

The Impact of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on Workplace Well-being and Employee Productivity: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the intricate relationship between locus of control (LOC) and stress, particularly in today's highly competitive environment. Stress has become a ubiquitous challenge for individuals across various professions, with a notable impact on software engineers frequently engaged in client-driven strategic alliances. Collaborating with diverse teams dispersed across different geographic locations often presents stress-inducing challenges. However, individuals possessing a strong locus of control (LOC) may exhibit enhanced resilience in the face of such adversity. This study formulates and tests a hypothesis to discern the significant differences between locus of control, the sources of pressure, and gender in stress management. The research employs the OSI questionnaire, initially developed by Cooper et al., as a robust instrument to gather pertinent data. The data collection involved 91 software professionals from five prominent companies listed within NASSCOM, all actively engaged in client-oriented projects. The collected data was meticulously analysed utilising various statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and ANOVA, all facilitated by the SPSS software. This comprehensive examination sheds light on the vital role of locus of control in stress management within the dynamic realm of software engineering and strategic alliances. The findings from this research provide valuable insights into occupational stress and the various sources of pressure that software professionals encounter in their pursuit of excellence.

Keywords: Locus of control, strategic alliance, Internal LOC, External LOC, stress management, occupational stress, sources of pressure, software engineers, OSI questionnaire, SPSS analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the lexicon of modern discourse, the terms "global economy" and "Indian economy" resonate with profound significance. Over the past six decades, we have witnessed seismic transformations in the global economic landscape. In the 1950s, eminent economists demarcated the world into two distinct realms: the "developed" and the "developing" economies. The industrialised nations of the Northern Hemisphere were anointed as they developed. At the same time, the Southern Hemisphere, with the notable exception of Japan, was cast as the crucible of non-industrialised, developing countries. From the 1950s to the 1990s, the epicentre of manufacturing and economic development was firmly ensconced within the bastions of developed countries. During this epoch, the scale of imports by developing nations dwarfed their exports, perpetuating a glaring economic imbalance on the global stage. However, the tides of economic fortune began to shift gradually but inexorably. In 1995, the developed nations experienced a precipitous 80% decline in production, a harbinger of the ascending fortunes of developing economies. Pivotal nations such as China, India, and Brazil embarked on a meteoric rise catalysed by the transformative Information Technology (IT) revolution. By 2014, the collective worth of the global software sector had burgeoned to an astonishing \$6,000 billion, translating to approximately \$850 per person per annum, considering a global population of roughly 6 to 8 billion in that year. To put this into perspective, the World Domestic Product in 2014 was approximately \$80 trillion, signifying a substantial 7.1% contribution from the software sector to the global economy. This paradigm shift in economic dynamics was not solely a fortuitous turn of events; rather, it was orchestrated through the strategic alchemy of alliances. Companies pooled their multifarious financial, marketing, technological, and human resources to forge collaborative partnerships that would reshape the business landscape. In this chapter, we delve into the human dimension of these strategic alliances, exploring their profound implications for the world of commerce.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Information Technology (IT) sector has catalysed the proliferation of strategic alliances in developing countries. Technological advancements have lowered the cost of communication and transportation and dismantled trade barriers, unleashing a surge in the global labour supply. Consequently, this seismic shift has redirected a significant portion—approximately 50 percent—of manufacturing activities from developed nations to developing economies like China, India, Pakistan, Iraq, and Russia. One noteworthy trend is India's rapid IT sector growth, highlighting its pivotal role in this transformative landscape. As organisations grapple with the repercussions of globalisation and ever-evolving environmental conditions, they navigate a complex terrain marked by heightened competition and continual change. In this dynamic landscape, the well-being of employees emerges as a paramount concern. While many organisations prioritise financial performance and stock market gains, it is imperative to recognise that the most vital asset within any organisation is its human capital. As the esteemed English author and international education advisor, Sir Ken Robinson, astutely noted, "Human Resources are like natural resources; they are often buried deep; you have to look for them; they are not just lying around on the surface. Indeed, within the ambit of human resource management, a multifaceted landscape exists to explore. This paper aims to illuminate one critical facet—the locus of control. Human beings are inherently social creatures, enveloped by the influences of society and external pressures. Employees contend with external pressures from colleagues and competition within the organisational context. Against this backdrop, we embark on a journey to comprehensively examine the concept of locus of control and its profound implications in the contemporary workplace.

