



Educational Process: International Journal

ISSN: 2147-0901 | e-ISSN: 2564-8020 | www.edupij.com

Educational Process International Journal • Volume 7 • Issue 3 • 2018

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To cite this article: Olaoye, O. T., & Olaoye, D. D. (2018). Assessment of Self-esteem, Locus of Control and Achievement Motivation of Female Students in Kwara State Colleges of Education, Nigeria. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 7(3), 209-221.

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2018.73.5>

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Assessment of Self-esteem, Locus of Control and Achievement Motivation of Female Students in Kwara State Colleges of Education, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study carried out an assessment of locus of control, self-esteem and achievement motivation of female students at Kwara State College of Education, Nigeria. 240 respondents were selected from each of the two colleges of education, purposively selected for the study making a total of 480 respondents. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire which was validated and tested for its reliability. Descriptive statistics were used in order to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics of multiple regression analyses were used to test the research hypothesis. The findings show that 66.67% of female respondents have internal locus of control and 33.33% have external locus of control; that 29.20% of the students have low self-esteem, while 70.80% have high self-esteem; and that 16.67% have low achievement motivation, while 83.33% have high achievement motivation. Finally, locus of control and self-esteem significantly predict achievement motivation of female students ($F = 61.336$; $p < .05$). However, it was recommended that parents should give adequate support and encouragement to their female children in order to maintain high achievement motivation spirit. The government of Nigeria should create an enabling environment capable of maintaining the growth of achievement motivation among female students by showing greater concern and interest for investment in engineering and industry.

Keywords: locus of control, self-esteem, achievement motivation.



DOI: 10.22521/edupij.2018.73.5

EDUPIJ • ISSN 2147-0901 • e-ISSN 2564-8020

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Introduction

Nigerian society is such that, achievement culture is well imbedded and in fact encouraged to the extent of motivating people to achieve is more or less an appreciation and acceptance value framework within which achievement motivation and achievement oriented behaviors are expressed. Thus, to a great extent, the acceptance of the expectancy value approach to achievement motivation by Nigerian society seems to provide the theoretical basis upon which most administrative practices commonly found in the country's formal organization are traditionally vested.

Influencing achievement in students or workers, for example, is the concern of most administrative sectors of formal organizations like schools and industry. In the cause of doing that, premium is placed on certain gratification attainable by students or workers. Typical of these, according to Korman (1974), are such rewards as good grades in schools and the promotion of job security as well as good working conditions in jobs. Achievement is thereby increased and controlled as attainment of these rewards is made contingent upon effective performances. Consequently, it is believed that the promise of such value attainment will result in increased performances.

From the most difficult task to the least, an individual strives to excel in their own area of specialization. Numerous people of diverse background and profession are influenced by various motives to excel in their endeavors. The furniture maker whose output is highly fanciful, attractive and durable is not only satisfied within himself, but also proud of his accomplishments. The admiration of his work and consequent patronage are outright incentives for his future production. In consonance with this concept, Shittu (1989) cited Vroom's (1984) statement that: "A person's motivation towards an action at any time would be determined by his anticipated values of all the outcomes of that action multiplied by the strength of that person expectancy" (p. 36). Achievement motivation is obviously a phenomenon of great significance in any society. Psychologists like McClelland and Boyatziz (1992) have spent a great deal of time trying to understand the factors that influence this variable in view of its immense importance to the effective functioning of any society, school, organization, or individual.

Held as paramount and central to learning, as well as to intelligent behavior, is the concept of motivation, a process that is responsible for the arousal and maintenance of interest within individuals. Also accorded high recognition as a variable of expectancy of success on one of man's basic social motives is achievement, because of its importance to both society and the individual. Corner and Wrightsman (2002) noted the society conscious attempts to introduce a child to achievement motivation as soon as their socialization begins. The need for achievement, otherwise known as achievement motivation, is such a vital basic psychological need which, though it is highly needed by all, entails a great deal of striving to attain.

