

## **Locus of Control and Academic Achievement of Undergraduate College Students of Guwahati City**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between Locus of Control and academic achievement of male and female undergraduate students of Guwahati city of Assam, India. A review of the previous literature has shown that positive significant relationship existed between internal locus of control and academic achievement of students. The study was conducted on a sample of 240 male and female undergraduate students, from various degree colleges of Guwahati. The Indian adaptation of Rotter's Locus of control scale was used to assess the locus of control of the students. The results indicated that there was no significant positive correlation between external locus of control and academic achievement of the students.*

**Keywords:** *Locus of control, academic achievement, college students*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Academic achievement is considered to be a very important factor to gauge a student's performance in an educational setting. The prediction of academic achievement is important in scientific and applicability aspect. One of the very important determinants of acceptability and popularity in the classroom has been found to be academic achievement and the achievement of high grades in examinations. It also have been found to be a crucial factor in determining one's future in the occupation sector and promotion related aspects. In fact academic scores have become a criteria upon which all the teaching-learning activities are measured. It has a crucial influence on not only the students, but also the people and the environment around them (El-anzi, 2005). An individuals' personality and his belief in the causes of his success or failures plays a very important role in influencing their academic achievement. College setting is a fertile environment, where an individual gets access to ample opportunities to show their talents and perform their best. It is very necessary that the youth at this period get motivated towards performing according to their interests and should take ownership for the activities they undertake. The aspect of Locus of control is one of the most important issues in academic achievement and educational scheduling in an academic setting. Various psychologists and theorists in the field of education, have emphasized on the factors which leads to academic achievement. These factors not only include the academic aspects, but the non-academic or the non-intellectual factors as well. Among these non-academic factors, the constructs of internal and external locus of locus, and their influence on academic performance is very important. From the point of view of the importance of academic achievement in determining and individual's success, the teaching and learning in colleges should also take into account the personality characteristics of the students.

#### **Locus of Control (LOC):**

According to psychologist, Julian Rotter, who formulated the concept in the 1950s, the Locus Of Control is a dimension of personality which helps explain one's traits and behaviors. Locus of control is a personality construct that reflects one's belief or perception about who controls life and the environment (Lefcourt, 1976). A Locus of Control refers to the extent to which a person believes they can influence or control events in their lives. It also describes what a person believes about the causes of events in their life. Locus of control has been described as a dimension with two opposing differentiates (Lee-Kelley, 2006). The concept of I-E (Internal-External) was first proposed by Rotter in 1966.

An individual's belief regarding the reasons of his or her experiences and the factors to which that person attributes success or failure is referred to as Locus of control (Njus & Brockway, 1999). In other words it can be said that locus of control is the generalized expectation regarding where control over events resides of an individual. This can either be internal or external (Rotter, 1966). People with internal locus of control attribute the causes of their successes or failures to their own abilities and skills. They consider themselves to be responsible for their own destiny. For example, a student who believes in his abilities and talents and is motivated to work hard for it and will be more likely to be involved in the learning process. There are also chances that these individuals would have a proper routine of study habits and a positive academic attitude. On the other hand, people with an external locus of control believe that external factors or situations are responsible in determining their success or failure. These people will be less likely to be persistent in learning and putting in

hard effort, as most of the times they consider luck or fate as responsible for the grades they achieve. Therefore it can be said that in the context of academic achievement, individuals with an internal locus of control have a higher tendency to believe that the causes of their achievement is related to their own individual ability and their lack of effort is related to their failures (Thelma, 1998).

## **II. EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL**

Having an "External Locus of Control" can lead to feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and depression. People with a high External Locus of Control believe that they are largely powerless in their own lives. They attribute events in their lives to powers outside their control. In youth, this can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness which contribute significantly to depression. It may also contribute to the phenomenon called "Learned Helplessness" in which a person has learned through experiences in their life that they are powerless to change or control things or remove themselves from harm or danger. This powerlessness leads to feelings of depression and in turn lead to poor academic performance. Martin Seligman's experiments with dogs demonstrated the phenomenon of Learned Helplessness.

**The following section deals with Methodological issues.**

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Objectives:**

- To assess the External Locus of Control of male and female undergraduate college students of Arts and Science streams
- To explore whether external Locus of Control is related to Academic achievement.

#### **HYPOTHESES:**

- There will be a difference in the external Locus of Control of male and female undergraduate college students.
- There will be a difference in the external Locus of Control of Arts and Science stream undergraduate college students
- There will be difference in the External Locus Of Control between groups ,when sex and stream are taken together
- There will be no association between External Locus of Control and Academic achievement of undergraduate college students

#### **SAMPLE:**

The sample for this study consisted of 240 undergraduate college students of ARTS stream (60 males and 60 females) and SCIENCE stream (60 males and 60 females) falling around the age group of 18-21years.

