

## STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO LOCUS OF CONTROL

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### Abstract

*The aim of the present study was to find out the relationship between mental health and locus of control of secondary school students for this study, a representative sample of 200 students were selected from Ludhiana district using random sampling technique. Descriptive survey method was used to collect the data Mental Health Test Battery by Singh and Gupta (2000) and Locus of Control Scale by Hooda and Dahiya (2020) was used for the data collection. Results indicated a significant but negative relationship between the Mental Health and Locus of Control of secondary school students. There is also a significant but negative relationship between the Mental Health and Locus of Control of secondary school boys as well as girls. Findings clearly indicate that both the variables under study (Mental Health and Locus of Control) share a significant relationship for the sample in totality as well as for boys and girls separately. Results of the study suggest that for making an improvement in the mental health of students, we must focus upon their perspectives towards life which is a determining factor of their well-being and prosperity.*

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Locus of Control, Secondary School Students*

We are living in a world which is in the grip of ever increasing unemployment, poverty, and spread of infectious diseases, violence and mass unrest. Outcomes of such imbalance in our society have a direct or indirect influence on the mental health of our young generation. To take our nation on the path of development, we need an educated work force which is not only physically healthy but also enjoys the status of a sound mental health. If we trace the roots of maladjustment or bad mental health then several factors seem to be accountable. Locus of control is one of the prominent factors.

Health, in the context of locus of control, refers to an individual's belief regarding the extent to which they can influence their own health. An internal health locus of control

reflects the belief that one's health is primarily determined by personal actions and behaviors, while an external health locus of control suggests that health outcomes depend on factors beyond one's control, such as chance, fate, or the actions of others.

Among adults, research indicates that an external locus of control is often linked to poorer health outcomes, whereas an internal locus of control tends to be associated with more favorable health results. The concept of health locus of control (LOC) thus captures people's perceptions of who or what governs their health management. These beliefs can significantly shape health behaviors and, consequently, health outcomes. Individuals with a strong internal LOC believe they can actively manage their health through their

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choices and behaviors, leading to benefits such as lower disease burden, fewer emergency department visits, better adherence to treatment, improved self-rated health, and overall well-being. In contrast, those with an external LOC attribute their health status to external influences such as medical professionals, other people, or luck resulting in a more passive approach to health management.

The World Health Organization (2004) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community” Locus of control on the other hand is the degree to which people believe that they, as opposed to external forces (beyond their influence), have control over the outcome of events in their lives. The concept of locus of control was first introduced by Julian B. Rotter in 1954 and later expanded in 1966, becoming a key construct within personality psychology. The term “locus” (plural “loci”), derived from Latin meaning “place” or “location,” refers to where individuals perceive control over events in their lives to reside. Rotter (1966) distinguished between two types: internal locus of control, where individuals believe that outcomes depend on their own actions, efforts, and abilities; and external locus of control, where people attribute outcomes to external factors such as luck, fate, or powerful others beyond their control.

According to Schultz and Schultz (2016), individuals with an internal locus of control tend to interpret life events as being largely within their influence. They often exhibit confidence in their ability to shape their

circumstances and achieve success through determination and effort. Such individuals are generally more proactive and goal-oriented. In contrast, those with an external locus of control perceive outcomes as determined by forces outside their control, which may lead to passivity or learned helplessness.

Research has explored the role of locus of control in various contexts. Kutanis, Mesci, and Ovdur (2011) found that individuals with an internal locus of control adapted more effectively to organizational learning environments. In a study by Ghasemzadeh and Saadat (2011), female students scored higher than males on the “locus of chance” dimension, suggesting gender-based differences in perceptions of control related to chance. However, Rastegar and Heidari (2013) reported no significant gender differences in internal or external locus of control, indicating that perceptions of control may not always vary by gender.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To study the relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Students.
- To study the relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Boys.
- To study the relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Girls.

### **Method**

#### **Sample**

For the present study, a total sample of 200 senior secondary school students was randomly selected from various schools in the Ludhiana district. The sample comprised 100 rural students (including 50 males and 50 females) and 100 urban students (including 50 males and 50 females), ensuring equal

representation across gender and locality.

