

Effect of Accommodation in Academic Achievement: The Case of Addis Ababa Commercial College Students Who Come from Regions

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Abstract: *This study identified some of the problems faced by Addis Ababa Commercial College students who came from regions. It also compared the academic performance of students from Addis Ababa and from regions. In addition, the academic performance of students from regions was compared by gender. The study also looked at how the College officials perceived the students' problems and what they did to help the students to overcome their problems. The study concentrated on freshman entrants of the 1998/99 academic year. Qualitative (focused-group discussions, interviews and observation) and quantitative (Means and ANOVA's were run) data were used. The problems of the students as identified in this study were financial which included inadequate meals, poor housing conditions, problems of electric light and utensils in the house, shortage of stationery and sanitary materials; personal which included lack of self-confidence, homesickness, feelings of loneliness, and adjustment problems; and also academic where the above stated problems hindered them from working hard to achieve good grades. Comparison of the academic performance of students from Addis Ababa and from regions proved statistically significant difference where those from Addis Ababa performed better. In contrast to this, the comparison by gender among those from regions did not show any statistically significant difference. The College officials also recognized the various problems the students experienced – mainly those which were caused by lack of accommodation facility. They therefore tried to help the needy, to supervise the students' lounge so that it provided what the students could afford, to check whether the supplies shop supplied stationery with minimal cost, and to inform the higher body about the intensity of the students' problems. Finally, this study made some recommendations on how to improve the students' living conditions.*

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Introduction

Tertiary level education in Ethiopia usually includes the provision of boarding facility to learners. This is to create a conducive atmosphere for academic achievement and development. But the case of the Addis Ababa Commercial College is peculiar in that it does not provide its students with accommodation facilities. This situation is believed to have negative impact on the academic achievement of its students, especially those coming from regions. Therefore, this study tries to investigate the problems of the students who have come from regions with a focus on whether the problems have influenced their academic performance; whether there are gender differences in performance, and also what the College has done to help students to overcome their problems.

Background of the Study

The Addis Ababa Commercial College is a diploma granting college in the field of business and commerce. It has been producing middle level skilled manpower for the country now for nearly sixty years. Before it became a college, as a high school it used to receive 8th grade graduates from various parts of the country and trained them for four years. Then it expanded and started to conduct training programmes for 10 + 3 and then 12 + 2 programs. The focus of the training was general business at first. Later on, the programs became specific in Secretarial Science and Accounting. In 1983 (1977 EC), the College grew up into being a junior college.

The introduction of a two-year post-higher secondary diploma program in four major commercial disciplines marked the beginning of the modern history of the College. In 1977, the institution, which until then was run by the Ministry of Education, was brought under the jurisdiction of the newly established Commission for Higher Education. In 1983, the name Junior College of Commerce was adopted.

Then, it became a full-fledged College in 1983 EC (1991 - 92). The students in the early years of the College's history were provided with accommodation facilities despite the fact that the College did not settle down with its own building till it moved to the present premises. In the College's golden jubilee anniversary magazine (1993:51) it was stated that in an era when the place of a male and a female was distinctly marked, this institution for the first time boldly introduced co-education and provided boarding facilities to its students.... The first graduates finished in 1952.

But as the number of students increased from year to year, the College could not afford to provide its students with accommodation facilities. In the same magazine, it was indicated that:

the present premises were planned to provide fully equipped boarding services, classrooms, and administrative offices. In fact, it is amazing to recall that there were 114 general service personnel, 14 hospital beds, a doctor and two health officers to serve about 250 students. However, this situation did not last long. Circumstances forced the dormitories to be changed to classrooms and offices.

The Ministry of Education also acknowledged the lack of boarding. That was why more than 90% of the College's entrants came from Addis Ababa while only a few students from the other regions might choose to enter the College with the knowledge that there would be no boarding facility. These students may have relatives to stay with though there were also some exceptional cases.

However, in the 1998/99 academic year, the Ministry of Education assigned 1005 new entrants to the College. According to the Dean's speech on the 52nd graduation ceremony of the College (July 31, 1999), this was 45% more than the new students intake capacity of the College. Out of these students, 431 came from different regions; Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, Benshangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Afar, Harari, Dire Dawa, and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). The first semester registration list included 414

students who came from regions out of which 262 chose to be commercial students. But they couldn't select a specific college they wanted to go to because they were not given the choice on the Students' Higher Education Application Form. On page 4 of the current Students' Application Form, only fields and their codes were stated; no names of colleges and universities were included. The code number for 'Commerce', for example, was 14.

On the other hand, about 152 students who completed high school in the different regions and who didn't choose the field of commerce were assigned in the College. The various fields chosen by these students were building technology, nursing, pharmacy, business education, library science, sanitary science, and animal health. Actually, those students who chose neither the field nor the college were penalized twice. The practice of asking students to choose only fields, not specific colleges/universities they wanted to go to, was started only at the beginning of the 1998/99 academic year. The Students' Application Form used in the previous years enabled students to choose Colleges/Universities, too. Informally interviewed, some of the students who came from regions said that since they were not from Addis Ababa, they believed that they would be assigned in a college where food and lodging were provided.

The Addis Ababa Commercial College provides students with Birr 120 stipend. For most of the students who have come from regions and who do not most likely have financial support from their families, this stipend would be allocated for living expenses like house rent, food, stationery, sanitary materials and the like.

Objectives of the Study

This study assumes that those from Addis Ababa have places to be accommodated while most of the students who come from regions live in rented houses as the College does not provide boarding facility. This study does not assume that all students who come from Addis Ababa are from well-to-do families with strong financial back up.

Students from Addis Ababa are from all kinds of family socio-economic brackets. Moreover, it does not assume that all students who have come from regions are from poor families with no financial support.

Another background to this study is that academic performance of students could be affected by various factors like linguistic ability and exposure. But the emphasis in this study is, other things being equal, whether there are differences in academic performance between students from Addis Ababa and from the regions? Based on these, the study's objectives are:

- to identify the various problems experienced by the students who came from regions;
- to explore if there are differences in achievement between students from Addis Ababa and from regions;
- to see if there are gender differences in the academic achievement of the students from regions; and
- to explore how the college officials perceive the problem and the measures they might have taken to overcome it.

Problem Statement

In the 1998/99 academic year, 1005 students were assigned in the Addis Ababa Commercial College. Of these, 43% of them were from regions. This study therefore tries to identify the different problems faced by these students which might have negatively affected their academic achievement. The questions of investigation in this study therefore are:

- What are the problems these students face which may have negatively influenced their academic achievement?

