The Impacts of Locus of Control and Religious Orientation on Academic Anxiety among Adolescents

Ali Haruna [*] Alhaji Ahmadu Ibrahim

Department of Sociology, Yobe State University, P M B 1144, Gujba Road, Damaturu. Yobe State. Nigeria.
* E-mail of the corresponding author: aliharunaktz@yahoo.com

Abstract

Two hundred and fifty adolescents were drawn from three secondary school located in Damaturu. They were administered the Rotter's I-E Scale to assess the locus of control (IDV) and Allport (1969) religious orientation (IDV) scale, to see the influence on expression of academic anxiety (DV) which was assessed using Zeidnes & Schleyer's (1999) Academic Anxiety Scale. A 2 *2 Anova revealed a significant main effect of locus of control on academic anxiety F= 3.370 (1,220) P= 0.05. The main effect of religious orientation and the interaction of effect of religious orientation and locus of control were found to be statistically significant. Recommendations for policy formulation especially towards educating the School pupils to change their locus of control orientation in order to combat academic anxiety are discussed. The limitations of the finding particularly the sample sizes of participants for future researchers are offered.

Keywords: Locus of control, Religious Orientation and Academic Anxiety

1.0 Introduction

The central contribution of psychology to the understanding of the possible consequences of control for individual mental and physical health have been in focus. There are certain psychological facilities of adaption that help to shape environment and society, these are known as control strategies. Lazarus and Falkman (1984) defined coping strategies as a set of cognitive and behavioural responses that are designed to master, tolerate or reduce the demands of stressful situation. The strategies also affects the choices we make in the environment which may foster or hinder the attainment of desired goals. The major facilities referred to as coping strategies within the study include; locus of control and religious orientation. The coping strategies are being investigated to address the question of how children may gain and maintain a sense of control in their lives.

Over the years research have been concerned about the effect of certain psychological variables on common human conditions and problems (Peterson, Calvin, & Lin, 1992; Mikulince & Nizam, 1995), common psychological problems such as; anxiety, stress, depression among others frequently undermine the resolve to humanity to achieve certain desired goals. Many psychological investigation have been centered mainly on the effects of attribution, cognitive styles and locus of control (Meguigan, 1995, Young & Allen 1992) on common human conditions and problems.

Recently interest has shifted towards investigating the moderating roles of religious orientation/beliefs and practices on the common psychological problems (Herrler and Cohen 1998). Religion is therefore gradually gaining ground in psychological investigation because of the role it plays in daily functioning of the believer (Shafranske, 1996).

Locus of control was developed by Jullian Rotter (1996) to measure the location of control of the individual. He defined it as the perceived source of control over ones behaviour. It is a generalized expectancy about the degree to which individuals control their outcomes, the theory posits that that one's life is profoundly influenced by whether are perceived control over life as predominantly internal or external. By this it is meant that locus of control influences the way one views himself and opportunities. When people expect their reinforcement or outcome are the results of personal choices and actions, it represent a belief in an internal locus of control. When people expect that outcomes result from unpredictable and chance cause such as luck, fate or as a result of the central powerful other people, it represent a belief in an external locus of control.

Related to the construct's of locus of control is religious orientation. Religious orientation is credited to the work of Allport (1960). According to Ventis (1995), the construct was used to describe ways in which people may be religious that transcends a specific creed or denomination. Allport (1967) provide two contrasting form of religious orientation, as extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation. Allport stated that the distinction help to separate church goers whose communal type of membership supports and serves others on religious ends from those for whom religion is an end in itself. An extrinsically oriented individual is that church goer/person whom religious devotion is not a value in its right, but an instrumental value serving the motive of personal comfort, security, and escapist, merely serving self-esteem utilization and incidental to life and lending social status. He described the extrinsic orientation individual as infantile, regressive or support to exclusion, prejudices and hatreds that negate all our criteria of maturity. Thus the extrinsic individual regards religion as a means to an end. Intrinsic religious orientation on the other hand has to do with those who regards faith as a supreme value in its

