

Major Problems Encountered by Non- Boarding College Students: Focus on Assela College of Teacher Education

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to identify the major problems that threaten non-boarding college students of Assela College of Teacher Education. It was also intended to see the differences observed in the types of problems faced by the students in terms of gender and previous residence background. To achieve the objectives, 211 (133 female and 78 male) students, 19 instructors of the college and 23 house renters were used as sources of information. All the necessary data was collected using pilot tested questionnaire and interview. The result indicated that the students are challenged by financial constraint, problems related to housing, interpersonal relationship and sexual harassment. Passionate love, anxiety, and unprotected sexual intercourse are also among the challenges faced by the students. Moreover, the quantitative analysis of the data revealed a significant difference between male and female students in terms of passionate love, anxiety and sexual harassment. The respondents' previous residence background brought a statistically significant difference only in addiction. Discussions are made from the point of view of current practice and earlier studies. Finally, possible implications of the findings for higher education institutions, together with recommendations, are forwarded.

Background of the Study

Accelerated socio-economic development and cultural change of a country depend on the overall development of education. In this regard, the role of higher education institution is of paramount importance for the growth of knowledge and information, technological change, interdependence among countries (Mekasha, 2005). Thus, higher education plays a significant role to enhance social changes, economic endurance and better life style. The

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Ethiopian government seems to be cognizant of this as it invests much on higher education institutions.

These days, many students are sent to different higher education institutions to be trained in different fields of studies. To make the students stay in the colleges and universities fruitful, different provisions are made by the government. Of these, the provision of boarding service is the major one. Unfortunately, in Assela college of Teacher education and other similar colleges in Oromia, there is no boarding service for the students.

During their study time at non-boarding colleges, the students are likely to face different challenges they had never been exposed to before. For example, lack of proper accommodation is one of the serious problems that non-boarding collegians are likely to face (Tsige, 2001, Habte, 1988). This means that the students are likely to be challenged by sanitation problems, suffocation of rooms and disagreement among themselves while living in groups of two, three or more. Some scholars suggest that such problems are not exclusive to collegians but high school students with similar living conditions suffer from problems such as inadequate diet, illness, homesickness and conflict with room-mates and house renters (Darge, 1994).

On the other hand, evidence indicates that the majority of college students are found in adolescence stage. In this period of human growth and development, physical growth and psychosocial development are critical. These physical, psychological and physiological growth and development imply social and psychological consequences such as development of interest in opposite sex, intimacy, peer recognition and substance abuse (Baron and Bayrne, 2005). These developmental changes, added to parental or institutional intervention, undoubtedly lead to excessive freedom which in turn brings negative consequences.

The study area is said to be a town of academic institutions. Including private institutions, there are 12 colleges and 3 secondary schools in the town. Thus, the town is predominated by the young generation. Except one

college, i.e. College of Agriculture, all of the institutions are non-boarding. All these students live in under quality rented rooms. Further more, the rental rooms are expensive.

The cost of living in Assela used to be relatively low for many years. Recently, however, there has been an increase in the price of every purchasable item, including rental rooms. To cope with such challenges, many students live in groups.

Studies undertaken on students of higher institution indicated that students face many types of psychological and social problems (Agliata and Renk, 2007; Abdu, 2003, Tsige, 2001). The authors of the studies argued that most of the problems of these students often emanate from the nature of their developmental stage, living environment and absence of parental intervention. The magnitude and courses of their problems are also reported to be different.

Some local studies show that many college students use substances such as 'Chat' and 'Shisha'. For example, Abdu (2003) carried out a study on a sample of 123 male AAU, main campus regular undergraduate students and found that about 60% of them were users of 'Chat'. These students think that it helps them to be stimulated and remain awake in the process of studying. Similarly, Seyoum and Ayalew (1996) also found that students use 'chat' while preparing for important examinations as it is believed to sharpen the mind and the sense. Similarly, Obats (2002) described that substance dependency has been a common problem among Nigerian college adolescents in recent years.

