



Impact Of Locus Of Control On Performance Of Secondary School Students

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Abstract:

Locus of control, refers to whether an individual can acquire a reinforcement through his/her own abilities and efforts (i.e., internals), or if it flows from uncontrollable external factors (i.e., externals). From the findings of our study, it can be concluded that by only having an internal academic locus of control regarding academic outcomes will not produce high academic performance unless planned study, hard work and efforts are actually been done to strive in academic settings.

Introduction:

Locus of control is a psychological construct that captures the extent to which we can control events in our lives. One can either have an internal or external locus of control. Internal locus means that individuals believe that they have control over their life and that their own behavior and actions result in the events that they experience. An external locus means that individuals believe that fate or powerful others have control.

In social learning theory, Rotter (1966) posited that individuals' expectations are established and strengthened via reinforcements. Rotter (1966) emphasized that behavior is influenced not only by the reinforcement itself, but more importantly by the individual's

perception of the relationship between his/her behavior and the reinforcement. "Locus of control," therefore, refers to whether an individual can acquire a reinforcement through his/her own abilities and efforts (i.e., internals), or if it flows from uncontrollable external factors (i.e., externals).

Over four decades, psychological researchers has focused on locus of control, which is a personality trait that represents the extent to which people believe that the rewards they receive in life can be controlled by their own personal actions (Lefcourt, 1976; Rotter 1966)

Academic performance is used to measure the extent to which a student has achieved the stated educational goals. Academic performance which is

the yardstick to measure educational outcomes is paramount to the economic, scientific and technological advancement of a nation. Academic performance has been investigated with relation to cognitive ability. Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2006) reported that cognitive abilities alone are not sufficient to account for individual differences in academic success or failure.

An extensive review of literature by Findley and Cooper (1983) shows that locus of control influence learning. When association is found between locus of control and academic achievement, the association is found to be stronger in adolescents compared to adults or children.

A study on locus of control among Iranian students by Barzegar (2001) using the I-E locus of control Scale by Rotter indicates that locus of control was a factor predicting students' academic performance. Knowles and Kerman (2007) found that students with internal locus of control tend to perform better in academic courses compared to those with external locus of control. Other studies (such as Biggs, 1997; Nejati, Abedi, Agbaci & Mohammadi, 2012) have reported a strong relationship between locus of control and academic achievements.

Anakwe (2003) examined the relationship between locus of control and secondary school students' academic performance. The findings

showed a significant positive relationship between academic performance and locus of control. Shepherd, Owen, Fitch and Marsall (2006) found that students with higher GPA group reported higher score in internal locus of control. Nejati, Abedi, Agbaci and Mohammadi (2012) investigated the relationship between locus of control and the academic performance of students by considering the role of life quality and satisfaction with life. The outcome of the study revealed that locus of control significantly correlated and the academic performance of the students. Dinçyürek, Güneyli, and Çağlar (2012) found no significant relationship between locus of control and academic students.

With an intension to triangulate the conventional inferences, the researcher divided the performer group into high performer & low performer. Thus it was an intension to see the impact of Locus of Control on the performer groups.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the impact of locus of control on academic achievement of secondary school children.

Null Hypotheses:

Ho No significant difference exists between the mean scores obtained by the High performer & Low performer students in Locus of control scale.

Operational terms used:

Locus of Control:

Locus of control is an individual's belief system regarding the causes of his or her experiences and the factors to which that person attributes success or failure. In this study Locus of control will be measured by a standardized test by Julian Rotter (1966).

High Performers:

For this study high performer have been defined as those students scoring above $M + 1$ SD in the distribution curve with students' scores in the last annual examination which was transformed into standard scores.

Low Performers:

For this study low performer have been defined as those students scoring below $M - 1$ SD in the distribution curve with students' scores

in the last annual examination which was transformed into standard scores.

