

Locus of Control Scale in the elaboration of permanent safeguard plan's projects in Algeria: a Practical Study

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Abstract

Since 2013 and as part of my PhD preparation, I have been engaged in a series of research on the influence of individual characteristics of citizens in their participation.

This series of studies aims to effectively involve citizens in conservation projects and to enhance the value of built heritage, thus building a basis for a participatory approach between citizens and public actors.

This research is the third after the studies on "community spirit" and then "individual competency".

The aim of this work is to examine one of the psychological variables "locus of control" that could influence citizen participation level, in the context of permanent safeguard plans projects elaboration.

The data was collected from citizens of two old districts "Messaaba and L'Aacheche" in the city of El Oued, located in south-eastern Algeria, who were interviewed by questionnaire.

Keywords : locus of control; citizen participation; permanent safeguard plans.

I-Introduction:

Over the last 20 years, "citizen participation" has increasingly become one of the major subjects of scientific research. The concerns of this theme have always attracted the researcher's attention in different fields (Arnstein, 1969), (Heller et al. 1984), (Levi & Litwin, 1986), (Chapman & Kirk, 2001), (Nampila, 2005), (Rollero et al. 2009), (Pierre André, 2006, 2010).

Examples of these concerns include individual difference variables that influence participation effectiveness (Abraham Wandersman, 1981).

These variables could be demographic (age groups, educational level, economic context... etc.) (Piven, 1968), community spirit level variables (McMillan, 1976), (McMillan and Chavis, 1986), competency and knowledge level (Guy Le Boterf 1995, 1997, 2000), as well as psychological variables (A. Zimmerman 1986, 1995).

In this study, we will focus on psychological variables by determining the "locus of control" level of a sample of citizens in a permanent safeguard plans projects elaboration, using the scale of (internal-external locus of control) developed by (Rotter, J. B, 1966, 1990).

I.1. Locus of control as an empowerment's variable

Psychological empowerment could be described as the link between a sense of personal competence, a desire or willingness to act in the public affairs (Brian et al. 2011).

The concept of empowerment has been recognized in many forms for many years. However, its operational and conceptual definitions are still under development. According to the studies that have been carried out by Swift & Levin (1987) and Perkins & Zimmerman (1995), this concept is used as a goal or outcome, feeling powerful, worthy of self-esteem, competent and as a personal process oriented toward others, changing personal and structural conditions to enable people to achieve power and empowerment.

Zimmerman in 1990 argued convincingly that "psychological empowerment" is much more than a simple personality variable. It refers to individuals and their ability to cope, but does not neglect cultural influences. It includes intrapsychic variables such as motivation, self-efficacy and locus of control.

I. 2. Citizen participation and locus of control:

Julian Rotter is credited with introducing the concept of "locus of control". His work was largely based on the work of Albert Bandura, who developed the theory of social learning. Rotter explains that humans can interpret events as the result of their own actions or external factors. He goes on to suggest that whether or not people believe that a situation or event is under their own control will influence their expectation of reward and their behavior.

According to Rotter, people with an internal locus of control believe that their behavior is relatively decisive in determining their destiny. People with an external locus of control believe that their behavior is less decisive in this regard; they believe that luck, chance, or external factors exert a strong influence on their destiny (A.Cohen & A.Samorly 2001).

Gore and Rotter (1963) and Strickland (1965) found a positive relationship between internality and participation, "*it would seem that political and social participation should be one of the clearest correlates of the internal-external variable*" (Johann et al., 2020).

According to Blanchard and Scarborough, those who see the locus of control as internal should take more direct action to influence their future by attempting to control their environment, than those who see the locus of control as external (Blanchard & Scarborough, 1972).

M. A. Zimmerman, J. Rappaport (1988) also suggest that participation can be an important mechanism for the development of psychological empowerment because participants can gain experience, organize people, identify resources and develop strategies to achieve goals. For example, participation in community organizations helps people feel more competent and less alienated.

Additionally, studies that have been carried out by Gootnick, Andrew Tobey (1973) thus support previous studies, they confirmed that people who perceive their destiny as the result of their own action seek more actively to influence their environment than people who are more 'external' in their perception of the locus of control.

Eventually, we expected to see greater involvement of citizens with an internal locus of control.

I. 3. Brief presentation of case study Mesaaba & Laachache's permanent safeguard plan project:

The permanent safeguard plan is a new protection measure that has taken a great place in the Algerian policy to stop the degradation of real estate. It aims at programming and implementing conservation, restoration and enhancement operations (R.Korti & S.B.Sassi 2018).

We should mention that the creation of the safeguarded sectors and the elaboration of their safeguard plans are regulated by the directives of the law (98-04) on the protection of cultural heritage as well as its executive decree (03-324 of 5/10/2003).

Our case study is the permanent safeguard plan elaboration project of two old districts Mesaaba and Laachache located in the city of El Oued in Algeria, it was promulgated by the decree N°11/141 of March 28, 2011, currently, the project is during the second phase, knowing that the first phase was completed in 2017. The figure below presents the map of our case of study (Source: permanent safeguard plan document, first phase, culture department 2017).

Fig.1. Two old districts map



Source: permanent safeguard plan document, first phase, culture department,2017

II-Method

II.1. Sample and procedure

The data was collected during the month of March 2020, the target population for the survey was citizens of the two old districts Messaaba and Acheche aged over 18 years. Surveys were undertaken to obtain in-depth information from a variety of participants who are directly involved in the permanent safeguard plan elaboration project, each citizen had an equal chance of being selected.

