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Exploring the relation between Self-regulated learning and Locus of control: A synthesis of literature review

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Abstract: Self-regulated learning (SRL) and Locus of control (LoC) are two very important constructs in educational psychology that have a significant impact on students' academic success. While SRL emphasizes an individual's ability to understand and regulate their learning process, Locus of Control pertains to an individual's belief about the underlying causes of their life events. The review paper encompasses 20 studies published between 2000 and 2024 that have been thoroughly examined by using the Google scholar, ResearchGate, Shodhganga, Science Direct, Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC database. In this study, empirical findings on the relationship between self-regulated learning and locus of control is explored. However, some other variables are also included in the study.

Keywords**:** *Self-regulated learning (SRL), Locus of Control (LoC), Internal locus of control, External locus of control, Self-directed learning*

INTRODUCTION

1.1. SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

In the contemporary educational context, learners are expected to take significant responsibility in shaping their own learning process. Self-regulated learning is a critical competence for academic success which enables students to actively regulate their own learning process.

Self-regulated learners take charge of their learning by planning, setting goals, organizing, monitoring and evaluating their learning process independently rather than depending on others (Lal, 2023). Self-regulated learners are motivationally, metacognitively and behaviorally active in their own learning process. They are well-known about their potentialities and limitations and employ different strategies to complete a task (Zimmerman, 1989). Pintrich (2000) described self-regulated learning as "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate and control their cognition, motivation and behaviour guided and constrained by their goals and contextuaal features of the environment" (Pintrich, 2000).

Self-regulated learners are autonomous, self-driven, self-reliant, goal-oriented, self-motivated, persistent as well as responsible for their own learning process. They have a great awareness about their capabilities and limitations along with their interest and effective learning strategies. It is a learner- centric approach which enables the learner to be more independent in the learning process and promote his ability to implement the knowledge and skills in real life situations (Kavita & Singh, 2020)

Several empirical findings consistently proved that self-regulated learning had a significant contribution on student's educational attainment. A meta-analysis determined that Self-regulated learning strategies had a great impact on academic achievement (Ergen & Kanadli, 2017). High achieving students typically engage in setting goals, strategic planning and motivate themselves to accomplish their academic goals. They devote consistent efforts in their academics and apply productive learning strategies. Moreover, they employ coping strategies to manage difficulties, evaluate their performance regularly and adopt new strategies when required (Foong et at., 2021) Self-regulated learning and academic performance found to have a significant positive correlation. Self- regulated students tend to achieve higher levels of academic success (Banarjee & Kumar, 2014; Brahma, 2024). High academic achievers were more self-regulated than low academic achievers (Malik & Parveen, 2019).

1.2. LOCUS OF CONTROL

Locus of control is an individual's belief that they have influence over the course of events in their lives. Locus of control is a notion that either we can control something or something can control us (Manichander, 2014). It is generally considered as the perception of the extent to which individuals believe that they can control the events which affect their lives. It is a person's tendency to see the events as being controlled internally or externally (Rotter, 1966).

In the field of education, locus of control describes how students assume the causes of their academic behaviour and success or failure. A Locus of Control orientation is a belief about whether the outcomes of our actions are contingent on what we do is known as internal control orientation or on events outside our personal control is known as external control orientation (Zimbardo, 1985). Normally people are categorized in two categories based on their belief over the outcomes of the events in their life as Internal or External locus of control. Individuals with internal locus of control believe that events in their life derive primarily from their own action, ability, behaviour and efforts. On the other hand, individuals with an external locus of control believe events happening in their life depend on some external factors like-luck, fate, destiny and significant others etc.

This study was conducted to analyze the existing research on the relationship between Self-regulated learning and Locus of Control, highlighting how internal versus external locus of control can facilitate or hinder self-regulatory strategies.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To analyze existing literature on the relationship between Self-regulated learning and Locus of Control to create better understanding.

3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The review paper adopts an exploratory approach and secondary sources of data to gather information. All the 20 studies published between 2000 to 2024 were collected from Google scholar, ResearchGate, Shodhganga, Science Direct, Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC database.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

An empirical study showed that self-regulation and internal locus of control of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers were significantly correlated and the subscales of self-regulation viz. goal-setting, intrinsic interest, performance goal orientation, mastery goal orientation, self-instruction, emotional control, self-evaluation, and help-seeking were also found to have a significant correlation with internal locus of control which indicated that teachers' internal locus of control was a positive predictor of self-regulation. Teachers who own self-regulatory expertise tend to allocate internal factors for their professional success or failure (Monshi Toussi & Ghanizadeh, 2012). A different study investigated the relationship of preservice teacher's locus of control and self-regulated learning in an online course which was found to had no significant relationship between locus of control subscale viz, internal, external social and external other and the six SRL subscales viz, goal setting, environment structuring, task strategies, time management, help seeking, self-evaluation (Min 2012). According to a research study, individuals with personal control had shown more control towards their learning and self- directed learning readiness as compared to those who believe in factors beyond personal control such as- belief in luck, fate or some external forces (Dagal & Bayindir, 2016). A different study also investigated the relationship which was found to had significant positive relationship between locus of control and self-directed learning among nursing students and further it was concluded that students with higher level of internal locus of control were more responsible for their learning and had higher level of self-directed learning (Arkan et al., 2016). Similarly, a study found significant positive correlation between self-regulation and locus of control among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners and locus control was proved as the strongest predictor of willingness to communicate whereas, self-regulation was proved as the second significant predictor of willingness to communicate of EFL learners. Furthermore, an assumption was made in the study that EFL learners with internal locus of control may rely more on their internal factors and feel more accountable for their own learning (Arkavazi & Nosratinia, 2018). A contradictory result was found in a study which showed that no significant correlation existed in between self-regulation and locus of control among EFL learners but locus of control was proved as a significant predictor of EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition preference (Soleimani et al., 2018). A different investigation summarized that learners with internal locus of control are more likely to be self-motivated and take responsibility for their learning outcome (Limunga, 2019). Another study demonstrated a negative link between self-regulated learning and academic locus of control, indicating that an increase in external locus of control corresponds with a decrease in self-regulated learning. Furthermore, the academic locus of control plays a role in mediating the relationship between self-determination demands (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and self-directed learning. Increased autonomy, competence, and relatedness decrease the

