

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 11 : 9 September 2011

ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.

B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.

A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.

Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.

Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.

G. Baskaran, Ph.D.

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Abstract

This study intended to explore school difference in locus of control among students of science subjects at secondary level of Wah Cantt. A sample of 270 students (120 Girls and 150 Boys) was selected from the F.G.H.S for Girls and Boys of Wah Cantt. A questionnaire consisting of 35 items was administered to measure locus of control. *t*-test (Independent sample *t*-test and Paired sample *t*-test) was applied for statistical analysis by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Results found that girls of government schools were superior to the girls of private schools in their locus of control.

Key Words: Locus of Control, Social Learning Theory, Learned Helplessness, Attribution Theory

1. Introduction

The important theory of motivation is the theory of locus of control. The term locus of control refers to the sense that one can affect the course of one's life, also called "Can-ness". Its exercise allows one a sense of freedom in feeling that one can correct one's difficulties. When one loses the belief that important events are to, some degree, controllable by one's action, one loses that vitality and courage that humans can display

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

in their encounter with hardships. Julian Rotter was the first psychologist who paid more attention to this issue of locus of control (Naila, 2000).

Locus of control plays an interesting role in education. Understanding its efforts can lead to more effective and worthwhile schooling for students and less frustration for teachers (Grantz, 2006). All these factors urge the researcher to do this research.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The study was designed to explore the difference between locus of control and amount of effort of the students in private and government schools. Locus of control in the present study was defined as individual variations in students' belief about what control the events in their lives, they themselves or others.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The study will be of great significance as it will help to identify the students' problem. It may be helpful in the improvement of quality education. It will enable the teacher to know how locus of control relates to his or her academic success. This study will be a proving method of increasing student internal locus of control. Depending upon student locus of control orientation, it has been found that they respond to positive and negative response differently.

Due to this reason, teacher will become well aware about the importance of locus of control. The school may design its experiences in the way that will foster acquisition of this view point. Present study may initiate guidance to the teacher in suggesting the method of infusing locus of control in the students.

The study will increase one's capacity for control on situation and will provide reassurance supports a positive self image and help the effect of stressors by reducing that often result in health breakdown. Confidence in one's control reflect security in the network a knowledge that its presence will reduce period of duress.

This study may provide information to curriculum developers for the selection of content. Locus of control may keep in mind. This research study may provide some guidance and direction in order to pave the way for further research in the same field.

Finally, this study will urge educators to recognize locus of control view point thinking as the most important aspect of life. Indeed it should be the means of breathing new life into others. It is once fluency, sensitivity to problem and ability to analyze synthesis and organize them correctly.

The history reveals that this subject was under discussion and research right from

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

earlier days, may be not as a subject but adopting different measure to have success was the practical approach. In 19th century and more elaborated in 20th century, many articles, research papers, workshops details and reviews educate us about different opinions on the term locus of control.

2.1 Locus of Control

Locus of control is a personality construct referring to an individual's perception of the locus of control of events as determined internally by his/her own behavior versus fate, luck or external circumstances (Grantz, 1999).

Locus of control is a psychological construct that refers to whether individuals believe that their behavior or, more correctly, the reinforcements from behavior, is under their control.

Locus of control describes the degree to which individuals perceive that outcomes result from their own behaviors or from forces that are external to themselves. This produces a continuum with external control at one end and internal control at the other.

Locus of control is a personality characteristic that determines the degree to which an individual believes that he or she is in control of life events. Rotter (1966) states that locus of control can be generalized into a basic dichotomy: internal and external. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that future outcomes depend primarily on personal actions, whereas individuals with an external locus of control ascribe actions to factors outside of their control, such as fate or chance. A theoretical construct designed to assess a person's perceived control over his or her own behavior. The classification internal locus indicates that the person feels in control of events external locus indicates that others are perceived to have that control.

Locus of control was viewed as a cognitive expectancy which defined the individual's view of causal factors related to these outcomes. Individuals having an internal locus of control tend to view outcomes as being under their own control, will, or initiative. In contrast, children having an external locus, ascribe positive and negative outcomes are derived from behaviors generated by the individual such outcomes to factors beyond their control such as luck, fate, or circumstance. In short, internal students feel outcomes (both negative and positive) are derived from a basis of empowerment, whereas external students view such outcomes from a basis of disengagement (Nunn and Nunn, 1993).

