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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECT OF LOCUS OF CONTROL ON THE ADJUSTMENT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study used 160 foreign students doing their first degree at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Using stratified random sampling, the sample consists of 20 males, 20 females Internally Controlled (I-C) and 20 males, 20 females, Externally Controlled (E-C) Africans and another 20 males, 20 females Internally Controlled (IC), 20 males, 20 females Externally Controlled (E-C) Non-Africans. The analysis of the students' score on an Adjustment Inventory shows that the Internally-Controlled (I-C), male African students were better adjusted than their Externally Controlled (E-C), female Non-African counterparts. The implications of these findings were discussed

RATIONALE

Not much research, if any, has been carried out on the foreign students in Nigerian Colleges and Universities. Yoloje (1999) ascertained that there is very scanty information about the academic performance of the foreign students. More often, the foreign students are sponsored by governments and agencies and because of this they were often assumed to be educationally sound, better financially equipped for educational and even social-personal pursuits. Thus they are believed not to have problems and were often seen as adjusted men and women in their new environment. This might suggest why little attention has been paid to the adjustment problems of these foreign students. However, it should be noted that being educationally sound and financially strong alone do not necessarily mean adjustment, those are only parts of the factors which could enhance adjustment. (Emeke et al 2000; Emeke, 1997; Block, 1984).

Fromm (1955) says that an adjusted person is a person who is productive and unalienated, a person who relates himself to the world lovingly, and who uses his reason to grasp reality objectively; who experiences himself as a unique entity and at the same time feels with one's fellow man, who is not subject to irrational authority, and accepts willingly the rational authority of conscience and reason; who is in the process of being born along as he is alive and considers the gift of life as a most precious chance he has.

Using Fromm's idea about adjustment as the operational definition of adjustment then it is clear that being educationally and financially strong does not mean adjustment. Thus what should be examined in terms of adjustment of the foreign students include whether they are productive in their academic pursuit, whether they are alienated, whether they relate to others in their new environment, whether they conform even with irrational authority, whether they can reason and grasp reality objectively, whether they can realize themselves within their various colleges and universities or lose their identity and even suffer the total loss of personal control of the situation due to their being foreign students.

Many studies like those of Shama (1973), Alao (1979) and Yoloje (1999) found that many foreign students experience a 'cultural shock' as a result of the sudden exposure to new culture and societal norms, unfamiliar customs as well as language disparities. These they said often interfere or even prevent them from being adjusted. At times it leads to loss of personal control, unwillingness to face social and academic work and thus resulting in poor academic performance of some of these students. These researchers found that due to failure and drop-out of the students, they often refuse to return to their countries.

The variance between the beliefs, experience and demands of the previous environment and the expectations and actual encounters in the new environment seems to be a major factor in the adjustment of the foreign students. The beliefs and expectations of these foreign students is of interest to this present research. Thus locus of control which is the determination of people's belief about situation will be examined vis-à-vis the adjustment of foreign students at the University of Ibadan.

Rotter (1954) postulates that individuals differ in the way they perceive their relationship with nature, institutions, other people, things and events. Rotter classified people into two groups (1) Internal-Control (I-C) and (2) External-Control (E-C). The Internal-Control (I-C) people are those who perceive contingency relationships between their actions and the outcomes which follow. They believe

that positive or negative events are direct consequences of their own actions and, therefore under personal control. They are people who do not believe in luck, chance, fate and powerful other forces. In short, these groups of people who are Internally Controlled regard their destiny as largely being in their own hands.

On the other hand, External-Control (E-C) applies to people who generally perceive that the outcome of their action and their destinies are controlled by extrinsic forces like luck, fate, chance and powerful others. They see no relationships between their behaviours and their outcomes or reinforcements. They therefore believe that they have no personal control over situations around them.

In this present study therefore, an attempt is made to investigate which groups of foreign students, the Internal or External Controlled, male and female African or Non-Africans that are more adjusted at the University of Ibadan.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to find out:

To what extent will there be significant difference? If any, in the effect of Internal Locus of Control [(I-C) and External Locus of Control (E-C)] on the level of adjustment of male and female, African and Non-African foreign students at the University of Ibadan?

SAMPLE

The sample was made up of 160 foreign students undergoing their first degree programme, at the University of Ibadan. They were classified on the basis of their Locus of Control, sex and country of origin. Thus the sample consists of 20 males, 20 females Internally Controlled (I-C) and 20 males, 20 females Externally Controlled (E-C) Africans and another 20 males, 20 females Internally Controlled (E-C) Non-Africans, as depicted in the Table below.

