

LOCUS OF CONTROL AS CORRELATES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigated locus of control as correlates of bullying behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The research is guided by three research objectives and its corresponding research questions and hypotheses. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. A population of 5,361 was drawn from Dutsin-ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance with a sample size of three hundred and sixty-one (361) students. Two instruments were used for data collection which are Locus of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ) and **Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (BBQ)**. The reliability co-efficient of instruments were LOCQ = 0.79, BBQ = 0.73, respectively. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance Pearson Product Moment Correlation were employed using SPSS version 23 to facilitate data analysis. Findings of the study showed that there is a significant positive correlation between internal locus of control and bullying behaviours ($r = .133$, $n = 359$, $p < 0.05$); there is a significant positive correlation between external locus of control and bullying behaviours ($r = .148$, $n = 359$, $p < 0.05$). Also, there is significant gender difference in bullying behaviours ($t = 1.151$, $n = 359$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that there is significant correlation among internal locus of control, external locus of control and bullying behaviours of senior secondary school students in Katsina State. Based on this finding, it was recommended that Students should be made to understand that hard work and active participation during teaching and learning process is the key to academic success and that one's ability determines one's success in school. Also, Secondary Schools Management should develop code of conduct that will encourage students to exhibit appropriate behaviours at all times, adequate and appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken against perpetrators of bullying and justice must be secured for victims.*

Keywords: Control, Internal Locus, External Locus, Bullying behaviour, Senior Students, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Students acquire relevant knowledge, skills, positive behaviour, competencies, values and abilities for useful living in the society and at school. Also at school, students socialize with others as they work in groups for their positive development. Positive development of students morally, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically cannot take place if they do not see the school environment as friendly, safe and secure. However, study by Fajoku

(2019) indicated that only few students or pupils can blend harmoniously with their school mates without experiencing violence in school. To be blend harmoniously, learner should have locus of control.

Locus of control in psychology is considered an important aspect of personality which is one of the variables in this study. Locus of control refers to an individual perception about the underlying main causes of events in his or her life. In other words, locus of control as the name implies is the location of controls (where is the location of what controls the learners). Fakaye (2011) defined locus of control as a cognitive style of personality trait characterized by expectancy about the relationship between behaviour and the subsequent occurrence of reinforcement. This therefore implies that reinforcement is the consequence of one's behaviours 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 Uchebo and Aminu (2017) 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, et al. (2019); Uchebo and Aminu (2017) 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. Thus, Amadi (2010); Araromi (2010) in their studies posit that both internal and external locus of control are important predictors for academic performance.

Despite the substantial research on these variables individually, limited attention has been paid to their interrelationships and collective influence on academic performance and bullying behaviour within the specific context of Katsina state. Individuals can be classified as possessing either internal locus of control or external locus of control. Individuals who possess internal locus of control typically assume that they possess a degree of control over circumstances and events that happen to them. However, individuals who possess external locus of control believes that they have no control of what happens to them, which leads them to place responsibility and blame on external variables such as luck and gods (Ukoh & Okeke, 2017). Individuals that have external locus of control tend to blame others for the outcomes rather than themselves. Also, they conclude that individuals with high internal control were more successful in their careers than those who scored high in external control. Adepoju (2010) in his study to evaluate the influence of locus of control on students' attitude to teaching and learning in Ibadan found that there is a significant relationship between locus of control and students' attitude toward learning.

However, one of the cruxes of educational problems is bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Nigerian society. Bullying is one form of violence that has been threatening the life of students in primary and secondary school levels. According to Keashly and Neuman (2010) expressed bullying as harassing, offending, excluding someone or negatively affecting student's academic tasks. This is continues occurrence repeatedly and regularly and over a period of time. Bullying is characterized by acts of intentional harm, repeated over time, in a relationship where an imbalance of power exists (Pepler & Craig, 2010). Bullying is not just a child's play but a terrifying experience faced by many school children every day.

Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. All these characteristics are inimical to productive growth and academic development of students.

