



Impact of Locus of Control on Emotional Intelligence: A Study of College Students

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To assess student's locus of control and to identify the impact of locus of control on emotional intelligence among college students. Gender differences were also assessed in the study regarding student's locus of control.

Study Design: An exploratory research design was used for the study where data were taken from primary sources.

Place of Study: The study was conducted in two coeducational and two girl's colleges of Chandigarh in the year 2018-19.

Methodology: A sample size of 100 boys and 100 girls (50 students in the age group of 18-24 years from each college) was selected randomly for the study. Data were collected from respondents by using standardized scales viz. Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control (Indian

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Adaptation) and Emotional Intelligence Test. Tabulation of data was done and frequencies were calculated and data was further subjected to statistical analysis through SPSS software.

Results: Based on study findings, out of 200 students, 116 students including both boys and girls have showed external locus of control. From linear regression results, it revealed that managing emotions was positively significant at confidence level 0.1 with external and internal locus of control while empathy was significantly but negatively associated with internal locus of control at 0.1 level of confidence.

Conclusion: It was concluded from results that, most of the sample have more external locus of control followed by internal locus of control. As both the dimensions of locus are significant with managing emotions at 90% intervals. Furthermore, the results for empathy are negative but significant which means that internal locus of control has significant impact on empathy. No significant gender differences were found for locus of control.

Keywords: Emotions; emotional intelligence; external; internal; locus of control; personal control.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Locus of control is a belief, a generalized expectancy regarding personal control by people over their life-events that influence their lives. It is mediating variable between the individual and his life-situation. It refers to the perception the extent to which people believe that they can control the events that affect them, thus causing them to believe that they are the source of what happens in their lives. Locus of control is the ability to perceive outcomes in one’s life including one’s own actions and within one’s own control which are determined by external factors, such as chance, fate or luck” [1,2]. The concept was developed by Julian Rotter, a clinical psychologist who was influenced by Social Learning Theory after rejecting a strict behaviorist approach. Rotter expanded upon Bandura’s ideas of reciprocal determinism, and he developed the term locus of control to describe how an individual viewed his or her relationship to the environment. A person’s “locus” 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). Locus of control can determine whether an individual appears to believe that circumstances and events are under their own control or under the control of external forces. One would have an internal locus of control if he or she feels as though consequences of his or her actions are contingent on personal behaviours or characteristics. On the other hand, an individual with an external locus of control would expect that the outcome or reinforcement is a function of luck, fate, or chance and that this consequence is generally unpredictable.

An important feature of locus of control is that it is not reality that is being measured; rather it is an individual’s perception of control what happens in their lives, they behave as though they can. Most people lie somewhere in between these two extremes, believing that both personal effort and outside circumstances will affect the outcomes in their lives. Societies experiencing social unrest increase the expectancy of being out-of-control; therefore, people in such societies become more external. Acc. to Mohanty [3] “development of individual locus of control is linked with their family style, resources, cultural stability and experiences. Many people with internal locus of control have grown up in such families which have typical internal beliefs and these families focused on effort, education, responsibility and thinking. Parents generally gave their children rewards as they had promised them. In comparison, to people with external locus of control are ordinarily connected with lower socio-economic status. Age plays an important role in one’s internal and external locus of control. When comparing a young child and an older adult with their levels of locus of control in regard to health, the older person will have more control over their attitude and approach to the situation. As people age they become aware of the fact events outside of their own control happen and that other individuals can have control of their health outcomes”. Schultz and Schultz [4] also claimed that “children in families where parents have been supportive and consistent in discipline develop internal locus of control”. “Warmth, supportiveness and parental encouragement have been proven in studies over the time to be essential for the development of an internal locus. Locus of control becomes more internal with age. Age plays an important role in one’s internal and external locus of control. When comparing a young child and an

older adult with their levels of locus of control, the older person will have more control over their attitude and approach to the situation. As we see individuals who grow up in circumstances where they do not see hard work pay off, as well as individuals who are socially disempowered (e.g., people from lower socio-economic statuses), may develop an external locus of control. Evidence has supported the theory that locus of control is learned and can be modified" [5].

