ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Retrospective Analysis of Academic status of Female students in Jimma University Main Campus: from 1993 to 1997 E. C.

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Abstract

Female students' participation in tertiary level education in Ethiopia is still very low even though rapidly increasing from time to time. This cross sectional study of Jimma University female students' academic performance was conducted concentrating on the main campus, focused on the six faculties, namely faculty of medical sciences, public health, business and economics, technology, education and law.

Data were collected from the university registrar based on the records of the years 1993 through 1997 Ethiopian Calendar and ethical considerations were taken care.

According to the study, female students' success rate at fresh level was founded 68.1%, including the status of pass, distinction and great distinction; followed by 15.3% warning, still lower than the males' performance at this level. That is, the attrition rate of male and female students at this level was founded to be 16.6% and 8.7% respectively, where the females' rate was almost twice that of the males' rate. At the final year of graduation the success rate of female students was 88.9%, which was encouraging, but still lower than the males' success rate, 92.2%. Though many of the females were founded rural originated, there was no significant difference in their academic performance compared with those from town. Besides, some female students disposed to academic dismissal and drop out at higher rates in some particular faculties like faculty of technology and medical sciences; which is recommended for further study followed by remedial action plan. Of course the recommendation to increase the rate of female enrolment at tertiary education followed by the continuation of the existing affirmative action is intact.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Jimma University was established in 1983 as health Institute and developed into University status in 1992. Beginning from its establishment, Jimma University has been engaged in providing innovative and community based practical education aiming at addressing societal needs and promoting holistic and sustainable development in the country (available at http://www.ju.edu.et/.).

Nowadays, one of the global issues that attract the world's attention is the widening of the gender gap in the arenas of education and development. Of course, it is worthwhile to mention that Ethiopian women are actively involved in all aspects of their society's life. They are both producers and procreators and they are also active participants in the social, political and cultural activities of their communities. They shoulder the overall reproductive works. However, the varied, important and backbreaking roles they play have not always been recognized. The discriminatory economic and social rules and regulations prevailing in the country have prevented them from enjoying the fruits of their labor. As a result, they remain still without equal opportunities. They have lagged behind men in occupying prestige jobs, status in all fields of self-advancements. The 1999 national population office report indicated that women in Ethiopia represent almost half (49.8%) of the total population. This indicates that it is unthinkable to maintain economic development while females; half of the productive forces are excluded from participation.

The major factor for such problem can be attributed to lack of education. Education is the handmaiden of development. It can empower one to occupy prestigious job, status; know one's own interests, motives, abilities and potentialities in order to set and attain meaningful goals. Education enables not only individuals but also the society at large to clarify their beliefs and attitudes, which resulted in avoidance of baseless prejudice, stereotype thinking and discrimination against gender roles.

Nevertheless, gender disparity in education still remained severe in Ethiopia even though some progress is observed today. For instance, only 51% of Ethiopia children attend schools up to the fifth grade (Women Empowering Women, n.d). And of all the children that do attend school in the country, only one third is girls. And what is much surprising is that the gap is more widened as grade level increases. Hence, the number of females at higher levels of education is very low and insignificant as compared to the males. The 1997 report of the Ministry of Education (cited in national office of population) witnesses this reality as shown in the table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of female students enrolled in regular undergraduate degree program by faculty and department (1995/96) academic year)

Department/Faculty	Percentage of female students
▪ Business and Economics	26%
▪ Education	14.8%
▪ Library Science	15.3%
▪ Law	9.6%
▪ Language Studies	25.2%
▪ Medicines	11.9%
▪ Pharmacy	2.8%
▪ Science	9.8%
▪ Social Science	28.3%
▪ Technology	3.2%
▪ Veterinary Medicine	3.8%

What makes this situation worst is not only the scant enrollment size but also the insignificant number of female students who complete their study to graduate.

There are quite a number of factors that affect girls' education. Among these the main ones are customary attitudes, early marriages and unwanted pregnancies, inadequate and gender biased teaching and educational materials, lack of adequate facilities in the schools, location of the schools, and sexual harassment and others (Burns, 2005 and Teshome, 2002). In addition, girls are also expected to share the heavy reproductive work of their mother. Consequently, if girls and young women get the chance go to school, they are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities. This in turn results in to poor scholastic performance and early dropout from the educational system. Furthermore, the mentioned factors that affected girls' access to schooling are considered to be the major causes for the present low female students' representation in higher education institutes. By realizing this fact, Jimma University has been taking deliberate measures with the intention of raising the proportion of female students. These includes, respecting their first choice during departmental placement, starting from their enrollment holding open discussion with them in order to clear the cloud, arranging and giving tutorial classes orientation & study skills, head start sessions during enrollments, tutorial classes, up to 13 hours per course based on the choice of the majority female students, and awarding for high achieving female students. By considering these realities, this research paper aimed at assessing the academic status of female students at Jimma University main campus. Therefore, studying the enrollment rate, the academic performance, study completion, and the attrition rate of female students following the enrollment year and academic year levels from 1993 to 1997 E.C were the task of this study.

