

## Role of Locus of Control On Assertive Behavior of Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

The research focused on the role of Locus of control on assertive behavior of adolescent. The null hypothesis stated- that there will be no statistical significant influence of locus if control on Assertive behavior of adolescent; with 80 participants drawn randomly from Abakaliki local government area Nigeria. Participants were within the age range of 10-18 years with a mean age of 14 years. Two set of instruments were used to get data. Locus of control inventory and assertiveness inventory, 2x2 factorial design, and analysis of variance ANOVA with unequal sample size was used for data analysis from which had the null hypothesis rejected,  $(F_{1, 46}) = 155.16, (P < 0.001)$  and in the second,  $(F_{1, 46}) = 1058.61, P < 0.001$ . It also showed that there is an interactive effect of  $(F_{1, 46}) = 326.43, P < 0.001$  and the critical value of 4.08. The findings of the research were discussed in relation to the implication on academic.

**Keywords:** Locus control, Adolescence, Assertiveness, Behavior and Inventory

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness reflects people's expression of their genuine feelings, standing up for their legitimate rights, and refusing unreasonable requests. Assertive individuals resist undue social influences, disregard arbitrary authority figures, and refuse to conform to arbitrary group standards. However, they are also highly capable of expressing positive feelings, including love and admiration. In addition, assertive individual frequently use the power of social influence to attain goals, for example, they can successfully recruit others for important activities. Hence, they are often actively involved in politics, consumerism, conservation, or other worthwhile causes (Neviide and Rathus 2007).

In contrast, lack of assertiveness leads to either submissive or aggressive behavior. Submissive individuals not only possess low self-esteem, but also frequently smolder with resentments. Aggressive individual, on the other hand, often use physical or verbal attack, threats, or insults to get the upper hand. While the submissive are prone to socially inappropriate outbursts, the aggressive often end up as social outcasts or worse inmates.

Assertiveness comprises multidimensional aspects of human expression, including behavior, cognition and affect behaviorally assertive individuals are able to express their emotions, defend their goals, and establish favorable interpersonal relationships (Herzberger, Chan & katz, 1984). While cognitively and affectively assertive individuals

can appropriately deal with both positive and negative emotion (Gladding, 1988). Kraft, Litwin, and Barber (1986) found that the cognitively assertive people possess the internal skills to cope with tragedies, while Saigh (1988) supported that such individuals are able to regain their assertiveness after experiencing traumatic event.

### **1.1 LOCLUS OF CONTROL**

Locus of control is a construct that defines how people attribute determinants of events in their life activities. Rotte (1975) posits that internality and externality represents two ends of a continuum, not an either or typology. Internals tend to attribute outcomes of events to their own control. People who have internal locus of control always believe that outcome of their actions and other events are a result of their ability and they tend to be assertive. Internals believe that they should be responsible of consequences that are bound to come from any case so they have the view that all that take place around them are in the power of their ability. They usually have a good self concept and self - esteem; they have a good feeling of worth.

The external locus of control is the contrary of the internal locus of control as individuals in this group believe that environmental forces determine their life and events around, they blame the environment and could be passive, submissive or aggressive and feel irresponsible of consequences of event and outcome of their own action.

### **1.2 ADOLESCENCE**

Adolescence is a period of transition in which children become adults. Traditionally, adolescence has been considered a period of great emotional stress, and it is not difficult to see why this might be so; in adolescent years, children break away from parents control and seek to make their own choices about their activities, schedules and more. At the same time, adolescents are shifting the focus of their social worlds, so that they spend more time with, and gain much more emotional support from peers rather those family members. Adolescents are also able to explore a variety of new found freedoms, including many activities away from adult supervision, with all these changes, the stage seems to be set for considerable tension between adolescents and their parents, the need for assertiveness obviously come up, to make sure that there is no violence. The adolescents who have internal locus of control are found to be better adjusted in this condition than the externally controlled ones both males and females alike. A good number of studies suggest that emotional turbulence is by no means universal among adolescents.

There are conflicts of course and the nature of the conflicts changes over the course of adolescence (Laursen, Coy and Collins 1998). There is no question however, that adolescence does pose a number of serious challenges as young adults prepare to become autonomous individuals. Assertiveness is a skill that involves speaking and acting with power while maintaining respect for others. Instead of passively giving up power or aggressively demanding it, assertiveness enables adolescents to positively and authentically influence others. This skill is particularly helpful when adolescents are faced with situations of potential conflict. Similarly, to other social skills, assertiveness is best learned through modeling and practice in assertive training.

