



Locus of Control as Determinants of Online-Dating Behaviour Among Graduates in Kwara-State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated locus of control as determinant of online dating among university students in Kwara State. Descriptive survey design with correlational approach was adopted. 380 university students from four universities in Kwara State were the respondents of the study. Instruments for data collection were Online Dating Behaviour Scale adapted from Tinsel (2019) Survey and locus of control scale adapted from Rotter (1966). Three null hypotheses were generated and tested at .05 alpha levels. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used. Result showed a significant relationship between online dating and internal locus of control of university students in Kwara State (r . calculated = 0.41, df = 378 and $p < 0.05$); a significant relationship between online dating and powerful others locus of control of university students in Kwara State (r . calculated = -0.62, df = 378 and $p < 0.05$); a significant relationship between online dating and chance locus of control of university students in Kwara State (r . calculated = -0.26, df = 378 and $p < 0.05$). Recommendations based on the finding of the study were proffered.

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 03 03 2024

First Revised 10 03 2024

Accepted 20 03 2024

First Available Online 31 03 2024

Publication Date 31 03 2024

Keyword:

Locus of control,

Online,

Dating

1. INTRODUCTION

Online dating behaviour is now common among university students and adults, generally. For as long as humans have recognized the urge to form romantic relationships, they have also recognized that finding an appropriate partner can be challenging and that sometimes it is useful to get some help from their immediate environment, which makes some adolescents expose themselves to online dating. According to [Olaide and Adewole \(2021\)](#), online dating services allow users to become members by creating a profile and uploading personal information, including age, gender, sexual orientation, location, and appearance.

Most services also encourage members to add photos or videos to their profiles and a sizeable number of online daters in Nigeria fall into the younger group. This observation was confirmed by recent statistics published on Facebook by [Adejumobi \(2014\)](#) which show that Nigerians are second to South Africans in internet usage for online dating. According to [Evans \(2017\)](#), dating is a stage in romantic relationships that takes place in western countries and involves two people meeting socially with the purpose of each assessing the other's suitability as a future intimate partner.

Accounting to [Benjamin et al. \(2012\)](#), dating is an interaction of two opposite sexes with consent, which can take place in two ways: physically or online. Whereas, online dating is especially popular among adolescents, who have mainly emerged in the last few because at this stage of life, they want to gather information by widening knowledge, gaining exposure in the era of technology, they love to demand answers to many challenging questions through social media. This necessitates some of them getting involved in online dating. Also, students gain more access to online interaction while away from home at university and spend time chatting, because there is no parent or guardian to caution them about spending hours online.

Also, students spend 12 hours per week engaged in computer-based online dating activities ([Frost et al., 2018](#)). The majority of adolescents who use online dating say it is at least somewhat easy for them to avoid shyness in physical relationships. But students also share some of the downsides of online dating. Roughly seven-in-ten online daters believe it is very common for those who use these platforms to lie to try to appear more desirable.

According to [Ellison et al. \(2020\)](#), they observed that online dating services have experienced notable growth over the past decade, and millions of adolescents have gone on a date with someone they met through such a service or website. A primary concern of those who seek a romantic relationship online is the fear of misrepresentation by a potential partner. [Toma et al. \(2018\)](#) propounded that there are various dating sites online on which students spend most of their time. The dating pool is larger than we have ever seen. These platforms have changed the way many people initiate relationships. People using dating sites and mobile apps now have greater access to potential romantic and sexual partners compared to those available in face-to-face encounters ([Fiore and Donath, 2021](#)).

Researchers in social psychology also elaborated and enriched with their studies the relation between attributive disposition, internal-external control and other psychological constructs. [Lynch et al. \(2020\)](#) acknowledge that the two generalized dispositions, internal and external locus of control, are formed through childhood. The students cultivate an internal locus of control because the father encourages their independence.

In addition, [Lynch \(2020\)](#) found out that parents' overprotection led to the high level of the external locus of control. There is another type of control that includes both internal and external types. People that have a combination of the two types of locus of control are often referred to as Bi-locals. People with bi-local characteristics are known to handle stress more

effectively because they have a mix of internal and external loci of control which can influence the rate of using online dating applications to relieve their stress.

According to [Lundberg \(2012\)](#), analyses of the locus of control literature showed a plethora of studies on the relationship between the kind of control and the type of locus of control and stable partnerships are linked to greater earnings, better health, happiness, and favourable results. Childhood physical or sexual abuse significantly correlates with the likelihood of experiencing depression over the victim's lifetime ([Lindert, 2014](#)). A student who faces some of these challenges may find it difficult to relate with peers around them based on previous disturbing encounters, whereas they would prefer new people online without negative motives, making him/her value online dating to face to-face interaction ([Ibrahim, 2013](#)).

