Locus of control and psychological well-being among Iranian adolescent migrants in Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being among Iranian adolescent migrants in Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia. The participants were 300 Iranian student adolescents that comprise (143 male, and 157 female) in the age range of 13-16 years. The instruments employed to measurement were locus of control scale Rotter,(1965) and psychological well-being scale by Ryff, and keyes, (1995). The results of this study showed that there was a significant relationship between locus of control and adolescent's psychological well-being. Internal locus of control was positively associated with psychological well-being, while external locus of control was negatively associated with psychological well-being.

Keywords: Locus of control, psychological well-being, Iranian adolescences

I. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood and is highly related with biological, physical, emotional, cognitive, social and psychological, changes (Kaplan, 2004). Many influential factors like internal and external locus of control always determine the mainstream of these changes that may be positive or negative to psychological well-being of adolescents (Hutchinson & Rapee, 2007). Psychological well-being as we all know today is defined as a positive self-perception and a positive view of an individual's way of life includes a sense of being happy about oneself, (Diener, 1984). According to Keyes, (2006) psychological well-being is a feeling of satisfaction and happiness with one's activities, also the ability to meet the demands involved in one's daily life, and having a sense of personal purpose and meaning. McNulty, Livneh, and Wilson (2004) believed psychological well-being is an important factor in positive psychology, as well as gladness, satisfaction of the past, optimism for the future and happiness in the present (Abdollahi, Abu Talib, Yaacob, & Ismail, 2014; Abbas Abdollahi, Hosseini, Motalebi, & Talib, 2013).

Although one of the larger disasters and difficulties over the past three decades in the world has been the phenomenon of the massive wave of immigration to foreign countries (Ghaffarian, 1987), this situation is particularly clear in third world countries like Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Africa, Middle East countries, or some of the other countries in Southeast Asia (Kazemipoor, 2007). Generally speaking, this phenomenon of the massive wave immigration is a challenging issue for many nations in the world, and Iranian immigrants are not exception. Because every year thousands from Iranian always moved to other countries, where they usually face with acculturation problems within their own family (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005). Moreover, these problems influence all Iranian immigrants in other countries like Southeast Asia countries such as Malaysia (Safdar, Lewis and Daneshpoup, 2006).

Moreover like many other immigrants, Iranian adolescents migrant also suffer from many problems which include; language proficiency, low psychological well-being, low self-esteem, discrimination, poor social adaptation, and homesick,(Ghaffarian, 1987). Importantly, adolescents also faced many changes in values, behaviours, economics, beliefs, climate, religious and contexts (Smith, 1989). In addition, immigrants are encountered with much pressure on their identity because immigrants are face with acculturation difficulty through cultural and psychological changes which occur as a result of interaction between two, three or more cultural groups (Berry, 1990).

Additionally, locus of control was hypothesized to be related to adolescent’s psychological well-being and mental health, because studies have demonstrated that an internal locus of control is typically related with better mental health (Karbalaei, Abdollahi, Abu Talib, Nor, & Ismail, 2013), immigrant adolescents with an internal locus of control were predicted to demonstrate better psychological well-being than those with an external locus of control (Ward and Kennedy, 1993). Locus of control is another factor which may influence adolescent’s psychological well-being. Individuals with high internal locus of control has been better adjusting to daily life
problems (Karbalaei, Abdollahi, Momtaz, & Abu Talib, 2014). Locus of control is defined as people belief and tendency to attribute their successes or failures to either internal or external causes (Rotter, 1966).

II. Objective

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between internal/external locus of control and psychological well-being among Iranian adolescents in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

III. Methodology

A. Population and Sample

The population of this study was 950 Iranian students from Iranian school in Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia and sample of the study was 300 male and female with age 13-16 years, and also the sample of this study were obtained by using cluster sampling technique.

B. instruments

The Rotter Internal-External locus of control scale was used. This scale has 29 items. Each of the 29 items has two options for responses. Each of these two options measures either external or internal locus of control. Examples of items in the scale were:

- No matter how hard you try some people just don’t like you.
- Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

Split-half internal consistency coefficients of the scale ranged from .65 to .79 among both high school and college student samples. Test-retest reliability coefficients were found range from .60 to .83 among college students (Rotter, 1966).