The other problem higher institution students are likely to be exposed to is alcohol addiction. In modern days, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on college and university campuses poses tremendous concern for parents, students, higher education professionals, government officials and the general community. A cross sectional study conducted on 1,872 college adolescents in Zambia showed that about 8.2% of them were cigarette

smokers (Siziya et al, 2007), Emphasizing the effect of addiction on Collegians, Hingson et al (2005) described that the majority of injuries, accidents, sexual assaults and rape, fighting and other crimes on and off college campuses are linked to alcohol and other drug uses. Moreover, studies revealed that alcohol consumption is associated with absenteeism from class and poor academic performance (Shehu and Idri, 2008).

Most college students are at puberty stage. At this stage love and sexuality matters are areas of high concern. According to Hatfield and Rapso (2002), love is a key issue among college students. The authors argued that most college students are being influenced by what they constantly see in society, especially on TV. They extended that the current students are more sensitive and open minded towards romance than their predecessors. Relating the issue of love with the world of education, Baron and Byrne (2005) claimed that a person in love is preoccupied with the loved one and can think of little else. Thus, the non-boarding collegians are more likely to be victimized by unrealistic love case which could be frustrating for their academic performance, interpersonal relationships and overall health condition.

Similarly, a study conducted on 184 undergraduates at East Carolina University indicated that 94% of the respondents had been in love, with a third reporting 3 or more love relationships (Knox, Schacht and Zusman, 1999).The researchers commented that their involvement in love relationships is more likely to arise from romantic belief in “love at first sight” and “love conquers all”, which has its own side effect on the students academic, social life and even health condition.

Emanating from various sources, anxiety is the other psychological impediment that college students are likely to face. In normal condition, every student feels some anxiety at some time in school, but extensive anxiety seriously inhibits learning experience, particularly on tests and examinations. The main source of anxiety in colleges is fear of failure and, losses of self esteem (Slavin, 1995). Anxiety can block college performance in several ways. Anxious students may have difficulty learning in the first

place they may have difficulty demonstrating their knowledge on tests (Ferdinald and Ferdinald, 2006).

Even though it might not involve a physical assault, unwanted sexual attention, including verbal and non verbal behavior is a serious problem among collegians. Studies estimate that anywhere from 13 % to 33% of female college students are victims of harassment (USM, 2007). It was indicated that harassment by peers is most common, occurring in approximately 42% of under graduates and 52% of graduate students. Furthermore, Shumba et al (2002) reported that sexual harassment of female students by lecturers is a serious social problem in schools and higher institutions of Zimbabwe.

Problems related to sexuality are aspects of critical consideration for the college youth. Physical and sexual maturities of the youth inevitably lead to sexual involvement. Non-boarding college youth, being in puberty stage and having excessive freedom, are more likely to exercise their sexuality, which could be risky for their overall development. Children's and youth Affairs Organizations (1995) underlined that lack of proper sex education often leads youth to such problems as unwanted pregnancy, abortion, illegitimate birth, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

Generally, college students who are living far away from home and parents are likely to be exposed to different social, academic and psychological challenges. Living out of campus obviously worsens this problem.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the nature of their age and environmental conditions, college students face many academic and social problems and subsequent emotional and psychological consequences such as stress, anxiety, frustration, depression, loneliness, inferiority, etc. Because of the absence of parental as well as institutional intervention, the problems of the non-boarding collegians are likely to be weighty.

Non-boarding college students come from urban and rural areas of different culture. They get favorable conditions for independent life in which they can explore what their age mates practice such as drug and unprotected sex. These students are likely to face a number of unique problems that boarding college students may not face.

Thus, the major purpose of this study was to identify the types of problems that non- boarding college students encountered. To this end, the following basic questions were formulated in the study.

- What are the major problems threatening non-boarding students of Assela College of Teacher Education?
- Is there a statistically significant difference between male and female students in the type of problems they face during their college life?
- Is there a significant difference in the types of problems the students face as a function of their previous residential background?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to identify the major problems of non-boarding college students with a particular focus on Asela College of Teacher Education. It was also intended to identify whether female and male, rural and urban background students differ in the types of problems they face.

Significance of the Study

This study will be significant in the following regards:

- It provides Assela College of Teacher Education an insight into the felt- problems of the non -boarding students so that the college looks for remedial solutions.
- It offers the Oromia Education Bureau basic information need to alleviate the non- boarding college students' problems.

