

Research Paper

Psychological Correlates of Locus of Control: Gender and Religion Among Diverse Populations

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the locus of control (LOC) orientations internal, chance, and powerful others among 142 university students from diverse cultural backgrounds found in Gujarat state. The sample was equally divided by gender (male and female) and religious affiliation (Christian and Muslim). A 2x2 factorial design was employed, and a factorial ANOVA was used to analyze the main and interaction effects of gender and religion on LOC dimensions. The findings revealed a dominant internal LOC orientation, with 127 participants attributing life events to personal effort and control. External and chance LOC orientations were less prevalent, with only 4 and 6 participants endorsing these, respectively. Male participants in the Islamic group showed slightly more diversity, with small overlaps in LOC combinations, such as Int + Ext (1), Int + Chance (2), and Ext + Chance (2). However, ANOVA results showed no statistically significant differences in LOC based on gender, religion, or their interaction. These findings suggest that cultural and religious contexts influence LOC perceptions but may not lead to significant variability in diverse populations. The study underscores the importance of culturally sensitive interventions to enhance a person's resilience and well-being. Future research should investigate additional demographic factors, such as age and educational background, to explore the broader implications of LOC in academic and clinical settings.

Keywords: *Locus of Control, External or Internal, International student, Religion, Gender*

Locus of control, introduced by Rotter in the 1950s, plays a crucial role in mental health. It refers to an individual's belief about their control over life events (Alex & Arjunan, N. K, 2018). Those with an internal locus of control believe their actions determine outcomes, while those with an external locus attribute outcomes to external factors or luck ((Zimbardo, 1985; Levenson, 1981). Research shows that individuals with an internal locus of control are generally more resilient, achievement-oriented, and have better life satisfaction and self-esteem (Rehman, 2017). Gender differences are noted, with men generally exhibiting a stronger internal locus of control (Marlin et al., 2001), but other studies find no significant gender differences in coping behaviors (Christopher, 2008).

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This study focused on international students in Gujarat, India, a state known for its cultural diversity and growing academic prominence. The research aimed to examine how gender and religion can be a determinant of locus of control among these students, who come from various diversity. By assessing their locus of control through the Levenson Locus of Control scale by (Vohra, 1992) with three dimensions: Internal (I-LOC), Powerful Others ((External)P-LOC), and Chance (C-LOC)). The study seeks to provide insights that can inform support systems, interventions, and policies to enhance the well-being of this diverse group of students.

Internal Locus of Control (I-LOC): Refers to the belief that an individual has control over their actions and outcomes in life (Fiveable, 2024). People with an internal locus of control believe that their choices and efforts directly influence the results they experience. Hammell (2006) claimed that those people who think they have the ability and opportunity to control their lives. When you feel you have control over your destiny (Dunne, 2024). Iles-Caven et al, (2020) showed that individuals with an internal LOC were not only more likely to believe in divine power, to admit a divine power helped them in the past, to ask for help from a divine power in the future, to attend places of worship more often than those who were external, but also that they were significantly more likely to maintain their religious beliefs and behaviors over 6 years compared to those with an external orientation. Additional exploratory analyses by gender revealed that compared to internal men, internal women were significantly more involved in all indicators of religious belief and action except for attending church weekly and obtaining help from religious leaders, where internal men were higher (Gregory, 2020).

Powerful Others ((External)P-LOC). Those who believe that their life circumstances are due to luck, fate, divine will, or powerful people have an external locus of control (Hammell, 2006). likely believe that what happens to you is the result of luck or fate or is determined by people in authority. May feel pessimistic and tend to give up if things don't work out for you (Dunne, 2024). Powerful Other's perspective suggests that individuals feel their life circumstances and outcomes are heavily influenced by the actions, decisions, or judgments of significant external entities or individuals (Bandhu, 2024). This is characterized by Individuals who may rely on advice or instructions from perceived authorities and tend to follow directives from influential people without questioning, A sense of limited autonomy, feeling dependent on external sources for guidance, and Emotional or psychological dependence on the approval or control of powerful entities (Ramesh, 2016).

