

CHAPTER 4

LOCUS OF CONTROL: TO LEAD OR TO BE LED

*No matter the experiences one has,
if they are not perceived as the results
of one's own actions, they are not
effective for altering the ways in
which one sees things and
consequently functions*

Herbert Lefcourt

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Locus of control is the second behavioural variable to be examined in this study. In Chapter 1 attention has already been drawn to the importance to management of having knowledge on locus of control in an organisational context and of the way in which knowledge of this nature may be employed to the advantage of the organisation.

In this chapter the concept 'locus of control', and, in particular, its relationship to behaviour in the organisational set-up, will be discussed. Aspects of the concept locus of control, that will be addressed are, inter alia, a clear definition of the concept, the nature of locus of control among certain geographical groups, the relationship between locus of control and other organisational variables such as motivation, performance and job satisfaction, as well as the measurement of locus of control. Furthermore, the effect of locus of control on preferences in terms of leadership behaviour will also be discussed. Within a new organisational paradigm, based on transformational leadership principles, participative management, empowerment of workers to the lowest level and increased focus on group achievement, as opposed to individual achievement, a detailed knowledge of the impact of locus of control on both leadership and follower behaviour becomes essential and will therefore be discussed.

4.2 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT

A study of various definitions of the term, locus of control, has made it clear that the concept is indicative of the degree to which an individual is convinced that he can determine his own fate (i.e. whatever happens to him) or exert an influence or control over it himself. People therefore see the ability to exert control over specific events as being present either in themselves or in the environment. Those who attribute control over events to themselves have an

internal locus of control and those who attribute this control to forces in the environment, have an external locus of control.

The psychological construct of locus of control originated in Rotter's theory of social learning (1954). He explains locus of control as "internal versus external control of reinforcements". When an individual's perception is that his own behaviour and attitudes will result in a positive reward, internality is indicated. However, when his perception is that external factors, outside his control (such as destiny or luck) are responsible for rewarding behaviour, externality is indicated. The concept was developed in an effort to explain why certain individuals are inclined to ignore reinforcing events (Phares, 1976). The fact that these individuals did not react to reward or punishment, as predicted, is attributable, according to Phares, to a generalised expectation that their own actions would not have contributed to the procurement of reward or the avoidance of punishment.

Lefcourt (1976: 2) regards individuals as actors who determine their own fates and states that it is precisely this perception of the ability 'to do something' that gives rise to the concept of observed control.

The direction of control underpins the construct and is adequately summarised by Spector (1988: 335): "a generalised expectancy that rewards, reinforcements or outcomes in life are controlled by one's own actions (internality) or by other forces (externality)." While internals attribute the control of events to themselves, externals believe that their lives are controlled by external forces and therefore have a locus of control outside themselves. The personal controllability of outcomes are also highlighted by the definition of O'Brien (1983: 7): "refers to a generalised expectancy about the extent to which reinforcements are under internal or external control."

From the above definitions it is clear, therefore, that locus of control (or control of reinforcement) is indicative of the degree to which individuals believe that, as Lefcourt (1976: 2) puts it, "...they are actors and can determine their own fates within limits". It is regarded as a general expectation concerning behaviour, whereby behaviour is linked to reinforcement and refers to the controllability of events in life.

4.3 LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SOCIAL DOCTRINE

In response to the above definitions one can justifiably ask whether locus of control (and especially the internal locus of control) is an important variable in the prediction of behaviour, in other words, whether the results of a person's own actions play a role in changing the person's view of events and the way in which he consequently behaves.

Many researchers such as Phares (1957), James, (1957) Rotter (1966) and Lefcourt (1976) have already written at length about the topic. The way in which interaction takes place between internal cognitive processes in children is discussed by Rotter (1966: 2). According to him, the child does not assimilate new knowledge if action-result sequences are seen as random, in other words, “he will not learn from his experiences unless he believes that these experiences are lawfully related to his own actions. If events are only randomly paired, there would seem to be little reason for attending to them with an intent to learn”.

If the individual is convinced that he has little control over the rewards or punishment he receives, he has little reason to adapt his behaviour in an effort to change the probability that the event will occur again. If this is the case, rewards and punishment will lose a great deal of their value as reinforcers, since they will not be more effective in reinforcing or weakening the person’s response (Crandall, Katkovsky and Crandall, 1965: 92). In organisational context this will bear significant consequences for the attempts of leaders to ensure certain behavioural outcomes from followers through the offering of rewards for expected performance or the application of punishment for non-expected behaviours or unacceptable performance. The effects of using such a transactional approach in leadership will be further discussed as well as compared with transformational leadership behaviours in Chapter 5.

Lefcourt (1976: 31) calls attention to the different convictions people have about locus of control and states that these differences do indeed correspond with the degree to which they learn by their own experiences: “The fatalists perceive no contingency between action and outcome, while those espousing internal control beliefs readily perceive such contingencies.”

From the above-mentioned viewpoints it is evident that the way in which people behave and alter and adapt their behaviour indeed bears a significant relation to the degree to which they themselves are responsible for what happens to them.

