

## **Impact of Counselling on Locus of Control of Underachievers**

**MUSKAN AMEEN<sup>1</sup> AND MAHMOOD AHMAD KHAN\*<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar and <sup>2</sup>Professor

School of Education and Behavioural Sciences, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal (J&K) India

### **ABSTRACT**

The present study was undertaken to study the Impact of Counselling on Locus of Control of Underachievers. An experimental research was adopted for the study. The initial sample comprised of 441 high school students of 9<sup>th</sup> class from two educational zones viz., Baramulla and Singpora Kallan of District Baramulla. Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices (Non-Verbal) was administered for the measurement of intelligence. Mean of two annual examination results (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) was considered as the criterion for academic achievement. The subjects whose scores lie 10<sup>th</sup> percentile or more below their intelligence percentile scores were considered as underachievers. The final sample comprised of 164 underachievers which were divided into experimental and control group (N= 82 each). The data was collected by using Levenson's Locus of Control scale Indian adaptation by Vohara. After collection of data 't' test was used to analyze the data. It was analyzed that subjects with high mean score in factor 'powerful others' were externally controlled. They relied on powerful others viz., parents, guardians or siblings for their achievement. It was also analyzed that for factor 'chance control' subjects with high mean score assigned the cause of their achievement to the factors like fate, chance and luck. Further, it was analyzed that subjects with low mean score for the factor 'individual control' did not perceive that their own efforts could result in success. After analysis, counselling was given individually to every subject. It was concluded that after counselling intervention the subjects learnt to resist themselves to rely on others and started believing in themselves rather than fate, chance or luck. It was also concluded that they became internally controlled attributing every achievement to their own actions and efforts.

**Key Words :** Counselling, Locus of control, Underachievers

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mostly researchers assess that achievement and intelligence are undistinguishable paradigms. At the same time sheer presence of superior intelligence does not certify higher achievement. Many experimental studies have shown that even pupils of superior intelligence are underachievers, while some pupil with average intelligence achieve more than what is expected from them. Barbara (2005) contends that despite all the assessment tools available to today's educators and mountains of existing research, a forthright definition of underachievement is not available. In answer to the question of who are underachievers at school, it can be presumed that underachievers include those students:

1. Who do not perform according to their potentials

in a particular subject.

2. Who as a result of their behaviour do not show interest or perform well in their studies.

3. Who do not perform well in a specific subject.

4. Who do have the obligatory intellectual ability but still underachieve.

5. Who are restricted by culture, language and gender from doing well academically at school.

In educational arena, Locus of Control has been found to be a significant variable which contributes to better scholastic achievement of a person. The individuals, who have the internal locus of control, think that they have a big role on affecting the events which influence their lives. Furthermore, they assess themselves as possessing the power for the attitude they want to display by having the positive ego concept, and they

believe that they can direct their lives whatever way they desire (Gulveren, 2008). The individuals with external locus of control relate the events affecting their lives to perceptions such as chance, fate, and fortune which are out of their control. Locus of control is one of the vital concepts in the context of learning difficulty and attitude change.

Yazdanpanah *et al.* (2010) were of the view that students high on internal locus of control academically achieve higher than externals. In other study Kutanis *et al.* (2011) revealed that learning performances of the students with internal locus of control are high so they are more proactive and effective during the learning process. On the other hand, the ones with external locus of control are more passive and reactive during this period. Majzub *et al.* (2012) found a significant and positive correlation was found between internal locus of control and academic achievement. Hassan and Khalid (2014) indicated that high achieving students hold an internal academic belief system towards the academic situation. In the above discussion it seems that the students with 'internal locus of control' show high academic achievement as compared to the students having 'external locus of control'. So, they became underachievers.

Educationalists and other concerned bodies have made intensive efforts to proffer solutions for underachievement. In light of this, a growing body of research has revealed that the condition of underachieving students could be improved using counselling principles.

