

LOCUS OF CONTROL AS CORRELATE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated Internal External Locus of Control as Correlate of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Katsina State, Nigeria. Three research objectives, 3 research questions and 3 hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The sample consists of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) senior secondary school students from ten (10) selected senior secondary schools from the population of 17,257 in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance. Two instruments were used for data collection from the respondents, the reliability co-efficient of instruments were LCS=0.83 and ELAT=0.74 respectively. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Product Moment Correlation were employed using SPSS 23 version to facilitate data analysis. Findings of the study showed that there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance in English Language ($r=.008$, $n=375$, $p<0.05$) that there is significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance in English Language ($r=-0.005$, $n=375$, $p<0.05$), respectively. Also, there is significant gender difference in academic performance in English language. The study concluded that internal and external locus of control were significant correlates of students' academic performance in English Language. Based on this finding, it was recommended that school counsellors should assist the students in developing internal locus of control as personality construct in order to improve their academic performance and minimize the effects of external locus of control. Educational stakeholders should focus more on changing students' locus of control from external to internal locus of control, so that students would be able to accept responsibility for their academic performance among others.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Locus of Control, Internal Locus of Control, External Locus of Control

Introduction

Education is considered as an important factor that contributes to success in an individual's life, improvement in the quality of life and general well-being of any society. Academic success is closely linked to a person's life success chances, income and well-being (Kola, 2014). Due to the significant role that secondary education plays in improving the quality of life and general well-being of any society, parents, governments and other stakeholders have continued to invest heavily in education. Investment in secondary education is desirable especially for most of the developing countries because it is the cheapest gateway to equipping the adolescents with core competence skills that require abstract reasoning that they can use to live productively as members of society. Secondary education is a key to any balanced strategic planning in national development since it forms a basis for democratic governance, development in competitive manufacturing, skill and service industries (Cooper & Burgar, 2010).

Locus of control is a personality construct propounded by Julian Rotter in 1954 within the framework of social learning theory. Locus of control is a concept in personality psychology referring to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them (Araromi, 2010). It

is a belief system regarding causes of a person's experiences and factors affecting success or failure either in general or in a specific area such as academic performance. Locus of control in psychology is considered an important aspect of personality which is one of the variables in this research study. Locus of control refers to an individual perception about the underlying main causes of events in his or her life. In other words, locus of control according to Colman (2013) as the name implies is the location of controls (where is the location of what controls the learners).

Locus of control refers to the extent to which a person believes that they can affect their life. In terms of attributing successes or failures, individuals are divided into two groups: 1) those usually attributing their success or failure to their own behaviour (effort or ability), 2) those usually attributing their success or failure to luck or difficulty of tasks. People in the first groups believe they can control the outcomes, finding themselves effective in their own destiny and assume responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour, whereas people in the second group imagine they have little control on what happens to them and ascribe the responsibility of outcomes to external factors. These individuals are known to have external control (Adepoju, 2010).

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 (Jacobs-Lawson et al., 2001; Araromi, 2010). This approach was first proposed by Rotter in his studies on social learning in 1954. Research also revealed the significantly positive effect locus of control on the ability to learn (Gökçearsan & Alper, 2015). Individuals can be classified as possessing either internal locus of control or external locus of control. Individuals who possess internal locus of control typically assume that they possess a degree of control over circumstances and events that happen to them. Internal locus of control is described as a person's believe that his rewards or punishments depend on his own efforts (Cummings & Swickert, 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 have 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.

With respect to school assignments and homework progress known as academic performance, locus of control is considered a key parameter. The vast majority of researches in this regard suggest that people with internal locus of control have always demonstrated better academic performance, more efficient taking advantage of social failures and ultimately greater success in educational contexts. Conversely, those with external locus of control perform poorly throughout education (Ahmad et al 2012). According to Sariçam and Duran (2012), students who have internal locus of control believe that their successes/failures are as a result of their efforts and abilities. On the other hand, students who have external locus of control believe that their successes/failures are as a result of fate or luck. Such students believe that they have no control over the events in their lives and that there are other individuals or external forces that control events in their lives (Akın, 2011).