For young people, it is very important to have emotional control in their lives as due to lack of this control their performance will majorly have affected. It has been seen that due to inappropriate knowledge and lack of competence, school and college students are failed to get desired results in many completions. Researchers suggested that people considering themselves to be able to control their lives will have better emotional intelligence as compared to those who believe that their lives are controlled by external factors. As emotional intelligence is the ability to handle our own emotions and other emotional relationships. Karibeeran and Mohanty [6] in his study concluded that "emotional intelligence helps individuals to develop an ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge which regulates emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. It also focused on the factors like family, school, media and social work interventions that can help in improving the emotional intelligence of the adolescents". The Mayer and Salovey [7] model of emotional intelligence defines "four discrete mental abilities (also referred to as 'branches') which includes perception of emotion (the ability to identify and differentiate emotions in the self and others), use of emotion to facilitate thought (harnessing emotions to facilitate cognitive activities such as reasoning, problem solving, and interpersonal communication), understanding of emotion (comprehension of the language and meaning of emotions and an understanding of the antecedents of emotions) and management of emotions (the ability to prevent, reduce, enhance, or modify an emotional response in oneself and others)" Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, [8].

Emotional intelligence does not only measure emotions or intelligence. It opens up a new way of looking at how our thinking and behavior could be seen intelligent. According to Goleman [9], "the emotional intelligence appraisal measures two components personal and social competences. Personal Competence: self-

awareness (recognizing and understanding one's emotions at the moment as well as one's tendencies across time and situation) and self-management (using awareness of emotions to manage response to different situations and people). Social Competence: social-awareness (understanding the perspective of other people including their emotions and the meaning of what they do and say) and relationship-management (using awareness of one's own emotions and the emotions of others to manage relationship to a successful outcome). These models provide appropriate measures to calculate and improve the emotional intelligence of individuals". As Akintunde and Olujide [10] revealed in their study that individuals who could perceive, understand their own emotions as well as other's emotions performed well in their academic work and developed more positive attitude toward learning. They could manage their emotional behaviour efficiently as compare to those who could failed to understand their emotions.

As emotional stability of young adults is affected by the belief in the amount of control they have over their lives. So that the individual level of emotional intelligence vary depends on their perceptions of control in which both personal efforts and outside circumstances will affect their outcomes in lives. Therefore, locus of control refers to degree to which individuals believe, they are masters of their own destinies. It refers to the outcomes of our actions that depend on what we do or on things out of our personal control. It refers to the degree of individual perception who believed that they have the control over the events which affects their life. The level of individual emotional intelligence depends upon the perceptions of control whether the outcomes for emotional intelligence may come positive or negative. Research suggest that individuals with internal locus of control shows personality traits like self-motivation, better performance, good relationship management skills. Therefore, the present study was carried out with the objective to find type of locus of control and impact of locus of control on emotional intelligence among college students and the gender differences associated with it.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken with help of explanatory research design that explores impact of locus of control on student's emotional intelligence. This investigation was carried out from July 2018 to May 2019 at two co-educational and girl's colleges in Chandigarh.