2.2 Theories of Locus of Control

There are three main theoretical description of locus of control in order to describe the ways in which they function and how the people behave in different situations. The name of these theories is as follows. The focus of the research was only

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

on attribution theory of Rotter.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

Theory is defined in terms of individuals' goals, expectancies, and social reinforcements. According to social learning theory, man's behavior is determined by his goals. Behavior is always directional. An individual responds with those behaviors that he has learned will lead to the greatest satisfaction in a given situation (Rotter, 1971).

According to Strain (1993), Rotter's social learning theory proposes that the probability of a behavior occurring is related to the individual's expectancy that the behavior will gain reinforcement and that the reinforcement has value to the individual.

Social learning theory of locus of control was given by Rotter. Rotter chose the label "Social Learning" because the theory stressed the fact that the major of basic modes of behavior are learned in social situation and are inextricably fused with need requiring for their satisfaction the mediation of another person (Naila, 2001).

Bandura's (1997) social learning theory posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. People learn through observing others' behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors. "Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action". Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation.

According to Morris (1993), the main idea of social learning theory remains the same that there is always an interaction among three factors, that being the person, the situation, and the evaluation of expectancies obtained by that person from that person's experiences

2.1.2 Theory of Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness theory is the view that clinical depression and related mental illnesses result from a perceived absence of control over the outcome of a situation (Seligman, 1975).

Learned helplessness is formally defined as a disruption in motivation, affect and learning following exposure to no contingent (uncontrollable) outcomes. There are three crucial elements to its definition; contingency, cognition and behavior (Christopher *et al*, 1993).

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

i. Contingency refers to the objective relationship between actions and outcomes and for helplessness to occur there must be no relationship between a person's actions and the outcome he or she experiences.

ii. Cognition is involved in how the person perceives the contingency, explains it and extrapolates from this understanding. The perception of uncontrollability (no contingency) may be accurate or inaccurate but once it occurs the person attempts to explain it. From this explanation they make extrapolations about the future and, when learned helplessness occurs, they expect that their behavior will not influence future outcomes.

iii. Behavior refers to the observable effects of being exposed to uncontrollable outcomes. Most often it involves giving up weaker attempts to control the situation or even failure to try to do so at all – a behavior incompatible with new learning. The response is also accompanied by negative emotions such as anxiety and sadness (Christopher *et al*, 1993).

In the course of studying learned helplessness in humans, Seligman found that it tends to be associated with certain ways of thinking about events that form what he termed a person's "explanatory style." The three major components of explanatory style associated with learned helplessness are permanence, pervasiveness, and personalization (Knopf, 1991).

Seligman (1975) believes it is possible to change people's explanatory styles to replace learned helplessness with "learned optimism." To combat (or even prevent) learned helplessness in both adults and children, he has successfully used techniques similar to those used in cognitive therapy with persons suffering from depression. These include identifying negative interpretations of events, evaluating their accuracy, generating more accurate interpretations, and decatastrophizing (countering the tendency to imagine the worst possible consequences for an event). He has also devised exercises to help children overcome negative explanatory style (one that tends toward permanent, pervasive, and personalized responses to negative situations). Other resources for promoting learned optimism in children include teaching them to dispute their own negative thoughts and promoting their problem-solving and social skills.

Learned helplessness in the classroom can result from teacher behavior. This discovery emerged from the observation that girls in grade school receive higher grades and less negative feedback in the classroom than boys. Although the feedback girls receive confirms their competence they tend to question their ability in the face of failure putting them at greater risk of displaying learned helplessness.

Pervasiveness refers to the tendency to generalize so that negative features of one situation are thought to extend to others as well ("I'm stupid" vs. "I failed a math test" or "nobody likes me" vs. "Janet didn't invite me to her party") (Knopf, 1991).

