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EFFECT OF GENDER ON METHODS OF TEACHING AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF UYO MUNICIPALITY, AKWA-IBOM

BY

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ABSTRACT

An investigation into the use of quality teaching methods of agricultural science in secondary schools was carried out in the third term of 2003/2004 academic session in Uyo municipality, Akwa Ibom State. A total of 60 Agricultural science teachers were selected out of a population of 63. A structured questionnaire with 15 items was administered. Personal visit and interview were also administered. The result showed that gender has no effect on the use of quality method of teaching agricultural Science. However female agricultural Science teachers were found to utilize instructional materials (mainly wall charts) more than their male counterparts. Recommendations for quality teaching of agricultural science have been highlighted.

INTRODUCTION

Gender which is erroneously viewing as a minute factor in the teaching- learning process is highly rooted in the larger society and hence the school system. The assessment that Miss Y or Mrs. X teaches like a man is gender bias. The discrimination of ones right on the ground of femininity denotes gender. It is gender inequality that makes women in the rural area dominate the production agriculture in Africa, Latin America and Asian countries (UNESCO,1997).

In Nigeria, the involvement of women in agriculture cannot be overemphasized. Nigerian women are leading in food production and processing. In Africa women produce 60—80% of food for home consumption while in Asia, women make up to 50% of agricultural workers (UNESCO,1997).Hence women are believed to be very keen in practical agriculture.

The role of women is versatile in our today's contemporary society. Women are no longer full time subsistent farmers except the illiterate middle aged women who are deprived of their educational right due to gender inequality.

The arrival of women in Nigerian School system as 'Swamp of bees' is of late in Southern Nigeria. Before and a decade after the Nigerian Civil War, School systems both primary and secondary, nation wide were dominated by men.

In Nigeria, the percentage of female teachers in 1988 was 33.75% and in 1990 it increased to 49.91%(FME, 1992). In Southern Nigeria, females outnumber the male teachers population in preschool and primary schools. UNESCO (1997) reported 92% and 80% of female teachers

population in Anambra and Lagos Primary Schools. At present, in Akwa Ibom State College of Education, over 70% of the Nigeria Certificate in Education students for the past seven years have been females in Agricultural Education Department (Ekpo, 2004)

Traditionally, women have been given the role of educators in the family with the great responsibilities of raising human beings with values and attitudes that help them in their individual and social lives.

Dalto (1997) describes women as being more accommodating, more persuasive than men with zeal, patience and impart knowledge faster to learners. If these characteristics are fully implemented in the teaching – learning process then female teachers would have no equal in the teaching process. Unfortunately, there is a decline in the quality of our school leavers or graduates in public schools dominated by female or male teachers.

Mallison (1975) opined that as is that school so is society and 'as is the teacher so is the school'. Kpanja (2003) remarked that the relevance of good teacher could result to qualitative education in Nigeria. Ukeje (1991) maintained that the quality of education provided in any society depends on the quality of teachers. Quality or standard is therefore necessary in our educational system and life without standard is the most barren life of all (Livingstone, 1994)

To effect quality in schools so many factors must come to play. The teachers experiences, his concept of quality education, efficacy of the use and availability of instructional materials, the authority and the government commitments to quality education.

To maintain quality teaching, relevant quality teaching methods are unavoidable. In the teaching of agriculture as a vocational subject emphasis is on practical exposures. Some of the teachings of agricultural science in secondary schools include demonstration, laboratory approach, team teaching, project method, discovery method, excursion or field trip.

Learning is only effective when the teaching methods are of interest to the learners, enhances retention and corresponding feedback from the learners. Teaching of agricultural science should be practical oriented but according to Akpan (1995) many technical related courses at all levels in Nigeria's institution of learning is that the teachings or instructions are devoid of practical, so much theory without practical experiences.

A teacher who could not make his lesson more permanent or learnable and could not create conceptual thinking should consider himself a trainee irrespective of paper qualifications. Both male and female teachers were given equal training and taken the same examinations and finally given the same certificate.

Although a survey by Ekpo (2004) showed that the average academic performance by male students in agricultural courses in both the College of Agriculture and College Of Education, Akwa Ibom State is better than their female counterparts; the examination result could not establish that the best graduating students are the best teachers or teachers with the best teaching methods.

Although women are regarded as good teachers because they are caring, loving, admiring and patience, these qualities are not enough to place them as first class teachers.

In the light of the above, this study was designed with the objective to investigate gender and quality teaching of agricultural science subject in secondary school in Uyo Municipality, Akwa Ibom State.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Women are very caring, loving and patience and they are good teachers. Unfortunately, the domination of women in the teaching profession at the pre-school and nursery school levels coincides with the poor quality of school Leavers and First School Leavers in Public Schools. Investigation, into the quality teaching of agricultural science subject by both male and female

teachers become necessary.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The finding of the study will serve as a measure or a compass to guide educators to organize seminars, workshops for male or female teachers or both on quality teaching of agricultural science in schools.

