

Understanding the role of locus of control in the job satisfaction of junior high school teachers

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Abstract: Examining the psychological factors that influence teacher satisfaction is crucial for fostering a productive and motivated educational workforce. However, limited research has explored how locus of control affects job satisfaction among public school teachers in local Philippine contexts. This study investigated the relationship between the locus of control and job satisfaction among selected Junior High School teachers in the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan for the school year 2021–2022. Utilizing a descriptive-survey method, the research involved fifty (50) randomly selected teachers from various public secondary schools. The study employed standardized tools such as Rotter’s Internal-External Locus of Control Scale and the Job Description Index (JDI) to measure locus of control and job satisfaction, respectively. Data were gathered through online questionnaires, supplemented with unstructured interviews and documentary analysis. Statistical analyses included descriptive and inferential tools to determine significant relationships between demographic variables, locus of control, and job satisfaction. Results indicated that teachers with an internal locus of control generally reported higher levels of job satisfaction across various facets. Furthermore, certain demographic variables showed significant relationships with both locus of control and satisfaction levels. These findings reveal the importance of psychological traits in influencing workplace contentment. It is recommended that educational leaders and school administrators provide strategic professional development programs and support systems that promote an internal locus of control among teachers, as this trait is significantly associated with greater job satisfaction.

Keywords: Locus of Control, Job Satisfaction, Junior High School Teachers, Descriptive-Survey Method, Psychological Traits, Professional Development

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INTRODUCTION

Success does not happen overnight. It requires effort, perseverance, sacrifice, and consistent engagement in one's chosen endeavor. To succeed, a person must clearly define what they want and where they intend to go. Once goals are set, a plan must be devised, a timeline established, and actions taken toward realizing that vision. By executing a well-thought-out plan, success becomes attainable.

Education is one of the most significant foundations for societal development. It enables the transmission of culture and values across generations. In the Philippines, the government plays a vital role in ensuring equitable access to quality education. As stated in Section 1, Article

XIV of the 1987 Constitution: “The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.” This constitutional mandate underscores the essential role that schools and teachers play in nation-building.

Teachers, as the primary agents of education, are central to this mission. They are entrusted with the responsibility of shaping young minds into responsible, capable, and productive members of society. As such, they are regarded as key components in the learning process.

Becoming a teacher requires a deep passion for the profession. Since education is a societal mandate that must be entrusted to capable individuals, teachers must possess an intrinsic motivation to teach, not merely driven by external pressures or influences. Passionate and self-driven teachers tend to be more effective and more committed to enhancing the quality of the education system.

Teachers must not only excel in delivering instruction but also strive for continuous professional growth. Career advancement often reflects a teacher’s commitment to excellence. Perseverance is, indeed, a vital key to success. Teachers who seek opportunities aligned with their passion are more likely to thrive and feel fulfilled in their profession. They pursue professional development and career progression actively.

However, for teacher applicants, the Department of Education’s hiring process can be challenging and exhausting. Securing a teaching position often requires continuous effort, teaching experience, and considerable patience. Some resort to external influences—political connections or family ties—to gain a recommendation or secure a position. These individuals may seek assistance from those in authority to gain entry into the system.

There appear to be two kinds of individuals: those who rely on their competence and perseverance, and those who depend on external support to meet their goals. Such tendencies are not limited to hiring processes—they are also present in the workplace. Some teachers invest significant effort and take on multiple responsibilities to earn a promotion. Others, however, seek “shortcuts,” relying on influential figures to move up the professional ladder.

These observations relate to differing personal beliefs regarding control over life events. Some individuals believe they are responsible for their successes and failures, while others attribute outcomes to fate, luck, or external circumstances. This psychological phenomenon is known as locus of control, as introduced in Julian Rotter’s (1954) social-learning theory of personality.

According to Rotter (1966), locus of control refers to an individual’s perception of the primary causes of events in their life. The term “locus” (Latin for “place” or “location”) indicates whether a person attributes outcomes to internal or external factors. An individual with an internal locus of control believes that their actions, decisions, and efforts determine outcomes. Conversely, someone with an external locus of control believes that external factors—such as fate, luck, or influential people—determine life’s events.

