

Relationship between Gainful Employment and Locus of Control in School: Views and Perspectives

Purna Tiwari

PhD Research Scholar

Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University
Udaipur

Dr. Dipika Jain

Assistant Professor

Social Science & Humanities
Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University
Udaipur

Abstract

Employees are the most important component of any organization. For any educational organization it is pertinent to maximize the effectiveness of their teachers and improve their experience of work. The development of positive school environment and educators sense of personal responsibility towards their job can enhance their efficiency. With this regard, Gainful Employment and Locus of Control play a significant role in uplifting overall teaching performance among educators'.

Gainfully employed people always look forward to going to their work instead of dreading it. They find growth in the areas of their talent and feel productive and satisfied in their profession, it explains the construct Gainful Employment. The construct Locus of Control can be defined as the level to which individuals believe that their actions control their life events and success (internal locus) or are dependent upon outside forces (external locus).

In a teachers' life the teaching and other school related activities occupies large part and has a great impact upon their overall personality therefore gainful employment is an important criteria to boost their talent and skill in the area of education. Educators also require a sense of control upon their teaching and other school related activities. Therefore the accurate understanding and cognizance of Locus of Control can enable the teachers to practically reflect and take charge of their classroom teaching and improve their interaction with the students.

Locus of Control is an established concept of psychology whereas Gainful Employment is a comparatively new concept that was conceptualized in 2007 by Snyder and Lopez. Both the concepts depict relevance in almost every profession, specifically teaching and corporate professionals. This paper aims to provide theoretical links between Gainful Employment and Locus of Control within the domain of school education, in context of teachers.

Keywords: Gainful Employment, Locus of Control

Introduction

Gainful Employment is a positive psychology concept that explains work as a means to enrich oneself, where employees feel productive and satisfied in their profession. This type of work is not merely limited to income, but also entails other benefits that an employee derives from his job. With this regard, employees that are gainfully employed give value to their occupation and this positive aspect of their work helps in understanding that, how well the employees are contented and in harmony with the value system of their profession. In relation to work, a bold statement was first made by Sigmund Freud that the individual's ability to work and to love signifies a healthy life (O' Brien, 2003). In the perspective of profession, teaching plays a vital role in spreading education. The positive school environment along with self-driven and responsible teachers, provide a pertinent pathway for imparting quality education to their students. The importance of the gainfully employed teachers can not only be evaluated by their teaching competence and overall job satisfaction, but also by the positive feedback gathered from their students, co-workers and senior's about their teaching as well as execution of other school

related duties. In the field of positive psychology the concept of gainful employment was defined by Snyder and Lopez (2007). This concept is very relevant in the area of teaching as this type of work provides eight benefits:

1. Variety in duties performed
2. A safe working environment
3. Income for the family and oneself
4. A purpose derived from providing a product or service
5. Happiness and satisfaction
6. Positive engagement and involvement
7. A sense of performing well and meeting goals
8. The companionship and loyalty to coworkers, bosses and companies

Conceptualizing Gainful Employment and Locus of Control

Gainful employment signifies positive aspect of professional work. In relation to the importance of progressive side of work, a statement given by Henry (2004) defines it, The centrality of work to well-being is not surprising when you think of the number of benefits it offers, notably: an identity, opportunities for social interaction and support, purpose, time filling, engaging challenges, and possibilities for status apart from the provision of income. (p.270) Nowadays with regard to teaching work, teachers' role in a school is not just limited to effective instruction delivery in a classroom, but has extended beyond pedagogy or effective instructional delivery. School teachers are also found involved in various leadership roles of day to day school activities and events that are organized for the students, they are engaged in facilitating the teaching of their colleagues and are also seen involved in the educators' professional development programs for upgrading their quality of teaching. Here gainfully employed teachers' benefit more because their sense of satisfaction and happiness in the work drives them to perform better in the workplace i.e. school.

It can be evaluated by the usage of Gainful Employment Measure that was developed by Snyder and Lopez (2007). It is a significant tool specifically for the teachers, to assess whether they are gainfully employed professionals. This measure is useful for analyzing the components of gainful employment among school teachers that can be worked upon and improved by the school administration with respect of providing safe working environment, income and variety in duties assigned to them. Other domains like positive engagement, happiness and satisfaction etc., can be enhanced by means of intervention programs for the teachers.

