

Emotional Intelligence and Its Relation to Locus of Control among Specialized Employees: A Field Study at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Employees, Bir Khadem Center, Algiers, Algeria

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Abstract:

This study investigates the connection between emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Employees. A total of 98 first-year trainees participated in the survey. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, while Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale was used to assess locus of control.

The findings showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and an internal locus of control, indicating that trainees with higher emotional intelligence are more inclined to take responsibility for their actions and make autonomous decisions. On the other hand, a negative relationship was observed between emotional intelligence and an external locus of control, suggesting that those with higher emotional intelligence are less likely to believe that external factors determine their outcomes.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Locus of control.

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1. Introduction

In alignment with the state's policy to support the right to work, enhancing quality of life and social stability, this training program adheres to specific guidelines for its participants. Its objective is to equip a selected group of trainee employees with the skills needed to assist vulnerable social groups, such as individuals with disabilities and those facing various social difficulties.

The National Center for the Training of Specialized Employees in Bir Khadem, Algiers, provides training for a set number of trainees as requested by institutions linked to the National Solidarity Sector. Admission to this specialized training, which spans seven fields, is determined through a national competition based on pre-established criteria. The purpose behind these procedures is to care for a wide range of social groups, both within and outside of private institutions. The National Center was created through a presidential decree published in the Official Gazette on December 1, 1987, under Decree No. 87/258. It was relocated to Bir Khadem in 1989, when its roles and functions were formally defined. Since then, numerous groups specializing in social services have graduated from the center (Official Gazette 87/258, 1987).

The training programs at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Employees differ in length, with some extending up to 36 months while others are completed in less than 24 months. The learning experience of trainees is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors, such as group membership and eligibility, which can either enhance or hinder their progress. Locus of control refers to whether an individual's actions are influenced by personal beliefs and values (internal locus) or by external pressures and expectations (external locus). The study aims to analyze the behavioral tendencies of the trainees within this framework.

2. Research problem

Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to interact effectively with themselves and others, aiming to maintain a balanced relationship between personal and social dynamics. It involves a variety of positive actions and emotions that help manage interactions, influencing outward behaviour, tendencies, and desires with a high level of control and accuracy. As highlighted in a study by O'Neil (1996), emotional intelligence enables individuals to regulate their emotions, make sound life decisions,

remain optimistic, handle work challenges, and foster empathy and positive social relationships with those in their environment.

In recent years, researchers have increasingly focused on emotional factors, particularly emotional intelligence, and its influence on various areas of life, education, and health. Daniel Goleman defines emotional intelligence as encompassing a set of personal and social abilities. Similarly, Bar-On describes it as a combination of emotional and social competencies that shape how we perceive and express ourselves, relate to others, and handle daily challenges (Bar-On, 2000). Emotional intelligence is widely regarded as a key predictor of success in social interactions. Goleman (1995-1996) argues that emotional intelligence is more significant than intellectual intelligence or IQ, emphasizing that academic success is largely influenced by emotional and social skills. He also highlights the importance of developing emotional intelligence in children from a young age, encouraging both teachers and parents to actively support this growth (Goleman, 2000, p. 53).

Goleman highlights the 1980s as a pivotal period for advancements in the scientific study of human emotions. He argues that this research challenges the notion that intelligence is purely genetic and that IQ is an unchangeable trait, unaffected by life experiences. This view fails to account for why some individuals with high IQs struggle in life, while others with average IQs succeed. According to Goleman, the crucial factor often lies in emotional intelligence, which includes traits such as self-discipline, optimism, perseverance, and the capacity for self-motivation (Goleman, 2000, pp. 10-11).

In their 2003 study, "Emotional Intelligence (as a Trait) and Subjective Well-being," Furnham and Petrides investigated how cognitive and personality factors relate to happiness. Their results showed a positive connection between people's happiness and their self-assessments of emotional factors and beliefs.

Saeed Sarour's research, "Coping Skills and their Relationship with Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control," identified differences in how people manage stress depending on their levels of emotional intelligence. Additionally, Lindy's 2001 study on emotional intelligence and its connection with various personality traits found no significant gender differences in emotional intelligence, but did uncover a strong negative correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism. Conversely, Baker's 2001 study reported gender differences in emotional intelligence, with females showing higher levels. This study also linked emotional intelligence to better emotional adjustment, revealing that females

experience fewer emotional disturbances and exhibit higher emotional intelligence, which contradicts earlier findings that suggested otherwise.

According to Perrone's 2006 study, children begin transitioning from close familial relationships to broader social interactions and kinship connections early in their lives. The study emphasizes that over time, the importance of the school environment increases relative to the family setting. Gifted learners, in particular, must put considerable effort into adjusting socially to a larger group of peers and establishing their place within this context. The study also points out the various internal dynamics within the school setting that act as significant stimuli.

