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LOCUS OF CONTROL, SELF-EFFICACY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Ijeoma Evelyn, Animba

Department of Educational Foundation, Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Email: animba.evelyn@esut.edu.ng Phone No: 08091713071

Edith Obianuju, Ezema

Department of Educational Foundation, Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Email: ezema.obianuju@esut.edu.ng Phone No: 08030894462

Peter Ndubisi, Chukwu

Department of Educational Management, Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Email: peter.chukwu@esut.edu.ng Phone No: 07036820436

Patience, Nwobodo

Federal College of Education (Technical) Isu, Ebonyi State

Email: ori98181@yahoo.com Phone No: 08032763436

Corresponding author: *Ijeoma Evelyn, Animba
Email: animba.evelyn@esut.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The impact of locus of control and self-efficacy on academic performance has long been an important issue in education. The study aimed to explore the relationship between locus of control and self-efficacy in the academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State. Correlational design was used for the study. The sample consists of 350 students randomly selected from three secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone. Two standardized instruments of locus of control and academic self-efficacy face validated by three experts from Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation respectively from Enugu State University of Science and Technology were used to collect data from the sample while students' scores in their last promotion examination were used to measure academic performance. The reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach's alpha with a coefficient of 0.73. Through Pearson Product Moment correlational analysis, the researchers found that locus of control and academic self-efficacy have a positive relationship with academic performance. Further analysis using multiple regression analysis revealed that locus of control and academic self-efficacy have a relationship with the academic performance of secondary school students in the zone. It was recommended therefore that teachers and counseling psychologists use appropriate psychological intervention as well as stimulating teaching methodology in order to enhance self-efficacy and locus of control among secondary school students in the state.

KEYWORDS

Locus of control, self-efficacy, academic performance, secondary school students.



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Introduction

Academic performance is the yardstick for measuring educational outcomes for economic, technological and scientific advancement of a nation. This is because academic performance has a direct impact on national development of any country thus the quality of a nation's manpower determines her level of productivity. Moreover, academic success and obtaining good grades are some of the main goals of education as well as positive outcomes for both students and educational system. Therefore, educational psychologists and educators consider it of utmost concern to identify factors influencing academic success of students like locus of control and self-efficacy (Mega, Roncon and DeBeni, 2014).

Locus of control is a personality characteristic that determines the degree with which an individual believes he/she is in control of their life and situation. It refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of event in his/her life. According to Education reform (2013), locus of control is a psychological concept that refers to how strongly people believe they have control over the situation and experiences that affect their life. Educationally, locus of control refers to how students perceive the causes of their academic success or failure in school. Considered as one of the four element of center self-assessment together with neuroticism, self-viability and self-esteem; Kendra (2021), defined locus of control as the extent to which people feel that they have control over the event that influences their life. She pointed out those students who believe they hold keys to their fate are more likely to take action to change their situation when needed. This is because one's locus of control influences not only how he/she respond to academic situation but the motivation to take action (APA, 2021). Furthermore, locus of control is divided into internal and external. Thus, students with internal locus of control believe that their success or failure is a result of the effort and hard work they invested in their learning while students with external locus of control believe that their success or failure is as a result of external factors beyond their control such as luck, fate, injustice and spiritual beings amongst others (Kendra, 2021). This means that while students with internal locus of control blame their poor/high academic performance on their study habit, dedication, hard work and perseverance; students with external locus of control blame theirs on teachers, society and negative forces. Therefore, whichever aspect of locus of control a student chooses to be influenced on, determines his/her academic motivation, persistence and level of hard work. This is because internals are considered more likely to work hard in order to learn, make progress and succeed regardless of failure while externals are likely to believe that working hard is pointless because someone or something else is in charge of their life.

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his/her capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals. Originally proposed by Albert Bandura who defined it as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of one's action required to produce given achievement (Meera and Jumana, 2015). They opined further that individual's level of self-efficacy can be used to determine whether a task will be initiated, the amount of effort that will be expended and the level of persistence to complete the task when faced with aversive experiences and obstacles. According to Ogunmakin and Akomolafe(2013), self-efficacy is the measure of one's competency to complete task and reach goals. They argued further that self-efficacy is a personal belief one has in his/her ability to successfully accomplish a specific task as well as a personal belief in the capability to learn or perform task at designated level. As a multi-dimensional, domain specific and context dependent concept, self-efficacy is largely dependent on interactions between one's behaviour, belief, thought and environmental factors. It influences the power of a student to face challenges as well as choices he/she is likely to make. A student with high self-efficacy is likely to view academic challenges as things that are to be mastered rather than threat to avoid. Hence, he/she approaches challenging situation with the belief that it can be controlled unlike a student with low self-efficacy who believes difficult tasks are threat to his/ her mastered level (Mega et al, 2014). Furthermore, the efficacy belief system is well differentiated because it is personally interpreted. This is because once an individual gets engaged in a situation, he/she interpret the result of the situation, uses the interpretation to create and develop belief about his/her abilities to engage in subsequent behaviour in similar activities as well as behaving according to the belief created. For example, a student belief about his/her academic capability will help to determine what he/she will do with the knowledge and skills gained during academic exercise (Loo and Choy, 2012). Thus learners appraise their self-efficacy level from their actual performances, past experiences, persuasions received from others and psychological reactions (APA, 2021). Hence, self-efficacy influences school task, career choice, effort, learning capabilities and achievement.

