

# TEACHERS' LOCUS OF CONTROL AND WORK EXPERIENCE AS DETERMINANTS OF TEACHERS' EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

Teachers' capacity for effectiveness has been attributed to their study sense of personal control and work experiences and this has been limited to improvement in learning outcome and socially desirable behaviour among students. Studies have shown that some teachers characteristics such as teacher personality, gender work experience, self esteem, educational qualification have link with teachers effectiveness. However, no singular study on secondary school teachers in Lagos-State have examined their locus of control and teaching experience. This study, therefore, investigated teachers' Locus of control and teaching experience as determinants of teachers' effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Lagos. The study adopted the descriptive survey research. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 574 Junior Secondary School teachers from six education districts in Lagos-State. Two Instruments were used: Teacher Effectiveness Questionnaire with three sub-scale ( $r=0.76$ ;  $0.73$  &  $0.71$ ) and Teachers locus of control ( $r=0.61$ ). Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moments Correlation. The result showed teacher locus of control ( $r=0.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had significant relationship with teacher effectiveness, whereas teachers work experience ( $r = 0.06$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ) did not show significant influence on teachers effectiveness. Teachers' locus of control is important to teacher effectiveness. Hence, secondary school teachers, in Lagos State should be made to go through self regulation training in order to enhance their level of effectiveness with a view of increasing students general performance in public examinations.

Locus of control has been postulated to be an important element of teacher effectiveness. "A sense of personal control appears to be important for teachers because the basic responsibility of teaching is to promote change in children thus it appears that teachers ideally should perceive themselves as in control of events in their own lives and in the classroom, therefore exhibiting a relatively strong sense of personal control" (Sherman and Gile,, 1981).

Sherman and Gile (1981) compared teachers with five or more year's internal locus of control with pre-service teachers and those with less than five years experience. The result showed that teachers with five or more years of experience were more internal than pre-service teachers and those with five years or less experience. The latter groups scored 10.76 and 10.23 respectively which is very near the midpoint between internal and external scores on the Rotter I-E scale Experienced teachers scored 8.85 which was significantly more internal.

The relationship between locus of control and student achievement was investigated by Rose and Medley (1981) as part of a study of a link between teacher beliefs (Locus of control), teacher behavior, student behavior and students' achievement. The investigator predicted that internal teachers would produce higher achieving students by utilising predominantly direct instruction methods and by maintaining a controlled learning environment. While the results of the

study confirmed statistically significant difference in achievement in mathematics scores for students taught by teachers with an internal locus control, the observations of teacher behaviors did not conform to the predictions that the internal locus of control would use more controlling techniques. The internal teachers used techniques which were humanistic and gave the students opportunities to develop internal controls for their behaviors. The students did spend more time-on-task in the higher achieving classrooms, but not for the predicted reasons. The study did not show significant differences in teacher internal locus of control and student achievement in several other subject areas included in the study. Sheard (1996) cited and confirmed that internal teachers could be differentiated from external ones in their effects on student achievement.

Agnes (1994) compared 88 teachers of the year with 92 in-service teachers, the result showed a higher correlation of humanistic pupil control beliefs, internal locus of control and higher teacher efficacy beliefs for the teachers of the year than for the inexperienced teachers. Kay-Cheng (1989) studied attitude towards responsibility and teacher locus of control, and observed that teachers who place a high value on teaching tend to take greater personal responsibility for their own actions and their students' performance.

Bimal (2001) studied stress and locus of control among Singaporean trainee special education teachers. Thirty-one trainee special education teachers completed the teacher stress inventory and the teacher locus of control scale. Principal findings indicated that trainee special education teachers' who have low stress, have an internal locus of control orientation. It was also revealed that the stress the trainee teachers encountered, was not mediated by the variables such as teachers' gender, age, qualification and the type of pupils they were teaching.