- Are there differences in the performance of students who come to the College from Addis Ababa and from the regions?
- Are there gender differences in academic achievement among the students who have come from regions?
- How do the College officials perceive the problems of students from regions and what have they done to help the students to overcome their problems?

This study is significant in the sense that it may:

- sensitize officials in the Ministry of Education engaged in placing students in the different higher education institutions so that they would consider the peculiarity of the Addis Ababa Commercial College;
- sensitize those who work in budgeting tertiary level students' expenses; inform policy makers and implementers who are developing the idea of cost-sharing;
- inform members of the College, both teachers and various office bearers, and employers, and
- instigate further research.

The following terms are used in this research paper.

- Region refers to all regions outside Addis Ababa taken together
- Academic Achievement refers to the first year, first semester academic performance of students of the 1998/99 Academic Year entry in the Addis Ababa Commercial College.
- Accommodation refers to boarding facility where both food and lodging services are provided;

- College Officials are position holders of the College (the Dean, the two Vice-Deans, the Registrar, and the former Students' Affairs Officer).

Review of Related Literature

The need for tertiary level education is to achieve better social mobility, and economic and political empowerment in a given country. In Ethiopia, students are sent to higher education institutions so that they can be trained in different specializations with different qualifications. To make the students' stay in colleges and universities fruitful, different provisions are made by the government. Of these provisions, boarding facility is common. But in the case of Addis Ababa Commercial College, there is no boarding.

Regional Differences in Academic Performance in Relation to Boarding Service

A few studies have been conducted in Ethiopia to find out if the region a student comes from has any impact on academic performance. Mulugeta (1997) worked on 187 College of Social Science students in Addis Ababa University. His samples were the 1992/93 freshman program entrants. He took their first year English Language and Quantitative Methods courses results to observe if there were regional differences in achievement. He found out students from Addis Ababa had better GPA's than those from regions did. In the English Language course, students from Addis Ababa outperformed those from regions in both semesters. But in the Quantitative Methods course, the higher performance of those from Addis Ababa was observed only in the first semester. In the second semester, no significant difference was observed in Quantitative Methods between the two groups.

On the other hand, Mohammed (1989) compared the performance of students from Addis Ababa and from regions by taking the 1985 Statistics graduates from Addis Ababa University. He took the 2nd, the

4th, the 6th, and the 8th semesters' GPA's of these students. He proposed that dormitory facility given to the students, and the ESLCE GPA upon entrance had effects on College performance. On the other hand, he reasoned that those from Addis Ababa had higher ESLCE GPA's and thus it would be expected that their performance would be higher. But they were not provided with dormitories, and this may have negative impact on their College achievement. The net effect therefore was neutralizing each other. His finding was similar to his expectation and he stated that he found no statistically significant difference in achievement between students from Addis Ababa and from the regions.

Another study was also done by Habte (1988). His subjects were first year science regular degree students in Addis Ababa University. In his abstract, he indicated that there were differences in the performance of students from Addis Ababa and from regions and the dormitory facilities seemed to have positive effect on the students' performance. Habte (1988) also quoted Asmerom et. al who worked on differences in performance between students who took ESLCE in Addis Ababa and those in regions. Their subjects were first year students of Addis Ababa University in six consecutive years (1978 - 84), totaling 750. Their finding as stated in Habte (1988) was that those from Addis Ababa, even if they came to the University with higher ESLCE GPA, were outsmarted by students from regions in their first year first semester achievement. The possible reasons for this difference, according to the researchers, were over-confidence for having higher ESLCE GPA and lack of boarding, for the students from Addis Ababa. So, Asmerom, et. al in Habte (1988), Habte (1988), and Mohammed's (1989) studies indicated the positive impact of dormitory facilities on students' college/university academic performance.

Gender Differences

In third world countries like Ethiopia where there is the dominance of the patriarchal system, not only academic performance but also access to education is biased towards males (Tsige, 1999;

Abebayehu, 1998). In other words, girls are denied of equal access to schooling in most parts of the country. Even when girls get the chance, they are discouraged to pursue further education (as failure and dropout rates are observed to be higher among girls than boys). For example, Tsige (1999) cited Wanna and Tsion (1994) who found out that girls dropped out of school at an early age; while a study on gender and primary schooling in Ethiopia by IDS, Sussex and MOE (1996) also stated that girl students achieved lower than boys. Considering the higher education institution, enrolment of female students is much less than their male counterparts. On their placement to higher education institutions, there seems to exist some gender bias as a larger number of girls are assigned to what are stereotypically labeled feminine professions like nursing and commerce. For example, in the 1996/97 academic year, among those who were assigned to the nursing profession, 63.8% were girls while in the commercial field, it was 34.9% (Abebayehu, 1998).

Regarding academic performance in higher education institutions, Mulugeta (1997) indicated that sex had a negligible effect on the academic performance of his sample. In his study, Mohammed (1989) also found out sex did not have a serious effect on students' academic performance. Conversely, however, Abebayehu (1998) found out gender differences in the achievement of the 1996/97 and 1997/98 freshman entrants in the College of Social Science, Addis Ababa University. He stated there was an overall attrition (withdrawal, dismissal, probation, and dropout) rate of female students and this was 10.7% greater than their male counterparts. But by considering those in the honor's list (achieving ≥ 3.25), the researchers found out that male students' achievement was 4.7% higher than that of the female students.

The Research and Publications Office of the Addis Ababa Commercial College (1997) conducted a research on the attrition rate of regular students for five consecutive years (1993 - 1997). Their finding showed that in the seven semesters out of the ten, the attrition rate of girl students was higher than that of boys.

Methodology

This study concentrated on the intake of 1998/99 Academic Year of the Addis Ababa Commercial College. The sample population both for the focus-group discussions, and the quantitative analyses were restricted only to the first year students of the academic year. This was so because in the 1998/99 Academic Year, unlike in the previous years, the College enrolled many students from regions as the Ministry of Education changed the 'Students' Application Form'. This was felt to be a significant crisis in the College atmosphere as many students from regions were complaining because they were assigned to the College which did not provide accommodation services.

Sampling

A total of seventeen students (nine boys and eight girls) who came from regions were taken for separate focused-group discussions. The separation was made by sex where female students were in one group and male students were in another group so as to help discussants feel comfortable to freely express themselves. The names of these students were taken from the Students' Affairs Office. A few of them were members of the Student Council and came from regions. The rest were students who applied to the Office to get financial support. These students were taken for the discussions as it was believed that they clearly knew the problems faced by the students.