own right that such faith strives to transcend self-centered needs, takes seriously the commandment of brotherhood that is found in all religious and seeks a unification of being. Allport (1966) also described the intrinsic religious individual as mature, comprehensive and integrative and an end-in-itself, the value underlying all things and desirable for its own sake, to which a person surrenders himself. The third structure is said to refer to the extent to which an individual's religion involves confrontation with existential questions raised by the contradiction and tragedies of life (Joseph Smith & Diduca, 2002). People with quest orientation always show genuine solidarity of behaviour.

Research have been conducted extensively on the impact of these constructs on the individual wellbeing, Strickland and Shaffer (1971) conducted the first substantial investigation of the relationship between religious orientation and locus of control. The sample in the study was drawn from two large Presbyterian churches in the Atlantes region of the United States. One church was considered socially and religiously conservative and the other socially and religiously usual. They found that locus of control measures as extent of externally and internal religious orientation were modestly, but significantly negatively correlated (r=0.32) in other study by Jackson and Coarsey (1988), as sample drawn from a Baptist church in Washington DC, with a congregation of African American. The participants in the sample range from 18 to 68 years and all were church members with at least a six grader education. The results suggested that persons assessed as generally having an internal religious orientation generally tended to also have an internal locus of control (Jackson and Coarsey, 1988).

In a more resent study Krause and Walt (2004) examined the relationship between religious doubt and health and found that people who have doubt about their faith were less satisfied with their health and experiences more symptoms of psychopathology. Ventis (1995), Found extrinsic religious orientation to be negatively correlated with mental health, intrinsic orientation correlated positively. This means that intrinsic individual have a better potential for maintaining moral psychological health than extrinsic individual while quest could be of greater potential for positive psychological health.

Maltby and Day (2002) Found intrinsic orientation to be associated with lower schizotypy while extrinsic orientation was found to be associated with high level of schizotypy. The literature also indicate that the area has been neglected for long. More so very few studies have been conducted with children, so the population of children studied is not large to allow for generalization. Not much has been done on religious orientation and locus of control and learning anxiety directly. This study sets to fall in this observed gaps.

The following questions have been paged to be answered by this study.

a. Will participants with internal locus of control experience less academic anxiety than those with external locus of control?

b. Will academic anxiety level of participants be affected by their religious orientation?

c. Will interaction of locus of control and religious orientation have a profound effect on academic anxiety?

2.0 Method

2.1 Participants

The study utilized a sample of 250 secondary school students drawn from three schools in Damaturu. The selection was based on available population. It comprised of 130 female students and 120 male students 100 were Muslims while 150 were Christians. All were junior secondary school level 3 students. Their ages ranged from 12-13years with a mean age of 13 years and standard deviation of SD: 1.32.

2.2 Instruments

The following instruments were used in the study. Locus of control scale Rotter (1966), developed this scale to assess level of control. It consist of 29-paired items. The locus of control scale was validated by Eyetsemintan (1996) for use on the Nigerian population which yielded a validly index of 0.61.

Scoring was done, one point is scored for each of the following items: 2a,3b,4b,5b,6a,7a,9a,10b,12b,13b,15b,16a,17a,18a,20a,21a,22b,23a,25a,28b,29a. Any total score from 0-11 is regarded as low score which represents an internal locus of control and any total score from 12-23 is regarded a high score representing an external locus of control. This procedure determined whether the participant is internally or externally controlled. Religious Orientation Scale: ROS was develop by Allport (1967). Wai (2007) and Karick (2010). Validated the instrument for use on Nigeria population.

