

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



THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC FACTORS RELATED TO
STUDENTS' ATTRITION AND OR SUBJECT FAILING AT THE
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR, SEMESTER I -2000.
(GRADUATION WORK)

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SISTEMA BIBLIOTECARIO, UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR

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INTRODUCTION

Imídeo G. Nérici (1985) points out in his book, "Hacia una Didáctica General Dinámica", that university teaching should avoid four things. First of all, university studies should not only aim at preparing students to pass exams. Second of all, university students should not limit themselves to just take notes and then memorize them. Third of all, university students should neither play passive roles nor limit themselves to know just what the teacher gives them. Fourth of all, university students should not be kept away from the problems their community and country faces.

The four aspects mentioned above can be closely related to the academic factors that might have influenced the attrition cycle and the subject failing at The Sociology Department of The School of Arts and Sciences of The University of El Salvador in semester I -2000.

These pages contain the graduation work that has been prepared by the researchers to find out the academic and non-academic factors related to students' attrition and or subject failing at the Sociology Department of The School of Arts and Sciences of the UES in Semester I -2000.

This document includes the statement of the problem to be researched; a list of objectives that will guide the research; a theoretical framework which contains the theoretical aspects related to the topic, based on the revised literature; the hypotheses and methodology to be used; the sampling section that describes not only the population and sample of the study, but

also the statistical procedure to calculate that sample and the instrument to be used to collect the data. Furthermore, this document exhibits the data analysis in order to show the findings gotten through this work to the readers. Finally a list of conclusions and suggestions are given as well as all the bibliographical material consulted.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nowadays, the students' subject failing and attrition constitute problems for educational institutions at any level. So new academic advising program and new teaching methodologies have been put into practice in order to control these phenomena.

According to "La Direccion General de Evaluacion de Calidad Educativa" from Honduras, the causes that are closely related to subject failing are linked to several factors such as the teaching learning process, the system of evaluation and the students themselves who don't want to study.

In addition to this, according to Dr. Badia Sierra, Director of the planning office of the University of El Salvador (UES), when interviewed on May 17th, 2001, the UES as a tertiary educational institution faces this problem. He said that the attrition problem is the result of different causes such as: lack of students' academic preparation, students' emotional problems, students' entrance profile, maturity, lack of teaching materials, teachers' lack of interest in the teaching-learning process. He said that due to all these reasons, a great number of students of the UES quit their studies.

Dr. Badia Sierra, also stated that the average attrition rate from the main campus of the University of EL Salvador, in the years 1995 to 1999 was 14.75%. This rate represents a great investment of the State of El Salvador, since each student that drops out costs seven hundred dollars.

According to information obtained from the Academic Administration of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), for the years 1995 to 2000 an average of 3195 students register each first semester, and only an average of 447 students

graduate each year. If we compare these figures, it can be stated that only 15% of the registered population graduates from this school each year.

Based on the importance of these phenomena, this research will try to answer the following general question: What are the academic and non academic factors that influenced students' attrition and subject failing in The Sociology Department of The SAS of the UES, Central Region, in the first semester of the year 2000?

II. OBJECTIVES

- A. Find out if students' attrition was influenced by their academic class performance.
- B. Relate professors' methodology in the teaching-learning process.
- C. Determine the relationship between students' economic situation and the attrition cycle.
- D. Determine the relationship between infrastructure and human resources of the Faculty influenced students' attrition and/or subject failing.
- E. Determine if women fail more than men in the Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Sciences.
- F. Identify if students' motivation, interest and dedication are factors that make them fail subjects in the Sociology Department of The SAS of The UES semester I -2000.
- G. Find out if students' subject failing leads them to drop out from The Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Sciences during the first cycle of the year 2000.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The phenomenon of attrition and subject failing are issues of concern for all educational institutions regardless the rates they may reach, for the fact that if they exist, they question the quality of the processes and programs that educational institutions offer, the quality of its teachers and the particular characteristics of every student.

The controversy for the quality of education is focused in three main aspects: the social efficiency, which pursues a changed in the attitude of people; social reconstruction and the internal efficiency which measures the retention capacity and degrees of attrition and failing.

“By the end of the 80s, in Latin America nearly 60% of the students finished their primary education or their elementary school. 44% of those students had failed three or more times one of the academic years. What this represented was the fact that about 20 millions of students have failed more than one year. The average time of the career ending was of 9.9 years instead of the six traditional ones”.¹

In Central America, the failing problems keep on occurring in a large scale in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Attrition is closely related to subject failing, for instance in Honduras between 1980-1999 subject failing presented a high grade of 15% at national scales.

According to “La Direccion General de Evaluacion de Calidad Educativa” from Honduras, the causes that are closely related to subject failing are linked to several factors such as the teaching learning process, the system of evaluation and the students themselves who don't want to study.

¹ Ordoñez Baca, Faustino.

Some other research studies have shown that children that fail subjects during the early school are more likely to abandon it completely. Apart from that, specialized institutions have done researchers at the primary level in the first year of secondary and tertiary education about school and academic performance on two specific subjects: Mathematics and Sciences. The results showed that male students performed better in mathematics while female ones did better in Sciences. The research also showed important features about teaching methodology in both levels, 66% of teachers never or hardly ever gave information about objectives to be developed for classes. Also, 62.9% of teachers used little or non visual aids or supporting material in their classes, 73.7% of the teachers dictated most of their classes to students, and 17.3% of them organized students in groups.

Mexico City, is another country that faces serious problems due to high levels of subject failing and attrition. Such problems make some experts to catalogue Mexico as a country of failing students. According to these experts, factors such as economical stability of family, strong influence of television and lack of expectations for the future have affected students' motivation towards education. During high school, the problems turn to be dramatic since 7 out of 10 students do not finish level in the three legal years. Due to subject failing 73% of the students obtained an average below 8, and the 63% of those who registered in the university failed at least one subject during the first academic year. This phenomenon has caused struggles from the very beginning of the school years since most students failed subjects or dropped from the university.

A research done at the Guadalajara university and UNAM showed that factors such as: instability of family, misconduct of young people, marriage,

vocational direction, schedules and economic factors are considered as the main causes of attrition and subject failing in high school as well as in the university.

In our country, the University of El Salvador, as institution of Tertiary Education, is being also affected by the Attrition phenomenon and subject failing. In accordance to a research done in this University about "Rendimiento de la Educacion Universitaria",² the academic failure at the University of El Salvador included student's subject failure and attrition. The Statistics and Record Section of the Central Academic Administration of the UES have identified two types of attrition: Reported Attrition and Non-Reported Attrition. The first term is referred to the students that inform the University about their decision of not to continue their studies; this allows them to postpone their enrollment for the next semester or academic year. And the second term refers to the students who abandon their studies without following the established academic process; thus, they miss the opportunity to reserve their future enrollment in this institution.