School bullying includes physical, psychological, emotional, cyber, social of one student by another at school or within the school community. It occurs in single sex and co-educational schools, small school and large schools, private or state run schools, country schools and city schools, boarding (Evelyn, 2023). Bullying involves repeated hurtful actions between peers where an imbalance of power exists (Olweus, 2013). Arseneault, et al., (2010) conducted a review of the mental health consequences of bullying for children and adolescents and found that bullying is associated with severe symptoms of mental health problems, including self-harm. Bullying is a persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone and can take many forms, from teasing and spreading rumours to pushing someone around and causing physical harm. It often happens in front of other people. People might bully someone because of their religion or the country they are from, their sexual identity, the way they look or how well they do in school, among other reasons. It can include name calling, mocking, writing or drawing offensive graffiti, messing around with or taking people's belongings, gossiping, excluding people from groups, kicking and threatening others and happens online as 'cyber-bullying', using mobile phones and the internet as well as in the playground, street or home. In addition, the social interaction of individual is basically on gender for optimum societal benefit, therefore, World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) defines gender as the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers for male and female. Gender usually refers to traits and behaviours that a particular culture judges to be appropriate for men and women. Stated that although the majority of the researcher shows that parent attachment is stronger in female, female may also be more likely than boys to draw support from other sources, such as peers, because female may be more active in the pursuit of relatedness in the context of their peer relations. Hay and Ashman (2013) concluded that females were more influenced by peer relations than males. It has also been revealed that girls do better in school, get higher grades and can graduate from high school at a higher level than boys.

Shamima and Suman (2018) conducted on locus of control, self-concept on bullying behaviour of adolescence and found negative correlation between bullying behaviour and locus of control ($r = 0.063$, $p < 0.018$) and self-concept ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.05$). That means, adolescent that have less positive self-concept and lower internal locus of control were involve in bullying. The study of [Belinda](#), et al. (2022) conducted to examine the External Locus of Control but not Self-Esteem Predicts Increasing Social Anxiety among Bullied Children. **The study revealed the elevated social anxiety is more likely among bullied children than those who have not been bullied but it is not inevitable and may be influenced by cognitive factors.** The result shown that more external locus of control was associated with a steeper increase in social anxiety among severely bullied children [$B = .249$, $p = .025$]. Although self-esteem at age 8 was associated with existing social anxiety it did not predict later increases in social anxiety.

The study conducted by Håkan and Mats (2021) on bullying at school and mental health problems among adolescents: a repeated cross-sectional, the study examine recent trends in bullying and mental health problems among adolescents and the association between them.

In adjusted models, having been bullied was detrimentally associated with mental health (OR = 2.57 [2.24–2.96]). Reports of mental health problems were four times higher among boys who had been bullied compared to those not bullied.

Similarly, Adediran and Ogunleye (2023) conducted a study to investigate bullying and its effects on emotions and academic performance of Junior Secondary School students in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State. Findings revealed that bullying led to depression which may affect a child academically; bullying led to fear which also led to lack of concentration; bullying has a very serious negative effect on students' academic performance and on social, emotional and psychological lives of members of the school communities both within and outside.

Statement of the Problem

Adediran and Ogunleye (2023) see that bullying led to depression which may affect a child academically; bullying led to fear which also led to lack of concentration; bullying has a very serious negative effect on students' academic performance and on social, emotional and psychological lives of members of the school communities both within and outside 10% of Greek students are being subjected to peer bullying and victimization within the ages of 8-15 years in both primary and high schools (Irene & Bourmpaki, 2017). There is an assertion by Gershaw (2014) 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 in my area of profession, bullying relates to student's failure in academics.

Despite the abundance of studies on bullying behaviour as correlates of locus of control, several gaps persist. There is a lack of comprehensive conceptual frameworks integrating locus of control and bullying behaviour specific to the study area. Existing theoretical frameworks may not adequately capture the nuanced interactions between the variables under investigation within the local educational context in the zone. There is also dearth of empirical evidence regarding the relationships between locus of control and bullying behaviour within the specified educational context. The overarching purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of locus of control and bullying behaviour among senior secondary school students in Katsina State. Hence, it is against this background that the researcher finds out how locus of control as correlates of bullying behaviour among senior secondary school students in Katsina state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.
2. determine the relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.
3. find out the gender difference in bullying behaviours of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does any significant relationship exist between internal locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State?
2. Does any significant relationship exist between external locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State?
3. Does any significant gender difference exist in bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated and tested in the study:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

HO₃: There is no significant gender difference in bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

Results

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

Table 1: r - value of Internal Locus of control and Bullying Behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value
Decision						
Internal Locus of control	361	40.07	4.35			
Bullying behaviours	361	55.12	7.66	359	.133*	.011