Academic performance is the outcome of learning process; it constitute the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals (Orji, 2014). He further stressed that academic performance is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important procedural

knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts. According to Aaronson and Williams (2017), academic performance can be defined as excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as extracurricular activities. It includes excellence in sporting, behaviour, confidence communication skills, punctuality, assertiveness, Arts Culture, and the like. In educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standard set out by local government or the institution itself. As career competition grows ever fiercer in the working world, the importance of students doing well in school has caught the attention of parents, legislators and government education departments alike. Therefore, this research investigates Social Skills and Locus of Control as Predictors of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The bottleneck of low performance in external examination among students of secondary school has also been confirmed by the May/June West African Examination Council (WAEC) results scored by students in examination in Katsina state in some years back shows that at least five credits, English Language and Mathematics inclusive, the failure rate be revealed the following statistics of the performance of student in secondary schools in public examination. The percentages of students who passed during the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 were reported to be 27.7%, 55.0%, 48.4%, 40.2%, 54.5%, 17.8% and 21.5% respectively (WAEC, 2024). Studies have shown that students' academic performance is very low which affect students gaining admission to university education. This is as a result can be attributed to student low level of internal locus of control and high level of external locus of control, examination anxiety, too much stress and lack of social skills to gain more interest on career opportunity ahead.

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 unravelling. From the past studies, poor academic performances of students, maladaptive or inappropriate behaviours among others has been linked or attributed to internal and external locus of control respectively. However, there is gap in literature and method, no agreement has been reached and no final conclusion was drawn to justify and ascertain the actual reasons behind such. It is in view of the above that the current study is based upon in order to breach the gap. Therefore, the present study intends to breach the gap by examining Locus of Control as Correlates of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the relationship between Internal Locus of control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the relationship between External Locus of Control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.
3. explore gender difference in the Academic performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina Sate.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between Internal Locus of control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

2. What is the relationship between External Locus of Control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

3. Does any gender difference exist in the Academic performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State.

Hypotheses

The researcher formulates the following hypotheses guided the study:

HO1: There is no significant relationship between Internal Locus of Control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students' in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between External Locus of Control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

HO3: There is no significant gender difference on Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State,

Methodology

The researcher adopted correlational research design for this study. The design was used to test the degree to which two or more measurements on the same group of elements show a tendency to vary together. Correlational study is a research design that determined the relationship between two or more variables from the same group or population (Creswell, 2012). As a quantitative research method, it involves analysing multiple quantitative variables from the same population to determine whether statistically significant relationships exist among them. Based on these facts, correlational research design is considered most appropriate for this study because it aims to investigate the relationship between Social Skills and Locus of Control as correlates of Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria. This would enable the researcher to ascertain the extent to which variations in one variable are related to variations in another variable.

The population for this study is seventeen thousand, two hundred and fifty-seven (17,257) students of senior secondary school (SSS II) across all public Senior Secondary Schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, (Jibia, Katsina and Kaita LGA) Katsina State.

The sample size of this research consists of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) SSS II students from public senior secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria. Research Advisors (2006) was adopted for determining the sample size which was drawn from representation of population of seventeen thousand, two hundred and fifty-seven (17,257) students were identified for this study.

The sample size was proportionally shared among the respondents in the respective schools using simple mathematical application with percentage of actual population of each school, which is populations of each sampled school multiply by total sample size divided by target population of the study. Because of the fact that ten (10) sampled senior secondary schools differ in population, the number of respondents were picked randomly from each selected schools proportionally according to the number of students and gender consideration in each schools. Simple random sampling was adopted using proportional distribution of the sample size. And these techniques are employed in order to have an unbiased sample and ensure that each sampled school is represented. In this study, multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select ten (10) schools from the total number of public senior secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina state, the judgment is based on school mixed schools (co-education).

The instruments used for this study include Locus of Control Scale (LCS), the academic performance test is English Language Performance Test (ELPT).

Locus of Control Scale (LCS) developed by Pettijohn (1992) was adopted for this research study. It consists of 20 statements in the questionnaire. The researcher finds it deemed appropriate because each of statements relates to the way the individual students believes he/she plays in whatever happens to him or her. The respondent are to choose one of options from rating and scoring were based on 4-point Likert modified Scale. The symbols used were Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) with numerical value of 1, 2, 3, and 4 points. It measures generalized expectancies for control of self/belief by measuring both internal and external locus of control about the self.

English Language Academic Performance of the participants were measured using the 2022 WASSCE Objective questions (Lexis and Structure) developed by West African Examination Council (WAEC). The test items consists of twenty (20) items objective questions was adopted and modified to suit the study because it also specifically sought to measure the academic performance of senior secondary school students on English Language. The scores will be mark 2.5 for each correct items, this was made off 100 marks.

