

# Measuring Perceived Stress and Burnout Level among Undergraduates during ODL Sessions in UiTM Tapah

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## ABSTRACT

*The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted nearly every industry including educational institutions. The change from traditional learning to online learning methods has created a new learning environment. Students need to adjust to a new norm of attending online lectures, connecting with lecturers and classmates virtually, and chasing deadlines for submitting work while also scheduling time for self-revision. This situation can create another issue for students which are stress and burnout during Open and Distance Learning (ODL) sessions. Hence, the purpose of the study is (1) to assess the level of perceived stress and burnout among accounting students during ODL sessions; and (2) to determine the relationship between accounting students' perceived stress and burnout during ODL sessions. An e-survey was used to deliver a set of questionnaires to accounting students on their perceived stress and burnout experiences, with a total of 314 respondents in the final sample. Perceived Stress Scale and Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-SS) were used to measure the perceived stress and burnout respectively. According to the findings, in terms of student burnout, 50 percent of the respondents had burnout from never to practically every week, while the other 50 percent experienced burnout from every week to every day. In terms of perceived stress, the results showed that 50 percent of the respondents felt from never to sometimes for specific perceived stress identified, while the other 50 percent felt from sometimes to very often. A substantial positive association between perceived stress and burnout was found, implying that the higher the perceived stress, the more burnout the students will feel during ODL sessions.*

**Keywords:** *Perceived stress, burnout, open distance learning, accounting student, Covid-19*

## 1.0 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit almost every country worldwide, with no exception to Malaysia. The Movement Control Order (MCO), which was proclaimed by Malaysia's Eighth Prime Minister, Tan Sri Dato' Haji Mahiaddin bin Md. Yasin, on 18 March 2020, was adopted to control the pandemic outbreak. Apart from the restrictions imposed by the government, all schools and both public and private higher education institutions have been closed. Alternatively, the schools and institutions employed home-based learning, and student's performance is evaluated through continuous assessment scores. To address this scenario, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has switched all classes to Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode as of 13 April 2020. It provides students with a flexible learning environment in which they can engage in online lectures, tutorial discussions, and even take tests and final assessments from wherever they are.

Online learning is a type of distance learning in which students and lecturers are in different locations but may still communicate over the Internet (Bartley and Golek, 2004). Instead of providing a flexible teaching and learning environment, online learning, on the other hand, has several challenges that students encounter. Hussin et al., (2020) reported that moreover half of the students had poor internet connections, which was highlighted as the most significant barrier to ODL implementation. According to the findings, 53 percent of those who have bad internet connections live in the cities. The study was later reinforced by the findings of Adnan and Anwar (2020), who discovered that rather than a terrible technical issue, a monetary issue was also causing difficulty in accessing online learning. For students, a lack of self-motivation is also a concern (Azmi and Lai, 2021). They further explain that the dissatisfaction with ODL is also because of the inability to adapt to the new learning environment, hence, it requires time for them to adapt to the new experience. In addition to a poor internet connection, financial difficulties, and a lack of self-motivation are the issues that need to be dealt with. In their study, Aldulaimi et al., (2021) discovered that the workload has piled up significantly on students because they are asked to complete study tasks and post them to the internet, which adds to the stress for all and takes a long time due to the complexities of technology. Responding to those issues that develop among students, educators must be aware of students' conditions, such as motivation and adequate internet connectivity, to participate in online learning and engage with educators effectively (Musa et al., 2020).

