

## **ADOLESCENTS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN NIGERIA TODAY**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

*In Nigeria emphasis has been placed on adolescents and academic achievement because of its direct positive national development and growth. Adolescents in schools today are expected to be leaders of tomorrow and in their academic achievement. Many researchers in recent time are mtsrer.sd in the factors affecting academic achievement with a view to finding permanent solutions to the problems of poor academic performance of adolescents in schools. The study examines locus control as a psychological construct on individual personality which explains internal and external of an individual successes and failures. Some variables relate to the studies were given to facilitate understanding. Suggestions and Recommendations were made to improve on the adolescents' academic achievement.*

**Keyword:** *Adolescents and Academic Achievement.*

## **Introduction**

Many things may contribute to school achievement, one variable that has been overlooked is Locus of control which is in the educational context it is referred to the types of attribution made for successes and failures in school. Looking at the locus of control and academic achievement of adolescent we first of all need to know what “locus of control” is and what “academic achievement” is. The knowledge of these two concepts will give us a clear view of the whole study.

## **Locus of Control**

Locus of control is an individual’s belief regarding the causes of his or her experiences and the factors to which that person attributes success or failure (Anakwe, 2003).

Locus of control is a psychological construct referring to the extent to which individuals believe they can control events that affect them. The belief of locus of control is related to what reinforcements have happened throughout the individual’s, namely the results, prizes, their success or failures, refer to. Adolescents are faced with challenges and changes in their cognitive processes, sex hormones and social life. To be more specific, adolescents due to the complex attributes of their successes and failures depend on the situations they find themselves. For example, in a classroom, tests are conducted and grades are given by the teacher that is David has an internal locus of control and attributes his grade to lack of studying and poor home background. Evelyn has an external locus of control and attributes her grade to a poorly made test and an ineffective teacher both of which are out of her control.

Locus of control of individuals determines that their expectations of specific pressures of a position depend on their visions about that position and not on the reality about it. Those with the internal locus of control try to dominate over the possible consequences of their activities Rezmerfar, (2016). Adolescents capitalize most of their difficulty to certain control that is beyond them due to their interests, behaviors and experiences due to pressures they find themselves, which has affected their academic achievement. Locus of control structure was first entered into the psychological terms with a scientific method by Fars (1957 and Rotter 1966 quoted by Miu (2016). When environmental conditions are not sufficient to explain individuals’ success or failures, locus of control can facilitate in making these situations clear. For instance individuals may sometimes

perceive good and bad events in different ways. To mention that these different ways are based on external and internal forces (Taylor, 2006 quoted by Rana, Muammer and Zeynep, 2011). Locus of control in communication with and education mc dependent variables can be studied and reviewed as an important indicator in predicting successes, failures and academic failures of students. Notion of locus of control means that people believe whether controlling events in life is internal or external (Razmefar, 2017).

Locus of control interest is based as a mirror or a picture of individual or student who holds himself or herself with a particular phenomenon, which is having his or her behavior. It is important in academic achievement because it leads to high need of performance in school and other higher levels of aspiration.

**Academic Achievement:** Is interestingly an important issues; a fundamental premium upon which id teaching-learning activities are measured using some criteria of excellence, for example good academic performance, poor academic performance and academic failure. The reason for this can be attributed to the performance of the adolescents at the secondary school level in recent times which, is not encouraging. According to the report by the two examination bodies in charge of secondary school certificate examination in Nigeria (NECO) National Examination Commission and (WAEC) West Africa Examination Council “more than half the candidates who took the two examinations between 2014-2016 failed” and also still date.

This structure, in the study related to motivation has achieved a theoretical and scientific importance increasingly which is academic achievement of adolescent in Nigeria is base on Self-efficacy is one of the concepts under social learning theory of Bandura which postulates that human achievement depends largely on interactions between one's behaviors, personal factor (e.g. thoughts, beliefs), and environmental conditions. Compared with students who doubt their learning capabilities, those who feel efficacious for learning or performing a task participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, and achieve at a higher level.

In the Nigerian educational system, the motivation in the past was given very high, than today, of which the level of education is declining in terms of some welfare packages such as scholarships, bursary allowances and infrastructures are no more there again to aid effective

learning which has made learning process more tedious. The adolescents find it difficult to cope their inability to adjust to demands of school activities.

Adolescents need to be motivated to have a positive result at the end of the term. Motivation in academics can come in any form. Where we have parental styles, peer groups, teachers, psychological aspects the adolescent can be motivated academically to improve academic achievement.

**Study Habits:** Many adolescents develop poor studying habits, they either blame it on themselves or people around, due to the fact that they cannot control their inability to comprehend what they have learnt. Also, adolescents with good studying habits and negative self conception of their ability in seldom success in school but will not have a better academic achievement.

