



INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL VARIABLES AND THE MODERATING ROLES ON AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION STUDENT'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY CALABAR, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the Influence of School Variables and the Moderating Roles on Agricultural Education Student's Academic Achievement in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 76 respondents in 300 level in agricultural education programme was used. There was no sampling due to small size all the population was used as sample. Instrument for data collection was school variable and academic achievement questionnaire (SVAAQ). The data was analyzed using ANOVA to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the null hypothesis showed that, there was a strong positive significant influence of moderating roles of classroom climate, teacher effectiveness, facility and structures on male students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria. And the result of null hypothesis four tested revealed no significant influence of moderating roles of health services on female students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria. Also, the result of null hypothesis five tested showed significant relationship between moderating roles of school location with size and academic achievement of agricultural education students in soil science in Federal University Calabar Nigeria. Based on the finding it was recommended that all federal universities through federal government should as a necessity make available conducive classroom climate; Engagement of quality and effective lecturers Facility and structure in our federal universities in Nigeria; are highly recommended for development and not necessary for academic achievement; and Health service care should be provided for all students of federal universities; for health is every students' wealth.

Keywords: *Students' Academic Achievement, School Variables, Moderating Roles, Agricultural Education students.*

INTRODUCTION:

The nation's overall development is largely dependent on its educational system, since education is a light that shows mankind the right direction to surge as well as being an engine for the growth and progress of any society. Nigeria has been grappling with poor

performance of students in secondary schools, tertiary institutions not excepted due to several variables or factors, which one of them is school variables (Babatunde, 2015). School variables are those factors that contribute to the achievement of school objectives, that may affect or cause change in the overall school performance and consequently school achievement (Moye, 2014). Moye (2014) limited school variables to teachers, classrooms, library, laboratory and instructional materials. In other word, school variables are science and computer laboratories, library facilities adequate classroom facilities, workshop facilitates farm buildings and structures and farm lands that can affect teaching and learning environment, which is the agent that provides atmosphere upon which a student may be formally educated in other to attain educational goals (Nsaoffiong, Udo and Ikot, 2014).

It is interesting to note that, school variables can moderate either negatively or positively the learning mode of students in every teaching and learning environment. Learning modes are simply learning styles that is, different methods of learning or understanding new information by the students (Kendal, 2015). There are different learning styles one of which is cognitive learning styles. Cognitive learning style is one's general predisposition towards processing new ideas, information or challenges in a particular manner (Tukur, Daniel, Abdurauf, 2015). To further buttress cognitive learning style is defined as the relatively stable strategies, preferences and attitudes that determine an individual's typical modes of perceiving, remembering and problem solving (Ahmad, Shabnam and Chaled, 2013). Bruno (2015) opined that, cognitive style of learning is people/students preferred method of transforming, encoding, sorting, retrieving, and using information. Is good to add that one's preferred method of processing information gives rise to one's uniqueness as information processor. A number of cognitive learning styles have been identified and researched into over the years. The most well-known or researched cognitive styles is field independent and field dependent cognitive style. However, not much work had been done in Agricultural Education using field dependent and field independent cognitive learning styles form literature (Bruno, 2015, Karacam, 2015 and Ahmed et al, 2013).

Agricultural Education as a branch of Vocational and Technical Education is therefore haunted by the same challenges of not fulfilling the objectives designed to carry out its programme of study.

Agricultural Education is saddled with responsibility of providing learners with the personal academic and career experiences and competences for participation and entrepreneurship in agriculture (Philips & Osborne, 2008). The major aim of agricultural education for the youth is to expose them to various occupations in agriculture through formal training and prepare them for different vocations in agriculture.