external locus of control and promote self-regulated learning (Afzal et al., 2019). The importance of internal locus of control in fostering self-regulatory approaches among students to achieve more academic success is demonstrated by a study that found a significant positive contribution of internal locus of control on self-regulation and towards all seven dimensions: receiving, evaluating, triggering, searching, formulating, implanting, and assessing of self-regulation. Whereas, statistically no significant contribution of external locus of control was observed on self-regulation (Sidola et al., 2020). Another study examined the relationship between these two variables on the basis of their gender, type of school and board of schools which was found to have a significant negative relationship between locus of control and self-regulation based on gender and school board but not significant based on type of school. Furthermore, the study concluded that these two variables are contrarily related to each other, that is internal LoC is linked to better self-regulation practices, while external LoC is linked to poor self-regulation practices (Jadhav, 2021). Similarly, Syahputra & Affandi (2021) interpreted a significant positive correlation between internal locus of control and academic self-regulation in vocational schools in Sidoarjo, Indonesia (Syahputra & Affandi, 2021). An experimental investigation explained that internally controlled students were more responsible for their learning process rather than depending on instructors, they were more motivated, independent as well as self-driven as compared to the externally controlled students who continuously needed help from the instructors and had lower self-regulatory skills. Further, internally controlled students performed better than externally controlled students in terms of self- regulated learning skills and learning retention (Al Mulhim, 2021). Different research finding showed a significant association between locus of control and level of readiness for self-directed learning where internal locus of control was more significantly associated with self-directed learning and it's all dimensions viz, self-control, self-management and learning desire than external locus of control (Alkorashy & Alotaibi, 2023).

From the above analysis of the review of related literature it was observed that most of the empirical study showed significant relationship between Self-regulated learning and Locus of Control. It was also identified that Internal locus of control is more significantly associated with Self-regulated learning than External Locus of control which indicated that people with internal locus of control were more responsible to their own learning process and perform better self-regulatory practices in their respective field. People who believe their academic success or failure is depend on their own action, abilities and strategies etc. tend to use self-regulatory skills including, awareness of self, goal setting & planning, self-motivation, self-control, self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-modification rather blaming on the outside factors such as-luck, fate, destiny and powerful others etc. The sample size used in these empirical studies ranges from 60 to 1012 from different stages and fields of education such as- secondary school students, undergraduates, university students, pre-service teachers, nursing students, EFL learners as well as teachers. Different statistical techniques viz., Pearson product moment correlation, Spearman's rho, Regression analysis, ANOVA used to examine the relationship between self-regulated learning and locus of control.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are also some limitations in the present study and some suggestions to improve and develop understanding in this area. At first, the present study is completely based on review of existing empirical findings on the relationship between self-regulated learning and locus of control; it does not collect any primary data. Moreover, studies have been done in different cultural settings, educational levels, disciplines, varied in conceptual and operational definitions of the terms as well as measurement tools which may restrict the generalizability of the conclusions. Based on the limitations of the study it can be suggested that longitudinal, experimental as well as qualitative studies should be done in this area. Efforts should be made to expand research in diverse cultural, educational and disciplinary contexts which will help to increase the generalizability of findings and will provide a more holistic understanding of the SRL- LoC relationship. Furthermore, Focus should be given on Meta-analysis and Systematic reviews to create better understanding in this context.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

In order to improve better learning outcomes, learners should be encouraged by the educators, administrators as well as parents to take responsibility for their own learning and use self-regulatory practices. Interventions and training should be given to promote self-regulatory practices including goal setting, planning, self-awareness, time management, self-motivation, self-control, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-modification etc. in learning which will help to improve the performance of students as well as the quality of education. Students with a strong internal locus of control believe that their efforts and strategies have a significant impact on their outcomes, which motivates them to take necessary actions for their future betterment. On the other hand, learners who attribute their success or failure to external factors become less motivated and interested in their studies. So, the educators and administrators should take necessary actions to reinforce internal locus of control among students.

CONCLUSION

This review paper emphasizes how closely locus of control and self-regulated learning were related. Evidence from the reviewed literature consistently shows that individuals with an internal locus of control have better self-regulatory skills, more persistence, and are autonomous. In contrast, those who are externally controlled frequently exhibit less autonomous learning patterns and depend more on outside cues. However, the strength of the association varies depending on factors like cultural influences and academic domain. Adoption of self-regulatory practices is facilitated by an internal locus of control orientation, which results in more adaptive learning outcomes and behaviours. Learning strategies that aim to create self-reliant, self- driven, and resilient students can benefit from an understanding and utilization of this connection.

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