

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of locus of control and academic achievement in financial accounting among business education students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria. The population used for the study is 571, census sampling techniques was used. Using regression analysis and Two-Way ANOVA, the research tested two hypotheses: (1) the effect of internal and external locus of control on academic achievement, and (2) the negative effect locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting. The regression results showed a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.396 and an R^2 value of 0.157, indicating that 15.7% of the variance in students' academic performance was explained by locus of control variables. The F-test result ($F(2, 97) = 9.002, p < 0.05$) confirmed that locus of control significantly influenced academic performance. Specifically, internal locus of control had a positive effect ($\beta = 0.543, t = 4.236, p < 0.05$), while external locus of control had a negative effect ($\beta = -0.961, t = -4.182, p < 0.05$). In contrast, the Two-Way ANOVA indicated no significant gender interaction effect ($F(7, 70) = 0.000, p = 1.000$), suggesting that locus of control affects male and female students similarly. These findings highlight the psychological dimension of academic achievement and underscore the importance of fostering internal control beliefs among students. The study recommends that students with external locus of control needs to be encouraged not to relent so that they can perform better in their study generally

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Business Education, Locus of control.

Introduction

Academic achievement remains a critical concern in Nigeria's teacher education system. Colleges of education, in particular, play a pivotal role in preparing future teachers who will, in turn, shape the learning experiences of students across the country. The students' academic achievements are therefore not only personal achievements but also national assets in the making. Beyond cognitive ability, psychological factors significantly influence how students learn, persevere, and achieve. Academic achievement is a key indicator of educational effectiveness and student learning outcomes. It refers to the degree to which a student has achieved specific learning objectives measured through standardized tests, continuous assessments, examinations, and other academic indicators (Ahiwe 2023). Scholars often conceptualize academic achievement as a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains of learning. According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2021), academic achievement serves as a critical determinant of future educational progression and labour market opportunities, making it a central

focus of educational research and policy discourse. It is typically measured using Grade Point Averages (GPAs), course grades, or standardized test scores, which provide objective evidence of student mastery of curricular content World Bank (2022). One of the most widely examined of these psychological variables is locus of control, which refers to the degree to which individuals attribute the outcomes of events to their own actions (internal) or to external forces such as luck, fate, or other people (external) Rotters (1966). Students with a strong internal orientation are often more motivated, persistent, and self-regulated in their learning behaviours, which can lead to better academic achievement Nowicki & Duke (2021).

In Nigeria and other parts of West Africa, it was suggested that locus of control is closely associated with students' academic engagement and performance. Internal locus of control has been linked to self-regulated learning, higher self-efficacy, and improved academic achievement (Aidoo,2024). Conversely, students who rely on external attributions may experience lower motivation, reduced resilience, and poorer academic achievement in demanding learning environments (Adeniyi,2018). Locus of control, a psychological construct, is another essential concept in understanding student academic behaviour. It refers to an individual's belief system regarding the causes of their life events, particularly whether outcomes are contingent on personal actions (internal locus) or external forces beyond one's control (external locus). Students with an internal locus of control tend to attribute success or failure to their effort, ability, and strategy, whereas those with an external locus often blame external circumstances such as luck, fate, or the difficulty of the task. (Rotter 1966) This psychological orientation has been shown to significantly influence students' motivation, self-regulation, and persistence in academic tasks. Locus of control becomes an important lens through which student academic achievement can be examined. Many students face environmental, socio-economic, and institutional challenges, and their perception of control may shape how they respond to these factors. Students with a strong internal locus of control are more likely to adopt adaptive coping strategies, maintain academic discipline, and perform better than their counterparts with an external orientation. This relationship provides the conceptual foundation for examining the psychological predictors of learning outcomes in colleges of education. In the context of colleges of education, this is particularly significant because future educators who display a strong internal locus of control may be better equipped to handle classroom challenges and model positive learning attitudes for their students. Colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria, therefore, provide an important context for examining this psychological factor, as they train a large proportion of the country's teaching workforce.

