerge from anxiety (e.g. Recalling facts and difficulty in reading and understanding the questions). The second factor is the influential factor; the individual's evaluation of their biological estate (such as tension, cramped muscles and trembling hands). The last factor which is the attitude, including weak learning abilities, passive resistance and delay of work and assignments.

1. 9 Causes of Exam Stress

According to Mc Donald (2001), the most well-known causes of exam stress are, for instance, weak study routine, poor preparation and planning, the inability to manage time in addition to revising a night before the exam, getting worried about anticipated outcomes, previous performances in exams, and academic probation are as well some other causes of stress among students.

According to The Classroom Website, it is common that when we prepare for exams or tests it causes pressure and anxiety. Whereas, a particular degree of stress is natural or predictable, while an excessive degree of stress can intervene with daily life potentially weak exam performance. While we are feeling stress, our brain is not in its best state to accumulate information, and this can lead to a vicious-circle- the more we stress, the less work we do, the more we dread about stressing, the greater the feeling of panic becomes, and so it goes on.

Furthermore, knowing and understanding what is exam stress and its original reasons can help students understand and adjust their stress level and improve their ability to manage it. Moreover, what is stressful for one student may not be the same for another one that is why the causes of exam stress are numerous and individualized.

1. 9. 1 Causes of Exam Stress

The first cause of exam stress is judgments from others, numerous students feel stressed because of others, for example parents and teachers. It is familiar to feel enormous quantities of judgments from the family, especially the parents, teachers and also friends. They all expect them to get good grades in exams but subconsciously they can feel crushed by the pressure they feel to work hard for them. Parents persistently compare their children's grades with those of their peers, however, students are not equally talented and this limit their ability to perform well in exams. So the fear of comparison raises the anxiety and stress level among students. Even teachers and professors can put pressure on them as they are essentially the ones who will be evaluating their exam papers. So students have to do their best so that they do not give anybody a chance to doubt their capabilities. Students are always bombarded by the warnings coming from their parents and teachers, this situation will create a psychological hurdle for them, they will believe by the excessive repetition of this process that their future is relying on their academic success, consequently they will reach a point where they will live only for scores and marks as being the only criterion of success in life, if not they will fail in their life and will live aimlessly.

The second cause of exam stress is the indications of self-confidence, pupils judge themselves based on their valuation and assessments. Adequate marks resulting in high-rise esteem whilst a base grade result in lower self-esteem. Not performing as well as expected or struggling with a specific subject or topic in the lectures and the fright of not working well in exams can lead up to stress among students. The fear of failure because of the weak academic performance and not obtaining the marks desired to pass an examination can push students to give up to an uncontrollable level of pressure, which can contribute greatly the their stress levels. This in return can lead to absenteeism or a sentiment of depression and hopelessness which will influence their study habits and may leave a student feeling lost or unqualified. All of this will additionally loom up or decline their academic performances.

Third, the lack of preparation which is one of the major factors that causes exam stress. When students recognize that they have not revised or prepared enough, sentiments of stress and nervousness may appear over as they stroll into the examination room. It is common that students start preparation for exams as soon as they get their time table or sometimes they leave the revision for the night before the exam which will make them perform in a bad way and may rise the fear of being unable to answer the exam questions.

The fourth cause is the internal pressure, the pressure to do well in exams and succeed does not just have to come from a student's family; instead, the student may be the one who put the most pressure on himself. If he wants to perform at the very highest level, a poor performance on an exam may be a great fear. In addition, if the student spends too much time thinking about how difficult the exam is while worrying about the outcomes of the exam, this passive approach may further increase exam stress. After experiencing stress during one exam, students may become so fearful about it happening again that they actually become even more stressed during the following exam.

The fifth cause is the biological cause, the body releases a hormone called 'adrenaline' in stressful situations. This prepares the body to deal with what is about to happen and is referred to as the-fight-or-flight response. Essentially, this response prepares the person either to stay and deal with the stress or escape the situation entirely. For some students, the symptoms of stress they feel can become so excessive that it makes it impossible to focus on the exam or test. Symptoms such as shaking hands, nausea, sweating can eventually make students feel more anxious and nervous.

The sixth cause of exam stress is the competition, the pressure that students put on themselves can cause an extreme amount of stress, especially if they are highly competitive. Students often hope to be the best in their class. All in all, it is important for students not to allow this to take their mental process as it can contribute to a high degree of pressure and make the process of learning much harder.

The last cause is the fear of the results, it is familiar that having to wait for exam results is a nightmare, the stress does not automatically disappear- students want to know how they did, the regret and panic will hit, followed by some questions, which they do not know the answers. Students will remain stressed out until they get their grades back.

1. 10 The Effects of Stress

According to (Centre 2010) stress affects students academically, socially, physically and emotionally. While stress affects students in different ways, there are two major types of stress; stress that is beneficial and motivating-positive stress- and stress that causes anxiety and even health problems-negative stress- (p.10-12). All in all, according to Herman et al (2015) stress is a key for survival, however, too much stress can detrimental. Stress that stays around for weeks or months can weaken the immune system and cause high blood pressure, fatigue, depression, anxiety and even heart diseases. In particular, too much epinephrine can

be harmful to the heart, it can change the arteries and how their cells are able to regenerate. To conclude, when studying it is very important to manage stress effectively. Stress is an entirely natural process, but it is essential not to let it damage our overall health and disrupt our lives. (p.18)

1. 10. 1 Positive Stress

According to Vilma Ruddock (2012), stress can help students perform a little better. It means that stress can lead people to accomplish their goals and allow them to be successful. Good stress can be the thing that they need to encourage themselves and their behavior to manage the situation effectively and more productively.

1. 10. 2 Negative Stress

According to the American Institute of Stress (1978) an extremist amount of stress can take a severe emotional toll. While people can overcome minor episodes of stress by tapping into their body's natural defenses to adapt to changing situations, excessive chronic stress, which is a constant and persists over an extended period of time, can be psychologically and physically debilitating.

Over time, the tension increases, compelling people to put more effort into successfully relieving causes of stress. Then their brain fights against itself instead of working on a specific task. When they expose themselves to stressors (stimulus that incite stress), the result is a set of emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral reactions that include the following:

1. 10. 2. 1 Muscle Tension

The muscles trigger when stress hormones activate the sensible nervous system. Activated nerves make the student either tense up when seating in class, or flex certain muscles making them ache. The result is a constant disturbance that minimizes his concentration in class.