1.2 Statements of the Problem
As indicated in the introductory part, this research paper is focused on answering the following points.
- What does the academic status of female students look like across faculties, through the academic years

with special emphasis on first and final year?

- Does students academic performance influenced by variables like age, admission type, high school area and program attended.
- Which groups of female students are more vulnerable to attrition?
- What does the enrollment rate of students look like across the years and programs?

1.3 Objective of the Research

General Objective
This research is intended to asses the academic status of female students in Jimma University main campus who had joined the university between 1993 and 1997 E.C and graduated within the same time range (see section 2).

Specific Objectives: This research is intended to:

- Describe the academic performance of female students across faculties,
- Assess academic performance of female students with reference to their admission type, high school area, and program type.
- Determine female student attrition rate?
- Determine enrollment rate of students across years and programs
- Rate their success level comparing enrollment and graduation
- Recommend possible means of minimizing attrition as well as raising proportion of female students

1.4 Significance of the Research
Gender gap in education participation is currently the critical concern of educators, researchers, and policy makers. The concern extends well beyond the very important equity issue and induced deliberate move to improve the situation of women with respect to participation to education and training. The low education level of most women leads them to less rewarding and lower status jobs-like the usual domestic activities performed at home. This in turn has a negative effect on how women perceive themselves by reinforcing and perpetuating gender stereotypes and biases. Again the negatively affected women's status and employment result in various social evils such as mortality, morbidity, poverty, and income inequality. As it has been usually rang in these days, "Educating a women is educating the family", enhancing female students' education and training at higher level institutions realizes the poverty reduction process and the attainment of other millennium development goals of the country. Therefore, this research is believed to have salient contributions in uncovering the deep-rooted academic problems of female students and identifying particular group of female students who are more exposed to drop out from higher education and /or performing poorly. This enables the university and other concerned bodies to take intervention measures to alleviate the problem and improve the situation of women's' participation in higher learning institutes. Moreover, the research can serve as a resource for other researchers who wish to promote further research development in the area.

1.5 Delimitation of the study
The scope of this study delimited to female students who had joined the university (only main campus) from 1993 to 1997

provided that they/their batch had graduated within the same time range. The study also analyzed the academic performance of female students with reference to their age, origin (degree of urbanization of the secondary education they had attended), and admission type (program they had attended).

1.6. Limitation of the study

The researchers premeditated to include records of all female students joined the university within the time range covered by the study so that the clear picture about their performance could be depicted. However, they could not succeed in doing so for the complete record of students joined the university in 1997 as well as records of regular female students in the Faculty of Low and Faculty of Business and Economics were not founded. This might have influenced the result obtained.

2. Methodology

The study population and site

The study population comprises all batches of female students of Jimma University (main campus) who enrolled in or after 1993 E.C provided that they graduated in or before 1997 E.C. It included female students who attended their education within the time indicated through evening extension and regular program. The research area was delimited to the main campus because of constraints of money and time. Accordingly, study included six faculties: Faculty of Business and Economics [FBE], Faculty of Low [FOL], Faculty of Education [FOE], Faculty of Medical Sciences [FMS] and Public Health Faculty [PHF] and Faculty of Technology [FOT]. And students who enrolled before 1993 were not included in the study since the researchers couldn't find well documented file of their academic record during the pilot study. The study was conducted on May, 2006.

The study design and sample

In order to realize the objectives of the research, the study design needed to be longitudinal in order to follow and assess the total female students enrollment with in the given time range, their academic status, performance and attrition from their enrollment to graduation time. So as to depict clearly the performance of female students under investigation, the comparison was made between male and female performances. For that matter, the analysis began from the total students enrolled in the campus within the time frame of the study, then specifically focused on that of female students.

Data collection procedures

Data was collected using the recorded documents found in the respective faculties or registrar office. Computer records of students' background and academic grade results were filtered by using DBASE (Computer Software) working currently in the university and printed, coded and transferred to SPSS-11 for analysis purposes. Twelve (two from each faculty, one for the regular and one for the extension) data collectors were recruited, trained, and worked under the close supervision of the researchers. Moreover, the data collected from the database and crosschecked with hard copy.

Variables

The variables of this research were age, admission type (regular/Extension), program studied, origin/area of high school, and grades at first and final years with respect to their cumulative grade point averages.