Measures used:

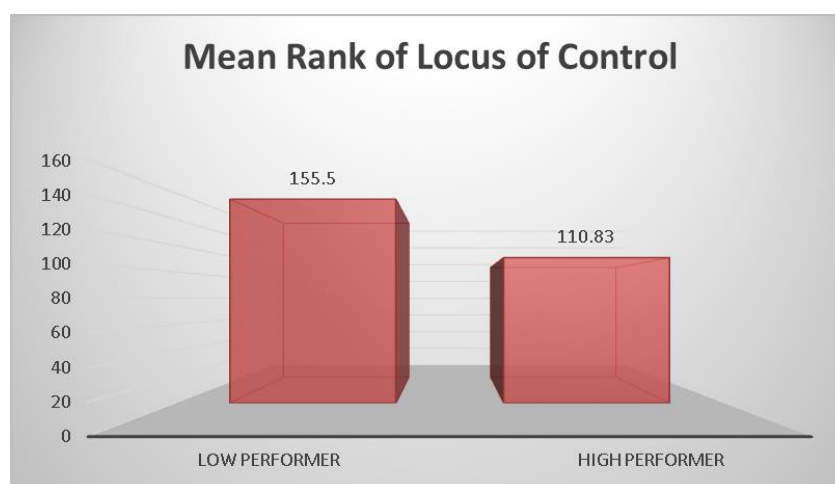
- (i) Locus of Control Scale by Julian Rotter(1966)
- (ii) Academic Achievement: The marks scored in annual examination of secondary level conducted by School were taken as indicator of academic performance

Research Design: The study employed the use of Survey research

Population: The population of this study comprised all secondary school students in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample consisted of five hundred and twenty three students conveniently selected from secondary schools.

Participants	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
LOC Low Performer	142	155.50	22081.50
High Performer	126	110.83	13964.50



Test Statistics a

Measures	Locus of Control
Mann-Whitney U	5963.50
Wilcoxon W	13964.50
Z	-4.733
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)	.000

Grouping Variable: Performance

Comment:

There is significant difference between Low Performer & High Performer in respect to Locus of Control.

Discussion:

Locus of control made the least, but still significant contribution to academic performance according to the findings of this study. This is in line with the findings of Akinleke (2008), Martinez (2003), Coleman and Deleire (2000), Olaitan & Moroluyo (2014) and Liu, Lavelle and Andris (2000). These studies discovered that locus of control does indeed strongly influence academic achievement and decision to graduate from high school.

Since internals perceive having more control over their environment, they tend to be less worried and afraid about the expected outcome related to a given task than externals. However, a study found no significant association between locus of control and fear of failure (Burnett, 1981).

A study shows that an internal locus of control is associated with

productive study habits among college freshmen, which provided a significant and positive effect on academic performance as reflected by their grades (Zhang and RiCharde, 1999). Also, research in educational psychology shows that internally oriented students tend to perform better academically than externally oriented students, as reflected by their GPA scores (Carden et al., 2004; Shepherd, et al., 2006). Because internals have more control of their environment, they tend to handle stress differently than externals. Internals tend to be more adaptive to stress and attempt to reduce it through problem solving strategies, while externals respond to stress emotionally and hence may withdraw from the stressful situation. Research in educational psychology shows that internally oriented students suffer less from debilitating test anxiety than externally oriented students (Choi, 1998; Carden, et al., 2004).

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Students having an internal locus of control are more likely to pursue academic activities than the Students with an external Locus of control. (Lefcourt, 1976). Similarly, Uguak, Elias, Uli, and Suandi (2007) study reported that 96% students make internal attributions of their success. Studies have shown that college students who attribute their academic outcome to external factors are defensive externals, as external beliefs evade their personal responsibility for failure (Basgall & Synder, 1983).

The findings have clearly indicated that the low achievers are not defensive externals. The findings emphasize that by only having an

internal orientation towards the academic outcomes will not produce positive academic results. This belief demands a practical action. It also emphasizes the factors other than academic locus of control such as poor study orientation, low motivation, and emotional problems responsible for poor performance of low achievers. However, the findings of the study support the extensive literature that high achievers are high on internal locus of control as compared to low achievers.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the findings it can be said that High and low achieving hold themselves responsible and not the external forces for the diverse academic situation. The findings contradict with the extensive literature which reports that low achievers are high on external locus of control and they act as defensive externals by attributing their low performances to biased attitude of the teacher, luck, out of course text in question paper to evade the personal responsibility for their failures (Basgall & Synder, 1988).

The findings showed that low achievers despite of having an internal academic locus of control are achieving low grades. The findings strongly support the Rotter's (1975) elaboration of the concept of locus of control that by only expecting a particular behavior will bring a particular reinforcement will not cause the occurrence of that behavior.

The value of the expected reinforcement is also important. Keeping in view the findings of our study we can say that low achieving students know that higher grade is contingent on studying but they do not study means that they do not value the high grades. From the findings of our study it can be concluded that by only having an internal academic locus of control regarding academic outcomes will not produce high academic performance unless planned study, hard work and efforts are actually been done to strive in academic settings.

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