1. 10. 2. 2 Memory Loss

If the student has trouble memorizing what he learned in class last week then his stress levels could be to blame. Stress negatively affects the student's capability to remember information. When he is struggling to retain information for exams or tests, he could end up stressing out even more. Whilst students are not able to recall necessary details to answer questions, this could lead up to poor exam results and limited participation in class.

1. 10. 2. 3 Physical Symptoms

According to the American Institute of Stress (1978) extreme levels of stress could lead up to physical symptoms that could have a negative effect on student's performance. How stress influences the body differs from one person to another, but the common physical symptoms of stress are typically the same and it comprise recurrent headaches; stress is a common trigger for headaches. Many studies have found that increased stress levels are associated with increased headache trembling of lips, nervous habits such as fidgeting, in addition to neck and back pains, rapid heartbeat.

1. 10. 2. 4 Poor Management Skills

Pupils who are suffering from excessive levels of stress could become disorder, disorganized and uncertain of their objectives and priorities. This could lead up to an inability to effectively budget and manage their time.

1. 10. 2. 5 Concentration Troubles

An increased level of stress decreases student's capability to focus on their studies. As a consequence, it makes it hard for them to memorize facts for tests and exams. Even more, weak concentration could limit student's ability to think critically or at best levels during exams. According to Musch and Broder (1999), the majority of researchers have viewed exam stress as a chief factor disturbing learners' academic performance. All in all, stress is a normal and natural response to such demands, though, if we do not handle, control and cope with it efficiently it can consume us to an extent that oftentimes leaves us feeling powerless and paralyzed.

1.11 Stress Management

Many students suffer from exam stress but fortunately there are several steps they can follow to reduce this stress, like Hans Selye says "Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one". First of all, according to EducationCorner.com, students should develop good study habits, one of the most effective ways to manage exam stress is through good preparation. Some students think that going to class is all it should take to learn and to do well on exams. However, there is much more to learning than just hoping to soak up everything in class. Many students do not begin to prepare for an exam in the adequate time because the fear of failure is overwhelming to them. Cramming for an exam or a test will only increase stress but if the student is completely prepared for an exam, stress will dramatically decrease. That is why good study habits are so important.

Second, they have to stay positive and challenge negative thoughts, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), students should not allow themselves to get overly pessimistic. For instance, if the thought is, “I always fail in exams,” then they must replace it with another thought like, “I can do it this time”. They must remain positive and concentrate on doing well on the exam. However, if they dwell on negative thoughts, it will increase their stress and make it more difficult to perform. If they are confident in their abilities, they are much likely to be less anxious and perform better.

Then, according to the University of St Andrews (2003), students must read all questions carefully and plan their answers, by reading everything carefully, students can be confident that they understand what to do and that they are able to complete the exam correctly. They may underline and circle important terms in the exam. In addition, they have to make sure to keep their minds on the questions they are working on. This way, all their energy can focus on figuring out the right answers. Finally, they have to plan their answers because it is a really important point.

In addition, according to Writers, S. (2019), students must get enough sleep because it decreases anxiety, and skip the junk food and nourish their body and brain with healthy food, moreover, they must never take exams on a hungry stomach.

Then, Daniel Wong (2019) believes that eating a small amount of dark chocolate every day reduces stress hormone levels. In addition, dark chocolate is a calorie-dense food, so it is not recommended that we eat more than 40g to 60g a day. (p.25)

Finally, according to Times Higher Education (2018), comparison is the thief of joy, pupils must avoid the pressure that their parents and teachers put on them by comparing their grades with those of their friends. They have to put in mind that everyone is different from the other, they must do their best but recognize that none of us can be perfect all of the time.

1. 12 Conclusion

The present chapter presents a theoretical background of exam stress. As it has been shown, its definition, its causes, its symptoms, and its effects on students’ academic performance. In addition to that, we suggest at the end some techniques to overcome and manage this phenomenon. As for the following chapter, it will constitute of the methodological and practical part of the research work.

Chapter Two

Methodology Design

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter includes the theoretical concepts about stress in general and exam stress in specific, as well as its causes, symptoms and effects on pupils' academic performances, moving to some tips and advises to control and manage it. The present chapter of the dissertation is mainly devoted for the practical part of this research, in which we describe the steps and the procedures we went through in order to answer the research questions that drove the research. This chapter contains a detailed description of the methods and instruments used while gathering data as well as a detailed description of the context of the study and the participants that we chose to conduct our survey with. It is planned for first year secondary school pupils at Benguella Touati's High School in Mostaganem, since they experience stress during exams, the research topic is familiar to them and they can answer the questions.

2. 2 Research Objectives

This survey aims to provide data that can help us to know the causes of exam stress among secondary school students. It attempts to demonstrate the features of this phenomenon, this study also tries to show and find some strategies and advices to manage exam stress. Therefore, the main purpose of this survey is to gather different point of view concerning the causes, features and the management of exam stress by using two different data collection which are the questionnaire and the interview.

2. 3 The Research Questions

The following questions are raised in order to be guided throughout the present work:

- Does exam stress affect students' academic success?
- Does the lack of preparation cause stress?
- Do students have the same way of expressing their stress in exams?
-

2. 4 The Research Hypotheses

A set of answers are suggested according to the previous asked questions:

- Exam stress may not affect students' academic success.
- An effective preparation for exams can be a good tool to avoid stress.
- Stress can differ from one student to another.

2. 5 The Context of the Study**2. 5. 1 The Participants**

Research participants are a diverse group of individuals who participate in human subject research and answer questions asked by the researcher in both qualitative and quantitative studies (e.g. Interviews, questionnaires).The targeted population in this study is composed of thirty (30) pupils, twenty (20) for the questionnaire and ten (10) for the interview, they are all from the same high school which is BenguellaTouati in Mostaganem and from the first year literary stream. Pupils are selected randomly from both genders males and females, age between 15-17 years old for the sake of making the data more valid and generalizing the findings. In addition, the selection of the first year students is based on the consideration that the majority of them are facing exam stress and they are aware of the difficulties caused by this phenomenon.

2. 6 Description of Sample Population

According to Burns and Grove (1993: 779), a population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected. It aims at gathering data about the population in order to make an inference that can be generalized to the population.

According to Webster, 1985 a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. It is important to select the appropriate sample for the study, the one used in our research is “random sample” which is a probability sample where every individual has an equal and independent probability of being selected in the sample. The present study aims at discovering the causes and reasons behind exam stress in addition to some solutions to manage it. The study includes two instruments, one questionnaire and one interview, the questionnaire consists of seventeen (17) questions while the interview consists of eight (8) questions, and both of the instruments are designed for the first year High School pupils from Mostaganem.

