

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



Graduation Work

“Main reasons why Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages with the Specialty in French and English and Bachelor of Arts in English Oriented to Teaching Students of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador drop out their Studies”.

Presented by:

Alvarenga Najarro, Jennie Lisseth (AN01007)

Merino Orellana, Fátima Lissette (MO05032)

Undergraduate work presented to obtain the Degree of Licenciatura en Lenguas

Modernas Especialidad en Francés e Inglés.

Advisor:

Jorge Homero Llanes Márquez López, MA.

AUTORIDADES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR

RECTOR

Ing. Mario Roberto Nieto Lovo

VICERRECTORA ACADEMICO

MsD. Ana María Glower de Alvarado

VICERRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVO

MsC. Oscar Noé Navarrete Romero

SECRETARIA GENERAL

Dra. Ana Leticia Zavaleta de Amaya

AUTORIDADES DE LA FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS Y HUMANIDADES

DECANO

Lic. José Raymundo Calderón Morán

VICEDECANA

MsC. Norma Cecilia Blandón de Castro

SECRETARIO

MsC. Alfonso Mejía Rosales

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

DIRECTOR

M.T. José Ricardo Gamero Ortiz

COORDINADOR DEL PROCESO DE GRADUACIÓN

MtI. Edgar Nicolás Ayala

DOCENTE DIRECTOR

M.A. Jorge Homero Llanes Márquez López

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God:

For providing me with his wisdom, strength, patience, and persistence to culminate my university studies successfully.

I take this opportunity in this really special moment in order to give acknowledgement to all of those who have both inspired me and helped me in order to make my goal and dream come true. I am deeply grateful to everyone and each one who contributed in the realization and acquirement of my goal.

I deeply acknowledge and am thankful to my ever-lasting love, my mother Maura Orellana who took great pains to make me the person I am and motivated me to carry on and never quit whichever the circumstances.

I would like to thank my father Héctor Merino who helped me out in counseling, warnings, along with me in this endeavor which I decided to undergo and has now come to an end.

My sincere acknowledgements go to Lic. Jorge Homero Llanes who gave me support and motivation in my academic path. And offered me invaluable support and useful knowledge; for his unconditional help, effort, and constructive criticism showed throughout the process of this work.

Fátima Lissette Merino Orellana

To God:

For providing me with his wisdom, strength, patience, and persistence to culminate my university studies successfully.

To my family, specially:

My mother Abigail Najarro Arguello and my father Guillermo Alvarenga who are the most important and wonderful persons in my life because they have supported me a lot, along my career and pushed me when I was decided to quit studying also thanks to my stepfather Orlando Alberto Cerén Juárez for the unconditional moral and economical support given to me. I will always appreciate their hope and confidence he showed me throughout the enduring of my studies.

To my sisters:

Jeannette Abigail Alvarenga Najarro, Abbey Geraldine Alvarenga, who always helped me when I needed it.

Special thanks to:

Professor Jorge Homero Llanes, who offered me invaluable support and useful knowledge; for his unconditional help, effort, and constructive criticism showed throughout the process of this work.

Jennie Liseth Alvarenga Najarro

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	iii-iv
-------------------	--------

Chapter I: Research Design

1.1 Statement of the problem	1-2
1.2 Research questions	3
1.3 Methodology	4-5
1.4 Objectives	6
1.5 Justification	7-8

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Dropout: Findings and reasons	9-16
2.2 Glossary	16-17

Chapter III: Data Analysis and Interpretation	18-57
------------------------------------------------------------	--------------

Chapter IV: Conclusions.....	58-59
-------------------------------------	--------------

Chapter V:Recommendations	60-61
----------------------------------------	--------------

Chapter VI: Bibliography.....	62
--------------------------------------	-----------

Chapter VII: Appendices

7.1 Questionnaire addressed to students.....	63– 66
7.2 Questionnaire addressed to teachers	67
7.3 Letter addressed to Mr. Francisco Marroquín	68
7.4 Document issued by Adm. Acad. Central	69-70
7.5 Survey format	71
7.6 Research timetables.....	72-75

Introduction

The purpose of the following paper is to show the different factors that influence students of the BA in English Oriented to Teaching and the BA in Modern Languages Specialty in French and English majors to dropout their studies and how those factors interfere with the achievement of their academic success.

This research paper is divided as follows:

1. Statement of the problem, in which the topic of investigation and its importance are stated.
2. Research questions: General and specific questions that will be answered throughout the investigation and will help the reader to keep a sequence beginning from the speculation to the facts.
3. Objectives: General and Specific objectives that reflect the purpose of the research.
4. Type of research: A brief explanation about the methodology, approach and the kind of instrument used to carry out this research.
5. Justification: A brief bibliographical report to know the different factors that influence students to drop out university. It also seeks to identify and analyze the most relevant factors based on the brief study developed by the researchers.
6. Theoretical framework: The core of the research presents bibliographical citations that enrich the content of the research. It also presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through a questionnaire of the factors that influence students' dropout of both majors, BA in English Oriented to Teaching and the BA in Modern Languages Specialty in French and English in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.
7. Glossary: A specification of terms used during the investigation.
8. Questionnaire: Data results analysis and interpretation.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

10. Bibliographic References: Contain the bibliography consulted to develop the research and carry out the investigation project.

11. Appendices: Acquired documents of information that improved the development of this research paper.

Chapter I: Research Design

1.1 Statement of the problem

In El Salvador the right election of a career and how its development is made are two facts closely related to a successful academic attainment level. At the same time, educational attainment is also closely related to the opportunities and rewards of people's experience in the labor market. Considering this, it is important to show the drawback that discourages students to achieve their longed academic and professional success. For that reason, it is fundamental to describe the subject and the main topic of this research: What does dropping out mean?

Furthermore, at the University of El Salvador, specifically in the majors of Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages with the Specialty in French and English and the Bachelor of Arts in English Oriented to Teaching, the problem of dropping out has increased in the last two years. That is why the researchers have decided to investigate about the main reasons why students of the majors mentioned above have chosen dropping out their majors.

For the sake of economy, the major Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages with the Specialty in French and English will be referred to as BA in Modern Languages, whereas the Bachelor of Arts in English Oriented to Teaching will be termed BA in English in the following considerations.

Education is the action of being educated, so this process becomes a right for all the people and all nations. When students drop out of their majors, the course of their lives may be totally reset. People that drop out typically earn less than their peers with more education. Researches show two sets of factors which may be predictors of whether students will drop out or graduate from university: One set is associated with the institutional characteristics of their families, classroom environment, and communities; the other set is associated with

the individual characteristics of the students themselves like dissatisfaction of expectations, emotional issues and economic conditions that influence students' decisions to drop out in several ways. In the following section we will analyze in depth all personal, family, institutional and social elements that have been identified as the participating variables involved in the educational process causing a student to abandon his/her studies. For example, studies show that students living with both parents have lower dropout rates and higher graduation rates as compared to students in other living circumstances.

Often dropout is the result of a process rather than a single event, which has more than one possible cause, and is fairly irreversible. Many studies currently undertaken take a look at the personal characteristics of the student. The social construction of race relations and environmental health hazards may be strong influences on academic achievement.

1.2 Research Questions

General:

- What are the main reasons why BA in Modern Languages and BA in English students of the Language Department at the Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador drop out their studies?

Specific:

- Do their educational performance and emotional factors increase the BA in Modern Languages and the BA in English students' dropout?
- Does the fact of becoming father or mother lead the FLD students to drop out their studies?
- Does the economic situation interfere with the students' academic achievement?
- Are the classrooms environment and the student-student, and student-teacher relationships a cause for a dropout?

1.3 Methodology

To carry out this paper, it was necessary to follow the methodology suggested by different authors and different kinds of resources like essays, books, magazines, Internet, etc., to get the appropriate information, as well consulting students' opinion through a questionnaire to compare theory with the problems they face in their real life.

This research was carried out mainly in a quantitative method. The researchers consider that the drop out issue reunites all characteristics that a quantitative investigation can explain:

1. Operationalization, which includes the following steps: 1. Identifying main theoretical concepts, a careful revision of books and magazines and other sources which can give the researchers details for the dropout issue behavior.

2. Elaborating this theoretical data into a list of concepts to classify the information gathered. The theory is the fundamental element of social research, gives origin, context and purpose. We can say that this research has some backup on what the theorists have said about this topic. The researchers sought on theoretical foundations that contribute to dropout research and the different theories that explain some reasons for this issue.

3. Formulating concrete questionnaire questions in the draft questionnaire so the researchers can submit a pilot of the questionnaire to the population for this research.

Research questions, which are going to be covered in the questions for the questionnaire to have objectivity, as it is the only way to attain knowledge, because it uses exhaustive measurement and control, trying to find the certainty of it. The researchers realize that this is going to be acquired for the instruments applied to the sample from our population.

To carry out this sampling there were two majors involved, the BA of Modern Languages with Specialty in French and English and the BA in English Oriented to Teaching. It can be said that the sample is focused on what the students and teachers of these majorsthink about the dropping out issue trend from existing students in their third year. The object of study is the unique empirical element.

It is argued that the relationship independent existence between subject and object generates the researcher to have a perspective from outside. The researchers establish this relationship with the approach to know what the population under study thinks about the dropping out issue.

One can also see that there is an explanatory and predictive understanding of reality of the behavior of this phenomenon under an objective conception. Of course, there is a linear conception of research through a deductive strategy. All the possible answers to this issue need to be analyzed since this is an issue that has not been yet studied as a trend for the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. It is important to mention that before gathering the information needed for this research, it was necessary to carry out a pilot test of the surveys, one for teachers and another for students, so that the researchers could have a broad panorama of the specific questions that were needed to accomplish an accurate research.

So, to carry out the research pilot test, it was needed first, to establish the sample to study. For this, students for the Modern Languages with the Specialty in French and English and English Oriented to Teaching, from the third year of each major were selected. After the sample was set out, it was also necessary to determine the teachers' point of view to know the different perspectives and in this way state the possible drop out reasons.

After the pilot test was undertaken by the students and teachers, it was decided to modify some questions and add some others to improve the instrument. Then, followed by the approval of the tutor, the instrument was successfully given to students and teachers for them to complete with it the necessary information.

Consequently, the information gathering was done first by joining the data of the two majors referred to so far, B.A. in English Oriented to Teaching and the B.A. of Modern Languages with the Specialty of French and English. Then the information gathered was reflected and shown through a series of graphs showing the number of yes/no questions as well as the percentage of each incidence. Each graph containing the data analysis as well as the explanation of the data are presented.

1.4 Objectives

General: To determine the main factors that influence BA in Modern Languages and BA in English students to abandon their studies in order to provide the Foreign Language Department with a global view so they can implement strategies in order to decrease dropouts.

Specific Objectives:

1. To discover the educational performance and emotional reasons that increase students' dropout in order for those findings to be taken into consideration by the corresponding authorities of the Foreign Language Department, to avoid dropping out studies.
2. To show how becoming a mother or father affects the FLD students' permanence in the BA in Modern Languages and BA in English Oriented to Teaching majors in order for them to present an appropriate treatment for that problem.
3. To analyze the economic conditions in which students and their families are involved, and the important role those conditions play in their academic achievement and how they can also lead to a dropout situation, so that the main authorities of the University of El Salvador widen the financial aids to support this population.
4. To expose how the classroom atmosphere can discourage students' participation leading them to drop out in order for the UES authorities to solve that problem.

1.5 Justification

At the University of El Salvador, the BA in Modern Languages and the BA in English Oriented to Teaching classmates' dropout has been closely experienced, so this research is focused on the main reasons why those classmates and the rest of students decided to drop out their studies. The main interest underlying this research is on both individual and environmental factors and how these factors can explain differences in dropout rates among social groups. It also seeks to identify and analyze the most relevant factors based on the brief study developed by the researchers. It emphasizes the importance that higher education has as a tool for facilitating the outcomes of better economic, social and moral conditions of life for the population.

This investigation is expected to be worthy of great value to those who are now taking into consideration the undertaking of a disciplinary field of study at the Foreign Language Department. Thus, it has taken a deep research of the factors which prevent a person from attaining academic success, which will be studied later in thorough detail. Therefore, it will be highly recommendable to take these factors into a great deal of consideration.

Listed one by one, this research envisages exposing the most common reasons why a student decides to drop out. A person might find obstacles in his/her academic advancement without even realizing the causes which are deteriorating his/her performance. Consequently, it would be recommended to be aware of such negative facts. The students and the Foreign Language Department's professors will find it very beneficial to take into account such factors in order to improve both the quality of education and the high quality of their performance in their everyday life.

The importance of this research lies on the following facts:

1. Family/ personal: relate to pregnancy, childbirth, childbearing, and personal reasons (some of which students' are not willing to discuss with the interviewer).
2. Economic conditions such as low income on students' family, parenthood responsibility, and not enough money resources to continue his/her studies.
3. Academic reasons like improper learning materials/ teaching methods used, and/or students' inability to understand the course learning material sufficiently to satisfy them minimally.
4. Psychological reasons like low self-esteem, a relationship among students and with teachers, environment facilities.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Dropout: Findings and Reasons

Development taken from scientific models suggests, that educational desertion should be conceived as a result of the weakening of the original intentions, and that the persistence of the individual, level of aspirations and expectations, and student success are fundamental elements to explain the problem (Ethington, 1990). This means that the student must be completely interested in school and encouraged not to think at all about desertion. If the student has little persistence facing for example a failed test, and loses interest in his/her initial goal, this automatically could lead him/her to the unfortunate university desertion.