However, certain behavioral problems associated with the attainment of achievement striving were identified by Jenkins (1997). These behavioral problems are those of how behaviors get started, energized, sustained, directed, stocked, and the kind of subjective reaction that is present in individual's motive arousal mechanism and indeed level of achievement striving, the relevance of achievement motivation to success attainment has been accounted for in several conceptual definitions.

In researchers' bids to provide one reason or another for man's behavioral outcome, it is a common phenomenon to attribute a particular cognitive style to an individual, particularly if that style becomes consistent of that person. Messick (1976) argued that a person who is consistently oriented towards attributing an event to their self may be said to have a style of internal control. On the other hand, someone who would rather attribute his behavioral outcomes to people, objects or events outside of himself may be said to have a style of external control. This idea seems to be in accord in that individuals can be characterized with regards to the degree to which they accept personal responsibility for what happens to them. There is evidence that, at least to some extent, locus of control is a response to circumstances. Some psychological and educational interventions have been found to produce a shift towards internal locus of control (e.g. house door educations programs).

While there are many psychological variables that have been linked to locus of control and achievement motivation, the relationship between these variables and self-esteem is one of the most frequently documented. Self-esteem is defined as individual perception of self as competent, capable and in possession of various other positive qualities that deems him/her worthy of love and attention from others. Specifically, high self-esteem has been positively correlated with academic achievement. In studies exploring locus of control among adolescent population, self-esteem has been found to be related to this construct. Specifically, an internal locus of control has been linked to high self-esteem. Self-esteem is the degree of value a person considers for himself. Self-esteem is within the most significant aspect of personality and it determines behavioral features as well as human development, as most experts accept it as an important and basic factor in affective and social adjustment. Locus of control refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events that take place in his/her life.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the enormous achievement recorded by women so far in the fields of academia, sport, music, administration, and other recognized endeavors, their consistent low achievement motivation is still being examined and reported by researchers (Horner, 1992; Silverman, 1995). Such reflection of societal perception of low expectations of women to achievement motivated goals is bound to show a high need for achievement in women on the one hand, and differences in the need for achievement of men and women on the other (Jenkins, 1997). These conflicting reports, as they seems to appear, have yet to depict the actual state of achievement motivation of women and can be sources of discouragement after all.

Even in the choice of career, the apparent satisfaction of some Nigerian women, with traditionally assigned careers, which however lack achievement congenial conditions, seem to have far reaching interpretations. Achievement motivated people, as noted by Jenkins (1997), perform better under working conditions of challenge, autonomy and rapid feedback; which are typical of the careers traditionally filled by women of developed countries than others who are not achievement motivated. For example, most traditional occupations occupied by women like teaching, nursing etc. in Nigeria generally lack achievement motivated conditions and are characterized by a lack of regular pay or promotion, but that women still stick to them. This behavior tends to suggest that differences indeed exist in the type of achievement motivation of females from their male counterparts, who generally prefer jobs that have achievement congenial conditions.

Also apparent are some other problems with regards to setting the successful realization of meaningful achievement goals of high achieving Nigerian women. Such problems seem to inhibit the successful realization of women's dreams and aspirations. Especially glaring among them is the lack of environmental support for women's posture. Consequently, women's decision making and efforts to embark and execute targeted goals seem to be influenced or even frustrated by the father's or husband's, and at times brother's decision (O'Leary, 1974).

Achievement motivation has been extensively studied by both foreign and local researchers, but usually in relation to certain variables other than locus of control and self-esteem. Again in most cases, academic achievement, rather than achievement motivation is given more prominence by researchers on studies that involve self-esteem and locus of control. This study is designed to investigate the extent to which the variables of locus of control and self-esteem could go in influencing the achievement motivation of women, particularly in Kwara State Colleges of Education. The researchers of the current study realize that studies that combine the variables of locus of control, self-esteem and achievement motivation under a given research work seem to be very much uncommon in Kwara State. Moreover, studies on these variable are generally non-gender focused. In addition, those that are gender focused, are either foreign based or carried out in some part of Nigeria other than Kwara State, hence, the reasoning behind this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find the relationship among locus of control, self-esteem and achievement motivation variables of college women at Kwara State Colleges of Education.

