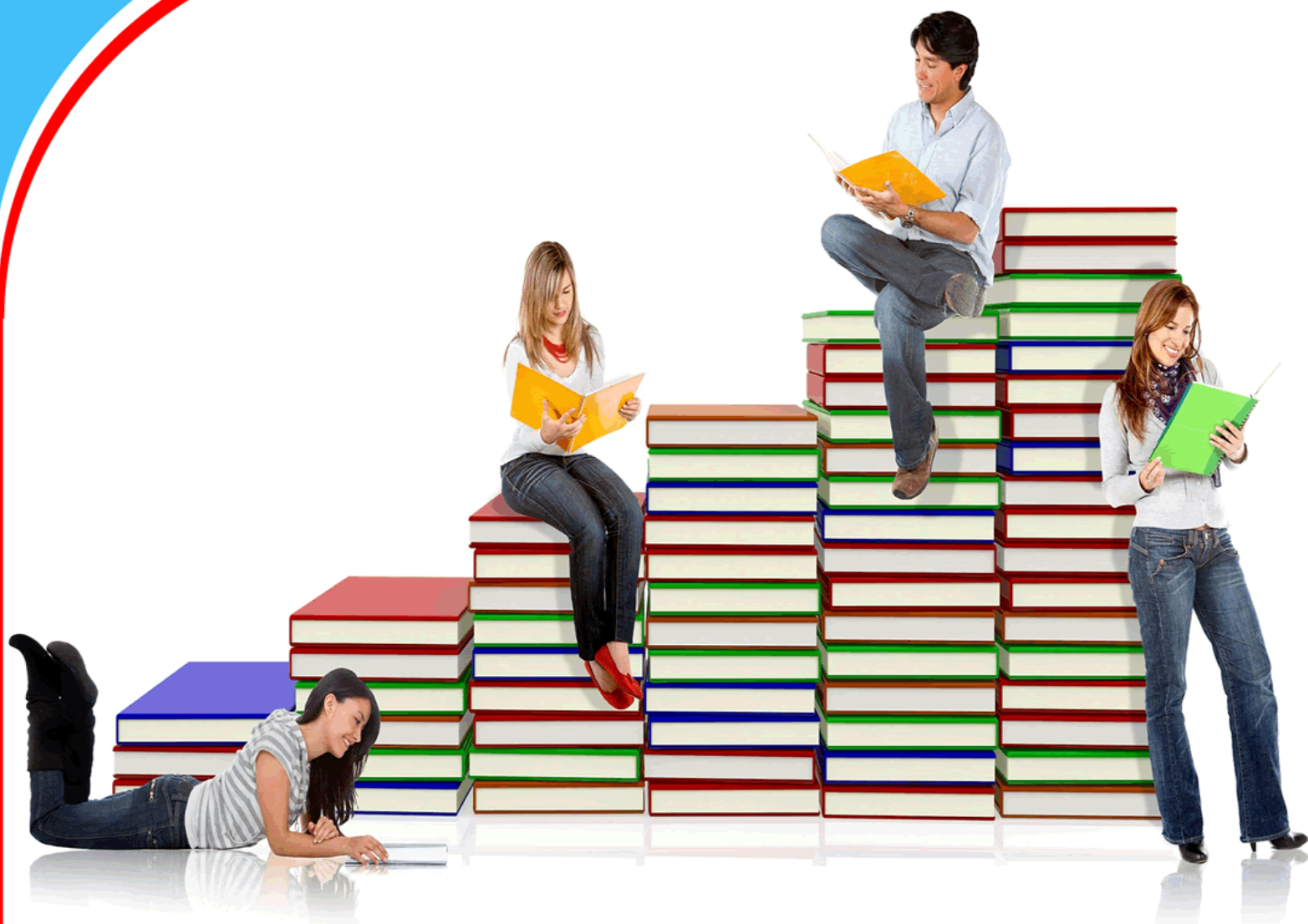


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## Locus of Control and Academic Achievement among Student Nurses in Cross River State, Nigeria

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## **Locus of Control and Academic Achievement among Student Nurses in Cross River State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The study was carried out to determine the extent to which locus of control predict academic achievement in foundation of nursing among student nurses in Cross River State.

**Methodology:** Two research hypothesis were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted the Ex-post facto research design. To test the hypothesis, a questionnaire titled 'Locus of control and academic achievement' was used. The questionnaire contained two sections; section A and section B. Section A contained 12 items with a Cronbach reliability estimate of .85. Section B contained 50 multiple choice questions with a Kuder-Richardson (k-R20) reliability estimate of .92. The questionnaires were administered on 766 student nurses from 100 to 300 level of study from all the four schools of nursing in Cross River State. The data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression and multiple linear regression.

