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locus of control among second-year students at Metlili High School in Ghardaia province

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Abstract:

The current study locus of control and among second-year students at Metlili High School in Ghardaia province. It establishes determines the type of locus of. The study is conducted using the descriptive method. The sample consists of (720) male and female students from Metlili High School. The following measurement tool are a dopted: the locus of control scale in education by Ibn Al-Zein Nabila,. The data is statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS_23). The findings show:

- An internal locus of control.

Keywords: Second-year High School , the locus of control, students.

Introduction

Schools are currently experiencing a crisis, as the rate of school dropout has risen alarmingly. Students who continue their studies and learning appear to have little connection to actual learning within the school, behaving in ways similar to those who have already dropped out. At the same time, while educational policies emphasize the central role of the learner in the teaching-learning process—as stipulated in the official documents guiding the educational system—we find that this learner is not truly engaged in the process. In most cases, the learner merely takes the role of a listener, and at best, that of a passive participant who simply reproduces the knowledge received whenever prompted (question) (Asmaa Idblal, 2014).

Many educational and psychological studies have focused on identifying the variables and psychological factors that influence the educational process. The concept of locus of control (internal and external) holds a special place today because of its potential to help understand, modify, and regulate behavior. Locus of control is considered a fundamental personality variable, as it relates to an individual's belief about which factors are stronger and more decisive in shaping important outcomes

in their life—whether they are internal factors such as skill, ability, and competence, or external factors such as luck and chance.

In order to invest in and make use of students' potential and capabilities, it is essential to foster and study the human personality with its distinctive components. Among these is the locus of control, a component that has attracted considerable attention from researchers and scholars, especially in recent years. It has been shown that this construct has the ability to predict an individual's motivations, opinions, and behavior in diverse life situations. This has been confirmed by numerous studies, including those of Charles Murray (1994), Daniel Goleman (1995), and Howard Gardner & Richard Honstein (1995) (Ammoumen, Maamri & Ben Tebani, 2019).

Julian Rotter (1966) is considered the first to highlight the concept of locus of control through his social learning theory, in which he presented the concept within an integrated theoretical framework drawing on two schools: the behavioral school and the cognitive school (Hibat Allah Al-Salem, 2016).

This concept has captured the attention of researchers in the field of psychology and personality studies due to its ability to predict the motives behind individual behavior in various life situations. Since its emergence, it has provided results that contribute to greater accuracy in predicting human behavior, whether in scientific, experimental, or natural social contexts. This is evident from a review of theoretical propositions and experimental studies in the psychological literature, such as the works of Rotter (1966), Joe (1971), and Lefcourt (1972) (Ben El-Zein & Ben El-Zahi, 2012).

The concept of locus of control has become one of the most extensively studied and researched variables in psychology, sociology, and educational sciences, particularly after Rotter's classification of locus of control into two categories: internal control and external control. This concept was later introduced into the Arab world, where it was addressed under different terminologies. The translation of the foreign term *locus of control* into Arabic led to variations such as: *markaz al-dabt* (center of control), *masdar al-dabt* (source of control), *masdar al-tahakkum* (source of regulation), *mawdiʿ al-dabt* (position of control), *wijhat al-dabt* (orientation of control), *ittijah al-dabt* (direction of control), *mawqiʿ al-dabt* (location of control), and others.

The relative novelty of this concept, which coincided with the growth of research activity in psychology and the spread of psychological studies, has made it a subject of inquiry and innovation, as it is directly concerned with human behavior (Eylas, 2017).

Crandall (1963) argued that an internal locus of control is the individual's belief that the sources of their success and failure are internal, such as the effort they exert and the abilities they possess, while an external locus of control refers to the belief that the sources of success or failure are external, such as luck, exam difficulty, the teacher, psychological state, or any other environmental conditions (Hibat Allah Salem et al., 2012).

