



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

Ibraheem Islamiyyah Olajire, Esere Mary Ogechi*

Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education,
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Email: ibraheemislamiyyah@gmail.com

ABSTRACTS

This study investigated how locus of control influences online dating behaviors among university students in Kwara State. A descriptive survey design with a correlational method was utilized. The participants included 380 students from four different universities in Kwara State. Data collection tools included the Online Dating Behaviour Scale, adapted from the Tinsel (2019) Survey, and Rotter's (1966) locus of control scale. Three null hypotheses were developed and tested at a 0.05 significance level. Data analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between online dating and an internal locus of control among university students in Kwara State ($r = 0.41$, $df = 378$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, there was a significant negative correlation between online dating and the powerful others locus of control ($r = -0.62$, $df = 378$, $p < 0.05$), as well as a significant negative correlation between online dating and the chance locus of control ($r = -0.26$, $df = 378$, $p < 0.05$). The study provided recommendations based on these findings.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 23 Mar 2024

Revised 17 May 2024

Accepted 06 Nov 2024

Available online 17 Dec 2024

Publication date 01 Dec 2025

Keywords:

*locus of control,
online,
dating,
university,
students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Online dating has become widespread among university students and adults alike. The pursuit of romantic relationships has always been integral to human nature, but finding a suitable partner can be challenging. This has led some young people to turn to online dating. (Olaide & Adewole, 2021) note that online dating platforms allow users to create profiles and share personal details such as age, gender, sexual orientation, location, and appearance. Many platforms also encourage users to upload photos or videos. In Nigeria, a large number of people using online dating services are young adults. According to (Adejumobi, 2014), data from Facebook indicates that Nigerians are the second highest users of these services, following South Africans. (Evans, 2017) describes dating as a stage in romantic relationships, prevalent in Western countries, where two individuals meet socially to assess each other's suitability as a future partner.

(Benjamin et al., 2012) note that dating involves consensual interactions between individuals of the opposite sex, which can occur either in person 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.

(Frost et al., 2018) found that students dedicate about 12 hours weekly to online dating activities. Most adolescents engaging in online dating report that it helps them overcome shyness in physical relationships to some extent. However, they also mention several drawbacks of online dating. Around 70% of online daters think it is fairly common for users to deceive others to enhance their attractiveness.

(Ellison et al., 2020) noted significant growth in online dating services over the last decade, with millions of adolescents having gone on dates with individuals they met through these platforms. A key concern for those seeking romantic relationships online is the potential for misrepresentation by partners. (Toma et al., 2018) discussed that various dating sites are popular among students, offering a larger dating pool than ever before. These platforms have revolutionized how people initiate relationships, Offering broader access to potential romantic and sexual partners than traditional in-person interactions. (Fiore & Donath, 2021).

Social psychology researchers have explored the relationship between external-internal control, attributive disposition, and other psychological constructs. (Bello et al., 2023; Lynch et al., 2020) noted that broad tendencies, such as internal and external loci of control, are formed during childhood. Students often develop an internal locus of control due to encouragement from their fathers to be independent.

Futhermore, (Lynch et al., 2020) discovered that excessive parental

overprotection contributed to a heightened external locus of control. There is another type of control that includes both external and internal types. Individuals who exhibit characteristics of both types of loci of control are commonly termed Bi-locals. Those with bi-local traits are recognized for their improved stress management, as their blend of internal and external loci of control can affect how frequently they use online dating apps as a means of stress relief.

Based on (Lundberg's, 2012) examination of locus of control literature, numerous studies have demonstrated that stable partnerships and the type of locus of control are associated with improved health, higher earnings, positive outcomes, and happiness. (Lindert, 2014) indicates that physical or sexual abuse during childhood is strongly linked to a greater likelihood of experiencing depression throughout one's life. Students dealing with these challenges may struggle to connect with peers due to past traumatic experiences, leading them to prefer meeting new people online without negative intentions, thus valuing online dating over offline interactions (Ibrahim, 2013).

