

## ***Predictive Value of Locus of Control on Psychological Well-being of Senior Secondary School Adolescents in Anambra State***

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined predictive value of locus of control on psychological well-being of senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 20,889 senior secondary two (SS2) students while 763 SS 2 students serve as the sample. Instruments titled Locus of Control of Behaviour Scale (LCBS) and Psychological well-being Scale (PWS) were used for data collection. The face validation of the instruments were established by three experts. The internal consistency of the items for each instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and coefficient values of 0.72 for locus of control and 0.86 for psychological well-being were established. Findings indicated, among others, that locus of control and psychological well-being were significantly related. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that locus of control is a predictor of psychological well-being of senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State. Amongst the recommendations is that Ministry of Education should support functional guidance and counselling services by providing and making funds available for research and to improve rendering of professional assistance to students.*

**Keywords:** locus, control, psychological, wellbeing

### **Introduction**

Psychological well-being refers to individual's emotional health and overall functioning. According to Davies (2019), psychological well-being is very essential for the total well-being of man throughout life. It is the experience of good health, happiness and prosperity which includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose and ability to manage stress. It is something desired by everyone because it includes so many positive things such as feeling happy, healthy, socially connected and purposeful. Davies further stated that psychological wellbeing emerges from thoughts, actions and experiences, most of which one has control over. They maintain that when one thinks positive, he or she tends to have greater emotional well-being; when one has meaningful relationship, he or she will have a better social well-being, and when one loses his or her job, he will have low workplace well-being.

There is tendency for adolescents in school to exhibit undesirable behaviour such as disobedience, fighting, noise-making, absenteeism, cultism, drug abuse, premarital sex, lateness to school and teenage pregnancy among others. To buttress this, Chingtham (2015) stressed that during the adolescence period, adolescents exhibit some delinquent acts such as truancy, vagrancy, obscenity, loitering, pilfering, drinking, gambling in order to satisfy one need or the other. At this juncture, one is poised to ask, what is the reason for the change in the intensity of school adolescents' maladaptive behaviours? As was observed by Mankandam (2017), adolescents want to consider themselves as adult while at the same time dependent on their parents for decision making. During this period, individual's personality is influenced by the involvement of different people like parents, teachers, and peers. Thus, this stage is considered very crucial for personality development. To develop a good personality, the locus of control of the individual is very consequential which in turn helps in the development of psychological well-being.

Locus of control is the likelihood of a person to see events of life as being controlled by internal or external factors. It is an individual's personal belief that events which occur in his life or her life are either as a result of personal control and efforts or outside forces such as fate and luck (Friday, Callista, Kenekwue, Godwin & Augustine, 2018). Locus of control determines the likelihood of a particular behaviour as well as the outcomes of engaging in the behaviour (April, Dharani, & Peters, 2012). For Cherry (2019), it refers to the extent to which people feel that they have control over the events that influence their lives; an individual's locus of control can influence not only how he or she respond to the events that happen in his or her life, but also his motivation to take action. A study by Maryan, Azizreza, Soheila and Mahsa (2012), indicated that locus of control components have a positive and meaningful relationship with self-esteem, and that all grades of self-esteem could be predicted by internal locus of control.

Adolescents with internal locus of control have this feeling that the outcome of their work is influenced by their own efforts, skills and characteristics. This group of adolescents believe that they hold the keys to their fate, and are more likely to take action to change their situation when needed, with the understanding that their own personal efforts, behaviour or skills will influence and determine outcomes. They take responsibility for their actions. According to Cherry (2019), individuals with internal locus of control tend to be less influenced by the opinion of other people; this group of individuals often do better at tasks when they are allowed to work at their own pace; they usually have a strong sense of self-efficacy. Working hard to achieve the things they want, they feel confident in the face of challenges. They tend to be physically healthier, they are happier and more independent; they often achieve greater success in the workplace. These types of individuals are seen to suffer higher levels of psychological distress; they are susceptible to depression along with poor responsiveness to anti-depressants and higher rate of suicide (Perry, 2019).