In the light of the studies, the investigators chose to identify underachievers and apply a counselling process to them. This was intended to determine if counselling could improve their locus of control. Only few studies have been conducted in India on this issue in general and specifically on the variable locus of control with respect to the impact of counselling intervention in the valley of Kashmir. The purpose of the study was to determine *Impact of Counselling on Locus of Control of Underachievers*.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- To identify the underachievers.
- To help underachievers to improve locus of control with the help of counselling.

#### **Hypotheses:**

- There would be a significant improvement in post-test factor wise scores of locus of control of experimental

group.

#### **Delimitations**

- Students from the 9<sup>th</sup> class were selected on the basis of their age group (14-15 years) as in this age children are mature enough to take decisions for themselves.
- The Government High Schools of educational zones *viz.*, Baramulla and Singpora Kallan of district Baramulla in Kashmir were selected. This selection was made on the basis that in the Baramulla District the affluent and educated class send their children to private schools, while the poor and uneducated class send their children to government schools. Therefore, these students do not currently get counselling for their problems either inside or outside school.

#### **Operational definitions of variables:**

##### ***Counselling:***

In the present study counselling means to help a client understand his potential and overcome his problems, which distract his locus of control.

##### ***Underachiever:***

In this study underachiever means, a client whose mean achievement scores of the previous two annual examination results (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) lie 10 percentile or more below his intelligence percentile scores.

##### ***Locus of control:***

Locus of Control in proposed study shall refer to the scores gained by the sample subjects on Levenson's Locus of control scale Indian adaption by Sanjay Vohara (1992).

## **METHODOLOGY**

There are 18 educational zones in district Baramulla. Out of these 18 zones, 2 zones *viz.*, zone Baramulla and zone Singpora Kallan were selected randomly for the sample. In zone Baramulla there were 11 high schools and in zone Singpora Kallan there were 6 high schools. The investigators selected 8 high schools from zone Baramulla and 4 high schools from Zone Singpora Kallan and rest were dropped on random sampling basis.

#### **Sample size:**

##### ***Initial sample:***

All the students studying in the 9<sup>th</sup> class within an age range of (14 to 15) from the Government high schools

of educational zones Baramulla and Singpora Kallan of district Baramulla (N=441) were contacted.

A mental measurement test Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices (1962), Non-Verbal, was administered to the subjects in different groups in order to measure intelligence. Mean of two annual examination results (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) was considered as the criterion for academic achievement.

The intelligence and achievement percentile scores of the sample subjects are given below:

**Table 1 : The intelligence and achievement percentile scores of the sample subjects**

Percentile PP	Intelligence Scores	Academic Achievement Score
	Lowest Score =1	Lowest Score =32
P90	15.92	71.32
P80	14.06	62.63
P70	12.74	58.39
P60	11.8	55.16
P50	10.94	52.43
P40	10.04	48.72
P30	9.08	45.1
P20	7.8	42.15
P10	5.94	38.65
	Highest Score =22	Highest Score =92

Subjects whose academic achievement scores lie  $\pm 10$  percentile of their intelligence percentile scores were considered as achievers and were dropped from the study (N=272). The subjects whose scores lie 10 percentile or more below their intelligence percentile scores, were considered as underachievers (N=169).

**Final sample:**

In the final sample 2 high schools were dropped as no underachiever was found in these schools according

to the criterion model. Following the same criterion a total of 169 subjects were screened out as underachievers. Five students were dropped from the study as they often remain absent from the school.

Thus in the final analysis the investigators were left with 164 subjects, who served as the sample for the study. The criterion model for the selection is in line with Gowan (1960), which has been successfully used by Mohan and Nehru (1972); Mohan and Khera (1978); Khan (1996); Khan (2000); Khan and Parveen (2005); Khan and Jabeen (2013); Khan and Dilruba (2017).

**Classification of sample subjects:**

In accordance with the research design the sample subjects were divided into two parallel groups- Experimental Group and Control Group (N=82) each.

**Pre-test:**

The investigators administered the test of Locus of Control to both the experimental and control groups. The scores gained by each student were recorded for Locus of Control. The mean, S.D and ‘t’ of Locus of Control scores (pre-test) of each group (experimental and control) is given below in Table 2.