Numerous studies have confirmed the existence of a relationship between locus of control (internal–external) and academic achievement, including the study of Matarazzo (1998) and that of Douga (1998) on locus of control and academic performance. These findings are consistent with the research of Zahia Khattar, cited in Alaib (2015:14), which revealed that students with an internal locus of control tend to use problem-focused coping strategies more frequently and achieved higher results in the baccalaureate compared to students with an external locus of control.

The study conducted by Zeidan (1997), which examined the relationship between locus of control orientation and the motivation for achievement with a sample of 413 male and female students,

concluded that there were statistically significant differences between males and females in the dimension of internal locus of control, in favor of males (Ben El-Zein, 2013).

A study conducted by researcher Al-Aaib Kalthoum (2015:01) showed that there are differences between students with an internal locus of control and those with an external locus of control in terms of their levels of perceived school-related stress, depending on their levels of motivation. The researcher found that students with an internal locus of control are more motivated to learn and exert the necessary effort in their studies, as they are confident that achieving academic success depends on their own abilities and personal efforts, in addition to employing certain strategies and methods to improve their performance and address their shortcomings.

Findley and Cooper (1983), as cited in Bani Atta (2012), argued that individuals with an internal locus of control tend to be more successful, achieve higher performance, and participate more actively in solving problems and tasks, unlike those with an external locus of control. The findings of several studies—including Jibril (1996), Hattie & Hamilton (2005), Own & Fitch (2006), Darwazeh (2007), and Bani Khalid (2009)—confirmed that students with an internal locus of control are more inclined to seek information related to assigned tasks, display higher motivation, achieve better results, and exert greater effort in tasks requiring cognitive activities compared to students with an external locus of control.

Heaven's study (1990) further demonstrated that students with an internal locus of control outperform those with an external locus of control in academic achievement, and that motivation among adolescents in secondary school is positively correlated with locus of control.

BEN ZINE (2013: 13–54) cited several studies that confirmed the correlational relationship between locus of control and problem-solving style. Supporting this relationship is the study of Heppner and Larson (1985), which revealed that individuals who rely on a problem-solving approach tend to have an internal locus of control, use coping strategies that are more problem-focused, and demonstrate logical thinking.

Based on the above, we propose the following research questions:

Research Questions:

- What is the locus of control orientation among second-year secondary school students in Metlili, Ghardaïa Province?

Research Hypotheses:

- The locus of control orientation among second-year secondary school students in Metlili, Ghardaïa Province is internal.

Research Objectives:

- To identify the locus of control orientation among second-year secondary school students.

Significance of the Study:

The importance of this study is reflected in both its scientific and practical dimensions, as follows:

- An attempt to provide a theoretical foundation for the variable of locus of control in the school context, considering that it is a highly significant concept in education in general, and in school

psychology in particular, especially given the recent establishment of this discipline in Algerian universities.

- The importance of locus of control as a psychological variable that contributes to understanding human behavior.
- From an educational perspective, locus of control is significant because it stimulates the student, unleashes their potential, plays a vital role in the learning process, and influences academic achievement.
- This study serves as an exploratory inquiry into the locus of control orientation among second-year secondary school students.
- The importance of this study also lies in the population under investigation, as the second year of secondary education is considered a pivotal stage that lays the foundation for the following year, which is decisive in the student's life. This stage requires preparation and readiness for the third year of secondary school, which culminates in the baccalaureate exam—a crucial milestone for accessing higher education and achieving a higher academic level.
- To draw the attention of education officials to the necessity of caring for and supporting second-year secondary students by providing appropriate conditions, as they are about to face a decisive examination.

Operational Definition of the Study Variable

Locus of Control:

It refers to the belief of second-year secondary school students regarding their ability—or lack thereof—to control events related to the academic domain. Locus of control is determined by the score obtained by the student through their responses to the *Locus of Control Scale (academic domain)* developed by Nabila Ben El-Zein (2013). A high score indicates a stronger orientation toward internal locus of control, whereas a low score indicates a weaker internal locus of control and, consequently, a stronger external locus of control.

