

Locus of Control of Lumad Students at Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology

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Abstract

The study surveyed the locus of control of 360 lumad students at Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology in 2001, Mati, Davao Oriental, using Rotter's Locus of Control Scale. The lumad students had internal locus of control. There were no significant differences in the locus of control of luthads who were grouped as Mandaya and other Lumads, between male and female lumads, and among those lumads enrolled in different year levels. These results suggest that the students were in control of their behaviors which has important implication to the choices they make in learning at school. Knowing students' locus of control will help point to the kind of guidance and academic programs that the school may employ to make students' learning more effective. The results also lend support to the theory of locus of control as well as give a glimpse of how information about the learners' locus of control can be utilized in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Locus of Control, Lumad students, Mandaya

Introduction

People are interested in explaining other people, just as social psychologists love to explain people's explanations. The human mind yearns to make sense of its world (Myers, 1999). For instance, when a student's academic achievement drops, the student could be assumed to be getting lazier or the educational system is getting less effective. An employee who blows his/her top on another employee could be perceived as having an aggressive personality or as reacting to his/her colleague's persistent cruelty only. Indeed, people try to find explanations to other people's behaviors. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement in America, low test scores and high dropout rates among certain groups — races, ethnicity and gender — were ascribed to differences in race or culture. In the early 1900s, blacks and people coming from the eastern and southern Europe were thought to have lower intelligence (Fairtest, 1991, as cited in

Menkart, 1993).

Women were also seen to have lower aptitudes in math compared with men. Black and Latino families were said to place a low value on education (Menkart, 1993). Research showed that ethnic minority students were poorer and many of them were dropping out of school, were being suspended or expelled, and were achieving below par (Benett, 1995, as cited in Wilson, 1996). Later, the Civil Rights Movement shifted the blame to the system.

That is, if the blacks or the women had lower test scores, then the schools, and not the students, must be failing (Wilson, 1996).

In the Philippines, the indigenous peoples or lumads are thought of as the least privileged, less educated, oppressed, marginalized, poor, “the highlanders”, and disenfranchised. This condition is blamed by most as caused by outside forces they were displaced when their ancestral lands were intruded, and they were deprived when developments were introduced. Are these, however, the real reasons for their present situation? Or are these their own making as a result of the decisions they have made?

Some recent studies conducted involving the lumads investigate their social understanding about phenomena that they are experiencing every day, such as poverty (De Guzman, Baquiano, & Sahibil, 2011), Bangsamoro (Catbagan, 2010; De Guzman & Inzon, 2011) and even land conflict in Mindanao (Montiel, Baquiano, & Inzon, 2012). It can be seen that from their vantage point, they perceive their situation as being shaped, not only by their own making, but by forces outside their control as well. These forces could come in the form of society’s structure itself or of actions conducted by other social groups in the society.

Lumads abound In Davao Oriental. Many of their youth enroll at the Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST) in the capital town of the province. Based on interviews conducted, some instructors have observed that students tend to be passive in class. They have the tendency not to participate much in class discussion, preferring to keep quiet on their chairs so that instructors are sometimes forced to do lecture. Students do not deny that their minds do wander during lectures.

DOSCST teachers on different disciplines have also observed that the students do not seem to have much motivation to study and so their performance comes out below par. when asked, about their low performance, students say they just did not really study period. Students also do not display much initiative sometimes. They seem to need pushing, especially when what they are told to do is something novel to them. At times, they are hesitant to jump into something they are not very certain about. They do not seem very willing to take risks. Could their culture be the reason for all these? Are there other factors that can be peered into? what should their performance be attributed to?

Fritz Heider (1958, as cited in Myers, 1999), Attribution Theory’s originator, investigated the “commonsense psychology” behind people’s explanation of everyday events. He concluded that people are likely to attribute a person’s behavior to either internal causes (e.g., the person’s personality) or external causes (e.g., the situation that the person is in). A school guidance counselor may ponder on the reason behind a student’s failing grade and ascribe it to either domestic problems or plain disinterest.

One factor that contributes to academic achievement, but often overlooked, is the locus of control, a term introduced by Julian B. Rotter in the 1950s. Locus of control is a person's perception of his/her capacity to control what happens to his/her life (Bar-Tal & Bar-Zohar, 1977; Lefcourt, 1982; Rotter, 1990). In the context of education, the construct refers to the type of attribution that one makes for the failure or success he/she makes in his/her academic endeavors. It is not a static personality trait, but an individual's dynamic way of understanding his other world (Reich, 1998).

