



## Locus of Control as Correlate of Career Decision Making among Secondary School Students in Delta State of Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the relationship of locus of control in career decision making. To guide the study, three hypotheses were formulated. The study employed an ex post facto design specifically of a descriptive survey type. One hundred and twenty male and female secondary school students were sampled for the study through simple random sampling technique. The main instrument used for the study was the questionnaire comprising of career decision scale and Rotters locus of control scale. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple regression and Pearson product moment correlation. From the analysis of data, it was discovered that there was significant relationship between external locus of control and career decision making. Internal locus of control was not significant but gender was significant. Some recommendations were made.*

**Keywords:** Locus of Control, Career Decision and Secondary School Students.

### 1. Introduction

The senior secondary school stage is the stage for career decision making. This entails students having a good understanding of themselves in terms of ability, interest and getting adequate information about the world of work. This decision will have crucial consequence for the individuals' entire life (Tuinstra, Sonderen, Groothoff, Van den, Heuvel and Post, 2000). Hence, Wattles (2009) opined that in recent times, an individual does not only have to make necessary vocational organization but also a comprehensive career research before making a choice which will align with the changing socio and economic circumstances. NCDA (2003) asserts that no other human activity satisfies as many needs as does one's occupation. Evidences abound that students in the secondary schools in Nigeria do not have enough career information (Salami, 2008). Moreover, according to Kinanee (2009) in Nigeria, adolescents have made numerous improper occupational decisions due to several factors which might endanger the students' future. Hence, Hinkelman and Luzzo, 2007 said that difficulties in choice of vocational decisions could cause mental illness or other work related problems if not well attended to in counselling.

The study was conceived to find out if locus of control is a predictor of career decision. Locus of control was originally developed by Rotter in 1954. Moorhead and Griffin (2004) sees locus of control as the degree to which persons think that their set of conditions in life are a product of actions within their control or from outside not under their control.

Locus of control orientation is a thinking concerning whether the products of our actions are dependent on what we do (internal control orientation) or on events secluded from our individual control (external control orientation) (Zimbardo, 1985). There is internal and external locus of control. The former refers to behaviour that is guided by personal decision and efforts which means career decisions made personally by students' efforts while the latter refers to behaviour guided by chance and outside influences. It means how far students think they can manage affairs that have an impact on them.

Martin, Thomas, Charles, Epitropaki and McNamera (2005) asserted that persons with inner locus of control have more efficiency in conquering difficulties of their surroundings and pressures at work, have higher occupational contentment and outstanding performance in their jobs in contrast to individuals who are externally controlled.

Kalantarkousheh, Moghagheghi and Hosseini (2013) posits that various studies on locus of control have been

carried out in Iran showing different outcomes. Some have shown positive correlation between locus of control and work fatigue while a study by Ghahramani, Arastehnazari and Meenar (2011) found no correlation between the two.

Stebbleton (2007) discovered that adolescents possessed external locus of control and thinks that there are different outside elements that are capable of influencing their career decision. Moreover, Muner and Morre (2003) have associated internal locus of control with high self esteem, job satisfaction, high self efficacy and high education aspirations. Furthermore, Suzanne H. Leese (2004) reported that Black Americans face a higher external locus of control with regards to careers. Amadi (2010) revealed in his work of a positive correlation between internal locus of control and a more favourable educational attainment.

Chan and Silver Thorne (2008b) asserts that individuals with internal locus of control are more resistant and have better capabilities in coping with vocational pressures and stress compared with those who have external locus of control. Moreover, Martin et al (2005) have indicated that individuals with internal locus of control are more capable of overcoming problems of the environment and job stresses, have increased job satisfaction and excellent function in the working environment compared to those who have external locus of control.

Gender is another variable being investigated in this study. The study wants to find out if any relationship exists between locus of control gender and career decision making.

