

Assessment of Practice and Outcomes of Tutorial Classes for Female under Graduate Regular Students in Adigrat University, Ethiopia

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Abstract: Back ground: Ethiopian government has committed itself to various national, regional, and international initiatives to eliminate gender-based disparity in terms of access to education. The country is adopted the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) makes member states responsible to take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women. [Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, 1979, article] Affirmative action is also provided as constitutional right. [FDRE constitution of Ethiopia, 1995, proc.No.1, NegaritGazeta of federal democratic republic of Ethiopia, year1, No1, article 35/3] Moreover, the current higher education policies are gender sensitive providing special treatment/affirmative action for female students. Objective: The study aimed to assess the attitude and practice of female students' tutorial class given to undergraduate female students. Method: the study conducted in Adigrat University, using institution based qualitative and quantitative approach. The study units were two departments from target population which were selected conveniently. A total of sixty two respondent students used for self administered questionnaire for the quantitative and three in-depth interviews and three focus group discussion with instructors were used for the qualitative. The quantitative data was entered to SPSS version twenty and qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Result: both instructors and female students have positive attitude towards the program. And it was practiced in the university to some extent but not considered as duty rather as a volunteer activity. There were also challenges like unwillingness of the teachers and the students, lack of follow up from the responsible body, and lack of incentive to instructors. Conclusion and recommendation: despite the contending views on the program it was accepted in the university. Lack of follow up, incentives and unwillingness of instructors were main challenges of the program.

Keywords: tutorial classes, female students, program

1. Introduction

Studies have confirmed that In Ethiopia, female students' participation at all levels of education is growing at increasing rate. [Mersha, Alemayehubishaw, Dawitasrat, Yismawnigussie (2009), The Study Of Policy Intervention On Factors Affecting Female Students' Academic Achievement And Causes Of Attrition In Higher Learning Institutions Of Ethiopia] On the other hand, the studies investigated that, the number of female students who graduate from higher learning institutions are still less as compared with males. Moreover, wider gender disparity exists at the higher up educational ladder in the country.

The constitution boldly entitles women to affirmative action to correct the remains of the past history. [Supra note at 2] The National Education Policy, which is prepared in the spirit of achieving the Universal Primary Education by 2015, recognizes the importance of affirmative action in enhancing girls'/ women's participation in decision-making. Accordingly Ethiopian higher institutions are implementing affirmative action to enhance gender equality.

Despite different constraints and disparity among the colleges and departments; Adigrat University delivers tutorial classes to female students to improve the academic performance of female students. Attitude of the female students and teachers towards affirmative action, mode of delivery and timing of tutorial classes are some of frequently raised challenges of tutorial classes of female students and the contribution of the program to academic performance of

female students is not studied in the university. Therefore, the study is designed to assess the attitude, existing constraints and outcomes of the program on academic performance of female students.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To examine the attitude and willingness of female students and instructors towards the tutorial classes.
- 2) To describe the practice of tutorial classes for female students in Adigrat university.
- 3) To identify the existing challenges to effective delivery of tutorial classes to female students in the university.

2. Review of Literature

Affirmative action is often misconceived as a compensation for women's individual shortcomings, rather than as a remedy for the social and historical barriers that affect women's outcomes. [AnoukaEerdewijk, Franz Wong, FetenuBekele, LenasilAsfawMahletMariem(2015)] Despite these misconceptions, many women underline the importance of affirmative action and gender equality measures, because 'women who are here face numerous obstacles and need as much support as possible.

Reviewing attrition rate or academic performance of female students of some universities up on which researches are conducted is important to have the overall figure of attrition rate of female students in higher learning institutions in Ethiopia.

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For instance, the cumulative academic achievement of male and female in Jimma College of Teachers Education in 2012 was 2.94 and 2.28 respectively. Furthermore, the data of graduated student profile shows that only 7.73% of female students achieved CGPA of 3.25 and above in 2013. [Teklu Tafase Oikaba Gender disparity in academic achievement Ethiop. J. Educ. & Sc. 2013, vol. 9: 8-9] The study further indicated that the difference is statistically significant and in some cases it is beyond the expected result. And the authors concluded that affirmative action taken during the admission process does not have as such a meaningful result in female academic achievements. The scholars finally recommended another strategy that urges to mitigate disparity between male and female students in their academic achievements at college level. So, delivering tutorial classes for female students is another strategy used to build academic capacity of female students in the university.