The idea of locus of control involves an internal or external belief that life events are either governed by external factors beyond one's chance, influence, or fate. Individuals with a strong internal locus of control believe that their actions primarily influence life events, whereas those with a strong external locus of control attribute outcomes to external factors such as teachers or exams (Abdulkareem et al., 2023). The concept of locus of control has been widely studied in different contexts psychology

fields, including educational, health, and clinical psychology.

Social psychology researchers have further explored the relationship between external-internal control, attributive disposition, and other psychological constructs. (Lynch et al., 2020) note that external and internal loci of control are shaped during childhood, influenced by learning experiences and family assessments. Parental behavior, such as providing warmth and concern for family members, fosters an internal locus of control, with children developing this trait when fathers encourage independence. Conversely, (Lynch et al., 2020) found that overprotective parenting leads to a higher level of external locus of control.

There is ongoing discussion about whether more specific or broader measures of locus of control will be more effective in practical settings. Locus of control encompasses both internal and external types. Individuals who exhibit a blend of these two types are commonly known as Bi-locals. Those with bi-local traits tend to manage stress and illness better due to their combination of internal and external control orientations.

(Lundberg, 2012) noted that reviews of the locus of control literature highlight many studies investigating the relationship between types of control and locus of control. These studies indicate that stable relationships are associated with increased earnings, improved health, greater happiness, and better academic outcomes. From a scientific perspective, these results are compelling as they highlight how relationships contribute to a higher internal locus of control. People's educational choices are

affected by their locus of control, largely due to shifts in their expectations regarding the returns on their efforts.

The impression of human life occurrences as under the control of unpredictable people or reliant on one's own conduct is referred to as external and internal locus of control. One of the major tenets of Rotter's theory is that individuals strive to maintain a good self-image. Thompson, Davidson, and Barber (1995) explained how 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.

Some research indicates that greater social interaction is linked to a stronger internal locus of control, while other studies report only a weak connection between these variables. A similar inconsistency is observed in the data concerning the connection between an internal locus of control and behaviors related to seeking novelty and innovation. However, the research on the relationship between internal locus of control and online dating appears to be more promising, suggesting that this relationship is directly influenced by the intensity of the internal locus of control, irrespective of whether it is internal or external (Mamlin et al., 2015).

This study was conducted to explore locus of control as a factor influencing online dating behavior among university students in Kwara State.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The swift progress of media technology among adolescents and adults has had a great impact on the way

people communicate, interact, create relationships, and meet friends on a daily basis. This has prompted most university students to get involved in online dating. The increasing prevalence of online dating among today's university students is highly significant, which has adverse effects on them academically, by not being focused on study rather than strong attachment to online dating activities. It affects them emotionally, while being difficult to have mutual interaction with their mate through verbal discussion, but instead prefers to chat with online friends and also causes psychological effects on society. For instance, if being scammed by online daters, such students would be mooding, and get angry easily at friends.

Meanwhile, some university students prefer social activities to learning, as they would rather buy iPhones and tablet computers than textbooks or teaching materials. Students who possess one of the five major personality traits, such as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and might use online dating sites to suit their personality type because they find it pleasurable. The positivity and negativity usage of online dating behaviour can be related to students' locus of control.

A significant issue is that students typically spend around 22 minutes per visit on online dating platforms and dedicate about 12 hours per week to online dating activities (Frost et al., 2018). Given the large number of users, this amounts to a substantial amount of time that could potentially be used for other pursuits, such as offline social interactions. However, as online dating has grown in popularity among students. Researchers are questioning whether locus of control is a determinant of online

dating behaviour among university students in Kwara State.

Many stakeholders may worry that students are dedicating too much time to dating websites, despite the fact that many have enough time to study, because online dating can become an addiction that wastes precious time on a daily basis, which may lead to developing awkwardness towards others in the environment. These gaps provided the impetus for conducting this study to focus on the contextual variables and online dating behaviour among university students in Kwara State.

1.2. Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine locus of control as a factor influencing online dating behavior among university students in Kwara State. Specifically, the study also aims to:

1. Investigate the connection between internal locus of control and online dating behavior among university students.
2. Explore the relationship between powerful others locus of control and online dating behavior among university students.
3. Analyze the link between chance locus of control and online dating behavior among university students.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between university students' online dating behavior and their internal locus of control.

