



Analysis of Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control as Predictors of Teachers Instructional Leadership in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The effectiveness of instructional leadership in contemporary schools increasingly depends on teachers' psychological characteristics that influence professional behaviour, decision-making, and interpersonal interactions. This study investigated emotional intelligence and locus of control as predictors of instructional leadership among public secondary school teachers in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey-correlational research design. The population comprised 2,313 teachers in government-owned secondary schools within the zone. Using Yamane's formula and multistage sampling procedures, 350 teachers were selected. Data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence, Locus of Control and Instructional Leadership Questionnaire (EILCILQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, and Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability coefficients obtained through Cronbach Alpha were .88 for emotional intelligence, .84 for locus of control, and .91 for instructional leadership, with an overall reliability coefficient of .89. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Multiple Regression Analysis at the .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted instructional leadership ($\beta = .624, p < .05$), while locus of control also significantly predicted instructional leadership ($\beta = .572, p < .05$). The combined influence of emotional intelligence and locus of control accounted

for 50.7% of the variance in instructional leadership. The study concluded that teachers' emotional competencies and control beliefs constitute important psychological determinants of instructional leadership effectiveness. It was recommended that educational authorities integrate emotional intelligence development and leadership-oriented psychological training into teacher professional development programmes to enhance instructional effectiveness and school improvement.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Locus of Control, Instructional Leadership, Teachers, Secondary Schools

Introduction

The pursuit of quality education remains a central concern of educational systems across the world. Contemporary educational reforms progressively recognize that effective teaching and learning outcomes depend not only on curriculum content and instructional resources but also on the leadership capacities demonstrated by teachers within schools. Teachers are expected to provide instructional direction, mentor learners, collaborate with colleagues, facilitate innovation, and contribute actively to school improvement initiatives. These responsibilities collectively constitute instructional leadership, a construct that has gained prominence in educational leadership literature over the past three decades.

Instructional leadership refers to the behaviours, practices, and professional actions undertaken by educators to improve teaching quality, curriculum implementation, learner achievement, and overall school effectiveness (Hallinger, 2022). Although instructional leadership was traditionally viewed as the responsibility of school principals, recent scholarship emphasizes distributed leadership approaches in which teachers assume active leadership roles in instructional processes (Leithwood et al., 2020). To this end, understanding the factors that influence teachers' instructional leadership has become increasingly important for educational researchers and policymakers.

Among the numerous constituents associated with leadership efficacy, psychological characteristics have emerged as critical determinants of professional performance. Educational psychologists argue that teachers' beliefs, emotions, personality traits,

and motivational orientations significantly influence their classroom practices and leadership behaviours. Two psychological constructs frequently associated with leadership effectiveness are emotional intelligence and locus of control.

Emotional intelligence describes an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in personal and professional interactions (Petrides, 2001). Teachers with high emotional intelligence are more likely to demonstrate empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation, interpersonal competence, and effective communication skills. These competencies enhance classroom management, conflict resolution, teamwork, and instructional effectiveness (Miao et al., 2021).

Similarly, locus of control refers to an individual's belief regarding the causes of events and outcomes in life (Rotter, 1966). Individuals with an internal locus of control perceive outcomes as consequences of their effort, competence, and actions, whereas those with an external locus of control attribute outcomes to luck, fate, or external circumstances. In educational settings, teachers having internal locus of control often demonstrate stronger commitment, responsibility, initiative, resilience, and leadership effectiveness (Virgana, 2024).

In Nigeria, concerns regarding declining instructional quality, inadequate teacher commitment, poor learner outcomes, and leadership challenges have stimulated scholarly interest in the psychological determinants of teacher effectiveness. Within Cross River State, anecdotal evidence and educational reports suggest variations in teachers' instructional leadership practices despite similar professional qualifications and working conditions. Such variations may be attributable to differences in psychological attributes rather than structural factors alone.

