

## ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AS CORRELATES OF SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AMONG STUDENTS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COLLEGES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The study investigated achievement motivation, locus of control as correlates of school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. Three (3) research objectives, 3 research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population consists of 5,452 and the sample size consists of one thousand two hundred and seventy-five (1,275) Senior Secondary School Students using multi-stage sampling technique which was drawn from three states in North Central, in seven (7) Federal Government College from each state using simple randomly sampling technique. Instruments used to collect data include Students' Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (SAMQ), 0.89, Locus of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ), 0.87 and School Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ) with 0.852, respectively. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to analyze the data collected. Findings of the study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between achievement motivation, internal locus of control, external locus of control and school adjustment. The study concluded that there is significant correlation between achievement motivation, internal locus of control, external locus of control and school adjustment of Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. The study recommended that School counsellors should assist students in building their internal locus of control, self-concept and self-motivation, which will in turn build their self-image and academic improvement among others

Keywords: Achievement Motivation, Locus of control, External locus of control, Internal locus of control, School Adjustment

### Introduction

Achievement motivation can be defined as the inner drive to excel and achieve success. It's rooted in the psychological desire to overcome obstacles and meet personal standards of excellence. People with high levels of achievement motivation are often motivated by intrinsic factors, such as the satisfaction of accomplishing a goal, rather than external rewards.

In psychology, achievement motivation is a concept that explains how an individual's desire to excel, accomplish task, and attain success in social or academic pursue. Achievement Motivation refers to an individual's desire for significant accomplishment, mastering of skills to meet high standards of excellence. It includes the intense, prolonged and repeated efforts to accomplish something difficult, to work with singleness of purpose towards a high and distant goal and to have the determination to win (Abdul Rashid, et al. 2023). Bala (2014) opined that when the need for love and belongingness is met, individuals can then focus on higher level needs of intellectual achievement. Achievement motivation therefore is a significantly important factor for academic learning and achievement from childhood through adolescence. Ericksen (2018) achievement motivation is a consistent personality trait that influences the extent to which an individual strives for and perseveres in pursuing specific

goals, ultimately achieving success and satisfaction when meeting or exceeding a particular standard of excellence.

Locus of control on the other hand is a psychological variable which tend to explain students' behaviour toward linking their failures or successes to internal or external factors. Some of these factors may include themselves, teachers, nature and atmosphere, learning environment, nature of examinations and nature of learning materials. The idea of locus of control was first introduced by Julian B. Rotter in 1954, which suggested that people possess either internal or external locus of control. Locus of control, as described by Cherry et al. (2022) pertains to the degree of which an individual believes they have control over events that shape their life. Locus of control is a personality construct within the framework of social learning theory.

Locus of control is seen as the way a student accounts for personal achievements and failures in school (Cetinkalp, 2010). Locus of control can be internal or external (Araromi, 2010). However, individuals who possess external locus of control believes that they have no control of what happens to them, which leads them to place responsibility and blame on external variables such as luck and gods (Ukoh & Okeke, 2017). External locus of control is characterized by the feeling that outcomes are more as a result of fate, luck, chance, or control of powerful forces (Ahmad, et al. 2012). Individual that has external locus of control tend to blame others for the outcomes rather than themselves. Also, they conclude that individuals with high internal control were more successful in their careers than those who scored high in external control. Adepoju (2010) in his study to evaluate the influence of locus of control on students' attitude to teaching and learning in Ibadan found that there is a significant relationship between locus of control and students' attitude toward learning.

School adjustment is seen as a positive state in which, at the school level, there is commitment and satisfaction for attending school and doing tasks, as well as feeling a part of a group (peers, teachers, and the educational community in social terms, free violent and challenging attitudes (Valenzuela-Santoyo et al., 2021).

### **Statement of the Problem**

A significant number of students in the North Central region of Nigeria display low level of motivation to learn and adapt to learning. More students increasingly find it difficult coping with the school environment and its challenges. With the academic demands becoming more intense, low self-concept, emotional problems and sometimes the inability to get help from the right source, students may tend to feel frustrated and find it difficult to cope with the school environment (Bama, 2019). They tend to attribute their academic struggles to their teachers and schools, struggle with self-understanding, and face challenges in adapting to the school environment. Some of these students failed to understand their real selves.

