



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCUS OF CONTROL AND GUILT AND SHAME PRONENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to examine the correlation between Locus of Control and Guilt and Shame Proneness among college students. The sample for the study comprised of 65 undergraduate college students from Bangalore (City), Karnataka region. Internal-External Locus of Control scale and Guilt and Shame Proneness (GASP) scale were used to collect the required data. To analyze data 'r' Karl Pearson Correlation method was used. Results show that correlation between Guilt Proneness and Locus of Control (Internal) is negative and correlation between Locus of Control (Internal) and Shame-Proneness is positive. Limitations of the study have been discussed.

Keywords

Locus of Control¹, Guilt and Shame Proneness², College Students³

Introduction

When students make a moral judgement, they weigh the claims of others against their own self-interest. That is, they choose to act on what they think is right for everyone, regardless of law or any kind of social agreement. Thus making them feel bad about themselves and can have negative consequences. Owing to this they befall to self-evaluation and understand that they have conceded their own standards of conduct or have breached a universal moral standard and assume momentous liability for that violation, perhaps guilt and shame get underway.

Guilt originates when one engages in internal, unstable, specific attributions about one's actions, which conduce to negative feelings about specific behaviors that one has performed (Tracy & Robins, 2004). Shame, in contrast, originates when one does internal, stable, global attributions about one's self, which causes negative feelings about the global self (Tracy & Robins, 2004). With guilt the focus is on one's behavior ("I did a bad thing"), whereas with shame the focus is on one's self ("I'm a bad person")

Shame and guilt are reckoned by many to be, first and foremost, "moral emotions" because they presumptively correspond to powerful internal sanctions against socially and morally unacceptable behavior. Guilt has been defined as "the emotional feeling associated with the realization that one has violated an important social, moral, or ethical regulation"; whereas Shame has been defined as, "an emotion characterized by feelings of guilt, embarrassment, and avoidance" (Chaplin, 1968).

Locus of control is a concept employed in personality psychology that adverts to causation as understood by persons in reply to personal outcomes or other actions. The supposition was constructed by Julian B. Rotter in 1954, and has since turned into a distinct feature of personality studies. An individual's "locus" (Latin for "place" or "location") is believed 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 purpose of incentive, reinforcement or satisfaction is ubiquitously identified as an important one in the attainment and execution of accomplishments and know-how. Nevertheless, an event considered by a few persons as an incentive or reward, perhaps perceived in a different way and responded to by others. One of the causal factors of this response is the level to which the person comprehend that the reinforcement comes from, or is dependent upon, his own attributes or behavior against the level to which he believes the reinforcement is operated by forces outside of himself and could happen independently. The observation of relation, association can differ in degree. When a reward is comprehended by the individual as ensuing some accomplishment of his own but not being completely dependent upon his action, then it is mostly conjectured as the outcome of fate, chance, luck as under the influence of powerful others or as whimsical because of the huge difficulty of the forces encompassing him. When the occurrence is construed in this way by a person, this belief is regarded as external control. If the individual perceives that the incident is dependent upon his own behavior or his own comparatively lasting characteristics, this belief is labeled as internal control.

In general individuals with internal locus of control are more thriving, for very good reasons. When you have a strong internal locus of control you will be considered to have the ability to direct your own fate and decide your own direction. In most events, if you want to be successful then this is a significant mind-set to have.

There are a few situations where external locus of control attitude can perform substantially. The cardinal for your own personal growth is to identifying with your natural disposition and then accommodating it to the circumstances you are confronted with. Nevertheless there can be instances when experiencing external locus of control can be a reward, mostly in circumstances where people need to be altruistic and more even-tempered.

On having a strong internal locus of control people inclined to be very achievement-oriented, and this can result in people around them feeling “crushed” or “injured”. Also having a strong internal locus of control, there is as well an inclination to want to rein in everything, and this can lead to problems in taking decision.

A person with strong internal locus of control should make sure to give care to the feelings of individuals around him – or else he will be looked as if arrogant, and people may not like to work with him. Also, he should make sure that he directs risks in a right manner and unplanned events do happen for all forms of reasons. Though he can handle many of these with suffice determination and hard work, a few he can't.