Dropouts themselves have shown a variety of reasons for leaving high school, but they do not reveal the underlying causes. Multiple factors in elementary or middle school may influence students' attitudes, behaviors, and performance in high school prior to dropping out. This research paper will be focused on university dropout because this phenomenon is also persistent at this higher education level.

This study identifies two main types of factors: those associated with institutional characteristics and factors associated with individual characteristics. They predict whether students drop out or graduate from higher education. Institutional characteristics involve students' family structure and classroom environment while individual factors fall into three areas: dissatisfaction of academic expectations, emotional and economic characteristics. All of them will be deeply explained below.

A number of factors within students' families, schools, and communities that predict dropping out have been identified. Among the students' family factors, it is necessary to list the following situations: 1. family structure; 2. family practices; and 3. family conditions.

On the one hand, starting with family structure, it is worthy mentioning that according to an article published in 2007 by the National Dropout Prevention Center of the United States, it is established that students living with both parents have lower dropout rates and higher

graduation rates as compared to students living in other family arrangements. On the other hand, in El Salvador, according to a research done by the MINED (Ministerio de Educación or Ministry of Education, MOE) the main reason for dropping out is the economic situation of our country. MINED shared these data which are the latest collected, because education authorities castle in the complexity of sampling as an excuse for not having the results of last year. In 2005, the dropout degree in higher education was 12.56%, corresponding to 16,405 students of a total 130,580 population nationally. The latest data, according to the MINED, declined 9.88% in 2006, totaling 12,987 students from a population of 131,449.

In 2005, the dropout rate in higher education was 12.56%, corresponding to 16,405 students out of a total of 130,580 ones nationwide. The latest data, according to the MINED, decreased by 9.88% in 2006, which is equivalent to 12,987 students, out of a total of 131,449. Despite the increase of active students and reduced by more than three percentage points, 2007 data are not yet known. Again, education authorities hide behind the complexity of sampling as an excuse not to have the results of last year.

The evaluation manager and statistical information officer of the MINED, Lidia Estevez said that data are collected annually. "We wait until each institution submits its reports on students' dropout. Then they are reviewed and if they are not right, they are sent to get corrected, a complex process", she added.

Estevez, however, was satisfied on presenting comparative results between 2005 and 2006 down: "It has diminished, it's encouraging." She added that, little by little, the MINED is giving scholarships to students with the best grades who excel in sports or competitions and are poor. In this way, young people can have the opportunity to undertake university studies. "This is a good way for desertion fall further," the official said.

Difficult access to higher education

Although the University of El Salvador (UES) has lower fees than private universities, it shares the problem of dropout due to economic problems. It is known that many college students wish to continue their studies at the university, but the economic situation of their parents has prevented them from making that leap in educational respects.

The former Academic Vice Rector of the UES, José Francisco Marroquín says that fees of more than 30,000 college students vary between \$10.00 and \$150.00. This institution makes economic studies to establish the amounts every year. In private universities, the reality is different. Normally, young entrants, have a much higher economic bracket.

College Dropout

Some students entered without any difficulty the field of higher education. What is really difficult is to keep studying. There, the first year will be crucial in the future education of those students. Mr. Marroquín and his colleague, Lic. Nelson Zarate, Vice Chancellor at MINED, expressed that the rise in basic food, fuel and services generally do not go unnoticed by the world of education.

According to reports from the MINED, in 1999 the country had 118,491 university students; however, the population had added only 865 students to the previous year's population. And what is worse, desertion reached incredible numbers. To Adalberto Campos, National Director of Higher Education at that time, the overall dropout in the previous year ranged between 36,000 and 38,000 students.

Not all colleges and universities have the same fate. The defection of the new students in some schools of the UES, such as Engineering and Architecture, reached 40 percent in recent years. Marroquín asserts that if the student passes the second year, he/she is not likely to be leaving.

In 1999 the Universidad Tecnológica received 4,082 new students, of which 24.3 percent (992) dropped out between the first and second semester. For the same year, two thousand students from more than 11 thousand of income also former dropouts.

Mario Ruiz, president of the Universidad Francisco Gavidia, also said they have a total drop (new and old income) of between 15 and 18 percent. Meanwhile, Mr. Alberto Zelaya,

Secretary General of Jose Simeon Cañas Central American University, insists that the defections highly focus on engineering careers.

Beyond economic factors, students forgo higher education (university or technological) for inappropriate academic guidance, because the general feeling of the population is that they do not believe that higher education is an investment for the future.

In recent decades, universities have had to develop pre-admission courses. Initially designed to address the flaws that dragged the young but, after considering that it is not resolved in a few weeks, university administrators decided that the courses would be designed to making students familiar with educational degrees, providing knowledge about national reality study and computer techniques.

The university authorities insist on the problems in reading and writing and understanding of the current generations of students, but they trust that the educational background of those who come afterwards will be better, as the Ministry of Education has projected from the early 90s, when this office designed and launched an educational reform.

The economic crisis affects the college dropout

According to the CES (Consejo de Educación Superior or Higher Education Council HEC) of El Salvador, half the students who start college do not conclude their studies. The main factor, according to the chairman of the CES, is the economic one.

An important aspect, according to an article published in La Prensa Grafica, is that the coverage of higher education in the country is 35%, a low figure compared to other countries in Central America, resembled only with Nicaragua, reaching about 28%, according to the Ministry of Education of the neighboring country.

According to Mario Antonio Ruiz CES president, there must be a system of grants and incentives to make more coverage. But the underlying problem has nothing to do with that

aspect, if not with the mercantilist view that prevails in higher Salvadoran education shares assuming "private college market" between \$ 40.00 and \$ 250.00. These fees do not allow the popular sectors of the population to access basic college, taking other expenses involved in the study at that level, such as 2 registrations in the year and payment for laboratories.

The Salvadoran Lutheran University (ULS) has grant programs that constitute over 60% of the university population, as well as differentiated quota system and only 9% pay \$40.00. The rest pay less than the quota. The orientation of the institution is addressed to the poor sectors of the population. However, dropout rates grow due to the economic situation tightened considerably in October 2010 and with the next package of economic measures aimed at reducing subsidies, the impact will be greater and most likely increase desertion.

Another crucial aspect is that the Salvadoran state is highlighting higher education. However, the budget of the University of El Salvador is the lowest in Central America, and it is the only higher education institution backed by the State. The incentive for private college has made political and electoral purposes in past administrations and did not generate programs to be geared to the popular sectors from accessing higher education. Thus it is necessary to consider a shift to the neoliberal vision of education in El Salvador. Ensuring Salvadoran youth education should be a strong bet when talking about solutions to the serious social problems that we suffer as a result of the application of the current voracious economic model.

However, the dropout persists. A clear example of how the economy affects directly in the students' dropout is that of Mario Cortez a 25-year-old student. He was studying B.A in Modern Languages major at the University of El Salvador, but dropped out his studies because he got a job at a call center. "I prefer to work, so I can help my family. It is hard to work", he says.

Moreover, changes in family structure, along with other potentially stressful events such as a family move, illness, death, adults entering and leaving the households, marital disruptions, divorce, fights and arguments in the family and children abandonment increase the odds of dropping out. Developments from psychological models suggest that desertion should be

conceived as a result of the weakening of the initial intentions. In addition, the students who become parents are increasing the rates of students who leave their studies because of this new role. Students that have become parents decide to work instead of studying because they do not have enough source of income to afford to study and raise their children at the same time.

Studies reveal that the family emotional support could represent a reason that influences the possibilities either to dropout or to continue school, however as in any particular study it is difficult to demonstrate a direct relationship between a specific factor and the decision to quit school, a large number of studies with similar results does suggest a strong connection. To address this crisis requires a better understanding of why students drop out.

The University of California at Santa Barbara students Russell Rumberger and Sun Ah Lim in their research project of October 2008, titled **Why Students Drop Out of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research**, state that students in closer relationship with their families have fewer probabilities to drop out school. A number of parenting practices have been shown to reduce the possibilities of dropping out, including what follows:

- Parents who have high educational aspirations for their children
- Parents who are aware of their children's study progress
- Parents who constantly encourage their children.

At the same time, students who live within incomplete families must be prepared to take some responsibilities such as that of head of family and the like. Finally, students are more likely to drop out if they have close relatives who have dropped out school.

In addition, according to what the psychologist Luz Inés Quezada states in her investigation entitled **Adolescence and School Dropouts**, students who belong to families with psychiatric patients, drug addicts, and domestic violence are more vulnerable to suffer psychological issues that lead to isolation. Lack of motivation on the part of the student and his/her frustration many times are displayed at school, forcing him/her to leave his/her studies

Likewise, the economic conditions of the students' family play a significant role in many aspects such as motivation, the ability to continue with university studies, and the like. Given the students' lack of money, they are forced to leave university studies, because they cannot afford them. Another common solution among UES students is to study and work at the same time, which triggers another problem that is subsequently treated: not having a good school performance due to fatigue or even not enough time to study the necessary subjects of an academic semester. In most cases, students who live as the heads of a family are responsible for younger siblings or even have an entire family depending on them.

Moreover, classroom ambience plays a very important role in the students' decision of dropping out the university. In the student-student relationship it can be said that the problem faced by the students in this matter is the environment created among classmates. If a student does not get integrated into a group, he/she can feel isolated and without encouragement from working into a classmate group, which gradually leads him to lose interest in studies because of the lack of adaptation and, finally, he/she gives up.

Furthermore, if the student-student relationship is studied, student-teacher relationship must be also mentioned, and it is of the utmost importance to expose that teachers can also cause their own students to desert the university because of the treatment the faculty members give to their students. Often teachers may ridicule some of their students in their attempt to correct them either consciously or unconsciously and this may intimidate students and cause them not to return anymore to that class where they feel uncomfortably and embarrassed.

As mentioned above, the individual characteristics are also involved in schooling desertion. These are subdivided in the following areas: educational performance, emotional and economic reasons, which belong to the factors attributed to the student as an individual. The educational performance that affects students in a negative way can be clearly perceived by low tests scores, a lower apprentice level in comparison with classmates and retention or students that have already failed in the same subject once or maybe twice. It is of a great importance to emphasize this last point of the subject because if a student has registered a

subject thrice, the student must begin a series of procedures, which is called “definitive registration” according to the *Reglamento de la Administración Académica de la Universidad de El Salvador* in the Chapter XIII, Article 52. This final registration, the third registration on a subject, means that a student can fail a subject just twice and after those times if he/she fails again, the rights of being registered as a student of a major will be run out. He/she will have to shift to another major. At the end the student that missed this opportunity must dropout the major.

As to the emotional factor, the Colombian researchers Carmen Nieto, Myriam Patiño and Beatriz Rodríguez in their research paper titled **Student Dropout in the Department of Chemistry of the National Teaching University. Grade and Causes**, describe the deserter as “a person who has deviated from his/her established goals”. In our country, as in many others, being a professional is the highest recognition of success in the society. If some individual fails in his/her purpose of becoming a professional because the student feels that he/she is not reaching the appropriate level, or that he/she does not have enough possibilities to satisfactorily culminate university, he/she can be frustrated to the point that he/she will end up dropping out studies.

2.2 Glossary

The following chapter aims to deepen and to make clear the terminology used in this investigation paper for the reader to have a better understanding of the complete analysis. At the same time there are words used just inside the University of El Salvador that are involved to the Foreign Language Department in which this research is focused.

Bachelor: Noun. A first university degree in an arts subject, a science subject, etc.

CES: Higher Education Council (HEC)

Drop out : Verb. To abandon or withdraw from (a school, social group, job, etc.)

Major : Noun. A subject or field of study chosen by a student to represent his or her principal interest and upon which a large share of his or her efforts are concentrated: History was my major at college.

Dropout : Noun. A student who fails to complete a school or college course

Middle school : Noun. A school intermediate between elementary school and high school, usually encompassing grades five or six through eight.

MINED : Ministry of Education (MOE)

Vice Rector : n. A deputy or assistant rector.

Pre- admission course: Course in which students are prepared to take an exam or test before entering to an institution in this case educational institution.

Quota : A proportional part or share of a fixed total amount or quantity.

Final registration (tercera matrícula) : Last registration on a specific major.

