

A LOCUS OF CONTROL MEASURE AS A TEACHING DEMONSTRATION¹

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Summary.—268 students (M age = 20.0 yr., SD = 4.4; 68% women), randomly chosen from psychology classes, completed Rotter's I-E scale and Pettijohn's 1992 locus of control scale for class demonstration. The two sets of scores were similar but examination of reliability and validity indicated the latter was best used as a demonstration.

Pettijohn (1) developed a 20-item true/false test based on Rotter's (2) original concept of locus of control as a teaching demonstration.² To provide possible data on reliability and validity 286 students (68% women) from a large public university and a small, private college were randomly chosen to participate as part of a psychology class's activity. Students were of traditional age (M = 20.0 yr., SD = 4.4) and 93% Euro-American. All participants completed both Rotter's Internal-External Scale and Pettijohn's scale in random order. Each response of the 20 Pettijohn items is scored as 0 or 5, so test scores can range from 0 = very strong external locus of control to 100 = very strong internal locus of control.

For this sample, the mean Rotter score was 10.4 (SD = 3.6, range 0–20) and that for the Pettijohn score was 70.9 (SD = 10.9, range 40–90). The Pearson correlation of scores for both measures was $-.39$, df = 282, p < .001. The Cronbach value of internal consistency, alpha, was only .43 for the latter scale.

Although the correlation between the Rotter and Pettijohn measures was statistically significant, both this value and internal consistency for the latter measure were low. While the measure can be useful as a demonstration of locus of control in the classroom, researchers should be cautioned about using the scale in formal research.

REFERENCES

1. PETTIJOHN, T. F. (1992) *Teaching and testing from psychology: a concise introduction*. (3rd ed.) Guilford, CT: The Dushkin Publishing Group.
2. ROTTER, J. (1966) Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcements. *Psychological Monographs*, 80, No. 1 (Whole No. 609).

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²Items appear online at <http://www.dushkin.com/connectext/psy/ch11/survey11.mhtml>.