

**The Effect of Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-efficacy and Admission  
Test Result on Academic Performance of First Year Students in  
Adwa College of Teacher Education**

**BY**

**BERIHU G/SLASSIE**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
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**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

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**Approved by Board Examiners**

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Chairman, Department Graduate	Signature
_____	_____
Advisor	Signature
_____	_____
Internal Examiner	Signature
_____	_____
Eternal Examiner	Signature

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## ABSTRACT

*The objective of the study was to examine the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result on academic performance of first year students in Adwa Teacher Training College. The coping methods of students were also examined. Two hundred forty first year students (120 males and 120 females) were included in the study. The data were obtained using self-administered instrument: self-efficacy and psychosocial adjustment scales and coping inventory. The three measuring instruments were adapted from previous related studies. Descriptive statistics, multiple regression and t-test were used to analyze the data. Personal-emotional adjustment was found to be one of the major psychosocial problems. In relation to coping strategy, emotion- focused method was the most frequently used one. The results showed that male students have significantly higher mean score in psychosocial adjustment and admission test result than females and female students have higher mean score in self-efficacy than males. Psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy predicted the academic performance of the students, while admission test result didn't. The results have implications for instructional practice. Instructors, for example, can enhance the academic performance of their students via designing relevant educational methods that may positively influence students' behavior. Further research is recommended on examining the effect of the variables included in the present study and other variables like student socio-economic status, educational background and institutional factors (opportunities and constraints).*

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The first year in college can be a time filled by novel and stimulating incidents. It can also be a demanding experience to the majority of college students. Some studies have revealed that the better accustomed students are to their college setting, the better will be their academic achievement (Lent, Taveira, Sheu, & Singley, 2009). The transition stage from high school to college can be challenging for students particularly following departure through the dependent phase at home or in school where they have to stand by the regulations laid down by parents and the school. From their view, college is a moment when these controls are not there and the students become autonomous just like adults. Earlier studies have revealed that the transition time from secondary to tertiary schooling is a critical phase (Hutardo and Carter, 1997).

Lots of students experience the first adaptation to university as demanding and negative in different ways (Pancer, Anderman, Hammen & freeman, 2000; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). This experience could be due to a range of difficulties faced by students particularly in their initial years on campus. The difficulties consist of forming new interactions, adapting to changes in interaction with parents and family (leaving away from home) and learning novel strategies in the new educational setting. If the students fail to deal with the new difficulties, they have to leave college even before completing their education.

Success for first year university students is often different in terms of making change in taking responsibility. Sociology based theories classify various factors, both outside and inside the university, that can affect the process of adjustment including students' primary objectives and commitments, their cloistered experiences including their college performance, supplementary activities and relations with faculties, staff and peer groups, their interaction with people and societies outside the university including parents, peers, employers and community of various organizations and their individual unique attributes (Tinto, 1993, cited in Adanew, 2007).

A study concerning the behavior of students' transitions to university offer important insights about the internal and external contexts and factors that can affect the process. In addition to the class room setting, students indicate that genuine educational transition processes from secondary to tertiary level include rising existence skills such as money and time management skills, private goal setting, rising self-regulation taking responsibilities for one's physical, financial and educational wellbeing and developing clear understanding of oneself and one's own goals through relations with faculty and peers who have goals, attitudes or values different from the students (Terenzini, 1994).

Baker and Sirk (1989) state that successful adjustment to university has been defined by criteria such as remaining on campus, enjoying emotional wellbeing and performing well academically. Concerning this, the research findings of Charles and Stewart (1991) reveal that if students fail to adjust to a new college atmosphere, they will face high levels of depression, isolation and loneliness which can present severe obstacle to the attainment of their college objectives. Once students adjust to the requirements and roles of the new environment, however, their academic and psychosocial experience is likely to be successful and achievable (Charles and Stewart, 1991).

Today, in Ethiopia, there is a great expansion of higher education. The number of universities has reached 31 from 8 in 1991 E.C. Similarly the number of teacher training colleges has grown from 8 in 1991 to 34 in 2005 (MoE, 2005 E.C). The 2005 enrollment in teacher training colleges was 175,142. With such expansion, it becomes necessary to ensure that proper services are provided or conditions created to support students' adjustment and success in their studies (MoE, 2005 E.C).

One of the teacher training colleges in the country is Adwa College of Teacher Education (ACTE) which is found in Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. The College recruits trainees from among students who have completed at least grade 10 and have a minimum achievement of 2.00 point GPA in the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination.

According to the statistics obtained from the ACTE Registrar's Office, there were 1213 first year students enrolled in the College in the 2005 E.C academic year. According to the Office, although many students were enrolled in the College, a large number of students did not continue their education as a consequence of poor academic achievement and dropout rate. According to the statistical data from the Office out of 1213 students, 57 students (4.7% - 1.9% male and 2.8% female) were dismissed due to low GPA. Eighty five students (7% - 3.9% female and 3.1% male) were on academic warning, and 30 students (2.5% - 1.1% female and 2.4% male) dropped out due to personal problems and misconduct at the end of their first term in 2005 E.C academic year.

In order to know the sources of the problem, the College conducted an informal assessment on the students. Based on this, it was found that students did not use their study time effectively. Besides, they had low participation in extracurricular events, little use of the library,

and lack of tutoring each other. Some students were not attending class regularly. In addition, some students devoted their time to chewing chat, heavy drinking, and sexual contacts.

As most of the instructors and researchers assume, among the conditions that give rise to the considerable academic problems of the students, one is associated with the intrapersonal issues rooted within self that includes sense of inferiority and uncertainty, mistrust, perceived bias, and students' perceptions of their own success. The other factors are associated with external factors such as environmental conditions, for example, socioeconomic status, student services in the college etc.

Several factors such as self-efficacy, sex, and personality variations contribute a large proportion of the variance in academic performance of college students (Terenzini, 1994). A person's sense of self-efficacy influences his or her perception, motivation and performance in various ways. Moreover, sex difference is another important source of variance in performance (Terenzini, 1994). Personality variations like flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, self-monitoring and shyness contribute to differences in academic achievement. Although it appears that certain personality characteristics of students may affect the way students adjust to college transition psychosocially and academically most of these characteristics are relatively stable and difficult to change.

Several factors can affect academic performance of college students. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of psychosocial adjustments, self-efficacy and admission test result on academic performance among first year college students.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Various literatures reveal that numerous variables influence academic performance of students. A study by Lent *et al.* (2009) shows that the better students adapt to their academic environment, the better will be their university experience. Once students adjust to the requirements and roles of the recent environment, their academic and psychosocial experience is likely to be satisfying (Charles & Stewart, 1991).

Similarly, a strong sense of self efficacy in relation to one's capacity and potential will help students with academic achievement. A well-developed self-efficacy helps students link with difficult situations with no feeling of being overwhelmed and confused (Bandura, 1986). These strong beliefs influence not only the choice of activities, but also help students in determining how much they will struggle for success, how long they will apply themselves against challenges and how they will handle dilemma and maintain their path (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 2002).

Although the importance of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result has been acknowledged in theory, empirical research looking in to the relation of these variables with students' academic performance has been limited. With this in mind, an attempt was made to investigate the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result on academic performance of college students in Adwa College of Teacher Education. The researcher raised the following research questions in relation to students' psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result.

1. What are the major psychosocial problems of the students?
2. What are the major coping methods used by students?

3. Is there a difference between male and female students in psychosocial adjustment, admission test result and self-efficacy?
4. To what extent do psychosocial adjustment, self- efficacy and the result of admission test contribute to the academic performance of students?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to explore the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result on academic performance of first year college students. Specifically the study was intended to:

- Identify the major psychosocial problems of college students
- Determine the major coping methods used by students
- Examine the difference between male and female college students in their psychosocial adjustment, admission test result and self-efficacy
- Explore to what extent the psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and the result of admission test contribute to the academic performance of first year college students

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The importance of studying first year college students as a separate group of knowledge can help counselors, instructors, and student affair offices to better understand and help this population through the development of new interventions and programs. Instructors, for example, can enhance the academic performance of their students via designing relevant educational methods that may positively influence students' behavior. Besides, counselors could consider using result of this study in trying to bring about the desired behavioral change in the



students they are helping. The outcome of this study also helps first year college students to evaluate their assets and liabilities and improve their capability to perceive, plan and accomplish their future academic duties. Furthermore, this study may give researchers more insight about the contribution of the selected variables to academic performance of college students at present and provide them with some ideas for designing further studies.

## **1.5 Operational Definitions**

**Adjustment:** The process by which the individual gets along successfully with various demands or pressures.

**Adjustment problem:** The failure to cope successfully with inner and outer demands which change from time to time.

**Academic adjustment:** Self-reported perception of students on their educational motivation, application, performance and their satisfaction with the academic environment.

**Personal adjustment:** Self-reported feelings, perceptions or expression of students that reflects feelings of depression, anxiety and stress and the opinion the student hold about him or herself.

**Social adjustment:** Self-reported perception of selected aspects of students' social relationship in their college in relation to their social competence, shyness, loneliness and social dissatisfaction.

**Self-Efficacy:** The confidence students have in their abilities to obtain the desired outcomes successfully.

**Academic Performance:** First semester freshmen GPA for the academic year 2006 E.C.

**Admission Test Result:** Students' result on the admission test to the College. The admission requirements to college are ESLCE result, high school grade and aptitude test. The college recruits trainees from among students who have completed grade 10 and have a minimum achievement of 2.00 point GPA in ESLCE.

**Coping Methods:** Students' skills and abilities to contest the demands of academic problem.

## **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

The study was limited to Adwa College of Teacher Education. This is mainly because the researcher is familiar with the area and has a hunch on problems of the study, especially, the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result on the academic performance of college students. The study is restricted only to first year college students on the assumption that transition to college would be more challenging to first year students than to students at other year levels.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **Review of Literature**

This chapter reviews related literature out of which conceptual and theoretical frameworks have been developed. Additionally, empirical studies on the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result of first year college students are reviewed.

### **2.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Explanation of Psychosocial Adjustment**

Lots of researchers and educators have been attracted to the psychosocial adaptation of students in order to discover ways to decrease pressure and increase the positive aspects of their understanding throughout the world. As Halamandaris & Power (1999) suggest, the definition of adjustment is broad. The definition includes psychosocial aspects such as emotional well-being, lack of loneliness, depression and satisfaction with social and academic life.

When beginning their studies, students face several academic and socio-cultural challenges. Research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s conceptualized adaptation in terms of college performance (Halamandaris & Power, 1999). As this early research indicated, the main objective of many students is to attain the highest academic achievement. Psychosocial adjustment of college students is very essential because of its positive correlation with academic performance (Pedersen, 1995 and Stoyhoff, 1997).

