

STUDENTS DROP-OUT IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN ETHIOPIA MAGNITUDE, CAUSES AND CURES¹

Asmerom Kidane, Lakew Wolde Tekle, Makonnen Yimer and
Yusuf Omer Abdi

Addis Ababa University

Abstract

This study attempted to estimate the number of dropouts in the higher institutions of learning in the nation as a whole and whether there was a regional variation in this regard by taking into consideration faculties and subjects with emphasis on English and Mathematics.

Many factors were used to determine the causes for the sampled dropout. Among other things, it was concluded that many of the sampled student discontinued their education for academic reasons and a few for non-academic ones as revealed both by empirical observations and correlational analyses. These were then followed by a number of suggestions to alleviate the prevailing high attrition rate.

Introduction

Education seems to be an apparent phenomenon occurring in schools since many individuals seem to terminate untimely their schooling at various levels of the formal educational training. The magnitude of such incidents has become a cause for great concern particularly in institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia, where a large number of students dropout or withdraw for both academic and non-academic reasons. Needless to say, the country can hardly afford to waste such a productive labourforce. It is high time, therefore, to identify the specific causes for the discontinuation of academic work by students and suggest possible solutions to the problem. To this end, a few unpublished research works have dealt with the issue with varying depth and points of emphasis-Ruda Oligra (1966), Awad and Strauss (1967), Geil and Valujk (1967), Langmuir (1969,-70), Bejerkan (1970), Yusuf

¹ All the authors are senior academic members in Addis Ababa University. This research was financially supported by the Commission For Higher Education.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Yusuf O. Abdi, Director, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University. P.O. Box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**STUDENTS DROP-OUT IN INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER LEARNING IN ETHIOPIA
MAGNITUDE, CAUSES AND CURES¹**

Asmerom Kidane, Lakew Wolde Tekle, Makonnen Yimer and
Yusuf Omer Abdi

Addis Ababa University

Abstract

This study attempted to estimate the number of dropouts in the higher institutions of learning in the nation as a whole and whether there was a regional variation in this regard by taking into consideration faculties and subjects with emphasis on English and Mathematics.

Many factors were used to determine the causes for the sampled dropout. Among other things, it was concluded that many of the sampled student discontinued their education for academic reasons and a few for non-academic ones as revealed both by empirical observations and correlational analyses. These were then followed by a number of suggestions to alleviate the prevailing high attrition rate.

1. Introduction

Education seems to be an apparent phenomenon occurring in schools since many individuals seem to terminate untimely their schooling at various levels of the formal educational training. The magnitude of such incidents has become a cause for great concern particularly in institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia, where a large number of students dropout or withdraw for both academic and nonacademic reasons. Needless to say, the country can hardly afford to waste such a productive labourforce. It is high time, therefore, to identify the specific causes for the discontinuation of academic work by students and suggest possible solutions to the problem. To this end, a few unpublished research works have dealt with the issue with varying depth and points of emphasis-Ruda Oligra (1966), Awad and Strauss (1967), Geil and Valujk (1967), Langmuir (1969,-70), Bejerkan (1970), Yusuf

¹ All the authors are senior academic members in Addis Ababa University. This research was financially supported by the Commission For Higher Education.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Yusuf O. Abdi, Director, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University. P.O. Box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

(1981 and 1984) Gebre Selassie (1983). However, there is no evidence whether the results and recommendations of such studies have been implemented.

The aim of this study is to estimate the magnitude of dropouts. Once this is estimated an attempt will also be made to see if there is regional variation in the magnitude of dropouts. By regional we mean the administrative region from which the students come. We will also try to show the variation in the dropout rates by faculties and subjects. More emphasis will be put on the two most important subjects namely English and Mathematics.

The data for the study included identification of the high school, regional background, student choice of college or university before being admitted to the institution of higher learning, the actual and potential causes of dropouts in the institutions, and academic performances both in the ESLCE and the GPA earned at the time of discontinuation of schooling. These pieces of information were described analysed and interpreted. A statistical analysis included students who successfully completed their university (or college) education, those who were dismissed or who withdrew from the university (or college), and dropouts in the various faculties and colleges of the Addis Ababa University.