Study Delimitations

- **Temporal Delimitation:** The period from 12/01/2020 to 13/02/2020.
- **Spatial Delimitation:** Secondary schools of El-Hajj Allal Ben Bittour, Ben Ammar Moulay Abdallah, El-Moujahid Chadli Ben Djedid, Kaddour Boubetima, Mahia Boulenouar, Bouamer Omar, and Ahmed Ben Belghaith.
- **Human Delimitation:** Second-year secondary school students enrolled in the aforementioned schools, totaling 720 male and female students.
- **Instrumental Delimitation:** The *Locus of Control Scale in the Academic Domain*.

Field Study Procedures

Research Methodology:

The pursuit of knowledge is no longer a random process carried out by individuals according to their personal perceptions and whims; rather, it has become a structured approach governed by scientific rules and grounded in objective principles. For this reason, adopting an appropriate research methodology is an essential step that cannot, under any circumstances, be neglected or overlooked. Since the methodology employed in any study is determined by the type and nature of the research, and given that the present study aims to investigate the locus of control orientation among second-year secondary school students in Metlili, Ghardaïa Province, the current research relied on the descriptive-analytical method, as it is the most suitable for achieving the study's objectives

Study Sample:

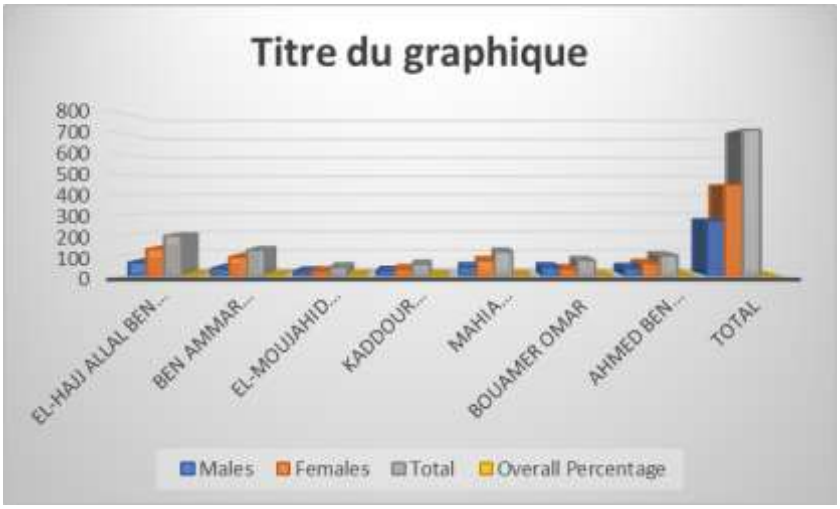
The main sample of the study consisted of second-year secondary school students in the city of Metlili, totaling 720 students, of whom 448 were female and 272 were male. They were selected through a comprehensive survey of the original study population, using a random sampling method.

Table (01): Distribution of the Main Study Sample across the Secondary Schools of Metlili City.

Secondary Schools	Males	Females	Total	Overall Percentage
El-Hajj Allal Ben Bittour	66	132	198	27.5%
Ben Ammar Moulay Abdallah	35	92	127	17.6%
El-Moujahid Chadli Ben Djedid	21	22	43	6.0%
Kaddour Boubetima	24	33	57	7.9%
Mahia Boulenouar	44	75	119	16.5%
Bouamer Omar	43	33	76	10.6%
Ahmed Ben Belghaith	39	61	100	13.9%
Total	272	448	720	100%

Source: Authors'

Figure No. (**01**): **Distribution of the primary study sample according to secondary schools and gender**



720=Sample

It is clear from Figure (09) that the graphical distribution of the sample representing the study population varies across the secondary schools of Metlili in Ghardaïa Province. The figure shows differences in the proportions of the sample distribution, ranging from the highest percentage at El-Hajj Allal Ben Bittour Secondary School (27.5%) to the lowest percentage at El-Moujahid Chadli Ben Djedid Secondary School (6.0%).

