

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the internal and external locus of control as predictors of academic performance among students of colleges of education in North-East Nigeria, four research objectives were stated and four null hypotheses formulated were tested, A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study and a simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 1,145 out of which 629 male and 516 female from a population of 22,911 ($M=14,475$; $F=8,436$) year II students of colleges of education in North-east. Rotter's (1966) Internal and External Locus of Control Reinforcement scale were adopted, the reliability was established .789. Null hypotheses were tested at $P \leq 0.05$ levels of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (PPMCC), and t -tests. The result revealed significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance (r -value= $-.077$ & p -value= <0.05), but there is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance (r -value= $.020$ & p -value= >0.05). This finding showed that, there is significant difference between internal locus of control of Male and Female students (t -value= $.936$ & p -value= >0.05), there is significant difference between external locus of control of Male and Female students (t -value= $.460$ & p -value= >0.05). Finally, some recommendations were made, which include, Learning should be organized in such a way that, it can meet the requirements of all learners in order to boost their academic performance.

Keywords: Internal locus of control, External locus of control, Academic performance, students

Introduction

In our society, academic performance is considered as key criteria to judge one's total potentialities and capabilities. Therefore, it is becoming more and more pressing for the individuals to have good academic performance. Students' academic performance takes important place in teaching and learning process (Olutola, Olatoye & Olatoye, 2016) and academic performance has become an index of child's future, particularly so in high competitive world. Research studies have proved that a supportive nurturing environment in home and school could enhance child's academic performance. Also, different personality factors play an important role in academic performances. These perceptions are referred to as perceived locus of control. Some people tend to see the things that happen to them as primarily under their own control. Such people are referred to as internals. In other words, their

perceived locus control is internal within themselves. The person with an internal locus of control attributes success to his or her own efforts and abilities.

Locus of control is a psychological variable, which refers to the extent to which a student feels he has control over his own destiny. The feeling of control here can be conceived and spread out along a continuum. At one end of the continuum, the internal connotes the attitude that one can manipulate his environment for reinforcement. This is based more on one’s potential effort or skill. That is, if the student has the influence of internal control, he believes that all can come to him will depend on his personal effort and struggle. Such student sees himself as instrument in outcomes of events. On the other end of the continuum, the external control consists of a self-characterized by all that happen to the individual as the consequence of chance, luck, fate and several others, all of which are forces and events beyond the individual control. Beliefs in this category have frustrated many individuals in life today. Many have left to strive hard and live a comfortable life and have attributed their ineffectiveness in attaining their desired goal to things unknown.

The concept of locus of control and attribution theory are closely related (Olukemi 2015). Weiner (1994) in Olukemi (2015), who introduced this theory, refers to four sets of attributions influencing individual success and failure: (a) ability (b) effort (c) success and (d) the level of difficulty of the task they are involved in. Weiner (1994), afterwards just mentioned three different dimensions of learner’s success or failure.

1. Stability: Success or failure may have permanent causes of success (effort or task difficulty) or temporary one’s. (Luck, mood).
2. Controllability: Whether elements or events are under the individuals control or not.
3. Locus of control: The extent to which individuals think they can control events.

Table 1: Examples of casual inference about success and failure

Variables	success	failure
Ability	I am clever	I am not clever enough
Effort	I try hard	I didn’t try enough
Level of difficulty	It was easy	It was too hard
Luck	I had good luck	I had bad luck

Source: Jarvis, (2005).

Araromi (2010), divided individual locus of control into two non-dimensional units namely; internal and external locus of control. Locus of control has also been described as a dimension with two opposing ends (Lee-Kelley, 2006). The dimensions reflect the extent to which individuals believe that what happens to them is within their control or beyond it (Carrim et al, 2006). This represents a continuum of an internal/external belief system (Littunen & Storhemmer, 2000).

Internal Locus of Control

Individuals with an internal locus control believe that their reinforcements are contingent on their own behaviour, capacities, and attributes. They also believe that their will and behaviour is directed by their own internal decisions and thus feel as if they have more influence on their environment (Jatkavicius, 2010). People with an internal locus of control believes that their rewards in life are guided by their

own decisions and efforts (Neill, 2016). If they do not succeed in life at something, they believe it is due to their own lack of effort. Internal locus of control also is a process, a pervasive, enduring feel of confidence that one's internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that all things will work out as well as can be expected dependent on their own effort. This implies that the perception of oneself as having a definite influence on live events through the exercise of imagination, skill, knowledge and choice.