2. Some Empirical Observations

A total number of 293² dropouts and withdrawal cases were "purposefully" selected and their records (profiles) were carefully evaluated and analyzed. Fifty students were each taken from the Medical Faculties in Addis Ababa and Gondar, Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Science (Addis Ababa University) and College of Agriculture (Alemaya)³, while forty three students were also selected from the College of Social Sciences. Table 1 shows dropout students classified by administrative region and faculties joined. The following observations can be made from Table 1.

2 This includes a large number of dropout cases from Asmara University who were in the Natural and Social Science fields.

3 Currently known as the Alemaya University of Agriculture.

TABLE 1: Dropout students from various faculties of the Addis Ababa University (1978-1984)

		COLLEGES AND FACULTIES						
No.	Regions	Natural Science	Gondar Medical	Social Sc.	Med. Sch. Addis A.	Agri. Coll. Ale.	Tech.	Total
1	Addis Ababa	12	22	12	28	10	22	106
2	Shoa	12	6	7	6	7	10	48
3	Hararge	2	7	3	2	11	5	30
4	Eritrea	-	5	2	7	-	1	15
5	Gondar	2	2	-	-	3	2	10
6	Gojam	3	2	-	-	2	1	9
7	Wollo	4	-	3	-	2	1	10
8	Tigrai	3	3	5	3	2	3	19
9	Arssi	1	-	2	-	3	-	6
10	Illubabor	1	-	-	-	-	1	22
11	Wollega	3	1	4	3	3	1	15
12	Gamu Goffa	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
13	Bale	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
14	Assab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Sidamo	3	1	2	1	1	3	11
16	Kaffa	3	1	1	-	4	-	9
Total		50	50	43	50	50	50	293

- Almost 35% of all dropout cases come from Addis Ababa Schools (106 cases) while none come from Assab.
- The second, third and fourth largest group of dropouts come from Shoa (48), Hararge (30), and Tigrai (19) regions, respectively.
- The dropouts are highest among students who originally graduated from Addis Ababa high schools. These students by and large are dismissed from the faculties of Medicine, Natural Science, College of Agriculture at Alemaya. The second highest dropout occurred from among the students who come from Shoa Region and they were mainly dismissed from the Faculties of Science, Technology, College of Social Sciences, Medical Schools (Addis Ababa and Gondar) and College of Agriculture at Alemaya.
- When such specific regions as Addis Ababa, Shoa, Hararge, Eritrea, Tigrai and Wollega are considered, the two Medical Faculties dismissed about 30%, 25%, 30% 80%, 32%, and 27%, of all sampled cases, respectively. In the case of those who originally came from each of these regions and attended the Natural Science Stream, the percentages of dropouts were 11, 25, 7, 0, 16 and 20 respectively. In the Social Science stream, the percentages of dropouts were 11%, 15%, 10%, 13%, 26%, and 27% respectively.

1.2 Dropout Cases -Their Choice of Faculties and Colleges.

One allegation often voiced by "mis-informed" individuals or groups is the attribution of the student dropout to the allocation procedure used by the University. According to this allegation students dropout because they were assigned to join a faculty or a college they did not choose. As can be seen from Table 2, the majority of the students (87%) earned the required grade for admission to the various colleges were assigned according to their own interests and levels of academic performance. This means the "allegation" that there is a mismatch between students' first preferences and the faculties of their choices does not seem to hold.

2.2 Causes for Dropping Out from Institutions of Higher Learning

Perhaps it may be pertinent to assess at this point the causes of discontinuing education at the university or college level in this country. This study has revealed that the causes of dropouts are both academic and non-academic. (Table 3)

The facts given in Table 3 show that out of the total 293 dropout cases, 244 (83%) were dismissed for academic reasons and 42 (14%) for non-academic factors. Seven out of the total 293 (3%) did not give any reason or at least no specific information was available in their record profile as to why they dropped out. *This may imply that the majority of students in the institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia are dismissed mainly because of academic reasons.*

TABLE 2: Dropout Cases- Their Choice of Faculties and Colleges

Faculty (College)	CHOICE OF DISCIPLINE				
	1st	2nd	3rd	Special Cases	Total
Natural Science	33	17	—	—	50
Gondar Medical School	50a	—	—	—	50
Medical School, Addis Ababa	29	11	—	10b	50
College of Social Science	—	11	—	13c	43
Agricultural College, Alemaya	40	—	3	7d	50
Technology	40	10	—	—	50
Total	222	38	3	30	293

^a48 of the 50 students at Gondar Medical School chose medicine as their first field of study and they preferred the Medical School in Addis Ababa to the Gondar Medical School.

