

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-6-2003

Socioeconomic status and locus of control

Allegra Nicole Esposito
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Esposito, Allegra Nicole, "Socioeconomic status and locus of control" (2003). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1293.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1293>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

by
Allegra Nicole Esposito

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 6, 2003

Approved by _____

Date Approved 5/6/03

ABSTRACT

Allegra Nicole Esposito

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

2002-03

Dr. John Klanderman and Dr. Roberta Dihoff

Master of Arts in School Psychology

The purpose of this study was to determine a possible relationship between locus of control and socioeconomic status. Past studies have shown that children of higher socioeconomic status have a more internal outlook on life, and children of lower socioeconomic status have a more external outlook. Two groups of fourth graders containing both males and females were involved in the study. One group (n=20) were from a school located in a high socioeconomic area, and the other group (n=40) were from a school located in a lower socioeconomic area. Both groups were given The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale, which is a "yes" or "no" questionnaire geared toward children. A higher score on the scale indicated a more external viewpoint, and a lower score on the scale indicated a more internal viewpoint. The data was analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation-R and an independent samples T-test. They were used to determine whether there existed a positive or negative relationship between socioeconomic status and locus of control and a possible relationship between gender and locus of control. It was found that the scores on the scale differed significantly between schools, but gender was not found to have a significant relationship with locus of control. Specific questions on the scale are discussed, as well as implications for further research.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Need.....	1
Purpose	1
Hypothesis	2
Theory	2
Definitions.....	3
Assumptions	3
Limitations	4
Overview	4
Chapter Two: Review of Literature	6
Depression and Socioeconomic Status.....	6
Children and Depression	7
Achievement and Socioeconomic Status.....	8
Learned Helplessness.....	8
Locus of Control	9
Locus of Control and Academics.....	10
Locus of Control and Socioeconomic Status.....	13
Locus of Control and Motivation.....	13
Locus of Control and Gender.....	14
Locus of Control and Age	15
Locus of Control and Ethnicity.....	15
Locus of Control and Family	16
Children and School	18
Summary	19
Chapter Three: Design of the Study	20
Sample.....	20
Method.....	20
Measures.....	21
Hypothesis	23
Analysis.....	23
Summary.....	24
Chapter Four: Analysis of Results	25

Table of Contents

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions	30
Conclusions.....	32
Discussion.....	32
Implications for Future Research	34
References.....	36
Appendix.....	41
Letter to principals requesting approval	
Letter of approval from principals	

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 4.1: Mean of School One and School Two.....	26
Figure 4.2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.....	27
Figure 4.3: Questions four, six, and twenty-two.....	29
Figure 4.4: Questions twenty-six and thirty-two.....	29

Chapter One: Introduction

Need

Every year the local newspaper has a feature entitled, "Report Card on the Schools." This is where every school district in the tri-state area is reviewed. Among the reviewed areas are standardized test scores, the percentage of students receiving free lunch, how much the district spends per child, the number of computers per child, and teachers' salaries and credentials. If one were to examine the results each year, he would find some similarities. These similarities reflect the close relationship between socioeconomic status and test scores. The areas that are known to be more affluent usually yield higher test scores, whereas the areas known for low SES tend to have lower test scores.

This phenomenon sparked an interest. What could be some of the reasons accounting for lower test scores in areas with lower SES? Could there be a relationship between SES and self perception? Finally, how do these areas impact on an elementary school student?

Purpose

This study examined two different elementary schools, one in a high socioeconomic area and one in a low socioeconomic area. This study was being conducted to test a possible connection between locus of control and socioeconomic status. The purpose of the study was to examine whether a low or high socioeconomic status had any influence on an elementary school student's locus of control.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis in this study was that children who are of a low SES would have an external locus of control, and children of a high SES would have an internal locus of control. The dependent variable was the score on the locus of control scale. The independent variable was the child's SES status, low or high. Another question of interest was: "Would there be a gender difference in scores on the locus of control scale?"

Theory

Martin Seligman formulated a theory of learned helplessness (Maier & Seligman, 1976; Maier, Seligman, & Solomon, 1969; Seligman, 1975). This theory states that individuals who are constantly faced with negative events that are beyond their control can start to feel as if their efforts are useless. They then begin to feel that no matter what they do, it will not make a difference, and so they begin to feel helpless. Studies have been conducted that link helplessness to depression (Haas, 1998). In these studies children who experienced a pessimistic outlook of life were more prone to depression.

Another theory that is often seen in connection with the learned helplessness theory is locus of control, developed by Julian Rotter (1954, 1966). He explained that people vary in the way in which they attribute their behaviors to the reinforcers that follow. He explained that people who are internal see themselves as the cause of a reinforcer, whereas an external individual will attribute reinforcers to something other than themselves. There are studies (Nolen-Hoeksema, Seligman, & Girgus, 1992) that show how people who are considered to be external are more prone to helplessness.

There are two other connections to be made. The first is that poverty has been associated with depression in children and poor school performance (Bradley & Coorwyn, 2002). The second is that, in many studies SES has been shown to be connected with locus of

control. The studies concluded that a lower SES was associated with an external locus of control and a higher SES was associated with an internal locus of control (Robinson & Kelley, 1998; Schultz, 1993; Vasquez, 1975). Therefore the areas of learned helplessness, depression, poverty, and locus of control have been known to be interrelated (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997).

Definitions

Learned Helplessness - This idea was originated by Martin E. P. Seligman. It stated that people who experience uncontrollable events can come to believe that no matter what they do, they cannot control what happens to them.

Reformulated Theory of learned Helplessness - This is similar to the original Learned Helplessness theory, except it states that children who consistently explain causes of bad events as being internal are at a greater risk for helplessness.

Locus of Control - This is a theory developed by Rotter, and is based on a scale called the Internal External Scale or (I-E Scale). If one has an external locus of control they explain reinforcers as being depended on luck, chance, or fate. If one has an internal locus of control, they explain reinforcers as being dependent upon themselves.

Rotter's I-E Locus of Control Scale - Rotter's scale for determining an individual as an internal or an external.

Children's Attribution Style Questionnaire and Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale - Other scales used for determining locus of control in children.

SES - Socioeconomic status. In this study low and high socioeconomic status will be reviewed.

Assumptions

The same scale for determining the elementary school student's locus of control

was distributed in the two fourth grade classrooms. Therefore it was presumed that the testing conditions were similar, in that both teachers read the survey aloud to their class, followed the standardized directions, and gave students time to complete one question before reading another aloud. It was also assumed that both of the classes involved with this study were composed of heterogeneous groups of children in terms of gender and cognitive abilities. Finally, it was assumed that both of the groups, low and high SES, were a true representation of high and low socioeconomic status.

Limitations

One limitation to this study is that most of the subjects were Caucasian. Neither elementary school involved in the study was made up of a multicultural body of students. Another limitation was that there were more children represented in the lower socioeconomic group than in the high group. This was due to the principal's desire to keep the study contained in one classroom. Finally, the inability to have a middle SES represented in the study was a final limitation. The school that was originally going to be representing middle SES lacked sufficient free/reduced lunch records. Therefore this school could not be determined to be a middle socioeconomic school.