The seventeen students came only from three regions (Tigray, Amhara, and Oromiya). Actually, in the 1998/99 Academic Year intake, these three regions were represented by more numbers than the rest of the regions (It was 161 from Oromiya, 113 from Amhara, 82 from Tigray while 1 from Gambella, 2 each from Benshangul-Gumuz and Afar, 9 from Harari, 17 from Dire Dawa, and 38 from SNNPR).

Four hundred seventy five files of first year students were selected using the simple random method. The placement list from the Ministry of Education was taken and every second student from Addis Ababa and from the regions was selected. Then, the selected students were traced in the classes they belonged to. Accordingly, their grades were searched. In this sample, students from Addis Ababa, Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, Dire Dawa, Harari, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambella regions were selected. Each department was also represented proportionally. Table 2 gives the description.

Table 1: Student Profile in the Focus Group

Sex	Regions they came from			Department in AACC			
	Tigray	Amhara	Oromiya	SSOM	ACCT	BF	MGT
Girls	5	1	2	5	1	-	2
Boys	2	4	3	-	2	3	4
Total	7	5	5	5	3	3	6

Table 2: Students by Region, Gender, and Department

Region		Gender		Department in AACC			
Addis Ababa	Region	Boys	Girls	SSOM	ACCT	BF	MGT
267	208	238	237	84	166	69	156
(56.2%)	(43.8%)	(50.1%)	(49.9%)	(17.7%)	(34.9%)	(14.5%)	(32.8%)
475 (100%)		475 (100%)		475 (100%)			

Five college officials were interviewed to find out how they perceived the problems of the students who came from regions, and also what they did to help the students to cope with the various problems.

Data Collection Techniques

Separate *focus-group discussions* were undertaken with both male and female students who came from regions to explore the different problems they faced. By posting a notice, the writer called for a meeting in her office and first explained to the students the objectives of the study as being exploratory and the results would give an insight to policy makers and concerned bodies. The students were then

asked to relate the different problems they had faced since they came to the College. The researcher took notes during the discussions that were held in Amharic and then translated to English.

First year first semester GPA's of 475 students enrolled in the college in the 1998/99 academic year were collected from the registrar's office for statistical analysis.

Interviews were conducted with five college officials. The researcher secured the consent of two officials to use a tape recorder during the interview; however, the three officials did not allow this. So the interviews with them were not tape-recorded. Notes were taken on all interviews. They were undertaken in Amharic and then translated to English.

Observations were carried out in four students' rented houses. The writer asked the students' permission to observe their houses and take pictures. Four students volunteered to co-operate, and the writer observed their houses.

Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative data were thematically analyzed for problem statements one and four. Quantitative data on the achievement of the students were computed using SPSS. Means and one-way ANOVA's were run. ANOVA was selected for analysis because it proportionally compares means while testing significance of differences between groups. (This is why it was, for example, possible to compare 267 against 202).

Findings

Exploring into the problems of students from regions

Financial Problem

Both the girls and the boys reported that they did not have any financial support from their families as their families were poor. Their

stipend was allocated for house rent, food, stationery, and all the other things necessary for them. So, the money was never enough. They said that especially after the 20th day of payment, they ran out of money, which they called "pocket crisis." The financial problem was reflected on many things such as the following:

Inadequate Meals

Omitting one meal or even in some cases two meals was common among the students. The quality of the food they could afford to buy (if they did not prepare food in their houses, they paid Br. 1.25 - 1.50 for one meal) was very poor; not nourishing. The quantity was never enough, and it was not healthy as most of them had acquired sickness like gastritis. Especially during the night, when they tried to stay late to study, the students reported that they felt very hungry. For example, one boy said that:

Those students who came from poor families continued to feel hungry even if they had come to College. This in turn made them so much distressed. If you talked to them, they would feel like crying.

There were also times that these students would go home very hungry and since there was no ready food at home, they had to buy things like 'Injera.' Yet, they may be told that it was finished. This brought about feelings of distress. The fact that food preparation took so much time discouraged them to satisfy their appetite when they wanted to eat. Insufficient meals, according to these students, was a major problem.

Poor Housing Condition

Most of the students lived in rented houses. They lived in groups (groups of two, three or more up to seven). They did this so that they could share the cost of the house rent. But this brought about problems of:

- suffocation as the rooms were very small. One student said: *if one catches cold, everyone also catches cold.*
- disagreement between each other as there could be disparity in interests, and
- lack of cleanliness (sanitation) as the situation was not comfortable to really keep oneself clean.

The houses they could afford to rent had no toilets which was one of the major problems. (They used toilets only on campus.) The walls of the houses were made of fertilizer bags, corrugated iron or cartons. Most of the time the students suffered from various forms of cold. The floor was infested with insects like fleas. Some houses were situated near pit latrines with disturbing odor. Some students said they developed sinus and the like. Some of them said they lived in houses that were sinking because these houses used to be pit latrines. The roofs of the houses were also torn and leaked water when it rained. According to the students, most of the houses were infested with rats. The writer observed four houses of these students. One of the houses used to be a veranda. The room was one meter wide and about two meters long. The floor was compacted mud and the ceiling was of fertilizer bag, which had several holes. The door was corrugated iron and there was a small wooden window. The walls were of mud. There was no tap water and toilet service.



Fig.1. One student's 'house'.

The other house observed was of corrugated iron in three of its sides. Only the front side was of mud. The roof was torn and it was observed that things like stones and pieces of wood were placed on the top so that they supported the roof from being carried away by wind. The room did not have a window, it was earthen floor and had a wooden door. In this house too, there was no tap water and toilet service. The other two houses observed were in a relatively better shape. The floors were cemented, the ceilings were new (clean) fertilizer bags, sides were mud, and they were relatively wider. Both had tap water and toilets. One of these houses shared its two sides with two different pit latrines that leaked and produced bad odor. This house

was rented by three students. The students had only one rented bed that they said was not enough for the three of them. So, they slept in shifts.



Fig. 2. A room that is shared by three students.

On the other hand, the students feared that if the owners got more money by renting the house to other people, they would tell them to leave immediately. Because of this, the students suffered from overstress regarding accommodation problems. The possibility of movement also made them feel "never settled." In relation to this, those from Tigray reported to have special problems when they looked for houses. They said that since they spoke 'Tigrigna,' some

people refused to let their houses with the suspicion that they could be Eritereans wanting to hide themselves. The other problem reported by the students in relation to housing was the fact that they rented houses far from the College to get cheaper ones. Thus, they could afford only busfares or had to go on foot. This wasted their time (leaving them little time to study) and caused fatigue. So, the students had to go home earlier than 6:30 p.m. to make use of the student bus fare – this hindered them from staying on campus to use the library.