In essence, locus of control reflects how much control an individual believes they have over their circumstances. Those with an internal locus tend to take responsibility for their actions and believe in cause and effect—that their efforts will lead to corresponding results. In contrast, individuals with an external locus often feel that events are beyond their control, attributing outcomes to chance, destiny, or external forces. They are more likely to hold others accountable for both their successes and failures.

Those who possess an internal locus of control are typically more proactive. They believe that their success is due to their actions and that their hard work and determination will yield

positive outcomes. They understand that every action reacts. Meanwhile, those with an external locus of control believe their lives are governed by forces outside of themselves. They may think that even their actions are influenced by external circumstances such as luck, fate, or powerful people. As a result, they often do not see a strong connection between their behavior and the outcomes they experience.

According to Rotter (1966), internality is primarily associated with attributing success to effort, while externality is linked to attributing outcomes to chance. Internals believe that personal competence and perseverance result in success. Externals, however, believe that their choices do not significantly influence future outcomes and attribute their results to external, uncontrollable factors.

In line with this, individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to believe that their educational and career decisions will lead to the desired outcomes. In contrast, individuals with an external locus of control attribute their success or failure to the difficulty of the task, to luck, or the fairness (or lack thereof) of the system. If they fail, they may assume the task was simply too difficult or that they were just unlucky. If they succeed, they may attribute their success to chance or favorable conditions rather than their efforts.

Research has shown that locus of control significantly influences job performance and satisfaction. In the context of the Department of Education - Schools Division of the City of Ilagan, teacher applicants are appointed after passing a rigorous assessment and meeting job qualifications. Promotions are granted based on Qualification Standards (QS), which require applicants to demonstrate eligibility and competence. Therefore, continuous performance and effort are essential for career advancement.

In the schools where teachers deliver quality education, challenges constantly arise. Based on the researcher's interviews and observations, some teachers attribute their success to their efforts, skills, and hard work. These teachers tend to be more optimistic about promotions and are more satisfied with their jobs. Others, however, credit their achievements or failures to luck, fate, or other external factors. Still, some acknowledge a combination of personal effort and external influences.

This research aims to explore the relationship between locus of control and job satisfaction among selected public junior high school teachers in the Secondary Schools of the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan, Isabela. Understanding teachers' beliefs and perceptions is crucial because they directly influence teaching practices, learner outcomes, and workplace dynamics.

It is essential to examine whether teachers are satisfied with their roles and to identify the factors contributing to their professional experiences. By exploring their challenges and motivations, this study seeks to advocate for better working conditions and professional development opportunities. The researcher is particularly interested in how teachers' locus of control influences their job satisfaction, a factor critical to effective education delivery.

Problem Statement

This research aimed to determine the locus of control of selected Junior High School teachers in the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan in relation to their job satisfaction.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, monthly salary, field of specialization, academic rank, and length of service;

2. identify the respondents' perceived locus of control in general and when grouped according to their profile variables; determine whether there is a significant difference in the perceived general locus of control when the respondents are grouped according to their profile;
3. assess the level of job satisfaction of the respondents when grouped according to their locus of control and profile variables; ascertain whether a significant relationship exists between the respondents' level of job satisfaction and their profile;
4. determine the level of job satisfaction of the respondents based on the different facets of job satisfaction; and
5. examine whether there is a significant relationship between the respondents' level of job satisfaction and their locus of control.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed the descriptive research method, which was deemed appropriate for investigating the current research problem in the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan.

According to Shona McCombes (2019), descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It addresses questions related to what, where, when, and how, but not why. A descriptive research strategy can examine one or more variables using a wide range of research techniques. This methodology involves more than just gathering and tabulating data; it includes accurate analysis, interpretation, comparison, identification of trends, and establishing linkages (IJTBM, 2012, Vol. 1, Issue 6, Apr–Jun).