TABLE 1
Sample By Sex and Locus of Control

Subjects' Category	Male	Female	Total
Internal-Controlled Africans	20	20	40
Internal-Controlled Non-Africans	20	20	40
External-Controlled Africans	20	20	40
External-Controlled Non-Africans	20	20	40
Total	80	80	160

INSTRUMENTS

The instruments were made up of three questionnaires labelled A, B, and C. Questionnaire A is a

Personal Data Form (PDF) which was used to collect background information like age, sex, country of origin, marital status and other demographic variables. Questionnaire B is the Rotter's Locus of Control Scale Internal-External (I-E) which was used to classify the students into internally and externally controlled groups. Questionnaire C is an Adjustment Inventory (ADI) designed by the researchers to measure the level of adjustment of the students.

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The Personal Data Questionnaire A, measured fixed traits or variables like age, sex, etc, thus the content and face validity are ensured. The reliability of this section was established by using a test re-test measure. This gave a correlation coefficient of $r=0.92$ which suggests that the instrument is reliable.

Section B instrument is the Rotter's Locus of Control Scale. The Scale consists of twenty-nine items which are highly forced choices. Six of the items are fillers and the other 23 offered choice between Internal and External Control statements. A score of 9 and above denote External-Control (E-C) while a score between 1-8 shows Internal control (I-C). Apart from the validity and reliability of the Locus of Control Scale established by Rotter (1966) and Olayinka (1977), Yoyoye (1999) the factorial validity correlation of 0.8 and 0.80 for External, Internal and filler items obtained by these researchers show that the instrument is valid. The correlation coefficient of 0.86 derived in a test, re-test measure of the test on a small sample of fifty foreign students shows that the instrument is also reliable.

The psychometric properties of Section C of the questionnaire-Adjustment Inventory (ADI) was established by comparing the one hundred items of the Adjustment Inventory with a parallel one hundred items from Problem Inventory by Mooney (1950). The correlation of $r=0.90$ found between the two instruments shows that the Adjustment Inventory is valid. The test re-test measure of the Adjustment Inventory on the same fifty foreign students yield a correlation coefficient value of $r=0.80$. With these values one could say the (AD I) instrument is reliable.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Through the cooperation of the Assistant Registrar in charge of foreign students in the University of Ibadan, the investigators obtained a list of foreign students in the University.

Most copies of the instruments used, i.e. the questionnaires were hand delivered directly to the students

and it was only after series of talk and persuasions that most of the students agreed to fill the questionnaire. Some of the students however, readily filled their questionnaires and either returned them to the office of the foreign students or to the researchers' offices. At the end of the two weeks only 160 questionnaires out of 275 sent out were adequate for use.

DATA ANALYSIS

The mean, standard deviation, analysis of variance and the Turkey's Honesty Significant Difference (HSD.) were used to analyze the students' score on the Adjustment Inventory.

The results of the analyses are now reported in Tables 2-4.

TABLE 2

The mean and standard deviation of the scores of male and female, african and non-african, internal and external control students

Continent	Sex	Locus of Control	n	x	S.D.
African	Male	(E-C)	20	72.24	2.891
		(I-C)	20	72.89	2.593
	Female	(E-C)	20	51.35	5.941
		(I-C)	20	49.76	5.703
Non-African	Male	(E-C)	20	45.70	7.198
		(I-C)	20	48.43	6.739
	Female	(E-C)	20	67.50	4.334
		(I-C)	20	73.05	5.482

Table 2 shows the mean and standard -deviation of the scores for each category of foreign students. The mean score ranges from 73.05 for the female Internally-controlled non-African students to a mean of 45.70 for male Externally controlled who are also non-Africans.

To test whether there were significant differences between all the groups, the analysis of variance was computed and the result is as shown on Table 3.

TABLE 3

Analysis of variance on the adjustment scores of male and female, i-c and e-c, african and non-african foreign students

SOURCE OF VARIATION	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIF. OF
VARIATION	0.007	1	0.007	0.000	0.999
MAIN EFFECTS	485.871	3	161.957	5.656	0.001***
SEX	10.558	1	10.558	0.369	0.999
CONTINENT	124.272	1	124.272	4.340	0.037*
LOCUS	350.625	1	350.625	12.244	0.001***
2-WAY INTERACTIONS	20841.891	3	6947.297	242.606	0.001***
SEX	0.619	1	0.619	0.022	0.999
CONTINENT					
SEX LOCUS	20604.977	1	20604.977	719.545	0.001***
LOCUS	246.371	1	246.371	3.604	0.004**
CONTINENT					
3-WAY INTERACTIONS					
SEX LOCUS	59.030	1	59.030	2.061	0.49
CONTINENT					
EXPLAINED	21386.801	8	2673.350	93.356	0.011***
RESIDUAL	4324.055	152	28.636		
TOTAL	25710.855	159	161.703		

P * <0.05 P**<0.01 P***0.001

Table 3 shows that sex was not significant as the main effect on the adjustment of the foreign students. However, there were significant effects of Locus of control and continent of origin. There were also the interacting effect of sex and Locus of control and also interacting effect of Locus of control and continent of origin on the adjustment of the foreign students. A multiple comparison of the result for the various categories of students is shown in Table 4.

