LOCUS OF CONTROL, LEADING TEAMS, LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of locus of control on personal effectiveness, leadership and management performance. It is also to study the relationship between locus of control, age, number of training programs attended and tenure. For this aim, firstly, the locus on control, then personal effectiveness, management performance and, finally, the effect of age, number of training programs attended and tenure on locus of control are explained. In the application part, a questionnaire including the measure of the locus of control is distributed to employees of ICAR Institutes and SAUs (State Agricultural Universities) in India and the data were assessed by simple statistical methods. Finally, it is found that there is relationship between locus of control and age, training programs attended and number of years of experience.

Keywords: Locus of Control[1], Performance/Personal Effectiveness[2], Leadership/Management Performance[3], Organizational Behavior[4].

Introduction

Locus of control is a theory used in personality psychology that refers to causation as perceived by individuals in response to personal outcomes or other events. The theory was developed by Julian B. Rotter in 1954, and has since become an aspect of personality studies. A person's "locus" (Latin for "place" or "location") is conceptualized as either internal (the person believes they can control their life) or external (meaning they believe that their decisions and life are controlled by environmental factors which they cannot influence).

Literature Review

The role of reinforcement, reward or gratification is universally recognized as a crucial one in the acquisition and performance of skills and knowledge. However, an event regarded by some persons as a reward or reinforcement, may be differently perceived and reacted to by others. One of the determinants of this reaction is the degree to which the individual perceives that the reward follows from, or is contingent upon, his own behavior or attributes versus the degree to which he feels the reward is controlled by forces outside of himself and may occur independently of his part of a human subject depends upon whether or not the person perceives a causal relationship between his own behavior and the reward. A perception of causal relationship can vary in degree. When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate as under the control of powerful others or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual, this belief is labeled as external control. If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behavior or his own relatively permanent characteristics, this belief is termed as internal control.

Benefits of Internal Locus of Control:

In general, people with an internal locus of control:

- Engage in activities that will improve their situation.
- Emphasize striving for achievement.
- Work hard to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Are inquisitive, and try to figure out why things turned out the way they did.
- Take note of information that they can use to create positive outcomes in the future.
- Have a more participative management style.

People with an internal locus of control are generally more successful, for very good reasons. When you believe you have the power to control your own destiny and determine your own direction, you

have a strong internal locus of control. In most cases, this is an important attitude to have if you want to be successful.

There are some situations where external locus of control approach can work well. The key for your own personal development is to understanding your natural tendency and then adapting it to the situations you are faced with.

However there can be times when having an external locus of control can be an advantage, particularly in situations where people need to be considerate and more easy-going. People with a strong internal locus of control tend to be very achievement-oriented, and this can leave people around them feeling "trampled" or "bruised." And with a very strong internal locus of control, there is also a tendency to want to control everything, and this can lead to difficulties in taking direction.

If you have a strong internal locus of control, make sure you pay attention to the feelings of people around you – otherwise you'll seem arrogant, and people may not want to work with you. Also, make sure that you manage risks properly. Random events do occur for all sorts of reasons. While you can manage many of these with enough determination and hard work, some you can't.

Performance / Personal Effectiveness

Locus of control may merely be a diagnostic indicator of a person's natural capacity to perform, in other words, the more intelligent and performance-oriented a person is, the greater the possibility that he will see himself as an active, effective person. James (1965) likewise reports that individuals, who are internally oriented, are more persistent in their efforts to solve complex problems.

Two obvious reasons for internals to perform better on the job than externals are provided by Sprector (1982). Firstly, internals hold stronger expectancies that effort will result in good performance and it will lead to rewards. In situations where rewards follow good performance internals exert greater effort. Secondly internals seek new and relevant information more actively and therefore perform better than externals on complex tasks which, in turn, should lead to better performance by internals when complex information and learning is involved.

Spector (1982) warns that it should be kept in mind that the better performance of internals will only be applicable for situations where they perceive that effort will lead to valued rewards. This means that in the absence of rewards for performance the performance-reward expectancies of internals and externals might show no differences.