2. 7 Research Methodology

According to Burns (2001), “A method is a range of approaches used in the educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for

explanation and predictions” p.44. Research is the most widely used tool to increase the stock of knowledge about something and someone. In the field of science, psychology, sociology, economics and business, etc. there are two standard ways of conducting research which are the qualitative or quantitative research. While the qualitative research relies on verbal narrative like spoken or written data, the quantitative research uses logical or statistical observations to draw conclusions.

Choosing the right research tools is considered as an essential component for conducting a research. However, to ensure the reliability and validity of the results, the present research work relies on the two main approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative approaches, we conduct our study using two data gathering tools: a questionnaire and an interview, both of them for the students, in order to gather data that enable to provide more understanding and to gain valuable information about the research topic. Both of the research instruments will be described in details below by highlighting the description, the population and the limitations.

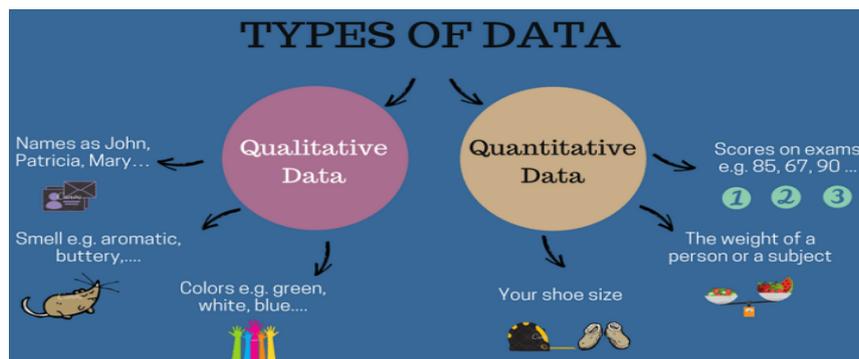


Figure 2.1: Types of Data

2. 7. 1 Quantitative Research

According to Susan E. DeFranzo, quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables and generalize results from a large sample population. Quantitative research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys- online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys and face to face interviews, telephone interviews and systematic observations.

According to Carr, (1994); Denscombe, (2010) “Quantitative data can be interpreted with statistical analysis, and since statistics are based on the principles of mathematics, the quantitative approach is viewed as scientifically objective, and rational”.

2. 7. 2 Qualitative Research

Susan E. DeFranzo defined the qualitative research as a primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thoughts and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations. The sample size is typically small, and the respondents are selected to fulfil a given quota. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994)

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p.2)

2. 7. 3 Key Differences

According to Study and Exam website, it is important to understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. There’s a common misconception that one is ‘better’ than the other, however qualitative and quantitative research serve vastly different purposes, the difference depends on the following two aspects of the research:

1. Aim of inquiry- quantitative data or qualitative findings.
2. Type of inquiry- structured or unstructured process.

First, the aim of the inquiry, to generate quantitative or qualitative findings, determines the nature of research as quantitative or qualitative. For example, if a researcher is working on the issue of Domestic Violence in an area. If he wants to know the extent of domestic violence in the area, he will require statistical data to know the extent of the domestic violence in that area. It will be quantitative research. On the other hand, if the researcher wants to know the causes of domestic violence in the area, he will require qualitative data (e.g.

opinions, reasons, theoretical statements) to know the causes of domestic violence in the area. It will be a qualitative research.

Second, type of Inquiry, structured or unstructured process. The quantitative research follows an unstructured process for the collection of quantitative data. Hence, the researcher will use a structured (close-ended) questionnaire, to collect responses which can be quantified or measured. A close ended questionnaire has responses already prescribed by the researcher. As the respondent has to choose an answer from the given answers, the data collected from all respondents remains the same and can be quantified using a common scale. On the other hand, the quantitative research follows an unstructured process for the collection of quantitative data. The researcher may use an unstructured or an open-ended questionnaire having empty spaces for responses. The respondent fills in open-ended questionnaire having empty spaces according to his own choice, the collected descriptive data serves as qualitative data. Due to the difference in responses by different respondents, all the answers may not be easily quantified using a common scale. Similarly, the researcher may use unstructured interviews for data collection, where the respondent is free to answer according to his own choice.

These two research methods do not conflict with each other, they actually work much better as a team. The qualitative research is almost always the starting point when you seek to discover new problems and opportunities which will help the researcher do deeper research later, in addition to that, the quantitative data will give the researcher measurements to confirm each problem or opportunity and understand it.

2. 8 Description of the Process

2. 8. 1 Data Collection Tools

Data collection is considered as an essential component for conducting a research; it is generally regarded as a hard task. According to O’Leary (2004), collecting reliable data is a hard task, and it is worth remembering that one method is not inherently better than another. This is why whatever data collection method to be used would depend upon the research goals, advantages, as to disadvantages of each method. (p.150)

Therefore, according to Dornyei (2007) the backbone of any research is the instruments that are used in gathering data. Thus, it requires different resources of data collection. For the purpose of collecting data, two different research methods are used, the questionnaire and the

interview. We have used the questionnaire as a primary tool because it is considered as a useful method for eliciting data. Besides that, to achieve more reliable data, we have used the interview as a second tool.

2. 8. 1. 1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a structured written list of questions which are answered by people in order to provide information and to collect the desired answers for a dissertation or a survey. It is the most known instrument that is equally used in survey research and experiments. It is seen as an effective tool for collecting data because of its advantages, it can help the researcher to gather data and have all the answers he needs. The questionnaire is usually designed in written form consisting of open-ended and closed questions. Brown (2001) defines the questionnaire as “any written instrument that represents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”. (p.6)

Therefore, Babbie (1990) stated that “a questionnaire is defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis”. (p.377). The questionnaire is designed for the first year High School pupils in Mostaganem. Twenty (20) students are selected to answer it. The students are asked to answers some of the questions by ticking the appropriate box, or by giving comments whenever required.

2. 8. 1. 1. 1 The Aim of the Questionnaire

In order to answer the research questions, the questionnaire is a crucial part to gather the pupils’ opinions about the research topic. The questionnaires permit respondents time to consider their responses carefully. In addition to that, it generates a large amount of data and answers can be easily quantified and analyzed.