People with internal locus of control believe that the outcome of their actions are as a result of their own abilities, or permanent characteristics (Littunen & Storhammar, 2000, Cannon et al, 2006). They believe that hard work and personal abilities lead to positive outcomes. Thus, for internals, the key links exist between behavior and consequences, and between outcome and personal effort. This belief entails that they are masters of their fates.

External Locus of Control

External locus individuals believe that their reinforcement are under the control of powerful others, luck or fate (Rotter, 1966). They always believe that mainly other people or forces beyond themselves determine major events in their lives. They tend to be more stressed and prone to child depression (Lee-Kelley, 2006).

The person with external locus of control always believes that the whole world is plotting against him, that luck exists and that life is unfair. The main reason why that person believes in luck is to explain how are the people around him are succeeding while he cannot. Whenever students either attribute their successes or failures to having a bad day, unfair grading procedures in their teacher's part, or even God's will, they can be said to be more external locus of control. These students might say, "It doesn't matter how hard I study. The teacher just doesn't show I know and I won't get a good grade". These students generally do not learn from previous experience. Since they attribute both their successes and failures to luck or chance, they tend to lack persistence and not have very high levels of expectation.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of under achievement has assumed a worrisome dimension in the Nigerian Educational System. Desperate to succeed, many students have devised various illegal means to pass in examinations, even when they are not academically competent. Unfortunately, poor academic performance has risen steadily to become a seemingly untamable monster. Several factors have been discovered in the past as the causes of this social malaise, but there seem to be indication that some hidden factors may be responsible and these need investigation. This desire to see this problem solved gave rise to this study and the researcher's aim is to see if self- locus of control can help to improve students' academic performance.

Similarly, poor academic performance and drop-out rate of students in Colleges of Education and other higher institutions have been a source of concern to stakeholders. These reasons could be as a result of poor study habits in term of students' locus of control, most students cannot make effort towards their studies. This is a serious issue of concern that prompts the researcher to investigate the possible reasons for poor academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically the study sought to:

- (1) find out the relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria
- (2) determine the relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria
- (3) examine the difference in the internal locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria
- (4) find out the difference in the external locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level in the study.

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria

Ho₃ There is no significant difference in the internal locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria

Ho₄ There is no significant difference in the external locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of great significance to educational stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, educational psychologist, administrators, government and other relevant authorities for their input in motivating and training of students and more particularly in improving and regulating academic activities, locus of control and academic performance.

Methodology

The research design used for this study was correlational research design and the population for this study consisted of all the Students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria with a total population of twenty-two thousand nine hundred and eleven (22,911). The sample in this study was one thousand one hundred and forty five students (1,145) out of the population of twenty two thousand nine hundred and eleven students (22,911) which represented the five (5%) percent of the population based on the recommendations by Gay and Airasian (2013).

Table 2. Distribution of the Sample Size

S/N	Sample School	Population	Sample
1	Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kungere	2,662	396
2	College of Education Billiri	482	72
3	Federal College of Education Potiskum	2051	306

4	Adamawa State College of Education Hong	2493	371
	Total	7,688	1,145

Purposive sampling method was used to select four states out of the six states in the North-East, Nigeria to participate in the study. This is because some of the states (Borno & Taraba states) have security challenges that prevented the researcher from having access to the locations of their Colleges of Educations. However, random sampling techniques was used in order to ensure every student have equal chance of being selected. The Rotter’s (1966) Internal and External Locus of Control Reinforcement Scale was modified and adapted to measure the degree of locus of control of the students.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship between Internal Locus of Control and Academic Performance of Students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Variable	Correlation, Sig. & N.	Internal Locus of Control	Academic Performance
Internal Locus of Control	Pearson Correlation	1	-.077*
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.047 (S)
	N	661	661
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	-.077*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
	N	661	661

