

## A Study on Locus of Control, Self Esteem & Decision Making among Male & Female Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a hurricane period associated with changes that bring along new opportunities and risks which are mostly responsible for influencing one's mindset and along comes ample experiences which put both positive as well as negative influence over a person's behavior. Since there is a lot of role confusion regarding power exertion, mostly adolescents find difficulty in deciding control over life events. The prominence of peers and the dominance of parents along with personal ideologies complicate the decision-making. During this period, one is confronted with many events and episodes contributing to the development of self-esteem. The present research aims to study the relationship between locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making in male and female adolescents. A sample 60 adolescents (30 males & 30 females) aged 12-18 years were taken. Standardized scales were used to assess locus of control, self-esteem, decision-making. Data analysis found out non-significant results for association and comparison between male and female adolescents in context to the locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making. There are a plethora of mechanisms and changes occurring in the physical and psychological levels of adolescents. This phase marks making shifts of autonomy based on locus of control and one's self-esteem. Thus, the parents and teachers should encourage and support their children to achieve their maximum potential and inculcate positive self-concept in them and guide them to work with full dedication for their future goals and aspirations. They should have proper access to all necessary information before making an appropriate decision for their betterment rather than based on explicit influences.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, Locus of control, Self-esteem, Decision making*

*"Adolescence is a new birth, for the higher and more completely human traits are now born." - Hall.*

Adolescence is a period of critical development where the expectations and responsibilities of an individual increase manyfold. Prominent change in the cognitive and metacognitive skills is observed. As one is trying to gain over autonomy hence, decision-making becomes one basic development task. Now the individual strives to obtain his unique identity and starts developing his ideologies and perceptions

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regarding whatever phenomena or experience he encounters. As the impulsivity increases with age during this period, individual usually gets agitated with opinions of their parents and tend to overshadow their advice and indulge in individualistic decision making. Adolescents are exposed to many new things during this period which attributes to what they become in their later life. Recognition and popularity among the peer become a facilitating factor to enhance self-esteem. As being lured by the external environment teens usually develop a highly expectant ideal image for themselves which creates a bridge between what they are and what they aspire to be, which puts a lot of pressure on them to always to exemplary and fail to portray that perceived image makes them more vulnerable to lower self-esteem. Teenagers mostly depend upon their peers to constantly reassure their self-worth and make themselves feel more admirable, this acts as a source to boost up their self-esteem. There are plentiful implicit as well as explicit sources acting around an adolescent influencing his course of action. Individuals usually have different beliefs over the ability to have control over their life events. To have an internal locus of control one must unearth their personality aspects and social skills and have faith in their talents and accomplishments. An urge to be socially accepted and to maintain family values at the same continuum reduces an individual's autonomy to decide the outcome of his actions. A teen who becomes more hard-working and dedicated and takes full responsibility for his outcomes feels more confident and empowered as compared to the one who lets fate and external forces decide for him. Studies bolstering that there is a significant difference among young boys and girls regarding self-esteem and locus of control. Boys who experience internal locus of control and high self-esteem feel more empowered and assertive as compared to college-going girls. (Kohli,2018). Various variables such as parental educational level, age, gender, and type of school were somehow related to the variable of decisional self-esteem and problem-solving skills. It was observed that male adolescents have high self-esteem and tend to experience less stress in the decision-making process as compared to females who have low self-esteem find the decision-making process more disquieting. (Gucray,2003). There exists a positive correlation between decisional behaviors & self-esteem and problem-solving. (Gucray,2010). As compared to the students with an internal locus of control, students with an external locus of control face more obstructions due to the paucity of information regarding the decision-making process, self, various occupations, and obtaining other significant additional information. (Kirdok & Harman, 2018).

### ***Locus of Control***

The concept of Locus of control was originated by Julian Rotter in 1954. The social learning theory became the basis for its framework. Rotter's view was that behavior was guided by reinforcements either rewards or punishments and through these contingencies, an individual develops a belief about what causes his action, either his behavior or forces surrounding him. According to Rotter (1966), "Locus of Control refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life". According to Zimbardo (1985) "A locus of control orientation is a belief about whether the outcomes of our actions are contingent on what we do (internal control orientation) or on events outside our control (external control orientation)". Locus of control is a personality construct describing how people attribute control of their circumstances and situations and the failure or success of their actions. It informs us about the governing forces acting upon our lives. It is considered an individual's presumption regarding the forces determining punishments and rewards.

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Since there are so many factors influencing our course of actions and outlook of our lives based on that the locus of control is said to be either internalized or governed by external factors.