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups as far as their pre-test Locus of control scores are concerned. It shows that the two groups (experimental and control) are parallel in their locus of control.

**Variables:**

The important variables taken into consideration in this study are:

**Independent variable:**

Counselling intervention served as the independent

**Table 2 : Representing the mean difference of Locus of control scores (pre-test) between the experimental and control group**

Variable	Factors		Experimental group	Control group
Locus Of Control	Powerful others	Mean	25.05	25.50
		S.D	4.166	3.673
		‘t’		0.220 *
Control	Chance control	Mean	24.37	24.71
		S.D	3.886	3.554
		‘t’		0.567 *
	Individual control	Mean	27.27	28.06
		S.D	2.529	3.511
		‘t’		1.632 *

\* = Not Significant

variable in the study.

**Dependent variable:**

Post counselling locus of control scores of the subjects.

**Tools used:**

- Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices (1962), for the measurement of intelligence.
- Vohara’s Locus of Control Scale Indian Adaptation of Levenson’s Scale. This 24 Likert type Rating items scale measures locus of control in three dimensions– I. powerful on others, II. Chance control, and III. Individual Control.

**Counselling intervention for experimental group:**

The investigators started with a directive approach Willaimson’s (1939), and when the situation demanded, a non-directive approach was used, Roger’s (1989). Throughout the research, an attempt was made to adjust the techniques used to the requirements of situation and the client. During treatment, the counselling process focused in three elements

- a) **Existing behavior;** the behavior which is causing the subject to underachieve.
- b) **Change in behavior:** a change in this underachieving behavior through counselling.
- c) **Terminal behavior:** powerful locus of control which leads underachiever to become an achiever.

**Time budget:**

In order to improve the locus of control budgeting of counselling time was done by the investigators in consultation with the clients

No. of counselling sessions for each client	Average time for each session	Gap between the counselling session
6	45 minutes	7 days

**Phases of counselling:**

**Establishing the relationship:**

In order to establish a fruitful relationship with the client, it is very important that the counsellor establishes a rapport with them. The counselling was done individually. The investigators listened to each client, gave them proper attention, expressed a caring attitude and empathized with them. It took some time but gradually each client started to discuss their genuine feelings openly

and got ready to find a remedy for their problems. The investigators detected how these clients felt and reflected. At the end of the session some structuring was done for the next session. Each client was told, “We will discuss more about the problems related to your studies and your life in the next session”.

**Assessing the problem:**

The process involved the collection and classification of information related to the client. From the review of literature, the investigators found that there were many reasons for students to be underachievers. One of the major reasons was poor locus of control. The investigators employed the test for the same variable in order to see if the clients’ have poor locus of control. The investigators found that they were not motivated or attracted towards their studies. Reasons were many, sometimes these were domestic problems, fear of failure, lack of interest in their studies, poor locus of control. The investigators assessed that in order to overcome these problems and to make them achieve well academically, each client needed assistance. Having determined the purpose for which a counselling relationship was established, each client and the investigators then agreed to how this goal will be achieved.

**Goal-setting:**

The investigators and each client set goals together for themselves to know how well counselling is working and when counselling should be concluded. The skills involved in goal-setting were divided into three classes. First was the investigator’s inferential skill. The investigators listened to every client’s vague descriptions of existing and desired conditions and read between the lines of those messages. The second skill involved differentiation between the ultimate goals, the intermediate goals, and the immediate goals. Most of the clients were thinking in terms of the ultimate goals e.g, when I grow, “I will choose such profession” when I graduate from college “I will go on in this subject” etc. Here the investigators interfered and started like if we are to accomplish the ultimate goals, we must be able to think in terms of intermediate goals, like in the next six months “I plan to complete this portion of a certain book” and immediate goals, “I will do the following things tomorrow”. Intermediate and immediate goals, provide the tactics which are essential to accomplish the ultimate goals and are the real vehicle for any change in

counselling. The third skill of the goal-setting process involved helping every client how to think realistically in intermediate and immediate terms.

