

# Studies about the State of Perceived Stress and Determining Risk Factors; case of Yemeni Students community Residing in Morocco.

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## Abstract

Stress qualifies both a constraining situation but also the physiological process put in place by our body to adapt it. However, the students' period is characterized by difficulties which make this behavior very widespread. The aim is to study the state of psychological health, and determining factors. the study is carried out on 197 (80.2% of men), studying in Moroccan higher education establishments. The stress test applied is Sheldon Cohen's, (1983) based on 10 items with 5 point ratings from "never" to "very often". The average age of the respondents is  $32.84 \pm 0.586$  years.. The average length of residence is  $4.74 \pm 0.178$  years (66% of these students are married). In addition, the distribution of the respondents' scores shows a prevalence of 57.7% (n = 113) in this category see life as a perpetual threat. The chi2 independence shows that only age has a significant influence on perceived stress (chi2 = 7.665; p <0.05). Indeed, 61.66% of respondents aged less than 35 years showed a perpetual threat against 51.31% were over 35 years old. Then, the Yemeni authorities must provide support sessions for new students about French language learning, orientation on Moroccan social and cultural life and.

Keywords: behavior - prevalence - determining factors – Yemen

## 1. 1.Introduction

Student's life, for a majority, is one of the most relaxing and fulfilling periods of life. In contrast, young people at this age are most likely exposed to behavioral illnesses such as stress and anxiety. Obviously, the stress of young people is above all an accumulation of worries which causes for 70% of them to feel overwhelmed by their daily lives[1]. In Morocco, 25 years ago, the number of foreigners enrolled in various higher education institutions reached the bar of 20,000 students[2]. The obstacles and challenges encountered by these foreign students can contribute to weakening them psychologically and socially, among these factors we cite linguistic obstacles, financial constraints, difficulties in adapting to the education system, lack of peer support, etc[3]. These barriers have a direct impact on learning and success in higher education[4;5].

Indeed, some international students come from countries and cultures where mental illness is more strongly marked out and where care is less accessible and considered less "acceptable"[6]. Faced with these constraints, the student must develop certain protective factors such as social commitment and sociability[7]. These authors, for their part, offer ways for action on the psychological well-being of foreign students, such as Educational, Community and Psychosocial.

In Morocco, the Yemeni community represented by students is 367 studying in different Moroccan educational establishments[8]. These students face many socio-economic and educational challenges due to the conditions in Yemen. The objective of this work is to develop the mental health status Yemeni students residing in Morocco as well as the determination of socio-demographic factor of stress.

## 2. 2. Material and Method

### 2.1. Population and study area

This is a cross-sectional study carried out during 2017 concerns 197 Yemeni students living in three Moroccan zones (Rabat / sale / kenitra); (Tangier / Tetouan) and Grand casa Blanca. The choice of respondents was free and random and concerns both sexes (158 male and 39 female).

### 2.2. Exploitation tool (questionnaire)

The choice was set on the Perceived Stress Questionnaire published by psychologist 9;10. This test assesses how stressful a person overall perceives situations in his life. This test is made up of 10 items with a 5-point rating from “never” to “very often” (items 4, 5, 7, 8 are reversed). A telephone conversation took place with each student to explain the objective and interest of the study as well as the ethical aspects, including the volunteering and anonymity of this survey, and to set an appointment to complete the questionnaire (table 1).

**Table 1. Definition of the perceived stress items**

1	Have you been disturbed by an unexpected event?
2	Did you find it difficult to control the important things in your life?
3	Did you feel nervous or stressed?
4	Did you feel confident in dealing with your personal issues?
5	Did you feel that things were going the way you wanted?
6	Did you think you couldn't take on all the things you had to do?
7	Were you able to control your nervousness?
8	Did you feel you were in control?
9	Have you felt irritated because things were beyond your control?
10	Did you find that the difficulties accumulated to such an extent that you could no longer control them?

Interpretation of scores:

This table shows that, less than 21 (knows how to manage stress); between 21 and 26 (generally able to cope with stress) and greater than 26 (perpetual threat).