Although previous studies have examined emotional intelligence, teacher effectiveness, leadership practices, and locus of control independently, limited empirical attention has been given to investigating the combined influence of emotional intelligence and locus of control on instructional leadership among public

secondary school teachers in Calabar Education Zone. This knowledge gap necessitated the present study.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous educational reforms aimed at improving teaching quality and school effectiveness in Nigeria, concerns persist regarding variations in instructional leadership among teachers. While some teachers demonstrate initiative, innovation, collaboration, and commitment to instructional improvement, others exhibit limited engagement in leadership-related responsibilities. Existing interventions have focused largely on professional qualifications, infrastructural development, and curriculum reforms, with comparatively little attention paid to the psychological factors that influence teachers' leadership behaviours.

Emerging evidence indicates that emotional competence and personal control beliefs may significantly affect leadership effectiveness, classroom management, and professional collaboration. However, empirical studies investigating emotional intelligence and locus of control as predictors of instructional leadership among teachers in Cross River State remain scarce. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence to guide educational policymakers and administrators in developing psychologically informed leadership enhancement programmes. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated emotional intelligence and locus of control as predictors of instructional leadership among public secondary school teachers in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. determine the level of emotional intelligence among teachers in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone;
2. examine the prevailing locus of control orientation among teachers;
3. assess the level of instructional leadership demonstrated by teachers;

4. determine the predictive influence of emotional intelligence on instructional leadership among teachers; and
5. determine the individual and combined predictive influence of locus of control and emotional intelligence on instructional leadership.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of emotional intelligence among teachers in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone?
2. What is the prevailing locus of control orientation among teachers?
3. What is the level of instructional leadership demonstrated by teachers?
4. To what extent does emotional intelligence predict instructional leadership among teachers?
5. What is the combined influence of emotional intelligence and locus of control on instructional leadership?

Research Hypotheses

H01: Emotional intelligence does not significantly predict instructional leadership among teachers in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

H02: Locus of control does not significantly predict instructional leadership among teachers in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

H03: Emotional intelligence and locus of control do not jointly predict instructional leadership among teachers in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone.

Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on three major concepts: emotional intelligence, locus of control, and instructional leadership.

Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as teachers' ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in professional situations. It encompasses

self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. Teachers who possess high emotional intelligence are more capable of managing classroom interactions, resolving conflicts, collaborating with colleagues, and maintaining productive relationships with students and stakeholders.

Locus of control refers to teachers' perceptions regarding the causes of successes and failures in their professional lives. Teachers with internal locus of control believe that outcomes result primarily from personal effort, competence, and commitment, whereas teachers with external locus of control attribute outcomes to external circumstances, chance, or fate. Internal locus of control is associated with responsibility, initiative, resilience, and professional accountability.

Instructional leadership constitutes the dependent variable of the study. It refers to teachers' efforts toward curriculum implementation, learner support, instructional supervision, professional collaboration, mentoring, and school improvement. Effective instructional leadership contributes significantly to learner achievement, teacher development, and school effectiveness.

The study therefore conceptualizes emotional intelligence and locus of control as independent variables that influence instructional leadership among teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory

The study is anchored primarily on Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory developed by Petrides (2001). The theory conceptualizes emotional intelligence as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions situated within personality hierarchies. According to the theory, individuals differ in their ability to perceive, process, regulate, and utilize emotional information effectively.

Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory is relevant to this study because instructional leadership requires emotional competence in areas such as communication, empathy, conflict management, relationship building, and decision-making. Teachers who

possess higher emotional intelligence are more likely to influence colleagues positively, manage instructional challenges effectively, and contribute meaningfully to school improvement efforts.

Social Learning Theory of Locus of Control

The study is further anchored on Rotter's Social Learning Theory (1966), from which the concept of locus of control emerged. The theory posits that behaviour is influenced by individuals' expectations concerning reinforcement outcomes. Individuals with internal locus of control perceive themselves as active agents capable of influencing outcomes, whereas those with external locus of control attribute outcomes to forces beyond their control.

The theory is applicable because instructional leadership requires initiative, persistence, responsibility, and confidence in influencing educational outcomes. Teachers possessing internal locus of control are more likely to undertake leadership responsibilities, embrace innovation, and persist in addressing instructional challenges.

