



SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS.

Healthcare

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ABSTRACT

Background and objectives: To study the relationship between socio-demographic factors and locus of control on mental health among college students. **Methods:** The sample size consists of 150 cases of college going students out of which 75 cases were males and 75 cases were females. Students within the age group of 18-23 years and who were willing to participate and give informed consent were selected through stratified random sampling technique. The semi structured performa, Rotter's locus of control scale by Anand Kumar and Srivastava and mental health inventory by Jagdish and Srivastava were used to collect the data. **Results:** The finding of the study showed no relationship between the socio demographic profiles of the study sample and locus of control. Further it was found that the overall mental health and locus of control have no relationship. However, the present study showed an association between two components of mental health (positive self evaluation and group oriented attitude) and locus of control indicating that students with internal locus of control have more positive self evaluation and group oriented activity than those who have an external locus of control. **Conclusion:** The present study concluded that the socio demographic factors had no relationship with the locus of control of the students and also there was no association with the overall mental health of the students with the locus of control. The stage of transition from school to college life is marked by a lot of adjustment issues and stress associated with academic pressure and various other environmental factors. This is a crucial time to learn and adopt adaptive and healthy ways of dealing with the various demands of the new environment. The study would enable students to understand how they give meaning to events in life and thus will help them understand themselves better. Further the current study would also be helpful in exploring the level of mental health of the students and providing necessary intervention if needed.

KEYWORDS

Socio-demographic Factors, Locus Of Control, Mental Health, College Students.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a state of well being whereby individuals recognize their abilities, are able to cope with the normal stressors of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to their communities. Mental health is about enhancing competences of individuals and communities and enabling them to achieve their self determined goals. It is a concern for all of us, rather than only for those who suffer from a mental disorder.¹ Keyes CL² identifies three components of mental health: emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being. Jahoda M³ has said that aspects of attitudes toward self, growth and development, self-actualization. Integration of personality and mastery of the environment must be considered in judging whether a person is mentally healthy or not. Bhatia BD⁴ considers mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. As part of one's overall health, mental and emotional health is a necessary condition to enable one to manage one's life successfully.

Locus of control

Locus of control as the framework of Rotter's social learning theory of personality is defined as a generalized belief about the contingency between one's action and the actual outcome brought about through social learning mechanism.⁵ One's LOC may either be internal or external. Rotter⁶ defines external and internal LOC as: "The degree to which persons expect that reinforcement or an outcome of their behavior is contingent on their own behavior or personal characteristics versus the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement or outcome is a function of chance, luck or fate is under the control of powerful others".

Internal and External locus of control

People with Internal locus of control see that there is a direct connection between the reinforcement provided and their behavior. Such individuals have a high sense of autonomy and are more confident, independent and assertive.⁷ People who have an external locus of control believe that his/her behavior is guided by external factors or agents of the world such as luck, fate, chance or other unpredictable circumstances. They usually lack autonomy and initiative as well and a result they experience more guilt and shame when they suffer defeat.⁷

Objective

To study the relationship between socio-demographic factors and locus of control on mental health among college students.

Materials and Methods

A cross sectional study design was used in the present study. The study was conducted in the Department of Clinical Psychology, RIMS, Imphal. The data was collected from students of DM College of Science and DM College of Arts. The sample size consists of 150 cases of college going students out of which 75 cases were males and 75 cases were females. Students within the age group of 18-23 years and who were willing to participate and give informed consent were selected through stratified random sampling technique. The semi structured performa, Rotter's locus of control scale by Anand Kumar and Srivastava⁸ and mental health inventory by Jagdish and Srivastava⁹ were used to collect the data.

Procedures

In the present study, necessary permission were taken from the concerned authorities of the DM College of Science and DM College of Arts. They were thoroughly explained about the aim and the procedure as well as the rationale of the study. Thorough information of the research was share to all the students who were willing to participate and give informed consent. Methods for maintaining confidentially was explained. The semi structured performa, locus of control scale and mental health inventory were used to collect the data.

Result

Table 1

Basic profile and other characteristics of the college going students (N=150)

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	75	50
Female	75	50
Total	150	100
Age Range		
18-20	98	65
21-23	52	35
Total	150	100
Religion		
Hindu	85	57
Christian	38	25
Sanamahi	27	18
Total	150	100
Stream of Subject		
Arts	81	54
Science	69	46
Total	150	100

Family Structure		
Joint	88	59
Nuclear	62	41
Total	150	100

In table 1, the socio demographic and other relevant characteristics of the study sample are showed. There were five parameters or basic profiles of the study subjects. They were gender, age range, religion, stream of subject and family structure. The study sample comprised of 150 college going students out of which 50% were males and 50% were females. The table revealed that 65% of the sample belonged to the age range of 18-20 and about 35% of the sample subjects belonged to the age range of 21-23. Regarding religion, 57% of the students belonged to Hindu, Christians comprising of about 25% and the remaining 18% belonged to Sanamahi religion. In case of stream of subject, 54% were enrolled in Arts and about 46% were students belonged to science stream.

Table 2
Age range and locus of control of the study sample

Age range	Locus of control			Chi-square	d.f.	p-value
	Internal	External	Total			
(18-20) Years	57(58%)	41(42%)	98(100%)	0.080	1	0.778
(21-23) Years	29(56%)	23(44%)	52(100%)			
Total	86(57%)	64(43%)	150(100%)			

p-value < 0.05 is taken as significant

In table 2, the percentage of internal and external locus of control of (18-20) years age group of college students were 58% and 42% respectively, and for (21-23) years age group of college students were 56% and 44% respectively. Here, the differences of percentages between the different categories of locus of control with respect to age range were minimal and statistically when applied chi-square test, there was an insignificant relationship between age range and locus of control as evident by p-value = 0.778.