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

2.1.3 Attribution Theory

Attribution theory is a social psychology theory developed by Fritz Heider, Harold Kelley, Edward E. Jones, and Lee Ross. The theory is concerned with the ways in which people explain (or attribute) the behavior of others or themselves (self-attribution). This theory explores how individuals "attribute" causes to events and how this associated perception affects their usefulness in an organization (Woolfolk, 2007).

Many years ago, the social psychologist Heider (1958) introduced the term 'attribution' to refer to explanations people give for their own or another person's action believes. When attribution is based on an internal factor, it is called dispositional attribution and when it is based on external factor, it is called situational attribution (Sprinthall and Sprinthall 1995).

It is important to appreciate the differences between the histories of these two theoretical models in psychology. Attribution theorists have been, largely speaking, social psychologists, concerned with the general processes characterizing how and why people in general make the attributions do, whereas locus of control theorists have been more concerned with individual differences. Significant to the history of both approaches were the contributions made by Bernard Weiner, in the 1970s. Prior to this time, attribution theorists and locus of control theorists had been largely concerned with divisions into external and internal loci of causality. Weiner added the dimension of stability-instability, and somewhat later, controllability, indicating how a cause could be perceived as been internal to a person yet still beyond the person's control. The stability dimension added to our understanding of why people success or failure after such outcomes (Weiner, 1992).

Heider (1958) distinguished between two general categories of explanation, internal and external. Internal attributions implicate characteristics of the individual (such as ability, attitudes, personality, mood and effort) for having caused a particular behavior, whereas external attributions implicate external factors (such as the task, other people or luck) for causing an event or outcome to occur. He established that successes and failures are interpreted by an individual within this causal framework, Weiner added an additional dimension to causal interpretation when he proposed that the stability of the cause is also included in individual's explanations of outcomes. The distinction between stable, non-variable causes (such as innate ability for internal attributions and inherent task difficulty for external attributions) and unstable, variable causes (such as effort and luck respectively) was combined with his internal/external dimension to form a basis for classifying the performance attributions made by individuals (Martinko, 1998).

Attribution Theory of Motivation describes how the individual's explanation, justification, and excuses about self or others influence motivation. Attribution theory (Weiner, 1992) is probably the most influential contemporary theory with implications

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

for academic motivation. It incorporates behavior modification in the sense that it emphasizes the idea that learners are strongly motivated by the pleasant outcome of being able to feel good about themselves. It incorporates cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory in the sense that it emphasizes that learners' current self-perceptions will strongly influence the ways in which they will interpret the success or failure of their current efforts and hence their future tendency to perform these same behaviors.

According to attribution theory, the explanations that people tend to make to explain success or failure can be analyzed in terms of three sets of characteristics:

First, the cause of the success or failure may be internal or external. That is, we may succeed or fail because of factors that we believe have their origin within us or because of factors that originate in our environment.

Second, the cause of the success or failure may be either stable or unstable. If we believe cause is stable, and then the outcome is likely to be the same if we perform the same behavior on another occasion. If it is unstable, the outcome is likely to be different on another occasion.

Third, the cause of the success or failure may be either controllable or uncontrollable. A controllable factor is one which we believe we ourselves can alter if we wish to do so. An uncontrollable factor is one that we do not believe we can easily alter.

An important assumption of attribution theory is that people will interpret their environment in such a way as to maintain a positive self-image. That is, they will attribute their successes or failures to factors that will enable them to feel as good as possible about themselves. In general, this means that when learners succeed at an academic task, they are likely to want to attribute this success to their own efforts or abilities; but when they fail, they will want to attribute their failure to factors over which they have no control, such as bad teaching or bad luck (Weiner, 1992).

A major concept in the study of attribution theory is locus of control, whether one interprets events as being caused by one's own behavior or by outside circumstances. A person with an internal locus of control, an "internal," for example, will believe that her performance on a work project is governed by her ability or by how hard she works. An "external" will attribute success or failure by concluding that the project was easy or hard, the boss was helpful or unhelpful, or some other rationale. In general, an internal locus of control is associated with optimism and physical health. People with an internal locus of control also tend to be more successful at delaying gratification (Encyclopedia, 2008).