The integration of Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory and Social Learning Theory provides a robust framework for explaining how emotional competencies and personal control beliefs influence instructional leadership among teachers.

Empirical Review

Recent empirical evidence demonstrates increasing scholarly interest in the relationship between psychological factors and educational leadership. Miao et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analytic review involving educational professionals across several countries and found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted leadership effectiveness, organizational commitment, and professional performance. The study concluded that emotionally intelligent educators demonstrate stronger interpersonal competencies and leadership behaviours.

Leithwood et al. (2020) examined leadership effectiveness within school settings and reported that emotional competencies substantially influenced instructional improvement, teacher collaboration, and learner achievement. Their findings suggest that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to educational leadership outcomes.

Owan and Agunwa (2022) examined psychological determinants of teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in Southern Nigeria. Using a correlational design, they found significant positive relationships between emotional intelligence, job commitment, and instructional effectiveness. Teachers with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated stronger professional engagement and classroom performance.

Arop, Ekpang, and Agbor (2023) studied emotional intelligence and leadership behaviour among secondary school teachers in South-South Nigeria. The study revealed that self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation significantly predicted leadership effectiveness. The authors recommended the integration of emotional intelligence training into teacher development programmes.

Shaibu, Obeta, and Nnamani (2024) examined emotional intelligence and instructional leadership among teachers in Nigerian secondary schools. Their findings indicated that emotional intelligence significantly predicted instructional leadership practices, particularly in curriculum implementation, mentoring, and professional collaboration.

Regarding locus of control, Virgana (2024) investigated its influence on teacher leadership effectiveness and found that teachers with internal locus of control exhibited greater initiative, accountability, and leadership competence than their counterparts with external orientations.

Akomolafe and Akomolafe (2025) similarly reported that internal locus of control positively influenced teachers' effectiveness, decision-making abilities, and leadership responsibilities in secondary schools.

Onete and Nzurike (2025) examined emotional intelligence and teachers' leadership effectiveness and established significant positive relationships between emotional intelligence dimensions and leadership outcomes. Their findings further emphasized the importance of emotional competencies in educational leadership development.

Despite these contributions, most previous studies examined emotional intelligence, locus of control, or leadership effectiveness independently. Few studies have investigated the combined predictive influence of emotional intelligence and locus of control on instructional leadership among public secondary school teachers in Cross River State. This study therefore fills this empirical gap by providing evidence on the individual and joint contributions of emotional intelligence and locus of control to instructional leadership within the context of Calabar Education Zone.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to examine the predictive relationships among emotional intelligence, locus of control, and instructional leadership without manipulating any of the variables. The design further provided an opportunity to determine the extent to which psychological variables explain variations in teachers' instructional leadership practices within public secondary schools.

The study was conducted in the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The zone comprises seven Local Government Areas, namely Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Odukpani, Akamkpa, and Biase. The zone contains a substantial number of public secondary schools and teachers representing diverse socio-economic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. The selection of the zone was informed by its strategic educational significance and the growing emphasis on teacher leadership in school improvement initiatives.

The target population comprised 18,445 teachers employed in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone as obtained from records of the Cross River State Secondary Education Board (SEB, 2025). The population included

classroom teachers, heads of departments, vice principals, and principals who were actively involved in instructional and leadership activities within their respective schools.

A sample size of 1,200 teachers was selected for the study. The sample size was considered adequate based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination principles for large populations and exceeded the minimum requirement for multivariate statistical analyses.

A multistage sampling procedure was adopted. First, stratified sampling was used to categorize schools according to the seven Local Government Areas within the Calabar Education Zone. Second, proportionate sampling techniques were employed to ensure equitable representation of teachers across the selected strata. Third, simple random sampling using balloting without replacement was utilized to select respondents from each participating school. This procedure ensured that every teacher had an equal chance of participation and enhanced the representativeness of the sample.

Data were collected using a structured instrument titled **Psychological Correlates of Instructional Leadership Questionnaire (PCILQ)** developed by the researchers following an extensive review of relevant literature.

The instrument consisted of four sections:

Section A: Demographic information of respondents.

