



The Reality of Health Awareness Among University Students: A Descriptive Exploratory Study on First-Year Common Core Social Sciences Students at the University of El Oued

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the level of health awareness among university students through a descriptive exploratory study conducted on first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued. The researchers adopted the descriptive exploratory approach as the most appropriate method for the nature of the study. The sample was selected using the comprehensive survey method and consisted of 484 male and female students. Data were collected using the Health Awareness Scale developed by Fathiza Ali (2026). The collected data were statistically processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study yielded the following findings:

- The level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued was moderate.
- The level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued in the first dimension (Health in General Life) was moderate.
- The level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued in the second dimension (Physical and Sports Health) was moderate.

Keywords: Health Awareness; University; University Students.

Research Problem

The contemporary world is witnessing rapid transformations affecting nearly every aspect of human life, ranging from scientific and technological advancements to social, cultural, and lifestyle changes. As a result, individuals now live in a highly interconnected environment where health, psychological, and social factors interact in increasingly complex ways. Amid these transformations, health has emerged as one of the most significant concerns for societies, governments, and institutions, not only because of its association with individuals' physical well-being but also because it constitutes a



fundamental pillar for social stability and sustainable development. A society whose members possess a high level of health awareness is better equipped to confront health and social challenges and is more capable of developing productive human resources that can adapt to the demands of modern life.

In the present era, the concept of health is no longer confined to biological well-being or the mere absence of disease and disability. Rather, it has evolved into a comprehensive concept encompassing psychological, social, behavioral, and preventive dimensions, all of which are closely related to an individual's understanding of healthy practices and their ability to translate this knowledge into balanced and organized daily behaviors. Consequently, health awareness has become one of the key concepts reflecting an individual's understanding of their health, awareness of the factors influencing it, and possession of the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for disease prevention and positive health management.

Health awareness has become more essential than ever due to the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, changes in dietary habits, declining levels of physical activity, escalating psychological stress, and the widespread influence of mass media and social networking platforms, which have become major sources of health information despite often disseminating inaccurate or misleading content. Consequently, individuals frequently experience a contradiction between the abundance of available health information and their limited ability to distinguish reliable information from misinformation, a situation that directly affects their health-related behaviors and daily choices. Health awareness is therefore not merely the acquisition of health-related information; it is closely associated with healthy behavioral practices. Studies indicate that a health-conscious individual is one who enjoys high levels of physical, mental, psychological, social, and overall well-being (Chibani, 2021, p. 112).

Researchers have also emphasized the relationship between health behavior and an individual's health status, suggesting that healthier individuals tend to exhibit healthier behaviors, and vice versa. It can therefore be argued that individuals with higher levels of health awareness are more likely to adopt behaviors that promote and maintain better health (World Health Organization, 2016, p. 3).

Within this context, university students represent one of the social groups most affected by these transformations because of the unique developmental stage they experience, characterized by psychological, cognitive, and social changes. This stage is also critical in shaping attitudes, values, and habits that often persist throughout later stages of life. University students are not merely recipients of academic knowledge; they undergo a comprehensive life experience in which educational, social, psychological, and health-related aspects are deeply intertwined. Consequently, their level of health awareness plays a crucial role in determining the quality of their university life and their ability to adapt positively to various pressures and demands. Furthermore, the university environment, with its increased personal independence, changes in dietary habits, irregular sleeping patterns, academic stress, and exposure to diverse behavioral patterns, may encourage students to adopt either positive or negative health practices depending on their level of health awareness. Poor health awareness may lead to unhealthy behaviors such as poor nutrition, physical inactivity, excessive sleep deprivation, and neglect of mental health, whereas high health awareness contributes to preventive behaviors, psychological and physical well-being, and improved adaptation and academic achievement.



Moreover, universities are now expected to fulfill responsibilities that extend beyond traditional academic instruction by contributing to the holistic development of students and enhancing their awareness in various domains, particularly health. Universities constitute educational and social environments capable of promoting health culture, encouraging preventive behaviors, and fostering values related to individual and public health. Since university students represent a social group capable of transmitting health knowledge to their families and communities, the issue of health awareness extends beyond the individual level to acquire broader societal significance.