Problem of Electric Light

In the rented houses, some owners told the students to pay the electric charge separately. The charge may also differ from one month to the other as per the consumption. But most importantly, they always had *time limit* on how much they could use the electricity. In most cases (nearly in all), the time limit was up to a certain hour, like 11:00 p.m. If they tried to stay late, the owners switched the light off. The owners may even do this earlier than 11:00 p.m. if they felt like sleeping. On the other hand, if there were other people who rented rooms in the compound, they sometimes frustrated the students by telling them that they used more electricity and incurred extra cost on their neighbors too. In relation to this, if they wanted to stay on campus till 7:30 to use the library facility, the girls said that they were afraid of street violence. There were times that they faced such violence. Even in their rented houses, if some males in the surrounding knew that they were only girls, they would disturb them by throwing stones on the roof of their little house or by knocking at it if it was next to the street. As stated earlier, most of the houses they had rented did not have windows which in turn made their rooms dark. In such cases, the students may need to use electricity more (e.g. at dusk) to have sufficient light and yet this was a big problem. Some students tried to add some money (like Br. 10.-), as a bonus for the owners so that they could use the electric light for some more time. But this caused more financial stress on them.

Utensils in the House

Most of these students lived in groups. So, they usually bought a mattress for two – grass packed in fertilizer bags. According to one student:

The contents of the mattress include not only grass but also other things like pieces of wood, sugar cane waste, and even soil. I have experienced soil coming out of it, and the dust is dangerous for our health. It is also an ideal breeding ground for insects.

Some of the students used rented mattresses (made of cotton). But these usually had bad smell. The bed or the mattress also served all purposes; it was a dining table, a desk to study on, a sofa to "rest" on, and a bed to sleep on. But sitting on a mattress put on the floor was not suitable to write on. Accounting assignments may include drawing straight lines but doing so on the mattress would be very difficult. The same was true for shorthand. One girl said,

If you study shorthand, writing on your lap is never comfortable. This is because if the figure you are writing has some extra shape because of the discomfort, it will have another meaning.

The students also stated that studying on their beds made them sleepy, thus, rendering them less effective academically.

Kitchen utensils were also problems where, for example, the students may have one kerosene stove for four of them. Since the meals they decided to omit may vary from one person to the other, they prepared their foods separately. But if one went home feeling very hungry and if the stove was occupied by another person in the group, the situation would become frustrating. This, according to the students, was one reason for causing disagreement among each other. This was a problem caused by lack of boarding and insufficient stipend.

Shortage of Stationery

Obviously, all faced problems regarding stationery. A girl stated:

There are times that we have little money and we are caught between lack of stationery and lack of food. Which one should we choose?

Another boy said:

There are times that we are told to submit some assignments on separate white papers. Once, I was told by my teacher I had lost some marks for not doing so; by then I did the assignment on a paper torn out of my exercise book because I could not afford buying a white sheet.

The students reported that shortage of stationery was a common problem. They said that there were times some students in the College gave them pens. Books like the text for the English language course should also be bought. One boy said,

We are instructed to buy the book at the beginning of the semester. Since we cannot readily afford buying one, the teachers send us out of class for not having books and so we have poor attendance.

Another one added:

We are persuaded to borrow books from other students. But begging does not feel good.

These students could not afford to buy calculators. There were times when some of them had performed poor on their exams because they did not have calculating machines. Special clothing was also a requirement in some departments like Banking and Finance. One student said, *in Banking, there is a need to keep one's protocol. Can anyone like myself afford to do so?*

Shortage of Sanitary Materials

Another problem particular to girls was related to menstruation. The girls could not buy ready-made pads every month. So, they used pieces of cloth. But this had to be washed regularly. However, they did not have enough money to buy soaps for washing. On the other hand, they stayed the whole day on campus since classes were from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and yet they may need to change the cloth twice a day in which case they had difficulty in washing it on campus. One girl said, *if you let the cloth to stay on your body longer, it would smell bad and you would feel ashamed to get closer to others.*

In the houses rented by the students, there was no facility to bathe or to take shower (to clean their body). Some said they depended on the College's shower facility that was allowed only after physical education class. But they were given this opportunity immediately after class only, in which case they could not use the shower later if they had another class following physical education. On the other hand, if they stayed longer without taking shower, they felt uncomfortable. Others said there was shower facility in the Kebele in their surrounding where they had to pay Birr 1. These students also said that they were asked by the house owners to pay extra 0.10 or 0.15 cents for a bucket of water when they needed to wash their clothes.

Personal Problems

Self-confidence

The students reported lack of confidence in many respects. For a better discussion, the issue was classified into two: self-expression, and dressing.

Self-expression was affected by the individual's linguistic ability. According to these students, they lacked confidence to express themselves in class (to ask or answer questions) because they thought that their classmates would laugh at them as they did not

speaking good English. One girl said, *in the first semester, I expected to get only a pass mark in English. I did not aspire to score higher because I felt I was poor when I compared myself with those who came from Addis Ababa.*

Dressing also had some impact on personality makeup. The dresses worn by those from the regions outside Addis Ababa may be poor in quality, torn, or unclean (because of shortage of sanitary materials like soaps or even water in some cases). One boy said, *if I am in an unclean dress, I obsessively think that those from Addis Ababa may hate me. So, I feel bad and have poor attention in class.*

Another girl added that:

In this College, friendships are based on dressing and status. If I see others looking at me, I usually think that they are looking at my dress - which is poor. So, I feel bad.

Another boy said: *I feel inferior due to the type and condition of clothing.*

Another student added:

At first, I used to feel like I was not in Ethiopia. when I saw the dressing styles of students from rich families of Addis Ababa.

The issue of dressing also had another dimension where some of the students said that it was difficult to compare the incomparable.

One girl stated: *I cannot compare myself with a person who drives a DX.*

Some others also confirmed that their objective is education, not comparing dressing patterns.

Homesickness

The students said that even if they knew that they would be away from their families when they joined college, they felt homesick once they were here. This, under normal circumstances, was not experienced by students from Addis Ababa. The students who came from regions said that while they were over-occupied in managing their lives with meager financial resources, they longed for their families and this increased their frustration and forced them to lose concentration when studying. As one boy said, *I did not expect the problem of lack of boarding. Self-administration makes me think of my family more.*

Another girl said,

I miss my family very much. Whenever I think of them, I cannot concentrate on my study.

Those from the Tigray region had an extra tension because of the war situation. Since their region was at the war front during the conflict, they did not hear from their families or they were obsessively thinking that their families were endangered, which in turn made them to lose concentration in their academic work.

