

# The Relationship between Personality Characteristics, Locus of Control, and Self-esteem among Nursing Students at Kashan University of Medical Sciences in 2016

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between personality characteristics, locus of control, and self-esteem of nursing and midwifery students of Kashan University of Medical University in 2016. The research method was descriptive and correlational. The population of this study included all nursing and midwifery students of Kashan University of Medical University (N=300) in 2016. 100 subjects were selected as the sample by stratified random sampling and Krejcie Table and 100 questionnaires were analyzed. The data collection tool included three standard questionnaires of Cooper Smith's Self Esteem, Rotter's Locus of Control, and Eysenck's Personality. All three questionnaires were standard and used in many foreign and domestic studies. The reliability of all these questionnaires has been confirmed in many studies indicating a high reliability. In this study, the reliability of the questionnaires was conducted on a 40-subject sample and their statistical estimate through Cronbach's alpha was obtained for extraversion and introversion ( $r=0.83$ ), emotional stability ( $r=0.79$ ), lie detectors ( $r=0.78$ ), locus of control ( $r=0.76$ ), and self-esteem ( $r=0.89$ ). The data were analyzed by SPSS software. The results indicated that there is a significant and negative relationship between extraversion and locus of control while 54.9% of the variance of students' internal locus of control can be explained through their extraverted personality.

A significant relationship was found between introversion and locus of control as well as between introversion and self-esteem. In addition, there was a positive and significant relationship between extraversion and self-esteem while 47% of the variance of students' self-esteem can be explained through their extraverted personality.

**Key words:** Personality characteristics, locus of control, self-esteem

## Introduction

Human behavior is affected by social factors. Human personality reaches toward perfection when an appropriate balance and interaction is created between human and environment (Tuzandeh Jani, 2007). The question of how personal differences lead to tendency or avoidance in human daily performance has always been answered by the word "personality" (Eliut, 2008). Personality is affected by internal elements such as thoughts, values, and genetic features and external elements such as observable behaviors (Mc Shane & Van Glinow, 2003). Psychologically, the personality characteristics are the basis of behavioral patterns (Nabi Zadeh Chiyaneh, 2010, as cited in Shahandeh and Yousefi, 2011).

One of the important aspects of personality which can be affected by such relationships is the individuals' beliefs in the ability of controlling the consequences of their lives, i.e. the locus of control (MizaeiAlavijeh, et al., 2012). Control can be defined as applying the power, guidance, or avoiding the behavior and actions of others to oneself. Locus of control is an important factor affecting mental health and reducing stress. A human, as a living creature, reacts to the external stimuli which intend to destroy this balance. The reaction of humans to different stimuli is highly dependent on the severity of these stimuli and the effectiveness of each person. Locus of control is the central core of psychological structures in the person providing them with comfort and preventing anxiety (Cleior & Soundler, 1992).

Another component related to personality characteristics is self-esteem. In this regard, Reladov (1984) stated that the higher ability in problem-solving is related to the increase of self-esteem (Salehi & Vakili, 2008). Self-esteem is the emotional dimension evaluating self-concept and equals to the concepts such as self-guard, self-assessment, and self-worth (Hart, 1999, as cited in Beshlideh and Yousefi, 2012).

Preparing the individual's acquisition of knowledge, cognitive skills, and job skills is regarded as one of the most important factors of the educational system. Our society is being developed and self-esteem is one of the most important factors affecting the progress of motivation and academic achievement (Abbasi, 1999). Self-esteem is one of the important factors in human prosperity referring to the personal judgment on self-worth (Vali Zadeh & Emami Pour, 2007). Increasing the academic achievement and the effort for success, having self-confidence, being arrogant and aggressive, showing tendency to better health, enjoying the relationship to others, predicting the later success positively, having close relationships to self-esteem, and being assertive are among the obvious signs of high self-esteem levels in individuals (Ghasemi, 2000). Self-esteem is the most certain internal factors in the mental growth of a person having prominent effects on intellectual flow, feelings, tendencies, values, and goals. As the person fails to acquire self-esteem, he or she may encounter anxiety, mental breakdown, self-

pessimism, escaping the truth, and lack of adequacy in life (Mcauly et al., 1997). Self-esteem is regarded as one of the main determinants of thoughts, emotions, feedbacks, and behaviors among individuals. The results showed that self-esteem has different aspects including physical, family, social, and academic self-esteem (Eysenck, 1967; Pop, 1989; Cooper Smitt, 1967).