Given the primordial role of school adjustment, it was crucial exploring the issues surrounding the psychosocial adjustment of learners with particular focus on the educational, motivational factors and school support. Several factors have been researched into in the past as to the cause of this social malaise, but there seem to be indications that some hidden factors may be responsible that needs unraveling (Bama, 2019). Most students lacked abilities to make these adjustments before joining academic activities especially at secondary level where the challenges of education start prior to tertiary education. Parents, guardians and students had a belief of any student enrolled in Federal Government Colleges excelled in life more than any other. These beliefs led to serious problem on governments, parents, guardians and students themselves. This worrisome trend has prompted the need for further research. Therefore, the study seeks to bridge the gap by examining achievement motivation and locus of control as correlate of school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were formulated for this study:

1. To investigate the relationship between achievement motivation and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria
2. To examine the relationship between internal locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria
3. To determine the relationship between external locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised regarding the problem under investigation;

1. What is the relationship between achievement motivation and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between internal locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between external locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were generated and formulated that guided the study.

HO1: There is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government colleges in North Central Nigeria

HO2: There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government colleges in North Central Nigeria

HO3: There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government colleges in North Central Nigeria

### **Methodology**

This study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationships between two or more variables within the same population. Specifically, the design investigated how achievement motivation and locus of control correlates with school adjustment among Federal Government College students in North-Central Nigeria. The correlational approach assessed the degree to which these variables tend to vary together within the same group. As a quantitative research method, it involves analysing multiple quantitative variables from the same population to determine whether statistically significant relationships exist among them. By using this design, the researcher can determine the extent to which changes in one variable correspond to changes in another, thereby providing valuable insights into their potential associations.

The population for this study comprises of five thousand four hundred and fifty-two (5,452) Senior Secondary School (SSS II) students from Federal Government Colleges in North-Central, Nigeria. The sample size of this study was one thousand two hundred and twenty-five (1,275) Senior Secondary School (SSS II) students from Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria's North-Central region, comprising six states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). This sample size was determined based on a 95% confidence level and a 2.5% margin of error (Research Advisor, 2006), ensuring statistical reliability. The study employed multi-stage sampling technique. The sampling process involved five stages: first, identifying the states and FCT; second, using stratified random sampling to categorize schools into boys-only, girls-only, and co-educational institutions; third, purposively selecting one co-educational school per state (totaling seven schools) to align with the study's focus; fourth, applying proportionate random sampling to allocate sample sizes based on each school's population and fifth, using simple random sampling (via a "Yes" or "No" ballot system) to

select final respondents, ensuring equal participation chances (Bebeji & Bello, 2013). This structured approach ensured an unbiased and representative sample, enhancing the study's validity.

This study employs questionnaires for data collection. The instrument are as follows:

Students' Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (SAMQ)

Locus of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ)

School Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ)

Surdents' Achèvement Motivation Questionnaire (SAMQ)

The first instrument, titled the Students' Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (SAMQ), was developed by Erhuvwu and Adeyemi (2019) and adapted for this study to better align with the respondents' driving forces in accomplishing their goals. The original instrument is in five Likert scale and contained thirty items, while researcher select twenty items that are in line with study objectives.

Locus of Control Questionnaires (LOCQ)

The second instrument, titled the Locus of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ), was adapted from Curtis and Trice (2013) for this study. The original instrument consists of 28 statements measured on a five-point Likert scale, each assessing students' beliefs about their role in determining life events. The questionnaire was modified to align with respondents' generalized expectancies for self-control and belief, using a 4-point Likert scale for scoring.

School Adjustment Questionnaires (SAQ)

The third instrument was titled School Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ) was adapted from Bama (2019). The original instrument is 16 items questionnaires with five likert scale; the researcher adapted the items that described individual in school adjustment and add some items that make it twenty items (20) for the study. It was used in this study to measure the students' level of adjustment to school activities in senior secondary school.