The sole aim of educating adolescents with poor psychological well-being is to improve on their perception and integrate them into their immediate environment (Canha, Simoes,

Matos & Laura, 2016). Many school counsellors have tried to improve on the adolescents' psychological well-being by employing various measures that can help improve psychological well-being. These measures include guidance and counselling and enlightenment programmes but have not helped much in improving adolescents' psychological well-being. These groups of adolescents still need to be subjected to therapies that will equip them with counselling and psychological skills to cope with various life challenges like depression and anxiety. Research carried out by Eremie and Chikweru (2015) revealed that psychological well-being of school adolescents can be improved through counselling skills and psychological factors such as locus of control and self-esteem.

Locus of control is a set of beliefs about the relationship between behaviour and the subsequent occurrence of reward and punishment. In other words, it is referred to as a circumscribed self-appraisal pertaining to the degree to which individuals view themselves as having some casual role in determining events. An individual who believes that he/she can control his/her own success and failure due to his efforts or relatively permanent characteristic is said to have internal locus of control. While people who believe that their lives are controlled by forces outside themselves like luck, chance or fate is said to have external locus of control (Khumalo & Plattner, 2019).

According to Abdul (2015), locus of control refers to a personality dimension that helps one's behaviour. It refers to the perception of the extent to which people believe that they can control the events that affect them, thus, causing them to believe that they are a source of what happens in their life. One who believes an outcome of an event is decided by his or her own actions is described to be someone high in internal locus of control. Consequently, Haider and Naeem (2013) posit that locus of control is an aptitude that has relevant control in excess of outcomes. People considering themselves able and unable to control their outcomes are known as internal and external locus of control respectively.

Qiang, Nathan, and Kevin (2010) defined locus of control as the extent to which people believe that the rewards they receive in life can be controlled by their own personal actions or to the external environment. It is the cognitive approach used to attribute causes to events which is related to social cognition, because it relies on self-awareness. Inevitably, individuals draw on their own belief systems to explain the world around them. An external locus of control attributes negative events to external causes which are outside the control of the individual, whereas an internal locus of control attributes negative events to flaws within oneself (Sullivan, Thompson, Kounali, Lewis & Zammit, 2017).

Allison et al. (2016) opined that people who base their success on their own work and believe they control their life have an internal locus of control; in contrast people who attribute their success or failure to outside influences have an external locus of control. He further explained that when a person with an internal locus of control gets a promotion at work or achieve some other types of success, he will probably attribute the positive result to the efforts he put in, his success was a direct result of his hard work. If on the

other hand he or she has an external locus of control, he might attribute the success to external or environmental factors, such as luck, fate, timing, other people or some type of divine intervention.

According to Kristin and Paul (2014), locus of control is a personality variable that reflects people's generalized expectancies for control of reinforcements or rewards. They maintained that people who believe that they can control reinforcements in their lives are termed internals while people who believe that fate, luck or other people control reinforcements are termed externals. Internal locus of control is associated with high levels of effects. On the other hand external locus of control is more conforming to authority and prefaced directive supervisory styles. For Thomas, Sorensen, and Lilian (2010), internal locus of control is related to an array of well-being, motivational and work related behaviour outcomes. They specifically maintained that individuals reporting higher internal locus of control possess higher mental well-being, life satisfaction and physical health. It is also associated with self-efficacy, psychological empowerment, career success, perceptions of social support received and effective coping strategies. Whereas externals are associated with role overload, ambiguity and conflict.

The concept of locus of control is a dimension of personality that explains individual's perception of responsibility for the action or situations (Abdul, 2015). They opined that a person with internal locus of control often takes responsibility of the situation and exercises possible control, whereas people with external locus of control often see themselves as victims of environmental factors, as a result they resort to learned helplessness behaviour. They further explained that individuals with internal locus of control are inclined to take responsibility for their actions, they are not easily influenced by the opinions of others and they tend to do better at tasks when they can work at their own pace. Rinin and Boazman (2014) posited that people with external locus of control tend to blame outside circumstances for their mistakes and credit their success to luck rather than to their own efforts. Consequently, people with external locus of control pay more attention to opinion holders while people with internal locus of control pay more attention to the content of the opinion regardless of who holds it.

