

# Impact of Locus of Control on Leadership Qualities: An empirical study of Business Management Students

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## ABSTRACT

The paper aims to study the Locus of Control of students pursuing Business Management Course and impact of Locus of Control on Leadership Qualities of the students. The results indicate that more number of students have external Locus of Control. The external Locus of Control is higher for Powerful Others as compared to Chance Control. The external Locus of Control is in medium range hence it indicates that the students are not overtly controlled by external factors. The regression analysis shows that Locus of Control has an impact on Leadership qualities of a student.

**Key Words:** Locus of Control, Development, Human Resource Development, Self-Assessment, Business Management Students

### 1. Introduction

Locus of Control refers to belief of a person related to certain positive or negative happenings in his / her life. It is a generalized belief as to who controls the happening or non-happening of events. In other words, who is responsible for happening of an event? Locus of control classifies beliefs into two dimensions – internal control and external control depending upon who or what influences happening of things. Internal control describes the belief that a person himself / herself is responsible for what happens to him / her or what is going to happen in future, whereas external control describes the belief that whatever happens is not in control of an individual himself rather, it has an external locus. It can be in the hands of powerful others or chance factor. Conceptualization of Rotter stated that Locus of Control is one dimensional (internal to external) and Levenson's model states that there are three independent dimensions: Internality, Chance and Powerful Others. As per Levenson's model, each one of these dimensions can exist independently or can exist simultaneously. A person may have strong belief in himself / herself or may believe that future happening is dependent on self-activities and simultaneously fate / chance also plays a big role.

Several instruments have been developed since time of introduction of Locus of Control for measuring it. People with high internal Locus of Control are found to be self-contained, self-content and achievement oriented. They are able to control and modify their behavior. They have strong personalities and are able to influence people. They tend to be more optimistic as they believe in themselves. They are open to feedback and gather information and knowledge willingly. Usually it is believed that development of Locus of Control has its roots in family, culture and experience. People with internal Locus of

Control belong to families which give lot of importance to values, efforts, responsibilities and education.

It is seen that most of the people who have external locus of control belong to low income group families, who have very less control over their lives. Psychological researchers have shown that people with internal Locus of Control are achievers, they are better placed with better paying jobs.

Locus of Control plays an important role in an organization. It determines the behavior of a person in an organization which is dependent on his / her belief that his / her promotion and recognition in the organization is dependent on his / her own effort or is dependent on powerful others and chance factor. Levenson has divided the concept of Locus of control in mainly two parts i.e. External and Internal, in external there are again two parts i.e. Chance or luck and other external factors.

Research undertaken in the Western world it brings claims that internality (a psychological belief system of having control over aspects of one's life and environment) is a trait which is in common among successful leaders (Klein & Wasserstein-Warnell, 1975; Andrisani & Nestel, 1976; Fusilier, Gausler, Noren, 1987; Hollenbeck, Brief, Whitener & Paul, 1988; Boone et. Al. 2000).

The research explores the psychological factor of locus of control of the Business Management Students. The results would be used to create self awareness among the students and guiding students for desired changes in their outlook and helping them attain greater internal locus of Control. Greater Internal Locus of Control in Business Management students would be instrumental in creating better and effective managers and leaders for tomorrow in face of the dynamically changing business environment.

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