The descriptive-survey approach enabled the researcher to collect data while it was still relevant, providing important insights into the nature and perspectives of the subject-respondents. Furthermore, through the use of analytical methods, the researcher was able to determine and comprehend the characteristics of the collected data. Generally, the approach relied on direct observations and data collection tools such as paper-and-pencil instruments, online resources, and structured questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied using appropriate tests, statistical tools, and well-organized tabular presentations to facilitate accurate findings and draw valid conclusions.

Research Locale

This research was conducted in public secondary schools under the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan.

Respondents of the study

The Respondents involved in this study are the Grade 11 Senior High School from Marcelina National High School and Bayugan City Senior High School. A total of 125 Senior High School students were taken as respondents of the study.

Selection and Description of Respondents

The respondents of this study were fifty (50) selected Junior High School (JHS) teachers from the Schools Division of the City of Ilagan. These teachers were chosen through a random sampling method and represented various public secondary schools across the City of Ilagan, Isabela.

Data Gathering Instruments

The following tools were utilized by the researcher to obtain the data required for this study:

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was the primary tool in gathering selected data for this research work. This was floated to the fifty (50) teachers in the public secondary schools of the SDO City of Ilagan. A questionnaire was used to gather the respondents' profiles in terms of their Age, Gender, Civil Status, Monthly Salary, Field of Specialization, Academic Rank, and Length of Service. Since it was a pandemic, the questionnaire was implemented on Google Forms, and the link was electronically sent to the respondents, through their respective school heads, to obtain information. Participants were free to respond to all of the questions and were given assurances on the confidentiality and anonymity of the data.

Internal-External Locus of Control Scale

To identify respondents' locus of control, the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, developed by Julian Rotter in 1966, was used. The scale includes twenty-nine (29) forced-choice items, six (6) of which are filler items developed to measure generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Scores ranged from 0 to 29. In the online questionnaire, there were six (6) filler items (numbers 1, 8, 14, 19, 24, 27) and twenty-three (23) scoring items.

This research work utilized internet-based questionnaires. Respondents who had their laptops, desktops and/or smartphones with internet connection answered the questionnaires either at home, in the office, or any place that was convenient to them at the time.

Job Description Index (JDI)

As used by Dr. Alfonso Simon in 2011, the JDI was used in this research work to elicit data on the job satisfaction of the respondents. The JDI was developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin in 1969 and is, according to Simon (2011), the most popular tool for gauging employees' job satisfaction in organizations.

Schmidt (2000) says that the JDI allows for the measurement of many aspects of the job independently and is focused on specific areas of satisfaction rather than just overall contentment. To ensure that respondents have a job referent rather than a self-referent, it requires respondents to explain their work rather than asking them directly how satisfied they are. Additionally, the JDI assesses satisfaction perceptions for 5 job components, including compensation, promotions, supervision, co-workers, and the task itself, according to Spector (2000). The measuring tool consists of seventy-two (72) elements, with eighteen (18) items each for work, supervision, and co-workers, and nine (9) items for the aspects of promotion and remuneration.

The reliability of a measure, according to Middleton (2023), is how consistently a method measures something. In support, Twycross & Shields (2004) state that "reliability describes the degree to which the results of a given study can be repeated or replicated under the same conditions".

Unstructured interview

The researcher conducted an informal interview among some of the respondents to get important data to validate responses given in the questionnaire.

Documentary Analysis

The result of the questionnaire and interview was used to provide insights into the locus of control of teachers.

Data Gathering Procedure

To gather the necessary data for the study, the researcher used formal channels to request authorization from the Superintendent of Schools Division (SDS) to carry out research in several public secondary schools to obtain the required data for the study. Upon approval of the SDS, the link to the e-questionnaire was sent to the different schools and administered to the participants. Due to the rise of COVID-19 cases and health measures still being strictly followed, teachers preferred to answer the questionnaire online. All of the questions were left up to the participants' discretion, and they received guarantees about the data's confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Analysis Procedure

All information gathered was kept private. Each item of data was carefully analyzed for consistency and dependability to see whether it was reliable and helpful for this study.