Chemiss et al. (2000) sees that emotional intelligence is essential for fostering self-efficacy, maintaining personality integration, and enhancing one's capacity to adapt and persist through challenging circumstances. Plus, Abdullah al-Aqqad (2009) highlights that it influences self-motivation and plays a key role in achieving success within social relationships (p. 4).

Psychological theory highlights the importance of locus of control, a concept developed by Julian Rotter within his social learning framework. Locus of control describes how people perceive the relationship between their actions and the outcomes they experience (al-'Afari, 2001, p. 14).

"Saeed Sarour" conducted a study titled "Coping Skills and Their Relationship with Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control," revealing significant differences in coping strategies based on varying levels of emotional intelligence.

Individuals encounter various challenges across their professional, academic, familial, and social spheres, necessitating effective coping strategies to handle stress or anxiety that may impede their goals. Naturally, human tendencies and personality traits lead people to seek control over their lives and impact their surroundings to achieve favorable outcomes. Consequently, locus of control has emerged as a personality trait of growing interest to researchers. This is illustrated by Verma's 1986 study, which explored the connections between locus of control, ego strength, emotional balance, and emotional intelligence among university students (Tariq al-Sadeq, p. 12).

Locus of control is a psychological framework used to understand and predict individual behaviour. Each student navigates their surroundings differently, influencing their self-actualization through events that affect their behaviours and attitudes in various ways. They develop personal interpretations of social

and behavioural situations, and their perception of responsibility for guiding events and managing outcomes is associated with their internal locus of control (Mufida and Aisha, p. 426).

Examining both emotional intelligence and locus of control among students at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem is driven by a societal concern. These students are expected to take on significant roles in the future, and failing to recognize and develop their potential could impede the growth of capable and innovative individuals.

We are concentrating on examining both emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees at the National Centre for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem, Algiers. This cohort will be pivotal in future specialized centres dedicated to supporting vulnerable populations with various disabilities. Our objective is to enhance their training and professional development, equipping them to effectively address and overcome challenges in their careers.

Given the importance of examining both emotional intelligence and locus of control, we have formulated the following general research question:

- Does emotional intelligence correlate with locus of control among trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem?

3. Hypothesis

➤ A connection exists between emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem.

4. Objectives of the Study

To explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem.

5. Importance of the Study

This study is vital as it focuses on students at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel, who will soon become professionals in centers dedicated to serving vulnerable populations. The aims of the study are to:

- Establish a framework to help them assume responsibilities and effectively manage future challenges.

- Ensure students excel in their academic and professional endeavors while minimizing errors and negative behaviors.
- Prepare students to succeed in collaborative environments and engage effectively with various stakeholders within the institution.

6. Definition of Concepts

6.1. Emotional Intelligence: Bar-On (2000) characterizes it as a combination of emotional and social skills that shape how individuals perceive and express themselves, engage with others, and handle everyday challenges (p. 321).

6.2. Operational Definition: it refers to the trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem's ability to manage their emotions through understanding their own psychology and that of others (Bar-On & Parker, 2000).

6.3. Locus of Control: Rotter describes locus of control as a person's belief regarding the factors that determine their successes or failures (Al-Barzanji, 2010, p. 31).

Springhalt and Sprint define locus of control as whether individuals believe they control their own outcomes (**internal**) or if external factors like luck or fate determine their outcomes (**external**) (Makkawi, 2015, p. 20).

6.3.1. Internal Locus of Control: This reflects an individual's belief that significant events in their life, whether positive or negative, result from their own actions, with fate, chance, or other people having no impact.

6.3.2. External Locus of Control: This represents an individual's belief that significant negative events in their life are caused by external factors, such as chance, fate, or the actions of others.

6.3.3. Operational Definition: The study investigates how trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem perceive the attribution of events.

7. Research Procedures

7.1. Study Population: The study population consisted of 98 first-year trainees in the specialized educator program at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel in Bir Khadem. This

sample was selected purposively and was enrolled in the training course for the 2020-2021 academic year.

7.2. Research Methodology: The study aims to explore the link between emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees at the National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel. A descriptive research method was utilized to analyze this relationship.

7.3. The sample

As for the features of the sample: Table (1) clearly shows that the total number of trainees is 98 individuals. In other words, the entire study population was included in the sample

Table (1)

Number of Trainees within the Institution

Municipality	Institution Name	Number of Trainees	Percentage
Bir Khadem	National Center for the Training of Specialized Personnel	98 Trainees	100%

Table (1) clearly shows that the total number of trainees is 98 individuals. In other words, the entire study population was included in the sample.

Table (2)

Shows the distribution of sample individuals according to their field of training.

Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Main Specialized Educator	72	73.46%
Specialized Educator	26	26.54%
Total	98	100%

Table (2) indicates that the percentage of trainees in the Main Specialized Educator program is 73.46%, while the percentage in the Specialized Educator program is 26.54%.

Table (3)

The distribution of the sample (gender)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	36	36.74%
Female	62	63.26%
Total	98	100%

Table (3) shows that the percentage of males is 36.74% and the percentage of females is 63.26%, indicating that there are more females than males in the sample.