Individuals with an internal locus of control attribute success to their own efforts and abilities. Since improvement is possible due to practice and personal determination, students with an internal locus of control will be motivated to master new skills and reflect current weaknesses. Rotter found that this type of learner will actively seek out

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

information and is more likely to have good study habits and a positive academic attitude.

On the other hand, a person with an external locus of control, is more likely to experience anxiety when confronted with failure or novel academic tasks, because she believes that she cannot directly influence her mastery of the knowledge. She may conclude that she simply “wasn’t meant” to do the novel task. Also a student that attributes her success to luck or fate will be less likely to make the effort needed to learn because she believes extra effort will not impact the final result

Weiner (1986) asserts that people attribute their successes and failures to internal or external reinforcers. An "internal person" attributes successes and failures to her ability or to her effort. An "internal person" attributes her performance to causes for which she assumes personal responsibility. An "external person" attributes her performance to factors for which she has no responsibility and over which she has no control. If she fails, the "external person" assumes that the task was too difficult or that she was unlucky (or both). If the "external person" succeeds, she attributes her success to the easiness of the task or to luck.

There are two basic implications of attribution theory for education: attributional training hypothesis, in which students who are trained to attribute academic success or failure to effort are more likely to work hard than students who attribute their performance to ability and attributional feedback hypothesis, when teachers who show sympathy or pity when students fail convey the idea that students lack ability (Mayer, 2002).

Weiner (1992) said that all causes for success or failure can be categorized within these three dimensions in some way. This is because the dimensions affect expectancy and value. Some examples of success or failure could be luck, effort, ability, interest, clarity of instruction, and much more. For example, the internal/external locus seems to be closely related to feelings of self esteem, while stability relates to expectations about the future and controllability is connected to emotions such as anger, pity or shame. When one succeeds, one attributes successes internally ("my own skill"). When a rival succeeds, one tends to credit external (luck). When one fails or makes mistakes, we will more likely use external attribution, attributing causes to situational factors rather than blaming ourselves. When others fail or make mistakes, internal attribution is often used, saying it is due to their internal personality factors.

It is important to remember in the classroom that a student usually does not have one attributional style. Students attribute different things to different situations and therefore we cannot try to assess a student based on one situation (Siegel, 2002). Teachers must be sensitive to how a student reacts in any situation to watch out for certain attributions.

The attribution theory has explained the difference in highly motivated students

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

versus low achievers. High achievers will take the risk in order to succeed on an assignment. Low achievers avoid success because they feel that their success was based upon luck and that it wouldn't happen again (Thielker, 2004).

It has been said that obtaining a good education is the key to being successful in the world. On the other hand, many things contributed to school achievement, one variable that is overlooked locus of control. In context of education, locus of control refers to the types of attributions we make for our success and /or failures in school task. If someone believes that his or her success and failures are due to factors outside of their own control (Grantz, 2006).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample of the Study

90 students were selected from 9th and 10th classes of Federal Government High Schools for Boys and Girls Wah Cantt. and Private Secondary Schools Wah Cantt. So, total sample size was 270 students studying science subjects in Federal Government High Schools and Private Secondary Schools of Wah Cantt.

3.2 Research Instrument

To measure locus of control, data was collected by means of a 35 items questionnaire which was constructed by researcher and discussed with experts of concerned areas. It was improved in the light of their suggestion.

3.7 Data Analysis

Mean, standard deviation, and *t*-test (Independent sample *t*-test and Paired sample *t*-test) were applied for statistical analysis by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) (Table 1).

Table 1: Significance of Difference between mean Locus of Control of Private and Government Schools

Groups	<i>t</i>	Table Value of <i>t</i>	df
Private and Government Schools (Boys)	1.73	1.98	148
Private and Government Schools (Girls)	-2.018	1.98	118

DISCUSSION

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

The present study supports the findings of Manger and Eikeland, 2009 who argued that significant relationship was found between locus of control and school effort. The present study also found that there is a link in Government and Private schools students in their locus of control.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of above findings followings conclusions were drawn:

1. It is concluded that the boys of Government and Private schools were same in their locus of control.
2. It is concluded that the girls of Government were superior then the girls of Private schools in their locus of control.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of above conclusion the following recommendations for future research are given:

1. Private and Government schools are the two contributors in academic achievement but research should be conducted on other systems i.e. Froebel, Beacon house to check their locus of control.
2. As the items in the present research were more appropriate for the adults, it became difficult for secondary level students to understand the items. Though it was pilot tested, it is, therefore recommended that the instrument for data collection in this study be revised and improved or some other instrument for young adolescent group be implied to measure locus of control.