**Findings:** The research finding showed that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement in Foundation of Nursing among student nurses. While external locus of control significantly predicts academic achievement in Foundation of nursing among student nurses.

**Recommendations:** Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that there should be attribution training for learners at all levels of education to encourage attribution to controllable factors. Also, parents, teachers, educational psychologist, counsellors and significant other should encourage students to see themselves as originals and not as pawns.

**Keywords:** *Academic achievement, clinical competency, external locus of control, internal locus of control and personality.*

## INTRODUCTION

In educational institution, academic achievement is considered to be a very important factor to gauge a student's progress and development. One of the very important determinants of acceptability and popularity in the classroom among students. Academic success is important because it is strongly linked to the positive outcomes we value. Adults who are academically successful and with high levels of education are more likely to be employed, have stable employment, have more employment opportunities than those with less education and earn higher salaries, are more likely to have health insurance, are less dependent on social assistance, are less likely to engage in criminal activity, are more active as citizens and charitable volunteers and are healthier and happier. Academic success is important because working people will need higher levels of education to tackle the technologically demanding occupations of the future. Nowadays, you need a post-secondary education in order to get a job (Regie, 2011). It has also been found to be a crucial factor in determining one's future in the occupation sector and promotion related issues. In fact, academic scores have become criteria upon which all teaching and learning activities are measured. An individual's personality and belief in the cause of successes and failures plays a very important role in influencing the individual's academic achievement. Academic achievement has a crucial influence not only on the students, but also the people and the environment around them. Individuals in the same group, same age grade and same potential academic ability may differ in academic achievement due to many factors. Some of such factors may be personal characteristics of the individual like locus of control.

Locus of control as propounded by Rotter (1966) locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals take responsibility for event in their life. In other words, it is how much people believe that their behaviour is influenced by a given situation or, how much a situation is controlled by an external force. The locus of control can either be internal or external. He further explained that people may be classified along a continuum according to their perception of what controls their life events. Rotter used a bipolar dimension to express control from internal to external and not as a typology. Internals tend to attribute outcome of life events to their own control, people who have internal locus of control believe that the outcome of their activities are results of their own abilities. They believe that their hard work would lead them to obtain positive outcomes. They also believe that every action has its consequences which makes them accept the fact that things happen and it depends on them if they want to have control over it or not.

To begin a successful career in nursing, the student nurse requires adequate understanding, comprehension and application of the course; foundation of nursing. The course covers the knowledge and skills needed for clinical practice, nursing intervention to maternity care, neonatal and pediatric care, geriatric care, mental health and community health care. It therefore follows that poor grip of the course leaves the student nurse incompetent to deliver quality nursing care. Poor academic achievement is not only frustrating to student nurses, educators and parents but leaves a devastating effect on the society in terms of shortage of essential workforce.

Nursing is one of the courses that attracts thousands of students in Nigeria and the world over. Unfortunately, not all student nurses who enroll into schools of nursing complete their academic training and graduate into professional licensed nurses. The most important criteria for effective nursing education, is developing clinical competency. Clinical competency means ability to integrate acquired cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills effectively when delivering nursing

services. The student nurse is expected to achieve the maximum level of clinical competency after receiving the necessary and adequate theoretical and practical training. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case as the number of student nurses progressing from one level of training to the next level keeps declining each year. So that at three hundred level, the number of student nurses in training has reduced significantly due to attrition occasioned by poor academic achievement. Some students attribute their failure to unfair marking procedure by the teacher. Many tend to attribute failure to bad luck, academic task difficulty or even fate. Some attribute their failures to some unexplainable forces working against their progress. This escalating rate of attrition occasioned by poor academic achievement of student nurses in Cross River State has undoubtedly become a social phenomenon and a matter of concern. Several attempts have been made by parents, government, nurse educators to help improve the student nurse academic achievement to no avail. For instance, parents make conscious efforts to provide for the financial, material and psychological needs of their children just to enhance their academic achievement. The untiring efforts of nurses educators in the rigorous training of student nurses cannot be ignored, yet the failure rate and attrition rate are still high (Cross River State Ministry of Health, 2020).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study sought to determinate the extent to which locus of control predict academic achievement among student nurses in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **The Specific Objectives**

Establish the extent to which internal locus of control influence academic achievement in foundation of nursing among student nurses.

Find out the influence of external locus of control on academic achievement in foundation of nursing student nurses.

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesizes were generated;

Ho<sub>1</sub>. Internal locus of control does not significantly influence academic achievement in foundation of nursing among student nurses

Ho<sub>2</sub>. External locus of control does not significantly influence academic achievement in foundation of nursing among student nurses.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Merkine et al. (2019) studied the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement of graduating students at Wolaita Sodo University. The study employed the correlation design to establish the nature or the relationship. The researchers used 313 respondents selected from three colleges and two schools in the university using simple random sampling method. The researchers used analysis of variance, t-test and Pearson product moment correlation to establish the difference and relationship between locus of control and academic achievement. They found no significant difference between internal and external locus of control on academic achievement, however both related positively with academic achievement.