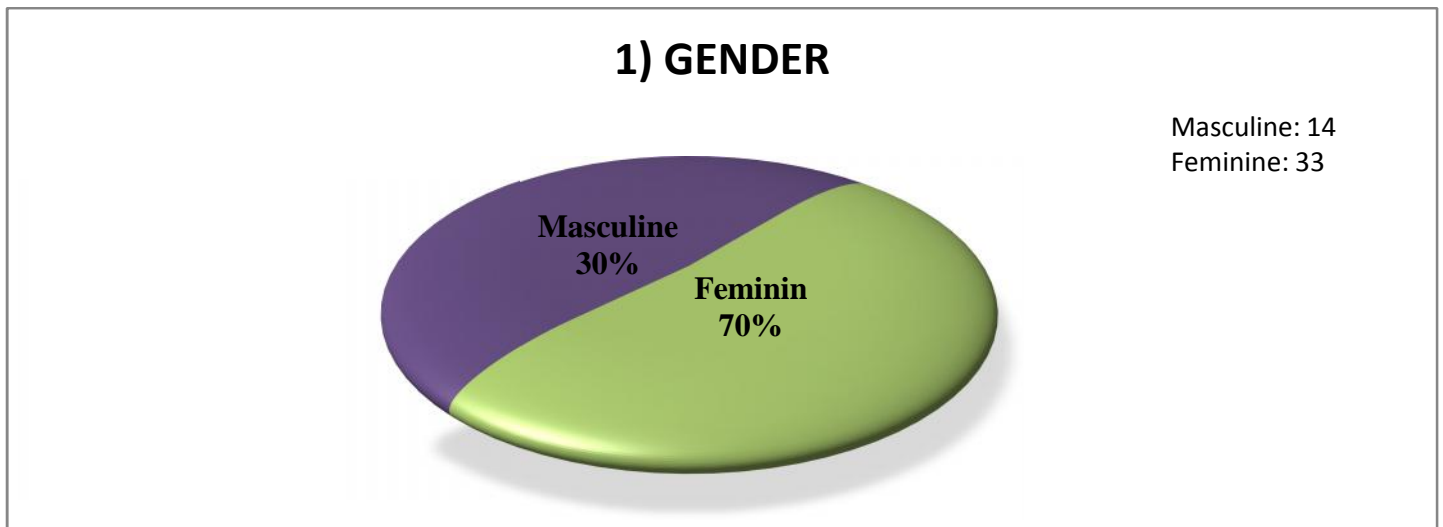
Chapter III: Data presentation

3.1 Data analysis and interpretation

The results obtained through a survey are presented in the following graphs. It is important to mention that the interviewed people were students from the both careers under study, Modern Languages with specialty in French and English and English Oriented to Teaching majors.

A total of 47 students were taken for this sample for which 21 students belong to Modern Languages with specialty in French and English major and 26 students belong to the English Oriented to Teaching major.

Sample surveys of BA in Modern Languages Specialty in French and English and BA in English Oriented to Teaching students
Codes L10412 and L10411. Total population : 237 (20% of 237= 47)47 surveys

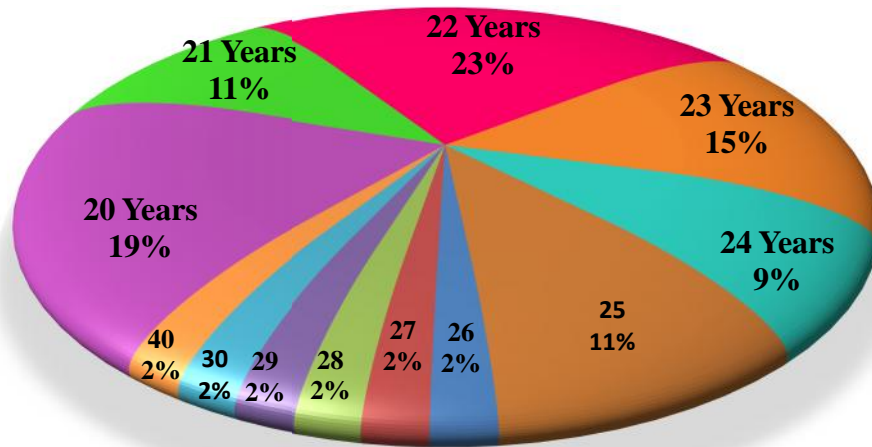


As expressed by the 47 respondents, it is seen that the majority are women with a percentage of 70% in comparison to the result of men with a percentage of 30%. It is worth mentioning that most of the population of those two specific majors is prevalingly made up of women.

This is a general question just to know which is the predominant percentage of gender in both majors, being the majority made up predominantly by women with more than half of the subjects under study.

As observed in the graph, there is a prevailing number of females among the students of both majors. This reveals that feminine students are more likely to drop out for any reason.

2) AGES



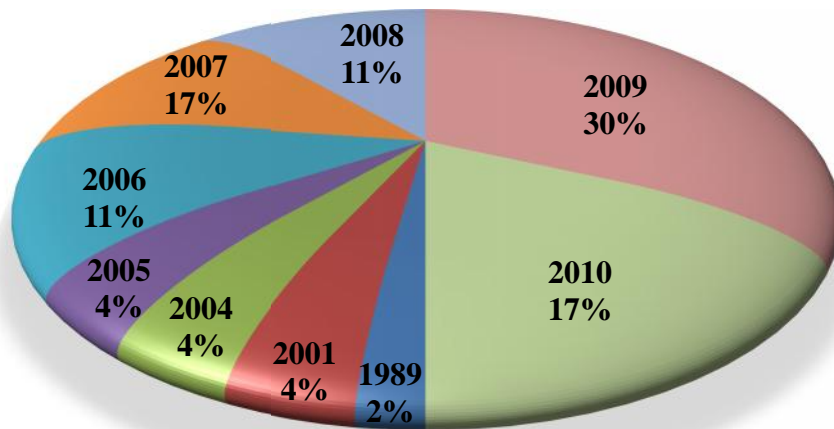
2. Ages:

20 Years: 9
 21 Years: 5
 22 Years: 11
 23 Years: 7
 24 Years: 4
 25 Years: 5
 26 Years: 1
 27 Years: 1
 28 Years: 1
 29 Years: 1
 30 Years: 1
 40 Years: 1

According to the results of the 47 respondents 19% of students are 20 years old, 11% of students are 21 years old, 23% of students are 22 years old, 15% of students are 23 years old, 9% of students are 24 years old, 11% of students are 25 years old, 2% of students are 26 years old, 2% of student are 27 years old, 2% of students are 28 years old, 2% of students are 29 years old, 2% of students are 30 years old and 2% of students are 40 years old.

It is seen that in both the BA in Modern Languages and the BA in English Oriented to Teaching majors there is a diversity of ages. Ages ranging from 20 to 25 years represent 88% of the population under study, which reveals a relatively young universe. Among these ages, the prevailing ones are 22 and 20 meaning 23% and 19% respectively.

3) YEAR OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION



3. Year of your high school graduation:

1989: 1 student
2001: 2 students
2004: 2 students
2005: 2 students
2006: 5 students
2007: 8 students
2008: 5 students
2009: 14 students
2010: 8 students

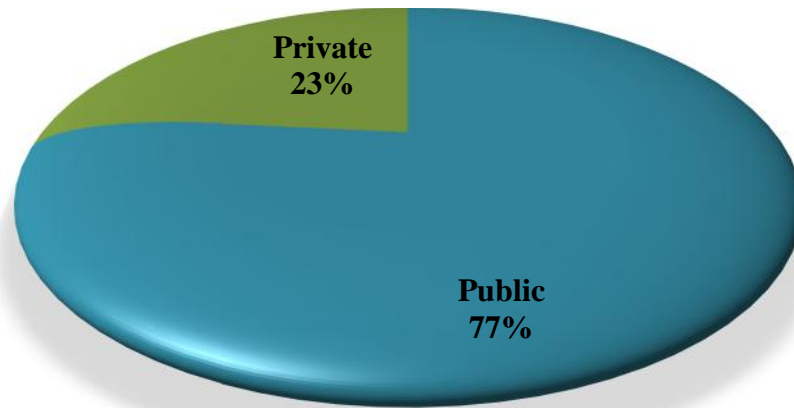
Of the 47 students respondents 2% of students graduated in 1989, 4% of students graduated in 2001, 4% of students graduated in 2004, 4% of students graduated in 2005, 11% of students graduated in 2006, 17% of students graduated in 2007, 11% of students graduated in 2008, 30% of students graduated in 2009 and 17% graduated in 2010. Summarizing, most of the students graduated in 2009 being the highest percentage followed by students graduated in 2010. A diversity of graduation years is also seen in this part of the survey.

64% of students graduated in 2009 and 2010. This represents more than half of the entire sample.

These data reveal that a big percentage of students, 64%, is a new generation of students who are now enrolled at the Foreign Language Department.

This shows that younger generations prevail in the majors under study.

4) TYPE OF INSTITUTION WHERE YOU GOT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



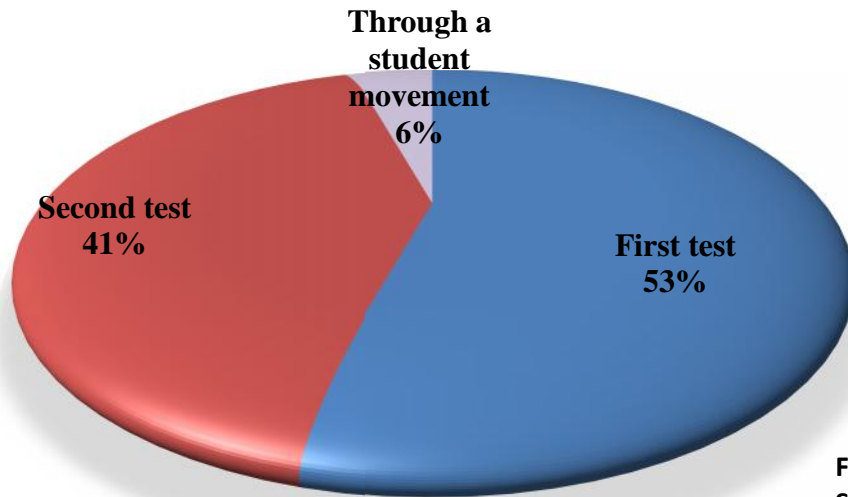
Public: 36 students

Private: 11 students

The 47 respondents' answers were divided into the following: 36 students studied at public High-schools, meaning 77% of the total, in contrast to 11 students who studied at private institutions, meaning 23% of the total. It means that most of students have gotten their High School diploma at public institutions.

As it can be seen, the majority of students have gotten their high school diploma at public institutions.

5) HOW DID YOU ENTER THE MAJOR YOU ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING?



First test: 25 students
Second test: 19 students
Through a student movement: 3 students

Out of the 47 respondents 25 students entered the investigated majors by the first test meaning the 53%, 19 students entered the majors by the second test meaning 41% of the total and 3 students entered through a student movement, meaning 6% of the total.

More than half of the total population have started their careers by the first test. Students who began their careers by the first test are a slight majority, being more than half of the total subjects under study. They are followed by the students who entered by the second test, with a close percentage to this of the first test student. It means that an evident rate of students did not need an association's support to enter their majors.

6) SEMESTER CURRENTLY COURSING

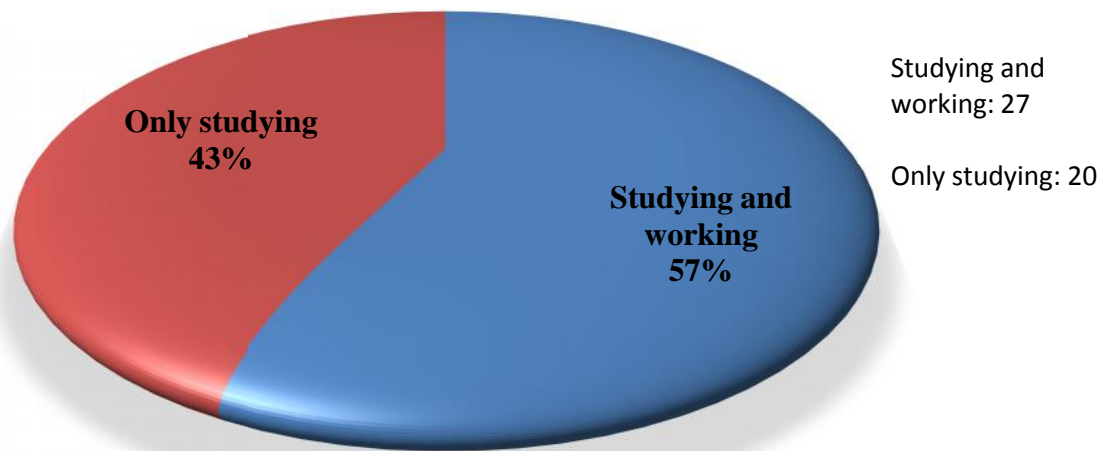


5th semester: 47 students

According to the 47 respondents, all of them were studying the 5th semester, meaning that the entire population in this investigation is studying their 3rd year in each major, being BA in Modern Languages Specialty in French and English and BA in English Oriented to Teaching.

As observed in this graph, the subjects under study are covering fifty percent of their majors.