After filtering the data collected, we worked on the statistical analysis of the items (mean score; standard deviation, frequency, etc.) and joint analyzes such as the chi2 independence test with 5% error.

### 2.3. Statistical Analysis

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Socio-demographic

#### characteristics of the Yemeni population studied

The distribution of Yemeni respondents (80.2% of male) by zone shows that 62.94% reside in the Rabat

/ Sale / Kenitra zone; 18.78% the Tangier / Tetouan area and 18.27% the grand Casa Blanca. The average age of the respondents is  $32.84 \pm 0.586$  years (minimum age of 18 and maximum age of 60), of which 74.11% are under 45 years old. In fact, the average length of stay is  $4.74 \pm 0.178$  years. The most recent of respondents have spent one year and the oldest have resided for 13 years. On the other hand, 66% of these students are married, compared to 34% are single (Table 2).

**Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

variable	modality	frequency
City	Rabat./Sale/kenitra	62,94%
	Tanger/Tetouan	18,79%
	Casa Blanca	18,27%
Gender	Men	80,2%
	Women	19,8%
Age	< 45 year	74,11%
	>45 year	25,89%
Marital status	Married	66%
	Single	34%
Period of residence	<5 years	50%
	>5 years	50%

### 3.2. Perceived Stress Scale: Perceived Stress Scale, PSS

The study of the reliability of the test shows the Cronbach index reaches 0.780 with a value of 3.36 and that the two axes absorb 67.2% of the total variation. The table below presents the results of answer choices. Indeed, less than 20% of people answered quite often to often for items one (During the last month how many times have you been disturbed by an unexpected event). Also in the case question three During the last month how many times have you felt nervous or stressed?, 6 In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going the way you wanted them to. In

addition to 8, in the past month, how often have you felt that you were in control? and 10– In the past month, how many times have you found that the difficulties got so much that you couldn't control them? . However, between 20 and 30% of the people surveyed answered often for items 2 (During the last month how many times did it seem difficult to you to control the important things in your life?); 5 (In the past month how often have you felt that things were going the way you wanted?) And 9 (In the past month how often have you felt irritated because of events were beyond your control?). At the end of the questionnaire, more than 30% answered often for items for (During the last month how often did you feel confident to take charge of your personal problems?) for question seven (During the last months how many times have you been able to control your nervousness)

**Table 3. Valid percentage of item choices**

item	parameter	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often Enough	Often
1	Frequency	26	41	90	32	7
	Percent	13,3	20,9	45,9	16,3	3,6
2	Frequency	39	33	65	39	20
	Percent	19,5	16,5	32,5	19,5	10,0
3	Frequency	35	59	64	26	12
	Percent	17,5	29,5	32,0	13,0	6,0
4	Frequency	0	68	51	27	50
	Percent	0,0	34,0	25,5	13,5	25,0
5	Frequency	19	51	69	34	23

	Percent	9,5	25,5	34,5	17,0	11,5
6	Frequency	35	44	80	25	12
	Percent	17,5	22,0	40,0	12,5	6,0
7	Frequency	0	76	46	37	37
	Percent	0	38,0	23,0	18,5	18,5
8	Frequency	37	66	61	32	0
	Percent	18,5	33,0	30,5	16,0	0
9	Frequency	34	58	51	36	17
	Percent	17,0	29,0	25,5	18,0	8,5
10	Frequency	60	53	48	24	11
	Percent	30,0	26,5	24,0	12,0	5,5

Principal component analysis shows that the two axes 1 and 2 alone absorb 41.83% of the total variation, with an average inertia of 2.75 (Figure 1).

The projection of the items in the space delimited by axes 1 and 2 made it possible to classify these items into two groups.

- The first group is located on the positive side of axis 1 and is made up of items 1, 3.9 and 10.

This axis shows that people who are disturbed by an unexpected event, they feel irritated because the events were out of their control

- The second group is located on the positive side of axis 2 is defined by items 4 and 7. This axis is defined by means that people who feel confident in taking charge of their personal problems are able to control their nervousness.