Agricultural education students are simply targeted to youths, the agricultural programme intends to expose the youth to various occupations in agriculture through formal training for self-reliance. These youths are either males or females. Educational

opportunities for both sexes are supposed to be equally distributed. According to the requirements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Countries are supposed to ensure that by 2015, gender disparity in education should be eliminated especially at the primary and secondary levels. Unfortunately, in some developing countries like Nigeria, this objective is yet to be achieved even as at 2019. Statistics show that the literacy rate is 73 percent for men and 48 percent for women showing that gender gap in literacy rates at post basic level of education stood at 79 percent for boys and 61 percent for girls (Eze, Ezenwafor and Obidilej, 2016). Similarly, Oyesola (2013) identified gender as one of the factors that affect students' academic performance. However, Olaoye and Adu(2015) reported that no significant difference exists in academic performance of students as a result of gender.

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved the short- or long-term Educational goals (Yeung, 2013). Academic performance is commonly measured through examination or continuous assessments but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important- procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge. The academic performance is active rather than passive acquisition. Olamie (2012) defines academic performance as how students deal with the studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by instructors. Academic performance is the ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate the knowledge verbally or in writing. Active acquisition of academic performance results in sound education. A sound Education can give students greater career opportunities and prepare them to make significant contribution in their chosen field (Ning, Kathleen, and Natalie, 2009). Academic performance of students is the yard stick for testing learning quality of a group of learners hence, it is expedient to maintain a high performance in internal and external examinations (Jan, 2013), maintaining high academic achievement should be the Agricultural Education Programme's pre-occupied goal to ensure significant contribution of Agricultural Education graduates in the chosen field. Therefore, lecturers of Agricultural Education should take cognizance of cognitive learning styles of the students as ideal for maintaining high academic achievement. However, school variables, student's variables, environmental and parental variable can play a mediating role on academic achievement or performance of the students. The research focused on influence of school variables and the mediating or moderating roles on Agricultural Education student's academic achievement in federal university Calabar, Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

Some of the learners like to learn independently by themselves, whereas other learners would prefer to receive a lot of assistances from instructors. Some learners like to communicate with other learners in class while others want to do lonely (Jantan, 2017).

Ideally teachers should gear the schooling environment to each child's unique learning needs and preferences. Otherwise they may risk placing a student in a hostile environment that breeds frustration hostility and low motivation (Sasiporn and Samart 2018). Moreover, ignoring a student's personality type can lead to a conflict in the educational process, since an individual's personality type and learning style are related to each other (Sasiporn and Samart 2018). As a result, many students who are less successful or failed to achieve excellent results admitted that their lack of knowledge about cognitive styles influence their grades. (JANTAN, 2014). One of the areas in agricultural education that, students' grades are negatively influenced is soil science specialization. According to Hope (2017) "Soil Science Courses were perceived as the most difficult among all the various courses offered in Agricultural Education" This perception can be considered to be underlying factor behind discouraging performance of Agricultural Education students in Universities in Northern Nigeria. The problem of the study is field dependent and field independent cognitive styles are scarcely used in the instruction of agricultural education. Because there seems to be no awareness by teachers of agricultural education, with the awareness of cognitive and learning styles, the teachers can help their learners to reach the desired learning levels (Singh, 2017). No nation can rise to a high level of development without considering the school variables which include location of the school, school size, school type, structures, facilities and ownership. These variables have capacity to moderate negatively or positively influence field dependent and filed independent cognitive style on Agricultural Education Students Academic Achievement in Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria. This is the reason behind the quest of examining "influence of school variables and the mediating or moderating roles on Agricultural Education student's academic achievement in federal university Calabar, Nigeri

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine influence of school variables and the mediating or moderating roles on Agricultural Education student's academic achievement in Federal university Calabar, Nigeria. The study has the following specific objectives:

1. Examine Moderating Roles of classroom climate on Field Dependent Students' Academic Achievement in Soil Science federal university Calabar, Nigeria
2. Determine the moderating Roles of teacher effectiveness on Field Independent Students' Academic Achievement in Soil Science federal university Calabar, Nigeria
3. Evaluate Moderating Roles of facilities and structures on the Influence of the Academic Achievement in Soil Science federal university Calabar, Nigeria
4. Evaluate Moderating Roles of health services on the Influence of Academic Achievement in Soil Science Federal university Calabar, Nigeria

5. Examine the relationship between Moderating Roles of school location with size and Academic Achievement of Agricultural Education Students Federal university Calabar, Nigeria

Research Questions

Based on the specific objectives, the following research questions are raised to be answered.