Psychological well-being includes the capacity to realize one's abilities to live a life with purpose and meaning; to make a positive contribution to the communities, form positive relationships with others and feel connected and supported. It refers to the capacity to experience peace of mind, contentment, happiness and joy, cope with life's ups and down and be confident and resilient, take responsibility for oneself and for others as appropriate. Psychological well-being is more than the absence of mental disorder; it represents the positive side of mental health and can be achieved by people with a diagnosis of mental disorder (Aked, Marks, Cordon & Thompson, 2010).

Psychological wellbeing is about lives going well, the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively (Huppert & Johnson, 2010). For Deci and Ryan cited in Winfield, Gill, and Taylor (2012), psychological wellbeing is conceptualized as some combination

of positive effective state such as happiness (the hedonic perspective) and functioning with optional effectiveness in individual and social life (the eudemonic perspective). The physical factors include good social support and interpersonal relationship with others. In the same vein, individuals who possess high level of psychological well-being are free from all forms of psychological disorders such as depression, general anxiety disorder, insomnia disorder, personality disorder, cognitive disorder, mood disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, phobias, among others.

To Davies (2019), psychological well-being is the experience of health, happiness and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction and a sense of meaning or purpose. Generally, well-being is just feeling well. He further maintained that psychological well-being is something sought by just every one because it includes so many positive things - feeling happy, health, socially connected and purposeful.

Multidimensional Well-Being Theory was propounded by Martin Seligman (2011). The theory is a positive psychology approach to psychological well-being. The fundamental aspect of multidimensional theory is that psychological well-being is a multi-varied and dynamic phenomenon upon which social scientist need to better understand how different aspects of people's well-being are tied together and how they differ between individuals at one point in time and within individuals over time. He is of the belief that psychological well-being has several measureable elements, each of them, a real thing contributing to the psychological well-being but not defining psychological well-being. He further posits that well-being is best characterized as a profile of indicators across multiple domains rather than a simple factor.

Multidimensional understanding of psychological well-being provides both theoretical and practical insights in the application of positive psychology at different levels of human organizations. On the theoretical side, psychological well-being is an abstract construct that includes both feeling good and functioning well. Thus, psychological wellbeing cannot be defined by a single measure but by various aspects that are readily measured. On the practical side, multidimensional well-being metrics identify groups with specified strength and weaknesses in educational overall grade points average, indicating a student's overall achievement but obscures the individual academic areas where students struggle. For instance, report cards breakdown grades across subject areas, highlighting weak areas but assessment provides teachers and school counsellors with specific information about domains in which students thrive or struggle. The theory maintains that while some students may need to dial up their sense of meaning, others might need to increase their positive emotions or improve relations. However, Seligman (2011) is of the view that people around the world pursue good life and they do it in varied ways. One person might seek wealth and fame while another might seek authentic relationship and positive change in the community. Good life is represented by high levels of well-being or flourishing, yet at any given point in time, less than 20% of people are living good life. This aggregate level of sub-optimal function is unfortunate because on the whole, well-being affords a host of beneficial outcomes for individuals (eg. better health, stronger

relationship), and society (eg, greater work productivity, more pro-social behaviour among others). Understanding the factors that move a person closer to flourishing is an obvious next step towards helping more of the people to the good life. According to the theory, what exactly promotes good health? In an attempt to find answers to this question, Seligman developed five aspects of dimensions that people around the world pursue because they find them naturally rewarding (ie. intrinsically rewarding). This includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement. This is usually referred to as PERMA. These five dimensions distinguished Seligman's theories from other multidimensional theories because it includes both eudemonic (eg. living a purposeful life) and hedonic (living a life rich in joy and pleasure) compounds and includes unique components (engagement, achievement) that are less included in other well-being theories.

