

A Causal Analysis of Locus of Control on Self Transcendence

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Abstract

Viktor Frankl (1965) postulated that a pivotal aspect of human existence resides in the concept of Self Transcendence, encapsulating a directed attention "beyond the self". This phenomenon entails diverse avenues for realization. Present research endeavors to explore distinct manifestations of Locus of Control categorized into two types namely Internal and External as predictors of Self Transcendence. A study encompassing 218 adults aged between 18 and 30 from Surat, Gujarat were undertaken for this purpose. The measurement instruments utilized were the Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale and Reed's Self Transcendence Scale, employed to assess Locus of Control and Self Transcendence respectively. Data collection employed a combination of Convenience and Snowball sampling techniques. Analysis encompassed statistical tools including Descriptive statistics, Pearson's Correlation coefficient, and Regression analysis, facilitated by SPSS software. This study posits that there will be a statistically significant prediction of Self Transcendence as a consequence of types of Locus of Control. The findings supported the hypothesis.

Keywords: Locus of Control, Self Transcendence, Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale, Reed's Self Transcendence Scale, Internal Locus of Control, External Locus of Control

Introduction

"By declaring that man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. I have termed this constitutive characteristic "the self-transcendence of human existence." It denotes the fact that being human always points, and is directed, to something or someone, other than oneself--be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter" quoted by Viktor Frankl (1946) in Man's Search for Meaning.

In today's society, characterized by a prevailing culture of self-aggrandizement and individualistic pursuits, individuals embodying the virtue of Self Transcendence are increasingly rare. This societal trend towards self-centeredness often leads to a disconnection from communal concerns and a lack of empathy towards others. Consequently, feelings of isolation, alienation, and loneliness have become commonplace, contributing to widespread existential distress. In the face of these challenges, there is a pressing need for solutions that promote connection, empathy, and a sense of shared purpose. Self-Transcendence emerges as a valuable antidote to the prevailing sense of disconnection and existential angst, offering individuals a pathway towards meaning and fulfillment in an increasingly self-focused world (Llamas, 2021; Wong, 2021).

Numerous psychologists and scholars have endeavored to encapsulate the essence of Self Transcendence through scientifically validated operational and conceptual frameworks. In their quest to unravel the complexities of Self Transcendence, researchers have devised various approaches, ranging from viewing it as a personality trait to conceptualizing it as a value orientation. The present study adopts Viktor Frankl's (1985) conceptualization of Self Transcendence as a Meaning-Mindset or Worldview. Within this framework, Frankl elucidates that the pursuit of meaning serves as a pathway to transcending the limitations of the self. Cultivating a mindset oriented towards seeking meaning, even in the face of adversity, can provide vital psychological support. This facet of Self Transcendence entails the process of finding coherence and significance in life, reframing experiences within the context of virtue and purpose (Wong, 2016). The present study defines Self Transcendence as “the capacity to expand self-boundaries intrapersonally (toward greater awareness of one's philosophy, values, and dreams), interpersonally (to relate to others' and one's environment), temporally (to integrate one's past and future in a way that has meaning for the present), and transpersonal (to connect with dimensions beyond the typically discernible world)” (Reed, 2003).

Wong (2021) underscores the transformative potential of Viktor Frankl's dialectical model of self-transcendence, which addresses the dual aspects of human existence: Human Potential and Human Suffering. This model posits that Human Potential, encapsulating Responsible Freedom, Will to Meaning, and the Intrinsic Meaning of life, serves as a pathway to transcend Human Suffering, including elements such as Death, Pain, and Guilt. Central to this framework is the concept of Will to Meaning, which Frankl (1985) contends is essential for transcending the self and finding purpose amidst life's challenges (Frank, 1988 cited in Wong, 2021).

