



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA KOGI STATE NIGERIA

Uchebo, Samuel Yahaya.

National Teachers' Institute Kaduna
Dekina Study Centre Kogi State Nigeria

&

Dr. Aminu Sanni
Department of Educational Foundations
Kogi State University, Anyigba

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between locus of control and academic performance of Arts and Science students among secondary schools in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. It is a survey design. The population consists of all senior secondary school students in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State where a total of 300 respondents were sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument employed was a structured questionnaire tagged "Locus of Control and Academic Performance Questionnaire (LCAPQ)" which yielded an Alpha level of 0.75 using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient on test-retest reliability. Four research questions and four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 Alpha level. The product moment correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The results indicated among others, that a significant relationship exists between external locus of control and academic performance of Arts students in secondary schools. Recommendations, among others, include counselors and teachers to help pupils in developing the right personality construct.

Introduction

The development of the learners can only be achieved through proper education and it is important to note that proper understanding of the learners in terms of

personality contributes significantly to the level of attainment in the educational strivings. And likewise it is important to note too that the level of understanding a learner holds about his or herself contributes significantly to the level of attainment in life and educational matters.

Over the years, investigation into the factors that influence academic performance at all levels of education has posed a serious concern to teachers, counselors, psychologists, researchers as well as school administrators in Nigeria and the world over. And this could be among many reasons why researchers have carried out series of researches in several areas/discipline and several places to fully understand those factors that could speed or impede the rate of academic performance of the learners. Trying to do so, the issue of locus of control comes in as a variable that has a strong link with academic performance.

Locus of control in psychology is considered an important aspect of personality. 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 as the name implies is the location of controls (where is the location of what controls the learners) Colman (2001) cited by Fakaye (2011) defined locus of control as a cognitive style of personality trait characterized by expectancy about the relationship between behavior and the subsequent occurrence of reinforcement. This therefore implies that reinforcement is the consequence of one's behaviors and that this reinforcement can come in the form of reward or punishment. The variable locus of control can be categorized into internal and external locus of control. According to Schultz and Schultz (2005) internal locus of control refers to the psychological orientation involving an acceptance for personal action and the belief that many circumstances in life and the way in which outcome develops are within the realm of one's control. Richard, Douma and Margolin (2009) refers to external locus of control as a tendency to attribute one's life circumstance to outside forces such as another person's agenda, luck or fate. This implies that poor performance in academics can be linked to other factors outside the individual person. However, the two are capable of influencing the academic performance of students at all levels of their educational endeavours which includes the secondary school.

Statement of the Problem

An excellent performance in academics is one of the major expectations of every serious minded individual and that accounts for the fact that much fund is invested into the education of her citizenry by parents as well government. Equally the place of locus of control and causal attribution as they relates to academic performance of learners at all levels of education cannot be over emphasized.

There is an assertion by Gershaw (2001) that learners who take responsibility for events around his or her life will stand the chance of excelling in academics than those who attributes blame on either the environment or other factors within the context of the environment. In line with this, several personal encounters with students either as Arts or Science in my area of study has shown me their diverse opinion as it relates to one's success and failure in academics, while some of them expressed success and failure in academics as a product of their personal effort, skill and ability, some of them equally said that personal effort plays a less significant role in relation to academic matters, such are of the mind that there are forces in the environment which we find it difficult to contend with. This implies that such students have attributed success and failure in academic achievement to internal and external causes.

It is important to note too that many of the students which I had opportunity to interact with neither understand their personality type as either internal or external nor the implication or relationship these styles of personality has on academic strivings of students.

It is against this background. The researcher has set up to find out the relationship between locus of control and academic performance of Arts and Science Secondary School Students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between locus of control and academic performance of Arts and Science Students Secondary School. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine if there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts Students in secondary schools.
2. Determine if there is a significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Arts students in Secondary Schools.
3. To ascertain whether there exist a significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Science Students in Secondary Schools.
4. Ascertain whether there is a significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Science Students in Secondary Schools.

Research Questions

The study will provide answers to the following research questions.

1. Is there any relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts Students in Secondary Schools?

2. Does any relationship exist between external locus of control and academic performance of Arts Students in Secondary Schools?
3. Is there any relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Science Students in Secondary Schools?
4. Does any relationship exist between external locus of control and academic performance of Science Students in Secondary Schools?