Moreover, Tseng (2002) states that college students face four major categories of adjustment problems such as general living, educational, socio-cultural, and personal-emotional adjustment. General living adjustment includes adjustment to living situation, financial issues, conditions, norms, values, rules and regulations. Personal-emotional adjustment relate to dealing

with loneliness, disturbance, homesickness, isolation, hopelessness, and loss of identity status. Similarly, educational adjustment issues include course loads, difficulty in doing assignments and preparing for examinations, lack of prior knowledge about a field of study and socio-cultural adjustment like language problem, accommodation difficulties, dietary restrictions, loneliness, and a sense of loss. Researchers assert that social and personal emotional adjustments often collapse under the brand of “psychosocial adjustment” (Halamandaris & Power, 1999; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002).

The problems individuals face are different in kind and magnitude. An elementary school child and a college student, a housewife and an office worker, and a nurse and a teacher face different psychosocial adjustment problems. Regarding students, their primary responsibility is to be engaged in the learning process. If their psychological or emotional state is affected, then they may not benefit from education. In other words, if they have adjustment problems, they will face academic, social, psychological, and health problems that directly or indirectly interfere with the teaching learning process.

First year students usually have expectations about campus life. Some students are looking forward to the university and are excited to practice more independence and adventure. Similarly, some students could be excited about college, but then discover real life to be contrary to their expectations. They don't feel happy, relaxed, safe or secure and sound in the new settings.

Wade, Cairney, & Pevalin (2002) state that there are some students who know that departing from family will be challenging and thus fear the thought of going to college. No matter how the expectations may be, almost all students face challenging obstacles at the beginning of campus life when things appear to be different from what they expected. Negative

life transition produces anxiety, and certainly the changes involved in leaving home for college are demanding and can direct to the unreliable psychosocial problems including sadness, worry, loneliness and isolation (Wintre, & Yaffe, 2000). These types of feelings are part of the normal developmental transition to university life.

Entering university life requires students to face many changes, including changes in their living preparations, educational environments, and companionship networks, while adjusting to better freedom and responsibility in their private and academic lives. Even though many students can be changed successfully by the university life, others may experience lasting emotional maladjustments and hopelessness (Gall, Evans, & Bellerose, 2000; Hammen, 1980; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000 cited in Lama M. Al-Qaisy, 2010). According to the research findings of Bradburn & Carroll (2002), one third of college students leave campus life without obtaining their college degrees, and this has been true of the majority of new entry students during their first year.

Consolvo (2002) indicates that approximately 30-40% of university students drop out without obtaining a university degree, and lots of these students by no means come back to complete their college degrees. On the contrary, students who succeed in handling their independence and the newly found freedoms are able to make new relationships while maintaining old relationships (Holmbeck & Leake, 1999). Hence, identifying factors that enhance positive adjustment in the first year of college is necessary (Pratt, 200). The feeling of college belongingness (e.g., Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2002) and the quality of student friendships (e.g., Fass & Tubman, 2002) are two constructs that have not been considered but may potentially add to better adaptation among college students throughout their

first year. Colleges are important developmental contexts for academic and socio-emotional development of students (Eccles & Roeser, 2003).

A few researchers have indicated that the degree of relationship that the student feels towards college (i.e., college affection) is related to better social adjustment (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2000).

However, the process of socio-emotional adjustment can be frustrating and overwhelming for lots of students leading them to emotional maladjustment and depression (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000), which may in turn, negatively affect college performance. High levels of emotional support save students from anxiety (Robbins, Lese, & Herrick, 1993). Rice et al (1995) has emphasized the significance of healthy emotional relations, and students who are able to create and uphold healthy relations with others tend to have an easier time in adjusting themselves to campus life. According to Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) social adjustment may be just as crucial as academic adjustment. They carried out their studies on 155 first year students and found that personal adjustment and integration with the social relation of college life play a role at least as important as academic factors in student retention rates.

A study by Adams, Ryan, & Keating (2000) shows that students' social adjustments to new college settings are associated with their participation in the campus life. Many studies conducted in the 1990s indicated that students need continued support to become involved in activities, and that this kind of support improves their overall psychosocial adjustment (Dinger, 1999).

## 2.1.1 Developmental Theories

Developmental theories have given particular importance to students because of the developmental task that must be accomplished at a time in a person's life — identity versus role confusion and intimacy versus isolation (Furnham, A., and Rawles, R., 1994).

In Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory there are eight unfolding stages of human development that people follow through within their life span. Erikson, in his study of human development, described the fifth stage as identity versus role confusion, typically as the adolescents' issue.

One of the most powerful theories and practices of psychosocial adjustment is that of Arthur Kerr & Nelson (1989, cited in Adanew Diro, 2007). Regarding the model of students development, it proposed seven stages. These seven stages are 1) achieving competence, 2) managing emotions, 3) becoming autonomous, 4) establishing identity, 5) developing mature interpersonal relationships, 6) clarifying purpose, and 7) developing integrity.

Baker et al. (1985) examined a four year undergraduate college experience and established a model that focuses on the developmental tasks that need to be successfully addressed and accomplished to grow as a person and be ready for the working world and the outside world. This developmental model has been labeled a mini-life cycle and each year in school has a central developmental task that needs to be accomplished (Baker et al., 1985 cited in Adanew Diro, 2007).

The four year undergraduate central tasks are characterized by four mechanisms 1) divestment in old roles and investment of new roles during freshman year transition from secondary school to college, 2) consolidation of the separation from home and choice of new

interest and goals during the sophomore year, 3) mastery of and commitment to work during the junior year, and 4) the anticipation of the future during the senior year (Baker et al., 1985).

The quality of an individual's development depends on how successful these developmental tasks are confronted and accomplished. Undoubtedly, the first years in college are important transitional times for independence and growth of a person adapting successfully to college environments through accomplishment of the divestment/ investment developmental tasks.

### **2.1.2 Psychosocial Problems of College Students**

College life has its own demands and challenges and failure in meeting those demands and challenges causes academic, psychological and social problems to a college student who is likely to be the person most affected by those problems (Abu Baker, 1997).

Researchers have also shown that progress from high school to college can result in negative/ positive experiences for students, especially at the beginning months. Most students successfully cope with university life, yet, some become overwhelmed. A number of college students have their education and personal lives disrupted by psychosocial problems. When psychosocial difficulties go untreated, the results can be serious and include academic failures and even total withdrawal from the university.

This is also case in Ethiopian higher institutions. Yusuf (1989, p.5) states "Students in Ethiopian institutions of higher learning face all kinds of problems related to academic, personal, social, health, medical, financial, family and a host of other personal problems".

Moreover, Bell (1996) states that students have to learn about their environment, and about themselves (which are at times elusive), and they have to manage their relationships with



the institution and its demands. If they are unable to do this, they fail in their task of being a student. Such psychosocial adjustment problem issues may be the same for all students in higher education institutions regardless of their differences in background (Bell, 1996). To explain this even further, Bell states that students need to leave behind what has gone before and to look forward to what is to come. They need to become attached to the institution and to their subject to make friends and to form a working relationship with those who will teach them (1996).

Scholars used to categorize students psychosocial problems into a number of categories. Throughout the transition periods to campus life, mostly first year students face many intellectual challenges such as academic and overall campus situation as well as social difficulties like moving far away from home (Schunk and Pajares, 2002).

Al-amayra (1988) conducted a study on 582 male and female students at Yarmouk University. In the study the prevalent psychosocial problems among university students were found to be in the academic, social, and psychological and health in descending order. On the other hand, in a study by Cornell (1994) several participants of new entry college students indicated academic pressures, interpersonal problems and emotional stress as common problems. However, many other studies found low confidence, sense of loss, anxiety, confusion, and sense of isolation and alienation among college students (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Lin & Yi, 1997).

In a similar fashion, Misra et al. (2000) argue that university and college students experience a broad range of stressful events when they move away from home for the first time. This can require leaving all formerly learned support of siblings, parents, and school mates or friends. Students may need adjust to the new social relations and they need to be accountable for

their own needs. Students may have difficulty to adjust to deal with individuals of differing cultures and ways of life (Misra et al., 2000).

Tinto (1993) explains that college transition is filled with social adjustment problems such as loneliness, homesickness and friend sickness. According to Tinto, the factors that influence the transition process of students to college life are ways of interactions with family, staff and peer groups and a student's relationships with people and communities outside the college.

Larose and Boivin (1998) compared students who left home to attend college education and those who did not. The purpose of their study was to assess individual differences in perceived feeling of security, social support expectations, and psychosocial adjustment during the transition from high school to college. In order to do this, 298 adolescents were made to meet on two occasions-at the end of high school and during the first semester in college. In this study perceived feeling of security indicated high-retest correlation with stability, more than perceptions of social support and emotional adjustment did. Larose and Boivin concluded that during transition periods of students who had left their home to attend college education experienced improved means of perceived security, increased feelings of loneliness and social anxiety and decreased perceptions of social support.

Do these perceptions of social support and the real social support relate to adjustment? Tao et al. (2000) found that overall social support among students did not vary significantly across the first term, but that support from diverse sources such as parents, peers, teachers and siblings indicated unique patterns of changes. Support was positively related to adjustment and coping skills in a dynamic way. This showed that the role of social support operated both

directly in relation to adjustment and indirectly through its relations to coping styles. This research shows that students who joined higher institutions face social adjustment problems.

Different studies identify academic adjustment problems. For example, Nora and Cabrera conducted a research on minority students who were attending a predominantly white institution. They concluded that financial problems, academic curriculum, lack of support service and the nature of interpersonal relationship with peers, academic faculty and staffs negatively affected the minority students attending the predominately white institutions (Nora and Cabrera, 1996).

Some studies focusing on the nature of students transition to college offer important insights in to the internal as well as external contexts and factors that can influence students' academic adjustment. For example, an exploratory study by Terenzini et al. (1994) dealt with students' perspectives about college transition, including how they become involved in college, and the experiences that influence the process both positively and negatively. They used group discussion in four distinct types of institutions in terms of student demographics and institutional characteristics (i.e. urban community colleges, residential liberal arts colleges, urban community state universities and residential research universities) and concluded that the process by which students become involved was poorly mapped.

Terenzini et al. indicated that real learning of the transition process includes developing survival skills (e.g., budgeting money and time management skills, personal goal setting), developing self-discipline when a task or obligation was recognized, taking responsibility for one's physical, financial, and academic well-being and developing a clear understanding of oneself and one's goal through interaction with peers and faculty who hold goals, attitudes, or values different from the students' (Terenzini et al., 1994).

During the period of transition, there are social strains, academic issues and financial concerns that bring mental stress to college students. These stresses lead an individual to an increased level of psychological problems (e.g., helplessness and depression) and physiological difficulties (Skowron, Wester and Azen, 2004).