#### **INCLUSION CRITERIA:**

- Youth in the age group of 18-21 were selected
- Both male and female students were included
- Second year undergraduate college students
- Students from Arts and Science streams
- Government colleges affiliated to Gauhati University were considered
- Only students who had cleared all papers in the first attempt in the first year were included

**TABLE 1: SAMPLE**

	ARTS	SCIENCE
MALE	N= 60	N= 60
FEMALE	N= 60	N= 60

TOTAL=240

#### **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:**

Multi- Stage Purposive Sampling Technique was used.

#### **TOOLS USED:**

- The Indian adaptation of the Rotter's Locus Of Control Scale, developed by Dr. Anand Kumar and Dr. S.N.Srivastava to assess the locus of control. The scale consisted of 29 items. Higher scores indicated external locus of control on internal-external dimension of the scale. A Split-half indexed reliability coefficient of the test is .88 and test retest reliability is .85.
- A record of the Academic scores of the students was collected from the students themselves, as well as cross checked with the available college records.

**PROCEDURE:**

- Informed consent was obtained from the principals of the colleges as well as from the participants concerned.
- Formal permission was also obtained from the HODs of the concerned departments.
- The administration was done in the class-room situation in groups, where the inclusion criteria was taken into consideration.
- A time gap of 10 minutes was given in between the administration of the two tests
- Only students who were willing to participate in the process were included, nobody was forced to take part in the process
- Debriefing was done after the administration was over.

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS:**

- **Internal Locus of Control:** It refers to the perception of positive and/or negative events as being a consequence of one’s own actions and thereby under personal control.
- **External Locus of Control:** It refers to the perception of positive and/or negative events as being unrelated to one’s own behaviours in certain situations and therefore beyond personal control.
- **Academic achievement:** Academic achievement is the level of academic performance of the student which gives an index of his annual examination scores to determine his/her overall academic performance.

**TYPE OF RESEARCH:**

Ex-Post Facto Research

**RESEARCH DESIGN:**

2×2 Factorial Design

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:**

- Descriptive statistics of Mean, SD
- ANOVA
- Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**TABLE 2: 2×2 DESIGN FOR LOCUS OF CONTROL(LOC)**

	arts	science
male	N= 60 M=9.23 SD=3.716	N= 60 M=9.55 SD=3.296
female	N= 60 M=9.92 SD=3.828	N= 60 M=8.92 SD= 3.837

2X2 FACTORIAL DESIGN

TOTAL=240

**TABLE 3: ANOVA TEST FOR LOCUS OF CONTROL (LOC)**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33.046	3	11.015	.815	.487
Within Groups	3188.750	236	13.512		
Total	3221.796	239			

The ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference between the groups , i.e. the p value is higher than 0.05 and therefore the external Locus of Control level is more or less similar between the groups. The minimal difference which is found, might exist due to variability and chance factors, and not a real difference. Therefore the hypothesis- ‘There will be difference in the External Locus Of Control between groups, when sex and stream are taken together’, is rejected. In this connection, a similar finding was observed in a study conducted by Abdul Raffie Naik (2015) on arts and science undergraduate college students studying in Gulbarga City Degree Colleges. The results of the study showed that there were no significant differences in the locus of control dimension when gender i.e. males and females and stream, i.e. arts and science, were taken into consideration.

**TABLE 4 : CORRELATIONS**

		LOC (Locus of Control)				
		Total	Arts	Science	Male	Female
Academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	.052	.131	.003	.013	.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.423	.155	.972	.891	.352
	N	240	120	120	120	120

The correlation between External Locus of Control and Academic Achievement was not found to be significant, which indicated that the strength of the association is very less, i.e. increase in the level of External Locus of Control does not lead to an increase in Academic achievement level of the students. Bruno U. Onyekuru, Josephat O. Ibegunam (2014) carried out a correlational study to investigate the relationship among test anxiety, locus of control and students' academic achievement. The study also revealed that there was a weak and insignificant negative correlation between external locus of control and academic achievement of the students. Therefore the hypothesis – 'There will be no association between External Locus of Control and Academic achievement of undergraduate college students' is accepted.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

After carrying out the statistical technique of ANOVA, it was found that no significant difference existed between the groups when sex and stream was taken together in the context of locus of control. Therefore it was found that there was no significant difference in the means between male and female students as well as between arts and science stream students. A study conducted by Mina Rastegar, Nahid Heidari (2013) found that there existed no significant differences among males and females in the locus of control dimension. It was also found that there existed no significant correlation between external locus of control and academic achievement, which indicated that external locus of control did not play an important role in influencing the academic achievement of the students.

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