More researches have recently focused on the perceived stress experienced by university students during open and distance learning, which was suddenly executed in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Perceived stress is described by Lazarus (1990), as referenced in Kausar, (2010) as a subjectively experienced condition in which an individual recognizes an imbalance between demands addressed to him/her and the resources available to meet the demands. Academic pressure, separation from school, fears of contagion on the physical and physiological health of college students and worry for family members' health are characteristics that were found to be predictors of institution students' perceived stress (Yang et al., 2021; and Kostic et al., 2021). During the early stage of the Covid-19 pandemic, Simegn et al. (2021) determined that stress was significantly associated with first and second-year female students in Ethiopian University when they did not believe Covid-19 was preventable, the presence of confirmed Covid-19 patients in the town they were living in, and a lack of access to reading materials about Covid-19. The other study on medical students made by Woon et al. (2021) discovered that after the first movement control order (MCO) was lifted, frustration from loss of daily routine and study disruption, as well as having pre-existing medical, depressive, and anxiety disorders, were resulted to increased depressive symptoms.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when education transitioned to online mode and distance learning, prolonged time spent in front of screens, tablets, and smart gadgets increased stress and burnout (Mheidly et al., 2020). Yang (2004) defines student burnout as "a state of emotional weariness, a predisposition to depersonalization, and a sense of poor personal success displayed by students in the learning process due to course stress, course load, or other psychological factors." While the concept of student burnout has gained popularity, Schaufeli et al. (2002) developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS). It has now been referred to be the most widely used as a measurement to survey burnout among students (Wickramasinghe, 2018; Portoghese et al., 2018). Sugara et al. (2020) proposed that burnout harmed the quality of life, and discovered that both health and relative, which are categories that characterize the quality of life, had a negative relationship with burnout. This explains that the higher the quality of life, the lower the burnout level of students and vice versa. In Malaysia, a comparison of Bachelor Accounting students from private and public colleges was conducted. The findings indicated that students from private institutions are more stressed than those from public institutions. The findings also suggest that academic environments such as assessment format, academic load and subject difficulty, could be the sources of stress (Mohd Nor et al., 2019).

According to the literature, there is a need to address the issue of stress and burnout

among university students to find the necessary solutions. Perceived stress and burnout were extensively discussed by Malaysian researchers. In response to the current situation, in which most educational institutes throughout the world have transitioned to e-learning because of Covid-19, this study aims to fill in this gap to acquire a clearer insight from the students' perspective, particularly in Malaysia. Thus, the objectives of this study are:

- To assess the level of perceived stress and burnout among accounting students during ODL sessions; and
- To determine the relationship between accounting students' perceived stress and burnout during ODL session.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 includes previous literature on the level of perceived stress and burnout among students. Section 3 describes the research methodology that includes data and samples. Section 4 presents the empirical analysis and discussion on the findings and section 5 provides the conclusion, limitation and recommendation.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Open and Distance Learning (ODL)**

The concept of ODL is not a new term as it has been introduced in the late 1800s whereby the University of Chicago became the first university in the United States (US) implemented distance education which teachers and students located in different locations (Ghosh et al., 2012). After the development of radio and television in the 1950s, the concept of ODL started to be widely used as people found the new delivery system outside the traditional classroom. In these modern days, with the introduction of the internet, online learning has become one of the choices to replace face-to-face classes especially during the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to American Association for Distance Learning (UDSL), ODL means "the process of acquiring knowledge through a variety of media used to transfer education and information, including all types of technology and various forms of education for distance learning." Recent research by Md Saidi et al., (2021) mention that ODL is one of the most suitable strategies that integrate virtual technology that will allow the continuation of the teaching and learning process. In today's global knowledge-based society, ODL may be conducted in various forms such as online learning or e-learning as well as MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses). Singh and Thurman (2019) defined online learning as learning experiences either in synchronous or asynchronous

environments through different technologies so that students can learn and interact with teachers anywhere and share their ideas with their friends simultaneously. Meanwhile, Osman et al., (2009) defined online learning as course materials that are delivered via the internet.

### **2.1.1 ODL Mechanism**

Because of the rapid changes in technologies, a variety of tools or methods can be used to conduct the ODL including chat applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), video conferencing (Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Cisco Webex) and Learning Management System (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Ufuture/i-Learn, Schoology, Moodle, Quizziz, Kahoot, Padlet and Jamboard. A study done by Kurok et al. (2020) found that 100 percent of the respondents, consisting of 173 teachers from two educational institutions in Russia, used the ZOOM application as a communication tool during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another study done by Md Saidi et al. (2021) claimed that 95 percent of respondents who are educators and students in public and private universities in Malaysia preferred Google Meet in conducting their live meetings and 97 percent of them preferred Google Classroom and WhatsApp as their tools in conducting ODL.