In addition, the study is to examine:

- The profile of locus of control of female students in Kwara State Colleges of Education.
- The level of female students' self-esteem in Kwara State Colleges of Education.
- The level of female students' achievement motivation in Kwara State Colleges of Education

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in other to guide the focus of this study:

- What is the profile of female students' locus of control at Kwara State Colleges of Education?
- What is the profile of female students' self-esteem in Kwara State Colleges of Education?
- What is the level of female students' achievement motivation in Kwara State Colleges of Education?
- What is the relationship among female students' locus of control, self-esteem and achievement motivation?

Research Hypothesis

A null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship among Female Students’ Locus of Control, Self-esteem and Achievement Motivation in Kwara State Colleges of Education

Methodology

The research design used for this study was that of a survey type. The researcher used this method because it was considered to be the most appropriate in obtaining information from representative samples of the population. It was for this reason that the researcher chose the method to conduct a study to look for any relationships among locus of control, self-esteem and achievement motivation of female students at Kwara State Colleges of Education.

The population for the study comprised all female students attending Kwara State Colleges of Education in Nigeria. There are three government operated colleges of education in Kwara State, of which two were purposively selected for this study. The sample for this study consisted of female students attending the colleges of Education at Oro and Ilorin. The two colleges of education were purposively selected due to their similarities and curriculum. The college of education at Lafiagi was deemed to be more technically inclined, hence has a notable difference in school programs and curriculum. A total of 240 students were selected from each of the two selected colleges, making a grand total of 480 students, using stratified and simple random sampling based on the available list of students. Stratification was based on school and level. The research questions were answered using data analyzed by frequency count and percentage. The hypothesis was analyzed using multiple regression at .05 level of significance.

Results

The results were presented in the order in which the research questions and research hypothesis were stated. The hypothesis was analyzed using multiple regression analysis technique in order to assess the relationship among locus of control, self-esteem, and achievement motivation of female students attending Kwara State Colleges of Education. The research questions were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages of the collected data.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	<i>Demographic feature</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Age</i>	15 – 19	77	36.88
	20 – 24	185	38.54
	Above 24	118	24.58
	Mean Age (21)		
<i>Marital Status</i>	Single	468	97.50
	Married	12	2.50
<i>School</i>	Science	183	38.13
	Arts	172	35.83

Social science	125	26.04
<i>Parents' occupation</i>		
Government sector	167	34.79
Private sector	313	65.21

From the demographic characteristics it can be seen that 36.88% of the respondents are within the ages of 15-19 years, while 38.54% are within the ages of 20-24 years, and 24.58% respondents are above the age of 24 years. Also, 97.50% of the respondents are single, while 2.50% are married. 38.13% of the respondents are from the School of Sciences, 35.83% are from Arts and Languages, while 26.04% are from Social Sciences. 34.79% of the respondents indicated that both parents are employed as government sector workers, while 65.21% stated that their parents are private sector employees or self-employed.

The pattern of the respondents profile was examined with descriptive statistics as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency Counts and Percentages of Respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>(a) Locus of control</i>			
Internal	0 – 14.49	320	66.69
External	14.5 – 29.0	160	33.33
Total		480	100
<i>(b) Self-esteem</i>			
Low self-esteem	30 – 89	140	29.20
High self-esteem	90 – 120	340	70.80
Total		480	100
<i>(c) Achievement motivation</i>			
Low achievement	30 – 75	80	16.67
High achievement	76 – 120	400	83.33
Total		480	100

Results from Table 2a shows that 320 of the respondents have internal locus of control, while 160 have external locus of control. Table 2b shows that 140 of the respondents have low self-esteem, while 340 have high self-esteem. Table 2c shows that 80 of the respondents have low achievement motivation, while 400 have high achievement motivation. Having examined the profile of the female students in terms of the variables shown in Table 2, a null hypothesis was generated for the study and tested.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship among locus of control, self-esteem, and achievement motivation of female students attending Kwara State Colleges of Education.