Skowron, Wester and Azen (2004) said that the sources of stress and their consequences arise from challenging course loads, university bureaucracies, problems in managing one's time and personal finances, and challenges in creating and maintaining satisfying interpersonal relationships that potentially lead to an increased levels of depression, anxiety, academic failure, and emotional exhaustion. Similarly, Atalay et al. (2005) indicated depression and anxiety are more common among university and college students than among the general population.

From the above paragraph we can understand that mental distress, depression and anxiety are personal problems which are prevalent among college students. The question at this point is whether these problems affect students' personal adjustment or not.

Skowron, Wester and Azen (2004) examine the relationship between differentiation of self, college stress and psychosocial adjustment. They conducted their study on 126 undergraduate students. The results of their study indicate that college stress was negatively related to a greater level of differentiation of self. In contrast, differentiation of self was positively related to psychological adjustment. Finally, they concluded that the association between college-related stress and actual level of personal adjustment is accounted for, in part, by one's capacity to regulate emotional reactivity, maintaining connections with others, avoiding emotional cutoff, and yet take first positions in important relationships (Skowron, Wester and Azen, 2004).

Similarly, Rawson et al. (1994) identified that significant relationships exist between anxiety and illness, stress and illness, and depression and illness among 184 college undergraduates. The researchers surveyed 145 women and 39 men at a small, mid-western, coeducational liberal arts college. It was found that stress accounted for 9.5% increase in illnesses.

In addition, Rawson et al. (1994) found significant differences in anxiety and stress across the different school years. First year students tended to report higher levels of anxiety. This result was attributed to the fact that the students no longer received strong social support which usually includes special programs, advice and attention by dormitory counselors. Besides, the students did not develop coping mechanisms used by older students to deal with college stress (Rawson et al., 1994).

There can be many sources of stress for college students. Ross, Niebling and Heckert (1999) surveyed 100 undergraduate students at a mid-sized mid-western university. The survey consisted of 40 items that were divided into four categories of potential sources of stress. These categories included interpersonal sources of stress, intrapersonal sources of stress, academic sources of stress and environmental sources of stress. The interpersonal sources of stress were the result of interactions with others such as fights with one's girl / boyfriend. The intrapersonal source of stress indicated a change within the individual such as sleeping or eating habits. Academic sources of stress were identified as course related activities such as an increase in workload, difficulty in doing assignments and examinations.

Lastly, environmental sources of stress were related to problems outside of the college such as difficulties with a vehicle or computer. The top four sources of stress identified in this

study were a change in sleeping habits, vacations and breaks, a change in eating habits, new responsibilities and increased workloads. These results indicate that three of the top four stressors of college students are intrapersonal problems (Ross et al., 1999).

### **2.1.3 Psychosocial Adjustment and Gender Difference**

Although each and every student has to regulate the new college situation, a few students may adjust better than others. Abdullah, Elias, Mahyddin, and Uli (2009) have found that male students had higher psychological and social adjustment to campus life than female students. Some studies (Enochs & Roland, 2006) have reported that female students showed low social adjustment. However, Kaur (2012) found that there were no gender differences in adjustment among college students.

Female students exhibit higher level of anxiety (Ozen, Ercan, Irgil, & Sigirli, 2010), anxiety, depression and stress (Mundia, 2010) and depression than males (Baldassin, Alves, Andrade, & Martins 2008). However, contrary to these findings Smith et al. (2007) found no significant differences on depression and anxiety between male and female year medical students.

Fong and Peskin (1969) examined gender differences in psychosocial adjustment. They suggested that female students experienced more strain than their male counterparts. Other studies examined that female students had higher emotional, physiological, and behavioral reactions to stressors (Misra et al. 2003) and that they were also more likely to feel homesick and loneliness than male students (Rajapaksa and Dundes 2002). Sumer et al. (2008) found no relation between gender and students' depression and anxiety levels.

## **2.2. Coping with Adjustment Problems**

### **2.2.1. Definition of Coping**

Coping is defined as the process of managing external and /or internal demands that tax or exceed the resources of the person (Lazarus, 1981). There are two key features of this definition that emphasize the process and describe coping in terms of the relationship between the person and the environment. George (1974) also defines coping as the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them.

### **2.2.2 Types of Coping Method**

There appear to be three main coping strategies that people employ when attempting to resolve or remove a stressor: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and avoidant coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

#### **2.2.2.1 Problem-Focused Coping**

The most adaptive coping strategy that reduces symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression is problem-focused coping. Wijndaele et al. (2007) revealed that problem-focused coping is the most successful coping method in reducing psychosocial problems in the general population. Their study analyzed the coping and psychosocial distress levels of 2,616 Belgian adults. The study found that participants that were engaged in problem-focused coping had reduced symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression compared to the participants that were engaged in other coping strategies. However, only one baseline self-report questionnaire was

used to measure a number of different factors such as support, stress, coping style and lifestyle factors. The study could have been improved by using a specialized measure of coping such as the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) or COPE (Carver et al., 1989).

Students show lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression when they are engaged in problem focused coping as compared to the other coping strategies. Crockett et al. (2007) found that problem-focused coping was the most adaptive coping method employed by university students. Crockett et al. (2007) and colleagues examined the associations between problem-focused coping and stress, anxiety and depression among 148 Mexican American college students. The study measured the participants' level of emotional support, coping styles, stress and anxiety (Beck & Steer, 1993) and depressive symptoms (Radloff, 1977). Their findings showed that problem-focused coping was associated with reduced depressive symptoms.

An additional study by Bouteyre et al. (2007) further demonstrates the negative association between problem-focused coping and psychosocial problems among university students. Bouteyre et al. were interested in examining both the prevalence of depressive symptoms on French students and the role of coping in relation to depressive symptoms. They found that 41% of the 233 students had depressive symptoms. However, participants that were engaged in problem-focused coping were less likely to exhibit depressive symptoms. Problem-focused coping appeared to be effective simply because it could remove daily stressors.

Although daily stressors are limited, they have been associated with lowered mood of university students (Wolf, Elston, & Kissling, 1989). Perhaps more significantly, daily stressors can develop major stresses and thus increase potentials for increased stress, anxiety and depression (Holahan et al., 2005). The removal of these stressors, therefore, decreases the likelihood of experiencing distress. In addition, problem-focused coping may be negatively



associated with psychosocial problems as it requires individuals to set and accomplish goals. Consequently, individuals are provided with a sense of mastery and control and thus they reduce their anxieties and stresses (Folkman, 1997).

#### **2.2.2.2 Avoidant Coping**

Avoidant coping has been shown to be associated with greater distress than other coping strategies. A ten year longitudinal study by Holahan et al. (2005) showed that avoidant coping is positively associated with depressive symptoms. Although the research by Holahan et al. was only correlational, it does suggest that avoidant coping may fail to remove stressors. As a consequence, depressive symptoms may increase.

Avoidant coping has also been associated with increased psychosocial problems in non-clinical populations such as the general population (Wijndaele et al., 2007) and university samples. Penland et al. (2000) found in their university study that students experienced greater depressive symptoms when they were engaged in an avoidant coping such as wishful thinking. Crockett et al's (2007) study also revealed strong positive associations between avoidant coping and psychosocial distress. Participants showed increased symptoms of anxiety and depression when they were engaged in avoidant coping, as opposed to participants that engaged in problem-focused coping.

The positive association shown between avoidant coping and stress, anxiety and depression might have occurred because avoidant coping failed to remove minor stressors (Holahan et al., 2005). As stressors are allowed to fester and grow, they could become more stressful, resulting in an individual experiencing increased anxiety and depression. A negative cycle can then develop where depressed individuals may be more likely to appraise their ability to deal with stressors as low and be more pessimistic about future outcomes (Abramson,

Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). This negative thinking may lead the individuals to be get engaged in more passive coping such as avoidant coping and thus the negative cycle is continued.

### **2.2.2.3 Emotion-Focused Coping**

Emotion-focused coping incorporates diverse coping methods that have been shown to be both adaptive and maladaptive (Billings & Moos, 1984; Penland, 2000; Wijndaele et al., 2007; Crockett, 2007; Bouteyre, 2007). The coping strategies that regulate emotion (e.g., seeking social support, affect regulation and acceptance) appear to reduce psychosocial problems whereas coping strategies that focus on negative emotions and thoughts appear to increase psychological distress (e.g., venting of emotions and rumination).

The mixed findings with regard to the emotion-focused coping have been also demonstrated by university samples. Bouteyre et al. (2007) found a positive association between venting of emotions and depressive symptoms among 233 first year psychology students. In contrast, however, Penland et al. (2000) found that venting of emotions was adaptive coping strategy as participants experienced decreased depressive symptoms when they expressed their distressing emotions. The inconsistency of these findings shows that it is difficult to ascertain the relationship between venting of emotions and anxiety, depression and stress.

An emotion-focused coping strategy that has consistently been shown to be negatively associated with psychosocial problems is seeking social support. Wijndaele et al. (2007) explored the relationship between emotion-focused coping and psychosocial problems in the general population and found that individuals had lower anxiety, loneliness and depressive symptoms when they regularly received social support. Seeking social support was also negatively associated with stress, anxiety and depression among university students. Crockett et al. (2007) found that seeking social support was an effective coping strategy for students

experiencing high levels of stress, as the students reported fewer anxiety and depressive symptoms when they received social support, as opposed to students who did not receive any social support. The negative association between seeking social support and psychosocial problems has further been supported by Penland et al. (2000) and Bouteyre et al. (2007).

Conversely, emotion-focused coping strategies that focus on negative emotions are maladaptive as they require individuals to focus on their negative emotions rather than on their removals (Billings & Moos, 1984). Coping methods such as venting of emotions and rumination are generally shown to be maladaptive as they do not remove the negative emotions but in fact exacerbate them and prolong the existing feelings of distress (Windle and Windle, 1996).

### **2.2.3. Measurement of Coping**

Currently, conviction has developed that it is how individuals cope with stress as such that influence their personal-emotional well-being, social functioning and somatic health. Even though there is interest in studying coping method, empirical research has been limited until recently due to lack of suitable assessment techniques (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Measurement of coping is difficult and several approaches were concerned with personality disposition that influences coping responses. The coping method inventory (COPE) assesses thoughts and actions individuals use to cope with stressful events (Carver et al., 1989). The questionnaire is conceived as an evolving strategy for measurement rather than, strictly speaking, a test.

### **2.3. Development of Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy refers to the confidence people have in their abilities for success in a given task (Bandura, 1997). If they possess the ability to successfully perform, then that task will be attempted. The task will be avoided if it is perceived to be too difficult (Bandura, 1986 and 1997 cited in Diane L. Witt-Rose, 2003).