Operational Definitions of Terms

Some terms are defined as follows in the context they are used in this study:

- **Rural**-refers to all villages, hard to rich areas lacking facilities such as transportation, electricity and the like.
- **Town**-refers to all small settlements such as capital of a district or (even smaller than that) which has some basic infrastructures such as electricity and roads.
- **Sexual Harassment**- refers to all kinds of attempts that draw attention to one's sex through verbal or non-verbal acts.

Methods

Participants and Sampling Procedures

The participants of this study were regular students of Assela College of Teacher Education. At the time this study was conducted, there were 1,229 regular students at Assela College of Teacher Education. Thus, the total population of this study was 1,229 College students, 50 instructors of the college and house renters in kebele 09 and 10 of Assela town.

From the student population, 78 male and 133 female students were selected using systematic random sampling technique. Out of 50 instructors of the college, 19 of them were selected using quota sampling technique. To select instructors for interview, quota sampling technique was employed not to skip some departments who have few instructors. Furthermore, 23 house renters from Kebele 09 and 10 of Assela town were purposely selected and used as sources of information. These two kebeles are near the college and most of the students reside in these kebeles. House renters who have relatively many rental rooms were chosen for interview.

Instruments

The questionnaire was the major data gathering tool used in this study. The first part of the questionnaire had 20 items prepared in the form of a four point rating scale. Items in this part of the questionnaire were partially adapted from the items previously used by SCOPE and Family Health International (2001). Other items were developed locally after reviewing different related literature.

The second part of the questionnaire was a rank order type. These items are a list of all the problems that college students are likely to face. It consisted of 11 items to be ordered by the students from the most frequently occurring to the least frequently occurring ones. The last section had three open-ended items.

The questionnaire was commented on for content validity by three instructors before pilot testing them. After that it was administered to 61 third year students and its reliability was computed. Accordingly, alpha value of .782 was obtained.

The questionnaire was administered after regular class schedule. The researcher together with his assistant gave clear orientation to the students about the objective of the study and made them complete the items independently. Initially, 228 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but 17 of the papers were found to be incomplete. Thus, 211 respondents were used for final analysis.

In addition to the questionnaire, interview was used to get supplementary information from the instructors and some house renters. The main theme of the interview was basically to assess the types of problems that challenge the students, major causes of these problems and the possible solutions.

Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative data gathered through questionnaire was tabulated and fed into SPSS software for statistical computation. To analyze and interpret the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were applied. Analysis of t-test was performed to see whether male and female, urban and rural background students face the problems at different or equal levels. Qualitative analysis through percentage and verbal description was utilized to indicate the problems the students face during their study at the college.

Results

In this study, the first question refers to the major problems that the trainees face during their stay at the college. Accordingly, the data obtained from the students was summarized and presented in figure as follows.

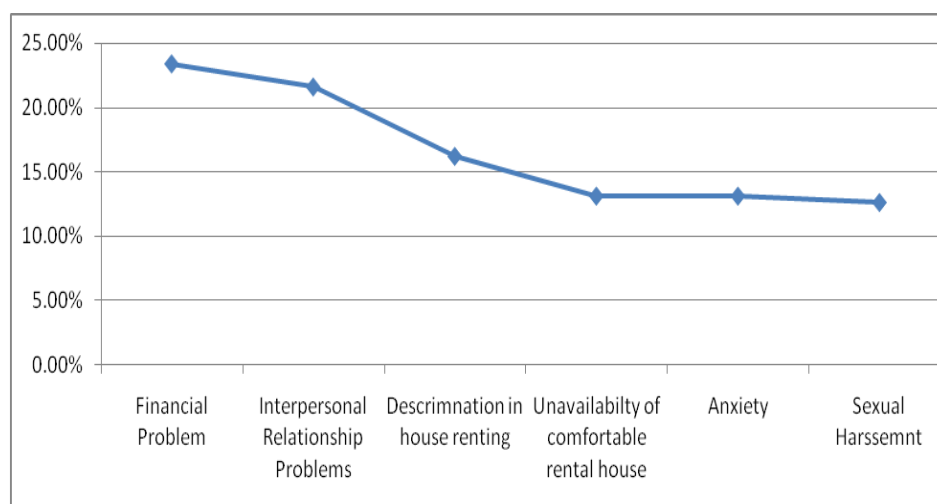


Figure 1: Major Problems as Described by the Students

As revealed in the figure, the primary challenge for the students was financial constraint. The respondents asserted that the stipend was not enough for house rent, food, stationery and other things necessary for them. In these days of inflation, the students clearly underlined how difficult it is to live on 300 birr per month without any external support.