The educators' approaches in the ODL must be consistent with the approach or mode in which they desire to connect with students, whether synchronous or asynchronous. The Synchronous method means that all classes are held in real-time, with teachers and students present at the same time (Abdul Rahim et al., 2021). Therefore, educators are required to schedule the meetings and conferences in an appropriate calendaring system and the data system logging needs to keep track of the system so that all members would be alert on updated announcements or information (Ghosh et al., 2012). Under the asynchronous approach, the lecture notes are given to students and they are free to go through their notes at their own time without any real-time communication with educators (Abdul Rahim et al., 2021). Asynchronous mode is more complex which requires a special and careful designation of the database to store the information of the participants' online behavior (Ghosh et al., 2012). Regardless of the advantages and disadvantages of the above approaches, however, it is suggested to include the combination of both approaches in conducting ODL so that greater flexibility for students to learn at their own time (Oye, 2012).

## 2.1.2 Benefits and challenges of ODL

ODL can provide numerous benefits to both educators and students. According to Ghosh et al. (2012), ODL may provide benefits in terms of; 1) improving the knowledge and skills of educators, both in higher education and educational agencies, 2) using in out-of-school programs where it is able to educate children and youth who are unable to attend ordinary schools due to disabled, suffering long-term illness, living in a remote area or living oversea and 3) playing an important role for the human development especially in providing online hands-on training in the field of technical and vocational education. Besides that, Roqobih et al. (2019) as cited by Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) mentioned that online learning was able to increase student's creative thinking skills. The flexibility of online learning that includes the element of gamification also has enhanced the student's engagement towards the course as well as improved the students learning as students started to feel enjoy learning on certain subjects or courses (Poondej, 2019; Hartt et al., 2020). Other than that, the physical lecture by the educators could be improved through the inclusion of the audio in the lecture slides (Roqobih et al., 2019). This can give benefits to students where it can help students to have a better understanding of the topics' content. By referring to the previous studies, it is no doubt that ODL can give positive effects and provide assistance in the teaching and learning process especially during the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the effectiveness of ODL, there are also some challenges faced by the educators as well as students. Girik (2020) highlighted some issues in ODL such as the availability of internet access, financial issues and also the problem with online learning applications. O'Doherty et al. (2018) stated that the main barriers to online learning were time constraints, poor technical skills, inadequate infrastructure, absence of institutional strategies and support as well as negative attitudes. A recent study by Sugilar (2021) identified four factors as students' barriers to participating in online tutorial classes namely (1) lack of information about online tutorials, (2) lack of student motivation, (3) technical barriers and (4) lack of support services for students. Bashitialshaer et al. (2021) have mentioned the important obstacles that hinder distance learning such as shortages of educators, the need for training and experience in using the internet, lack of technological infrastructure at some universities other than lack of direct interaction and communication between educators and students.

## **2.2 Perceived stress**

Stress is a normal phenomenon suffered by anyone due to various factors of the stressor. According to Yang et al. (2021), two appraisals were triggered when someone was confronted with stressors namely primary appraisal which an individual evaluates potential threats or harms; and secondary appraisal that refers to the ability to change the situation and control negative emotional reactions. The present study will focus on perceived stress due to its crucial role in the attribution-secondary appraisal coping relationship. Lazarus (1990, as cited in Kausar, 2010) defined perceived stress as a condition subjectively experienced by an individual who identifies an imbalance between demands addressed to him/her and the resources available to encounter these demands. Kausar (2010) revealed that academic workload predicted university students' perceived stress. Consistently, a study conducted on 199 university graduates and undergraduates in Rawalpindi and Islamabad further confirmed that course load, sleep problem and social activities were the major source of perceived stress (Talib and Zia-ur-Rehman, 2012). According to Mohd Nor et al. (2019), the nature of accounting courses that require students to master highly technical and quantitative subjects as well as to adapt to the rapidly changing environments on accounting, auditing standards and taxation regulations also imposed stress on the accounting students. Other than previous factors, Worku et al. (2020), reported that the financial constraint, pressure to maintain a good grade and high parental expectations contributes to the perceived stress among undergraduate health science students at Arsi University Oromia, Ethiopia. However, when students see stress positively, it can motivate them to take action to be their success factors. The study done by Gabre and Kumar (2012) found that there is no significant relationship between perceived stress and academic performance of accounting students because students will perform best under moderate amounts of stress. Another study conducted by Ozveren (2021) showed a negative relationship between self-efficacy and perceived stress which indicates that students with a relatively high self-efficacy level can control stress better than students with a low self-efficacy level.