4.4 LOCUS OF CONTROL AND PERFORMANCE-RELATED BEHAVIOUR

4.4.1 GENERAL

In the previous section it was shown that certain cognitive activities, such as social learning, occur more frequently in individuals with an internal orientation with respect to control than in individuals who have an external orientation. According to Lefcourt (1976: 66), one possible interpretation of these findings is that locus of control may merely be a diagnostic indicator of a person’s natural capacity to perform, in other words, the more intelligent and

performance-orientated a person is, the greater the possibility that he will see himself as an active, effective person.

Available empirical research data on the correlation between locus of control and achievement behaviour reveal some discrepancies. Stephens (1973), states that the correlation between different evaluations of locus of control and successful behaviour often contains many inconsistent and “weird” results. However, most research results suggest that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. Franklin (1963: 1684) found, for example, that internality is related to the amount of time high school pupils spent on homework. James (1965) likewise reports that individuals, who are internally oriented, are more persistent in their efforts to solve complex problems.

A considerable amount of attention has been devoted by Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld and York (1966) to the performance of high school children. They have found that scholastic achievement among these children can best be predicted by measuring the child’s view on whether the results he obtains are determined by his own efforts. The results of this investigation are summarised by Coleman (1971: 28) himself as follows: “The importance of attitudes such as this is the effect such an orientation toward the environment can have on other resources, by creating an active, driving stance toward the environment rather than a passive one. Suggestive evidence of its importance is provided by a striking result: those 9th-grade Negroes who gave the ‘hard work’ response scored higher on the verbal achievement test, both in the North and South, than those whites who gave the ‘good luck’ response, even though ...the average Negro scored from 2.7 to 3.8 years (in different regions) behind northern urban whites from other regions.”

Although discrepancies occur in some research results, the opinions of the different authors named above actually clearly show that a sense of personal control is in fact a determining factor in achievement-orientated behaviour, or, as Lefcourt (1976: 77) puts it: “...that the engagement in achievement activity or long-range skill-demanding tasks is unlikely if one views himself as being at the mercy of capricious external forces.”

Two obvious reasons for internals to perform better on the job than externals are provided by Spector (1982). Firstly, internals hold stronger expectancies that effort will result in good performance and that good performance will lead to rewards. In situations where rewards follow good performance internals exert greater effort. Secondly internals seek new and relevant information more actively and therefore perform better than externals on complex tasks which, in turn, should lead to better performance by internals when complex information and learning is involved.

Although several other studies (Heisler, 1974; Valecha, 1972; Andrisani & Nestel, 1976), support the above relation, Spector (1982) warns that it should be kept in mind that the better performance of internals will only be applicable for situations where they perceive that effort will lead to valued rewards. This means that in the absence of rewards for performance the performance-reward expectancies of internals and externals might show no differences.

As a result of the clearly positive internality-achievement relation as discussed above, certain jobs appear to be more suitable for internals and others for externals (Spector, 1982). Internals are expected to perform better on the following jobs/tasks :

- Jobs requiring complex information processing and frequent complex learning,
- Tasks requiring initiative and independence of action,
- Jobs requiring high motivation,
- Highly technical or skilled jobs,
- Professional jobs
- Managerial or supervisory jobs

As locus of control is negatively related to anxiety (Joe, 1971; Archer, 1979), Spector (1982) warns that this interrelatedness complicates research findings on locus of control and performance and argues that it could well be the influence of anxiety that cause internals to be better learners than externals.