H02: University students' online dating behavior is not significantly connected to

their locus of control linked to powerful others.

H03: University students' online dating behavior is not significantly linked to their locus of control related to chance.

1.4. Empirical Review

Research conducted by (Lynch et al., 2020) revealed that two general dispositions, namely internal and external loci of control, are established during childhood. (Lynch et al., 2020) concluded that students develop an internal locus of control when their fathers encourage independence. Additionally, (Lynch et al., 2020) discovered that parental overprotection contributes to a heightened external locus of control. (Judge, 2015) was observed that individuals with an internal locus of control are more inclined to set goals compared to those with an external locus, pursue them, and achieve career success. Similarly, (Ariely & Dan, 2014) found that internal stimuli are more influential than external stimuli in motivating university students towards online dating, thereby leading to successful romantic relationships.

(Sohn & Leckenby, 2015) claimed that the concept of locus of control is relevant in studying individuals' online dating behaviors, as it allows them to exert direct control over their environment. Primary control becomes crucial as individuals have a wider and deeper range of choices in how they interact with others on dating sites.

Furthermore, (Lynch et al., 2020) discovered that parental overprotection during adolescence leads to a higher external locus of control, influencing

university students' tendency to become addicted to online dating sites. Encouragement of independence by fathers fosters an internal locus of control in students. One study reported concerns among students about dishonesty on the internet, the perceived danger of meeting romantic partners online, and the extended time needed to understand someone online as opposed to in person. (Hurford & Cole, 2020).

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employs a survey research method with a correlational approach. In correlational research, the researcher conducts a systematic empirical investigation without direct control over the independent variables, as they have already been influenced or are inherently unchangeable. This approach typically involves gathering data post-event or

after the phenomenon being studied has occurred, hence it is called 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 study population includes all undergraduate university 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 (Kwara State University, Molete; Landmark University, University of Ilorin; Crown Hill University Eiyenkorin; Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin; Summit University, Omu-Aran; Offa). Thus, the respondents to the study will be selected from 62,740 university students in Kwara State, as shown 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 Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, a sample of 384 was determined from a population of 62,740. To select the study's respondents, two sampling methods were employed: stratified random sampling and proportionate sampling. Initially, the stratified sampling method was employed to classify all public and private universities. Random sampling

technique was used 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 study employed a modified version of the Tinsel Online Dating Behaviour Scale 2019, as cited in Ibraheem's (2022) research. This scale features 10 questions, with answers rated on a four-point Likert scale. Additionally, the Locus of Control was assessed using an adapted form of Levenson's Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale (1981), which includes 24 items, also rated on a four-point Likert scale. In total, the questionnaire comprises 34 items. The response options were rated as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), with numerical values assigned as 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively (Levenson, 1981).

In this study, data analysis was performed using both Percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) statistical methods. The Percentage method was employed to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while PPMC was used to evaluate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Hypothesis One

No significant relationship exists between online dating and Internal Locus of Control among university students in Kwara State (Table 1).

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	378	0.41	0.00	**
Internal Locus of Control	380	29.06	2.77				

** (Significant at 0.05 critical regions)

The results of testing the first hypothesis are shown in Table 2. These findings indicate that the calculated r value is 0.41, with a degree of freedom of 378 and a significance level of 0.00. The null hypothesis is rejected as the significance level is less than 0.05. Therefore, a significant correlation exists between online dating behavior and internal locus of control among university students in Kwara State.

3.2. Hypothesis Two

No significant relationship exists between online dating and external locus of control among university students in Kwara State (Table 3).

Table 3. 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	378	0.62	0.00	**
Powerful Others Locus of Control	380	25.87	2.45				

** (Significant at 0.05 critical regions)

Table 3 presents the findings from testing the seventh hypothesis. These findings indicate that the calculated r value is 0.62, with a degree of freedom of 378 and a significance level of 0.00. The null hypothesis is rejected as the significance level is below 0.05. Therefore, a significant correlation exists between online dating behavior and the

locus of control influenced by powerful others among university students in Kwara State.