2. 8. 1. 1. 2 The Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprises of seventeen (17) questions organized in four sections. The first section has to do with students’ experience of stress (Q1...Q6), the second one is about mind blanking and stress discomforts (Q7...Q10), the third section has to do with students’ attitude toward the exam, and the last section deals with stress management. It consists mostly of closed-ended questions and few open-ended questions. The questionnaire was given to twenty (20) students from the first year high school of Mostaganem, literary stream.

1) Section One

Six questions are designed in the first section, in the first one pupils are asked to answer with yes or no if they have ever experienced exam stress before, the second question students are asked to say when they experience stress, the options are; before, during or after the exam. Then, the third question is about the most stressful things about doing an exam, (6) choices are given. The fourth one is about the way students prepare for exams, then the fifth question is about the level of stress pupils feel when preparing for exams, is it high, medium or low, and the last question has to do with the modules pupils tend to stress over the most.

2) Section Two

Four questions are designed in this section, in the first one pupils are asked to answer if their minds go blank during exams and the reason behind it, the second question is about the level of stress they feel during exams. Then, the third question is about the discomforts they have during exams, trembling hands and concentration difficulties for instance. In the fourth question pupils are asked to answer if they have ever left the examination room because of stress.

3) Section Three

Two questions are designed in this section, the first one is about the level of stress students feel after exams, is it high, medium or low, the second question is about students' attitude towards the exam.

4) Section Four

There are five questions in this section, in the first one students are asked to answer whether they think that exam stress can be a motivational factor to work harder. Then, in the second question they are asked if their teachers help them to manage their stress, the third one is about students' suggestions to manage stress and in the fourth question they are asked if they think their teachers offer enough help to help them control their stress. Finally, the last question deals with pupils' academic performance.

2. 8. 1. 1. 3 The Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is administrated to first year students of BenguellaTouati's High School, literary stream in Mostaganem. It is administrated on the 14th of April, 2019. The

target population of the research consists of twenty (20) pupils, seventeen (17) female and three (3) male. Noticeably, the pupils were helpful, all the questions were answered except for some open-ended questions.

2. 8. 1. 1. 4 Limitations of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires tend to be the most appropriate research tool. However, we have noticed some limitations in our research, one of these limitations is that the participants did not answer all the questions especially open-ended questions, they prefer “yes” “no” questions. Some of them failed to understand some questions In addition to this, some participants did not take it seriously, and they didn’t give the questionnaires back.

2. 8. 1. 2 The Interview

In addition to the use of the questionnaire as a research tool in this study, we depended also on the use of the interview which is the verbal conversation between two people with the objective of collecting relevant information for the purpose of research. According to Creswell (2009): “Interviews are primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audiotapes are utilized to allow for more consistent transcription”

Easwaramoorthy&Fataneh, Z (2006) describe interview as:

A conversation for gathering information. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the telephone.

The internet is also emerging a tool for interviewing. (p.1)

2. 8. 1. 2. 1 The Aim of the Interview

The aim of this interview is to guarantee mutual understanding, and to explore more in-depth information and data about the ideas towards exam stress. The students’ thoughts are helpful to understand the causes and the features of exam stress and how they can reduce it and manage it.

2. 8. 1. 2. 2 The Description of the Interview

The interview constitutes of eight (8) questions, six (6) open-ended and two (2) closed-ended ones. The first question aims to know if pupils think that revising a night before each

exam is enough. In the second question, students are asked whether they find it stressful having more than one exam a day or not. Then, the next question has to do with students' preparations for exams. The fourth question is about the difficulties students face in exams which means the difficulties that cause stress. The fifth question is about the things that make exam stressful, and what's hard about exams. In the sixth question, pupils are asked to give their opinions about the consequences of exam stress, then, the seventh question has to do with the things students can do to manage and reduce the level of stress. Finally, question number eight is about the things the teachers can do to help their students manage stress.

2. 8. 1. 2. 3 The Administration of the Interview

The interview as well was designed for the first year pupils of Benguella Touati's High School, literary stream in Mostaganem. It was administered on the 14th, 17th and the 28th of April, 2019. The target population of the research consisted of ten (10) students, eight (8) female and two (2) male. The interview was held in a friendly environment where the students were so cooperative because all the questions were answered.

2. 8. 1. 2. 4 Limitations of the Interview

Conducting the interview for the students was a bit difficult because some of the participants (females) did not accept to be recorded, it was time consuming, starting from the preparation of the interview, taking the interview and the interpretation of the responses, all these required much time.

2. 9 Conclusion

This chapter describes the research methodology; it provides a detailed description to the practical procedures that we designed in order to conduct our research with. It constituted of the context of the study, a description of the methods used as well as the sample population, and the research methods, which are the questionnaire and the interview, as well as their limitations, in addition to the participants chosen in our research. The following chapter will describe and analyze the results and the findings.

CHAPTER THREE

Data Analysis

3. 1 Introduction

This chapter represents the data analysis and interpretation. First, it will begin with the analysis and the findings of the questionnaire, then, the analysis of the interview. Finally, some suggestions and recommendations are going to be presented in order to help pupils manage exam stress. Moreover, the current chapter is divided into three sections.

3. 2 SECTION ONE

3. 2. 1 Description of Pupils' Questionnaire & Interview

The questionnaire consists of four sections including sixteen questions of both closed and open-ended questions, while the interview consists of eight questions. These questions are designed to elicit student's comments about the causes and effects of exam stress on their academic performances. The sample consists of twenty (20) students for the questionnaire and ten (10) students for the interview.

3. 3 SECTION TWO

3. 3. 1 The Analysis of the Questionnaire:

To come up with reasonable answers to the research questions, data analysis shows that:

3. 3. 1.1 Section 01

Question one: Have you ever experienced exam stress?

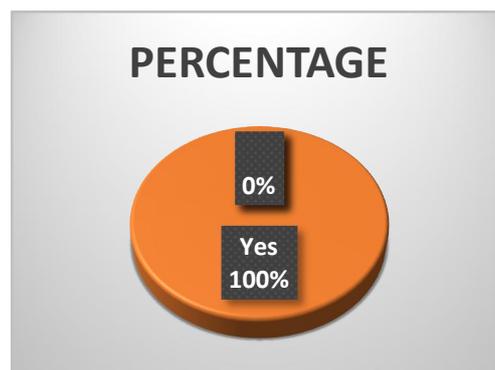


Figure 3.1: Exam Stress Experience

The figure above shows that all the participants (100%) have experienced exam stress.

Question two: When do you experience exam stress?