At the core of Viktor Frankl's concept of Will to Meaning lies a profound connection with intrinsic motivation, serving as a driving force for personal growth and fulfillment. This intrinsic motivation extends beyond mere self-interest, encompassing a deeper yearning to find purpose and significance in one's existence. As individuals cultivate this intrinsic motivation to pursue meaning, they embark on a journey of self-transcendence. Intrinsic motivation propels individuals to transcend the limitations of their immediate desires and concerns, guiding them towards a broader understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Through acts of selflessness, compassion, and service to others, individuals transcend their individual egos and connect with something greater than themselves. In this way, intrinsic motivation serves as a catalyst for the process of self-transcendence, facilitating the realization of a more profound and meaningful existence (Wong, 2012).

In the field of Psychology, Intrinsic Motivation has been found to be strongly correlated with Internal Locus of Control (Hajmohammad & Aghayani, 2022). As articulated by Rotter (1966), Locus of Control delineates the extent to which individuals perceive outcomes in their lives as contingent upon their own actions or external forces. Rotter (1975) identifies two classifications along this continuum: Internal Locus of Control and External Locus of Control. Individuals with an Internal Locus of Control, known as Internals, attribute life events to their own actions and exercise agency over their lives, aligning closely with the notion of Will to Meaning. Conversely, individuals with an External Locus of Control, or Externals, tend to attribute life events to external forces and may struggle to assert control over their circumstances, potentially impeding their pursuit of meaning and self-transcendence. This speculation inspires current study to investigate the interplay between Locus of Control and Self Transcendence.

In a research study, the connection between individuals' values, locus of control, and pro-environmental actions was investigated. The hypothesis was that self-transcendent values and internal locus of control

would be positively correlated, which was subsequently confirmed by the results (Engqvist Jonsson ; Nilsson, 2014). A research study analyzed the connections among self-transcendence, depressive symptoms, self-esteem, and locus of control in individuals suffering from substance abuse disorder (SUDs). The findings indicated that there was a positive correlation between self-transcendence and internal locus of control (Er & Buzlu , 2022).

In conclusion, the literature review suggests a strong positive relationship between internal locus of control and self-transcendence. Numerous studies have shown that individuals who possess an internal locus of control are more likely to exhibit higher levels of self-transcendence. Furthermore, the presence of self-transcendence has been linked with positive attitudes towards death and greater psychological well-being, making it a valuable construct to consider. These findings imply that interventions that foster internal locus of control and self-transcendence may be beneficial for individuals dealing with life-threatening illnesses, substance abuse, or other challenging circumstances. Further research is needed to explore the specific mechanisms underlying the relationship between Locus of control and Self-transcendence. Upon reviewing the existing literature, it was also noted that there is a scarcity of studies focusing on the demographic of Surat City residents of India, aged between 18 and 30 years. Consequently, this study endeavors to examine the predictive relationship between Locus of Control and Self Transcendence within a sample comprising 218 adults from Surat falling within the specified age range.

Method

Aim:

- To discover the predicting effect of Locus of Control on Self Transcendence.

Objective:

- To study the relationship between Internal Locus of Control and Self Transcendence.
- To study the relationship between External Locus of Control and Self Transcendence.
- To study the predicting effect of Internal Locus of Control on Self Transcendence.
- To study the predicting effect of External Locus of Control on Self Transcendence.

Hypotheses:

- H_1 : There will be a statistically significant prediction of Self Transcendence by Internal Locus of Control.
- H_2 : There will be a statistically significant prediction of Self Transcendence by External Locus of Control.

Research Design:

Quasi-Experimental Research Design.

Variables:

Dependent Variable -

- Self Transcendence

Independent Variable-

Types of Locus of Control

- Internal Locus of Control
- External Locus of Control

Inclusion Criteria-

- Adults in between the age group of 18 - 30 years were included.

- Participants living in Surat were included.
- Participants having an educational background of minimum 12th standard were included.
- Participants who could read the English language were included.
- Participants belonging to binary gender were included.