Scoring: The scale items are rated on a nine point (1-9) for the intrinsic religious orientation, the responses for items 1,3,4,6,8,11 (intrinsic items are summed up and the mean was determined by dividing the sum by 6. Extrinsic orientation for itens 2,10,12, extrinsic social items) are added up and the mean determined by dividing the sum by 3. Test anxiety inventory: This is a self-report inventory designed to measure test anxiety (Zeidner & Schleyer 1999). It consists of 20 items on a four point likert type scale (1=almost, 2=sometimes, 3=often and 4=almost always). The scale measure, worry and emotionality. The alpha reliabilities for the test anxiety measure ranges between .92 to .96, for worry it ranges between 0.83 to 0.91, and for emotionality between 0.91.

2.3 Design

The design consisted of two main factors these are locus of control and religious orientation, Locus of control has two levels (internal x external) while religious orientation consists of three levels (intrinsic x extrinsic-personal x extrinsic- social) It is thus a 2x3 factorial design.

2.4 Procedure

Having gotten informed consent from the school authorities participants were drawn into one classroom in each of the located school. instruction were read out to the students which indicate confidentiality of the information sought from them and their assenting to participate and their right to withdrawn at any stage of research if they so wish. They were then instructed on the nature of the task before them. They were asked to read the instructions carefully and proceed to respond to each item as it applies to them. They were told there were no right or wrong answer. All these were carried out with the help of the form masters and mistresses who served as proctor.

It took 7 days to organize and run the battery of test in three schools. Two hundred and fifty completed questionnaires were retuned.

3.0 Result

The coded questionnaires were subjected to analysis of variance statistic. The descriptive as well as the inferential statistics are presented below in table 1a & 1b.

The result show higher mean for extrinsic on test of anxiety. Likewise extrinsic social religious orientation has higher mean score than intrinsic social and extrinsic personal (see Appendix for Table 1a, 1b and Table II the ANOVA Summary table for the main effects of locus of control, religious orientation and the interaction effects.) The result presented in table II show that research question I which says participants with internal locus of control will experience less academic anxiety than those with external locus of control is supported by the results $F(225.1) = 3.370$, $p = 068$. Research question II which states " The academic anxiety level of participants will differ according to their religious orientation, was not supported by the results of the study $F (1,225) = 1.846$ $P =.160$. Similarly the interaction of locus of control and religious orientation was not significant $F (1,225) = 008$, $P<.929$.

4.0 Discussion

Basically the outcome of the research work on locus of control religious orientation and academic anxiety has clearly shown and significant, based on indicated that it was not the analysis of data.

The first finding shows that the result marginal supported research question I which say "participants with internal locus of control will experience less academic anxiety". This finding was supported by Baron & Ganz (1972) and Baron, Cowan & Ganz (1974) who showed that externally children were more responsive than internally controlled children to positive verbal feedback. Pines (1973), equally found that externally controlled people seemed to be more attentive to and affected by the interpersonal characteristic of the person giving the positive feedback than were internally controlled people.

The implication of the finding is that if individuals are made to be more internally oriented it will moderate the effect of anxiety the experience in their academic pursuit.

Research question 2, which states that "the academic anxiety level of participants will differ according to their religious orientation" was not supported by the result of the study. This is in line with Wai's learned helplessness, a psychological construct that is anxiety based (Wai, 2007).

Similarly the interaction of locus of control and religious orientation was not significant mcLntosh, kojetin and Spilka (1985) in their study involving students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Denker found no significant correlation between locus of control and religious orientation. Result of this study suggest that, for religious person, internal religious orientation is generally negative associated with locus of control.

The limitation of this study centres on the sample size used, larger sample could have yielded a different result, and similarly the researchers were constraints to few variables. Inclusion of other variables such as age, gender, and religious affiliation could have given in-depth study of this area.

5.0 References

Allport,G,W (1996). The Religion context prejudice. *Journal for the scientific   study of Religion,* 5:447-257.

Allport,G,W. & Rose, J. M (1967) Personal Religion Orientation and prejudice. *Journal of   personality   and social psychology,* 5:432-443.