Table # 1 : " Students' attrition causes at the University of El Salvador in 1992 ".

| No. | Student attrition causes. | Percentages |
|--------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Student's economic situation | 38.20 % |
| 2 | Academic performance | 31.66 % |
| 3 | Extra activities responsibilities | 15.41 % |
| 4 | Health problems | 14.73 % |
| Total | | 100 % |

² Source : (www.oei.org.com/equipo/salvador/salva10.pdf./)

Regarding student's subject failure, this study also shows the subjects of the different schools that overpass the 50% of subject failures are the ones referred to the areas of Chemistry, Mathematics and Statistics.

After having presented a general background about students' attrition in institutions of tertiary education, it is necessary to place the present research in the specific context in which the process is being addressed. Therefore, the definitions that will be used in the study of the attrition phenomenon and subject failing in The Sociology Department of The School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador during semester I-2000 are mentioned next.

For this study, Attrition will be taken as *the student's abandonment of their educational program due to Academic and/or Non-Academic factors, having gone through the administrative process to reserve their right to continue studying later on.*

As literature shows, there is a relationship between student's attrition and subject failing; hence, it is necessary to state that failure of subjects is part of this study; thus, it is defined as *the student's lack of success in achieving the average of six, which is the lowest passing grade, in any specific subject at the end of the semester.*

Based on the theory studied in regard to causes that provoked students to drop out and subject failing from different Tertiary Institutions, the researchers have made the following model that will be used in order to study the phenomenon of attrition and subject failing at The Sociology Department of The School of Arts and Sciences of the UES during semester I-2000.

The model includes two major categories: *Academic factors and Non-Academic factors.*

A. ACADEMIC FACTORS

These factors have been sub-divided into *Students' Professor's and Institutional areas.*

1. The student's area includes students' academic performance, and student's participation in campus activities. These are the most common factors related to attrition and subject failing according to the theory read. The aim of this area is to find out to what extent the students' academic performance, and student's participation in campus activities influenced in students' attrition and subject failing.
2. The professor's area includes professor's methodology used in the teaching learning process in the subjects that present the highest number of failures. This particular area will be devoted to relate professor's methodology in the teaching learning process of the students.
3. The last one is the institutional area. This one contains class schedules, curricular changes, administrative processes, and university policies in the institution. This area is specifically aimed at determining the relationship among students' attrition and all these factors previously mentioned.

B. NON- ACADEMIC FACTORS

These factors have also been sub- divided into two areas as follows: Student's and Institutional areas.

1. Regarding student's area, it includes students' economic situation, health problems, parenthood, students' sex, and their identification with the institution. The purpose of this area is to determine to what extent all these factors influenced in the students' withdrawal as well as subject failing of the university. Furthermore, to identify the relationship between their attrition cycle, and the health problems that they might have had.
2. Within the Institutional area are found the infrastructure itself and its resources related to the educational process such as material, financial and human. The main objective of this is to determine the university resources that influenced students to drop out and fail subjects.

IV. HYPOTHESES

- A. The professors' methodology in the teaching-learning process influence in the students' subject failing in The Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Sciences during semester I -2000.

- B. More women than men fail subjects in the Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Science during semester I -2000.

- C. Students drop out due to subject failing in the Sociology Department in the SAS of UES during semester I -2000.

V. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to find out the Academic and Non Academic factors that influenced students' attrition and subject failing at the Sociology Department of the School of Arts and Sciences during the first semester of the year 2000.

There was the need to measure and explain the attrition cycle and failing phenomenon; for that reason the survey research method was used. This was a sample survey since the nature and the purpose of the study was related with Education and Social Sciences and it was studied only a portion of the population.

The most challenging type of survey is one that seeks to measure intangibles such as attitudes, opinions and values, or the sociological and psychological constructs, like the reason our students population had for withdrawing from college as well as the implications relative to University entities such as Faculty and Administrators, teaching- learning methodology, students' economic factors, job related reasons, students' preparation for entering college.

The opinions, attitudes, and values were not directly observable but they were inferred from responses given by the subjects to the questionnaires specially designed for this purpose. Since it was a survey of intangibles it was limited by the fact that the data that was collected only indirectly measured

the variables the study was concerned about. This limitation depended on how well the observations measure the intangible variables.

The steps involved in this survey research were:

1. Planning: The survey research began with the question that could be answered by means of the survey method. The question of our study was:

What are the academic and non-academic factors that influenced students' subject failing and attrition at the Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador, Central Campus in the first semester of the year 2000?

In order to find out the answer to this question, the research was divided into two areas: one dealing with the academic factors and the other with the non-academic. The area of the academic factors was subdivided into students' factors, Professors' factors, and institutional factors. The area of the non-academic factors consisted of: students' factors and the institution resources factors. (For more information refer to the theoretical framework).

The research group gathered the information from the Sociology Department of the School of Arts and Sciences in the University of El Salvador. Then the group administered the questionnaire to the sample subjects from this department.

Once the subjects were selected, their information (residence, telephone numbers, etc.) was drawn from the Administration office of the School of Arts and Sciences.

2. Sampling:

- a. The population of this study was formed by the students who failed one or more subjects and those who withdrew from the Sociology Department of the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of El Salvador during the semester I -2000.
- b. The sample included students who fulfilled the characteristics determined for our study. The subjects were selected according to a simple random sampling with one substitution that was designed for the Sociology Department within the School of Arts and Sciences. (Please, refer to the Sampling Section for more information).

3. Conducting the survey:

- a. Pilot study: once the data-gathering questionnaire was ready, the pilot study was run to determine if the designed questionnaire would provide the expected data.
- b. Field work

The steps that were followed for gathering the information were:

- i. Phone calls: they were made in order to set an appointment with the subjects of the sample for an interview. In case one of the subjects could not be contacted or refused to be interviewed, the substitute would be taken.
- ii. Visiting their workplaces or houses: After contacting the subject of the sample they were visited, either at their jobs or their houses to administer the questionnaires.

4. Data processing

The steps that were followed for processing the data were:

- a. Designing the database using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).
- b. Coding the information.
- c. Entering the data into the database.
- d. Analyzing and interpreting the data.
- e. Report writing.
- f. Results Presentation.

VI. SAMPLING

In order to carry out the sampling process of our Department (CC.SS) the following formula was used:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 PQ N}{E^2 (N-1) + Z^2 PQ}$$

Where: **n** = sample; **N** = population; **Z** = score; **PQ** = percentage to be included or excluded; **E** = standard error.

The general population was composed of 52 students and by using this formula the researchers were able to obtain the sample which was of 30 students. Having determined the sample. Thirty students were picked out of 52. This process of picking students was done randomly. At first, several pieces of paper containing the students' numbers were cut. Then they were put into a little box and thirty students were chosen. Consequently, the rest were taken as substitutes.

The following table shows the population (N) and the sample (n) of the department.