Chance (C-LOC); Is another sub-dimension of the External Locus of Control (P-LOC), which emphasizes the belief that life events and outcomes are governed primarily by luck, fate, or random circumstances which categorizes how individuals attribute control over their lives (Vohra, 1992). Individuals with a strong Chance Locus of Control attribute successes, failures, or life outcomes to factors beyond their control, such as Randomness or unpredictability, Fate or destiny, Luck or fortune (Main, 2024). This is characterized by a sense of powerlessness in influencing outcomes, a passive approach to challenges, and expecting luck or fate to dictate results, assigning responsibility to external, uncontrollable forces, Behaviors and efforts may lack direction, as outcomes are perceived as unrelated to the effort (Bar-Tal et al., 2009).

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Objective

The focus of this study is to examine the influence of gender (Male and Female), and Religion (Islamic and Christian) and their interaction effect on Locus of Control among international students studying in Gujarat State.

Hypotheses (Ho)

1. No significant difference between Gender (Female and Male) in the measuring Locus of control of international students in Gujarat.
2. No significant difference between Religion (Muslim and Christian) in the measuring Locus of control of international students in Gujarat.
3. No significant interaction effect between Gender (Male and female) and Religion (Muslim and Christian) in the measuring Locus of control of international students in Gujarat.

Variables

Independent Variables.

- Religion (Christian and Muslim).
- Gender (Male and Female).

Dependent Variables.

- Locus of control (internal and external)

Control variables

- Only International student who is studying in Gujarat state was considered.
- Age ranging from 18 to 50 years old.
- An equal number of international students from both genders viz. Male and female and religions viz. Islamic and Christian were selected.
- Instruction was provided coherently to all participant.
- Psychological tool was well checked and provided respectively.
- Consent and rapport were established before obtaining information from the participants.

Design

It's a quantitative research study in nature where Levenson's Locus of Control Scale (LLOC) standardized psychometric tool was employed. The study used a 2*2 Factorial Design or Analysis of variance (ANOVA) F test at a 0.05 level of significance. The procedure, sample, and measures were as follows.

Data Collection

To fulfill the present study official permission was gathered to meet and interact with the international students, The participants were contacted individually. Before the scale administration for each participant, proper rapport was built, and confidentiality as well as the informed consent person data sheet was provided. After ensuring a participant was comfortable the administration of Levenson's Locus of control Scale was done. Participants were asked to fill in each item and did not leave any blank items. After completing the data collection, the participant's responses on each tool were scored by helping with the scoring key of the manual. Afterward, the scores were tabulated and interpreted.

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Sample

For the current study, the participants were selected purposively. 150 international students the major students found in Gujarat state are from the Countries of Africa viz Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa etc., Asia., Viz Afghanistan, America, etc., 142 were qualified for research due to their age limit between 18 to 50 years old, located at Gujarat state, and their readiness.

Table no 1 shows a gender and religion participant distribution

Categories	Population	
Islamic Religion	Male	36
	Female	35
Christian Religion	Male	36
	Female	35
Total	142 (N)	

Measures on Locus of Control

Levenson's Locus of Control Scale by (Vohra, 1992) extension includes three subscales Approximately 150 statements were selected with an attempt to cover the whole range, i.e. powerful others, change control, and individual control, rather evenly. The final scale consists of 42 statements, 8 each for P-powerful others viz, 8, 3,11, 13, 15, 17,20, 22, C-Chance control item no: 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 24, and I-individual control, item no 1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, 21, 23. These statements have thoroughly been revised and edited before being included in the final scale. Belief about control by powerful others. High scores indicate that other people control your outcomes. Belief about change control. High scores indicate that unordered, chance or random events control your outcomes. Belief about individual control, High scores indicate you believe that your outcomes are controlled by you, that your current situations and your rewards are direct outcomes of things you control.

Data Analysis

A 2*2 Factorial Design or Analysis of variance (ANOVA) F test was used to analyze the data at a 0.05 level of significance after that the data was interpreted and the result was printed out.

RESULTS

The current study was designed to measure the Locus of Control among international student concerning their gender and religion. In all Psychometric tools, the P value was compared with the Alpha value to determine the presence of significance among the participants.

Table II: Showing Two-way ANOVA, Showing the effect of Gender (Male and Female) and Religion (Muslim and Christian) on Locus of control

Source of Variation	F	F crit	LoS
Gender	2.243863	3.908741	N. S
Religion	2.243863	3.908741	N. S
Interaction	1.377734	3.908741	N. S

N.S. -No significant.

