



"EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF LOCUS OF CONTROL ON PERSONALITY TRAITS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS"

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ABSTRACT :

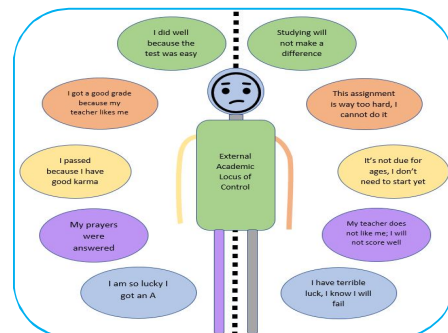
This study investigates the influence of locus of control (LoC) on five major personality traits—Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism—among senior college students. The sample consisted of 100 participants aged 18 to 25 years ($M = 21.03$, $SD = 2.78$), evenly divided into internal ($n = 50$) and external ($n = 50$) locus of control groups, selected using purposive and accidental sampling methods. The NEO Personality Inventory by Costa and McCrae was employed to assess personality traits, and Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (standardized by Anand Kumar and Srivastava, 1985) was used to determine control orientation. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine group differences across the five personality domains.

The results revealed statistically significant differences ($p < .01$) between the two groups across all traits. Students with an external locus of control scored significantly higher on the Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness dimensions. In contrast, those with an internal locus of control showed substantially higher scores on Neuroticism. The findings suggest that locus of control is a critical psychological construct that relates meaningfully to various personality dimensions among young adults.

KEYWORDS : locus of control, personality traits, college students, NEO-PI, Rotter scale, internal vs. external control.

INTRODUCTION :

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, college students experience a critical developmental phase marked by identity formation, increasing autonomy, and self-regulatory behaviors. During this stage, personality traits and cognitive orientations such as locus of control play a pivotal role in shaping students' academic performance, mental well-being, interpersonal relationships, and future career development. Locus of control (LoC), a concept originally developed by Rotter (1966), refers to an individual's generalized belief about the extent to which life events are under personal control (internal LoC) or influenced by external forces such as luck, fate, or powerful others (external LoC). Individuals with an internal locus of control tend to view themselves as active agents in shaping outcomes, whereas those with an external locus often perceive themselves as victims of circumstance. Personality traits, especially those outlined by the Five-Factor Model (McCrae & Costa, 1999), are essential constructs in understanding behavior. Traits such as conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience have been shown to interact meaningfully with control beliefs. College students with internal LoC often exhibit traits such as self-discipline, responsibility, emotional stability, and high



motivation, while those with external LoC may struggle with anxiety, learned helplessness, and poor goal-setting (Nowicki & Duke, 1983; Judge et al., 2002). Understanding this interplay offers key insights for student counseling, academic advising, and personal development programs in educational institutions.

Numerous studies have examined locus of control and personality independently; however, the intersection of these two constructs among college students, particularly in the Indian context, remains underexplored. Given that personality traits are relatively stable yet can be influenced by environmental learning and perception of control, investigating the connection between these variables is both theoretically and practically significant. Moreover, young adults' beliefs about control may affect how they manage academic stress, set goals, and maintain interpersonal effectiveness—all key indicators of psychosocial development and success in college life.

The present study aims to explore the influence of locus of control on the personality traits of college students. By examining whether students with internal or external control orientations differ significantly in their personality profiles, this research may help educators and psychologists design more effective developmental interventions. It also contributes to a broader understanding of how beliefs about control relate to stable personality dimensions, fostering a deeper awareness of student functioning in higher education.

The relationship between locus of control and personality traits has long intrigued psychologists due to its implications for behavior prediction, motivation, and psychological health. Rotter's (1966) seminal work laid the foundation by conceptualizing locus of control as a continuum ranging from internal to external, influencing how individuals interpret success, failure, and responsibility. Subsequent researchers extended this framework to examine how control beliefs relate to enduring personality traits.

McCrae and Costa's (1999) Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality—comprising openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—has served as a dominant paradigm in personality research. Studies have found consistent associations between internal locus of control and higher levels of conscientiousness and emotional stability (Judge et al., 2002). Conversely, external locus is often linked to neuroticism, low self-efficacy, and maladaptive coping mechanisms (Wang et al., 2010).

Nowicki and Duke (1983) emphasized that internality is positively associated with persistence, achievement motivation, and social responsibility in adolescents and young adults. More recent studies by Lester (2013) and Wang et al. (2010) have found that students with internal control beliefs tend to possess adaptive personality profiles, marked by self-regulation, openness to experience, and social engagement.