A person's locus is conceptualized as an internal or external belief that life is controlled by outside factors which the person cannot influence, or that chance or fate controls their lives. Individuals with a strong internal locus of control believe events in their lives are primarily a result of their own actions. People with a strong external locus of control tend to praise or blame external factors such as the teacher or the exam. The locus of control has generated research in a variety of areas of psychology and the construct is applicable to such fields as educational psychology, health, psychology, and clinical psychology.

Researchers in the area of social psychology also elaborated and enriched with their studies the relation between attributive disposition, internal-external control and other psychological constructs. [Lynch et al. \(2020\)](#), acknowledge that the two generalized dispositions, internal and external locus of control, are formed through childhood. They are influenced by the learning experience and by the abilities' assessment from the family. The parental behaviour as giving warmth and concerned about other family members determines the internal locus of control. The children cultivate an internal locus of control because the father encourages their independence. In addition, [Lynch \(2020\)](#) found out that parents' overprotection led to the high level of the external locus of control.

Debate continues whether specific or more global measures of locus of control will prove to be more useful in practical application. In terms of locus of control, there is another type of control that includes both internal and external types. People that have a combination of the two types of locus of control are often referred to as Bi-locals. People with bi-local characteristics are known to handle stress and disease more effectively because they have a mix of internal and external loci of control.

[Lundberg \(2012\)](#), stated that analyses of the locus of control literature showed a plethora of studies on the relationship between the kind of control and the type of locus of control and stable partnerships are linked to greater earnings, better health, happiness, and favourable results for students and those The findings are intriguing from a scientific standpoint because they show that the partnership determined the high degree of internal locus of control. Individuals' schooling decisions are influenced by their locus of control, which is mostly due to changes in expectations of return on invested effort.

The impression of human life occurrences as reliant on one's own conduct or under the control of unpredictable people is referred to as internal and external locus of control. One of the major tenets of Rotter's theory is that individuals strive to maintain a good self-image. [Thompson et al. \(1995\)](#) explain why people's expectations of challenges are largely based on one's efforts and ability to cope with them. When individuals predict failure or bad deals, on the other hand, they feel it is due to forces outside their control.

They note that some studies have found that increased interaction with others is associated with an increased internal locus of control but cite other studies that have found a weak relationship between interaction and the internal locus of control. A similar ambiguity

is noted for data on the relationship between internal locus of control and other-related behaviours such as innovations, and exploration of new findings. In reviewing the literature on the relationship between the internal locus of control and online dating is more optimistic, and that relationship is directly related to the strength of the locus, regardless of type, internal or external (Mamlin et. al, 2015). This study was carried out to examine locus of control as a determinant of online dating behaviour among university students in Kwara State.

2. METHODS

The study adopts a survey research design using a correlational type. Correlational research design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manipulations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulative. This design usually collects data after the event or phenomenon under investigation has taken place and is therefore referred to as a correlational research design. This study design attempted to establish the frequency, extent, manifestation and implications of online dating behavior in society between the independent variable (locus of control). The population for the study consists of all university undergraduate students in Kwara State. As at 2019, there are six licensed Universities containing 2 Public and Seven Private Universities (NUC, 2019). Kwara State has nine universities that consist of two public and four private universities (University of Ilorin; Kwara State University, Molete; Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin; Landmark University, Omu-Aran; Summit University, Offa; Crown Hill University Eiyenkorin). Thus, the respondents to the study will be selected from 62,740 university students in the universities in Kwara State as presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Population of the Study

S/N	Name of University	Number of Students	Type
1	University of Ilorin	44,460	Federal
2	Kwara State University	12,253	State
3	Al-Hikmah University	2,567	Private
4	Crown-Hill University	244	Private
5	Landmark University	3,064	Private
6	Summit University	152	Private
Total		62,740	

Source: National University Digest 2019 as Published by National University Commission (NUC 2019).

Based on the population of 62,740 sample size of 384 was determined with the use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table. Two sampling techniques was used to select the respondents for the study; they are stratified, random sampling and proportionate techniques. First, stratified technique was used to group all the public and private universities. Random sampling technique was use in selecting 4 universities comprising of the two private and two public universities in Kwara State. Secondly, 2 faculties were selected in each chosen university. Thirdly, two Departments were selected randomly in each selected faculty. However, 24 university students were selected randomly in each selected Department.

