



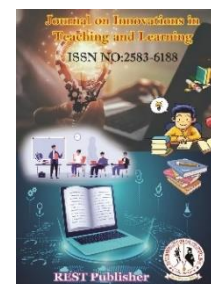
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Demographic Determinants of Locus of Control Among Working Women

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Abstract: *The present study examines the relationship between locus of control and selected demographic variables among working women in Punjab. The sample comprised 64 working women from Mohali, Punjab, selected through the cluster sampling technique. The study hypothesized that there would be no significant association between locus of control and age, locale, or marital status. Findings revealed that, although variations were observed across different demographic groups, chi-square analyses indicated no statistically significant differences. This suggests that locus of control among working women is shaped more by factors beyond these demographic characteristics.*

Keywords: Locus of Control, Locale, Working Women, Age.

1. INTRODUCTION

Julian B. Rotter proposed the idea of Locus of Control (LOC) in 1966, defining it as the extent to which people think they have influence over the things that happen in their life. While people who have an external locus of control ascribe success or failure to fate, luck, or outside factors, those who have an internal locus of control think that their accomplishments are the product of their own initiative, hard work, and skills (Rotter, 1966) (Lefcourt et al., 1984). LOC has been extensively studied over time in the domains of psychology, education, organizational behavior, and gender studies because of its close connections to performance, mental health, decision-making, and interpersonal interactions (Judge & Bono, 2001). Higher self-esteem, improved stress management, and increased motivation are all linked to a strong internal LOC (Avtgis, 1998). On the other hand, a dominating external LOC is frequently associated with apathy, low accomplishment, and frustration (Gottman et al., 1998). Mental health experts emphasize that fostering an internal locus of control is among the safest and most effective strategies for reducing stress. In contrast, individuals with an external locus of control tend to be more susceptible to influence and may feel dominated by authoritative or controlling superiors (Sakthivel, 2022).

Achieving Work life balance is an ongoing process involving the separation and integration of professional and personal roles. On the professional front, work life balance includes commitment to one's organization, striving for career growth, and delivering meaningful outcomes (Com et al., 2012). On the personal front, responsibilities may include caregiving, household tasks, and maintaining family relationships. In many cultures, particularly in India, caregiving duties such as cooking, cleaning, and looking after dependents are traditionally viewed as the responsibility of women, with male participation remaining limited (Mayya et al., 2021).

This gendered distribution of domestic duties can disproportionately affect working women, making the quest for work/life balance more challenging. While positive factors such as supportive marital status, favourable work hours, and fair compensation can help women manage their dual responsibilities effectively, the absence of a balanced structure often forces women to sacrifice their personal life to maintain career progress. Therefore, when WLB is overlooked, it can significantly hinder women's ability to sustain a fulfilling personal life (Khan et al., 2023). Working women's locus of control is significantly influenced by their marital status, age, and residence location, particularly in a culturally varied nation like India. Given their easier access to education and work possibilities, urban women tend to exhibit a higher internal LOC than their rural counterparts, who are subject to more social restraints. Due to their dual duties, married women also typically endure greater psychological pressure, which can have a substantial impact on their sense of control (Padmanabhan, 2021).

Age also has a significant role in the development of LOC. Lack of independence or job security may cause younger women to feel more externally controlled at first, but as they grow older and gain experience, they may eventually move toward a more internal LOC (Fiori et al., 2006). Additionally, it has been discovered that LOC affects decision-making, occupational satisfaction, and coping mechanisms during stressful times (Luthans et al., 2007), and job performance (Joo et al., 2016). This study uses the LCHJ tool to examine the Locus of Control among working women, focusing on geography (rural vs. urban), age, and marital status. Classifying individuals into internal, external, or average LOC and examining trends that can provide light on psychological orientation and its ramifications within the Indian sociocultural framework are the objectives.

‘The degree to which I can create relationships, which facilitate the growth of others as separate’ persons, is a measure of the growth I have achieved in myself”

-Carl. R. Roger.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A psychological component that affects behavior, decision-making, work satisfaction, and mental health is known as locus of control, or LOC. Rotter (1966) coined the term "LOC," which describes a person's perception of their level of control over their life's events. The idea that one's actions impact outcomes is known as internal LOC, while external LOC ascribes results to chance, fate, or influential people. Particularly for working women, this idea has expanded throughout time to include its relationships with gender roles, work-related demands, and family obligations. Self-control and the locus of control Despite their differences, self-control and locus of control influence health-related behavior and lifestyle. People with an internal LOC typically have more self-control, which results in better decisions and greater life satisfaction (Shahghasemi, 2023a; Botha & Dahmann, 2024). Control orientation and behavioral regulation work in concert to improve productivity and general well-being. According to studies, those who think they have the power to change their life's circumstances are more likely to adopt preventative health practices and maintain their long-term well-being (Fiori et al., 2006).

