



## LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PALEMBANG: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

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### Abstract

This paper is focused on the results of a study entitled “The Correlation between Locus of Control and Academic Achievement of Junior High School Students in Palembang.” This investigation sought an answer to a primary question whether or not there was any correlation between Locus of Control (hereafter LOC) of the Junior High students in Palembang city and their academic achievement. The sample were 500 junior high school students taken from 7 junior high schools with three categories of school accreditations. Data were gathered by distributing LOC Questionnaire by Miller, Yahne, and Rhodes (1990) and collecting the students’ documented academic achievement in their report books. The results of the study demonstrated that there was a positive and significant correlation between LOC and academic achievement of junior high school students in Palembang in that R-squared was .237 out of .001 significance level. The follow-up of this study is that: what could be implied from this result in relation to the new curriculum especially if we try to relate it to developing the characters of our students?

**Keywords:** *LOC, academic achievement, junior high school, character building*

### INTRODUCTION

Learning activities in school do not necessarily end a good level of achievement. It is influenced by individual and social factors. Purwanto (1987:88) lists individual factors, such as developmental maturity, IQ levels, training, interests, and motivation. He also lists social factors such as social environment and school environment that also play a role in academic achievement. Introducing students to these factors influences the success of their study and helps them achieve the learning objectives. In addition, Neyers (1974 cited by Rosalina, 2002: 1) argues that there are two factors that affect the learning process, namely the physical and psychological factors. Students, teachers, teaching aids, learning, and classroom situations are examples of physical factors. The psychological factors include the interest and readiness of the students to learn. In addition to this variety of factors, there is one other factor that helps influence learning achievements. This factor is known as locus of control (LOC). LOC is a form of personality referring to the perception that a person has power or control over his/her own life. S/he believes that his/her life is not influenced by the factors of fate, luck, or other external forces (Lefcourt, 1976 in Calderon, Hey and Seabert, 2001: 3). Rotter (1966 in Schultz, 1990: 484) states that LOC is a personal belief about the source of strength gained control over one's strength. Furthermore, he adds that there are two types of LOC: internal and external. Internal LOC is the belief in the power that comes from a person's behavior and attitude, while external LOC indicates the belief that strength comes from other people, fate,

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or luck. It is the belief that such person is powerless against the strength of the outside. People with external LOC look at events as a result of forces beyond themselves, like luck and or fate (Marsh & Weary, 1994 as quoted in Calderon , Hey and Seabert, 2001:3). In contrast, people with internal LOC view an event as a result of control of their own strength, for example, their own ability and effort. As an illustration, people who have an external LOC would consider a failure coming from circumstances beyond their control, while people who have an internal LOC would consider a failure due to a nunder cooked preparation.

In the context of education, LOC refers to the types of attributions enablingsomeone to experience success or failure in completing school assignments. If a student believes that success or failure is caused by the things they can control, such as effort or ability, then he is considered to have an internal LOC. Conversely, if a student believes that the success and or failure is due to factors outside themselves, such as fate and luck, he has an external LOC.

A studyby Findley & Cooper (1983, in Grantz, 1999:1)reveals that there is a close relationship between internal LOC ownership with high academic achievement. The students who have an internal LOC get better grades and they work more diligently. They also spend a lot more time to finish the job retention and learning for longer, especially when going to an exam. Calderon, Hey and Seabert (2001)show that college students who work or take part-time jobs demonstrate greater confidence, better learning achievement, and lower stress levels.

Most of the students in public or state junior high schools in Palembang have internal LOC and show their good character, for example, they show the spirit of learning and higher optimism in learning. In contrast, the students in common private schools tend to show lower motivation and achievement. This description encouraged us to study the types of LOC possessed by junior high school students, both state and private schools, and how their achievements are shown by their grades, and whether there is a positive relationship between their LOC and their academic achievement.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

LOC refers to a range of the direction in which a person's response to the business and results of operations (MacDonald, 1973: 169). LOC is generally regarded as the common belief regarding the control of one's self to the things that happen in life. Allen (1990: 166) argues that the LOC refers to the condition if one considers the power comes from themselves such as behavior and attribution, or something that is determined by external forces. In addition, Miller, Yahne and Rhodes (1990: 38) define LOC as a personality trait that determines the direction in which someone responds to control himself. Lefton (1985 : 486 ) adds that LOC include things if someone convinced against their own self-control or control from outside himself. Furthermore, Smith and Vetter (1991 : 280 ) gives the definition of LOC which refers to the general way how a person regards a source of behavior, be it positive or negative.

LOC can be grouped into two categories: internal and external. Rotter (1982 cited in Gerow 1989: 410) believes that some people develop behavior or perception that strength



comes from within and outside themselves. Thus, some people are sure how they should behave and the consequences of their behavior are at the mercy of their own (internal) or under the control of others (external). According to Evans and Hubbs-Tait (1991 : 64), internal LOC is the belief that the strength of the person, such as business and competence are a dominant influence on his life. While external LOC is the belief that strength comes from outside oneself, such as fate and luck, which becomes the dominant influence in his life.