From the website of higher education, the list of all government and private colleges in Chandigarh were obtained and four colleges were selected randomly. The selection of students was done carefully while keeping in mind the objectives of study. Thus, a total number of 200 undergraduate college students between the age of 18-24 years was selected by random sampling procedure. Out of 200 students, 100 boys and 100 girls (50 each college) were administered. The basic method of data collection i.e. survey method was used in the study for collecting data from students. The data were collected with help of socio-personal questionnaire along with standardized psychological tools. These tools were administered individually to get better responses from students. The students were apprised about the tools in detail and were given instructions to fill the questionnaire. The investigator remained present while the respondent was filling the questionnaire and any query asked was clarified. Before administering the test, respondents were informed about the research problem and were told that information obtained from them will only be used for research purpose and their personal information will be kept strictly confidential. Study standard instructions as per the tools were given to them. Enough time were allocated to participants for completion of survey questionnaire. To examine type of locus of control among college going students, Indian Adaptation of Rotter's Internal- External Locus of Control developed by Kumar and Srivastava (1985) was administered. It is a forced-choice instrument in which participants decides between an internal or external interpretation. This scale consists of 29 pairs of statements including 6 filler items and 23 items to be scored, each alternative key as to a belief in either internal or external control of reinforcing event. The higher the score (15-23), the more likely the participant is to have an external control locus (luck, chance, others etc), and the lower the score (1-7), the more likely the participant is to have an internal control locus. Strong evidence is provided by Rotter (1966) for the high reliability varied from .55 to .83 and internal consistency varied from .65 to .79. validity of scores obtained with the I-E scale.

Emotional intelligence of students has been determined by a standardized, Emotional Intelligence Test developed by Dr. Ekta Sharma in 2011 based on the Daniel Goleman (1995) test to measure emotional intelligence. The Emotional Intelligence of any individual

measured in five domains: Self-Awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating Oneself, Empathy and Handling Relationship. This test consists of 60 items in which five options were given to each item ranging from strongly Always (5) to Never (1). The scoring of these five components were scored as per 5 point Likert scale and total score was obtained from all items. The scoring for each statement in the scale is done in descending/ascending order for determining the emotional intelligence by giving a score of 5 for always, 4 for most often, 3 for occasional, 2 for rarely and 1 for never and reverse for negative items. For positive items, the range of scores varies from 5 to 1 and for negative items; the range of scores varies from 1 to 5. The expected score may range from 60-300 with high score showing high degree of emotional intelligence and low score showing low score degree of emotional intelligence. The Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency reliability was 0.68.

Statistical work- After data collection, the results were scored, interpreted, coded, tabulated and analyzed with the help of statistical tools. Percentages were calculated from frequencies. As linear regression was statistically used to find out the cause and effect relationship between independent and dependent variables and t-test was used to find gender differences.

The analysis of data was conducted with the help of SPSS software.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency and percentage distribution of college students socio-demographic attributes as reported by them has been presented in Table 1. From Table 1 it was concluded that around half of the sample 49% are in the age group of 20-22 years and 34.5% of the them in 18-20 year's age group. While majority of the sample 73.5 % belongs to Hindu religion followed by 23% which belongs to Sikh religion. As from the table most of the boys as well as girls (72%) belongs to nuclear families whereas only few of the students 28% are from joint families. It was also found from the Table 1 that more than half of the fathers 54.5% of both boys and girls were employed in private sector while majority of mothers 73.5% of both the samples were not working. As we see in the Table 1 the aim of both boys and girls fall under miscellaneous category which included fashion designing, dietician, psychologist, artist, singer etc. while 36% of boys and 22% of girls interested in join civil services.

Only few percent of the sample reported themselves to join medical (10%) and banking profession (9%).

Data related to percentage distribution of boys, girls and total sample with regard to their locus of control is given in Fig. 1. It was revealed from Fig. 1 that more than half of boys 61% and girls 55% have scored high in external locus of control while 39% boys and less than half of girls 45% have scored in internal locus of control respectively. Suvera [11], Fatemi and Hoseiniyan [12] and Saxena [13] in their studies showed similar results that males students have scored higher in external locus of control as compared to

girl's students whereas the results for internal locus of control was supported by the studies of Sherman et al. [14], Naik [15] and Saxena [13] who revealed that female students showed higher level of internal locus of control than males. As overall, total sample of both college students (58%) have showed higher level of external locus of control followed by (42%) students who have internal locus of control. Similar results are shown by studies of Goswami [16], Angelova [17], Kumar [18], Hosseini et al. [19], Thangal et al. [20] and Omoniyi and Adelowo [21] who found that majority of the participants have an external locus of control.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of socio-demographic attributes among sample