3. THE DYNAMIC CONCEPT OF LOCUS OF CONTROL

Maya Angelou's wisdom resonates in her insight that while we may not command all the events that unfold, we retain the power to determine how we respond to them. In 1954, Julian Rotter introduced the locus of control (LOC) concept, shedding light on the forces that influence and shape human existence. As Rotter articulated, these forces manifest as internal and external influences, and they play a pivotal role in our lives. To delve into the intricacies of Locus of Control, it is imperative to understand the fundamental terms that constitute its essence—namely, 'control,' 'locus,' 'Internal Locus of Control (ILOC),' and 'External Locus of Control (ELOC).' The term 'locus' denotes a position where events or occurrences transpire; it signifies the specific point or place where something takes shape. 'Control,' on the other hand, represents the power or authority to dictate outcomes and results.

Julian Rotter's seminal work in 1975 categorises Locus of Control into two distinct realms:

1. **Internal Locus of Control (ILOC):** Individuals who exhibit an Internal Locus of Control possess a profound belief in their ability to influence the outcomes of their endeavours. They assume personal responsibility for their successes and failures, attributing these outcomes to their actions and intrinsic capabilities. These individuals harbour a steadfast faith in the value of hard work and believe that the consequences of their actions directly result from their choices and abilities. In essence, they accept accountability for the events that unfold in their lives, whether favourable or adverse.
2. **External Locus of Control (ELOC):** Conversely, those with an External Locus of Control view themselves as lacking the capacity to govern the consequences of their efforts. They perceive those external forces, such as societal influences, colleagues, and even the capricious hand of luck, shape the outcomes they experience. For individuals with an ELOC, the locus of control resides outside of themselves, leading them to attribute the events in their lives primarily to external factors rather than their actions or abilities.

In this exploration of Locus of Control, we will delve deeper into the profound implications of these two orientations, examining their impact on individual behaviours, choices, and overall well-being. Through this lens, we seek to unveil the complex interplay between one's perception of control and the outcomes that shape one's existence, ultimately shedding light on the dynamic forces that guide human agency.

Table 1. Weiner's Attribution Theory and Motivation: Locus of Control and Attributions

Weiner's	Perceived	Attributions	Attributions	Attributions of	Attributions of
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Attribution Theory	Locus of Control	of Ability	of Effort	Chance/Luck	Task Difficulty
Internal Locus of Control	"I have control."	"I have the ability."	"I exerted effort."	"Luck played no role"	"The task was manageable."
External Locus of Control	"I lack control."	"It is beyond my ability."	"I could not change it."	"It is all a matter of luck."	"The task was too challenging."

Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) emerges as a defining trait in individuals driven by a profound inner motivation. Such individuals exhibit remarkable organisation, self-determination, and high self-efficacy. They readily shoulder the responsibility for their actions with unwavering confidence, remaining relatively impervious to external influences. Positivity pervades their outlook, and their physical well-being often reflects their proactive approach, contributing to their remarkable success in their professional endeavours.

Conversely, Julian Rotter's framework highlights External Locus of Control (ELOC) as the antithesis of ILOC. Individuals characterised by ELOC tend to be less motivated and susceptible to the sway of external forces. Their confidence in their abilities wanes, and they often attribute successes and failures to external factors, blaming others for their circumstances. This disposition is frequently accompanied by a pessimistic outlook and a diminished sense of self-efficacy, leading to a less auspicious career trajectory. They are more likely to succumb to feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness in challenging situations.