In another question the students noted that interpersonal relationship problems and lack of willingness of the house owners to rent rooms to female trainees take second and third rank respectively. Unavailability of comfortable rental houses near the college (13.1%) is the other challenging factor. Sexual harassment (12.6 %) and anxiety (13.1 %) are the fifth and sixth challenging factors faced by the respondents.

Some of the respondents described that most of the students are more attentive to non-academic issues such as hair dressing styles and clothing fashions. Exposure to passionate love was also pointed out as a problem to be taken into account.

Analysis of the responses obtained from the instructors complements the above information. Issues such as self-management skill-related problems, lack of self-confidence, excessive freedom, loneliness, shyness, substance addiction, lack of motivation, excessive carelessness and culture shock are among the problems that face first year trainees.

Responses obtained from both sides revealed the students facing of various social, academic and personal challenging factors while they are at college for study. In this study, an attempted was also made to see the relationship among these challenging variables. Accordingly, Pearson product moment coefficient correlation was computed. From the computation, it was found that most of the variables have weak but significant relationship with each other. The most significant relationship was observed between sexual harassment and passionate love ($r = .98^{**}$) followed by anxiety and addiction ($r = .97^{**}$).

To identify whether male and female trainees encounter these challenges at different or equal levels, analysis of t-test was under taken. The result is shown as follows.

Table 1: t-test for Gender differences on the Problems Encountered

Variables	Gender				t-calcul	df
	Male (N=78)		Female (N=133)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Passionate love	5.7	2.2	4.63	1.61	4.30**	209
Anxiety	4.83	1.69	5.95	1.98	4.50**	
Sexual harassment	5.1	2.06	5.9	2.53	2.78**	
Home sickness	2.2	0.9	2.43	0.96	2.20*	

* $p < .05$, ** $P < .01$ (M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, df=degree of freedom * $p < .05$, ** $P < .01$)

Simple observation of the mean indicates that female and male respondents differ only by fraction of numbers under most of the variables. However, the calculated t-value reveals a significant difference in passionate love ($t = 4.30^{**}$), anxiety ($t = 4.50^{**}$), sexual harassment ($t = 2.78^{**}$) and home sickness ($t = 2.20^{*}$).

Another variable treated in this study was the trainees' previous residence background. This variable refers to their origin: rural, town and small towns' background. Towns and small towns were considered as one variable. These variables were also treated using t - test and a statistical difference was computed only in addiction ($t = 2.98^{**}$, sig.003) space. In all other variables, no statistically significant difference was found.

Table 2: t-test for Previous Residence Background difference on the Problems Encountered

Variables	Previous Residence Background				t-cal.	df.
	Rural Background (N=112)		Town Background (N=99)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Relationship problems	4.66	1.65	5.0	1.82	1.35	209
Passionate Love	5.2	1.9	5.0	1.98	0.69	
Anxiety	5.24	1.8	5.71	2.05	1.84	
Home sickness	2.22	.93	2.42	.96	1.52	
Addiction	1.35	0.62	1.7	1.0	2.98**	
Sexual harassment	5.33	2.1	5.70	2.62	1.06	

* $P < .05$, ** $P < .01$ (M =Mean, SD =Standard Deviation, df =degree of freedom)

It is possible to understand from the data shown in the table that both rural and town background trainees face more or less similar problems. However, trainees from town background seem to suffer more from addiction compared to those who are from rural background.

Data gathered through the open-ended items of the questionnaire was presented and analyzed qualitatively. Thus, the respondents were asked to list some of the problems they face during their study. Accordingly, the following are some of the major problems the students encountered while they were living in the rented houses.