Studying the students who looked for a job indicated that those with high self-esteem received more job suggestions and were evaluated as more favorable by their employers than those with low self-esteem (Shultez, 2007). Teaching the communication skills affects the promotion of self-esteem, emotional adequacy, and social adequacy among students (Momeni, 2010). Some researchers like Int et al. (1994), Kreuter et al. (1991) and Elyas (1991) found teaching life skills as effective on self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy. A negative relationship was found between self-esteem and progress motivation with procrastination. In addition, a positive and significant relationship was observed between self-esteem and progress motivation. Based on the regression, self-esteem has a higher predictability for progress motivation (Avaziyan, et al., 2011). According to California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, responsibility is appreciating the personal significance and value and having a responsible personality and responsible actions in relationship with others (Mahdavi & Enayati, 2010, as cited in Farhadi, 2004). The study results of Clouse and Murgan (2005) showed that the effects of experimental interventions (teaching social skills and the effect of medical treatment) can have the strongest effects on increasing self-esteem (Mahdavi, et al., 2011). Tamanayifar, et al. (2010) stated that the emotional intelligence, self-concept, and self-esteem of students have no effect on their academic achievement. Self-esteem is higher among women, compared to men and there is no difference between emotional intelligence and self-concept, which is one of the fundamental variables of locus of control and self-esteem. Valizadeh and Emami Pour showed that teaching rational treatment-behavioral emotion increases the general, family, and social self-esteem among the students although no effect was reported based on their physical and academic self-esteem (Kelior & Soundler, 1992).

Thus, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between personality characteristics, locus of control, and self-esteem among nursing and midwifery students in Kashan University of Medical University in 2016 based on the following hypotheses:

- H1:** There is a relationship between extroversion and locus of control among students.
- H2:** There is a relationship between introversion and locus of control among students.
- H3:** There is a relationship between extroversion and self-esteem among students.
- H4:** There is a relationship between introversion and self-esteem among students.

## Methodology

The present study used a descriptive and correlational design. In this study, personality characteristics were considered as predicting variable (independent) and locus of control and self-esteem as criterion variable (dependent). The population of this study included all nursing and midwifery students in Kashan University of Medical Sciences (N=300) in 2016. One hundred subjects were selected based on stratified random sampling and Krejcie Table. In order to collect the related data, 57-item Eysenck's Personality questionnaire, 29-item Rotter's Locus of Control questionnaire and 57-item Cooper Smith's Self Esteem questionnaire were used. All these three questionnaires were standard and have been used in many foreign and domestic studies. In order to measure the reliability of the questionnaires, 40 subjects were selected:

**Table 1: The reliability of instruments**

Indicator		N	Cronbach's alpha
Variables			
Locus of control		40	0.76.
Personality characteristics	Introversion-Extroversion (E)	40	0.83.
	Emotional stability (N)	40	0.79.
	Lie detector (L)	40	0.78.
	Self-esteem	40	0.89.

### Research findings based on demographic information

Table 2 presents the personality characteristics of the sample. Accordingly, 100 (50 males and 50 females) with the mean age of 22 were selected. Most of the subjects had bachelor's degree (58%).

**Table 2: The distribution of the studied sample based on demographic features**

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
Age	20-25 years old	27	27
	26-30 years old	21	21
	31-35 years old	10	10
	36-40 years old	5	5
	41-45 years old	7	7
	45-50 years old	4	4
	Not stated	26	26
Education	Diploma	6	6
	Associate degree	4	4
	Bachelor	58	58
	Master	6	6
	Not stated	26	26
Occupation	Housewife	6	6
	Self-employed	11	11
	Employee	13	13
	Teacher	15	15
	Student	14	14
	Not stated	41	41

### Assumption for using parametric statistical test

Based on the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in Table 3, the locus of control (external-internal), personality characteristics and self-esteem have normal distribution since the significance level of all Z values in each variable is larger than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the parametric tests can be used to analyze the research hypotheses.