Research Hypotheses

These hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts Students in Secondary Schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Arts Students in Secondary Schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Science Students in Secondary School.
4. There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Science secondary school students.

Methodology

Research Procedure

Survey design was used for the study. The area of study comprised of Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. The population for the study consist of al the Senior Secondary School students in the twenty Eight (28) secondary schools with a total student enrolment of twenty thousand, eight hundred and fourty –four (20,844).

A sample side of 300 was used using Research advisor (2006) statistical table for determining sample size of a given population. The researcher adopted the use of Ndagi (1999) proportionate stratified random sampling method to ensure a fair distribution of the sample/respondents.

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to seek information from the respondents. The instrument was tagged Locus of Control and Academic Performance Questionnaire (LCAPQ) which comprised of 3 sections. Section A was Bio-data of respondents while section B comprised of a twenty-five (25) items designed to measure the internal and external locus of control of respondents using the Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D).

While section C measures the academic performance of respondents and this was done using the student's scores of their internal examinations.

The contents validity of the instrument was carried out by experts in the field of Guidance and Counseling in the department of educational foundations of Benue State University, Makurdi. This was done through personal contact with these authorities who carefully examined, supervised, corrected, reformed and moderated the questionnaire. This made the instrument to be accepted in terms of its reliability and therefore adequate for the study.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out by the researcher by administering questionnaire on 30 respondents who were not part of the original respondents in the study area. The administered instrument was collected and tested using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Co-Efficient which yielded an Alpha level of 0.75 which is considered high enough to be used for the study.

Data Analysis and Results

The formulated hypothesis for the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Each hypothesis was tested using computer calculated probability of the SPSS denoted as sig. (2-tailed) = p. if p is less than 0.05, the relationship in the tested hypothesis is significant, but if p is equal to or greater than 0.05, the difference in the tested hypothesis is not significant.

Hypothesis one

1. *There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts students in Secondary schools;*

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correction Co-Efficient (PPMC) Statistics of internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts students.

Description	N	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Internal locus of control of Arts students	80	.472**	.000	Significant
Academic performance of Science students	80			

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the above table, it can be seen that the relationship is positive ($r=.472$) and since $p=.000$ is less than 0.05 it is concluded that the relationship is statistically significant. The hypothesis is therefore rejected and the conclusion is that there is statistically significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts secondary school students.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Arts Students in Secondary Schools.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correction Co-Efficient (PPMC) of External locus of control and academic performance of Arts students.

Description	N	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
External locus of control of Arts students	66	-.377**	.000	Significant
Academic performance of Arts students	66			

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the table above, the computer calculated 'r' value is $-.377$ showing a negative relationship between Art students' external locus of control and academic performance. Since the p value of $.000$ is less than $.05$, it can be concluded that, though the relationship between the two variables is fairly negative, it is still statistically significant. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected as there exist a statistically significant relationship between Arts students' external locus of control and academic performance.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Science Students in Secondary School.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correction Co-Efficient (PPMC) of Internal locus of control and Academic Performance of science students.

Description	N	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Internal locus of control of science students	93	.212**	.008	Significant
Academic performance of Science students	93			

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the above table, 93 science secondary school students were surveyed, and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) between the students' internal locus of control and their academic performance is .212 the decision rule is that, since the p value of .008 is less than .05, we can conclude that, the relationship between science students' internal locus of control and academic performance is statistically significant. Therefore, I fail to accept the hypothesis as it is not statistically valid.

Hypothesis four

There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Science students in secondary schools.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correction Co-Efficient (PPMC) of External locus of control and Academic Performance of science students.

Description	N	Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
External locus of control of science students	61	-.279**	.000	Significant
Academic performance of Science students	61			

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table shows that, the correlation between the 61 surveyed science students on their external locus of control and academic performance is -.279, showing a low negative relationship. The hypothesis is tested at 0.05 level of significance, and hence the computer calculated p value of .000 is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected as

there exist a negative significant relationship between science students' external locus of control and their academic performance.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

Hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of Arts Secondary School students. This is an indication that Arts Students who are internals in terms of their locus of control are noted for high performance in academics. This is due to the fact that internal locus of control plays a significant role in the academic striving of students. Such students who are internal in terms of their locus of control take responsibility for their actions. They depend on their personal ability like skill, effort as responsible for their success or failure in all their endeavors. Such factors are known to trigger them up for excellent and competent performance. They embark on independent studies or tasks towards success and failure which can be the major factor responsible for such positive significant relationship between them and academic performance. This finding is in agreement with that of Fakeye (2011) who established that there was a significant relationship between the locus of control of students and their achievement in English language.