Stress, if not well managed, may give rise to feelings of fear, incompetence, uselessness, anger, and guilt, which in turn can cause physical and mental health problems (Eva et al., 2015). These worrying circumstances should be addressed promptly because they can lead to poor quality of life and overall dissatisfaction in life (Opoku-Acheampong et al., 2017). Further, unmanaged stress also may expose people to the risk of self-harm and suicide (Stewart et al., 2019).

Concerning financial matters, all self-financing students and almost all of the students who received a scholarship claimed that they experienced stress. This could be due to the pressure to complete their study and maintain a good grade to secure continuous sponsorship (Mohd Nor et al., 2019). In contrast, Worku et al. (2020) found that there was a statistically significant association between perceived stress and students' age and year of study among undergraduate health science students.

Recently, an increasing number of studies have focused on the perceived stress suffered by university students during ODL that was suddenly implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Yang et al. (2021) carried out research to explore the mediating effect of perceived stress on the relationship between academic workload, separation from school, and fears of contagion on college students' physical and physiological health. Findings revealed that all the variables are a predictor of college students' perceived stress, which in turn, affect their health. Since students live with their parents, Kostic et al. (2021) found out that expressing concern for the health of family members during the Covid-19 outbreak predicted higher levels of perceived stress. Thus, the present study implies that ODL conducted during the pandemic contributes to the perceived stress among diploma accounting students.

## **2.3 Burnout**

Herbert Freudenberger was the first to describe burnout in 1974 (Heinemann and Heinemann, 2017). Since that, burnout received extensive attention from the researcher to explore the factors that triggered the syndrome, its consequences and ways to cope with it. The World Health Organization has revised the definition of burnout as a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed (WHO, 2019). Not limited to the professions such as teachers, medical practitioners, lawyers, security agents, secretaries or psychologists, university students are also vulnerable to burnout syndrome (Salami et al., 2017). Yang (2004) has defined student burnout as burnout in the learning process, because of course stress, course load or other psychological factors, display a state of emotional exhaustion, a tendency to depersonalization, and a feeling of low personal accomplishment. Rahmati (2015) pointed out that students with low self-efficacy become easily burnout and have less ability to adapt to the syndrome when facing academic assignments, hard tasks and exhausted subjects. Other than the pressure on course load, university students are also faced with social and professional pressures related to the financing of higher education, academic performance, and poor relationships with colleagues and educators that make them more vulnerable to the development of this syndrome (Salgado and



Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2021). As the education shifted to online mode and distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, prolonged time facing screens, tablets, and smart devices also lead to an increased level of stress and burnout (Mheidly et al., 2020).

A higher level of burnout can lead to higher absenteeism, lower enthusiasm to complete the course work, higher percentage of dropout and eventually affect overall student's academic achievement (Yang, 2004). Burnout causes students to feel strain, overwhelmed, and exhausted. This in turn gives a bad impact on student performance, satisfaction and decreasing productivity in learning (Norez, 2017; Sugara et al., 2020). However, students with high levels of emotional intelligence are associated with lower levels of burnout due to their ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures (Cazan and Nastaza, 2015). Another study conducted by Abuaddousa et al. (2021) found that major academic satisfaction for accounting students has a significant negative impact on burnout. Besides that, Salgado and Au-Yong-Oliveira (2021) highlighted that academic involvement, intrinsic motivation, social support and resilience are factors that seem to protect students from experiencing burnout. Thus, universities should educate students about coping strategies to manage their emotions, to be more flexible, and to express their emotions in a proper way in order to combat burnout syndrome. In terms of health, burnout leads to an increased rate of mood disorders such as depression and anxiety and a plethora of physical problems including increased inflammation biomarkers and cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, sleep disturbances, changes in appetite, fatigue, lowered immunity, headaches, and gastrointestinal distress (Norez, 2017). To conclude, the negative effect brought by burnout will affect the overall quality of life (Sugara et al., 2020). Turning to demographic elements, Yang (2004) found that male students have a higher level of burnout than female students. In contrast to the earlier study, no statistically significant result was found between age, gender and gross monthly income with the levels of burnout (Abuaddousa et al., 2021; Salgado and Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2021). Based on the above argument, this present study assumed that ODL conducted during the pandemic contributes to burnout to the diploma accounting students.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Population and sample size**