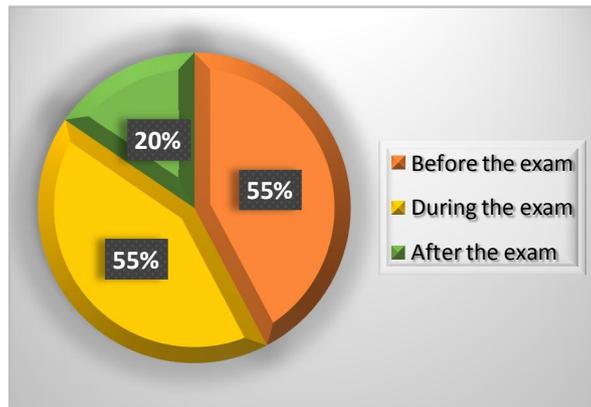


Figure 3.2: Time of Exam Stress

The second question intended to know when pupils experience stress. The statistics reveals that 55% experience stress before and during exams, while 20% experience it after exams.

Question three: What are the most stressful things about doing an exam?

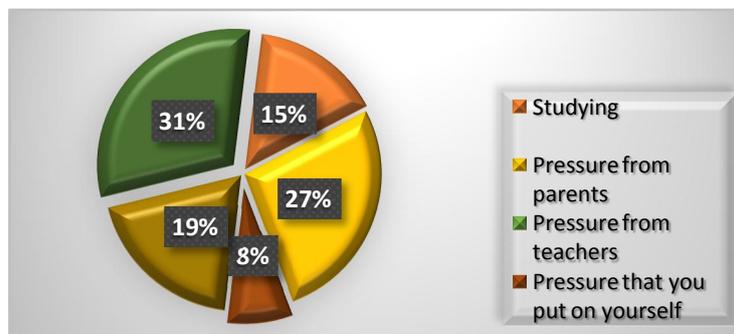


Figure 3.3: The Most Stressful Things about Exams

We can notice that 31% of students claimed that time management leading up to exams is the most stressful thing. However, 27% said that the pressure from parents is the most stressful thing about exams, moreover, 19% of them said the preparation for exams. In addition, 15% of the participants claimed that studying is the most stressful thing about exam, and 8% of them confirmed that the pressure they put on themselves causes stress.

Question four: How do you prepare for exams?

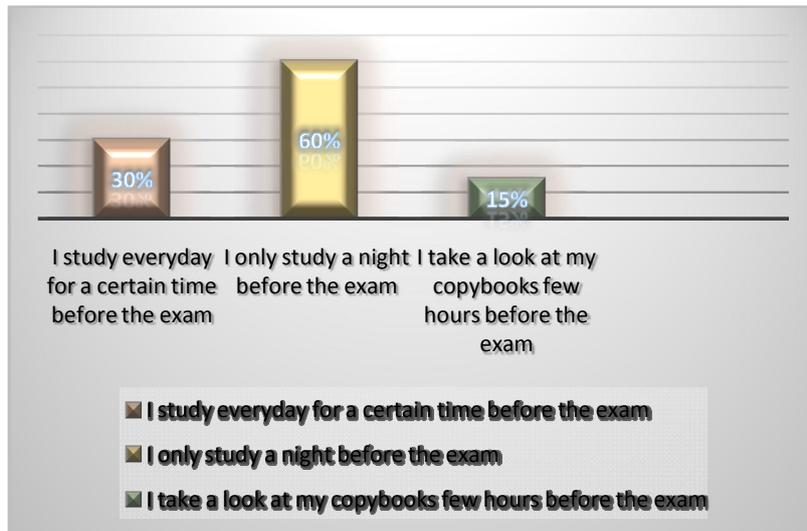


Figure 3.4: Exams Preparation

This figure shows that 60% out of twenty participants study a night before exams, however, 30% of them study every day for a certain time before exams, while 15% of them take a look at their copybooks few hours before the exam.

Question five: What is the level of stress you feel when preparing for exams?

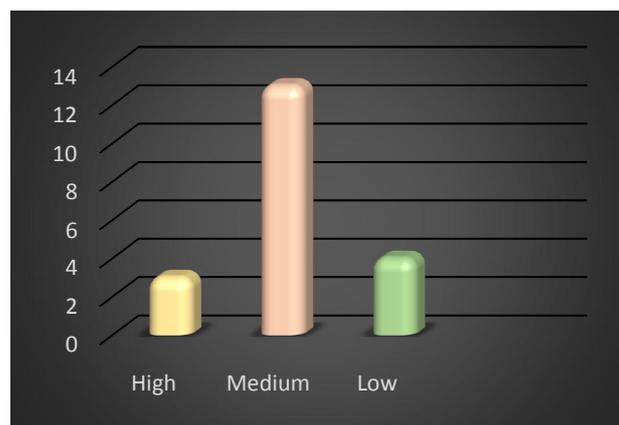


Figure 3.5: Level of Stress when Preparing for Exams

It is noticed that the level of stress the majority of the participants (65%) feel when preparing for exams is medium, however, 20% have a low level of stress and 15% have a high stress level.

Question six: Which subject do you tend to stress over the most?

Students	Module	Stress	%
20	English	6	30%
20	Mathematics	13	65%
20	Arabic	2	10%
20	Physics	6	30%
20	French	2	10%
20	History	1	5%

Table 3.1: Stressful Subjects

The figure above shows that 65% of the participants tend to stress over mathematics, while 30% stress over English and Physics, and 10% tend to stress over other subjects such as French, Arabic 10%, while 5% stress over History.

3. 3. 1. 2 Section 02

Question one: Does your mind go blank during exams? Why?

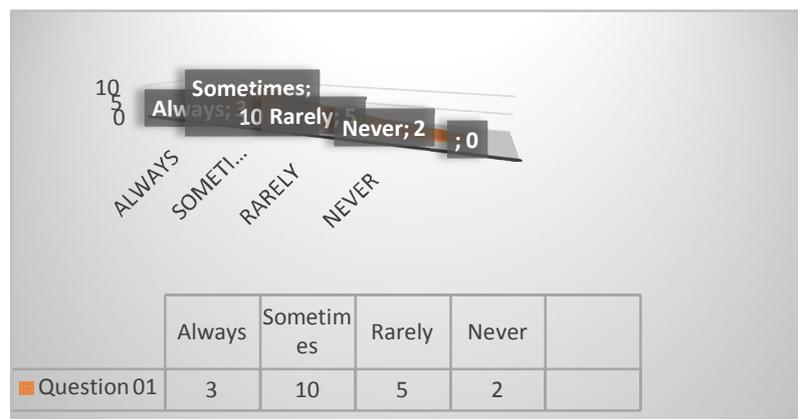


Figure 3.6: Mind Blanking out During Exams

This questions intended to know how many times the participants blank out during exams, 50% of them claimed that they sometimes blank out. However, 25% of them rarely blank out, moreover, 15% of them always blank out while 10% confirmed that they have never blanked out during exams.