Research questions

1. Could quality teaching of agricultural science be offered by teachers of both sexes?
2. Which sex of agricultural science teachers use lecture method predominantly?
3. Which sex of agricultural science teachers use instructional materials regularly?

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the use of quality teaching method and continuous assessment by male and female agricultural science teachers in secondary schools.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the frequent use of lecture method in the teaching of agricultural science by male and female teachers.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the frequent use of instructional materials by male and female agricultural science teachers.

METHODOLOGY

All the 18 Secondary Schools in Uyo municipality of Akwa Ibom State were used for the study. Sixty (30 males, 30 females) Agricultural Science Teachers were used for the study. However there were 63 Agricultural Sciences teachers in the study area. The study was carried out in the third term of 2003/2004 academic session.

Structured questionnaire with only 15 items were administered to 60 out of 63 Agricultural Science teachers in the study area. Visits to the school farms, laboratories and animal units were carried out.

Students' practical note books and class notes were also inspected to serve as a guide to the teachers' responses. Independent t-test and chi-square were used for the analysis of data wherever it was appropriate at 5% probability level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study are presented in the tables below.

TABLE 1: Frequent use of instructional materials (wall chart) by male and female teachers in Secondary Schools located at Uyo Municipality, Akwa Ibom State

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	Decision
Male	30	8.72	9.75	58	4.62	1.68	Reject (Ho)
Female	30	12.51					

Probability level = 5%

The result showed that the calculated 't' was greater than the critical value hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the frequent use of instructional materials by male or female agricultural science teachers was rejected. Female teachers were found to make use of instructional materials better than their male counterparts. However, the instructional materials used were mainly wall charts. Women are naturally very admiring and they prove this characteristic in the frequent use of wall chart than their counterparts in the course of teaching agricultural science in schools.

Uwah (2004) had already reported the effect of gender on teacher's utilization of instructional materials, which favours female teachers. Dalto (1997) also supported that women impart knowledge faster to learners than their male counterparts.

TABLE 2: Frequent use of lecture method by male and female Agricultural Science Teachers. Agricultural Science teachersN

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	Decision
Male	30	16.89	3.67	58	1.46	1.68	Null hypothesis accepted
Female	30	15.96					

Probability Level = 5%

The result shows that the critical 't' value was greater than the calculated value hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the frequent use of lecture method in the teaching of agricultural Science by male and female teachers was accepted. The frequent use of lecture method predominantly in the teaching of technological oriented course in schools was reported by (Akpan, 1995). The use of lecture method predominantly could be due to lack of inadequate facilities in the teaching of agricultural science in Schools and Colleges.

The result of the use of appropriate teaching methods of Agricultural Science Teachers is shown in table 3.

TABLE 3: Number of time (period) in which appropriate teaching methods and administration of continuous assessment are rendered by male and female Agricultural Science Teachers.

Agriculture Science teachers.	Test	Excursion	Demonstration	Laboratory Exposure	Practical Exposure (Crop/animal Production)	Assignment	Team Teaching	Project 2003/2004	Total
Male (30)	34	2	9	10	7	31	0	0	93
Female (30)	30	1	12	8	5	84	0	0	90
Total	64	3	21	18	12	65	0	0	183

Significant at 5% Probability

$$df = (r-1)(c-1) = 7$$

$$X^2 \text{ obs} = 2.31$$

$$X^2 \text{ exp} = 14.07$$

The result shows that the critical value is greater than the observed value hence the null

hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the use of quality teaching methods and continuous assessment by male and female Agricultural Science Teachers was accepted. This indicates that both male and female Agricultural Science Teachers are using the same teaching methods in the teaching of agricultural Science subject. Both the male and female agricultural Science teachers were found to be deficient in the use of project method, team teaching, laboratory exposures, demonstration and practical exposures. This could be due to the improper supervision by heads of schools and inadequate facilities.

CONCLUSION

Gender has no effect on the methods of teaching agricultural Science subject in the school. However female Agricultural Science Teachers used more instructional materials (wall chart) than their male counterparts. Generally, the teaching of agricultural Science in schools is deficient in methods that could make students acquire basic agricultural skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Heads of schools should mount intensive supervision on quality methods of teaching agricultural Science while adequate facilities should be made available through community assistance and government direct provision.
2. Vacation workshop for heads of schools and agricultural Science teachers on how to effect quality teaching of agriculture as a vocational subject becomes imperative.
3. Annual quiz competition based on agricultural skills should be organized for students. The successful students and their teachers should be adequately rewarded by government, organizations, schools authority and privileged individuals.
4. Experienced agricultural extension agents in each state should be cooped to organize bi-monthly agricultural skill training to students.
5. Agricultural Science subject should be accredited annually before it is mounted by schools. This is to ensure the availability of facilities for quality training and learning.

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