Morale

The question of morale was related to the social interaction that was prevalent among the students: those from Addis Ababa versus from regions. The students in the focused - group discussions said that students from Addis Ababa thought that those from the regions were naive.

One boy said:

Our outlook of the world is richer than those from Addis Ababa because we have seen the ups and downs of life

more than they have. But they think of us as fools. This affects our morale.

Loneliness

The students in both focused-group discussions said that they felt excluded by the students from Addis Ababa. The students who came from regions thought that communication among students was largely based on background similarity. They also believed that those from Addis Ababa marginalized them and also misunderstood their problems. According to one girl,

It is the lack of dormitory and food facility that accounts for poor communication between students from Addis Ababa and those from the other regions. Here, it is like a high school.

Another boy said that:

Most of my classmates are from Addis Ababa. But I do not mix with them because I feel that I do not belong there, and yet I feel bad for not doing so.

Adjustment Problems

This was reported to be a big problem especially at the early stages of arrival at Addis Ababa (a city that they did not know before). One girl reported that:

Since it was our first time to come to Addis Ababa, most of us were confused and we did not know where to go and what to do. Some of us stayed in hotels but this took all our money. Had there been dormitory in this College, the money spent in the hotels could have been saved to buy stationery materials necessary for our education. The confusion would not also have been as intense as we experienced it to be.

The students said that their mind was divided between academics, household chores, and also how to effectively use the little money they were given. One boy said that:

I prepare my own food. One day, I did not have the time to properly wash my hands. While sitting in class, I realized that my hands were smelling onion. So, I started to think that my classmate sitting beside me noticed the smell of the onion. That day, I was very tense and had poor attention for the lesson.

The students usually compared themselves with those from Addis Ababa believing that the latter did not have such things to bother about. So, the students from regions felt frustrated because they thought that those from Addis Ababa would excel them academically.

Academic Problem

All the problems discussed above combined together to negatively affect students' academic performance. The students in both focused-group discussions said that their first semester grades were not attractive because the general situation of their living was not conducive for academic work. All the problems discussed above explained their situation. For example, one boy explained the poor housing condition affecting academic performance as:

The houses we have rented are not comfortable. There are other external influences (disturbances) such as music from the closer neighborhood or talks of neighbors. I did not know which one to concentrate on.

Another girl said: *How can you study while feeling hungry.*

Generally, the students said that fatigue and shortage of time were the causes for low academic performance and for academic dismissals.

In relation to this, the linguistic ability and the general exposure of the students from regions were relatively poor which decreased the students' academic performance. One girl said:

In shorthand, sounds are written. Because of the language problem we have, our performance is relatively lower than the students from Addis Ababa.

The general stress in life also made their academic performance lower. Thinking what to eat and spending so much time to prepare food, on the one hand, and concentrating on academics, on the other hand, were conflicting, according to these students. They said that the intensity of the problem forced so many students from regions to withdraw. Classes in the College extended from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., which gave them little extra time for food preparation. When they went home, food preparation and eating made them stay as late as 11:00 o'clock in the evening. By that time, they were too tired and unable to really concentrate on their academic study. Yet, employment after graduation was based on academic performance. For these students, therefore, the situation was not conducive enough to compete and score good grades.

Differences in Achievement

The sampled students' first semester GPA (Grade Point Average) was taken from the Registrar's Office of the College. Of the 475 cases, only 463 were valid while the rest had missing cases with a SGPA (Semester Grade Point Average) of 'NG' (No Grade) or 'I' (Incomplete). With the valid cases, Analysis of Variance was run. This was to see if there were differences in the performance of the students from Addis Ababa and those from regions.

The mean SGPA of students from Addis Ababa was 2.30096, while the mean SGPA of students from regions was 2.07371. The difference of these values was 0.22725. The Analysis of Variance below shows the statistical significance of this difference.

As it is seen in the ANOVA test, the difference in achievement between students from Addis Ababa and from regions was statistically significant where the former performed better than the latter. Even if the difference in mean SGPA's looks very small, the fact that GPA values are densely populated makes small figures to matter and to make a difference.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA to Determine Mean Differences

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	1	5.8803	5.8803	20.0758	0.0000*
Within Groups	461	135.0294	0.2929		
Total	462	140.9097			

$F_{(0.01; 1, \infty)} = 6.63$. (This is table value where 'F' ratios greater than or equal to 6.63 are statistically significant.)

In this study, ESLCE GPA was not considered as a factor. This was because students who came to the College be it from Addis Ababa or the other regions had ESLCE GPA's that ranged between 2.80 - 3.00 which showed the least of variation. However, the ESLCE English and Math results of the sample population were compared to see if there were differences by region. But there was no statistically significant difference ($F = 2.8224$ with $\alpha = 0.0937$ for English while $F = 2.4468$ with $\alpha = 0.1185$ for Math).

Gender Differences In Achievement Among Region Students

As it is observed in Table 4, the sampled students who came from regions outside Addis Ababa were 208. Of these, six were missing cases while 202 were valid cases. There were 117 boys and 85 girls. The mean Semester Grade Point Averages (SGPA's) of these students were taken to see if there were differences in their performance.

Mean SGPA of boys	=	2.10393
Mean SGPA of girls	=	2.03212
The difference in mean	=	0.07181.

To see if this difference was statistically significant, Analysis of Variance was run.

The result indicated that among the students who came from regions, there was no significant difference in achievement (academic performance) by gender. Actually, comparison by gender among the whole sample indicated no statistically significant difference ($F = 0.0050$ with $\alpha = 0.9825$).

Table 4: One-way ANOVA to Determine Gender Differences

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	1	0.2539	0.2539	0.8417	0.3600
Within Groups	200	60.3312	0.3017		
Total	201	60.5851			

$$F_{(0.05, 1, \infty)} = 3.84$$

The SGPA of the students from Addis Ababa and those who came from regions were compared by department.

Table 5: Mean SGPA by Department and Location

Location	Department			
	SSOM	ACCT	BF	MGT
Addis Ababa	2.57500	2.26469	2.34919	2.15775
Regions	2.13636	1.94429	2.35932	1.96919

The results showed that the mean SGPA of Secretarial Science and Office Management students from Addis Ababa was the highest followed by Banking and Finance students from regions, Banking and Finance from Addis Ababa and Accounting students from Addis Ababa, and so on.

Four one-way ANOVA's were run to determine if there was statistically significant difference between the means of students from Addis Ababa and regions in each department. Based on this, the summary of the one-way ANOVA is shown in the Table 5.