Overview

In chapter two, research linking learned helplessness to external locus of control will be reviewed. Also many other studies which discuss related issues such as school achievement, depression in children, SES, and poverty will be explored.

The sample used in this study will be explained in detail in chapter three as well as the instrument used to measure locus of control. The hypotheses will be revisited in a more specific and testable form.

The data and results will be analyzed and explained in chapter four. The

hypothesis will once again be discussed and explained. The following chapter will now explain how locus of control is closely related to the areas of socioeconomic status, poverty, and learned helplessness.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

There has been much research conducted establishing a relationship between socioeconomic status, depression in children and adults, learned helplessness, locus of control, motivation, and achievement. There have been numerous studies conducted showing correlational relationships in regard to these areas of interest. The studies range from school age children to adults, measuring achievement in the classroom as well as family relationships. Other areas such as gender and financial success have been researched. We will begin with an overview of socioeconomic status and the role it has in depression.

Depression and Socioeconomic Status

A review of past studies yielded a finding that people of lower socioeconomic status had a higher incidence of depression and mental disorders. Forty five to sixty percent of low income mothers taking the CES-D, a self report on depression, reported depressive symptoms (Coiro, 1997). It is important to note that socioeconomic status has not been found to be the cause of depression. When an individual is of lower status they often times rely on financial assistance to function. This reliance, rather than the actual financial status of the person, is found to be the cause of depression (Eaton, Muntaner, Bovasso, & Smith, 2001).

Another reason for the depression is that individuals living in poverty often blame themselves for their financial status, and therefore are under much stress. This stress is often to blame for much of the depression they experience. Often times the group that falls into these categories is single women trying to stay afloat and support their children.

It has also been noted from several studies that just being female is a consistent risk factor for depression (Haugaard, 2001).

Children and Depression

Children are also affected by the poverty and depression experienced in their households. Some adverse affects include lower academic achievement, lower rates of social and cognitive development, and higher incidences of behavior problems. These behavior problems, if exhibited at school, can lead to rejection by peers and poor academic performance (Wentzel & Asher, 1995). The reason being is that depressed mothers do not spend the adequate time with their children that is necessary to aid them academically and socially. Major depression in children can lead to the development of certain anxiety disorders and externalizing behaviors. It was also found that as children's depression levels rose, their scores on the WISC-R fell (Teeter & Semrud-Clikeman, 1997). This indicates the negative relationship depression has on achievement.

Children of poverty stricken and depressed parents were found to be hit more, to be scolded by yelling, and to receive less nurturing (Petterson & Albers, 2001; Whitbeck, Simons, Conger, Wickrama, Ackley, & Elder, 1997). Children in lower class families scored lower on standardized tests of intelligence (Olson, 1985) and experienced nutritional deficiencies (Petterson & Albers, 2001). However, it has been found that as a mother's depression level decreases, her child's cognitive and behavioral level increases. It is unfortunate though, that even after these mothers' depression decreases, the children never catch up to their peers (Coiro, 1997).

These results also generalize to minorities. A study conducted by Schultz (1993) indicated that minority children who came from more financially successful households performed better on academic tasks. It was even found that minority children from

disadvantaged households performed even lower than white children from equally disadvantaged households. The reason for this is that minority children are exposed to greater risks and fewer programs which promote resilience (Borman & Rachuba, 2001).

Achievement and Socioeconomic Status

Finally, another area related to socioeconomic status and achievement is mental retardation. It has been found that mentally retarded children of low socioeconomic status score better than higher SES mentally retarded children in serial recall and visual short term memory (Orn & Das, 1972). Perhaps the reason for this is that the high SES child was actually retarded, whereas the low SES child was instead just culturally deprived.

Learned Helplessness

Another area associated with childhood depression is the area of learned helplessness. This theory, which was proposed by Martin Seligman, (1975) explains that an individual develops a sense of helplessness when he discovers that his actions are worthless. He comes to believe that his responses are independent of any type of reinforcer. He then becomes depressed, for he believes that he is helpless. Many families who are living in poverty experience feelings of helplessness. They tend to start blaming one another for their situation, and when that does not work, they begin to feel that no matter how hard they try, they will never get ahead (Rubin, 1994). It has been found that people who consistently blame themselves for negative events, and believe that everything will have a negative outcome, are at the highest risk level for depression (Cummins, 1989).

Children who are in these situations, and who develop feelings of learned helplessness are at risk for problems such as low school achievement, low self-esteem,

and long experiences with depression (Haas, 1998). Children who experience many negative life events are at a higher risk of developing depression. As these children get older they begin to develop a pessimistic explanatory style. This means that because negative events keep occurring in their lives, they begin to believe that these bad things will continue to happen to them, and there is not anything they can do about it (Nolen-Hoeksema, Seligman, & Girgus, 1992).

Some studies that were conducted (Nolen-Hoeksema, Seligman, & Girgus, 1986; Rothblum & Green, 1980) indicated that children who attributed these negative life events to internal factors and attribute positive events to external factors were at a higher risk for developing depression and having achievement problems. Other studies showed that depressed individuals tended to attribute the cause of negative events in their lives to fate or chance rather than to themselves (Kolotkin, 1994). It was found that students with a strong sense of hopelessness attributed school failure to environmental deficiencies, and not to lack of ability or effort (Benham, 1995). Finally, another study was conducted that yielded somewhat different conclusions. A study by Banks and Goggin (1983) found that individuals who scored the same (either external or internal) for both locus of control and attribution were the least depressed, whereas people who have one score on one measure and a different score on the other were the most depressed.

Locus of Control

This phenomenon of internal and external attributions leads us to the next section of locus of control. Locus of control is a term coined by Julian Rotter. Rotter's theory was based around the principal of reinforcement and the social learning theory (Rotter, 1971). The social learning theory states that if a behavior is rewarded, then it will continue to generate rewards in the future. Rotter suggested that there are two types of

personalities, internal and external. A person with an internal locus of control will attribute reinforcers to their own behavior. For example, if an individual performs well on a test he would say, "I am smart, and that is why I received this grade." However, a person with an external locus of control will attribute reinforcers to events that are beyond his control, such as chance or fate. For example, using the same situation, a person might say "I must have gotten a good grade because the teachers liked me." It must also be noted that people are not just one or the other (internal or external). Most people have different degrees of internality and externality, since locus of control is a continuous variable (Chubb, Fertman & Ross, 1997).

Many studies have been conducted which showed how people with an internal locus of control will usually raise their expectations after a success, and lower them after a failure. On the other hand, people with an external locus of control will veer their expectations in the direction opposite to the previous outcome (Carver & Scheier, 2000; Rotter, 1971). For example, if playing cards, an internal individual may raise his bets after a success and lower them after a failure, whereas an external person would raise his bets after a failure and lower them after a success. Another difference between internals and externals is that because internals rely on themselves, they seek more information than externals (Thomlinson, 1987). Another finding related to the differences between internals and externals in that internals were found to be more perceptive, more curious and better processors of information (Thomlinson, 1987).