Study Instrument:

To achieve the objectives of the study, the *School Locus of Control Scale* developed by researcher **Ben El-Zein Nabila** and applied in Ouargla in 2013 was adopted. The scale consists of **30 items** measuring students' opinions and perspectives regarding various situations they encounter in their school life. The items are formulated as declarative statements in both positive and negative directions, with respondents choosing between two options (*Yes/No*). The scale includes **16 items indicating external locus of control** and **14 items indicating internal locus of control**.

Analysis and Discussion of the Study Results First Research Question:

What is the locus of control orientation among second-year secondary school students?

The descriptive analysis of the results was based on calculating the arithmetic mean and the standard deviation. In order to determine the significance of the difference between the hypothetical mean of the scale and the sample mean, a one-sample *t*-test was used. Table (02) presents the obtained results:

Table (02): The difference between the arithmetic mean of the study sample on the Locus of Control Scale and the hypothetical mean of the scale, and the results of the *t*-test for the significance of these differences.

Scale Dimensions	Sample	Degrees of Freedom	Hypothetical Mean	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*-Value	Significance Level
External Locus	720	719	7	7.49	2.868	4.626	0.000
Internal Locus	720	719	5	7.94	1.669	47.243	0.000

Interpretation For Table (02), it is evident that the dominant locus of control among the study participants is the **internal locus of control**, as the arithmetic mean (7.94) significantly exceeded the hypothetical mean (5). This indicates that most second-year high school students in Metlili tend to attribute their academic outcomes to their own abilities and efforts rather than to external factors.

From Table (02), it is clear that the dominant locus of control among the study sample is the **internal locus of control**. The mean score of internal locus of control among the participants reached (7.94), which is higher than the hypothetical mean value (5), with a standard deviation of (1.669). The calculated *t*-value was (47.243), and the significance level was (0.000), indicating statistical significance.

On the other hand, the mean score of external locus of control among the participants was (7.49), which is higher than the hypothetical mean value (7), with a standard deviation of (2.868). The calculated *t*-value was (4.626), and the significance level was (0.000), also indicating statistical significance.

Referring back to Table (02), it is evident that the prevailing locus of control among the study population is the **internal locus of control**, as the mean score of internal locus of control among the study sample reached (7.94), which is higher than the hypothetical mean value (5).

This result can be interpreted by the fact that the students in the study sample have a clear perception of their academic goals and hold high aspirations in the field of academic achievement. They are characterized by self-confidence and a strong belief in their own abilities and potentials; therefore, they make special efforts and take responsibility for the consequences of their behavior, whether success or failure. They are aware that the events they experience at school are directly related to their own actions.

The study conducted by Darwazeh (2007) found that Master's students in the Faculty of Education at An-Najah University tended to have a greater inclination toward internal locus of control rather than external locus of control. This result was expected, as students believe in the importance of being responsible for the outcomes of their actions and for the results they achieve, whether positive or negative. They attribute these outcomes primarily to their own efforts, abilities, and actions rather than to external factors such as fate, luck, or chance. This finding is consistent with three earlier studies

conducted by Darwazeh (1988, 1993, 1997), all of which showed that the participants tended to favor internal locus of control.

The ultimate goal for most students is academic excellence, academic success, and achieving satisfactory results. The study conducted by Khailooshrof and Salman (2015) found significant differences in the mean scores on the locus of control scale between high-achieving and low-achieving students, in favor of the high-achievers. These differences can be explained by the characteristics associated with the type of locus of control they possess. The belief in an internal locus of control compels individuals to enhance their motivation in order to achieve better academic performance. An individual with an internal locus of control believes that they can determine what will happen to them and are therefore capable of exercising a high degree of control over their destiny.