Gershaw (1989) summarized that the following research finding has a typical characteristic of a person with internal locus of control: Internals are likely to work for achievements, tolerate delays in rewards and plan for long-term goals. After experiencing success in a task, internals are likely to raise their behavioral goals. In contrast, externals are likely to lower their goals. After failing a task, internals re-evaluate future performances and lower their expectations of success. After failure, externals raise their expectation. Internals are better able to resist coercion. Internals are more likely to learn about their environment and learn from past experiences. Internals experience more anxiety and guilt with their failures and use more repression to forget about their disappointments. Internals find solving their bouts of depression easier likewise; they are prone to learned helplessness and serious depression. Internals are better at tolerating ambiguous situations, are less willing to take risks, are willing to work on self-improvement and better themselves through remedial work, they derive great benefits from social supports, they make better health recovery in the long-term adjustment to physical disability

Cain and Mckay (1996) investigated the relationship between internal locus of control and female role model in female college students. The study presents evidence which suggests that the subjects who identified role models had stronger internal locus of control than the subject who did not identify role models, that locus of control was a changeable variable, that internal locus of control increased over the first year of college in the role model group (positive effect), and that internal locus of control decreased over the first year of college in the no role model group (negative effect)

Sheard (1996) studied classroom management skills and early childhood teacher locus of control. Subjects in the study were 55

teachers in child care centers. It was concluded that an external locus of control may be a predictor of poor behavior management skills in early childhood teachers. While an internal locus of control is not always an indicator of good management, its absence is a strong predictor of poor skills in this area. Teachers who have a combination of knowledge of good classroom management technique and an internal locus of control are likely to be the most successful in their behavior management efforts.

Murat (2003) conducted an analysis of relations among locus of control, burnout, and job satisfaction in Turkish high school teachers. Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression statistical procedure were used to understand high school teachers' burnout when using some predictors such as age, locus of control, and job satisfaction. The results showed that gender, locus of control and job satisfaction were significant on predictor effect on emotional exhaustion. There were difference on gender in relation to emotional exhaustion, that is female teachers had more emotional exhaustion than their male counterparts. Age did not have significant effect. All these independent variables had a combined predictor effect on emotional exhaustion. In the burnout dimension, locus of control and gender had the highest effect. Teachers with external locus of control had more emotional exhaustion than teachers with internal locus of control.

All variables were statistically significant in predictive effect on depersonalisation. Thus all the variables had combined predictor effects on depersonalisation. In the burnout dimension, female teachers' with burnout and external teachers with locus of control had high depersonalisation.

Only age was revealed to be significantly predictive of personal accomplishment. Other variables (such as gender, locus of control, and job satisfaction) were not revealed to be

significantly predictive of teachers' personal accomplishment.

The importance of experienced teachers in schools has been highlighted by many researchers. Adeyemi (2008) and Ogundare (2001), contended that researchers have also given different opinions about teaching experience and students' learning outcomes in schools. Their arguments centre on the fact that experience improves teaching skills while pupils learn better in the hands of teachers who have taught continuously over a period of years. In investigating possible differences in teaching strategies, Schuler (1984) grouped teachers into three levels of teaching experiences (3-6, 7-10; and more than 10 years). His findings revealed that experienced teachers' perception of their teaching objectives was significantly more subject-oriented than was that of first-year teachers. Hence, effective teaching could be measured by the level of a teacher's subject matter competence which Mullens (1993) regarded as a prime predictor of students' learning. It was also argued that experienced teachers are necessary for school effectiveness (Zaku, 1983). This suggests that many experienced teachers might have left the school system probably as a result of better job prospects in other sectors of the economy. However, the desire by government to engage experienced teachers is perhaps hampered by the high cost of education. Hence, Adeyemi (1998) maintained that the more experienced teachers in a school system, the higher would be the recurrent cost of education. In measuring teacher's effectiveness, Stiggins and Duke (1990) suggested three parallel evaluation systems, these include induction system for novice teachers with a focus on meeting performance standards; a remediation system for experienced teachers in need of remediation to correct deficiencies in performance and a professional development system for

competent, experienced teachers pursuing excellence in particular areas of teaching.

Adeyemi (2008) investigated teachers' teaching experience and students' learning outcome among secondary schools in Ondo State, and found that there was a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and students' learning outcomes as measured by their performance in SSCE examination in the state. The result further showed that schools which have more teachers with teaching experience of more than 12 years performed better compared to those teachers who have less than 12 years.