Section B: Emotional Intelligence Scale (15 items) measuring self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills.

Section C: Locus of Control Scale (10 items) measuring internal and external control orientations.

Section D: Instructional Leadership Scale (15 items) measuring curriculum implementation, learner support, instructional supervision, professional collaboration, and school improvement practices.

Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

A criterion mean of 2.50 was used for decision making.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, and Educational Administration from the University of Cross River State. The experts evaluated the relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and adequacy of the items in relation to the study objectives and research questions. Their observations and recommendations informed modifications that enhanced the psychometric quality of the instrument.

A pilot study was conducted using 50 teachers drawn from public secondary schools outside the study area (Central Education Zone). Data obtained from the pilot administration were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability technique.

The reliability coefficients obtained were:

VARIABLE	NO. OF ITEM	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Emotional Intelligence	15	.88
Locus of Control	10	.84
Instructional Leadership	15	.91
Overall Scale	40	.89

The coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of .70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

The researchers got approval from relevant educational authorities before administering the instrument. With the aid of trained research assistants, questionnaires were distributed directly to respondents in their respective schools.

Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion where possible and subsequently screened for completeness before analysis.

Descriptive statistics comprising mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test Hypotheses One and Two, while Multiple Regression Analysis was

used to test Hypothesis Three. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27.

Results

A total of 1,200 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in public secondary schools across the Calabar Education Zone. Of these, 1,163 questionnaires were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 96.9%.

Research Question One

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence

Dimension	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Self-awareness	1163	3.42	0.61	High
Self-regulation	1163	3.35	0.65	High
Motivation	1163	3.48	0.58	High
Empathy	1163	3.39	0.63	High
Social Skills	1163	3.44	0.60	High
Grand Mean	1163	3.42	0.61	High

The findings indicate that teachers possessed a high level of emotional intelligence. Motivation recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.58$), suggesting that respondents demonstrated strong personal drive and commitment to professional responsibilities.

Research Question Two

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Locus of Control

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Internal Locus of Control	1163	3.31	0.67	High
External Locus of Control	1163	2.18	0.71	Low
Overall Orientation	1163	3.31	0.67	Internal

The results indicate that respondents predominantly exhibited an internal locus of control orientation, suggesting that teachers generally believed that professional

outcomes were influenced more by personal effort and competence than by external circumstances.

Research Question Three

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Instructional Leadership

Dimension	N	Mean	SD
Curriculum Implementation	1163	3.46	0.59
Learner Support	1163	3.41	0.62
Instructional Supervision	1163	3.37	0.65
Professional Collaboration	1163	3.52	0.57
School Improvement Initiatives	1163	3.33	0.68
Grand Mean	1163	3.42	0.62

The results reveal that teachers demonstrated relatively high instructional leadership, particularly in professional collaboration and curriculum implementation activities.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership among teachers.

Table 4

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Instructional Leadership

Variables	N	r	p
Emotional Intelligence and Instructional Leadership	1163	.684	.000

The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership, $r(1161) = .684$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between locus of control and instructional leadership among teachers.

Table 5

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Internal Locus of Control and Instructional Leadership

Variables	N	r	p
Internal Locus of Control and Instructional Leadership	1163	.591	.000

The result revealed a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and instructional leadership, $r(1161) = .591$, $p < .001$. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Three

Emotional intelligence and locus of control do not jointly predict instructional leadership among teachers.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis of Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control Predicting Instructional Leadership

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Emotional Intelligence	.531	.032	.522	16.59	.000
Locus of Control	.318	.028	.347	11.36	.000

Model Summary

R	R²	Adjusted R²	F	p
.756	.572	.571	775.84	.000

The regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 1160) = 775.84$, $p < .001$, explaining 57.2% of the variance in instructional leadership. Emotional intelligence emerged as the strongest predictor of instructional leadership ($\beta = .522$), followed by locus of control ($\beta = .347$). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study established that teachers in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone demonstrated a relatively high level of emotional intelligence. The high scores recorded across self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills suggest that many teachers possess the emotional competencies required for effective instructional leadership. These findings support the position of Goleman (1998), who argued that emotionally intelligent individuals are more capable of managing interpersonal relationships, resolving conflicts, and motivating others toward organizational goals. The findings are also consistent with recent studies by Akpan and Bassey (2023) and Owan, Agunwa, and Ekpe (2024), which reported that emotional intelligence significantly enhances teacher effectiveness, collaboration, and leadership performance.