Although global studies affirm the link between LoC and personality traits, there remains a dearth of culturally contextual research in India. Given cultural factors that influence perceptions of control, especially in collectivistic societies, further investigation among Indian college students is warranted to extend generalizability and enrich cross-cultural perspectives.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To examine the influence of locus of control on personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, And Neuroticism) among college students.

HYPOTHESIS:

- 1) There will be no significant difference between internal and external locus of control on Personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism).

Methods:

Sample:

100 participants were selected, comprising 50 students with an internal locus of control and 50 with an external locus of control. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 25 years ($M = 21.03$, $SD =$

2.78). Non-probability accidental sampling and purposive sampling methods were utilized for participant recruitment.

Research Tools:-

1) Personality Test (NEOPI):

The test created by Costa and McCrae measures five personality traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. It includes 90 items with five response options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. Internal consistency scores for the traits are as follows: Neuroticism (N) = 0.79, Extraversion (E) = 0.79, Openness (O) = 0.80, Agreeableness (A) = 0.75, and Conscientiousness (C) = 0.83. The test also correlates with the Self-Directed Search by John L. Holland, with notable correlations: Artistic with Aesthetic (0.56), Investigative with Ideas (0.43), and Social with Tender-mindedness (0.36).

2) Rotter's locus of control scale:

The Locus of Control Scale, standardized by Anand Kumar and Srivastava in 1985, comprises 29 pairs of items. Out of these, 23 items are scored, while 6 filler items are not scored. Scoring is conducted using a specific key, where higher scores indicate a greater tendency towards an external locus of control (external LOC), and lower scores reflect an internal locus of control (internal LOC). The authors report a reliability coefficient of 0.88 for the scale, which is considered significantly high.

Variable

Independent variable-	1) Locus of Control	a) Internal	b) External
Dependent Variable -	1) Openness	2) Conscientiousness	3) Extraversion
	4) Agreeableness	5) Neuroticism	

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Mean, standard deviation, and t value of internal and external locus of control for college students of Personality Traits.

Table No-1

Personality Traits	Internal Locus of Control		External Locus of Control			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	t' Value
Openness	27.54	4.15	35.78	3.74	98	10.42**
Conscientiousness	32.48	3.50	38.69	4.02	98	8.23**
Extraversion	33.01	4.16	37.55	3.03	98	6.23**
Agreeableness	32.09	4.10	37.51	4.18	98	6.54**
Neuroticism	41.03	3.61	29.30	3.76	98	15.91**

Significant at 0.01 = 2.62, 0.05* = 1.98**

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare personality traits between students with an internal versus external locus of control. The results revealed significant differences across all five dimensions of personality.

Students with an external locus of control scored significantly higher on openness (M = 35.78, SD = 3.74) compared to those with an internal locus (M = 27.54, SD = 4.15), $t(98) = 10.42, p < .01$. Similarly, conscientiousness scores were higher among external locus individuals (M = 38.69, SD = 4.02) than internal (M = 32.48, SD = 3.50), with a significant t value of 8.23, $p < .01$. For extraversion, external LoC students (M = 37.55, SD = 3.03) again scored higher than internal LoC counterparts (M = 33.01, SD = 4.16), $t(98) = 6.23, p < .01$.

In terms of agreeableness, the external group ($M = 37.51$, $SD = 4.18$) outperformed the internal group ($M = 32.09$, $SD = 4.10$), $t(98) = 6.54$, $p < .01$. Interestingly, the pattern reversed for neuroticism, with internal locus students ($M = 41.03$, $SD = 3.61$) showing significantly higher scores than external ($M = 29.30$, $SD = 3.76$), $t(98) = 15.91$, $p < .01$.

Overall, the findings indicate a statistically significant influence of locus of control on all major personality traits ($p < .01$), highlighting meaningful psychological distinctions between internal and external LoC groups.

CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) The external locus of control senior college students had significantly higher Openness than the internal locus of control senior college students.
- 2) External locus of control senior college students had significantly higher Conscientiousness than the internal locus of control senior college students.
- 3) External locus of control senior college students had significantly higher Extraversion than the internal locus of control senior college students.
- 4) The External locus of control senior college students were significantly more Agreeable than the internal locus of control senior college students.
- 5) The internal locus of control senior college students had significantly higher Neuroticism than the external locus of control senior college students.

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