Internals are expected to perform better on the following jobs/tasks:

- Jobs requiring complex information processing and frequent complex learning.
- Tasks requiring initiative and independence of action.
- Jobs requiring high motivation.
- Highly technical or skilled jobs
- Professional jobs
- Managerial or supervisory jobs

Leadership/Management Performance

Leaders with an internal locus of control take responsibility for who they are, for their actions and performance, and for the performance of their department or organization. They see others as able to develop, and take an active role in the development of their team or department.

A laboratory study of Anderson & Schneier (1978) on the leadership behaviors of internals and externals confirmed the notion that the two types prefer different supervisory styles: internals are more action oriented and externals more socially oriented. The following differences were revealed.

Groups led by internals outperformed those led by externals.

- Internals were more likely to emerge as group leaders.
- Internal leaders were better class performers than external leaders.
- While internal leaders were more task oriented, external leaders were more socially oriented.
- It is generally accepted that group effectiveness is largely dependent on the quality of its leadership (Rutter, 1995; Ristow, Amos & Staude, 1999)

The opposing organizational demands for compliance (preferred by externals) on the one hand, and complex task performance (focused on by internals) on the other hand, lead to obvious conflict in terms of those locus of control characteristics which will contribute towards more effective leadership. In this regard Spector (1982) mentions that, in the world of work becoming increasingly complex,

organizations might have to sacrifice compliance for skill. Both the internal's initiative and the external's compliance is necessary.

Gender Differences

Although males and females seem to attach different meanings to perceived causality, it is obvious that there is considerable confusion regarding the role of gender in locus of control and achievement relations. Nowicki (1973) confirmed that externality could be related to achievement for females while internality was associated with the same achievement for males.

In contrast with the above findings, Wolfgang & Potvin (1973) describe internal females as showing higher achievement results than external females. These conflicting findings regarding gender, locus of control and achievement behavior, confirm the fact that considerable more research and attention is needed in this area.

Age

It is sometimes assumed that as people age they will become less internal and more external, but data here have been ambiguous.[38]Longitudinal data collected by Gatz and Karel (cited in Johnson et al., 2004[citation needed]) imply that internality may increase until middle age, decreasing thereafter. Noting the ambiguity of data in this area, Aldwin and Gilmer (2004) cite Lachman's claim that locus of control is ambiguous. Indeed, there is evidence here that changes in locus of control in later life relate more visibly to increased externality (rather than reduced internality) if the two concepts are taken to be orthogonal. Evidence cited by Schultz and Schultz (2005) (for example, Heckhausen and Schulz (1995) or Ryckman and Malikosi, 1975) suggests that locus of control increases in internality until middle age. The authors also note that attempts to control the environment become more pronounced between ages eight and fourteen.

Locus of Control and Organizational Behavior

General

Individual differences in locus of control have a significant and varied effect in organizations and have become an important variable for explaining human behavior in organizational life. Some of these differences are mentioned and discussed by Spector (1982: 485) (he points out that, although his discussion is theoretical in nature, actual data exists that can validate many of his hypotheses):

Persons who believe in internal control should endeavor to exert more control in their work than those who believe in external control, on condition that control is seen as something that leads to the required results or rewards. For internals, control can manifest itself in areas such as work flow, operating procedures, job conditions, goal setting, work scheduling and organizational policy.

Since those who believe in internal control make better use of information, they perform better in learning and problem-solving situations. They take more trouble to gather relevant information.

Those who believe in external control are more prone to conforming and to yielding that those who believe in internal control. "Internals look to themselves for direction; externals look to others" (Spector, 1982: 486). Externals therefore, make more complaint about followers or subordinates than internals.

As a result of the more indulgent nature of externals, it will probably be easier to supervise them because they follow instructions more easily. According to Theron (1992: 93) externals, as a result to being more conforming and complaint that internals, would be easier to supervise. For them, following instructions would be easier than giving them. He predicts that externals are therefore more likely to be followers than leaders, while on the contrary, internals would make excellent leaders.