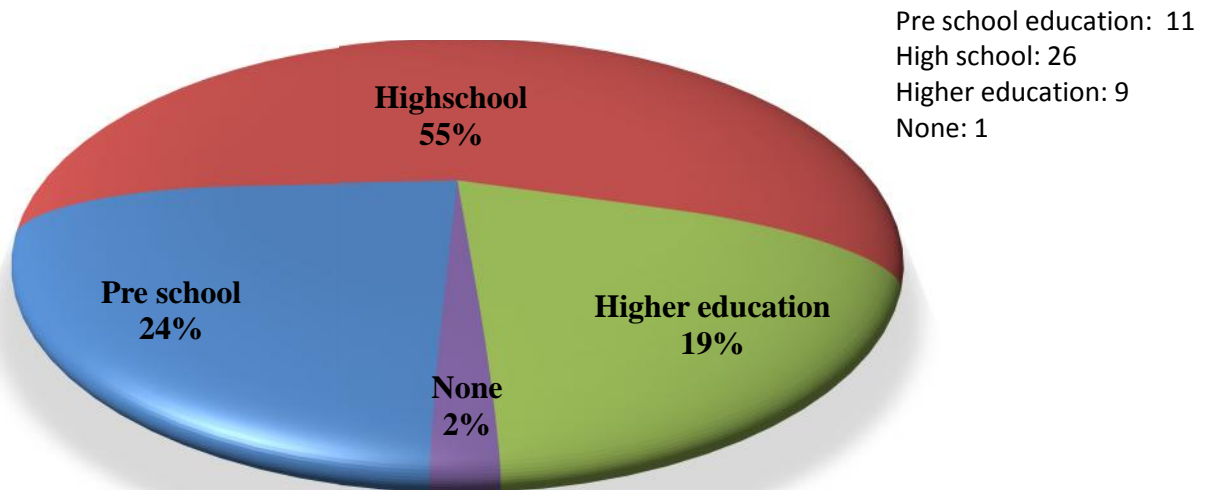
7) Indicate your current condition



The 47 people who answered this survey were divided into two groups: 27 are studying and working, meaning 57% of the total and 20 students are only studying meaning 43% of the total. It can be observed that a little more than half of the students are currently studying and working in contrast to the minimum of the students that are just studying. It is seen that there is a slight difference between the people that are only studying and those who are studying and working at the same time, prevailing the students who do both things. It can be inferred that the majority of students of the fifth semester of the B.A in English Oriented to Teaching and the B.A in Modern Languages are currently studying and working at the same time.

As revealed by the figures, students who are finishing the first part of their majors are likely to getting jobs, which can contribute to their progress.

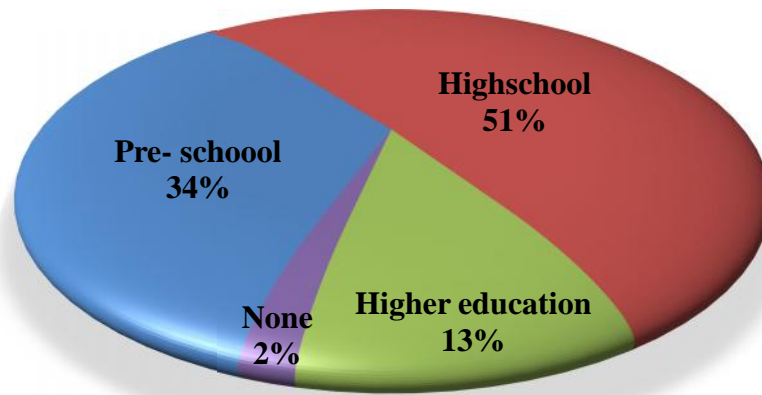
8) What is the education level of your father?



Out of the 47 respondents, 11 students' fathers have studied up to Pre-school education meaning 24% of the total, 26 students' fathers have studied up to High-school education, meaning 55% of the total, 9 students' fathers have studied up to Higher education meaning 19% and a student's father has none of the education mentioned meaning 2% of the total investigation sample. It means that more than half of the total students' fathers have studied up to high school, followed by the students' fathers who have studied up to pre-school and a minor percentage of students' fathers who have studied up to higher education and a minimum percentage of a student father who has none of the studies mentioned above. It can be concluded that a high level of student's fathers have at least some kind of education level, being the majority those with a high school diploma with a significant 55% followed by pre-school education and higher education.

As observed in the graph, most fathers have gone to school, which means that students under study have a considerable academic influence through their parents.

9) What is the education level of your mother?



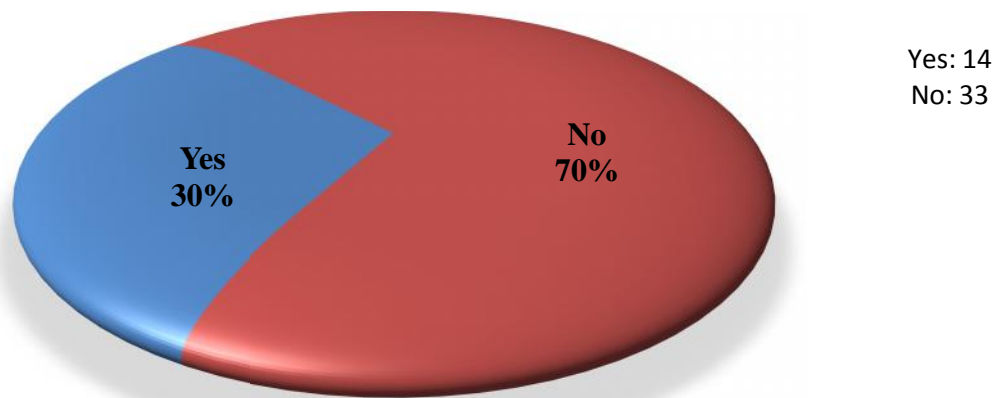
Pre school education: 16
High school: 24
Higher education: 6
None: 1

The population of 47 students sample answered as follows: 16 students' mothers have studied up to pre-school education meaning 34% of the total, 24 students' mothers have studied up to high-school meaning 51% of the total, 6 students' mothers have studied up to higher education meaning 13% of the total and 1 student's mother has none of the studies mentioned above meaning 2% of the total. Summarizing, more than half of the students' mothers have studied up to high school, followed by pre-school and then by higher education and a minority percentage has none of the studies mentioned above. This question is similar to the previous one and it can be concluded that out of the 47 subjects under study, the predominant study level of both parents is high school. However, there is more incidence of women regarding the percentage of pre-school study of 34% and a similar percentage of both father and mother who have reached higher education with 13% and 19% respectively.

As observed in the graph, most mothers of the subjects under study have an academic background that can be a good example for their children to go on their schooling.

II. READ AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO YOUR EXPERIENCE.

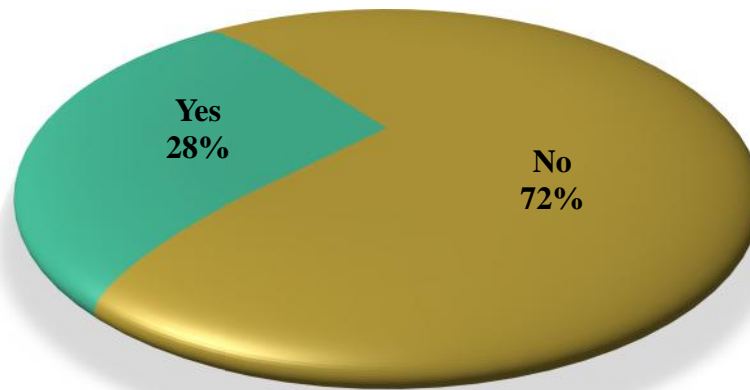
1) Did you ever want to drop out your studies?



Out of the 47 respondents, 14 students wanted to drop out their studies meaning 30% of the total sample and 33 students did not want to drop out their studies meaning 70% of the total. It is clearly seen that the majority of students did not want to drop out their studies. However, almost a third of the students have already thought about dropping out. As shown by the graph, the students under study are considerably willing to continue their school up to the end in spite of the difficulty they can encounter on their way.

The students under study show a considerable desire to continue to study in spite of the difficulty they might find in their learning process.

2) Are you prone to dropping out your studies now?



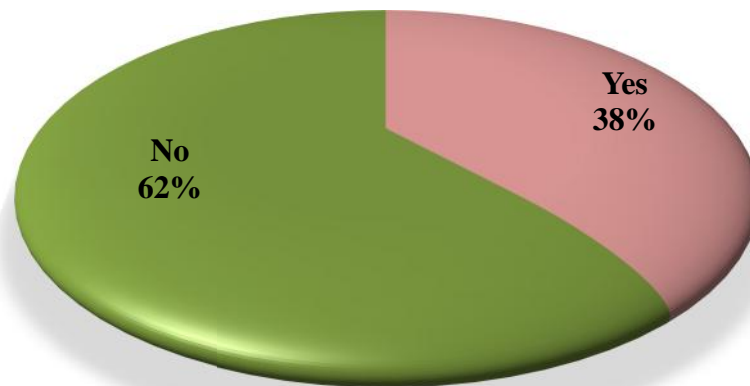
Yes: 13

No: 34

Out of 47 respondents, 13 students are prone to dropping out their studies now, meaning 28% of the total sample, whereas the remaining 72% have the opposite attitude. It is seen that most students are not prone to leaving their majors. This question was very similar to the last one and, again, the subjects under study showed their determination to continue on their academic task.

This situation is in agreement with the previous answers, in which the students expressed their determination not to leave their studies.

3) Would you consider dropping out your studies for any economic reason?

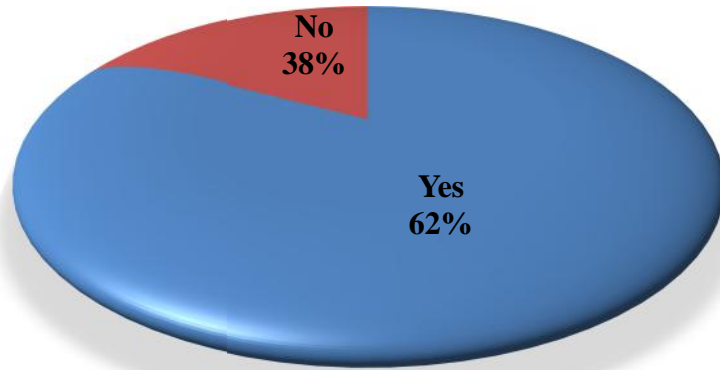


Yes: 18
No: 29

Out of the 47 respondents, 18 students would drop out their majors, meaning 38% of the total sample population, and 29 students would not dropout their studies, meaning 62% of the entire population sample. It means that most students would not dropout their studies caused by any economic reason. This graph reveals that the economic factor is very strong. Even though more than 50% of the subjects under study do not consider their economic situation as a reason to drop out, their determination to go on is somehow affected by economic factors.

The subjects under study continue to show a determination to continue their schooling no matter how difficult their economic situation can be.

4) Do you know any student from the BA in Modern Languages and BA in English Oriented to Teaching that has dropped out his/her studies?

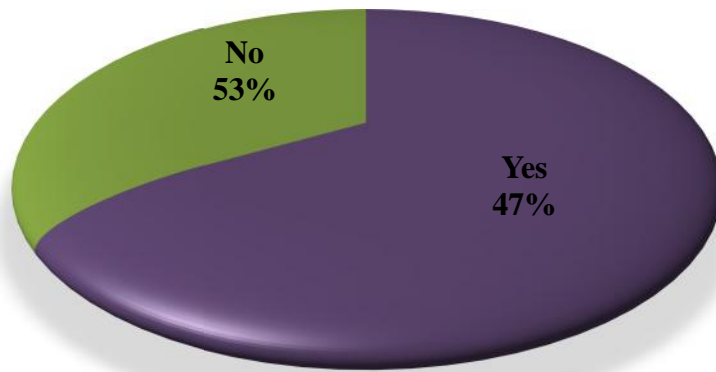


Yes: 29
No: 18

The 62% of the population surveyed knows students from the BA in Modern Languages and BA in English Oriented to Teaching that have dropped out their studies and only 38% of them do not know any student. This shows that the dropout rate of 62% is more significant than the other percentage, 38%. It means that the surveyed population is aware of the high level of dropout since the majority know at least one student that abandoned his/her studies. It is a very important discovery regarding the dropout rate because out of the 47 subjects under study more than the half know a student who did not conclude his/her studies.

Even though the students under study know other students who have dropped out their studies, their determination is firm to continue their studies.

5) Do you consider that a low educational performance could be the main reason why students leave their studies?



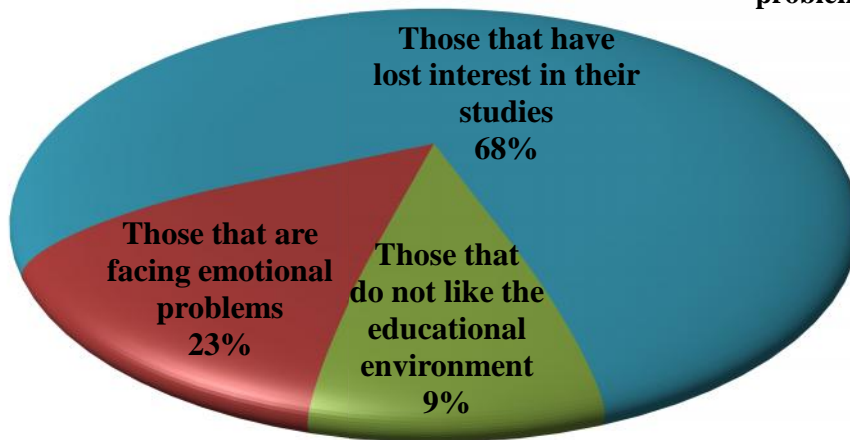
Yes: 22
No: 25

The responses were from 47 students in both careers and 47% of them consider that a low educational performance could be the main reason why students leave their studies while the remaining 53 % do not think that. There is a divided opinion between the two viewpoints as to the low educational performance of students and their school leaving decision. A scarce majority of students think that the main reason of dropout is not necessarily the low educational performance. However, the point of view of the surveyed people is a little narrow because 47% of them think that the low performance of a student can immutably lead to a dropout.

Educational factor seems to be a serious cause for dropping out, as expressed by the subjects under study, whose opinions are somehow divided on this matter.

6) What students do you think are more likely to drop out their studies?