Consequently, academic performances partly the resultant effect of student's belief on their accomplishment level. This is because human behaviour is controlled by reward and punishment; thus the academic performance of a student in a learning situation helps to influence his/her belief about the likely result of future behaviour. In other words, a student is likely to pursue an academic goal if he/she has been rewarded for similar effort in the past as well as belief for future chances in academic performance.

Academic performance is the extent to which a student has attained a short or long term educational goal. Academic performance is important because it is strongly linked to the positive/negative life outcomes. Students who are academically successful with high level of school performance are more likely to have internalized locus of control as well as high self-efficacy needed to survive in the real world. Academic performance is therefore very important for the successful physical, social, psychological integration of a learner to the society and contribution to national development (Animba and Obika, 2020). This is because grade serves as medium of communication to students, teachers and parents about a student's mastery of the object, strength, weakness and criteria for graduation hence gives adequate information about a student for possible admission into higher school of learning. Moreover, the interconnectivity between subjects studied in secondary schools makes it possible for students to acquire life skill for better integration into the society. These connections are evident in their locus of control and level of self-efficacy acquired through formal education. However, the massive influence and relationship between locus of control, self-efficacy and academic performance among secondary school students in the zone have not been harnessed optimally to the best of knowledge of the researchers hence, the huge empirical gap the study intended to fill. Based on the foregoing, the need to examine psychological variables like locus of control and self-efficacy on academic performance becomes of utmost importance. Moreover, statistics from different promotional examination in the zone did show low academic performances of students with high failure rates especially in external examinations thus making it a worrisome situation (PPSMB, 2021). This is also evident in the gradual loss of place by education resulting in loss of confidence by students, massive drop-out and drug abuse amongst others (Akunne and Anyaneme, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The essence of theoretical framework in a study of this nature is to establish scientific justifications why certain phenomenon occur as it were with possibility of empirical verification hence the theoretical framework of this study was based on the following theories: Social Cognitive and Social Learning theory. Social Cognitive theory by Bandura in 1986 posits that effective learning happens when an individual is in social context and able to engage in both dynamic and reciprocal interactions between the person, environment and behaviour (LaMorte, 2016). In relation to this research, giving students the opportunity to experience small wins, celebrating little success, modelling motivation, hard work and offering verbal encouragement: teachers can help their student build their self-efficacy that will serve them throughout their academic career and beyond. Psychological theory of self-efficacy by Albert Bandura in 1963 posits that there is a mechanism in people's lives that played a role in events of their lives. This mechanism was the belief that people have in them the ability to influence situations of life. He also opined that people with high self-efficacy have internal locus of control while those with low self-efficacy have internal locus of control. Furthermore, the two theories were able to explain student's self-efficacy and locus of control as it relates to academic performance. This goes to show the extent the variables affect the level of motivation, hard work, resilience, perseverance and attitude towards academic. Secondly in order to bring about increase in academic performance, there is needed to increase internal locus of control as well as high self-efficacy.

Statement of the problem

Internal locus of control and high self-efficacy could be a pre-requisite for high academic performance among secondary school students because of its tendency to improve higher motivation, hard work, perseverance and positive attitude towards education hence should not be treated with kid's glove because the opposite will be catastrophic leading to loss of interest in academics and massive failures in schools. The belief a student has about himself and his/her ability as well as the degree of perception of what goes on around them influences social, psychological and physical foundation of a student thus, has the capacity to destroy every

aspect of their life. The Nigerian student is faced daily with a lot of struggles due to changes in the socio-economic status of parents, security threat and other vices in the society. Therefore, there is need for increase in locus of control and self-efficacy especially internal locus of control and high self-efficacy. Hence the purpose of this study was to investigate locus of control, self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu state Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the correlational index existing between locus of control and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State?
2. What is the correlational index existing between self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State?