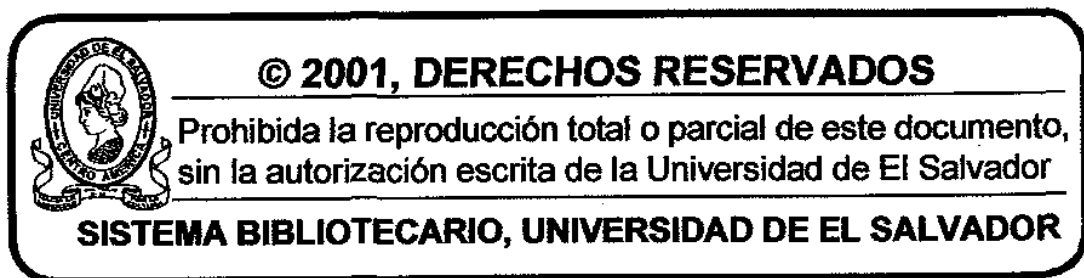
TABLE 1 : The Population and Sample of Sociology Department

| Department or School | Population (N) | Department Sample (n) |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Social Science School | 52 | 30 |

Source : The population of each department or school was given by the Academic Administration of the School of Arts and Sciences, Semester I-2000.

A. Instrument

The instrument that was used was a questionnaire. This questionnaire contained questions related to the areas included in the model design to study the attrition cycle and subject failing of the Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Sciences in semester I -2000. These areas were academic performance of the sample students, the professor's methodology, and the role of the university as an institution in the students' failure and or attrition.



VII. DATA ANALYSES

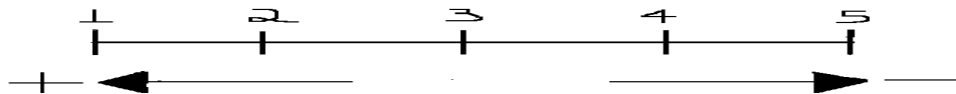
A. SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

The sample characterization for this research was composed of students who were studying at The Sociology Department of the SAS of the UES during semester I -2000. There were 26 students as a whole. 14 students were women and 12 of them were men. Furthermore, 11 female students as well as 8 male ones failed subjects. In regard to attrition, 7 students dropped out, 3 women and 4 men. Lastly, regarding the career they were studying, it can be said that 5 women were studying "Profesorado en SS.CC (Ciencias Sociales)" and 9 the "Licenciatura en SS.CC. Likewise, there were 5 men studying "Profesorado" and 7 the "Licenciatura en SS.CC.

| | SEX | | SUBJECT FAILING | | ATTRITION | | CAREER | |
|-------|-----------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|------|---------------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Women | 14 | 53.8 | 11 | 57.9 | 3 | 42.9 | 5(Prof.) 9(Lic.) | 19.2 34.6 |
| Men | 12 | 46.2 | 8 | 42.1 | 4 | 57.1 | 5(Prof.) 7(Lic.) | 19.2 27 |
| TOTAL | 26 | 100 | 19 | 100 | 7 | 100 | 26 | 100 |

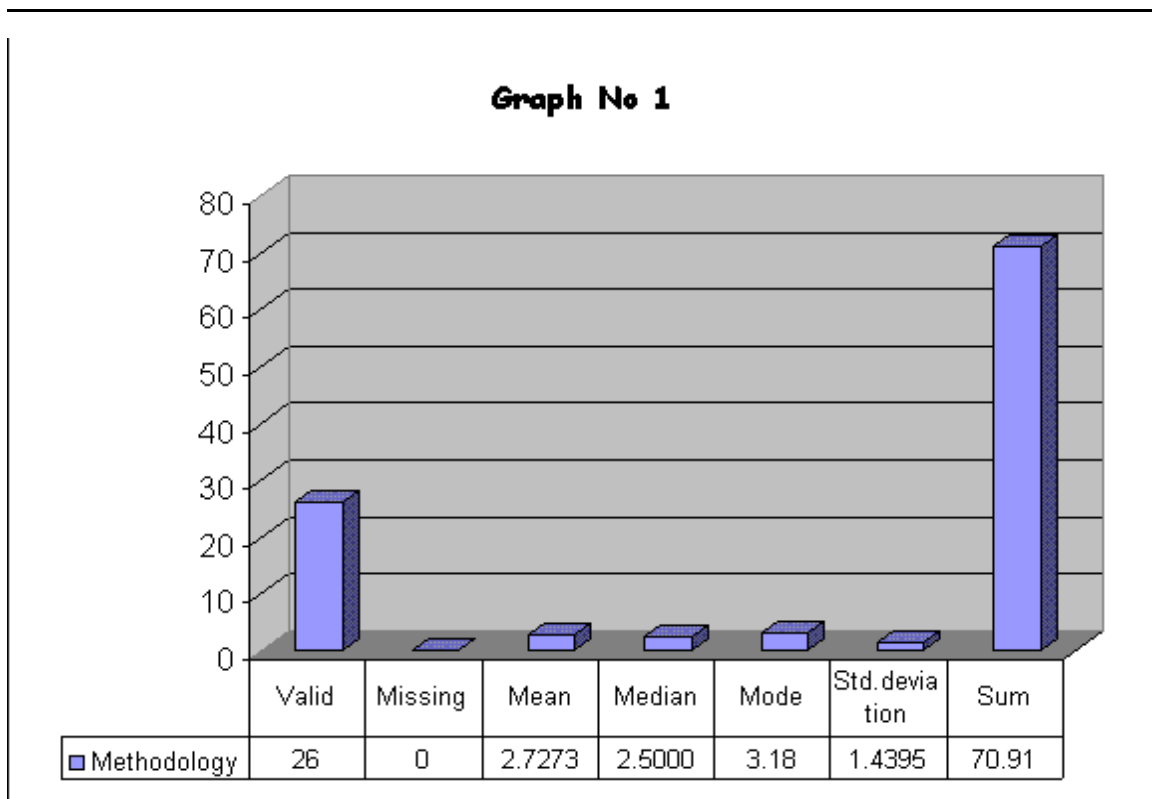
B. SCALE USED FOR ANALYSING THE METHODOLOGY CONSTRUCTS

In order to measure the methodology constructs, a Likert scale was used, which can be analyzed taking as a starting point the mean understanding that the closer to 1.0 it is, the better the results; and further the mean is from 1, the worst the results are.



- + *It gets closer to the methodology established as better.*
- - *The methodology tends to further to an appropriate teaching learning methodology*

