A LOCUS OF CONTROL MEASURE AS A TEACHING DEMONSTRATION

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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 internal 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. To provide possible data or reliability and validity 268 students (68% women) from a large public university and a small, private college were randomly chosen to participate in 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 36.4 (SD = 3.6, range 20-20) and that for the Pettijohn score was 72.9 (SD = 10.9, range 40-90). The Pearson correlation of scores for both measures was .39, r2 = .22, p < .001. The Cronbach value of internal consistency, alpha, was only .45 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


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