3.3. Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between online dating and chance locus of control among university students in Kwara State (Table 4).

Table 4. 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	Sig	Remark
Online Dating	380	30.48	3.63	378	-0.26	0.00	**
Chance Locus of Control	380	15.71	5.33				

** (Significant at 0.05 critical regions)

Table 4 presents the findings from testing the third hypothesis. These findings indicate that the calculated r value is -0.26, with a degree of freedom of 378 and a significance level of 0.00. The null hypothesis is rejected because the significance level is less than 0.05. Therefore, a significant correlation exists between online dating behavior and the locus of control attributed to chance among university students in Kwara State.

3.4. Discussion of Findings

This study reveals a significant relationship between the internal locus of control and the online dating behaviors of university students in Kwara State. In other words, there is an important link between these students' internal locus of control and their online dating patterns. This result aligns with the studies by (Judge, 2015; Ariely & Dan, 2014), which

also discovered a significant connection between locus of control and online dating behaviors.

Additionally, this study reveals a significant relationship between the locus of control related to influential others and the online dating behaviors of university students in Kwara State. This finding is consistent with (Lynch et al., 2020), whose research also demonstrated a significant association between the locus of control involving powerful others and online dating behaviors.

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

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Teachers and parents should help children cultivate appreciation, a sense of adventure, self-discipline, cooperation, coexistence, and mutual trust,
2. At the beginning, parents should comprehend their children's needs and adopt a parenting style that fosters a positive temperament free from aggression,
3. Parents and older siblings should model emotional, cognitive, and behavioral patterns that are exemplary,
4. Counseling should be given significant importance both at school and at home.

REFERENCES

- Abdulkareem, H.B, Bello JA & Salami TA. (2023). Self- Concept and Locus of Control as Internet predictor's among Undergraduates Students. *ASEAN Journal of Educational Research and Technology* 2(3), 179-188.
- Adejumobi, O. O. (2014). Online dating involvement among students in Nigeria, Retrieved from a publication via facebook on 5th May, 2020.
- Ariely, D. & Dan P. (2014). Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy. *Journal of Sociology*, 53 (2), 271-284.

- Bello, J. B., Abdulkareem, H. B., Hassan, A. A., Ogo-oluwa, A. A., & Abubakar, A. O. (2023). Influence of Locus of Control on Internet Addiction among Kwara State Colleges of Education Students. *Jurnal Pendidikan Multimedia (EDSENCE)*, 5(1), 11-20.
- Benjamin, T. A., Olufunwa I. N & Harry, H. H (2012.) Cyber-flirting: Playing love on the Internet. *Journal on theory and psychology*, 13(3), 339-357.
- Ellison, N. E., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. L. (2020). Managing Impressions Online: Self presentation processes in the online dating environment. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 1 (5), 415-441.
- Evans, K., & Brase, G. L. (2017). Assessing sex differences and similarities in mate preferences. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 24 (8), 781-791.
- Fiore, A. T., & Donath, J. S. (2021). Online Personals: An Overview. *Paper session presented at the meeting of ACM ComputerHuman Interaction, Vienna, Austria.*
- Frost, J. H., Chance, Z., Norton, M. I., & Ariely, D. (2018). People are experience goods: Improving online dating with virtual dates. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 22(5) 51-61.
- Ibrahim A. (2013). A systematic review of studies of depression on *University Students*. *Clinical Therapy Journals*, 47(2), 391-400.
- Judge V. P. (2020). Effects of personality traits (big five) on expatriates adjustment and job performance, equality, diversity and inclusion: *An International Journal*, 33 (1), 73-96.
- Judge, V. O., Erez K. L., Bono V., & Thoresen, P. (2020). Personality Traits and Drug Consumption. *A Story Told by Data. Springer, Cham* Xiv:2015.06520. ISBN 978-3-030-10441-2.
- Levenson, H. (1981). Differentiating among internality, powerful others, and chance. In H. M. Lefcourt (Ed.), *Research with the locus of control construct* (Vol.1, pp. 15-63). Academic Press.
- Lindert, J. (2014). Sexual and physical abuse in childhood is associated with depression and anxiety over the life course: systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Public Health*. 59 (2) 359-372.
- Lundberg, D. (2012). Is human mating adventitious or the result of lawful choice? A twin study of mate selection. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 56-68
- Lundberg, G. (2012). Assortative mating and marital quality in newlyweds: A couple-centered approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5 (3), 388- 391.
- Lynch, S., Hurford, D. P., & Cole, A. (2020). Parental enabling attitudes and locus of control of at-risk and honours students: a publication in Norton, 37 (147), 527-550.
- Mamlin, N., Harris, K. R., & Case, L. P. (2015). A methodological analysis of research on locus of control and learning disabilities: Rethinking a common assumption. *The Journal of Special Education*, 34 (4), 214-225.
- National University Commission. (2019). *Nigeria University System Statistical Digest*, Abuja: National University Commission.
- Olaide, E & Adewole, S. (2021). Making Music: The development of personal relationships online and a comparison to their off-line counterparts. *Journal of Social Personal*, 3 (9) 325-329.
- Sohn, V., & Leckenby Y. L. (2015). "Locus of control and interactive advertising: *Paper presented at the 2015 Annual Conference of the American Academy of Advertising, Salt Lake City, Utah, March.*
- Thompson, T., Davidson, J. A., & Barber, J. G. (1995). Self-worth protection in achievement motivation: Performance effects and attributional behaviour. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87(4), 598-610.

