

The Research of Medical Science Review

Received: 20 November, 2024
Accepted: 20 December, 2024
Published: 27 December, 2024

ISSN: 3007-1208 | 3007-1216
Volume 2, Issue 3, 2024

LOCUS OF CONTROL: A CONCEPT ANALYSIS

Faiza Parveen^{*1}, Nausheen Abdullah²

^{*1}Student of MSN at AFPGMI, NUMS, Post RN Bsc, Charge Nurse at Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Rwp

²Post RN Bsc, Charge Nurse at Institute of Urology & Transplantation, Rwp

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This concept analysis has been done to strengthen the epistemological foundation and to clarify the ontology of the concept "Locus of Control, LOC" by using the Walker and Avant Concept Analysis approach (Walker L. O. & Avant K. C., 2005). Hence, there is no concept analysis has been done on locus of control and locus of control which is an important aspect of personality.

Method: This concept analysis was done by using the dictionaries to get the etymological and semantic meaning of this concept and diverse online literatures 'PubMed', CINAHL, Google Scholar & Science Direct were used to analyze this concept and to understand this concept in relation to human nature and specifically nursing.

Results: It revealed that emotional stability may be a predisposing factor for internal locus of control. Thus, the study results indicated that people with higher emotional stability and a stronger internal locus of control are more likely to engage in positive behavior.

Conclusion: Therefore, to promote positive behavior, people's self-control awareness must be strengthened through education to enable them to remain calm and peaceful.

Keywords: Concept analysis; Depression; Health outcomes; Locus of control; Nurses

INTRODUCTION

The paper is based on an analysis of an important concept of personality which plays a major part in someone overall performance in life course. This concept of Locus of Control is also very crucial for the nursing profession as they are the one who are managing patients with different type of diseases and also the patients are from different background have their own preferences and locus of control. So, for the better outcomes patient's and medical professional's locus of control influences the recovery journey either positively or negatively.

Locus of Control & Nursing:

Positive psychological and behavioral effects are directly related with strong internal locus of control and on a contrary external locus of control may leads to negative effects and unfavorable fight with diseases in patients and poor performance in healthcare professionals. A study indicated that this concept is closely related to quality of life. ²⁴ Multiple empirical studies reported the beneficial effect of LOC and different unfavorable effects of the external LOC, such as depression ¹¹, burnout ⁴, deviation in physical health ¹⁶, psychological and physiological distress ¹³, psychological disorders ⁷, job strains e.g., job dissatisfaction, symptoms, and emotional distress ^{.24} The purpose of this is to analyze the concept of locus of control thoroughly, which is generalized problem solving expectancy and its relation to the nurses as no concept analysis on this specific topic has been done with regard to nursing perspective.

The Research of Medical Science Review

Method of concept analysis

Design:

This concept analysis was done by using the walker & Avant Concept Analysis approach ²⁵ to get the highlights of the concept by defining attribute, consequences, model & contrary cases and to develop an in depth analysis of this concept.⁶

Walker and Avant Method for Concept Analysis: Eight-Step Method	
<i>Step 1</i>	Select a concept
<i>Step 2</i>	Determine the aims
<i>Step 3</i>	Identify all uses of the concept possible
<i>Step 4</i>	Determine the defining attributes
<i>Step 5</i>	Identify a model case
<i>Step 6</i>	Identify borderline, contrary cases
<i>Step 7</i>	Identify antecedents and consequences
<i>Step 8</i>	Define empirical referents

Table: 01

Material:

This concept analysis was done by using the dictionaries and articles from online search engines e.g. PubMed, Google Scholar, Science direct, online libraries of Psychology, Psychiatry and Social Sciences to get the in-depth understanding of the concept. This was done by defining the search strategy and through defining the keywords for this concept and also by using the Boolean operators.

Data Analysis:

Data was categorized and analyzed according to the eight steps of the Walker and Avant framework e.g. defining attributes, antecedents and consequences and also the different aspects of the concept. This was done by minimizing the personal biasness.