### Tools Used

- Mental Health Test Battery by Singh and Gupta (2000)
- Locus of Control Scale by Hooda and Dahiya (2020)

### Results and Conclusions

As the present study was intended to find out the relationship between Mental Health of Secondary School Students and Locus of Control, Pearson's Product Moment correlation technique ( $r$ ) was employed.

**Table 1: Coefficient of Correlation between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Students (N=200)**

| Variables        | N   | R       | Sig./Not Sig.     |
|------------------|-----|---------|-------------------|
| Mental Health    | 200 | -0.6258 | Sig. at .01 level |
| Locus of Control | 200 |         |                   |

Table 1 shows that the coefficient of correlation between Mental Health and Locus of Control is  $-0.6258$ , which is negative and significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates a significant negative relationship between the mental health and locus of control of secondary school students. In other words, as the locus of control becomes more external, the mental health of students tends to decrease, whereas a more internal locus of control is associated with better mental health. Thus the hypothesis 1(a) "There exists a significant relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Students" stands accepted. Study by (Sunil and Sontakke, 2011) also found a negative and significant relationship between the mental health and locus of control. Thus the results indicated above is clearly indicating that both the variables (Mental

health and Locus of control) are correlated and they influence each other

**Table 2: Coefficient of Correlation between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Students (Boys) (N=100)**

| Gender | Variables        | N   | r       | Sig./Not Sig.     |
|--------|------------------|-----|---------|-------------------|
| Boys   | Mental Health    | 100 | -0.6336 | Sig. at .01 level |
|        | Locus of Control | 100 |         |                   |

Table 2 shows that the coefficient of correlation between Mental Health and Locus of Control for boys as  $-0.6336$  which is negative and significant at .01 level of confidence which shows that there exists a significant negative relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Students Boys. Thus the hypothesis 1(b) "There exists a significant relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Boys" stands accepted. The findings clearly indicated that both the variables under reference are significantly correlated but their direction is negative. It can be due to the reason that a good or poor mental health status may affect an individual's perspective of seeing the things (Locus of control).

**Table 3: Coefficient of Correlation between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Students (Girls) (N=100)**

| Gender | Variables        | N   | r       | Sig./Not Sig.     |
|--------|------------------|-----|---------|-------------------|
| Girls  | Mental Health    | 100 | -0.6175 | Sig. at .01 level |
|        | Locus of Control | 100 |         |                   |

Table 3 shows that the coefficient of correlation between Mental Health and Locus of Control for girls is  $-0.6175$ , which is negative and significant at the 0.01 level of

confidence. This indicates a significant negative relationship between the mental health and locus of control of secondary school girls. In other words, girls with a more internal locus of control tend to have better mental health, whereas those with a more external locus of control tend to have poorer mental health. Thus hypothesis 1(c) "There exists a significant relationship between Mental Health and Locus of Control of Secondary School Girls" stands accepted. These findings are supported by the studies conducted by (Jain and Singh, 2015). The findings clearly indicated that both the variables under reference are significantly correlated but their direction is negative which in a way is indicating a more clarity among the thought process of female population fixing their roles and responsibilities for enjoying a better state of mental health.

So In Nutshell, findings of the study clearly indicates that both the variables (Mental health and Locus of control) have a significant relationship and similar findings were reported for gender and locale

### **Educational Implications**

- Findings of the present study can be used to look into all those factors which can affect mental health of the students and special attention should be given to developing purpose and goal in life For this concrete objectives should be framed by the parents and teachers which will help in setting focus in life in students thus affecting their mental health in a positive manner.
- Findings of the study also reveal that both boys and girls need special attention to their present state and to

decide their future course of actions based upon their inclination towards internal and external locus of control for improving their mental health as well as overall adjustment.

- This study draws the attention of all the stakeholders to create a conducive environment for the students, giving them choices in the selection of courses, guiding them in the process and working for their mental health.

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