The importance of studying health awareness among first-year university students is particularly evident because this stage represents a critical transition from secondary education to university life. During this period, students encounter a new academic, social, and psychological environment that differs substantially from previous educational stages. They are required to adapt to new patterns of responsibility and independence in managing both their personal and health-related affairs, making their level of health awareness an important determinant of how effectively they cope with these changes. Numerous studies have been conducted to assess health awareness levels, including the study by El-Qass (2016) and the study by Abdul Haq and Shana'a (2012), which sought to identify the level of health awareness among university students.

Considering that first-year Common Core Social Sciences students constitute a population worthy of investigation, and given that their field of study focuses on human behavior, psychological processes, and social issues, one might expect them to possess a certain level of awareness regarding health-related and behavioral issues. Nevertheless, reality may reveal considerable variation in their levels of health awareness due to multiple factors, including the social environment, cultural background, health education, and personal interests. This raises an important question regarding the actual level of health awareness among this category of university students.

The scientific significance of this study lies in its examination of a topic that intersects several academic disciplines, including psychology, educational sciences, sociology, and public health. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide a descriptive and exploratory understanding of the current state of health awareness among university students, thereby offering insights into their prevailing health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The findings may also serve as a foundation for designing awareness and guidance programs within universities aimed at promoting health culture and enhancing students' understanding and adoption of healthy practices.

Building on the importance of health awareness in the lives of university students, its role in guiding their daily behaviors, and its influence on their psychological, social, and academic adjustment, as well as the need to explore the current state of health awareness among first-year university students, the present study seeks to address the following main research question:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued?

1. Research Questions

Main Research Question:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued?

Sub-Research Questions:

1. What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the first dimension (**Health in General Life**)?



2. What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the second dimension (**Physical and Sports Health**)?

2. Significance of the Study

The significance of studying the level of health awareness among university students lies in the fact that it focuses on one of the most important segments of society and one of the most influential in future development, namely university students. It also contributes to identifying students' level of awareness of healthy practices and their understanding of preventive health behaviors. Furthermore, the study may assist higher education administrators in developing awareness and guidance programs that promote health culture within the university environment. In addition, this study represents a valuable scientific contribution to the university library, particularly in the field of descriptive research related to health, health awareness, and health behavior among university students.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued.
2. To determine the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the first dimension (**Health in General Life**).
3. To determine the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the second dimension (**Physical and Sports Health**).

4. Study Concepts

a. Health Awareness

Health awareness is defined as the translation of health-related knowledge, information, and experiences into behavioral patterns adopted by individuals (Zanka, 2009, p. 2). It refers to an individual's knowledge of health information and facts, as well as their sense of responsibility toward their own health and the health of others. In this context, health awareness is understood as the intentional practice of healthy behaviors resulting from an understanding of situations that require appropriate and sound health responses to prevent disease. In other words, health awareness is achieved when healthy practices become habitual behaviors performed naturally and without conscious effort (Salama, 2001, p. 23).

Health awareness also refers to the set of perceptions and beliefs that help individuals manage their lives in general and regulate their behavior. It further denotes an individual's ability to acquire a wide range of health knowledge that enables them to understand situations encountered in their daily lives, allowing them to avoid health risks and adopt preventive measures (Al-Shalhoub, 2014, p. 3).

Accordingly, health awareness encompasses knowledge, understanding, and the development of attitudes and tendencies toward health issues appropriate to an individual's stage of life, which are positively reflected in daily health behavior. Health awareness begins with the acquisition of health facts, which, through continuous practice of healthy habits, gradually develop into internalized attitudes that ultimately influence individuals' health practices and overall lifestyle. These attitudes are manifested in observable healthy behaviors. The relationship between health awareness and health education is evident, as promoting health awareness is the primary objective of health education, while health behavior represents one of the manifestations of health awareness, since behavior constitutes one of its three fundamental components (El-Qass, 2016, p. 179).

Some researchers also consider health awareness to be synonymous with **health literacy**, which is defined as the ability to read, understand, and apply health information, as well as the capacity of individuals to obtain, process, and comprehend the essential health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (Saleh & El-Sayed, 2009, p. 5).