Hassan, Saied, Elewa (2018) investigated the relationship between locus of control and suicide commit attitude among adolescents with suicide attempt in Ain Shams University Hospital, Egypt. One research question guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study was all poisoning cases admitted in centre for treatment of poison in Shams University Teaching Hospital, Ain. The sample of the study was 150 adolescents with suicide attempt drawn from the population through convenient sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were Beck's Suicide Intent Scale developed by Beck et al. (1974), Structured Interview Questionnaire, Locus of Control Scale and Behaviours Associated with Suicide Attempt Scale. The data were analysed with the use of regression analysis. The findings of the study showed that majority of the adolescents who want to commit suicide suffer from psychological abuse. Thus, there was a high significant correlation between intent to suicide and suicide behaviour, intent to suicide and locus of control, Locus of control and suicide behaviour among adolescents with suicide attempt. The study recommended that Social group therapy with the religious leader and psychiatric specialist should be available at the centre of poisoning treatment. The study also recommended the establishment of counselling unit for psychological problems among adolescents at the centre of poisoning treatment. The study is related to the present study in the sense that both studies examined locus of control which is among the main thrust of the present study. The two studies differ in sampling technique and method of data analysis, while the former used convenient sampling technique to draw 150 suicide attempt adolescents from Ain University Hospital Egypt, the present study uses multi stage sampling technique to draw 1,456 senior secondary school adolescents.

Mobarakeh, Juhari, Yacob and Redzuan (2015) examined locus of control and psychological wellbeing among Iranian adolescent migrants in Kuala-Lumpur Malaysia. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlation research design. The population of the study was 950 Iranian adolescents from schools in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The sample of the study consisted of 300 Iranian student adolescents comprising 143 males and 157 females in the age range of 13-16 years which were selected through cluster sampling technique. The instruments for data

collection were Locus of Control Scale of Rotter (1996) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale of Ryff and Keyes (1995). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed a positive significant relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being of the adolescents. The reviewed study is related to the present study as both dealt with locus of control and psychological well-being. However, both studies differ in the geographical scope. While the reviewed study was carried out in Malaysia, the present study is conducted in Anambra state, Nigeria

Harshitha, Abirami and Mythili (2018) carried out a study on locus of control and psychological well-being in visually and auditorily challenged individuals. Two research questions guided the study and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the visually challenged and auditory challenged persons in the city of Chennai. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw 100 respondents made up of 50 visually challenged and 50 auditory challenged persons. Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1996) and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) were used for data collection. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and t-test were used to analyse the data. The finding of the study revealed among others that significant relationship was not found between locus of control and psychological well-being. It was also showed that low relationship was found between locus of control and psychological well-being. The reviewed study is related to the present study as both dealt with locus of control and psychological well-being. The two studies however differ in geographical locations, research design and method of data analysis. The reviewed study was carried out in the city of Chennai, used ex-post facto research design and Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test for data analysis, while the current study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria and used correlational research design and simple regression for data analysis.

Agbor, Ebeh and Onyeonu (2018), investigated psychological well-being among undergraduates in eastern Nigeria as a function of academic stress, substance abuse and age. The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive design. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A total of 348 undergraduates were selected through simple random and cluster sampling techniques. The instruments used for data collection were, Student Academic Stress Scale (SASS) developed by Busari (2011), Drug Abuse Screening Test Scale (DAST) developed by Skinner (1989) and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) developed by the researchers. The data collected was analysed using regression analysis and 2-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings of the study showed that there is a significant inverse relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being of students. The result also revealed that substance abuse has impact on psychological well-being. The researchers recommended that school administrators and lecturers should schedule lectures in a way that it will reduce academic pressure and stress on students. The study is related to the present study in the sense that it supports the main issue on psychological well-being. It also showed

similarities in the method of data analysis but differ in research design as the work used cross sectional descriptive research design while the present study used correlational research design.

Ukeh and Hassan (2018) examined the impact of coping strategies on student's psychological well-being among students of Federal University, Lafia, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 9,400. The sample of the study consisted of 149 students comprising of 81 males and 68 females ranging from 18 to 33 years selected through stratified random sampling technique. Two instruments were used for data collection - Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI-5), and Psychological wellbeing Scale (PWS). Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The results revealed that there were significant independent positive and negative impacts of coping strategies on psychological well-being of students. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that coping strategies may enhance and/or exacerbate psychological well-being. The researchers advised the students to embrace appropriate strategies to avoid negative consequences. The study is related to the present study as it supports the main issue on psychological well-being. It also showed similarities on geographical location. The two studies were carried out in Nigeria. Both studies differ in research design and method of data analysis. The reviewed study adopted descriptive research design while the present study adopted correlational research design. The former study used mean, standard deviation and t-test in data analysis, the present study used regression analysis.

### **Research Question**

1. What is the predictive value of locus of control on psychological well-being of male and female senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State?