Structure of locus of control has rooted in Social Learning theory and Attribution theory which is the study of how individuals explain events that take place in their lives. These attributions refer not only to chance, fate, and powerful people out of one's control, but also to the results of his/her own attitudes (Zeyney, 2016). Students who believe they are able to affect an outcome through their own behavior are more likely to retain motivation than those who believe they can't control the outcome. One of the main reasons among the complex causes in failure of education is the adolescents' attitude to himself and his ability and this attitudes and interpretations about his abilities which was the basis for Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. Bandura believes that children who believe that they are capable to carry out a task, indeed they succeed and students who are satisfied with their abilities and themselves, they are most likely to go on the success way. On the contrary, those students who are confronted with a variety of attitudes towards themselves and their capabilities would fail (Ogunmakin and Akomolafe, 2016).

Research has examine locus of control and its relationship with academic achievement or learning outcomes which is still very limited from the Nigeria secondary school students' population. Knowles and Razmefom, (2017) found that students with internal locus of control tend to perform better in academic courses compared to those with external locus control. (Nejati, Abedi, Agbaci & Mohammadi, 2017) reported a strong relationship between locus of control and academic achievements. This has necessitated the conduct of this research at this time. Researchers

declare that there is a significant relationship between locus of control and academic achievement. Those with the internal locus of control are more successful in comparison with those with the external locus of control. However, there is more possibility of dropout for those with the external locus of control (Aremu, 2009).

Nejati, Abedi, Agbaci and Mohammadi (2017) investigated the relationship between locus of control and the academic performance of students by considering the role of life quality and satisfaction with life. The outcome of the study revealed that locus of control significantly correlated and the academic performance of the students. Dkujiirek, Giineyli, and Qaglar (2012) found no significant relationship between locus of control and academic students. Taila (2017) in a research conducted with students in Nigeria concluded that the locus of control is a good predictor for academic and social behavior.

Examining the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement suggests that there is a relationship between locus of control and academic achievement. When association is found between locus of control and academic achievement, the association is found to be stronger in adolescents compared to adults or children for fact that adolescent are complex in nature.

### **Locus Control and Academic Achievement of Adolescent**

About the locus of control, teachers and counselors should focus on changing the locus of control from outside to, so people accept the responsibility of their action and on the other hand, as locus of control is related to many people's psychological characteristics such as self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression, the persistent and perseverance in work and physical and psychological health, then formation of an internal locus of control as an important structure of personality has been introduced, which consistency and psychological health of community depends on its correct orientation in person (Miu, 2016).

The individuals, who have the internal locus of control, think that they have a big role on affecting the events which influence their lives. Furthermore, they assess themselves as possessing the power for the attitude they want to display by having the positive ego concept, and they believe that they can direct their lives whatever way they desire (Gulveren, 2008).

Some outcomes of this study were not consistent with the findings of some previous studies (Anakwe, 2003). One possible reason was the instruments used. The instruments used in measuring locus of control were scored in external direction while the instruments used in previous studies were scored in internal direction. The population and sample size were based on random sampling which may affect the study.

### **Further Findings and Suggestions**

For Nigerian educational system to be successful career followed by a promotion in the level of human culture. The adolescents' are suggested applying the consequent conclusions to achieve education success and promote their vision about the effective factors. It is suggested to investigate the relationship between psychological variables and academic performance to know the level of understanding of the adolescents. It is suggested to examine different academic disciplines in different education levels according to effective psychological variables of the academic performance.

- Future researchers should offer to conduct researches in comparison with various secondary schools including those with different school facilities and training system.
- Obtaining a proper vision about enhancing the academic performance of the adolescents in Nigeria is defined as one of the applicable aims of this study.
- Further researches can be concentrated on the role of other variables such as psychological well-being and level of understanding which are influenced by adolescents in different perspectives. In other words it can affect quality of life and improvement in the educational system.
- Future researchers are should be called upon to focus on these limitations and work out how they can be minimized so as to improve the generalizability of the findings.

**Recommendations**

1. The teachers, parents and the society at large should be very careful about how they handle academic issues of adolescents.
2. Adolescents should be made to know that one's behavior can affect one's academic achievement in diverse ways.
3. Individually adolescent should be made to understand his or herself first in life.
4. Teachers should establish and maintain supportive and appealing pedagogical environments and employ teaching and evaluation methodologies which are focused on students' educational needs and overall development.

**Conclusion**

For adolescents to go far in their education and become educated of special repute their interests need to be constantly stimulated. This can be ensured with teachers' instructional methods. Government on the other hand needs to make the necessary attempts and innovation in instructional materials to facilitate schooling interests of these adolescents. They should not lose sight of the great impact and current role played by Information Technology in the world of education. It is hope that this will promote their sense of efficacy beliefs about themselves Teachers should not see any of the variables on this study as superior to the other and hence neglect or ignore one at the expense of the others. They should endeavor to improve all of them simultaneously. Locus of control focuses on ability to cope with uncertainty. Locus of control identifies the reaction given to change according to its status. If an individual can make self- control and has the belief that he or she is the dominant of his or her fate, he or she can give positive reactions to the change. There is need for students to develop locus of control (internal) for them to be able to always attribute their success to their own efforts. To achieve this, student may be taught how to individually develop learning, plan their goals, and how they plan to achieve those goals, with timeline and the consequences or outcomes.

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