Day, Stobart, Sammons, Kingston, Gu, Smee, and Mujtaba (2006) concluded that the capacity of teachers to manage work life tensions in different professional life phases and in different schools contexts is key to their effectiveness. Alliance for quality teaching (2010), contended that the first three years in the teaching profession are equally crucial in building a quality teacher workforce, and that teachers working conditions outlines key features of the workplace that enhance teacher quality, retention and effectiveness. The key assumption is that teachers' characteristic and qualification are not fixed and static rather, they are malleable and dynamic within a rich professional context that encourages learning and growth. The workplace culture plays a key role in whether newly hired teachers stay for more than a year to two.

Leigh (2010) reported in a study estimating teacher effectiveness from two –year changes in students' test score that experience has the strongest effect, with a large effect in the early years of a teacher's career. For literacy and numeracy, there appears to be statistically significant effect of experience in the early years. Compared to novice teachers, teachers with 20 years of experience have test score gains that are 0.1 standard deviations higher in literacy, and 0.2 standard deviation higher in numeracy. Beyond

20 years, there appears to be no further gains to experience.

Sachs (2004) surveyed elementary teachers with five or more years of experience in an urban school district. No difference was found between effective and ineffective teachers. Darling –Hommond (1999) Contended that effects of experience are visible when teachers with less than five years experience are included in the study.

### **Rationale for the Study**

The teacher capacity and experience to control event within and around the classroom environment are important towards achieving success among students' and understandably, the teacher primary responsibility is to organize and influence learning task and this involves exiting control over both management of learning activities and students behaviour. More so, the teacher plays a major role in the accomplishment of students academic achievement throughout school. This study therefore examines teachers locus of control and work experience among secondary school teachers in Lagos state.

### **Research Questions**

**The following research questions are answered in the study;**

1. What is the influence of the independent factors of locus of control on teacher effectiveness in Lagos State?
2. What is the influence of teachers work experience on teachers' effectiveness in Lagos State?

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a correlation research of expost-facto. This design was chosen because it seeks to establish the relationship between the variables under investigation

**Population of the Study**

The target population comprise of 958 teachers from public Junior Secondary School (JSS) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population comprised of both male and female Mathematics and English Language teachers; this is because both are core subjects in students' academic progression.

**Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The population of Mathematics and English Language teachers and the number of junior secondary schools in the six districts in Lagos State are presented in Table 3.1

In order to determine the sample size as representative of the study population, a sample fraction of 60% was chosen and multiplied with the total population within each district. Thus, a total sample of 574 teachers' was obtained

The researcher used the multi-stage sampling technique to determine the total number of schools involved in the study. A total of 159 JSS were randomly selected from the six districts in Lagos State, comprising district 1 (16), 2 (24), 3 (34), 4 (26), 5 (39) and 6 (20). All the Mathematics and English language teachers from the randomly selected schools were used in the study. This clusters were chosen because the unit is not an individual, but groups of individuals who are naturally together.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of Mathematics and English Language teachers' in Lagos State**

S/N	District	No. of Junior Secondary Schools	Population of mathematics and English teachers	Sample Size
1.	1	27	122	73
2.	2	40	138	83
3.	3	56	175	105
4.	4	44	173	104
5.	5	65	221	133
6	6	33	129	75
		<b>265</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>574</b>

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**Instrumentation**

The following research instruments were used to obtain data from the respondents in this study.

1. Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire
2. Teacher Locus of Control scale

**Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire**

Three instruments were used to obtain information on teacher effectiveness these comprised the teachers' effectiveness, principal/head of unit assessment of teacher effectiveness and students' assessment of the teacher effectiveness, adapted from Virgilio's Teacher Behavior Inventory (1987), designed to measure specific teacher behaviors consistently described in teacher effectiveness research. The teachers' effectiveness self-reported questionnaire covers items relating to Goe, et al's (2008) definition of teachers' effectiveness, which includes high expectation of learning outcome, improved academics, attitudinal and social outcome for student, utilization of diverse resources to plan and structure learning outcome, contribute to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civil mindedness and collaborating with others to ensure students' success. It is a five point Likert scale, ranging from Never, (1) Rarely (2) Sometimes (3) usually (4) or Always (5).

The reliability of the instrument was validated for use by trial testing the instrument on 30 Junior secondary schools teachers, heads of units and students in Ajangbadi junior high school and Ojo high school, after two weeks, the instrument was re-administered to the same set of participants. The product moment correlation was used to establish the psychometric value of the instrument using the test-retest method; it was found to have 0.76 reliability coefficients for teachers effectiveness self-reported questionnaire, 0.71 reliability coefficients for principal/ head of unit teachers'

effectiveness assessment questionnaire and 0.73 reliability coefficients for students' assessment of teacher effectiveness questionnaire.