Analysis

After the data was tabulated and entered to the SPSS-11 (statistical package for social science) version, descriptive statistics such

as percentages and frequencies were computed. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out for the grade point average against the various variables if more than 3 to check for equality of variances. A pair-wise comparison of means for the grade point averages was also carried out using t-test. All tests of statistical significance are performed at alpha = .01 level.

Ethical Consideration

The official consensus of the university authority was approached to use the document. Only the identification numbers were used for confidentiality purpose of protecting the student personal documents.

3. RESULTS
The study focused on female students who had enrolled in the university from 1993 to 1997 E.C. and records of 4313 students were founded. Among this, 4265 (98.9%) students' year of entry was clearly recorded and identified. As shown in table 2, enrollments of students kept on increasing from year to year. The increment was not indicated in year 1997 merely because of damage in the records of students' document that had joined the university in that year. Besides, sex of 4303 students were recorded and 787 (18.3%) were found to be female.

From the total students whose record founded in this study 79.2% (3417) were degree students, the rest were attended diploma program. Likewise, 76.4% were regular while the rest were followed extension program.

Table 2: Crude enrollment of students (both sex) by entry year (Ethiopian Calendar)

Year of Entry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1993	329	7.6	7.7	7.7
	1994	609	14.1	14.3	22.0
	1995	1348	31.3	31.6	53.6
	1996	1700	39.4	39.9	93.5
	1997	279*	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	4265	98.9	100.0	
Missing System		48	1.1		
	Total	4313	100.0		

*Note: * The figure does not represent the total number of students who have joined the university in the indicated year for the document was damaged.*

As emphasized in the methodology part, the study focused on six faculties: FBE, FOE, FOL, FMS, FPH, and FOT. Like that of 1997 year record, the researcher couldn't get access to full documents of regular female students from FOL and FBE. In general, One third of students, 1898 (44%), went for FOE and followed by the two health faculties (FPH & FMS), which were accounted for 1570 (36.4%). This is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Female students across different faculties

|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FOE	371	47.1	47.1	47.1
	FBE+LAW	21	2.7	2.7	49.8
	MED	177	22.5	22.5	72.3
	PHF	167	21.2	21.2	93.5
	TECH	51	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	**787**	**100.0**	**100.00**	

Note for the sake of simplicity FBE and Law faculties data are merged
as the data obtained is incomplete and are from extension program only

Regarding age of students, the range is from 15 to 28 year. Majority of them 86.3%, were between 18-21 ages.

Out of the total students attended the education in Jimma University in the selected program, only records of 2058 (47.7%) depicted the degree of urbanization of the high school they had come from. Among this, as shown by figure 1, 667 (32 %) of them originated from rural high schools, followed by urban and semi-urban where each of them accounted for 25%.

Figure 1: Degree of urbanization of the secondary school the participants had attended
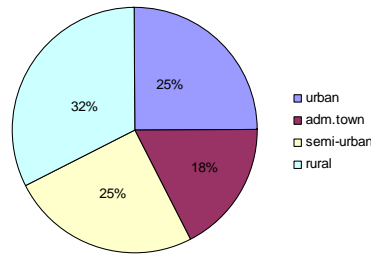
Concerning academic status of students at freshman completion, majority of them promoted with the academic status of Pass 3183 (73.8%), followed by distinction 458 (10.6%), then Warning 267 (6.2 %). Insignificant number of students had marked as drop Out 156 (3.6%), Great Distinction 153 (3.5%), Academic Dismissal for good 41 (1%), Academic Dismissal/Readmission 36 (0.8%), and Withdrawal and Incomplete 11 (0.3%).

Table 4:   Crude Academic Status at Freshman Completion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		8	.2	.2	.2
	A.D	41	1.0	1.0	1.1
	AD/R	36	.8	.8	2.0
	Pass	3183	73.8	73.8	75.8
	Dist	458	10.6	10.6	86.4
	G.Dist	153	3.5	3.5	89.9
	DO	156	3.6	3.6	93.6
	WARN	267	6.2	6.2	99.7
	W.D+INC.	11	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	4313	100.0	100.0	

As shown in table 5, in the attempt to identify academic status of students at the final year, records of 2070 (47.8%) students were founded clearly stating the required variable. Of these students, including those with academic status of pass, distinction and great distinction, 1913 (92.8%) had graduated successfully. On the contrary side, 130 (6.2%) students were failed to graduate at the final years. They went out with the status of academic dismissal, academic dismissal/readmission, drop out, or delayed to clear grade F or to upgrade the cumulative grade points to 2.00.