Locus of Control and Academics

Locus of control has been found to influence many areas. One of the areas to which locus of control is linked is academics. Many studies have consistently come to the conclusion that internal students are higher achieving than external students (Benham,

1995; Levin, 1992; McLaughlin & Saccuzzo, 1997; Stipek, 1980; Thomlinson, 1987; Vasquez, 1978). A study was conducted measuring the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement in first grade. The reason why first grade was chosen was because it was hypothesized that first graders have not had a significant time in school for locus of control to be attributed to teacher feedback. It was found that children who received a score of high internality took a more active role in the learning process. They were found to participate more often and believe that their efforts would be rewarded (Stipek, 1980). It was determined by this study that children's locus of control at the beginning of the school year helped to determine their academic success, and not the reverse. Students who have an internal locus of control believe that their efforts will be rewarded, so therefore they are more willing to try their best on their assignments. External students, on the other hand, have been found to choose tasks which are easier than the tasks chosen by internal students. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) found that locus of control and school achievement correlate more highly than school achievement and intelligence.

A study by Vasquez (1978) indicated that internal locus of control was connected to many areas of academic achievement. The first was self reliance. Internal students were better able to work independently in the classroom, whereas external students often depended on the teacher for assistance. The next area was level of aspiration. Internals were found to have set higher goals for themselves than externals, and were more likely to attend college. The third area was expectancy of success. If one is to succeed on a task, he needs to assume responsibility for it. Internals were more likely to attribute their failure to something within their control. So the next time they attempted the task, they were more likely to try harder. It was found that the external person was likely to

attribute his failure to something that was beyond his control. Therefore, he was not as likely to try harder the next time, because to him it would not make a difference. The fourth area was achievement motivation. It was shown countless times that the more internal one is, the greater his desire for achievement. Intensity of work was another area in which externals and internals differed. Internals were more likely to work harder at their job than externals, for they believed that their efforts would be rewarded and acknowledged. The sixth area was affection reaction to reinforcement. Even if a teacher complimented an external student, telling him he did well on a paper, he would not feel good about this compliment. Since reinforcement is a valuable tool used by teachers to motivate students, teachers find it harder to motivate external students. One of the reasons that internal students perform better than external students in terms of achievement is because internal students prefer to work under conditions that require skill. The classroom is one of these places in which the internal student prefers to work. Internals also differed from externals in performance on tests. It has been found that externals do not take more time to complete more difficult items on tests. Finally, internality was shown to have been correlated to many socially acceptable areas, such as staying in high school, exhibiting greater self control, the ability to delay short term rewards for long term goals, and being raised in a home that is warm and nurturing (Chubb et al., 1997; Levin, 1992).

All of those were the positive effects of locus of control. One negative effect of having an internal locus of control is that individuals who felt as if they have too much control over what happens in their lives were more vulnerable to the development of stress (Cummins, 1989).

Locus of Control and Socioeconomic Status

Locus of control and socioeconomic status is an area which has been widely studied. It has been found in a myriad of studies that higher SES yielded an internal locus of control, and lower SES yielded an external locus of control (Benham, 1995; Caesar, 1994; Levin, 1992; Martin & Cowles, 1983; McLaughlin & Saccuzzo, 1997; Stipek, 1980; Vasquez, 1978; Young & Shorr, 1986). In the study mentioned earlier by Stipek, first graders' locus of control was measured at the beginning of the school year. It was found that most students who were found to have an external locus of control were of lower socioeconomic status, and differed from their middle class peers in that most of them did not attend pre-school. School was found to have aided in the development of an internal locus of control in that children received an opportunity to see how effort could result in success. Since most lower class children did not attend pre-school, they did not receive as much school experience as did the middle class children. With regard to middle class children, they also tended to be more internal than lower socioeconomic children (Vasquez, 1978).

There are a few reasons which were found to be the cause of lower socioeconomic children having an external locus of control. One is that when children of lower socioeconomic status were failing in the school setting, they were unable to remove themselves from the situation, as adults might be able to do. So when lower SES children experienced failure, they attributed it to the school system. They believed that it was not themselves who were responsible for their failure, but the teacher or school system (Vasquez, 1978).

Locus of Control and Motivation

Motivation is another area in which locus of control is related. Motivation as

related to children takes into account which task they might choose, and how long they stay engaged in the task. It also pertains to enjoyment of school, and learning challenging, difficult, or new tasks (Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998). A study was conducted (Early & Barrett, 1991), that measured fifth graders' locus of control and motivation orientation. Motivation orientation can either be internal or external. If one has an external motivation orientation, then he is motivated by external rewards, such as a prize being rewarded by the teacher. An individual who is internally motivated will be motivated by his own desire to achieve. The studies were conducted to see which of the two would be more strongly related to standardized test scores and learned helplessness. It was found that motivation orientation was a stronger correlate to standardized test scores and learned helplessness than locus of control. However, it was found that children with an external motivation orientation were more likely to develop an external locus of control, and children with an internal motivation orientation were more likely to develop an internal locus of control.

Locus of Control and Gender

Gender is another area which is known is to be associated with locus of control, depression, and motivation. In terms of locus of control there has been mixed reviews. Some studies have concluded that there was no difference between male and female locus of control (Adame, Johnson & Cole, 1989; Dellas & Jernigan, 1987; Igoe & Sullivan, 1991; Levin, 1992). Other studies have concluded that females have a more external locus of control than males (Cairnes et. al., 1990). Finally, another set of studies concluded that females are more internal than males (McLaughlin & Saccuzzo, 1997; Young & Shorr, 1986). Researchers Archer and Wateman (1988) came to the conclusion that there was not enough evidence on gender to show that there were any differences in terms of locus

of control.

In others areas, gender has had somewhat consistent reviews. In the area of motivation, females were found to desire a challenge in the school setting more often than males (Igoe & Sullivan, 1991). Many studies concluded that males consistently had a higher self-esteem than females (Chubb et. al., 1997; Haugaard, 2001).

Locus of Control and Age

Age has been found to be a significant factor in the development of locus of control. Numerous studies have concluded that locus of control becomes more internal as a child increases in age (Chubb et. al., 1997; Igoe & Sullivan, 1991; Levin, 1992; Young & Shorr, 1986). The reason for this is that as children get older, they assume more responsibility for tasks and chores. This then enables them to feel more empowered, and feel that they have more control over their decisions (Chubb et. al., 1997). Also, when children increase in age, they don't feel so strong a need for approval as they did when they were younger (Igoe & Sullivan, 1991).

Locus of Control and Ethnicity

Various studies contradict each other in regard to locus of control and ethnicity. Some studies concluded that African American students were consistently more external than Caucasian students. Other studies found this conclusion only when studying middle and upper class students, but not lower SES students (Young & Shorr, 1986). Lastly, a study by McLaughlin and Saccuzzo (1997) inferred that Caucasian children had a more internal locus of control than Filipino, Latin/Hispanic, and African American children. In spite of these findings, much research has been conducted in regard to resilient children, or children who beat the odds. Research has found that with proper resources, these students had a much better chance of success (Borman & Rachuba, 2001). These factors

included; a safe and orderly school with many resources, caring and devoted teachers, and opportunities for children to become notably and productively involved and engaged within a school. Culture can also be another means for explaining locus of control. Certain cultures such as the Ute Indians place much emphasis on fate and external forces. In these cases, culture plays an even larger role than socioeconomic status (McLaughlin & Saccuzzo, 1997; Rotter, 1971).