4.4.2 CONTROL AND SUCCESS IN NON-WESTERN CULTURES

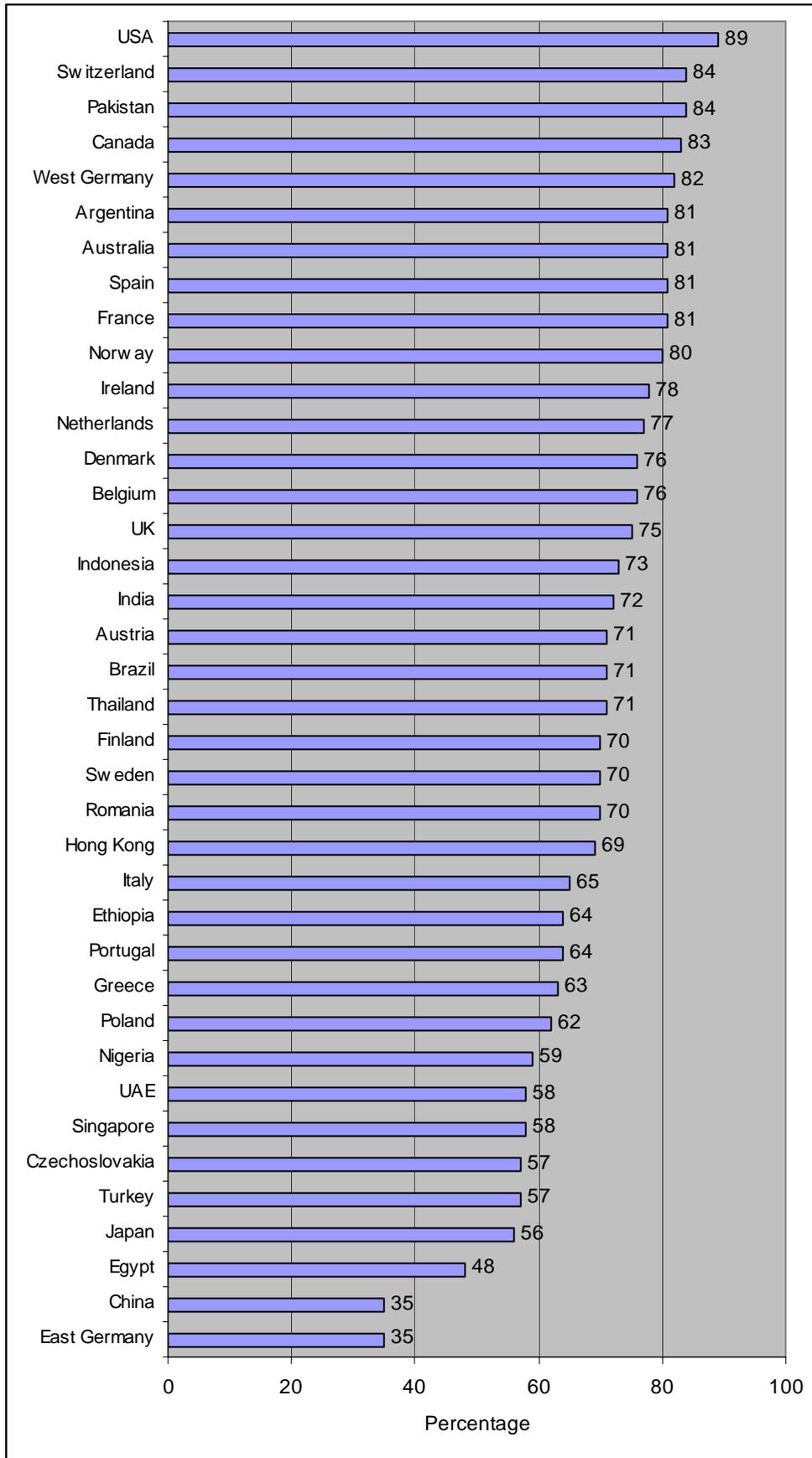
The internal-external items devised by Rotter (1966) were used by Trompenaars (1993) to assess the relationship of 15 000 managers with natural events and found very significant differences between geographical areas. Unfortunately a South African sample was not included – Nigeria, Ethiopia and Egypt were the only three African countries to be included. When respondents' answers to the following two questions are analysed (see Table 4.1) countries such as the USA (89%), and Germany (82%) are found to be almost completely internalised:

- A. What happens to me is my own doing.
- B. Sometimes I feel that I do not have enough control over the directions my life is taking.

While most European countries (except East Germany, probably due to many years of communism) score high, the managers of other countries, such as Japan and China, in contrast, are far more likely to believe in external control.

The American view is characterised by control over outside circumstances. However, Trompenaars (1993) stresses the fact that this is not necessarily the case in non-American cultures, where it is believed that outer-directed does not mean fate-directed and that there are indeed economically effective ways of adapting to external influences. For managers of more outer-directed countries such as Japan and Singapore it is not seen as a personal weakness to acknowledge external forces like direction from customers, market forces or new technologies. For them the ideal is to fit themselves advantageously to an external force. The result is that “scanning the business environment” comes naturally and it does not have to be taught, as is the case in the USA and Western Europe. For them business survival and economic performance depend on the ability to form a winning relationship with external niches and conditions.

Table 4.1: Level of internality per country.



(Source: Trompenaars, 1993: 128)

4.4.3 LOCUS OF CONTROL AND LEADERSHIP/-MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

Leadership is a behavioural construct that can be studied from two points of view, namely the style of the leader and the resultant behaviour/reaction of the follower. Therefore, it follows logically that when locus of control is studied, it should be done with regards to the behaviour of both leader and follower.

Various research results confirm that the appropriateness of a leadership style is influenced by the subordinate's locus of control and that internals and externals prefer different styles of leadership. In a study of the moderating effect of locus of control on the relation between supervisory style and satisfaction with supervision, Runyon (1973) reports internals to be more satisfied with supervision (than were externals) under a participative style. As leaders they also preferred a participative style to a directive one. Externals were found to prefer and to be more satisfied with a directive style. A laboratory study of Cravens and Worchel (1977) observing subjects working under either a coercive or noncoercive supervisory style yielded similar results. Internals were less satisfied with the coercive style than externals. However, no differences were found with the noncoercive style. Spector (1982) provides a summary of the effect of locus of control on follower preferences in respect of leadership. Because internals are less conforming and compliant than externals they "look to themselves for direction; externals look to others." Being more compliant and more likely to follow directions, externals would therefore probably be easier to supervise. Where the social demands of co-workers are in conflict with those of supervisors though, compliance might be dependent on the relative strength of influence.

A laboratory study of Anderson & Schneier (1978) on the leadership behaviours of internals and externals confirmed the notion that the two types prefer different supervisory styles: internals are more action oriented and externals more socially oriented. The following differences were revealed:

- Groups led by internals outperformed those led by externals.
- Internals were more likely to emerge as group leaders.
- Internal leaders were better class performers than external leaders.
- While internal leaders were more task oriented, external leaders were more socially oriented.

A summary of leadership-related differences between internals and externals reflecting locus of control-authoritarianism parallels is provided in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Summary of leadership-related differences between internals and externals.