Studies assert that the chances of overall satisfaction of an individual will be higher with life, if the individual is happy at work (Hart, 1999; Judge & Watanabe, 1993). Happiness and satisfaction is one of the benefit derived from gainful employment and psychologists prefer placing it at the center amongst the eight benefits because of its vital role (Amick et al., 2002; Kelloway & Barling, 1991). Gainfully employed teachers are able to perform better because they are happy educators and have a sense of efficiency while delivering a lecture, discussion or organizing any school activity. According to Peter Suchy with regard to gainful employment, an employee works to enrich himself in an organization or a company. In context of teachers it stretches the skills and talents of educators that improve their performance and then they are better able to meet the goal of their educational organization.

Gainful employment results in work involvement and engagement among the school teachers. This work involvement has been operationally defined by Kanungo(1977) as " a generalized cognitive (or belief) state of psychological identification with work, in so far as work is perceived to have the potentiality to satisfy one's salient needs and expectations". It enables the

educators to understand the academic and emotional needs of their students and consequently provide them better learning experiences. Studies reveal that this engagement manifests the employee circumstances in which they “ know what is expected of them, have what they need to do their work, have opportunities to feel something significant with coworkers whom they trust, and have chances to improve and develop” (Harter et al., 2002, p.269).

Gainful employment allows the teachers to fully embrace teaching, as the potential source of calling in their professional life. The purpose of teaching is their underlying driving force that enables them to show commitment in their work and brings passion in their field of education. In Research done by Amy Wrzesniewski along with her colleagues(e.g., Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997) have explained the employees perception of work as a calling. This notion of work as a calling is the purpose that an employee derives from his job that makes him gainfully employed. Martin Seligman (2002) describes, Individuals with a calling see their work as contributing to the greater good, to something larger than they are, and hence the religious connotation is entirely appropriate. The work is fulfilling in its own right, without regard for money or for advancement. When the money stops and the promotion end, the work goes on. Traditionally, calling were reserved to very prestigious and rarified work – priests, supreme court justices, physicians, and scientists. But there has been an important discovery in the field: Any job can become a calling, and any calling can become a job. (p.168)

Gainful Employment also encompasses variety in job duties. When the employees maintain variety in the activities of their work, then it not only brings satisfaction in their professional arena but also contribute in overcoming boredom at work. The maxim “variety is the spice of life” is important for teachers in the school to overcome repetitiveness of the day to day school activities. It also sustains their interest and motivation in creating new ways to teach and provide improved learning experiences to their students.

In the area of work, income is an important component for the fulfillment of employees’ needs and their family, but is considered to be an overrated source of happiness. Two survey studies reveal that people comprehend, their amount of money making to be unrelated to the happiness and meaning in life in any major degree (King & Napa, 1998). According to Peter Suchy, for employee money is very essential, but gainfully employed workers understand that it is not everything. According to him, gainfully employed individuals work in order to enrich them professionally. This also holds true in the case of gainfully employed school teachers, as their zeal and enthusiasm in teaching and school activities is independent of the amount of income they receive.

Gainfully employed professionals also perceive that their job gives them chance to interact with people and develop bonding with each other. The Gallup organization by means of Vital Friends Assessment surveyed 1,009 individuals to assess the effects of friendship on productivity, satisfaction and happiness (Rath, 2006). This work of Gallup researchers confirmed in the book called Vital Friends that in the workplace a sense of community is a factor that contributes to satisfaction and happiness on the employee’s job.(Mahan, Garrard, Lewis,& Newbrough, 2002; Royal & Rossi, 1996). The companionship that school teachers develop over the years of teaching with other teachers simply boosts their engagement, happiness and performance in the school environment.

Locus of control is the second variable used in this paper, is a useful means to gain understanding about the potentialities and limits of the school teachers and to uplift their sense of responsibility and personal control. The internal-external control dimension of this concept is

significant in knowing individual's behavior in context of reinforcement. With regard to teachers, it was found by Stockard and Lehman (2004) that the level of control that teachers exercised over the work environment significantly influenced satisfaction. Studies have also found evidence that those high external control teachers possibly to suffer burnout more (Farber, 1991; Kyriacou, 1987; Rotter, 1996). Scott, Cox and Dinham (1999), have indicated that when teachers had greater control upon their work then they were found more satisfied. Rotter describes, "The effect of reinforcement following some behavior ...is not a simple stamping in process but depends upon whether or not the person perceives a causal relationship between his own behavior and the reward" (1966, p. 1).