Inefficacious individuals usually avoid challenging tasks. When they do attempt them they give up more easily than individuals with high efficacy. When inefficacious individuals fail, they attribute the unsuccessful result to a lack of ability and tend to lose faith in their capabilities. When they succeed, they are more likely to attribute their success to external factors (Bandura, 1986, 1997 cited in Diane L. Witt-Rose, 2003). If students master a challenging task with limited assistance, their levels of self-efficacy will rise (Bandura, 1986). Individuals who possess a high degree of self-efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging tasks, to persist longer at them, and to exert more effort in the process. If highly efficacious individuals fail, they attribute the outcome to lack of effort or an adverse environment. When they succeed, they credit their achievement to their abilities. It is the perception that their abilities caused the achievement that affects the outcome rather than their actual abilities (Bandura, 1986).

According to Bandura (1977 and 1997 cited in Diane L. Witt-Rose, 2003), people's beliefs about efficacy can be affected by four main sources of influence: (a) performance accomplishments, (b) vicarious learning, (c) social persuasion, and (d) emotional arousal. Performance accomplishment is based on an individual's past success in performing a task or behavior.

Zimmerman (1989) has indicated that low results and poor grades generally weaken students' confidence in their capabilities. As a result, students with low mathematics self-

efficacy are more likely to avoid future mathematics classes and tasks, and they may approach the area of mathematics with new apprehension.

Regarding successes and efforts made for achieving successes, Bandura (1994) found that if people had experienced only easy successes in the past, they come to expect quick results and they are easily discouraged by obstacles. Self-Efficacy beliefs vary between individuals and will actually fluctuate within an individual for different tasks. In many activities, self-efficacy contributes to self-esteem. Self-efficacy beliefs affect how people approach new challenges and will contribute to performance since these beliefs influence thought processes, motivation, and behavior (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is not static and can change over time resulting from periodic reassessments of how adequate one's performance has been (Bandura, 1986). For example, in a college population, chemistry lab self-efficacy increased over the course of a school year whereas biology self-efficacy decreased over the same duration (Smist, 1993).

### **2.3.1 Self-Efficacy and Social Cognitive Theory of Personality**

According to Bandura (1977 cited in Stephen P. Becker, 2009), one of the central components of social learning theory is reciprocal determinism. Reciprocal determinism posits that behavior is not caused by internal traits, drives, or instincts, or by the situational influences of the environment, either individually or in combination, since each is considered to be a unidirectional determinant of behavior. Rather, human functioning in social learning theory, is determined by the continuous reciprocal interaction of personal (cognitive), behavioral (affective), and environmental factors.

In social learning theory, an environment influences how people behave, and in turn, peoples' behavior influences their environment. When people reflect on the causes and results of

their past behavior, it influences what they think, what they expect, and how they will act in the future. Consequently, there is a triadic reciprocal causation between conditions (environment), personal cognitions (thinking and feeling), and behavior (actions). This premise has important implications for first-term students in that much of their behavior is determined by the accepted behaviors of their social environment that appears to value employment and family obligations before formal education. As a result, the students tend to miss too many classes, expend too little effort in their academic endeavors, and they become underachievers. Therefore, students who have higher self-efficacy at entry stage realize higher first-term academic success by taking control of their actions rather than allowing their environment to impede them.

### **2.3.2 Self-Efficacy in Educational Context**

Some studies have investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement in higher education. For example, Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, (2001); Greene & Miller, (1996); Multon, Brown, & Lent, (1991); Silver, Smith, & Greene, (2001) indicate a connection between self-efficacy and academic achievement. In the case of education, self-efficacy has been related with effort, persistence and achievement. In a study on mathematical problem solving, Chemers & Garcia (2001 cited in Diane L. Witt-Rose, 2003) found that children with higher self-efficacy strived for longer periods and used more effective problem solving strategies than children with lower self-efficacy.

A strong sense of self efficacy about one's ability and competence will help individuals with emotional adjustment. A strong self-efficacy also helps individuals to deal with challenging situations without feeling overwhelmed and confused (Bandura, 1986).

Self-efficacy is a multidimensional construct that varies according to the domain of demands (Zimmerman, 2000), and, therefore, it must be evaluated at a level that is specific to the outcome domain (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996). In a meta-analysis of studies of self-efficacy in academic environments, Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991) concluded that the most specific academic self-efficacy indices had the strongest effect on academic outcomes, while the more generalized measures were less closely associated.

On the other hand, general self-efficacy measures were not found to be predictive of any college outcomes (Ferrari and Parker, 1992; Lindley and Borgen, 2002), while academic self-efficacy has been consistently shown to predict grades and persistence in college. An extensive body of research has shown that academic self-efficacy is positively associated with grades in college (Bong, 2001; Brown, Lent, and Larkin, 1989; Hackett, Betz, Casas, and Rocha-Singh, 1992; Lent, Brown, and Larkin, 1984; Multon, Brown, and Lent, 1991) as well as with persistence (Lent et al., 1984, 1986 and 1987; Zhang and RiCharde, 1998).

Bandura (1993) posits that self efficacy belief can determine how people feel, think, and act. Self-efficacy beliefs affect people's choices. These beliefs not only affect the choice of activities, but also help persons in determining how much they will strive for achievement, how long they will exert themselves against difficulties and how will they handle troubles and maintain their course (Bandura, 1977 and Pajares, 2002). More specifically, the construct of academic self-efficacy (derived from Bandura's 1982 and 1986 Social Learning Theory) encapsulates the notion that self-referent thoughts or beliefs play a central role in behavior.

In a meta-analysis of 39 self-efficacy studies by Multon, Brown, & Lent (1991), stronger relationships were found between self-efficacy and performance among high school and college students than among younger students. Out of the studies included, 28.9 % involved higher

education. The above mentioned Greene and Miller (1996) study found a positive correlation between perceived ability, learning goals, and meaningful cognitive engagement which influence college achievement.

Two different studies measured self-efficacy of second year college students and reported conflicting results. Among associate degree nursing students, self-efficacy predicted academic achievement (Jeffreys, 1998). Academic variables such as study hours, study skills, and absenteeism but not self-efficacy were statistically significant contributors to nursing achievement. Silver and colleagues (2001) found that self-efficacy is positively related to achievement in social science classes for community college students.

Another study with college students found academic self-efficacy to be significantly more predictive of career choice than academic achievement (Kennedy, 1996). The study also found that semester academic performance was positively influenced by perceived goals and previous academic experience instead of by self-efficacy (Kennedy, 1996). The researcher stated that her findings do not negate self-efficacy's mediating influence on past achievement and thus self-efficacy could contribute to academic achievement via this mediatory role. Other studies (Greene & Miller, 1996; Miller, et al., 1996; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990) support the mediating effects self-efficacy has on academic achievement.

In general, students need to be self-directed and take greater responsibility for their learning. Students possessing a high degree of self-efficacy are more successful at accomplishing these tasks and as a result, perform better academically. Accordingly, self-efficacy beliefs are "crucial" when applied to the cognitive demands of higher education (Bandura, 1997).



### **2.3.3. Self-Efficacy and Gender Difference**

Many researchers show that boys tend to be more confident than girls in academic areas related to mathematics, science and technology (Hackett and Betz, 1989; pajares and Miller, 1994; Yalew, 1997). It has further been noted that females have lower self-efficacy for scientific occupation and occupational quantitative skills (Zeldin and Pajares, 2000). Women's continued under representation in higher paying, higher status, scientific and technical fields has been partially explained by their lack of preparation relative to men in mathematics (Golman and Hewit, 1976; Hackertt and Betz, 1989).

Other studies indicate that female students take significantly fewer mathematics related courses than male students do in both high school and college, and fewer women than men prefer to major mathematics related courses (Tamir, 1988; Asefa, 2002). Low self-efficacy beliefs of women are thought to reflect the limited and disadvantaged positions they have in the work place and the limited range of career positions presented to them (Bentz and Hackett, 1981). Several studies (DeBacker & Nelson, 1999, 2000; Miller, et al., 1996; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Smist, Archambault, & Owen, 1997; Tippins, 1991) have documented that female students have lower levels of self-efficacy in math and science courses in comparison to male students. Similarly, DeBacker & Nelson (2000) found that high school girls, regardless of their achievement level, scored lower than boys on perceived ability in biology, chemistry, and physics.

In many research works, it has frequently been observed that the fields of mathematics, science and technology are typically viewed by students as being within a male domain (e.g., Fennema and Sherman, 1978; Assefa, 2002). In these areas, a masculine orientation is associated with confidence and achievement (Hackett, 1985). Consequently, boys tend to be more confident and competent in these areas. A study of elementary school children (Pajares, Miller, & Johnson,

1999), found no difference between males and females in writing skills self-efficacy after controlling for aptitude, but girls had higher self-efficacy for self-regulation. In a study of middle school science students, girls had higher achievement, higher science efficacy, and higher efficacy for self-regulation (Pajares, 2001). Hall and Ponton (2005) conducted a study on mathematics self-efficacy of college freshmen students and found no significant gender differences.

On the other hand, in a college general chemistry class, a statistically significant result was reported with male students scoring higher than female students in science self-efficacy for laboratory skills (Smist, 1993). The study also mentioned that female students had lower self-efficacy scores than males for the sciences. However, this result was not statistically significant.

Pajares (2001) found that girls have higher self-efficacy and higher achievement than boys. Girls also have stronger self-efficacy for self-regulation. This means students' judgments of their capabilities to use various self-regulated learning strategies have been found to predict achievement in both writing and mathematics. Pajares (1996) reports that high school girls perform as capably as boys in academic tasks, but reported lower self-efficacy. They were frequently less confident and they may give up more easily. However, in a study involving college students, Greenglass, Schwarzer, Jakubiec, Fiksenbaum, and Taubert (1999), found that women had higher abilities to cope with stress, by setting and striving to achieve academic goals. Thus, research results have shown inconsistent relationship between gender and academic achievement.

## **2.4. Studies on Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-efficacy and Admission Test**

### **Result**

Empirical studies conducted in high schools and colleges in particular at the international level have generally demonstrated that psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result have a positive effect on academic performance of students, though there are some conflicting findings.

#### **2.4.1. Psychosocial Adjustment and Academic Performance**

Researchers have indicated that psychosocial adjustment can predict the academic performance of students. Maddux (1995) found that students with higher psychosocial adjustment had higher college satisfaction rates. Therefore, college students who have strong psychosocial adjustment tend to set academic goals and strive for better academic achievement.