Table 3. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Locus of Control, Self-Esteem and Achievement Motivation of Female Students

A. Model Summary for the Constructs

Regression	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error
.453	.205	.202	8.03948

- a) Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem and Locus of control.
- b) Dependent Variable: Achievement motivation

B. Analysis of Variance of the Constructs

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7928.730	2	3964.365	61.336	.000
Residual	30765.432	476	64.633		
Total	38694.163	478			

- a) Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem, and Locus of control.
- b) Dependent Variable: Achievement motivation

C. Coefficients of the Constructs

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	t.	Sig.
Constant	45.578	3.682	12.379	.000
Locus of control	-.012	.097	-.128	.898
Self-esteem	.497	.045	11.055	.000

- a) Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem and Locus of control.
- b) Dependent Variable: Achievement motivation.

The results in Table 3a show that both locus of control and self-esteem jointly predict female students' achievement motivation by 20.5% ($R^2 = .205$). Table 3b represents the ANOVA report on the general significance of the model. The p -value is less than .05 ($p < .05$), $F_{cal} = 61.336$ with df 2/476 meaning that the model is significant. Therefore, the combination of the variables significantly predicted the dependent variable.

The result of the regression as shown in Table 3c and reveals that the locus of control does not predict female students' achievement motivation by 0.5%, meaning that it is inversely related with female students' achievement motivation (sig .898 $p > .05$). On the other hand, self-esteem has as positive relationship with achievement motivation of female students attending Kwara State colleges of Education by 45.3%, and is significantly related to achievement motivation (sig .000; $p < .05$). This is also supported by the percentages in Table 2 which shows that 83.33% of respondents have high achievement motivation, 70.80% have high self-esteem, and a considerable percentage (66.69%) of the respondents have internal locus of control.

Discussion of the Findings

The noteworthy result of the study revealed that self-esteem of female students was more related to their achievement motivation than locus of control. This result establishes a difference to that reported by Shittu (1989), in which it was revealed that women's self-esteem does not positively influence their achievement motivation. This therefore means that if the attainment and sustenance of more realistic achievement motivation is desired, effective methods of enhancing women's self-esteem must be employed. It further means that if more care is taken by women to develop a spirit of positive thinking, cautiousness and objective criticism of self, then the much required happiness, joy and contentment necessary for adjustment in any setting of life will ensue.

This evidence of an inverse relationship between locus of control and achievement motivation of female students, though surprising, may be attributed to the type of instrument used to measure the locus of control of female students. Like in most earlier studies, the current researcher used the Rotter's (I-E) scale (as cited by Strickland & Haley, 1980) in preference to other alternative scales because of its ability to examine locus of control as a global trait. However, the difficulty in interpreting the Rotter's (I-E) scale, as observed by Nowicki, Duke, and Crouch (1978), at times renders results ambiguous. The use of Rotter's (I-E) scale is thus considered a limitation which might have been responsible for the result obtained in this current study.