The study area was divided into two regions, with each interviewer assigned to a zone and a goal of completing 38 surveys each day over a seven-day period. This resulted in a total of 271 completed surveys.

Participants were interviewed by a trained interviewer; the questionnaires were anonymous and each one took about 15 minutes to complete.

Table 1. The study sample to contribute to the city's citizen

	Surface of the study area (H)	Inhabitation (N)	Population (%)
El-Oued city	77.20	155525	20.71% of El Oued city citizen
Aacheche	17.1	1096	0.70 % of El Oued city center citizen
Messaaba	11.2	1552	1.00 % of El Oued city center citizen
The sample	28.3	266	10.00 % of l'Aacheche/ Messaaba citizen

Source: El Oued urbanism direction & KORTI Rafika, 2019

II.2. Questionnaire

Data were collected through a survey questionnaire designed to determine internal/external locus of control as defined in the Rotter scale (1966, 1990).

Rotter developed a 23-item scale to assess whether an individual tends to think that situations and events are under his or her control or under the control of external influences (SUN, 2011).

The scale measure used in our study contains 5 items only, because of time issues, this scale is a strict choice paradigm in which a person chooses between an internal or external interpretation.

The questionnaire was tested before being administered to citizens in two districts to ensure a sequence of questions and clarity of instructions as well as relevance and reliability by using alpha cronbakh testing.

III-Results

III.1. Alpha cronbakh test

Prior to data collection, a pre-test was conducted to examine the relevance and reliability of the research instrument, using CRONBACH's α (1951) which is generally used as a measure of the internal consistency of a multi-item scale.

Some researchers affirmed that the acceptable values should be between 0.70 and 0.80 for preliminary research and between 0.80 and 0.90 for basic research; values above 0.95 are de rigueur especially in the context of applied research (Numally 1978).

In addition, Van de Ven and Ferry (1988) presents an example of expected values for α :

Table 2. The expected range of α value

	1	2	3 or above
Number of scales in measure K	3	3	3
Inter-correlation average	0.50-0.65	0.30-0.45	0.10-0.25
Values expected for α	0.70-0.90	0.55-0.70	0.35-0.55

Source: Van de Ven and Ferry,1988

Table 3. α value of our study scale

Item's group	Items number	Alpha Cronbach	Expected value of α
Locus of control	5	74%	0.35-0.55

Source: KORTI Rafika, 2019 using SPSS

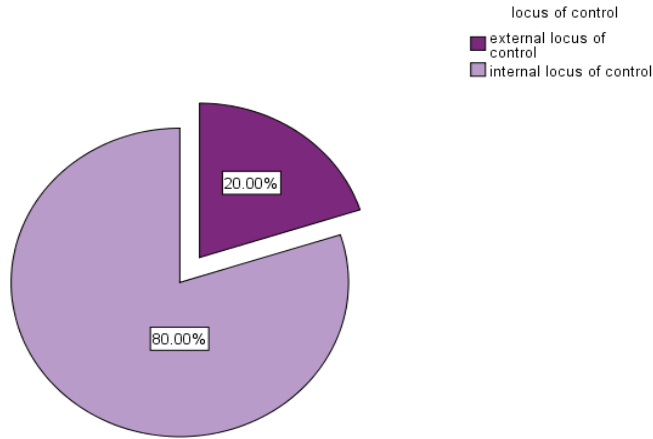
We note that α in all dimensions exceeds the expected range, due to this reason the questions for this scale are reliable and the items are consistent with each other.

Table 4. Locus of control result

	Number	Percentage
External locus of control	47	19.7
Internal locus of control	188	79.0
Total	235	98.7
Missing values	3	1.3
Total	238	100.0

Source: KORTI Rafika, 2019 using SPSS

We obtained our result using software used for statistical analysis SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Fig.2. Locus of control result

Source: KORTI Rafika, 2019 using SPSS

The table and graph above present the result of internal/external locus of control, they indicate that the majority of the citizens (almost 80%) believe that they are solely responsible for their current situation, that they could control their destiny (internal locus of control).

On the other hand, only 20% believe that they could never change their situation, they believe that luck and fate control their lives.

IV- Discussion and Conclusion :

This study was carried out to test Rotter's scale (1966) specific to one of the psychological variables; this is an internal/external locus of control test that was applied on Acheche and Messaaba's citizens located in El Oued city, in order to determine their effectiveness participation in the permanent safeguard plan elaboration project.

Factor analysis showed that our scale was consistent and reliable, the analysis of covariance confirmed the validity of the scale.

In addition, the locus of control is also important to understand how much power people have over the events around them, and consequently over their participation in projects that related to them.

Data analysis shows that the majority of citizens score high on the internal locus of control, such groups would tend to believe that they can control the events around them, this is a positive factor in encouraging them to participate, to collaborate to make the project successful.

The results of this research could be used as an initial step in a successful participatory process.

However, there are other psychological variables that affect citizen participation:

- Self-efficacy White (1959) and DeCharms (1968), Bandura (1977, 1982);
- Motivation (de Charms, 1968), we need to take them into consideration to ensure a comprehensive and multidisciplinary study.

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