Why do you blank out during exams?

Students	Reasons of blanking out	Blanking out	Results
20	Bad revising methods	4	20%
20	Concentration difficulties	4	20%
20	Noise	3	15%
20	Stress	4	20%
20	Poor preparation	2	10%
20	Nothing	2	10%

Table 3.2: Reasons of Mind Blanking out during Exams

The table above shows that 20% of the participants consider that bad revising methods, concentration difficulties and stress are the most common reasons of blanking out during exams while the answer of 15% of them was noise, however, 10% of the pupils confirmed that bad preparation is the reason of blanking out, and the other 10% said nothing.

Question two: What is the level of stress you feel during the exam?

Pupils	Stress level	Answers	%
20	High	5	25%
20	Medium	12	60%
20	Low	3	15%

Table 3.3: Stress level during the exam

The aim behind this questions is to know the level of stress each participant feel during exams. As a result, 60% of the participants have a medium stress level during exams, 25% have a high level and 15% tend to have a low level of stress during their exams.

Question three: Which of the following discomforts do you have during exams?

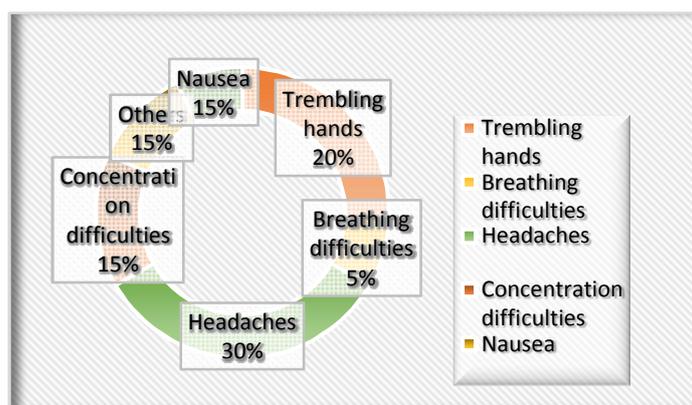


Figure 3.7: Exams' Discomforts

The table and figure below show that the majority of the participants (30%) suffer from headaches when they stress out in exams. However, 20% said that their hands tremble and

20% of them said that they have some concentration difficulties, while 15% suffer from nausea and other discomforts such as fast heart beating, and finally 5% of the participants have breathing difficulties.

Question four: Have you ever left the examination room because of stress?

Students	Have you ever left the examination room because of stress	Answers	Results %
20	Yes	4	20%
20	No	13	65%
20	Sometimes	3	15%

Table 3.4: Leaving the Examination Room because of Stress

The aim behind this question is to know whether stress affect pupils and make them leave the examination room because of stress or not. The results show that 20% of the participants have left the examination room because of stress, while 15% said that they sometimes leave the examination room. However, 65% admitted that they have never left the examination room because of stress.

3. 3. 1. 3 Section 03

Question one: What is the level of stress you feel after the exam?

Students	Stress level	Answers	%
20	High	6	30%
20	Medium	11	55%
20	Low	8	40%

Table 3.5: Stress Level after the Exam

The analysis shows that the majority (55%) of the students tend to have a medium level of stress after exams. However, 40% have a high level of stress while 30% have a low level of stress after their exams.

Question two: What is your attitude towards the exam?

Students	Attitude	Answers	Percentage
20	Positive	2	10%
20	Bad	1	5%
20	Negative	6	30%
20	Angry at teachers (Hard exams)	2	10%
20	Afraid of the parents	3	15%
20	Normal	2	10%
20	Worrying about the results (Marks)	4	20%

Table 3.6: Exams' Attitude

The table above shows that 30% of the participants have a negative attitude towards exams, however, 20% of them just worry about marks, 15% of the participants are afraid of their parents, while 10% have a positive attitude toward exams. Moreover, 10% of the participants blame their teachers because of their difficult and complicated exams, 10% have a normal attitude toward exams, and finally, 5% have a bad attitude towards exams.

3. 3. 1. 4 Section 04

Question one: Do you think that exam stress can be a motivational factor to work harder? Explain

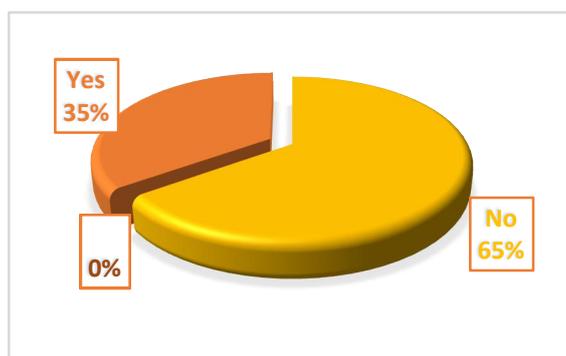


Figure 3.8: Stress as a Motivational Factor to Work Harder

Why do you think that stress can be a motivational factor to work harder?

Students	Choices (Positive & Negative) Answers	%
20	A cause to study more	5%
20	To have good marks	10%
20	To do more efforts	15%
20	It gives a bad feeling	15%
20	Feeling nervous and afraid	10%
20	Doing worst in exams	10%
20	No answer	35%

Table 3.7: Student’s Explanations

The aim of this questions is to know if students find stress a motivational factor to work harder. 35% agreed while 65% disagreed.

Question two: Do your teachers help you to manage stress? How?

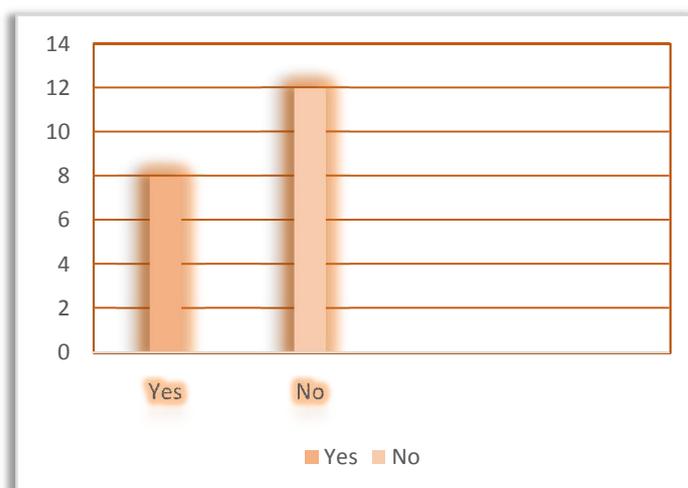


Figure 3.9: Teacher’s Help in Managing Stress

How can your teachers help you to manage stress?