### **Hypothesis**

**Ho1:** Locus of control is not a significant predictor of male and female psychological well-being of senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State.

### **Methodology**

Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. There are 262 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The State Post Primary Service Commission, Awka centrally controls the schools. The population of the study comprised 20,889 senior secondary two (SS2) students (M= 9,411 and F=11,478) from public secondary schools in Anambra State (Anambra State Post Primary School Service Commission, Awka, 2020).

The sample for this study comprised 763 SS 2 students made up of 396 males and 367 females drawn using multistage sampling procedures. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw 20% of schools in each education zone. As a result of this procedure, 10 schools were sampled from Aguata Zone, 12 schools from Awka zone, 10

schools from Nnewi Zone, 8 schools from Ogidi zone, 6 schools from Onitsha education zone and 6 schools from Otuocha education zone.

Locus of Control of Behaviour Scale (LCBS), developed by Craig, Franklin and Andrews (1984) and adapted by the researchers, was used for the study. The instrument consists of 17 items placed on a 5-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The range of the scores for positive statements were weighted as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively, while the negative statements were weighted 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. Another instrument used for this study was Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS), developed by Ryff (1989) and adapted by the researchers. PWS contains two Sections A and B. Section A elicited information on gender of students. Section B has six subscales with 22 items measuring each subscale; (Autonomy subscale, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth subscale, Positive Relations with others subscale, the Purpose in Life subscale and the Self-Acceptance subscale). The items in PWS are placed on a 5-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The range of the scores for positive statements were weighted as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively, while the negative statements were weighted 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The content validity of the instruments was established by three experts. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected.

## Presentation of results

**Research Question 1:** What is the predictive value of locus of control on psychological well-being of male and female senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Regression coefficient r on locus of control and psychological well-being of male and female secondary school adolescents

Gender	Model	r	r squared	Adj. r square	Std error of the estimate	Remarks
Male	1	.425	.181	.179	3.285	Moderate
Female	1	.494	.244	.242	2.701	Moderate

As shown on Table 1, the correlation coefficient between locus of control and psychological well-being of male and female school adolescents are .425 and .494 with coefficient of determination of .181 and .244 respectively. This shows that 18.1% and 24.4% change in male and female school adolescents' psychological well-being is explained by locus of control. The regression coefficient r of .425 and .494 for male and female students respectively indicated that locus of control is a moderate predictor of psychological well-being of male and female senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State.

**Ho1:** Locus of control is not a significant predictor of male and female psychological well-being of senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State.

**Table 2:** Test of significance of simple regression analysis with locus of control as predictor of psychological well-being of male and female secondary school adolescents

Gender	Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P-value
Male	Locus of control	.425	.181	85.510	.000
Female	Locus of control	.494	.244	115.753	.000

\*Significant

As shown on Table 2, the simple regression coefficient (R) of male students is .425 while the R<sup>2</sup> is .181 showing that 18.1% change in male secondary school adolescents' psychological well-being is explained by locus of control, while the simple regression coefficient (R) of female students is .494 while the R<sup>2</sup> is .244 showing that 24.4% change in female secondary school adolescents' psychological well-being is explained by locus of control. The *F* (1,389) is 85.510 and *F* (1,360) is 115.753 for male and female secondary school adolescents' respectively and the *p*-value (0.00) is less than .05 in both cases. Since the *p*-value is less than the stipulated .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, locus of control is a significant predictor of psychological well-being of male and female senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that locus of control is a predictor of psychological well-being of senior secondary school adolescents in Anambra State. Students with internal locus of control are bound to have high predicting psychological well-being and vice versa. The relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being is noticeable across male and female senior secondary school adolescents. Male and female senior secondary school adolescents with internal locus of control enjoy greater socialization and happiness which reduce depression and unfavourable psychological conditions. Therefore, locus of control which has played a lot of roles in predicting psychological well-being deserves maximum support of all education stakeholders.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Ministry of Education should support functional guidance and counselling services by providing and making funds available for research and to improve rendering of professional assistance to students with external locus of control.
2. School principals should initiate in-service course programmes related to locus of control for school guidance counsellors to acquire more skills and be empowered to solve the problems of external locus of control among male and female students.

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