For the scoring purposes of the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale responses, one (1) point is given for each of the following statements: *2b, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6b, 7b, 9b, 10a, 11a, 12a, 13a, 15a, 16b, 17b, 18b, 20b, 21b, 22a, 23b, 25b, 26a, 28a & 29b*.

The scale below was used to determine the Locus of Control of the respondents:

Score Range	Locus of Control	Qualitative Description
1.00–11.58	External	Individuals falling within this range are categorized as having an external locus of control. It suggests that these individuals tend to attribute outcomes and events in their lives to external factors, such as luck, fate, or the actions of others. They may perceive themselves as having limited control over their own lives.
11.59–23.00	Internal	Individuals falling within this range are classified as having an internal locus of control. It indicates that these individuals tend to believe that they have a significant degree of control over the outcomes and events in their lives. They attribute their achievements and failures to their abilities, efforts, and decision-making.

To determine the perceived job satisfaction of the respondents, in general, the scale below was used.

Range	Qualitative Description	
1–72	Not Satisfied	This category includes values from 1 to 72. It represents a range where the level of satisfaction is relatively low or unsatisfactory. Individuals falling within this range may express dissatisfaction or discontentment with the subject or situation being evaluated.
73–144	Not Sure	This category encompasses values from 73 to 144. It indicates a range where individuals may have mixed feelings or uncertainty regarding their level of satisfaction. They may neither strongly express satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, but rather fall into an ambiguous or indecisive state.
145–216	Satisfied	This category covers values from 145 to 216. It represents a range where individuals express contentment or a high level of satisfaction. Individuals falling within this range are likely to perceive the subject or situation as fulfilling their expectations and meeting their needs.

To determine the perceived job satisfaction of the respondents, as used by Cherrington (1994) and A. Simon (2011), the table below scores the positively discriminating items:

Numerical Value	Response	Qualitative Description
0	No	It suggests a negative or non-affirmative answer or outcome.
1	?	This typically represents an ambiguous or uncertain response. It indicates that the answer or outcome is not clearly defined or known, and further clarification or information may be required.
3	Yes	It implies a positive or affirmative answer or outcome.

The table below was used to determine if the items are negatively discriminating items:

Numerical Value	Response	Qualitative Description
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3	No	It suggests a negative or non-affirmative answer or outcome.
1	?	This typically represents an ambiguous or uncertain response. It indicates that the answer or outcome is not clearly defined or known, and further clarification or information may be required.
0	Yes	It implies a positive or affirmative answer or outcome.

Statistical Treatment

The following statistics were applied to the data collected for this study:

Frequency and percentage distributions were utilized to present the respondents’ profiles, locus of control, and job satisfaction.

Weighted mean and standard deviation were utilized to determine the perceived general locus of control of teachers.

Chi-Square test was utilized to determine the significant relationship between the respondents’ job satisfaction and their profiles. Additionally, it was used to determine the significant relationship between the job satisfaction level of respondents and their locus of control.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents reveals that the majority are aged 26–30 years (36%), indicating a relatively young workforce, with fewer respondents in the older age brackets. Females dominate the sample, comprising 72%, which aligns with the global trend of teaching as a predominantly feminized profession. Most respondents are married (56%), slightly outnumbering single individuals, reflecting common marital trends within the teaching population. In terms of academic rank, a significant portion (62%) hold the position of Teacher III, suggesting that many respondents are experienced or have advanced in their careers, though fewer are at the entry-level Teacher II rank. The monthly salary for most respondents falls between Php 30,000 and Php 34,999, consistent with the recent Salary Standardization Law for teachers in the Philippines. Regarding specialization, Araling Panlipunan is the most common field (24%), followed by Mathematics (18%) and Science (16%), highlighting diversity but also a notable concentration in social studies and STEM subjects. Finally, the length of service shows that half of the respondents have been teaching for 6–10 years, pointing to a relatively stable and experienced group, though few are nearing retirement.