Results: Definition of the concept

According to the dictionary of Psychology “Locus of control is a generalized expectancy about the association of behavior and consequent occurrence and also a personality attribute or a cognitive style” (Shane J. Lopez, Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology, 2009).¹⁵

According to the Core Psychiatry “Locus of control refers to a person’s belief how much control they are having on their external surrounding so more external control is related to anxious or depressed person and increased vulnerability to disease and illness. But it can be internalized by the use of psychotherapeutic intervention.” (Nick Goddard, Core Psychiatry (Third Edition), 2012).¹⁰

Etymologic meaning


There is no word “Locus of control” found in dictionary instead The word “Locus” as a noun comes from Latin which means “the place where something is situated or occurs, Site or Location” & The word “Control” means to have control over. Although, this concept was first brought by an US Psychologist E. Jerry Phares and also published in Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology in 1957 first time. ²⁰ This concept is basically a someone belief that how much control they have over their happenings. It means the more a person anxious or worried they are more prone or directed to their external locus of control and this might lead to their liability to physical and mental ailment.

In an article of journal Psychological Monographs, the US psychologist Julian B. R. discussed about that behavior is a product of reinforcement which may be reward or punishment these are that forces which basically direct the behavior of a person towards their action. Julian also developed a scale to measure the LOC known as internal-external control of reinforcement (1966).²²

The Research of Medical Science Review

These beliefs direct and also shape people's attitude and behaviors. As a famous psychologist 'Philip Zimbardo' stated that It's a belief that weather our actions are dependent with our action (internal control orientation) or events happening outside our control (external control orientation) (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 275).²⁷ So, it ranges from external to internal on a multidimensional continuum.

External Locus of Control	Internal Locus of Control
Individuals are more dependent on their external events and more directed toward the fate, powerful others and external stimuli's.	Individual believes that they can modify their actions by their own efforts and they are more self-oriented.



Semantic meaning

In the Oxford Reference Locus of control is a defined as “Cognitive style or personality trait” which is described by association amongst behavior and occurrence of reinforcement.¹ It may be a reward or punishment. People considered their actions to their own determinations and behaviors are known as having internal locus of control and people dependent on fate, luck and others actions are known as having external locus of control.

Descriptions from published articles

Multiple empirical studies have been identified the relationship of locus of control with job satisfaction, health and wellbeing of the person. As a study indicated that job satisfaction is directly related to the higher level of internal locus of control.^{17, 18} Locus of control basically developed in childhood and may be influenced by different factors and can also be varies in both genders as a study proposed that education programs related to positive control can shape the resilience and control in children.⁵

Locus of control is highly related to the health outcomes and overall health as indicated in study that higher internal locus of control is related to higher health and they are more involve in health seeking behaviors and preventive health's behaviors like smoking and drinking cessations and also in physical activity.¹² A systematic review supported this hypothesis that higher internal locus of control can have better outcomes in physiotherapy management of the chronic pain.⁹

On the contrary, a study which was done on a reflection of a case presented with the history of drug overdose in Emergency department was analyzed and found that patient had limited control and reported helplessness and powerlessness on reflection.⁸ Thus, the findings indicate that decrease patients' locus of control detrimentally contribute to their recovery. A study done on ultra-high risk patients to correlate to LOC with them indicated that Cognitive development of psychosis and others symptoms can be assessed by the use of external LOC.²²

Instead the importance of this concept in Professional life and in clinical outcomes an exploratory qualitative study highlighted some aspects of the health locus of control in cancer patients and also recommended further research for the development of a questionnaire related to locus of control for cancer patients.²

In conclusion, Locus of control plays a crucial role in nursing profession as it increases burnout, stress and less satisfaction in nurses which leads to poor quality of care and ultimately result in poor clinical outcomes in patients. Also in patients with decrease LOC are more prone to negative behavior and decrease satisfaction. However, social skill training and positive reinforcement programs can improve the outcomes and promote the wellbeing by ensuring the control over their actions.

Attributes of Locus of Control

Locus of control include internal and external locus of control. In which individual believes in his own efforts actions and abilities for the consequences like failure and success but, in external LOC person influences from external sources and gives credits to external forces and stimuli for any action. Defining attributes are different for both the internal and external locus of control and leads to different types of personalities individuals have and these include;

The Research of Medical Science Review

❖ **Self-determination:** This is the key attribute to the individuals' having internal locus of control and they mostly have strong self-agency. They can direct their actions on the basis of their decisional powers as a study done at workplace proved that they are more likely take responsibility of their actions and perform tasks and challenges optimistically.¹⁷