Table 5: Crude Academic status at time of graduation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A.D	69	1.6	3.3	3.3
	AD/R	17	.4	.8	4.2
	Pass	1577	36.6	76.6	80.7
	Dist	288	6.6	13.9	94.6
	G.Dist	48	1.1	2.3	96.9
	DO	23	.5	1.1	98.1
	WARN	19	.4	.9	99.0
	W.D+INC.	13	.3	.6	99.6
	DELAY	8	.2	.4	100.0
	Total	2060	47.8	100.0	
Missing System		2253	52.2		
	Total	4313	100.0		

Since the major target of this study was on analyzing academic performance of female students, records of female students from each faculty were identified and analyzed (figure 2). Consequently, majority of female students, like that of the total

population of students, were from FOE 371 (47.1 %) and then health faculties 344 (43.7%). Again, 75.3% (593) of the female students were attended degree programs while the rest were attendants of diploma program. Besides, 72.7 % (572) of them were regulars students while the rest 27.3% were joined extension program.

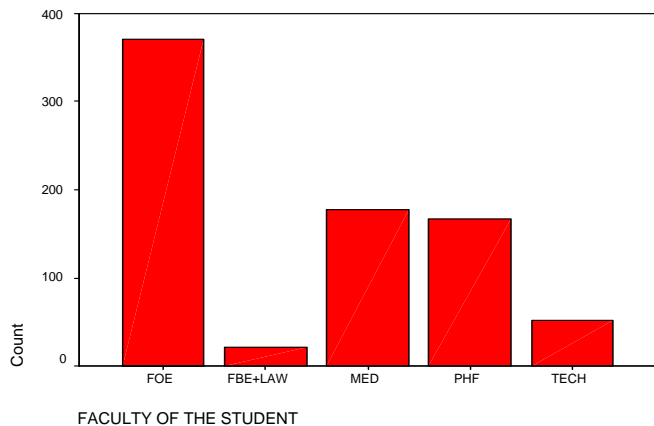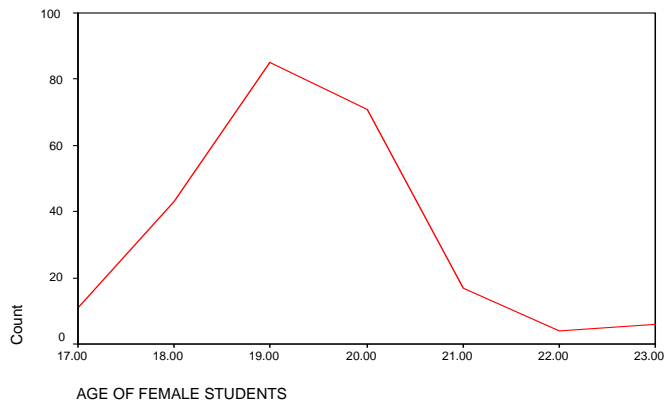Figure 2 Bar graph showing female students across different faculties

FACULTY OF THE STUDENT

Figure 3 Age of female students on their entrance to the university

AGE OF FEMALE STUDENTS

Regarding the age at which female students joined university, as shown in figure 3, majority of them (84%) included in the range of 18 to 20 years old. In general, the minimum age is 17 and the maximum is 23 year old and the mean age is 19 years with standard deviation 1.19 years.

Table 6: degree of urbanization of the origin of female students.

		Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	urban	165	43.2	43.2
	Semi-urban	114	29.8	73.0
	Rural	103	27.0	100.0
	Total	382	100.0	

As shown in table 6, among the 787 students, only 382 students' area of origin was documented. Among this, majority of them 165 (43.5%) came from urban, followed by semi-urban 114 (29.8) and the least figure 103 (27.0 %) originated from rural areas.

Figure 4 Number of female students based on year of entry

YEAR OF ENTERY
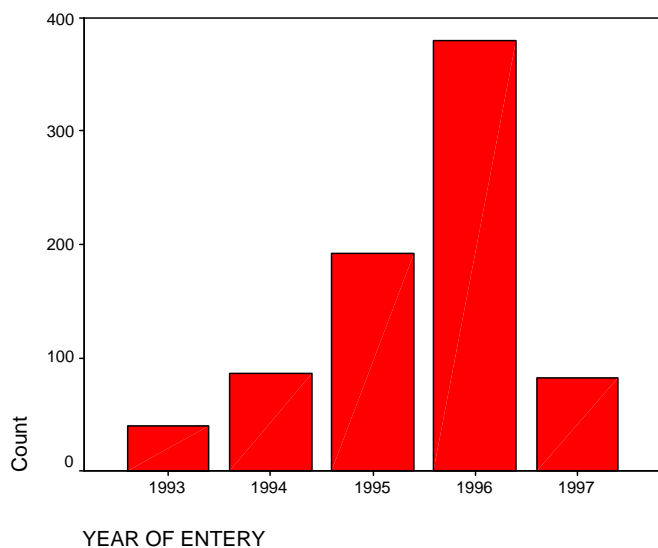
Note: The figure for year 1997 was small for the completed data was not obtained.