Another study by Ogunmakin and Akomolafe (2013) relating locus of control to academic achievement, found that internality is positively related to academic achievement adding that

behaviors such as class participation, positive study habits and positive learning attitudes leads to high academic achievement . The authors further noted that students with internal locus of control showed significant low academic procrastination, low debilitating test anxiety and therefore achieve higher academically. In addition, the authors added that internal locus of control is a moderator of academic work readiness and positive attitude to academic work. Internals are more motivated, have less fear and show more interest in their academic work. Individuals with an internal locus of control engage in a more active information search which they use largely in making effective decision. Internals are also committed to their academic work. The reason for this commitment includes perceived control over the school environment, perceive availability of alternatives and having more likelihood to take action when dissatisfied with a situation.

Though the above study did not report on those with external locus of control, it can be however deduced from the findings of the study that those with external locus of control are likely to have high levels of test anxiety, academic procrastination, fear and distrust. In this direction Rotter (1966), vignette that Individuals with external locus of control believe that they are largely powerless on their own. The individuals with external locus of control prefer the activities in which they can show the role of chance, luck, fate and significant others on their life.

It is therefore safe to conclude that externals usually view change as a danger as they do not feel in control of the forces affecting their lives. They prefer to be at a status where they can be passive in case of a change. Individuals with an external locus of control limit further improvement on their skills, ability by relying on external factors such as luck, stimulate the brain by ingesting illicit substances, depending on the influence of significant others for positive life outcomes.

Externals often view life as uncontrollable and difficult to cope with and often hold superstitious belief (Shinde & Joshi, 2011). Within the domain of education, external locus of control has been found to be a negative predictor of academic achievement. For instance, (Mali, 2013), examined the locus of control on student' learning performance. The researcher studied a sample of 84 undergraduates who were randomly selected. The result showed that students with external locus of control were more passive and reactive during the learning process and recorded more low examination grades. They display fewer compliance attitudes than individuals with internal locus of control. External locus of control individuals cannot cope with the stress and difficulties in life.

## **METHODS**

The study employed the Ex post facto research design. Since the investigation was carried out after the fact has occurred without interference from the researchers. Study population comprised all student nurses from years one to three across the four schools in Cross River State. A structured questionnaire titled locus of control and academic achievement (LCAC) developed by the researcher was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed after an elaborate literature review and related studies. To ensure face validity and content validity, three experts in Educational psychology and Nursing Education validated the instrument. The corrections and suggestions made by the experts were used to package the final production of the instrument. In determining the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used. The Kuder- Richardson (k-R20) method was used to determine the reliability of foundation of nursing test which yielded an estimate of 0.67. Although all effort were made to ensure a 100% return rate, unfortunately 758 participants returned their questionnaire, thus putting the return rate at 98.3%. Descriptive statistics were used.

## RESULTS

The demographic description of the sample was done using frequency count and simple percentage. The result indicated that 224 or 29.7% of student nurses were male while 529 or 70.3% were females. In terms of age range, the highest number of student nurses (323 or 42.9%) were those above the age of 22 years, closely followed by those between the age 20 and 22 years (303 or 42.9%) the least number were those between 17 and 19 years (127 or 16.9% of age). As regards school, students of school of nursing calabar were highest in number (207 or 25.5%). School of nursing, Ogoja were the least in terms of numerical strength. The distribution of student nurses in terms of year of study shows that year 1 had the highest population of (278 or 36.9%), closely followed by 200 level (254 or 33.7%). The least number were those in year 3(221 or 29.3%) and had 5-7 credits at the point of admission while less than 50% of student had above 7 credits (352 or 46.7%).

### Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one states that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement in foundation of nursing among student nurses. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was carried out with internal locus of control as independent variable and academic achievement in foundation of nursing as dependent variable. The result obtained is presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Regression of achievement in foundation of Nursing on internal locus of control**

<b>R = 042</b>		<b>Adjusted R-squared = 000</b>			
<b>R-Squared = 002</b>		<b>Std Error = 6.84715</b>			
Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-value	p-value
Regression	61.105	1	61.105	1.303	.251
Residual	35209.471	751	46.88.83		
Total	35270.576	752			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Unstandardized coefficient B</b>	<b>Std error</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficient Beta</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Constant internal	29.476	3.492		8.440	000
Locus of control				1.142	.254

*\*Significant at .05 level.  $P < .05$*

From table 1, the p-value (.251) associated with the computed F-value (1.303) is greater than the chosen level of significance (.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement in Foundation of Nursing among student nurses. The R-square value of .002 denotes that 0.2% of the variation in the dependent variable was accounted for the independent variable (internal locus of control).



