

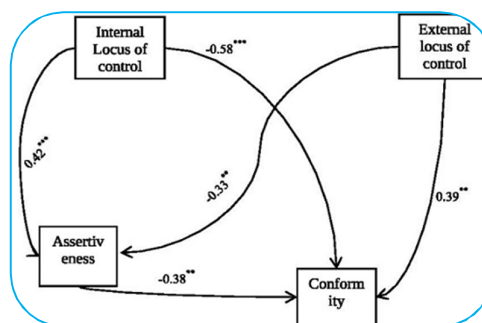


LOCUS OF CONTROL AMONG YOUTH AGED 14-18 YEARS

Father Thomas Kodiyan
Counselling Psychologist

ABSTRACT :

Locus of control refers to an individual's belief about the extent to which they can influence the events and outcomes in their life. During adolescence, young people experience several physical, emotional, social, and academic changes. Their beliefs about control over their lives may influence the way they respond to success, failure, challenges, and everyday situations. The present article focuses on locus of control among youth aged 14-18 years. The study aims to understand the level of locus of control among adolescents and to examine whether differences exist among them. The study also attempts to provide an understanding of how young people perceive control over the events in their lives. The findings may be useful for parents, teachers, counsellors, and other professionals working with adolescents.



KEYWORDS: Locus of control, youth, adolescents, internal locus of control, external locus of control.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important period of human development. Young people between the ages of 14 and 18 experience many changes in their physical, emotional, social, and academic lives. During this period, they gradually develop their own opinions, make decisions, develop relationships, and begin to take greater responsibility for their actions. Their understanding of themselves and their surroundings plays an important role in this development.

One psychological factor that can influence the way young people understand their experiences is locus of control. Locus of control refers to a person's belief about whether the outcomes of life are mainly influenced by their own actions or by factors outside their control.

The concept of locus of control was introduced by Julian B. Rotter as part of social learning theory. Individuals with a more internal locus of control generally believe that their actions, efforts, and decisions have an important role in determining outcomes. Individuals with a more external locus of control tend to believe that outcomes are influenced more by luck, chance, fate, or powerful others.

Locus of control does not mean that a person always has complete control over life situations. Rather, it reflects the person's general belief about the relationship between their actions and the outcomes they experience.

For young people, these beliefs can be important in different areas of life. For example, a student who believes that regular study and effort can improve academic performance may be more willing to work towards academic goals. Similarly, a young person who believes that outcomes are mainly determined by luck or other people may respond differently to challenges.

Understanding locus of control among adolescents is therefore important because this period involves the development of independence, responsibility, decision-making, and future goals.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Previous psychological research has shown that locus of control is associated with several aspects of behaviour and adjustment. Individuals with a stronger internal orientation have often been found to demonstrate greater personal responsibility and active involvement in dealing with problems.

Rotter's theory explains that people's expectations regarding control over reinforcement develop through their experiences. When individuals repeatedly experience a connection between their behaviour and outcomes, they may develop stronger beliefs that they can influence what happens to them.

Research among students has also examined the relationship between locus of control and academic behaviour. Students who believe that their effort can influence their performance may demonstrate greater involvement in learning activities. However, locus of control may differ according to age, environment, family experiences, educational setting, and other personal and social factors.

Adolescence is therefore an important period for understanding this psychological characteristic. The development of healthy beliefs about personal responsibility and control may help young people deal with challenges more effectively.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Young people face increasing academic expectations, social pressures, family expectations, and decisions about their future. These experiences may influence how they understand control over their own lives.

A better understanding of locus of control among youth can help teachers and parents recognise different patterns in the way adolescents respond to success and failure. It may also help counsellors design appropriate programmes that encourage responsible decision-making, realistic thinking, and positive coping strategies.

The present article therefore focuses on locus of control among youth aged 14–18 years.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of locus of control among youth aged 14–18 years.
2. To identify the predominant locus of control among the participants.
3. To examine differences in locus of control among the selected participants based on relevant demographic variables.
4. To understand the importance of locus of control during adolescence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive research design may be adopted for the study.

Participants

The participants may include youth between 14 and 18 years of age. Participants may be selected from educational institutions using an appropriate sampling method.

Research Instrument

A standardised scale for measuring locus of control may be used. The selected instrument should have established reliability and validity and should be appropriate for the age group.

A demographic information sheet may also be used to collect basic information relevant to the study.

Data Collection

Prior permission may be obtained from the concerned authorities before data collection. The purpose of the study may be explained clearly to the participants. Participation should be voluntary, and confidentiality of the information provided by the participants should be maintained.

Data Analysis

The collected data may be analysed using suitable descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation may be used to describe the data. Appropriate statistical tests may be used to examine differences or relationships based on the objectives of the study.

Expected Findings

The study is expected to provide an understanding of the nature and level of locus of control among youth aged 14–18 years. It may show differences in the way adolescents perceive responsibility and control over events in their lives.

The findings may also indicate the importance of personal beliefs in dealing with academic and everyday challenges. However, the interpretation of the findings should be based only on the actual data obtained from the participants.

DISCUSSION

Locus of control is an important psychological factor during adolescence. Young people are gradually becoming more independent and are beginning to make decisions that may affect their education, relationships, and future careers.

A balanced understanding of personal control can help adolescents recognise the importance of their own efforts while also understanding that some situations are beyond their control. Teachers and parents can support young people by encouraging responsible decision-making and helping them learn from both success and failure.

The development of a healthy sense of personal responsibility may contribute to better adjustment during adolescence. However, locus of control should be understood within the wider social and family environment of the young person.

EDUCATIONAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study may have useful implications for schools, parents, and counsellors. Schools can provide activities that encourage students to set realistic goals, make decisions, solve problems, and take responsibility for their actions.

Counselling programmes can also help adolescents develop positive ways of dealing with situations that they cannot control. Parents and teachers can encourage young people to recognise their efforts and abilities rather than attributing every success or failure to luck or external circumstances.

LIMITATIONS

The study may have certain limitations. The findings may be limited to the selected participants and geographical area. The responses may also be influenced by the participants' personal understanding of the questions. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of the study.

CONCLUSION

Locus of control is an important psychological characteristic during adolescence. Youth aged 14–18 years are at a stage where they gradually develop independence, responsibility, and decision-making abilities. Understanding their beliefs about personal control can provide useful information for parents, teachers, counsellors, and educational institutions. Supporting adolescents in developing realistic and healthy beliefs about personal responsibility may help them respond more effectively to the challenges of everyday life.

REFERENCES

1. Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, 80(1), 1–28.
2. Lefcourt, H. M. (1991). *Locus of control*. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes*. Academic Press.