***Initiating interventions:***

While initiating counselling, due cognizance has been given to empathy. As the client's thoughts and feelings about their difficulties became clarified and better understood, they began to move towards their counselling goal. In addition, as the problem was clarified it became more amenable to attack. Based on their tentative understanding of the problem, the investigators tried Directive to Non-Directive and Non-Directive to Directive counselling approaches to help each client.

***Counselling client's in relation to locus of control:***

Most of the students in experimental group had low locus of control in various dimensions. These students were in conflict with the world and with themselves. As Duhigg (2016) describes, "Having an external Locus of Control means believing that your life is primarily influenced by events outside your control and it is correlated with higher levels of stress because an individual perceives the situation as beyond his or her coping abilities". The investigators found that most clients' were externally controlled. They do attribute their achievements to the external factors. They assign the cause of their achievements to the factors like fate, chance and luck. They were having the perception that the people who are at the helm of affairs in different spheres of life, become the cause of their accomplishments and achievements. Consequently, they do not take their own initiatives in performing different academic pursuits resulting in their low achievement. Sometimes they were denying who they really were and follow the things which were not suiting their mental structure. This resulted in failure. The investigators helped them to understand that one should have a strong locus of control while dealing with life. One should become aware of what he is and what he can be. The investigators facilitated each of them that it is essential to improve the way you look at the world. Therefore, one should not believe that his life is dictated by forces other than his control. The investigators assisted them that one should be internally controlled attributing his every sort of achievements to his own actions and efforts. One should be autonomous and diligent in his approach. Their own initiatives, decisions, strategies and styles become the core

determinants and predictors of their high achievement. The investigators facilitated them that we aren't born with an unalterable Locus of Control. Our achievement is not only because of our fate or our luck or by chance. Of course, to one degree or another it is, but there is plenty that we can control. Perhaps hard work, perseverance and a thirst for knowledge will lead one person to become a millionaire. Here, the investigators introduced them to the role model of successful adult like Abraham Lincoln who had a rough childhood as his mother died when he was nine and his family moved several times but despite all odds he later became the President of United States. The underachievers started saving time and making effort to make more appropriate decisions about themselves. This resulted in more positive and successful results. The underachievers were helped to gain strong internal locus of control.

***Termination and follow-up:***

Counselling process was terminated by saying "We are done with our work". Each client appraised the worth of counselling sessions and how this temporary relationship had helped them. They appraised their progress i.e, what new behaviour they had learnt, identified the unfinished ones which they will continue to work on their own, whose assistance they could take, what problems they may face in implementing and maintaining new behaviours and how they could deal with these problems in future. The clients were encouraged to consider their counselling experiences in the light of probable future developments. The purpose of counselling was not only to increase clients' abilities to deal with the difficulties, but also a gentle improvement in their ability to cope with themselves and the world.

***Post-test:***

After the counselling process was completed, locus of control test was conducted to the experimental and the control group, to determine the impact of counselling on locus of control. The test used to assess locus of control was the same test that was employed at the pre-test stage. The mean of post-test scores of locus of control (factor wise) of experimental group are for powerful others is 23.44, for chance control is 22.11, for individual control is 29.18 and of control group for powerful others is 25.18, for chance control is 24.10 and of individual control is 28.09.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

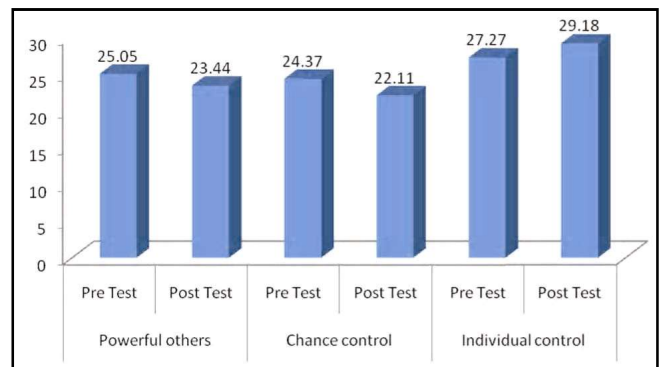
The investigators had to analyze the impact of counselling on Locus of Control on underachievers (experimental group). For this purpose the data was treated to Fisher’s ‘t’ test.