	INTERNALS	EXTERNALS
1.	Prefer supervisors who engage in participative approaches (also tend to be participative supervisors)	Prefer supervisors who are directive (also tend to be directive supervisors)
2.	Rely more on personal persuasion with own subordinates	Rely more on coercion with subordinates
3.	Seem to be more concerned with task related aspects of the job	Seem more concerned with social aspects of the job

(Source: Adapted from Spector, 1982: 491-493)

It is generally accepted that group effectiveness is largely dependent on the quality of its leadership (Rutter, 1995; Ristow, Amos & Staude, 1999). Quality of leadership, however, is not easily defined and, as effective leadership could only be evaluated against groups doing (or not doing) what needs to be done, the behaviour of both leaders and followers, as well as the situation at hand (Bass, 1990) should be studied when determining the effectiveness of leadership. Leadership effectiveness in this study will be evaluated along a *full range of leadership styles* varying from transactional on the one end to transformational on the other (see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of these styles). Although the classification of leaders as either transactional or transformational was initialised by Burns (1978), Bass (1990) as well as Pruijn & Boucher (1994) found transformational leadership to be an extension of and a more enlightened, personalised and participative approach to the transactional style and that the two extremes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Transactional leaders are prescriptive, expect compliance to rules, regulations and guidelines and followers are compensated/rewarded for expected behaviour. They only intervene when desired outcomes are not met and when deviations in expected behaviour are detected. Transformational leaders are much more actively involved with followers and engage the full person of the follower (Burns, 1978). In their quest to lead the team through continuous environmental and organisational change they provide meaning and challenges to followers' work. To help individuals and teams cope with complex task demands they also encourage creativity and innovation through questioning assumptions and by reframing problems (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The opposing organisational demands for compliance (preferred by externals) on the one hand, and complex task performance (focussed on by internals), on the other lead to obvious conflict in terms of those locus of control characteristics which will contribute towards more *effective* leadership. In this regard Spector (1982) mentions that, in the world of work becoming increasingly complex, organisations might have to sacrifice compliance for skill. Both the internal's initiative and the external's compliance are necessary.

These qualities are often not found in the same individual - leaders are thus left with the challenge to find ways of managing employees in complex job settings by allowing personal control (empowerment) while still striving for and achieving organisational objectives. The issue of which of a transformational or transactional approach would be the more effective is still not clear. Although Bass et al (1994) describe transformational leadership as more effective in terms of resultant follower effort and satisfaction, inner-directed leaders (who are generally regarded as more successful in the organisational context) prefer work relationships where their own way of thinking can win over those of others (Trompenaars, 1993), which is clearly more aggressive, directive and transactional in nature. It stands in sharp contrast with Spector's (1982) notion that internals prefer participative approaches when leading subordinates. This study will be concerned with the moderating effect of locus of control on both transactional and transformational leadership styles as well as on the effectiveness of these styles as reflected by the levels of (dis-)satisfaction of followers with these styles.

4.4.4 GENDER-RELATED ACHIEVEMENT DIFFERENCES

Although males and females seem to attach different meanings to perceived causality, it is obvious that there is considerable confusion regarding the role of gender in locus of control and achievement relations. Evidence on gender-linked differences with regards to the relation between locus of control and achievement behaviour has been found by several researchers (Messer, 1972; Nowicki, 1973). In an experiment conducted to analyse the association between gender, locus of control and achievement test scores, Messer (1972) reported boys who assumed responsibility for success and females who assumed responsibility for failure to be the most likely to obtain high achievement test scores. Nowicki (1973) confirmed that externality could be related to achievement for females while internality was associated with the same achievement for males.

In contrast with the above findings, Wolfgang & Potvin (1973) describe internal females as showing higher achievement results than external females. For the male sample in this study no association between locus of control and achievement scores was found. These conflicting findings regarding gender, locus of control and achievement behaviour, confirm the fact that considerably more research and attention is needed in this area.

4.5 THE NATURE OF LOCUS OF CONTROL IN CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE

4.5.1 IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE

The South African population comprises a large number of previously disadvantaged/poor people. The effect of this negative economic and socio-economic environment might have an influence on locus of control and thus achievement behaviour, and needs to be investigated. The question whether the nature of locus of control in impoverished persons shows a certain tendency, is very clearly answered by Lefcourt (1976: 15). According to him helplessness and a sense of desperation are characteristics commonly found among these people. Their outlook on life can be described as follows: "To people who live in continuously adverse circumstances, life does not appear to be subject to control through their own efforts. Only through some outside intervention do events seem to be alterable, and such intervention is a rare occurrence." It would therefore seem as if people in such situations believe that they are at the mercy of external factors and that they have little control over their own desperate and unfortunate situation.