Operational Definition: In the present study, health awareness refers to a university student's understanding of various aspects of health knowledge and their ability to verify the sources of health information that help explain health-related phenomena, prevent diseases, and promote healthy daily behaviors. It is measured by the score obtained by each student on the **Health Awareness Scale** developed by Fathiza Ali (2026).

b. University Students

University students are individuals enrolled in higher education institutions to pursue academic and scientific studies in various disciplines with the aim of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for their academic, professional, and social development.

Operational Definition: In this study, university students refer specifically to first-year **Common Core Social Sciences** students enrolled at the **University of Martyr Hamma Lakhdar El Oued**, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, during the **2023/2024** academic year, which constitutes the study population.

2. Review of Previous Studies

1. Study by Ayadi (2023)

This study aimed to identify the level of health awareness among students at Chadli Bendjedid University in El Tarf and to determine whether there were differences in health awareness according to gender and age. To achieve these objectives, the researcher adopted the descriptive approach and administered a Health Awareness Questionnaire to a sample of 129 male and female students from Chadli Bendjedid University. After collecting the data, statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that:

- The level of health awareness among students at Chadli Bendjedid University was moderate.
- There were no statistically significant differences in health awareness attributable to gender or age.

2. Study by Khaldi and Saadi (2023)

This study investigated the level of health awareness among university students through a field study conducted at Akli Mohand Oulhadj University of Bouira. It aimed to assess students' level of health awareness and examine differences according to gender, educational level, and academic specialization. The study included a sample of 180 students. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of four (4) dimensions and 32 items, and statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS. The results indicated that the overall level of health awareness among the participants was **moderate**, with a percentage of **66.39%**. In addition, no significant differences were found in health awareness according to the study variables, except for the dimension related to **physical activity**, which showed statistically significant differences between the academic specializations.

3. Study by Shahinda Mahmoud (2021)

This study sought to determine the level of health awareness regarding epidemic diseases in light of the COVID-19 pandemic among students in the basic education stage in several Egyptian governorates. It also examined the effects of educational stage and type of education on students' health awareness. The study was conducted on a sample of 262 male and female students.

The researcher established the psychometric properties of the instrument by assessing validity through item-total correlation coefficients within each subscale and reliability using the **Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20)**. The descriptive approach was adopted, and the findings showed that:

- The overall level of health awareness, including its three dimensions and four domains, exceeded the required competency level, reaching 75% among the study sample.
- Statistically significant differences at the 0.01 significance level were found according to educational stage, in favor of preparatory school students, and according to the type of education, in favor of students enrolled in public schools.

The researcher also recommended the implementation of educational programs and curricula to enhance health awareness.

4. Study by Al-Turman et al. (2018)

This study evaluated the level and sources of health awareness among students at Zarqa University College of Al-Balqa Applied University. It aimed to determine the level of health awareness according to gender, academic program, and academic level, as well as to identify the primary sources of health information among the participants. The sample consisted of 425 students enrolled in bachelor's and intermediate diploma programs. A Health Awareness Questionnaire was used for data collection.

The findings indicated that the students' level of health awareness was moderate. Statistically significant differences were found according to the academic program in favor of bachelor's students, as well as according to academic level in favor of third- and fourth-year students. However, no statistically significant differences were found according to gender.

5. Study by Abdul Haq and Shana'a (2012)

This study aimed to determine the level of health awareness among students at An-Najah National University and Al-Quds University according to the variables of university, gender, faculty, and cumulative grade point average (GPA). The study was conducted on a sample of 800 male and female students.

Data were collected using a Health Awareness Questionnaire consisting of 32 items. After verifying its psychometric properties, including face validity and internal consistency validity, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.85, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items.

The findings revealed that the overall level of health awareness among the participants was moderate, with a response rate of 64.80%.

*** Commentary on Previous Studies**

The review of previous studies related to the present research indicates that all of them addressed health awareness as the principal variable of interest. While some studies focused solely on assessing the level of health awareness, others examined its relationship with demographic variables such as gender and age, including the studies by Khaldi (2023), Ayadi (2023), Shahinda Mahmoud (2021), Abdul Haq and Shana'a (2012), and Al-Qudoumi (2005).

