

Locus of control :



Locus of Control Locus of control refers to a person's generalized outlook concerning where supremacy over subsequent events resides. In other words, who or what is to blame for what happens. Julian Rotter's original (1966) locus of control formulation classified generalized thinking concerning what influences things along a bipolar dimension from internal to external control. Internal control is the term used to describe the conviction that control of future outcomes exist in mainly in self while external control refers to the probability that control is outside of oneself, either in the hands of outside forces like other people or due to destiny/chance. The development of locus of control stems from family, culture, and past experiences leading to rewards. Most internals have been shown to come from families that focused on effort, education, and responsibility. On the other hand, most externals come from families of a low socioeconomic status where there is a lack of life control (CTER, 2005). Persons with a high internal locus of control believe that actions result mainly from their own conduct and dealings. Those with a high external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate, or chance chiefly determine actions. Those with a high internal locus of control have better control of their behavior and tend to exhibit more biased behaviors than externals and attempt to influence other people. They assume that their efforts will be successful. They are more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation than do externals (Rotter, N. D.).

The important consequences of personal control occur between an individual's behavior and the environment. People are both products and producers of their environment. A person's actions will determine the aspects of their upbringing to which they are exposed. In turn, the environment

partly determines which forms of ones actions are developed and activated. Humans are neither driven by inner forces nor automatically restricted by the environment. Thus, humans function as contributors to their own motivation, conduct, and development within a network of equally interacting influences. Humans are characterized in terms of five basic and distinctive capabilities: symbolizing, vicarious, foresight, self-regulatory, self-reflective. It is these capabilities that provide humans with cognitive means by which to determine their conduct (Stone, 1998).

The theory of learned helplessness provided a model for explaining depression, a state characterized by a lack of influence and feeling expressed. People became that way because they learned to be helpless. During the course of their lives, depressed people in fact learned that they have no control. Because depressed person thought about the bad event in more pessimistic ways than a non-depressed person (noogenesis. com, 1998).

Optimism is an active, empowering, productive attitude that creates environment for success by focusing and acting on possibilities and opportunities. Optimism is a creative constituent for life that is inspired, productive and enjoyable. Research shows that Optimists live longer, enjoy better health and build better relationships work and sport. For some optimism comes naturally. For most, it is a positive attitude towards life that must be learned and cultivated (Lighman, 2005).

Locus of control beliefs tend to be formed beginning in early childhood and are influenced by early learning experiences, access to opportunities, and family cultural values. A child may progress from having an external locus of control to an internal locus of control during his or her development by

counseling. A child from a Middle Eastern culture is likely to view fate as a determiner of his or her life. The actions of this child may be interpreted by a counselor as passive and dysfunctional. If the counselor takes time to explore these culture laden beliefs with the child, the child will very likely feel uniquely understood and supported and then perhaps be in a position to explore how these beliefs are helpful at times (Marks, 1998).

The individuals who fall in the category of external locus of control believe strongly that the outside forces like other powerful people, fate, luck and chance decide their destiny and they fall as victims of learned helplessness. A child with a family environment characterized by warmth, protection, love and nurturance are more likely to lead to an internal locus of control while those with limited social power or material resources are more likely to develop external locus of control styles. Finally, it can be said that the family plays an important role in an individual's life, if he/she has an external or internal locus of control.

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