	Categories	Boys (n=100)	Girls (n=100)	Total (N=200)
• Age	18-20years	37.0 (37%)	32.0 (32%)	69.0 (34.5%)
	20-22years	45.0 (45%)	53.0 (53%)	98.0 (49%)
	22-24years	18.0 (18%)	15.0 (15%)	33.0 (16.5%)
• Religion	Hindu	69.0 (69%)	78.0 (78%)	143.0 (73.5%)
	Sikh	23.0 (23%)	16.0 (16%)	39.0 (19.5%)
	Muslim	3.0 (3%)	2.0 (2%)	5.0 (2.5%)
	Others	5.0 (5%)	4.0 (4%)	9.0 (4.5%)
• Type of Family	Nuclear	67.0 (67%)	77.0 (77%)	144 (72%)
	Joint	33.0 (33%)	23.0 (23%)	56 (28%)
• Occupation (Father)	Govt.	48.0 (48%)	43.0 (43%)	91 (45.5%)
	Private	52.0 (52%)	57.0 (57%)	109 (54.5%)
(Mother)	Working	29.0 (29%)	24.0 (24%)	53 (26.5%)
	Housewife	71.0 (71%)	76.0 (76%)	147 (73.5%)
	Medical Profession	11.0 (11%)	9.0 (9%)	20 (10%)
	Bank Professional	10.0 (10%)	8.0 (8%)	19 (9%)
• Aim	Civil Services	36.0 (36%)	22.0 (22%)	58 (29%)
	Education	13.0 (13%)	26.0 (26%)	39 (19.5%)
	Miscellaneous	30.0 (30%)	35.0 (35%)	65 (32.5%)

Note: Figures in parenthesis depicts percentages

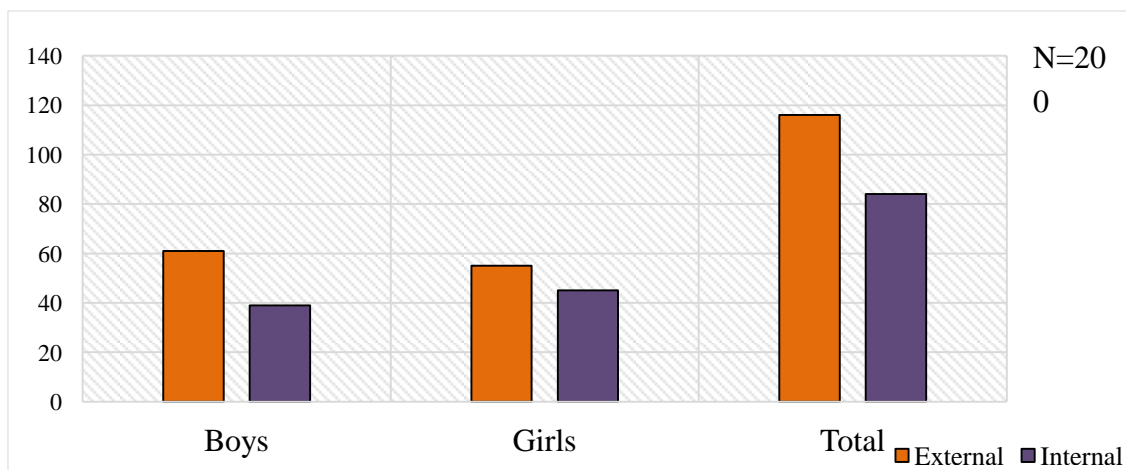


Fig. 1. Percentage distribution of locus of control among sample

Fig. 2 showed that 86% of students are more capable to manage their emotions, problems and frustrations more easily than who are not. The similar results are existing in the study of Goel [22] who found sample have achieved highest score for managing own emotions among the four sub-factors of EI. Out of total sample only 84% of them are more empathetic and easily understand the emotions of others also. About 72.5% of students are self-aware and knowing their emotions better than others. Minimum 61% boys and girls can handle their social relationship effectively. The respondents who are low in this category are facing more problems in relationships. There are very few percent of students, 56% who are self-motivated and have received positive self-feedback. They motivate themselves in healthy and positive way to achieved their goals.