Overall, the respondents represent a youthful, predominantly female teaching force with varied academic ranks, salaries consistent with national standards, and diverse specializations, mostly concentrated in social studies and sciences, with moderate years of service that suggest both experience and continuity in the profession. These findings correspond well with previous

studies on teacher demographics in the Philippines and other countries, though some variations exist depending on location and context.

Perceived Locus of Control (Internal and External) of the Teachers in General and When Grouped According to Selected Profile Variables

The perceived locus of control of teachers, both in general and when grouped according to selected profile variables, reveals that the majority (76%) of the respondents possess an internal locus of control, indicating a belief that their actions and decisions largely determine the outcomes in their lives. This supports prior studies by Simon (2011), Mehta and Gupta (2022), and Kiral (2019), who similarly found teachers to lean toward internal control due to the demands of the profession. In terms of age, internal control was more prevalent among younger respondents (20–35), while older teachers (40 and above) showed a slightly higher tendency towards external control, echoing Kiral's (2019) finding that age is not a significant factor except in the domain of chance control. Gender-wise, both males and females showed dominant internal control, with females slightly higher in both internal and external categories.

This contrasts with Kamdron's (2015) assertion that men generally possess a stronger internal locus. Regarding civil status, both single and married teachers predominantly held an internal locus, but a higher proportion of married respondents displayed external control, aligning with Angelova's (2016) finding of significant differences by marital status. Lastly, income groups showed that teachers with higher monthly earnings (P30,000–P34,999) had greater external locus of control than those earning less, suggesting that financial stability does not always equate to perceived personal control. Overall, the findings emphasize a strong internal control orientation among teachers, though variations exist across demographic variables.

Comparison of the perceived General Locus of Control of the Respondents when grouped by Profile

The study investigated whether there were significant differences in the perceived general locus of control of respondents when grouped according to various profile variables, namely: age, gender, civil status, monthly salary, field of specialization, academic rank, and length of service. Results showed that none of the profile variables yielded statistically significant differences in the respondents' perceived locus of control, as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that demographic and professional characteristics do not significantly influence the respondents' internal or external locus of control.

These findings are consistent with Simon (2011), who also found no significant relationship between respondents' locus of control and their profile variables. His study similarly concluded that locus of control is independent of demographic and occupational attributes, reinforcing the idea that it may be more closely tied to individual personality traits or internal psychological factors rather than external characteristics.

Level of Job Satisfaction of the Respondents in General

The study found a generally high level of job satisfaction among 50 Junior High School teachers from the SDO City of Ilagan, with 76% reporting satisfaction and none expressing dissatisfaction. This aligns with Simon's (2011) study, where 75.38% were satisfied and none

were dissatisfied. Both teachers with internal and external loci of control exhibited high satisfaction, with slightly higher rates among those with internal control, suggesting personal agency may influence perceptions (Simon, 2011). Teachers aged 26–35 were the most satisfied, indicating early-career contentment, while all age groups showed no dissatisfaction. Both male and female respondents reported high satisfaction, differing from Simon’s (2011) results, where males were slightly more content. Marital status had no impact, as both single and married respondents reported high satisfaction.

Job satisfaction was also high across salary, specialization, academic rank, and service length. Those earning ₱30,000–₱34,999 showed the greatest satisfaction. This is supported by Labonete (2024), who said that salary positively affects satisfaction. Teachers in Araling Panlipunan and Science were most satisfied, while Filipino teachers were least satisfied. Teacher III respondents had high satisfaction but also uncertainty, reflecting concerns about advancement (Mgaiwa, 2023). Teachers with 6–10 years of experience were satisfied yet uncertain, indicating mid-career challenges.