1. What are the moderating roles of classroom climate on academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria?
2. What are the moderating roles of teacher effectiveness on academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria?
3. What are the moderating roles of facility and structures on the influence of academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria?
4. What are the moderating roles of health services on the influence of academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria?
5. What is the relationship between moderating roles of school location with size and academic achievement of agricultural education student's federal university Calabar, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the specific objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at significant level of 0.05.

- HO₁: There is no significant influence of moderating roles of classroom climate on academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria.
- HO₂: There is no significant influence of moderating roles of teacher effectiveness on achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria
- HO₃: There is no significant influence of moderating roles of facility and structures on academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria
- HO₄: There is no significant influence of moderating roles of health services on academic achievement in soil science federal university Calabar, Nigeria
- HO₅: There is no significant relationship between moderating roles of school location with size and academic achievement of agricultural education students federal university Calabar, Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was descriptive survey research design. It is not a true experiment because it lacks random assignment (Salkind, 2010).

The population of the study comprises of 76 students who offered introduction to soil science education during 2020/2021 academic session from Federal University Calabar, Nigeria.

No sampling technique was adopted for this study, the reason is because the sample size was small, which comprise all three hundred level students of University of Calabar that had offered Introduction to Soil Science education in the previous session.

The instrument for data collection was Structured questionnaires for students tagged "School Variables and Academic Achievement Questionnaire" (SVAAQ). The questionnaire was tagged "School Variables and Academic Achievement Questionnaire" (SVAAQ). The instrument has a 4-point rating scale developed from literature reviewed on school variables. The SVAAQ had 44 items that was grouped into four (4) sections. Each section has responses of Strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and Strongly disagreed. The options are:

Key- Strongly agreed 4, Agreed 3, Disagreed 2 and Strongly disagreed 1

The instrument contained two sections: A and B. Section A contained questions on the bio-data of the respondents while section B contained items that were analyzed for research questions and tested null hypotheses.

The experts were requested to scrutinize face and content validity. After checking the contents, language, ambiguity, and the appropriateness of the items, their observation and corrections were incorporated before production of final copy. According to Uzochi (2011) face validity of an instrument that has consultation of experts and scrutiny should be considered adequate and suitable for the study. Content validation can only be carried out by a experts with several years of teaching experience.

The instrument SVAAQ was pilot tested to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability and consistency of the instrument was established at reliability coefficient of 0.784.

Data was collected using SVAAQ by the researcher and the help of two trained research assistant that same day to ensure 90% return of the questionnaire.

The data collected were analyzed using means, standard deviations and percentages to answer research questions. The decision cut point of 2.50 is adopted. Any item or component in which the respondents have a mean score of 2.50 as agreed to have a moderate influence, 2.50 above agreed to have a high influence while less than 2.50 disagreed of any influence:

=	2.5	Moderate Influence
≥	2.5	High Influence
≤	2.5	No Influence

Null hypotheses (1-5) were tested using ANOVA (Analysis of variance) at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents analysis and discussion of data generated from the study.

Test of Null Hypotheses: The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance. The summary of the results was presented in Table 1-5

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant influence of moderating roles of classroom climate on student's academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria.

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented in Table 1 revealed the Sum of Squares of 104.1 and 304.1 for Between Groups and Within Groups at degree of freedom of 45 and 414 respectively. The F-value obtained was 3.149 and the p-value was less than the level of significance $.0177 < 0.05$. The result therefore shows that there is significant influence of moderating roles of classroom climate on field dependent student's academic achievement in soil science in Federal University in Calabar, Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table1: Analysis of Variance used for testing the difference among the respondents in Null hypothesis one.