As it is indicated, the results of Secretarial Science and Office Management, and Accounting students were statistically significant at 0.01 alpha level while the results of Management students were statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level. In all of these three departments, those from Addis Ababa performed better than those from regions. In the Banking and Finance department, the mean SGPA of students from regions was slightly higher than those from Addis Ababa though the difference was not statistically significant. Why this was so would be an area for further investigation.

Table 6: Summary of one-way ANOVA's to Determine Mean Differences by Department and location

Secretarial Science and Office Management					
Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	1	3.7625	3.7625	18.6927	0.0000*
Within Groups	79	15.9014	0.2013		
Total	80	19.6639			
Accounting					
Between Groups	1	3.9049	3.9049	14.9854	0.0002*
Within Groups	157	40.9107	0.2606		
Total	158	44.8156			
Banking and Finance					
Between Groups	1	0.0021	0.0021	0.0065	0.9359
Within Groups	79	25.0004	0.3165		
Total	80	25.0024			
Management					
Between Groups	1	1.2419	1.2419	4.1094	0.0445*
Within Groups	140	42.3079	0.3022		
Total	141	43.5497			

$F_{(0.01;1,\infty)} = 6.63$. $F_{(0.05;1,\infty)} = 3.84$. ('F' ratios greater than 3.84 are statistically significant.)

Problems of Students From Regions

General

In the 1998/99 academic year, 43% of the students placed in the Addis Ababa Commercial College came from different regions though the College did not have accommodation facilities. One official said:

Too many students from regions are placed in AACC for the purpose of encouraging cultural exchange among students. But officials in Ministry of Education did not give attention to the peculiarity of AACC, that it does not provide boarding services.

Another official added:

In principle, AACC should not be only for students who come from Addis Ababa. Students from all parts of the country should be given the opportunity to attend the College once its internal facilities are fulfilled like other similar Colleges.

Lack of Boarding

Unavailability of food and lodging facilities had a serious impact mainly on the students who came from regions. Here, it is not implied that those from Addis Ababa were comfortable without the boarding facilities. As one official put it:

The transfer from high school to College has a unique problem on all students as the teaching style, the study method and the nature of courses are different.

Another official also added: *academic work needs comfort; enough and nourishing meals, sleeping places, and the like.*

But comparing with the students coming from regions, those from Addis Ababa were far better off. The lack of boarding forced the students from regions to rent houses which were not suitable for academic work. As one official said,

Studying at home diverts concentration as a school atmosphere is much more conducive for schoolwork. Group work cannot be encouraged when students live in separate houses.

The lack of accommodation in the College was also reflected on library use where the library could not be opened till late in the

evening as students were not on campus to use it. In the rented houses, the students who came from regions faced various problems like poor electricity and water supply, and lack of toilet. To avoid confrontation with house renters on the question of electricity, some students were even observed to stay till 8:00 o'clock in the evening studying on corridors of the College building where there was enough light.

There were also students who rented houses very far from the College, like Kaliti, so that they could get cheaper accommodation. Paradoxically, these students spent much of their time waiting for buses. Because of the lack of boarding, the students also prepared their food themselves. This was time consuming and tiresome. As one official said:

The students cannot afford to eat in hotels as they do not have enough money. So, they cook their foods. Cooking in turn 'wastes' their time.

Insufficient Finance

In Addis Ababa Commercial College, even if there was lack of boarding facility, the students were given Birr 120. This was the budget allocated only for food in all higher learning institutions. This money, according to all College officials interviewed, was never enough especially for students coming from regions. This was mainly because most of these students allocated this money for food, house rent (shelter), stationery, and everything that was necessary for them. As one official said: *Economic problem is the major one for the students. Besides, lack of shelter is the basic problem.*

Another one supported the idea by saying: *some students even asked the administration to look for donation.*

Adjustment Problems

The College officials also believed that the problems of the students included adjustment problems. One official said:

These students are mostly in the age range of 18 - 20.

They are not mature enough to cope with all problems of housing, money, and the like.

The seriousness of the problem was reflected on one strange situation where some boy and girl students who came from the same region rented houses together. As another official said:

This could have been prevented had there been dormitory facilities as the students are sexually matured enough not to be placed in same rooms.

This problem was inducing adjustment difficulties among these students. The lack of social support had an impact on students and this made them feel discriminated. In relation to this, the background (exposure) differences between students from Addis Ababa and from regions also worsened the problems of the latter: As stated by one official:

Comparatively speaking, there are problems of books, experienced teachers and libraries in regions outside Addis Ababa. Students from Addis Ababa are exposed to better materials, many libraries and experienced teachers. Even while learning in AACC, if there is a necessity of using other libraries, those from Addis Ababa know where and how to go while those from the other regions would be confused.

Placement

Placement of students from regions to the Addis Ababa Commercial College was the major problem according to one official. He strongly commented that:

If the Ministry of Education does not stop placing students who come from regions to this College, the students cannot really learn here - they cannot cope with. They would rather plot conspiracies which in turn makes us to have unnecessary confrontations with them.

Two other officials also criticized placement of students from the other regions to the College by giving the example of students coming from the Tigray region where there was a business college offering similar training leading towards the same qualification.

Academic Problem

Because of all the problems stated above, all College officials interviewed strongly asserted that the academic performance of these students was negatively affected. Since they had to attend to their food, shelter, and the like, the students asserted that they lacked concentration for academic work.

Every regular student of the College contributed Birr 1.00 per month for the Student Council. This money was spent for something that was of a common interest to every student like contributing to strengthen the defense force and helping the displaced. Apart from this one Birr contribution, interested students also donated some money out of their stipend to help the needy ones in the College. This money, though very little, was between 0.50 cents to Br. 9.00, the most common contribution being Br. 1.00 - 3.00. Both of these contributions were mainly used to help the needy students who came from regions.

According to the Students' Affairs Office, a total of 98 students received help in the 1998/99 Academic Year. The money given ranged from Br. 40.00 - 60.00 where in some cases it may be reduced to Br. 30.00 per student. The selection of the needy students was done by the Student Council members because it was believed that students knew their mates better. The College therefore encouraged the students' contribution and also helped in different matters of importance with regard to the needy students. An example for this

could be a committee consisting of three staff members which was always standing by to help the Student Council. All of the College officials interviewed believed that for the time being, the students' contribution and the active work of the Student Council were the only means to help the needy students from regions.

Students' Lounge

The administration and the Students' Affairs Office had a close supervision of the students' lounge. This was most importantly to help the students who came from regions. As one official said:

Since we are aware that these students are facing problems, we always check on the lounge if bread and tea is available in abundance.