Locus of Control and Family

Family is yet another area which can influence locus of control. It was found in a study by Taylor (1985) that children who resisted their parents' divorce had a more external locus of control. Another study conducted by Ollendick (1979) measured both fourth grade students and their parents in terms of locus of control. The study concluded that girls' locus of control correlated significantly to their parents' locus of control, where boys' locus of control did not.

Children of workaholics were studied to determine what effect having a workaholic parent would have on the child. Results indicated that children of these types of parents exhibited an external locus of control, greater depression, and higher anxiety. The same study also yielded the finding that parents with Type A behaviors tend to promote this type of behaviors in their children. These behaviors consisted of competitiveness, aggressiveness, and hostility (Robinson & Kelley, 1998). A role that gender played in this study was that children of workaholic fathers were at risk for elevated depression, whereas children of workaholic mothers were not.

Families also play a part in developing their children's motivation. When parents were found to use extrinsic rewards with their children much of the time, children had lower academic intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, parents who tapped into their

children's intrinsic motivation, had children who developed a higher academic motivation.

Children of lower SES have been discussed a great deal. Children of more wealthy households will now be discussed. These children will also be compared with children of lower SES with regard to a few different studies. Just as individuals living in poverty can become dependent on welfare, children from more wealthy households can become dependent on a trust fund. Just like welfare, the maintenance of life is removed if the recipient attempts to support himself.

Children of wealthier households can find themselves depressed just as children from poorer homes. One of the reasons is that these children have had the goods and riches of life without much hard work in exchange. They have not had the opportunity to see how their own actions can influence the world, and therefore develop a sense of power (Pittman, 1985; Seligman, 1975).

An area where high SES children were found to have lower self concepts than children of low SES was the area of adult expectancy (Smith, Zingale, & Coleman, 1978). In this study, it was found that when children of high SES failed, they experienced a lowered self-concept. The reason was that the adult expectation was so high, and there was such a discrepancy between the expectancy and the performance level. Adult expectation in poorer SES households is usually lower, so the discrepancy is not as large. Consequently, these children do not experience a lowered self-concept. It should be noted that higher SES children only experience a lowered self-concept when they are failing in comparison to their classmates. They would not have this experience if, for example, they were placed in a special education room, where the other children were performing at the same level as they.

Children and School

Children of different socioeconomic statuses are not only influenced by variables at home, but also variables at school. A study was conducted by Duke (2000) which compared children of low and high SES in regard to their literacy experiences at school. The study concluded that schools containing mostly children of higher SES offered a higher quality and quantity of print experiences than schools containing mostly children of lower SES.

Just because a child may enter school with an external locus of control, that does not mean that there is nothing that can be done to help the child become more internal. One of the first steps is to help the child understand cause and effect relationships. This can be done through literature and follow up discussions. They also need to see these cause and effect relationships as related to human beings. A second proposition is to help the child choose something in which he excels, and then set a goal for himself in that area. The third suggestion is to give the child a task that is considered internal. An example of this would be a creative task, for which he would have to take ownership. Being a peer tutor would also be a way to increase the external child's ability to take credit for a task (Leven, 1992; Vasquez, 1978). Praise is another area of concern on terms of the external child. Teachers must be careful not to praise low level students for just low level accomplishments. They will then feel as if they are incapable of higher level tasks. Modeling internal locus of control thought processes around students is also important, which can be accomplished by thinking aloud (Benham, 1995). Teaching responsibility can also be modeled for the class (Stipek, 1980). For example, the teacher can say, "If you look at the teacher and listen, you will remember what to do," or "That's a good job, you must have worked very hard at that."

Summary

In many of the studies that have been reviewed, the areas of socioeconomic status, achievement, depression, learned helplessness, and locus of control were intertwined. Children living in poverty can become dependent upon assistance. This in turn can lead them to feel that they do not have any control over the world, or what happens to them. This can lead them to feel helpless. It has also been observed that people in these situations were at a higher risk for depression. Depression had been found to have been associated with lower achievement and lower IQ scores. Children living in these poorer households usually were lower achievers, and had an extrinsic motivation orientation. The areas of socioeconomic status and locus of control have been found to be correlated in numerous studies. Children of lower socioeconomic status have been found to have an external locus of control, whereas children of higher SES have been found to have an internal locus of control. External locus of control has also been associated with lower school achievement and dependence. Internal locus of control has been associated with higher school achievement, independence, and self-reliance.

Gender and ethnicity were areas of study that were inconclusive as to their relationship with locus of control. Locus of control had been found to become more internal as children grow older. The reason for this is that as children have more experiences, they begin to see the effect that they have on the environment. Finally, there are things the schools can do to promote a more internal locus of control. Helping children to see that they can be responsible for their own successes, and giving children creative tasks are a couple of the ways to foster internal locus of control.

Chapter Three: Design of the Study

Sample

Two groups of fourth grade students participated in the study, completing the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children. One class of twenty fourth graders was from an upper socioeconomic status area in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and consisted of eleven males and nine females. The elementary school contained 530 children, and encompassed grades Kindergarten through fifth grade, with 2.07% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. The other group consisted of two classes of twenty fourth graders each, twenty males and twenty females. These classes were from a lower socioeconomic status area in the suburbs of Philadelphia. This elementary school had 288 children, and encompassed grades Kindergarten through fourth grade, with 53% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. Approximately 90% of the participants were Caucasian.

Method

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale was used in the current study to determine a possible relationship between locus of control and socioeconomic status. The independent variable was the socioeconomic status, and the dependent variable was the children's scores on the scale. Another area which was examined was the potential relationship between gender and locus of control. In this case, the independent variable was gender, and the dependent variable was their scores on the locus of control scale.

Prior to conduction of the study, the Nowicki-Strickland scale was given to all

three participating fourth grade teachers. Also the principals of both elementary schools were contacted to ensure permission to conduct the study. The fourth grade teachers received permission slips to send home, in order to secure parental permission. The parents understood that their neither their child's name, nor the name of their school would appear anywhere on the scale.

The examiner prepared the teacher before he/she distributed the scale. The teacher was told to explain the scale as a survey which asked about fourth graders' attitudes or opinions on various topics. The teacher was told to distribute the scales, and to instruct their students to write either an "M" or "F" at the top depending upon whether they are male or female. The teacher then read each question twice to the students and instructed them to circle either "yes" or "no".

Measures

The Rotter scale, called the I-E scale or the Internal/External Scale, is used to measure people's locus of control. This is a scale consisting of twenty-nine questions. A person can score as low as a zero, which is extremely internal or as high as a twenty-three, which is extremely external. Rotter's scale has been used in numerous studies to measure individual's locus of control as compared to many areas: achievement, depression, socioeconomic status, gender, others. The scale has been criticized for making the external items more depressing than the internal items, thus lending to the fact that depressed people would be more likely to choose these responses because of their lowered mood level (Evans & Wanty, 1979).

Since then a few variations of Rotter's scale have been developed to meet the needs of different age groups. One of the variations is The Stanford Preschool Internal External Scale: Extension to Kindergartners. This scale was developed to measure locus

of control in younger children (Chartier, Lankford & Ainley, 1976). Some other scales developed for children include The Locus of Control Scale by Bailer and Cromwell, The Children's Picture Test of Internal-External Control, The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire, and The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale for children (Benham, 1995).

