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MULTIDIMENSIONAL LOCUS OF CONTROL: THE CASE OF WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS*

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Considerable import is currently attached to locus of control (LOC).¹ Within this framework, greater salience accrues to multidimensional constructs, as these are held to be more specific predictors of behavior than global scores.²

Thus it is interesting to note that Collins³ has shown that four factors typically characterize this construct: Beliefs in a Difficult World, a Just World, a Predictable World, and a Politically-Responsive World. Subsequent research has since replicated this factor structure.⁴ Nonetheless, the specific nuances of the factor structure may be influenced by the cultural or social milieu: When LOC was investigated in army reservists, an additional factor—the Belief in a Friendly World—emerged,⁵ while the Belief in a Controllable World emerged as the fifth factor when South African mothers were tested.⁶ Since these latter results may be specific to the *maternal*, rather than the *cross-cultural* nature of the sample, the present study investigated whether a comparable factor would emerge when such sample restrictions were not operative.

Ninety-six white university students in South Africa (\bar{X} age = 19.33 years; $SD = 2.08$; 48 males, 48 females) individually completed Collins' 46 item revision of Rotter's (8) original 23 forced-choice item LOC scale.⁷ Subse-

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¹ Phares, E. J. *Locus of Control in Personality*. New Jersey: General Learning Press, 1976.

² Mirels, H. L. Dimensions of internal versus external control. *J. Consult. & Clin. Psychol.*, 1971, 34, 226-228.

³ Collins, B. E. Four separate components of the Rotter I-E scale: Belief in a difficult world, a just world, a predictable world and a politically responsive world. *J. Personal. & Soc. Psychol.*, 1974, 29, 381-391.

⁴ Zuckerman, M., & Gerbasi, K. C. Dimensions of the I-E scale and their relationship to other personality measures. *Educ. & Psychol. Meas.*, 1977, 37, 159-175. Zuckerman, M., Gerbasi, K. C., & Marion, S. P. Correlates of the just world factor of Rotter's scale. *Educ. & Psychol. Meas.*, 1977, 37, 375-381.

⁵ Duffy, P. J., Shiflett, S., & Downey, R. G. Locus of control: Dimensionality and predictability of Likert scales. *J. Appl. Psychol.*, 1977, 62, 214-219.

⁶ Barling, J. Multidimensional locus of control beliefs among South African mothers. *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 1980, 111, 000-000.

quent principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation yielded four factors with an eigenvalue equal or greater than unity; the formula $3/\sqrt{N}$ was used to assess which items loaded significantly. The first factor (comprising items 25, 24, 27, 28, 39, 23, 14, 46, 2) was labelled Belief in a Predictable World; the second (items 35, 31, 34, 33, 38, 1, 22) Belief in a Controllable World, the third (items 32, 27, 36, 33) Belief in a Predictable World, while the fourth factor (items 19, 12, 13, 17) was labelled Belief in a Just World. All items are presented in descending order of importance. These four factors accounted for 20.00, 11.50, 11.20, and 9.50% of the variance, respectively.

The present results generally replicate previous findings, which suggests the consistency of the basic factor structure. However, consistent with cross-cultural research using Collins' scale, cultural characteristics were evidenced in the factor solution. Specifically, the import of a Belief in a Controllable World is evident, and may be accounted for in two ways. First, all 96 Ss were white South Africans, for whom the expression of political control may be rather prominent. Second, the present sample comprised university students, and the expression of personal control may be of some importance for this group. Consequently, this particular Controllable World Belief may well reflect two issues central to this sample's experiential reality.

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⁷ Rotter, J. B. Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychol. Monog.*, 1966, **80**(1), Whole No. 609.