Students	Suggested answers	X	Results
20	They make it worst (raise it)	2	10%
20	They don't care	1	5%
20	They discourage us (exams will be hard)	4	20%
20	They give us solutions to problems	1	5%
20	They say good words (exams will be easy)	4	20%
20	They encourage us	3	15%
20	No answer	5	25%

Table 3.8: Teachers’ Help in Managing Stress

The pupils (40%) who answered with “Yes” said that their teachers help them managing their stress by encouraging them, by saying good words, for example they tell them that exams will be so easy and they also give them solutions to their problems. Whereas the majority of students (60%) who answered with “No” claimed that their teachers had never helped them to manage stress, they even make it worst and raise it because they keep on saying that exams will be difficult, in other words, they discourage them.

Question three: What do you suggest to manage stress?

Students	Suggested answers	X	Percentage
20	Studying well	3	15%
20	Avoiding pressure	2	10%
20	More concentration	3	15%
20	Yoga	1	5%
20	Eating healthy food	2	10%
20	Eating chocolate	1	5%
20	Good preparation	2	10%
20	Time organization and management	2	10%
20	No answer	4	20%

Table 3.9: Suggestions to Manage Stress

The aim of this questions is to know what students suggest to minimize and manage their stress. 15% of the participants said that to manage stress they have to study well with more concentration. Moreover, 10% think that they can manage stress by organizing their time, avoiding pressure from parents and teachers, having a good preparation for exams, in addition to eating healthy food. While 5% said that playing yoga and eating chocolate are good solutions to manage stress and unfortunately 20% gave no answer.

Question four: Do you that think teachers offer enough help to students to control their stress?

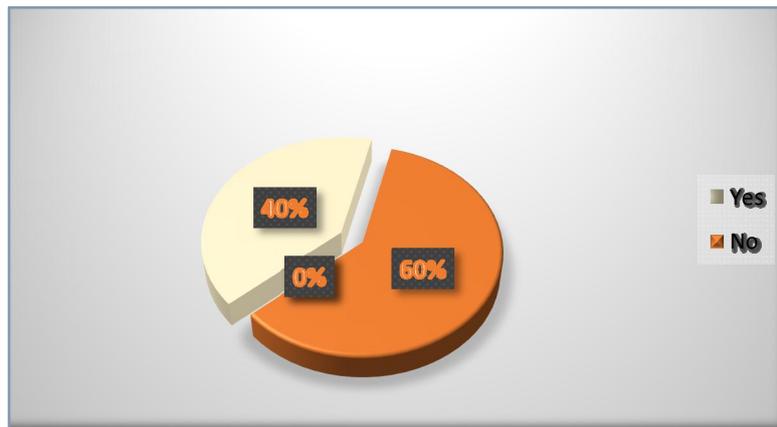


Figure 3.10: Teachers Offering Enough Help to Students to Control Stress

The result shows that the majority of the participants (60%) confirm that teachers do not offer enough help to help them controlling stress while 40% said the opposite.

Question Five: Do you think that stress affect your academic performance?

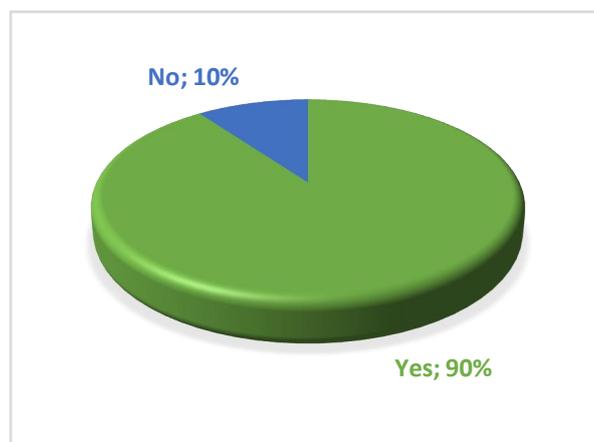


Figure 3.11: Stress Affecting Pupils’ Academic Performance

The results show that 90% of the participants confirmed that stress affect their academic performance while 10% confirmed the opposite.

3. 3. 2. Discussion of the Questionnaire's Results

Based on the data gathered and analyzed from the students' questionnaire, it is found that:

- The majority of the participants have experienced exam stress before and during exams. They think that the most stressful things about doing an exam are pressure from parents and time management during exams.
- All the participants revise their lessons a night before exams, while some others only take a look at their copybooks few hours before exams. In addition, they tend to stress over the module of mathematics, English and Arabic.
- All the participants suffer from mind blanking during exams which causes some discomforts such as trembling hands, headaches, concentration difficulties and nausea. In addition, the majority of the participants confirmed that they have left the examination room because of stress.
- Pupils' attitudes towards exams are negative, they believe that stress can never be a motivational factor to work harder, it just makes it worse. Moreover, they confirm that their teachers have never helped them to manage and control their stress, they believe that they do not care about them and they might be the reason of stress.
- Exam stress affect pupils' academic performance.
- According to the participants, there are many suggestions to manage stress such as studying well, avoiding pressure, managing and organizing time, eating chocolate and healthy food. In addition, they think that yoga might be a good exercise to manage stress.

3. 4 SECTION THREE

3. 4. 1 The Analysis of the Findings of the Interview

To come up with reasonable answers to the research questions, data analysis shows that:

Question One: Students' opinions about revising a night before exams

In this study, the majority of the students (7) confirmed that revising a night before exams is not enough, while (3) of them confirmed the opposite.

Question Two: Do you find it stressful having more than one exam a day?

Six interviewees admitted that it is stressful having more than one exam, according to them, this will cause pressure. While, the other four interviewees confirmed that it is not stressful having more than one exam a day but no more than two examinations per day.

Question Three: How do you like to study for exams?

Four pupils confirmed that they always revise a night before an exam, two of them revise the last minute before having the exam and one of them said that he revises a whole week before it. In addition, another pupil added that she revises by organizing her time and lessons by priority. The ninth pupil said that he always memorizes his lessons and the last participant believes that preparing a collection of questions and trying to answer them is the appropriate way to revise.

Question Four: What are the difficulties you face in exams?