Guilt and Shame Proneness

Guilt and Shame Proneness includes two guilt-proneness subscales that evaluate negative behavior evaluations (NBEs) and repair responses to private transgressions or failures and two shame proneness subscales that appraise negative self-evaluations (NSEs) and withdrawal responses to publically-exposed transgressions or failures.

Negative Behavior Evaluation

Negative Behavior Evaluation (NBE) is the property of guilt-proneness that functions as the entrée to experience guilt which has various results including empathic concern and perspective-taking (Cohen, Wolf, Insko, Panter, 2010). NBE adverts to the theory that guilt is an acknowledgement of having constrained a behavior that is comprehended by the wrongdoer as having done damage, but is ascribed to a behavior and not a basic component of the wrongdoer's self (Cohen et al., 2011). When a behavior has not been openly or publicly disclosed, but the guilty contributor experience that he has perpetrated a behavior that directs to an infringement of one's morality (Smith et al., 2010). The behavior of a transgressor displaying repentance directs the victim to understand that the action may have been bad, but the guilty person became conscious that he had made a mistake. For this cause negative behavior evaluations are frequently perceived as the antecedent to guilt-repair as behavioral evaluations and self-reflection typically come before a transgression can be repaired (Wolf et al., 2010).

Guilt-Repair

The guilt-proneness dimension of guilt-repair acts as a fixing method of moral emotions when there is a necessary to restore a situation. As discussed by Jorgensen et al. (2011) NBE brings on aversive cognitive thoughts of “I have done a bad thing” which must be alleviated, activating guilt-repair which behaviorally tries to rectify the wrongdoing and cognitively improves suffering. Though cognitive distress is reduced; the most important part of guilt-repair is the visible behavioral repair because it is the most visible aspect

(Tangney et al., 2000). These repair behaviors much happen in the form of prosocial behaviors such as an apology or trying to fix the mistake (Vaish et al., 2011).

Negative Self Evaluation

The shame proneness aspect of NSE is parallel to Cohen's similar idea of NBE (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Nevertheless, the dissimilarity is that NSE puts the burden of the wrongdoing on the individual's construct of self (Tracy & Robbins, 2006). NSE pertain to the thought that shame is related with the identification of having entrusted an discourtesy that directs the person to judge that a element of their personality or self is faulty, or harmful to themselves or others (Cohen et al., 2011). Owing to the negative feelings on an individual's meaning of self on NSE, there are very likely detrimental fallouts such as feeling unhappiness, enrage, and lesser degrees of self-esteem (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Tracy and Robbins (2006) propose that one way NSE spoils the person is by inducing sore emotions and painful emotional reactions to circumstances. This is potentially because of the cognitive distress attributable to internalizing the guilt on the self (Tangney et al., 1996). Alike to other dodging behaviors, the dislike to conditions that can cause NSE directs to what Cohen et al. (2011) adverts to as Shame Withdraw since individuals do not lean to search stimuli that damage them (Tangney et al., 1989).

Assessing guilt and shame impeccably involves fine-tuning the items so they focus on guilt and shame in their purest forms rather than hybrid combinations of the two emotions. By appraising Guilt-NBEs and Guilt-repair responses to private transgressions and Shame-NSEs and Shame-withdraw responses to public transgressions we can more precisely observe individuals' tendency to feel guilt and shame in their everyday lives. As a matter of fact and corroborating to the above text the correlation has been carried out separately for each subscale.

The present study was conducted to see the relationship between Locus of Control and Guilt and Shame Proneness among college students studying in undergraduate colleges. To measure the locus of control beliefs of college students, Rotter's Locus of Control Scale was used. Whereas, to measure Guilt and Shame Proneness scale by Cohen, T. R., Wolf, S. T., Panter, A. T. was used. Both of the questionnaires were administered on 65 students. The following hypothesis was proposed that higher the locus of control of participants and higher is the guilt and shame proneness.

METHODOLOGY

The participants recruited for the study were selected randomly from private degree colleges of Bangalore, Karnataka. 65 students were included in the study. Participation in the research was voluntary. In the present study two questionnaires were used in order to measure the two variables. Rotter's Locus of Control Scale was used to measure Locus of Control of participants and Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale was used to measure the Guilt-NBE, Guilt-Repair, Shame-NSE and Shame-Withdraw of the subjects.