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale was developed because these researchers wanted a scale similar to Rotter's, but one that would be easier understood by children (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). The Nowicki-Strickland scale is a 40 item scale that was designed for children in grades three through twelve. The scale consists of reinforcement situations in children's lives dealing with areas such as affiliation, achievement, and dependency (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). It asks them questions to determine whether or not they believe they can control these situations.

This scale was originally tested on a group of mainly Caucasian students ranging from third through twelfth grades. The sample was derived from schools of all socioeconomic areas in a county outside a large metropolitan school system. The students' intelligence test scores ranged from a mean of 101 to 106 (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). Reliability was measured using the split-half method and test-retest. The Spearman-Brown measure of split-half reliability was .63 for grades three, four, and five. Test-retest was measured for three grade levels; third .63, seventh .66, and tenth .71. The mean score for a fourth grade female was found to be 18.80, SD 3.63, and the mean score for a male fourth grade student was 18.44, SD 3.58. The scale is scored by assigning one point for each external response. Therefore, the higher the score the more external the individual, and the lower the score the more internal the individual.

Hypothesis

Due to the results of various past studies, the hypotheses in this study was that socioeconomic status will be found to be related to locus of control. Therefore the null hypotheses was: No difference in locus of control will be found between children of low socioeconomic status and children of high socioeconomic status. The alternate hypotheses was: There will be a difference in locus of control depending upon the children's socioeconomic status to the effect that the higher SES children will yield a lower score on the scale meaning an internal locus of control, and the lower SES children will yield a higher score on the scale meaning an external locus of control.

Another area of interest was the relationship between gender and locus of control. Due to the inconsistencies in the past studies on gender and locus of control, the hypotheses was that there will not be a difference in locus of control depending upon whether the subject is male or female. Therefore the null hypotheses was: There will be no difference in the locus of control scores between male and female students. The alternate hypotheses was: There will be a difference in locus of control scores depending upon whether the subject is male or female.

Analysis

This study examined the effect socioeconomic status had or did not have on locus of control. It measured whether or not there was a relationship between socioeconomic status and locus of control. Since this was a correlational study, the Pearson product-moment correlation-R was calculated between the variables. It was used to determine whether there existed a positive or negative relationship between socioeconomic status and locus of control. The Pearson product-moment correlation was also used to determine a possible relationship between gender and locus of control.

Since there were two different groups involved in the study, and they each possessed different characteristics, low and high socioeconomic status, an independent samples T-test was conducted to determine whether or not there existed a difference between the two socioeconomic groups and the two gender groups.

Summary

In order to determine the effect socioeconomic status had on locus of control in children, two groups of students from different socioeconomic levels needed to be studied. The two groups received the same scale, The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale. The teachers who distributed the scale received structured standardized directions to ensure uniform conditions. The forms were collected by the teachers, and given to the examiner who scored them, and conducted both a Pearson product-moment correlation-R and an independent samples T-test on them. This determined whether or not there existed a relationship between socioeconomic status and locus of control, whether or not there was a difference in scores between the two groups, and whether or not there existed a difference in males' and females' test scores.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Results

The hypothesis under analysis was that socioeconomic status will be correlated with scores on The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale. It was hypothesized that the students attending the school in the higher socioeconomic area would score lower on the scale, therefore possessing a more internal attitude, and students attending school in a low socioeconomic area would score higher on the scale, therefore possessing a more external attitude.

The number of children participating in the study from the high socioeconomic school was twenty. These twenty students scored a mean of 12.25, with the standard deviation being 4.5. The forty students from the lower socioeconomic school scored a mean of 16.22, with a standard deviation of 4.3 (see Figure 4.1). Upon conducting an independent samples T-test, a significance level of .002 was found (see Table 4.1).

The null hypothesis had stated that there would be no difference in locus of control between children of low socioeconomic status and children of high socioeconomic status. Due to the significance level of .002, the null hypothesis was rejected. Analysis of variance indicated a mean effect for school $F = 10.335, (1, 56) p < .002$ (see Table 4.1). The alternate hypothesis maintained that there would be a difference in scores on a locus of control scale depending upon the children's socioeconomic status to the effect that the higher SES children would yield a lower score, and the lower SES children would yield a higher score. Each question on the scale was scrutinized to determine the percentage of "yes" and "no" responses. There were five questions that yielded a percentage over 90 for a "yes" response. Items four, six, and twenty-two yielded a 96.7 percent of "yes"

Figure 4.1

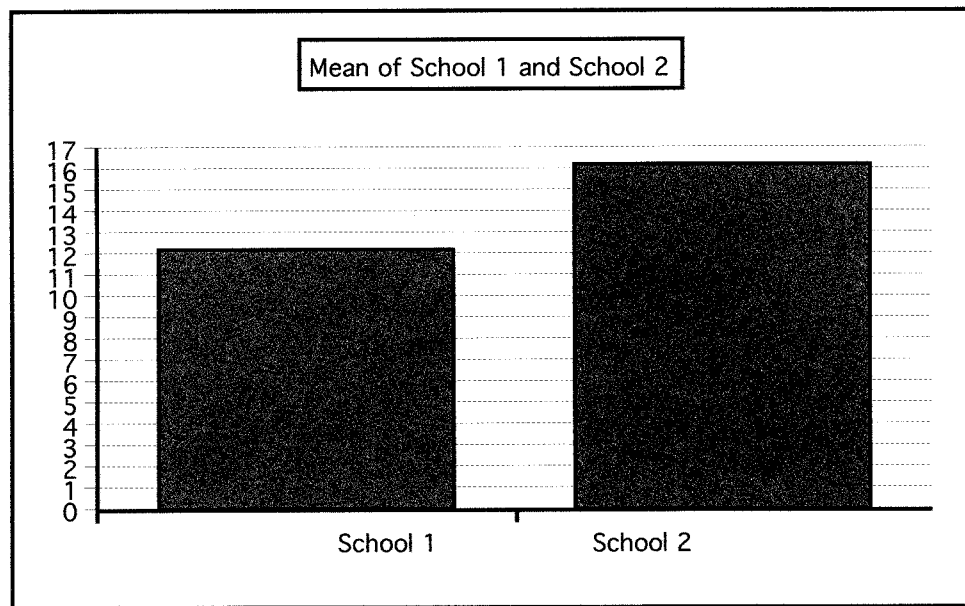


Table 4.1
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
corrected Model	226.379	3	75.460	3.838	.014
Intercept	10782.546	1	10782.546	548.421	.000
SCHOOL	203.195	1	203.195	10.335	.002
SEX	14.764	1	14.764	.751	.390
SCHOOL* SEX	.148	1	.148	.008	.931
Error	1101.021	56	19.661		
Total	14648.000	60			
Corrected Total	1327.400	59			

responses, and items twenty-six and thirty-two produced a percentage of 95.0 “yes” responses (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

The second hypothesis under consideration entailed the relationship between gender and locus of control. Due to the unstable studies relating to this topic, the hypothesis was that there would be no significant difference between male and female students’ scores on the locus of control scale. The null hypothesis stated that there would be no difference in the locus of control scores between males and females. The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference in locus of control scores depending upon whether the student was male or female.