Spector (1982: 486) discusses certain job settings that are found to be more suitable for internals than externals. When a job, for example, is of a complex nature and demands higher levels of initiative and independent action, it would be more suitable for internals. Simple tasks of complaint nature would suit externals better. It is also suggested that internals are better suited for professional and managerial jobs. They tend to attain higher occupations with greater autonomy and higher status than externals. (O'Brien, 1984: 16).

Spector (1982) draws attention to the fact that externals are not necessarily less oriented towards rewards or personal goals, but that internals will make a greater effort to earn rewards or achieve objectives since they are more inclined to believe that their efforts will be successful. If rewards do not follow performance, internals may adopt a more external stance (Theron, 1992). Therefore, when leaders are in control of internally oriented followers, the proper clarification of goals and outcomes will be essential. As a result of their higher levels of motivation, internals would do better on jobs where high motivation is required. (Spector, 1982: 486).

Measuring Instrument

Julian Rotter is credited for introducing the concept of Locus of Control. His work was largely based off the work of Albert Bandura, who developed the social learning theory. Rotter explains that humans can interpret events as being either a result of one's own actions or external factors. He goes on to suggest that whether or not people believe a situation or event is under their own control will influence their reward expectancy and behavior. Rotter developed a 23-item scale to assess whether a person has a tendency to think situations and events are under their own control or under the control of external influences. This scale is a forced-choice paradigm in which a person chooses between an internal or external interpretation.

Format: 23 items, each presenting two statements: one presenting internal, and one external locus of control. Respondents must choose the statement with which they agree the most.

Scoring: Only external locus of control statements in each item are scored, if endorsed by the respondent. High scores therefore indicate an external locus of control.

Interpreting the Score

Internal Scorers	0-7
Intermediate Scorers	7-13
External Scorers	14-20

External Scorers: A score above 13 suggests that you have a fairly strong belief that events are beyond your control. In other words, you do not feel that there is much of a connection between your behavior and your outcomes. This means that you are relatively less likely than others to take credit for your successes or to take the blame for your failures. Instead, you tend to believe that success and failure are primarily a matter of luck and chance breaks.

Intermediate Scorers: A score in this range means that you have inconsistent views about the degree to which you control your own fate. You probably believe that you do control your own fate in some areas of your life, while believing that you have little control in other areas.

Internal Scorers: A score below 7 indicates that you have a firm belief in your ability to influence your outcomes. Your relatively internal score means that you generally do not attribute your successes and failures to good and bad luck or chance factors. Instead, you feel that you can influence the course of what happens to you. An internal locus of control is associated with relatively great stress tolerance.

Data Collection

The social lab selected for this study is the Training Programme conducted by NAARM located at Hyderabad, India. The sample of study was those employees of ICAR who are involved in Research and Management. Total 40 questionnaires were distributed and 39 were received out of which 36 (92.3 % response rate) were found valid for further analysis.

Background of respondents

The overall profile of the participating respondents' characteristics is discussed below and presented in tables.

Out of 36 respondents 6 (16.67%) from '40-45' age group, 11 (30.56%) from '46-50' age group, 16 (41.67%) from '51-55' age group, and 4 (11.11%) from '56-60' age group.

Table - 1

| Age	No. of Participants	External LOC
40-45	6	9.00
46-50	11	6.73
51-55	15	6.93
56-60	4	3.25
Total	39	

Graph - 1
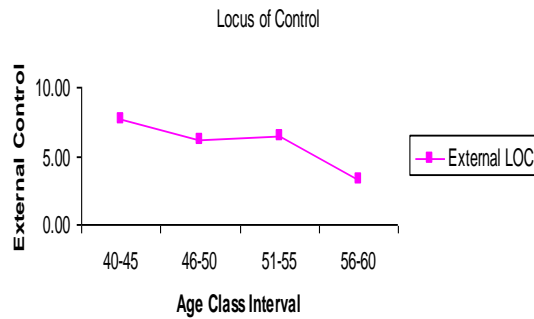
Number of training programs attended by the respondents shows, out of 36 participants 10 (27.78%) participants have attended 1 to 3 programs, 7 (19.44%) have attended 4 to 6 programs, 2 (5.56%) have attended 7 to 9 training programs, 2 (5.56%) have attended 10 to 12 training programs and 1 (2.78%) have attended 13 to 15 training programs.