❖ **Resilient:** They think they have supremacy to bounce back in case of trouble and they also relayed on their abilities. Individuals with strong internal LOC with resilient can handle tough and difficult situations as they think their efforts basically decides about their success and failures.¹⁷

❖ **Positive self-belief:** Individual with internal control are more directed and counted for their efforts and have strong belief and faith on themselves as they think their supremacy to shape their destiny as they are sole influencer of their lives.¹⁷

❖ **Achievement oriented:** They are highly achievement and goal oriented persons they always try their level best to get a change in their life and also have satisfaction with their efforts as this one leads to their work related job satisfaction.¹⁷

Individuals with high external locus of control mostly believe on their luck, fate and always give responsibility of their failure to others, more pessimistic and have lowest control over their actions. Their attributes from the literature review are;

❖ **Low self-esteem:** Individuals dependent on others are mostly have low self-esteem and unable to change their destiny at their own, more prone to go through Job dissatisfaction¹⁷, loneliness, depression and may develop relationship problems in their lives as in cancer patients some patients solely believe that their physician should take decisions solely and they even don't advocate for their rights.²

❖ **Fate-oriented:** This is the key attribute of the individuals with external locus of control as they are more dependent on their luck and even don't give any input for changing circumstances as in a research study most of the cancer patient were influenced to powerful others and didn't try to involve in their treatment plan.²

❖ **Powerlessness:** Those with external control feels that they are powerless they cannot perform anything at their own and this might develop the anxiety, feeling of helplessness and job dissatisfaction in them as they are always looking to other for their failures or success.¹⁷

Cases for Locus of Control:

Next step is to formulate hypothetical cases to get the in-depth understanding and view of locus of control from both patient and healthcare professional perspective. So, the cases are;

Model case - Internal Locus of Control

Modal case is basically involving the positive aspect of the locus of control which involve internal control in a patient as, a patient named Mrs. X presented into outpatient department and upon investigation diagnosed from hypertension and after the diagnosis patient was advised to modify the lifestyle and adhere to medical treatment according to physician advise. And as a result Mrs. X developed a personalized care plan with adequate workout or exercise schedule, dietary modification and medication adherence. This basically indicated that Mrs. X had a strong internal locus of control so she tried hard to manage her disease process with her own efforts and ultimately this will lead to positive health outcomes.

In a modal case of healthcare professional, a nursing professional of Ms. Emely is providing care to a bed ridden patient who is prone to development of bedsores and in this case she utilizes her knowledge, practice and in light of latest literature perform positioning, massage and also uses ripple mattress for the prevention of bed sore. In this case she believed on her knowledge, her expertise and provided her best to minimize the suffering of the patient.

The Research of Medical Science Review

Borderline case - Mixed Locus of Control

In borderline case individual have both internal and external locus of control as we can see in previous modal case Mrs. X tried her best to control her disease process of hypertension but sometimes she may feel overwhelmed by different challenges and unable to cope with external stimuli's as she may continue with her medical regimen but failed to continue lifestyle, dietary modifications and physical activities as prescribed. And in previous case of Ms. Emely provided preventive care to patient very well but still patient developed the bed sore as this may be due to the external factors not in control of Ms. Emely like family support, decrease dietary intake or factors related to chronic diseases.

Contrary Case - External Locus of Control

In a contrary case a patient named Mr. Y presented in outpatient department and diagnosed with hypertension and even after multiple educational sessions and guidance he still unable to manage his disease as he thinks this might be out of his control and this disease is a result of genetic factors or family history. So, he displays skepticism about the effects of medicines or dietary interventions or lifestyle modifications. And in other case Mr. John, a nursing professional was providing care to a patient with 2nd degree bed sore and she provided his nursing care but he still believes that patients comorbid e.g. diabetes mellitus, poor circulation or equipment's efficacy (mattress) may contribute to the worsening of the disease so he believes that whatever he does or not, nothing will happen as the external factors are more strong so, his care cannot improve the outcomes.