^bHave not indicated their choice.

^c13 students had background and did not choose the same.

^dThere are seven transfer cases (i.e. accepted at advanced standing).

TABLE 3: Causes of Dropping Out**

No.	Faculty/College	Academic Causes	Non—Academic	Remark	Total%
1	Natural Science N=50	39	11	—	50 100%
2	Gondar Medical School N=50	45	2	3 (reason not stated)	50 100%
3	Medical School, Addis Ababa N=50	30	16	4 (reason not stated)	50 100%
4	CSS N=43	43 43	— —	— —	43 100%
5	Agricultural College, Alemaya N=50	42	—	—	50 100%
6	Technology N=50	45	5	—	50%
Total		244	42	7	100%

**Almost all non-academic reasons are classified as “personal”.

* On the other hand, some of the possible non-academic reasons for dropping at least in the institutions considered include:

- Inadequate facilities and services in the institutions (such as poorly equipped laboratory, inefficient library services, inadequate food and dormitory services, etc.)
- The nonexistence of psychological services such as guidance and counseling programmes,
- Inadequate educational background and preparation on the part of the students before joining the institutions,
- Inadequate professional (qualification) competence among college instructors,
- Lack of appropriate social and recreational outlets for students,
- The nonexistence of clear and uniform policy guide-lines on student allocation in various settings, and
- Lack of adequate and standardized examination system policies

2.3 Academic Performance of Dropout Students

When some academic characteristics of dropout cases in some selected faculties and colleges were assessed, below average academic performance is strongly associated with discontinuation, even though there were cases of “average” and “above average” performances as well (Table 4). This evidence implies that “dropping out” from higher institutions is basically dependent on academic performance.

Forty two of the 50 students admitted to Addis Ababa Medical Faculty had a GPA ranging from 3.00 to 4.00 in ESLCE, while only 8 of the 50 had a GPA ranging from 2.75-2.99. This means, exceptionally above average students were admitted to the Medical Faculty in Addis Ababa.

According to the data collected, the Agricultural College of Alemaya and the Faculty of Technology also admit students with an above average academic performance. To this effect, 37 of the 50 dropout students who were admitted originally to the Agricultural College had GPA's ranging from 3.00 to 4.00 points in ESLCE and only 13 had GPA's ranging from 2.00 to 2.99.

TABLE 4: Some Academic Characteristics of Dropouts in some Selected Faculties/ College

Grading Codes	C S S		Gondar			Agric. Alemaya			Natural Science			Med. Sch. Addis A.			Tech- nology		
	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	ESLCE GPA	GPA DISMISS	
A= 3.00 - 4.00 points Excellent = A = 90-100	1	-	17	-	37	1	4	1	42	3	27	1					
B = 2.75 - 2.90 Good = B = 80-89	2	-	15	1	4	2	9	-	8	15	5	-					
C = 2.00 - 2.74 Average=satisfactory = C = 70-79	40	2	18	1	9	-	-	37	24	-	-	11					
D = 1.00 - 1.99 Passing=unsatisfactory = D=60-69	-	-	-	-	-	43	-	22	-	-	-	34					
F = 0.00 - 0.99 Failing=F=below 60	-	41	-	48	-	-	-	3	-	32	-	4					
Total	43	43	50	50	50	46	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	

- a. Students at Alemaya did not identify their GPA upon dismissal
- b. AAU has no uniform and /or standardized grading systems. The present cumulative grading codes are taken from the specific policy guide line adopted by various faculties and colleges both at present and past. (For the details see Yusuf's grading Game in AAU" (1984 mimeographed).
- c. In each faculty or college two types of GPA are given:
 1. ESLCE, GPA of the student (first column).
 2. GPA obtained when student was dismissed (2nd column).