Table (4)

The distribution of the sample (age)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-21 years old	77	78.57%
22-24 years old	21	21.43%
Total	98	100%

Table 4 shows that the predominant age group among the participants is 20-21 years, comprising 77 individuals or 78.57% of the sample. The following most frequent age group is 22-24 years, with 21 individuals, accounting for 21.43%. The data suggests that the age range of the participants is relatively narrow, implying that age may not significantly influence the study. Nonetheless, this information provides useful context for understanding the age distribution of the participants.

8. Research Instruments

8.1. Bar-On Youth Emotional Intelligence Scale

We used the Bar-On Youth Emotional Intelligence Scale, translated into Arabic by Ghada Mazhar al-Jundi (2006). It consists of 60 items where respondents select the most accurate description of themselves from a series of statements. The scale includes six subscales, each covering different facets of emotional intelligence. Responses are rated on a four-point Likert scale. The overall emotional intelligence score (EQ) is calculated based on the first four dimensions of the scale: intrapersonal competence, interpersonal competence, stress management, and adaptability.

Bar-On and Parker developed the scale using large samples of children and adolescents, with reliability assessed through Cronbach's alpha (0.65 to 0.90) and test-retest methods (0.77 to 0.89) (Shuler, 2004, p. 47).

In Arab studies: Jaajaa and Mansour (2015): Their study of fourth-year middle school students found Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.671, a split-half correlation of 0.516, and an overall test correlation of 0.680. Retest reliability showed significant correlations between initial and follow-up scores at the 0.01 level (Moqaddam Fahima, 2010, p. 86).

8.2. The Locus of Control Scale (Rotter's Scale, 1966)

The scale was created to investigate how reinforcement and rewards influence behaviour. The original version of the scale includes 23 forced-choice items, featuring pairs of statements where one represents external control, and additional 6 items were included to obscure the scale's intent, making a total of 29 items. Higher scores on this scale indicate a stronger external locus of control. Kafafi adapted this scale for use in Egypt with 427 students from Fayoum University, finding a reliability coefficient of 0.691 using the test-retest method and 0.528 with the split-half method, along with a face validity of 0.8 (Farouk Sayed Osman et al., 1998, p. 44).

This scale, designed by Rotter, classifies respondents into two categories:

- The first category (from 0 to 8 points) is the internal control category.
- The second category (from 9 to 23 points) is the external control category.

In 1966, Rotter created the "Locus of Control for Reinforcements" (E-I) scale, which includes items related to political, social, achievement, and general attitudes, featuring 29 pairs of statements, with 6 presented in a forced-choice format. Recognized for its methodological rigor, Rotter's scale was translated and adapted into Arabic by Alaa Eddine Kafafi (1982), who also standardized it for psychological research. The scale consists of 23 core items and 6 filler items across various domains and is commonly used for adults (Yahia Nougui, 2009-2010, p. 42).

9. Presentation, Analysis, Discussion, and Interpretation of Hypothesis Results

To test the hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between the two scales.

Table (5)

Demonstrates a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Significance Level	Decision
Internal Locus of Control	0.57	0.01	Significant
External Locus of Control	-0.63	0.01	Significant

Table (5) demonstrates a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and locus of control among trainees. A Pearson correlation of 0.57 ($p < 0.01$) shows that higher emotional intelligence is associated with a stronger internal locus of control, while a negative correlation of -0.63 ($p < 0.01$) indicates that lower emotional intelligence correlates with a stronger external locus of control. These findings support the research hypothesis and are consistent with studies by Asad and Weiss (2011), Abu

Zeiton (2011), and Ramadan et al. (2019), confirming the link between emotional intelligence and locus of control.

10. General Conclusion

The study found a positive link between emotional intelligence and internal locus of control, stressing that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to take responsibility and make independent decisions. Conversely, a negative correlation with external locus of control indicates that more emotionally intelligent individuals are less likely to attribute outcomes to external factors. These findings, which are linked to traits such as self-awareness, emotion regulation, and empathy, support existing research and underscore their importance for understanding personality traits, designing effective training programs, and enhancing job performance.

11. Conclusion

The study underscores the essential influence of emotional intelligence and locus of control on behaviour and decision-making. It suggests that training and educational programs could be developed to enhance these competencies. The strong positive link indicates that employees with high emotional intelligence are generally more self-reliant and proactive. Conversely, the negative correlation with external locus of control implies that these employees are less likely to attribute their outcomes to external factors. These insights offer valuable understanding into the factors that affect the behaviour and decision-making of specialized employees.

13. Recommendations

To deepen our understanding of this relationship, future studies could explore the following aspects:

- Exploring factors that shape emotional intelligence and locus of control.
- Examining the relationship between emotional intelligence, locus of control, and mental health factors.
- Developing training programs based on these findings to enhance emotional intelligence and locus of control in various age groups.

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