Those that have lost interest in their studies: 32 students
Those that do not like the educational environment: 4 student
Those that are facing emotional problems: 11

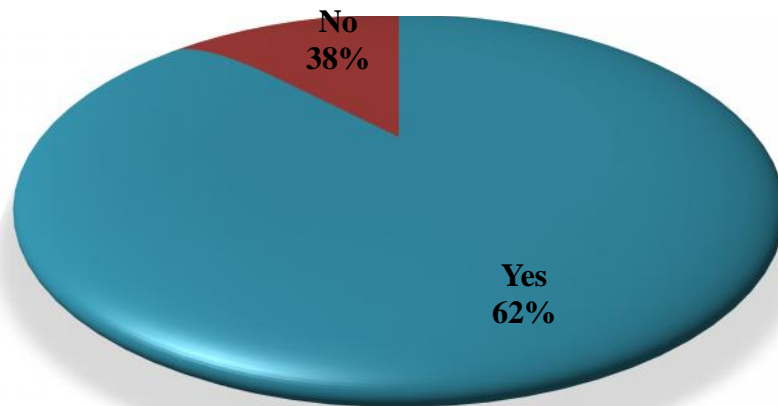


The results obtained from the questionnaire show that 32 students from semester V strongly agreed that students are more likely to drop out when they have lost interest in their studies. Eleven of the respondents consider, however, that students are more likely to drop out when they are facing emotional problems and only 4 of the respondents think that students who do not like the educational environment are more likely to drop out. As shown by the graph, most of the respondents think that there is a high probability that students who are not interested anymore in their studies could drop out their majors, in contrast to those who think that students' emotional problems and the feeling of discomfort regarding the educational environment lead to a dropout decision.

Lack of interest is one factor that prevents students from continuing, as revealed by two thirds of them. According to this, interest is one crucial factor for students to continue or drop out school.

7) Do you think that the fact of becoming a mother or father causes students to drop out their studies?

Yes: 29 students
No: 18 students

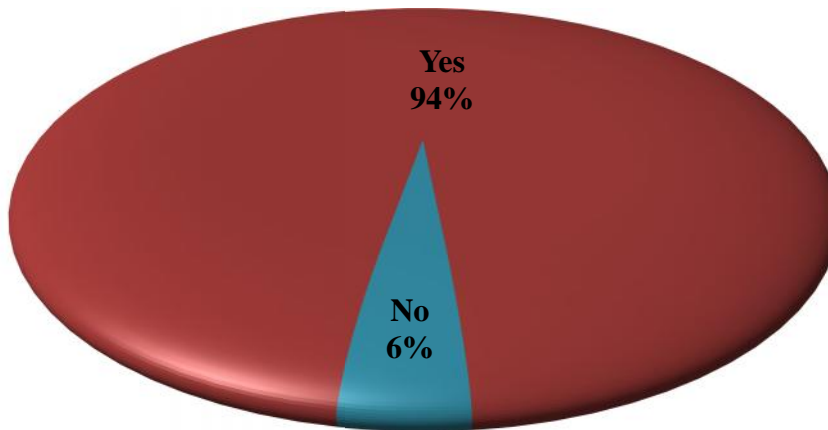


Out of the 47 respondents interviewed, 29 students think that the fact of becoming a mother or father causes students to drop out their studies whereas 18 students think it is not a cause of dropout. They represent the percentages of 62 and 38 respectively. According to the graph, a high percentage of the subjects under study think that having a baby interferes with the students' decision of going on until the completion of their careers. On the other hand the minority thinks that there is no problem in having a baby and that a student could complete a major in spite of being a mother or father.

Being a father or a mother is a factor that the subjects under study consider a reason for dropping out, as expressed by six out of ten of them.

8) Would you consider that the economic conditions in which students and their families are involved are part of the dropping out problem?

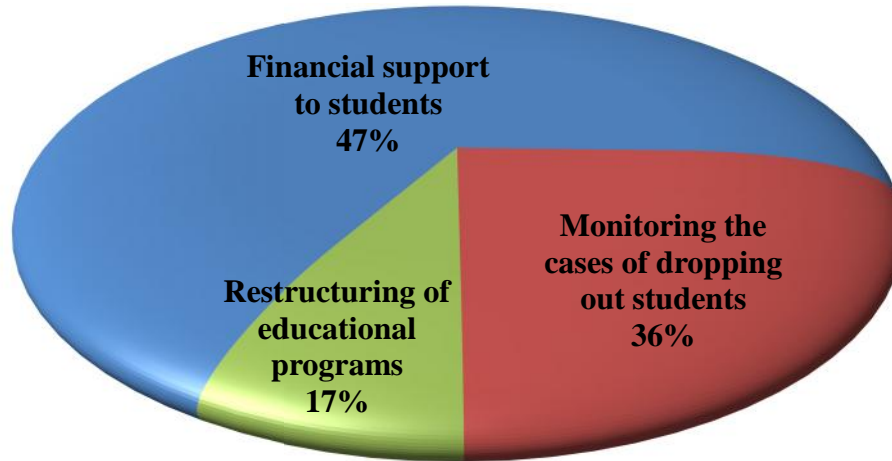
Yes: 44 students
No: 3 students



The 94% of the population surveyed consider that the economic conditions in which students and their families are involved are part of the dropping out problem and the 6% said the opposite. A vast majority of students agree that the economic conditions by which the student is surrounded highly affect the student's decision of leaving or dropout his /her studies. This is a very marked and important result obtained, meaning that for students this will be an irrevocable reason of dropout.

Economic conditions are very strong for dropping out, as expressed by almost all the subjects under study.

9) What would you suggest for the university students to lower dropout rates?



Financial support to students: 22 students

Restructuring of educational programs: 8 students

Monitoring the cases of dropping out students: 17 students

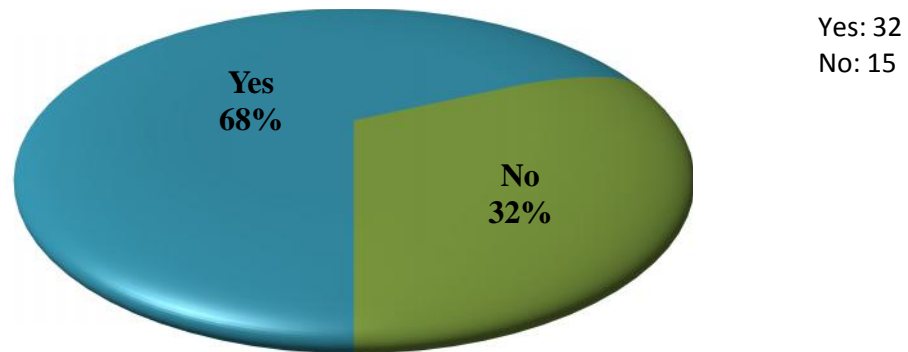
The results obtained from the questionnaire show that 22 students suggest a financial support to lower dropout rates, 17 students suggest a restructure of educational programs, and 8 students suggest monitoring cases of dropping out.

As shown by the graph, financial support and monitoring of dropping out cases are the measures more recommended by the subjects under study to solve or reduce the problem of dropout rate. The study plans of the students' majors are also taken into account.

III. IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL FIND A SET OF ASSERTIONS FOR WHICH YOU CAN EXPRESS YOUR DEGREE OF AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT ON THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS. PLEASE CIRCLE THE BEST OPTION THAT EXPRESSES YOUR POINT OF VIEW.

ECONOMIC CATEGORY

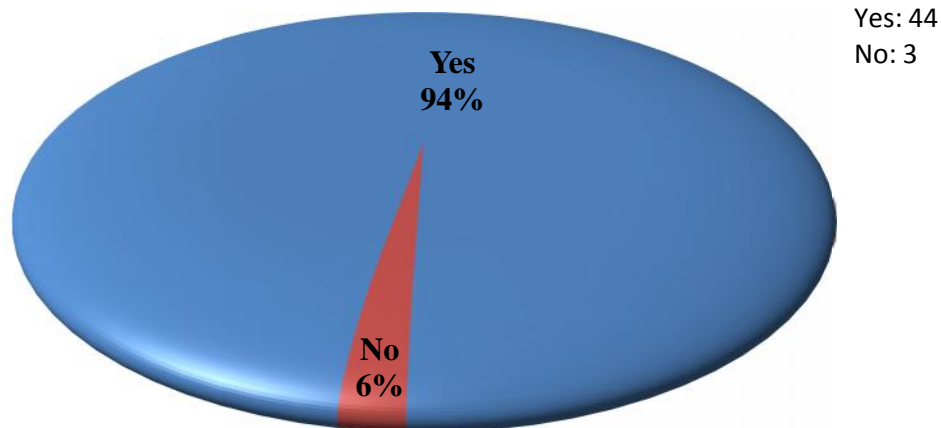
1) There is a need to get a job to pay for and complete my major.



As revealed by the graph, 68 % of the respondents consider that it is necessary to get a job to pay for and complete their major. And 32% of the respondents (15 students out of the 47) consider that it is not necessary to get a job to pay and complete their major.

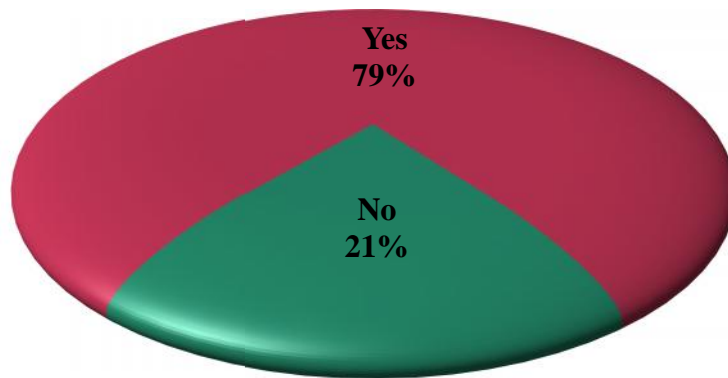
As shown by the data, there is a strong tendency on the students' part to consider that if they do not get a job they would not be able to pay for their major nor to complete it either. As a result, they would drop out.

2) Students who work full time are affected in their learning process.



As revealed by the graph, 94% of the population surveyed consider that students who work on a full time basis are affected in their learning process and only 6% (3 students of 47) of them consider that a full-time schedule does not affect their learning process. So there is a strong tendency on the surveyed students' part to consider that working on a full time basis can have a negative impact on their learning process.

3) Having low income affects the process of study and completion of a major.



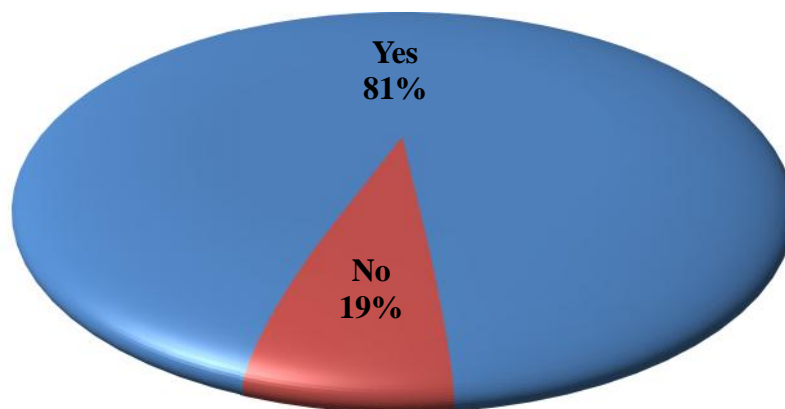
Yes: 37
No: 10

As revealed by this graph, 79% of the population surveyed consider that having low income affects the process of study and completion of their major while the rest of the surveyed subjects consider that having a low income does not affect the process of study.

More than half of the students agree that if a family has a low income, this may frustrate them and truncate their process of study and completion of a major. Therefore, they would choose dropping out their major.

As a conclusion, there is a strong tendency on the surveyed students to associate low income with a non- successful academic process.

4) The lack of necessary technological equipment affects my learning process. (Tape recorder, computer and the like)



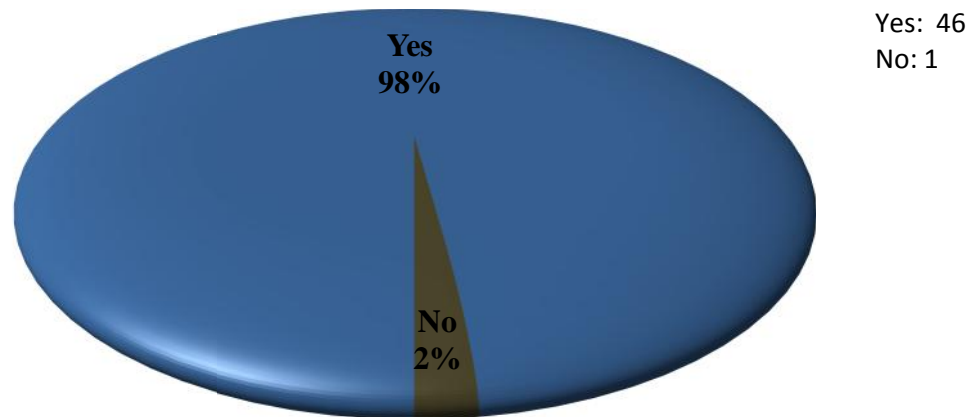
Yes: 38
No: 9

As shown by the graph, it is seen that 81 % of the respondents agree that the lack of necessary technological equipment affects their learning process while the remaining 19% of the surveyed (9 surveyed of 47) consider that the lack of necessary technological equipment does not affect their learning process.