To performance, locus of control is found to be related (Spector, 1982; Spector & OConnell, 1994). According to Phares, Locus of control is "the belief regarding internal or outside forces have control over their success". It was indicated by Locke(1983) and Spector(1982) that the appearance of more motivation, better performance on job and expression of higher levels was found among individuals with the orientation towards internal locus of control than the individuals with external locus of control. In a study by Bulus' (2011) with regard to prospective teachers' indicated that, high level of internal locus of control plays role in goal orientation of mastery level(goals to enhance competence in teaching and mastering task of teaching) and achievement in academics. Findings suggests that in high external control among teachers are more chances to suffer burnout(Farber, 1991; Kyriacou, 1987; Rotter, 1966).

Studies by Phares(1957) gave an early indication of usefulness of knowledge of subject's perception of control for the prediction of the type of judgments the subject would make in a task given as a response to failure and success. Study of James and Rotter (1958) showed confirmation to the findings of Phares' that the manner in which individuals would respond to the outcome of their performance is predicted by perception of control. In a finding by Phares(1968) in the area of decision making, the externals and internals were compared in their usage of information. Despite the fact that the externals and internals might have equivalent funds of information, it was concluded that as compared to externals, internals use of information in a better manner. Study by Rotter and Mulry(1965) have asserted that as compared to externals, internals give more attention to decisions about the matters that are skill-related. The findings made it clear that when the task is considered skill demanding then in decisions more time was deliberately spent by the internals as compared to externals.

Gainful Employment and Locus of Control in Teachers

The role of gainful employment in making individuals feel productive and satisfied in their work significantly determines how they feel about themselves. In context of teaching, the morale of the teachers can be sustained by means of gainful employment as it facilitates the expression of positive individual-group relationship in terms of companionship and loyalty to coworkers and seniors. It also promotes higher probability of attaining job satisfaction and a sense of performing well as an educator in a course of action. It influences teachers' life in a positive manner; as a result the importance of gainful employment in the teaching profession cannot be undermined.

With respect of teaching and learning process, the role of "locus of control" is equally significant in the field of education. Locus of control deals with an individual's views about himself in relation to the happenings of his life, and the interpretation drawn from those interactions that occur between his own self and his life experiences. It elucidates the extent to which an individual's behavior is contingent upon the reinforcement. This concept became prominent with the monograph publication by Rotter (1966). In the monograph, the scale of locus of control (I-E Scale) was presented that was developed by him to evaluate one's generalized expectancies for

external or internal control of reinforcement. It is derived from social learning theory. Locus of control is internal as well as external. The Internal control involves generalized expectancy in which individuals have perception that one's own actions causes the positive or negative events and are potentially under one's control. On the other hand, the External control involves generalized expectancy, where one's perception regarding positive or negative events is beyond one's control and is not related to individual's behavior. The cognizance of locus of control can promote acceptance of responsibility among school teachers with regard to their vital role in shaping students overall performance and successful leadership among school administrative authorities for improved school functioning.

Theoretical links between gainful employment and locus of control

In this paper the researcher attempts to illustrate the theoretical links between gainful employment and locus of control. As pointed out earlier, the first concept i.e. gainful employment explains the work that leads to healthy life of the employees by enabling them to stretch their talents and strengths where they feel satisfied and productive in the job. On the other hand the second concept of this paper i.e. locus of control describes one's beliefs regarding the extent to which they can control or cause events in their life.

Studies have revealed that internal locus of control among individuals' results in:

- Improved performance
- Satisfaction with the work
- Happiness in the job
- Goals achievement
- Engagement in the work
- Commitment towards work, creating work life balance
- Better social adjustment and adaptability with others

These benefits depict theoretical and empirical association with the second concept i.e. gainful employment. The following five benefits of gainful employment shows relationship with the benefits derived from internal locus of control are mentioned below:

- Happiness and Satisfaction
- Sense of Performing Well and Meeting Goals
- Engagement and Involvement
- Deriving Purpose in Providing a Product or Service
- Companionship and Loyalty to Coworkers and Company

The conceptual understanding of locus of control shows that individuals with internal locus of control experience happiness and satisfaction in their job. Likewise theoretical knowledge of gainful employment also describes the fact that gainfully employed individuals are happy and satisfied in their workplace. This indicates that an increase in either one of them will result in the increase of other. Empirically also, with regard to happiness, a study by Shubina (2017) shows a significant correlation between happiness and internal locus of control. Argyle (2001) and Myers (2001) have also indicated that there exists a direct relationship between perceiving of happiness and internal locus of control.