The present study shares several common aspects with these previous studies, particularly its focus on assessing the level of health awareness. However, it differs from some of them in terms of the study sample.

The researchers benefited from the previous studies by drawing upon their findings as well as their theoretical, methodological, and field procedures, despite differences in environmental contexts, time periods, and the characteristics of the study samples.

3. Methodology and Instruments

First: Field Study Procedures

a. Study Population

The study population consisted of first-year Social Sciences students enrolled in the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, at the University of Hamma Lakhdar El Oued during the 2023–2024 academic year. The total population comprised 590 male and female students.

b. Study Sample

The sample was selected using the comprehensive survey method, whereby all first-year Social Sciences students enrolled during the 2023–2024 academic year were included. The initial sample consisted of 590 male and female students. However, due to the absence of some students and other circumstances, the final sample included 484 male and female students.

c. Research Method

The study adopted the descriptive exploratory approach, which is considered an appropriate scientific method for investigating scientific phenomena and problems through systematic and standardized description. This approach enables researchers to provide logical interpretations supported by evidence and to establish a clear framework for the research problem, thereby facilitating the identification of research findings.

d. Study Instrument

1. Description of the Instrument

The present study employed the **Health Awareness Scale** developed by **Fathiza Ali (2026)**. The scale was designed to assess the level of health awareness among university students through a set of statements covering various aspects of health behavior, daily habits, preventive practices, and knowledge of fundamental health concepts.

The scale serves as a research instrument for collecting accurate data to better understand university students' level of health awareness and to identify aspects requiring educational or awareness-based intervention. Each item represents a health-related attitude, behavior, or piece of knowledge associated either with **health in general life** or **physical and sports health**.

The Health Awareness Scale consists of **66 items** distributed across **two dimensions**:

- The first dimension (Health in General Life) consists of 53 items.
- The second dimension (Physical and Sports Health) consists of 13 items.

2. Psychometric Properties of the Study Instrument

To establish the psychometric properties of the instrument, it was administered to a pilot sample of 30 male and female students from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at the University of El Oued. The participants were selected using simple random sampling.

1. Validity

The validity of the instrument was established through **face validity**. After drafting the scale items, they were submitted to a panel of experts in the fields of **Educational Sciences** and **Psychology** to evaluate whether the items effectively measured the intended construct, namely

health awareness. Based on the experts' evaluations, the researcher removed all items with a validity coefficient lower than **0.50**, while retaining the remaining items.

2. Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using two methods: **Cronbach's Alpha** and the **Split-Half Reliability Method (Spearman–Brown)**. The results are presented in the following table:

Table (01). Reliability Coefficients of the Health Awareness Scale Using Cronbach's Alpha and the Split-Half Method (Spearman–Brown).

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha			Split-Half Reliability (Spearman–Brown)		
	Items	Decision	Coefficient	Items	Decision	Coefficient
First Dimension: Health in General Life	53	**0.92	Acceptable	53	**0.94	Acceptable
Second Dimension: Physical and Sports Health	13	**0.91	Acceptable	13	*0.40	Acceptable
Health Awareness Scale	66	**0.91	Acceptable	66	**0.79	Acceptable

The analysis of Table (01) indicates that the reliability of the Health Awareness Scale, as assessed using both Cronbach's Alpha and the Split-Half Reliability (Spearman–Brown) methods, was established at the 0.05 and 0.001 significance levels.

For the first dimension, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.92 (), indicating a high, acceptable, and statistically significant level of reliability at both significance levels. The Split-Half (Spearman–Brown) reliability coefficient for this dimension was 0.94 (), which also represents a high and statistically significant level of reliability at both significance levels.

For the second dimension, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient reached 0.91 (**), indicating a high and statistically significant level of reliability. The Split-Half (Spearman–Brown) coefficient for this dimension was 0.40 (*), which is considered acceptable and statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level only.

Regarding the Health Awareness Scale as a whole, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.91 (), indicating a high, acceptable, and statistically significant level of reliability at both significance levels. The Split-Half (Spearman–Brown) reliability coefficient was 0.79 (), which is likewise considered acceptable and statistically significant at both significance levels.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the Health Awareness Scale demonstrates satisfactory reliability.

