

# University Students Evaluation of Psychosocial Problems Scale<sup>©</sup>

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**Abstract.** *The University Students Evaluation of Psychosocial Problems (USEPP) scale is a multidimensional, self-administered psychological instrument measuring psychosocial problems among university students. It discriminates university students with or without psychosocial problems and it can predict psychological distress. The scale can be applied for research purposes and for clinical evaluation. The scale development was premised on a rational-empirical approach utilizing two theories/models. Namely, the Vulnerability-Experience-Manifestation-Prevalence model (Chun, Eastman, Sue, & Wang, 1998) to build a grounded theory for the instrument-items generation that could depict those personal and environmental factors and experiences of psychosocial problems among the students. And the Item Response Theory, specifically, the derivative Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a statistical multivariate analysis technique (Crockett, 2012) used toward creating a psychometrically sound instrument focused on the unique contextual environment of university students in a developing world. Experts in instrument development look at SEM as a 'must' for social scientists when designing new instruments and validating existing ones (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008).*

## Introduction

The University Students Evaluation of Psychosocial Problems (USEPP) scale was developed and validated at Nkumba University-Uganda for a PhD study by Dr. Norman David Nsereko and published in 2014 (Nsereko, Musisi, & Holtzman, 2014). It was registered as a literary work No.80/2015 at Uganda Registration Services Bureau in Uganda under the name Norman David Nsereko in accordance with section 43(6) of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006, effective from 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

## Psychometric Properties

The psychometric properties of USEPP namely, the scale structure, reliability and validity were demonstrated by two studies of diverse respondents using both exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. The scale has 17 items under four subscales that measure emotional, antisocial, academic problems and traumatic experiences as predictors of psychosocial problems among university students. Each item is rated on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 3 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the USEPP total scale (Reliability) is (0.81) and the four subscales: Emotional Problems (0.70); Antisocial Behaviour (0.73); Traumatic Experiences (0.60) and Academic problems

(0.63). The instrument was validated by the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist (HSCL-10) as a gold standard to establish its construct validity and by the Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) curve for its predictive validity.

### **Scale Administration**

The scale takes between five to ten minutes to score. The instrument can be used by trained mental health workers such as university counsellors, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists etc. at university counselling centres and health facilities. Private mental health practitioners and researchers etc. can apply the instrument (Nsereko, 2015). It is recommended for use as a campus routine assessment activity of university students' psychosocial functioning.

The use of the instrument in other settings outside the developing world will enable its properties to be better understood and its generalizability to wider groups to be clearer.

### **Permission to Use the Scale**

Currently the scale is entirely in manual form. Permission to use the scale can be obtained from the author on email address [nnsereko@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug](mailto:nnsereko@nkumbauniversity.ac.ug) who will provide its user manual. A fee is levied on the use of the scale. Efforts are being made to generate a computer/net version of the scale.

## University Students Evaluation of Psychosocial Problems

You are asked to go through the issues/concerns listed below. Indicate your level of agreement with those that are current concerns for you by circling the number on your right from the following options:

Not at all = 0    Somewhat Agree = 1    Agree = 2    Strongly Agree = 3

*Circle one response for each item and do not leave any blank*

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Issues/concerns experienced and are current concerns for me	0	1	2	3
Feeling stressed, being in low mood	0	1	2	3
Unpredictable/Insecure tuition fees status	0	1	2	3
I am involved in behaviours I should be ashamed of if they became public	0	1	2	3
I am not able to concentrate on my studies as I would have liked	0	1	2	3
Experiences of irrational fears/phobia	0	1	2	3
Often lacking welfare/pocket money for personal use	0	1	2	3
I am involved in one way or the other in academic mal practice	0	1	2	3
Low academic grades	0	1	2	3
Sometimes experiencing wishes of being dead	0	1	2	3
Adjustment problems in my new environment i.e. hostel, campus life	0	1	2	3
I take sexual advantage of others	0	1	2	3
Inadequate study skills to meet university academic demands	0	1	2	3
I have problems of concentrating in life generally	0	1	2	3
My family is experiencing problems to which I am of great concern	0	1	2	3
I engage in gambling/betting for financial gain	0	1	2	3
I sometimes find it difficult to sleep or I sleep too much	0	1	2	3
I indulge in uncontrolled drinking of alcohol	0	1	2	3

## References

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