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SOCIAL SKILLS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AS CORRELATES OF ASSERTIVENESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DUTSIN-MA METROPOLIS, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined Social Skills and Locus of Control as correlate of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State. It has 5 objectives, 3 research questions and 2 hypotheses. This study adopted a descriptive survey of correlations research design. A total sample of three hundred and fifty seven (357) was drawn from population of five thousand two hundred and thirteen (5,213) senior secondary school students II through research advisor (2006). Three instruments were used to collect the data; Social Skills Scale (SSS), Locus of Control Scale (LCS) and Assertiveness Scale (AS). To ensure validity of the questionnaires and was validated by two experts. The reliability co-efficient of Social Skills Scale (SSS) was 0.70, Locus of Control Scale (LCS) was 0.70 and Assertiveness Scale (AS) was 0.75, respectively. Mean, Frequency and Percentage, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statics (PPMC) were used to analyze the data collected at 0.05 level of significance. The finding shows that there was moderate level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students. There was moderate level of locus of control among Secondary School Students. There was moderate level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students. There was significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students. There exists a significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students. Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations among others were made; School counselors should design interventions programs aimed at helping students develop an internal locus of control, encouraging them to responsibility for their actions and believe in their ability to influence outcomes. School counselors and educational psychologists should organize regular workshops and seminars for students to help them express their feelings, thoughts, and rights confidently without aggression or passivity.

Keywords: Assertiveness, Social Skills, Locus, Control, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar of societal progress, recognized as a powerful tool for national development. At the secondary schools level, students are equipped with advanced academic and practical skills that are essential for various professions. Secondary schools are valued institutions that creatively and innovatively consolidate a nation's foundations and serve as an arena where the growth and stability of future generations begin. Moreover,

Secondary schools often serve as hubs for cultural diversity and intellectual exchange, promoting unity by bringing together individuals from different backgrounds and fostering an environment of collaboration. At this stage, students should learn necessary skills that allow them to adjust easily and smoothly to the rapid physical, emotional, mental and social changes (Sitota, 2022).

Social skills include a broad range of competencies that enable individuals to engage and communicate effectively with others. Social skills are learnable actions that are seen as signs of social proficiency (Bala & Monika, 2022). Social skills are a set of learned behaviours which gives the individual, the ability to exercise an influential relationship with other members of the society and abstain from reactions that are considered unreasonable in a society Mitchell, (2021). We learn how to solve social situations by predicting and understanding other people's behaviours**.** Appropriate social skills provide the individual with an important foundation that leads to good social relationships with peers and academic success. Scholars have argued that inappropriate social skills during childhood are associated with a number of negative consequences in the development of paradigms of social behaviour, such as aggressive behaviour, social withdrawal, extreme shyness, problems with social, emotional, and behavioural adaptation, and social inefficiency.

Social skills are an important factor that supports people in establishing good interactions with the people around them. People who have good social skills mean that they have a good ability to create a warm relationships and build trust with others. In addition, he also has strong affection and empathy. Nurhidayat (2022) states that someone with good social skills can establish effective communication both verbally and nonverbally according to the situation and conditions faced. Furthermore, people with high social skills can express their thoughts clearly and are open in expressing feelings or problems that are being faced and finding adaptive ways to solve problems and have high mental health status. They are also responsible for everything they do, have a lot of consideration before taking action, and can express refusal and disapproval.

Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them. Understanding of the concept was developed by Julian B. Rotter in 1954, and has since become an aspect of personality studies. Rotter (1966) stated that a person's "locus" (Latin for "place" or "location") is conceptualized as either internal or external. It is the perceived source of control over the behavior. It is the degree to which individuals feel they have control over outcomes. The locus of control is one of the most significant psychological concepts that regulate behaviour and mental conditions of teenagers. This concept is divided into two categories: internal locus of control and the external locus of control. The locus of control in adolescents refers to the extent to which they perceive that they have the control over events affecting them in their lives by the choices they make (Arkorful & Hilton, 2022). On the other hand, an external locus of control entails the notion that one is fate, luck or other people controlled in his or her life. For instance, adolescents who possess an internal locus of control are more proactive in their behaviour, and they also exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy as argued by Clark and Zhu (2024). They also believe that success or failure is within their control, and that luck plays no part in it. This belief leads to responsible behaviour. This disposition helps adolescents cope with adversities and failings as they continue to strive for personal development, regarding difficulties as growth processes (Greenblatt-Kimron, 2024).

Locus of control is a concept related to behaviors of individuals and how the results of these are perceived by individuals. Locus of control is a psychological structure which tells the beliefs of persons related to whether they control their actions and results. Internal control loci and external control loci are two unique kinds of control loci. Interior locus of control is an individual quality that each effective individual has. Individuals who have an inner locus of impact feel they are in charge of their lives' results. Individuals who have the interior locus of control won't ever make statements like "individuals fizzled because the test was troublesome," however rather will acknowledge duty by asking themselves inquiries like "what turned out badly and how might we stay away from it happening again?" The total inverse of somebody with an inner locus of control is somebody with an outward locus of control. The individual feels that the whole universe is neutralizing him, that karma exists, and that life is out of line.