- financial problem to rent quality rooms;
- conflict with roommates;
- over strictness and threat of house renters;
- poor quality of rented rooms;
- house renters' complaints about electricity and water consumption;

- distance from college; and
- sexual harassment and the like.

Regarding financial problem, the students claimed that the stipend and standard of living are unrelated. One respondent expressed his grief in the following ways.

It is hard to live on this small stipend. I pay for food, house rent, stationery, etc. Some students get additional money from their parents. I have no other means of getting money. The purchasing power of money is decreasing from day-to-day. My parents are poor farmers and they never send me money. I do not want to trouble them for I know that they do not have anything to give me. Because of this I always skip breakfast. Recently, I have acquired gastritis and I am suffering a lot now.

The students reported that omitting at least one meal within a day was a mandatory. As a result, most of the students had acquired gastritis. During the night, when they try to sit up to study, they reported that they feel hungry. Thus, insufficient and under quality meals, according to the students, was a major problem caused by financial constraints.

One of the open-ended items was related to the cause of these challenges. The responses they gave were diverse. However, the most recurrent ones include the following:

- absence of boarding service;
- inattentiveness of the college to the students' problems;
- unfriendly and repelling nature of some house renters;
- inadequacy of college guidance and counseling service;
- female trainees clothing and hair dressing styles;
- difficulty of tests given by the teacher; and

- lack of adequate facilities in the college such as books written in the medium of instruction (Afaan Ormoo).

Absence of boarding service results in complete absence of institutional intervention or control in all directions of the students lives. This way of living by itself has a negative impact on the students of which sexuality is the major problem. Regarding this, there are instances where the respondents described female students as cause of problems for the collegians. Excerpts taken directly from the students responses as shown below, illustrate the point under discussion.

According to the respondents, limitless male-female interaction added to female students out of norm clothing style is a serious cause of sexuality related problem for the college youth. A first year female student wrote the following to be taken in to consideration.

Some female students of this college, wearing short trousers and tiny-shirts, exhibit their breast and body posture. It is only such students who mislead male students and urge them to unprotected sex. There is no such kind of wearing in our culture. A college should be a place where we learn good things for life; not a place where we abuse our culture. As far as the college is responsible for their education, it is better to make the students use college uniform.

Such grievances forwarded by the students reveal how the students themselves can pose problems among each other. On a similar issue, the instructors were interviewed and a complementary response was obtained. Thus, the instructors described the following issues to be the causes of the problems.

- absence of boarding service;
- nature of puberty stage;
- absence of periodic and adequate orientation;
- limitless proximity between male and female trainees;
- the evil effect of urbanization, such as films, addictive drugs and peer pressure ;
- the trainees poor educational background;
- the weak side of the assessment method applied in the college; and
- lack of challenges of the course contents.

Generally, the trainees as well as the instructors pointed out that the non-boarding collegian problems are complicated and intertwined.

Regarding the solutions to these problems, about 80% of the respondents suggested provision of dormitory and continuous guidance and counseling services. Besides, they listed the following points as some of the basic measures to be taken by the college to minimize these problems.

- increase the monthly stipend for the trainees;
- raise awareness of the nearby society so that they will be willing to rent houses to the female and male trainees;
- discuss the issue with the town's municipality to get rental houses constructed around the college;
- provide orientations about out of campus living skills;
- revise the existing rules and regulations and take strict measures on misconducts;
- set imposition on females clothing style and male hair dyes;
- introduce more individual work than group-based assessment techniques;
- take disciplinary action on illegally pregnant female trainees;
- provide reproductive health education and contraceptives to female trainees;
- **limit** male-female trainees' interaction; and
- avoid reluctance to solve the students' problems.

The instructors, on their parts, forwarded scholarly suggestions as remedies for the stated problems. Their responses were similar with the students', and the only different ones are listed below. The college should:

- involve students in different clubs;
- produce/purchase and post different kinds of posters against HIV/AIDS and STIs;
- make course contents, teaching methods and assessment techniques more engaging ;
- ban inflated grading;
- improve managerial tasks of the college; and
- take reasonable disciplinary measures when extreme misbehaviors occur.

The responses collected from the instructors through interview together with the students' responses suggest that it is the responsibility of the college in collaboration with the surrounding society and local government officials to intervene as early as possible.