This is also true in the Faculty of Technology (degree programme) although these students did not join the faculty directly based on their performances in the ESLCE⁴. The relevance of high GPA in ESLCE is borne when it is used to determine whether students should join the Faculty of Science's Freshman programme. It is worth noting, however, that 27 of the 50 dropouts from the Faculty of Technology scored GPA's of 3.00 to 4.00 in the ESLCE while 23 of the 50 had ESLCE GPA's ranging from 2.00 to 2.99.

There is relatively low GPA among the entrants to the Colleges of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Sciences. In the former, for instance, 42 of the 43 dropout cases had ESLCE GPA's ranging from 2.00 to 2.99. In the same way, in the Faculty of Sciences, 46 of the 50 dismissed cases had ESLCE GPAs ranging from 2.00 to 2.99.

In this brief analysis one could observe a paradox, why, for instance, would the students who had very high GPA's 3.00—4.00 in the ESLCE (such as 84% in Medical Faculty, 74% Alemaya, 54% in Technology) be academically dismissed? Why (as in the case of CSS and Natural Science students) would student with an average and above average points be dismissed just because they were not able to maintain the minimum academic requirements in order to stay in the academic institutions? The best way to answer these questions would be to apply basic inferential statistics to see the relation between ESLCE and first year first semester results of various categories of students.

3. Statistical Relations- Findings and Interpretations

The other main task envisaged in this study is to examine whether the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (the ESLCE) is a good instrument for screening would be successful candidates in higher institutions of learning in Ethiopia. In an attempt to see this, a sample of 500 «failures» along with 250 «regular» and «exceptional» students was sampled and studied. The regular and the exceptional categories are meant to be «control groups». The samples were collected from a «population» of first year students taken for six consecutive years (1978-1984). The source of data are mostly from the files of the Registrar's Office and some were selected from the campuses of the various faculties and colleges.

In this part of the study the «failures» are those students who left their faculties for academic reasons; the «regulars» are students who successfully completed their studies with final cumulative GPAs ranging from 2.00 to 2.75; and the «exceptionals» are similar to the regulars except that their final College GPAs are above 2.75.

The method of analysis used is to compare:

- a) The overall ESLCE with the overall first semester first year results. This is accomplished by comparing the sample mean, standard deviation and a linear correlation coefficient. Each faculty was studied separately, and an interfaculty comparison was also made.

⁴ Any student who wants to join the Faculty of Technology must complete first a minimum of one semester in the Faculty of Science's Freshman Programme. Then on the basis of his /her first semester result the student could join the Faculty of Technology.

- b) ESLCE mathematics results with the first semester first year mathematics
 c) ESLCE English results with the first semester first year English results, and
 d) Regional variation in ESLCE and first semester first year results.

As the study is confined to comparing means, standard deviations and correlations, the findings and their implications should be taken with some degree of caution. The shortcomings of correlation over the other methods should be kept in mind and the findings ought to be interpreted by assuming that other factors remain constant or equal.

3.1 Overall ESLCE GPA's and first year first semester GPA's

The relationships between overall ESLCE and those of first semester first year performances of the students as classified by faculty and by academic status of students are given in Tables 5a, 5b, and 5c.

TABLE 5a: Mean ESLCE GPA (\bar{X}_1) Vs 1st year 1st Semester GPA (\bar{X}_2) of Failures⁶

	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_{X_1}	S_{X_2}	$r_{X_1X_2}$
Natural Science	2.58	1.88	0.361	0.555	-0.2602*** (0.075)*
Medicine (Addis Ababa)	3.22	2.60	0.364	0.410	0.1312 (0.1376)*
Medicine (Gondar)	2.86	1.20	0.265	0.490	0.3767*** (0.1226)*
Technology	2.92	2.52	0.495	0.581	0.5455*** (0.1713)*
Alemaya	3.04	1.69	0.470	0.560	0.3210** (0.1322)*
Social Science	2.31	2.15	0.268	0.428	0.0923 (0.1548)*

TABLE 5b: Mean ESLCE GPA (\bar{X}_1) Vs 1st Semester GPA (\bar{X}_2) of Regulars*

