



Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Locus of Control among College Students: Role of Gender Differences

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control in light of gender differences among college students. The data of 80 college students (40 males & 40 females) were drawn from in and around Fatehgarh Sahib. General Self-efficacy Scale & Rotter's Locus of control Scale were used for the study. The t-test and correlation analysis were used for statistical investigation. Results indicated that a significant negative relationship has been found between self-efficacy and locus of control. Overall, males had higher level of self-efficacy as compared to females. Also, male students reported more internal locus of control than females.

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Introduction

Learning is a never ending process, we start learning the day we are born and it continues till we take our last breath. So it becomes really important to understand different aspects of the learning environment. Not only this, a learner plays a significant role in the learning process. So it is of paramount important to study the factors that could affect a learner's interests and involvement in educational process to facilitate learning. One of the important factors is LOC or Locus of control.

The concept of locus of control is derived from Social Learning Theory by Rotter (1966). The locus of control is a personality trait relating to one's perception about the control over his/her life events. This refers to an individual's belief regarding the outcomes in their life, whether the outcomes are contingent on the individual's behaviour or on some external forces outside their control. A person's locus of control is internal if they believe that they have control over their life. On the other hand if they believe that they have no control over their life, whatever happens in their life is due to chance, luck, and fate and by influence of others, then they tend to have external locus of control. In other words some see themselves as a master of their live and some are on the mercy of fate. According to Rotter (1975) these beliefs are based on specific past experiences and reinforcement histories. Locus of control has been found to be an important predictor of academic achievement. According to Shepherd et al., (2006) students who had high GPA scored high on internal locus of control. Another study found a strong positive relationship between academic achievement and internal locus of control among senior secondary school students (Kumar & Asha, 2017)

Bandura's (1977) construct of self-efficacy is another factor that can influence the learning process. It is an important component in one's ability; it refers to the beliefs in one's potential to carry out a course of action in order to achieve a desired outcome. It is a major factor in deciding an

individual's motivation, behaviour, feelings and cognitions. Self-efficacy is related to a specific task owing to the fact it may differ as per the situation. According to a study done by Valle et al. (2009) the urge to learn new things and gain knowledge in a particular area is related to high self-efficacy, individual's belief in control over learning and high self-regulation and time management. Previous researches conducted on students found a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement (Iovu et al., 2015).

Locus of control and self-efficacy are the chief behavioural construct in determining the motivation and effectiveness of the learning. Previous researches have shown a significant relationship between the two. Wood & Bandura (1989) found that regulation of performance system is related to one's perceived self-efficacy. According to Ashagi & Beheshtifar (2015) there exists a direct and meaningful relationship between internal locus of control and self-efficacy beliefs, whereas no significant relationship was found between external locus of control and self-efficacy. The current study is devised to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control in light of gender difference.

Objectives

The present study has following objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control among college students.
2. To access the gender difference in self-efficacy among college students.
3. To study the gender difference in locus of control among college students.

Hypotheses

H₁: There exists a relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control among college students.

H₂: There exists no significant gender difference in self-efficacy among college students.

H₃: There exists no significant gender difference in locus of control among college students.

Methodology

A sample of 80 college students (40 males and 40 females) in the age range of 19-24 were drawn from in and around Fatehgarh sahib using convenience sampling method.

Measures

The following measures were administered in the present study:

1. General Self-Efficacy Scale

GSE (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995) – This scale is a self-report inventory to measure self-efficacy. It consists of 10 positive items. Responses in the scale range from not at all true (1), hardly true (2), moderately true (3), exactly true (4). The total score is calculated by adding all the items and it can range between 10 and 40. Higher the score higher is the self-efficacy. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is between 0.76 and 0.90.

2. Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966)

The scale consists of 29 statements. The respondent has to select one statement which best reflects his or her viewpoint. Six items are filler items. Scoring will be done for only 23 items. A high score indicates an external locus of control whereas a low score indicates an internal locus of control. Thus, this scale assess whether a person has a tendency to think situations and events are under their own control or not Internal consistency estimates ranged between 0.65 and 0.79 and test-retest reliability are also found to be satisfactory.

Results

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control in light of the gender differences among college students. The score obtained on measures of self-efficacy and locus of control was analysed using Independent t-test and Pearson's product moment correlation with the use of SPSS.