## 2. Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

- i. Is there any relationship between external locus of control and career decision making of secondary school students?
- ii. Is there any relationship between internal locus of control and career decision making of secondary school students?
- iii. Is there any relationship between locus of control of gender and career decision making of secondary school students?

## 3. Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated for this study and they are as follows:

- i. Null hypothesis:  $H_0$ : External locus of control has no significant relationship with career decision making among secondary school students.  
Alternate:  $H_A$ : External locus of control has significant relationship with career decision making among secondary school students.
- ii.  $H_0$ : Internal locus of control has no significant relationship with career decision making of secondary school students.  
 $H_A$ : Internal locus of control has significant relationship with career decision making among secondary school students.
- iii.  $H_0$ : Gender has no significant relationship with locus of control and career decision making of secondary school students.  
 $H_A$ : Gender has significant relationship with locus of control and career decision making of secondary school students.

## 4. Methodology

The study employed an ex-post-facto design, specifically, a descriptive survey type. This design is suitable for this study because it is after the facts and it collects data in its natural occurrence. Moreover, there is no manipulation of variables.

The target population for this study included all SS II secondary school students in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta state. This class was chosen because they have made their career decisions. The sample consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) secondary school students made up of 66 male and 54 female. The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique to select four schools. The main instrument used for this study was the questionnaire. Two different instruments were used. The first was the career decision scale (CDS) and second Rotters locus of control scale.

## 5. Career Decision Scale

The career decision scale was adapted from Obiunu (2005). His original scale was made up of 40 items. The scale used for this study was made up of 18 items. The first part was information on demographic data of age, gender, location and school. It was structured on a four point scale of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD). High scores indicates high level of career decision making ability. Examples of items on the questionnaire are:

1. I am certain I made the right decision
2. I doubt my competence in making career decision.

## 6. Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

Rotters originated this scale in 1966 and it was used to evaluate the locus of control of the subjects. It consist of 29 item statement of which 23 are keyed and six fillers. Each item had two statements which the respondents read and choose the one with which they agree more. In each item, one statement expressed external locus of control while the other expressed internal locus of control. Rotter (1966) reported test-retest reliability estimate ranging from .70 to .80 and internal consistency ranged from .65 to .79.

Samples of the items in the instrument are:

- 1a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
- b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
- 2a. In my case, setting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
- b. Many times, we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

## 7. Content and Construct Validity of the Instrument

The researcher revalidated the scale since this environment is different from the environment that Rotters used. Initially, the researcher used the 23 real items avoiding the fillers since they were not scored. When subjected to Principal Analysis and Varimax Rotation method with Kaiser Normalization, the number of items in the instrument was reduced to 17. The rotated component matrix showed the construct validity within the range of .46 and .82. This shows that the 17 items were compatible and have good construct validity. The career decision scale initially were 20 items but using factor analysis two were removed bringing it to 18. The rotated component matrix gave the construct validity within the range of .53 to .92. This implies the instrument had a good construct validity.

### 7.1 Reliability

The researcher used the Cronbach alpha method to get the reliability of the instrument. Rotters locus of control scale yielded a coefficient alpha of  $r=.65$  and career decision scale was  $r=.80$   $p<.05$ .

## 8. Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple regression and Pearson product moment correlation.

### 8.1 Hypothesis 1:

External locus of control has no significant relationship with career decision making of students.

**Table 1:** External locus of control and career decision making of students

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	SE	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> adj.	Sign.
Regression	3414.293	1	3414.293	41.196	9.10	.67	.44	.43	.000
Residual	43097.07	52	82879						
Total	7724.000	53							

\* $P<.05$  level of significance N=120.

As shown above, a correlation of .67 with a computed  $F(1,53)=7.01$ ,  $p<.05$ . Hypothesis 1 was therefore rejected. This indicates significant relationship between students with external locus of control and career decision. The conclusion is drawn that external locus of control predicts career decision.

### 8.2 Hypothesis 2:

Internal locus of control has no significant relationship with career decision making of students.