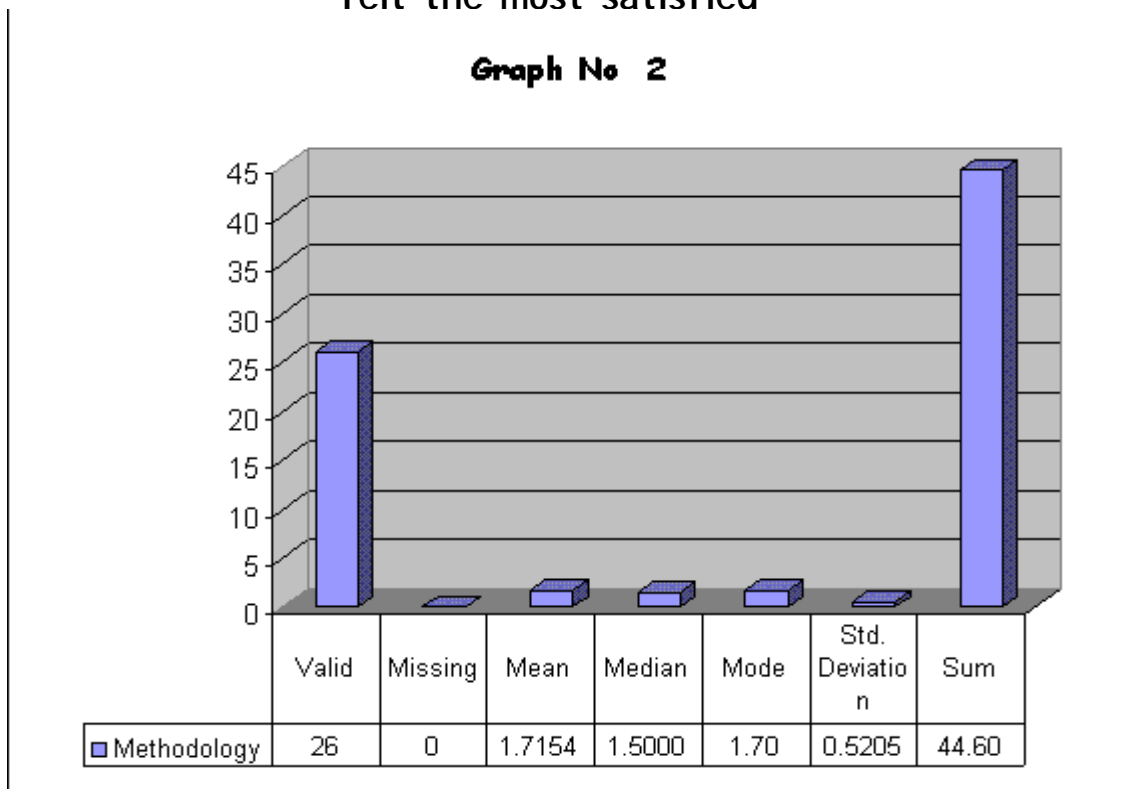
Evaluation of the teaching learning methodology in the subjects students had failed



The methodology construct refers to the techniques, strategies, interest and available resources that the professors used to teach classes in The Sociology Department.

Based on the data presented in the table above, it can be mentioned that the methodology of the professors was not good enough in order to help students to succeed in those subjects since it exhibits a 2.7 value (Let's take into account that the higher the Mean is, the less Positive or appropriate the methodology is).

Evaluation of the methodology used in the subjects students felt the most satisfied



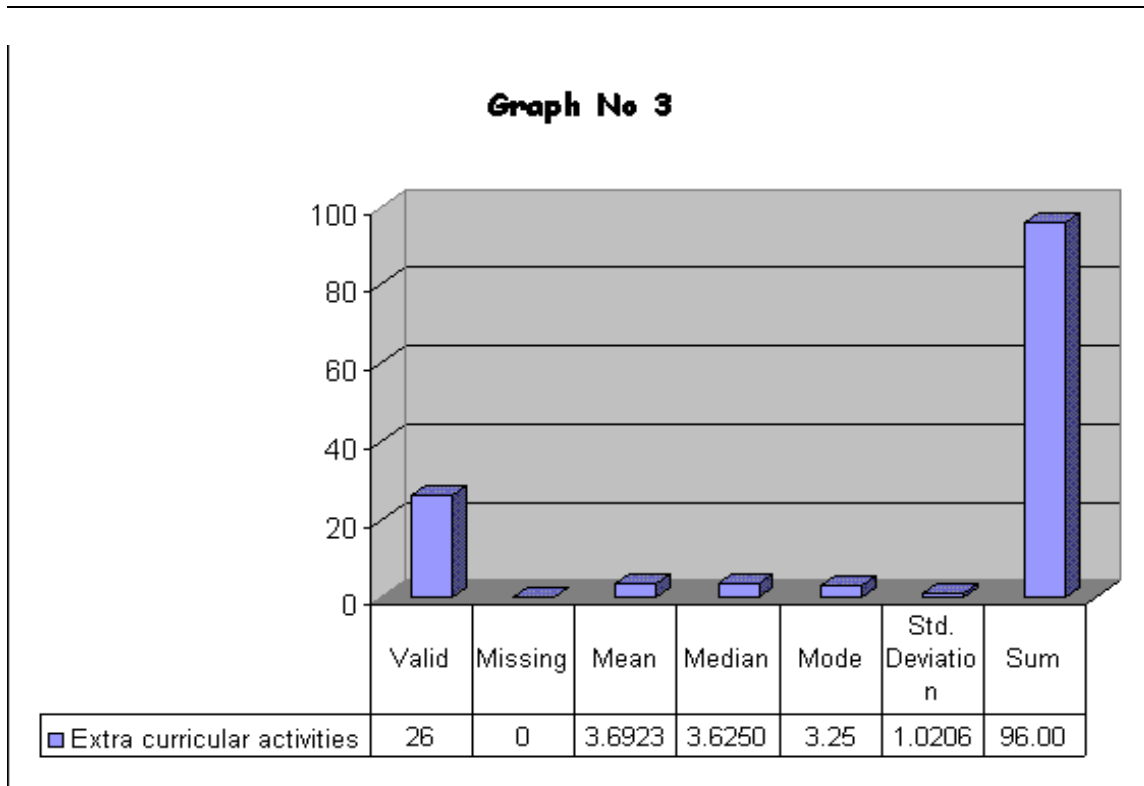
This table shows clearly that the Professors' methodology was considered better by the students because the mean shows a 1.71 value. Therefore, it can be said that the methodology used by the Professors was really important for the students to succeed in those subjects .

The previous findings match with the hypotheses in regard to the methodology of the Professors since in the first construct the methodology of the professors influenced in a way students subject failing. And in the second one, the methodology of the professors expressed a positive idea because it determined the students' success

In order to measure the constructs related to *extra curricular activities, students' performance, classroom environmental factors and aspects related with the SAS and the Sociology Department*, the following categories were used:

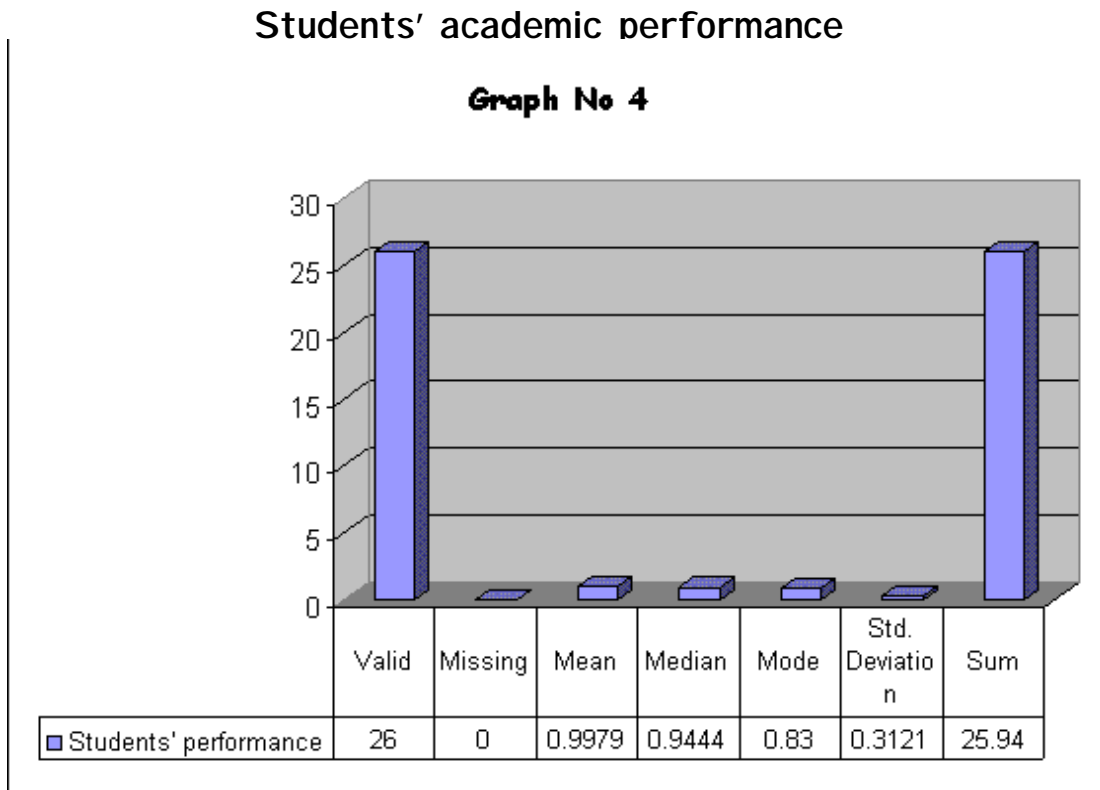
(1) Always (2) Usually (3) Sometimes (4) Almost never (5) Never [designed for the first two constructs], and for the last two ones the categories were: (1) Excellent (2) Very good (3) Good (4) regular (5) Poor.

Evaluation of the students' participation in extra-curricular activities



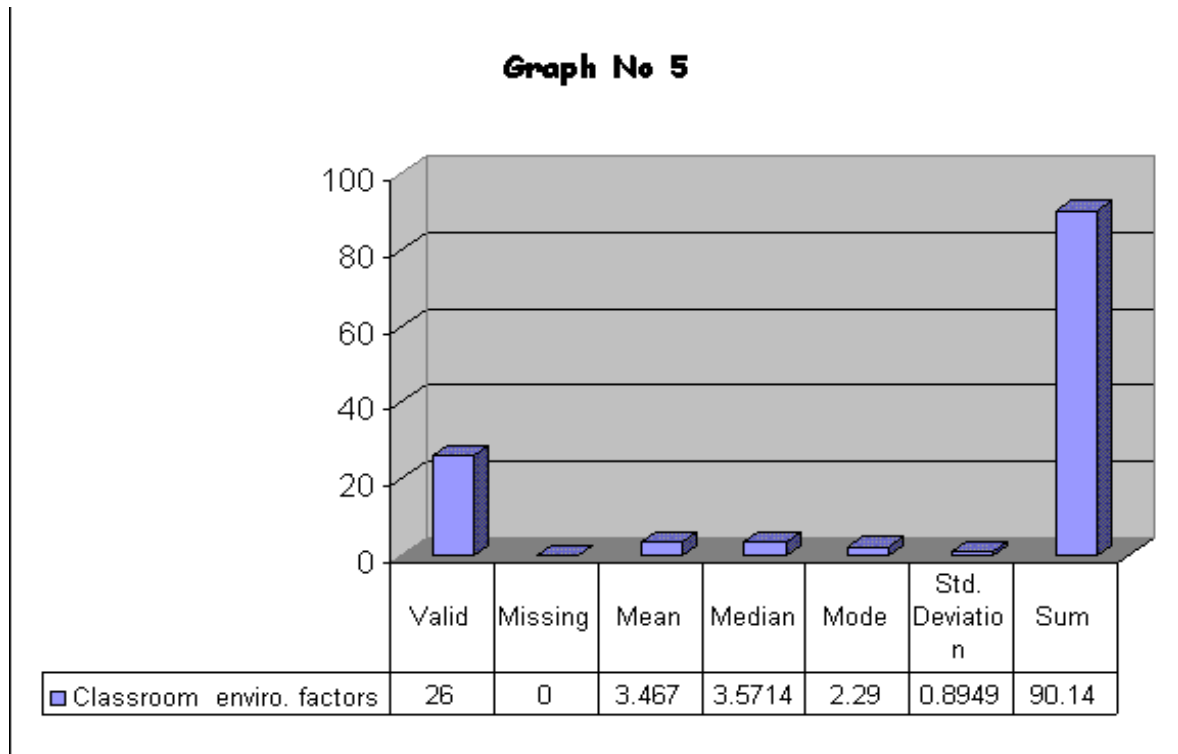
This construct had the following aspects: students' participation in cultural activities, workshops, and associations as well as their participation as subject representatives.

As it can be seen in the graph above, the Mean for this construct is 3.7 value which means that most of the students almost never participate or care about taking part of extra curricular activities in the institution.



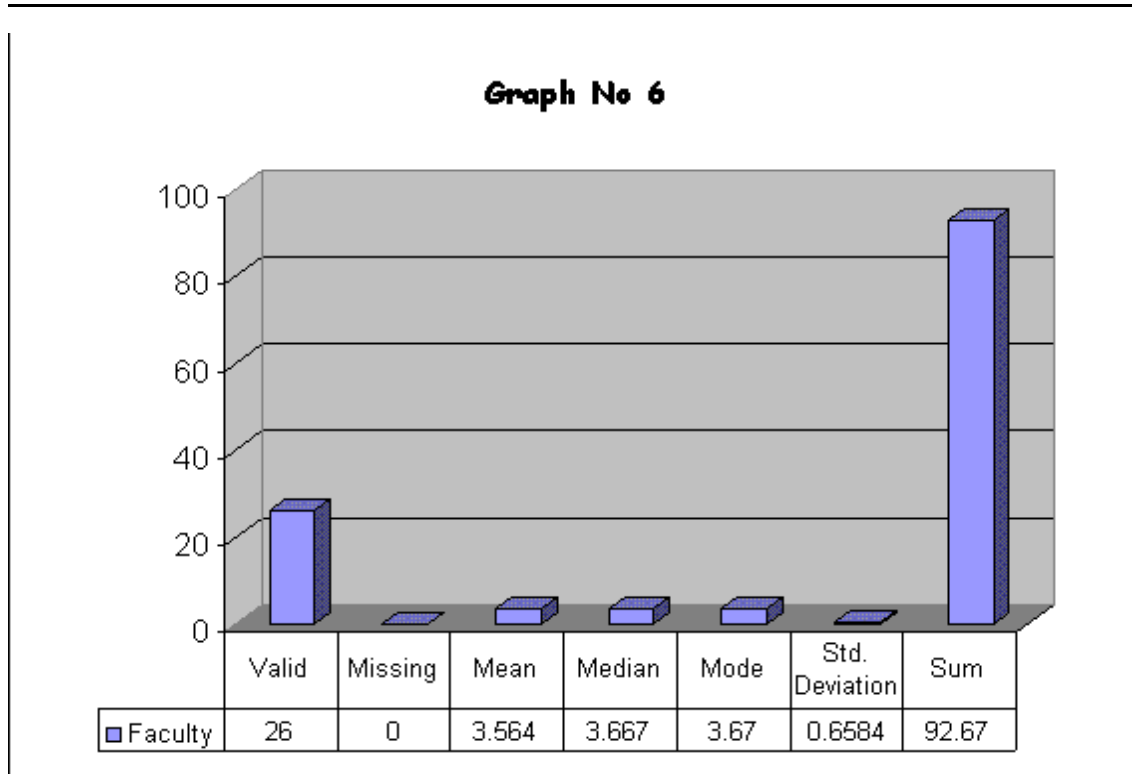
According to the data presented in this graph, it can be mentioned that the students' academic performance apparently was very good since the mean expresses a .9979 value. However, by making a deeper analysis, this data tend to be contradictory in regard with students point of view because 19 of them out 26 failed subjects, and it is relevant to mention that they were between 20 to 25 years old. (See table No 2 about variable cross tabulation for reference).