**Figure 1. The distribution of respondents by score shows that.**

7.7% (n = 15) of respondents have a score below 21, which means that these people know how to manage their stress, who know how to adapt and for whom there are always solutions. 34.7% (n = 68) of the respondents had a score between 21 and 26, that is to say that these people generally know how to cope with stress, but there are a certain number of

situations that they do not know not manage. Sometimes she has a feeling of helplessness which leads to emotional disturbances. She can break out of this sense of helplessness by learning strategies for change. In spite of, 57.7% (n = 113) of the respondents obtained scores above 26. These people see life as a perpetual threat: they have the feeling of

being subjected to most situations and of being unable to do anything other than to undergo them. This strong sense of helplessness linked to their representation of life can tip it into illness. Working on his thought pattern is desirable as well as a change in the way he reacts.

The chi2 independence test (Table 4), shows that only theage has a significant influence on perceived stress (chi2 = 7.665; p <0.05). Indeed, 61.66% of respondents aged less than 35 years showed a perpetual threat against 51.31% were over 35 years old.

**Table 4. Chi-square test of independence between categories of perceived stress and socio-demographic factors**

\*: significant difference at 5%

		Category perceived stress			Total	Khi2 (P value)
		Knows how to control stress	Coping with stress	A perpetual threat		
Gender	Men	4	10	25	39	1,933 (p<0,372)
	Women	11	58	88	157	
Total		15	68	113	196	
City	CASA	2	13	21	36	0,295 (p<0,830)
	TANGER - TETOUAN	3	13	21	37	
	RABAT	10	42	71	123	
Total		15	68	113	196	
Period of residence	< 5 years	10	45	75	130	002 (p<0,999)
	> 5 years	5	23	38	66	
Total		15	68	113	196	
Marital status	Single	4	22	41	67	0,699 p<0,408)
	Maried	11	46	72	129	
Total		15	68	113	196	
Age in years	<25	1	10	31	42	7.665 (p<0,050)*
	25<>35	7	28	43	78	
	35<>45	7	26	34	67	
	>45	0	4	5	9	
Total		15	68	113	196	

#### 4. Discussion

In Morocco, the Yemeni student community finds itself stuck in their place of residence. Indeed, the lack of security in Yemen, many people are still struggling to earn a living and support their families. Faced with this situation, students are unable to get in touch with their families, which remain the only source of funding or benefit from the scholarship granted by the Yemeni government. Add to this the usual problems (rent,

food, activity, transport ...). This situation finds the adequate ground for the appearance of certain psychological behaviors such as stress, depression, anxiety... ..etc. Our study is carried out on 197 students residing in three Moroccan zones. The results of the prevalence of the united state of stress show that 57.7% (n = 113) of the respondents obtained scores greater than 26 [9,10]. These people see life as a perpetual threat, they feel they are suffering most in situations and not being able to do anything but endure

them. This strong sense of helplessness linked to their representation of life can tip it to an illness. Working on his thought pattern is desirable as well as a change in the way he reacts.

According to a study by [11], it shows the importance of socioeconomic background in the academic success and mental stability of students. Also, according to a study conducted by [12] on medical students, it shows that the average stress is  $24 \pm 7.18$ . Furthermore, a study conducted in Tunisia by [13], a perceived stress level was high at 36.4% among medical students. In a new study published on January [14], nine in ten students report being stressed "at least once a year. A quarter say they are stressed throughout the year, and more worryingly, 22% (27% of female students) say they have had thoughts of suicide in the past. According to [14] and according to studies carried out by [15], the causes of this stress are multiple: examination periods (94% of respondents, including 50% permanently), the studies themselves (82%, including 27% permanently) or guidance (71%, including 25% permanently). Digital tools, and mainly smartphones, appear to have an impact on the feeling of perceived stress. Students seem to be aware of their impact on their ability to concentrate and the quality of their sleep. 39% admit to being on constant alert for this reason. 5. 5.

## 5. Conclusion

The study that we carried out with Yemeni nationals residing in Morocco, mainly students, made it possible to detect certain risk factors which are directly or indirectly linked; above all, in their financial state given the conditions of war in the country of Yemen, which makes communication difficult. Adding to this the factors linked to the conditions of their daily life such as (food, language of study, residence ...)

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