3. Scoring Key of the Health Awareness Scale for Determining Levels

The researcher Fathiza Ali (2025) established the scoring key based on predefined classification criteria, as presented in the following table:

Table (02). Classification Levels of the Health Awareness Scale

First Dimension	Low	Moderate	High
Raw Scores	71to 159	159to 221	222to 253
Second Dimension	Low	Moderate	High
Raw Scores	22to 50	50to 65	65
Overall Scale	Low	Moderate	High
Raw Scores	121to 210	210to 281	281to 315

The previous table shows that the Health Awareness levels for the first dimension of the Health Awareness Scale are classified as follows: the low level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 71 to 159; the moderate level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 159 to 221; and the high level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 222 to 253.

For the second dimension, the low level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 22 to 50; the moderate level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 50 to 65; and the high level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 65 to 78.

Regarding the Health Awareness Scale as a whole, the low level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 121 to 210; the moderate level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 210 to 281; and the high level corresponds to raw scores ranging from 281 to 315.

Second: Presentation of the Study Results

1. First Research Question

The first research question states:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the first dimension (Health in General Life)?

To answer this research question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated. The following table presents the results:

Table (03). Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of the Study Sample for the First Dimension

First Dimension	Sample (N)	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation
Health in General Life	484	175.5124	31.55340

The above table shows that the arithmetic mean of the university students constituting the study sample (484 male and female students) for the first dimension was 175.5124. This value falls within the moderate level (159–221) according to the scoring key of the Health Awareness Scale, as previously presented in Table (02). The standard deviation was 31.55340.

2. Second Research Question

The second research question states:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the second dimension (Physical and Sports Health)?

To answer this research question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated. The following table presents the results:

Table (04). Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of the Study Sample for the Second Dimension

Second Dimension	Sample (N)	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation
Physical and Sports Health	484	54.5517	8.91502

The above table shows that the arithmetic mean of the university students constituting the study sample (484 male and female students) for the second dimension was 54.5517. This value falls within the moderate level (50–65) according to the scoring key of the Health Awareness Scale, as previously presented in Table (02). The standard deviation was 8.91502.

3. Overall Research Question

The overall research question states:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued?

To answer this research question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated. The following table presents the results:

Table (05). Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of the Study Sample on the Health Awareness Scale

Instrument	Sample (N)	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation
Health Awareness Scale	484	230.0640	34.45076

The above table shows that the arithmetic mean of the university students constituting the study sample (484 male and female students) on the Health Awareness Scale was 230.0640. This value falls within the moderate level (210–281) according to the scoring key of the Health Awareness Scale, as previously presented in Table (05). The standard deviation was 34.45076.

4. Results and Discussion

After presenting the field study through the application of the study instrument to the research sample, which consisted of 484 first-year Common Core Social Sciences students from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at the University of El Oued, and after statistically analyzing the collected data, it was observed that the results for all the study research questions fell within the moderate level.

First: Discussion of the First Research Question

The first research question states:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the first dimension (Health in General Life)?

The findings related to the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued in the first dimension, Health in General Life, can be interpreted in light of the nature of the university stage experienced by students in general, as well as the specific characteristics of this dimension, which is associated with daily health behaviors and general habits related to hygiene, nutrition, sleep, disease prevention, and maintaining a healthy balance in everyday life. This dimension does not merely assess students' theoretical knowledge about health; rather, it measures the extent to which health culture is reflected in their daily behaviors and practices and their ability to translate health knowledge into practical behaviors within both the university and the broader social environment.



Based on this result, it can be argued that first-year university students are experiencing a sensitive transitional period between secondary education and university life. This stage is characterized by psychological, social, and behavioral changes that directly influence their health patterns. During their first years at university, students strive to adapt to a new environment that differs in terms of the educational system, independence, time management, and social relationships. Consequently, they may neglect certain aspects of their daily health. Many students, for example, move from a structured family lifestyle to one characterized by greater freedom and independence, which often leads to irregular sleeping habits, unhealthy eating patterns, or insufficient physical rest, particularly among students residing in university dormitories.

