evaluate negative affect such as depression, helplessness, exhaustion stress and suicide. A number of items investigate students' social wellbeing such as ease to recruit support from family and friends; friendships, and satisfaction with personal relationships.

The fourth and final section includes a number of items that assess students' life at university regarding their satisfaction as university students; their motivation and participation in lectures and extra curricular activities; and their involvement in decision making. Other items examine the assistance and support the students get from academic and non academic staff as well as from their colleagues. A number of questions in this section investigate the level of academic stress amongst students, the major sources of stress, and the coping strategies used. The remaining items were about types of harassment and discrimination experienced by students. The final qualitative question asked participants to provide suggestions on how the university may help to enhance various aspects of their physical, social and emotional health, such as the promotion of health practices, a healthier physical environment, prevention of stress and stress management, healthy relationships and social support, safety, and equal opportunities amongst others.

## 2.2 Sampling

A random sample of approximately 500 students was selected to participate in this study. This sample, which comprised more than 7% of the university population in the 2008-2009 academic year, was stratified mainly by faculty. All selected students were undergraduates attending various faculty courses, excluding those attending Institute or Centre-organised courses. The sample was clustered into four faculty groups and each cluster comprises faculties of a similar discipline origin. The Science cluster includes students studying for a Bachelor of Science, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Medicine. The Humanities cluster includes students reading for a Bachelor of Arts, Theology and European studies. The Social Science cluster comprises students studying for a Bachelor of

Communications, Accountancy, Commerce, Education, Psychology and Law. The Civil Science cluster includes students reading for a Bachelor of Engineering and Architecture. To ensure that the sample of students was representative, the faculty clusters were sampled in proportion to their size in the university population (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Number of students categorized by faculty cluster**

| Faculty cluster | Population size | Sample size |
|---|---|---|
| Sciences | 1269 (19.9%) | 101(20.4%) |
| Social Sciences | 3212 (50.6%) | 247(50.0%) |
| Humanities | 1168 (18.4%) | 95(19.3%) |
| Civil Sciences | 705 (11.1%) | 51(10.3%) |

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 show the number of male and female respondents categorized by faculty cluster. Compared to the actual proportion of females in each faculty cluster, the sample proportion of females turned out to be higher in the Humanities and Science clusters, while the sample proportion of males in the Civil Science cluster was higher than the corresponding population proportion. However, for both gender groups, the difference between the population and sample proportions was not found to be significant at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 2.3: Number of female students categorized by faculty cluster**

| | Female students | |
|---|---|---|
| **Faculty cluster** | **Sample** | **Population** |
| Sciences | 63 (18.5%) | 597 (16.4%) |
| Social Sciences | 189 (55.6%) | 2075 (57.0%) |
| Humanities | 77 (22.6%) | 755 (20.7%) |
| Civil Sciences | 11 (3.2%) | 213 (5.9%) |
| **Total** | 340 | 3640 |

$\chi^2 = 5.281,\ v = 3,\ p = 0.152$

The 494 university students were selected evenly from the various course years. The vast majority of the students were 25 and under, with only 4.3% older than 25 years (Figure 2.1).

**Table 2.4: Number of male students categorized by faculty cluster**

| Faculty cluster | Male students | |
|---|---|---|
| | Sample | Population |
| Sciences | 38 (24.7%) | 672 (24.8%) |
| Social Sciences | 58 (37.7%) | 1137 (41.9%) |
| Humanities | 18 (11.7%) | 413 (15.2%) |
| Civil Sciences | 40 (26.0%) | 492 (18.1%) |
| **Total** | 154 | 2714 |

$\chi^2 = 6.671,\ v = 3,\ p = 0.083$

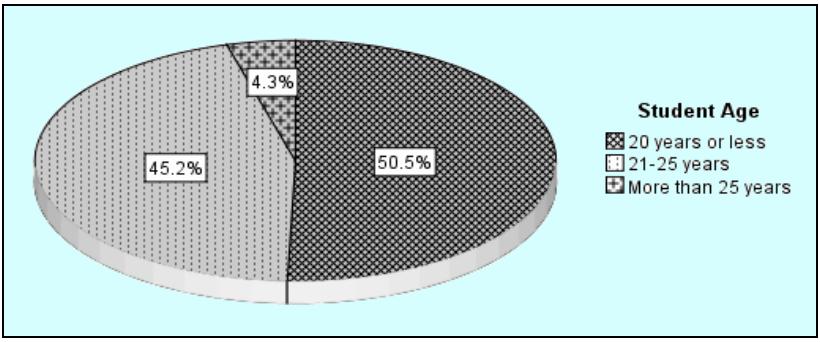


**Figure 2.1: Percentage of students by age**

46% of the selected student were single, about 31% were dating and the remaining 23% were in a long term relationship, including married persons (Figure 2.2).