Figure 4 showed that the number of female students joining the university increasing from time to time. For instance, the number of female students in 1993 was below fifty but alarmingly increased and reached beyond 300 in 1996. The decline in 1997 was due to the incomplete data obtained.

Table 7: Academic status of female students after freshman completion

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Valid	AD/R	94	11.9	12.0	12.0
	Pass	461	58.6	58.9	70.9
	Dist.	60	7.6	7.7	78.5
	G. Dist	12	1.5	1.5	80.1
	D. out	36	4.6	4.6	84.7
	Warn	120	15.2	15.3	100
	Total	783	99.5	100	
Missing system		4	.5		
	Total	787	100		

Table 8: academic status across male and female students at freshman level

		Academic status cross tabulation						
		A.D/R	PASS	DIST.	G.DIST	D.OUT	WARN	TOTAL
Sex of the Student	Female Count	94	461	60	12	36	120	783
	%Within sex of the student	12.0%	58.9%	7.7%	1.5%	4.6%	15.3%	100%
	Male Count	118	2449	380	80	122	295	3444
	% within sex of the student	3.4%	71.1%	11.0%	2.3%	3.5%	8.6%	100%
	Total Count	212	2910	440	92	158	415	4227
	% within sex of the student	5.0%	68.8%	10.4%	2.2%	3.7%	9.8%	100%

When academic status of female students at freshman level seen separately, as depicted in table 7, majority of them 461 (58.1%) were promoted with pass status followed by warning 120 (15.3). Academic dismissal and drop out added to 130 (16.5%) while Distinction and Great Distinction status accounted only for 72 (9.2%). When these figures for different academic status compared with that of their male counterpart, the proportion of female students on academic status such as Drop out, warning, and Academic Dismissal/ Readmission surpassed   that of male. On opposite side, on good academic statuses such as great Distinction, Distinction and Pass status, the proportions of female students on each of these academic statuses were low.   Moreover, freshman attrition rate for male and female students for the year 1993 E.C-1997 E.C was calculated and that of female students was 16.6% while that of male students were 8.7%. This showed that female students' attrition rate was almost two times that of male.

Table 9: Female students' academic status across faculties at the freshman level

			Academic Status						
			A.D/R	PASS	DIST.	G.D IST	D.OUT	WARN	TOTAL
Faculty of the student	FOE	count	49	212	13	4	12	81	371
		% Within Faculty of the Student	13.2%	57.1%	3.5	1.1%	3.2%	21.8%	100 %
	MED	Count	24	96	13	1	17	25	176
		% Within Faculty of the Student	13.6%	54.5%	7.4%	.6%	9.7%	14.2%	100.%
	PHF	Count	10	112	29	6	2	5	164
		% Within Faculty of the Student	6.1%	68.3%	17.75	3.7%	1.2%	3.0%	100%
	TECH	Count	9	26	4	1	4	7	51
		% Within Faculty of the student	17.6%	51.0%	7.8%	2.0%	7.8%	13.7%	100%
Total		Count	92	446	59	12	35	118	762
		% Within Faculty of the Student	12.1%	58.5%	7.7%	1.6%	4.6%	15.5%	100%

As one can see from table 9, female students joining FOT were not only small in number but also suffered from high rate of academic dismissal (17.6%). On the other hand, drop out case was high for FMS female students (9.7%) as compared to the other faculties. Moreover, female students from FOE observed to be low achiever since 21.8% were survived with warning.

In general, many of the PHF female students were successful (89.7%) while the rest were more or less at the same level of success, which was about 60%.

Table 10: The average mark of female students across different faculties on the completion of freshman program.

Faculty of the student	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Median
FOE	2.1540	352	.62957	.00	4.00	2.1200
MED	2.3099		.78657	.00	3.89	2.3500
PHF	2.6723		.76408	.00	4.00	2.7600
TECH	2.3445		.59048	1.70	3.90	2.1500
Total	2.3175		.72388	.00	4.00	2.2700

Table 11

ANOVA Table

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
CGPA2* Faculty of the student	Between Groups (combined)	3	9.949	20.534
	Within group	716	.485	
	Total	719		

As one can deduce from table 10 and 11, the average mark of female students vary across faculties and this was significant at p=0.01 level of significance performance (measured as CGPA). Accordingly, the mean of the female students academic performance (CGPA2) was 2.3 (St.dev 0.72) while it varies faculty wise where the highest mean was 2.7 (St.dev. 0.76) for public health faculty, the lowest 2.2 (St.dev 0.63) education faculty; where by the maximum CGPA 4.0 is found in both faculties.

