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EXPLORING AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LOCUS OF CONTROL: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Locus of control is the degree to which people believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives. The concept was developed by Rotter (1954), and has since become an aspect of personality psychology. Individuals with a strong internal locus of control believe events in their life are primarily a result of their own actions; whereas people a strong external locus of control tend to praise or blame external factors. The main objective of the present study was to see if adolescent and young adult males and females show any significant difference in their Locus of control or not. So, the study investigated the effect of age and gender on Locus of control in 120 subjects, 60 males and 60 females. The subjects ages 12 -25 years were selected randomly from Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh., constituting two groups, namely adolescent (12-18 years) and young adults (19-25 years). The data was collected using the locus of control questionnaire developed by Terry Pettijohn, on basis of Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Personality Test. For analysis of data, Two Way Analysis of Variance was conducted on the two independent variables- gender (male, female), developmental age (adult, adolescent) and dependent variable (locus of control). The results revealed that Adults Males had the highest mean score (55.83) and Adolescent Males had the lowest mean score (48.17) on locus of control.

Keywords: Locus of control, age, gender, adolescents, young adults

Introduction

In today's globalized world, society is changing very fast; and as a result, there is a change in the behavior and life style of people. Competition is increasing in every field of life. Along with success, there are also failures in this competition. So, in such a situation, Females and males have a tendency to attribute their success and failure in different ways, which is called the locus of control. Rotter (1966) defined locus of control as a construct relating to perceptions of the individuals who attribute control over their lives to internal forces (themselves) or to external forces. The locus of control affects the behavior of a person to a large extent. Along with behavior, its profound effect is also seen on the life of the person. When these effects are "typically perceived as the results of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him" it is called an external locus of control (Rotter 1966). Conversely, a person is considered to have an internal locus of control, when she/he perceives that there is a cause – and – effect relationship based on his/her own behavior.

There has been a lot of work on Locus of Control. Researchers have explored various aspects related to this concept, including the locus of control orientation. It is a belief about whether the outcomes of our actions are contingent on what we do (internal control orientation) or on events outside our personal control (external control orientation) (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 275). Several studies have shown that there are multiple crucial variables which contribute to

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determine the level of locus of control. Shirley et.al, (2020) had done extensive work on the prevalence of internal locus of control based on the income of adult below 65 yrs. and found that among the respondents, internal prevalence for low, medium and high income was 27%, 30% and 30%, respectively. Internal was associated with high resilience, less stress, exercise and less opioid use across income levels. Lower-income internal was additionally associated with diverse social networks, physical therapy and less drug use. Those with high internal generally had lower healthcare utilization and expenditures; better self-rated health and functionality. Internal is a powerful positive resource associated with better health outcomes, especially influential for lower income.

Intelligence is also found to determine the level of locus of control. Farnham & Cheng (2017) found a strong relationship between intelligence and internal locus of control. More intelligent children of age 10 had a more instrumental internal locus of control at age 16 which was a strong predictor of educational success. Locus of control was also found to act as a predictor of adult financial well-being for both genders. Xiaobo Yu et al. (2016) studied the direct and indirect relationship between locus of control and depression among 457 (232 males and 225 females) adolescents and adults. They found a significant difference between the adolescents and adults. The adults scored higher than the adolescents. Sagone et al. (2014) found that the late adolescents have more internal locus of control than the middle adolescents, and the middle adolescents have more external locus of control than the late adolescents. Hence, internality of the adolescents is improved and externality is reduced as they move from middle to late adolescence.

Not only age, but gender is also found to determine the level of locus of control. Ghasemzadeh & Sadat (2011) found that female students with higher internal locus of control received higher scores than male students. The students from the faculties of basic sciences, psychology and educational sciences, power and computer showed significant difference in the internal locus of control and external locus of control. Internal locus of control with meaningful level had a direct and positive relationship with the educational achievement of students. Serin et al. (2010) found that the students with medium socioeconomic level have external and students with high socioeconomic level have internal locus of control. The male students were found to have a higher internal locus of control. Contrary to this, Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) found females having a higher internal locus of control. There was no significant difference in the external locus of control of boys and girls.