Rice (1992) found that first year students with low levels of psychosocial adjustment tended not to perform well academically, became more likely to seek out campus counseling services, have a higher dropout rate, and reported less overall satisfaction with college experience. In contrast to this, students who adjust well to the college environment are those who are academically ready to persist. However, less than half of the first year students had clear sense of their future in college (Rice, K.G. 1992). To Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994), social adjustment may be just as important as academic adjustment. In their report on 155 freshmen it was stated that "personal adjustment and integration into the social fabric of campus life play a role at least as important as academic factors in student retention".

### **2.4.2. Self-efficacy and Academic Performance**

Chemers, Hu, & Garcia (2001) found that self-efficacy and optimism of first-year college students were strongly related to academic performance and expectations. These researchers also believe that self-efficacy can predict student academic success. According to Multon, Brown, & Lent, (1991), in a meta-analysis of 39 studies from 1977 to 1988, positive and statistically significant relationships were found between self-efficacy, academic performance, and persistence for a number of disciplines. In a study of self-efficacy and academic performance, Mow, Baker and Jeffries (1995) found that self-efficacy was a statistically significant predictor of personal academic good setting and academic performance.

A study by Pajares (2000) further noted that female students have lower self-efficacy for scientific occupation and occupational quantitative skills than male students. In contrast, Pajares (2001) show that girls have higher self-efficacy and higher achievement than boys in both writing and mathematics in high school and colleges.

### **2.4.3. Admission Test Result and Academic Performance**

There are two forms of access to higher education: one is referred to as open admission which allows any student who has completed secondary school to attend course work at higher level; and the other is selective admission (Jameson and Ottobre, 1976; Hills, 1971 cited in Kassim Kimo, 1999). However, there have been arguments indicating that the system of open admission to higher education for all qualified high school leavers could be problematic (Teichler, 1991). This is because when access to higher education from high school is widened, and when capacities in some fields of study are not extended in accordance with the growing number of students for all qualified high school leavers the situation can be problematic.

In Ethiopian contexts, the admission requirements to higher institution are the EGSECE scores, high school grades and aptitude test. The certificate of completion of high school is awarded to those who successfully complete the secondary education cycle and pass an examination which is administered nationwide by the Ministry of Education. A pass in Mathematics and English is mandatory. However, different governmental and other types of institutions in the country have been using alternative criteria in addition to the EGSECE results, high school grades and aptitude test scores for admitting students.

Mittman (1972) studied how results in three subjects (Amharic, Mathematics and English EGSECE) contributed to the variation in the GPA of first year students. The results in the three subjects show a significant contribution to variation in first year GPA. Kebede (1991) found that neither total EGSECE GPA nor EGSECE Mathematics and English results significantly contributed to the prediction of academic performance of first year college students. In a similar study, Meresa (1994) found the same kind of result.

Mekkonne et.al. (1991) and Tamru (1992) found that admission test is the predictor of the candidates in a training institution. Belay (1991) found that EGSECE GPA did not predict trainees GPA in vocational and professional courses at a teacher training institute. Some studies also revealed that the ESLCE was one of the predictors of college success (Bowers, 1968; King and King, 1972; Shenkute, 1991).

Schwarz (1971) points out that the use of school grades as index of success has some problems which are compounded by variations in the grading system applied by different schools and teachers. Thus, in some studies (Fantu et al., 1966 and Brown, 1983) rank in class yielded inconsistent results in predicting academic success of college students. On the other hand, according to Hezlett et al., (2001) and Kobrin et al., (2008), a central part of the college

admission process includes the use of standardized test scores and some record of high school achievement. These measures are expected to predict academic performance in college.

## **2.5. Summary of Review of Literature**

The review has focused on conceptual and theoretical explanations of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result. It considered the major psychosocial problems of college students and their coping strategies, conceptual framework, psychosocial adjustment and gender difference, self-efficacy and its development, self-efficacy and gender difference and the contribution of the three variables (psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result) to students' academic performance.

Researchers have shown that the transition from secondary to tertiary levels is a critical phase which influences success or failure. Most students successfully cope with university life. However, some are overwhelmed. A number of college students have their education and personal lives disrupted by psychosocial problems. When psychosocial difficulties go untreated, the results can be serious and they include academic failures and withdrawals from college. Undoubtedly, the first years of college are important in successfully adapting to college through accomplishment of the divestment/ investment developmental task. Therefore, psychosocial adjustment is important for students to reach to his/her desires and goals.

It is generally accepted that many students experience the first adjustment to university as demanding and as negative in different ways. This experience would be due to the range of difficulties faced by students particularly in their initial years within the campus. Students have their own unique profiles concerning the causes of the problems. However, in general, there are three commonly reported psychosocial problems of college students which affect their academic

performance. They include academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment problems. Problems in social and psychological adjustment may be accompanied by anxiety, stress, depression, isolation and loneliness.

Problem-focused, emotional-focused and avoidant coping are three main coping strategies that students employ when attempting to resolve or remove a stressor. Several studies have indicated that problem-focused coping is negatively associated with stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms while avoidant coping is positively associated with stress, anxiety and depression. The research around emotion-focused coping has produced mixed findings, with some studies showing it to be associated with decreased distress and others with increased distress. Researchers have also examined the existence of gender differences in psychosocial adjustment. They have suggested that female students experience more strain than their male counterparts.

Research on self-efficacy among college students is in an early stage of development. Self-efficacy refers to the confidence people have in their abilities to be successful at a given task. It is determined by performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Out of these factors, enactive mastery experience has the most influence. Self-efficacy beliefs vary between individuals, fluctuate under different circumstances, and can change over time. Self-efficacy also contributes to performance. Researchers have also suggested that male students are superior in self-efficacy belief as compared to their female counterparts.

In most studies, college admission considers results on school leaving examination, high school achievement and the use of standardized test scores. Generally, the review has indicated

that psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result can predict academic performance in college.

In spite of the various research focusing on the prediction of academic performance of first year college students, there appears to be little focus on investigating the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result to students' academic performance in college, particularly in teacher training colleges. The present study seeks to focus on this gap.

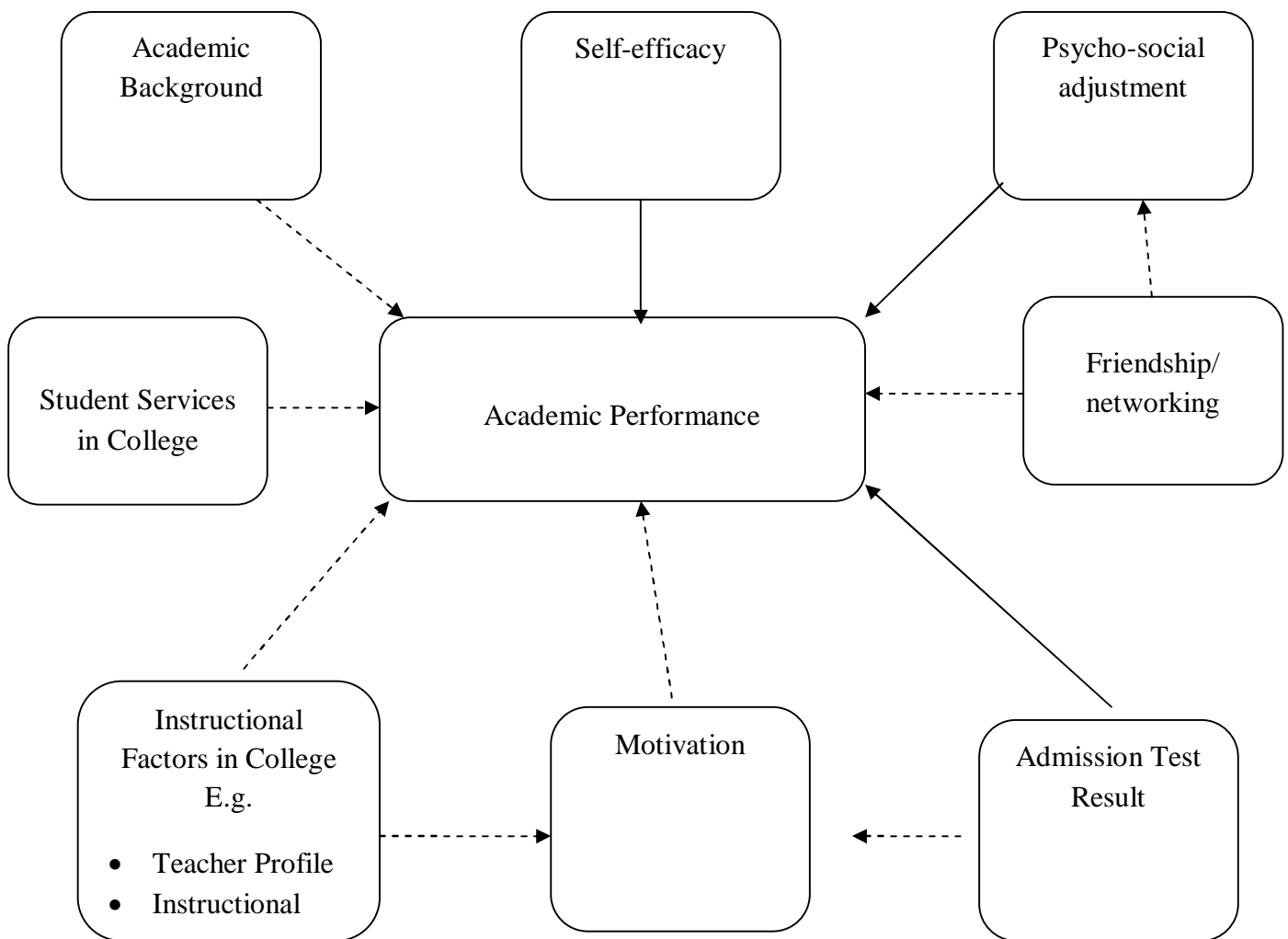
## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

In life experiences there are external pressures which stem out from the environment. At the same time, every individual has his/her own internal demands. These internal and external demands are high among college students. This is because college is a time of transition and transitions are mostly accompanied with changes and the changes are accompanied with new internal and external demands.

Hence, college students need to meet successfully the internal and external demands for the effective completion of their education. Failure to do this can result in poor academic performance. Internal demands include, but are not limited to motivation, self-efficacy, psychosocial adjustment and academic background, and external demands include, among others, teacher profile, instructional material, students services, friendship/networking and admission test result (Fig. 1, below). Within this framework, the present study focuses on psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result as predictors of students' academic performance.



**Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework**



NB:     → path to be considered in this study

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

This chapter deals with the study design, study area, sampling technique, procedures of data collection, instruments for data collection and methods of analysis.

#### **3.1 Study Design**

The study employed a correlational research design.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Adwa College of Teacher Education which is found in Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. It is located 1000km north of Addis Ababa and 280 km away from the capital of the Tigray Regional State, Mekelle. Adwa College of Teacher Education was selected for this study on the basis of the researcher's knowledge about the academic performance of students and the information the researcher got from many of the college instructors about the issue of poor academic performance and dropout rates of the college's students. Moreover, this college is the researcher's place of work.

