The present study investigated locus of control differences in male and female Indian and White third-grade children in South Africa. Using the Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale for children as the dependent variable, a 2 x 2 (Race x Sex) analysis of variance revealed no significant differences on a global locus of control index. However, Indian children were significantly more internal than their White counterparts on both the Helplessness and Achievement factors, although no significant differences were yielded on the Luck factor. In addition, neither significant sex main effects nor any interaction effects emerged on any of the three factors. Differences between the two cultural groups are discussed in terms of their relative positions in South African society, and the possible utility of a multidimensional approach to locus of control in cross-cultural research is evaluated.

LOCUS OF CONTROL BELIEFS
IN MALE AND FEMALE
INDIAN AND WHITE SCHOOLCHILDREN
IN SOUTH AFRICA

JULIAN BARLING
FRANK FINCHAM
University of the Witwatersrand

Locus of control (LOC) is being increasingly emphasized in personality functioning (see Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1975) as this variable appears to influence several classes of behavior. Consequently, LOC is proving to be an important construct in cross-cultural research. Moreover, examination of this issue may be informative regarding the norms, attitudes, and beliefs of specific cultural groups as well as providing information regarding personality development in a cross-cultural context, especially if such research is conducted with children.

Fairly consistent differences between various cultural groups regarding their belief in personal control have been
documented (see Phares, 1976). The trend emerging suggests that a belief in internal control appears in those societies valuing and emphasizing some degree of personal initiative, as is the case in westernized countries (Hsieh et al., 1969; Lessing, 1969; McGinnies et al., 1974; Parsons and Schneider, 1974; Reitz and Groff, 1974; Shaw and Uhl, 1971; Strickland, 1972; Zytkoskee et al., 1971). Nonetheless, there is a problem in interpreting these results since the above research may more accurately be described as cross-national, rather than cross-cultural. Further, such studies are limited in terms of the information they provide regarding cultural variations in personality development, since they exclusively used adolescent and/or adult subjects.

Although EchoHawk and Parsons (1977) studied LOC beliefs among American (rather than Asian) Indian children, only the study by Tyler and Holsinger (1975), which demonstrated White children to be significantly more internally oriented than their rural Indian counterparts, specially compared the LOC orientation between children of these two groups. However, their results are confounded by a number of problems. First, rural Indian children were compared with more urbanized children. Second, it must be presumed that the latter group comprised White subjects, since Tyler and Holsinger (1975: 151) only describe them as “non-Indian,” enrolled at a “predominantly White” school. The possibility thus exists that this “control” group was not homogeneous in terms of cultural values, and any truly cross-cultural comparison must therefore be limited (Holtzman, 1965). Finally, a unidimensional approach to LOC was utilized, although considerable evidence attests to the multidimensionality of the construct (see Carment, 1974; Mirels, 1970; Lefcourt, 1976; Nowicki, 1976; Phares, 1976; Viney, 1974). It is therefore possible that this study provides a somewhat truncated view of the effects of culture on LOC beliefs in children, while the need for more research in this area has been documented (Parsons and Schneider, 1974; Phares, 1976).
The present study, therefore, attempted to study the possible influence of culture on children's LOC orientation while avoiding some of the above problems. First, only middle-class, urban children were participants. Second, owing to South Africa's racial legislation, it was possible to obtain Indian and White subjects who were isolated from each other socially, educationally, and to a lesser extent economically, while only living some 20 kilometres apart in racially distinct areas of the same city. Hence a cross-cultural rather than a cross-national comparison was possible. Third, a multidimensional approach to LOC was utilized. Fourth, it was decided to assess both cultural/racial and sexual effects, since different cultures place varying emphases on child-rearing practices for males and females. For example, Ferron (1973) points out that within the Indian culture, subservience is emphasized for females and duty for males to a far greater extent than in White cultures. Finally, on the basis of previous research (e.g., Carment, 1974; Tyler and Holsinger, 1975), as well as anecdotal descriptions of cultural differences in child-rearing practices (see Carment, 1974; Ferron, 1973), it was hypothesized that Indian children would have a more external LOC orientation than their White counterparts.

METHOD

SUBJECTS

Twenty-four Indian and 24 White children, with equal numbers of boys and girls in each group, participated in the study. The subjects (X age = 8.52 years; SD = .45), all third-grade students, attended racially segregated schools in the metropolitan area of greater Johannesburg. Both schools were located in middle-class areas.
THE SCALE

As a part of larger research project, the Nowicki-Strickland (1973) LOC scale for children was administered to all subjects. It was adopted from Rotter’s (1966) scale, consists of 40 items answered either Yes or No, and is reported to be both reliable and relatively free of social desirability factors (Nowicki and Strickland, 1973). All the responses on this questionnaire were first scored to obtain an overall LOC score with a high score reflecting externality. Second, since the LOC construct has repeatedly been demonstrated to be of a multidimensional nature,1 separate factors (namely, Helplessness, Achievement, and Luck) were also obtained using Nowicki’s (1976) empirically based criteria.

PROCEDURE

All subjects were individually interviewed. To eliminate possible cultural and/or sexual subject-experimenter interactions (see Allen et al., 1966), the questionnaires were administered by an experimenter of the same cultural and sexual group as the particular subject.2 All questionnaires were presented in English, the medium of instruction in both schools, thus avoiding possible translation problems.

RESULTS

To ascertain whether the three factors were measuring separate entities, Pearson correlations were computed between them. None of the Helplessness/Achievement (r(47) = .16; p > .05), Helplessness/Luck (r(47) = -.20; p > .05), Achievement/Luck (r(47) = .24; p > .05) relationships explained more than 5.76% of the variance, which suggests that the three factors were indeed measuring separate constructs.