Table 12. The average mark of female students in regular and extension program together with other statistics

Regular/extension	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Median
Regular	2.2383	527	.74882	.00	3.95	2.2400
Extension	2.5086	213	.59481	1.43	4.00	2.3300
Total	2.3161	740	.71807	.00	4.00	2.2700

Similarly, the mean CGPA of regular female students was 2.2 (St.dev. 0.75) while that of the extension was 2.5 (St.dev 0.59) were the difference was significant at $P = 0.01$ using the t-test for equality of the means.

Table 13: Independent t-test for the difference in *CGPA* at first year for regular and extension female students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					99% Confidence interval of Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CFPA2	Equal variances assumed	1.225	.269	-4.703	738	.000	-.2704	.05749	-.41884	-.12192
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.180	489.622	.000	-.2704	05220	-.40537	-.13539

As it is shown from table 12 there was deviation on the average mark of female students attending regular and extension program. The average mark for extension female students on first year completion was 2.51 where as that of the regular

students was only 2.24 this difference is
also supported by t-test which was

significant at p =0.01 level of significance.

Table 14: Cross tabulation of academic status vs. origin of town

			A.D/R	Pass	Dist & G. Dist	D. Out	WARN	Total
Urban/semi-urban/rural	Urban	Count	25	95	17	6	21	164
		%Within Urban/semi-urban/rural	15.2%	.57.9%	10.4%	3.7%	12.85	100%
		% of total	6.6%	25.0%	4.5%	1.6%	5.5%	43.2%
	Semi-urban	Count	22	62	10	4	15	1133
		% Within urban/sem9-urban/rural	19.5%	54.9%	8.8%	3.5%	13.3%	100%
		% of Total	5.8%	16.3%	2.6%	1.1%	3.9%	29.7%
Total	Rural	Count	69	216	33	14	48	380
		% Within urban/semi-urban/rural	18.2%	56.8%	8.7%	3.7%	12.6%	100%
		% Total	118.2%	56.8%	8.7%	3.7%	12.6%	100%

Even though the highest Academic
Dismissal/ readmission (21.4%) seen in
female students who came from rural areas,

there was no significance difference as
shown by the chi-square test at $P = 0.01$
where $(P = 0.92)$ in this test.

Table 15: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.214[a]	8	.920
Likelihood Ratio	3.324	8	.912
Linear-by-Linear Association	.548	1	.459
N of Valid Cases	380		

a. 2 cells (13.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count
is 3.79.

Table 16: Academic status of female students during final year (at the time of graduation)

			STATUS AT TIME OF GRADUATION						
			A.D	Pass	Dost	G. Dist	D. Out	DELAY	Total
Sex of the student	Female	Count	17	129	32	6	3	1	188
		% Within Sex of the student	9.0%	68.6%	17.0%	3.2%	1.6%	.5%	100%
	Male	Count	48	654	114	26	18	1	861
		% Within sex of the student	5.6%	76.0%	13.2%	3.0%	2.1%	.1%	100%
Total		Count	65	783	146	32	21	2	1049
		% Within sex of the student	6.2%	74.6%	13.9%	3.1%	2.0%	.2%	100%

The success rate of male and female students also showed difference that is males' success rate was 92.2% where as that of female students' success was 88.9%. The rest 7.8% and 11.1% from male and female students respectively did not graduate with their batch for academic or non academic reasons.

4. DISCUSSION

In order to study the academic performance of female students Jimma University who are enrolled in or after 1993 and have graduated in or before 1997 E.C, cross sectional study based on document analysis method of data collection technique was employed and the result was displayed in the forerunning section (result Part). Similarly, this section devoted itself to the detailed discussion of the result obtained

Attending different program at different levels 4313 students were founded in the main campus of Jimma University. However, the entry year was clearly indicated for 4265 students. The data showed that the enrollment of students alarmingly increase from year to year. This is because of the general current trends of

education in Ethiopia for the new Education and Training policy focuses on expansion of education at all levels (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1994).

Out of 4,303 students whose sex was clearly recorded, 787 (18.9%) were female which is insignificant compared to the total population of female in Ethiopia, which is almost half of their counter part male (MOE, 2005; Prime Minister Office, 2004). This is inline with the finding of Burns (2005) that presented the enrollment ratio of Ethiopian students' at all levels as one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa and the disproportional representation of female students at higher levels. However, as shown in figure 4, the number of female students joining the university, like that of male students, kept increasing from time to time. This could be due to the policy held at the country as well as at university level. The intake capacity of the Jimma University is increasing since its inception as a university. This resulted in the observed escalation of students' number from time to time.