The mean score for females taking The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale at the high SES school was 12.88 with a standard deviation of 4.80, and the mean for the males at the same school was 11.72 with a standard deviation of 4.40. As for the low SES school, the mean score for females was 16.7 with a standard deviation of 3.11, and the mean for males 15.75 with a standard deviation of 5.32. The combination mean for females in both schools was 15.51 with a standard deviation of 4.04, and the combination mean score for the males from both school was 14.32 with a standard deviation of 5.31. Neither school reached significance regarding gender and locus of control scores. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject null hypothesis.

There were two hypotheses which were under examination. The first tested the relationship between SES and scores on The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale. The second hypothesis tested the relationship between gender and scores on the locus of control scale. When tested, it was found that there was a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and fourth graders’ locus of control. On the other hand, there proved to be no significant relationship between locus of control and gender.

Figure 4.3
Questions four, six, and twenty-two

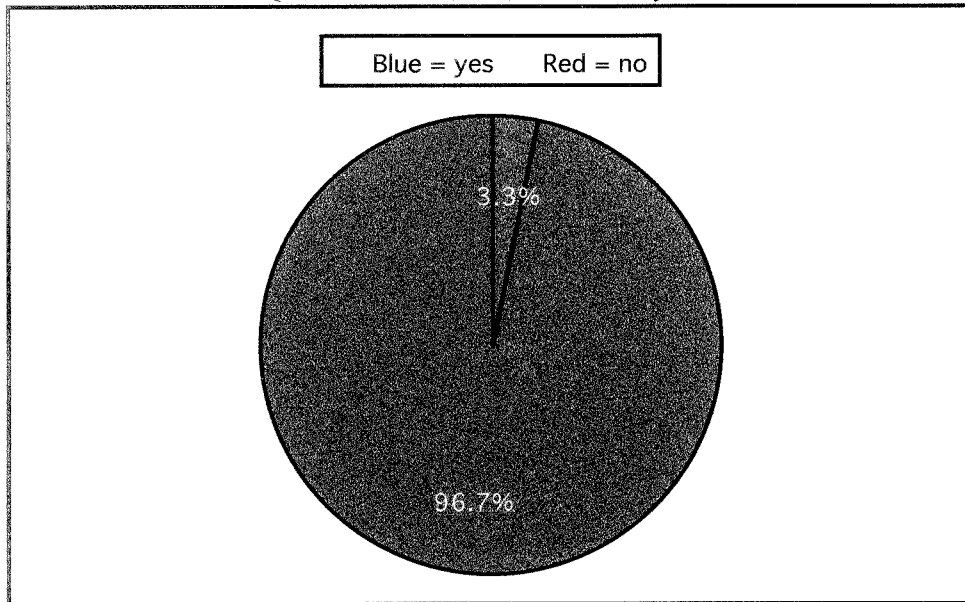
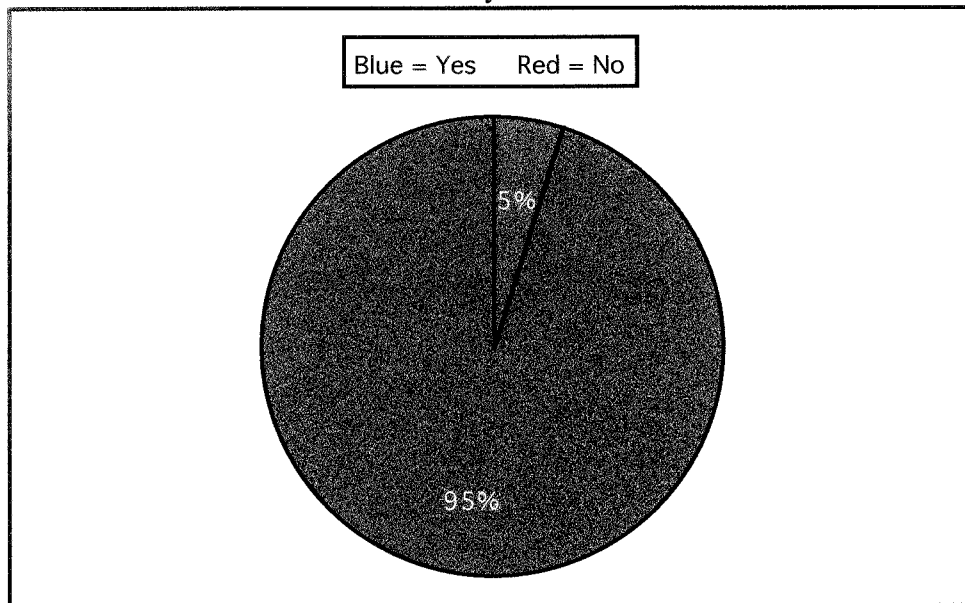


Figure 4.4
Questions twenty-six and
thirty-two



Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Educators, parents, and laymen often are presented with data regarding students and their performance in school. School districts are frequently compared and contrasted, and test scores are often critiqued. Often times blatant discrepancies are noted between areas of high and low socioeconomic status. There could possibly be numerous explanations for this, however this study focused on one, locus of control.

There have been numerous studies linking locus of control, socioeconomic status, depression, motivation, and achievement. Individuals of lower socioeconomic status were found to have higher rates of depression and stress. Children living in households with depressed individuals were found to experience numerous adverse effects. They were found to perform poorly on academic tasks, have lower rates of social development, possess a high incidence of behavior problems, and finally exhibit more external behaviors (Wentzel & Asher, 1995).

In many studies these external behaviors were linked to feelings of helplessness. When families constantly blamed themselves for negative events and believed that there was nothing that could be done to improve their situation, they developed a sense of learned helplessness. The children in these families often sensed that there was little that could be done to improve a negative situation, and if things did improve it was through no effort on their part. They came to believe that situations were governed by fate or chance (Nolen-Hoeksema, Seligman, & Girgus, 1992). In turn, children who thought in this external manner, were at a higher risk for developing depression and having academic difficulties.

Clearly, there is a relationship involving locus of control, socioeconomic status, depression, learned helplessness, and school achievement. This study focused mainly on one relationship, the relationship between locus of control and socioeconomic status. The study was designed to examine whether a low or high socioeconomic status had any influence on an elementary school student's locus of control. The hypothesis concerning this factor was that socioeconomic status would be correlated with scores on The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale. An additional factor which was examined in this study was gender, and its possible connection to locus of control. Due to the diverse conclusions to past studies, the hypothesis was that gender would not be correlated with locus of control.

Two elementary schools were chosen to participate in the study. One was in a high socioeconomic area, and the other in a lower socioeconomic area. Socioeconomic status was determined by the number of children participating in the free or reduced lunch program. The sample consisted of fourth grade students, both male and female. The number of participants in the lower socioeconomic school was greater by twenty than the participants at the higher socioeconomic area school. Both sets of students were given The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale. They were given this scale by their teachers who had received standardized instructions before administering the scale.