Another study by Devin, Ghahramanlou, Fooladian & Zohoorian (2012) found that happiness and internal locus of control are positively related among teachers. No positive relationship has been found between external locus of control and happiness in any studies. With regard to satisfaction among the workers, the studies have revealed that the employees with internal locus of control exhibit greater satisfaction in the job than the employees with external

locus of control (Gangai, Mahakud & Sharma, 2016; Spector, 1982). Similarly gainfully employed individuals demonstrate good satisfaction in their job. Satisfaction is one of the characteristic of gainful employment, the findings claim that it plays the key role in the professional domain of the individuals (Amick et al., 2002; Kelloway & Barling, 1991).

Theoretically the concept locus of control explains that individuals with internal locus of control perform better in job. It is because they take charge of their roles and responsibilities instead of blaming outside factors i.e. circumstances and people. Similarly gainful employment also results in performing well and meeting goals.

Empirically in context of performance, studies have indicated that the employees with internal locus of control perform well in the workplace as compared to workers with external locus of control (Mali, 2013; Spector, 1982).Likewise gainful employment also results in performing well in profession and also enables the employees to meet their respective goals of the job, which is indicated by the gainful employment model by Snyder and Lopez (2007).

With regard to meeting goals, a study by Coburn (1990) indicates that the individuals with internal locus of control are more motivated in meeting goals than the individuals with external locus of control. The study claims that the presence of goals, on the individuals with external locus of control adds pressure to them which creates a feeling of helplessness among them whereas it is not the case of individuals with internal locus of control. Similarly, gainful employment also allows the individuals to meet the desired goals expected from him. Peter Suchy with regard to this suggest that the employee need to evaluate what he or she has to offer to the organization and also determine what more is needed from him or her. It facilitates the workers to meet the goals of their organization. Snyder and Lopez (2007) have also described, meeting goals and performing well as one of the component in determining gainfully employed individual.

Conceptually individuals with internal locus of control are more engaged in work as compared to individuals with external locus of control. These individuals have engagement in their work. Theoretically gainful employment also results in engagement and involvement in work. The studies have practically confirmed this theoretical viewpoint.

Merwe (2003) in a research study found that there exist a positive relationship between internal locus of control and engagement. The study suggests that engaged individuals have an internal locus of control. It also asserts that these individuals are less prone to burnout and use active coping strategies whereas it is not the case of individuals with external locus of control. In context of gainful employment it has been demonstrated that gainfully employed individuals are involved and engaged in their work. Snyder and Lopez (2007) have described engagement and involvement as one of the important benefit derived from gainful employment. According to Rabinowitz and Hall (1977) involvement in work and internality go together. This work involvement according to Kanungo (1977) is “ a generalized cognitive (or belief) state of psychological identification with work, in so far as work is perceived to have the potentiality to satisfy one’s salient needs and expectations”.

With regard to deriving purpose in the work and its services, the theoretical viewpoint of locus of control indicates that the individuals with internal locus of control derive purpose and meaning in their work. This fosters commitment towards their job. In theory, gainful employment also enables the individuals to derive purpose in their job. Empirically in context of locus of control, Johnson et al. (1968) in a finding indicated that internals in one case showed pain tolerance in order to actively do what they considered correct; and in another case it was found that for the sake of maintaining proper behavior, they manifested willingness to risk rejection at social level, as construed by them. Another study by Crowne and Liverant (1963) also indicates

that individuals with internal locus of control trust their judgments more than individuals with external locus of control, when the stakes of success is of some value to them. It is because externals showed more confidence on the consensual judgments than the self-independent judgments. In another study Midlarski (1971) claims that help is more likely given by internals to other individual than the individuals with external locus of control.

All these findings indicate that the acts of internals are driven by purpose and meaning even to the extent of tolerating discomfort and are not influenced by the consensual judgments of others. This also enhances internals ability to commit to the work assigned to them by taking personal responsibility and in doing so quality performances are given by them.