#### **3.3 Population**

The study targeted first year regular students (male and female) of Adwa College of Teacher Education. In 2006 E.C, the College had 1869 first year regular students (i.e. 896 males and 973 females) (Adwa College of Registrar's Office). First year college students were targeted

for this study because of the assumption that transition to college would be most challenging at this stage.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

In order to select the sample size, first the 1869 students were stratified based on sex and section and then, out of 36 sections, 10 sections were randomly selected. The sample comprised 240 students (120 males and 120 females) i.e. 24 participants were randomly selected from each section using Bartlett, Kortlik and Higgins (2001) sample determination. They describes that the procedures for determining small sample size and large sample size for continuous and categorical variables and they display table for determining large and small sample size for population size. Overall, 13% of the population was included in this study.

### **3.5 Instruments for Data Collection**

Three self-report questionnaires were used to collect information about psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy. An inventory was used to investigate coping methods. Data concerning the performance of the students on the admission test result and grades were collected from the Registrar's Office of the College.

All the three instruments were translated from English into Tigrigna. Two Tigrigna instructors from the Tigrigna Department of Addis Ababa University evaluated and approved the appropriateness of the translation. Furthermore, each item in the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts from the Tigrigna panel in the Curriculum and Research Department of Tigray Education Bureau. These experts mainly focused on terminologies (e.g. "coping strategies" and "psychosocial adjustment") and grammar.

In an effort to verify the adequacy of the instruments, the Tigrigna version was translated back into English by instructors of the Foreign Language and Literature Department of Mekelle University. Lastly, copies of the instrument were assessed by two instructors from the Psychology Department of Mekelle University, i.e. one M.A holder in Counseling Psychology and the other M.A holder in Measurement and Evaluation. The comments and suggestion given by these professionals were: Modification of some items, Similarity of some items, in some items the Tigrigna version did not convey the meaning in English Version.

Taking the comments and suggestions given by these professionals in to consideration, the ambiguities, and misunderstandings found in some items were cleared. By doing so the content validity of the questionnaire were assessed and the questionnaire becomes ready for the actual pilot study.

### **A) Student's Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)**

Students' level of psychosocial adjustment was measured by an adapted version of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire by Baker and Siryk (1999). The scale measures attributes in academic, social and personal-emotional areas. The scale is a 36 item self-report measure with a five-point scale (5=strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree). Baker and Siryk(1989) reported alpha coefficient as follows: academic adjustment 0.84, social adjustment 0.76 and personal-emotional 0.88.

### **B) College Academic Self -efficacy (CASES)**

To assess academic self-efficacy, CASES which was developed by Owen and Froman (1988) was adapted. Owen and Froman reported alpha coefficient of 0.86 for the full scale. The

instrument consists of 24 items (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Participants were asked to respond using 5 point likert type scale ranging from 1 “very low confidence” to 5 “very high confidence”.

## **B) The Coping Inventory (COPE)**

COPE (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989) was adapted to assess the coping strategies of the students. It is a self-report questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (5 – strongly agree and 1- strongly disagree). The instrument consists of 53 items but I used only 32 items in a brief form. COPE items can be grouped into three meta-strategies: problem-focused coping, emotional coping and avoidant coping.

Problem-focused coping can be described as problem-solving or doing something to alter the source of the stress, while emotion-focused coping can be described as reducing or managing the emotional distress that is associated with the stressor. Avoidant coping can be described as striving to ignore the stressor or not dealing with it.

Carver et al. (1989) report alpha coefficient of 0.60. COPE shows good convergent validity with the Cope Strategy Indicator (CSI; Tobin, Holroyd, & Reynolds, 1984) and the Ways of Coping Revised (WOCR; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

## **D) Archival Data/Records**

The grades of the participants for semester I, 2013/14 academic year and the admission test results were collected from the Registrar’s Office of the College (archives). The college has open admission from among students who completed grade 10 and have a minimum achievement of 2.00 point GPA in the EGSECE. The admission requirements to the college are high school grade, ESLCE scores and aptitude test. The admission test result is it is out of

hundred (i.e. high school grade 25%, ESLCE 25% and aptitude test 50%). Therefore, these are mandatory for admitting students to the college.

### **3.6 Pilot Study**

Though the instruments have already been standardized and validated the situation under which they were standardized are different from the environment of the present study site. Hence, pilot test was conducted in the College in order to check on and if necessary, refine the instruments.

In order to determine the specificity, relevance and clarity of the instruments, a pilot test was carried out on 90 first year students. The subjects were randomly selected using lottery method from the College. In doing so proportion of male and female students (i.e. 45 males and 45 females) were also considered. The researcher were explained orally for the samples to write their sex, classes and roll number on the questionnaire that help me later excluded from the main study.

The responses of the respondents were processed and scored using SPSS version 20. The reliability of the 36 item psychosocial adjustment sub-scales (Cronbach alpha) were found to be as follows: academic adjustment scale 0.79 (18 items), social adjustment scale 0.81(8 items) and personal-emotional adjustment scale 0.81 (10 items). The overall alpha coefficient for the psychosocial adjustment scale was 0.83. The 36 items were used to gather the psychosocial adjustment of the students.

For the academic self-efficacy scale (Owen & Froman, 1988) that contained 24 items, Cronbach alpha of 0.88 was obtained in the pilot test. The 24 items were used to gather the self-efficacy belief of the students.

For the COPE sub-scales that contained 32 items the reliabilities (Cronbach alpha) were as follows: Problem-focused coping scale 0.80 (9 items), Avoidant coping scale 0.78 (8 items) and emotion-focused coping scale 0.77 (15 items). Cronbach alpha of 0.81 was obtained for the scale as a whole. The 32 items were used to gather information on COPE.

### **3.7 Data Gathering Procedure during the main study**

During the main study, the three (Tigrigna version) instruments were administered to the sample with the help of instructors from the College. In addition to the direction given on the questionnaire, the researcher and the research assistants explained to the students orally the purpose of the study and the instructions. At the same time, semester one grades and the results of the admission test were obtained from the Registrar's Office of the College.

In the main study, the questionnaires were distributed to 240 respondents to be filled individually in 1 hour. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents (during their regular class time) by the researcher and college instructors in six separate classrooms. The researcher personally availed himself in each classroom and clarified the purpose of the questionnaire. Out of the total, 214 questionnaires were completed and found usable. Questionnaires from 18 students which were incomplete were discarded. Eight students were absent during the completion of the questionnaire.

### **3.8 Method of Analysis**

Psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result were used as independent variables (IV) and academic performance was used as dependent variable (DV).

The responses obtained from the students and their academic achievements were analyzed using SPSS/PC program. In order to examine the major psychosocial problems one-way ANOVA were used. The coping methods used by the students, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used. To examine the difference in academic performance between male and female students in their psychosocial adjustment, admission test result and self-efficacy, t-test was employed.

In addition, multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to see the degree to which academic performance of the students can be predicted by their psychosocial adjustment, self- efficacy and admission test result. Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was pre-set at 0.05 for all statistical tests.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

To make the research participants fully aware of the purpose of the research, the researcher gave explanation about the study before the beginning of data collection. Verbal consent of individual participants was obtained after they were fully informed about the purpose of the study and the procedures. Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured. No name or other identifying information was included in the instruments.



# Chapter Four

## Results

In this chapter the major findings are presented and discussed.

### 4.1 Results

Out of the 240 selected participants, 214 respondents (107 males and 107 females) fully participated in the study.

#### 4.1.1 Adjustment to Major Psychosocial Problems

The results of students' Adjustment to College Questionnaire which was used to assess the degree of adjustment to psychosocial problems were as follows.

Table 1 A Summary Table of One-Way ANOVA (N=214)

	Sum of squares	DF	mean of squares	F	Sig
Between groups	14217.988	2	4739.329		
Within groups	101319.786	212	633.249	6.072	.000
Total	115537.774	214			

The above table shows that there is a significant difference among students' psychosocial adjustment problems [ $F(2, 211) = 6.07, p < 0.05$ ]. Sheffe's post hoc test was further showed the following results.

**Table 2 Sheffe's Post hoc Comparison test to Students' Psychosocial Adjustment Problems**

Psychosocial adjustment		Mean Difference	Std. error	Sig
Academic adjustment	Emotional	-14.48	5.127	.000
	Social	1.57	3.216	.072
Social adjustment	Emotional	-16.05	1.462	.000
	Academic	-1.57	5.216	.072
P-emotional adjustment	Academic	14.48	5.216	.000
	Social	16.05	1.462	.000

Furthermore, the Sheffe's post hoc test indicated that the mean of academic adjustment is significantly different from the mean of personal-emotional adjustment (sig= 0.001) but not significantly different to the social adjustment mean. Also, the social adjustment mean is significantly different from the personal-emotional adjustment mean (sig= 0.001) but not significant with the academic mean. Similarly, the personal-emotional adjustment mean is significantly different from the other two categories of psychosocial adjustment mean (sig= 0.001). Therefore, an overall significant difference was observed only in the personal-emotional adjustment mean. This implies that from the domain of psychosocial adjustment, students find personal-emotional adjustment to be the major psychosocial adjustment problem.

### 4.1.2 Coping Methods

The results of the Coping Inventory were as follows.

**Table 3 Coping Method Preferences and Means and Standard Deviation on Coping Methods (N=214)**

Categories of Coping	Mean	SD
Emotion-focused	44.76	6.56
Avoidant-focused	35.19	4.41
Problem- focused	26.5	5.15

\*Maximum obtained score for emotion focused= 60, avoidant focused= 40, and problem focused= 45.

As indicated in the table above the respondents who reported emotion-focused strategy was greater mean score than those who used avoidant and problem focused strategies. This suggests that in most cases students' attention is focused on tension reduction rather than altering the source of problems through direct action.

The differences in the coping methods of male and female respondents are presented as follows.

**Table 4 Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for Males and Females on Coping Methods**

Category		M	SD	t	P
Emotion-focused	Male(N=107)	44.4	(6.31)	.43	.67
	Female(N=107)	44.5	(6.57)		
Avoidant-focused	Male (N=107)	35.1	(4.64)	.62	.53
	Female(N=107)	27.8	(4.92)		
Problem-focused	Male (N=107)	27.2	(5.16)	.54	.59
	Female(N=107)	35.6	(4.47)		
P>0.05					

Table 4 suggests that the coping methods of male and female students are similar. This implies that male and female students do not show a difference in the utilization of various coping methods.

#### **4.1.3 Sex differences in the Predictor Variables**

Descriptive data regarding the scores of male and female students on psychosocial adjustment, admission test result and self-efficacy are displayed below.

