

EFL LIBYAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' STRESS LEVEL AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH LESSONS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the factors influencing the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students while studying English; and whether there is a significant correlation between their stress levels and attitudes towards English lessons. This study utilized a mixed methodology design to address the research problem. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, with eighty students from Al-Entisar Libyan secondary school in Zliten. Data was collected through questionnaire to investigate the relationship between stress levels and attitudes, and interviews with ten students to examine the factors contributing to their stress. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software, while qualitative data was organized thematically. The results revealed that academic and environmental factors contribute to students' stress levels. Additionally, no significant correlation was found between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons. The findings highlight that Libyan stakeholders should take into account EFL students' stress levels and attitudes in order to effectively achieve the goals of language learning.

Keywords: EFL Libyan students, stress level, attitude, language learning

1. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of foreign language learning, various factors affect the learning process, including motivation, attitudes, anxiety, level of stress, academic achievements, aptitudes, intelligence, age, and personality (Shams, 2008). Stress in education is recognized as a significant concern in the modern world and can manifest in various ways in a person's daily life. Franken (1994) described psycho-social stress as the body's neurological and physiological response to adapting to new conditions. For students, stress can arise from academic failures, sports, financial difficulties, health issues, or the loss of a family member or close friend. Stress is common among students, and how it is dealt with can influence their academic performance (Salami, 2001). Numerous studies have explored the relationship between stress and the performance of undergraduate students, revealing that stress affects

students' academic outcomes (Choi et al., 2007). Students have reported experiencing academic stress when facing exams, grade competition, and having excessive information to study with limited time to master it (Carveth et al., 1996).

Stress affects everyone in different ways, with two main forms identified by Stevenson and Harper (2006) in academic institutions: positive and negative consequences. The work settings in academic institutions differ from non-academic ones, leading to varying symptoms, causes, and effects of stress (Chang & Lu, 2007). Many students are also trying to learn and use a foreign language, with anxiety often intensifying when they have to speak in class or during exams and tests. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) noted that "anxiety poses several potential problems for the student of a foreign language because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention, and production of the new language" (p.86). Secondary school students experience stress from various sources, with academic stress, assignments, and examinations being the most common. Stress can stem from internal or external sources, such as pressure, conflict, frustration, or delayed gratification (Yusoff et al., 2010).

Moreover, attitude is a significant psychosocial factor in the process of learning a foreign language. Thus, when conducting research, it is crucial to focus on the attitude towards foreign language learning, as it is one of the important individual factors (Shams, 2008). Additionally, Abidin et al. (2012) emphasize that a learner's attitude towards foreign language learning, along with their individual capacity, plays a crucial role in determining their success in language acquisition.

Several previous studies (e.g., Abidin et al., 2012; Getie, 2020; Masadeh, 2021) have highlighted that students' negative attitudes towards learning English significantly contribute to their lower academic outcomes. While some research has explored the factors influencing EFL students' attitudes towards English learning (e.g., Abidin et al., 2012; Getie, 2020; Le & Le, 2022), few have delved into the internal and external factors affecting Libyan secondary school students. Consequently, this current study was conducted to identify these factors. This study also aimed to explore the connection between stress levels and the attitudes of Libyan secondary school students towards English lessons.

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1.1. Statement of the problem

Considering the widespread use of English worldwide, exploring its acquisition in a Libyan setting is crucial. Alhmali (2007) suggests that the primary goal of education in Libya is to achieve high grades and pass exams. The system does not place significant emphasis on fostering creativity or understanding the students' nature and needs (Ghwela et al., 2017). The stress levels and attitudes of Libyan secondary school students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) significantly influence their academic performance and overall learning experience. Despite the importance of English proficiency in global communication and education, many Libyan EFL students exhibit high levels of stress and negative attitudes towards English lessons. These stressors stem from various sources, including academic pressure, language anxiety, and socio-cultural expectations, which can hinder their language acquisition and retention.