As Table 2 presented the scored obtained by respondents with regard to their emotional intelligence. It is more clear from above Table 2 that majority of sample (70 per cent) have more emotionally intelligent than others who scored low and have an average level of emotional intelligence. From Table 2, it also depicts that the girl's students scored better and are more emotionally intelligent than boys. They manage any problem or task very effectively and develops strong relationships within society. The findings of Alonso et al. [23], Meshkat and Nejati [24], Senad [25], Sati and Gir [26] and Borooah and Sarma [27] revealed the greater values of emotional intelligence in girls and strongly associated with women rather than men.

To see the impact of locus of control on emotional intelligence, linear regression method

was used as the data is interpreted in Table 3. It is revealed from Table 3 that overall 2% variations are created by external and internal locus of control in self-awareness. However, the coefficients of external and internal locus of control are positively correlated with self-awareness that shows that any increase in external and internal locus of control will also lead to increase in self-awareness. From the Table 3 both the dimensions of locus of control i.e. external and internal are significant with managing emotions at 90% intervals. The coefficients of both the variables are positive suggesting higher locus of control whether it is external or internal help them manage their emotions and vice versa. This may be due to the reason that individuals who believe they control the events in their lives, are more likely to have strong aptitudes for monitoring and controlling their emotions. It may be explicitly said that individuals who have the ability to effectively manage their own as well as others emotions, possess more of belief that they, than any other factor, are the cause of whatever successes and failures they have in the life. Furthermore, the results for empathy are significant only for the variable internal locus of control which means that internal locus of control has significant impact on empathy. The coefficient of the variable is -0.486 in the model which means higher the internal locus of control of an individual, less empathic the individual is. These findings are supported by the empirical studies of Omoniyi & Adelowo [21], Bellamy et al. [28], Gildea [29], Rizeanu [30], Chiang et al. [31] found that there was a significant and positive relationship between locus of control and emotional intelligence.

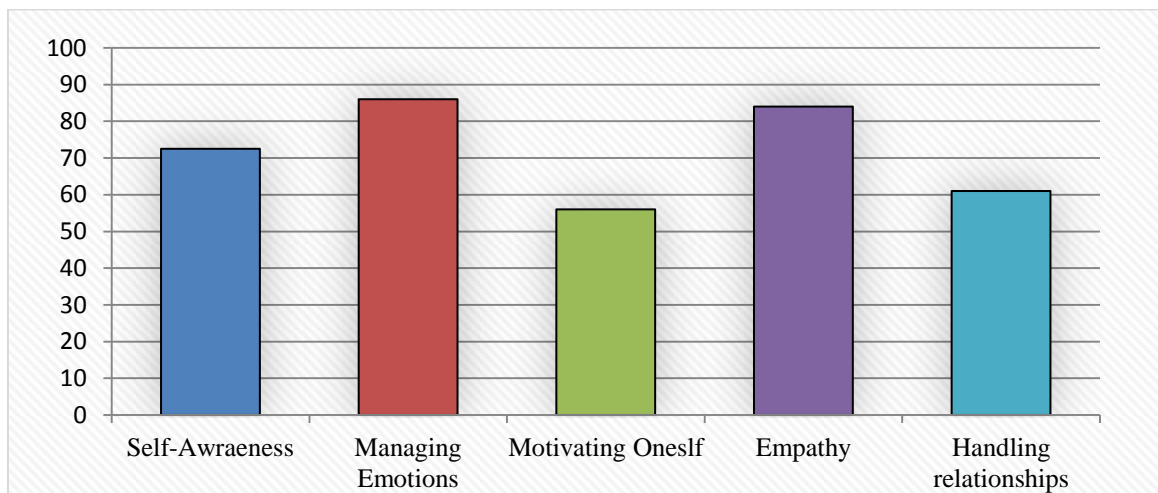


Fig. 2. Percentage distribution of domains of emotional intelligence among sample