The population of this study is accounting students in one branch of a public university in Perak, Malaysia. This is the university that has the largest number of accounting students as compared to other branches. Therefore, data in

this research represent a large population of Accountancy diploma students as a whole. A set of e-survey in Google Form was distributed to all students through Group WhatsApp since it is the best medium to reach students who were at their own home during ODL due to the pandemic of Covid-19. The data were collected from August to October 2020 with a total population of students of 1,545. There were 314 responses received which is approximately 20 percent of the total population. According to Roscoe (1975), as cited by Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the sample size in a study should be between the ranges of 30 to 500. Thus, the sample size of 314 is considered to be sufficient for this study.

### **3.2 Survey Instrument**

This study uses an e-survey that consists of three sections. The first section, Section A requests the respondents to complete their demographic profile such as age, gender, parents' employment status, parents' monthly income, parents' monthly income is affected by the pandemic crisis of Covid-19, family residence, total online classes enrolled, current semester, student accommodation, types of internet access during ODL, as well as their academic performance. The student's academic performance was measured by their Cumulative Grade Points Average (CGPA). Section B asks about the respondents' perceived stress. There are 10 questions adapted from Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale that are used to measure perceived stress during open and distance learning. The respondents are requested to choose between the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = never, 2 = almost never, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often and 5 = very often. The final section, Section C consists of 15 statements adapted from Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-SS) that measure burnout during open and distance learning. The respondents are requested to tick one out of seven scales provided where 1 = never, 2 = a few times a year, 3 = every month, 4 = a few times a month, 5 = every week, 6 = a few times a week and 7 = every day.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software. Descriptive statistics was used to find out the mean scores for perceived stress and burnout. Meanwhile, the correlation analysis was performed to investigate the existence of a relationship between the two independent variables (perceived stress and burnout). Before this analysis took place, the reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was conducted. The results in explaining the distribution of the data will use median (Med) value to central value and interquartile range (IQR) to explain the variability of the data.

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

A demographic profile has been collected from the participants. The profiles included gender, family residence, student's accommodation, parent's monthly income, internet access and the family being affected by pandemic crisis of Covid-19.

Table 1 below shows that the respondents are represented almost by females compared to males. There are 65 males (20.7 percent) and 249 females (79.3 percent) in the sample giving a total of 314 respondents. According to the Family Residence variable, it was found that the majority of the respondents are from the Urban areas (65.9percent) compared to the Rural areas (34.1 percent). Meanwhile, for a parent's monthly income, it shows that the respondents are taken across all income levels which reflects the socio-economic status of their parents. Majority of the respondent came from B40 group where their parent's income is between RM1,000 to RM5,000 (52.5 percent), followed by income range RM 5,000- RM10,000 (24.5 percent), less than RM1,000 (11.1 percent), RM10,000 - RM15,000 (8.6 percent) and over RM15,000 (3.2 percent). The respondent has also been asked about their internet access during the ODL session on the kind of internet access that they mostly used. The result shows that 49.4 percent of the respondents used their mobile phone internet, followed by fixed internet line/broadband/home Wi-Fi (49 percent) and another 1.6 percent is free accessible Wi-Fi. The study also found that 62.1 percent of the respondent's parent's monthly income are not really affected by the pandemic crisis of Covid-19, the remaining 37.9 percent are very much affected by this pandemic crisis.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondent**

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	65	20.7
	Female	249	79.3
Family Residence	Rural	107	34.1
	Urban	207	65.9
Students Accommodations	Stay with parents	304	96.8
	Stay with older siblings	3	1
	Stay with guardians (other than parents and siblings)	5	1.6
	Others	2	0.6

Parent's Monthly Income	Less than RM1,000	35	11.1
	RM1,000-RM5,000	165	52.5
	RM5,000-RM10,000	77	24.5
	RM10,000-RM15,000	27	8.6
	Over RM 15,000	10	3.2
Internet Access	Fixed internet line/ broadband/ home WI-FI	154	49
	Free-accessible WI-FI	5	1.6
	Mobile Phone internet	155	49.4
Affected by Pandemic Crises	No	195	62.1
	Yes	119	37.9