Toma, C. L., Hancock, J. T., & Ellison, N. B. (2018). Separating fact from fiction: An examination of deceptive self-presentation on online dating profiles. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, pp 34, 1023–1036

APPENDIX 1
AL-HIKMAH UNIVERSITY ILORIN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND COUNSELLING

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is designed to elicit information on *locus of control and online dating behaviour among university students in Kwara State*. You are implored to fill the questionnaire with sincerity and faithfulness. Your responses will be used for research purpose only and high level of confidentiality is guaranteed.

Thanks

SECTION A (PERSONAL DATA)

Please tick (✓) the appropriate option and fill in the gap where necessary.

Age: Below 20 Years (), 20 Years and Above ()

Gender: Male (), Female ()

Religion: Christianity (), Islam (), Traditional ()

SECTION B: (Dating Behaviour Scale)

INSTRUCTION: Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column

NOTE: SA means Strongly Agree (4), A means Agree (3), D means Disagree (2), and SD means Strongly Disagree (1)

S/ N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	S D
1	Online dating is an effective way to meet people.				
2	I think my friends using an online app to meet people are a good idea				
3	I feel that people that use online dating are looking for a long-term relationship				
4	Online dating is a trustworthy way to learn about people.				
5	The outcome of using an online dating app is likely to be positive.				
6	I have gone on date with someone I met online.				
7	I am currently using online dating app.				
8	I have been in committed relationship with someone I met online.				
9	Online dating is more effective than being set up with someone on blind date.				
10	The outcome of using online dating is likely to be positive.				
	Section B: Internal Locus of Control				
1	I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events.				
2	I often feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.				
3	I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.				
4	What happens to me is my own doing.				
5	I am confident that I can handle any unexpected events.				
6	Sometimes I feel that I have little control over my life.				
7	I often feel ineffective in the world.				
8	I can do just about anything I really set my mind to.				
	Powerful Others Locus of Control				
1	Other people often have more control over my life than I do.				
2	Many of my problems are due to bad luck.				
3	What others decide has little influence over the things I do.				
4	Other people determine most of what I can and cannot do.				
5	Often, I have the feeling that I am being pushed around in life.				
6	I often feel that I have little control over my life.				
7	Other people can decide what I can and cannot do.				
8	I often feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.				
	Chance Locus of Control				
1	Often my life has been influenced by forces beyond my control.				
2	I often feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.				
3	Much of my life is determined by my actions.				
4	Often I feel that I have little control over my life.				
5	There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.				
6	What happens to me is my own doing.				
7	I am often blamed for things that I have no control over.				
8	Sometimes I feel that I have little control over my life.				