Research Hypothesis

1. The correlational index existing between locus of control, self-efficacy and academic performance is not significant

Method of Research

The study design was correlation survey. Nworgu (2015) noted that this type of study seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. The study was delimited geographically to Agbani zone with a sample study of 350 senior secondary 111 students obtained from seven classes randomly drawn from the area of study. Two adopted instruments of self-in-school scale by Downs (2005) and Locus of control of behaviour scale by Craig, Franklin and Andress (1984) was used to elicit response after careful face validation by three experts from Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation in Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Reliability co-efficient of instruments was obtained through test-retest reliability scale by Salami (1999) for Nigerian students and co-efficient of 0.75 obtained. This correlated with Rotter’s internal and external control reinforcement scale($r=.65$ for male and $r=.67$ for females). This signifies that the instrument was suitable for the respondents. However, to further affirm the reliability value of the scale, the researchers obtained 0.80 coefficient using test- retest method and Cronbach alpha with reliability coefficient of 0.73. Instruments were administered and collated by researcher and two research assistants. English and Mathematics scores of SSS 111 students collated from their school records were used to measure academic performance. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation while research hypothesis was answered using multiple regression at .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the correlational index existing between locus of control and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on locus of control and academic performance of secondary school student in Enugu State.

Variables	X	SD	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal	r-crit
Locus of control	2.33	1.53	23.30	58.77	70.42	0.1975	0.1045
Academic performance	3.01	1.73	30.07	91.15			

Data on table 1 shows the correlational index between locus of control and academic performance. The r-cal (.1975) is greater than r-crit (.1045) at 0.05 level of significance indicating a significant linear correlation meaning the two variables. This reveals that there is a significant relationship between locus of control and academic performance among senior secondary students in Enugu State.

Research Question Two: What is the correlational index existing between self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State.

Variables	X	SD	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal	r-crit
Self-efficacy	2.09	1.48	20.99	47.47	63.80	0.4336	0.1045
Academic performance	3.01	1.73	30.07	91.15			

Data on Table 2 shows the correlational index between self-efficacy and academic performance. With the r-cal (.4336) greater than the r-crit (.1045) indicating a significant linear correlation between the two variables among senior secondary school students in Enugu State.

Table 3 Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between Locus of Control, Self-Efficacy and Academic performance (N=350)

Multiple R=0.49

Multiple (adjusted) R²=0.36

Standard error=5.52

Analysis of Variance

Source of Variation	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares	f-ratio	P
Regression	2	1830.90	1830.90	31.36	<0.05
Residual	347	20432.57	56.58		
Total	349	24095.41			

Table 3 shows the analysis of the relationship between locus of control, self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State. The result of the analysis yielded a coefficient of multiple regression of 0.49. This shows that locus of control and self-efficacy has a 49% relationship with academic performance. In determining the level of significance between the three variables, ANOVA was employed with a calculated value of 31.36 at 0.005 level of significance. Therefore locus of control and self-efficacy has a positive relationship with academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State.

Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between locus of control, self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State. The result of the first research question revealed that locus of control has a linear correlation with academic performance with a cal (r) of .1975 and crit (r) of .1045. This is in line with the study conducted by Muhammad, A. A., Sadia, K., Muhammad, A. T. N., Saher, I., and Noor, U. H (2016) who opined that locus of control identifies reaction of student according to their status. The researchers also stressed on the fact that internal locus of control help students to manage situation according to their abilities than external locus of control. This is also in line with the works of Neha, A and Rajalakshmi, V. R (2021) who posited that locus of control affect student's personality hence can be improved through counselling and psychological well-being programs. The result of second research question revealed that self-efficacy has a linear correlation with academic performance with a cal (r) of .4336 and crit (r) of .1045. This is

in line with the works of Mustafa, M., Esmā, C., and Ertan, Z (2012) who pointed out that self-efficacy is an important variable on students' academic performance and affects them positively. They further stressed that if students are trained to have higher self-efficacy belief, their academic performances also improves. This is because students with strong sense of self-efficacy tendency involve in challenging task, invest more effort and persistence and excellent academic performance in comparison with students who lack confidence. The result of the hypothesis revealed the level of positive significance between locus of control and self-efficacy on academic performance of secondary school students with 49% relationship between the variables. This is in line with the study conducted by Oguamakin, O. A., and Akomolafe, M. A. (2013) who opined that the motivational influences of self-efficacy through organized goals, hard work, persistence and fewer emotional reaction as well as the level of control students have over themselves have a significant relationship with their level of academic performance.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, the researchers concluded that locus of control and self-efficacy is one of the factors affecting academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State. This is because it deals with attitude of individual who have less tolerance and resistance to change. Therefore, students who have internal locus of control and high self-efficacy are more prone to academic proficiency than those with external locus of control and low self- efficiency. This is because locus of control and self-efficacy are deeply rooted in learning thus educational programmes of secondary schools in the state should restructured in such a way that importance would be given to developing both variable for students.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should establish and maintain conducive pedagogical environment by employing teaching methodologies focused on educational need and development of students.
2. School environment should be enhanced for students' academic success by offering rich curricula that will stimulate life- long skills for them.
3. Appropriate psychological interventions should be used by counsellors and educational psychologist in order to help mal-adjusted students cope with their academics.
4. Students should be taught how to individually develop their academic interest which will influence their academic performance
5. Policy makers should also include in the educational blueprints strategies that will help students develop goal setting skill, appropriate learning style, perception of skills and time management.

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