Results demonstrate the no difference between genders where $F (2.243 < F_{crit} 3.90)$, (p -value $0.136 > 0.05$ at Los). In religion (Christian and Muslim) results showed that $F (2.243 <$

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Fcrit 3.90), (p-value 0.136 >0.05 LoS). In the Interaction effect of variables gender and religion where $F(1.378 < F_{crit} 3.90)$, (p-value 0.242 >0.05 Los).

Table III shows the individual raw scores regarding the Locus of control aspect for Religions and genders

Categories	Gender	Internal Loc	External Loc.	Chance Loc	Int+ext	Int+chance	Ext+chanc
Islamic Religion	Male	28	0	3	1	2	2
	Female	32	1	2	0	0	0
Christian Religion	Male	34	1	0	1	0	0
	Female	33	1	0	0	1	0
Total	142 (N)	127	4	6	2	3	2

DISCUSSION

The objective was to examine the influence of gender (Male and Female), and Religion (Islamic and Christian) and their interactive effect on locus of control among international students studying Gujarat State the result findings tabulated showed the following:

Influence of gender (Male, Female) on Locus of control

Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they have control over events in their lives (Ramesh, 2016). It can be internal, where individuals believe they have control over their actions and outcomes, or external, where they attribute control to outside forces such as luck or fate.

Research has shown that men and women may differ in their locus of control beliefs. Christopher (2008) study suggests that men are more likely to have an internal locus of control, while women may be more likely to have an external locus of control. This difference could be influenced by socialization, cultural expectations, and experiences of discrimination or marginalization. These research findings suggest that both males and females are becoming more external. Females, however, tend to be more external than males on most locus of control measures. There are also gender differences in perceptions of control across behavioral domains. Factor analyses of locus of control measures indicate that males and females are relatively similar in primary factors but may differ substantially in some secondary factors. Two areas in which males and females appear to differ are the perception of control over interpersonal relationships and the perception of control over essentially uncontrollable life events (Puente et al., 2015). Gender differences also emerge in how locus of control relates to comparison variables. Internality, for example, appears to be more related to achievement for males than females and a better predictor of social adaptation for females than for males (Mohanty, 2021).

Gender differences

While both genders leaned heavily towards internal LOC, males in the Islamic religion showed slightly more diversity in their orientations, with small representations in external LOC (3) and chance LOC (2). Females, especially in the Christian group, had minimal variation, indicating a stronger inclination towards internal LOC without overlapping combinations.

Influence of Religion (Christian, Muslim) on Locus of Control

One area where their influence is particularly noteworthy is the concept of locus of control, which refers to the extent to which people believe they have control over the events that affect their lives (Filipiak, 2021).

Christianity, with its emphasis on personal responsibility and free will, tends to foster an internal locus of control among its adherents. Followers of Christianity are often taught that they have the power to shape their destinies through their faith and good works. They trust in divine providence and believe that God is ultimately in control of their lives, giving them a sense of assurance and confidence even in the face of adversity. Additionally, Christianity teaches that each person has a unique purpose or calling in life, which provides direction and motivation, contributing to an internal locus of control (Hart, 2017). Islam emphasizes submission to the will of Allah and acceptance of divine decree. While Muslims believe in personal responsibility and the importance of striving to do good deeds, they also believe that everything happens according to Allah's plan (Al-'Uthaimin, 2000). This belief can lead to a sense of fatalism or external locus of control among some adherents, as they trust Allah's wisdom and accept events beyond their control as part of their divine will (Ebrahimi & Yusoff, 2017).

When examining the influence of religious beliefs, specifically Christianity and Islam, on an individual's locus of control, the Findings of the current study showed $F(2.243 < F_{crit} 3.90)$, at a 0.05 LoS which implied that there is no significant difference between the two religions. While both Christianity and Islam offer unique perspectives on control and destiny, their teachings ultimately lead to similar outcomes in terms of how believers perceive their agency in life. This result is the same as a study done by (Iles-Caven et al., 2020). This result found no significant difference between men and women concerning church attendance.

Overall, while there may be nuanced differences in how Christianity and Islam approach the concept of locus of control, this study suggests that these differences may not be statistically significant. Both religions ultimately encourage believers to trust in a higher power while also taking responsibility for their actions, leading to similar perceptions of agency and control over one's life. Therefore, regardless of religious affiliation, individuals may find empowerment and purpose through their faith, shaping their beliefs and actions in ways that align with their understanding of divine guidance and personal responsibility.