Classroom environmental factors



Based on the data above, it can be said that the classroom environmental factors were evaluated by the students as regular since the mean exhibits a 3.46 value. This means that the faculty has to work in providing students better infrastructure conditions to make their permanence more appropriate and comfortable.

Aspects related with the SAS and Sociology Department



According to the information shown in this graph, the administrative aspects related to the Faculty of SAS and the Sociology Department can be qualified as regular since the mean exhibits a 3.56 value. Therefore, it can be quoted that these aspects need to be improved in order to provide much better services to the students.

C. VARIABLE CROSS TABULATIONS

Table No 1 *“Sex vs. failed subjects”*

| | | Rec. Failed subjects | | | Total | |
|--------|--------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| | | | 1-2 subjects | 3-4 subjects | 5 on | |
| P2.sex | Male | Count | 7 | | 1 | 8 |
| | | % of P2.sex | 87.50% | | 12.5 | 100 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 41.2 | | 100 | 42.1 |
| | | % of Total | 36.8 | | 5.3 | 42.1 |
| | Female | Count | 10 | 1 | | 11 |
| | | % of P2.sex | 90.9% | 9.1 | | 100 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 58.8 | 100 | | 57.9 |
| | | % of Total | 52.6 | 5.3 | | 57.9 |
| Total | | Count | 17 | 1 | 1 | 19 |
| | | % of P2.sex | 89.5 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 100.0 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | % of Total | 89.5 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100 |

The cross tab above shows that women actually failed more subjects than men since the figure of 90.9 corresponding to female sex is higher than that of men which is 87.5. It has to be stated that this is not a statistically meaningful difference though.

Table No 2 "Age vs. failed subjects"

| | | | Rec. Failed subjects | | | Total |
|---------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| | | | 1-2 subjects | 3-4 subjects | 5 on | |
| Rec.age | From 20 to 25 | Count | 14 | 1 | 4 | 19 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 82.4 | 100 | 50 | 73.1 |
| | | % of Total | 53.8 | 3.8 | 15.4 | 73.1 |
| | From 26 to 30 | Count | | | 1 | 1 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | | | 12.5 | 3.8 |
| | | % of Total | | | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| | From 31 to 35 | Count | 2 | | 1 | 3 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 11.8 | | 12.5 | 11.5 |
| | | % of Total | 7.7 | | 3.8 | 11.5 |
| | from 36 to the highest | Count | | | 1 | 1 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | | | 12.5 | 3.8 |
| | | % of Total | | | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| | No information | Count | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 5.9 | | 12.5 | 7.7 |
| | | % of Total | 3.8 | | 3.8 | 7.7 |
| Total | | Count | 17 | 1 | 8 | 26 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | % of Total | 65.4 | 3.8 | 30.8 | 100 |

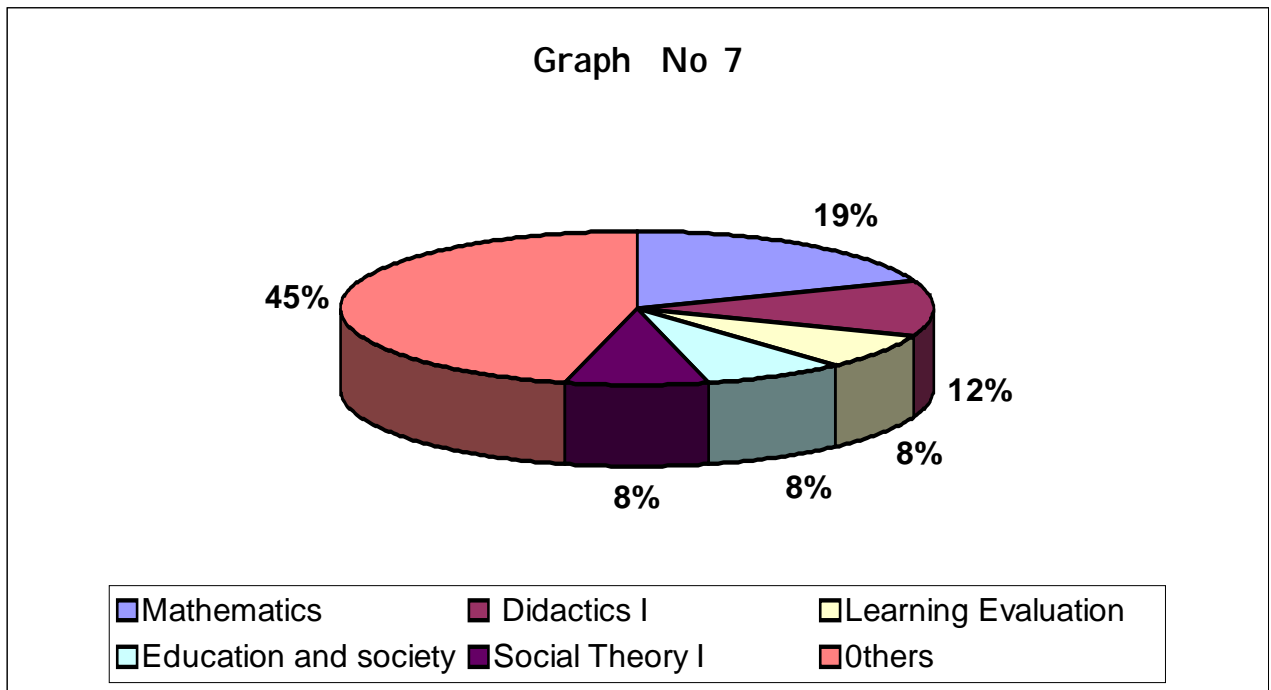
The output obtained from the table above exhibits that the students who failed subjects the most were the younger ones since as it can be seen 19 students out 26 are concentrated between the ages of 20 to 25 years old. It may be said, that this happened due to students' lack of motivation, interest and dedication toward the subjects that they were taking during semester I - 2000. (See graph No 8). Furthermore, students at these ages tend to be less responsible in regard with academic matters, in this case passing subjects. Also, they are not quite sure about what they want to achieve in their professional life. (Researchers' point of view).

