



Locus of Control and Self Esteem as Correlates of Secondary School Students Academic Achievement in English Language in Anambra State

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author LIA designed the study and wrote the protocol. Author ANA managed the literature searches. Author LIA wrote the first and second draft of the manuscript, performed the statistical analysis and managed the analysis of the study. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJARR/2021/v15i230366

Editor(s):

(1) Dr. Fagbadebo Omololu Michael, Durban University of Technology, South Africa.

Reviewers:

(1) Woradee Jongadsayakul, Kasetsart University, Thailand.

(2) Azman Bin Che Mat, UiTM Terengganu, Malaysia.

(3) Nazri Muslim, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/66650>

Original Research Article

Received 06 January 2021

Accepted 11 March 2021

Published 23 March 2021

ABSTRACT

Aims: The failure rate in English language subjects as consistently been recorded in major examinations in the country makes it a worrisome situation. This is such that the schools are gradually losing its reputation which could likely result in loss of confidence in the students. Hence, this study aims at determining the relationship among locus of control, self-esteem and secondary school students' academic achievement in English language.

Study Design: The study adopted the correlation design.

Place and Duration of Study: 920 senior secondary school II students from Anambra State of Nigeria, between August 2019 and January 2021.

Methodology: This study on locus of control and self-esteem as correlates of secondary school students academic achievement adopted the correlational research design, a correlational research design seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables as well as indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables The sample for the study

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was 920 senior secondary schools students drawn using the multi-stage sampling technique. Locus of control scale developed by Asthon Trice, revalidated by Osuji and Self-Esteem scale developed by Dr Morris Rosenberg were used in data collection. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used in answering the research questions while t-test for correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used in testing the null hypothesis.

Results: There is a moderate positive correlation between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language ($r = .469$, $n = 920$), there is a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language ($r = .602$, $n = 920$). The hypotheses tested show that that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is statistically significant ($t\text{-cal.} = 24.03$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.960$), that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is statistically significant ($t\text{-cal.} = 34.11$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.960$). At 0.05 level of significance, locus of control and self-esteem added statistically to the prediction of secondary school students' academic achievement in English language.

Conclusion: There is a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language. There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language. Furthermore, there is a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language. The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is statistically significant. Locus of control, and self-esteem added statistically to the prediction of secondary school students' academic achievement in English language. This implies that there is need for schools to initiate and implement procedures in order to help improve the quality and consistency in the outcome of academic achievement of students in English language which is a core subject at the secondary education level.

Keywords: Locus of control; self-esteem; correlation; relationship; academic achievement; secondary school; students; English language.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Government of Nigeria [1] in the National Policy on Education stipulates the importance of English language as one of the core subjects that will enable students offer any course in higher institution. As one of the core subjects, it is naturally expected that the level of attainment of the students in English language will be evident in their performance in other subject areas. Due to this, failure in English language automatically invalidates grades obtained in other subjects no matter how high the grades are [2]. However, the attitude of secondary school students towards English language is unpredictable, this has further led to low academic achievement in this subject as been recorded amongst secondary schools in some part of the world. Most particularly in Nigeria, academic achievement in English language is a matter of great interest to researchers, and of great concern to parents, teachers and educational administrators. Many

reasons are usually given for this poor performance which include: students' factor, teachers' factor, parental factor, schools' factor, government factor, language problems, infrastructural problem, instructional strategy adopted by the teacher and many others. This has prevailed despite its place as one of the core subjects recommended in the National Policy on Education [3].

According to [4] academic achievement means the attained level of students functioning in school task such as shown by school marks. Teachers in secondary schools measure the academic achievements of students with the aim of achieving desired educational goals and objectives. The realization of such objectives is the touchstone for any educational system, hence if the achievement corresponds to the objectives, the system has justified its existence. Undoubtedly, academic achievement is interestingly an important issue and a fundamental premium upon which all teaching-

learning activities are measured using some criteria of excellence ranging from good academic achievement, poor academic achievement and academic failure [5]. Further, [5] posited that academic achievement has special importance for both the students and the people around them. The concern of improving academic achievement among secondary school students has increased in recent years. However, the reason for this concern can be attributed to the high percentage of low academic achievement recorded in recent times.