This was because the students could afford to buy bread and tea. Therefore it was important to make periodic supervisions. Another official said:

I always make follow-ups on the cafeteria - especially the food items bought. They are really the first quality. Lunch is sold for Birr 2.50, which is a very reasonable price for such good food. But the students who came from regions could not still afford to buy the food.

Supplies Shop

The supplies shop was first established to help Purchasing and Supplies Management students to apply their theoretical knowledge into practice. Currently, however, it is used by the administration of the College to supply stationery to the students of the College with minimal cost.

The Clinic

In this academic year, unlike in the previous years, the clinic notified girl students that it would supply them with menstruation pads. One official said that the College decided to do so because:

If a girl is facing a problem because of lack of pads, she may stay out of school for two to three days. To avoid that, we have decided to give out menstruation pads.

Another official also added that:

For various reasons, the students from regions get sick. To help them, therefore, we have increased the budget of the College clinic.

Reaching Others Who may Extend Help

The students with economic problems repeatedly asked the administration of the Collège to help them look for donation. But as one official said, *even if we tried to reach some non-government organizations, our students with a stipend of Br. 120.00 are not given priorities.*

So, looking for donation money did not work out. The other co-operation sought was to look for Kebele houses in the nearby areas. But this alternative did not work.

The College officials, recognizing the problem of the students from the other regions, wrote letters to the Ministry of Education stating the insufficiency of the Birr 120.00 stipend, and that students' problems were beyond the means of the College to cope with. Generally speaking, the College officials asserted that the solution for the problem was not within their reach. The College did not have either the capacity or the system to help the students.

Discussions

In this study, both the male and the female students in the focus-group discussions disclosed that food shortage was one of the most acute problems they faced. It was therefore difficult for them to have the energy to study their courses, which in turn made them low academic achievers. This finding corroborates Andreou, et. al (1997)

who studied children's eating habit in relation to self-esteem and academic achievement. They found children with comparatively healthy eating habits had higher self-esteem and achieved better in school than those who had worse diets.

Lack of accommodation was the biggest problem among the Addis Ababa Commercial College students. This had severe adverse effect especially on students from regions. They reported that they had faced multitudes of problems and poor academic performance. The reason behind this was that, other things remaining the same, the lack of accommodation facility in the Addis Ababa Commercial College forced the students from regions to live in privately owned rented houses which were in very destitute conditions and which did not stimulate academic work. Even if food shortage was the most serious problem among these students, they and the officials of the College confirmed lack of accommodation, insufficient finance, and adjustment problems, among others, were the main problems that negatively affected the students' academic achievement.

The importance of accommodation facility while studying in higher learning institutions was substantiated by studies like Asmerom et. al in Habte (1988) who reasoned that one factor for the poor performance of AAU students from Addis Ababa was lack of dormitory facility. Habte (1988) found dormitory facilities had positive effect on students' academic performance. Mohammed (1989) also asserted lack of dormitory facilities negatively affected academic performance. He said those from Addis Ababa, who were not provided with dormitory facility, though joined the University with higher ESLCE GPA, performed similarly as those from other regions. So, these studies asserted the importance of dormitory facilities for successful academic performance. In addition, when the results of the sample population (475 students) were considered, ESLCE English and Math grades showed no statistically significant difference by location. This partly indicated the fact that the difference in academic performance of the sample population (those from Addis Ababa performing better

than those from regions) in the Addis Ababa Commercial College to be more affected by lack of boarding facility.

Comparison was made on the academic achievement of the male and the female students from regions though there was no statistically significant difference. Comparison by gender on the total sample did not either show any statistically significant difference in academic achievement. Habte (1988) and Mohammed (1989) also found out the same results. This is different from Abebayehu's (1998) finding on AAU students that showed female students achieved lower than their male counterparts.

As they repeatedly stated, the focus group sample in this study compared themselves with those from Addis in many respects like dressing, social status, language proficiency, and overall academic competence. Self-esteem, on the other hand, was influenced by social interactions (Vander Zanden, 1981). So, their self-esteem/ self-concept was in a certain way affected negatively. Jordan (1981) found that if a person's global self-concept was the feeling of inadequacy, it would cause problems in academic achievement.

For the sake of curiosity and to arouse further investigation, this study compared differences in achievement between students from Addis Ababa and from regions, by department. In the Secretarial Science and Office Management, and in Accounting departments, statistically significant differences were observed where those from Addis Ababa performed better. Mohammed (1989) checked if such differences existed in the Science Faculty, Addis Ababa University. In Chemistry and Mathematics departments, he found out that students from regions performed better.

Generally, this study tried to integrate the qualitative and the quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis. In other words, it included the identification of the problems of students from regions outside Addis Ababa, compared the students' academic

performance by region, gender and department, and also investigated what the College did to help the students.

Conclusions

This study is more of exploratory than conclusive. It has tried to find out the problems the students from regions experienced; the problems mainly caused by the lack of boarding facility in Addis Ababa Commercial College.

This study has also compared the achievement of the students from Addis Ababa with those from the other regions. In relation to this, the study examined if there were gender differences in achievement among students from regions. Finally, the what of the students problems in the eyes of the College officials and the possible solutions have been explored. Therefore, the following conclusions could be drawn:

The students who came to the College from regions faced financial problem. They reported that the Birr 120.00 stipend was not enough. The financial strain reflected itself on:

Inadequate meals or no meals: They would omit meals. The food they could afford was of poor quality and also insufficient in quantity. Yet, academic work needed too much energy.

Poor housing condition: The inside part of the houses the students rented were made of corrugated iron, fertilizer bags or cartons. It was also possible that they were situated near pit latrines, very compact in size, with torn and leaking roof, and without windows. So, the students were affected by various illnesses like cold and sinus.

These two problems induced distress in the students. This was because as they lived in groups, they quarreled with each other. This affected their performance as they did not have suitable places to study or full bellies to give out enough energy.

Electric light: It was the other problem as the house owners gave the students a time limit on how much to use it. To avoid confrontation, some students stayed on campus till the library closed (7:30 p.m.) or till 8:00 p.m. studying on lighted corridors.

Poor household utensils: The students used mattresses made of grass in fertilizer bags which served a dining table, a studying desk, and a sleeping bed. Shortage of some utensils like cooking stove also induced irritability and sometimes even fighting among those who lived together.

Shortage of stationery: The students were not able to provide themselves with the necessary stationery. There were times they were caught in avoidance - avoidance conflict as they were short of food, on the one hand, and short of stationery, on the other. Such a conflict however is the most dangerous one which in extreme cases involves avoidance of the self.