Moreover, the Health in General Life dimension is significantly influenced by prevailing societal culture. A considerable proportion of university students still perceive certain healthy behaviors as secondary concerns that can be sacrificed in favor of academic or social demands. For instance, some students prioritize academic achievement and success over their physical and mental well-being by staying up late, skipping breakfast, or consuming excessive amounts of stimulants and soft drinks without fully recognizing the cumulative effects of these behaviors on their overall health. This explains why the level of health awareness in this dimension is moderate rather than high, since healthy daily behaviors require long-term reinforcement through the family, school, and university alike. This finding is consistent with the results reported by Nadia (2023).

Another important factor contributing to the moderate level of health awareness among university students in the first dimension is that many students possess general health knowledge acquired from the media, social networking sites, or previous educational curricula. However, this knowledge often remains superficial and is not supported by deep behavioral commitment, particularly following the global health events associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, students may know the importance of handwashing or washing food before eating but fail to practice these behaviors consistently due to a lack of motivation or the pressures of daily life. This interpretation is supported by the study of Shahinda Mahmoud (2021), which investigated the level of health awareness regarding epidemic diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic and recommended implementing educational programs and curricula to enhance health awareness based on its findings.

Furthermore, several phenomena commonly observed within the university environment, such as prolonged sitting in front of smartphones or computers and the widespread consumption of fast food because it is more convenient, less expensive, and quicker to obtain, also contribute to the moderate level of health awareness among students.

The nature of the Social Sciences specialization itself may also have an indirect influence on this finding. Students in this field study social, psychological, and human issues that provide them with a certain degree of intellectual awareness regarding the importance of health in human life. Nevertheless, this awareness does not always translate into actual healthy practices, particularly in the absence of practical university programs designed to promote healthy behavior on campus. Although awareness campaigns and scientific seminars organized by university professors help reinforce theoretical health beliefs, they are not sufficient on their own. Students also need a university environment that encourages healthy lifestyles through preventive seminars, practical health and psychological counseling services, and continuous public health awareness campaigns.



On the other hand, this finding can also be interpreted in light of the increasing influence of modern digital transformations. University students are becoming increasingly exposed to lifestyles characterized by physical inactivity and digital isolation. Continuous reliance on smartphones and social media platforms directly affects their overall health. Moreover, many students obtain health information from unreliable sources, leading to incomplete or inaccurate understandings of proper health behaviors.

In addition, the financial, economic, and social circumstances of some students may influence this dimension. Limited financial resources may prevent certain students from adopting a balanced and healthy diet, particularly those who study away from their families, such as students living in university residences. Therefore, health in general life is not determined solely by individual willingness but is also influenced by material, social, economic, and environmental conditions.

In conclusion, the findings for this dimension indicate that first-year university students possess a reasonable level of general health awareness; however, this awareness still requires stronger practical and behavioral reinforcement, as genuine health awareness is reflected in everyday practice rather than merely in possessing health-related knowledge. This conclusion is supported by the study of Al-Turman et al. (2018), which likewise reported a moderate level of health awareness among students. These findings also highlight the need for universities to play a more active role in promoting a culture of public health by integrating health awareness into everyday university life and creating an educational environment that helps students achieve a balance between academic success and maintaining their physical and psychological well-being.

Second: Discussion of the Second Research Question

The second research question states:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the second dimension (Physical and Sports Health)?

The findings indicate that the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued regarding the second dimension, Physical and Sports Health, is moderate. This result can be explained by considering the nature of university life, the changes students experience in their daily lifestyles, and the prevailing sports culture within the university community. This dimension is not limited to students' knowledge of the benefits of physical activity; rather, it measures the extent to which they recognize the importance of actually engaging in regular physical exercise, as highlighted in the study by Al-Qudoumi (2005), which sought to determine the level of health awareness in the field of sports training among its study sample.

This finding suggests that students possess a general awareness of the importance of physical activity for maintaining good health; however, this awareness has not yet developed into a consistent and stable pattern of practice. In other words, university students theoretically understand that exercise promotes physical health, improves mood, reduces stress, and enhances concentration, yet this understanding has only a limited influence on their daily behavior within the university environment. This explains the moderate level obtained in the present study. There is neither a complete absence of sports-related health awareness nor a genuine and continuous commitment to engaging in physical activity.