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

The result on table 1 shows that there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in Kaatsina State. This indicates that correlation co-efficient of *r*-value of .133 and *p*-value .011 is less than 0.05 significant alpha level at 359 degree of freedom. Therefore, hypothesis two is hereby rejected, because there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students. Therefore, internal locus of control was significantly found to have a greater relationship to correlate Students' bullying behaviours.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviours of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

Table 2: r - value of External Locus of control and Bullying Behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	df	r-value	p-value
Decision						
External Locus of control	361	20.28	3.52			
Bullying Behaviours	361	55.12	7.66	359	.148**	.005

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

The result on table 2 shows that there is significant relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State. This indicates that correlation co-efficient of r -value of .148 and p -value 0.005 is less than 0.05 significant alpha level at 359 degree of freedom. Therefore, hypothesis three is hereby rejected, because there is significant relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students. Therefore, external locus of control was significantly found to have a capacity to correlates with Students' bullying behaviours.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant gender difference in bullying behaviours of senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

Table 3: *t*-test of Gender difference in Bullying behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Bullying behaviours	Male	193	55.55	7.89	359	1.151	.251	N Sig.
	Female	168	54.62	7.37				

Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result on table 3 shows that there is significant gender difference in bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State; this indicates that the levene's T-test for equality of variance at which t-test value of 1.151 and p-value .251, since t-value is greater than p-value 0.05 at significant alpha level at 359 degree of freedom. Therefore, hypothesis is hereby retained because there was no significant difference in male and female in bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State. This indicates that male mean score of 55.55 is greater than female counterpart of 54.62.

Summary of Findings

The major findings from the analysis of the data and test of the research hypotheses are summarized below. The study revealed that:

- 1). There is significant relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State
- 2). There is significant relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State
- 3). There was no significant gender difference in bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in English language in Katsina State.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one states that there is significant relationship between internal locus of control and bullying behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State. The finding of this study was in line with the finding of Shamima and Suman (2018) who finding indicated that in bullying behaviours was accounted by linear influence of internal locus of control among secondary school students. In addition, the finding of this study was is in line with the finding of Belinda, et al. (2022) who results shown that internal locus of control and social skills were associated with a increased among severely bullying behaviours among bullied children. In contrary the finding of this study was in contradicts with the finding of Håkan and Mats (2021) who finding revealed that bullying behaviour at school was not associated

with internal locus of control nor socio-economic status and the school environment was distributed to all secondary school students.

Hypothesis two states that there is significant relationship between external locus of control and bullying behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students in Katsina State. The finding of this study was in agrees with the finding of Belinda, et al. (2022) who result shown that more external locus of control was associated with a increased among severely bullying behaviours among bullied children. In contrary, the finding of this study was in contradicts with the finding of Adediran and Ogunleye (2023) who findings revealed that bullying behaviours led to external locus of control and depression which may affect a child academically; bullying led to lack of control, fear which also led to lack of concentration; bullying has a very serious negative effect on students' academic performance.

The result of hypothesis three revealed that, there is significant gender difference in bullying behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in State. The finding of this study was in line with the finding of Håkan and Mats (2021) who revealed that, the male students appear to be more vulnerable to the deleterious effects of bullying than female students. In contrary, the finding of this study was in contradicts with the finding of Scimago (2023) who finding revealed that only male bully-victim experienced significantly rejection by peers, while female bully-victims had significantly fewer friends.

Conclusion

The study concluded that internal locus of control was positively significantly and correlates with Students' bullying behaviours, external locus of control was significantly correlation with Students' bullying behaviours. The study concluded that the factors determining the formation of the internal locus of control on individual students. It was concluded that the competence of locus of control has a strong impact on the level of attainment achieved by students and correct undesirable behaviours.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of this study:

1. Parents and School managements should totally condemn and discourage bullying among the students either in the school or at home, in form of verbal, emotional and physical bullying which have cognitive effect on student academic performance.
2. Secondary Schools Management should develop code of conduct that will encourage students to exhibit appropriate behaviours at all times, adequate and appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken against perpetrators of bullying and justice must be secured for victims.
3. Educational Psychologists should be equipped with appropriate knowledge and techniques in reducing bullying behaviour and counsel the bullied in controlling his emotion and applying psychological principles in solving educational related problems that confronting student's traits such as locus control and social skills.
4. Schools Authority and Ministry of Education should provide counselling and support services for students who might be victims of emotional bullying in order to enable them meet up academically. The School wide bully prevention programmes should be conducted to mitigate this dastardly act.

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