To supplement the data obtained from the students and the instructors, a few house renters were purposefully selected and interviewed. At the beginning, some of the respondents resisted the interview and tried to exhibit socially desirable explanations hiding the reality. However, after getting good explanation about the purpose of the interview, most house renters mentioned different problems the students face while they live with the community in rented rooms. Their responses are diverse but the following are the most recurring ones.

- conflict among themselves;
- frequent health problems;
- theft of properties;
- conflict with house renters;
- robbery and physical attack by gamblers; and
- improper use of money.

The house renters further described that the students themselves facilitate their own problems through the following acts:

- having lots of visits and visitors;
- frequent telephone calls even late in the evenings;
- spending much time making coffee and tea for friends (this is particularly common among female students);
- 'chat' chewing (most common among those who came from Harare and Borana);
- noisy and violent behaviors; and
- inappropriate consumption of water, electricity and other properties.

Regarding their preferences of renting rooms, disappointed aged male house renter has the following to say.

እወነቱን ንገረኝ ካልክ ከሐረር የሚመጡ ልጆች 500 ብር እንኳን ቢከፍሉኝ አላከራያቸውም። እነርሱ ጫት እንደ ሰንደቅ ዓላማ ይዘው መዞር ይወዳሉ። የጫት ገራባ ለእኔ ብቻ ሳይሆን ለጎረቤትም ይተርፋል። በሙዚቃ ሰፈር ይረብሻሉ። ይሉኝታ የሚባል ነገር አያውቁም።

Which means:

To tell you the truth, I will never rent my rooms to those who come from Harare even if they pay me 500 birr per room. They always hang 'chat' like a flag and wonder here and there. The waste of the 'chat', 'garaba', is terrible even for my neighbors, let alone for me. The noise of the music disturbs the compound. They are not concerned about others' feeling.

Most of the house renters expressed lack of willingness to rent houses to female students. For example, one female house renter hesitantly said the following:

እኔ ሴቶች ያሳዘኩኛል። ቢሆንም ግን ለወንዶች ማከራትን እመርጣለሁ። ሴቶች የውሃ ፍጆታቸው ከፍተኛ ነው። ጠዋት ማታ መታጠብ ልብስ ማጠብ ይፈልጋሉ። እንግዳም ይበዛባቸዋል። ወንዶች እነርሱ ዘንድ ሲመጡ በቀን ውስጥ 2 ወይም 3 ጊዜ ቡና እና ሻይ የሚያፈሉበት ጊዜ አለ። እነርሱን ብለው የሚመጡ ሰዎች ውሃና ሽንት ቤት ይጠቀማሉ። በግቢ ውስጥ ሰው ሲበዛም ጥሩ አይደለም። ሴቶች በደንብ የማያውቁትን ወንድ ይዘው መጥተው ግቢ ሊያስደፍሩ ይችላሉ። ብቻ ለወንዶች ማከራት ይሻለኛል።

Meaning:

I feel pity for females; nevertheless, I prefer males to rent rooms to. Females' water conception is high. They take shower and wash their clothes many times a day. Their visitors are many. When their male friends come to visit them, they make coffee or tea 2 or 3 times a day. Their visitors consume water and use toilet rooms. Many visitors are not good for the safety of my property. Females come with males they do not know well and these people could be dangerous for my compound. Anyway, I prefer males.

Generally, the qualitative analysis of the responses obtained from the house renters indicates that about 90% of them are less interested in renting houses to females and students who come from Harare and Borana areas **because of their water and electricity conception, group-based living style , 'chat' chewing habit and the noises they make in the compound**. Thus, it is possible to understand that house renters take into account gender and previous residence background while they rent rooms to students. This can be a challenge and discrimination to less favored students.

As indicated earlier, the students mentioned that the first problem they face is related to unavailability of rental rooms near the college. Analysis of the data gathered from the house owners, in one way or another, reveals the existence of problems listed by the students.

Discussion

The major intention of this study was to probe into those factors that challenge the out of campus living students with particular emphasis on Assela College of Teacher Education. Results obtained from quantitative and qualitative analysis appear to show that a large number of social, academic and psychological factors are threatening the students of the college.