Religious comparisons

Both religious groups displayed similar trends, with slight differences in combination categories (e.g., Int + Ext and Int + Chance). This points to a shared cultural or social emphasis across religious groups on individual responsibility, which aligns with teachings in both Islam and Christianity that often encourage accountability for one's actions.

Interaction effects of gender (Male, Female) and Religion (Christian, Muslim) on Locus of control

Focus on the present Research result indicates $F(1.378 < F_{crit} 3.90)$, at a 0.05 level of significance. That means there are no significant differences found in the interaction effects of gender (male, female) and religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim) on locus of control, this suggests that neither gender nor religious affiliation significantly influences an individual's locus of control when considered together. Research findings showed that for true peace to take hold, peace educators must begin a process of re-education centering on

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the individual's attributions and locus of control so that peace will resonate between people, not just governments (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2002). Simply means to build peace as a factor for mental health the improvement not internally or externally but both (Purwadi et al., 2022). Therefore, when examining the interaction effects of gender and religious affiliation on locus of control, the relationship between these variables differs depending on the combination of gender and religious affiliation (Holt et al., 2015). In this case, finding no significant differences means that regardless of whether someone is male or female and regardless of whether they identify as Christian or Muslim, their locus of control tends to be similar.

Internal Locus of Control (I-LOC) Dominance

The majority of participants (127 out of 142) demonstrated an internal locus of control (I-LOC), indicating a strong belief in personal agency and self-determination. This trend was consistent across both religious groups and genders, suggesting that cultural or environmental factors might encourage self-reliance and individual responsibility.

Low Representation of External and Chance LOC

Few individuals attributed their outcomes to external factors (4 participants) or chance (6 participants). This suggests that the population may have a relatively low tendency to believe in external control systems, such as authority figures (Powerful Others) or uncontrollable forces like luck or fate.

STUDY APPLICATIONS

1. Clinical applications

It helps to understand patterns of avoidance or fatalistic thinking in person. Interventions may focus on cognitive restructuring to promote agency and accountability. Individuals with a strong internal LOC may benefit more from cognitive-behavioral therapies that emphasize self-efficacy and goal-setting (Mehrtak et al., 2017). Those with external or chance LOC tendencies (even if rare) could require tailored interventions to build personal agency and reduce feelings of helplessness (Tyler et al., 2020). Understanding a client's LOC orientation can help clinicians design coping strategies. Bryan's (2021) study showed that clients with external LOC might need additional support to feel empowered in managing stressors.

2. Academic applications

It helps Support teachers in encouraging students to recognize the role of effort and planning in success, reducing over-reliance on luck. Educators can leverage the dominant internal LOC trend to encourage autonomous learning and resilience among students. Programs can focus on building internal LOC in students who show external or chance LOC tendencies to foster better academic outcomes. Career counseling can align students' perceptions of control with practical steps to achieve their goals, emphasizing how their effort influences success.

3. Cultural applications

It guides leaders in helping employees/people to focus on controllable factors like skill-building rather than attributing failures or successes solely to luck or chance. The strong internal LOC suggests that community programs could focus on empowerment and skill-building, as the population already values self-determination (Malta, 2023). For minority groups with external or chance LOC tendencies, culturally sensitive initiatives could encourage self-reliance while addressing systemic barriers they may face (Lwamasa, 2003). Religious leaders and institutions could utilize these findings to reinforce messages of

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personal accountability in both Islamic and Christian communities, aligning with existing teachings on self-responsibility.

Research Limitation

Statistical tests (e.g., Chi-square) could be conducted to determine whether the observed differences are significant. Qualitative data might provide insights into cultural or religious teachings that encourage internal LOC over other orientations.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the distribution of locus of control (LOC) orientations among 142 students from diverse cultural, gender, and religious backgrounds, focusing on internal, chance, and powerful others dimensions. The findings revealed a dominant preference for an internal locus of control across all groups, with limited representation of external and chance orientations. A 2x2 factorial ANOVA indicated no statistically significant differences in LOC based on gender, religion, or their interaction.

These results suggest that while societal and religious values influence control perceptions, such differences may not manifest significantly in diverse populations. The findings emphasize the importance of understanding cultural, gender, and religious influences on psychological traits like LOC and underscore the need for culturally sensitive interventions. Future research should explore additional demographic factors, such as age and educational background, to deepen the understanding of LOC's variability and its impact on resilience and well-being, particularly in international and multicultural contexts.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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