

THE IMPACT OF LOCUS OF CONTROL ON TRAINING TRANSFER WITH MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

The core objective of this study is to explore the relationship between locus of control and Training Transfer in the telecom industry of Pakistan. This relationship was studied under the influence of two other variables acting in mediation role i.e. achievement motivation and Job satisfaction. The sample consists of 200 employees from telecom sector. Results indicate significant relationship between locus of control, training transfer and achievement motivation while job satisfaction plays a vital role in the mediation process.

INTRODUCTION

Locus of Control (LOC) gained immense importance in the Organizational Psychology as it is considered as a dispositional factor which determines the perception of an employee; developed through learned behaviour and then reinforcement of the behavior at work (Salazar & Pfaffenberg, 2006). However, there is a mixed response in literature as far as LOC and transfer of training are concerned. Colquitt et al. (2000) found an inverse relation with the transfer of training and Locus of Control. According to their study, people with External Locus of Control learn more and have level of transfer of training. However, Wilson, Strutton, and Farris (2002) conducted a study on different perceptual aspects of sales training and found that sales person with external locus of control were dissatisfied with the training as they were expecting more from it than the training could actually deliver. Hence, the chances of training transfer are low in such individuals. There is a need to further clarify this link between LOC and transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2007), which is precisely the reason for conducting this study.

Recently, achievement motivation along with professional training was studied to determine the factors that influence (or not influence) the employees to continue their job trainings. Their findings indicated that the desire to learn through trainings has a strong link with achievement motivation since the employee will lose motivation to learn if it is not improving his/her job in terms of promotion. With such latest finding, it will be interesting to know the role of achievement

motivation as mediator with reference to locus of control and training transfer in Pakistani context.

Job satisfaction due to its dispositional nature has a strong link with Locus of control and it has been studied in various studies as dependent variable. Mahajan & Kaur (2012) studied the relationship between Locus of control and Job satisfaction among College teachers and found positive association between the two variables. Carr (2011), also found that happiness, extroversion and optimism were the qualities associated with the individuals termed as "Internals" Locus of Control, whereas neuroticism and unhappiness were the qualities associated with individuals termed as "External" Locus of control in the prevailing western culture which proves a very strong link with employee satisfaction. Therefore Job Satisfaction becomes an important mediator in our context.

In the context of Pakistan, there is hardly any work done with reference to LOC. A study was conducted to examine the affects of External LOC on Organizational Commitment among the University Professors in Pakistan, which finds a significant relation between the two variables (Munir & Sajid, 2010). We will be focusing on the Telecom Sector of Pakistan as it is one the fastest growing sectors with highly competitive business market and cut throat competition. Pakistan being one of the developing nations is rich in emotional attitudes by virtue of its collectivist culture in relation to the influence of the past experience on future outcomes (Shahzad et. al, 2011). Our present study will further extend the body of knowledge of LOC in Telecom Sector of Pakistan.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Locus of Control

According to Bandura (1977) little attention has been given to one of the most important factor in human behavior i.e. Self-Regulatory Behaviors. These Self-Regulatory behaviors can be controlled by a conscious effort of the individual thus resulting in the conscious decision making process (Baumeister, 2008). These conscious decision makers were termed as Internals (by Julian Rotter in his theory of Locus of Control) who believed to be in control of their destinies and Externals for those people who believed in luck/bad luck and powerful others determining their fate (Twenge, Zhang & Im, 2004).

The research further establishes and supports the importance by the fact that the internals carry a positive attitude both at work and in their everyday life (Spector et al., 2002). Such Individuals are more likely to meet challenges and will be successful in achieving their goals and objectives (Mahajun & Kaur, 2012), whereas the externals involve themselves in escape mechanism, and avoids dealing with the problem (Cavaiola & DeSordi, 2000).