**1. Teacher Locus of Control Scale.**

The teacher locus of control scale consists of 25 items developed by Rose and Medway (1981), teachers were asked to assign responsibility to student successes or failures by choosing between two competing explanations for the situation described. Half the items on the TLC describes situation of students' successes while the other half describes student failures. For each success situation one explanation attributes the positive outcome internally to the teacher (1+) while the other assigns responsibility outside the teacher usually the students. Similarly, for each failure situation, one explanation gives an internal attribution (1-) while the other blames external factors.

Rose and Medway (1981) found that TLC is a better predictor of teacher behavior than Rotter's Locus of Control (I – E) scale probably because it is more specific to the teaching context. The bi-serial correlation of the items range between 0.25 and 0.66.

The reliability of the instrument was validated for use by trial testing the instrument on thirty junior secondary schools teachers in Ajangbadi Junior high school, after two weeks the instrument was re-administered to the same set of participants. The product moment correlation was used to establish the psychometric value of the instrument using the test-retest method. A reliability coefficient obtained for the scale is 0.61

**Data Analysis**

The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation will be used to analyse the data, while the Pearson Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression will be used to test the hypotheses and research questions.

**Research Question one:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' locus of control and teacher effectiveness among teachers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Table 1.2: Relationship Between Teacher Locus of Control and Teacher's Effectiveness**

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	R	P	Remark
Teacher locus of control	510	36.73	2.12	508	0.089	<0.05	Significant
Teacher-effectiveness	510	45.86	7.23				

**Table 1.2** reveals that the correlation coefficient “r” between teachers' locus of control and their effectiveness is 0.089 and P < 0.05. Since P < 0.05, it implies there is significant relationship between teachers' locus of control and their effectiveness, based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Research Question Two:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' work experience and their effectiveness in Lagos State, Nigeria

**Table 1.3: Relationship Between Teacher Work-experience and Teacher's Effectiveness**

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	R	P	Remark
Work-experience	510	3.93	5.01	508	0.056	>.05	Not Significant
Teacher-effectiveness	510	45.86	7.23				

**Table 1.3** reveals that the correlation coefficient “r” between teachers' work experience and teacher effectiveness is 0.056 and P > 0.05. Since P > 0.05, it implies there is no significant relationship between teachers'

work experience and their effectiveness, based on this, the null hypothesis is accepted.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Research Question One result showed there is a significant relationship between locus of control and teachers' effectiveness in secondary schools. This finding corroborated Rose and Medley (1981); Gershaw (1989); Kay and Chang (1989); Sheard (1996) and Bimal (2001) who argued that teachers with five or more years of experience were more internal when compared with pre-service teachers and those with less than five years experience. However, the current finding negates Rose and Medley (1981) where no significant difference in teachers' internal locus of control and students' achievement in several other subjects were reported. Based on the results, locus of control showed a statistical significance as a determinant of teacher effectiveness, hence, the teachers' capacity to demonstrate resilience and focus on helping students attain their goal is an important measure of an effective teacher.

**Research Question Two** revealed that there is no significant relationship between work experience and teachers' effectiveness. This outcome supports Sach (2004) that no difference was found between effective and ineffective teachers who had spent five or more years in an urban school district. However, this study contradicts Adeyemi (2008); Zaku (1983) Stiggins and Duke (1990) who reported that there is a significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and learning outcome among secondary school students. They contended further that the importance of experienced teachers is necessary for school effectiveness. This finding also contradicts Day et al (2006) who reported that teachers' professional life phases related to experience are core moderating influences on their effectiveness. Based on the result, work experience did not show any statistical significance as a determinant of

teachers' effectiveness, hence it should not be considered as a factor in the determinant of the teacher effectiveness, since it has been argued that it is a moderating factor in the professional life of teachers.

### **Conclusions**

The study reveals that teachers' psychological attributions are important factors for enhancing their effectiveness, thus, locus of control must be improved upon for teachers in secondary schools and prospective teachers must be thoroughly screened and trained appropriately.

This implies that school proprietors and policy makers must continually evolve programmes and interventions that will enhance teacher effectiveness.

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