Adeyemi and Adeyemi [6] had attributed the causes of low academic achievement in schools to factors such as school environment, home background, economic, political, and intellectual capability, social and entry qualification as well as personality traits. Supporting this assertion, [7] also stated that difference in academic achievement have been linked to factors including difference in intelligence, personality and school related factors. Von et al. observed that students with higher mental ability as demonstrated by intelligence quotient test and those who are higher in conscientiousness linked to certain factors tend to achieve highly in academic settings. In the opinion of [8], academic achievement of students can be improved upon if these factors are adequately addressed. In addition, academic achievement is associated with other socio-psychological variables such as locus of control, academic interest, self-esteem among others.

Locus of control is a personality characteristic that determines the degree with which an individual believes they are in control of life events. The concept of locus of control has been originally developed by Julian Rotter, and can be generalized into basic dichotomy which is internal and external locus of control [9]. Khir et al. [9] further stated that individuals with internal locus of control believe that future outcomes depend primarily on personal actions, whereas individuals with external locus of control ascribe actions to factors outside their control, such as fate or chance. According to [10], internal and external locus of control have been analyzed in relation to other important aspects and is seen to be related to the daily life of students, such as academic achievement, self-concepts, self-efficacy, motivation, optimism among others.

Self-esteem can be defined as a person's judgment regarding their self-worth [11]. He further stated that this construct emerges when

students compare their self-evaluation with actual performance on verity of task. Similarly, [12] defined self-esteem as how an individual self-evaluate themselves and whether they perceive the self-evaluation in a positively or negatively manner. The concept of self-esteem is very important because it influences a person into achieving set goals and has major influence in decision making. Self-esteem among secondary school students seem to have received much attention over the years and found to positively correlate with academic achievement. Furthermore, studies have shown that self-esteem is seen as one of the influential factors which affect's academic achievement among secondary school students. It is also stated correspondingly that high self-esteem may lead to high academic achievement. Self-esteem is related to ones' ego, and individuals with low self-esteem are said to be suffering from inferiority complex. In practical terms, self-esteem can be classified as low self-esteem or high self-esteem, people with high self-esteem generally feel worthy of good life and all that entails while those with low self-esteem feel they are of less value [13]. Nwankwo et al. [13] further posited that low self-esteem or possessing an inferiority complex is often attributed to self-defeating behaviours. This is because accomplishing the task that someone intends or attempts will give the person a feeling of better self-esteem, which will conflict with the low self-esteem such individual feel.

Nevertheless, the joint relationship among locus of control, self-esteem and secondary school student's academic achievement seems not to have been empirically established, this however creates a ap in the body of literature where the unstable state of academic achievement as highlighted earlier is appalling and calls for measures to refurbish the system where students' achievement could be optimal and acceptable. Based on the foregoing, the need to examine psychological variables (locus of control, self-esteem) in relation with academic achievement among secondary school students becomes paramount. However, observations and statistics have shown that while some students achieve high academically, the overall academic achievement in English Language has been declining. Apparently, the failure rate in these subjects as consistently been recorded in major examinations makes it a worrisome situation. This is such that the schools are gradually losing its reputation which could likely result in loss of confidence in the students. More so, if not

rectified, it could lead these students into being involved in all sort of societal crimes like drug abuse, dropping out of school, loss of interest in academic pursuit and some may turn out to become street urchins. Nevertheless, students with sense of responsibility towards the school environment as well as share in its values would likely perform well academically. Likewise, when students with high self-esteem are directly involved in their academic pursuit, there tend to be noticeable difference in their academic pursuit and outcome. Thus, this has been a concern to many and research effort has been geared towards investigating such factors as locus of control and self-esteem in line with student's academic outcome.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. The relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students' in English language
2. The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students' in English language.

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions were raised;

1. what is the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students' in English language?
2. what is the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students' in English language?

1.3 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is not statistically significant.
2. The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is not statistically significant.
3. The relationship among locus of control, self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is not statistically significant.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies conducted by several scholar where review as follows, [14] conducted a study on academic achievement prediction: role of interest in learning and attitude towards school. the study adopted the multiple prediction design. six research questions guided the study, while six hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. the sample for the study comprised of 518 students drawn with the aid of Table of random numbers from the 14459 students who enrolled for the 2013 MAY/JUNE senior secondary certificate examination (SSCE) in Bayelsa state. the instrument for data collection was the interest in learning and attitude to school scale, which had a reliability coefficient of 0.79. multiple regression statistical technique was used for analysis with SPSS to test tenability of each postulated null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed a significant correlation and multiple prediction of students' academic achievement with the predictor variables; accounting for 21.60% of the variance in students' academic performance. the findings further revealed that improvement of students' interest in learning and attitude to school could contribute in boosting their performance academically.