The association of Locus of control with the well-being of the individual has significant impact on personal well-being of the individual along with the job related affective reactions (Wrightson & Wardle, 1997; Kirkcaldy et al. 2007; Hans, Mubeen, & Ghabshi, 2013). The personal well-being includes mental well-being, life satisfaction and physical health whereas affective reactions are reflected in job satisfaction, pay, promotions, affective commitment and turnover (Ng, Sorensen & Eby, 2006). It is argued that the individuals with internal locus of control are psychologically healthier due to their belief that external factors are under their control. This mere belief that one can exert control is intrinsically satisfying (Ganster & Fusilier, 1989). In the organization when employee believe that they can govern and create their own environment by controlling the external factors, they feel empowered and utilize their abilities to their best level, thus enhancing their learning ability to manifold (Spreitzer, 1996).

Locus of control and Training Transfer

The term "Transfer" was the term coined by Baldwin and Ford (1988), which they defined as the degree to which participants are able to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during an occupational training. The Training Process involves

learning set of new knowledge, skills and attitude in one environment (Training situation) and then its actual implementation on the work environment (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). The successful training implies that what learnt during the training is applied on the work, therefore improving the work quality of an employee. However, it is estimated that only 10% of the training is applied by the trainee at work.

Formal employee training typically involves learning new knowledge, skills, attitudes or other characteristics in one environment (the training situation) that can be applied or used in another environment (the performance situation). Presumably, what was learned in training should be applied to performance on the job. However, a common experience is that learning from a formal training program is not carried back for application on the job (Arthur et al., 2003). The studies showed that loss of skills was 87% of the trainees within the first month of the training completed (Noe, 1986).

Some studies found out that the attribution (External or Internal) has a very significant role in enhancing the learning ability of the trainees. They argued that if the trainee is motivated and believe that he/she can deliver, then the training process will be facilitated. Low transfer of training is mainly the result of employees' low belief on their abilities and high belief in the external factors. Colquitt et al (2000), Balwin & Ford (1988); Cavaiola & Desordi (2000); Spreitzer (1996). The self-belief in ones abilities was termed as Internals whereas reliance on external factors was termed as Externals by Rotter (1966). Therefore we formulate the following hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. External locus of control has significant negative relation with training transfer

Locus of Control and Job Satisfaction

According to Locke (1976), "Job satisfaction may be defined (for the present) as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience". According to Calvo-Salguero (2010), job satisfaction is the attitude associated with the degree to which people like or dislike their jobs leading to the level of job satisfaction of the employee. They argue that the low level of job satisfaction is associated with negative behavior at work which results in absenteeism, turnover and reduced productivity. Job satisfaction can be measured from two factors: Job characterization and the disposition of the employee (Grandey et al., 2005). One measures the nature of the job and other is used to access the attitude of the

employee to carry out his/her job which constitutes the job satisfaction. They also argued that when a situation threatens our self-identity, the employee shows negative response to that perceived threat and therefore develops a negative attitude towards it. Such negative behavior towards the perceived threat contributes in low level of job satisfaction.

Research indicates that Job satisfaction is associated with internal locus of control whereas job dissatisfaction is linked with external locus of control (Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). The individuals who are internally focused relate their achievements at their workplace by controlling the external factors whereas externally focused individuals feel that external factors are not in their control thus resulting in dissatisfaction and negative attitude towards work. Hans et al (2013) studied the relationship between Locus of Control and Job Satisfaction in semi government organization operating in Oman. Their findings indicate that the employees with Internal Locus of Control were relatively satisfied than the employees with External Locus of Control. Therefore we hypothesize that

Hypothesis 2. External Locus of control has significant Negative relation with Job Satisfaction

Locus of Control and Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is defined as an individual's tendency to desire and work toward accomplishing challenging personal and professional goals (Byrne et al. 2004). According to Wigfield & Eccles (2000), it refers to an individual's personality trait who has a strong desire for significant accomplishment, mastering of skills, control, or high standards characterized by an endurance and consistency. According to McClelland (1987) this need is driven by an internal drive for action (intrinsic motivation), and also by the external factors like expectations of others (extrinsic motivation).

