

EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN OGBA/EGBEMA NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated external locus of control and students' academic performance in the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. Correlational research design was adopted. The population of the study was 5,227 students in 21 senior secondary schools in Ogba/Egbema Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The sample size of 372 SSS2 students (186 males and 186 females) was selected for the study. Taro Yamena's formula was used to determine the sample size. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample size. The face and content validity of the instruments were determined by the supervisor and two other experts. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability coefficients of 0.74 for cluster A, 0.78 for cluster B, 0.73 for cluster C, 0.76 for cluster D and 0.75 for the entire Locus of Control Questionnaire. Test-retest method was used to obtain 0.80 reliability coefficient. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed that locus of control have positive relationship with students' academic performance, in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. It was recommended that: Students should be encouraged to develop an internal locus of control in order enhance their learning efforts for high academic performance.

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

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance remains of primary significance and serves as the ultimate measure for all teaching-learning endeavours, including those classified as excellent performance, subpar performance or failure. Although academic performance remains the cornerstone of education, its attainment remains an unattainable objective. Some educators in their search for academic rigor may unknowingly make choices which hinder alternative programs from producing desired educational outcomes. Academic achievement serves as the measure of educational progress; it measures whether or not individuals, teachers or institutions have accomplished their desired educational objectives. Measuring academic performance often takes the form of examinations or assessments. However, no consensus has emerged as to which testing methods or elements to measure-whether procedural knowledge with skills or declarative knowledge with facts are most suitable or necessary (Akunne et al., 2021).

Reducing academic performance deficits has become more urgent over time due to secondary school students' dismal performance. Reports by Nigeria's National Examination Commission (NECO) and West African Examination Council (WAEC), two bodies responsible for secondary school certificate examinations between 2005-2010, revealed that over 50% of candidates took these examinations between those years had unsuccessful results (Abid et al., 2016). Such statistics bear special relevance given Nigeria is one of many nations which depend heavily on successful secondary education as the foundation for further studies at universities, colleges of education or polytechnics (Abid et al., 2016).

Student's academic performance in Economics can also be affected by factors other than curriculum and resources alone. Two important psychological constructs have been studied as potential correlates; self-concept and locus of control being two such examples; self-concept refers to an individual's perception of themselves in terms of abilities, competence and worth; while locus of control encompasses perceptions regarding how much one has control over events or outcomes occurring within their lives.

Research suggests that having a positive self-concept, defined as having faith in their abilities to comprehend challenging subjects like Economics, can contribute to improved academic performance (Thakare & Matte, 2022). A high self-concept, characterized by a positive and confident perception of one's abilities, significantly influences student academic performance (Thakare & Matte, 2022). Therefore, students with a high or strong self-concept are basically motivated, approaching their studies with enthusiasm and purpose. This inner motivation drives them to excel academically while low self-concept, characterized by a negative perception of one's abilities, can adversely affect student academic performance. For example, students with low self-concept often lack the motivation to excel academically (Thakare & Matte, 2022) and may also doubt their capabilities, leading to a lack of enthusiasm and commitment to their studies.

Within the context of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, exploring the interrelation between self-concept, locus of control and academic performance can provide invaluable insight into factors contributing to students' success in Economics. By understanding how psychological constructs relate to academic performance, educators and policymakers can devise interventions and strategies designed to increase both learning experiences and achievements in Economics for both students in rural and urban areas.

Notable researchers such as Abdulkadir & Solomon (2016), Sa'adiya (2018); Buckingham and Corkeron, 2020) and Thakare and Matte (2022) have demonstrated how academic performance is deeply connected to socio-psychological variables and other notable elements, including self-concept, esteem, confidence, regulation self-efficacy interest schooling emotional intelligence study habits etc, all contributing towards student academic outcomes. Modern society uses academic performance as a key barometer of an individual's potential and abilities; therefore, striving for superior academic achievements has become ever more vital to survival in modern life. Academic achievement has become a cornerstone of success for today's children in an increasingly challenging globalized environment.

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Theory of Educational Productivity (TEP) by Walberg (1981)

Walberg (1981) propounded the theory of educational productivity. The theory is one of the few theories that explained students' academic performance. Walberg's theory tackles the influences on learning that affects the academic performance of a student. It is an exploration of academic achievement wherein Walberg used a variety of methods on how to identify the factors that affects the academic performance of a student. He analyzed his theory with the help of different theorists and integrated his study with over 3000 studies. In his theory, he classified 11 influential domains of variables, 8 of them were affected by social-emotional influences namely, classroom management, parental support, student-teacher interactions, social-behavioral attributes, motivational-effective attributes.