Lewis (1961: 171) provides a good example of this fatalistic approach when he writes about a certain man's failure as a shoemaker. This person comments on his situation as follows: "To me, one's destiny is controlled by a mysterious hand that moves all things. Only for the select do things turn out as planned; to those of us who are born to be tamale eaters, heaven sends only tamales. We plan and plan and some little thing happens to wash it all away. Like once, I decided to try to save and I said to Paula, 'Old girl, put away this money so that some day we'll have a little pile.' When we had ninety pesos laid away, pum! my father got sick and I had to give it all to him for doctors and medicines. It was the only time I had helped him and the only time I had tried to save! I said to Paula, 'There you are! Why should we save if someone gets sick and we have to spend it all!' Sometimes I even think that saving brings on illness! That's why I firmly believe that some of us are born to be poor and remain that way no matter how hard we struggle and pull this way and that. God gives us just enough to go on vegetating..."

The view expressed above by Lefcourt (1976) is confirmed by Joe (1971: 624). He points out that available data correspond with the theoretical expectation that individuals, who are restricted by obstacles in the environment and limited material opportunities, will develop an externally orientated outlook on life. Likewise, individuals of the lower classes and minority groups are inclined to have higher expectations of external control.

4.5.2 ETHNIC GROUPS

In order to determine whether there is any significant difference in locus of control among whites and blacks, Lefcourt and Ladwig (1965: 377 – 380) used Rotter's questionnaire, the Internal-External Control of Reinforcement (1966). From this research it transpired clearly that blacks attach more importance to external control than whites. To support these findings, the "Powerlessness Scale" of Dean (1969) was applied to the same group of people. Once again it was found that blacks were more externally and fatalistically orientated than whites, with only a few exceptions. In referring to the process of socialisation Theron (1992) states that the most pervasive social differentiation can be found along ethnic and racial lines and that ethnicity (also in South Africa) is of central importance in the study of locus of control. Although not all studies report differences, Lefcourt (1976) notes that whenever differences are found, the black sample reveal stronger external fatalistic expectations.

Studies by Battle and Rotter (1963) also indicate that Negroes and lower-class individuals generally have higher external scores than whites and middle-class individuals. These findings have been confirmed by Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld and York (1966) in a report on the equality of training opportunities. Likewise Dyal (1984: 214) reported American blacks with low-socio-economic status and less power to be more external than American whites. Other minority groups like the Mexicans, Native Americans and people of African descent were also found to be more externally oriented than whites. The underlying reasons for differences in locus of control across cultures are vested in what Cox (1993) calls fatalism. This fatalism is found to be much stronger in African cultures than in most European cultures. He confirms the higher externality of black Africans as opposed to high internality of white Africans.

It must be borne in mind that the trends described above are mostly based on research conducted in the USA. With regards to the nature of locus of control in South Africa, the research of Riordan (1981) provides clear proof of differences between ethnic groups. A high externality was found amongst the Asians, coloureds, Africans and the English-speaking whites. Only the Afrikaans-speaking whites were found to be high on internality. Lefcourt (1976: 25) points out that the control that is observed can be positively linked to access to opportunities. It has been found that blacks, Hispanics, Red Indians and other minority groups who do not have as much access to opportunities as the Caucasian groups in North American society have convictions that are orientated more towards fatalism and external control. Theron (1992) also ascribes the South African ethnic differences re locus of control to the political environment. For many years the political status quo was upheld by the minority Afrikaans group, who politically controlled the country and thereby also had an influence on the fate of other groups. The learned helplessness and powerlessness (high degree of externality) of migrant farm workers was

largely caused by them being deprived from rights and privileges and being controlled by oppressive powerful others (Magwaza & Bhana, 1991: 162).

Although it is logical for members of many minority groups to be more externally oriented as a result of being more sensitive to the influence of race-ethnicity on life events, Cox (1993) notes that the introduction of affirmative action has caused some white men in organisations historically dominated by white men to believe that they are now disadvantaged due to their group identity. Under affirmative action conditions these members may develop an external locus of control.

The highly diverse multi-cultural composition of the South African workforce continuously increases the importance for leaders and managers to understand individual differences and the effects thereof on employee behaviour and performance. The influence of ethnicity on the nature of locus of control among employees in the SAAF (with a particular emphasis on leader-/follower preferences) will also be investigated in this study. A detailed discussion of leadership and follower behaviour will follow in Chapter 5).

4.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCUS OF CONTROL AND CERTAIN ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR VARIABLES

4.6.1 GENERAL

Individual differences in locus of control have a significant and varied effect in organisations and have become an important variable for explaining human behaviour in organisational life. Some of these differences are mentioned and discussed by Spector (1982: 485) (he points out that, although his discussion is theoretical in nature, actual data exists that can validate many of his hypotheses):

- Persons who believe in internal control should endeavour to exert more control in their work than those who believe in external control, on condition that control is seen as something that leads to the required results or rewards. For certain individuals control can be rewarding in itself and might therefore lead to these individuals attempting control for its own sake. Therefore, a “contingent reward” leadership style (see Chapter 5), that is characterised by a rewarding transaction between leader and follower, will not always be necessary for the motivation of internally oriented followers. For internals, control can manifest itself in areas such as work flow, operating procedures, assignments, relationships with supervisors and subordinates, job conditions, goal setting, work scheduling and organisational policy.

