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## EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING & LOCUS OF CONTROL IN YOUNG ADULTS IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Locus of control, Psychological wellbeing, Personal Growth	Psychological wellbeing (PWB) is a person's ideal disposition of mental and emotional functioning, marked by positive emotions, satisfaction, serenity, resilience & purpose. These aspects are often influenced by locus of control (LOC), which enhances self-awareness & awareness of intrinsic capabilities. As LOC is a trait, knowing its links with PWB will illustrate the contribution of more permanent aspects of the personality in PWB. Most studies have not examined these important variables together. This research aims to bridge this knowledge gap and uncover predictive relationship between these factors and hypothesized that LOC would be correlated with to PWB. To conduct a cross-sectional survey a sample of 400 young adult participants from University of Karachi was drawn. Correlation that links LOC & various facets of psychological wellbeing is insignificant, except for correlation of internal LOC & personal growth, where there is slight negative correlation, as higher scores of the measure of LOC meant higher degrees of internal locus of control & vice versa. This result shows that the more external locus of control the more personal growth. This study sheds light on interesting perspective about the impact of perceived internal LOC on specific aspects of psychological well-being. These findings open new avenues for further research in this field.
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### INTRODUCTION

The psychological wellbeing refers to a state of prime functioning denoted by presence of positive emotions, lack of negative emotions, a perception of satisfaction with life, feeling of fulfillment, and the ability to effectively cope with various stressors and challenges (Ryff, 1995). It is a very important concept in all fields of Psychology. Stringer (2023) reports employee's wellbeing is in demand as organizational culture is shifting. This is the global trend in 2023. For this, a better

understanding of psychological wellbeing developed in organizations. PWB includes a holistic sense of mental and emotional health, where individuals experience positive emotions, sustain sense of contentment with their lives and possess the necessary resilience and adaptive skills to navigate over life's difficulties. Appraisal and perception play important part in psychological wellbeing (Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Together, these two variables shape individuals' cognitive and emotional reactions to life events, so, influencing their psychological wellbeing. Among researchers there has been debate about definition of psychological wellbeing. WHO defines it as the mental state where individuals are able to develop their potential, work productively, and cope with normal stresses of life (Dhanabhakym & Sarath, 2023). Research has shown that resilience positively relates with psychological wellbeing (Klainin, Vongsiris & Ramirez, 2021). Resilience can be defined as productive journey of adjustment that empowers individuals to bounce back from challenging circumstances and difficulties (King & Rothstein, 2010).

The adaptive process heavily relies on an individual's perception and appraisal of the situation. Another factor that has been found to positively correlate with psychological wellbeing is self-compassion (Hall, Row, Wuensch & Godley, 2013). Thus, the self-compassion involves internal psychological processes that stem from within oneself (Johnson, Sirois & Rowse, 2022). This further suggests that there may be intrinsic factors, values, and perspectives that contribute to enhancing psychological wellbeings. Though it is true that situations, too, play their required role in building or maintaining resilience and psychological wellbeing in general (Foster, 2020). One's appraisal and perception of circumstances is what shapes their psychological wellbeing. Research indicates that individuals who adopt adaptive cognitive appraisals, such as viewing challenges as chances for personal growths or directing their attention toward positive aspects of the situation, tend to experience greater levels of PWB. These findings suggest that the way individuals appraise and perceive events plays a significant role in shaping their psychological wellbeing (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Furthermore, usually, the people with the dominating perception of an internal LOC possess the positive appraisals and perceptions (Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood, 2003). Thus, it can be hypothesized that the LOC may have a predictive relationship with one's PWB. By examining the correlation between LOC and PWB, this research seeks to understand the interplay between intrinsic factors and PWB.

### **Problem & Objectives**

Exploring the literature on LOC and PWB brings to attention a gap in existing research as most studies have not examined these important variables together. This research aims to bridge this knowledge gap and uncover predictive relationship amid these significant factors. Establishing such a relationship can pave the way for future studies to delve into causal links between them. This research opens up a new avenue, breaking away from the prevalent qualitative approaches and theoretical discussions. By doing so, it has the potential to shed light upon essential factors influencing psychological wellbeing and locus of control, contributing to our understanding of personality development. Thus, anticipating positive outcomes, this research might unveil key factors that can aid in preventing the emotional and behavioral challenges in both children and adults. In crux, it holds promise for evolving primary prevention strategies for improved mental health.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Psychological Wellbeing**

Psychological wellbeing came into focus for psychologists when they started exploring ways to make normal life happier, healthier and fulfilling. Some researchers viewed it as single concept, while others saw it as having many scopes. [Ryff and Keyes \(1995\)](#) proposed model comprising self-acceptance, personal growth, and purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others. Many researches support this model. Like, [Ryff and Keyes \(1995\)](#) conducted an important research that indicated their model better fits idea of wellbeing than a single-factor model. In this connection, this type of psychological wellbeing is also known as eudemonic wellbeing, emphasizing the purposeful aspect of psychological wellbeing in diverse disutions. According to [Ryff \(2013\)](#) revealed that the increasing evidence supports the health protective features of psychological well-being in reducing risk for disease & promoting length of life.