LOC and Mental Wellness Numerous studies show that psychological problems like anxiety and sadness are negatively correlated with internal LOC. Depression symptoms are less common in those with an internal locus (Khumalo & Plattner, 2019). Similarly, mood problems and insomnia were predicted by an external LOC in conjunction with perfectionism and low self-esteem (Lindsay et al., 2022). It has also been demonstrated that an internal LOC lowers perceived stress levels and improves resilience to life's stresses (Cheng et al., 2013).

LOC and Work-Life Balance Women in the workforce often struggle with work-family conflict (WFC). Research confirms the link between internal LOC and increased ability to efficiently manage both domains. On the other hand, external LOC is associated with stress, discontent, and inadequate coping mechanisms. External LOC, on the other hand, is associated with stress, discontent, and inadequate coping mechanisms (Karkouljian et al., 2016; Awaworyi Churchill et al., 2020). Compared to women who are unmarried or childless, married women especially mothers face greater time conflicts connected to their families (McMillan et al., 2008). (Hosseini et al., 2024) highlighted the value of family-friendly policies and social support in lowering WFC, whereas (Wang et al., 2020) found that gender, age, and background were factors in the manifestation of work interference with family (WIF) and vice versa (FIW). Women who have an internal LOC are more likely to be engaged at work and to have less burnout (Siu et al., 2002).

Effects of Society and Structure on Women's LOC Women may absorb the idea that success requires more than just hard work because of societal inequalities, particularly if they originate from low-income or rural backgrounds. In patriarchal societies, where women have less access to education, mobility, and employment prospects, this is especially noticeable (Sakthivel, 2022).

The productivity of women from lower-income families is further impacted by caregiving duties (Sahni et al., 2025). To empower women and promote internal LOC, supportive work policies and fair organizational structures are essential (Com et al., 2012) (Hosseini et al., 2024). Additionally, women's internal control orientation has been proven to be much improved by professional counselling and empowerment courses (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Career Development and LOC Career advancement perceptions are also influenced by locus of control. According to (Caliendo et al., 2022), those with internal LOC are more likely to think that training will result in benefits down the road, even if actual pay stays the same. This finding emphasizes the motivational value of control orientation. According to (Simmers & McMurray, 2022), however, internal LOC is essential for overcoming professional obstacles, particularly in varied and changing work contexts, even while traditional values like hard labor are

important. Women with more ambitions and leadership qualities are those who feel they have control over their career paths (Twenge & Campbell, 2001).

Age, marital status, and demographics The perception of control is significantly influenced by age and marital status. While younger women might deal with external constraints and professional insecurity, older women tend to have more internal LOC as they accumulate life experience. Work-life balance differs by age and gender (Mayya et al., 2021). Similarly, Gridiron (2018) found that the inability to balance roles can increase anxiety and depression in women, especially those with children. Additionally, studies indicate that because they are exposed to a wider range of occupations and have greater access to resources, urban women experience stronger internal LOC than their rural counterparts (Lefcourt et al., 1984).

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The concept of locus of control, which refers to the extent to which individuals believe that outcomes in their lives are determined by their own actions (internal locus) or by external factors such as fate, luck, or powerful others (external locus), is an important psychological construct that shapes behavior, decision-making, and coping strategies. Among working women, the locus of control becomes especially significant because they often negotiate multiple roles in professional and personal domains. Understanding how demographic variables—such as age, education, marital status, income level, and work experience—influence their locus of control is crucial for promoting both individual well-being and organizational productivity.

The need for this study arises from the changing socio-economic landscape, where women are increasingly participating in the workforce and assuming leadership roles. Yet, they continue to face unique challenges, including gender stereotypes, work–life balance pressures, and unequal career opportunities. By examining the demographic determinants of their locus of control, this study can help identify patterns that influence resilience, motivation, job satisfaction, and career advancement. The significance of this study lies in its potential applications. For organizations, insights into the relationship between demographics and locus of control can inform policies and training programs that empower women to develop a stronger internal locus of control, leading to higher self-efficacy and better performance. For policymakers, the findings can guide initiatives aimed at supporting women’s career growth and mental health. On a broader level, the study contributes to psychological research by highlighting how socio-demographic factors interact with personality constructs in shaping behavior. In sum, this research is vital for creating supportive environments that enhance working women’s sense of control over their lives and careers, thereby contributing to gender equity and organizational success.

Objective of The Study

1. To study the distribution of working women on the basis of locus of control.
2. To compare locus of control of working women on the basis of age.
3. To compare locus of control of working women on the basis of locale.
4. To compare locus of control of working women on the basis of their marital status.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant association between locus of control and age of working women.
2. There is no significant association between locus of control and locale of working women.
3. There is no significant association between locus of control and marital status of working women.

Methodology

The main objectives of this were to study the demographic determinants of locus of control among working women. Descriptive method was used in the present study, which tries to explore the locus of control in relation to their locale, age and marital status of working women.