1. Correlation

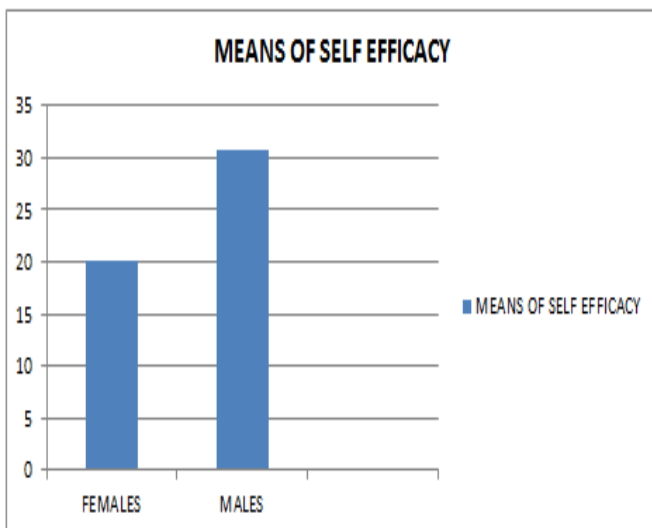
Table No 1: Displaying the Correlation between Self – efficacy and locus of control among college student (N=80)

VARIABLES	LOC	SE
SE	-	-0.64**
LOC	-	-

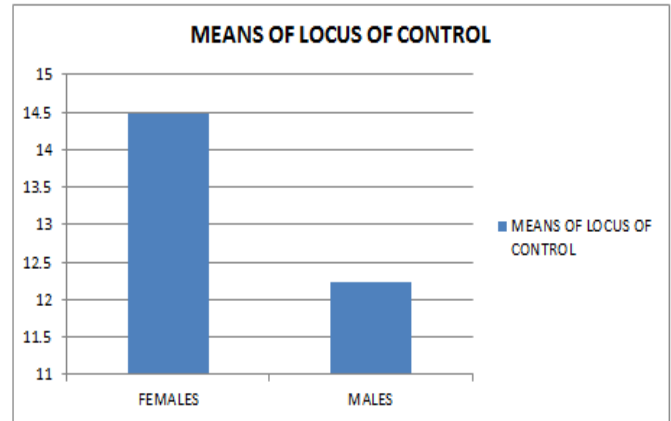
$p < 0.01^{**}$

*Note: LOC: Locus of control; SE: Self-efficacy

2. Bar Diagrams



a. Bar Diagram depicting the mean of Females and Males in self efficacy.



b. Bar diagram depicting the mean of females and males in locus of control.

3. T-TEST

Table no 2. Showing the gender differences in self-efficacy among college students

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	t	Sig
FEMALES	40	20.175	5.05	9.58	.000
MALES	40	30.65	4.73		

Table no 3. Showing the gender differences in locus of control among college students

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	t	Sig
FEMALES	40	14.48	5.17	1.89	.062
MALES	40	12.23	5.44		

Discussion

The present study endeavoured to assess the relationship of self-efficacy with locus control and impact of gender on self-efficacy and locus of control among college students. The result (Table No. 1) clearly reveals that a significant negative correlation exist between self-efficacy and locus of control ($-0.64 p < .01$) hence the results depict that individuals high on self-efficacy will have low score on locus of control (internal locus of control). The present finding is supporting the hypothesis.

Earlier research studies support this finding that there was high negative correlation between self-efficacy and internal locus of control. In other words, if self-efficacy level increases then locus of control tends to be internal (Judge et al., 2002; Mir Arzgar, 2014). Similarly, Nwankwo et al. (2012) study found a positive relationship between internal locus of control and high self-esteem

Self-efficacy has been found to be closely associated with locus of control and people having more internal locus of control will have a higher self-efficacy than people with a more external locus of control (Ansai & Fathiazar, 2005). Internally oriented individuals have high self-determination and personal competence. They don't blame others for their failure and generally believe that they have full control on their actions and its consequences.

Locus of control and self-efficacy together influence the success and performance of an individual as both constructs linked with goal setting, motivation and achievement (Bandura et al., 2001). Similarly, individuals with high self-efficacy and internal locus of control has been found to be more persistent in their task performance than individuals with low self-efficacy and external locus of control dimension (Strauser et al., 1998). According to Sherer et al. (1982), Individuals with internal locus of control will attribute their success to themselves and this tendency will likely to increase their general self-efficacy.