This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies, including those of Jibril (1996), Qatami (2003), Carden, Bryant & Moos (2004), Ben Zine (2005), Moore (2006), Shepherd, Own, Fitch & Marsha (2006), Bani Khalid (2009), and Anwar & Shanan (2011).

The differences in locus of control can be attributed to the characteristics associated with the type of locus of control held by the students in the study sample. Belief in an internal locus of control compels students to increase their motivation in order to achieve better academic performance. Moreover, possessing an internal locus of control drives students to take responsibility for their actions, whether in success or failure. An individual with an internal locus of control believes that they can determine what will happen to them and, consequently, that they are largely capable of controlling their own destiny. This was confirmed by the study of Khaila, Shorouf, and Salman (2015), entitled *Determining Locus of Control among Students According to the Variable of Academic Achievement: A Comparative Study on Sixth Grade Students in the City of Jableh*, which concluded that the students in the study sample exhibited an internal locus of control.

In the same context, the study conducted by Ben Amour (2018), which aimed to identify the type of locus of control (internal–external) among a sample of (120) male and female secondary school students, revealed that the locus of control among the schooled adolescents was internal.

Similarly, the study conducted by Ali Mani' Al-Shehi (2017), which aimed to explore the concept of self and its relationship with locus of control as well as psychological and social adjustment among secondary school students in the southern sector of the Najran region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, found that the students in the study sample possessed a moderate level of internal locus of control.

Students with an internal locus of control are characterized by a set of qualities that make them excel academically. Salah Mahmoud Abu Nahia (cited in Bin Zahi & Bin Al-Zein, 2012) summarized these qualities as follows:

- **Research and discovery**: a tendency to seek and explore information, and to use this knowledge effectively to solve problems.
- **Work and performance**: they experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment in their tasks.
- **Achievement and academic performance**: they are more open-minded, flexible in thinking, creative, and responsible.
- **Mental health and psychological adjustment**: they show higher self-respect, life satisfaction, reassurance, and self-confidence, with fewer psychological disorders.

This means that such students, due to their belief in their abilities, their sense of responsibility, and their high self-confidence, perceive that the events they experience at school are directly linked to their own actions. Their academic results, therefore, are connected to their personal study methods, revision practices, and preparation for exams. Consequently, their outcomes reflect the behaviors and strategies they adopt.

In addition, students with an internal locus of control have clearly defined academic goals, strong ambitions, and aspirations for their educational path. They make special efforts and endure all obstacles and difficulties that may hinder them from achieving their objectives. Their positive adjustment with the school environment, classmates, and teachers further contributes to higher grades and academic excellence. The school environment, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping the students' locus of control.

The prevalence of an internal locus of control among second-year secondary school students can also be explained by several factors. Smith (1956) found that patience in the face of crises or hardships produced significant shifts toward internal control, accompanied by greater determination to overcome challenges through effort. Moreover, locus of control is influenced by family environment, where warm treatment and consistent standards of upbringing encourage an internal orientation.

The findings of the present study are consistent with those of Rouhi (2014), Al-Anzi (2015), Al-Shahi (1987, 2017), Bin Amour (2018), Al-Hammouri (2018), and Galaledin, Boudreau & Anis (2018). However, they differ from studies such as Al-Shafi'i (1983), Nashwati et al. (1988), Bani Khalid (2009), Abu Zaytoun (2010), Angelova (2016), Al-Rabab'ah (2017), and Al-Nawaisa (2018), which indicated that the locus of control among their samples was external.

Locus of control is thus considered an important cognitive construct. Given the significance of internal control in the academic field, it has become necessary to foster this concept among students with an external orientation, and to help them shift their perceptions toward internal control. This would free them from feelings of helplessness in the face of external factors, enabling them to assume greater responsibility for their academic and personal lives. As a result, they would become responsible and independent individuals with clear goals that they strive to achieve through their own capacities and abilities. All of the above demonstrates the effectiveness of internal control as a key factor in achieving academic success.

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