Research Tool

Locus of Control Scale by Hasnain and Joshi (1992) has been used for data collection. This is a 36 item scale that contains 16 positive items which measure internal locus of control and 20 negative items that measure external locus of control. The subjects have to respond in terms of ‘Always’, ‘Sometimes’, ‘Never’ scores of 2, 1 and 0 are given to the positive items. The scoring on negative items are done in a reverse order. The highest score on the scale is 72 and the lowest is 0 and higher score on the scale indicates internally oriented behaviour and lower score shows externally orientation while the middle scores depict normal orientation.

2(11.11%) of working women of rural area has external as well as internal orientation whereas 6(21.42%) of working women of rural area has neutral orientation. The chi-square value of 3.66, shows that there is no statistically significant correlation between locus of control and location, indicating that working women's locus of control is not significantly influenced by their urban or rural home.

TABLE 3. Cross Tabulation of Locus of Control among Working Women on the Basis of Marital Status

Marital status	Locus of Control						Total
	External		Internal		Neutral Orientation		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Single	10	55.55	12	66.66	20	71.42	42
Married	4	22.22	4	22.22	6	21.42	14
Separated	4	22.22	2	11.11	2	7.14	64
Total	18		18		28		
Chi-square= 1.18			df=4 (Not Significant)				

Table 3 shows that locus of control among working women on the basis of their marital status. Of the 64 working women in the sample, 42 are unmarried, 14 are married, and 8 are separated. According to the study, 10 (55.55%) of the unmarried women have an external orientation, 12 (66.66%) have an interior orientation, and 20 (71.42%) have a neutral orientation. Of married women, 6 (21.42%) shows neutral orientation, while 4 (22.22%) shows both internal and external orientation. Comparably, among the women who are separated, two (11.11%) have an internal orientation, two (22.22%) have an exterior orientation, and two (7.14%) have a neutral orientation. The chi-square value of 1.18, shows that there is no statistically significant correlation between locus of control and marital status, indicating that working women locus of control is not significantly influenced by their being single, married or separated.

5. CONCLUSION

- The results of the study reveal that age does not have a significant association with the locus of control among working women. Although some variations were observed in the orientation patterns across different age groups, these differences were not statistically significant, as indicated by the chi-square value of 6.576. Women in all age categories—20–30 years, 31–40 years, and 40+ years—exhibited a mix of internal, external, and neutral orientations. This suggests that age alone does not play a decisive role in shaping the locus of control of working women in Mohali, and other demographic or psychosocial factors may have a greater influence.
- The findings indicate that location (urban or rural residence) does not have a significant influence on the locus of control among working women. While the majority of women from both urban and rural areas displayed a mix of internal, external, and neutral orientations, the chi-square value of 3.66 confirmed that these differences were not statistically significant. This suggests that the locus of control of working women in Mohali is not determined by their place of residence, and factors other than location may play a more prominent role in shaping their control orientations.
- The findings of the study indicate that marital status does not significantly influence the locus of control among working women. Although variations were observed in the distribution of internal, external, and neutral orientations across unmarried, married, and separated women, these differences were not statistically significant, as reflected by the chi-square value of 1.18. This suggests that the locus of control orientation among working women is shaped more by factors other than marital status. Therefore, whether a woman is unmarried, married, or separated does not appear to play a decisive role in determining her locus of control.

Discussion

The present study reveals that demographic variables such as age, location, and marital status do not exert a significant influence on the locus of control among working women in Mohali. While some variations in orientation patterns were observed across groups, these differences were statistically insignificant, as indicated by the chi-square values. This finding suggests that locus of control is more likely shaped by psychosocial, cultural, or personality-related factors rather than basic demographic characteristics. The absence of a significant association between age and locus of control supports earlier research indicating that control orientations remain relatively stable across adulthood, with only minor shifts resulting from life experiences (Lefcourt, 2014). Women across age groups—20–30 years, 31–40 years, and 40+ years—demonstrated mixed orientations, suggesting that developmental stage alone does not play a decisive role in shaping perceptions of control. Similarly, the lack of

significant differences based on location (urban vs. rural) aligns with studies highlighting the diminishing urban–rural divide due to globalization, technological access, and educational opportunities (Rotter, 1990; Singh & Kaur, 2018). Regardless of residence, women displayed internal, external, and neutral orientations, pointing toward the greater influence of socialization processes and workplace environments. The non-significant impact of marital status also echoes earlier findings that emphasize personality traits and workplace context over family structure in determining control orientations (Chhabra & Pandey, 2016). Whether single, married, or separated, women exhibited similar patterns, suggesting that personal beliefs and organizational support may play a more crucial role than marital circumstances. Overall, the findings indicate that locus of control among working women is less determined by demographic factors and more by psychological resilience, social support systems, and occupational contexts. Future research should therefore shift its focus toward these psychosocial determinants to provide a more comprehensive understanding of control orientations among working women.

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