Table 3
Gender and locus of control of the study sample

Gender	Locus of control			Chi-square	d.f.	p-value
	Internal	External	Total			
Male	40(58%)	35(42%)	75(100%)	0.981	1	0.322
Female	46(56%)	29(44%)	75(100%)			
Total	86(61%)	64(39%)	150(100%)			

p-value < 0.05 is taken as significant

In table 3, it is perceived that the percentage of internal and external locus of control of male college students were 58% and 42% respectively, and for female college students were 56% and 44% respectively. Here, the differences of percentages between the different categories of locus of control with respect to gender were minimal and statistically when applied chi-square test, there was no significant relationship between gender and locus of control as evident by p-value = 0.322.

Table 4
Religion and locus of control of the study sample

Religion	Locus of control			Chi-square	d.f.	p-value
	Internal	External	Total			
Hindu	43(51%)	42(49%)	85(100%)	3.840	2	0.147
Christian	26(68%)	12(32%)	38(100%)			
Sanamahi	17(63%)	10(37%)	27(100%)			
Total	86(57%)	64(43%)	150(100%)			

p-value < 0.05 is taken as significant

In table 4, it is perceived that the percentage of internal and external locus of control of the Hindu students were 51% and 49% respectively, for the students belonging to Christian community were 68% and 32% respectively. And for Sanamahi students, the percentage of internal and external locus of control were 63% and 37% respectively. Here, statistically when applied chi-square test, it was found to have insignificant relationship between religion and locus of control as evident by p-value = 0.147.

Table 5
Stream of subject and locus of control of the study sample

Stream of subject	Locus of control			Chi-square	d.f.	p-value
	Internal	External	Total			
Arts	50(62%)	31(38%)	81(100%)	1.390	1	0.238
Science	52(56%)	33(48%)	69(100%)			
Total	86(61%)	64(39%)	150(100%)			

p-value < 0.05 is taken as significant

In table 5, it is perceived that the percentages of internal and external locus of control of the arts students were 50% and 31% respectively and 56% and 48% respectively for the science students. Here, the differences of percentages between the two categories of locus of control with respect to stream of subject were minimal and statistically when applied chi-square test there was an insignificant relationship between stream of subject and locus of control as evident by p-value = 0.238.

Table 6
Family structure and locus of control of the study sample

Family structure	Locus of control			Chi-square	d.f.	p-value
	Internal	External	Total			
Nuclear	53(60%)	35(40%)	88(100%)	0.729	1	0.393
Joint	33(53%)	29(47%)	62(100%)			
Total	86(57%)	64(43%)	150(100%)			

p-value < 0.05 is taken as significant

In table 6, it is evident that the percentage of internal and external locus of control of the students belonging to nuclear family were 60% and 40% respectively, and 53% and 47% respectively for the students belonging to a joint family. Here, the differences of percentages between the two categories of locus of control with respect to family structure were minimal and statistically when applied chi-square test it was found to have no significant relationship between family structure and locus of control as evident by p-value = 0.393.

DISCUSSION

The present study was carried out to find out the relationship between socio-demographic factors and locus of control of the study sample. In the present study, no relationship was found between the age range and locus of control of the college students. Findings suggested that age range between 18-20 and 21-23 have no influence on locus of control and this could be because of the narrow age range of the present study population. However, this finding is in line with a study by Nehrke MF et al¹⁰ which revealed that there were no significant age differences in locus of control.

In case of gender and locus of control, no relationship was found between gender and locus of control. Gender did not influence locus of control and this could be due to similar gendered experiences of the study sample. This finding is supported by a study done by Bedel EF¹¹ among university students in Turkey. Another study by Rastegar M and Heidari N¹² revealed there were no significant differences among males and females regarding the locus of control scores in Iranian students. This finding is also supported by a study conducted among college students which showed that gender had no influence on locus of control.¹³

On stream of subject and locus of control, no relationship was found between locus of control and students belonging to arts and science stream. The finding suggested that students belonging to Arts and Science stream had no influence on locus of control scores and this could be due to the small sample size. However, the present finding was supported by Sundaramoorthy J and Naik AF¹³ in their study on college students which revealed that there was no significant relationship between locus of control and students belonging to arts and science stream.

On religion and locus of control, findings further showed that there was no relationship between religion and locus of control. This finding suggested that students belonging to Hindu, Christian and Sanamahi religion had no differences in locus of control. This may be due to the fact that although students belong to three different religions, the values and cultural and traditional norms shared by them are quite overlapping. A study by Friedberg BA and Friedberg RD¹⁴ supported this finding by revealing that there was no significant relationship between locus of control and religiosity. Rastegar M and Heidari N¹⁵ have also

revealed in their studies that religious orientation had no significant relationship with locus of control.

On family structure and locus of control, the present study revealed no relationship between locus of control and family structure. The family structure in this study was grouped into nuclear and joint family system. A research by Peter FH and Spiess CK¹⁵ showed that adolescents who do not experience any family changes at all have a significantly higher internal locus of control than those experiencing a family change. An in depth study into the family structure and family instability would provide a more significant results.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that the socio demographic factors had no relationship with the locus of control of the students. Students having internal locus of control had more positive self evaluation and group oriented attitude than students who have an external locus of control. However, locus of control had no association with the overall mental health of the students. Thus the study would enable students to understand how they give meaning to events in life and thus will help them understand themselves better. Further the current study would also be helpful in exploring the level of mental health of the students and providing necessary intervention if needed.

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