Using a 2 x 2 (Race x Sex) analysis of variance, no significant race (F(1,44) = 1.25; p > .05), sex (F(1,44) = .84; p > .05)
or interaction effects (F(1,44) = 2.13; p > .05) were found on the global LOC index. Significant main effects for race were evident for the Helplessness (F(1,44) = 11.18; p < .002) and Achievement (F(1,44) = 4.21; p < .05), although not the Luck (F(1,44) = .15; p > .05) factors. No significant sex main effects or interactions were yielded on any of these factors.

DISCUSSION

That no significant main effects or interactions were yielded on a global LOC index is perhaps not surprising. If a multidimensional approach to LOC is invoked, it is questionable whether simple summation of the items involved in three conceptually distinct factors can logically provide a meaningful global index of LOC. Furthermore, it is possible that such a global LOC index is not specific enough to have any utility as a predictor variable.

Significant racial differences were, however, obtained on two of the factors, namely, Helplessness and Achievement. In contrast to previous research (see Hsieh et al., 1969; Lessing, 1969; McGinnies et al., 1974; Parsons and Schneider, 1974; Reitz and Groff, 1972; Shaw and Uhl, 1971; Strickland, 1972; Zytkoske et al., 1971), Indian children were significantly more internal than their White counterparts regardless of sex overall mean scores: Helplessness — Indians = 2.01, Whites 4.25; Achievement — Indians = 1.5, Whites = 2.1). A number of factors may account for these results. First, the present study attempted to equate all children in terms of socioeconomic status and residential area (i.e., urban/rural). When Tyler and Holsinger (1975) failed to do so, White children were more internal. The LOC differences found cannot, therefore, be ascribed to cultural variations because of the possible confounding effects of these two variables, especially since socioeconomic status has consistently been shown to correlate with internality (see Phares, 1976). Second, when American
subjects have been shown to be more internal than their European or Eastern counterparts (see Hsieh et al., 1969; McGinnies et al., 1974; Parsons and Schneider, 1974; Reitz and Groff, 1974), only adult subjects have been used. In addition, this research can more accurately be described as cross-national rather than cross-cultural. Sampling children from the same city who were geographically separated from each other, the present study avoids these possible confounds. Moreover, some information is provided regarding cross-cultural personality development.

That Indian children were more internally oriented in terms of Helplessness than their White counterparts is surprising until viewed in terms of South Africa's sociopolitical system. Given the restricted opportunities available to "non-Whites," these Indian children may have realized (e.g., with the help of parental modeling) that the few positions open to them could only be obtained through considerable personal effort and initiative. Since similar positions are far more readily accessible to Whites, the more external orientation found for these children may also have been inculcated by environmental realities. In similar fashion, it would be less important for White children to have a more internal Achievement orientation, thus possibly accounting for the significant differences between the two groups in this regard. Finally, the present result is partly supported by Carment's (1974) finding that Indian university students and workers were more internally oriented than their White counterparts with respect to Mirels' (1970) Control Ideology and Systems Control factors.

Since Ferron (1973) maintained that Indian children are trained to have a belief in fatalism, and to give up when the odds against them become too great, it may be expected that they be externally oriented regarding Nowicki's (1976) Luck factor. One might also anticipate White children in the present sample evidencing an external orientation, since they find themselves in a situation bestowing on them a certain degree of luck. Indeed, the nonsignificant differences between these...
two groups on this factor is probably attributable to the fact
that both were externally oriented (Indians: $M = 2.31$; $SD = .97$; Whites: $M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.04$; maximum = 4.0).

Previous studies have demonstrated male-female LOC
differences in adults regardless of cultural group membership
with males being more internal than females (see McGinnies et
al., 1974; Parsons and Schneider, 1974). In turn, female
women's liberation adherents are more internal than non-
 adherents (Sanger and Alker, 1972). The lack of any signifi-
cant sex differences thus raises a further issue regarding
personality development, namely, at what stage such LOC
differences may be expected to emerge.

The present study provides information regarding the utility
of a multidimensional LOC construct with children. First,
significant differences were not yielded on the global LOC
index, although they did emerge on two of the three factors.
That a multidimensional approach has more predictive utility
than a unidimensional approach in this situation with children
is consonant with Carment's (1974) findings regarding differ-
ences between Indian and White adults. Second, the three
factors were not significantly related to each other which
suggests their relative independence. Finally, the present
results suggest caution in assuming White to be more internal-
ly oriented than Indian children. Rather, when socioeconomic
status factors and urban/rural differences are controlled, any
assumptions about such differences become, at best, specu-
lative.

REFERENCES

LENN, S. A., R. A. DUBANOSKI, and H. W. STEVENSON (1966) "Children's
performance as a function of race of experimenter, race of subject and type of

International J. of Psychology 9: 45-50.

CHOHAWK, M. and O. A. PARSONS (1977) "Leadership versus behavioral
problems and belief in personal control among American Indian youth." J. of
Social Psychology 102: 47-54.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Lato's (1978) article in which she described the use of a variant of the Locus of Control scale.
2. The authors express their appreciation to Lars Franzen, Margie Morrison, Farouk Peer and Hafsa Patel for administering the questionnaires.

Julian Barling received his M. A. degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, where he is currently a full-time lecturer in the Department of Psychology (University of the Witwatersrand, 1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg 2001, South Africa). His major research interests are the effect of the South African racial situation on children's attitudes and behavior, and the self-regulation of children's behavior in academic situations. He is currently involved in completing his Ph.D. research on the latter topic.

Frank Fincham received his M. A. degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, and is currently a Rhodes Scholar at the Department of Psychology, Oxford University, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3UD, England. His research has centered around moral judgment, particularly in exceptional populations. In addition, he has conducted cross-cultural research with children in South Africa.