ANOVA table	SS	DF	MS	F	P value
Treatment (between Groups)	104.1	45	2.313	F (45, 414) = 3.149	P<0.0177
Residual (within Groups)	304.1	414	0.7345		
Total	408.2	459			

Source: IBM SPSS 26.0 output

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of moderating roles of teacher effectiveness on students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria.

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented in Table 2 revealed the Sum of Squares of 60.32 and 345.2 for Between Groups and Within Groups at degree of freedom of 45 and 414 respectively. The F-value obtained was 1.608 and the p-value was less than the level of significance $.0098 < 0.05$. The result therefore shows that there is significant influence of moderating roles of teacher effectiveness on field dependent student's academic achievement in soil science in Federal University in Calabar, Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table2: Analysis of Variance used for testing the difference among the respondents in Null hypothesis two

ANOVA table	SS	DF	MS	F (DFn, DFd)	P value
Treatment (between columns)	60.32	45	1.340	F (45, 414) = 1.608	P=0.0098
Residual (within columns)	345.2	414	0.8338		
Total	405.5	459			

Source: IBM SPSS 26.0 output

Hypothesis Three:

There is no significant influence of moderating roles of facility and structures on male students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria.

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented in Table 3 revealed the Sum of Squares of 106.4 and 237.8 for Between Groups and Within Groups at degree of freedom of 22 and 276 respectively. The F-value obtained was 5.611 and the p-value was less than the level of significance $.0001 < 0.05$. The result therefore shows that there is significant influence of moderating roles of facilities and structures on male students' field dependent cognitive styles with their academic achievement in soil science in Federal University in Calabar, Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance used for testing the difference among the respondents in Null hypothesis three.

ANOVA table	SS	DF	MS	F (DFn, DFd)	P value
Treatment (between columns)	106.4	22	4.835	F (22, 276) = 5.611	P<0.0001
Residual (within columns)	237.8	276	0.8618		
Total	344.2	298			

Source: IBM SPSS 26.0 output

Hypothesis four:

There is no significant influence of moderating roles of health services on female students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria.

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented in Table 4 revealed the Sum of Squares of 14.96 and 200.3 for Between Groups and Within Groups at degree of freedom of 10 and 242 respectively. The F-value obtained was 1.808 and the p-value was greater than the level of significance $.0598 > 0.05$. The result therefore shows that there is no significant influence of moderating roles of health services on female students' field dependent cognitive styles with their academic achievement in soil science in Federal University in Calabar, Nigeria. The hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance used for testing the difference among the respondents in Null hypothesis four.

ANOVA table	SS	DF	MS	F (DFn, DFd)	P value
Treatment (between columns)	14.96	10	1.496	F (10, 242) = 1.808	P=0.0598
Residual (within columns)	200.3	242	0.8275		
Total	215.2	252			

Source: IBM SPSS 26.0 output

Hypothesis five:

There is no significant relationship between moderating roles of school location with size and academic achievement of agricultural education students in soil science in Federal University Calabar Nigeria.

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented in Table 5 revealed the Sum of Squares of 138.0 and 278.4 for Between Groups and Within Groups at degree of freedom of 45 and 322 respectively. The F-value obtained was 3.547 and the p-value was less than the level of significance $.0001 < 0.05$. The result therefore shows that there is significant relationship between moderating roles of school location with size and academic achievement of agricultural education students that are field dependent in soil science in Federal University in Calabar, Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance used for testing the difference among the respondents in Null hypothesis five

ANOVA table	SS	DF	MS	F (DFn, DFd)	P value
Treatment (between columns)	138.0	45	3.066	F (45, 322) = 3.547	P<0.0001
Residual (within columns)	278.4	322	0.8645		
Total	416.4	367			

Source: IBM SPSS 26.0 output

Discussion of Major Findings

The result of the null hypothesis one showed that there was a strong positive significant influence of moderating roles of classroom climate on student’s academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria. This implied that, influence of classroom climate has capacity to affect students’ academic achievement in soil science. This is in line with opinion of Babatunde (2015), who observed that, geographical setting of a class must be free of noise, easily accessible and must have nearness to amenities. Noisy climate and long journey to class can be drudgery. The moment classroom climate is noisy, small and comfortless is bound to affect students’ academic performance negatively.