Exclusion Criteria-

- Adults below 18 years and above 30 years were excluded.
- Participants not residing in Surat were excluded.
- Participants not having an educational background of minimum 12th standard were excluded.
- Participants who could not read the English language were excluded.
- Participants not belonging to binary gender were excluded.

Sample Characteristics:

The study encompassed a sample of 218 individuals from Surat City, Gujarat, India. The participants were selected from the demographic of adults aged between 18 and 30 years, possessing a minimum educational qualification of completion of 12th Standard and proficient in reading the English language. Data collection was facilitated through the utilization of Convenience and Snowball Sampling Techniques.

Tools Used:

Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale and Reed's Self Transcendence Scale were used to quantify variables of Attitude towards Death and Self Transcendence respectively.

- **Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale:** The concept of Locus of control was first conceptualized by Rotter in 1966. Rotter referred to Locus of Control as an individual's degree of belief in regards to how much control they think they have over their life events. Looking for her dissertation topic along with experiencing some personal life events inspired Hanna Levenson to reconceptualize the concept of Locus of control. Hence, Hanna Levenson developed a three-dimensional scale to measure locus of control consisting of 24 items in 1981. The scale measures the response on a 7 point likert scale. The scale has been standardized across various populations. The internal reliability is psychometrically high ranging from .64 to .82. Split half reliabilities are .62, .64 and .66 for the three subscales. Test retest reliabilities for a 1 week period are in range of .60 - .79 and for 7- week period, it is .62 - .73. The validity of the scales have been demonstrated through convergent and discriminant methods showing psychometrically sound validity (Levenson, 1981).
- **Reed's Self Transcendence Scale:** The Self Transcendence Scale was devised to quantify self-transcendence as a psychosocial and spiritual resource indicative of developmental maturity. Comprising 15 items, this unidimensional scale was crafted by Pamela Reed in 1986. Responses on the scale are gauged using a 4-point Likert Scale. Extensive psychometric evaluations have revealed the scale to possess robust reliability and validity, with coefficients ranging from .80 to .94. Derived from the broader "Developmental Resources of Later Adulthood scale," which originally comprised 36 items, this scale offers a focused assessment of self-transcendence. (Reed, 1986).

Procedure:

To gather data from participants, approval was obtained from appropriate authorities, and data collection ensued following authorization. The designated questionnaires were utilized for data collection once

clearance was secured. The survey included:

1. Introduction of the Researcher
2. Ethical considerations of the study
3. Demographic details of the Participants
4. Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale
5. Reed’s Self Transcendence Scale
6. Debriefing section

The data underwent analysis using various statistical techniques, including Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlation, and Regression analysis, conducted utilizing SPSS software. Following the analysis, the results were discussed and interpreted accordingly.

Ethics

Following ethics were abided by

1. Before collecting data, participants provided informed consent.
2. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were upheld.
3. Following data collection, participants received immediate debriefing.
4. No intentional physical or psychological harm was inflicted during the study.
5. Participants had the prerogative to withdraw from the research at any point.

Result and Discussion

The aim of this research was to study the predicting effects of Locus of Control on Self Transcendence. The data collected is described below using Descriptive Statistics.

Table 1.1 shows descriptive statistics for Types of Locus of Control and Self Transcendence

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Internal Locus of Control	218	31.57	10.16
External Locus of Control	218	47.58	18.11
Self Transcendence	218	45.87	9.63

According to the data presented in Table 1.1, it was found that the mean and standard deviation for Internal Locus of Control were 31.57 and 10.16, respectively, indicating moderate levels of Internal Locus of Control. Similarly, External Locus of Control exhibited moderate levels, with mean and standard deviation values of 47.58 and 18.11, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for Self Transcendence were reported as 45.87 and 9.63, respectively.