The variables are reflected with different representation. In the first three variables (ability, motivation, and age) reflect characteristics of the student. The fourth and fifth variables reflect instruction (quantity and quality), and the final four variables (classroom climate, home

environment, peer group, and exposure to media) represent aspects of the psychological environment. He explained that these variables have certain effects that might cause problems with the academic performance of students if it will not be properly guided. Giving importance with a certain variable can mean a big impact with the student's academic performance.

Several studies have been done to identify problems that affect students' academic performance. The students' academic performance depends on a number of socio-economic factors like students' presence of trained teacher in school, teacher-student ratio, attendance in the class, sex of the student, family income, mother's and father's education, and distance of schools. The theory is highly related to the present study as it emphasizes that students are most essential asset for any educational institute.

External Locus of Control and Academic Performance

In the realm of academic performance, understanding the implications of an external locus of control is of paramount importance. Abdul's (2015) research offers valuable insights into this dimension, shedding light on how an external locus of control orientation can significantly influence an individual's educational journey. Abdul (2015) offered the following as attributes of external locus of control:

Procrastination as a Consequence: One of the notable findings from Abdul's study is the strong correlation between an external locus of control and procrastination. Individuals who lean towards an external locus of control often believe that external factors, rather than their own actions, dictate the outcome of their academic pursuits. Consequently, they may postpone tasks, believing that the timing of their efforts is less relevant since external forces largely determine their success. This tendency to delay critical academic tasks can have detrimental effects on learning, as it reduces the time available for in-depth understanding and mastery of course materials (Abdul, 2015).

Lack of Effort: Another significant outcome of an external locus of control is a diminished sense of personal responsibility for academic outcomes. Students who exhibit this orientation may perceive that their efforts have little impact on their grades or educational achievements. Consequently, they may invest less effort in their studies, feeling that their actions are futile. This lack of effort can manifest as reduced participation in class, a failure to complete assignments, and a general disengagement from the learning process.

Lower Persistence: Abdul's research also highlights the tendency for individuals with an external locus of control to display lower levels of persistence in the face of academic challenges. When confronted with obstacles or setbacks, these students may be more inclined to give up rather than persisting and seeking solutions. This lack of persistence can hinder their ability to overcome academic difficulties and make academic progress.

Poorer Academic Outcomes: Perhaps the most critical implication of an external locus of control in the context of academic performance is its association with poorer educational outcomes. As individuals with this mindset are more likely to procrastinate, exert less effort, and exhibit lower persistence, their academic achievements tend to suffer. They may earn lower grades, perform below their true potential, and ultimately experience reduced satisfaction with their educational experiences.

Interventions and Support: Recognizing the challenges associated with an external locus of control, educational institutions and educators can implement targeted interventions to help students shift towards a more internal locus of control orientation. These interventions may include promoting a growth mindset, providing mentorship and guidance, and emphasizing the importance of personal agency in achieving academic success (Abdul, 2015).

Abdul's (2015) submission underscores the significance of locus of control in shaping academic performance. An external locus of control can lead to detrimental academic behaviors, such as

procrastination, reduced effort, and lower persistence, all of which contribute to poorer educational outcomes. Understanding these dynamics allows educators and institutions to design interventions and support systems that empower students to take control of their academic journey, foster a sense of personal responsibility, and ultimately enhance their academic performance.

Empirical Review

External locus of control and Academic Performance of Students

Nayak (2016) studied the relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of medical students using a sample of 70 undergraduates selected through purposive sampling method. Eysenck personality inventory was used for data collection. Pearson correlation was used for data analysis at 0.05 level of probability. The result revealed that there is no significant correlation between external locus of control and academic performance.

Benjamin et al (2016) examined the connection between locus of control and academic performance among high school students in Payame Noor University. Correlational design was adopted in carrying out this research. The author steered the research using seven research questions in combination with seven hypotheses. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 381 high school students from a population of 45,539 students in the area where the study was conducted. The instruments that was used for data gathering was a self-developed structured questionnaire 'Locus of Control Questionnaire 'and Students' academic record were also sourced from the school. A reliability test was conducted on the instrument of the study and a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. Pearson method of correlation was applied in answering the research questions and was further used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a positive significant connection between internal locus of control and students educational performance. This could be that students that have internal locus have the capacity to internally regulate, checkmate, evaluate and modify themselves along with the educational learning process.