**Table 3: The result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normal distribution of data**

Indicator \ Variable		N	Z value	Significance level
Locus of control		100	290.1	072.0
Components	Internal locus of control	21	77.1	053.0
	Locus of control	79	210.1	107.0
Personality characteristics	Introversion-Extroversion	100	777.0	582.0
	(Emotional stability N)	100	210.1	107.0
	Lie detector (L)	100	341.1	055.0
Self-esteem		100	093.1	183.0

**Research hypothesis testing**

**H1:** There is a relationship between extroversion and locus of control among the students.

Based on the results of Pearson correlation test in Table 4, there is a negative and significant relationship between extroverted personality and locus of control ( $p = 0.000$  and  $r = -0.737$ ). Therefore, higher extroverted personality leads to more internal locus of control and vice versa.

**H2:** There is a relationship between introversion and locus of control among the students.

Based on the results obtained from Pearson correlation test, there is no significant relationship between introverted personality and locus of control ( $p = 0.998$ ,  $r = -0.003$ ).

**Table 4: The relationship between personality characteristic and locus of control among students**

Variables	N	Correlation coefficient	Sig.
The relationship between extroverted personality and locus of control among students	71	-737.0	**000.0
The relationship between introverted personality and locus of control among students	29	-003.0	989.0

\* Significant at 0.05 level \*\* significant at 0.01 level

**H3:** There is a relationship between extroversion and self-esteem among the students.

Based on the results of Pearson correlation test in Table 5, there is a positive and significant relationship between extroverted personality and self-esteem ( $p = 0.000$  and  $r = 0.686$ ). Therefore, with a confidence of 99%, the higher extroverted personality, leads to more self-esteem and vice versa.

**H4:** There is a relationship between introversion and self-esteem among the students.

Based on the results of Pearson correlation test, no significant relationship was observed between introverted personality and self-esteem ( $p = 0.65$ ;  $r = 0.347$ ).

**Table 5: The relationship between personality characteristic and self-esteem among the students**

Variables	N	Correlation coefficient	Sig.
The relationship between extroverted personality and self-esteem in students	71	686.0	**000.0
The relationship between introverted personality and self-esteem in students	26	347.0	065.0

\* Significant at 0.05 level \*\* significant at 0.01 level

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results based on the first hypothesis suggested that the personality characteristics of extroversion have a negative and significant relationship with locus of control. The findings of this research are consistent with the studies of Ghasemi (2001), Holmes (2000) and Jashni (2014) indicating a negative and significant relationship between extroverted personality and locus of control. However, the results of this study are inconsistent with the study of Ghasemi (1384) showing no relationship between the extroverted personality and locus of control. Regarding the second hypothesis, the personality characteristics of introversion has no relationship with locus of control. The findings are incongruent with the studies of Vafai (2001), Holmes (2000), and Ghasemi (2001), in which they reported the significant relationship between introverted personality and locus of control. However, the results are congruent with the study of Jashni et al.(2014).

Regarding the third hypothesis, the personality characteristics of extroversion has a positive and significant relationship with self-esteem. The findings are in line with the studies of Schultz (2001), Biabangard(2003), Nanel (2005), Sidney Allen (1930), Tatiana (1997), Gary Mazet (1960), and Jashni et al.(2014).

As for the fourth hypothesis, upon which the personality characteristics of introversion have no relationship with self-esteem, the findings are in line with the studies of Schultz (2001), Biabangard (2003), Nanel (2005), Sidney Allen (1930), Tatiana (1997), Gary Mazat (1960), but inconsistent with the study of Jashni et al. (2014).

## Limitations of the study

Based on the results of the present study, the following limitation should be considered:

1. Limiting the statistical population of the study to the students in Kashan University of Medical Sciences
2. Limiting the data collection tool to the questionnaire and not using other methods of data collection such as interview, observation, etc.
3. The cultural weakness of the study and the reluctance of some students in answering the questions
4. Some respondents may have not expressed their true feelings and emotions, and personal anxiety may have affected their responses.
5. Some uncontrolled variables such as field of study, personality type, and cultural characteristics of individuals may have influences the results of the study.