Table 3 represents the significant mean difference between pre and post-test locus of control scores factor-wise of experimental group. It is clearly visible that on factor ‘p’ *i.e.*, powerful others, the mean score of pre-test is 25.05 which is higher than the mean score of post-test (23.44). The calculated ‘t’ value for ‘p’ is 5.188 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The mean score favouring the pre-test on this factor indicates that before counselling students were externally controlled. They gave credence of their achievements to the external factors. They had to rely on powerful persons around them *viz.*, parents, guardians or even their siblings. They were even not able to manipulate daily assignments whether at school or outside school. They couldn’t decide on their own and often hesitated in taking initiatives for performing different academic pursuits resulting in their low academic achievements. During counselling sessions, the investigators facilitated them to focus on their lives, overcome every weakness and take ‘individual control’ of themselves. Gradually, they learnt to resist themselves to rely on ‘powerful others’ and started believing in themselves. Consequently after counselling, students perceived that their own decisions and efforts contributed to their high achievement which is evident from the low mean score of post-test.

It is evident from the table that on factor ‘c’ *i.e.*, chance control the mean score of pre-test is 24.37 which is higher than the mean score of post-test 22.11. The calculated ‘t’ value is 7.074 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The mean score favouring the pre-test indicates that before counselling students assigned the cause of their achievement to the factors like fate, chance and luck. They were having the perception that

their academic grades were the result of their good or bad luck. The investigators found that they did not believe in hard work which resulted in their low academic achievement. After counselling, the students devoted themselves to achieve their target by realizing their objectives. They became more responsible for their problems by taking necessary steps throughout the process. Their internal locus of control became a driving force for them to work hard, take their own initiatives and achieve better which is evident from the low mean score of post-test.

It is also evident from the table that on factor ‘I’ *i.e.*, individual control the mean score of pre-test is 27.27 which is lower than the mean score of post-test 29.18. The calculated ‘t’ value is 4.459 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The mean score favouring the post-test indicates that after counselling students get high academic grades. They achieve high because they are ‘internally controlled’ attributing every single achievement to their own actions and efforts. They are hard workers, believe in themselves and are active in their nature. They are autonomous and industrious in their approach. Their own initiatives, decisions, strategies and styles became the core determinants and predictors of their high



**Fig. 1 : Significance of mean difference between (pre and post-test) locus of control scores (factor wise) of experimental group**

**Table 3 : Representing the significance of mean difference between (pre and post-test) locus of control scores (factor wise) of experimental group**

Variable	Factors	Experimental Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t'-value
Locus Of Control	Powerful others	Pre Test	82	25.05	4.166	5.188**
		Post Test	82	23.44	3.944	
	Chance control	Pre Test	82	24.37	3.886	7.074**
		Post Test	82	22.11	3.549	
	Individual control	Pre Test	82	27.27	2.529	4.459**
		Post Test	82	29.18	3.461	

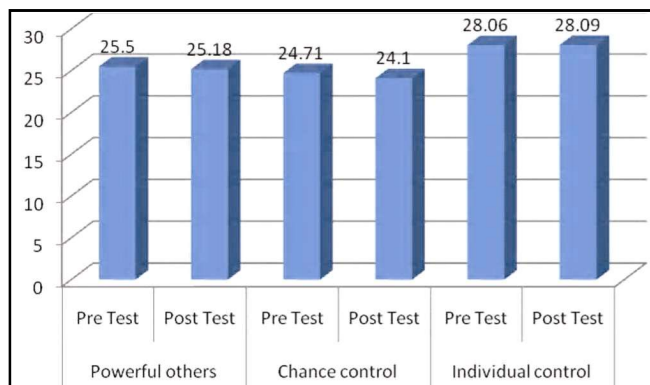
\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

academic achievement. The low mean score of pre-test indicated that before counselling, students did not perceive that their own efforts could result in success, and therefore they did not work for better grades. Their outer directedness became the cause of their underachievement. They were slow, sluggish and passive because they relied on factors like fate, chance and luck and not on themselves.