Çağlar et al. (2009) conducted a study to determine the locus of control and level of assertiveness in students on different variables. Significant results concerning the assertiveness and locus of control levels of students were obtained. Akturk, et al. (2009) explored variations in cognitive learning strategies and computer attitudes amongst college students, based on gender category and locus of control. Results demonstrated that the level of adherence to cognitive learning strategies on the part of female college students was considerably higher as compared to those of male college students, especially in terms of memorization, analytical ability and explanation. Observance of cognitive learning strategies was found to be significantly higher for college students with internal locus of control as compared to those with external locus of control in terms of summarization preparation.

Previous studies regarding the internal and external locus of control of boys and girls have inconsistent findings. However, Sherman et al. (1997) found that females are more external than males and attribute interpersonal relationships and life experiences to external factors. Furham (1993) used a cross-sectional design and found that males tend to have an external locus of control.

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In the light of the above analysis and review of studies, it is clear that gender and age affect the locus of control to a large extent. At the same time, the locus of control has also been found to be related differently with different levels of intelligence, depression, and assertiveness. Since, these variables affect, or are affected by locus of control, but the researchers were interested to study the impact of both gender and age, especially two different developmental stages (adolescence and young adulthood) together on locus of control. Therefore, the present study entitled as 'the effect of age and gender on locus of control' has been undertaken, as this kind of work has not been recorded in Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of level of locus of control among male and female (adolescents and young adults) students.
2. To compare groups formed on the basis of age and gender on the locus of control.
3. To compare the effects of age on locus of control.
4. To compare the effects of gender on locus of control.
5. To compare gender and age would not interact significantly for locus of control.

Hypotheses

1. Groups formed on the basis of gender and age would not differ significantly on locus of control.

2. Adolescents and young adults would not differ significantly on locus of control.

3. Male and female students would not differ significantly on locus of control.

4. Gender and age would not interact significantly for Locus of control.

Method

Sample: A representative sample of 120 individuals, sixty males and sixty females, ages 12 to 18 years (Adolescents) and 19 to 25 years (Young Adults) were selected randomly from Rampur district of (Uttar Pradesh) in India for the study.

Tools

Rotter's 20 item Locus of Control:

Rotter (1966) devised a locus of control personality test to assess the extent to which an individual possesses internal or external reinforcement beliefs. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the Locus of Control measurement scale items is 0.9290 and near to 'one', revealing that there has been high degree of internal consistency among 20 items in the scale measuring Locus of Control.

Procedure: Data collection for the present research work was conducted during the lockdown period after COVID -19 out-break in 2020. Following the Covid-19 Protocol, students from different schools and colleges from Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh were contacted through phones and email. After informing them about the purpose of the study, and assuring them about anonymity and confidentiality, they gave their consent to participate in the study. After getting consent from the respective respondents, the questionnaire was sent to them on Gmail In order to assess their locus of control. Through the Google Form, the participants were asked to respond to the 20 statements of the questionnaire. After a few weeks, the researcher was able to get the desired number of responses from the participants.

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The scoring was done according the manual and the obtained data was analysed using the 2X2 ANOVA.

Result : The current research focused on the level of locus of control in Adult males ,Adult females, Adolescent Males and Adolescent females. The sample selected comprised of 120 individuals selected from Rampur district. To measure locus of control a 20 item Locus of Control questionnaire (Rotter, 1966) was used. To assess these hypotheses statistical analysis were run through M.S (Microsoft Office). Statistical tool of two - way ANOVA were used to obtain the results. The obtained results are given here.