As explained in the earlier sections, the primary challenge the students face is related to financial constraint. Though they are paid 300 birr per month, it is known that it would not be enough to respond to their needs. This financial constraint, in turn, is reported to affect their feeding condition, room renting pattern and their access to other necessary things. As a result, many students are found to live in under quality rental rooms, which exposed them to health problems and theft. On top of this, most of them are forced to skip at least one meal each day and this has exposed them to health problems such as gastritis.

The students have devised their own mechanisms to cope with financial problems through sharing a small room between three or four. However, this way of life leads to frequent conflict and sanitation problem. Thus, the financial constraint resulted in multiple problems on the students' health, social life and intrapersonal relation.

Besides financial shortfall, the trainees face different challenges in getting comfortable rental rooms near the college. Analysis of the responses collected suggests that rental rooms available near the college are costly. The houses are also not comfortable. The owners complain about the

students' water and electric power conception. Moreover, the owners strongly reject relatives and friends frequent visits with the assumption that these visitors will use water and toilet rooms. Data gathered through interview from the house owners supplements this. The interview response analysis indicates that more than 90% of the house renters are not happy about renting rooms to females and students who come from Harare and Borena areas.

Perhaps, the weightiest reason for their lack of willingness to rent rooms to females is related to female students' water and electricity conception. Another point worth mentioning in connection why the house renters favor males is the belief that females have many visitors. Some visitors may have undeniable behavior such as theft.

It was also found that 'chat' chewing is strongly unaccepted by many of the house renters. The majority of the students who come from Harare and Borena are not preferred for house renting because of their 'chat' chewing habit and their life style. The most annoying practice found in this study is that some house owners provide the students only a jerry can of water (which is not more than 10 liters) per day. They also restrict the use of electric light in the evenings. Moreover, the rented rooms were of poor quality. Some of them have no proper toilet and bath rooms. This result is congruent with previous similar research result reported by Tsige (2001).

The present study has uncovered the presence of interpersonal relationship problems among the students. The students ranked this as the second most frequent problem they encounter. From practical point of view, the instructors also indicated that frequent complaints and conflicts arise while the students work on group projects. Added to this, the house renters witnessed that some times the students exhibit negative attitude to each other based on the zones they come from. They reported that even their house renting pattern is based on the zones they come from. The house renters added that female students are sometimes causes for male students' conflict. This study is similar with other studies that indicated college students have more complex

problems including difficulty in relationships and developmental issues (Leigh, 2003). Similarly, Abebaw and Tilahun (2007) described that when people of diverse background come to a common place like educational setting, their culture is likely to clash and lead them to conflict.

As clearly described in the result section, sexual harassment was found to be the other challenging factor reported by the students. The nature of this challenge ranged from sexual expression through physical contact to expressions of sexual feeling. The correlation matrix shows that this variable has a strong positive relationship with passionate love and interpersonal relationship problems. **Some male students have reported that they encountered** some kind of sexual harassment from their female counterparts. This result agrees with the view that males can be affected by sexual harassment as well. However, the t-test result revealed more females as victims of sexual harassment compared to their male counterparts. This result is congruent with other studies which indicated that 13 % to 33 % of female college students fall victim to sexual harassment (USM, 2007).

One possible explanation for female students to be more harassed could be the social environment in which female students find themselves. They join higher education institutions which are far away from their parental care and control.

This study has also revealed that love, anxiety and unwanted pregnancy are amongst the most common threatening factors for the non-boarding collegians. Unlike sexual harassment, passionate love is identified to be more serious among male students than females. This result was contrary to the result of a study conducted at the New Orleans's Dillard University which portrayed that black female students were more eager than their male counterparts to jump into serious relationships being driven by romantic beliefs (Glover, 1994).

An attempt made to identify felt-problems from the point of view of previous residence background showed a statistically significant difference only in

case of addiction ($t=2.98^{**}$, $sig.003$). This result could be attributed to earlier experience of the respondents. It is known that addictive substances are more accessible in town areas than in villages. Moreover, villagers may not be able to afford frequent consumption of the substances. Cultural resistance against addictive substances also prevails more in rural areas. Thus, this result reflects the practical observations in the respondents' previous living environment.