For Achievement motivation an individual has to plan and exercise control in order to fulfil the expectations from his organization, as such individuals with high achievement motivation will be able to see that future, depending on their abilities and not the external contingencies (Nicholls, 1984). This establishes a link between achievement motivation and locus of control (Phillips & Gully, 1997). The individuals with internal locus of control will attribute their success and achievement to the consequence of their own behaviour. Hence following hypothesis is proposed

Hypothesis 3. External Locus of control has

significant Negative relation with Achievement Motivation

Job Satisfaction, Achievement Motivation and Training Transfer

Learning abilities of the trainees depends on their level of motivation to learn. It has been proved that the individuals with high level of job satisfaction will have high motivation level which will increase their ability to learn (Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004). This eventually expedites the transfer of training process. According to Colquit, et al., (2000), the cognitive abilities of the trainees were reported to be enhanced due their increased level of job satisfaction and their desire to achieve more challenging goals. Hence we hypothesize that

Hypothesis 4. Job Satisfaction has significant positive relation with Training Transfer

Hypothesis 5. Achievement Motivation has significant positive relation with Training Transfer

Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction & Achievement Motivation

According to Inozu, Yorulmaz, and Terzi (2012), Job satisfaction and achievement motivation are two of the dispositional factors which determine the employees' attitude towards work. According to Ryon & Gleason (2013), individuals who feel more in control of their own outcomes are more likely to be optimistic, engage in positive health behaviors, and are less prone to depression in the face of adversity. They further added that such healthy attitude is associated with high performance, job satisfaction and desire to achieve more. It is believed that training is a function of ability and motivation which they presented in a relation: $\text{Trainability} = f(\text{Ability} + \text{Motivation})$. This aspect of training was further strengthened by Ford and Weissbein (1997) when they concluded that it will be reasonable to expect that personality factors might not only predict the future job performance but it will also have an impact on the individual's motivation to learn, learning strategies used during training, skill acquisition and training transfer. We therefore hypothesize that

Hypothesis 6. Job Satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between External Locus of Control and Training Transfer

Hypothesis 7. Achievement Motivation significantly mediates the relationship between External Locus of Control and Training Transfer

METHODOLOGY

Data and Sample

The data for this research was taken from Senior and Middle level management employees of Telenor situated in Islamabad, Pakistan, employing self-administered study questionnaires. Questionnaires were passed on over to respondents together with a note that explained the intent behind the research in broad terms. The respondents were reassured that their responses will remain confidential for the sake of this study and their participation in this study is purely on volunteer basis.

Of the 300 questionnaires dispersed, 203 completed questionnaires were received back. Overall, the response rate was 67 %. After eliminating 3 unusable responses, 200 continued and constituted the sample for this analysis.

MEASURES

Locus of Control

The scale was developed by Suárez-Álvarez, et al.(2013), with reported coefficient alpha of 0.73 for measuring external Locus of Control. 11 Items were assessed on 5-point Likert scale. The scales had the anchor of 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. A sample item was "Landing a good job depends more on "string-pulling" than on training".

Job Satisfaction

A 6-item abbreviated version of an 18-item scale was used to measure job satisfaction. Coefficient alpha values for six item version ranged between 0.83 to 0.90 (Fields, 2003). Items were assessed on 5-point Likert scale, with anchor of 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. A sample item was "I am often bored with my job". The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.73.

Achievement Motivation

The Scale was developed by Suárez-Álvarez, et al.(2013) with alpha reliability of 0.85. 9-item scale was used to measure Achievement Motivation. Items were assessed on 5-point Likert scale, with anchor of 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. A sample item was "I make an effort to be one of the best at work".