Regarding the age of students joined the different faculties, majority of them were at a fire age (15-18 year) with a range of 15-28 age. Regarding the age at which female

students joined university, as shown in figure 3, the range is 17-28 with the mean of 19 year and St. dev. 1.19 where the majority (84%) lied between 18 to 20 years.

Jimma University has been running different programs through regular and continuing and extension program. Accordingly, the aggregated data of both sexes showed that (3417) 79.2% were attended degree program, while 20.8 % were attendants of diploma program. Taking data of female students independently, majority of them 593 (75.3%) were enrolled in degree program while the rest went for diploma program. The observed difference in aggregated data as well as that of female was because of the fact that many faculties were not providing diploma program from the beginning or provided it only through extension program unlike degree. Moreover, since 1996 diploma program was phased out for the ministry of education gave the responsibility for regional colleges.

Regarding the proportion of students attended regular and continuing/extension programs, majority (76.4%) were registered in regular program while the rest were followed extension program. Similar evidence observed regarding that of female students since 72.7% (572) of them were registered in regular program while the rest 27.3% were joined extension program, showing that the extension program contributed to the increase of female education at tertiary level.

Pertaining to the academic performance of female students at different program, students who had attended extension program showed good performance though they were small in number. The comparison was made based on their CGPA where the mean value for that of regular students was 2.2 (St.dev. 0.75)

whereas that of extension was 2.5 with St.dev. 0.59, which is significant at p=0.01 using t-test for equality of the means. This indicated that female students attends extension program are becoming strong in their academic performance.

Like for other variables, records regarding the degree of urbanization of the town of the school they had attended their secondary education was not founded for all students. It was clearly recorded for relatively half, which was 2058 (47.7%) of the students. In general, the aggregated data of male and female students as indicated in figure 1, showed that majority of students joined the university came from country sides than urban or semi-urban. This is also logical since 80 % of Ethiopian people are dwelling in the country side. However, the situation became the reverse when origin of female students treated independently. The data showed that majority of them 165 (43.5%) came from urban areas while least number 103 (27.0%) joined the university from rural areas.

 This implies that still females from rural areas did not yet succeed in joining higher learning education compared to the same sex students who are from urban and semi-urban and male students of the same areas. Tassew Dejene (2001) confirmed this idea stating that females in towns have better access to education than those in rural area. Therefore, Jimma University should design strategies by which female students from rural areas are encouraged to join the university. This is the responsibilities of the universities in the country since the one of the variable by which the quality of the service and education they provided are to be measured by the proportion of disadvantaged groups, like female and minorities (Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency [HERQA], 2006).

Comparing the academic performance of female students from different origins,

there was no significance difference being tested by chi-square test at p=0.001 though it seemed that the highest Academic dismissal/Readmission went for Female students from rural areas.

Although the study focused on six faculties: FBE, FOE, FOL, FMS, FPH and FOT, complete data of students from FBE and FOL were not accessed. In general, the available data showed that one third of students, 1898 (44%), went for FOE and followed by the two health faculties (FPH & FMS), which were accounted for 1570 (36.4%). As the student population in FOE is one third of the total population of JU, females in this faculty found high in number 371 (47.1%) than any other faculty. This might be due to the fact that FOE has incorporated many departments with different programs unlike other faculties for instance, FOL which is running with only one department.

Regarding academic status of students at freshman completion, majority of them promoted with the academic status of Pass 3183 (73.8%), followed by distinction 458 (10.6%), then Warning 267 (6.2 %). Although the number/ percentage of students who had marked as drop out, academic dismissal for good, academic dismissal/ readmission and withdrawal and incomplete were seemed insignificant when viewed independently, the fact is far beyond that for they added up to 244 (9.2%) and these much number considered as wastage.

Like that of freshman completion, academic status of students (both males and females) at the final year was also investigated. In view of that, majority of them 1913 (92.8%) had graduated successfully while the remaining 130 (6.2%) were not get graduated for various reasons. Though the attrition during the final year was less in number compared to that of the first year, the wastage should not be considered as insignificant when the resources and time invested were taken into consideration. Moreover, if attrition continues like first and final years also during the middle levels, large amount of students would be victimize, which is in great wastage of resource. The attrition rate during first year significant compared to final years that might be due to the fact that students experience adjustment difficulty with the new physical, academic and social milieu. Study conducted in developed country also confirmed the same result (Ohio University, 2005).