Anxiety was also found to be the other psychological challenge to the students. The students' preoccupation with anxiety could be attributed to their transfer from a place where they were brought up or where they lived for a long time with their friends and parents. In connection with this, Morgall et al (1986) described that when students move from a friendly and well experienced social environment to a new one, they feel anxious, helpless and depressed. In the present study, it was found that females are more anxious compared to their male counterparts. It is also identified that anxiety is associated with addiction. Basically, the reason for the students' anxiety is clearly attributed to academic difficulty and fear of failure. Regarding its effect, Yalew (2003) pointed out that the more the students become anxious, the lower would be the scores they get.

One possible cause for female students to be more anxious could be their academic self-concept. Some studies reveal that female college students have low academic self concept compared to their male counter parts (Demoz, Mehad and Tesfaye, 2005).

Besides the obviously challenging factors such as interpersonal conflict, addiction, and financial constraints, this study has revealed that the trainees exhibit behaviors of being more attentive to non-academic issues such as talking about males or females. It is also found that the students pay more attention to fashions, hair styles and beautifying themselves than academic issues. This is found to be highly practiced by females even if it is common among male students.

As one of sexuality problems, unwanted pregnancy is the other problem among female students identified in this study. As far as passionate love and unprotected sexual intercourse are reported to be common, the existence of unwanted pregnancy may not be surprising. The correlation matrix reveals this truth indicating positive correlation with anxiety ($r = .75^{**}$), addiction ($r = .75^{**}$) and free sexual intercourse ($r = .45^{**}$).

A point worth mentioning as an explanation of this could be the social environment in which college girls are found. Girls do not feel safe in a rented house without parents or relatives behind them. Tesfaye (2006) argued that there are instances where college girls are trapped for sex by their male class mates or some rude persons in the society or even some ill disciplined instructors. As a result, many college girls may get pregnant in this way.

Another possible reason for female pregnancy may be their need for money. Scholars argue that poverty, both at country and individual level, is determinant to girls' education (Emebet, 2002; Hedija, 2002). Even if poverty interferes with education of all children, its correlation is stronger for female students. It is known that females need money to buy cloths and other make ups in addition to buying food and stationery. If these things are not fulfilled, female students may feel inferior and this may divert their attention to undeniable source of income to fulfill their needs. Some of these mechanisms could be to have sex with a man who can provide them with money.

Generally, evidence obtained from the students, the instructors and the house owners attribute the causes of these problems to the absence of boarding service. Moreover, the students claim that the college's negligence of the students' welfare and out of campus living condition is the main cause of the problems.

Regarding service quality of higher institutions, Teshome (2006) asserted that higher education system in the country, in many cases, is too

cumbersome for modern needs. He argued that some higher institutions have management system and work cultures that stretch back to several decades. Such systems are not in tune with modern needs. Further research is needed to tell us whether or not this is true in the context of non-boarding colleges.

Conclusion

Analysis of the data obtained from the students, the instructors and house renters has shown that the non-boarding college students face diverse and complicated challenges. The study revealed that problems related to lodging and interpersonal relationships are the most frequent ones. It was also known that the students face problems related to sexual harassment, anxiety, addiction, unprotected sexual intercourse, unwanted pregnancy and abortion. Most of these problems, in one way or another, are attributed to absence of boarding service, the colleges' reluctance, environmental conditions and the students' developmental stages.

It is also recognized that there is a significant difference between male and female students in problems such as passionate love, anxiety and sexual harassment. The respondents' residence prior to college has a statistically significant difference only in the case of addiction.

Recommendations

Based on the results obtained and the conclusions drawn, the following are forwarded to alleviate the mentioned problems.

- The college, together with the Oromia Education Bureau (OEB), should provide dormitory service for the students, with particular attention to female students.
- The college should increase the amount of the stipend provided for each student if boarding service provision is impossible.

- Collaborating with the kebele administration, the municipality and the police office, the college should prepare a discussion forum with the college nearby house renting people about the well-being and rights of the trainees while they are living with the society in rented rooms.
- Under the dean of the students' office, an independent body responsible for the students lodging service, should be established and this part should do strict follow-up about where and how the students live in the society.

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