Psychological Well-being scale developed by Ryff and Keyes, (1995) was used to assess adolescents’ psychological well-being. In this study, psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct encompass to psychological and psychosocial well-being (Ryff and Singer, 2005). This scale has 54 items and six dimensions (6×9) that contains six subscales reflecting self-acceptance (9 items), autonomy, social support(9 items), environmental mastery (9 items), personal growth (9 items), positive relations with others (9 items), and purpose of life (9 items). In this regards, respondents were asked to response to each items using 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree (e.g., In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live). The scale was scored by a total number of items. The total score ranged from 54 to 270, higher scores indicating that adolescents have high level of psychological well-being.

IV. Results

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the variables of this study. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being.

A. Descriptive Findings

Respondents in present study were Iranian adolescent students in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The respondents’ age range was from 13-16 years with the mean age of 14.76 years (SD= 1.11). Then more than half of the respondents 157 (52.3%) were female and 143 (47.7%) were males.

As shown in Table 1, based on the mean of scores of respondents, the scores of psychological well-being, 48.4% of the respondents reported high score in psychological well-being and it is means 145 of respondents were strong in adjustment and psychological well-being, also 50% of the respondents (150) reported mild scores in psychological well-being whereas only (1.6%) of the respondents reported low scores in psychological well-being and almost greater number of respondents (98.4%) reported medium and strong adjustment and also good psychological well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>N=300</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-Being</td>
<td>190.32</td>
<td>24.59</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (Scores 54 - 141)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (Scores 142- 190)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (Scores 191 - 270)</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicate in Table 2 the level of locus of control reported by the respondents was (77%) for low level in locus of control and it is means which almost of respondents (231) were placed in internal locus of control, while (23%) of them (69) were placed in external locus of control or high level in locus of control, (Mean=9.3) and (SD= 3.85). This is mean that almost of respondents were internal locus of control and believe to him/her abilities. Individuals with scores between [0-12] are place in internal locus of control groups, while Individuals
with scores [13-23] are place in external locus of control groups. An internal locus of control perceive positive and negative events as being under their personal control, while those with an external locus of control believe that these events are not contingent on their behavior. Locus of control has frequently been researched as a personality variable that is associated with mental health, including psychological well-being and general life satisfaction (Ward and Kennedy, 1992).

Descriptive findings for locus of control variables are displayed in Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (Scores 0 - 12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (Scores 13 - 23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inferential Findings**

There was a negative significant relationship between external locus of control and psychological well-being ($r= -0.317$, $p \leq 0.01$). The negative correlation coefficient indicates that an increase in the scores external locus of control is followed by a decrease in the adolescents’ psychological well-being. Therefore, adolescents with a strong internal locus of control more likely to report higher psychological well-being. The present finding of the study is consisted with past results (Moshki, and Ashtarian, 2010; Mohammad-Khani,2007; Legerski, et al., 2006; Shek, 2007 and Abedi, 2011) that argued internal locus of control is an important trait in the development of coping skills and positive adjustment when encountering traumas or distress and can helpful for adolescents psychological well-being. Internal locus of control has been found to be a predictor of psychological well-being, in adaptation to cultural transition (Ward, and Kennedy, 1993). Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that the outcomes of their actions are a result of their own personal efforts or abilities. They believe that hard work and personal abilities lead to positive outcomes and psychological well-being (Dyal, 1984). On the contrary, individuals with an external locus of control believe that their own actions are dependent on factors outside their personal control.

**Conclusion**

The present study found a significant correlation between locus of control and psychological well-being. It is obvious from the analyses conducted that locus of control effects on psychological well-being in adolescents. Internal locus of control motivates adolescents to achievement goals. Adolescents with high psychological well-being adopt mastery and performance approach goals, while those external locus of control tend to prefer performance-avoidance (Gordon, 1997). Social learning theory of locus of control stipulates that adolescents with external locus of control may underperform academically due to their lack of confidence in their ability to succeed, regardless of attempt (Gordon, 1997). Individual with highly internal locus of control will be more likely to have beneficial social relationships that impact positively on the performance of group assessments (Moshki, and Ashtarian, 2010). The ability to connect and socially interact helps in group assessments and the maintenance of social support as well as provides a feeling of empathy, wellness in the studying environment (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).

Based on findings of this study, domain and type of locus of control has significant relationship with adolescent’s psychological well-being among Iranian adolescent migrants in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is clear to note that adolescents who are internal locus of control are more likely to be sociable and tendency to society host culture and better psychological well-being. In conclusion, the results of this study showed that locus of control plays a basic role to determine the level of adolescent’s adjustments and psychological well-being among Iranian adolescents migrant in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Thus, it is necessary that adolescents should be equipped with appropriate abilities, skills, and knowledge so that they can have better adjustment with their society at large.

**References**