Rotter (1990) describes the internal locus of control as, "the degree to which persons expect that a reinforcement or an outcome of their behavior is contingent on their behavior or personal characteristics". People with an internal locus of control believe in their ability to influence their situations and circumstances. They are more confident and assertive among themselves. They consider their life outcomes being the consequence of their agency of abilities. They held themselves responsible for all the success and failures coming their way and take full charge of their life. They tend to be less influenced by people and generally have higher self-efficacy. they believe that they control their destiny. Rotter (1990) describes the external locus of control as, "the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement or outcome is a function of chance, luck, or fate, is under the control of powerful others or is simply unpredictable". People with an external locus of control believe that they have very little or no control over their life outcomes and thus they have only had the option to obey as their lives are being controlled by people outside them. They are more accepting and passive and mostly give credit to luck or action of powerful others for whatever happens in their life. Studies reveal that when an individual has a low internal locus of control, the power is exerted by the external forces which increases the likelihood to be victimized by bullying (Shamima & Rehman, 2018). A student with an external academic locus of control believes that the success or failure of his work is not in his control and is influenced by the power exerted by external forces and grades don't reflect any effort whereas a student with an internal academic locus of control strongly believes that the success and failure of his work lie under his control (Trice, 1985). Whereas in another study it was found that there exists a non-significant association between external locus of control and academic achievement of a student and no significant difference is seen among genders and streams selected by students in context to the locus of control. (Choudhury & Borooah, 2017).

### ***Self-Esteem***

Self-esteem refers to the negative or positive self-evaluation. It is a socio-psychological concept that discusses how one perceives his self-worth. This term was coined by William James in 1890. According to Rosenberg (1965), "Self-esteem is one's positive or negative attitude towards oneself and one's evaluation of one's thoughts and feelings overall concerning oneself. Self-esteem is a way of thought process which makes you think, realize and act in a manner that portrays self-acceptance and belief in oneself. Self-esteem enables one to conclude their self-worth and makes them respect themselves. As being an attitude towards self, self-esteem can be of two types: High self-esteem and low self-esteem depending upon one's thoughts, environment, and surroundings around them.

High self-esteem builds positive regard towards oneself, the person feels more assertive, optimistic, composed, determined, zestful, and harmonious. According to James (1890) "Self Esteem as a Ratio of Success compared to failures in the area of life that are important a given individual or that individuals success to the pretentious ratio". Low self-esteem builds negative self-regard, one feels discouraged, demoralized, pessimistic, incompetent, and non-productive gradually developing the thought of having potential and will to succeed. According to Schunk (1985), "Self-esteem implies an awareness of one's value system and one's emotional evaluation of one's self-worth".

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Differences can be seen among the levels of self-esteem of students coming from different locations. The students belonging to urban areas have low self-esteem as compared to the students belonging to rural areas (Ramesh & Jain, 2018). There exists a positive correlation between self-esteem, self-efficacy, and achievement motivation, implying that high self-esteem and self-efficacy will have high achievement motivation preparing people to perform better in life (Bhatt & Bahadur, 2018). The behavior and attitude of our parents, close kins, teachers, peers, and coaches towards us and our achievements and failures while growing up constitute our basic self-esteem (Yaratan & Yucesoylu, 2010).

### ***Decision Making***

A decision is said to be a choice selected after reviewing all possibilities available. Decision-making is a cognitive process involving many stages and internal mechanisms for selecting one appropriate alternative out of numerous choices available. Successful decision-making requires proper scrutiny of available resources, efficient, effective, and precise recognition of the problem and its expected repercussions. Wang et. al, (2006) defined decision making as, "process of preparing an option or a course of action over other alternatives based on given criteria or strategies". Several factors tend to influence and effective decision making such as experience, cognitive biases, and personal choices. Since a person is surrounded by numerous people in life such as parents, peers, and significant others it becomes quite a strenuous task to take independent decisions. A lot of critical thinking is involved to make a rational decision. According to Kreitner (1966), "decision-making is a process of identifying and choosing an alternative course of action in a manner appropriate to the demand of the situation".

According to Trewatha & Newport, (1982), "decision-making involves the selection of a course action from among two or more possible alternatives to solve a given problem".

Studies reveal that there exists a negative correlation between decision-making and peer pressure. Adolescents who are victims of high peer pressure tend to have lower decision-making abilities (Verma & Bansal, 2019). Adults who live far away from their parents tend to experience more autonomy and independence in decision-making as compared to ones living with their parents. Thus, studies reveal that hostellers usually take less advice and support from their parents while deciding as compared to the day scholars. (Kadam, Bajpai & Balamurugan, 2016). Research on adolescents stated that there was no significant difference seen between boys and girls with and without siblings in the following dimensions of decision making: self-esteem dimension, vigilance dimension, rationalization dimension, buck passing dimension, and procrastination dimension. Whereas significant difference was reported between boys and girls with and without siblings in the following dimensions of decision-making hypervigilance and defense avoidance dimension (Lavanya & Ahmed, 2018).