The above discussion lead the investigators to the conclusion that after counselling, there was a significant improvement in the locus of control of experimental group.

This way the hypothesis no. 1 which states, “There would be a significant improvement in post-test factor wise scores of locus of control of experimental group” is accepted.

Table 4 represents the significant mean difference between pre and post-test locus of control scores factor-wise of control group. It can be seen that for the factor ‘p’ *i.e.*, powerful others of locus of control the mean score of pre-test is 25.50 which is slightly higher than the mean score of post-test (25.18), for factor ‘c’ *i.e.*, chance control the mean score of pre-test is 24.71 which is slightly higher than the mean score of post-test (24.10)



**Fig. 2 : Significance of mean difference between (pre and post-test) locus of control scores (factor wise) of control group**

and for the factor ‘I’ *i.e.*, individual control the mean score of pre-test is 28.06 which does not make much difference with the mean score of post-test (28.09). The calculated ‘t’ value for powerful others, chance control and individual control is 0.820, 1.215 and 0.356, respectively which is not significant. No improvement is seen in control group as far as their post-test locus of control scores are concerned. The results are authenticating the fact that no significant difference is found in scores as no counselling was given to this group.

The results are in line with Julian (1996); Bryan *et al.* (2008); Patricia (2013);

The investigator Julian (1996) studied locus of control, personal control and the counselling of children with learning and/or behaviour problems and advocated an approach to counselling of children with learning and/or behavioral problems to improve their locus of control and personal control. Bryan *et al.* (2008) investigated the efficacy of a 10 session group counselling and suggested that the group format had a positive impact on the adolescent’s general and parent/home-related self-esteem and internal locus of control. Patricia (2013) in one of her studies, Effect of counselling on study habits, locus of control among senior secondary students in Nigeria indicated that counselling played a significant role in student’s attitudinal change.

**Inferential suggestions:**

On the basis of the field experience the investigators have framed some suggestions which are as follows;

- Every school should establish a counselling center in which a school counsellor should be appointed who help the students in academic, vocational or personal problems.
- It is recommended that schools should have elaborate and organized mechanism to ensure guidance and counselling services relevant, timely and useful to maximize its effectiveness in enhancing students’ locus

**Table 4 : Representing the significance of mean difference between (pre and post-test) locus of control scores (factor wise) of control group**

Variable	Factors	Control Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t'-value
Locus Of Control	Powerful others	Pre Test	82	25.50	3.991	0.820 *
		Post Test	82	25.18	3.673	
	Chance control	Pre Test	82	24.71	3.554	1.215*
		Post Test	82	24.10	3.357	
	Individual control	Pre Test	82	28.06	3.511	0.356 *
		Post Test	82	28.09	4.409	

\* = Not Significant

of control.

– It is obligatory to locate, analyze, comprehend and ponder on the factors within the school situation that are favorable to the commencement of the causes of underachievement.

– Counteractive measures like counselling whether individual counselling or group counselling as part of the student personnel services are essential if the rate of underachievement is to be condensed and students are to achieve well academically.

– The purpose of education is to offer opportunities for each student to reach his/her potential in the areas of educational, vocational, social and emotional development. The Head of the school must ensure that guidance and counselling is an integral part of education and that it is centered directly on this purpose.

– School counsellors in collaborative efforts can implement both systematic and programmatic changes in schools and communities to prevent students from dropping out of schools.

– Every person wants to be successful. The counsellor must use techniques to help each and every underachiever to achieve better.

– Individual counselling making use of appropriate intervention techniques should be used in order to strengthen the factors associated with high achievement and alter the factors related to underachievement.

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