- Since those who believe in internal control make better use of information, they perform better in learning and problem-solving situations. They take more trouble to gather relevant information.
- Those who believe in external control are more prone to conforming and to yielding than those who believe in internal control. “Internals look to themselves for direction; externals look to others” (Spector, 1982: 486). Externals therefore, make more compliant followers or subordinates than internals.
- As a result of the more indulgent nature of externals, it will probably be easier to supervise them because they follow instructions more easily. According to Theron (1992: 93) externals, as a result of being more conforming and compliant than internals, would be easier to supervise. For them, following instructions would be easier than giving them. He predicts that externals are therefore more likely to be followers than leaders, while on the contrary, internals would make excellent leaders.

The organisational areas highlighted by various authors (Joe, 1971; Organ & Greene, 1974; Spector, 1982; Bass, 1990; Theron, 1992; Cox, 1993) where the use of internal versus external control would probably differ are amongst others, the following:

- Leadership behaviour
- Communication styles
- Interpersonal relationships (especially those between supervisors and followers)
- Risk-taking
- Motivation, and
- Job satisfaction

Spector (1982: 486) discusses certain job settings that are found to be more suitable for internals than externals. When a job, for example, is of a complex nature and demands higher levels of initiative and independent action, it would be more suitable for internals. Internals exhibit more initiative in their efforts to attain goals than do externals (Seeman, 1963). Simpler tasks of a compliant nature would suit externals better. It is also suggested that internals are better suited for professional and managerial jobs. They tend to attain higher occupations with greater autonomy and higher status than externals (O'Brien, 1984: 16).

4.6.2 MOTIVATION

Studies have been conducted by Organ and Greene (1974) on the relationship between locus of control and observed meaningfulness of behaviour. Meaningfulness is reasonably directly related to motivation as high scores during the investigation reflected high job motivation (use was made of a 10 item instrument that measures goal setting, task orientation, meaningfulness of work and task-related utilisation of time). Locus of control correlated negatively with this scale ($r = -0,43$). Internals therefore regard their work as more meaningful.

Spector (1982) draws attention to the fact that externals are not necessarily less orientated towards rewards or personal goals, but that internals will make a greater effort to earn rewards or achieve objectives since they are more inclined to believe that their efforts will be successful. If rewards do not follow performance, internals may adopt a more external stance (Theron, 1992). Therefore, when leaders are in control of internally oriented followers, the proper clarification of goals and outcomes will be essential. As a result of their higher levels of motivation, internals would do better on jobs where high motivation is required (Spector, 1982: 486).

According to the expectancy theory, effort will lead to good job performance, which in turn will lead to valued outcomes (O'Brian, 1984). In this regard Theron (1992) emphasises the role of rewards in the work-related behaviour of internals and externals. Because internals associate effort with performance levels and performance with attaining valued rewards, they believe that their own efforts will ultimately lead to valued outcomes and reinforcements. Externals regard performance and its outcomes as being influenced by factors beyond their control. Therefore externals are insensitive to pay incentives, while internals exert more effort for monetary rewards and other incentive systems (Spector, 1982).

The use of a transactional style in leading people, as it will be discussed in Chapter 5, could prove to be less effective with externally oriented followers. Motivation and the reward systems applied in organisations are often built on assumptions of internal locus of control (Cox, 1993). The underlying premise is that employees control their own rewards by the level of achieved performance.

4.6.3 JOB SATISFACTION

Writers such as Porter & Lawler (1965) and Salancik & Pfeffer (1978) indicate that internals generally display greater contentment than externals. Spector (1982) puts forward, among others, the following three reasons why internals should experience greater job satisfaction than externals:

- Since those who believe in internal control (internals) are inclined to take action more frequently than externals, the chances are greater that the dissatisfied internal will resign from the specific job he is not satisfied with. Therefore, there should be fewer dissatisfied internals than externals.
- Internals should perform better than externals. The resulting benefits of their good performance should lead to greater satisfaction among internals.
- Internals are inclined to progress faster and are more successful in their careers.

The positive effect of an internal control orientation on job satisfaction is not fully supported by O'Brien (1983). When age, income and education are being controlled statistically, he found that locus of control does not significantly predict job satisfaction. He does, however, agree with the notion that internals are more job involved than externals.

Turnover as a result of dissatisfaction in the workplace is also addressed by Spector (1982). There seems to be a complex relationship between locus of control and turnover. When internals experience the work environment as dissatisfying, they tend to take action, which results in a higher turnover than with externals. This is only true for a dissatisfying work environment. When work is experienced to be satisfying, internals will be more successful and will therefore exhibit the same turnover rate as externals. Externals on the other hand, even when dissatisfied, tend not to take action and would therefore be expected not to quit. Spector (1982) concludes that, for the correlation between job satisfaction and turnover, locus of control acts as a moderating variable. The correlation should be higher for internals than for externals.

4.6.4 RISK-TAKING

Although Lefcourt & Steffy (1970) reported that there is no relationship between locus of control and risk-taking, there seems to be some inconsistency in other research reports such as Julian, Lichtman and Ryckman (1968). They support the notion that internals would rather prefer choices with high probabilities of success as opposed to externals preferring choices with low probabilities of success. Likewise, in a dice-throwing situation Liverant and Scodel (1960) observe internals to be more cautious in their betting choices. They chose significantly more intermediate bets and significantly fewer low-probability bets than did the externals.