Researches have shown that these stressors and negative attitudes are pivotal in determining students' success in language learning (Abidin et al., 2012). Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive research specifically addressing the internal and external factors contributing to these stress levels and attitudes among Libyan secondary school students, despite these being significant factors in learning—attitude being a key learning component and stress an emotional factor affecting learning (Yin, 2023). This gap in research highlights the necessity for in-depth investigations to understand and address these issues effectively. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the specific causes of stress among Libyan EFL secondary school students and to propose actionable solutions to enhance their learning environment and academic success. This research also aims to examine the relationship between stress levels and the attitudes of Libyan secondary school students towards English lessons.

1.2. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the factors that contribute to the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students while learning English.
2. To examine the relationship between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons.

1.3. Research Questions

This study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students while studying English?
2. Is there a significant correlation between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EFL Learners and Their Stress Levels

Many children start to feel stress as soon as they begin their schooling. According to Huh and Shin (2015), schoolchildren perceive academic competence as a reflection of their self-worth and tend to link their self-image to their academic performance. Parents introduce this concept to children, which is why academic achievement can be perceived as a stressor. Academic stress is defined as the disturbance caused by a student's evaluation of academic stressors. This stress typically arises from exams and assessments, expectations from parents and teachers, conflicts or tensions between teachers and students, and intense competition among peers (Carveth et al., 1996).

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can be a significant source of stress for students. This stress often originates from various factors such as academic pressure,

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expectations from parents and teachers, and the inherent challenges in mastering a new language. The intensity of stress experienced by EFL learners can have a profound impact on their motivation, attitudes towards learning, and overall academic performance (Madigan, & Curran, 2020; Li et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022) Research has shown that high levels of academic stress can negatively affect students' self-esteem and self-efficacy (Min, 2009; Zhang, et al., 2022). Additionally, studies indicate that academic stress is a prevalent issue among EFL students, where educational achievement is highly emphasized (Alhmali, 2007; Leung et al., 2010; Xu et al., 2022). Understanding the specific stressors affecting EFL learners is crucial for developing effective strategies to help them manage stress and improve their language learning experience.

Studies on childhood stress have shown that children react to stress in various ways. Furthermore, teachers have the ability to anticipate stress responses in school-aged children (Romer, 1993). This is encouraging for educators because, once a teacher identifies stress in a child, they can evaluate potential stressors and determine the level of stress the child is experiencing. Chandler (1987) suggested that teachers can play a pivotal role in supporting children under stress. According to Chandler, teachers act as mediators who can mitigate the negative experiences of students and buffer the impact of stress. They can establish a low-stress learning environment by setting clear and appropriate academic expectations, reducing ambiguity, and minimizing opportunities for frustration. Importantly, teachers are considered the most influential factor in effecting positive change in children's lives (Huh & Shin, 2015). Thus, teachers should strive to identify, predict, and alleviate students' stress by communicating effectively and taking an active role as environmental facilitators.

2.2. Significance of Investigating EFL Learners' Attitudes

Understanding learners' attitudes is crucial because it can significantly impact their behavior towards learning. Attitudes, whether positive or negative, towards ideas, objects, people, and situations play a pivotal role in the learning process (Zulfikar et al., 2019). This aspect has recently attracted considerable interest from researchers studying both first and

second languages. Language attitudes are directly linked to students' EFL learning, influencing their willingness to learn English effectively. Several factors, including educational, social, and individual personality traits, contribute to shaping these attitudes (Getie, 2020; Le & Le, 2022). Research consistently shows that a learner's attitude is a fundamental element of successful language acquisition, warranting its consideration as an essential component in foreign language teaching methodologies (İnal et al., 2000).