Richard and Schroeder, (1976) proposed that assertive behavior is the skill to seek, maintain or enhance reinforcement in an interpersonal situation through the expression of feelings or wants when such expressions risks loss of reinforcement or even punishment, the degree of assertiveness may be measured by the effectiveness of an individual's response producing, maintaining or enhancing reinforcement. More so, St. Lawrence's (1987) broadening of assertive concept to "the learned skill to adapt one's behavior to the requirement of an interpersonal situation", so that positive consequences are maximized and negative ones minimized.

The importance of locus of control as a construct in psychology is likely to remain quite central for many years. Individuals with high internal locus of control are very assertive and believe that events in their life derive primarily from their own actions; for example, an adolescent who eventually gets teenage pregnancy will not abort the pregnancy, she will believe her action caused it and she should take the responsibility. She will blame on her lack of self-control and not blaming the family situation or the environmental moral decadence. In contrary, a person of high level of external locus of control in same situation, on the contrary would attribute the cause to either the family, friends or would feel that luck was not on her side after all, many ladies have sex and don't get pregnant, she could even feel, those who live a good moral life do so because their environment is favorable for such life style.

This study therefore which to investigate and establish whether locus of control has any significant influence on the assertive behavior of adolescents

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Participants in this study were 80 adolescents purposively and randomly drawn from Abakaliki local government of Ebonyi State Nigeria. For the purposes of the present study, classification of the participants sample into Internal and External locus of control were required of the 80 adolescents, 40 adolescents were classified as internal locus of control while 40 adolescents were classified as external locus control based on their scores on the locus of control measure developed by (Craig, Franklin and Andrew 1984) Similarly, 40 adolescents were classified as having Low assertiveness, while 40 adolescents were classified as having high assertiveness base on their scores on the assertiveness inventory (Albverti and Emmons, 1995) the ages of the participants ranged from 10-18 years with a mean age of 14 years. All participants were Christians and were able to communicate in English and Igbo.

### **3. MATERIALS**

Two sets of instruments were employed in the study namely, Locus of Control Scale (Craig, Franklin and Andrew, (1984) and Assertiveness inventory (Alberti and Emmons, 1995b).

#### **3.1 LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE:**

This is a standardized psychological assessment instrument developed by Craig, Franklin and Andrew, (1984 ) to assess the main behavior characteristics of internal and external locus of control among the adolescents (confidence, Hard work) the instrument has 17 bipolar adjective item and scored on 5 to 1 point scale as follows

5 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Agree, 1 = Strongly Agree.

The scores range from 1 to 17. The cutoff score of 10 was adopted as the norm for interpreting the test scores.

Scores above 10 on these measures are considered as External locus of control whereas; those scoring less than 10 are considered to be internal locus of control. The instrument has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of test-retest reliability co-efficient of 6.87.

#### **3.2 ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY**

This is a standardized psychological assertiveness inventory adapted by (Alberti and Emmon, 1995a). It contains 17 items designed to assess the assertiveness (High and Low assertiveness) experienced by the participants: each item is scored on 0 to 4 points scale reflecting the degree with which the item applies to the participants during the research. The specific life events on this inventory include:

0 = No or Never, 1 = somewhat or Sometimes, 2 = Average, 3 = usually, or a Good deal, 4 = practically always or entirely.

The inventory a Split- half reliability coefficient of 0.89, the main purpose of using the inventory in the present study was specifically to determine the assertive levels of the low and high participants.

### **3.3 PROCEDURE:**

The questionnaire was administered to one Hundred adolescents selected from Abakaliki Local government Area of Ebonyi State Nigeria out of the 100 copies distributed, 90 were returned, representing a return rate of 75%. 10 copies of the returned questionnaire were discarded due to improper completion, leaving a total of 80 that were used for the data analysis.

### **3.4 DESIGNS/STATISTICS**

The study employed a 2x2 factorial design; and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with unequal sample sizes was used to analysis of the data.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Summary table of mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard Deviation (SD) on the role of locus of control and on Assertiveness behavior of Adolescents**

LOCUS OF CONTROL	
External	Internal
$\bar{X} = 24.13$	$\bar{X} = 23.58$
SD = 4.91	SD = 4.86
ASSERTIVENESS	
High	Low
$\bar{X} = 25.68$	$\bar{x} = 2.42$
SD = 5.07	SD = 1.56

Table 1 above indicated that External locus of Control adolescents obtained the highest group mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard Deviation (SD) of ( $\bar{x} = 24.13$ , SD = 4.91) followed by the Internal locus of control adolescents of mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard Deviation (SD) of ( $\bar{x} = 23.58$  and SD = 4.86).