In an era of globalisation and fierce competition, organisational change becomes paramount for success. Beyond terminology such as "innovation," "modification," "transformation," "transition," and "reconstruction," organisations must embrace change comprehensively. Carter McNamara underscores the significance of adapting to diverse markets and evolving opportunities in a globalised landscape. However, a crucial distinction often eludes higher-level management—the differentiation between "organisational change" and "organisational development." While organisational change pertains to shifts in an organisation's nature and scope, organisational development focuses on elevating the capabilities of its workforce. Unfortunately, many leaders conflate these concepts, emphasising financial, marketing, and technological facets while neglecting the human resource dimension.

This disregard for the human element within organisations primarily catalyses employee stress. Employees bear the brunt of changes, yet management frequently overlooks their well-being. This oversight precipitates stress in the workforce.

Our exploration delves further into the stress experienced by employees during times of change. We partition the Locus of Control (LOC) into three crucial components:

1. **Helplessness:** Individuals with a pronounced External Locus of Control (ELOC) often grapple with a pervasive sense of "helplessness." They perceive themselves as bereft of external assistance, believing they cannot perform tasks without external support. In contrast, individuals with a robust Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) exhibit self-reliance and experience less stress associated with helplessness.
2. **Chance:** The concept of "chance" mirrors helplessness. Those with a heightened ELOC perpetually seek opportunities from external sources, waiting for favourable circumstances to materialise. Conversely, individuals with a strong ILOC rely on their intrinsic abilities, eschewing the passive waiting associated with chance. In this paper, we explore the interplay between LOC and job-related stress through the lens of these notions.
3. **Internality:** Lastly, we delve into "internality," the belief in one's control over oneself rather than external circumstances. Individuals with a pronounced sense of internality typically exhibit ILOC, while those with diminished internality often display ELOC.

Additionally, research also examines the gender dimension concerning LOC. Given their predisposition toward empathy and emotional responsiveness, we posit that females exhibit a higher degree of ELOC. In contrast, males tend to embrace a more ILOC-oriented outlook, driven by their proclivity for achievement and self-development. These gender-related nuances in LOC offer an

intriguing avenue for exploring how individuals navigate the complexities of work and life in an ever-evolving world.

4. UNRAVELING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Stress has become an omnipresent spectre in the lives of individuals today, casting its long shadow across many aspects, including motivation, morale, performance, absenteeism, accidents, job satisfaction, internal communication, and interpersonal conflicts. Occupational stress, in particular, looms large as a pervasive challenge, striking at the very heart of the workplace. At its core, occupational stress arises from the dissonance between the workplace's expectations and the actual capabilities of its employees. Its impact reverberates through the corridors of psychology and manifests as a potent physical force.

A confluence of factors conspires to elevate stress levels among employees—escalating workloads, isolation, harassment, communication breakdowns, limited job control, and uneven team contributions all contribute to the mounting pressure. In all its guises, stress has become a ubiquitous companion for today's workforce, taking on various forms, from illness-related stress to performance anxiety, from the stress of office dynamics to the rigours of client interactions.



Fig.1 Major Causes of Workplace Stree

In this intricate tapestry of stressors, various elements such as job satisfaction, locus of control, inappropriate self-concept structures, and many more intertwine to shape the individual's experience. Chusmir and Franks (1988) underscored the intricate nexus between these stressors and their profound ramifications on organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

Stress manifests as a formidable adversary amid this landscape of perpetual change, alliances, and transformation. Studies have likened the stress response to such changes and alliances to the intensity experienced in response to traumatic events like death and grief (Henderson-Loney, 1996; Grant, 1996; Kubler-Ross, 1969).

One context in which stress unfolds with remarkable poignancy is when employees work with clients. Such scenarios invariably usher in a tidal wave of changes, altering work cultures, organisational structures, technology, timing, and even the office environment. However, embracing change is rarely a seamless transition. Resistance and criticism often accompany it as individuals grapple with

relinquishing familiar modes of operation. Employees, too, are not immune to this resistance; they may resist change imposed by management, leading to elevated stress levels. The repercussions of stress in client-facing roles can be profound, encompassing anxiety, erosion of a sense of security and competence, threats to professional identity, excessive workloads, work-life imbalances, financial insecurity, and diminished concentration.