There is no denying that the ideas of locus of control and academic achievement are crucial and relevant to education in general. Without any doubt, locus of control is a crucial position in students' learning which is one of the product of students' academic standard. It is possible to forecast students' academic achievement using locus of control. Nonetheless, Business Education which has been defined by different authors is one area of education where the two previously mentioned ideas are important. Business Education refers to the teaching and learning of business-related skills, knowledge, and practices. The main goal of Business Education is to prepare students for careers in business and related fields by providing them with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. It is noteworthy that business education is work focused, skill-based, result-oriented and technology-driven.(Akinlabi, 2023). A particular area of accounting in business education programme is known as financial accounting which deals with the process of documenting, compiling, and reporting the numerous transactions that arise from corporate operations throughout time. These activities are summarized in the preparation of financial statements including the balance sheet, income statement, cashflow statement that record a company's operating achievement over a given period(Kenton, 2024). With its foundations of ethics, measuring principles (historical cost and fair value), assumptions and reporting standards, Financial Accounting is a crucial component of post-secondary business school curricula. Financial Accounting is an important aspect of Business Education curriculum at post-secondary level of education. It is a key subject taught in all colleges of education in Nigeria offering Business Education as an academic programme as stated in the national minimum standard by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (Ore 2025). Based on their locus of control from secondary school, it may be inferred whether or not the students would perform well in Financial Accounting. The fundamental aim of a college of education is to train teachers, develop education and innovation. In light of this, it is necessary to investigate the impact of locus of control and academic achievement in Financial Accounting among Business Education students in southwest, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Financial accounting is a core component of any business education programme. As an area of study, Financial Accounting is very technical and analytical, thus requiring a good blend of intelligence quotient and psychological stability to achieve academic excellence. In recent times, the researcher observed that many business education students

are not well disposed to the study of Financial accounting, another worrisome phenomenon is the dwindling achievement of business education students in Financial accounting examinations. It is therefore imperative to investigate the personal factors (internal and external) that influence the academic achievement of business education students in Financial Accounting. Without any doubt, Financial Accounting is one of the pillars of the Business Education programme and any problem that affect this aspect of study must be empirically addressed, hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of locus of control ON academic achievement in Financial Accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the effect of locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria.
2. Examine the negative effect of locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. To what extent does locus of control have influence on academic achievement in financial accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria?
2. What is the negative effect of locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁** Locus of control does not have relative significant influence on academic achievement in Financial Accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria.
- H₀₂** There is no significant negative effect of Locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting among students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria.

Theoretical and Empirical Review

This study was anchored on Rotter's Locus of Control Theory, proposed by Julian B. Rotter in 1966. The theory posits that individuals develop generalized expectancies about whether reinforcement is contingent upon their own behaviour or external forces. An internal locus of control indicates that individuals perceive outcomes as a result of their actions, while an external locus reflects the belief that external circumstances dictate outcomes. In educational settings, this theory suggests that students with an internal locus are more likely to take responsibility for their learning, engage more deeply with academic tasks, and exhibit higher academic achievement.

Complementing Rotter's theory is Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1986. Bandura emphasized the concept of reciprocal determinism, where personal factors (such as locus of control), behaviour, and the environment interact to shape learning outcomes (Rotter 1966). Within this framework, locus of control influences students' self-efficacy and learning strategies. Students who believe they can influence outcomes (internal locus) are more likely to persist in the face of difficulties, whereas those who feel powerless (external locus) may disengage. Both theoretical perspectives underscore the significance of psychological orientation in academic performance.

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement across diverse contexts. For example, a study by American Psychological Association (2021) found that students with a high internal locus of control consistently outperformed their peers with an external locus in both continuous assessments and standardized examinations. Similarly, recent research in Nigerian colleges revealed that students who believed their academic achievement depended on their own efforts demonstrated higher GPAs and were more likely to complete their programs successfully (American Psychological Association 2021). In a comparative study conducted in Southwest Nigeria, students with internal control orientations reported greater academic engagement and lower absenteeism rates than those with external orientations. (NCCE, 2023) Moreover, locus of control has been linked to meta-cognitive skills, time management, and study habits, which are critical factors for academic success. Students with external orientations, on the other hand, were more susceptible to academic procrastination and lower motivation levels. A recent study of colleges of education students revealed that those with a more internal locus reported higher academic self-concept, greater motivation, and significantly better performance in their courses. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021) Similarly, multiple studies across Europe and North America have shown that internality predicts

self-regulated learning, academic persistence, and grade point average. A global review further highlighted that internal locus of control correlates with academic resilience and achievement across cultural contexts (British Educational Research Association 2023).

In Nigeria, a growing body of research has examined how locus of control affects students' academic outcomes at different educational levels. The study found that locus of control significantly predicted junior secondary school students' academic achievement in Osun State, with internal orientation contributing positively to test scores (Nowicki & Duke 2021). Similarly, a study about Nigerian graduate shows that Nigerian undergraduates with internal locus demonstrated stronger study habits and achieved better academic outcomes (Tella 2011). These findings indicate that locus of control is not merely a theoretical construct but a practical factor influencing real educational outcomes in Nigerian classrooms.