Faculty	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_{X_1}	S_{X_2}	$r_{X_1X_2}$
Natural Science	2.66	2.25	0.4	0.49	0.1125 (0.1472)
Technology	3.25	3.03	0.525	0.728	0.7132*** (0.0964)
Social Science	2.48	2.68	0.436	0.454	0.4065*** (0.1244)

TABLE 5c: Mean ESLCE GPA (\bar{X}_1) Vs 1st semester GPA (\bar{X}_2) of Exceptionals

Faculty	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	Sx_1	Sx_2	r_{x_1, x_2}
Natural Science	2.86	2.94	0.658	0.568	0.7698*** (0.1089)
Technology	3.64	3.56	0.322	0.416	0.4747*** (0.158)
Social Science	2.97	3.20	0.596	0.495	0.4837*** (0.1429)

Table 5a shows that except for Natural Sciences there is a positive but rather weak linear relation between ESLCE and 1st semester GPA's. For Medical and Soccial Science students the positive association is not significant, while for the Natural Science students the relation is significant but negative.

A more significant result appears when one compares the mean GPA between the two variables.

As Table 5a indicates, failure in the Natural Science programme seem to have a higher ESLCE GPA compared to those in the Social Science programme with the case being reversed in the first semester freshman results. This seems to imply that the survival rate in the College of Social Sciences is much better than in the Natural Sciences. Furthermore, the dropouts in the Social Sciences were individuals who successfully completed the first semester in the Freshamn year while their counterparts in the Natural Sciences were dismissed at the end of the first semester.

With respect to Medicine (Table 5a) the difference between the ESLCE results of the students in Addis Ababa and those in Gondar is significant, which is also true for the first semester results. From this it may be deduced that student entrance requirement and survival period at the two Medical Colleges is different. However, Gondar Medical College appears to dismiss more students during the freshman year than the Medical College in Addis Ababa. Since the syllabus at the two colleges is assumed to be the same, the difference may be attributed to the grading system used, the qualification of instructors as well as the availability of laboratory and other facilities. This also suggests that, when the overall performances of the students in the Medical Colleges are considered, on the one hand, individuals who had high ESLCE GPA's but had no aptitude for the profession seemed to join Medical College merely for prestige purposes, and, on the other, as evidenced by regulars and exceptionals, higher ESLCE GPA's seemed to help individuals to stay longer in the colleges.

*Values given in the parentheses are the standard error of the correlation coefficient.

** Sx stands for standard deviation while $r_{X_1 X_2}$ is linear correlation coefficient.

***Significant at 5% level

In Technology, there is a tendency for more students to be dismissed much early despite good entry academic performances. On the other hand, the ESLCE results of the students categorized as regulars and exceptionals indicate that if individuals are to successfully graduate in this faculty, they must have GPA's of 3.00 or better in ESLCE.

As in the cases of those in the Natural Sciences and Gondar Medical College students joining the College of Agriculture seem to experience the same fate (Table 5a). But the high ESLCE grade point average recorded is due to the fact that students with little or no aptitude for the profession seemed to have joined the college in an attempt to evade the teaching profession which they might encounter otherwise.

With respect to individuals classified as regulars, (Table 5b) although in general those who had a relatively good ESLCE GPA were able to survive in the faculties indicated, those in the Social Science seemed to get better grades in the University than the grades they had in the ESLCE.

In the case of the exceptionals (Table 5c), there is no significant difference between Natural Science and Social Science students both in their ESLCE and first semester results.

This shows that students with high ESLCE GPA (i.e. on the average close to 3.00) would not have a problem in succeeding with the same or better grade in the Natural Science and Social Sciences. As a whole, for Natural Science and Social Science students, it can be conjectured that the ESLCE has identified individuals in the regular and exceptional groups who can successfully complete their studies.

As a whole, the relationship between the ESLCE grade point average and the first year first semester results seem to confirm that individuals with good performance in the former tend to do the same in the latter. On the other hand, persons admitted in the sciences (Natural Science, Medicine, Technology and Agriculture) seem to perform poorly compared to their counterparts in the Social Sciences even though they have higher entrance GPA's. This, therefore, more or less, portrays the overall function of the ESLCE grade point average as a screening device for candidates entering institutions of higher learning.