Attitudes, along with all components of human cognition, develop early in childhood and are significantly influenced by the attitudes of parents and peers (Brown, 1994). An attitude is shaped by a myriad of life experiences rather than a single event. Consequently, while it may not be readily apparent during school life, it is the responsibility of schools and educators to help students cultivate positive attitudes towards foreign language learning (İnal et al., 2000). A positive attitude typically correlates with the ease of achieving one's goals, suggesting that language learning becomes more accessible when learners possess a favorable attitude towards both the language and the learning process (Chambers, 1999). Additionally, understanding learners' attitudes towards language learning helps educators comprehend how these students approach learning the language, thereby enhancing the likelihood of their academic success (Karahan, 2008).

Enhancing learners' achievement and performance in a specific language relies not only on their individual abilities but also on their attitudes towards language learning. Hence, language learning should be primarily considered a social and psychological phenomenon, rather than merely an academic exercise (Abidin et al., 2012). Additionally, a learner's ability to master a foreign language is influenced by their perceptions and attitudes towards the target language, not just their mental capacity or language skills. Understanding the concept of attitude can improve the language learning process, shape students' behaviors and beliefs towards the new language, and its associated culture and community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Moreover, recognizing learners' attitudes is crucial as they significantly impact behaviors such as choosing a book to read or speaking in a foreign language. Positive attitudes generally lead to better achievement, while negative attitudes can hinder progress (İnal et al., 2000).

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Learners' attitudes, comprising their feelings about language use and its societal status, can either support or impede the learning process (Ahmed, 2015). Understanding learners' attitudes is crucial because they are considered one of the most important psychological factors affecting the process of foreign language learning, often determined by their beliefs about the learning outcomes (Zebaria et al., 2018). Furthermore, positive attitudes towards the foreign language and its speakers can enhance motivation, leading to better learning achievements and a positive disposition towards learning the language (Tódor & Dégi, 2016).

2.3. Related Studies

Various studies have explored the dynamics of stress and attitudes in the context of language learning. For instance, Alavinia and Salmasi (2012) conducted a study to explore the correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness levels and their attitudes towards language learning. Their research, which involved 104 male and female Iranian learners, utilized two questionnaires: one to measure shyness and another to assess language learning attitudes. Data analysis, performed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, independent samples t-test, and Eta Test, revealed no significant correlation between learners' shyness and their attitudes towards language learning. This lack of significant correlation extended to the relationship between shyness and self-image ($r = .799 > .05$), contradicting the common belief that higher levels of shyness should correlate with a less positive self-image in EFL learners. Other studies have yielded different findings. For instance, Mahir (2004) found a significant negative correlation between Malaysian learners' language learning attitudes and their language proficiency.

More recently, Le and Le (2022) explored how students' learning attitudes affect their learning outcomes. Their qualitative study focused on factors influencing Vietnamese students' attitudes towards English learning in a tertiary institution in the Mekong region. Data were collected through structured interviews with 69 first-year students. The findings highlighted both internal factors (such as self-confidence, willingness to take risks, anxiety, curiosity, and awareness of the importance of English) and external factors (including

teaching materials, curriculum design, and teacher-related factors) that influenced students' attitudes.

In a study on language anxiety, Ellis (1994) identified several causes for anxiety in a language classroom, including the fear of being compared to peers, tests, and relationships with teachers. The researcher found that some students perceived their teachers' questions as threatening. Language anxiety tends to arise in stressful classroom situations, such as during tests, oral participation, and homework checks. Ross, Niebling, and Heckert (1999) identified four primary sources of stress among college students: interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, and environmental factors.

Moreover, Getie (2020) investigated the factors influencing Ethiopian high school students' attitudes toward learning English. The study collected data from 103 students through questionnaires and group interviews. The results revealed that students generally had positive attitudes towards English learning. Social factors positively influenced these attitudes. Conversely, educational context factors, including EFL teachers and learning situations, negatively affected students' positive attitudes towards learning English. However, textbooks were found to motivate students to achieve higher learning outcomes.