**Table 5 Descriptive Data for Males and Females in Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-Efficacy and Admission Test results**

Variable		M	SD	t	p
Psychosocial adjustment	Male (N=107)	56.53	(5.71)	2.14	.024*
	Female (N=107)	52.83	(7.45)		
Self-efficacy	Male (N=107)	45.59	(11.43)	2.28	.612
	Female (N=107)	48.19	(10.57)		
Admission test result	Male (N=107)	44.11	(10.88)	2.54	0.12*
	Female (N=107)	40.16	(11.58)		

\*p<0.05

According to the results indicated in Table 5 males' psychosocial adjustment mean score is significantly greater than that of female students. Similarly, a statistically significant difference between males and females was observed in admission test result, again favoring males. Female students have higher mean score in self-efficacy than males, but not significant so.

#### **4.1.4 Regression Analysis Concerning Academic Performance**

Regarding the first semester (2013/14) grades, the GPA of male and female participants were 2.8 (SD=0.45) and 2.7 (SD=0.46), respectively. This suggests that males semester GPA is greater than females GPA.

The regression analysis regarding the contribution of psychosocial adjustment, admission test result and self-efficacy to academic performance is summarized in the following table.

**Table 6 Summary of Multiple Regressions on Academic Performance**

Variable	B	S.E.B	Beta	R	R square	Sig T
Psychosocial adjustment	12.54	5.812	0.200			0.02*
Self-efficacy	12.94	5.96	0.149	0.288	0.083	0.03*
Admission test result	2.73	6.11	0.042			0.65

\*P<0.05

The beta weight in Table 6 suggests that psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy had reliable contribution to the variation of students' academic performance. Admission test result of the students, however, did not make a significant contribution to the prediction of academic performance. Besides, Table 6 indicates that the variables together reliably accounted for 8.3 percent of the variance of the students' academic performance. This result also implied that the more the students' psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy are, the more the students are likely to achieve academically.

In order to identify the magnitude of the unique contribution of each of the predictor variables in explaining students' academic performance, stepwise analysis was conducted, and the following results were obtained.

**Table 7 Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis**

Step No	Variables entered	Multiple		Change in	
		R	R square	R square	F-value
1	Psychosocial adjustment	.243	.0589	-	12.27
2	Self-efficacy	.286	.0820	0.0241	8.698

\*P<0.05

As can be seen from Table 7 the variable which has been first entered in the regression model was psychosocial adjustment. This predictor variable alone improved the accuracy of the prediction by 5.9 percent.

The independent variable which was entered in the second step was self-efficacy. Adding this variable to the model improved the prediction by 2.4 percent. So, psychosocial adjustment contributed more to students' academic performance.

Analysis of the data for male and female students separately produced the results below.

**Table 8 Summary of Multiple Regressions for Male Students**

Variable	B	S.E.B	Beta	R square	Sig T
Psychosocial adjustment	.419	0.05	.067	.096	.02816*
Self-efficacy	.502	0.04	.056		.0355*
Admission test result	.369	0.04	.028		.697

\*p<.05

**Table 9 Summary of Multiple Regressions for Female Students**

Variable	B	S.E.B	Beta	R Square	Sig T
Psychosocial adjustment	.433	.067	.727	.118	.028*
Self-efficacy	.269	.064	.448		.035*
Admission test result	.322	.099	.311		.567

\*P<0.05

The regression analysis revealed that a model involving psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy on academic achievement was statistically significant for both male and female students. The model accounts for about 9.6% of the variance in the case of males and 11.8% of the variance in the case of females.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

The main objective of the study was to explore the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result on academic performance of first year college students. This section relates the results of the analyses to the research questions set at the beginning of the paper.

#### **5.1 Psychosocial Adjustment and Academic Performance**

Regarding psychosocial adjustment, it was found that personal-emotional adjustment was the major psychosocial problems area for the students. Perhaps this was because the main goal of many students was to pass examinations.

The result of this study is inconsistent with some previous studies. For example, Al-amayra (1988) conducted a study on 582 male and female students at Yarmouk University. In the study, the psychosocial problems of college students appeared in the following order: academic, social, and personal-emotional. Similarly, among participants of the new entry of college students Cornell (1994) found academic pressures, interpersonal problems, and personal-emotional stress to be common problems. Besides, students may have difficulty in learning and dealing with individuals of differing cultures and ways of life (Misra et al., 2000).

In the discussion with some college instructors, it was learned that first year students of the college face adjustment problems that could contribute to their academic failure. Problems of the students mentioned by the staff include: time management problems, fail to tutor each other, lack of prior knowledge about a field of study and lack of encouragement by academic staff and the dean of students which could help to come to their office.



Different studies were able to identify the problem areas in the academic adjustment of college students. For example, Nora and Cabrera (1996) found that adjustment problems relate to finance, academic curriculum, lack of support services, relationships with peers, members of academic faculty and staff. These problems interfere with the teaching learning process directly or indirectly. Similarly, Skowron, Wester and Azen (2004) elaborate on the sources of college students' academic failures. The problems arise from challenging course load, university bureaucracies, problems in managing one's time and personal finances, and challenges in creating and maintaining satisfying interpersonal relationships, which potentially lead to increased level of academic failures, depression, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion.

The results of the multiple and stepwise regression analysis indicated that psychosocial adjustment had the highest contribution to the prediction of students' academic performance as compared to other variables in the study. The results of this study are in line with the findings of many researchers. Maddux (1995) suggested that students with higher psychosocial adjustment had higher college satisfaction rates. College students who have strong psychosocial adjustment tend to set academic goals and strive for a better academic achievement.

With respect to gender difference, the study suggested that generally male students show better psychosocial adjustment than females. Although each and every student has to adjust to the new college situation, a few students adjust better than others. In support of this finding, Abdullah, Elias, Mahyddin, and Uli (2009) found that male college students had higher psychosocial adjustment than female students. However, Kaur (2012) found no gender difference in adjustment among college students.

Generally, in the site of the study, the culture is more restrictive for females than for males. Thus, females might have been shy or reticent to interact easily with people whom they

did not know well and they might have had a more difficult time than males in adjusting themselves to the college environment and making social links. Moreover, female students might face sexual harassment by their male counter parts and other men outside the college community. In support of this finding, McWhiter (1997), in his study of 625 college students, suggests that female students are more likely to experience depression, loneliness and social isolation than their male peers.

Pittman (2008) in his study of 79 college students suggests that more females than males were dismissed due to their achievement. In this study, the percentages of dismissed female and male students at the end of semester I (2013/14) were 1 and 2.1, respectively.

## **5.2 Psychosocial Adjustment and Methods of Coping**

Regarding coping methods, the study revealed that emotion-focused coping was more frequent than problem-focused and avoidant-focused coping. This implies that students' attention was more focused on tension reduction in the face of stressful events rather than altering the source of problems through direct actions. In this connection, Holahan et al (1995), Lakey and Cohen (2000) suggested that receiving emotional support and companionship may encourage effective psychosocial adjustment among students who have to cope with uncontrollable events. Sumer et al. (2008) found that emotional coping had a significant contribution to the prediction of depression.

The Tigray peoples are religious and cultural people. Thus, the people frequently observe things from the religious and cultural point of view. When college students face problems like anxiety, depression and others, they may not likely to engage in self-criticism. Instead they tolerate the situation putting their trust in God and they pray more than usual and they try to get

emotional support from friends or relatives. In support of this, Heintzman and Mannell's (2003) suggest that spiritual praying for college students' served as a source of motivation to sustain ongoing efforts to cope by offering hope and optimism.

With respect to gender difference, Bakan (1960) found that men are more instrumental and analytic in employing coping strategies, whereas females are expressive, more emotionally sensitive and dependent. But recently, this idea has become controversial (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980). The results of this study did not show a significant difference between the two sexes in employing different or distinct ways of coping.

Nevertheless, the overall findings regarding gender differences in coping method agree with the findings of Folkman and Lazarus (1980). In their studies, the coping responses of males and females were found to be generally similar, although women made frequent use of emotional focused coping. This is because the females focused on the regulation of stressful emotions like praying more than usual, and avoiding stressful work situations.

### **5.3 Self-efficacy and Academic Performance**

The multiple regression analysis results indicated that self-efficacy belief had a significant contribution to the prediction of the students' academic performance. The proportion of variance accounted by the self-efficacy belief to academic performance was 2.4%.

The result of this study is in line with some previous studies. Chemers, Hu, & Garcia (2001) found that self-efficacy and optimism among first-year college students were strongly related to academic performance. These researchers said that self-efficacy can predict student academic success. Similarly, in a meta-analysis of 39 studies from 1977 to 1988, Multon, Brown, & Lent (1991) found positive and statistically significant relationships between self-efficacy and

academic performance. Mow, Baker and Jeffries (1995) also reported that self-efficacy is a statistically significant predictor of personal academic good setting and academic performance.

Self-efficacy has the power to predict intellectual performance better than skills alone and it directly influences academic performance through cognition. It also indirectly affects perseverance (Schunk, 1984). When compared with students who doubt their learning capabilities, those who feel efficacious for learning participate in activities more, persist longer when they encounter difficulties and perform better academically (Schunk, 1984 and Yalaw, 1996). Students who have confidence in their academic skills and expect higher marks on exams, the quality of their work could earn them good grades. The opposite is true of those who lack such confidence and who doubt their academic ability (Pajares, 1997).

In general, college students need to be self-directed and take greater responsibility for their own learning. Students possessing high degrees of self-efficacy are likely to be more successful at accomplishing these tasks and perform better academically. Accordingly, self-efficacy beliefs are crucial when applied to the cognitive demands of higher education (Bandura, 1994).

With respect to the gender difference in self-efficacy, the mean score of females was higher than that of males, but not significant so. This observation may not be surprising because researchers such as Zimmerman and Martinez (1990) reported comparable scores in self-efficacy between males and females at the college level. However, the present finding is inconsistent with the well established gender difference in favor of females in self-efficacy among college students (e.g., Bong, 1997; Muttelberg and Lev, 1999). Perhaps the inconsistent results are related to cultural contexts. In some cultures parents, teachers and society in general tend to enhance females' confidence. A study by Brinter and Pajares (2001) among western college students

found that girls have higher self-efficacy and higher achievement than boys in both writing skills and mathematics. In a study of middle school science students, girls had higher achievement, higher science efficacy, and higher efficacy for self-regulation (Britner & Pajares, 2001).

Similarly, DeBacker (2009) studied the relationships between self-efficacy, assertiveness and academic success of Uganda college students and found that female students have higher levels of self-efficacy than male students. However, Zeldin and Pajares (2000) have noted that female students have lower self-efficacy for scientific occupation and occupational quantitative skills than male students. In general, the findings of this study tally with the conclusion of Hall and Ponton (2005) who studied the mathematics self-efficacy among college freshmen students and found no significant gender differences.