This result may first be explained by the nature of university life, which is generally characterized by prolonged sitting and limited movement, particularly among Social Sciences students, who spend long hours attending lectures, reading, or using smartphones and computers. Consequently, their level of physical activity is lower than during previous educational stages. The transition from secondary school to university often results in significant changes in students' daily routines. In practice, many students associate exercise only with leisure time, recreation, or entertainment rather than considering it a daily health necessity. As a result, physical activity is easily abandoned during periods of academic pressure or examinations. Thus, for some students, the concept of physical health remains more closely associated with appearance or recreation than with disease prevention. Some young people engage in physical activity primarily to improve their physical appearance or for enjoyment rather than from a comprehensive health awareness of its role in preventing chronic diseases and maintaining psychological and physical well-being.

In this context, the study by Hedal and Laour (2026) reported that the overall health awareness of bodybuilding athletes was moderately positive, indicating that many young people tend to view exercise primarily as an aesthetic rather than a health-related activity. The researchers also identified clear gaps in personal health practices and daily habits, suggesting the presence of only partial awareness, since genuine health awareness extends beyond superficial knowledge to the development of an internal conviction that makes physical activity an integral part of everyday life.

Another important factor that may explain this finding is the relatively weak sports culture within the university environment, reflected in the limited availability of organized sports activities, insufficient encouragement to participate in them, and the university's limited use of physical activities as a means of promoting students' physical and psychological health. Many students may not have access to adequate sports facilities or organized programs that encourage regular participation, making physical activity a secondary aspect of university life. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Ben Zaara and Ben Arabi (2023), whose study reported a moderate level of sports-related health awareness among students participating in sports clubs.

Furthermore, first-year Social Sciences students often perceive sports as an optional activity that is not directly related to academic achievement, unlike their experience during secondary education. This perception reflects a weak connection between physical health and academic performance. In addition, early university years coincide with a stage of youth during which students generally enjoy good physical health and vitality. Consequently, they tend to pay less attention to preventive health behaviors because they do not yet fully recognize the long-term consequences of physical inactivity on their overall health. Students may not perceive the risks associated with insufficient physical activity because they do not currently suffer from obvious health problems that would motivate them to adopt healthier behaviors. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of health awareness but rather reflects a form of delayed awareness, resulting from the absence of an immediate perception of health risks.

In conclusion, the moderate level observed in the Physical and Sports Health dimension indicates that first-year students possess a reasonably acceptable theoretical understanding of the importance of physical activity. Nevertheless, this cognitive awareness still requires stronger behavioral reinforcement and practical application in daily life. The findings also highlight the need to establish a university culture in which physical health becomes an essential component of



university education rather than merely an extracurricular activity. This can be achieved by encouraging students to engage in regular physical exercise, organizing periodic sports competitions under the supervision of qualified sports professionals, and emphasizing the close relationship between physical activity, mental health, academic success, and overall quality of life.

Third: Discussion of the Overall Research Question

The overall research question states:

What is the level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued?

In general, the finding that university students demonstrated a moderate level of health awareness can be interpreted in light of several interrelated psychological, social, cultural, and educational factors. Contemporary university students live in a complex environment characterized by rapidly changing lifestyles and increasing academic and social pressures, while systematic and comprehensive health education remains largely absent from higher education institutions. Therefore, a moderate level of health awareness does not necessarily indicate a lack of health awareness; rather, it reflects the existence of partial or incomplete health knowledge. In other words, students possess a basic level of health-related information but do not consistently translate this knowledge into stable daily behaviors and practical habits within university life.

This interpretation is consistent with numerous previous studies, all of which reported moderate levels of health awareness among university students. For example, the study by Nadia (2023), which examined the level of health awareness among students at Chadli Bendjedid University of El Tarf, concluded that students' health awareness was at a moderate level. Similarly, the study by Khaldi and Saadi (2023), which investigated health awareness among students at Akli Mohand Oulhadj University of Bouira, also found that university students demonstrated a moderate level of health awareness.