Training Transfer

The Training Transfer was measured using a 5-item scale with alpha reliability of 0.73. Items were assessed on 5-point Likert scale, with anchor of 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. A sample item was "My organization considers training as a part of organization strategy". The alpha reliability of scale in this study is 0.71.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics as well as inter correlations among variables are discussed in table 1.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gender	1.38	0.49	-							
Age	4.28	1.91	0.015							
Category	2.84	1.01	0.002	-0.165						
Experience	4.26	2.13	-0.096	0.256	-0.056					
Loc of Control	2.97	0.66	-0.056	-0.297	0.144	-0.086	-0.74			
Job satisfaction	3.11	0.67	0.184	0.226	-0.017	0.016	-.745**	-0.47		
Achieve Motivation	3.02	0.58	0.137	0.269	0.021	0.119	-.635**	.659**	-0.58	
Training transfer	3	0.68	0.124	0.149	-0.051	0.069	-.814**	.815**	.780**	-0.93

Note. Cronbach's alpha reliabilities appear in parentheses, ** $p < 0.01$.

All the variables had acceptable Cronbasha's alpha reliability. External locus of control was negatively related to training transfer ($R^2 = .68$, $P < .01$), however beta value is -0.87, ($\beta = -0.87$, $P < .01$) negative sign showing that there is negative relation between the variables. For every unit increase in external locus of control their will be .87 unit decrease in the training

transfer. Higher beta value shows the presence of any mediating or moderating variable. Table 1 shows negative correlation of external locus of control with job satisfaction (-0.745), achievement motivation (-0.635) and training transfer (-0.814).

Moreover table 2 & 3 shows direct relation of external locus of control with job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.75$,

$R^2 = 0.58, P < 0.01$) and achievement motivation ($\beta = -0.54, R^2 = 0.44, P < 0.01$) respectively. The above results supports our hypothesis which states that external locus of control is negatively related to Training Transfer (H_1), achievement motivation (H_2), and Job Satisfaction (H_3). Table 1 also shows that job satisfaction and achievement motivation is positively related to training transfer (0.815 & 0.78 respectively), moreover table 2 & 3 reports the direct impact on training transfer of mediating variables i.e. job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.84, R^2 = 0.82, P < 0.01$) and achievement motivation ($\beta = 0.94, R^2 = 0.62, P < 0.01$) which supports our hypothesis H_4 and H_5 which states that job satisfaction and achievement motivation are positively related to training transfer.

Table 2 contains hierarchical regression analysis of external locus of control and training transfer with job satisfaction as mediator.

TABLE 2
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for External Locus of control and Training Transfer with Job satisfaction as a Mediator

Variables	Job Satisfaction			
	Direct Effect	β	R^2	Adj R^2
Controls			0.09	0.003
External LOC		-0.75**	0.58	0.54
Training Transfer				
Variables	β			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Controls	.175	-.029	.023	
Age	.046	-.023	-.041	
Category	-.018	-.029	.008	
Experience	.015	.021	.016	
Job Satisfaction		.84**	.48	
External LOC			-.51	
R^2	.04	.82	.88	
Adj R^2	-.05	.64	.74	
Change in R^2		.63	.10	

Note .LOC stands for Locus of Control, ** $P < .01$

Direct effect of external locus of control shows huge variation in the dependent variable ($\beta = -.87, R^2 = .68, P < .01$) which shows the presence of mediator job satisfaction. In step 2 of table 2 with the introduction of mediator value of R square is 0.82 which shows out of total change in dependent variable 82 percent is due to job satisfaction. Positive sign of beta values ($\beta = 0.84,$

$P < .01$) shows their positive relation with the training transfer. However with the introduction of independent variable external locus of control their is huge drop in the beta values (-0.87 to - 0.51) and higher value of R square (0.68 to 0.88) which shows the mediation of job satisfaction. Hence from the above results our H_6 is accepted which states Job Satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between external locus of control and training transfer.

Table 3 contains hierarchical regression analysis of external locus of control and training transfer with achievement motivation as mediator.