### **Self-Acceptance**

The term Acceptance is derived from the Latin verb Acquiescere, meaning "To find rest in." It's about recognizing the reality of something without trying to change it. Cognitive psychology has studied "Acceptance," focusing on being content with oneself and acknowledging strengths and weaknesses ([Shepard, 1979](#)). According to [Ackerman \(2023\)](#), self-acceptance is not a state that is automatic (or default). Many people have trouble accepting themselves the way they are. The people do not accept their failures and flaws. "Self-Acceptance" is when you're happy with who you are, understanding both your good and bad qualities. In therapy, like the Person-Centered Therapy, it's crucial and is fostered by the empathy and unconditional positive regard ([Bruno, 1977](#)). Positive psychology sees self-acceptance as first step towards positive change ([Seligman, 2004](#)).

### **Personal Growth**

It is the process of developing novel skills, approaches, actions, or responses that may have a positive effect on an individual's life and increase their overall wellbeing ([Parincu, 2023](#)). The personal growth is about wanting to be the best you can be. In this involving, it involves being willing to grow, putting in effort, and evaluating progress. It's a complex process that includes being satisfied with your environment, wanting more growth, as well as being eager for it ([Ryff, 1995](#)).

### **Purpose in life**

The word Propose refers to intent why something is done or used ([Merriam-Webster, 2023](#)). When the phrase "Purpose of life" is used it has connotation that for what the person wants to invest his life for. Purpose in life is the reason why you do things. In psychology, it's about how having a purpose affects your life and wellbeing. [Ryff and Keyes \(1995\)](#), having a purpose gives direction, making your life whole and meaningful. According to [Berkeley \(2023\)](#), it is enduring aim to attain a long-term aim that is both personally meaningful and makes a positive mark on the world.

### **Environmental Mastery**

According to [Ryff and Keyes \(1995\)](#) environmental mastery is how competent and capable you feel in dealing with surroundings. It involves handling tasks, making most of opportunities and aligning your context with your needs and values. It's about being an active problem solver and effectively coping with daily challenges. It denotes to the ability of a person to alter or shape the

environment by using his bodily and psychological strength (Stafford et al., 2016). It is relevant to note that instrumental competence proposed by Baumrind (1966) is similar to environmental mastery.

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy means doing things on your own and being responsible for your actions. In psychology it's vital for wellbeing. It's not just about being self-reliant but also taking responsibility for own choices. The prescribed definition of 'autonomy' is the state of being cause of own behavior. It refers to feeling of psychological freedom and ability to control own life. In short, it is all about having voice and choice (Perry, 2022). Erickson (1968) theory autonomy vs shame and doubt is a phrase.

### **Positive Relations with Others**

Positive relations with others are about having fulfilling social connections. It's not just about receiving benefits but also giving support. The positive relationship, according to Ryff and Keyes (1995), involves mutual happiness, trust, consideration for others' welfare, empathy & warmth in the different situations and contexts. Consequently, according to a study by Segrin and Rynes (2009), positive relations with others mediates the negative association between social skills and depression.

### **Locus of Control**

According to Rotter (1954) how a person acts is influenced by the rewards or punishments they get. He also coined term 'locus of control,' which means how a person sees their power whether they think their actions are controlled by environment or by their own abilities (Rotter, 1966). A person's LOC affects their quality of life, mood, and emotions. People with an internal LOC are generally healthier, both physically and mentally. They handle stress well. On other hand, those with an external LOC tend to blame the environment and don't take steps to make their lives better. To figure out someone's locus of control, Rotter made a scale that measures both external and internal control (Cherry, 2022). Rotter's theory suggests that every individual has either an internal or an external LOC (Zigarmi, Galloway & Roberts, 2018). Internal LOC refers to the belief of an individual that regardless of what the outcome may be of his action(s), it is all due to his own capabilities. In the case of external locus of control, an individual believes that the result of his action(s) is wholly dependent on external powers, i.e., other people, fate, luck or chance. It is also stated by some individuals with external locus of control that uncertain social conditions makes the outcome of action(s) unpredictable (Tyler, Heffernan & Fortune, 2020). Individuals with high internal locus of control are inspired in maintaining health. They were ones who willingly agreed to maintain social distancing during time of pandemic (Itani et al., 2021).