Baron, R. M Cowan, G, & Ganz, R (1974) Interaction of locus of control and type of feedback consideration of external validity. *Journal of personality and social psychology,* 21, 124-130.

Eyetsemitan, F. E (1986). *The influence of personality factors and organization climate on   commitment   of*

workers in Nigerian organization. The Relation of locus of control Dimension and supervision Styles on Commitment of workers Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of philosophy psychology (organizational) submitted to the department of general and applied psychology, university of Jos, Nigeria.

Herler, T. R and Cohen L. H (1998). Intrinsic Religiousness as a stress moderator for adult protestant church goers, *Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(6), 567-609.

Jackson, L. E, & Coursey, K.D. (1988) The Relationship of god control and internal locus of control to intrinsic religious motivation, Coping and   purpose in life. *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion,* 27, 399-401.

Lazarus, R, S, and Folkman, S. (1984) Stress appraisal, and Coping New York: Springer

Maltby, J, 7 Day K. (2002) Religious Experience, Religious Orientation and Schizaotype. Mental Health, *Religion and Culture*, 5 20, 163-174.

Malute, H. (1995) Hunan Reactions to Uncontrollable outcomes: Further Evidence for superstitions Rather than helplessness. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental, Comparative and physiological Psychology,* 48b (2), 1453-157.

Mcintosh, D, N, Kojetin, B. A., & N. (1985) *Form of personal faith and general and specific locus of control*. Paper presented at the annual general meeting of Rocky Mountains psychological Association Tucson, AZ April 24-27.

Meguigan, I. B (1995) Attribution style and Depression in men receiving treatment from chronic pain. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 26 (4) 21-25

Peterson, C, Colvinm D, & Lin, E, H, (1992) Explanatory style and helplessness. *Social Behaviour and Personality*, 20 (1) 1-13.

Pines, H, A. (1973) an attritional analysis of locus of control orientation and source of informational dependence. *Journal of personality and social   psychology*, 26, 262-272.

Rotter, I. Generalized expectancies for internal vs external control of reinforcement. Psychological Monograph 80, 1-28.

Shefranske, E, P (1996) *Religion and the clinical practice of psychology* Washington D.C; American Psychological Association.

Strickland, B, R, & Shaffer, S. (1971) I-E & F. *Journal for the Scientific study of Religion,* 10, 366-369.

Ventis, W, L. (1995) The Relationship between Religion and Mental health,*Journal of Social Issues,* 51 (2) 33-48

Wai, P, S. (2007) *Locus of control, Religion, Orientation and learned helplessness*. A thesis submitted to the school of post Graduate University of Jos. Nigeria. In partial fulfilment for the awar*d* of Ph.D (Unpublished).

Young, L, D., & Allen, I, M, (1992) Repression Sensitization Differences in Recovery from learned Helplessness. *Journal of General Psychology*, 119(2), 135-139.

Zeidner, M. (1995) Adaptive coping with test situation: A review of the literature. *Educational Psychologist* 30, 123-133.

Zeidner, M., & Schleyer, E.J (1999) Test anxiety in intellectually gifted school students. Anxiety, Stress and Coping, 12 163-189.

6.0 Appendix

Table 1a: Mean of test of anxiety score for religious orientation.

Religious Orientation	Mean	N
Intrinsic	46.44	108
Extrinsic Social	45.82	56
Extrinsic	54.33	3

Table 1b: Mean of test anxiety score for locus of control.

Locus of Control	Mean	N
Internal	45.70	108
External	47.81	58

Table II: The ANOVA summary table for the main effects of locus of control, religious orientation and the interaction effects.

Source	Type II Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	sig
Model	433.3259	4	108.331	1.823	.125
Intercept	93250.744	1	9250.744	1569.441	.000
LOCL	200.224	1	200.224	3.370	.068
Re	219.416	2	109.708	1.846	.160
LOCL* Re	471	1	471	0.008	929
Error	13071.635	220	59.417		
Total	503785.000	225			
Corrected Total	13504.960				