3.2 ESLCE GPA and first year first semester grades in compulsory subjects.

Among the grades in the various subjects used for computing the overall ESLCE GPA's are the grades for mathematics and English. These results are included as compulsory in calculating the said GPA's. Hence it is desirable to find out whether the results in these subjects have any relationship with the first year first semester mathematics and English grades earned at the faculties being considered.

In this study, the ESLCE mathematics results for the Social and Natural sciences failures are about the same (i.e. the mean grades for failures are 2.05 and 2.09.) For regulars the mean results of the two groups are 2.14 and 2.53, while for exceptionals they are 2.29 and 2.61 respectively. In fact the results are significantly and positively related in the cases of the Natural Sciences ($r=0.34$ for failures), the Social Sciences ($r=0.49$, $r=0.43$ and $r=0.67$ for the failures, the regulars and the exceptionals respectively), and the Technology ($r=0.48$ for the failures and $r=0.49$ for the exceptional students). These results seem to suggest that, on the whole, the ESLCE mathematics could not serve for predicting success in the first year first semester mathematics in areas (fields) where the teaching of mathematics is app-

arently thorough. It may, therefore, be wise to consider that in the future, if the ESLCE mathematics is to be useful for predicting candidates who could be successful in the Natural Sciences and Technology, the examination may have to be oriented toward these fields or a separate examination has to be set in order to select candidates joining these. In other words, the present ESLCE mathematics seems to be suitable for selecting students admitted to the College of Social Science while it is inappropriate for a similar purpose for those joining the Natural Science and Technology Faculties.

Unlike mathematics, students joining the Natural Sciences need not be proficient in English in order to be successful. This is illustrated by the ESLCE English results of the failures whose average grades in this test and the first year first semester were 2.38 and 2.06 respectively, the regulars who earned mean grades of 1.83 in the ESLCE and 2.16 in the first year first semester, and the exceptionals who scored 2.4 and 2.5 average grades in the ESLCE and the first year first semester respectively. Except for the Natural Science regulars and the Social Science failures, the first year first semester and the ESLCE English results were significantly related in the cases of the other groups under discussion. For these latter groups the correlation coefficients were $r=0.15$ and $r=0.48$ for the failures in the Natural Science and the Technology faculties respectively. In these fields of study the correlation between the two English grades for the regulars were $r=0.78$ and $r=0.59$ respectively. The relationship between the two English grades for the exceptionals were $r=0.81$, in the Natural Science, $r=0.59$ for the Technology and $r=0.55$ for the Social Science students. The correlation between the ESLCE English and the first year first semester English grades for the natural science regulars and the Social Science failures were $r=0.24$ and $r=0.00$ respectively. What the ESLCE English result reveals is the reverse condition observed in the case of the ESLCE mathematics which was noted earlier. Thus the present ESLCE English is a poor test for selecting candidates to be admitted to the faculties of the Social Sciences while it seems to have a functional value for screening students who will join the Natural Science and Technology faculties. Consequently there seems to be a need for setting a different ESLCE English examination for the faculties of the Social Sciences from the one used in the past.

Comparison by place of Origin

The relationship between the ESLCE and the first year first semester results are compared in terms of the regions where the students, enrolled in the fields of study treated above, took the ESLCE. The procedure was to compare the results of the students from Addis Ababa against the academic achievements of students who came from the other regions put together.

When the entrance as well as the first year first semester results at a college both the Addis Ababa and the non-Addis Ababa groups are examined, it appears that the latter, with low ESLCE GPAs, seem to succeed better than the Addis Ababa students in the fields of higher education. The poor performance of the Addis Ababa students, who were expected to have a better chance for success because of their higher ESLCE grades, may be attributed to a number of factors. These include:

- a) The students from Addis Ababa might have been over-confident in themselves since they had relatively good grades, and might not have worked as hard as they should.

- b) The boarding facility given to outside of Addis Ababa students may have a positive effect on the results students get during their freshman year.
- c) The possibility that individuals from provinces are of high caliber compared to Addis Ababa students due to the fact that on the average students from provinces seem to get better results than expected. This may further hint that one could predict success better for the non-Addis Ababa students than the Addis Ababa based on the same type of ESLCE. This may then suggest that different entrance requirements for the Addis Ababa and the non-Addis Ababa groups should be set or a measure of ability other than achievement should be used.