Daniel and Guo (2004) examined foreign language anxiety among EFL elementary school students in Taipei County. They utilized questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document collection with 205 fifth-grade students. Similarly, Woodrow (2006) studied anxiety and speaking English as a second language among learners in Australia. Using a purpose-developed questionnaire, Woodrow explored the relationship between second language anxiety and speaking performance, finding a significant negative correlation. The main stressor identified was interacting with native speakers. The study revealed that students found communicating with the teacher and performing in front of the class to be the most stressful activities. The primary stressors reported were 'performing in front of the class' and 'talking to native speakers.'

Huh and Shin (2015) examined the relationship between stress levels in elementary school children learning English and their defense mechanisms, as well as the connection

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between these mechanisms and English achievement. They surveyed 106 fifth-grade students in a metropolitan area in Korea. Using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and t-tests, the study found a strong link between stress levels from learning English and specific defense mechanisms. The results underscored the importance of addressing stress in young English learners and helping them manage it effectively.

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that while numerous studies have explored learners' stress levels and attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language, there is a noticeable lack of research focusing on Libyan learners. Thus, this study intends to explore the specific stressors affecting Libyan EFL secondary school students. Additionally, the research seeks to understand the relationship between stress levels and the attitudes of Libyan secondary school students towards English lessons.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current study utilized a mixed-method approach to explore the specific causes of stress among Libyan EFL secondary school students and to examine the relationship between their stress levels and attitudes towards English lessons. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods in social science research as "a technique that mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study" (p. 17). Consequently, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods, employing various research instruments to gain a comprehensive understanding of the study.

The quantitative data collection tool utilized in this study was a questionnaire adapted from Sheu, Lin, and Hwang (2002) and customized to align with the research objectives. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first part included 18 closed-ended items rated on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while the second part invited students to provide additional factors or opinions through open-ended questions. To ensure all participants comprehended the questionnaire, an Arabic translation was included alongside the English items. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social

Sciences (SPSS). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was employed to determine the relationship between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with ten students from the sample, which were analyzed using thematic analysis

3.1. Participants

The participants were selected through purposive sampling. According to Merriam (2009), purposive research helps researchers gain insights from samples that offer the most learning potential. Therefore, the selected students were expected to provide valuable information about their stress levels and attitudes towards English lessons. The study involved 80 female students from Al-Entisar secondary school in Zliten, Libya, aged between 16 and 18 years and spanning three different grades.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the entire sample of 80 students to investigate the relationship between their stress levels and attitudes towards English lessons. For qualitative data, a simple stratified random sampling technique was employed. Amin (2005) noted that randomization is effective in creating equivalent representative groups across all relevant variables considered by the researcher. To gain a deeper understanding of the specific causes of stress among Libyan EFL secondary school students, interviews were conducted with 10 participants from the total sample of 80 students.

4. RESULTS

4.1 What factors contribute to the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students while studying English?

The first research question addressed in this study was descriptive. Ten students participated in the interviews, and the qualitative data collected from these Libyan secondary school students in Zliten revealed two main factors contributing to their stress levels: academic and environmental factors. These findings align with the four sources of stress

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identified by Ross, Niebling and Heckert (1999) among college students, namely academic, environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors.

In this study, the primary factors identified were academic and environmental. The academic factors were further divided into five categories: proficiency levels, grammar and vocabulary difficulties, exam preparation, the role of teachers, and speaking in front of the class. Environmental factors included the classroom climate and relationships with family and friends.

1. Academic Factors of Stress

Academic factors contributing to stress can be divided into five sub-categories: i) Level of Proficiency ii) Grammar and Vocabulary Difficulties iii) Preparing for Exams iv) Teachers' Role v) Speaking in Front of the Class.

I. Level of Proficiency

Although most students responded "YES" to the first interview question, "*Do you feel comfortable learning English in school?*" it was found that the major source of stress for Libyan secondary school students was their proficiency level. Students experienced stress when they couldn't answer teachers' questions, understand their teachers, or read something in English. Low proficiency in the four language skills emerged as the primary stressor.