Table no. 1

ANOVA

Source of Variance	Df Degree of freedom	SS Sum of Square	MSS Mean sum of square	F Ratio	Significant level 0.05
Among group	3	1221.67	407.22	F (3, 116)=2.87	Significant
Age	1	1140.83	1140.83	F(1,116)=8.047	Significant
gender	1	13.33	13.33	F(1,116)=0.094	Insignificant
Age× gender	1	67.50	67.50	F(1,116)=0.476	Insignificant
Error	116	16445	141.77		

Table no.2

Means of four groups on locus of control

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Developmental Age	Gender		Mean
	Male	Female	
Adolescent	48.17	49.00	48.58
Adults	55.83	53.67	54.75
Mean	52.00	51.33	

Table no. 3

The critical difference at 0.5 levels on locus of control

Group	N	SED	Critical difference
A,B	30	3.05	6.11
A/B	60	2.12	4.21

In the, present study locus of control has been analyzed among female adults, male adults, female adolescents and male adolescents of Rampur district.

Table no. 1 for locus of control shows that there was significant difference among group formed on the basis of age and gender. Means for four different groups given in table no. 2 reveal that adult males groups has the highest score. Table no. 3 depicts that adult males groups significantly higher than adolescent males . So, hypothesis 1 was partially accepted.

Table no. 1 reveals that the results of adults and adolescents. Adults significantly differed to adolescents on locus of control. So, null hypothesis.2 was rejected.

Table no. 1 reveals that results of males and females. The mean results showed that males were not significantly different from females on locus of control. So, null hypothesis 3.was accepted.

Interaction effect for age and gender on locus of control is not significant. So, null hypothesis 4 was accepted.

Discussion

In this present study, the locus of control has been analyzed among female adults, male adults and female adolescents, male adolescents of Rampur district. The groups were formed based on age and gender. the four groups were compared among themselves on locus of control. the results were found as follows. Adults males were significantly differ to adolescents males on locus of control. And others groups found no significantly difference. It means adult males tended to blame external factors more often for their failures as they were found to have a mixed locus of control. However, all the groups have scored in the range of mixed locus of control. It means similarly adolescent females were found to have perceived the least amount of stress as the population involved in this study was more or less similar in reacting to

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objects or events affecting their lives. In the light of available literature, we found various studies with different results. Saricam. (2012) The study found a significant difference among age and gender as male students scored more on locus of control .The researcher found a remarkable difference in age and gender on locus of control. As male students scored more on the locus of control scale and reported having an external locus of control on the other hand females were found to have an internal locus of control which helped them get better grades. Thus, the study agrees to that of our findings and the researcher supports the notion of the research.

The results was showing the scores of adults and adolescents. The results adults were significantly differ to adolescent on locus of control. The researcher had observed that there was a difference. Age is supposed to be a decisive factor in any of the psychological attributes and here the case is not any stranger as throughout the study we had found a significant difference between adolescents and adults on the measure of locus of control and as expected adults were reported to have a better locus of control as compared to adolescents. Hence, it was concluded that adults have a better locus of control. Nunyia & domes.(2019) found a significant difference between adolescents and adults on locus of control with adults scoring the more is a justificatory thing as everything changes with the increase in age, so do people's perspective of life largely changes and they begin to attribute differences to their and failures. Every time they succeed or failed, they took a lesson and evaluate what gone wrong by praising or blaming either themselves or others. This happens as a result of learning, maturation and an increased sense of self-esteem. So, this study supports the notion of the research.

The results was showing the males and females. The mean results showed that males were not significantly differ to females on locus of control. The shows that male and female believes][that every consequences in day to day life. It determined by their actions. They also believes that by controlling their action they can control any of the other external of situational.

The results was showing interaction effect for age and gender. The results were insignificant interaction effect for age and gender on locus of control. Age and gender are equally influencing the locus of control.

Conclusion: The result revealed that four groups differed significantly on locus of control. The result showed that there was significant difference in adolescents and young adults on locus of control. The result revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females on the locus of control. The results showed no significant interaction effect for age and gender on locus of control.

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