The ramifications of stress extend far beyond the individual, casting a pall over employees and organisations. Stress should not be a burden employees carry in the face of change. Organisations bear a responsibility to aid their employees in managing and mitigating stress. In the following section, we delve into stress-coping strategies.

Within organisations, a plethora of threats conspire to cultivate stress. Employees confront external threats (ET) like global competition, evolving skill requirements, and perpetual job and technological transformations. Simultaneously, internal threats (IT) such as anger, isolation, violations of personal boundaries, and disparities in employee behaviour loom large. The symptoms of stress permeate the workplace, with employees struggling to concentrate on their tasks, diminished productivity, increased irritability, and a notable decline in overall concentration. Stark statistics underscore the gravity of the situation, with over 45% of employees grappling with stress and more than 25,000 individuals in Japan contending with severe health issues attributed to stress. Even in countries renowned for their work culture, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, approximately 55% of the population confronts the spectre of stress, underscoring its universal presence and impact.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

In their study, Lakshman Vijayashree and Mali Vishalkumar Jagdishchandra (2011) highlighted a positive relationship between Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) and job satisfaction. They posited that External Locus of Control (ELOC) is directly linked to aggression, with negative attitudes like aggression contributing to job dissatisfaction. The authors further emphasised that external factors, including chance and others, are primary catalysts for job dissatisfaction.

Vishal Mali (2013) delved into the significance of both ILOC and ELOC in employee learning. Mali's research illuminated that individuals with a strong ILOC tend to exhibit greater self-confidence, believing in their ability to chart their life's course. The study also underscored the positive correlation between ILOC and academic and professional achievements.

Urska Treven and Sonja Treven (2011) explored the ubiquitous presence of stress in contemporary life, asserting that nearly everyone is affected by stress. Their research highlighted the role of individual differences, including self-perception, Type A and B behaviour, locus of control, gender, and positive-negative attitudes, in influencing one's ability to cope with stress from personal and professional experiences.

L. Vijayashree and Pallabi Mund (2011), in their research on "Role stress and coping," revealed a positive correlation between personal inadequacy and coping abilities. Additionally, they identified a negative correlation between stress coping strategies (SCS) and role ambiguities, suggesting that employees with a stronger External Locus of Control (ELOC) tend to experience higher levels of role ambiguities in their work environment.

Smith and Liu (2014) explored the role of locus of control in determining the efficacy of workplace stress management programs. Their research across various multinational corporations indicated that individuals with an internal locus of control were more receptive and committed to proactive stress management interventions (Smith & Liu, 2014).

Patel and Gomez's (2015) study in the academic context provided crucial insights into the relationship between locus of control and stress perception among students. They argued that students with an internal locus of control coped better with academic stress, suggesting the need for programs that foster this trait (Patel & Gomez, 2015).

Johnson and Khanna (2015) found a nuanced relationship between locus of control and stress in the healthcare sector. Healthcare professionals with a high internal locus of control experienced lower stress levels but were also prone to overcommitment, leading to potential burnout (Johnson & Khanna, 2015).

6. OBJECTIVES

In light of our preceding discussion, the study's objectives take shape as follows:

1. **Unveiling Dominant Locus of Control Factors:** The primary objective is to discern the most influential factor within the locus of control paradigm among employees.
2. **Exploring the Locus of Control-Pressure Nexus:** Delving into the intricate relationship between Locus of Control (LOC) and the sources of pressure encountered while collaborating with clients.
3. **Understanding Gender-Related Variations:** A crucial objective entails investigating variations in LOC factors concerning gender and individual personal variables concerning locus of control and occupational stress.

7. HYPOTHESES

Building upon our discourse, we posit the following hypotheses:

1. **Hypothesis1: Locus of Control and Occupational Stress:** A significant relationship exists between locus of control and occupational stress, mainly when working with clients during strategic alliances.
2. **Hypothesis2: LOC and Source of Work Pressure Across Genders:** A substantial difference prevails in the locus of control (LOC) variables and the sources of work-related pressure discerned across gender lines.