Thus, it was also found that females tend to suffer with depression and anxiety more than men because females are generally more dependent on their external locus of control (Churchill et al., 2020). LOC plays an important role in how people feel (Jackson, 2019). If a person has an external locus of control, they strongly believe that they're not responsible for what happens because of their actions. Thus, this belief can make them feel hopeless when things get tough (English, 2022). Studies also show that people with an external locus of control are more likely to take risks and less likely to seek help (Eatough, 2022). On other hand, those with an internal LOC feel more confident when things are uncertain. They take responsibility for everything,

making them more independent and mentally healthy (Cherry, 2022). In this linking, oftentimes, locus of control can be perceived as a strong construct of personality, which might not be true in the every situation since many theories suggest that locus of control is often attained through past life experiences. Therefore, research found that to a certain extent locus of control is solely dependent on the external environment or circumstances. Psychologists suggest that locus of control can be shifted from one continuum towards another internal to external or external to internal

### Hypotheses of Study

1. H1: The Locus of Control will be correlated with overall Psychological Wellbeing.
2. H2: The Locus of Control will be correlated with Autonomy in particular context.
3. H3: The The Locus of Control will be correlated with the environmental Mastery.
4. H4: The Locus of Control will be correlated with personal growth in particular context.
5. H5: The Locus of Control will be correlated with positive relationship with the Others.
6. H6: The Locus of Control will be correlated with Purpose in Life in particular context.
7. H7: The Locus of Control will be correlated with Self-acceptance in particular context.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a cross-sectional study that utilized a quantitative statistical route, following methodology and procedures were applied in current study. A stratified convenient sample of 463 (female: 230, male: 233) students was drawn from various departments of the University of Karachi. The sample was of ages between 18 to 25 years (mean age=21.47, SD=1.79). Most part of the sample (75.16%) was comprised of full time students who are currently not working anywhere, while 24% of sample was employed (see Table 1). Education wise (Table 2) the sample belonged to a variety of programs, mostly belonging to BS program (52.05%) that provide the significant information.

**Table 1**  
*Occupation Wise Distribution of Sample*

Occupation	N	%
Unemployed/ full time students	348	75.16
Employed	115	24.83

**Table 2**  
*Education Wise Distribution of Sample*

Education	N	%
BSC	17	3.671
BA	15	3.239
BBA	4	0.863
BCOM	3	0.647
BS	241	52.05
Diploma	5	1.079
HSC	177	38.22
ME	1	0.215

### Measures of Study

### **Locus of Control Scale (Levenson et al., 1973)**

The locus of control scale evaluates individuals' perceptions regarding the degree of influence they possess over their own lives. On the other hand, LOC refers to the belief about the extent of control an individual possesses over the events, behaviors, cognitions, and outcomes in life. It can be described as the agency that one has over themselves (Rotter, 1966). Higher scores on the scale means greater internal locus of control while the lower scores means external locus of control.

### **Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff, 1995)**

It includes six facets: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents give answers on 6-point rating scale. 18-items brief version was utilized for current research. A study by Ryff (1995) suggests temporal stability of scale. Strong validity and reliability are also reported. It is a widely used measure.

### **Procedure**

The students were approached and asked to fill the form. Convenient sampling technique was utilized. The participants were presented with the forms and asked to fill them as honestly as possible, they were assured that confidentiality will be maintained in terms of their responses in study.

### **Data Analysis**

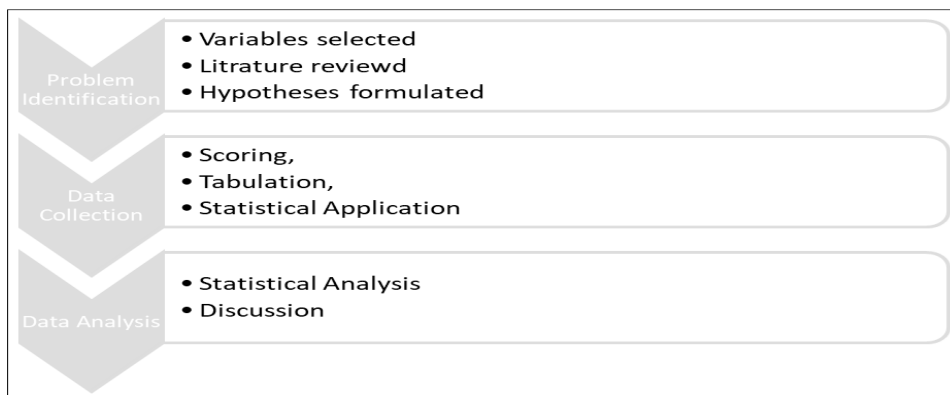
Pearson product moment correlation was calculated for each of given constructs. Descriptive statistics, mean, median, mode etc. were also calculated in order to attain the desired leading information.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Standardized psychological tests suitable for population of current research was used. Consent was taken from participants. Participants had complete autonomy over being a part of current research. Participant confidentiality was maintained, and consent question added at beginning of form.