#### **5.4 Admission Test Result and Academic Performance**

The results of the multiple regression analyses clearly indicate that admission test result was not a valid indicator of the academic performance of the students. It was thus doubtful whether the content of the admission test was really relevant to the teacher training college. This might have happened due to lack of reliability and validity of the test.

This result is inconsistent with some previous findings. Mekkonne et.al. (1991), Lakew and Mittman (1972) explained that admission test result might be considered as the most important predictors in the case of academic performance in college. Moreover, Tamiru (1992) found that admission test is the best potential predictor of the performance of the candidates in a training institution.

The non significant relationship of admission test to academic performance may be due to the nature of the test. The courses being offered in the college may have little to do with the

contents of the admission test. In the discussion with instructors, it was learned that no item analysis has been conducted to ascertain the validity or reliability of the test.

## **5.5 The Contribution of Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-efficacy and Admission Test results to Students' Academic Performance**

The multiple regression analysis showed that only psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy have independent contributions to the students' academic performance while the admission test results did not have such contribution.

Generally, the above findings are consistent with previous studies. Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) in examining the experience of first year students found that psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy were predictive of academic performance. Overall, the predictor variables explained from 8% to 21% of the variance in students' academic performance. In the study by Rice (1992) were psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy among the factors that affect students' academic performance.

Generally, a number of variables (not just two) seem to predict college students' academic performance because the proportion of variance explained by the predictors considered in this study did not surpass 10 percent of the variation in academic performance. In this regard, relevant variables for consideration include academic background (prior knowledge about a field of study), students' perceptions of their own success, personality variables such as locus of control, self-esteem and self-concept, motivational factors and "survival skills" and institutional factors like teachers' profile and instructional materials. Financial condition of the students can also be influential in student learning. If the students lack a minimum income they could find it difficult to concentrate on their learning.

In support of this argument, Terenzini et al (1994) asserted that survival skill (e.g., budgeting money and time management skills, personal goal setting), financial, and academic background affect students' academic performance. Tinto (1993) also found that such personality factors like self-esteem and locus of control are important for students' academic performance.

## **5.6 Prediction of the Academic Performance of Males and Females**

The sex-specific analysis indicated that psychosocial adjustment was significantly and positively related to the academic achievement of both male and female students even when the effect of other variables in the study has been taken into account. The multiple regression analysis revealed that psychosocial adjustment contributes importantly to the explained variance in academic achievement both for male and female students. This result is consistent with the findings of other studies (Abdullah, Elias, Mahyddin, and Uli, 2009; Enochs & Roland, 2006).

Self-efficacy was positively and significantly related to the academic achievements of both male and female students. This result is consistent with the findings of Chemer (2001) who found that self-efficacy predicted the academic performance of male and female students.

To examine the combined effects of the predictor variables on the criterion variable, multiple regression analyses were conducted for male and female students separately. The results revealed that the variables in combination added significantly to the prediction of academic performance of both sexes. This result agrees with Rice (1992) who found that self-efficacy, psychosocial adjustment and assertiveness add significantly to the prediction of academic performance of male and female college students.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The study investigated the effect of psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result among first year students of Adwa College of Teacher Education.

Two hundred forty first year students' (120 males and 120 females) were included in the study. The data were obtained using self-administered instruments: self-efficacy and psychosocial adjustment scales and coping method inventory. The three measuring instruments were adapted from previous related studies. All of them were translated into Tigrigna (the subjects' mother tongue) by consulting language experts. Students' grades and admission test scores were secured from the College's Registrar's Office. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis and t-test.

The results showed that:

- Personal-emotional adjustment was a major psychosocial adjustment problem of Adwa College students.
- emotion-focused coping is the most frequently used coping method by the students.
- male and female students do not show a difference in the utilization of various coping methods.
- male students have significantly higher mean scores in psychosocial adjustment and admission test result while female students have higher mean scores in self-efficacy.



- psychosocial adjustment and self-efficacy made a significant contribution to the prediction of academic performance while admission test result did not.
- the variables involved in the analysis have a contribution to the students' academic performance of both male and female students.

The findings of this study were found to be in line with the evidences found by other researchers. But there were some areas in which the results did not agree with previous research.

## **6.2 Recommendation**

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made with a particular reference to Adwa College of Teacher Education.

- As an educational institution the college should organize special programs focusing on the mechanisms of solving psychosocial problems of the students in collaboration with the community and other concerned organizations, which are interested in strengthening student learning.
- College instructors need to give attention to the contribution of the variables mentioned in this study so as to devote much of their time and effort in promoting students' academic performance.
- The College should properly train senior students to become effective advisors and mentors that are actively involved in helping first year students. For example, the senior student should be encouraged to become leaders, advisors and mentors for the freshmen in orientation programs.

- Instructors and college counselors should help students regardless of their sex to become confident in their own performances. This can enhance their sense of efficacy and academic performance.
- College instructors and counselors should device interventions to narrow down the gender gap observed in self-efficacy.
- The college should examine the reliability and validity of the admission test from time to time.
- The present study dealt mainly with three variables (psychosocial adjustment, self-efficacy and admission test result) and they accounted 8.3 % for the variance in academic performance. It is important for future research in the area to consider more variables related to academic performance.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **The questionnaire used in the study**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**Department of Developmental Psychology**

### **Questionnaire to be filled out by college students**

#### **Dear Students**

This questionnaire is designed to collect information for **MA** thesis entitled on the “**Effect of Psychosocial Adjustment, Self-Efficacy and Admission Test Result on Academic Performance of First Year College Students**”. Your genuine response would highly help in making this study a success. Your response will remain confidential. Don't write your name. Whatever you answer is considered right; so feel **FREE** and give your true feelings on each item.

**N.B.** be sure that all your choices are directly across from the items that correspond it.

**Thank you in advance**

## Section I

**Direction:** please put tick mark (/) to indicate your level of your agreement or disagreement with each sentence.

**5. Strongly agree      4. Agree      3. Undecided      2. Disagree      1. Strongly disagree**

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
	<b>Academic Adjustment</b>					
1	I consider college diploma important					
2	I attend lectures regularly					
3	I have not been working as hard as I should in this college					
4	I depend on myself in solving my problems in the university					
5	I try to achieve my goals through high performance in the college					
6	I'm not satisfied with my achievement.					
7	I feel sorry sometimes because I joined the college education due to lack of other alternatives					
8	I receive low grades because the instructors gives difficult assignments and exams					
9	I follow a planned study program efficiently					
10	I feel that having diploma in education is important for my life					
11	I feel that my general interests do not go together with education courses					
12	I used to miss classes because some are boring to me					
13	I joined this program to become professional teacher					
14	I sometimes feel that I am not doing what I can do					
15	Instructors show partiality to some students					
16	I feel that I am born to be a teacher					
17	I enjoy the class lectures and practical placements					
18	I don't receive high grades because I don't have adequate					



	time for study					
	<b>Social Adjustment</b>					
1	It is easy for me to make new friends in the college					
2	Being independent has not been easy in this college					
3	Even when I need someone to help me, no student in the college like to help me					
4	I feel tense when I'm with people I don't know well					
5	I do not find it difficult to ask other people in the college for information					
6	When in a group of people, I have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about					
7	I feel nervous when speaking to someone in authority					
8	I am more shy with members of the opposite sex					
	<b>Personal-Emotional Adjustment</b>					
1	I found myself getting upset by quite trivial things					
2	I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all					
3	Sometimes I feel absent minded during lectures in the class					
4	I found it difficult to relax					
5	I worry so much about grade that I can't sleep at night					
6	I felt that I had nothing to look forward to					
7	Because of many offending situations in the college education I often have headaches					
8	I was in a state of nervous tension					
9	I feel that I had lost interest in just about everything					
10	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.					

## Section II

**Direction:** Please put a tick mark (/) under the number that best represents your confidence.

**5-Very high confidence      4- High confidence      3- Moderate confidence**

**2- Low confidence      1-Very low confidence**

<b>No</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
1	Participating in a class discussion					
2	Listening carefully during a lecture on a difficult topic					
3	Taking easy tests					
4	Writing a high quality term paper					
5	Taking “objective tests (multiple choice, T-F, matching)					
6	Tutoring another students					
7	Explaining a concept to another students					
8	Earning good marks in most courses					
9	Studying enough to understand content in detail					
10	Participating in extracurricular events ( sports, clubs)					
11	Making instructors respect you					
12	Attending class consistently in a boring course					
13	Making an instructor think you are paying attention I class					
14	Understanding most ideas presented in class					
15	Talking to an instructor privately to get to know him/her					
16	Relating course content to material in other courses					
17	Challenging an instructors opinion in class					
18	Making good use of library					
19	Getting good grades					
20	Mastering content in a course you are not interested in					

21	Asking an instructor in class to review a concept you don't understand					
22	Even if the academic work in this class is hard, I can learn it					
23	My study skills are excellent compared with others in this class					
24	Understanding most ideas presented in your tests					

### Section III

**Direction:** Please indicate how often the statements apply to you by marking (/) in front of the alternative expresses your opinion.

**5) Strongly agree 4) Agree 3) Undecided 2) Disagree 1) Strongly disagree**

No	How do you deal yourself when you face problems during this semester?	5	4	3	2	1
	<b>Problem focused Coping</b>					
1	I make a plan of action					
2	I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it					
3	I think about how I might best handle the problem					
4	I try to come up with a strategy about what to do					
5	I take direct action to get around the problem					
6	I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities					
7	I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this					
8	I learn something from the experience					
9	I make sure not to make matters worth by acting too soon					
	<b>Avoidant coping</b>					
1	I sleep more than usual					
2	Listen to music, radio or watch TV, to think about it less					
3	I act as though it has not even happened					
4	I give up the attempt to get what I want					

5	Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking etc					
6	I turn to work or other substitute activities to make my mind off things					
7	Find away to let off steam; for example smoking cigarettes, take drugs etc					
8	I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting in to solving the problem					
	<b>Emotional Coping</b>					
1	I talk to other people about my concern to help me sort it out					
2	I accept that this has happened and that it can be changed					
3	I try to find comfort in my religion					
4	I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives					
5	I put my trust in God					
7	I let my feeling out					
8	I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot					
9	I learn to live with it					
10	I pray more than usual					
11	I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem positive					
12	Pray for help and guidance so that everything will be all right					
13	I read different books, magazines					
14	I improve my relationship with others					
15	I asked people who had similar experience what they did					

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and hasn't been submitted for a degree in this or any other university and that all the sources used in this study has been properly acknowledged.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_