8. METHODOLOGY

Our research endeavours encompassed 91 professionals from diverse backgrounds, representing five distinct software companies engaged in client-centric collaborations. These professionals can be classified into three primary groups based on their work arrangements:

- **Offsite Professionals:** Those operating from the comforts of their homes.
- **Onsite Professionals:** Individuals stationed at client locations permanently.
- **Liaison Professionals:** Those navigating various client locations as part of their roles.

To gauge the intricacies of locus of control and stress, we employed the Occupational Stress Questionnaire developed by Cooper. Data collection transpired through the utilisation of convenient sampling methods. The formidable analytical prowess of the SPSS tool aided us in extracting meaningful insights. As a safeguard for privacy, we refrain from disclosing the names of the participating companies, respecting their confidentiality concerns.

9. EXPLORING THE DATA: UNVEILING DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

Table 2: Demographic Profile Breakdown

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Valid Percent
Age		
20 years - 24 years	4	4.4
25 years to 29 years	16	17.6
30 years - 34 years	53	58.2
35 years and above	18	19.8
Years of Experience		
Less than 2 years	2	2.2
2.1 - 4 years	13	14.3
4.1 - 6 years	14	15.4
6.1 years and above	62	68.1
Employee Category		
Working with clients from home (Offsite)	32	35.2
Working with clients from client locations (Onsite)	28	30.8
Travelling to different client locations (Liaisons)	31	34.1
Working Shift		
Day	38	41.8
Night	8	8.8
General	45	49.5
Gender		
Male	48	52.7
Female	43	47.3