Most students think that their learning process can be impacted in a negative way if there is not appropriate technological equipment for them.

ACADEMIC CATEGORY

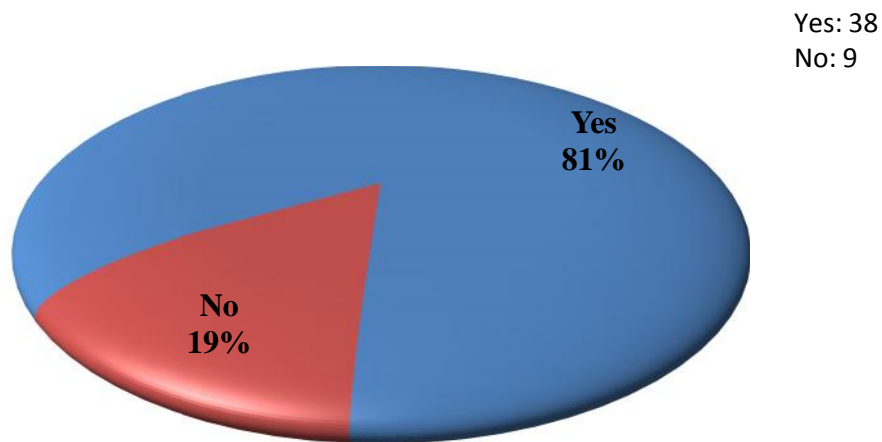
1) The good teacher – student relationship is essential for academic success.



The results obtained from the questionnaire show that 46 students from semester V, strongly agreed, 98%, that good teacher-student relationship is essential for their academic success, and 1 student, 2%, considers that it is not necessary to have good teacher-student relationship as something essential for student's academic success.

There is a strong tendency on the surveyed students' part to admit that if there is not a good relationship between the teacher and the student, there cannot exist a successful academic result because of the lack of implication of both parts.

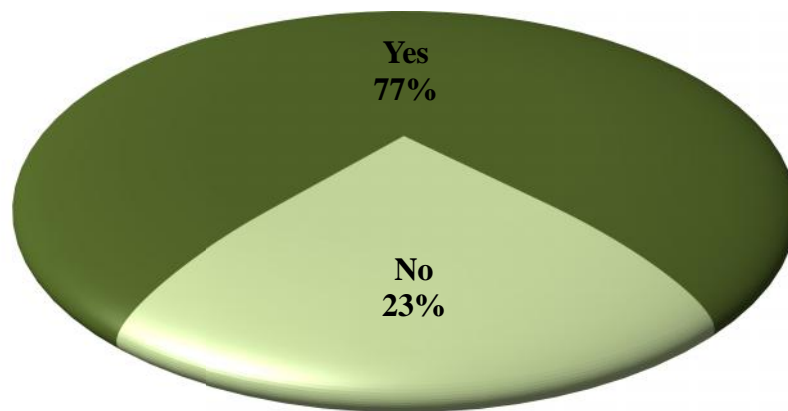
2) Studying a career you chose but you do not like or do not have many skills for that area affects your performance and the ability to succeed as a professional.



It is seen that 81 % of the respondents agree that studying a career you chose but you do not like or do not have many skills for that area affects your performance and the ability to succeed as a professional, whereas 19 % of the students think that studying a career you do not like does not affect your performance.

This graph reveals that if students are not interested in their major or they do not have vocation, they simply will not succeed as professionals and they think that it is more productive choosing a career you feel you are likely to succeed on.

3) Lack of professionalism in the teaching learning process affects a student's success when he/she becomes a professional.

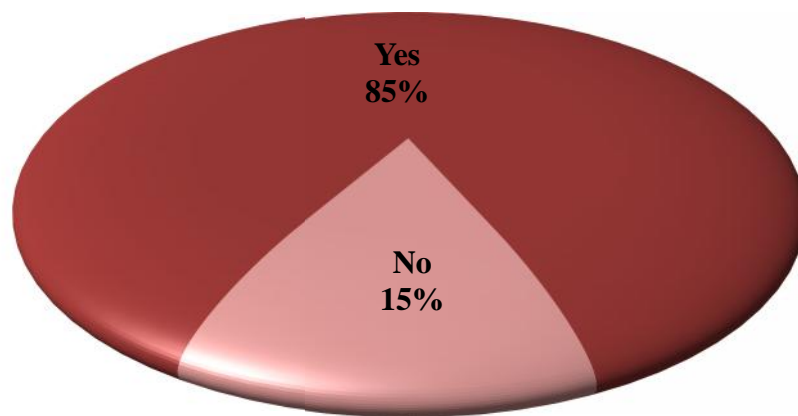


Yes: 36
No: 11

It is seen that 77 % of the respondents agree that the lack of teacher professionalism in the teaching learning process affects student success when they become professionals, whereas the remaining 23 % of the students think that the lack of teacher professionalism in the teaching learning process does not affect them as professional people.

As shown by the graph, the students under study feel that the lack of professionalism of a student affects directly the success of a student and his/her professional future.

4) Accessibility of the teacher helps students perform better in the classroom.



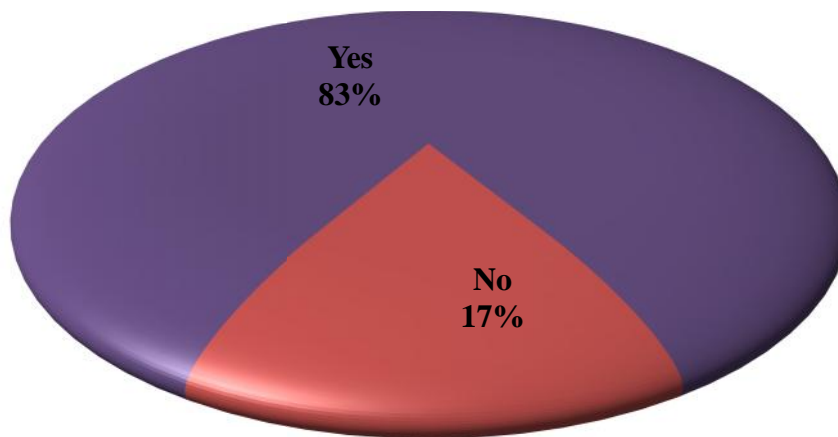
Yes: 40
No: 7

It is seen that 85 % of the respondents agree that the accessibility of the teacher helps students perform better in the classroom whereas the 15% of the students think that the accessibility of the teacher has nothing to do with the students' performance.

As revealed by the graph, there is a strong tendency on the students' part to consider the teacher's accessibility as a necessary help for students to do a good job in the classroom.

SOCIALCATEGORY

1) The study habits of the student for a career are affected by a liberal lifestyle.



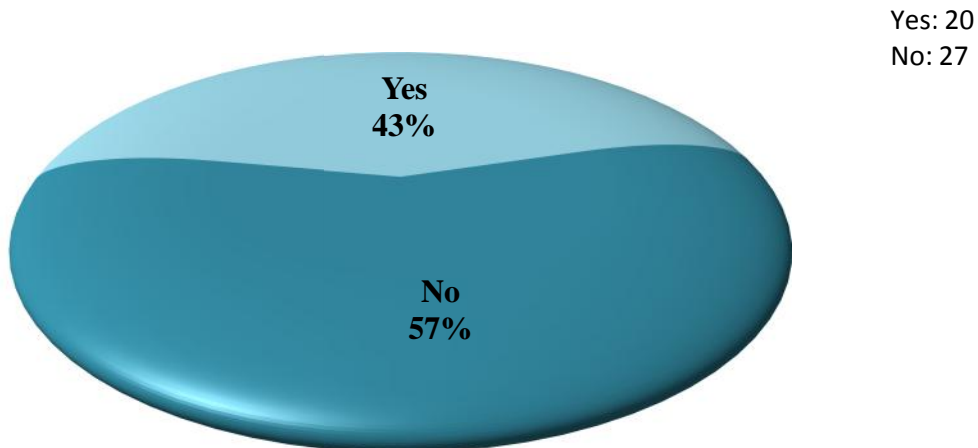
Yes: 39

No: 8

As revealed by the graph, 83 % of the respondents agree that the study habits of the students for a career are affected by a liberal lifestyle whereas the 17 % of the students do not admit that situation. It is observed that most students coincided in accepting that having a liberal lifestyle affects the completion of studies.

As shown by the graph, a liberal lifestyle affects the study habit of a FLD student in his/her career. This is admitted by the majority of student who were surveyed, whereas less than 20% admitted the opposite

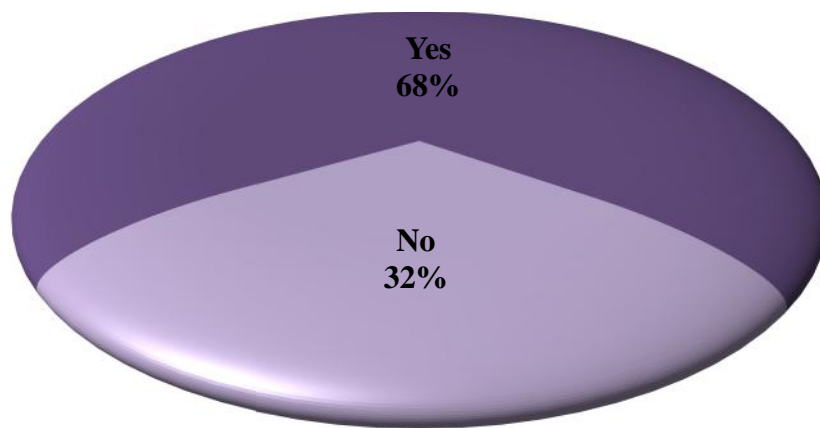
2) A romantic relationship in college affects student academic performance.



It is seen that 57 % of the respondents do not consider that a romantic relationship in college affects student academic performance, whereas the remaining 43% of the students expressed the opposite.

The results show that students have a divided opinion regarding the impact of a romantic relationship on their academic performance. There is a moderate tendency on their part to admit such a situation.

3) A marriage affects the partners to achieve the completion of academic studies.



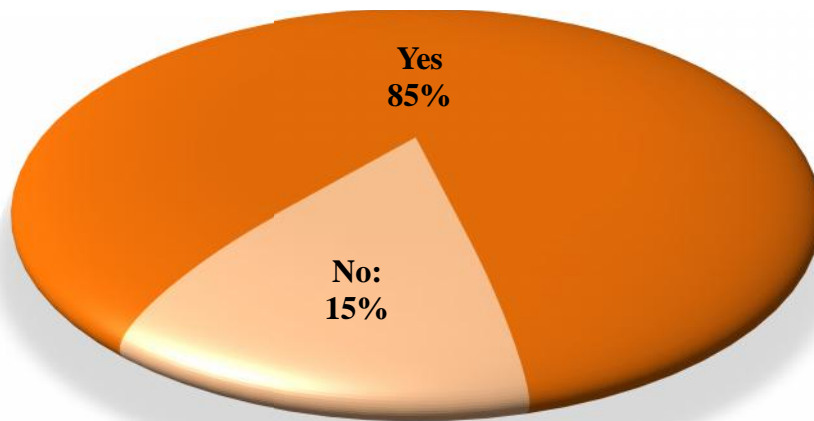
Yes: 32
No: 15

Out of the 47 students, it is seen that 68 % of the respondents agree that a marriage affects the partners to achieve the completion of academic studies, whereas the 32 % of the students think that a marriage does not have that impact.

A larger number of students agreed with the fact that being married when still a student can obstruct you to complete your academic studies. So there is a considerable tendency on their part to admit that a marriage affects the completion of academic studies.

4) An unplanned pregnancy can hinder the act of reaching goals previously established.

Yes: 40
No: 7

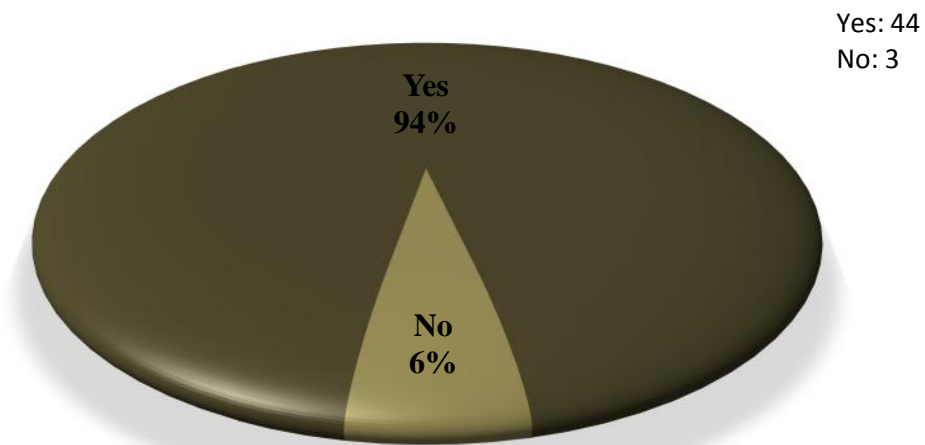


It is seen that 85 % of the respondents accept the fact that an unplanned pregnancy can hinder the act of reaching goals previously established, whereas the remaining 15 % of them think that an unplanned pregnancy does not affect the reaching of academic goals.