**Table 2:** Internal locus of control and career decision among secondary school students

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	SE	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> adj.	Sign.
Regression	526.129	1	526.129	4.193	11202	.24	.06	.05	.045
Residual	8407.24	67	125.481						
Total	8933.333	68							

\* $P<.05$  level of significance  $N=120$ .

As shown in the Table 2, there is a correlation of .24 with a computed  $F(1,68)=4.19$ ,  $p<.05$ . This indicated that there is a linear positive relationship which is statistically significant at .05. There is a practical significance. It accounted for 5% amount of variance in career decision making in the population.

### 8.3 Hypothesis 3:

Gender has no significant relationship with career decision making of students.

**Table 3:** Mean, SD and relationship between gender and CD among secondary school students

Variable	No.	M	MD	SD	F	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> adj.	Decision
Male	66	51.56	4.57	10.91	7.01	.24	.06	.05	$P<.05$
Female	54	56.3		7.13					
Total	120								

\* $P<.05$  level of significance  $N=120$ .

The table above shows a correlation of .24 with a computed  $F(1,119) = 7.01$ ,  $p<.05$ . Hypothesis 3 was therefore rejected. This indicates significant correlation between gender and career decision of secondary school students. The conclusion is drawn that gender is a correlate of career decision and it predicts career decision with  $r^2$  adj. .05 which accounted for 5% amount of variance in career decision. The direction of variance is in favour of the female students with the  $M=56.13$ ,  $SD=7.13$  in comparison to the mean of male students,  $M=51.56$ ,  $SD=10.91$ . The mean difference  $MD = 4.57$  as shown in Table 3. This implies that female students make better career decision making than their male counterparts.

**Table 4:** Correlation matrix of gender, career decision, external locus of control and internal locus of control

Variable	Gender	CD	ELC	ILC
Gender	1			
CD	.24**	1		
ELC	.30*	.67%%	1	
ILC	.06	.24*	.00	1

As shown in Table 4, CD and gender are significant. There is linear correlation between CD and gender. There is also correlation between external locus of control and CD. As for internal locus of control and external locus of control, there is zero correlation. No linear relationship.

## 9. Discussion of Findings

The first finding was significant relationship between external locus of control and career decision making of secondary

school students. Stebleton's (2007) work corroborates this finding. He found out that adolescents possessed external locus of control and thinks that there are different outside elements that are capable of influencing their career decision.

The second findings show significant relationship between internal locus of control and career decision making. This is in agreement with the following findings; Martin et al (2005) indicated that persons with inner locus of control have more efficiency in conquering difficulties of their surroundings and pressures at work, have higher occupational contentment and outstanding performance in their jobs in contrast to individuals who are externally controlled. Moreover, Amadi (2010) found a positive correlation between internal locus of control and a more favourable educational attainment. Furthermore, Chan and Silver Thorne (2008b) also asserts that persons who are controlled from inside are resistant and have superior potential in withstanding occupational stress in contrast to individuals who are externally controlled.

The third finding showed that gender was significant. This means that locus of control has more relationship with female students in relation to career decision making.

## 10. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusion can be made that both external and internal locus of control are crucial in career decision making of secondary school students. Moreover, female students make better career decision making. Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

One crucial work of counsellors is to assist students through stages that enable them to make good career decision. As such, since internal locus of control was significant, counsellors should ensure techniques that allow individuals to make career decisions based on their personal decisions and efforts. This type of decision no doubt according to authorities cited in the works makes for job satisfaction, capable of overcoming problems in environment and job stress and so on.

Moreover, counsellors should be guided by external influences that influence students in their career decision making. Students should be exposed to career information and mentors. This will help to boost their career decision making ability.

Furthermore, students should be exposed to career decision making skills for this will go a long way in their making a worthwhile decision.

## 11. Limitation

The sample size was 120 and drawn only from Delta State as such findings cannot be generalized beyond the population of study but nevertheless it has heuristic value for practicing counsellors.

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