Those students who voluntarily wanted to take part in the study were given both the test booklets one after the other. Before the conduction of the test for research purpose, all the participants were explained the reason for administration of the tests and assured of confidentiality. Thus consent was taken from the participants, keeping in mind ethical concern of informed consent. The instructions were read to the participants and they were told to answer the questions honestly. They were given sufficient time to complete both the questionnaires. The doubts raised by the participants were answered frankly. Upon completion of the survey, the participants were thanked for their cooperation.

Results

The present research was done to find out the relationship between Locus of Control and Guilt and Shame Proneness among college students. According to the hypothesis of the research, higher the locus of control of participants, higher is the Guilt and Shame Proneness. The Karl Pearson's coefficient was calculated to find out the correlation between LOC and GASP. Table 1 consists of the Means, SDs of 65 participants for subscales of GASP and r values of locus of control and subscales of Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale. The correlation coefficient was found to be -0.11 and -0.12 for Guilt-Proneness subscales and LOC (internal), which denotes negative correlation, and r values between LOC(internal) and Shame-Proneness was found to be 0.01 and 0.18 indicates positive correlation.

It's likely seen from Table-I that Guilt-Repair ($\bar{X} = 4.64$) is higher than Guilt-NBE (Negative Behavior Evaluation) ($\bar{X} = 4.39$) among college students. Shame-NSE (Negative Self Evaluation) favored students ($\bar{X} = 4.52$) related to Shame-withdraw ($\bar{X} = 3.85$).

Table-I: Means, SDs and correlation between Locus of Control and Guilt & Shame Proneness subscales.

| (N=65) | Mean | SD | Locus of Control |
|----------------|------|------|------------------|
| | | | r-Values |
| Guilt-NBE | 4.39 | 1.32 | -0.11 |
| Guilt-Repair | 4.64 | 1.12 | -0.12 |
| Shame-NSE | 4.51 | 1.03 | 0.01 |
| Shame-Withdraw | 3.85 | 1.07 | 0.18 |

Note: N = 65. The correlations were computed separately for the emotional (Guilt-NBE, Shame-NSE) and behavioral (Guilt-Repair, Shame-Withdraw) subscales. The score of Locus of Control 6.53846154 indicates Internal Locus of Control.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Furthermore depending on the concept that guilt is a moral emotion (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), students with soaring scores on the guilt-proneness subscales will turn up to ethical and prosocial behavior and unlikely to unethical and antisocial behavior. Relying on the belief that shame proneness is a problem for psychological functioning, students with high scores on shame subscales possibly accounts to personal distress and more neuroticism, and less self-esteem and self-compassion. Consequently the results also defend the conclusion that the college students are inclined to guilt-proneness (guilt-nbe, guilt-repair) along with shame-nse, which is a healthier and more psychologically adaptive than shame-withdraw.

It was hypothesized that higher the locus of control of participants, higher is the guilt and shame proneness. The value of the correlation coefficient (r) was found to be 0.18, which is statistically significant and denotes a reasonable correlation, which indicates modest relationship. Thus, there is reasonable positive correlation between LOC (internal) and shame-proneness and the hypothesis of the study has been marginally corroborated by the obtained data since there is negative correlation between LOC (internal) and guilt-proneness which is in contrast to the hypothesis. Investigation conducted suggests that individuals with a higher internal locus of control are more likely to have higher levels of shame-proneness and lower levels of guilt-nbe and guilt-repair.

This study about college students reckons that students with internal locus of control demonstrates information about their own achievements, qualities and adequacy, they seek to reflect the credibility of their claims. If they are unsuccessful to reflect their claims then they inclined to undergo shame. The analyses in this study showed that locus of control are related to student's guilt and shame proneness.

Personality traits apart from locus of control as well as environmental conditions may also play a role in determining level of guilt and shame proneness.

The research findings could be implied in different ways, such as to design and develop a training program for students which gives an outlook of Locus of Control concept and denotes the benefits of having Internal and External LOC, to continue and enhance conduction of various guilt and shame proneness training programs. Several limitations have to be taken into consideration while interpreting the results of present study. The research has not taken into consideration differences in gender which might influence the variables being studied. The research sample is not adequate to make generalizations. The data obtained from sample on LOC only has to do with the score of internal locus of control and the other scores of LOC like intermediated and external are absent. From the obtained results it can be concluded that there is moderate positive correlation between internal locus of control and Shame Proneness the hypothesis of the study is marginally validated

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