The result of the null hypothesis two tested showed that there was significant influence of moderating roles of teacher effectiveness on students’ academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria. This implied that, effectiveness of teachers is key to students’ academic achievement in soil science in university of Calabar Cross river State. The teacher effectiveness involves the intangible parameter like subject knowledge, intelligence, enthusiasm, measures of academic ability, measures of subject matter knowledge, and teaching knowledge (Pereira, 2011). Teacher effectiveness is different from teacher quality. Teacher quality means the teacher qualification, teaching experience, training before joining and the in-service training attained (Daso, 2013). On

the other hand, effectiveness of teacher can't be assessed by the teacher; however, students are best assessors of teachers' effectiveness in teaching. Quality teachers are mostly found effective in the delivery.

The result of null hypothesis three tested showed that there was significant *influence of moderating roles of facility and structures on male students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria*. The implication is that, facility and structure had strong influence on students' academic achievement in soil science at University of Calabar. Therefore, facility and structure will determine how well or bad students perform or achieve in an examination. This discovery agreed with work of Nsa, Offiong, Udo, & Ikot, (2014), who said, facilities and structures as necessary variables of school have the capacity to moderate or influence significantly student's academic achievement at all levels of education. This is true because, facilities and structures give students experience, skills acquisition and untiring interest. These experience, skills acquisition and untiring interest consequently result into a bumper harvest academically.

The result of null hypothesis four tested revealed *no significant influence of moderating roles of health services on students' academic achievement in soil science in Federal University Calabar, Nigeria*. This implied that, health services lacks capacity to moderate students' academic achievement in soil science at University of Calabar, Nigeria. This discovery is congruent with findings of Oyiniade, Ogukunle, Olanrewaju, (2014). This is an indication that only a healthy student can learn. Effective health service facilitates early detection and diagnosis of disease whereby prompt intervention ultimately reduces school-age morbidity and mortality (Oyiniade, Ogukunle, Olanrewaju, 2014). They further stated that, in Nigeria implementation of the school health service (SHS) is generally poor. This is true because many students failed courses because of ill-health.

Also, the result of null hypothesis five tested showed *significant relationship between moderating roles of school location with size and academic achievement of agricultural education students in soil science in Federal University Calabar Nigeria*. This implied that location and size of school had strong influence on students' academic achievement in soil science at University of Calabar, Nigeria. Therefore, the moment class location and size are accessible easily by the students, their academic achievement will be negatively affected.

Nsa, et al, (2014), observed that, learning environment surrounded by all learning materials of which individual can access readily for learning purposes is ideal classroom location and size. In a nutshell is learning and teaching environment comprising of size, and location. Class size refers to an educational tool which can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school.

Conclusion

Based on the findings it was concluded that,

1. classroom climate has capacity to affect students' academic achievement in soil science
2. Effectiveness of teachers is key to students' academic achievement in soil science in university of Calabar Cross River State.
3. Facility and structure strongly determine how well or bad students perform or achieve in an examination.
4. *A health service lacks capacity to moderate students' academic achievement in soil science at University of Calabar, Nigeria.*
5. *Location and size of school had strong influence on students' academic achievement in soil science at University of Calabar, Nigeria.*

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the study:

1. Is ideal that every all federal universities through federal government should as a necessity make available conducive classroom climate.
2. Engagement of quality and effective lecturers must come top priority for all stakeholders in our federal universities in Nigeria
3. Facility and structure are highly recommended for development and not necessary for academic achievement
4. Health service care must be provided for all students of federal universities; for health is every students' wealth

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