Furthermore, [15] examined the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement, and discussed the possibility of gender differences in selected higher education institution in Jordan. the study adopted that the correlational survey design. two research questions guided that study, and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. the sample for the study comprised of 204 first year students aged 18-24 from four departments in Yarmouk university Irbid, Jordan. the instrument for data collection was the multidimensional-multi-attribution causality scales (MMCS) adopted and administered to the respondents of the study. the study employed descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while multiple regression with stepwise method was used to test the hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that the internal locus of control was high and positively correlated with academic achievement among the male students and positively correlated with external locus of control. the findings further revealed that the internal locus of control was positively correlated with academic achievement among female students and negatively correlated with external locus of control. based on this finding it became

evident that male students were more internal and external than females.

Similarly, [16] carried out a study focused on the relationship between self-esteem, causal attributions and academic achievement among secondary school students in Bwari area council of federal capital territory. the study adopted the descriptive survey research design. six research questions guided the study and six hypotheses were tested at 0.01, and 0.05 alpha level. the sample for the study comprised 191 participants comprising 90 males and 101 females from five secondary schools in Bwari area council, FCT. two standardized questionnaires were used thus; the academic causal attribution scale which is a 5-point scale questionnaire and Rosenberg self-esteem scale which is a four-point scale questionnaire. academic achievement was measured by the end of term result of a standardized examination given to the students by the education board. the data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation to test relationships and independent sample t-test to test differences between variables. The findings of this study revealed that at 0.01 level of significant, self-esteem was positively associated with academic achievement so also internal attribution for success. the findings further showed that at 0.05 significant level, external attributions for success was negatively related to academic achievement. similarly, external attributions for failure was related to academic achievement, also no gender difference was discovered in both self-esteem and internal or external attributions for success and failure.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study on locus of control and self-esteem as correlates of secondary school student's academic achievement adopted the correlational survey research design, a correlational research design seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables as well as indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables [17]. The population for the study comprised of 18,297 senior secondary school students in 261 secondary schools. The sample for the study was 920 senior secondary school students, this sample was drawn using the multistage sampling procedure where different number of subjects were selected at different stages. Locus of control scale developed by Asthon Trice, Trice's academic locus of control scale was developed by Asthon

Trice in 1985, but was revalidated in Nigeria by Osuji. Osuji's revalidation followed face and content validation by experts, and test retest reliability which shows that instrument had good psychometric properties. This instrument consisted of 28 true/false item used to measure locus of control. However, upon validation by Osuji, it was modified to a 4-point type response scale to suite the Nigerian environment. The self-esteem scale developed by Dr Morris Rosenberg was also used of data collection. While designed as Guttman scale, the SES is now commonly scored as a 4-point scale. The scale consists of 10-items, the 10 items are answered on a 4-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Five statements were positively scored whereas the rest five statements were negatively scored. Items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 are scored in reverse valence. The process of data collection was done through direct delivery approach. In this approach the researcher with the help of some research assistants will administer the instrument to the students of interest. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used in answering the research questions while t-test for correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used in testing the null hypothesis to determine the r , r_s and R^2 adjusted. Data analysis will be conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Academic achievement in this study will be measured thus; 80-100 = excellent achievement, 75-79 = very good achievement, 70-74 = good achievement, 50-69 = average achievement (credit), 40-49 = poor achievement (pass), 0-39 = very poor achievement (fail). More so, the norm for judging locus of control scale is given as follows: Scores range from 28 – 112, 56 – 112 = High score = external locus of control, 28 – 55 = Low score = internal locus of control. Self-esteem in this study is measured as follows; 21 – 40 = High self-esteem, 10 – 20 = Low self-esteem.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: what is the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement in English language?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between locus of control and academic achievement in English language.

Analysis presented in Table 1 shows a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language ($r = .602$, $n = 920$).

Correspondingly, data relating to Hypothesis 1 presented in Table 2 shows that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language ($t\text{-cal.} = 34.11$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.960$).