According to Schultz (1990: 484), people who have an external LOC believe that the attitude and skills will not affect the strength they receive, will not look at the value of a particular effort to remedy the situation. They have little confidence about the possibility of controlling their own lives either in the present or in the future. Meanwhile, people who have an internal LOC sure that they have control over their own lives and therefore they exhibit behavior that is in line with it.

Parham (1988: 383) illustrates that people tend to prefer internal form to improve the environment and become agents of change. They believe that they can cause change. They also consider the benefits associated with behavior and therefore motivated to change themselves. Meanwhile, people with external LOC tend to believe that whatever they do will not have much effect on the results of their work. They tend to be quick to give up when faced with a difficult problem and see it as a threat.

Research indicates that people who have little confidence that the efforts and skills can affect the results of something tends to stand by and wait for fate. As a result , their lives are likely to experience difficulties . This is evident : people who succeed tend to assume that success will come if they tried.

Students with internal LOC are more intelligent than those with external ones. They more often get better results ( Hampton , 1978; Findley & Cooper , 1983 in Evans & Hubbs-Tait , 1991:65), due to their attitude to success in the classroom everyday. The internal is more resilient than the external , they never give up just like that when there is the challenge of math or reading assignment . The internal usually make teachers more impressed with the hard work and self-discipline they showed.

Gerow (1989 : 410 ) argues that internal people will blame themselves for failing to respect ourselves and when accomplished something . If they fail , it is due to lack of hard work and determined to take a step better in the future . This contrasts with the external who consider success as a result of interference of others, luck, or chance. If they fail, they will not blame themselves and would encourage other students to achieve success.

## **METHOD**

This study used a descriptive method, namely collecting facts or data in the field and describe them as such. Woolfolk (1993:15) states that descriptive methods used to collect detailed data about a specific topic in a particular state. The data collection aimed to describe the existing situation, as Best and Kahn (1993:105) states, "A descriptive study describes and interprets what it is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident , or trends that are



developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often consider past events and influences as they relate to current conditions.”

Best and Kahn (1993:106) also illustrate that descriptive research is usually referred to as correlation studies have demonstrated a relationship between two or more variables, hypothesis testing, development of generalizations, principles, or theories having general validity. Description of the research is related to functional relationships. In addition, they concluded that descriptive research related to the analysis of relationships between variables that are not manipulated by the development of generalizations, conclusions by developing outside the observed sample.

Descriptive method was used to describe the LOC students, student achievement, and the relationship between these two variables. Two variables were involved: independent and dependent variable. In this study, the independent variable is the LOC students, while the dependent variable is the value of students' academic achievement. The independent variable is symbolized by X, while the dependent variable is symbolized by Y.

The population in this study were junior high school students in the city of Palembang in the 2006-2007 school year. The sample consisted of 500 students in the public and private junior high schools in Palembang. They were adequately representatives of all junior high schools in the city. The sample of this study can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1**

No.	Name of School	Number of Sample
1	SMP Negeri 1	71
2	SMP Negeri 3	71
3	SMP Negeri 9	71
4	SMP Negeri 18	71
5	SMP Xaverius	72
6	SMP Srijaya	72
7	SMP Negeri 33	72
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

The data in this study were collected through questionnaires and documentation, that is the students' report books.

A questionnaire is a series of questions to be answered by a number of people in order to obtain the necessary information (Longman, 1981: 904). In this study, the questionnaires were distributed to collect data on the students' LOC. According to Isaac and William (1980:173), a questionnaire is one of the methods to evaluate learning outcomes expected or personality type, that is their LOC.

The questionnaires were translated into Indonesian to facilitate the students to fill in more easily. This set of questionnaires contains 40 multiple choice items with three options. The items are based on indicators that are arranged in such a way to look for certain types of LOC respondents (students). They were taken from the Manual for the Adult Nowicki - Strickland Internal - External Locus of Control, Department of Psychology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, quoted Miller, Yahne and Rhodes (1990 : 39-41).

The indicators listed in the questionnaire are as follows:



- 1 . Control of personal progress, consists of 12 items.
- 2 . Control of interpersonal relationships, consists of 12 items.
- 3 . Control of the social environment, consisting of 16 items.

Of the 40 existing items, each option was scored . Score 1 for option A , option B for a score of 2 , and a score of 3 for option C. Thus, of the 40 items , the range of the lowest score is 40 and the highest range is 120 .Before the study was undertaken, the instruments were tried out in order to determine the reliability and validity. This questionnaire was tested to 40 students from populations notparticipating in this study. Wiersma (1991:275) argues that reliability is the consistency of the measuring instrument to measure anything. Usually have a reliability coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, while the results were tabulated using student LOC Alpha formula.The tried results demonstrate the reliability of .663 LOC. This means that the questionnaire can be used as a measuring tool for this study.

Wiersma (1991 : 227 ) states that vaditas measuring instrument is the range in which direction the instrument can measure a test . Brown (1998 : 223 ) suggests that to determine the validity of the tool , there are items that should be representative of the sample contents , no matter what will be measured . Hence , this is called content validity (content validity) . For documentation study, samples of the student grades were collected to look into their grades in previous semesters .