Locus of One's locus of control could be internal or external. To have internal locus of control means believing that outputs result from one's behavior, effort, ability, or even decision (Lefcourt, 1982; Rotter, 1990). For instance, having confidence that one's getting good grades in school is a result of one's effort and ability is an indication that one has internal locus of control. To have external locus of control, on the other hand, means believing that whatever happens to one's life is a result of luck, fate, or difficulty of the task (Battle & Rotter, 1963; Lefcourt, 1982; Rotter, 1990). For instance, blaming the teacher for crafting a hard exam which resulted in one's failure to get a passing grade is indicative of an external locus of control.

When studying people's behaviors, it is important that their beliefs and attitudes towards their personal successes and failures be taken into account. It would also help to bear in mind that individuals' locus of control impacts their behaviors (Reich, 1998) as it mediates in their decision whether or not to pursue success. It is important for people to believe that the effort they put forth can be valuable before they can actually make the sacrifices that are necessary to achieve (Lefcourt, 1982, as cited in Reich, 1998).

Locus of control is thus, an important variable for students' academic success (Bar-Tal & Bar-Zohar, 1977; Ghasemzadeh & Saadat, 2001). Research studies show that there is a need to study locus of control because of its impact on achievement. It serves as a predictor of tenacity and diligence in higher education (Parker, 1999). Knowing this dimension of personality helps one in understanding the students better. Likewise, if the students are made to be aware of their locus of control and realize how it can affect their performances in school, then this could be one chance in which they could be helped. Awareness of it could be a way by which they could be helped.

The result of the study could certainly be a baseline data. The instructors and guidance counselors would be guided also as the result could give them information on how to better handle, deal, encourage, and motivate the students to make their learning experience worthwhile.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to find out the type of attribution that the lumad students at DOSCST in Davao Oriental make for their successes and/or failures. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions: What is the locus of control of the lumad students in Davao Oriental? Is there a significant difference between the locus of control of the students when grouped according to lumad groups, year level, and sex?

Significance of the study

As not many studies have been done on lumads, particularly lumad students, results of this endeavor would give us a chance to peer into their personality. With this, the academic community and the lumads themselves would have a glimpse of the lumad character as well as how they use their capacity to make things happen. This information would be helpful for lumads if they were to effect changes in their own lives; for teachers if they were to help lumads get more encouraged and motivated to learn; and for guidance counselors in school if they were to come up with guidance programs that would help enhance personal growth and total human development of indigenous students.

Methods

This descriptive study looked at the locus of control of 360 lumads of Davao Oriental, who were all enrolled in Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCAST) in 2001.

They came from nine municipalities of Davao Oriental, namely Banaybanay, Luponv San Isidro, Gov. Generoso, Mati, Tarragona, Manay, Caraga and Baganga. Eighty nine percent (89%) of them were Mandaya while the remaining 11% were a mixture of Kalagan, Mansaka, Tagakaulo, and Manobo. These four minority groups were lumped together as other Lumads of the 360 respondents, 39% of them were first year students, 23% were second year students, 21 % were third year students and 17% were fourth year students. Thirty-six percent (36%) of them were males and 64% females. The lumad students were identified as per record of the College Guidance Counseling and Testing Center.

The Locus of Control Scale developed by Julian Rotter was used. This test measures how a person perceives the cause of life events — whether the outcomes of one's actions are dependent on what he/ she does (internal locus of control) or on factors or events outside his/her personal control (external locus of control). Lower scores indicate internal locus of control. The measure was composed of 29 items which assessed generalized expectancies for internal versus external control-As universal sampling was used, all lumads identified were given the Locus of Control Scale.

Z-test, was used to determine the significant differences between the locus of control of Mandaya and other Lumads students and between males and females. Variance on the locus of control among lumad students at different year levels was analyzed at .05 degree of significance.

Results and Discussion

The lumad students at DOSCAST had internal locus of control. The total mean or arithmetic average of the students' scores in the distribution of locus of control test was 10.18 (Table 1). This means that Lumad students leaned towards being internal

rather than external.

As internals, they believed that events in their lives were a result of their own behavior and action. That means that they were in control of their behaviors. Because of this, they had the tendency to expect to do well if they put much effort on their tasks. They also believed that success and failure, particularly in school, were a result of one's effort and ability. They understood that personal abilities and hard work would lead to positive outcomes, making them more likely to face challenges and to succeed in their endeavors. If they failed, however, they also knew that the failure was a result of not putting much effort and hard work into their endeavor. That is, they knew that to be able to get excellent grades in school, they had to labor for it.