References

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. New York: W.H. Freeman. Retrieved Jan 11, 2009, from <http://www.learning-theories.com/social-learning-theory-bandura.html>

Christopher, Peterson, Maier, Steven F., and Seligman, Martin S (1993). Learned helplessness: A theory for the age of personal control. Oxford: oxford University Press.

Heider, F. (1958). The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations. New York: John Wiley and Sons. ISBN 0-471-36833-4. Retrieved March 14, 2009, from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_theory

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
11 : 9 September 2011
Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.
Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

- Knopf, A. (1991) *Learned Optimism*. New York. Retrieved Jan 20, 2009, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_g2602/is_0003/ai_2602000349/
- Manger and Eikland (2009). Retrieved Aug 9, 2009, from www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119038009/abstract
- Grantz, M. (2006). Locus of control and its impact on education. Retrieved 21 Apr, 2006, from <http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/control/education.shtml>
- Martinko (1998), M. J. Editor. *Attribution Theory in the Organizational Sciences*. goliath.ecnext.com/.../Identifying-leader-social-cognitions-integrating.html
Retrieved Aug 9, 2009, from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_theory.
- Mayer, R. (2002). *The promise of Education psychology* Pearson Education, Inc. http://wik.edu.uiuc.edu./index.php/Attribution_theory
- Morris, C. G. (1993). *Psychology: An introduction* (8th ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. Retrieved 22 Jan, 2010, from www.rowan.edu/library/rowan_theses/RU1999/0161THER.pdf
- Nunn, G. D. and Nunn, S. J. (1993). Locus of control and school performance: Some implications for teachers. *Education*, 113, 636-640. Retrieved Sep 29, 2009, from www.rowan.edu/library/rowan_theses/RU1999/0161THER.pdf
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2248/is_n125_v32/ai_19417322/
- Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs*, 80, (1 Whole No. 609). Retrieved April 24, 2007, from www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&se=gglsc&d=5000224082
- Rotter, J. B. (1971). *Clinical Psychology*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (1975). *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman. ISBN 0-7167-2328-X. Retrieved Aug 29, 2009, from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learned_helplessness
- Siegal (2002). *Learning and Instruction to Student*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. Retrieved Dec 27, 2009, from http://www.psychwiki.com/wiki/Attribution_Theory
- Strain, B. (1993). Locus of control, Achievement Motivation and selected variables as

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control

predictors of persistence for_low Achieving students unpublishf doctoral dissertation University of Texas, Austin, Retrieved Dec 27, 2009, from http://dianehoward.com/what_is_at_stake_in_observation_of_leaders.htm

Sprinthall and sprinthall (1995).The adolescent Education psychology,Mcgraw Hill Edition.

Thielker, V. et al. (2004).The relationship between positive reinforcement and locus of control. Retrieved Dec 5, 2004, from http://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/lablouin/psych200/project_fall01/locus_control.hm

Weiner, B. (1992). An attributional theory of emotion and motivation, New York: Springer-Verlag. Retrieved Dec 12, 2009, from http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/EdpsyBook/Edpsy5/edpsy5_attribution.htm

Weiner, B. (1986). An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotion, New York: Springer-Verlag. Retrieved Feb. 22, 2005, from http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/EdpsyBook/Edpsy5/edpsy5_attribution.htm

Woolfolk, Anita (2007). Educational Psychology. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc. Retrieved May 5, 2009, from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_theory

=====

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D (International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan)
Lecturer, University of Wah
Quaid Avenue, The Mall
Wah Cantt.
Pakistan, Postal Code 47040
aamnasalim@yahoo.com

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 9 September 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph. D.

Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control