Strickland, Lewicki and Katz (1966) disagree with the finding that internals are more cautious in risk-taking and state quite the opposite. They argue (without providing statistical evidence) that because internals would be more likely "... to try to outwit the odds for reinforcement", they would show greater risk-taking behaviour.

4.7 MEASURING LOCUS OF CONTROL

4.7.1 GENERAL

As in the case of many other psychological constructs, measurement of locus of control is subject to a great deal of criticism. Lefcourt (1976: 127) points out some of this criticism that is also associated with measuring locus of control, namely that there is a tendency to measure a specific construct with a single instrument: "One contributing factor to the common decline of interest in many an adequate construct derives from the mistaken tendency to identify a construct with some singular measurement deviceand subjects' scores on those instruments came to be taken as indications of the presence or absence of given traits; that is, individuals scoring high on an anxiety scale are said to be highly anxious or to have high anxiety."

It should also continuously be borne in mind that certain measuring instruments give only rough approximations of an individual's position with regard to a specific characteristic and that various error variables can occur which can lead to erroneous observations: "...there are a host of 'error' variables which can contribute to inaccuracy in any measurement device and therefore lessen the utility of that device for measuring actions or cognitions pertinent to a particular construct" (Lefcourt, 1976: 128). The factors which were taken into account when selecting the instrument for measuring locus of control in this study, are discussed in Chapter 7.

4.7.2 VALIDITY OF THE CONSTRUCT OF LOCUS OF CONTROL

As mentioned earlier, the concept of locus of control refers to the degree to which people either ascribe control of events to themselves or attribute control to outside forces (i.e. beyond their own control). According to Spector (1982) the basic validity of the concept itself therefore is concerned with the question as to whether internals perceive more often than externals that events are a result of their own actions. Several studies (Table 4.2) confirm that this is indeed the case. Researchers like Julian & Katz (1968) and Kahle (1980) report that internals not only perceive more control but that they are also actively seeking situations where more personal control is required.

Table 4.3: Summary of research studies confirming the validity of the locus of control construct.

	FINDINGS	RESEARCHER(S)
1.	Internally oriented employees were more inclined to attribute the obtaining of their present jobs to their own actions.	Roark (1978)
2.	A higher tendency for perceiving more alternatives in a choice situation was found for internals than for externals.	Harvey, Barnes, Sperry & Harris (1974)
3.	Internally oriented members of manufacturing employees more frequently attributed past job changes to their own initiative.	Hammer & Vardi (1981)
4.	A higher tendency exists amongst internals for choosing leisure activities where greater skill and more personal control are required.	Kabanoff & O'Brien (1980)
5.	In a setting where subjects could choose a task requiring either luck or skill, internals preferred skill as opposed to internals who preferred luck.	Kahle (1980)

An interactive relation between locus of control and experience seems to exist (Spector, 1982). This means that while a person's locus of control may influence his behaviour, the consequences of his behaviour may also affect his locus of control. The prediction is supported by Anderson (1977) after a study of the business performance of 102 victims of Hurricane Agnes. Internals whose performance improved during the study showed a shift towards higher internality; likewise externals whose performance deteriorated showed a shift towards higher externality. However, externals showing an improvement in business performance, did not move to internality, neither did internals showing a decrease in performance move to externality. Krolick (1979) reports that the sensitivity of locus of control to experience is more significant for internals than externals. In reaction to an experience of failure, the I-E scores of internals shifted in an external direction, yet those of externals did not shift in an internal direction following a successful experience.

4.7.3 INSTRUMENTS MEASURING LOCUS OF CONTROL

Over the years researchers have tried to change and improve the instruments that are used for measuring psychological constructs, with the result that there are various measuring instruments for specific constructs. This trend was also found in the case of locus of control.

Various instruments have already been designed for measuring locus of control. The best known among these is probably the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (I-E scale) of Rotter (1966). It is the most widely used instrument for measuring internality versus externality, comprising a 23-item forced option questionnaire with six extra items or so-called “filler items”. Marks are awarded in the external direction so that a higher score means that one is more externally orientated. Theron (1992:90) indicates that from the resultant conceptualisation of factor analytic studies on the I-E scale, the internal, powerful others and chance (IPC) scales were developed. While the I-scale deals with the extent to which people believe that they control their own lives, the C-scale refers to the perception of chance control. The role of powerful others and their influence on one’s life is reflected by the P-scale.

The criticism that Crandall, Katkovsky and Crandall (1965) level against the I-E scale of Rotter is aimed at the so-called agents of external control. On the I-E scale these “agents’ are identified as luck, fate and impersonal and personal powers. Crandall et al (1965) prefer to regard “significant others” such as parents, teachers and peers as sources of external control. According to Lefcourt it is precisely these “agents’ of control who have become a central question for some researchers.

In spite of the wide application of Rotter’s I-E scale, various other researchers have also already made definite comments about inherent deficiencies in the instrument. Thus, for example, Gurin, Gurin, Lao and Beattie (1969), after a factor analysis of the responses of 1 695 students on the I-E scale, found various independent factors to exist. The first factor that was found was called “control ideology” by Gurin et al. This refers to the amount of control a person believes most people in the community have. The second factor, “personal control”, refers to the degree of control a person believes he has himself.