### **Figure 1**

*Step Wise Research Process*



## RESULTS OF STUDY

The correlation between the locus of control (LOC) and psychological wellbeing (PWB) (and its various dimensions.) were calculated to test the hypotheses and following are the results of the study.

**Table 3**

*Correlation Between Internal LOC and PWB and its Dimensions (N=463)*

	1.	M	SD
LOC	--	58.72	12.19
PWB	-0.036	63.96	8.41
Autonomy	0.026	10.36	3.09
Environmental Mastery	0.020	10.56	3.08
Personal Growth	-0.114*	10.81	2.82
Positive relationship with others	0.028	10.77	2.82
Purpose in life	-0.032	10.78	2.73
Self-acceptance	-0.018	10.84	3.12

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

Results indicated that overall, there is a very small non-significant negative relationship amid locus of control and psychological wellbeing. As this is a non-significant result it indicates that there is no predictive relationships between these variables. Similarly, correlation amid LOC and various sub domains of PWB are insignificant, except for the relationship between Internal locus of control and Personal Growth, where there is a slight negative correlation ( $r = -0.03598$ ), meaning the more the external LOC the more the personal growth. This result is indicative of the predictive relationship between personal growth as well as external locus of control.

## DISCUSSION

This research was an attempt to study two very important variables i.e. the locus of control and the psychological wellbeing and its subdomains. For this purpose, sample of 463 students was drawn from University of Karachi. A predictive relationship between LOC, PWB and its many aspects were hypothesized. The hypotheses were non-directional, as this study explored a new topic and there was very little existing literature on this. According to the results, there was no significant correlation between the overall psychological wellbeing and LOC. As psychological wellbeing is multidimensional concept, the correlation between all dimensions of psychological wellbeing and LOC were calculated. The results revealed that only one hypothesis was proved i.e. LOC is correlated with the personal growth. Interestingly, this specific aspect or component related to personal development exhibited a modest predictive relationship with external LOC. This finding challenges usual notion that internal LOC universally fosters & positively impacts personal growth (Nowicki et al., 1973; Judge et al., 2001). Instead, results indicate an alternative perspective.

According to the current finding, the more the internal locus of control the lesser the personal growth. Or in other words the more the external locus of control the more the personal growth. It proposes suggests that an internal LOC may be linked with rigidity and the strong need for control. This can lead individuals to prefer familiar environments where they feel the sense of control and this may result in the inclination that hinders their willingness to venture into new

territories, confront unfamiliar situations, and engage in new experiences. This hindrance may limit them in the journey of their personal growth. Internal locus of control is mostly viewed as an indication of a healthy mindset (Ng et al., 2006) but current finding suggests that person's believe they have control over their own lives and can influence the outcomes they experience. But it is vital to recognize that people with internal LOC have many a times high expectations from themselves that can result in anxiety (Reknes et al., 2019). In this linking, they might not accept situation where there is limited control or outcomes are uncertain, because it challenges their perceived sense of control. In this connection, the internal locus of control leads people to attribute bad events of life to their own faults or personal beliefs about themselves (Crisp et al., 2007).

This self-blaming may deject them from engaging in situations where outcomes are uncertain or where personal growth opportunities are present. The people with a strong internal locus of control believe that their own actions, decisions, and efforts can influence the outcomes in their lives. The fear of failure or the perception that they cannot control the outcome might prevent them from taking necessary risks and venturing into new experiences. According to the results, there was no significant correlation between overall psychological wellbeing and the LOC. As a result, persons with an internal LOC may unintentionally limit their exposure to unfamiliar or challenging situations and miss valuable opportunities for personal growth and development. The results revealed that only one hypothesis was proved i.e. LOC is correlated with Personal Growth. In this regard, this hindrance may limit them in the journey of their personal growth. Studies show that individuals with an external LOC are more likely to take risks and less likely to seek help (Eatough, 2022). Whereas, the people with external LOC are directed towards the external environment and this focus on the outside gives them the will and desire to grow as a person.

## CONCLUSION

The results of current study provide significant information in reaching the conclusion. It can be concluded that, although an internal control is usually considered positive, it is vital that its effects are not always generally beneficial. Potential drawbacks of internal locus of control may include,

1. A high perspective of control
2. A tendency to blame oneself
3. It can affect people's willingness to accept uncertainty
4. It can affect person's ability to and engage in new experiences that foster personal growth.

This study sheds light on an interesting perspective about the impact of perceived internal LOC on specific aspects of PWB. Thus, these findings open new avenues for further research in this field.

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