Most of the students think that an unplanned pregnancy derives to a series of events such as the non-completion of their studies. There is a very strong tendency on the surveyed students' part to admit that an unplanned pregnancy can be an obstacle for them to reach their academic goals.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CATEGORY

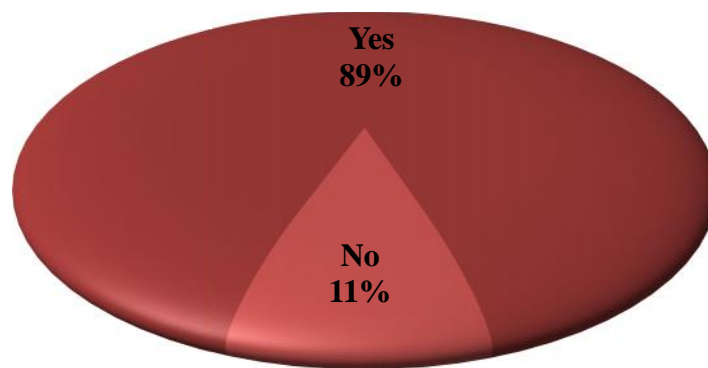
1) Low self-esteem can affect the academic process and psychological balance of a student



It is seen that 94 % of the respondents agree that a low self-esteem can affect the academic process and psychological balance of a student, whereas the remaining 6 % of the students consider that low self-esteem cannot have that effect.

There is a very strong tendency on students' part to consider low self-esteem as a cause of problems for them in their academic process and psychological balance.

2) A good environment can maintain a positive aspect, responsiveness and development of an individual academic pressure.

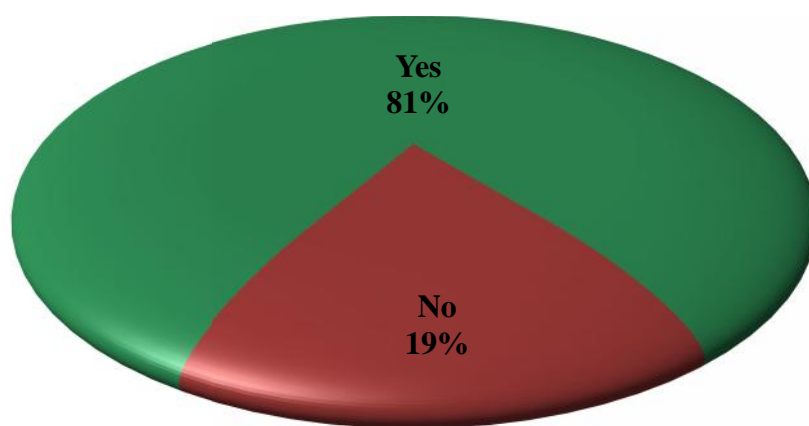


Yes: 42
No: 5

We can see that 89 % of the respondents agree that a good environment can maintain a positive aspect, responsiveness and development of an individual academic pressure, whereas the remaining 11 % of them admit that a good environment is not necessary to maintain that situation.

There is a very strong tendency on the students' part to consider a good environment as the cause for positive aspect, responsiveness and development of an individual academic pressure.

3) The lack of economic support from a student's family can bring a negative development in his/her field of study.



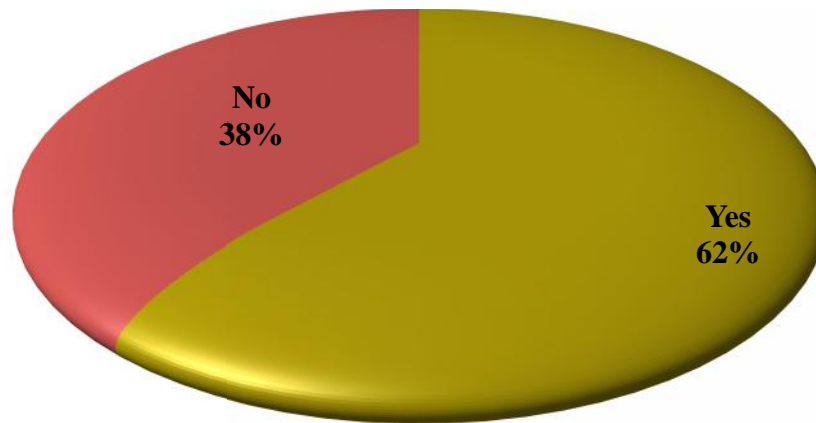
Yes: 38
No: 9

It is seen that 81 % of the respondents agree that the lack of economic support from a student's family can bring a negative development to a student's field of study whereas the rest, 19 % of the students, express the opposite.

Most students expressed that a good student's academic development is greatly influenced by the financial assistance that his/her family can provide.

The students under study show a strong tendency to admit that economic support from their families is essential to have a positive development in their studies.

4) A difficult family situation could make a student a future professional with few skills.

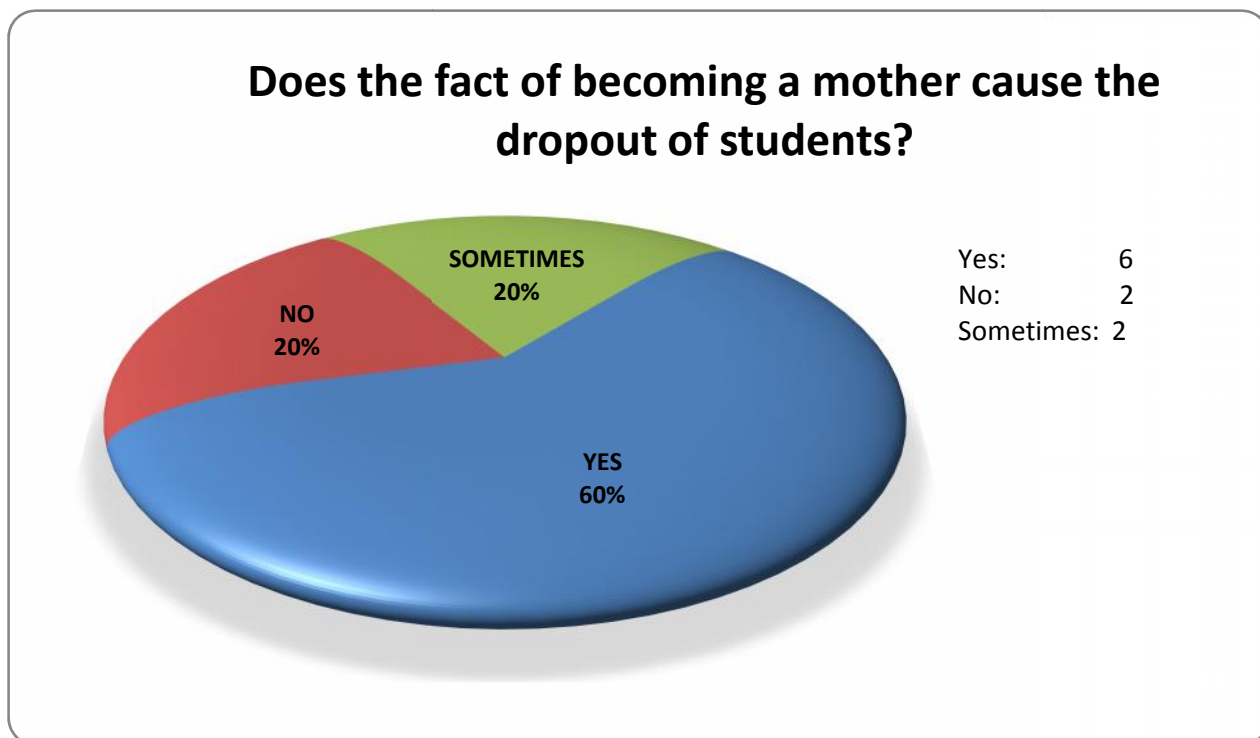


Yes: 29
No: 18

It is seen that 62 % of the respondents agree that a difficult family situation could make a student a future professional with few skills whereas the 38 % of the students express the opposite.

Opinions are divided on the issue of the influence of a family situation on the achievement of the student's skills. In this case, a large number of students think that the situation of a family directly influences the student's abilities. As shown by the data, family difficulties are a considerable cause of a professional with lack of skills, which would affect his/her job.

Sample surveys of BA in Modern Languages Specialty in French and English and BA in English Oriented to Teaching teachers
Codes L10412 and L10411. Total population : 10 surveys

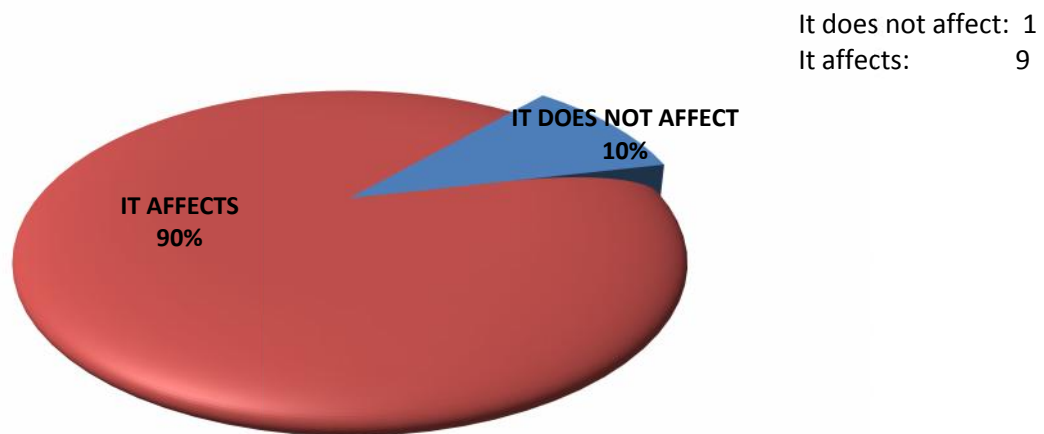


It is seen that 60% of the respondents accept the fact that becoming a mother causes the dropout of the students, whereas 20% of them think that this phenomenon happens sometimes, and the remaining 20% of the professors express that this situation is not a cause of dropping out.

Most teachers think that the fact of becoming a mother plays a key role in a series of events such as the non-completion of their studies. On the other hand, twenty percent of the teachers think that there is no problem in becoming a mother for the students to drop out.

In conclusion , there is a strong tendency on the professors' part to associate the fact of becoming a mother with dropping out.

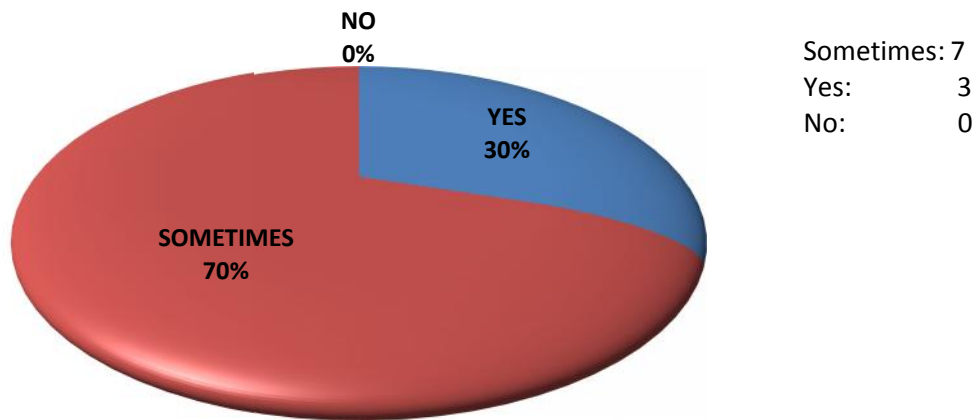
How do the professors' attitudes or behaviors lead the students to drop out?



The results obtained from the questionnaire show that 9 of the teachers, 90%, strongly agree, that the professors' attitudes or behaviors lead the students to drop out, and 1 teacher, 10%, considers that the professors' attitudes or behaviors do not lead the students to drop out.

There is a very strong tendency on the surveyed professors' part to admit that the professors' attitudes or behaviors affect their studies and lead them to drop out school.

Do you think that the economic conditions cause students' dropout?

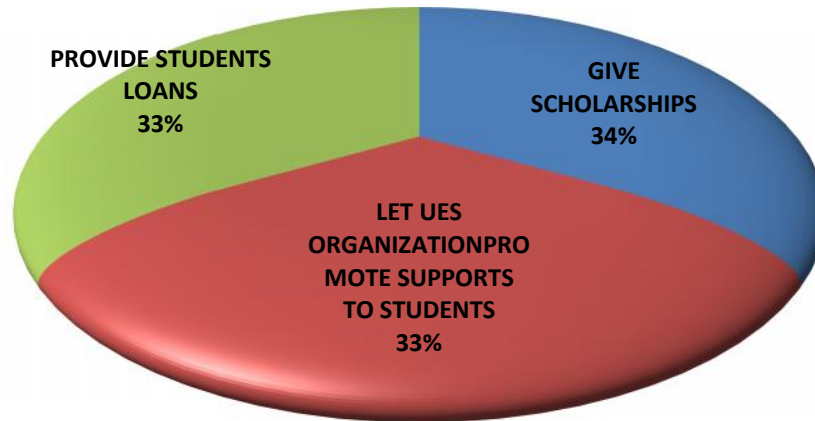


The results obtained from the questionnaire show that 7 of the teachers, 70%, consider that the economic conditions cause students' dropout. On the other hand, 3 of the teachers, 30%, think the opposite.