Empirically gainfully employed individuals are also driven by purpose, as the sense of giving services through their work gives them the impetus to continue doing their work with passion and enthusiasm. Amy Wrzesniewski and her colleagues (e.g., Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997) in their research have described work as calling, where the employees in an organization from all the status i.e. highest to the lowest can recognize their work as a calling and have a sense of purpose in providing services. In this case workers for their own sake bring commitment and passion to the work. Here the employees are gainfully employed where work is perceived with purpose.

With regard to companionship and loyalty to coworkers and bosses, the theory of locus of control asserts that internal locus of control results in better social adjustment with people and situations as compared to external locus of control. Similarly the theory of gainful employment also suggests that the gainfully employed individuals have better companionship with the fellow workers, seniors and loyalty towards them and their organization.

Empirically a study by Bahrainian and Yari (2014) shows that internal locus of control and social adjustment is positively correlated. This study asserts that the adjustment ability is greater among individuals with internal locus of control than the ones with external locus of control. Another study by Jain and Singh (2015) also suggest that internal locus of control results in better adjustment with the surrounding environment as compared to external locus of control. These findings indicate that internals are better able to adjust in the company of others than the externals.

Similarly empirical findings in context of gainful employment confirm the importance of companionship at the workplace. Vital Friends Assessment developed by Gallup Organization where 1,009 people were surveyed with regard to effects of workplace friendships on their productivity, happiness and satisfaction (Rath, 2006). Vital Friends book presented Gallup researchers work and gave confirmation regarding the employees' community sense at the workplace as the contributing factor to their satisfaction and happiness on the profession (Mahan, Garrard, Lewis, & Newbrough, 2002; Royal & Rossi, 1996). These studies reveal that the individuals with best friends at their area of work are physically and psychologically seven times more engaged on their job (Rath, 2006).

The conceptual understanding and empirical findings indicates that an increase in either one of them (internal locus of control or gainful employment) will result in the increase of the other.

Significance of relating gainful employment and locus of control

The significance of relating locus of control and gainful employment lies in the fact that on the common elements of both the constructs, an intervention training program can be conducted among the teachers in a school environment. It can result in an increase of both internal locus of control and gainful employment. The related elements of both the concepts are happiness,

satisfaction, engagement and involvement, deriving purpose, sense of performing well and companionship at the workplace.

With regard to internal locus of control, findings have revealed that it is of changeable disposition (Manichander, 2014). This indicates that the internal locus of control can be induced and maintained among individuals. An increase in the internal locus of control among school teachers can enhance their gainful employment due to theoretical and empirical association between the two.

In a school setting, sensitivity towards students' needs is manifested by the teachers who take responsibility in the teaching learning process, derive a sense of purpose in the field of education by giving value to their students' academic interest. Their locus of control is internal and they perceive teaching as a calling. In context of gainful employment, gainfully employed educators teach in order to enrich their skills in teaching. These professionals have a growth mindset in the area of education. Findings indicate that for gainfully employed professionals the value of their job is not just limited to income. Income is important but is not everything for them. With regard to gainfully employed individuals' happiness, purpose, satisfaction, performance, companionship cannot be compromised.

Two survey studies suggest the understanding of people revealing that they perceive their amount of money making has no relation in any major extent with the meaning and happiness in life (King & Napa, 1998). In a teaching job, to increase the meaning, happiness and the above mentioned elements it becomes important to raise the educators' gainful employment and internal locus of control. For this reason to enhance both gainful employment and internal locus of control among these professionals, an intervention programme can be designed and conducted in schools, with reference to the relationship between the two constructs.

In the field of education, it can uplift educators' sense of responsibility, purpose, passion and commitment, enabling them to become cognizant about students potentialities and conflicts, by giving more emphasis to student centered approach with the usage of effective methods in teaching.

Conclusion

The above discussion comprehends the relationship between gainful employment and locus of control with regard to school teachers, as they play a very significant role in students school life. The internal locus of control and gainful employment positively influences their teaching abilities and empowers them to provide improved learning experiences to the students. Therefore the importance of understanding this association between the two constructs lies in knowing the common elements between them and thereafter planning, designing and conducting an intervention programme on those common elements. It can enhance teachers' internal locus of control and gainful employment and also enable them to experience growth in the area of their talents and strength by elevating their efficiency in teaching. The relationship between these two constructs can practically benefit schools and overall raise the quality of education in it.

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