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**BALANCING BEAMS OF EMOTIONAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONGST
B. Sc. UNDERGRADUATES OF THE OPEN
UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

By

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ABSTRACT

This research was carried out to identify the balancing beams of emotional and psychological distress amongst B. Sc. undergraduates of the Open University of Sri Lanka. The survey method was adapted for this study with questionnaires i.e., a previously validated screening test (GHQ-30), and a prepared questionnaire to determine socioeconomic, personal backgrounds of students. Both questionnaires were administered to 133 B.Sc. undergraduates selected by using stratified random sampling technique.

Percentages, frequency tabulation and multivariate analysis (PCA, FA, DFA) were used to detect significant statistical differences in distress levels. In the study sample (133), 86(64.7%) students are found to be psychologically and emotionally distressed. Factors such as student's monthly family income, mode of accommodation and type of permanent residence are detected as balancing beams. Gender, study year, marital status, age category, G.C.E. (A/L) grading or basic level of English, source of motivation, employment status, were not significantly correlated for variation of distress levels among students. Most stressful events in personal life of students were recognized as uncertainty of the future, financial difficulties and the difficulties encountered in university life. Most stressful events in the university life of students were problems related to learning materials, practical classes, day schools, accommodation and language.

The study revealed that, academic and administrative structure of the B.Sc. program should be changed to prevent the highly stressful condition of undergraduates in order to decrease the distress levels. The study also suggested that, students and staff should become aware of true distance education concepts. Further effective academic and career counseling programs and career guidance services are recommended for OUSL undergraduates.