Assertiveness can be accepted as a pattern of behavior which can prevent problematic relations and communication, which is the basic problem of our times. Characterizing some features like giving importance to the feelings of others as well as our own, self confidence and ability to establish positive relations can be perceived as a feature sought in adolescents. For these reasons, determining the assertiveness and control locus of computer informatics and teaching students is also important for professional roles. Assertiveness is a mode of personal behaviour and communication characterized by a willingness to stand up for one's needs and interests in an open and direct way. Adak, and Sarkar, (2021). defined assertiveness as the ability to express one's thoughts and feelings with confidence, without having to resort to passive aggressive behaviorus. It is a communication that encompasses a respectful acknowledgment of personal and others' boundaries, indicating a genuine commitment to achieving mutual needs and desires through collaborative efforts. Adak, and Sarkar, (2021) noted that assertiveness is the expression of social boldness by which an individual claims his rights and voices out true feelings in social setting in manners that would maximize reinforcement. Assertiveness, therefore, is a skill which, if mastered right could bring about rich dividends in the future. Those who practice assertiveness lead a happy, honest, and less manipulative life as compared to aggressive and submissive individuals (Adak & Sarkar, 2021).

Assertiveness is a quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive or submissive. In the field of psychology, assertiveness is a skill and a means of communication that can be learned. In the view of Adak, and Sarkar, (2021), unassertive people are usually unable to do anything about their condition. Consequently, they are characterized by behaviours easily pushed around by way of manipulation. It further opined that practicing assertiveness enhances the likelihood of fostering genuine relationships, cultivating self-improvement, and attaining a sense of mastery over everyday circumstances. However, asserting oneself may not necessarily guarantee happiness or fair treatment. Nonetheless, by developing an ability to express oneself, one is able to reduce stress, increase feelings of self-worth, improve decision-making abilities, and feel more self-confident in relationships. Adak, and Sarkar, (2021) stated that gender dynamics can influence the development and expression of assertiveness, as societal expectations often pressure individuals to conform to traditional gender roles regarding communication behaviours. Therefore, seeks to find out the Social Skills and Locus of Control as correlate of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the theoretical connections among social skills, locus of control and assertiveness, many secondary school students continue to struggle with self-expression and confidence. There is limited empirical evidence particularly within the local context that clearly establishes the extent to which social skills and locus of control are related to assertiveness among secondary school students. however observations in many secondary schools reveal that some students exhibit low levels of assertiveness which often manifest in passive behavior, inability to depends personal opinions susceptibility to peer influence, bullying and poor decision –making. Research in educational psychology suggests that social skills and locus of control may be important factors influencing assertiveness. Therefore, it is as result of this above assertion that this study found it important to investigate Social Skills and Locus of Control as correlate of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine Social Skills and Locus of Control as correlate of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State. Specifically to examine:

1. the level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
2. the level of Locus of Control among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
3. the level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
4. the significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
5. the significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
6. Social Skills and Locus of Control as correlate of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Research Questions

The following research question were raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What the level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State?
2. What the level of Locus of Control among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State?
3. What the level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Methodology

The population of this study consist of five thousand two hundred and thirteen (5,213) students all Senior Secondary School (SSS II) Students in the nineteen (19) public Senior Secondary Schools under Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance Zone, comprising of Dutsin-ma Local Government Area. A total sample size that is appropriate for the research was three hundred and fifty seven (357) that was drawn from target population of five thousand two hundred and thirteen (5,213) students, which was selected as sample size for the study. The sample size was estimated in line with recommendations offered at a confidence level 95% and a Margin Error of 5.0% (Research Advisor, 2006). Three researcher designed questionnaires were used to collect the data from the sampled respondents. These included Social Skills Scale (SSS), Locus of Control Scale (LCS) and Assertiveness Scale (AS). The instruments contained demographic data of the respondents. The questionnaires were answered by the SS II in public senior secondary schools. The questionnaires have 10 items and Four Points Linkert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Agree (1), with 10 items on each scale.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaires, it was validated for both face and content by the supervisor and other two experts in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. The items were in terms of clarity, relevance and appropriateness in addressing the problem in the study and research questions under investigation, and to also make concrete suggestions for improving the instrument towards meeting the objectives of the study. To establish the reliability index of Social Skills Scale (SSS), Locus of Control Scale (LCS) and Assertiveness Scale (AS), the instruments were pilot tested using a secondary school not situated in Dutsin-Ma, but Kafur, Katsina state. 10 copies of the instruments were distributed to both male and female students. This community secondary school was not part of the sample but form part of the population. The pilot study outcome assisted the researcher in clarifying the items, clear ambiguities about statement and determined the difficulty respondents may have in completing the questionnaires. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient of Social Skills Scale (SSS) was 0.70, Locus of Control Scale (LCS) was 0.70 and Assertiveness Scale (AS) was 0.75 respectively. The data obtained from the pilot study were statistically analyzed for the purpose of reliability. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was used to test the questionnaire. This reliability coefficient was considered adequate for the internal consistencies of the instruments. The result of Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of Social Skills Scale (SSS) was 070, Locus of Control Scale (LCS) was 0.70 and Assertiveness Scale (AS) was 0.75 respectively. This was a confirmation of test of reliability which according to Freedman, (2018), an instrument is considered reliable if its reliability coefficient is not below 0.60 index Therefore, it is confirmed that the instruments used for this study were highly reliable. To analyze the data collected Mean, Frequency Count and Percentage was used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents and the research questions while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statics (PPMC) the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