A study conducted by Ethiopian education strategy center in 2015 shows that there is an uneven practice and implementation of affirmative action in the universities in Ethiopia.

The practices of tutorial classes have largely been developed in response to the need to retain students in the academia so that the number of early student dropouts on academic grounds can be minimized. [Yasin, A. M. (2013). Affirmative action for women in higher education and the civil service: The case of Ethiopia] The study further stated that tutorial classes encourage students to develop more scholarly approaches to their academic disciplines. It is more interactive in that the tutor gives individual attention to the students for ensuring a greater participation, notably females. Nevertheless, the study indicates that effective implementation of tutorials is hindered due to; lack of time, commitment, voluntary nature, lack of awareness, and insufficient budget. The survey shows that from the total of 100 students interviewed, 90% of them are in favor of attending tutorial classes but consistent tutorial programs were not implemented or were implemented irregularly.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted in Adigrat University. Adigrat University is 903 km far from Addis Ababa which was established in 2011.

The study used institution based qualitative and quantitative approach. The source population of the study was instructors and all under graduate regular female students of the university. Instructors and female students from colleges of

health science, natural sciences, business and economics, agriculture and environmental science, of the university were selected purposively. The study units were two departments from each college were selected conveniently. A total of sixty two respondent students were involved in self administered questionnaire for the quantitative part and three in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with instructors were used for the qualitative part. The quantitative data was entered to SPSS version twenty cleaned, analyzed and the results described in paragraphs, graphs, tables and pie-chart. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion

The responses of female students and instructors were treated separately for the purpose of suitability and intervention. The response rate was 98.4%. The distribution of the respondents was 33.9% from college of business and economics, 22.6 % from college of social sciences and humanities, 30% from agriculture and environmental science, and 12% from college of Medicine and health science.

4.1. The need and outcomes of tutorial classes

Different views are forwarded on the importance of the program, for instance, some argue that tutorial classes are positive discrimination to female students because it implies the incompetency of female students. So, this study tried to explore the perception and attitude of female students and instructors towards affirmative action. The finding of the study shows that 98.12 % of the respondents agreed with the importance of affirmative action specifically female students, tutorial classes. In other words, both instructors and female students of the university have positive attitude on tutorial classes.

Increasing competency of female students, improving academic result, compensating social and biological problem of female students and ensuring gender equality were positive responses towards the tutorial program. 95.2% of them agreed with all advantages of the tutorial classes. Only 4.8% of the female respondents stated that females need tutorial program because their academic capacity is relatively weaker than males. This response implies that there are some female students who consider tutorial classes help to compensate personal drawbacks of female students. In this regard, whatever the reason behind, the program is accepted and believed that it is important to female students. The full figure of the respondents is indicated in (figure.1)

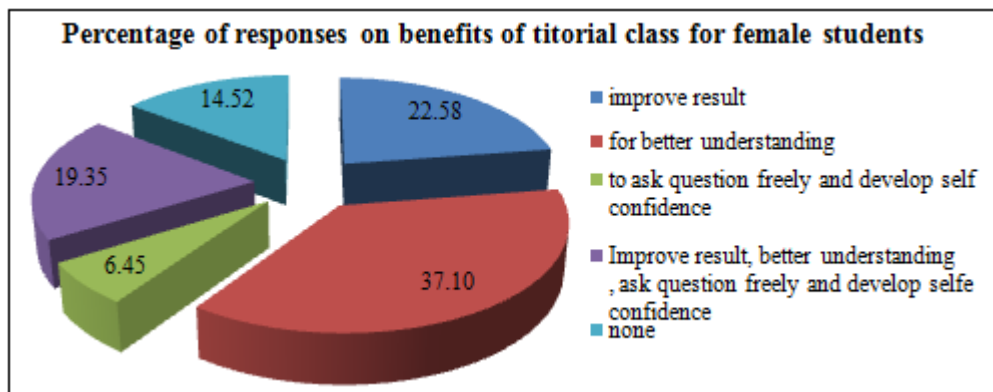


Figure 1: Why tutorial classes are needed to be given to female students? Adigrat university, Tigray, Ethiopia 2016