To establish the validity of the instruments, it was reviewed by three experts from the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling at Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. The experts provided feedback on the instruments, and their observations and recommendations were carefully considered and incorporated to produce the final draft.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was employed on a sample of twenty-five (25) students from Federal Government College, Minna a group separate from the main study sample with a three-week. An alpha coefficient of 0.832 was obtained for the Students' Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (SAMQ), 0.893 for the Locus of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ), and 0.852 for the School Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ), respectively. The high reliability coefficients across all instruments demonstrate strong internal consistency, affirming their accuracy, suitability, and reliability for the study. The researcher collected the data with the help of research assistant and Guidance Counsellor of each school were contacted to facilitate prompt response from the respondents. The data collected in this study was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). All analyses were conducted at a 0.05 significance level using SPSS Version 23.

**Results**

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government colleges in North Central Nigeria

Table 1: r – value between achievement motivation and school adjustment

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Achievement motivation	1532	32.10	6.07	1530	-.007	.041	Sign.

School adjustment 1532 49.97 10.96

Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 indicated the relationship analysis between achievement motivation and school adjustment. The finding revealed that the r-value is .007 and the p-value .041 which is less than .05 level of significant alpha level at 1530 degrees of freedom. The above stated null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that, there is significant relationship between achievement motivation and school adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central Nigeria

Table 2: r – value between internal locus of control and school adjustment

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Internal Locus of Control	1532	33.85	10.96	1530	-.253	.029	Sign.
School Adjustment	1532	49.97	10.96	1530	-.253	.029	Sign.

Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 indicated the relationship analysis between internal locus of control and school adjustment. The finding revealed that the r-value is .253 and the p-value .029 which is less than .05 level of significant alpha level at 1530 degrees of freedom. The above stated null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that, there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and their school adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central Nigeria

Table 3: r – value between External locus of control and school adjustment

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
External Locus of Control	1532	24.17	6.89	1530	-.043	.096	Sign.
School Adjustment	1532	49.97	10.96	1530	-.043	.096	Sign.

Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 indicated the relationship analysis between external locus of control and school adjustment. The finding revealed that the r-value is -.043 and the p-value .096 which is greater than .05 level of significant alpha level at 1530 degrees of freedom. The stated null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that, there is significant relationship between external locus of control and students' school adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria.

**Discussion of Findings**

The results from hypothesis one state that there was significant correlation between achievement motivation and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. The findings of this study supported the findings of Ashish (2022) whose finding indicated that, achievement motivation significantly affects the school adjustment of secondary students. In the contrary, the finding of this study is in contrast with the finding of Palak et al. (2017) which shows that, the achievement motivation is greatly based upon adjusting abilities of children to the school, but not correlated with favorable situation which affects child's adjustment, motivation and gradually it leads to academic achievement.

The results from hypothesis two state that, there was significant correlation between internal locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Richard

(2025) whose study revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between internal locus of control and school adjustment of secondary school students. In addition, the finding of this study is in support with the finding of Ogbogo and Amaechi-Udogu (2019) who revealed that school adjustment significantly with internal locus of control correlating significantly. In the contrary, the finding of this study is in disagreement with the finding of Nwokolo, et al. (2023) who finding revealed that there was very low negative relationship between students' internal locus of control, school adjustment and their academic achievement.

The results from hypothesis three state that, there was no significant correlation between external locus of control and school adjustment among senior secondary school students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in support of the findings of Ogbogo and Amaechi-Udogu (2019) whose result revealed that secondary school students was high, school adjustment was not significantly correlate with external locus of control and not significantly relationship. In the contrary, the finding of this study is in contrast with the findings of Fakeye (2011) who revealed that the locus of control of students positively correlates with their academic achievement but not significantly relate to school adjustment due to environmental factors.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that there is significant correlation between achievement motivation, internal locus of control, external locus of control and school adjustment of Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. Internal locus of control correlates with academic performance among Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria. In addition, external locus of control did not correlate with school adjustment of Senior Secondary School Students of Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were given based on the findings of the research:

1. School counsellors should assist students in building their internal locus of control, self-concept and self-motivation, which will in turn build their self-image and academic improvement.
2. Students should be guided by counsellors, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to understand the uniqueness of their internal locus of control, self-concept and achievement motivation which helps them to be comfortable in learning toward achieving better academic performance.
3. Educational Psychologists should assist the students in developing internal locus of control in order to improve their academic performance and to minimize the level of failure in both terminal and public examination. Also, assist them to respond in a ways that increase their comfortability and ultimate adjustment in the school environment.

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