Hypothesis two found that there is a negative significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of Arts secondary school students. The implication of this finding could be that Arts students who are external in their classification of personality type as external locus of control are associated with low performance in academics. Students who are external attributes success or failure to external causes/ factors like fate, god, luck, chance or an un conducive environment as well as significant others in the society. An individual who holds such belief (external) may be tempted to hold these factors as responsible for his or her behavior thereby transforming such to academic which may result in a negative relationship to academic matters. The result of this study is in agreement with that of Rotter (1966) cited by Allen (2000) who found out that externality was greater among African –Americans than Europeans – Americans. On this note too, Hardin and Rodin (1999) found out that African-American population tended to have an internal orientation. This situation may be traceable to the fact that African – American population were suffering racial discriminations and marginalization.

Hypothesis three revealed that there exist a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of science secondary school students. Reasons for such positive relationship between the two variables could be traceable to the fact that a learner who has an internal locus of control

orientation is noted for such belief that he or she is guided by his or her personal decisions and efforts. An internal orientation is synonymous with having self-agency, personal control, self-determination and self-regulation which are essential ingredients for an achievement in academic matters. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Ozioko (2002) who carried out a research and the result of the study strongly supports the prediction that performance in mathematics would be attributable to locus of control than performance of participants who attributed performance to skills or ability, internal was substantially superior to the performance of those who attributed performance to luck, chance or fate (externals). Ozioko's study therefore found out that internality is significantly positively related to mathematics achievement than externality.

Hypothesis four revealed that there exists a significant negative relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of science secondary schools students. One of the notable reasons for such negative correlation between the two variables could be traceable to the mentality of externals who believe that external or environmental circumstance is a strong factor for success or failure in life with particular reference to academics. A situation like the above reduces an individual from engaging in tasks that are result oriented thereby holding others as accountable for such results. This finding is in agreement with several authorities like Crandall (1965) and Katkovsky (1981) who found out that children who scored higher were internalizes who tend to get better grades and to do better in achievement test than the externals. It also confirms Edmonds (2002) on the effect of locus of control and stability on academic performance in Eight Grade Students from North Central West Virginia, which found out that overall internal students had higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than external students and equally. Thomas and Harvey (2001) examined current research on locus of control self-monitoring and student responsibility and academic motivation and they found out that students with internal locus of control were more responsible than students with external locus of control and finally, stone and Jackson (1975) found out that persons with internal locus of control were more responsible than students with external locus of control and finally, stone and Jackson (1975) found out that persons with internal locus of control are more cognitively able, mentally aware, better predisposed to learning and more motivated than persons with external locus of control.

6.0 Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made

1. Since the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control and academic performance of both Arts and science secondary school students, teachers should identify students of who are

internal in terms of their psychological makeup and assist them discover more of the hidden virtues that makes them different from others.

2. From the findings too, there is a negative significant relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of arts and science secondary school students. External factors which could be responsible for such externality resides on teacher, parents and government to create an environment conducive and suitable for learning.
3. From every indications, students who are internal possess a superior academic character therefore teachers should give such students extra academic tasks that can enhance further development of such superiority.
4. External students attributes both success and failure to external (environmental factors) teachers and counselors should assist them understand the implications of such attribution.

From the findings of the study, the nature of one's personality determines the extent to which such persons can attain in achievement strivings, on this note, therefore teachers counselors should assist their students and clients form or develop a healthy personality construct (internal) through individual and group counseling.

Conclusion

The findings that characterized this study are in consonance with current findings in this field of study. Both Arts and Science Students either as internals or externals related to academic performance. This implies that proper attention should be given to both in developing the right personality construct. Since both students as either internal as well as external locus of control related to academic performance, while internals related positively to academic performance externals related negatively to academic performance.

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