These findings are in line with the findings of [18] who found that internal locus of control was high and positively correlated with academic achievement among the male students and positively correlated with external locus of control. The findings further revealed that the internal locus of control was positively correlated with academic achievement among female students and negatively correlated with external locus of control. In further agreement, it revealed that six factors (teacher's attitude, teacher's qualification, resources available, class size, opportunity to study at home, student attitude) seemed not to be effective in predicting secondary school students' academic achievement in Mathematics, however they correlate positively with the dependent measure.

Research Question 2: what is the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in English language?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in English language.

Table 3 shows that there is a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language ($r = .602$, $n = 920$). Analysis presented in Table 4 shows that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is statistically significant ($t\text{-cal.} = 34.11$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.960$).

This result supports the findings of [19] whose study identified age and gender differences, furthermore, the findings also revealed that low academic performance was associated with lower self-esteem, lower decision making, self-efficacy and more dysfunctional decision-making styles. However, students with high academic performance showed higher self-esteem, higher

decision-making self-efficacy and more functional decision-making styles. This finding agrees with the finding of [17] which revealed that at 0.01 level of significance, self-esteem was positively associated with academic achievement so also internal attribution for success. On the other hand, the findings further showed that at 0.05 significance level, external attributions for success was negatively related to academic achievement. Similarly, external attributions for failure was related to academic achievement, also no gender difference was discovered in both self-esteem and internal or external attributions for success and failure.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship among locus of control, self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language.

Data presented in Table 5 shows a multiple regression analysis computed to predict secondary school students' academic achievement in English language from locus of control, and self-esteem. These predictor variables statistically predict secondary school student's academic achievement in English language, $F(2, 602) = 0.306$, $\text{sig. value} = 0.821$, with $r = 0.021$, $r_s = 0.613$ and $R^2 = 0.613$. This implies that at 0.05 level of significance, locus of control, and self-esteem added statistically to the prediction of secondary school students' academic achievement in English language.

The findings further revealed that the relationship among locus of control, academic interest, self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language and Mathematics is statistically significant. The finding contradicts that of [19] which revealed a very low relationship between self-esteem, internal locus of control, external locus of control and academic underachievement which showed no statistical significance. However, the finding is in agreement with the findings of [14] which revealed a significant correlation and multiple prediction of students' academic achievement with the predictor variables; accounting for 21.60% of the variance in students' academic performance. Justifying this, academic related beliefs, such as locus of control and academic self-esteem are likely to influence student's decision to engage in activities that enhances academic achievement in English language.

Table 1. Relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students' in English Language in Anambra state (N=920)

| N | Correlation coefficient (r) | Remark |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 920 | .469 | Moderate positive relationship |

Table 2. T-test of significance relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language (N=920)

| Correlation coefficient (y) | N | df | A | t-calculated | t-critical | Decision |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|-----|--------------|------------|-------------|
| .469 | 920 | 2048 | .05 | 24.03 | 1.960 | Significant |

Table 3. Relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students' in English language in Anambra state (N=920)

| N | Correlation coefficient (r) | Remark |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 920 | .602 | High positive relationship |

Table 4. t-test of significance relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language (N=920)

| Correlation coefficient (y) | N | df | A | T-calculated | T-critical | Decision |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|-----|--------------|------------|-------------|
| .602 | 920 | 2048 | .05 | 34.11 | 1.960 | Significant |

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis for the relationship among locus of control, self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language (N=920)

| Model | R | R square | Adjusted R square | Std. error | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | .021 ^a | 0.613 | 0.613 | 11.464 | | |
| | Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 120.568 | 2 | 40.189 | .306 | .821 ^b |
| | Residual | 268889.296 | 918 | 131.422 | | |
| | Total | 269009.864 | 918 | | | |

5. CONCLUSION

There is a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language. There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language. Furthermore, there is a high positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in English language is statistically significant. Locus of control, and self-esteem added statistically to the prediction of secondary school students' academic achievement in English language. This implies that there is need for schools to initiate and implement procedures in order to help improve the quality and consistency in the outcome of academic

achievement of students in English language which is a core subject at the secondary education level. More specifically, this study suggest that teaching and learning equipment should be provided to enhance the teaching of English language among secondary schools.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors will like to acknowledge all the authors of articles cited in this original research paper. In addition, the authors gratefully acknowledge the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria for their immerse support and encouragement.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
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