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation of Hypothesis 1:

Table 2.1 Showing the Correlation between Internal Locus of Control and Self Transcendence

	Internal Locus of Control	Self Transcendence
Internal Locus of Control	1	.665**
Self Transcendence	.665**	1

control	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	218	218
Self Transcendence	Pearson Correlation	.665**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	218	218

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2.2 Showing Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.665 ^a	.442	.439	7.21192

Predictors: (Constant), Internal Locus of Control

Dependent Variable: Self Transcendence

Table 2.3 Showing Results of ANOVA of Internal Locus of Control on Self Transcendence

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8901.859	1	8901.859	171.151	.000 ^b
	Residual	11234.544	216	52.012		
	Total	20136.404	217			

a. Dependent Variable: Self Transcendence

b. Predictors : (Constant), Internal Locus of Control

H₁ : There will be a statistically significant prediction of Self Transcendence by Internal Locus of Control.

Following an examination of the association between Internal Locus of Control and Self Transcendence via Pearson correlation analysis, it was determined that the findings demonstrated a noteworthy positive correlation between the two variables, as evidenced by a Pearson coefficient of .665 ($p < .01$). The magnitude of this correlation was deemed substantial. Furthermore, the F Ratio of 171.151 indicated that the regression model held statistical significance, affirming that the relationship between Internal Locus of Control and Self Transcendence was not random. Moreover, the R-squared value of .439 suggested that approximately 43.9% of the variance in Self Transcendence could be elucidated by the Internal Locus of Control variable within the model. This relationship can be explained by several psychological theories. The result can be explained by the concept of personal agency, which is a central theme in both of these constructs. Internal locus of control refers to the belief that one's actions and decisions can influence the outcomes in their life (Rotter, 1966), while self-transcendence refers to a sense of connection to something larger than oneself and a desire to help others or contribute to a greater good (Reed, 2014). Individuals with a strong sense of internal locus of control tend to feel a greater sense of personal agency and control over their lives, which can lead to a greater motivation to seek out opportunities for personal growth and

to make a positive impact on the world around them (Lefcourt, 1982). This sense of personal agency and control can be seen as a precursor to the desire for self-transcendence, as individuals with a strong internal locus of control may be more likely to view themselves as capable of making a meaningful contribution to the world around them (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). These positive outcomes may further facilitate the development of self-transcendence, as individuals with a greater sense of well-being and self-efficacy may be more inclined to seek out opportunities for personal growth and to contribute to the well-being of others. In conclusion, the strong positive correlation between Internal Locus of Control and Self Transcendence can be explained by the concept of personal agency and the motivation to seek out opportunities for personal growth and to make a positive impact on the world around them. Hence, the first hypothesis is accepted.

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation of Hypothesis 2:

Table 3.1 Showing the Correlation between External Locus of Control and Self Transcendence

		External Locus of Control	Self Transcendence
External Locus of Control	Pearson Correlation	1	.392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	218	218
Self Transcendence	Pearson Correlation	.392**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	218	218

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3.2 Showing Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.392 ^a	.153	.149	8.88447

Predictors: (Constant), External Locus of Control

Dependent Variable: Self Transcendence

Table 3.3 Showing Results of ANOVA of External Locus of Control on Self Transcendence

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3086.693	1	3086.693	39.105	.000 ^b
	Residual	17049.710	216	78.934		
	Total	20136.404	217			

a. Dependent Variable: Self Transcendence

b. Predictors : (Constant), External Locus of Control

H₂ : There will be a statistically significant prediction of Self Transcendence by External Locus of Control.