Mirels (1970) also investigated the factor composition of the I-E scale and obtained similar results to Gurin et al (1969). Two factors were identified by means of the varimax rotation method. The first was related to the amount of control a person believes he personally has while the second was indicative of the extent to which a person believes a citizen can exercise control over political and international matters.

Since the development of the I-E scale various other measuring instruments have been developed for internal-external control. Some of these are the following:

- A forced-choice activity preference scale was composed by Schneider (1968). With the aid of this scale it was found that internally orientated men preferred skilled activities since these activities confirmed their expectations of internal control, whereas externally oriented men

preferred so-called “random activities” since these activities bore no relation to individual performance.

- Dies (1968) developed a projective measuring instrument for evaluating internal versus external control based on TAT stories.
- The “internal control index” (ICI) was developed by Duttweiler (1984) as a new instrument for measuring locus of control in adults. She developed it in response to increasing criticism of previous instruments and attempted to eliminate the most important problems encountered with existing instruments. This index consists of 28 items and has a 5-point interval response scale. In contrast with the I-E scale of Rotter, the items are internally oriented, in other words, higher scores are indicative of higher internality. This instrument, together with Duttweiler’s (1984) criticism of the Rotter I-E scale, will be discussed in Chapter 7.

For the sake of completeness a number of other instruments for measuring locus of control are merely listed. They are as follows:

- Bialer’s questionnaire on locus of control (Bialer, 1961);
- Crandall’s questionnaire on responsibility for intellectual performance;
- Dean’s estrangement scale (Dean, 1969);
- James’s I-E scale (James, 1957);
- The Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale (Nowicki and Strickland, 1973);
- Reid-Ware’s trifactor I-E scale (Reid and Ware, 1974); and
- Stanford’s pre-school I-E scale (Mischel, Zeiss and Zeiss, 1974)

As regards the possible confusion and uncertainty that may exist in connection with the use of existing measuring instruments as opposed to the development of new instruments, Lefcourt (1976: p 137) recommends the following: “If the investigator’s purposes are to expand upon the nomological network within which locus of control may operate, then devices such as Rotter’s scale or Crandall’s IAR may suffice despite the failings inherent in each of them. However, if one were seeking to use the construct to make sense of more clinical problems where precision is an issue, then due consideration should be given to the construction of measures that are appropriate to the given problem.” After a careful analysis of the advantages and shortcomings of the

various instruments available, the researcher selected the Internal Control Index of Duttweiler (1984) for the measuring of locus of control in this study.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has been devoted to a discussion of the psychological construct, “locus of control” with a special focus on its impact on employee and leader behaviour in the organisational context. If the bulk of the references to its definition and its connection with social learning are summarised, it would be fair to conclude that it refers to the degree to which people attribute the cause of events either to themselves or to the external environment. Internals are referred to as those perceiving control of events to be in themselves while externals ascribe control to outside (environmental) forces. Internals perceive more often than externals that events are a result of their own actions. Externals exert less effort to control their environment. Significant support was found for the idea that members from lower socio-economic classes are more externally oriented mainly because of limited (or a complete lack of) access to opportunities. Impoverished people seem to have a stronger belief that they are at the mercy of external factors and that they have little control over their situation.

As far as the effects of internality/externality on organisational behaviour variables are concerned, the existing research evidence suggests that locus of control may well be a very important personality variable in organisational theory. Internals are more action oriented and in general better performers than externals, which could be ascribed to the fact that they have a stronger belief that they have personal control over rewards and events. They make better use of information, are more suitable for complex, professional and managerial jobs and see their work as more meaningful. There seems to be a positive relationship between internality and both motivation and job satisfaction.

It seems clear that the locus of control construct plays a major role in leadership preferences and behaviour. Leadership should be studied from two points of view – the style of the leader and the behaviour of the follower. As followers, externals tend to be more satisfied with directive approaches to supervision. Internals will be more appropriate for participative styles. The same trends are found in the leadership styles used by internals and externals themselves. As supervisors, internals seem to be participative as opposed to externals who tend to be more directive. Organisational demands often require leaders to adopt a certain style of leadership. In the military, for example, where prompt and accurate carrying out of orders is often required, the leader-follower context would be more appropriate for externals owing to their preference for directive supervision.

When summarising the characteristics and preferences of internals and externals in organisational context, it seems as if most organisational behaviour theory is limited to internals only. That is, that only the behaviour of internals seems to validate organisational psychology theory. Examples of these are the following:

- Internals (as followers) prefer participative supervision and also demonstrate participative approaches as leaders.
- They seem to display clearer response to reinforcing rewards and incentives (while, although they want them, externals are often unresponsive to incentives).
- Internals show more initiative and are more effective when dealing with complex tasks and demands.

Finally, the chapter was concluded with a discussion of measuring locus of control. Despite the wide application of Rotter's (1966) I-E scale in research, a multitude of other instruments have been developed, some of which were specifically addressing the shortcomings of the I-E scale. The Internal Control Index, for example, was developed in an attempt to eliminate some of the most important problems encountered with existing instruments such as the I-E scale.

Up to this point a few brief references were made to the influence of certain work related values (and specifically locus of control) on leadership and follower preferences and behaviour. The next chapter is devoted to a comprehensive review of contemporary leadership theories and the development of an appropriate and effective leadership culture in the organisation studied.