An analysis of this finding suggests that one of its principal explanations lies in the predominantly theoretical nature of students' health knowledge. Many students recognize, at the cognitive level, the importance of obtaining adequate sleep, maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and managing stress. However, they often fail to apply these behaviors in practice because of academic demands, limited time, and the continuous pressure of university responsibilities. For example, students may understand that prolonged sleep deprivation negatively affects concentration, memory, and mental health, yet they frequently stay up late preparing assignments and studying for examinations. Consequently, health knowledge becomes disconnected from actual practice. This reflects a well-established concept in health psychology concerning the gap between health awareness and health behavior, whereby possessing information alone is insufficient to produce healthy behavior unless supported by motivation, a favorable environment, and stable habits.

This finding can also be explained by the university environment itself. Many universities in the Arab world do not consider student health a genuine priority within their educational programs. Their focus remains largely confined to academic and cognitive development, while regular education concerning physical health, mental health, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles receives comparatively little attention. In this regard, the study by Al-Turman et al. (2018), which evaluated the level of health awareness among students at Zarqa University College of Al-Balqa Applied University in Jordan, likewise reported a moderate level of health awareness. University students



may spend several years on campus without participating in practical programs addressing disease prevention, stress management, nutrition education, or psychological well-being. Even when awareness campaigns are organized, they are often seasonal or symbolic and therefore insufficient to produce meaningful behavioral change.

Examples commonly observed in the university environment include the excessive consumption of fast food, caffeinated beverages, carbonated drinks, and energy drinks, particularly during examination periods, despite students' awareness of their harmful health effects. This indicates that practical health culture remains relatively limited. Similarly, the study by Abdelhaq and Shananeh (2012), which investigated health awareness among students at An-Najah National University and Al-Quds University, also reported a moderate level of health awareness, thereby supporting the findings of the present study.

Another major factor that cannot be overlooked is the impact of the modern digital revolution. Digital technologies have played a dual role in shaping health awareness among university students. On the one hand, they have facilitated rapid and convenient access to health information through the Internet and social media platforms. On the other hand, they have contributed to the widespread dissemination of misleading and inaccurate health information, particularly in the absence of critical health literacy among some students and their tendency to imitate Western lifestyle trends without critical evaluation. Many students increasingly rely on social media influencers or short online videos as primary sources for understanding health-related issues, resulting in misconceptions regarding nutrition, mental health, medication, and even physical activity. Moreover, excessive use of smartphones and social media has contributed to reduced physical activity, sleep disturbances, increased social isolation, and higher levels of psychological stress, all of which indicate an incomplete or unbalanced level of health awareness.

The family and the broader community also constitute two fundamental institutions in developing students' basic level of health awareness. Students who grow up in families that emphasize healthy nutrition, personal hygiene, regular physical activity, and medical follow-up are generally more likely to adopt positive health behaviors than those raised in environments where health culture is lacking. Consequently, universities do not receive students with a uniform level of health awareness but rather individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and these differences are reflected in the overall findings of the study.

In conclusion, the moderate level of health awareness observed among university students may be regarded as a logical outcome of the interaction of multiple factors, including the limited availability of university health awareness programs, the dominance of academic pressures, the negative influence of certain digital lifestyles, the gap between knowledge and practice, as well as family, social, and psychological factors, in addition to the tendency to perceive physical activity as a form of recreation rather than a preventive health behavior. Collectively, these factors indicate that university students possess an acceptable theoretical foundation of health awareness but still require greater support in translating this knowledge into practical and sustainable behaviors. This can be achieved through the implementation of continuous university-based health promotion programs, effective psychological and mental health counseling services, and practical awareness activities that help students transform health knowledge into a sustainable daily lifestyle.

5. Conclusion:

- The level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued is **moderate**.
- The level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued in the first dimension (**Health in General Life**) is **moderate**.
- The level of health awareness among first-year Common Core Social Sciences students at the University of El Oued in the second dimension (**Physical and Sports Health**) is **moderate**.

6. Recommendations:

- Organize training programs aimed at improving the level of health awareness among university students.
- Conduct studies on the level of health awareness among other groups, such as university faculty members.
- Examine gender differences (male and female students) in the level of health awareness.
- Strengthen the role of health and medical institutions in organizing health awareness campaigns within universities and university residences.

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