Except one participant all participants of the in-depth interview and focus group discussion also agreed on the importance of tutorial classes for females students. Regarding the outcomes of the tutorial classes most of the participants agreed that female students who have been attending the tutorial classes have shown improvement in their academic performance. In addition participants stated that the female students have shown better participation and confidence. More over many participants confirmed that the students grasped relatively better knowledge on the subject matter of the courses on which tutorial classes are conducted.

Based on this result, it is safe to say that the argument against affirmative action is not accepted by the study subjects of this study. And this implies that female students can be the beneficiary of this program in the university.

4.2. The practice of tutorial classes in the Adigrat University.

Beyond attitudes and expectations of the respondents towards the program, the study assessed its practical implementation in the university. The university requires every department to deliver the tutorial classes at least on three courses chosen by the female students. And the instructors are also expected to conduct tutorial classes provided the students have chosen the course. In this regard, there is variation among the colleges in the university.

Despite the variation among the departments of the university tutorial classes were conducted on many courses for four to thirty six hours for every course. Coming to the attendance of the students high attendance is observed in the department of; accounting, environmental sciences and plant sciences respectively. The least attendance is observed in nursing and archeology where the program is not fully implemented. 77.4% of the respondents replayed that they fully attended all the classes conducted. There is also a tendency of missing the classes by female students. The responses on attendance of female students on the tutorial classes are summarized in the (Table.1.)

Table 1: Attendance of female students on tutorial class per department, Adigrat university, Tigray , Ethiopia, 2016

Attendance	Department							Total
	Marketing	Nursing	Environmental science	Accounting	Plant science	Archeology	English	
All class	(11)84.6%	(2)25.0%	(18)90.0%	(8)100.0%	(8)88.9%	(5)62.5%	(5)83.3%	(77)77.4%
As needed	(1)7.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	(1)1.6%
Most classes	.0%	.0%	(1)10.0%	.0%	(1)11.1%	.0%	.0%	(1)3.2%
No tutorial class given	.0%	(6)75.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	(3)37.5%	(1)16.7%	(10)16.1%
Total	(13)100.0%	(8)100.0%	(10)100.0%	(8)100.0%	(9)100.0%	(8)100.0%	(6)100.0%	(62)100.0%

4.3. Preferences of female students

Another issue that was considered in this study was the preference of the female students on the delivery of the tutorial classes. That is, the timing, selection criteria of the courses and the provider of the program. Regarding the timing and the providers of the program, the study shows that 69.4% of the students are interested to attend the classes from the beginning of the normal classes to the end and the

rest of them replayed that they prefer to take the tutorial classes when the exam approaches and for some time before the exams. The one who should deliver the tutorial classes is another basic point that should be considered. So, the female students were asked their first choice. Accordingly the course instructors are the preferences of 75.8% of the female students and 16% of them prefer clever students to conduct the tutorial classes as indicated in (figure.2).

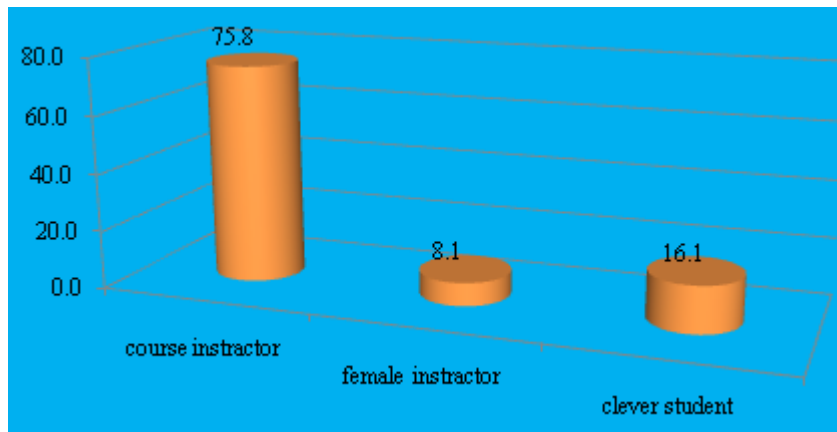


Figure 2: Preference of female students by whom the tutorial classes should be conducted Adigrat University Tigray, Ethiopia 2016