Antecedents & Consequences of the locus of control

Antecedents are those circumstances happen before the locus of control and consequences are the outcomes of it. Literature suggested that Locus of control depends upon the parental locus of control, early home life of the child, social and cultural factors, educational background and also the trial and errors of the individual's life. Parental locus of control contributes to the development of the child's locus of control as in a study indicated that mother's locus of control can contribute to the child rearing and early cognitive development of a child.¹⁴ Early lives can also influence the development of locus of control in the individuals as children who are overprotected are more prone to development of external LOC as they thought they have little control and, those who are encouraged by their parents have more control later in their lives as a study indicated that LOC develops in early age and remained throughout the life.⁶ In early life education, social and cultural factors are also influence the locus of control as a study stated that GPA can be predicted by locus of control.^{17, 1} Also the life trajectories provide direction to our locus of control either increasing the internal control or external control.

Locus of control have different consequences as with internal LOC individuals have positive outcomes and in external LOC individuals have negative outcomes.¹⁴ In strong internal locus of control individuals are more carrier oriented, resilient, high achievers, self-determinant and have more positive self-beliefs. On other side, high external control results in low self-esteem, depression, powerlessness, dependent, more Fate-oriented, dissatisfied with life, Inconsiderate, unsuccessful and always play the victim.

The Research of Medical Science Review

Attributes	Antecedents	Consequences
Internal Locus of control: Self-determination Resilient Positive self-belief Achievement oriented	Parental locus of control Early home life of the child Social and Cultural factors Educational background and also the Trial and Errors of the individual's life	Positive outcomes from strong internal locus of control; Successful High-achiever Carrier- oriented
External Locus of control: Low self-esteem Fate-oriented Powerlessness		Negative outcomes from strong external locus of control; Depression Anxiety Dependency Dissatisfied with life Inconsiderate Unsuccessful Play the victim

Table-01

Empirical referent:

In Walker and Avant model of concept analysis, empirical referent is basically related to the concept application in real world, in research and practice. As in this paper concept of locus of control has been analyzed practically and evident in multiple researches. Thus, our instrument found in this study was Julian Rotter (1966) Locus of Control Scale questionnaire related to internal and external locus of control. ²²

Discussion:

The finding of this paper established the in depth analysis of locus of control in nursing perspective and found that this concept is a component of a personality developed early in life of a child and contribute to overall growth in life. This concept makes a person optimistic or pessimistic about his/her life goals. Thus multiple studies found it relevant and stated that high internal locus of control leads to better outcomes in decision making ², Job satisfaction ¹⁷, Better self-health ¹², Better work performance ¹⁸, Better result in treatment of chronic pain ⁹ & effective decision making in cancer patients ². On the contrary, external locus of control is more related to negative outcomes e.g. Work-related stress ¹⁷ Poor work-life balance in PGs life ¹⁹, Increase suicidal tendency ⁸ Increase positive symptoms in psychiatric patients ²² poor effects of medical treatment ⁹ & Poor decision making in cancer patients who are having external locus of control ². Thus, some interventions targeting the locus of control to improve the patient outcomes can be initiated to enhance the satisfaction in workers and decrease stress, depression and negative effects in individuals with external control also this suggestion was given by literature. ¹² A study done in Australia reported decrease ratio of crimes like, victim of property misconducts, Jail detention, any injury or serious illness, in individuals with strong internal control. ³ So, from this we can conclude that not only in medical profession if we increase the number of persons with internal controls in our society we can also contribute the wellbeing of our country by decreasing the number of mishaps related to mistreatments.

Conclusion:

Overall this concept is unique and embedded in our personality and can be influence by our upbringing, our society, our family and our awareness. So, this should be highlighted at all level so individuals can develop strong locus of control and minimize the negative effects of external locus of control on their lives. Further researches based specific interventions regarding the awareness of this concept are recommended to promote the healthy society and positive outcomes.

The Research of Medical Science Review

References:

- “Locus.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/locus>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2024.
- Álvarez-Rodríguez, J., Leirós-Rodríguez, R., Morera-Balaguer, J., Marqués-Sánchez, P., & Rodríguez-Nogueira, Ó. (2022). The influence of the locus of control construct on the efficacy of physiotherapy treatments in patients with chronic pain: a systematic review. *Journal of Personalized Medicine*, 12(2), 232.
- BUDELMEYER, H. & POWDTHAVEE, N. 2016. Can having internal locus of control insure against negative shocks? Psychological evidence from panel data. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 122, 88-109.
- Caron, C., Corcoran, K. J., and Simcoe, F. (1983). Intrapersonal correlates of burnout: The role of LOC in burnout and self-esteem. *Clinical Supervisor*, 1, 53–62.
- Churchill, S. A., Munyanyi, M. E., Prakash, K., & Smyth, R. (2020). Locus of control and the gender gap in mental health. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 178, 740-758.
- Cobb-Clark DA, Schurer S. Two economists’ musings on the stability of locus of control. *ECONOMIC JOURNAL*. 2013; 123(570):F358–400.
- Cohen, S., and Edwards, J. R. (1986). Personality characteristics as moderators of the relationship between stress and disorder. In R. W. J. Neufeld (Ed.), *Advances in the Investigation of Psychological Stress*. New York: Wiley
- Dernbach, M. R., & Kiernan, E. A. (2024). Locus of Control. *The journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 52(1), 90-92.
- Dopelt, K., Bashkin, O., Asna, N., & Davidovitch, N. (2022). Health locus of control in cancer patient and oncologist decision-making: An exploratory qualitative study. *PloS one*, 17(1), e0263086.
- Goddard, N. (Ed.). (2012). *Core Psychiatry (Third Edition)*. Churchill Livingstone.
- Gray-Stanley, J. A., Muramatsu, N., Heller, T., Hughes, S., Johnson, T. P., and Ramirez-Valles, J. (2010). Work stress and depression among direct support professionals: The role of work support and LOC. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 54, 749–761.
- Kesavayuth, D., Poyago-Theotoky, J., & Zikos, V. (2020). Locus of control, health and healthcare utilization. *Economic Modelling*, 86, 227-238.
- Leung, T.-W., Siu, O.-L., and Spector, P. E. (2000). Faculty stressors, job satisfaction, and psychological distress among university teachers in Hong Kong: The role of LOC. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 7, 121–138.
- Lekfuangfu WN, Powdthavee N, Warrinnier N, Cornaglia F. LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ITS INTERGENERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SKILL FORMATION. *Econ J (London)*. 2018 Feb;128(608):298-329. doi: 10.1111/eoj.12414. Epub 2017 Apr 27. PMID: 29651168; PMCID: PMC5891155.
- Lopez, S. J. (Ed.). (2009). *Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Muhonen, T., and Torkelson, E. (2004). Work LOC and its relationship to health and job satisfaction from a gender perspective. *Stress and Health*, 20, 21–28.
- PADMANABHAN, S. 2021. The impact of locus of control on workplace stress and job satisfaction: A pilot study on private-sector employees. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 100026.
- Pandia, M. M., Jufrizen, J., Khair, H., & Tanjung, H. (2023). Organization citizenship behavior: the role of spiritual leadership, self efficacy, locus of control and job satisfaction. *Jurnal Organisasi Dan Manajemen*, 19(1), 168-187.
- PARAJULI, D. R., ULLAH, S., MCGRAIL, M., MCLACHLAN, C. S. & ISAAC, V. 2022. Work-related, socio-cultural, and personal factors associated with locus of control among Australian general practitioners. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 155, 589-595.

The Research of Medical Science Review

- Phares, E Jerry. 1957. "Expectancy changes in skill and chance situations." *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 54(3): 339.
- Ribolsi, M., Albergo, G., Leonetti, F., Niolu, C., Di Lazzaro, V., Siracusano, A., & Di Lorenzo, G. (2022). Locus of Control behavior in ultra-high risk patients. *Rivista di psichiatria*, 57(3), 123-126.
- Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological monographs: General and applied*, 80 (1),
- Rotter, Julian B. 1954. *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology*. Prentice-Hall. Rotter, Julian B. 1966. "Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement." *Psychological monographs: General and applied*, 80(1):
- Russo, G. T., Scavini, M., Acmet, E., Bonizzoni, E., Bosi, E. ... Giorgino, F. (2016). The burden of structured self-monitoring of blood glucose on diabetes-specific quality of life and LOC in patients with noninsulin-treated type 2 diabetes: The PRISMA Study. *Diabetes Technology & Therapeutics*, 18(7), 421–428. doi:10.1089/dia.2015.0358.
- Spector, P. E. (1986). Perceived control by employees: A meta-analysis of studies concerning autonomy and participation at work. *Human Relations*, 39, 1005–1016.
- Walker L. O., Avant K. C. (2005). *Strategies for theory construction in nursing*, 4. Prentice Hall Upper Saddle River
- Zimbardo, P. (1985), *Psychology and Life*, Scott Foresman, Glenview, IL.