Upon conducting Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationship between External Locus of Control and Self Transcendence, it was determined that the results revealed a significant positive correlation between the two variables, yielding a Pearson coefficient of .392 ($p < .01$). However, the strength of this correlation was deemed weak. Additionally, the statistical significance of the regression model was confirmed by an F Ratio of 39.105, indicating that the association between External Locus of Control and Self Transcendence is not attributable to random chance. Moreover, the R-squared value of .149 suggested that approximately 14.9% of the variance in Self Transcendence can be accounted for by the External Locus of Control variable in the model. The result can be explained by several psychological concepts. One possible explanation for the weak positive correlation between external locus of control and self-transcendence is rooted in the concept of socialization. According to social learning theory, individuals acquire beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors through observation and imitation of others in their environment (Bandura, 1977). Thus, individuals who have been exposed to socialization experiences that emphasize the importance of external factors in shaping one's life outcomes may be more likely to develop an external locus of control. Similarly, those who have been exposed to socialization experiences that promote the value of self-transcendence and connection to something greater than oneself may be more likely to develop a sense of self-transcendence. Another possible explanation for this correlation is related to the concept of meaning-making. Individuals who possess an external locus of control may be more likely to engage in meaning-making processes to understand the events and circumstances in their lives (Rotter, 1966). This search for meaning may lead individuals to seek out experiences that promote self-transcendence, such as participating in community service or religious activities. In conclusion, the weak positive correlation between external locus of control and self-transcendence may be explained by socialization experiences that promote the importance of external factors in shaping one's life outcomes and the value of connection to something greater than oneself, as well as by meaning-making processes. Hence, the second hypothesis is accepted.

Implication

- Developing programs aimed at cultivating individuals' sense of personal agency and control over their lives. These programs could include workshops, coaching sessions, and self-reflection exercises to empower individuals to take ownership of their actions and decisions.
- Incorporating strategies into educational curricula that promote internal locus of control among students. Teach skills such as goal-setting, problem-solving, and resilience to foster a belief in one's ability to influence outcomes and navigate challenges effectively.
- Offering mindfulness-based interventions to help individuals with an external locus of control develop awareness of their thoughts and emotions, and cultivate acceptance of uncertainty and change.
- Facilitating opportunities for individuals to engage with their communities and contribute to causes they care about. Encourage participation in volunteer work, community service projects, or advocacy efforts to foster a sense of connectedness and purpose beyond oneself.
- Using assessments to determine individuals' locus of control orientations and tailor interventions accordingly. Design personalized plans that address the specific needs and tendencies associated with internal and external locus of control to promote Self Transcendence.

- Integrating considerations of locus of control into broader well-being initiatives. Develop comprehensive programs that address physical, emotional, social, and existential aspects of well-being, taking into account individuals' beliefs about control and influence over their lives.

Limitations

- The sample of adults from Surat may not accurately represent other populations in terms of their cultural background, beliefs, and values. Therefore, caution should be exercised when extrapolating the findings to other demographic groups.
- The study relied on self-reported measures, which are susceptible to response biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Participants may have been hesitant to disclose their true responses, potentially compromising the validity of the results.
- The study utilized a quasi-experimental design rather than a true experimental design, meaning participants were not randomly allocated to different groups. This may have introduced confounding variables that could have influenced the outcomes.
- The study solely focused on adults aged between 18 and 30 years, thereby limiting the representation of individuals across other age cohorts who may possess differing perspectives.
- The study exclusively recruited participants proficient in reading and comprehending English. This exclusion criterion might have restricted the sample's representativeness and impacted the generalizability of the findings.

Suggestions for future research

- Given that this study focused on a specific sample of 18 -30 years of adults from India, subsequent research endeavors may consider replicating the study with a more diverse cohort to ascertain the generalizability of the findings across various cultural and age demographics.
- Subsequent investigations could adopt a longitudinal study design to examine the trajectory of changes in locus of control and self-transcendence over time, and to explore potential correlations with diverse life experiences.
- As the present study relied on self-reported measures, which are susceptible to response bias, future research initiatives might consider employing alternative assessment methods such as informant reports to enhance the credibility and robustness of the results.
- Future research endeavors may opt for qualitative research approaches such as interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insights into individuals' perceptions and experiences of self-transcendence, and to elucidate the potential influence of locus of control in this phenomenon.

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