Lack of sanitary materials: This problem was more intense on girls as they needed to use menstruation pads. In fact, in the 1998/99 academic year, the College clinic started giving out pads to those who needed it. Common to most of the students was the problem of (insufficiency) water for their body and clothes.

The students also experienced personal problems which affected their adjustment and academic performance seriously. These personal problems were seen in the following:

Self-confidence: This has two categories in this study: self-expression and dressing. In the former case, the students reported lack confidence to express themselves because they thought that they were not good English language speakers. In the latter case, the students said that they felt inferior because their dressing pattern was poorer than those from Addis Ababa. This was common to both sexes.

Homesickness: as the students were far from their parents and siblings unlike those from Addis Ababa, their being overburdened in managing their lives with little finance and much academic work intensified this problem as they needed support from closer ones.

Morale was also affected because those from Addis Ababa considered the students as coming from countryside and thus, naive. This affected their self-esteem. These students also thought that they were marginalized by those from Addis Ababa and they felt lonely.

These students, as they were College students, were expected to work harder academically. But unlike all the colleges and universities in Ethiopia, they were not provided with accommodation facilities. Generally, they were not in a conducive situation to be better than or even to compete academically. It is also a common understanding that education in our country is a means of improving economic status. However, competition for employment for these students is expected to be stiff due to their low academic performance.

Taking their first semester GPA, these students were found to perform lower than those from Addis Ababa. The one-way ANOVA run to see the differences in achievement proved the statistical significance of the better performance of those from Addis Ababa. However, the ESLCE English and Math results did not show any statistically significant difference by region. Among those from regions, there was no gender difference in achievement, however.

College officials interviewed acknowledged that lack of boarding, insufficient finance, and adjustment problems negatively influenced the students' academic achievement and overall competence. They, therefore, tried to help with all the means at their disposal. These included encouraging and facilitating students' contribution, giving out the students' stipend on time every month, checking students' lounge to make sure the cost food items is within the financial capacity of the students and that it also meets the minimum quality requirement, strengthening the supplies shop so that it could sell stationery

materials with the possible minimum cost, helping the clinic to distribute menstruation pads and also strengthening the clinic's budget as the students usually caught sickness because of the uncomfortable situation they lived in, discussing with the students to understand their problems, and notifying higher body on the seriousness of the students' problems.

Recommendations

From the various problems faced by the students from regions, as discussed above, the following recommendations are made. It is hoped that officials in the Ministry of Education, policy makers, policy implementers and the College community would note them seriously.

- The College should strongly try to create networks with employers (government, non-government, or private) so that the latter can sponsor or offer part-time jobs for those students with severe financial problems. This can help the students to perform well academically too, hence to become competitive. Sponsorship or offering part-time jobs can also be related with the idea of cost-sharing because when students with poor financial resource join colleges/universities, they would get means of support to cover the fees that are required by the institutions. Employers will, in a way, fulfill their social responsibilities by contributing to such activities.
- Currently, students are being assigned to the Addis Ababa Commercial College from all parts of the country though the College does not provide lodging facilities. This causes the students to face various problems. So, the Ministry of Education should seriously consider the problem of these students and make adjustment on its placement policy. This is also related with the idea of cost-sharing because if students are closer to their regions, covering the non-instructional fees would be relatively easier. Actually, the new trend of expanding colleges that are found in the different regions into universities will be helpful as the universities will offer different disciplines that could help students to pursue their preferred field of study in the nearby institutions.

- The Ministry of Education and the Addis Ababa Commercial College should jointly work to find a means of providing boarding facility - either by building or by renting one until the idea of cost sharing materializes. To start with, it could be provision of only housing without food facility as long as the students are given stipend. Still as a starting point, this could be only for students from regions. But in the long run, provision of boarding (with or without fees) should be to all students coming to the College from any part of Ethiopia, including those from Addis Ababa as academic work needs academic environment. The availability of boarding helps the College to admit students from all regions of Ethiopia. In fact, the Addis Ababa Commercial College is not meant only for students coming from Addis Ababa. As the College is producing well-recognized and well-skilled graduates, opportunity should be given to all coming from all parts of the country.
- Till accommodation facility could be secured to the College students, the Ministry of Education should make adjustments on the code of the 'Students Application Form' that is filled while students choose fields of study to join higher institutions. The peculiarity of the Addis Ababa Commercial College should be emphasized. Suggestion for the application form could be: *COMMERCE ... Addis Ababa Commercial College (no boarding facility) [Code No. 14a] ... Mekelle Business College [Code No. 14b], etc.*
- If situations continue as they are, the government should increase the stipend money at least to those who come from regions so that the problem of boarding could be alleviated to a certain extent.
- Teachers should try to understand the different and difficult situations of those who come from regions so that they would not over expect the students on some matters like submitting computer typed papers, project reports, or assignments.
- The College should help the students to have access to a shower facility. The one that exists should be open the whole day.

- The supplies shop should be strengthened to provide students with more stationery items still with minimal cost.
- The existing counseling service should be strengthened.

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Abstract: This paper tries to check whether or not multiple draft writing is more useful than the single draft feedback in creating assignments and finding a way to achieve this objective. The researcher used two kinds of data collection methods. In the experiment, 119 AAU students who were grouped into experimental (59) and control groups (60) were taken for writing drafts in 12 one semester. The former received multiple draft feedback and the latter single draft feedback. To measure the difference in the effects of the two kinds of feedback on students' performance, pre-test and post-test essays were used. Besides, a questionnaire was designed to supplement the findings of the experiment. The overall result was that the EG, identified to be approximately equivalent to the CG in the pre-test, performed better in the post-test at the end of the experiment. Responses to the questionnaire also indicated that students revised their essays and paid more attention to teachers' and peers' comments on their multiple drafts (100%-31%) of the process writing than the single draft feedback on the respective end products (57%-70%). Besides, 15% of the CG were reported to have ignored the single draft feedback and showed very limited attempt to understand it, whereas only 4% of the EG said that they ignored the multiple draft feedback. In the follow-up activities of the process of feedback involving the revision of the first draft, the EG reported that they added new points, developed ideas with examples, identified logical relations, used markers to connect ideas, dropped unrelated ideas, rephrased introductions and restated central ideas in their conclusions. However, these revision strategies were reported to be inapplicable to the CG. The responses of both the CG (84%) and the EG (91%) indicated that incorporating feedback in rewriting essays two or more times was more useful to revision writing skills than the single draft feedback. It is further recognized that self-correction is an effective in the multiple draft contexts.