Table No 3 “Marital Status vs. Failed subjects”

| | | | Rec. Failed subjects | | | Total |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| | | | 1-2 subjects | 3-4 subjects | 5 on | |
| P3.Marital status | Married | Count | | | 1 | 1 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | | | 12.5 | 3.8 |
| | | % of Total | | | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| | Single | Count | 16 | 1 | 6 | 23 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 94.1 | 100 | 75 | 88.5 |
| | | % of Total | 61.5 | 3.8 | 23.1 | 88.5 |
| | | Count | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| | People living together | % of Rec. failed subjects | 5.9 | | 12.5 | 7.7 |
| | | % of Total | 3.8 | | 3.8 | 7.7 |
| Total | | Count | 17 | 1 | 8 | 26 |
| | | % of Rec. failed subjects | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | % of Total | 65.4 | 3.8 | 30.8 | 100 |

According to the data above, single people, who do not have parenthood responsibilities, failed more subjects. So it can be mentioned that even though single people have more time to dedicate to their studies, they don't take advantage from that. Almost one fourth of the single population has failed 5 or more subjects which is an interesting finding taking into consideration that the population is relatively young (See table No 2 age vs. failed subjects). Therefore, the fact of being single might be another factor that influenced on students' subject failing since they still do not have enough grade of maturity regarding academic matters.

**Subjects most often failed by the students of the Sociology
Department, semester I -2000**

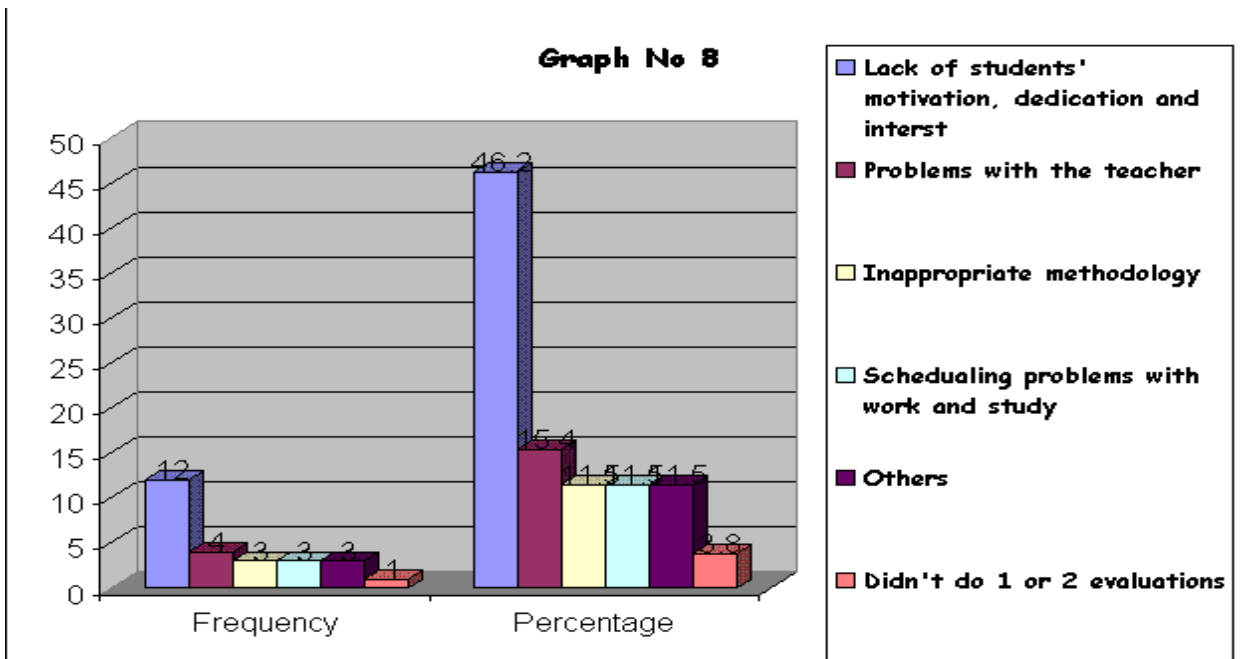


In the Sociology Department the subject most often failed was Mathematics exhibiting a 19%. Based on this information, the researchers think that students tend to fail this subject not only because it is considered by many as a difficult one, but also because mathematics is not usually taken as a main subject in their professional field. The category others with a 45% includes twelve (12) subjects that were mentioned only once.

Coming up next, a table with its graph, containing causes arranged in an ascendant way, is presented below; these causes were considered as the ones that provoked students' subject failing.

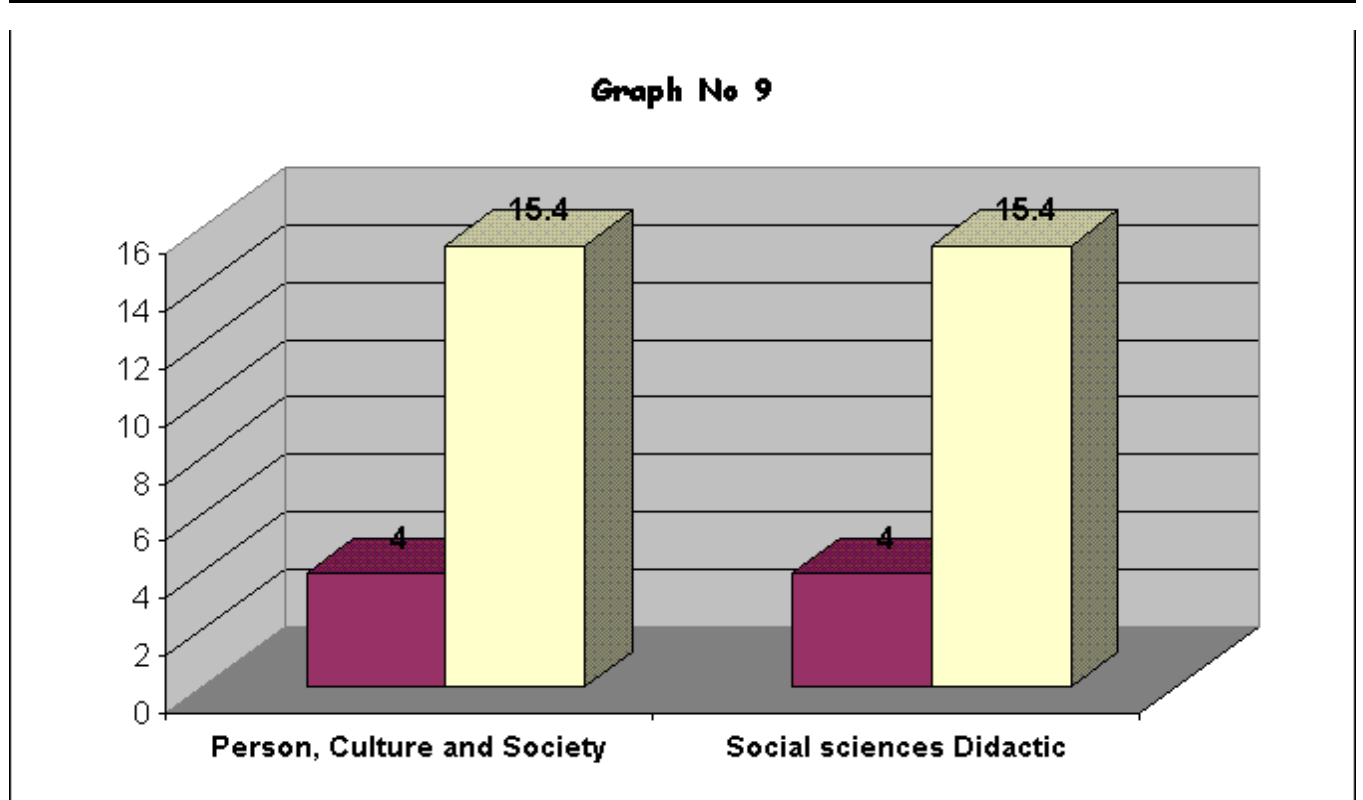
| CAUSES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--|-----------|------------|
| 1. Lack of students' motivation, dedication and interest | 12 | 46.2 |
| 2. Problems with the teacher | 4 | 15.4 |
| 3. Inappropriate methodology | 3 | 11.5 |
| 4. Scheduling problems with work and study | 3 | 11.5 |
| 5. Others | 3 | 11.5 |
| 6. Didn't do 1 or 2 evaluations | 1 | 3.8 |
| Total | 26 | 100% |