After administering the scale, the teachers delivered the scale to the scorer, who in turn scored the scale and conducted a Pearson product-moment correlation-R and an independent samples T-test on them. This was to determine if socioeconomic status was in fact correlated with locus of control. Gender was also examined to view a possible correlation with locus of control. In addition, individual scale questions were examined for possible similarities and differences in answers.

Upon conducting the tests, it was found that there existed a significant relationship between the two schools' scores on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale. Therefore it was determined that locus of control and socioeconomic status were correlated. There also proved not to be a significant relationship between gender and locus of control. A few of the scale's questions proved to show high percentages of children answering in the same way.

Conclusions

1. The schools' scores on The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale differed significantly. The mean score for the higher SES school was 12.25, and the mean score for the lower SES was 16.22.

2. The scores between males and females in both schools did not differ significantly; with the males in both schools combined receiving a score of 14.32, and the females a score of 15.51.

3. There was a total of five questions on the scale where 95% or more of the students in both schools answered "yes" to the question. These questions were:
question #4 - Most of the time, do you feel that getting good grades is important to you?
question#6 - Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough he or she can get good grades?
question#22 - Do you feel that doing your homework will help you get good grades?
question#26 - Will your mom, dad, or someone who watches you at home usually help you if you ask them to?
question#32 - Do you feel you can make good things happen if you work hard?

Discussion

The question was raised earlier as to why children in higher SES areas tend to

score higher than children from lower SES areas on standardized academic tests. A definite answer to this question was not easy to obtain. However, based on the theory of learned helplessness combined with issues of depression, socioeconomic status, and locus of control, we can intelligently produce some hypotheses. We can assume that because the children from the lower SES area school received more external scores, that these children view the world in a slightly different manner than the children from the higher SES area school. The lower SES children are not as confident that they are capable of causing positive events to happen and capable of preventing negative events from happening. Based on the theory of learned helplessness, the fact that these children may live in households with parents who express feelings of hopelessness may play a large part in their more external viewpoints. Due to the fact that depression and learned helplessness are related, the lower SES children's families may also exhibit signs of depression, causing some of these children to also be depressed. This may also lead to some of their more external answers. Finally, it has been shown in past studies that all of the above factors can lead to lower academic performance. As mentioned, the true answer to the differences in standardized scores cannot be determined, however we can conclude that children from lower SES areas tend to score more external on locus of control scales, and external locus of control leads to lower academic performance (Benham, 1995; Levin, 1992; McLaughlin & Saccuzzo, 1997; Stipek, 1980; Thomlinson, 1987; Vasquez, 1978).

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that when this same scale was given to fourth graders in a study conducted by Nowicki and Strickland (1973) the mean score for a fourth grade female was found to be 18.80, and the mean score for a male fourth grade student was 18.44. This sample was derived from schools of all socioeconomic areas in a county outside a large metropolitan school system. The means for both the male and

female students were higher, more external, than both of the mean scores in the current study. Consequently even though the scores of the higher SES children were significantly lower than the scores of the lower SES children, both schools in the current study received lower, more internal, scores than the mean for fourth graders in the past study.

Another interesting point is that there were five questions to which 95% or more of the students answered “yes.” When examined, it was noticed that all four out of the five questions were related to school performance and working hard. The fifth was a question involving guardian support. Therefore, even though overall the scores between the two schools differed significantly, it appears as though most children believe that studying and academics are important to them. Also most children, both low and high SES, are of the belief that a parent or guardian is readily available to help them when help is needed. Finally, it is concluded by this and other studies that gender does not play a role in an individual’s locus of control.

Implications for Future Research

Due to the fact that both schools in the current study scored lower than the mean for fourth graders in the past study, it would be interesting to conduct the study with more fourth grade students in schools of varying SES. Since both of the schools in the current study were generally in close proximity, it would be of interest to conduct the study in other parts of the country.

Academics would be an advantages subject to use as a follow up this study. A test of academic achievement could be given to the children in each school to see how the two schools would compare, and to see how they may correlate with their scores on the locus of control scale.

Finally, since students in both schools answered extremely similar to questions

regarding academics, a study could be done where only questions regarding academics were asked. This could be conducted to determine possible differences or similarities in the way these questions were answered.

References

- Adams, D.A., Johnson, T.C., & Cole, S.P. (1989). Physical fitness, body image, and locus of control in college freshman men and women. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 68, 400-402.
- Anastasi, A. & Urbina, S. (1997). *Psychological testing*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Archer, S.L., & Waterman, A.S. (1988). Psychological individuation: Gender differences or gender neutrality? *Human Development*, 31, 65-81.
- Arnett, J.J. (2001). *Adolescence and emerging adulthood*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Banks, M.L., & Goggin, W.C. (1983). *The Relationship of locus of control and attribution to depression*. Atlanta, GA: Southeastern Psychological Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 236461)
- Benham, M.J. (1995). *Fostering self-motivated behavior, personal responsibility, and internal locus of control in the school setting*. University of Southern, Maine. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 386 621)
- Borman, G.D., & Rachuba, L.T. (2001). *Academic success among poor and minority students*. Johns Hopkins University & Howard University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 451 281)
- Caesar, V.R. (1994). Financial success and personality: An examination of self-esteem, locus of control and cognitive characteristics of successful mid-life men in america. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 56, 621-774.
- Cairnes, E., McWhirter, L., Duffy, U., & Barry, R. (1990). The stability of self-concept in late adolescence: Gender and situational effects. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 11, 937-944.
- Carver, C.S. & Scheier, M.F. (2000). *Perspectives on personality*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Chartier, G.M., Lankford, A.D., & Ainley, C. (1976). The Stanford Preschool internal-external scale: Extension to kindergartners. *Journal of Personality*, 40, 431-433.

- Chubb, N.H., Fertman, C.I., & Ross, J.L. (1997). Adolescent self-esteem and locus of control: A longitudinal study of gender and age differences. *Adolescence*, 32, 113-127.
- Coiro, M.J. (1997). *Maternal depressive symptoms as a risk for the development of children in poverty*. Washington, DC: Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 414 016)
- Cummins, R.C. (1989). *Attributions, outcome expectations, locus of control and daily hassles*. Houston, TX: Southwestern Psychological Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 309 328)
- Duke, N.K. (2000). For the rich it's richer: Print experiences and environments offered to children in very low and very high-socioeconomic status first grade classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37, 441-478.
- Early, D. & Barrett, M. (1991). Predicting learned helplessness and achievement: The role of locus of control and motivational orientation. Seattle, WA: Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 333 987)
- Eaton, W.W., Muntaner, C., Bovasso, G., & Smith, C. (2001). Socioeconomic status and depressive syndrome: The role of inter- and intra-generational mobility, government assistance, and work environment. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 42, 277-294.
- Evans, R.G., & Wentz, D.W. (1979). I-E scale responses as a function of subject mood level. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 43, 166-170.
- Gottfried, A.E., Fleming, J.S. & Gottfried, A.W. (1998). Role of cognitively stimulating home environment in children's academic intrinsic motivation: A longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 69, 1448-1460.
- Haas, E.M., (1998). Depressive attributional style in a child and adolescent outpatient clinical sample. *Digital Dissertations*, AAT 9901904.
- Haugaard, J.J. (2001). *Problematic behaviors during adolescence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Publications.