RESULTS

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Table 1: Percentage Distribution level of Social Skills among Respondents

Variable	Mean Score	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
	1.48	96	27	low
Social Skills	2.00	197	55	Moderate
	2.63	64	18	high

Table 1 revealed that out of 357 (100%) respondents, 96 (27%) has low level of Social Skills, 197 (55%) has moderate level of Social Skills and 64 (18%) has high level of Social Skills. This implies that there was moderate level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Research Question 2: what is the level of Locus of Control among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State?

Table 2: Percentage Distribution level of Locus of Control among Respondents

Variable	Mean Score	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
	1.44	93	26	low
Locus of Control	2.10	201	56	Moderate
	2.55	63	18	high

Table 1 revealed that out of 357 (100%) respondents, 93 (26%) has low level of Locus of Control, 201 (56%) has moderate level of Locus of Control and 63 (18%) has high level of Locus of Control. This implies that there was moderate level of Locus of Control among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Research Question 3: what is the level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State?

Table 1: Percentage Distribution level of Social Media Addiction among Respondents

Variable	Mean Score	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
	1.47	94	26	low
Assertiveness	2.05	198	55	Moderate
	2.68	65	19	Low

Table 1 revealed that out of 357 (100%) respondents, 94 (26%) has low level of Assertiveness, 198 (55%) has moderate level of Assertiveness and 65 (19%) has high level of Assertiveness. This implies that there was moderate level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State.

Testing of Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Table 4: PPMC table showing the relationship Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Locus of Control	357	45.62	6.84				
				355	0.68	.000	**rejected**
Assertiveness	357	42.18	7.10				

P<0.05

Table 4 revealed that the calculated r-value is (0.68), the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance and 355 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State.

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

Table 5: PPMC table showing the relationship Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Locus of Control	357	25.14	7.13				
				355	0.65	.000	**rejected**
Assertiveness	357	24.15	8.25				

P<0.05

Table 5 revealed that the calculated r-value is (0.65), the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance and 355 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State.

Summary of findings

The findings of this study were summarized as follows;

1. There was moderate level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
2. There was moderate level of locus of control among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State
3. There was moderate level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State

4. There was significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State. . The calculated r-value is (0.68) the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance
5. There exist significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State. The calculated r-value is (0.65), the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there was significant relationship between Social Skills and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State. The finding of this study is line with Njuguna,. (2024), who found that there exist significant relationship between social skills, locus of control and assertiveness among secondary school students. this implies that students with higher social skills tends to show higher levels of assertiveness and poor social skills are associated with low assertiveness or aggressive behavior. Also, students who develop effective communication, emotional regulations, empathy, and interpersonal competence are more likely to exhibit assertive behavior.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there was significant relationship between Locus of Control and Assertiveness among Secondary School Students in Dutsin-ma Metropolis, Katsina State. The finding of this study supported by Nurhidayat, (2022), who found that high level of Social skills and locus of control influence high level of assertiveness among adolescents in high schools .this implies that students with high level of both internal and external locus of control tends to believe that their success or failure depends largely on their own actions and decisions . as a result, they are more likely to express their opinions confidently, defend their rights respectfully and take responsibility for their choices. Such students demonstrate higher levels of assertiveness because they perceive themselves as capable of influencing situations around them.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusion was reached; there was moderate level of Social Skills among Secondary School Students. There was moderate level of locus of control among Secondary School Students. There was moderate level of Assertiveness among Secondary School Students. Also, social skills and locus of control significantly and positively influence assertiveness among Secondary School Students. this indicates that students who demonstrates higher level of social skills and possess locus of control are more likely to exhibit assertive behavior in interpersonal and academic setting. It further concludes that social skills and locus of control are significant positive determinants of assertiveness and their development is crucial for the psychological adjustment and social effectiveness of secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. School counselors should design interventions programs aimed at helping students develop an internal locus of control, encouraging them to responsibility for their actions and believe in their ability to influence outcomes
2 School counselors and educational psychologists should organize regular workshops and seminars for students to help them express their feelings, thoughts, and rights confidently without aggression or passivity.
3. Teachers should receive training on strategies to promote positive classroom interaction, student's participation and assertive communication among students.
4. Participation in debates, drama, leadership clubs and group projects should be encourage as these activities naturally develop social skills and assertiveness
5. Schools should establish peer mentoring systems where socially competent and assertive students can model positive behaviors for others.

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