As revealed by the graph, there is a strong tendency on the professors' part to consider the economic conditions as a cause of students' dropout.

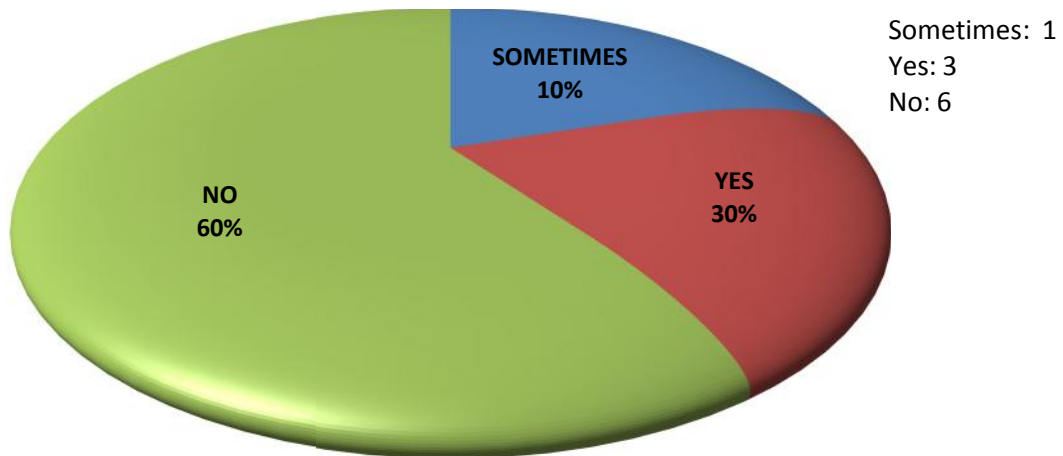
If your answer was YES, what would the authorities of the University of El Salvador's role be?

Give scholarships: 1
Provide students loans:1
Let UES organization promote supports to students: 1



Out of the three teachers who responded that the economic condition is one of the problems for students to drop out agreed that something must be done to increase the students' chances to continue with their studies and reduce the dropout. As seen in the graph, the teachers' opinion towards the decisions that the university should take regarding the students' economic issues is divided. One of the teachers, meaning 34 percent, suggested that scholarships would be beneficial to reduce the dropout. On the other hand, one of them recommended to provide loans to the students, which they would pay afterwards. The 33 percent remaining, suggested that the university authorities should demand financial support from the government to these students.

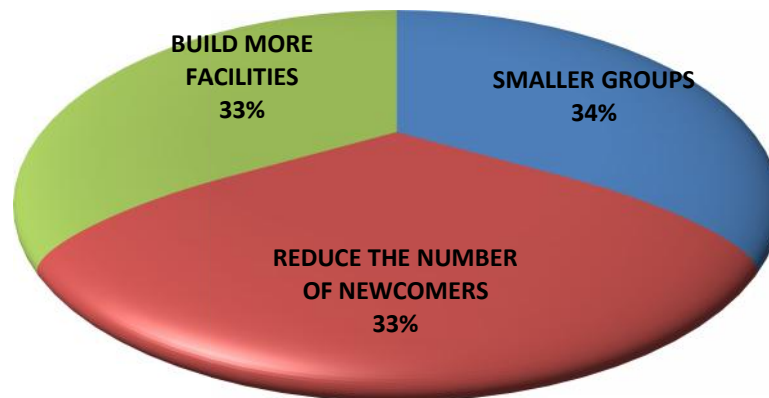
Do the class size and the classroom atmosphere cause students' dropout?



It is seen that 60% of the teachers agree that students in the Foreign Language Department are used to taking classes in crowded classrooms or at least they can deal with it, but it is not a cause for dropping out. Whereas the remaining 40% of the surveyed professors state that the number of students in a classroom is an inconvenient that leads to a dropout.

In conclusion, the class size and the classroom atmosphere are not a factor of dropping out on the students' part.

If your answer was YES, how could this problem be solved?



Smaller groups: 1
Reduce the number of newcomers: 1
Build more facilities: 1

As seen in the graph above, teachers' opinion is varied. 33.3% of them think that the possible solution facing a crowded classroom is to make an effort to have smaller groups and help build a better atmosphere in the class. On the other hand, 33.3% agree that this problem can be solved by making fair distributions of students according to the nature of each class. For this purpose, it is necessary to build more facilities for students to have more classrooms and offices to help them solve economic problems (by giving counseling and other important measures).

The remaining, 33.3% suggest that the best option is to reduce the number of newcomers and open other schools of the University of El Salvador all over the country and reduce in that way the overcrowded classrooms. As stated by the professors surveyed, there are three possible ways to solve the problem related to class size and classroom atmosphere.

Chapter IV: Conclusions

At the end of the research it can be concluded that the results obtained with the analysis have been satisfactory, getting a broad understanding about the dropping out issue in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

It can be concluded at the end of this research that the main reasons why students choose to drop out are:

1. Economic aspect
2. Parenthood aspect
3. Lack of motivation
4. Working and studying at the same time.

Statistical analysis of the data revealed that there were series of reasons combined or related among themselves such as the need of working and study at the same time because these students had economic difficulties which at the end affected them in the completion of academic studies, and also their academic performance. Through this study it has been seen that those students who work and study at the same time have more trouble in achieving their goals.

From information obtained through the surveys, it appears that the dropping out of studies affects specific people in specific ways. For example, one student withdrew from his course after only a few weeks of attending the university because he felt so distant from the love of his friends and family.

Other students reported discomfort in adjusting to overcrowded classrooms and noisy environments that distracted them, avoiding students from being focused during the class.

According to the results obtained from this research, students as well as teachers agree that parenthood is one of the causes of dropping out since the responsibility causes them to look

for a job and in most cases students do not have enough time money or motivation to continue their careers.

It is also important mentioning that the economic condition is one of the most considerable causes of dropping out. According to students, more than half of them feel the need to work to pay and complete their studies, so the economic situation for them is not stable. This problem force students focus on both their studies and jobs at the same time

Dropping out is also an effect from depression or distress, and suspected that acted as the result of earlier life damage.

In terms of study limitations, during the investigation the resources were limited because neither the Foreign Language Department nor the Administración Académica Central had the record of each student who had abandoned his/her majors so, gathering the information was more difficult.

Chapter V: Recommendations

It might seem that there are no simple solutions to the dropout issue but there are certain “ways” that can be provided within the academic environment and other circles that would improve students’ chances of staying in school. While many students agreed that it is one’s decision to drop the studies, they also say that institutions must do something in order to control this issue.

* Improve instruction and access to special help for students who are struggling to understand their studies. A great a great number of them felt that more needed to be done to help students who had problems learning. They also believed more tutoring or extra time with teachers would improve the chances of a student to graduate. More than half of students wanted better teachers along with smaller classes so they could get more individualized instruction.

* Courses schedule flexibility. It is understandable that the economic aspect is one of the main reasons why students drop out college. For that reason more flexible schedules should be established to work without the need of dropping out their studies. Besides it could also be helpful for a mother and a father to balance both family and studies at the same time without having to scarify any of them.

* Build a school environment that promotes better academic relationships. Some students, for example, felt their teachers did not establish a good relationship to help them or feel free to ask if they had any question. They even considered that teachers did nothing to make the classes interesting.

* More accurate data from institutions must be rendered. We cannot have a clear perspective of the dropout problem without an accurate account of it. There are too many ways to calculate graduation and dropout rates that disguise the problem. Even when the researcher went to the Ministry of Education (MINED), they could not give them the proper information that they needed on dropout rates. The institutions in charge need to build the data systems that will allow states to collect and publish information on graduation and dropout rates to overcome this major issue.

* Better incentives. Students who perform low need more support in school. Schools should have incentives and programs developed by the department organizations to ensure there is a balance between the ones that are doing well so that proper attention can be given to low-performing students. If universities only focus on students that stand out with good grades, the quality will at some point decrease as more students will not get the support they need.

Chapter VI: Bibliography

Cocar Romano, Orlando (2003) *Seminarios. Metodología de la Investigación, un enfoque práctico*. 1ª Edición. San Salvador. Talleres y Copiados Unidos.El Salvador.

Fraser, William and Roy Killen (2003). “*Factors influencing academic success or failure of first-year and senior university students: do education students and lecturers perceive things differently?*” in *Journal of Education*, Vol 23(4)254-260 Béchard, South Africa: Editions University of South Africa.

Lozano Díaz, Antonia (2008) “*Personal, family and academic factors affecting low Achievement in secondary school*” in *Journal of Educational Psychology* Almería, Spain: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca.

Roces, J., et al. (1995) *Motivación, estrategias de aprendizaje y rendimiento académico*. Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Ediciones Lea.

Russel, Rumberger and Sun Ah Lim (2008) *Why Students Drop Out: A Review of 25 Years of Research*. Santa Barbara, California: Board Editorial

<http://www.uca.edu.sv/virtual/comunica/archivo/abr042008/notas/nota2.htm>

- <http://www.elsalvador.com/noticias/EDICIONESANTERIORES/2000/NOVIEMBRE/noviembre12/NACIONAL/nacio1.html>
- <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/24943>

APPENDICES

Chapter VII: Appendices

Questionnaire

University of El Salvador

Foreign Language Department

School of Arts and Sciences



This survey is meant to determine the knowledge of current BA in Modern Languages and BA in English Oriented to Teaching students about the dropping out issue in the Foreign Language Department.

We would like you to answer all of the following questions reading them one by one carefully. Your help is greatly appreciated in our research. Feel free to answer in Spanish the questions you want.

Name of your major: _____ Major code: _____

I. General Information

1. Gender: M F

2. Age: _____ years old

3. Year of you high school graduation: _____

4. Type of institution where you got your High School diploma:

Public Private

5. How did you enter the major you are currently studying?

a. First test b. Second test c. Through a student movement

6. Semester coursing: _____

7. Indicate your current condition.

a. Studying and working b. onlystudying

8. What is the education level of your father?

a. Pre-school b. High school c. Higher education d. None

9. What is the education level of your mother?

a. Pre-school b. High school c. Higher education d. None

II. Read and answer the following questions according to your experience.

1. Did you ever want to drop out your studies?

Yes No

2. Are you prone to dropping out your studies now?

Yes No

3. Would you consider dropping out your studies for any economic reason?

Yes No

4. Do you know any student from the BA in Modern Languages and BA in English Oriented to Teaching that has dropped out his/her studies?

Yes No

5. Do you consider that a low educational performance could be the main reason why students leave their studies?

Yes No

6. What students do you think are more likely to drop out their studies?

- a. Those that have lost interest in their studies.
- b. Those that do not like the educational environment.
- c. Those that are facing emotional problems.

7. Do you think that the fact of becoming a mother or father causes students to drop out their studies?

Yes No

8. Would you consider that the economic conditions in which students and their families are involved are part of the dropping out problem?

Yes No

9. What would you suggest for the university students to lower dropout rates?

- A. Financial support to students
- B. Restructuring of educational programs
- C. Monitoring the cases of dropping out students

III. In this section you will find a set of assertions for which you can express your degree of agreement or disagreement on the factors that influence your academic success. Please circle the best option that expresses your point of view.

Economic category

1) There is a need to get a job to pay for and complete my major.

Yes No

2) Students who work full time are affected in their learning process.

Yes No

3) Having low income affects the process of study and completion of a major.

Yes No

4) The lack of necessary technological equipment affects my learning process. (Tape recorder, computer and the like)

Yes No

Academic category

1) The good teacher–student relationship is essential for academic success.

Yes No

2) Studying a career you chose but you do not like or do not have many skills in that area affects your performance and the ability to succeed as a professional.

Yes No

3) Lack of teacher professionalism in the teaching learning process affects student success when he/she becomes a professional.

Yes No

4) Accessibility of the teacher helps students perform better in the classroom.

Yes No

Socialcategory

1) The study habits of the student for a career are affected by a liberal lifestyle.

Yes No

2) A romantic relationship in a college affects student academic performance.

Yes No

3) A marriage affects the partners to achieve the completion of academic studies.

Yes No

4) An unplanned pregnancy can hinder the act of reaching goals previously established.

Yes No

Psychological category

1) Low self-esteem can affects the academic process and psychological balance of a student.

Yes No

2) A good environment can maintain a positive aspect, responsiveness and development of an individual academic pressure.

Yes No

3) The lack of economic support from a student's family can bring a negative development in his/her field of study.

Yes No

4) A difficult family situation could makea student afuture professional with few skills.

Yes No

University of El Salvador
Foreign Language Department
School of Arts and Sciences



This survey is meant to determine the point of view of current BA in Modern Languages and BA in English Oriented to Teaching teachers about the dropping out issue in the Foreign Language Department.

We would like you to answer all of the following questions reading them one by one carefully. Your help is greatly appreciated in our research.

1. Does the fact of becoming a mother cause the dropout of students?

Yes _____ No _____

2. How do the professors' attitudes or behaviors lead the students to dropout?

3. Do you think that the economic conditions cause students' dropout?

Yes _____ No _____

4. If your answer was **YES**, what would the authorities of the University of El Salvador's role be?

5. Do the class size and the classroom atmosphere cause students' dropout?

Yes _____ No _____

6. If your answer was **YES**, how could this problem be solved?