TABLE 3
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for External Locus of control and Training Transfer with Achievement motivation as a Mediator

Variables	Job Satisfaction			
	Direct Effect	β	R^2	Adj R^2
Controls			0.10	0.02
External LOC		-0.54**	0.44	0.34
Training Transfer				
Variables	β			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Gender	.175	.020	.046	
Age	.046	-.028	-.051	
Category	-.018	-.055	-.002	
Experience	.015	-.003	.002	
Job Satisfaction		.94**	.53	
External LOC			-.58	
R^2	.04	.62	.80	
Adj R^2	-.05	.56	.77	
Change in R^2				

Note .LOC stands for Locus of Control, ** $P < .01$

Table 3 contains hierarchical regression analysis of external locus of control and training transfer with achievement motivation as mediator. In step 2 of table 3 with the introduction of mediator value of R square is 0.62 which shows out of total change in dependent variable 62 percent is due to job satisfaction. Positive sign of beta values ($\beta = 0.94, P < .01$) shows their positive relation with the training transfer. However with the introduction of independent variable, i. e., external locus of control, there is huge drop in the beta values (-0.87 to - 0.58) and higher value of R square (0.68 to 0.80) which shows the mediation of achievement motivation.

Hence from the above results our H7 is accepted which states Achievement motivation significantly mediates the relationship between external locus of control and training transfer.

DISCUSSION

Our first hypothesis was that External Locus of control has significant Negative relation with Training Transfer, which is accepted. The literature had mixed findings which was precisely the reason for conducting this research to find out how this relationship exists in the context of Pakistani Culture. Our data proves that Training transfer has very strong association with locus of control, which is consistent with the conceptualization of Baldwin & Ford (1988) and Colquitt et.al (2000). According to their conceptualization, the employees with high Internal Locus of control will have firm belief in their abilities therefore their learning will be enhanced as compared to those employees with high External Locus of control.

Our second hypothesis was that External Locus of control has significant Negative relation with Job Satisfaction, which was accepted. There is sufficient evidence in the literature which also supports our findings like Carrim, Basson & Coetzee (2006) and Hans et. al (2013). Their findings highlighted that Job Satisfaction and Locus of control has strong association when studied together. Employees with external locus of control will be less satisfied from their jobs then the employees with internal locus of control.

Third Hypothesis states that External Locus of control has significant Negative relation with Achievement Motivation, which was also accepted in the light of the results we calculated. The literature has evidence the individuals' personality trait like strong desire to achieve has association with their belief on their abilities (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Phillips and Gully (1997) also found that employees with Internal Locus of control had high level of motivation to achieve more goals and objectives in their life and at workplace, which is consistent with our findings.

The fourth hypothesis and fifth hypothesis were Job Satisfaction and achievement motivation has significant positive relation with Training Transfer, which were accepted significantly. Egan et. al (2004) found that motivation level and job satisfaction has very strong correlation with Training Transfer. This is also consistent with the findings of Colquitt et al (2000), who reported that cognitive ability of the trainees were enhanced with job satisfaction and achievement motivation.

Our sixth and seventh hypothesis were on mediating effect of Achievement motivation and Job satisfaction on Training Transfer. Our data shows that

both the mediator plays a role in our research model. Inozu et al. (2012) reported that Job Satisfaction and Achievement motivation were the dispositional factors which determine the employees' attitude at work. In 1997, Ford and Weissbein concluded that personality disposition like achievement motivation or job satisfaction has strong impact on individuals; motivation to learn during the training. Our findings also indicate that there is inverse relationship between External Locus of Control and Training Transfer. However in the presence of the mediators like Achievement motivation and job satisfaction the impact of negative relation between external locus of control and training transfer is reduced.

From the above discussion it is concluded that people with external locus of control have low level of job satisfaction as well as achievement motivation. Renn and Vadenberg (1991) reported that Internals were highly satisfied from their jobs as compared to externals that had frequent thoughts of quitting their jobs. Such attitude of Externals towards their jobs result in boredom and lack of interest in opportunities provided to them at work including trainings. Therefore, when they participate in any training opportunity their level of training transfer will also be low as compared to the people who have internal locus of control, because our results reveal that external locus of control negatively effects job satisfaction and achievement motivation which have negative effect on training transfer. It can also be concluded under the light of the above research that Internals will have better attitude towards their work with high levels of transferability of knowledge gained in the training sessions.

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