One of the major findings of the current study is that there was a significant negative relationship seen between locus of control and achievement motivation. The findings are consistent with those of Allen, Giat, and Cherney (1974), Procuick and Breen (1974), and Tesin, Lefkwowitz, and Gordon (1980), which consistently found significant motivation. The current study's finding is however inconsistent with that of Duke and Nowicki (1974), which indicated females' externality in the attribution of success and failure, and that of Weiner (1972, 1981, 1985) which found locus of control (externality) as a strong variable of achievement motivation. It is pertinent to remark that the finding of a significant relationship between locus of control and achievement motivation of female students is actually not surprising considering the theoretical postulate of Social Learning theory (SLT). Judging that internals will positively correlate with achievement motivation in line with SLT, it was expected that locus of control (internality) would significantly correlate positively with achievement motivation. In the current study, locus of controls' scale was keyed towards externality. The negative and significant relationship established between locus of control and achievement motivation implies that internal locus of control was positively related to achievement motivation. Thus, the need to satisfy self-upgrading and improvement needs through education and training might have been perceived by female students as merely dependent on success in school programs like tests, assignments, and examinations; hence the need to value the judicious use of effort, ability, and time in order to attain the desired goals.

Another major finding of the current study reveals a significant relationship between self-esteem and achievement motivation. The finding is supportive of that of a study, who found that self-esteem and educational success and positively related, and also that of Maruyama, Rubin, and Kingsbury (1981) in that self-esteem and achievement motivation are inter-correlated. The finding is however inconsistent with that of Alao (1979), who found

that women's self-esteem and their lack of confidence negatively effects their achievement motivation.

Further still, the result also revealed that self-esteem was more related to achievement motivation than locus of control when the test of relationship was conducted. It was found that self-esteem correlated more highly with achievement motivation than did locus of control when the multiple Regression analysis was employed to explain the amount of correlation shared among the dependent variables (locus of control and self-esteem) and the independent variable (achievement motivation).

These findings show that the self-worth of women is not as poorly appreciated as perhaps imagined and also helps to establish that the result is different from earlier studies which revealed that women's self-esteem does not positively influence their achievement motivation. The current study's results also indicate a reduction in the extent to which the self-esteem of women is still subjected to threats of environmental factors like poor education.

In Nigeria, before the 1970's, people were unfavorably disposed to the appreciation of the worth of women beyond the home. For this reason, very few women considered themselves worthy of striving for success in academic or vocational fields, or in sports etc. Similarly, Burger (1993) reported that before the 1950's in the United States of America, very few women entrepreneurs could be found; hence, the exclusion of women from early studies conducted by McClelland on achievement motivation. A series of educational and social programs like the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) seem to have positively influenced the self-esteem of women by eradicating some of the stereotypes that previously limited women's perceived worth and reduced the level of inferiority complex experienced by women. The successes recorded in the various pursuits of women in the last few years have gone a long way to enhancing their greater confidence, as well as an appreciation of women's potential and worth than the mere attribution of such successes to either self or events. Thus, the quest for self-respect and admiration, as in the case of college women, could be more responsible for achievement motivation than the belief in one's ability or inability to control events in favor of one's success.

The current study's results also revealed a significant negative correlation between locus of control and self-esteem of college women. The finding agrees with that of Fleming and Watts (1980) who reported a negative and significant correlation between locus of control and self-esteem; but is inconsistent with that of Masquod (1983), who found a positive and significant correlation between locus of control and self-esteem. The current result thus tends to suggest the likelihood of external respondents to be low in self-esteem, and shows a positive relationship between internal locus of control and self-esteem. Recognizing all the limits that outside forces can place on them, such external locus of control respondents are prone to suffer a variety of emotional problems like significant anxiety, unhappiness, and self-criticism, which also continue to pose more problems or difficulties of adjustment to situations that can make for success.

Another major finding of the current study revealed a significant difference in the self-esteem of college women who have high achievement motivation, and the self-esteem of their counterparts who have low achievement motivation. The finding confirms an earlier

report by Korman (1974) that there is a significant difference between the self-esteem of both high and low achievement motivated subjects. The finding also supports the laboratory evidence of Hamachek (1971), that unlike low achievement motivated subjects, the relationship between high achievement motivation and self-esteem was found to be significant. The finding does, however, contradict that of Borckner, Den, and Lang (1981) in that there was no significant difference found in the self-esteem of high and low achievement motivated subjects.