- Igoe, A.R. & Sullivan, H. (1991). *Gender and grade-level differences in student attitudes related to school learning and motivation*. Chicago, IL: American Education Research Association. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 333 044)
- Kolotkin, R.A. (1994). *Sex differences in locus of control, helplessness, hopelessness, and depression*. Washington, DC: National Science Foundation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 377 421)
- Levin, V.M. (1992). *Locus of control: Its relationship to gender, ethnicity and at-risk students*. University of Virginia. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 360 605)
- Martin, S. & Cowles, M. (1983). Locus of control among children in various educational environments. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 56, 831-834.
- McLaughlin, S.C., & Saccuzzo, D.P. (1997). Ethnic and gender differences in locus of control in children referred for gifted programs: The effects of vulnerability factors. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 20, 268-283.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Seligman, M.E.P., & Girgus, J.S. (1986). Learned helplessness in children: A longitudinal study of depression, achievement, and explanatory style. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 435-442.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Seligman, M.E.P., & Girgus, J.S. (1992). Predictors and consequences of childhood depressive symptoms: A five year longitudinal study. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 101, 405-422.
- Nowicki, S. & Strickland, B.R. (1973). A locus of control scale for children. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 40, 148-154.
- Ollendick, D.G. (1979). Parental locus of control and the assessment of children's personality characteristics. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 43, 401-405.
- Olson, C.C. (1985). Relationships of parenting and aspects of the home environment to achievement and self-concept of students in grades 3 to 5. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 47, 1076-1431.
- Orn, D.E. & Das, J.P. (1972). IQ, socioeconomic status, and short-term memory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 63, 327-333.
- Petterson, S.M. & Albers, B.A. (2001). Effects of poverty and maternal depression on early child development. *Child Development*, 72, 1794-1813.

- Pittman, F.S. (1985). Children of the rich. *Family Process*, 24, 461-472.
- Robinson, B.E. & Kelley, L. (1998). Adult children of workaholics: Self-concept, anxiety, depression, and locus of control. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 26, 223-245.
- Rothblum, E.D. & Green, L. (1980). The reformulated model of learned helplessness: An empirical test. Washington, DC: Southeastern Psychological Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 199 591)
- Rotter, J.B. (1971). External control and internal control. *Psychology Today*, 5, 37-42.
- Rubin, L. B. (1994). *Families on the fault line*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
- Smith, M.D., Zingdale, A.S. & Coleman, M.J. (1978). The influence of adult expectancy/child performance discrepancies upon children's self-concepts. *American Educational Research Journal*, 15, 259-265.
- Schultz, G.F. (1993). Socioeconomic advantage and achievement motivation: Important mediators of academic performance in minority children in urban schools. *The Urban Review*, 25, 221-232.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (1975). *Helplessness*. San Francisco: Freeman.
- Stipek, D. (1980). A causal analysis of the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement in first grade. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 5, 90-99.
- Taylor, K.P. (1985). Children of custody disputes: Socioeconomic status, control orientation, trust and belief in a just world. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 46, 664-866.
- Teeter, P.A. & Semrud-Clikeman, M. (1997). *Child neuropsychology*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Tomlinson, L.M. (1987). *Locus of control and its affect on achievement*. University of Georgia. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 276 965)
- Vasquez, J.A. (1978). *Locus of control, social class, and learning*. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 166 596)

Whitbeck, L.B., Simons, R.L., Conger, R.D., Wickrama, K.A.S., Ackley, K.A., & Elder, G.H. (1997). The effects of parents' working conditions and family economic hardship on parenting behaviors and children's self-efficacy. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60, 291-303.

Wentzel, K.R. & Asher, S.R. (1995). The academic lives of neglected, rejected, popular, and controversial children. *Child Development*, 66, 754-763.

Young, T.W. & Shorr, D.N. (1986). Factors affecting locus of control in school children. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 112, 405-417.

Appendix

4622 West Ave.
Ocean City, NJ 08226
November 5, 2002

Mr. Hipple
Gladwyne Elementary School
230 West Righters Mill Rd.
Gladwyne, PA 19035

Mr. Hipple:

My name is Allegra Esposito, and I am both an elementary teacher and a graduate student. I teach Kindergarten at Marcus Hook Elementary School in the Chichester School District. I also attend Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey for a Master's in School Psychology, and am currently writing my Master's thesis.

The topic I have chosen for my thesis is locus of control and socioeconomic status. I am comparing fourth grade students of different socioeconomic background's with regard to locus of control. Locus of control is a term coined by Julian Rotter. A person can either have an internal or external locus of control. A person with an internal locus of control assumes control and responsibility for the events in his or her life. A person with an external locus of control attributes responsibility to outside sources such as chance, luck, or fate.

As mentioned, I am investigating the relationship between locus of control and socioeconomic status. I have spoken with Drew Heinerichs and he is willing to distribute the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children in his class. If it is possible, I wanted to see if another fourth grade teacher would be willing to administer the survey in their class as well. I want to make it clear that the name of your school as well as the names of the children will not be mentioned at any time. The only information I am asking the students to make available is their gender. If necessary, I can send home a permission slip for the parents to view. It will ask them to indicate by a signature if they do *not* want their child to participate in the study.

Finally, I will be sure to share the results of the study with you, as my research comes to a close. Please call if you have any questions, and I will contact you soon to make sure the surveys can be distributed in the fourth grade classes. I attached a copy of the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale. You can disregard the "yes" and "no" answers that are printed next to the questions.

Thank You,

Allegra Esposito

Allegra Esposito
4622 West Ave.
Ocean City, NJ 08226
January 27, 2003

Mr. Hipple
Gladwyne Elementary School
230 West Righters Mill Rd.
Gladwyne, PA 19035

Mr. Hipple:

This is a follow up to the letter indicating my interest in conducting a survey in Mr. Heinerichs' fourth grade class. Rowan University is requesting that I obtain a signature of approval from you, showing that I will be authorized to use one of your teachers to conduct a study in their classroom. The study will probably be conducted in late February or early March.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, you can contact me at (610) 485-6881 ext. 3124.

Thank You,

Allegra Esposito
Allegra Esposito

Signature: _____

Mr. Hipple

Allegra Esposito
4622 West Ave.
Ocean City, NJ 08226
February 28, 2003

Mr. Rocco
Marcus Hook Elementary School
8th and Market Sts.
Marcus Hook, PA 19061

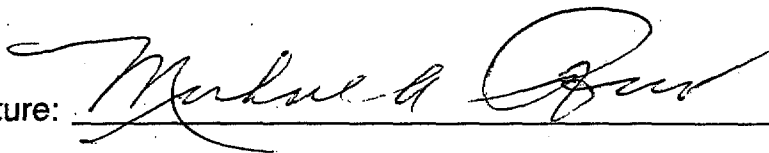
Mr. Rocco:

This is a follow up to the letter indicating my interest in conducting a survey in the fourth grade classes. Rowan University is requesting that I obtain a signature of approval from you, showing that I will be authorized to use two of your teachers to conduct a study in their classrooms. The study will probably be conducted in early March. Thank you for your cooperation.

Thank You,

Allegra Esposito

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Allegra Esposito", is written over a horizontal line.