The academic status/ performance of female students were presented in comparison with that of males both during freshman program and final year. With respect to the former one, as depicted in table 7, majority of female students 461 (68.1%) were promoted with pure pass status followed by warning 120 (15.3). Academic dismissal and drop out added to 130 (16.5%) while Distinction and Great Distinction status accounted only for 72 (9.1%). When these figures for different academic status compared with that of their male counterpart, their performance could be marked as poor. This was evident since proportion of female students on academic status such as Drop out, warning, and Academic Dismissal/ Readmission surpassed that of male. On opposite side, on good academic status such as great Distinction, Distinction and Pass status, the proportions of female students on each of these academic statuses were low. Moreover, freshman attrition rate for male and female students for the year 1993 E.C-1997E.C was calculated and that of female students was 16.6% while that of male students was 8.7%. This showed that female students' attrition rate was almost two times that of male. This confirmed the

perpetuated gender gap in literate adults since less students joined Higher learning Institution but more of them drop out their education compared to male students. Pertinent to the later (academic performance during final year), male students kept on showing good performance than females. For instance, the male students' success rate was 92.2% where as that of female students' success was 88.9%.

Significant difference in performance among female students themselves was also observed when assessed across different faculties and tested at p=0.01 level using ANOVA. In general, the mean of the female students' academic performance (CGPA2) was 2.3 (St.dev 0.72) with the range of 2.2 (St.dev. 0.63), which belonged to FOE, to 2.7 (St.dev. 0.76), which is observed in PHF. In addition the general success rate was calculated and female students PHF came in first with rate of 89.7% while the other faculties were revolving around 60%. In general, PHF was observed to be best for female students to achieve a high score as well as maintaining low number of drop out case. On the contrary side, female students joining FOT were not only small in number but also suffered from high rate of academic dismissal (17.6%). On the other hand, drop out case was high for MSF female students (9.7%) as compared to the other faculties. Moreover, female students from FOE observed to be low achiever. The reason for high rate of academic dismissal for FOT and high drop out case for FMS was not exactly known and recommended for further research, the categorization of female students from FOE as low achiever could be justified less prepared students are joining the faculty (Adula, 2006). Firdissa (2006) confirmed similar conclusion in the context of Faculty of Education in Addis Ababa University.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This part of the paper devoted it self to presenting the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the aforementioned discussion.

5.1. Conclusion
- Although the proportion of female students in Jimma University was low compared to their male counterpart, their number kept on increasing from time to time within the time range of the study.
- The study showed that students joining Jimma University (both male and female) were youngsters for which consistent and effective guidance and counseling services demanded if they were needed to follow the right track in their stay in university as well as for their future life.
- Majority of female students were attended degree program than diploma. This might be due to the fact that diploma program was used to be offered by selected departments, and currently phased out at university level.
- The aggregated data of male and female students showed that majority of them were originated from rural high schools. However, records of female students depicted the opposite way that the majority of them were not from rural high schools. This implies that still females from rural areas are not succeeded in joining higher education unlike those from towns. Nonetheless, there was no significance difference in academic performance among female students from urban, semi-urban and rural areas. This might be due to the attempts made by the university in general and gender office in particular in supporting female students so that they

succeeded in their education through affirmative action.

- Majority of female students attended regular program than extension. This might be because of financial problem to cover the tuition fee as well as their living expenses, the perpetuating gender stereotypes, and family influence. The absences of extension program at selected department also contribute for the wide gap between those who followed regular and extension program.

- Although the number of female students attended extension program was relatively small in number, they showed better performance than those who attended regular program.

- Freshman attrition rate for male and female students was calculated and that of female students became twice that of males. Likewise, attrition rate for both sex during first year is more that the final years.

- There was also significant difference in enrollment and performance of female students joined different faculties. High numbers of students were joining FOE while least numbers were attending FOT. PHF was best suited female students for high rate of success and low dropout cases were registered there. On other hand, female students in the FOE registered low performance; FMS high in dropout and FOT were high in dismissal. Though giving justification for the performance of female students in other faculties seemed infant based on the data at hand, it is possible to give explanation for low performance of female students at the FOE as they were less prepared for higher education.

5.2 Recommendations

- The university should work toward increasing at least gradually the ratio of female students' enrolment to that of males. It should design strategies by which enrollment of female students from country sides will increase.

- Although the academic performance of female students is becoming strong from time to time, the attrition rate for female students surpassed that of males. Therefore, the support that has been provided for female students in the form of affirmative action shall be strengthened.

- The cause for high academic dismissal and drop out in some faculties like in FOT and FMS respectively needs further investigation.

- The university should also think of strategies by which the proportion of female students in Extension program be increased. This could be done through providing scholarship opportunities.

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