The findings of the survey have been represented in Table 2 and Table 3 below. Table 2 shows that the respondents' perceived stress levels during the ODL session. Based on the findings it shows that 50 percent of the respondents feel from 'never to sometimes' (Med=3) as they felt unable to control the important things in their life (IQR=3 to 4), they were confident about their ability to handle their personal problems (IQR=3 to 4), things were going their way (IQR=0), they could not cope with all the things that they had to do (IQR=3 to 4), they been able to control irritations in their life (IQR=3 to 4), they were on top of things (IQR=2 to 3) and difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them (IQR= 3 to 4). Other than that, the respondents felt fairly often (IQR=3 to 4). Another 50 percent of the respondents feel and think from 'sometimes to very often'. Furthermore, the findings also show 50 percent (Med=4), as they feel from 'never to fairly often' on being upset because of something that happened unexpectedly (IQR=3 to 4), they felt nervous and stressed (IQR=3 to 5) and been angered because of things that were outside of their control (IQR= 3 to 4). Other remaining respondents experienced from fairly often to very often.

It could be said that the perceived stress during ODL with the median score of 3 (Sometimes) could be due to the reason that students were staying with parents. They might have to abide by rules and regulations from parents or even high expectations from parents for them to be involved in household matters and at the same time concentrating on their ODL sessions. These findings are supported by Worku et al. (2020) as they stated that high expectations from family members could lead to a high level of perceived stress. Other than that, since ODL sessions are conducted due to the pandemic crisis of Covid-19, the rising number of infected patients is one of the worrying issues that will somehow increase the level of stress among students. Kostic et al. (2021) found that expressing concern for the health

of family members has predicted a higher level of perceived stress. Another factor that might lead to this finding is students were having financial resources constraints as the majority of students comes from a lower range income family. In addition to the rising level of stress could be due to the model of ODL sessions, where students have no physical interaction opportunity with their friends, students were actually separated from their normal face-to-face life with friends in university. Yang et al. (2021) claimed that separation from school leads to perceived stress.

**Table 2: Respondents' Perceived Stress during ODL session**

Item	Median	IQR	Interpretation
In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	4	1	Fairly Often
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	3	1	Sometimes
In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?	4	2	Fairly Often
In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	3	1	Sometimes
In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	3	0	Sometimes
In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	3	1	Sometimes
In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	3	1	Sometimes
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	3	1	Sometimes
In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	4	1	Fairly Often
In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	3	1	Sometimes

The findings in Table 3, has shown that during ODL sessions, 50 percent of the respondents were experiencing burnout out from 'never to every week' (Med=5), as 'they feel emotionally drained by online distance studies' (IQR=4 to 6), 'burned out from their online distance classes' (IQR=3 to 6), 'they felt tired of getting up in the morning and have to face another day in online distance classes' (IQR=3 to

6), 'the belief that they can make an effective contribution to the online distance classes attended' (IQR=3 to 6) and the 'feeling of stimulated when study goals are achieved' (IQR=4 to 6). Another 50 percent are from 'every week to every day'.

**The 3: Respondents' Burnout during ODL session**

<b>Item of the survey</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>IQR</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
I feel emotionally drained by my online distance studies	5	2	Every week
I feel used up at the end of a day at university	4	2	A few times in a month
I feel burned out from my online distance studies	5	3	Every week
I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day in online distance classes	5	3	Every week
Studying or attending an online distance class is really a strain for me	4	3	A few times in a month
I have become less interested in my studies since my enrollment in the online distance classes imposed by the university	4	4	A few times in a month
I have become less enthusiastic about my online distance studies	4	4	A few times in a month
I have become more cynical about the potential usefulness of my online distance studies	4	3	A few times in a month
I doubt the significance of my online distance studies	4	3	A few times in a month
I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my online distance studies	4	2	A few times in a month
I believe that I make an effective contribution to the online distance classes that I attend	5	3	Every week
In my opinion, I am a good student	4	3	A few times in a month
I have learnt many interesting things during the course of my online distance studies	4	3	A few times in a month
I feel stimulated when I achieve my study goals	5	2	Every week
During the online distance class, I feel confident that I am effective in getting things done	4	2	A few times in a month