To test for the significance of the regression constant (29.476) and the regression coefficient (.172), t-test was carried out. The results showed that, only the regression constant contributed significantly to the prediction of achievement in Foundation of nursing ( $t=8.440; p<.05$ ). The contribution of the coefficient (internal locus of control) was not significant ( $t=1.142; p>.05$ ). The regression model is represented by the following equation:  $y=29.476+.17x$

Where:  $y$  = achievement in foundations of Nursing

$x$  = internal locus of control

### Hypothesis Two

External locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement in Foundation of nursing among student nurses. Simple linear regression was carried out to test this hypothesis with external locus of control as independent variable and academic achievement as dependent variable.

**Table 2: Regression of achievement in foundation of nursing on External locus of control**

<b>R</b>	=	<b>.094</b>	<b>Adjusted R-squared = .007</b>		
<b>R-Squared</b>	=	<b>.009</b>	<b>Std Error of Estimation = 6.82288</b>		
Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square p-value	F-value	
Regression	310.243	1	310.243	6,664*	
Residual	34960.334	751	.010		
Total	35270.577	752	46.552		
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Unstandardized coefficient B</b>	<b>Std error</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficient Beta</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Constant external	31.446	.816		38.538*	.000
Locus of control	.123	.047	.094	2.582*	.010

\*Significant at .05 level.  $P>.05$

The results in table 2 above show that the p-value (.010) associated with the computed F-value (6.664) is less than the chosen level of significance (.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that external locus of control significantly predicts academic achievement in Foundation of nursing among student nurses. The R-square of .009 means that 0.9% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by external locus of control.

In testing the significance of the contribution of the regression constant (31.446) and the regression coefficient (.123) to the prediction of achievement of Foundation of nursing, t-test was carried out. The results in Table 8 show that both variables contributed significantly to the prediction of the dependent variable. The regression model is represented by the following equation:  $y = 31.446+.123x$

Where  $y$  = achievement in foundations of Nursing and  $x$  = external locus of control

## DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis stated that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement in Foundation of nursing among student nurses. The researcher investigated the internal locus of control of student nurses in Cross River State regarding the degree to which they believe they are responsible for their academic achievement. The result of simple linear regression showed that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement in Foundation of nursing among student nurses. Thus, the null hypothesis was upheld rejected. This means that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement of nurses among student nurses.

Contrary to expectations, these current findings contradicts previous findings by Abid, and Kanwal (2016) that internality tends to be associated with higher academic achievement. Logically, students who attribute successes to internal locus of control are likely to engage in a more active academic information search, are more motivated, have less academic phobia and exhibit a favourable attitude towards enhanced academic achievement. Mali, (2013) noted that internal locus of control is a positive predicator of academic achievement. This also contradicts the finding of the present study. These contradictions have occurred maybe due to dome inevitable limitations in the statistical computation or instrumentation. Otherwise it could be majorly attributed to the research participants response set. This is responding inaccurately or falsely to questions.

The second hypothesis stated that internal locus of control does not significantly predict academic achievement among student nurses. Simple regression analysis used to test this hypothesis and the result showed that external locus of control significantly predicts academic achievement in Foundation of nursing, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding is in corroboration with the previous study by Rahman (2016). In that study, the researcher found that students with high score in external locus of control recorded a low scores in their school grades and also noted that external locus of control often view life as uncontrollable and difficult to cope with and hold superstitious belief that one's success or failure is dependent on external factors. In consonance with the findings of the present study is the study by Adalbajarnardottir and Rafnsson, ( 2010) relating locus of control to academic achievement, found that externality is negatively related to academic achievement adding that the externally oriented individual lack positive study skills and attitudes to learning which usually leads to low academic achievement in grades. For this study, student nurse's external locus of control has a significant predictive relation to their academic achievement in Foundation of nursing.

## CONCLUSION

Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that future outcome depend primarily on personal factors. Whereas individuals with an external locus of control ascribe actions to factors outside of the individual's control such as fate or chance. This study reveals that academic achievement is greatly determined by factors outside the individual's control such as fate or chance. Though personal effort is necessary for the achievement of academic success, but this effort is often times being impaired by some uncontrollable circumstances attributed to factors beyond the individual's control.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were proffered;

1. Attribution training for learners at all levels of education be encouraged.
2. Students should conduct themselves always to avoid infractions or any circumstances that could jeopardize their effort.
3. Students should work hard and obey school rules and regulations.
4. Teachers should be fair to students and treat them justly
5. Students should stop blaming others for things they can control and get focused.
6. Students should reduce blame game, stop seeing injustice and be themselves.

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