Relationship between the Respondents’ Job Satisfaction and their Profiles

The study found no significant relationship between respondents’ job satisfaction and their profiles—age ($p = 0.9534$), gender ($p = 0.7906$), civil status ($p = 0.6310$), academic rank ($p = 0.7726$), monthly salary ($p = 0.5989$), field of specialization ($p = 0.8474$), and length of service ($p = 0.8310$). All p -values exceeded the 0.05 significance level, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. This indicates job satisfaction is consistent regardless of demographic or professional backgrounds, likely influenced by other factors like work culture or leadership. These findings concur with Simon’s (2011) results, which also showed no significant association between job satisfaction and profile variables.

Level of Job Satisfaction of the Respondents when Grouped According to the Perceived Job Satisfaction Facets

The study using the Job Description Index revealed varied satisfaction levels across five job facets among respondents. Most were satisfied with their work (66%), supervision (86%), and coworkers (96%). However, satisfaction with present pay was lower (40%), with 38% dissatisfied, and opportunities for promotion showed mixed satisfaction, 46% satisfied and 28% dissatisfied. These findings align with Simon’s (2011) study, which also found high satisfaction in work, supervision, and interpersonal relationships, but varied satisfaction across facets. Simon emphasized that job satisfaction determinants are numerous and differ among groups, with relationships, supervision, and working conditions as key satisfaction sources.

Relationship between Job Satisfaction of the Respondents and their Own Locus of Control

The analysis showed no significant relationship between job satisfaction and locus of control ($\chi^2 = 0.0087$, $p = 0.9259$), leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. This implies respondents’ belief in control over their lives does not significantly influence their job satisfaction. These findings contradict those of Pavalache-Ilie and Ursu (2016), Kamdron (2015), and Simon (2011), who found significant associations between locus of control and job satisfaction, suggesting locus of control can impact job satisfaction in various professional contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that junior high school teachers' locus of control, whether internal or external, does not significantly influence their overall job satisfaction. This suggests that factors beyond personal beliefs about control over life outcomes, such as organizational environment, work relationships, and supervision, play a more critical role in shaping their job satisfaction. The consistency of job satisfaction across demographic and professional profiles further implies that interventions to improve teacher satisfaction should focus on enhancing workplace conditions and support systems rather than attempting to modify individual psychological orientations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings and conclusions of the study, the following are recommended:

The Department of Education (DepEd) in general may consider working or lobbying for a salary increase for public school teachers, as salary or pay is a factor in job satisfaction.

School heads/administrators are encouraged to provide growth and promotion opportunities in their respective school assignments. Areas to be given priority should be the provision of clear career paths, professional development programs, and opportunities for growth and advancement. This can enhance job satisfaction and provide employees with a sense of progression and fulfillment.

School heads are encouraged to enhance support and supervision. While the majority of respondents reported satisfaction with supervision, organizations can still invest in training and development programs for supervisors and managers. This can equip them with effective leadership skills, communication techniques, and the ability to provide ongoing support and guidance to employees.

School heads/administrators should foster a positive work environment. Given the high satisfaction reported in terms of colleagues, organizations should encourage a positive work culture that promotes teamwork, collaboration, and mutual respect. Regular team-building activities, communication platforms, and recognition programs can help create a supportive and engaging work environment.

When designing policies, benefits, and work arrangements, school officials may consider individual differences and preferences. It is essential to recognize that job satisfaction can vary across demographic factors such as age, gender, and academic rank. Offering flexible work options, mentorship programs, and tailored career development plans can contribute to greater job satisfaction for diverse employees.

Support for teachers in the early years should be provided by school heads. Respondents with 0-5 years of service reported higher levels of uncertainty or mixed feelings about job satisfaction. Special attention should be given to supporting early-career teachers through mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment. This can help them navigate challenges, gain confidence, and develop a strong foundation for their teaching careers.

School administrators may encourage an internal locus of control. Although no significant relationship was found between locus of control and job satisfaction, Schools can still promote a sense of personal empowerment and internal locus of control among teachers. Providing training

programs on self-efficacy, resilience, and goal-setting can help individuals feel more in control of their work and outcomes, leading to greater job satisfaction.

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