Table 2. Overall emotional intelligence among sample (N=200)

	Boys	Girls	Total
Overall Emotional Intelligence	63%	77%	70%

Table 3. Impact of locus of control on components of EI and on total emotional intelligence

Dimensions		Un-Std. Coff.	Std. Coff.		t	Sig.	R ²
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
Self-Awareness	External	0.055	0.449	0.024	0.122	0.903	0.02
	Internal	0.002	0.367	0.001	0.005	0.996	
Managing Emotions	External	0.387	0.225	0.33	1.718	0.087*	0.07
	Internal	0.317	0.184	0.33	1.716	0.088*	
Motivating Oneself	External	-0.388	0.579	-0.13	-0.669	0.504	0.04
	Internal	-0.318	0.474	-0.13	-0.67	0.503	
Empathy	External	-0.536	0.349	-0.299	-1.537	0.126	
	Internal	-0.486	0.286	-0.33	-1.699	0.091*	0.05
Handling Relationships	External	-0.58	0.656	-0.172	-0.885	0.377	
	Internal	-0.535	0.537	-0.194	-0.997	0.32	0.05
Emotional Intelligence	External	-1.104	1.621	-0.133	-0.681	0.496	
	Internal	-1.07	1.327	-0.157	-0.806	0.421	0.04
Significance Levels:		*** 99%	** 95%	* 90%			

To find the gender differences in the mean score of boys and girls t- test was used. The data is given in Table 4. As per Table 4 there is no significant gender difference found in between the college going boys and girls with regards to locus of control. The results are in line with the studies of Goswami [16], Mohanty [3], Choudhury and Borooah [32], Naik [15], Mole [33], Rastegar and Heidari [34], Gildea [29], Stocks et al. [35] and Clarke [36] who revealed that there is no statistically significant relationship found between locus of control and gender. The study of Thangal et al. [20] was also not found significant gender differences for internal locus of control while for external locus of control the gender differences were found significant. On the basis of mean score obtained by sample for external locus where male students scored (15.04) higher than females scores (14.58). It may be due to that boys don't admire the interference of others

whether they are parents, teachers or peers, who will control their actions. They are always taking everything very causally and don't have any control over what's going around them. They don't credit of their success to their own efforts. Also reverse results were achieved for internal locus of control where female's students have scored higher (14.24) than the mean scored of boys (13.78). The study of Akintunde and Olujide [10] also supported the results for internal locus of control where girl's students scored higher than boys. As we see behaviour of girls lead by their own personal decisions and efforts. They have a strong belief in themselves and try hard to achieve success in life. They are more hardworking, confident, independent and their actions will less have affected by others thoughts. In general girls solve the problems very easily and are more socially adaptable as compared to boys.

Table 4. Difference in mean score obtained by students with regard to Locus of Control

Locus of Control		Boys	Girls	t-value	P-value
External	Mean	15.04	14.58		
	SD	2.57	2.71	-1.21	.22
	SEM	0.25	0.27		
Internal	Mean	13.78	14.24		
	SD	3.17	3.29	1.009	.31
	SEM	0.31	0.33		

4. CONCLUSION

From the study it was concluded that more than half of the total sample, including both boys and girls, revealed external locus of control whereas the girls scored higher in internal locus of control while boys scored high in external locus of control. As there was significant and positive correlation found in managing emotions with both external and internal locus of control. Also, significant and negative correlation was found between empathy and internal locus of control. From results it was revealed that there was no gender difference exists between boys and girls as per their locus of control. Research on similar topic can be done with larger sample size and individuals belonging to specific occupation (doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses etc.) for better understanding of variables used in the study. Also, in future more studies can be carried out to explore the relationship of locus of control with other variables like academic achievement, personality, leadership, job satisfaction and peer attachment.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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