Extracts from the interviews between the researcher (R) and students (Ss1, 2, 4, 8, 9, and 10) highlighted how low proficiency causes stress. When asked, "*What makes you feel nervous/uneasy in your English class?*" one student mentioned, "*What makes me feel worried and stressed is grammar lessons and speaking inside the class.*" Another one said that "*I find studying English, particularly reading skills, quite tedious. The lengthy texts filled with numerous words are overwhelming and stressful*". While one of the students expressed, "*the tasks assigned are too difficult, and it's frustrating to deal with something that I don't understand at all.*" From the participants' responses, six out of ten students, or 60%, indicated that their proficiency level was the main source of stress in their English classes.

II. Grammar and Vocabularies Difficulties

As non-native English speakers, Libyan students face numerous challenges with grammar and vocabulary, leading to stress in their English classes. During interviews, students (1, 2, 5, 7, and 9) highlighted these issues. One student remarked, "*There are some difficult words and also the traditional way to explain the grammar which increases my confusion in distinguishing tenses.*" Another student mentioned that "*I lack the vocabulary to answer my teacher's questions, which makes me apprehensive about attending English classes.*" Also, one of the students explained "*I struggle to understand what others are saying due to my limited vocabulary.*"

III. Preparing for Exams

During the interviews, Libyan secondary school students identified exams as a significant source of academic stress. When asked to explain what makes their English class sessions stressful, five students (1, 3, 5, 6, and 9) mentioned exams as a primary stressor. One of the students expressed, "*Exams are one of the reasons that make me feel worried during English class. My focus is solely on the curriculum, which hinders effective language learning. Studying without the pressure of exams is more relaxing.*" Another one explained that "*The curriculum is overwhelming, making exams at the end of the semester particularly stressful for me. This stress prevents me from enjoying the classes*".

IV. Teachers' Role

Teachers significantly influence students' attitudes towards subjects, potentially making them like or dislike a subject. Some students feel uneasy when their teacher closely monitors their English performance. When researchers asked, "*Can you explain things that are stressful in your English class session?*" four students (S2, 5, 8, 10) identified their teacher's approach as the primary source of their stress. One student mentioned, "*The teacher's way of explaining and conveying information,*" and she continued that "*I enjoy English, but my teacher's teaching technique often makes it boring, diminishing my interest in the subject.*" While another expressed, "*I feel embarrassed to ask the teacher to repeat*

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anything, avoiding any awkward situation." One of the students declared that *"Some teachers are very strict and unfriendly, which causes me a lot of stress"*. Additionally, another one stated, *"some teachers lack dedication and responsibility in teaching, often leaving me to learn on my own, which is quite frustrating"*.

V. Speaking in Front of the Class

In this study, many students reported feeling nervous when speaking in front of the class. This anxiety stemmed from the fear of not responding correctly and the possibility of classmates laughing at their mistakes. Students also worried about losing face. According to (S3, 4, and 8), some students found speaking English in front of others more nerve-wracking than individual oral tests. One student expressed, *"I fear my colleagues will laugh at me if I make a mistake, and the teacher might punish me by giving me low marks."* Two other students mentioned their shyness, with one saying, *"...I feel shy in front of my classmates and worry about giving wrong answers, even though I excel in other subjects where everything seems easy to understand."* Another student claimed that *"I experience pressure when I have to speak English in front of a large audience"*. One of the students emphasized that *"I struggle with speaking. Every time I'm in class, I hope my teachers don't call on me"*.

2. Environmental Factors of Stress

Environmental stress factors can be divided into two sub-categories: i) family and friends, and ii) the classroom climate.

I. Family and Friends

Several situations related to family and friends contribute to student stress in English classes. When asked, *"What makes you feel nervous/uneasy in your English class?"* One student responded, *"For me, there is nothing in a person that makes me feel agitated, but sometimes I feel so because of circumstances not related to school or the subject itself."* Further, when the researcher asked, *"Can you explain things that are stressful in your English class session?"* Two students mentioned, S3 *"There are some reasons related to my family*

and my friends," and S6 "There are no factors related to the class, rather it is my state of mind." Another one explained that "...actually, my parents don't encourage me to learn English, maybe because they don't like it. For this reason, I also don't feel like learning it". Also, one of the students elaborated that "My friends don't enjoy the English class, and I feel bored in it just like them".