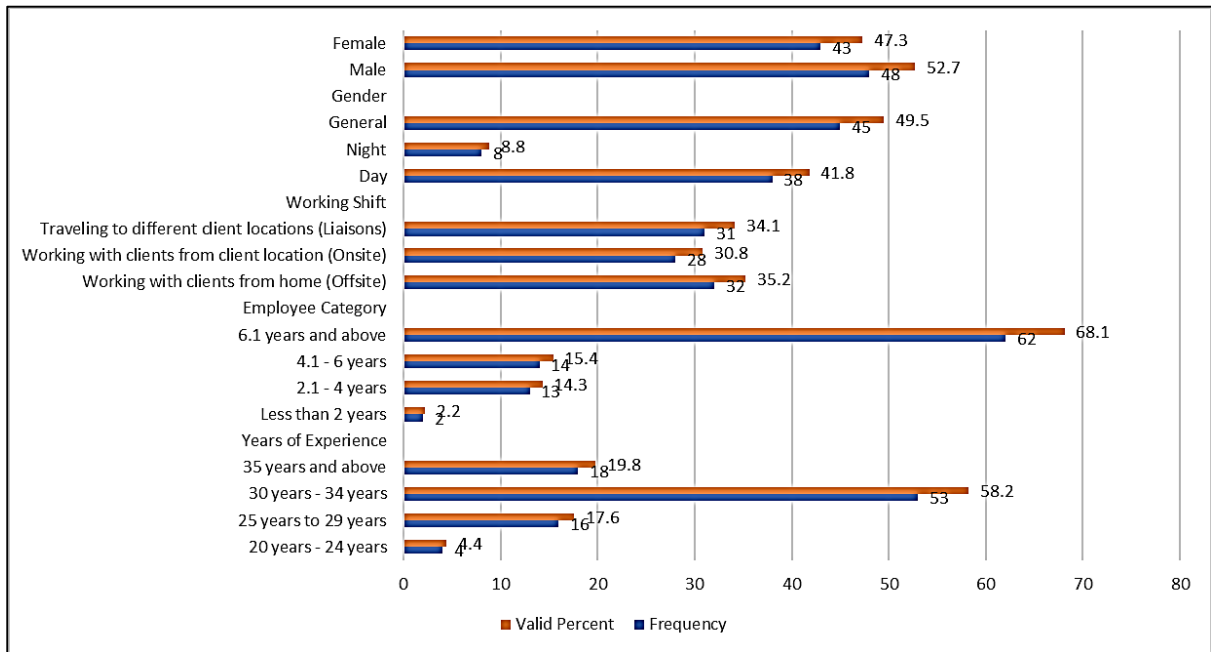


Fig. 2. Demographic Insights

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the study's participants. Regarding age distribution, most participants, comprising 58.2%, fall within the "30 years - 34 years" category, indicating a significant presence of individuals in this age group. Additionally, participants aged "25 years to 29 years" constitute a noteworthy portion, accounting for 17.6%. On the other hand, participants aged "35 years and above" and "20 years - 24 years" represent 19.8% and 4.4%, respectively, of the study's population. When examining years of experience, the data reveals that a substantial proportion of participants, 68.1%, possess "6.1 years and above" of experience, signifying a considerable level of expertise among the respondents. Meanwhile, individuals with "2.1 - 4 years" and "4.1 - 6 years" experience contribute 14.3% and 15.4%, respectively. Only a small fraction, 2.2%, have "less than 2 years" of professional experience. Table 2 sheds light on the diverse employment categories, with "Working with clients from home (Offsite)" employees comprising 35.2% of the total, followed closely by "Working with clients from client location (Onsite)" employees at 30.8%. Those "travelling to different client locations (Liaisons)" represent 34.1% of the participants. Regarding working shifts, the "Day" shift is the most prevalent, with 41.8% of participants, while the "General" shift accounts for 49.5%. A smaller proportion, 8.8%, is engaged in the "Night" shift. Finally, when considering gender distribution, the data indicates a slightly higher presence of males at 52.7% compared to females at 47.3%. This demographic breakdown offers valuable insights into the study's participant composition. It sets the stage for further analyses, allowing researchers to explore potential correlations between these demographics and the study's outcomes.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Locus of Control Constructs

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items	Mean	Stdev
Helplessness	0.820	5	2.70	0.79
Chance	0.770	5	3.10	0.88
Internality	0.818	5	3.93	0.72