Adu and Oshati (2014) conducted a study examining the relationship between eternal locus of control and academic performance. Their research found that locus of control is a significant factor in understanding students' academic achievement. They explored the association between study habits, locus of control, teachers' self-efficacy, and students' performance. The study revealed that eternal locus of control is a crucial factor that correlates with academic outcomes. Locus of control is a bipolar construct, encompassing internal and external dimensions, and this research shed light on its impact on students' educational success.

Nejati et al (2022) conducted a study aims to investigate the relationship between external locus of control and the academic performance of M.A. students, taking into consideration the role of life quality and life satisfaction. It follows an applied correlation research design, and the sample was selected using stratified sampling. The sample comprises 267 students in the second semester of the academic year at the Islamic Azad University of Yazd. The research instruments used include the World Health Organization (WHO QOL-BREF) life quality scale, the Diener life satisfaction scale (SWL), and the internal and external locus of control scale (ANS). Data were analyzed using AMOS software and structural equation modeling. The findings of the study indicate that locus of control is significantly related to students' academic performance.

Research Design

Correlational design will be used for the study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study will be 5,227 SSS2 students in all the 21 Senior Secondary Schools in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The population of the study is made up of 2,579 male and 2,648 female students in senior secondary schools in Ogba/Egbema Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. (Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, Port Harcourt, 2023). See Appendix 2.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size of the study will be 372 SSS2 students made up of 186 males and 186 females which were determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Simple random sampling technique will be used because it has the advantage of ensuring that "each element of the population has equal and independent chance of being included in the sampling" (Emaikwu, 2015). Simple random sampling will give equal opportunity to all public senior secondary school students to be selected for the study.

Administration of the Instrument

The Self-concept and locus of control and students economics performance instruments shall be administered on 372 students (186 males and 186 females) of senior secondary school SSS 2. The researcher shall be aided in the administration of the instruments by five research assistants.

Method of Data Analysis

The data that will be collected from the respondents for the research questions and hypotheses will be answered and tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The test of null hypotheses will be done at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question one: What is the relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in Economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in Economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation Analysis between External Locus of Control and Students'

Academic Performance in Economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA

Variables		External Locus of Control	Academic Performance in Economics	
External Locus of Control	Pearson Correlation	1	-.410	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.572	
	N	372	372	Negative and Not Sig.
	Pearson Correlation	-.410	1	
Academic Performance in Economics	Sig. (2-tailed)	.572		
	N	372	372	

Not Significant at 0.05 (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows the Pearson's Correlation analysis between external locus of control and students' academic performance in economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA. Table 1 revealed that there is a negative value of r (-.410) indicating that the relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in Economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State is negative. Furthermore, the data in Table 4.2 showed that the p -value = .572 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the p -value(0.572) > 0.05, the null hypothesis two was therefore accepted, hence there is no significant relationship between external

locus of control and students' academic performance in Economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State.

External Locus of Control and Students' Academic Performance

Analysis of data on research questions two using Pearson correlation revealed that there is a negative relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. The corresponding hypothesis two showed that the relationship between the external locus of control and students' academic performance in economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State is not statistically significant. This could be attributed to the fact that those with external locus of control usually believe that most events in their life including their failures or success in school activities are caused by luck or fate. This may have influenced the finding of this study. This present finding supports Abdul (2015) who studied the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of male and female undergraduate students of Guwahati City of Assam, India and reported that there was no significant positive correlation between external locus of control and academic achievement of the students.

Similarly, Nayak (2016) study revealed that there is no significant correlation between external locus of control and academic performance when he studied the relationship between external locus of control and academic performance of medical students. Also, external locus of control indicates that a positive or negative reinforcement following some action of the individual is perceived as not being entirely contingent upon his or her own action but the result of chance, fate, or luck or it may be perceived as under the control of powerful others and unpredictable because of the complexity of forces surrounding the individual (Jeniffer, et al., 2022). Abdul's (2015) noted that external locus of control can lead to detrimental academic behaviors, such as procrastination, reduced effort, and lower persistence, all of which contribute to poorer educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study which focused on the relationship between external locus of control and students' academic performance in economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State revealed that external locus of control have positive relationship with students' academic performance in economics in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Students should be encouraged to develop an external locus of control in order enhance their learning efforts for high academic performance in economics.
2. Students should be actively involved in school activities in order to suppress their external locus of control as to attain high academic performance in economics.

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