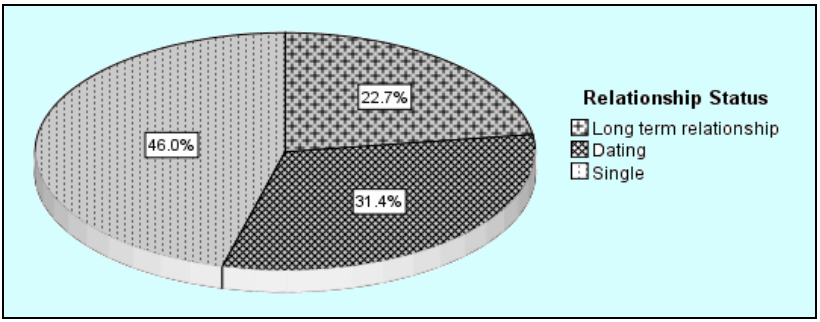


**Figure 2.2: Percentage of students by relationship status**

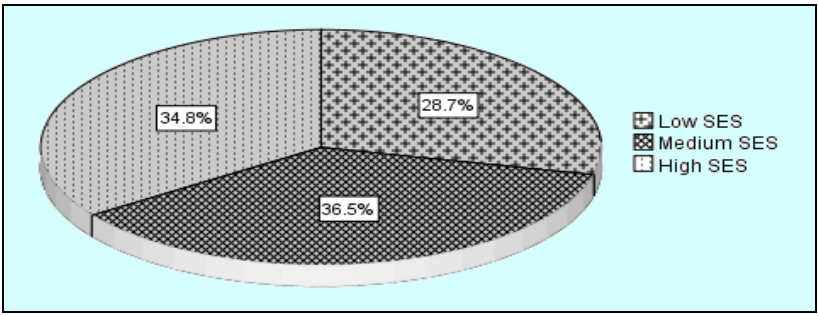


**Figure 2.3: Percentage of students by socio economic status**

34.8% of the students in the sample came from a high socio economic status (SES). 36.5% came from a medium SES and 28.7% from a low SES (Figure 2.3). SES was computed on the basis of father's occupation and level of education and mother's level of education.

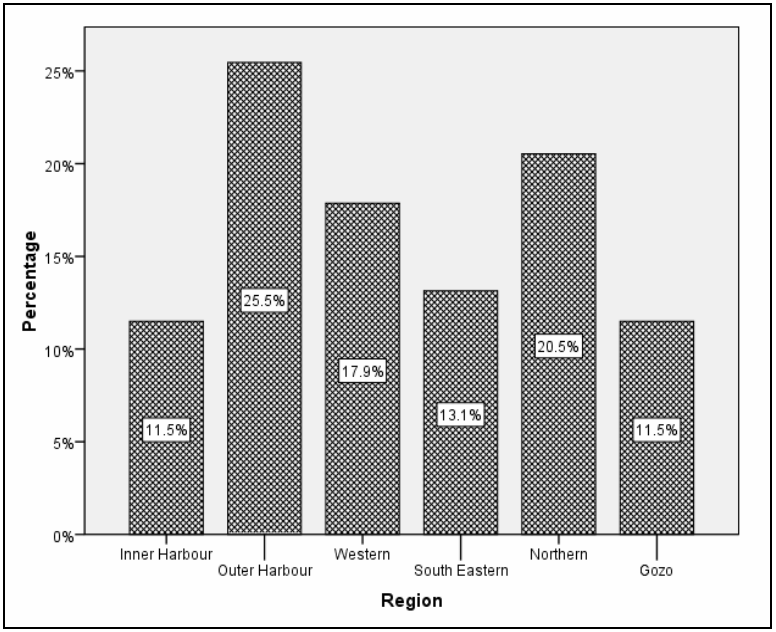


**Figure 2.4: Percentage of students by region**

Approximately a quarter of the selected sample come from the outer harbour region, followed by Northern region (20.5%) and Western region (17.9%), with Gozo and the Inner Harbour having the least number of university students (Figure 2.4).

## 2.3 Data Analysis

Statistical inference is intended to make generalizations about the university population based on information elicited from the randomly selected sample. This is carried out in two ways; either by conducting hypothesis tests or by computing the 95% confidence intervals for population parameters. The Chi-Square test and the One-way ANOVA test are used to make inferences through tests of hypothesis; for both tests a 0.05 level of significance is employed.

The Chi-Square test is used to determine whether there exists a significant association between two categorical variables in a two-way contingency table. The null hypothesis specifies that there is no association between the two variables and will be accepted if the P-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. This test is used extensively to determine whether the associations between health-related variables and demographic variables are significant.

The One-way ANOVA test is used to compare the mean values of a quantitative dependent variable across the categories of an independent (explanatory) variable. The independent variables include two course related variable and two demographic variables, namely faculty and course year and gender and relationship status respectively**.** The null hypothesis specifies that the actual mean values of the quantitative dependent variable are equal across the different levels of an independent variable. Using a 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis will be accepted if the P-value exceeds the 0.05 criterion.