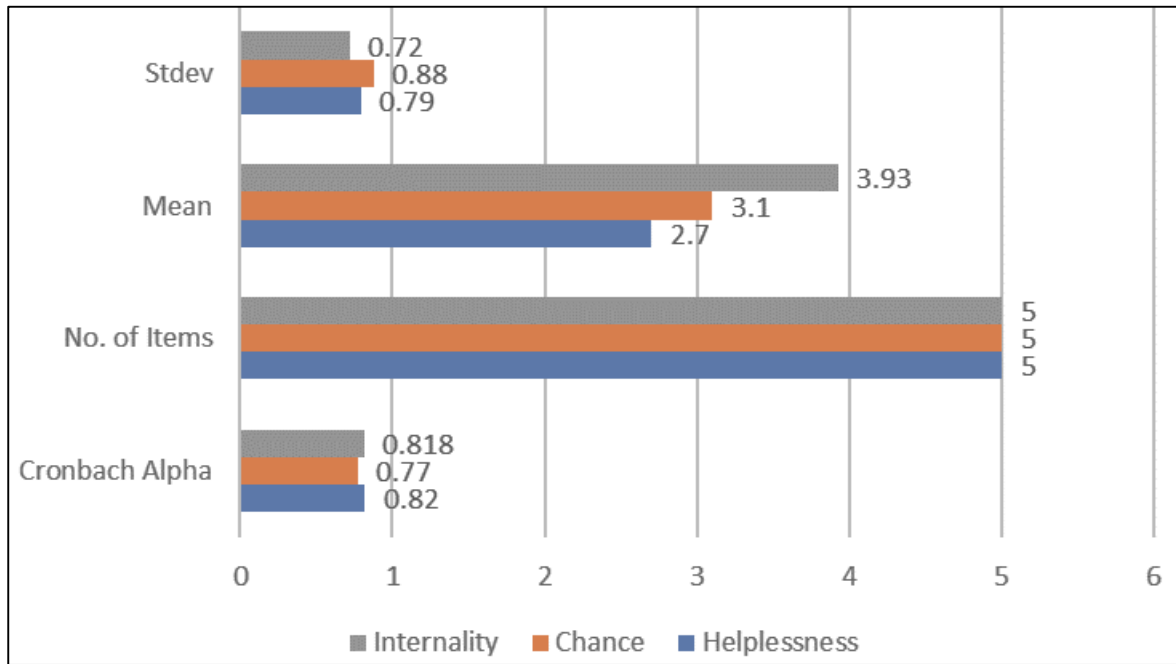


Fig. 3. Descriptive Statistics for Locus of Control Constructs

Table 3: Correlation Table

S. No	Factors of LOC	Source of Pressure (SP)
1	LOC_Helplessness	.462**
2	LOC_Chance	.281**
3	LOC_Internality	0.013

LOC_Helplessness: According to the correlation table, LOC_Helplessness demonstrates a positive relationship with stress (SP), with a coefficient of .460**. This indicates that individuals exhibiting high External Locus of Control (ELOC), characterised by helplessness, tend to experience higher stress levels.

LOC_Chance: Examining the correlation between LOC_Chance and stress (SP), the data reveals a positive relationship with a coefficient of .279**. This implies that individuals with a higher External Locus of Control (ELOC), specifically those attributing outcomes to chance, tend to experience elevated stress levels.

LOC_Internality: Unlike the previous constructs, LOC_Internality exhibits an insignificant positive relationship with the source of work pressure (SP), as shown in the table. This suggests that individuals with an Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) do not experience a significant increase in stress due to work pressure.

Table 4: ANOVA Results

Employee Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-Value	p-Value
LOC_Helplessness					
Offsite	32	2.57	0.79	0.88	0.42
Onsite	28	2.68	0.91		
Liaisons	31	2.79	0.74		
LOC_Chance					
Offsite	32	2.91	0.88	1.12	0.33
Onsite	28	3.02	0.97		
Liaisons	31	3.25	0.73		
LOC_Internality					
Offsite	32	4.23	0.35	17.62	0.00
Onsite	28	4.08	0.52		
Liaisons	31	3.35	0.81		

Source of Work Pressure					
Offsite	32	2.98	1.02	0.06	0.94
Onsite	28	2.96	0.90		
Liaisons	31	3.05	1.03		

Table 4 presents the results of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to analyse the relationship between different Locus of Control (LOC) factors and the source of work pressure across various employee categories.

Here is a breakdown of the table:

1. **Employee Category:** This column lists the different employee categories under consideration, which include "Offsite," "Onsite," and "Liaisons." These categories represent different working conditions or locations for the employees.
2. **N (Sample Size):** This column shows the number of employees in each category participating in the study.
3. **Mean (Average):** The mean column displays the average scores for each category within the corresponding LOC factor or source of work pressure. These scores represent how employees in each category perceive the specific LOC factor or work pressure.
4. **Std. Deviation (Standard Deviation):** This column indicates the degree of variation or dispersion in employees' responses within each category for the respective LOC factor or work pressure source. A higher standard deviation suggests more significant variability among responses.
5. **F-Value (ANOVA Test Statistic):** The F-value is a statistical measure that assesses whether significant differences exist in the means of the groups being compared. This table is used to determine if there are significant differences in how employees in different categories perceive the LOC factors and work pressure source.
6. **P-Value (Significance Level):** The p-value indicates the level of statistical significance. It assesses whether the observed differences in means are statistically significant or could have occurred by chance. A smaller p-value suggests greater statistical significance.

The table aims to help researchers understand whether there are significant variations in how employee categories perceive LOC factors (Helplessness, Chance, Internality) and the source of work pressure. Researchers can use the F-values and p-values to determine if there are statistically significant differences among these groups. For instance, if the p-value is less than a predetermined significance level (commonly 0.05), it suggests significant differences between the groups regarding how they perceive these factors.

