

ABSTRACT

A Study of Locus of Control and Related Home and School Variables in a Sample of Secondary-Level Jamaican Students.

Sr. Mary Christine Green, E.M.S.

This investigation explored the impact of home and school variables on the locus of control construct - the extent to which individuals perceive events in their lives as being a consequence of their own actions, and as such, controllable (internal control); or as being unrelated to their own behaviours and, therefore, beyond personal control (external control). The sample consisted of 213 Grade 8 students drawn from three Traditional High and three New Secondary schools in the parish of St. Andrew, Jamaica. Data were analysed for the sample overall and its partitions (sex and school type) and an indepth study was also made of the highest and lowest scorers on LOC. The chief findings were as follows:

(1) Students overall, tended to be more internal than external (the mean score on LOC falling above the mid-point of the scale). There were also no significant differences in performance on LOC between the partitions.

(2) There were, likewise, no significant differences in performance on the independent

variables for the two sexes: however, for the school type partition, High school Ss scored significantly higher than their counterparts in the New Secondary schools on V-1, Parental Support and Encouragement, V-3, Life Style, V-4, Teachers' Reinforcement System and V-5, School Tone.

(3) For the total sample, females and New Secondary Ss, there was an absence of any significant correlations emerging between the dependent and independent variables. However, for the boys and High school Ss, LOC correlated significantly with V-1, Parental Support and Encouragement, V-4, Teachers' Reinforcement System and V-5, School Tone.

(4) Factor analysis produced, for the total sample, a three factor solution - Factor I representing School Environmental Inputs and Factor II, Socio-Economic Status. Factor III emerged with only two variables loading significantly (interestingly, one of these was LOC), so no attempt was made to name the factor.

(5) The in-depth exploration of data pertaining to the 5 highest and 5 lowest scorers on LOC,

pointed to fairly marked differences in their performance on specific items comprising the independent variables. In general, the more favourable responses were given by high LOC Ss.

The implications of these results for the educational field were discussed, and certain recommendations were made to those involved in the education of children. These were addressed to the government, educators, parents and future researchers, and encompassed several suggestions for enhancing internality in secondary-level students.