II. Classroom Climate

The classroom environment significantly affects students' stress levels while studying English. When asked, "*Can you explain things that are stressful in your English class session?*" two students (S6 and S7) mentioned issues such as high temperatures due to electricity cuts and noise from outside the classroom. One student stated, "*...other factors like high temperatures due to electricity cuts or noise that some students outside make.*" Another added, "*Some external factors, such as electricity cuts leading to increased classroom temperatures and noise from students outside.*" One of the students explained that "*I find learning English unenjoyable due to the poor conditions of the classroom. The classroom size, lighting, and uncomfortable temperatures*".

4.2. Is there a significant correlation between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons?

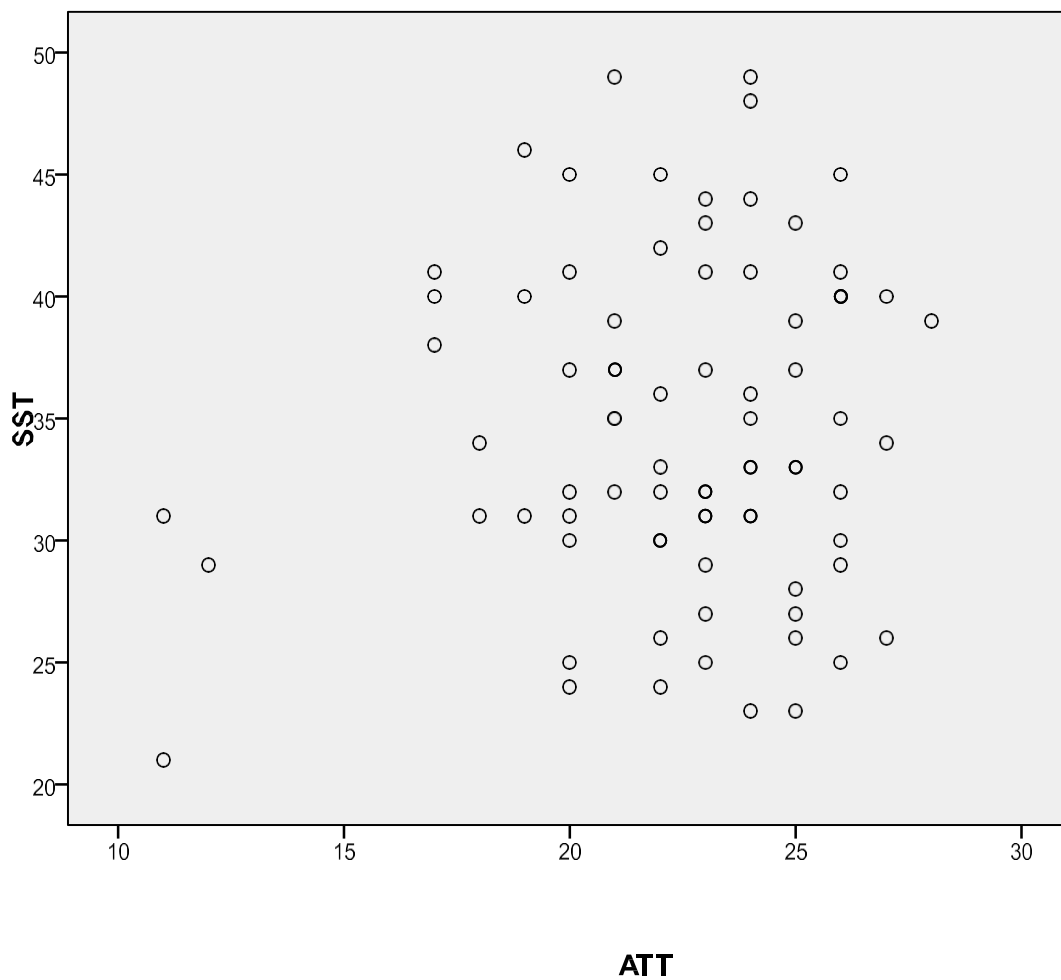
The questionnaire data was quantitatively analyzed to address the second research question. To determine whether there is a significant correlation between the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students and their attitudes towards English lessons, the researcher utilized SPSS to conduct a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis.