Furthermore, a significant difference was established in the current study between the self-esteem of college women who have internal locus of control and the self-esteem of their counterparts who have external locus of control. The finding corroborates that of Fleming and Watts (1980) in that self-esteem and internal locus of control have a positive and significant correlation, and that internals were higher in their responses to items than externals. Fitch (1970) and Bachman (1970) also found a positive correlation between self-esteem and internality. However, the current finding negates that who reported that women, like victims of inferiority complex, are unable to attribute responsibility for successful events. The significant difference found between the self-esteem of female students who have internal locus of control and the self-esteem of their counterparts who have external locus of control might be explained in terms of female students' attitude to the teaching practice exercise. While serious planning is made of each aspect of the teaching practice exercise (time, content, teaching aids, and lesson notes) by careful and success-conscious students who believe that there is a direct connection between how hard they work and the grades obtained, some others simply disregard such measures. Even when planning of any sort is made by the latter group of students, they still have problems making them work and so they more easily accept misfortunes like test failure as the result of either luck or fate.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The discussion of the error correction of English language errors is still alive and plays a vital role in English language learning in the EFL classroom for foreign and second language settings. From the results of the current study, it can be concluded that:

- The majority of female students are high in achievement motivation;
- The majority of female students are high in self-esteem;
- The majority of female students have internal locus of control; and,
- The self-esteem of female students was more significantly related to achievement motivation than their locus of control.

The results of the current study have provided a strong basis for determining the levels of achievement motivation of female students and the extent to which the achievement motivation of female students is influenced by the variables of locus of control and self-esteem. Based on these considerations, and based on the current study, the following recommendations are made:

Parents should be encouraged to give their female children the support and encouragement necessary to create in them a spirit for high achievement motivation. As early as age six, girls should be given material, moral, and physical support, and also

encouraged to develop personal competence in the work assigned to them. While giving support and encouragement, care should be taken to ensure that children's sense of independence is neither suppressed nor that their perception of mastery or accomplishment undermined. It is believed that children who are raised to develop high achievement motivation have the tendency to transfer the trait into adulthood.

The government of Nigeria should create an enabling environment capable of maintaining the growth of achievement motivation among female student by showing greater concern and interest for investment in engineering, industry etc., as well as preparedness to encourage and afford moral, physical and financial backing to interested female investors. Such endeavors could influence Nigeria's economic growth and success in business, and also inspire female students' greater desire for such ventures. Due to the lack of an enabling environment for economic advancement from those at the helm, laudable schemes that are envisaged by Nigeria's female intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and philanthropists toward realistic economic transformation of the country fail to materialize. As a result, potential achievers become frustrated and give up on their pursuit of achievement and advancement. The economic growth of Nigeria should be the concern of all citizens; hence, the need for the government of Nigeria to provide an enabling environment.

Female citizens of Nigeria should attach greater importance to hard work which appears relegated to the background in order that Nigeria will once again become a leading achieving country. Leaders of Nigeria, at Federal, State and Local Government levels, should endeavor to exhibit exemplary leadership styles through working hard and rewarding hardworking citizens. Such leadership styles and achievement-oriented models will be emulated by Nigeria's female youth and female students who, being the potential leaders of tomorrow, will model their lives upon the ways of such hardworking groups.

Lastly, female students should strive to adjust to situations that may enhance their self-esteem by disregarding worry, fears, and anxiety that may tend to grip them whenever mistakes are made or difficulties encountered in tests, examinations, projects, vocations etc.. Instead, they should not allow themselves to suffer from undue emotional stress or focus on self-criticism, but look at problem-solving techniques of positive thinking in order to boost their self-respect and self-admiration. Such techniques can help individuals to focus their abilities on finding immediate solutions to problems they encounter rather than self-criticism which merely results to more problems of adjustment.

Notes

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