(Significant levels P<0.055.133 P<0.01 = 7.144).

TABLE 4

Multiple comparison of the adjustment scores of male and female (e-c) and (~c) african and non-african foreign students

Students	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
African	72.24	72.89	51.35	49.76	45.70	48.43	67.50	73.05
1. Male (E-C)	-	-0.65	20.9	22.5	26.55	23.8	4.75	-0.8
2. Male (I-C)	-	-	21.5	23.1	27.45	24.4	5.4	-0.15
3. Female (E-C)	-	-	-	.6	5.65	2.9	-16.15	-21.7
4. Female (I-C)	-	-	-	-	-	4.05	1.3	-23.3
Non-Africans								
5. Male(E-C)	-	-	-	-	-	-2.75	-21.8	-27.3
6. Male (I-C)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-19.05	-24.6
7. Female (E-C)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-5.55
8. Female (I-C)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Significant level

From Table 4, it will be observed that the male Externally-Controlled students who are Africans were better adjusted than the male Externally-Controlled students who are non-Africans. The male Internally-Controlled (I-C) African students have a significant better Adjustment than the male Internally-Controlled Non-African foreign students. The female Externally-Controlled (E-C) African students were less adjusted than their female Externally-Controlled (E-C) non-African foreign students. A significant difference was also found between the adjustment of the female Internally-Controlled (I-C) African foreign students and their Internally-Controlled (I-C) non-African counterparts. The female Internally-Controlled (I-C) non-African foreign students were better adjusted than their female Internally-Controlled (I-C) Africans students at the University of Ibadan.

Within each continent of origin for the African students, there were no significant difference between the adjustment of the male Externally-Controlled and the male Internally-Controlled African foreign students.

For the non-African foreign students, there was no significant difference between the adjustment of male Externally-Controlled (E-C) and male Internally-Controlled (I-C) non-African foreign students. However there was significant difference at $P < .05$ between the-adjustment of the female Externally-Controlled (E-C) and female Internally-Controlled (I-C) non-African students. The female Internally-Controlled (I-C) were better adjusted at the University of Ibadan.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings that the Internally-Controlled (I-C) students were better adjusted than the Externally-Controlled ones in most comparison could be interpreted in terms of the beliefs of these groups of people. The Internally-Controlled (I-C) students believe that the result of their

actions depends entirely on them. In other words, if they would either adjust or not adjust, their own actions and behaviour will determine this and since it is better to be adjusted, the Internally-Controlled (I-C) students must have tailored their actions to achieve this. This is unlike the Externally-Controlled (EC) students who believe they have no control over their own actions and so rather than striving to adjust they will simply believe that it is their luck and destiny which will determine whether they will adjust or not. Thus they do not adjust.

The findings that the male foreign students were better adjusted than their female counterparts in some cases at the University of Ibadan could be interpreted in terms of the general extroversion, interaction and socialization of the male foreign students. Yoloeye (1999) ascertained that the male students are more extrovert than the female students and they have more social personal adjustment than the female students who he said at times find it difficult to start relationship.

The findings that the African foreign students were better adjusted at the University of Ibadan than the non-Africans is not surprising. This is because the climatic conditions, life-style, food, educational system, cultural values and norms of many African countries are at times the same or closely related to that of Nigeria. This is unlike the case of the non-African foreign student who has dissimilar climatic conditions, social Life-style, different educational system, food, cultural values and norms.

From the findings of this study, it is apparent that being Externally-Controlled predisposes the individual to certain implications. The individual who is Externally-Controlled believes in chance, luck and destiny, has less of personal control, is easily influenced, become alienated and lack total adjustment as indicated by the result of this research. It.. is therefore, recommended that the individual who is Externally-Controlled should move slightly towards

becoming Internally-Controlled, thereby, the individual could have the mastery of his environment, believe in his own cause of action and adjust in his new environment.

It is the belief of these researchers that Locus of Control (L-C) is a continuum and the shift towards being Internally-Controlled should stop at the middle of the continuum. Thus we could literally say that an individual is not totally Internally-Controlled and not totally Externally-Controlled i.e. not at the two extremes of the continuum. This is because it is also known that extreme Internal-Control could lead to guilt feelings which would also lead to lack of adjustment (Phruse, 1973).

The problem of social and psychological adjustment has led to many pathological behaviours of foreign students in many countries. Far away in Manila University, Philippines in 1981 Oluwole Longe, a 24 years old Nigerian student, committed suicide and the reason that was given was lack of adjustment and being fed-up with life. (Sketch Newspaper, 1981): Many other cases have been reported without any reason given. These students must have problems with their adjustment hence they end it with suicide.

In some other cases, the problem of adjustment may be mild, that is, not ending with suicide but lead to failure, drug abuse, alcoholism, and drop out. Adequate counselling should be provided to help the students about their locus of control and adjustment at the University of Ibadan or any other University and College throughout Nigeria.

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