4.4. Number of courses on which tutorial classes are given to female students

Another issue up on which the study focused is for how long and on how many courses the students have been taking tutorial classes. It is a rule of the university to conduct tutorial class on at least three courses which the students chose. In addition, tutorial classes are included in curriculums for most courses. Moreover, the instructors are expected to conduct tutorial classes when needed to address the students with special need. So, in a condition which is

suitable for tutorial classes, the classes should be given on more than three courses. But the responses show that it is limited only to three courses. This implies that the tendency of delivering tutorial class based on the requirements in the course curriculums and personal motives of instructors is very low. 65% of the respondents replied they have been taking tutorial classes on three courses and 35% on two and one courses. Moreover, 17.7% replying that the tutorial classes were not conducted. The numbers of the courses on which the tutorial classes have been given are indicated in the (Table.2)

Table 2: Number of Courses up on which tutorial classes are given to female students per department in Adigrat university, Tigray, Ethiopia, 2016

Courses given	Department							Total
	Marketing	Nursing	Environmental science	Accounting	Plant science	Archeology	English	
One course	(3)23.1%	(1)12.5%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	(4)6.5%
Two course	(4)30.8%	.0%	(2)20.0%	(1)12.5%	(3)33.3%	(3)37.5%	(5)83.3%	(18)29.0%
Three course	(8)38.5%	.0%	(8)80.0%	(7)87.5%	(6)66.7%	(2)25.0%	.0%	(28)45.2%
Four course	(1)7.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	(1)1.6%
None	.0%	(7)87.5%	.0%	.0%	.0%	(3)37.5%	(1)16.7%	(1)17.7%

4.5. How and when to conduct tutorial class

During in-depth interview and focus group discussion with instructors, the participants discussed in detail whether to conduct tutorial classes only to female students or to deliver it in combination with males. Finally, the majority of the participants agreed that Tutorial classes should be given only to female students to insure active participation of female students and build self confidence. The participants further justified the separate delivery of the tutorial classes to female students by stating that female students would not be dominated by males in the class activities. Coming to the implementation time of the tutorial class most of the respondents suggested the tutorial class should be given from the begging of the formal classes to the end. Besides, some of the respondents insisted that the tutorial classes should be given when the exam approaches that is, before two or three days of the exam for the purpose of improving their result.

4.6. Challenges of tutorial classes faced by female students.

Identifying the challenges hindering effective implementation of the program in the university is also very important. Because this can indicate the intervening modalities to correct the existing problems. 58.1% of the respondents claim that they faced different challenges in the course of delivery of tutorial classes. All challenges may have negative impact on effective delivery the program. 29% respondents indicated that lack of willingness by instructors is the main challenge of effective delivery of the program. Negative attitude of students towards the program was also raised as another challenge of the program as indicated in (Figure.3)