The mathematics and English results discussed earlier are also examined taking the regions where the candidates took the ESLCE. By and large, when the Addis Ababa and the non-Addis Ababa groups were viewed separately with respect to each subject area the findings are the same as those explained earlier using the overall sample.

4. Some Concluding Remarks

4.1 Conclusions

After going through the above findings, the following general conclusion could be made:

- a) A great number of the students who discontinue their university level education is due to academic reasons while a few do the same because of non-academic causes.
- b) Students who had above average grades in the ESLCE were dismissed from the various faculties, especially from the two medical faculties.
- c) In general, the correlation between the ESLCE overall GPA's and the first year first semester GPA's earned at the Colleges considered in this study seem to show that individuals with good performance in the former tend to perform poorly in the latter. However, individuals admitted to the faculties of Natural Sciences, Medicine, Technology and the College of Agriculture seem to perform poorly, compared to their counterparts in the College of Social Sciences, though they had higher overall GPA's in the ESLCE.
- d) ESLCE mathematics result does not seem to predict success in the first semester mathematics in the faculties where the teaching of mathematics is apparently thorough.
- e) ESLCE English grade does not seem to predict success in the first semester English in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, while a high English score in the ESLCE English examination is required to succeed in the faculties of the Social Sciences.
- f) Failures in the Faculty of the Natural Science, who took the ESLCE in Addis Ababa, had high ESLCE GPA's compared to those who came from the provinces and joined the same field.
- g) With regard to «regulars» and «exceptionals», who were from Addis Ababa and those who came from the provinces, there is little difference in performance between those who joined the Natural Science or the College of Social Sciences.

- h) Regarding students admitted with low ESLCE GPA's those who came from the provinces seem to succeed better than those who were from Addis Ababa.
- i) Considering the regions where the students took the ESLCE, the three largest dropout cases were from Addis Ababa, Shoa, and Hararge, in that order.

Assuming that the above findings represent the true picture of dropout cases, the following suggestions may help reduce the high rate of attrition.

- a) The personal, social, academic, and psychological needs of the students admitted to colleges must be identified and attempts must be made to satisfy these needs.
- b) Offices which give effective psychological and psychiatric services must be established in every college and these offices must monitor the symptoms of student discontinuation and identify mechanisms designed to resolve the psychological and academic problems of potential and actual dropout cases .
- c) Viable methods must be designed to recruit and allocate students to different faculties and departments.
- d) Special attention must be given to the task of student advising, and the professional competence of instructors should be evaluated continuously.
- e) Effective manpower planning which will be utilized for selecting and training individuals in the various fields of study may have to be worked out.
- f) Ways and means must be identified in order to absorb individuals according to their capabilities.

References

- Awad and Strauss, **Ways and Means to Handle "University Delinquents",**
HSIU, 1967, Mim.
- Bejerkan, O. Christian, **Plans, Targets and Trends in Ethiopian Education.** Ph.D.
Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1970.
- Gebreselassie Seyoum H., **Ways to Reduce too High Students' Attrition and to Promote Academic Excellence at the AAU, College of Social Science Programme.** First semester 1982/83 A.Y., June 17 1983, Mim.
- Giel and Valujk, **Psychological Problems of University Freshman Students at the HSIU,** 1967 ,Mim.
- Langmuir, Charles R., **Attritriion and Survival in the Freshamn Programme at the AAU,** Technical Report, 1969- 1970, Mim.
- Oligra, Ruda, **"School Dropouts in Ethiopia", Educational Journal, 3, 13-16,** 1966.
- Yusuf O. Abdi, **Academic Problem of AAU Students,** 1981, Mim.
----- and Abiy Kifle, **The Significance of the "Quota System"** 1981, Mim.
- **Zewdneh Yimtatu and Retta Alemayehu, Problems of AAU Students,** 1982 (in Amharic), Mim.
- **The "Grading Game" at the AAU,** 1984, Mim.
- and others, **A Study on the Causes and Cures of Student Discontinuation from Institutions of Higher Learning in Ethiopia,** Addis Ababa, 1984, Mim.
- Wonnacott, T.H. **Introductory Statistics (Third Ed.)** 1977, New York, John
npa R.J. Wonnacott. **Wiley.**