* means Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 11 reveals correlation co-efficient of -.077* which is significant at 0.05 alpha levels of significance (r = .047 p < 0.05). Therefore, the stated null hypothesis four is rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. Moreover, a unit increase in internal locus of control leads to a unit increase in students’ academic performance.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship between External Locus of Control and Academic Performance of Students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Variable	Correlation, Sig. & N.	External Locus of Control	Academic Performance
External Locus of Control	Pearson Correlation	1	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.604 (NS)
	N	661	661
	Pearson Correlation	.020	1

Academic Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	.604	
	N	661	661

NS means Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 12 reveals correlation co-efficient of .020 which is significant at 0.05 alpha levels of significance ($r = .604, p < 0.05$). Therefore, the stated null hypothesis five is rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the internal locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Table 5: t-Test Summary Table Showing the Difference in the Internal Locus of Control of Male and Female Students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Cal.	Sig. of t-value
Internal Locus of Control	Male	322	28.8602	4.9999	659	.936	.350 (NS)
	Female	339	28.5074	4.6925			

NS means Not Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 5 reveals that there is no significant difference in the internal locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria ($t = .936; df = 659; p > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis eight is upheld. This implies that, there is no significant difference in the internal locus of control of students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria based on gender.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in the external locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria.

Table 6: t-Test Summary Table Showing the Difference in the External Locus of Control of Male and Female Students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Cal.	Sig. of t-value
External Locus of Control	Male	322	26.2609	4.7216	659	.460	.645 (NS)
	Female	339	26.1032	4.0716			

NS means Not Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 16 reveals that there is no significant difference in the external locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria ($t = .460; df = 659; p > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis nine is upheld. This implies that, there is no significant difference in the external locus of control of students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria based on gender.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding in Hypothesis one revealed significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Moradi, Pourheidari, and Hamdi, (2015) their finding indicated significant relation between internal locus of control and students’ academic performance and also in

line with Singh, Shilpa and Anju (2014) who in their study revealed that highly academic achievers students are significantly higher on Internal Locus of Control and the students who were low in academic performance are significantly higher on External Locus of Control.

This finding is also in agreement with the finding of Eduwem (2013). In her study she discovered that there is a significant influence of internal locus of control on SSS 3 students' performance and that locus of control is a significant factor in students' classroom learning especially in spatial subjects. The study further revealed that students' with an internal locus of control performed significantly better than those with external locus of control. This finding is in contrary with the finding of Brink (2003) who reported no correlation between internal locus of control and academic performance.

The findings in Hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Suphi and Yaratan (2012), who found weak and negative relationship between external locus of control and mathematics achievement. This finding is also in contradiction to the finding of Azlina, Redzuan, Hanina and Ibrani (2015) who in a study identified the internal and external locus of control and its link to mathematics achievement of Orang Asli secondary schools students in Malaysia, in which the finding revealed strong relationship between external locus of control and mathematics achievement. This finding is also in contrary to the findings of Telesia, Peter and Owino (2018), who in their independent studies found out that there is significant relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in Mathematics.

The findings in Hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant difference in the internal locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. This finding is also in line with the finding of Azlina, Redzuan, Hanina and Ibrani (2015) who in a study identified the internal locus of control and its link to mathematics achievement of Orang Asli secondary schools students in Malaysia, in which no significant difference in term of gender was found ($t = -0.60$; $p > 0.05$).

The findings in Hypothesis four revealed that there is no significant difference in the external locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. This finding is supported by the finding of Naeem and Haidar (2013) who found gender difference in favour of boys.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

There is significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. There is no significant difference in the internal locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. There is no significant difference in the external locus of control of male and female students of Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. The researcher further concluded that locus of control are effective in improving students' academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that:

1. Colleges lectures and counsellors should inculcate values such as confidence, competence, effective use of time, good organization and so on among the students so as to developed internal locus of control.
2. Students should be given adequate motivation irrespective of their gender, so as to develop positively.
3. Learning should be organized in such a way that, it can meet the requirements of all learners in order to boost their academic performance, so that, they can acquired the needed competences for them to contribute to the general development of the society.

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