

Locus of Control over the Types of Crime among Secondary School Students in the District of Pasir Gudang, Johor.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the locus of control over the types of crime among secondary school students in the district of Pasir Gudang. Research design used in this study is a correlation study. This study was conducted on 380 respondents randomly selected from 13 schools in the district of Pasir Gudang. The questionnaire used by the researchers in this study consists of three parts, namely, information on demographics, locus of control and types of crime. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. The results showed 62.4 percent of students have external locus of control, while 37.6 percent have internal locus of control. In addition, the study also showed 21.26 percent of respondents are involved with property crime, where the highest mean value was 1.88 for vandalism, followed by stealing with 1.29 and burglary with a mean value 1.26. Furthermore, the study also showed that 23.68 percent of the respondents were involved in violent crime. For violent crime, sexual offences dominated with a mean of 1.67, followed by blackmail with 1.42 and bullying with a mean value 1.41. The results also showed there is no significant relationship between the locus of control types and types of crime among secondary students in the district of Pasir Gudang.

Keywords: Locus of control, crimes, school students

Locus of control, as originally conceptualised by Julian Rotter (1966), refers specifically to people's perceptions of control over access to reinforcements. Duffy and Atwarer (in Patricia, 2009) put forward the definition of locus of control as a source of confidence held by the individual in dealing with events that occurred internally or externally. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that events in their lives are caused by the behaviour of themselves (Carlson and N.R, 2007) but individuals with a high external locus of control believe that events happen because of external factors such as luck and fate (Susan, 1996).

However, some argue that the concept of internal and external locus of control does not take into consideration the different cultural and social experiences of the individual. This to some extent has an impact on mental health as ethnic minorities, women, and the poor are seen as having dire and negative characteristics. Thus Sue and Sue's (1990) formulated a world view which consists of two psychological dimensions, namely, locus of control and locus of responsibility. The combination of these two dimensions were then expressed to form a permutation of the world view as follows: I, Internal Locus of Control - Internal Locus of Responsibility, II External Locus of Control - Internal locus of Responsibility, III External locus of Control - External locus of Responsibility and IV, Internal locus of Control - External locus of Responsibility.

According to Jones et al (1972) in the attribution theory, locus of responsibility is one dimension that can also be used to understand the views of an individual. According to him, the locus of responsibility shows the orientation of the individual to the parties who are responsible for resolving any problems that occur either within themselves, or outside the party or system. Internal locus of responsibility is the belief that the self is responsible for the problems encountered. In contrast, external locus of responsibility refers to the perception that outside parties are responsible for the problems encountered. Levenson (1981) proposed a structure comprising "Internality", "Powerful Others" and "Chance Scales" which looks at locus of control from three dimensions. "Internal Attributing" refers to the abilities, effort, kindness and abilities, while the dimension of natural chance (*Chance Attributing*) refers to an individual who believes wholeheartedly in destiny, fate, fortune and powerless to stop or change something. Meanwhile the dimension of "Powerful Others" refers to the power or action taken by other individuals (Levenson, 1981).

Violent and property crimes involving school students in Malaysia are a cause for concern, despite a drop in such cases compared with the previous year. Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation (MCPF) vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said 741 cases were recorded during the first half of 2011. He said from January until June 2010, 761 cases involving violent and property crimes were recorded (The Star Online, 2011). The study of why students commit crimes is important, not only as a field of behavioural research, but also as a source of data for constructing public policy models in response to criminal behaviour. Greater understanding of why students commit criminal offences enables policy makers and the general public to make better decisions about the criminal justice system.

Crime and secondary school students

Issues and cases of discipline in schools today are different from those reported 5 or 10 years ago. Various problems involving secondary schools students include truancy, skipping class, smoking, gangsterism, vandalism, running away from home, drug addiction, stealing, gambling, black mailing and fighting either individually or in groups (How Lee Chan, 2007), with most of the issues being related to triad activities (Mohd.Sharani and Zainal, 2005). The latter pointed out that the problem has worsen as students with triad connections do not fear repercussion resulting from disciplinary problems in school because

of their belief that the triads are fully able to protect them from disciplinary actions or school authorities.

Disciplinary problems in schools among students need to be given due attention (Bernama, 2007), particularly in view of several studies which showed indiscipline among students throughout the country is on the rise (Shoba, 2007). Although the offense is committed by teenagers or children who are underage, they still must be responsible for the offenses they had committed. Thus the issue of considering what is good and what is bad, is not a trivial matter. Past studies have found locus of control to be relevant with individuals involved with immoral behaviour patterns such as watching porn videos (Corey, 2009). Therefore, every individual should be aware of and know the strengths and weaknesses of himself/herself as well as which locus of control dominates him/her so that he/she has a clearer perception of himself/herself.