To ensure the validity of the instruments, drafted copies of the instrument was validated by three experts in Test and Measurement and Educational Psychology. Their comments, corrections and observations were adhered to and strictly taken into consideration in drawing the final copies of the instrument. The test-retest method of reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. The instrument was administered to a sample of twenty (20) students from Government Senior secondary school Kaita, under Katsina Zonal Educational Quality Assurance (KZEQA) Katsina state, which is not part of the real study sample. An Alpha coefficient values of 0.83 was obtained for the Locus of Control Scale (LCS) and 0.74 was obtained for English Language Performance Test (ELPT) reliability. This shows that the instrument is accurate, suitable and reliable for the study. The data collected from this study were sanalysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) for hypotheses 1 and 2, while t-test was used to analyse hypothesis 3. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was subjected to SPSS Version 23 statistical software.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between Internal Locus of Control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students’ in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 1: r-value of Internal Locus of Control and Academic Performance

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Internal Locus of Control	377	68.99					
Students’ Academic Performance	377	13.64	2.721	375	.881	Sig.	

**Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result on table 1 shows a positive relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of senior secondary school students in English language in Katsina Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State; this indicates that r-value of 0.008 and p-value 0.881 is greater than 0.05 significant alpha level at 375 degree of freedom. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected since there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance among senior secondary school students in Katsina Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State. Therefore, it implies that internal locus of control correlates students’ academic performance in English language in Katsina Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between External Locus of Control and Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 2: r-value of External Locus of Control and Academic Performance

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
External Locus of Control	377	31.63					
Students' Academic Performance	377	13.64	2.721	375	-.005	0.921	Sig.

**Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result on table 2 indicates that there is a positive relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of senior secondary school students in English language in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State; this indicates that r-value of -0.005 and p-value 0.921 is greater than 0.05 significant alpha level at 375 degree of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis is hereby rejected because there is significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance among senior secondary school students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State. Therefore, it implies that external locus of control correlates students' academic performance in English language in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant gender difference on Academic Performance in English Language among Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Gender difference in Academic Performance in English Language

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Sign	Decision
Students' Academic Performance	Male	197	13.40	2.721	375	-1.622	0.106	Sig.
	Female	180	13.91	2.721				

**Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result on table 3 shows that there is significant gender difference in academic performance of senior secondary students in English language in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State; this indicates that the levene's T-test for equality of variance at which t-test value of -5.043 and sign. value of 0.106 is greater than 0.05 significant alpha level at 375 degree of freedom. Therefore, hypothesis is hereby rejected because there is significant difference in male and female academic performance in English language among senior secondary students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State. This indicates that female mean score of 13.91 is greater than male counterpart of 13.40. Therefore gender was significantly found to have a greater capacity to influence Students' academic Performance in English language.

Discussion of Findings

The results of hypothesis one revealed that internal locus of control is significantly correlate to academic performance. The result is in support of the study of Ozuome, et al., (2020) which indicated that majority of the students in Imo state have external locus of control. The result also indicated that a good number of the students have good achievement in English language. In contrary, the result disagrees with the finding of Mustapha (2016) which found out that internal locus of control was negatively associated with academic performance.

The results of hypothesis two revealed that there is significant relationship between external locus of control and there was a positive relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance. The result is in support of the study of Uchebo and Aminu (2017) shown a significant relationship exists between external locus of control and academic performance of English Language students in senior secondary schools. The result agrees with the finding of Mustapha (2016) which found that external locus of control was positively associated with academic performance. In contrary,

the study of Itani and Hollebeek (2021) found that an external locus of control negatively correlated with academic performance of individual.

The results of hypothesis one revealed that there is significant gender difference in academic performance in English Language among Secondary School Students. The finding of this study is in support of Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) which shows that gender (male or female) does not influence academic performance of secondary school students. In addition, this finding is supported by Mapesa (2013) had a positive influence to female student performance in English language. The study recommends that Students and school stakeholders should be made aware of the benefits of peer group prior achievements as it greatly influences academic performance of students in secondary schools. In contrary, the findings of Bassey (2020) revealed that male students perform positively significantly in the academic performance secondary school students in English Language than their female counterpart. This implies that gender (male and female) has contributed influence on student academic performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that locus of control plays a major role in the academic performance of students. Students with good internal locus of control are academically more competent as compared to students with external locus of control. Locus of Control is one of the major factors that influenced students' academic performance; similarly, internal locus of control was significant and predicts students' academic performance, external locus of control students' academic performance. Lastly, Gender (male or female) has influence on academic performance of senior secondary school students in English language in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina state.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of this study:

- (1). School Counsellors should assist the students in developing internal locus of control as personality construct in order to improve their academic performance and minimize the effects of external locus of control.
- (2). Educational stakeholders should focus more on changing students' locus of control from external to internal locus of control, so that students would be able to accept responsibility for their academic performance.
- (3). School should organize inter and intra class debate competition in collaboration with the Counselling service and Ministry of Education, by making the learning environment conducive to boost student inert behaviour toward social skills, internal locus of control and academic performance and reduce the influence of external locus of control.

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