More recent studies have extended this research to Colleges of Education. Ahiwe (2023) examined pre-service teachers in Imo State and found a significant, though moderate, positive relationship between locus of control and cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Christian-Ike's (2021) study similarly revealed that students with higher internal control beliefs tended to report stronger academic engagement and resilience in challenging learning environments. These studies collectively underscore the relevance of locus of control as a predictor of academic achievement among Nigerian teacher trainees.

Finally, meta-analytic evidence suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing students' internal locus of control such as goal-setting training, feedback strategies, and self-regulation programme can lead to measurable improvements in academic achievement (Rotter 1966). Such findings provide both theoretical and practical justification for investigating the impact of locus of control on student achievement in Nigerian colleges of education.

This paper focused on locus of control and academic achievement in Financial Accounting among business education students in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to investigate the influence of locus of control on academic achievement in Financial Accounting among Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to explore the relationship between psychological orientation and academic achievement without altering the natural learning environment. The population consisted of 571, NCE III students in colleges of education across the six states of Southwest Nigeria. While census method was adopted because the numbers are manageable to capture gender and departmental variations. Data were collected using two instruments: a researcher-developed structured questionnaire and a standardized achievement test in Financial Accounting. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A captured demographic data (gender, age, department, and institution); Section B focused on locus of control, adapted from standardized psychological scales measuring internal and external control orientation. Students' academic achievement was assessed through a 50-item multiple-choice achievement test in Financial Accounting. The test was designed in line with the curriculum and validated by experts in educational measurement and psychology to ensure content and face validity. A pilot study was conducted to refine ambiguous items, and Cronbach's Alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91, indicating high internal consistency and stability. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarize respondents' characteristics, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to determine the extent to which locus of control influences academic achievement, and two-way ANOVA to examine the gender interaction effect on academic achievement. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the locus of control and students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting among Business Education students in colleges of education in southwest Nigeria.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Locus of Control and Academic Achievement

| Descriptive Statistics | Locus Academic Achievement | External Locus of Control | Internal Locus of Control |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mean | 10.21 | 11.89 | 9.40 |
| Std. Deviation | 2.64115 | 4.36676 | 3.14947 |
| Range | 7 | 15 | 10 |
| Minimum | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Maximum | 13 | 21 | 16 |
| Skewness | -0.209 | 0.045 | 0.287 |
| Kurtosis | -1.733 | -1.126 | -1.417 |

Source: Authors Computation, 2025

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 give a clear picture of students’ academic achievement and their locus of control orientations. The mean academic achievement score of 78.5% indicates that students generally performed well on the achievement test, with most scoring above average. The scores ranged from 46.2% (minimum) to 100% (maximum), reflecting a moderate performance spread. The standard deviation of 2.64 shows a fair level of variability among students’ scores, while the negative skewness (-0.209) indicates a slight concentration of scores at the higher end of the performance scale. Similarly, the negative kurtosis (-1.733) reveals a relatively flat distribution, suggesting fewer extreme scores and a more balanced performance pattern across the sample.

For external locus of control, the mean percentage score was 56.6%, indicating that students exhibited a moderately high tendency to attribute their academic outcomes to external factors such as luck, fate, or external influences. The scores ranged from 28.6% to 100%, with a standard deviation of 4.37, reflecting considerable variation in external control beliefs. The skewness (0.045) indicates a near-symmetrical distribution, while kurtosis (-1.126) suggests a flat distribution with less clustering at the extremes. In contrast, the mean internal locus of control score was 58.8%, showing a moderate inclination toward personal responsibility for academic outcomes. The scores ranged from 37.5% to 100%, and the standard deviation of 3.15 indicates moderate variability. A positive skewness (0.287) shows a slight clustering toward lower scores, while negative kurtosis (-1.417) suggests a flat curve. Overall, students recorded strong academic performance but appeared to lean more on external than internal control factors when explaining their success or failure.

Test of Hypotheses

The study employs regression analysis and multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses stated in chapter of the study

Hypothesis One

Ho₁ Locus of control does not have relative significant influence on academic achievement in financial accounting among students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, regression analysis was conducted. Data collected on locus of control (both internal and external) and indicators of students’ academic achievement were subjected to regression analysis to determine whether locus of control significantly predicts academic achievement among students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria. This analysis was aimed at testing the null hypothesis which states that “locus of control does not have a significant effect on academic achievement among students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria.

