

The Relationship between Self-Described Spirituality and an External or Internal Locus of Control

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This study investigates the relationship between spirituality and locus of control using similar definitions and processes of previous research on the topic. This cross comparison of participants who categorize themselves into different groups of spirituality allows for the examination of how people of various spiritual groups can be described as having an internal or external locus of control. Items from questionnaires completed by an undergraduate population were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA to examine the direct relationship between the variables. A significant difference between the groups of participants of differing spiritualities and their locus of control was found. Participants who consider themselves atheists were found to have higher levels of internal locus of control versus participants who labeled themselves agnostic, unsure, spiritual, religious, or a combination of labels. Participants who described themselves as agnostic, unsure, spiritual, religious, or a combination of levels were found to have higher levels of external locus of control versus those who described themselves as atheists. These results offer support for past research and open opportunities for the continuance of studying aspects of the relationship between spirituality and locus of control.

Information about the Author:

Elizabeth Hostetler is a senior Christ College student majoring in sociology and psychology. This study is a side project to Professor Nelson's ongoing research on spirituality and addiction in the Psychology Department, which Elizabeth has participated in for two years. She offered to do an independent project with previously collected data as a part of her sociology senior research assignment. This project was also presented at Butler's Undergraduate Research Conference earlier this year.

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