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Table 1. Pearson product Moment Correlation (N = 80)

	ATT	SST
Pearson correlation	1	.094
Sig (1-tailed)		.203

To interpret the correlation coefficient, one must examine the coefficient and its associated significance value (p). The output below confirms the scatter dot results, indicating that there is no significant relationship between SST and ATT ($r = .094$, $p < .05$).



The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to 1 , where a value of 1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship between axis X and axis Y , with all data points falling on a line where SST increases as ATT increases. Conversely, a value of -1 signifies a perfect negative linear relationship, with Y decreasing as X increases. A value of 0 indicates no linear correlation between the variables.

Based on the scatter plot results above, the correlation coefficient value is 0 , meaning there is no linear correlation between SST and ATT. This finding indicated that there is no statistically significant correlation between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were discussed in relation to two primary research questions. The first question examined the factors contributing to the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students while studying English. The qualitative data used to address the first research question revealed that the factors contributing to students' stress align with those identified in the literature. These factors are divided into two main categories: academic and environmental. Academic Factors: These can be categorized into five sources: Level of Proficiency, Grammar and Vocabulary Difficulties, Exam Preparation, Teachers' Role, and Speaking in Front of the Class.

Most students identified their Level of Proficiency as the primary source of stress, consistent with Daniel and Guo's (2004) findings, which identified low proficiency as a significant stressor. Grammar and Vocabulary Difficulties and Exam Preparation followed, with the majority of students indicating these as major stress contributors. Ellis (1994) also identified several causes of language anxiety in stressful classroom situations, such as tests. Daniel and Guo (2004) found that tests directly provoke anxiety. The fourth and fifth ranked stress factors were Teachers' Role and Speaking in Front of the Class, both supported by literature as significant stressors. According to Daniel and Guo (2004), fear of negative evaluation from teachers and friends is a key source of language anxiety. Moreover, a study

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done by Le and Le (2022) found that teacher-related factors influenced student's attitudes towards learning English in a stressful classroom. Woodrow (2006) and Daniel and Guo (2004) further confirmed that performing in front of the class is a major stressor for English learners.

Environmental Factors: The qualitative data also revealed that environmental factors contribute to students' stress levels, categorized into Classroom Climate and Family and Friends' Relationships. Many students identified these factors as significant sources of stress, which aligns with Getie's (2020) findings. In Getie's study, social factors and educational context factors were shown to contribute to students' stress levels and consequently negatively impact their positive attitudes towards learning English.

The second research question examines whether there is a significant correlation between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English. The correlation analysis found no relationship between these variables. The results indicated no significant correlation coefficient value ($r = .094, p < .05$), confirming no linear correlation between SST and ATT. This result aligns with the findings of other studies. For instance, Alavinia and Salmasi (2012) explored the correlation between Iranian EFL learners' shyness levels and their attitudes towards language learning. They found no significant correlation between learners' attitudes and their degree of shyness. Their analysis, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, independent samples t-test, and Eta Test, concluded a lack of significant correlation ($r = .799 > .05$). Conversely, Mahir (2004) found a negative significant correlation between Malaysian learners' language learning attitudes and their language proficiency. Furthermore, Huh and Shin (2015) found a strong link between stress levels from learning English and specific defense mechanisms.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Findings of this study offers valuable insights for various stakeholders. For EFL Teachers: EFL teachers should be attentive to the emotional concerns of anxious students and understand the significant impact they have on their students' stress levels and attitudes