There was no significant difference between the locus of control of Mandaya and other Lumad students at DOSCST (Table 2). Their being lumad had nothing to do with their locus of control. This result agrees with the idea of Grantz, et. al (1999) that culture may be linked to locus of control, but not in general sense. This also coincides with the findings of Gaa and Shores (1979, as cited in Granu et al (1999) that the difference between the locus of control of Blacks, Anglos and Chicanos was not certainly the case that blacks were more external than whites in all circumstances. In fact, they found that locus of control was not only dependent on culture, but also on specific components or domains of locus of control being evaluated.

There was no significant difference in the locus of control among students

Table 1. Locus of control of lumad students at DOSCST

Parameter	N	X	Description
Ethnic group			
Mandaya	320	10.18	Internal LOC
Other Lumads	40	10.23	Internal LOC
Total	360		Internal LOC
Year Level			
I	140	10.24	Internal LOC
II	84	10.12	Internal LOC
III	76	10.43	Internal LOC
IV	60	9.83	Internal LOC
Total Gender	360		Internal LOC
Male	131	9.92	Internal LOC
Female	229	10.34	Internal LOC
Total	360	10.18	Internal LOC

Legend: 1-12 Internal Locus of Control
 13-23 External Locus of Control

Table 2. Locus of control of DOSCST students grouped based on their ethnicity

Ethnicity	N	x		D	SED	Zcomp	Z.05	Remark
Mandaya	320	10.18	.83	.05	.13	.38	1.645	not significantly different
Other Lumads	40	10.23	.75					

Table 3. Locus of control of the DOSCST lumad students grouped by Year Level

Year Level	N	x	Fcomp	F.05	Remark
I	140	10.24			
II	84	10.12			
III	76	10.43	1.737	3.02	not significantly different
IV	60	9.83			

Their being freshmen, sophomore, junior or senior students had nothing to do with their locus of control. Reich (1998) found that locus of one’s age increased. But in this particular study, it did not show to be so. The lumad students’ Locus of Control then did not have anything to do with age. Any learner could have internal or external locus of control, whether freshman or at higher scholastic level.

There was no significant difference between the locus of control of male and female lumad students (Table 4). This result implies that any male or female learner could have either internal or external locus of control. This finding was quite different from the study made by Reich (1998) whose result showed that females tend to be

Table 4. Locus of control of DOSCST students grouped according to sex

Gender	N	x		D	SED	Zcomp	Z.05	Remark
Male	131	9.92	.74	.42	.86	.4879	1.645	not significantly different
Female	229	10.34	.86					

What is the implication of the results to learning? Educators should remember that students with internal locus of control have “great potentials”. It is a matter of tapping and developing these potentials to the fullest. Being internals, they know that they have great power in their hands which is within their control. They have the responsibility to use that power to effect positive change in their lives and in the society where they are a part of. This, they must understand. Another practical implication of the results of this study is that if the students are less motivated, maybe they are not challenged by the way they are handled. Thus, they choose to be passive. The students must be made to understand the consequences of the choices they make.

Conclusion

The locus of control of lumad students at DOSCST has nothing to do with their ethnicity, with one’s educational year level, and even with one’s sex. Thus, Locus of Control depends on the person himself/ herself. It is a choice.

Most students in DOSCST freshman, sophomore, junior or senior— are observed as passive in class, preferring to keep quiet in their chairs. They seem not so motivated to study, without much initiative, and not so willing to jump into something that they are not so certain about. Most of them have internal locus of control, and internals believe that success and failure are a function of one’s ability and effort. Their being passive learners (quiet) must probably be a choice. Their being what they are

could not be attributed to their culture, age, or sex.

The results point to the significance of the theory of locus of control on learning. Those with internal locus of control believe that they have control over their own lives, at the same time are putting value on their abilities and skills. Thus, helping students apply this information positively to their studies would lead to greater academic achievement (Ghasemzadeh & Saadat, 2011).

It would also help to remember that individuals are dynamic. The students' passivity towards learning now could still be transformed into enthusiasm to participate in the teaching-learning process. A learning environment that leans towards encouraging students to be more internal in orientation and is structured in a way that inspires learners to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions could help shape the DOSCST students to use the n power* they have in their hands to be more motivated, be more information-seeking, and be more task-oriented. Providing the students this kind of learning environment could come in the form of guidance and academic programs that the school may employ.

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