Causes that provoked students' subject failing



The main cause that provoked students' subject failing, as the previous table and the graph show, was mainly the lack of motivation, interest and dedication toward the subject. This cause presents a 46.2 % out of the 100%; the other causes were considered as the ones that also provoked students' subject failing but by a less percentage of students. However, an important finding is that the teaching learning methodology used by the professor did take part on students' failing too. (For more information refer to graph No 1).

Subjects that students mentioned they felt the most satisfied with



The subjects that students considered as the ones that fulfilled their expectations were: "Persona, Cultura and Sociedad with a 15.4% and Didactica de las Ciencias Sociales" showing the same percentage. It can be quoted that the methodology used by the professors in those subjects was very appropriate since it played such an important role on students subject success (For more information See graph No 2).

D. TESTING HYPOTHESES

As literature previously showed, students' subject failing and attrition are linked to several factors such as instability of family, students' lack of motivation toward education and economic factors (See theoretical framework for reference). In this section is intended to test whether the following hypotheses are factors or not that are linked to students' subject failing and attrition in the Sociology Department in the School of Arts and Sciences during semester I-2000.

HYPOTHESIS 1:

The professors' methodology in the teaching learning process influenced in the students' subject failing.

Table 1

| | Value | Df | Asymp.sig. (2-tailed) | Exact.sig. (2-tailed) | Exact.sig. (1-tailed) |
|------------------------------|-------|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pearson chi-square | 3.000 | 1 | .083 | | |
| Continuity Correction | 1.688 | 1 | .194 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 3.104 | 1 | 0.78 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .193 | .097 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2.875 | 1 | 0.90 | | |
| N of valid cases | 24 | | | | |

In the light of the Chi-square test of Pearson, it can be determined satisfactorily that the hypothesis number 1 is confirmed since the Chi-square value 3.000 is higher than the X table value with an error of the 0.10 (See

Fisher and Yates statistical tables in annexes). Such significance allows to say that the professors' methodology influenced students' subject failing.

HYPOTHESIS 2:

More women than men failed subjects in the sociology Department.

Table 2

| | Value | Df | Asymp.sig. (2-tailed) | Exact.sig. (2-tailed) | Exact.sig. (1-tailed) |
|------------------------------|-------|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pearson chi-square | .490 | 1 | .484 | | |
| Continuity Correction | .082 | 1 | .775 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | .490 | 1 | .484 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .683 | .387 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .471 | 1 | .493 | | |
| N of valid cases | 26 | | | | |

By having a look at this table, it can be said that hypothesis No 2 is not accepted since the value given by the Pearson Chi-square is lower than the X table value with 0.10 minimal permissible percentage of error. This perhaps might have happened due to the limited sample included for this analysis which was composed of 19 students, divided into 8 men and 11 women.

HYPOTHESIS 3:

Students dropped out due to subject failing.

The hypothesis above could not be proved by the Chi-square test since the number of found cases (7) cannot be taken as a representative sample for this analysis. Nevertheless, through a qualitative analysis made, it was found that subject failing influenced students to drop out (See Attrition analysis, page 34).

E. ATTRITION ANALYSES

Despite of the few cases gotten of the people who dropped out from the Sociology Department, this analysis was made since it was considered as a matter of concern because of its nature itself and the important findings that were obtained from the people who dropped out.

Out of the total sample seven dropouts cases were found. Six of them belonged to the "Profesorado", and one to the "Licenciatura of Sociology". Four of the subjects were men and three women. Six of the subjects were between 20 to 25 years old.

The subject most often failed was Mathematics with a frequency of three students who mentioned that due to lack of motivation, interest and dedication they failed that specific subject.

There were two strong causes that the students considered to be the main reasons for dropping out which were: Lack of economic resources to continue their studies and to carry out some other studies. These causes were said by four students and the rest expressed other reasons. However, further information collected showed that the seven individuals shared a pattern of subject failing. They all have failed more than 5 subjects who can be considered as foremost reasons of their career abandonment.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

- A. The Professors' methodology played such an important role in the students' subject failing as well as in students' subject success.
- B. Students tend to show little or no interest at all in the subjects that do not present a great concern on their career.
- C. Students with a poor academic performance are highly likely to drop out their careers.
- D. It is concluded that causes such as lack of motivation, interest, dedication and poor success in subjects are actually linked one another since they influenced students to quit their studies and fail subjects.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

- A.** Professors should devote themselves to improve the quality of their teaching to develop motivation on students.
- B.** The Sociology Department should motivate the students to participate more in extra-curricular activities such as workshops, trainings or congress so that they heighten efforts to the subjects from the very beginning to minimize the possibility of subject failing.
- C.** Students should consult libraries, info-centers or other resources outside the classroom so that they get the maximum knowledge for having success in a given subject.
- D.** The university authorities specifically of the SAS should try to improve the conditions of every classroom to benefit all the students so that this takes part of their motivation to attend classes and improve their academic performance.
- E.** From the very beginning of each course, the professors should help students become aware about the objective of the subject and what they expect from them in order to succeed at the end of the subject.
- F.** The authorities of the UES should provide more scholarships for those students who cannot pay a career in the university.

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