Instead of felt burned out weekly, 50 percent of them experience burnout from ‘never to a few times’ in a month (Med=4). An item such as that stated they feel used up at the end of a day at university (IQR= 4 to 6), studying or attending an online distance class is really a strain for them (IQR= 3 to 6). Other than that, they also become less interested in their studies since their enrollment in the online distance classes is imposed by the university (IQR=2 to 6), enthusiastic about their online distance studies (IQR=2 to 6). They also become more cynical about the potential usefulness of their online distance studies (IQR=3 to 6) and doubt the significance of their online distance studies (IQR=3 to 6), stating that they are a good student (IQR=3 to 6), have learnt many interesting things during the course of their online distance studies (IQR=3 to 6) and feel confident that they are effective in getting things done (IQR= 3 to 5).

The level of burnout is considered high. These students were at an early age to be experiencing a high level of burnout. ODL sessions lead to this as students are now shifted from traditional face-to-face learning to fully lending their attention to watching and listening to online lectures, either live or pre-recorded. As students estimated to take a minimum of 4 codes in a semester (12 credit hours) to a maximum number of 8 codes (24 credit hours), more hours were taken for online learning. Mheidly et al. (2020) highlighted that prolonged screen time will increase the level of burnout. The study found that ODL burnout causes these students to feel strain, overwhelmed, and exhausted to face another day online session. These effects will have a negative impact on students’ future performance (Sugara et al., 2020). This study suggests that educational systems should make an effort to revise the curriculum and assessments from face-to-face based to ODL based, as the method of delivering lessons and conducting assessments online alone are insufficient. A comprehensive ODL based curriculum is important to alleviate the level of burnout among students in this pandemic.

**Table 4: Reliability Test**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient</b>
Perceived Stress	10	0.767
Burnout	15	0.883

Table 4 above depicts Cronbach’s Alpha score for the dimensions. The reliability test was conducted to check the internal consistency of the scales. The reliability coefficients of the two dimensions’ exhibit consistency: Perceived Stress factor with 10 items yield a coefficient value of 0.767 and Burnout factor of 15 items exhibit coefficient value of 0.883. Therefore, the reliability for all dimensions studied was considered high. The scores above 0.70 are consistent with Sekaran

and Bougie (2013).

**Table 5: Correlations**

		TOT_PS	TOT_BO	
Spearman's rho	TOT_PS	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	
		N	314	
	TOT_BO	Correlation Coefficient	.543**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	314	314

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 above illustrates spearman's Correlation coefficient significant value between Perceived Stress and Burnout during ODL session. The result showed that there was a moderate positive relationship between perceived stress and burnout during ODL with a correlation coefficient of (0.543) and significant at the 0.01 level ( $p=0.000$ ). It can be concluded that the more perceived stress they experienced during the ODL sessions, they will face a higher level of burnout. The finding of this study is consistent with a recent study by Deemah et al. (2020), who found that the majority of their participants showed moderate to high levels of stress, which would later induce burnout amongst students. All the ODL issues such as the curriculum, assessments, educators-students interaction and others need to be addressed well by universities as a prolonged experience of a high level of stress and burnout, will affect the academic performance of students.

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found that students were experiencing moderate to high level of stress and burnout experiences. Students experienced with a high level of stress were associated with feelings of burnout during ODL sessions. The presence of stress may motivate the feelings of burnout to become more visible to students. Hence, this issue should be given outstanding attention in order to find the best mechanisms and techniques in controlling the situation. The study believes that the educational system should consider students' academic life in the time of the current severe pandemic. The center of attention should be on integrating a comprehensive ODL-based curriculum. As for parents, there is a need to address and acknowledge students' feelings during ODL sessions to show support to them. There are several limitations found in this study. The main limitation is reporting bias resulting from the respondents' interpretation of the questions. Factors such



as gender, internet connectivity and financial resources were vary for each student and these might have affected their way of interpreting all the questions. In addition, the study took place only from one university which may set a limited perimeter of generalizing the results. Therefore, for future research, it is suggested to explore a comparison of perceived stress and burnout level of students among different courses during the ODL sessions, from different universities, with a view of extending and examining in a relative and integral way for better results.

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