The instrument that was used for this study is adopted questionnaire, tagged, Tinsel Online Dating Behaviour Scale 2019 as cited in Ibraheem (2022) survey. It is 10 items scale with responses anchored based on the four likert points. Also, locus of control scale adopted from Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1981), was used as a measure of Locus of

Control questionnaire. It is a 24 items scale with responses anchored based on the four likert points. The questionnaire in all contains 34 items. The questionnaire was designed on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), with the corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1.

Percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) statistical methods were used to analyse the data collected in this study. Percentage was used to analyse the demographic characteristics of respondents. PPMC was used to establish the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. Research Hypotheses are:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between internal locus of control and online dating behaviour among University Students.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between powerful others locus of control and online dating behaviour among University Students.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between chance locus of control and online dating behaviour among University Students.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between online dating and Internal Locus of Control among university students in Kwara State

Table 2. P.P.M.C Table Showing the Relationship between Online Dating and Internal Locus of Control of University students in Kwara State

Variable	No	Mean	St. Dev.	df.	r. cal	Sig	Remark
Online Dating	380	30.48	3.63				
Internal Locus of Control	380	29.06	2.77	378	0.41	0.00	**

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table II shows the result obtained from testing hypothesis one. From the table, it is shown that r. calculated is 0.41, degree of freedom is 378 and significant level is 0.00. Since the significant level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between online dating behaviour and internal locus of control among university students in Kwara State.

3.1.2. Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between online dating and external locus of control among university students in Kwara State

Table 3. P.P.M.C Table Showing the Relationship between Online Dating and Powerful Others Locus of Control of University Students in Kwara State

Variable	No	Mean	St. Dev.	df.	r. cal	Sig	Remark
Online Dating	380	30.48	3.63				
Powerful Others Locus of Control	380	25.87	2.45	378	0.62	0.00	**

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table III shows the result obtained from testing hypothesis seven. From the table, it is shown that r. calculated is 0.62, degree of freedom is 378 and significant level is 0.00. Since the significant level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between online dating behaviour and powerful others locus of control among university students in Kwara State.

3.1.3. Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between online dating and chance locus of control among university students in Kwara State

Table 5. P.P.M.C Table Showing the Relationship between Online Dating and Chance Locus of Control of University Students in Kwara State

Variable	No	Mean	St.Dev.	df.	r. Cal	SigRemark
Online Dating	380	30.48	3.63			
Chance Locus of Control	380	15.71	5.33	378	-0.26	0.00 **

** (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table IV shows the result obtained from testing hypothesis three. From the table, it is shown that r. calculated is -0.26, degree of freedom is 378 and significant level is 0.00. Since the significant level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between online dating behaviour and chance locus of control among university students in Kwara State.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control and online dating behaviour of university students in Kwara State. Put differently, significant relationship exists between internal locus of control of the university students in Kwara State and their online dating behaviour. This finding supports [Judge \(2015\)](#) and [Ariely and Dan \(2014\)](#). The findings of these studies revealed that there was a significant relationship between locus of control and online dating behaviour of their respondents.

The findings of this study demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between powerful others locus of control and online dating behaviour of university students in Kwara State. This finding supports [Lynch \(2020\)](#). The findings of these studies revealed that there was a significant relationship between powerful others locus of control and online dating behaviour of their respondents.

Finally, the findings show that there is a significant relationship between online dating behaviour and chance locus of control of university students in Kwara State. This means that online dating behaviour of the university students in Kwara State is significantly related to other external forces. This finding supports [Thompson et al. \(1995\)](#) with the conclusions that when individuals predict failure or bad deals, on the other hand, they feel it is due to forces outside their control.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It was concluded from this study that all the independent variables have significant relationship with online dating behaviour which is the dependent variable of this study. Each of internal, powerful others and chance locus of control has significant relationship with online dating behaviour of university students in Kwara State.

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

- a. Teachers and parents should assist these young ones to develop sense of appreciation, adventure, self-discipline, cooperation, co-existence and trust for one another,
- b. Parents at the onset should understand their children and adopt a parenting approach or style that will be suitable for the development of favourable temperament devoid of aggressive tendencies,
- c. Parents and older siblings should exhibit a set of emotional, cognitive and behavioural patterns worthy of emulation and lastly
- d. Counselling should be taken very seriously both at the school and home fronts.

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