According to the Police Chief Officer District of Batu Pahat, Assistant Commissioner Din Ahmad, discipline problems in schools are becoming increasingly critical and in some cases associated with criminal cases such as violent crimes and property crimes (Straits Times, 2012). The National Key Result Areas (NKRA) lists violent crimes as murder, gang robbery using weapons, gang robbery without weapons, injuring people and rape, while property crimes involve burglary, theft and vehicle theft (Jabatan Pembangunan Bandar dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia, 2011).

Statistics Social Welfare Department (Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat) showed each type of offense has increased in 2011. Offense relate to properties amounted to 2,109 cases in 2010 and increased to 2,743 cases in 2011. Offense in connection with people also increased to 762 cases in 2011 compared to 543 cases in 2010. Gambling offenses among children have also increased by about 75 per cent, from 24 cases reported in 2010 to 42 cases in 2011. Offences related to weapons / fuel increased to 72 cases in 2011 and drug offenses increased to 1,096 cases in 2011 (Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, 2011). The phenomenon of school students becoming involved in criminal activities, which has showed an increase over the years is very upsetting because if it is not controlled, it will have a negative impact on the country's future human capital formation. Therefore, this case should be viewed seriously to ensure it does not become a factor which inhibits development of the country as a whole, as the quality of human capital is a significant aspect in nation building.

Theories of Crime

Different perspectives of crime are important for the explanation of why individuals engage in deviant behaviours, with a few become monsters in our society. Explaining each theory and each perspective will help explain the different reasons for the occurrence of crimes and the identification of factors that cause an individual to become a criminal. With the biological and classical theories, an understanding of an individual's behaviour will provide an insight into the mind and reasoning towards criminal behaviour. The classical theory of crime views humans as having free will with rational independent capability who make decisions freely and with understanding of the consequences. Hence, according to Bryan Schatz (2013), in response to criminal action, the classical theory postulates that society should enforce a punishment that fits the crime committed. After all crime is an immoral form of behaviour that will weaken the society (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

In the biological theory (Ministry of Justice, 2009) crime is viewed as resulting from the physical body through inherited genes, evolutionary factors, brain structures, or the role of hormones, which influence an individual's involvement in criminal behaviour. Human DNA, environmental contaminants, nutrition, hormones, physical trauma (especially to the brain) and body chemistry all combine to contribute to criminal behaviour. Bar Charts, Inc. (2000) biological theories of deviance see crime and deviant behaviour as a form of illness caused by

pathological factors that are specific to certain types of individuals. They assume that some people are "born criminals" who are biologically different than non-criminals. The underlying logic is that these individuals have a mental and physical inferiority, which causes an inability to learn and follow the rules. This in turn leads to criminal behaviour.

Explanations of why people commit crimes are somewhat different in the sociological theory which believes that the social environment is the cause of criminal behaviour, resulting from weak or broken bonds between family, school, and religion, which then acts as a catalyst to criminal behaviour. People engage in criminal behaviour because they do not see the benefits of adhering to conventional social values, and believe crime is a way to improve personal social conditions (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). Sociological theories of crime look for elements in the social structure and processes that create motivation and provide the opportunities to commit crime (Moraine Valley Community College, 2004).

Present Study

Accordingly, this study was conducted to examine the locus of control over the types of crime among secondary school students in the district of Pasir Gudang. Thus, the main objective of this study is to identify the locus of control among school students. Additionally, it aimed to identify the types of crimes committed among school students and also investigate the relationship of locus of control and types of crime among school student in the district of Pasir Gudang.

Sample

Ten secondary schools in the Pasir Gudang area were selected based on the simple random sampling technique. The researchers initially obtained a list of secondary schools in the Pasir Gudang district, from the official website of the District Education Office Pasir Gudang. Next the researchers wrote 33 school codes listed on 33 pieces of paper which were then folded and placed in a container. The container was then shaken to ensure the folded pieces of paper were properly mixed and randomly distributed. Finally, the researchers pulled out 13 pieces of paper from the container, containing the names of schools where the study would be undertaken.

The study involved school students comprising Secondary One to Secondary Four students, aged between 13 and 17 years. The choice of sample size is based on the determination of Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table. The population of secondary school students in the district of Pasir Gudang is 44,100 students. Thus, the sample size of this study consisted of 380 respondents from 13 schools. Each school was represented by 30 respondents who were randomly selected.

Data collection

Questionnaires were used as a means for data collection. The questionnaire comprised 2 main parts, namely, Part A and Part B. In Part A, demographics data were collected, which were then presented in tables containing the mode and percentage. In Part B, respondents' locus of control was investigated, with the data analyzed using descriptive statistics, namely in terms of means and percentages of respondents' locus of control.