On the other hand, High Assertiveness behavior in adolescents has mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard Deviation (SD) of ( $\bar{X} = 25.69$ , SD = 5.07) which is higher than low assertively behaved adolescents with mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) of ( $\bar{x} = 2.42$ , SD = 1.56)

**TABLE 2: Summary table of a two-way ANOVA of un-equal sample size on the role of locus of control on Assertive behavior of adolescents.**

Sources of Variable	SS	DF	MS	Fratio	Sign
Locus of Control (A)	1720.68	1	1720.68	155.16	*
Assertive behavior (B)	11740	1	11740.00	1058.61	*
(AB)	3620.12	1	3620.12	326.43	*
S/AB	510.32	46	11.09		
Total	47390.849	49			

\* significant P < 0.001

From the result above computed value of  $F(1, 46) = 155.16$ ,  $P < 0.001$  is greater than the critical value of 4.08, we reject the null hypothesis and concluded that locus of control plays a significant role in adolescents assertive behavior. It also showed an interactive effect of  $F(1,46) = 326.43$ ,  $P < 0.001$ , and critical value of 4.08.

We reject the null hypothesis and concluded that the variable vary according to the level of the other variable as locus of control vs Assertive behavior.

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

Obviously from the result of the study, there is a significant outcome from the hypothesis. From the null hypothesis stating that there will be no statistical significant influence of locus of control on assertive behavior, we can see that factor (A) computed value  $F = 155.16$ , and critical table value is 5.22, then since the computed value is greater than the critical values, we reject the null hypothesis and concluded that locus of control plays a significant role in the assertive behavior of adolescents  $F(1, 46) = 155.16$ ,  $P < 0.001$  this is in line with the position of Reynolds and ceramic (2009) that internality of locus of control is also one of the several traits that has been shown to contribute to more ethical behavior in the workplace. Socially responsible behavior is something often promoted by internality, individuals who are internally controlled tend to be highly assertive than those with externality of control (qutkin and Suls, 1979), the externals believe that the environmental forces determine their life and events around, they blame the environment and could be passive, submissive or aggressive and feel irresponsible of events. The result of the present study has also shown that there is an interactive effect: computed  $F = 326.43$  critical values = 5.22. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and concluded that locus of control and assertive behavior is of main role in adolescents' behavior as the variables vary according to the level of the factors  $F(1, 46) = 326.43$ .  $P < 0.001$ .

##### 4.1 Implication of the Study

Findings of this study have obvious implications. First it shows or rather has exposed that locus of control plays a significant role in the assertive behavior of adolescents. It also brings to light that as the factor of internality and externality of control vary in individuals and, it is implicit on assertive behavior of adolescents. The present study may also be regarded as a therapy. This is because, with the findings of this studies adolescents have learnt that to be assertive, is of utmost importance to young people as they strive through the several conflicts that adolescents are bound to encounter in life. It also brings enlightenment to therapists that assertive training has to involve a check on locus of control of the individual and if the internality of control is improved, then one could improve in assertiveness too.



## Implication on Academics

In a review by Suniya and Edward (1992) interactions between intelligence and psychosocial factors were examined in terms of influences on social competence among 144 adolescents. Psychosocial variables examined included ego development, locus of control, and positive and negative life events. Definitions of social competence were based on peer ratings, Teacher ratings, and school grades. Results indicated that unlike their less intelligent peers, intelligent youngsters showed higher competence levels, at high versus low levels of both ego development and internal locus of control. From the literature reviewed, one could say that, high assertiveness promotes good academic achievement. In addition to that, most of the earlier researchers also observed that individuals with internal locus of control tend to function better in all aspect of life than those with external locus of control.

More so, most of the theories reviewed were of the assertion that intrinsic motivation inspires one to move ahead than extrinsic motivation. In other words, people with high level of internality will perform better in academic achievement and other things and will always like to accept blames for their failure than those who depend more on externalities and extrinsic motivation. Therefore, our educationists must give attention to issues of assertive behavior and locus of control as the adjustments in this area will enhance improved academic performance.

In addition, the present study will also serve as an empirical study for future researcher.

## 5. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, one could say that there is a significant role locus of control plays in assertive behavior of adolescents. Individuals with high internal locus of control are more assertive than those who are externally controlled.

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