### ***Purpose***

The purpose is to study the relationship between of locus of control on self-esteem and decision making among male and female adolescents.

### ***Hypothesis***

- There will a significant positive relation between locus of control and decision-making among adolescents.
- There will be a significant positive relation between decision-making and self-esteem among adolescents.

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- There will be a significant positive relation between self-esteem and locus of control among adolescents.
- There will be no differences among male and female adolescents based on locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making.

### METHODOLOGY

**Sample:** The study was conducted on 60 adolescents aged from 12-18 years (30 males & 30 females) from Amritsar.

#### Measures

- **Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE)** – Given by Rosenberg (1965). The scale consists of 10 items that measure global self-worth by measuring both negative and positive feelings about self. It is a unidimensional scale. All the items were answered using 4- point Likert scale format. The options available range from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
- **Making decisions in everyday life** – Given by Mincemoyer & Perkins (2001). This scale consists of two sections having 20 items in section I and 10 items in section II. All the items are answered using a 5-point Likert scale format. The scale assesses decision-making ability among youth by providing statements about how one decides in everyday life and how often certain factors influence their decision.
- **The internal-external locus of control scale** – Given by Rotter (1966). This scale consists of 29 items and each item has two alternatives indicating internal and external locus of control. The subject is required to select one item from each set closest to their preferences.

#### Procedures

The participants were informed about the research. The data was collected by filling the questionnaires using google forms. The participants were asked to fill the responses honestly and were assured of maintaining the confidentiality of their responses. Standardized psychological tests were selected to collect responses and to assess psychological phenomena.

### RESULTS

The mean and standard deviation of the data is represented in Table 1. Table 2 represents the correlation between locus of control, self-esteem & decision making among adolescents aged 12-18 years. The responses of the participants were analyzed using t-test to see the locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making in adolescents among males and females is shown in Table 3.

**Table 1: showing Mean and Standard deviation data of the sample**

	Internal LOC	External LOC	Self esteem	Decision making
N	60	60	60	60
Mean	8.12	3.95	16.2	64.9
Standard deviation	5.05	7.30	2.88	16.7

**Table 2: showing correlation between variables**

	Internal LOC	External LOC	Self esteem	Decision Making
Internal LOC	—			
External LOC	-0.884***	—		
Self- esteem	0.092	-0.077	—	
Decision-making	0.034	-0.080	-0.226	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3: Showing independent samples T-test**

<b>Group Descriptives</b>						
	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Internal LOC</b>	male	30	8.53	4.94	0.63597	0.527
	female	30	7.70	5.21		
<b>External LOC</b>	male	30	3.33	6.83	-0.65106	0.518
	female	30	4.57	7.81		
<b>Self-Esteem</b>	male	30	16.03	2.98	-0.44510	0.658
	female	30	16.37	2.82		
<b>Decision-Making</b>	male	30	64.90	16.58	0.00766	0.994
	female	30	64.87	17.11		

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The aim was to investigate the relationship between locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making among male and female adolescents. The correlation between locus of control, self-esteem, and decision making was not found to be significant, which indicated the strength of association is very less. Similar, results were found in a study that stated zilch significant effects of Locus of control on autocratic decision-making were seen (Selart, 2005). Further, there existed no gender differences among locus of control, self-esteem, decision-making variables. Therefore, above stated hypothesis is accepted. Few pieces of literature in support of results suggest that there existed no significant difference between men's and women's self-esteem. (Tajeddini, 2014). The engineering students had no significant association with gender and other factors in context to the locus of control (Kumar, 2021).

### **CONCLUSION**

The present research was aimed to study the correlation and comparison between locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making in male and female adolescents. For this 60 students ( 30 males & 30 females) aged 12-18 years participated in the study. Standardized scales were used to assess locus of control, self-esteem, decision-making. As the findings suggest that there exists no significant correlation between locus of control, self-esteem, and decision-making among male and female adolescents signifies that how an adolescent is going through a turbulent period which makes things around him topsy-turvy. Since there exists a lot of peers and the societal pressure that teenager finds difficult to take an independent decision and with the overflowing exposure of new ideologies and theories further complicates the decision-making process. An adolescent is going through the phase of identity crises and is in constant search for his ideal goals, career path, and recognition accompanied by numerous physical and psychological changes. It is most likely to affect self-esteem and mental well-being. Adolescence is considered a breakthrough phase; thus, parents need to nurture and encourage their kids to develop into successful and confident individuals. Their support and guidance will help adolescents to move ahead in the right direction. Adolescents should believe in their potential and work wholeheartedly to achieve the pinnacles of their life instead of falling prey to non-ethical social groups and should restrain external sources governing their decisions and life events. The insignificant results may have occurred due to a short sample size or personal factors affecting adolescent's mental state while filling the questionnaires. Further research can be conducted to find significant results in accordance with the present study findings.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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