Measures

The statistical tool that the researchers used in analyzing the data was the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. This analysis is used to obtain the mean, mode, median and standard deviation generated by the data. To find the strength level of the locus of control of the respondents, and the types of crime involving the respondents, the researchers classified the scores for the locus of control and the mean value obtained for the type of crime into three levels, namely, low, medium and high. Table 1.1 shows the score

classification for the locus of control type, while Table 1.2 shows the mean score classification for the types of crime. Table 1.3 shows the correlation coefficient values classification, while Tables 1.5 and 1.6 show the frequency and percentage of the locus of control of each item.

Table 1.1: Score Classification of Locus of Control

Score	Level of Classification
0 – 7.66	Low
7.67 – 15.33	Medium
15.34 – 23	High

Table 1.2: Mean Score Classification of Types of Criminal

Mean Score	Level of Classification
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.66	Medium
3.67 – 5.00	High

Table 1.3: Classification of Correlation Coefficient Values

Size of the correlation coefficient (<i>r</i>)	Correlation strength
.91 to 1.00 or -.91 to -1.00	Very Strong
.71 to .90 or -.71 to -.90	Strong
.51 to .70 or -.51 to -.70	Medium
.31 to .50 or -.51 to -.50	Poor
.01 to .30 or -.01 to -.30	Very Poor
.00	No correlation

Results

Table 1.4 shows the distribution of respondents by the type of locus of control. The results showed a total of 237 respondents (62.4 per cent) who answered the questionnaires were individuals with external locus of control, while 143 respondents (37.6 per cent) were individuals with internal locus of control.

Table 1.4 Respondents by Type of Locus of Control

Variable	Frequency/ <i>n</i>	%
Internal Locus of Control	143/380	37.6
External Locus of Control	237/380	62.4

Note: *N* = 380.

Table 1.5 Frequencies (*f*) and Percentage (%) for Item Internal Locus of Control

B	I	Item Internal Locus of Control	f	%
1	1	People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.	2	7
2	2	One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics	1	3
3	3	In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.	7	2
4	4	The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.	2	6
5	5	Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.	2	7
6	6	People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.	2	6

7	7	Trusting fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.	1	3
8	8	In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely, if ever, such a thing as an unfair test.	1	3
9	9	Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.	1	4
1	1	The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.	1	4
1	1	When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.	2	6
1	1	In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.	1	3
1	1	Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability - luck has little or nothing to do with it.	1	5
1	1	By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.	1	4
1	1	There really is no such thing as "luck."	1	3
1	1	How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.	1	3
1	1	Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.	1	5
1	1	With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.	1	4
1	1	There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.	2	6
2	2	It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.	1	4
2	2	People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.	1	4
2	2	What happens to me is my own doing.	1	4
2	2	In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.	1	3

Table 1.6 Frequencies (f) and Percentage (%) for Item External Locus of Control

Bil	I	External Locus of Control	f	%
1	1	Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.	8	2
2	2	There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.	2	6
3	3	Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.	3	7
4	4	Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.	1	3
5	5	Without the right breaks, one cannot be an effective leader.	9	2
6	6	No matter how hard you try, some people just don't like you.	1	3
7	7	I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.	2	6
8	8	Many times, exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.	2	6
9	9	Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.	2	5
10	1	This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.	2	5
11	1	It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad anyhow.	1	3
12	1	Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.	2	6
13	1	Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.	1	4
14	1	As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, control.	2	5
15	1	Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.	2	6
16	1	It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.	2	6
17	1	In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.	1	4
18	1	It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.	2	5
19	1	Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.	1	3
20	2	Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.	2	5
21	2	There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.	2	5
22	2	Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.	2	5
23	2	Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.	2	6

Table 1.7 shows the percentage of students involved in two main types of crimes. The findings showed that 21.26 per cent of the students were involved in property crimes,

indicating a slightly lower percentage compared to 23.68 per cent who were involved with violent crimes.

Table 1.7 Percentage Students Involve in Types of Crimes

Types of Crimes	%
Property crimes	21.26
Violent crimes	23.68

Table 1.8 shows the mean value of property crimes by types. The findings showed that crimes of *vandalism* have the highest mean value of 1.88 followed by *stealing* with a mean value of 1.29 and *burglary* shows a mean value of 1.26. For *snatch theft* crimes, the mean value is 1.18 while the mean value for *stealing vehicles* is 1.17. The findings showed that all types of crimes fall under the low level category.

1.8 Mean Value of Property Crimes

Types of Crimes	Mean Value	Level
Vandalism	1.88	Low
Stealing	1.29	Low
Burglary	1.26	Low
Snatch theft	1.18	Low
Stealing Vehicles	1.17	Low

Table 1.9 shows the mean values of violent crimes by types. The findings show *Sexual activities* as having the highest mean value of 1.67 followed by *black mail* 1.42. For *bullying*, the mean value is 1.41 while the mean value for *fighting* is 1.38. For *gangsterism* the mean value is 1.22. The findings showed that all types of violent crimes also fall under the low level category.