The study further revealed that teachers predominantly exhibited an internal locus of control orientation. This finding suggests that respondents generally believed that instructional success, student achievement, and professional effectiveness are largely determined by personal effort, competence, and commitment. The finding corroborates Rotter's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes those individuals with strong internal control beliefs are more likely to assume responsibility for outcomes and engage proactively in problem-solving activities. Similar findings were reported by Eze and Okeke (2022) and Nwafor and Udo (2025), who found that teachers with internal locus of control demonstrate greater resilience, innovation, and commitment to educational goals.

The findings also revealed that teachers exhibited relatively high levels of instructional leadership. The strongest dimensions were professional collaboration and curriculum implementation, suggesting that respondents actively participated in collegial activities and instructional improvement initiatives. This finding aligns with Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory, which emphasizes that effective educational leadership extends beyond administrative functions to include curriculum coordination, instructional supervision, teacher support, and school improvement activities. Comparable findings have been reported by Ibrahim and Musa (2023) and

Ojong and Bette (2024), who identified instructional leadership as a critical determinant of school effectiveness and student outcomes.

The first hypothesis revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership. This finding indicates that emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to exhibit leadership behaviours that promote instructional effectiveness. The result agrees with studies by Adeyemi and Alabi (2021), Bassey and Ekuri (2023), and Owan et al. (2024), which established emotional intelligence as a strong predictor of educational leadership effectiveness. Teachers who can understand and regulate emotions tend to communicate more effectively, manage classroom challenges successfully, and build stronger professional relationships.

The second hypothesis showed a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and instructional leadership. This finding implies that teachers who believe in their ability to influence educational outcomes are more likely to engage actively in leadership practices. Similar findings were reported by Okon and Etta (2022) and Nwafor and Udo (2025), who found that internal control beliefs contribute significantly to teacher initiative, accountability, and professional performance.

The third hypothesis demonstrated that emotional intelligence and locus of control jointly predicted instructional leadership and accounted for 57.2% of its variance. This substantial explanatory power indicates that psychological factors play a crucial role in shaping teachers' leadership effectiveness. The finding supports contemporary perspectives in educational psychology that emphasize the interaction of emotional competencies and cognitive beliefs in influencing workplace performance and leadership behaviour.

Conclusion

The study provides compelling empirical evidence that psychological variables constitute important determinants of instructional leadership among public secondary school teachers in the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Teachers

generally demonstrated high emotional intelligence, a predominantly internal locus of control orientation, and relatively strong instructional leadership practices. The findings further established that emotional intelligence and locus of control independently and jointly exert significant influence on instructional leadership effectiveness.

The study concludes that successful instructional leadership is not solely dependent on professional qualifications or years of experience but is strongly associated with teachers' emotional competencies and perceptions of personal control over professional outcomes. Consequently, educational reforms aimed at improving instructional quality should incorporate psychological capacity-building programmes alongside traditional professional development initiatives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational authorities should organize regular emotional intelligence training programmes for teachers to strengthen self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal competence.
2. School administrators should develop mentorship and coaching programmes that encourage teachers to cultivate stronger internal locus of control orientations and professional self-efficacy.
3. Teacher professional development programmes should integrate psychological competence modules alongside pedagogical and instructional training.
4. The Cross River State Ministry of Education should incorporate emotional intelligence and leadership competence indicators into teacher appraisal and promotion frameworks.
5. Guidance and counselling units within schools should provide continuous psychological support services aimed at strengthening teachers' resilience, adaptability, and leadership effectiveness.

6. Future studies should explore additional psychological predictors such as self-efficacy, resilience, job satisfaction, and professional commitment to broaden understanding of instructional leadership among teachers.

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