Likewise, Ashagi & Beheshtifar (2015) postulated that individuals with internal locus of control usually take full

responsibility of their actions, more self-sufficient and has strong self-efficacy (Cherry, 2009). However, Lefcourt (1982) study indicated that externally oriented individuals likely to doubt their self-efficacy and depend heavily on outside forces.

Thus, individuals with high self-efficacy are likely to attribute their failure to less effort or insufficient skill and knowledge because high self-efficacy individuals believe that they have full control over their life situations (Internal locus of control) whereas individuals with low self-efficacy usually doubt their own abilities and attribute their failure to other people and rely more on luck and destiny (External locus of control). Therefore, our first hypothesis is accepted which states there exists a relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control among college students.

Results obtained in Table no 2 indicate that there exists significant gender difference on self-efficacy among college students where t-value ($t=9.58$) came out to be significant at .01 level. The mean value for males was found to be (30.65) while for females it was (20.17) which indicates that male students were high on self-efficacy as compared to female students. Earlier studies done by Rajesh & Chandrasekaran (2014) and Singh & Udainiya (2009) also indicate that male students had high self-efficacy as compared to female students.

Also, Huang (2013) study found that males have high self-efficacy than females with regard to academic self-efficacy. Males have tendency to show more confidence in various aspects of life than females. Another study depict that female students have lower level of self-efficacy and self-efficacy strength than their male counterpart (Fallan & Opstad, 2016). One plausible explanation is because of lack of role models and insufficient encouragement which can contribute to low self-efficacy in females (Litzler et al., 2014).

Furthermore, sources of self-efficacy predict outcome expectations for both males and females (Schaub & Tokar, 2005). Mastery had been found to be strongest predictor of self-efficacy for males while social persuasion and vicarious learning for females (Lapin, 2001). Out of all sources of self-efficacy, mastery appears to be the most strongest predictor of academic self-efficacy (Klassen, 2004; Usher & Pajares, 2006).

Self-efficacy is also linked with sex-role orientation i.e. masculinity or femininity. General self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy were likely to be high in participants having high scores in masculinity (Choi, 2004). With regard to working with sex-role oriented activities especially masculine one, females reported lower level of self-efficacy than males (Whiston, 1993).

Self-efficacy determines an individual belief about his/her ability to achieve success in life. Low self-esteem is also linked with low level of self-efficacy. As females are likely to have low self-esteem as compared to males thus this could be the one reason for low self-efficacy in females. Therefore, our second hypothesis is rejected which states there exists no significant gender difference in self-efficacy among college students.

Results summarized in Table no 3 indicate that there exists significant gender difference on locus of control among college students where t-value ($t=1.89$) came out to be significant. Mean value for males was found to be (12.23) while for females it was (14.48) which indicate that males are more internally oriented than females.

Likewise, Haider & Mohsin (2013) study concluded that males have more internal locus of control whereas females have more external locus of control (Parsons & Schneider, 1974; Haider & Mohsin, 2013). Males attribute their academic performance to their own efforts whereas females attribute it to destiny, fate or luck rather than efforts (Reis, 1991) and females have tendency to seek for confirmation of their actions from the society (Fatemi & Hoseiniyan, 2016)

According to Sherman et al. (1997) females generally attribute their interpersonal communication and life experiences to more external factors so females have more external locus of control than males. Therefore, our third hypothesis is rejected which states there exists no significant gender difference in locus of control among college students. However, this present investigation attempted to study the relationship and impact of gender on self-efficacy and locus of control among college students.

Conclusion

The present study revealed that both self-efficacy and locus of control construct are related to each other as college students with internal locus of control reported high level of self-efficacy. Gender has significant impact on self-efficacy and locus of control among college students as males' display more self-efficacy as compared to females. However, male students reported more internal locus of control whereas female students reported external locus of control.

Recommendations

The current study has implications in the field of education as high self-efficacy belief and internal locus of control predicts the academic performance and motivation level of the students. High self-efficacy can foster sound mental health and emotional well-being. Teachers can enable the students to improve their self-efficacy beliefs by practicing strategies which include peer modeling, use of positive reinforcement and teaching coping skills. Self-efficacy and locus of control has a strong relationship with academic achievement. Thus, educational institutions should create an environment where teachers and parents can together foster more internal locus of control, self-determination, self-efficacy and personal responsibility in college students so as to catapult them towards success.

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