Table 1.9 Mean Value of Violent Crimes

Types of Crimes	Mean Value	Level
Sexual activities	1.67	Low
Black Mail	1.42	Low
Bullying	1.41	Low
Fighting	1.38	Low
Gangsterism	1.22	Low

Table 1.10 shows the results of internal locus of control with property crimes. Pearson correlation analysis showed that the value of the correlation coefficient, r for both variables is 0.060. This shows a very weak relationship between the two variables. For a significant value, $p = 0.242$ should be greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between Pasir Gudang secondary school students' internal locus of control with property crimes. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 1.10 Relationship between Internal Locus of Control with Property Crime Analysis

Relationship of variable	r	p
Internal locus of control with types of property crimes	0.060	0.242

Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Table 1.11 shows the results of internal locus of control with crimes of violence.

Pearson correlation analysis showed that the value of the correlation coefficient, r for both variables is 0.058. This shows a very weak relationship between the two variables. For a significant value, $p = 0.257$ should be greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between Pasir Gudang secondary school students' internal locus of control with crimes of violence. Therefore, the second null hypothesis is also accepted.

Table 1.11 Relationship between Internal Locus of Control with Violent Crime Analysis

Relationship of variable	r	p
Internal locus of control with types of violent crimes	0.058	0.257

Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Table 1.12 shows the results of external locus of control with property crimes. Pearson correlation analysis showed that the value of the correlation coefficient, r for both variables is 0.060. This indicates a very weak negative correlation between the two variables. For a significant value, $p = 0.242$ should be greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between Pasir Gudang secondary school students' external locus of control with property crimes. Therefore, the third null hypothesis is also accepted.

Table 1.12 Relationship between External Locus of Control with Property Crime Analysis

Relationship of variable	r	p
External locus of control with types of property crimes	0.060	0.242

Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Table 1.13 shows the results of external locus of control with violent crimes. Pearson correlation analysis showed that the value of the correlation coefficient, r for both variables is 0.058. This shows a very weak relationship between the two variables. For a significant value, $p = 0.257$ should be greater than the 0.05 significance level, therefore, there is no significant relationship between Pasir Gudang secondary school students' external locus of control with violent crimes. Thus, the fourth null hypothesis is also accepted.

Table 1.13 Relationship between External Locus of Control with Violent Crime Analysis

Relationship of variable	r	p
External locus of control with types of violent crimes	0.058	0.257

Significant $p \leq 0.05$

Discussion

In this study, the researchers have formulated four hypotheses and tested them using Pearson correlation to see whether there is a significant relationship between the types of locus of control and types of crime involving school student in the district of Pasir Gudang. The results showed that all formulated alternative hypotheses were rejected, suggesting that there is no significant relationship between the types of locus of control with the types of crimes involving school students in the district of Pasir Gudang.

Results showed that internal locus of control scores, showing a value of 10.87 is at a moderate level. Thus, it is clear that secondary school students in the district of Pasir Gudang

have moderate internal locus of control. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Shahrin and Gina (2011) which showed that the mean locus control of students is 3.33, signifying a medium level. Findings of this study showed that the percentage of students involved in property crimes is 21.26 percent, which also signifies a medium level. Further analysis shows no significant correlation between Pasir Gudang secondary school students' internal locus of control with property crimes. The findings of this study contradict the ones by Avtgis (1988) who, in conducting a meta-analysis of the effects of locus of control on social influences found individuals with internal locus of control showing a moderate tendency toward social influence.

This study also shows that there is no significant relationship between Pasir Gudang secondary school students' external locus of control with types of violent crimes. The findings of this study concur with the findings of a study conducted by Wallace et al (2012) who found a weak relationship between external locus of control with the whole aggressive or violent behaviour with $r = 0.14$. However, Hall (in Ridling 2010) argues that the relationship between locus of control and violence may exist because individuals with external locus of control over unwanted events may display aggressive behaviour in order to reduce the influence of the impact of the event.

Conclusion

Overall, through this study, it can be concluded that the behaviour and criminal behaviour involving secondary school students in the district of Pasir Gudang are still at a low level. Nevertheless, such negative behaviours should not be tolerated, but instead should be resolved as soon as possible before it comes more severe and difficult to control. There is no doubt that only a few of the subjects were involved in serious criminal behaviour while others are only involved with petty criminal behaviour, that leads to crimes like drawing and writing obscene graffiti on walls. Therefore all parties should work together to curb and control this problem before it worsens and ultimately adversely affects national development.

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