In this question, three interviewees believe that indirect questions are the most difficult thing they face in exams, two of them said that they lose ideas, another two added that they face difficulties in wasting time. Moreover, the last two pupils suffer from losing concentration in exams.

Question Five: What makes exams stressful?

Concerning this question, the majority of the pupils think that complicated questions (3), marks (3) and time organization (2) make exams stressful. Two others said that they suffer from pressure from parents and from difficult questions in exams.

Question Six: What are the consequences of exam stress?

According to four participants, bad marks are the first result of exams stress, the others added that loss of concentration, lack of understanding, psychological issues and confusion are the consequences of exam stress. While one pupil believes that exam stress has good consequences.

Question Seven: What are the things you can do to manage stress?

Regarding this question, two pupils believe that eating chocolate helps them manage stress, while the answers of the others was self-confidence, sleeping well, revising well and in groups, having positive attitude towards exams and organizing the revision time is the best way to manage stress.

Question Eight: What are the things your teachers can do to help you manage stress?

The majority of the participants (5) confirm that their teachers can help them manage stress by encouraging and supporting them, (3) others think that they can help them by giving them advice and by preparing easy exams while, the last two pupils confirm that their teachers cannot help them.

3. 4. 2 Discussion of the Interview's Results

Based on the data gathered and analyzed from the students' interview I found that:

- The interviewees think that revising a night before exams is not enough but they always do it. They also think that having more than one exam a day is stressful. In addition, they all prepare for exams by revising a night before it and sometimes few hours before.
- The difficulties participants face in exams are in organizing their ideas and wasting time, indirect questions and pressure are also one of the difficulties they face. They tend to stress over the marks and pressure from parents.
- According to students, exam stress has bad consequences such as confusion, lower grades and some psychological issues. They believe that to manage stress they have to be confident and rely on themselves, revise in groups, sleep well and have a positive attitude towards exams.
- The interviewees believe that their teachers can help them manage stress by encouraging and supporting them, giving them advices and preparing easy exams.

3. 5Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present research, it is advisable to suggest these recommendations to students who are suffering from exam stress and anxiety:

- Good eating habits should be priority of students in relation to their stress management.
- Enough sleep and exercise is an important tool to manage stress.
- Positive thinking is an essential stress relieving technique, this eliminates the thoughts of failure.
- Students should manage their revision time wisely, they mustn't revise for an exam last minute or a night before.
- Avoiding pressure from both parents and teachers is a good way to get rid of stress.

- Students should never compare themselves with other students because their learning abilities are not the same.
- Teachers must help their students to minimize their stress.

3. 6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to analyze the main data gathered by using two data collection tools namely the questionnaire and the interview. Since stress is the major difficulty faced by students in their learning institutions, there is a need for a proper preparation during the exam period, positive thinking, good eating and sleeping habits as well as time management leading up to exams to get rid of stress.

General Conclusion

The current research is concerned with the causes and features of exams. The main purpose of this investigation is to identify factors that cause stress among secondary school pupils in exams, and to identify its features, as well as to determine suitable measures to solve this problem, and find techniques to deal with stress during the exam. Throughout this work, the researcher tried to answer the research questions and examine the validity of the hypotheses.

For the purpose of examining these hypotheses, the research work was divided into three main chapters; the first chapter was a theoretical background about exam stress, then, the second chapter was devoted to the methodology, data collection tools and data analysis. The third chapter dealt with the discussion of the findings gathered from the research tools. This chapter was concluded with some recommendations addressed to secondary school pupils to manage their stress in exams.

The findings show that the majority of secondary school pupils have experienced exam stress

Based on the data analyzed from the questionnaire, it is noticed that the majority of the pupils have experienced exam stress due to many reasons such as pressure, time management and poor preparation for exams. The findings have also shown that the features of exam stress differ from one pupil to another, they don't express it the same way and the most important thing is that exam stress affects pupils' academic performance. In addition, the majority of the participants confirmed that exam stress affect their academic performance.

Based on the data gathered from the interview, we found that the difficulties participants face in exams are in organizing their ideas and wasting time, indirect questions and pressure are also one of the difficulties they face. Moreover, they tend to stress over the marks and pressure from parents.

All in all, according to the results of this research, we can consider that exam stress is a major problem that most of pupils face, to manage this phenomenon, pupils must follow some steps while preparing for exams, they should have a positive attitude towards exams, prepare well and manage their time. In addition, teachers should offer enough help to their students to manage their exam stress.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Dear pupils,

I would be grateful if you accept to answer this questionnaire, your responses will help me in my research about exam stress. Your help is much appreciated

Section One:

1. Have you ever experienced exam stress?

Yes

No

2. When do you experience stress?

Before the exam

During the exam

After the exam

3. What are the most stressful things about doing an exam?

Studying

Pressure from parents

Pressure from teachers

Pressure that you put on yourself

Preparation for exams

Time management leading up to exams

4. How do you prepare for exams?

I study every day for a certain time before the exam

I only study a night before the exam

I take a look on my copybooks few hours before the exam

Others (please specify)

5. What is the level of stress you feel when preparing for exams?

High

Medium

Low

6. Which module do you tend to stress over the most?

English

Mathematics

Arabic

Physics

Others (please specify)

Section Two:

1. Does your mind go blank during exams?

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Why?.....

2. What is the level of stress you feel during the exam?

High

Medium

Low

3. Which of the following discomforts do you have during exams?

Trembling hands

Breathing difficulties

Headaches

Speech disorder

Butterflies

Concentration difficulties

Racing heartbeat

Nausea

Others

4. Have you ever left the examination room because of stress?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Section Three:

1. What is the level of stress you feel after the exam?

High

Medium

Low

2. What is your attitude towards the exam?

Section Four:

1. Do you think that exam stress can be a motivational factor to work harder?

Yes

No

How?.....

2. Do you teachers help you to manage stress?

Yes

No

3. What do you suggest to manage stress?

4. Do you think that teachers offer enough help to students to control their stress?

Yes

No

5. Do you think that stress can affect your academic performance?

Yes

No

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 2

Interview

Q1: Do you think that revising a night before an exam is enough?

Q2: Do you find it stressful having more than one exam a day?

Q3: How do you like to study for exams?

Q4: What are the difficulties you face in exams? (Difficulties that cause stress)

Q5: What makes exams stressful? (What's hard about exams?)

Q6: What are the consequences of exam stress?

Q7: What are the things you can do to manage stress?

Q8: What are the things your teachers can do to help you manage stress?