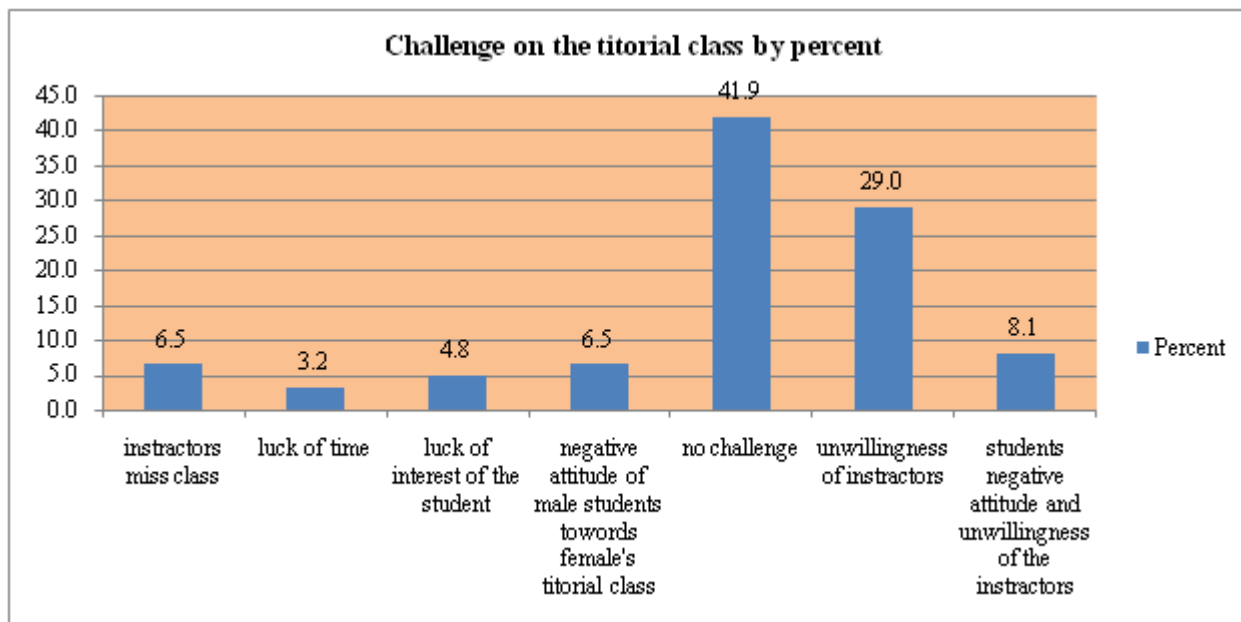


Figure 3: Challenges on implementation of Tutorial programs for female students in Adigrat University, Tigray, Ethiopia 2016

In the instructor's in-depth interview and focus group discussion the main challenge up on which the majority of the respondents agreed was absence of sufficient incentives or payment by the university. And unwillingness of female students to attend the tutorial classes was raised as another problem of effective implementation of the tutorial classes. Besides, lack of follow up of the program by responsible body of the university, clash of the tutorial class with other programs like make up classes and tests, were the challenges raised by the respondents.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

Female students' tutorial program is one of affirmative action strategies that Adigrat adopted to tackle gender disparity in academic performance of the students. But there contending views on affirmative action. The aim of this study was to assess the practice, challenges and outcomes of female students' tutorial classes in the university. Accordingly the study focused on attitude, its practical implementation and challenges in the course of implementation and the results achieved. Data were collected through questionnaires, focus group discussion and interview; Then the data were analyzed through percentage and using some descriptive statistics and qualitatively. Based on the analysis made, the following results were found:

- Attitude of instructors and female students towards Female students' tutorial Found to be positive. The respondents justified that the program have multiple advantages like improved academic results, gain of knowledge, compensating social and biological problems of female students and improved confidence and participation in class activities. On the other hand, only 4.8% of the female student respondents stated that females need tutorial program because their academic capacity is relatively weaker than males.

- The program was being implemented in the university but the practice varies from collage to collage.
- There is high demand for tutorials from the beginning to the end of the formal classes and they prefer course instructors to conduct the tutorials. 77.4% of the respondents replayed that they fully attended all the tutorials conducted. So student absenteeism is not hampering problem of the program in the university.
- Lack of interest of instructors due to lack of sufficient incentives and follow up by the responsible body are the main challenges affecting the effective implementation of the program in the university.

5.2. Recommendations

- The individuals in all levels of academic leadership should not consider the program as voluntary in nature. Because affirmative action for females is constitutional right which is also, incorporated in the policies of the higher institutions of the country. So, they must consider it as a duty and a matter of law and policy.
- The instructors also should consider the program as their responsibility.
- The gender office in collaboration with the university management and all collages of the university should make follow up and support.

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