The second data show the students' grades.To verify the hypothesis, the results of correlation analysis sought to link the students' LOC and their academic achievement. To that end, Pearson 's correlation formula Product Moment was applied (Arikunto , 1993:138) . To test the significance of the correlation coefficient, we used t-test with a significance level of  $p < 0.5$  . If the t-test is greater than t-table, the working hypothesis is accepted . Conversely, if the t - table is greater than the t-test , the null hypothesis is accepted.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This section displays the results and discussion of the data obtained in this study results

### **Results from LOC Questionnaire**

From A survey of 500 respondents, the lowest value is 5 and the highest is 98 with details of 64.2 % or 321 students within a span value of 40-80 , while 35.8 % or 179 students are in the range of the 81-120. As for more details , see Table 2 .

**Table 2**The Distribution Of Loc Of Junior High School Students In Palembang

<b>Categori</b>	<b>Interval</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal Locus of Control	81-120	178	35,8
External Locus of Control	40-80	322	64,2

### **Academic Performance**

Students' academic performance seen from the test results the summative tests in their schools of odd semester 2006-2007.The data demonstrated that the highest value of 13 subjects is 148 and the minimum value is 60. Distribution of data on the performance of

junior high school students in Palembang can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3** Distribution of Students Based on Academic Performance

No	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
1	141-160	1	2
2	121 - 140	0	0
3	101 - 120	21	4.2
4	81 - 100	277	55.4
5	60 - 80	191	38.2

### Correlation Analysis

The presence or absence of correlation between these variables ditenggarai with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The coefficient obtained was .237 with a significance level of .000 and 499 degrees of freedom to test two directions. In conclusion , there is a positive and significant relationship between LOC and academic performance of junior high school students in Palembang though not too high . This means that every increase in the LOC variable ( X ) causes an increase in academic performance variable ( Y ) . Conversely , a decrease in the variable X causes variable Y descent

### DISCUSSION

After getting the LOC and stellar academic student , it can be said that there is a positive and significant correlation between academic performance and variabe LOC and junior high school students in Palembang .

The data analysis is done , it can be said that there is a significant correlation between the two variables in this study coefficient of .237 . This means LOC junior high school students in Palembang affect their academic performance . This statement is in accordance with the statement Grantz ( 1999 ) that in the context of education , LOC refers to the types of attributions that we make for the success or failure of duty of the school to accept the burden on students. This means that LOC is one of the factors that influence keberhasilan students in school , as well as other determining factors such as IQ , motivation , and parental involvement . This is supported by the results of statistical calculations ( Regression ) indicate that the coefficient ( R ) LOC contribution to student academic performance is only .237 , meaning that only about 23.7 % of all LOC factors that influence the academic performance of the students .

In school activities , students who have an internal LOC was a bit more active compared with students who have an external LOC . Students who have more internal LOC can create a good impression in the eyes of teachers in a way to show high discipline and hard work. Behavior are the ones that attract the attention of the teacher. On the other hand , students who have a more external LOC quitter when given the difficult task and tend memilih lighter tasks when the opportunity arose.

Students who have an internal LOC believe that they will get in return with active learning , while students who have an external LOC feel that there is nothing they can do that can affect their learning results . Consequently, they are not actively trying to learn .



## **CONCLUSION AND REMARK**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the data is scored , the writers can conclude the following things . First , the majority of junior high school students in Palembang ( 64.2 %) had type external LOC , and some of them ( 35.8 %) had type internal LOC . Second , most of junior high school students in Palembang ( 55.4 %) had a pretty good academic performance with a range of 81-100 the average , about 38.2 % showed low performance with the average value of 60-80 , and 6.2 % of students are able to perform academically above average with a range of values 101-160 .

Third , the results of Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis , it appears that there is a positive and significant relationship between LOC and academic performance of junior high school students in the city of Palembang.

Then , students who have an internal LOC study performed better than students who have an external LOC . However, the LOC is not the only determining factor in the success of learning . From the results of the regression analysis that the LOC will know only contribute 23.7 % of the student 's academic performance , this means that 76.3 % were the contributions of many other factors , such as motivation , IQ , and guidance older people.

Finally, the understanding of the influence of LOC can meruju refinements academic level students and teachers reduce frustration .

### **Suggestions**

By considering the findings in this study and the discussion that has been shown in the previous section , the writers offer some suggestions as follows .

- 1 . When students have an external LOC , their LOC let slowly transformed into internal . It is based on the findings in this study show that students who have internal LOC tend to show higher learning achievements . While most of the students are in an external LOC groups
2. Teachers let know the type - type LOC owned their students , because by understanding the type LOC students , they can teach techniques to pre method appropriate to the type LOC to optimize student learning outcomes
3. The teachers instill confidence their students to believe in themselves and that they have control over their own lives . It is hoped that students can succeed in the world of academic and non-academic
- 4 . Schools and parents should open up the possibility of working with the institutions involved (psychological consultancy services ) to be able to change the type of external LOC students to be internal . It is very possible because of age who are still very young students and allow them to evolve towards a better order to achieve better performance anyway.



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