Table – 2

| No. of Training Programs	No. of Participants	Avg External LOC
1-3	10	9.4
4-6	7	7.71
7-9	2	6.5
10-12	2	5
13-15	1	4

Graph - 2
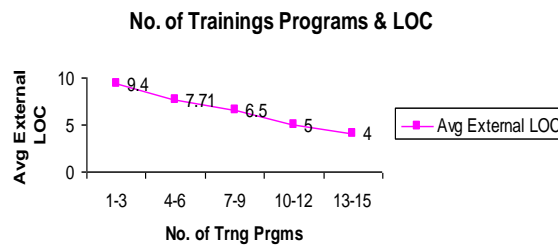
Tenure in company shows, 7 (19.44 %) respondents have the tenure of 14 to18 years, 11 (30.55 %) respondents have the tenure of 19 to 22 years, 6 (16.67 %) respondents have the tenure of 23 to 26 years and 9 (25%) respondents have the tenure of more than 27 years.

Table – 3

Tenure	No. of Participants	Avg LOC Score
14-18	7	8.43
19-22	11	6.82
23-26	6	6.33
27-30	9	6.22

Graph 3
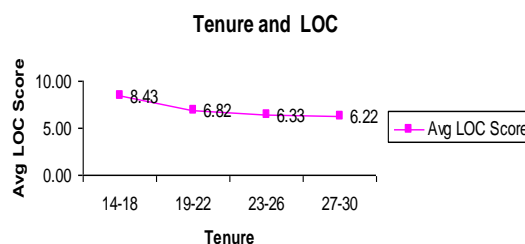
During cross tabulation data analysis another interesting demographic finding was appeared that out of 36 respondents 17 (47.22%) were Principal Scientists, 8 (22.22%) were Principal Scientists / Head, 1 (2.78%) is Joint Director, 2 (5.56%) were ICAR National Fellows, 2 (5.56%) were Professors, 1

(2.78%) Associate Director of Research, 2 (5.56%) were Directors (Acting) and 2 (5.56%) were Head of Divisions.

Surprisingly participants' educational qualification is very impressive that 100% are Doctorates.

Conclusion

Age vs. LOC

In accordance with the results obtained in the study; it is observed that from Table 1 and Graph 1 there is variation in External Locus of Control with the age. The raw score 9.0 of participants who are in the age group of 40-45 indicates Average Internality or Intermediate Scorers shows that they have inconsistent views about the degree to which they control their own fate. They probably believe that they have little control in other areas.

The raw scores 6.73 and 6.93 of the respondents who fall in the age group of 46-50 and 51-55 respectively shows they almost touches the border-line of Intermediate Scorers.

The raw score 3.25 of the participants within the age group of 56-60 shows the more internality, indicates that they have a firm belief in their ability to influence their outcomes. They generally do not attribute their successes and failures to good and bad luck or chance factors. Instead, they feel that they can influence the course of what happens to you. An Internal Locus of Control is associated with relatively great stress tolerance.

So our results supports that Locus of Control increases in internality until middle-age as stated by Gatz and Karel (cited in Johnson et al., 2004) and Heckhausen and Shulz (1995) or Ryckman and Malikosi (1975).

Training Programs vs. LOC

According to the Table 2 and Graph 2, it is very much clear that Internal Locus of Control increases with the number of training programs attended by the respondents. There is a positive correlation between number of training programs attended and increase in Internality of Locus of Control.

Tenure vs. LOC

Table 3 shows the relationship between number of years of experience of the respondents and their Locus of Control. The LOC score 8.43 of the participants whose service lies in between 14 and 18 years shows that they are the 'Intermediate Scorers'. It indicates that a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate as under the control of powerful others or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding them.

The scores 6.82, 6.33 and 6.22 shows that the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his behavior or his own relatively permanent characteristics.

Based on the collected data Graph 3 shows there is some positive correlation between number of years of experience and Internal Locus of Control.

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