toward English learning. Recognizing these feelings as legitimate, teachers should aim to reduce students' feelings of inadequacy, confusion, and failure by offering positive experiences to counteract stress levels. Teachers must avoid unprofessional behaviors such as tardiness, frequent absences, or inappropriate humor. Instead, they should focus on fostering enthusiasm, friendliness, teaching expertise, professionalism, effective interaction strategies, positive attitudes towards learners and the teaching profession, and a strong sense of responsibility in their teaching practices.

For School Administrators and Policymakers: Administrators and policymakers in Libya should understand students' stress levels and attitudes for language learning and the factors that influence these stress levels and attitudes. This understanding can inform the planning of professional development training for EFL teachers, aimed at eliminating factors that negatively affect students' attitudes towards English learning and enhancing teaching effectiveness. Additionally, they should respond to students' concerns regarding the challenging curriculum and insufficient teaching materials by modifying these elements to better align with students' abilities, thereby alleviating learning-related stress.

For Researchers: Researchers exploring the factors that influence EFL students' stress levels and attitudes towards language learning can gain a deeper understanding of the Libyan educational context through this study's findings. Future research should include participants from all educational levels, from kindergarten to post-graduate programs, in both private and public institutions. To ensure more significant findings, participants should be drawn from various provinces and cities across Libya.

7. CONCLUSION

While previous studies on stress primarily focused on college or high school levels, this study specifically targeted secondary school students. The qualitative research explored the factors contributing to the stress levels of Libyan secondary school students in Zliten. Meanwhile, the quantitative aspect examined the correlation between stress levels of Libyan

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students, as well as the relationship between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons.

Based on interviews with 10 participants, the study identified five academic factors (Level of Proficiency, Grammar and Vocabulary Difficulties, Exam Preparation, Teachers' Role, and Speaking in Front of the Class) and two environmental factors (family and friends, and classroom climate) as contributing to student stress levels. The study also found no statistically significant correlation between students' stress levels and their attitudes towards English lessons. In conclusion, this study provides additional evidence that students' stress levels and attitudes significantly influence the enhancement of English language learning in EFL classes.

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مستوى توتر طلاب المدارس الثانوية الليبيين في مادة اللغة الإنجليزية ومواقفهم تجاه دروس اللغة الإنجليزية: دراسة حالة

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الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العوامل التي تؤثر على مستويات التوتر لدى طلاب المدارس الثانوية الليبيين أثناء دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية، وما إذا كان هناك ارتباط ذو دلالة إحصائية بين مستويات التوتر لديهم ومواقفهم تجاه دروس اللغة الإنجليزية. استخدمت هذه الدراسة تصميمًا منهجيًا مختلطًا لمعالجة مشكلة البحث، حيث تم استخدام كل من الأساليب الكمية والنوعية، مع ثمانين طالبًا من مدرسة الانتصار الثانوية الليبية في زليتن. جُمعت البيانات من خلال استبيان للتحقيق في العلاقة بين مستويات التوتر والمواقف، ومقابلات مع عشرة طلاب لفحص العوامل التي تسهم في توترهم. تم تحليل البيانات الكمية باستخدام برنامج SPSS، بينما تم تنظيم البيانات النوعية موضوعيًا. كشفت النتائج أن العوامل الأكاديمية والبيئية تسهم في مستويات توتر الطلاب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، لم يتم العثور على ارتباط ذو دلالة إحصائية بين مستويات التوتر ومواقف الطلاب تجاه دروس اللغة الإنجليزية. وتُظهر النتائج أن أصحاب المصلحة الليبيين يجب أن يأخذوا في الاعتبار مستويات توتر طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ومواقفهم من أجل تحقيق أهداف تعلم اللغة بشكل فعال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الليبيين، مستوى التوتر، المواقف، تعلم اللغة.