Table 2a: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .396 ^a | .157 | .139 | 2.45050 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), External Locus of Control, Internal Locus of Control

The model summary in Table 2a shows the multiple correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination for

the effect of locus of control on students' academic achievement. The R value of 0.396 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the variables. The R² value of 0.157 shows that 15.7% of the variation in students' academic achievement is explained by their locus of control. The adjusted R² of 0.139 confirms the stability of the model, while the standard error of 2.45050 indicates a moderate level of prediction accuracy. This suggests that locus of control has a meaningful, though not dominant, influence on students' academic achievement.

Table 2b: Summary of F-test result showing overall model fit

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1 Regression | 108.111 | 2 | 54.055 | 9.002 | .000 ^b |
| Residual | 582.479 | 97 | 6.005 | | |
| Total | 690.590 | 99 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Locus of Control

Table 2b shows the significance of the regression model (overall model fit). The $F(2, 97) = 9.002$ with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the overall regression model statistically and significantly predicts students' academic achievement. This means that internal and external locus of control combined have a significant effect on academic achievement among students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria. The result confirms that the model provides a good fit for the data, rejecting the null hypothesis of no significant effect.

Table 1c: Regression results showing Relative influence of Locus of Control on students' academic achievement

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 12.413 | .971 | | 12.789 | .000 |
| | External Locus of Control | -.961 | .230 | -3.509 | -4.182 | .000 |
| | Internal Locus of Control | .543 | .128 | 3.554 | 4.236 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic achievement

Table 1c presents the regression results testing the hypothesis that “locus of control do not have a significant relative effect on academic achievement among students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria.” The regression coefficient for external locus of control is -0.961 , with a corresponding t-value of -4.182 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a negative and statistically significant effect of external locus of control on students' academic achievement suggesting that as students attribute outcomes to external factors, their performance decreases. On the other hand, the regression coefficient for internal locus of control is 0.543 , with a t-value of 4.236 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), showing a positive and significant effect on academic achievement. This suggests that students who take personal responsibility for their learning outcomes perform better academically. Since both variables have significance values lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The study therefore concludes that locus of control have significant relative effects on students' academic achievement in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria. Internal locus of control improves performance, while external locus of control negatively impacts it.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no negative effect of Locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting among Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria.

To test hypothesis two, a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted to examine negative effect of locus of control and academic achievement in financial accounting among Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria. This analysis was aimed at testing the null hypothesis which states that “there is negative effect of locus of control on academic achievement in financial accounting among Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Southwest

Nigeria.

Table 3: Two way ANOVA Results Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model | 615.590 ^a | 29 | 21.227 | 19.812 | .000 |
| Locus of Control1 | 581.018 | 21 | 27.668 | 25.823 | .000 |
| Error | 75.000 | 70 | 1.071 | | |
| Total | 1115.000 | 100 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 690.590 | 99 | | | |

a. R Squared = .891 (Adjusted R Squared = .846)

Table 3 presents the results of a Two-Way ANOVA test examining the negative effect of locus of control on students' academic achievement. The corrected model is statistically significant, $F(29, 70) = 19.812$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of 0.891 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.846$), indicating that the model explains approximately 89.1% of the variance in academic performance. This reflects a strong overall fit of the model. The results also show that gender has no significant main effect on academic achievement ($F(1, 70) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$), suggesting no difference in performance between male and female students. In contrast, locus of control has a significant main effect ($F(21, 70) = 25.823$, $p < .001$), indicating that students' locus of control orientation meaningfully influences their academic achievement. However, locus of control is not significant ($F(7, 70) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$), meaning that the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement does not differ.

Since the p-value (1.000) is greater than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is negative effect of locus of control on students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of locus of control and academic achievement in financial accounting among Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria. Findings revealed that locus of control is a significant predictor of academic achievement. Specifically, students with a strong internal locus of control demonstrated higher academic achievement, while those with a dominant external locus of control recorded lower achievement levels. This highlights the critical role of students' psychological orientation in shaping their learning outcomes, reinforcing the idea that academic success is strongly linked to personal agency, motivation, and self-regulation. The implication of this study is that business education should foster a culture of personal responsibility and academic self-efficacy among Business Education students. Furthermore, students should be equipped, regardless of their gender, to take active control of their learning journeys, thus improving academic outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

1. Business Educators should encourage Business Education students to build up a formidable internal locus of control.
2. Educational managers should promote a conducive environment, so that Business Education students can maximize the benefits of external locus of control.

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