Table 5: Helplessness (LOC) Concerning Gender

Helplessness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Sig.
I cannot influence the assignments I receive at my workplace.					
Male	48	2.82	0.97	0.141	0.024
Female	43	3.15	1.18	0.180	-
Total	91	2.99	1.06	0.118	-
I feel like I am only a number at my work.					
Male	48	2.18	0.68	0.098	0.163
Female	43	2.42	1.21	0.185	-
Total	91	2.31	1.01	0.106	-
My work is just a cog in the machine...					
Male	48	2.29	0.62	0.090	0.734
Female	43	2.37	1.15	0.175	-
Total	91	2.33	0.91	0.095	-
It is useless to try hard...					
Male	48	2.12	0.88	0.127	0.072
Female	43	2.48	1.01	0.154	-

Total	91	2.30	0.98	0.103	-
The management does not appreciate it.					
Male	48	2.08	0.85	0.123	0.034
Female	43	2.59	1.22	0.186	-
Total	91	2.31	1.10	0.115	-

Table 5 offers insights into the perception of "Helplessness" within the Locus of Control (LOC) construct, focusing on gender differences. It presents data on how employees view their level of helplessness concerning different aspects of their work assignments. The table is divided into sections representing specific statements related to helplessness. For the statement "Lack of influence over work assignments," female employees, on average, tend to feel a higher level of helplessness compared to their male counterparts. In "Feeling Like Just a Number at the Workplace," female employees exhibit a slightly greater sense of insignificance. However, both genders perceive "Perceiving work as insignificant in the grand scheme."

Regarding "Believing that efforts often yield little recognition," female employees feel slightly more unrecognised for their efforts than male employees. Lastly, in the "Noting that management undervalues creativity and innovation," female employees tend to perceive more significant undervaluation than male employees. This table sheds light on how employees perceive helplessness in different work-related dimensions, highlighting some gender-related distinctions in their perceptions. Such insights can be valuable for understanding employee perspectives and addressing potential concerns within the workplace.

10. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of employees' Locus of Control (LOC) in the context of occupational stress, mainly when working with clients during strategic alliances. Employees with an Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) tend to handle stress more effectively, taking responsibility for their actions and exhibiting higher self-efficacy. Conversely, those with an External Locus of Control (ELOC) often attribute outcomes to external factors, increasing stress levels. Both employees and organisations should recognise the significance of managing stress in the workplace. Neglecting stress can harm employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organisational performance. This study underscores the need for proactive stress management strategies, which should be integrated into an organisation's culture and practices.

Moreover, the findings reveal exciting insights into the influence of employee category and gender on stress levels. Employees working from their home company experience less stress than those travelling to different client locations. Additionally, gender differences are evident, with a higher prevalence of ELOC and stress among females, while males tend to exhibit more ILOC and lower stress levels. Organisations should prioritise stress-reduction initiatives to enhance employee well-being and productivity, including providing support and resources for stress management. Employees, on their part, should work on developing their internal locus of control, building confidence, and adopting stress-relief strategies. Individuals and organisations can collectively create a healthier and more productive work environment by addressing these issues.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, organisations should prioritise the development of employees' Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) through training programs, fostering personal responsibility and self-efficacy. Additionally, they should implement comprehensive stress management initiatives, recognising potential gender-specific differences in stress responses. Offering flexible work arrangements, promoting open communication, and creating a supportive workplace culture can reduce stress. Continuous monitoring of stress management effectiveness, training for managers in recognising and addressing stress, and educating employees about the connection between locus of control and stress should be integral parts of organisational strategies. Finally, implementing Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) can support employees dealing with stress-related challenges. By adopting these recommendations, organisations can enhance employee well-being and productivity while cultivating a healthier work environment.

12. FURTHER SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

Further research could investigate the effectiveness of specific stress management interventions tailored to employees with different locus of control orientations. Investigating the long-term impacts of these interventions on job satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being would provide valuable insights. Additionally, exploring how organisational policies and leadership styles influence employees' development of locus of control and subsequent stress levels could offer a deeper understanding of the factors at play. Moreover, as technology continues to shape work, examining the role of virtual work environments, digital communication, and remote team dynamics with locus of control and stress could be an emerging area of interest. Further research could also explore the intersectionality of gender with other demographic factors and its impact on locus of control and stress, shedding light on the unique experiences of various employee groups. Ultimately, continued research in this field can contribute to developing more targeted and effective strategies for managing occupational stress and enhancing employee well-being in diverse work settings.

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