

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320912106>

WORK LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SELF-ESTEEM OF THE UNEMPLOYED MACEDONIAN YOUNG PEOPLE

Article · August 2017

CITATIONS

0

READS

7

3 authors:



[Marija Topuzovska Latkovikj](#)

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

29 PUBLICATIONS 13 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



[Mirjana Borota Popovska](#)

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

27 PUBLICATIONS 15 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



[Nita Starova](#)

3 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Студија за младите во Република Македонија 2016 [View project](#)



Macedonian Youth Unemployment [View project](#)

All content following this page was uploaded by [Marija Topuzovska Latkovikj](#) on 07 November 2017.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file.

WORK LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SELF-ESTEEM OF THE UNEMPLOYED MACEDONIAN YOUNG PEOPLE

Marija Topuzovska Latkovikj¹, Mirjana Borota Popovska², Nita Starova³

1 Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje,
marija_t@isppi.ukim.edu.mk

2 Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje,
mborota@isppi.ukim.edu.mk

3 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung - Office in Skopje,
nita.starova@fes.org.mk

ABSTRACT: *This research paper investigates the work locus of control and the level of self-esteem of the unemployed Macedonian young people. The research findings are result of a research study about the Macedonian Youth Unemployment financed by Friedrich Ebert Foundation - Office in Skopje and conducted by the authors in 2016 on a representative national sample (N=1009) consisted from unemployed young people aged 15-29, citizens of Republic of Macedonia, from all eight statistical regions. The youth unemployment is a serious problem in the country as its rate for the last several years is almost double (approximately 50%) than the general unemployment rate (23,7% in this moment). It was assumed that the (external) work locus of control and the (low) self-esteem are related to the unemployment and of course to certain demographic characteristics (age, educational level, place of living...). There are no previous research data on this topic in a national context, that's why the research approach and the findings can be considered as novelty for the Macedonian scientific literature. For this particular part of the research study, the applied methodology used research instruments developed by Spector (1988) and Rosenberg (1965).*

KEYWORDS: *Youth Unemployment; Work locus of control; Self-esteem.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Locus of control is a personality variable that has been studied extensively in a wide variety of settings, including organizations. Despite wide interest, the organizational studies have been dominated for long by the use of Rotter's (1966) I-E scale of general locus of control. Locus of control is defined as a generalized expectancy that rewards, reinforcements or outcomes in life are controlled either by one's own actions (internality) or by other forces (externality). Rotter (1966) differentiates internal and external locus of control (LOC). Internals are those who believe that they are the masters of their fate and, therefore, often are confident, alert, and directive in attempting to control their external environments. Further, they often perceive a strong link between their actions and consequences. Externals, on the other hand, are those who believe that they do not have direct control of their fate and perceive themselves in a passive role with regard to the external environment. They, therefore, tend to attribute personal outcomes to external factors or luck. Researchers observe that individuals' LOC plays an important role at work. For instance, it is found that LOC is related to various important work outcomes including job satisfaction and job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001). In organizational settings, rewards or outcomes include promotions, favorable circumstances, salary increases and general career advancement. Internals tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than externals, see their supervisors as higher on consideration and initiating structure, report less role stress, perceive more autonomy and control, and enjoy longer job tenure.

Judge and colleagues (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge et al., 1998) took the perspective of LOC as a proximal predictor of well-being. They suggest that LOC is one of the critical elements of fundamental self-evaluation. The belief that one has control of the external environment represents a positive fundamental evaluation of self-worth, whereas the belief of a lack of control indicates a negative fundamental evaluation of self-worth. Not surprisingly, internals are more sensitive

than externals to information that directly or indirectly delivers a connotation of self-worth (Phares, 1976). In sum, research supports the notion that internality is associated with positive well-being, both on and off the job.

Spector (1988) has developed a scale that measures the work locus of control (WLCS). The scale was developed to measure generalized control beliefs in work settings. Spector (1988) described work locus of control as a personality variable. He defined it as "a generalized expectancy that rewards, reinforcements or outcomes in life are controlled either by one's own action (internality) or other forces (externality)". He explains that in organizational settings, rewards or outcomes include promotion, favourable circumstances, salary increases and general career advancement.

Self-esteem from the other side has become a household word. Teachers, parents, therapists, and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes and benefits.

According to Joubert (1991), self-esteem can be defined as a "person's judgment of general self-worth that is a product of an implicit evaluation of self-approval or self-disapproval made by the individual". Dolan (2007) describes self-esteem as an internal perception on how competent we are to work, live and share and fully developing as balanced individuals. In other words, it is the result of the perception of material, emotional and ethical achievements based on one's own efforts and on the confidence we place in ourselves and in others (Dolan, 2007). Self-esteem is based on the self confidence in our ability to dream, care, think and manage to be efficient and to be able to cope with challenges posed by life, both positive and negative (Ibid.).

A positive self-esteem works as an immune system of the conscience, and offers resistance, strength and capacity to cope with various stressful situations in a better way. Lack of self-esteem means that the individual gets trapped in a maze of stress and a failure to adapt to the situation and therefore finds himself with no way of getting out of the maze (Dolan, 2007). It is also believed that individuals, who perceive having a high internal locus of control or high perceived control, therefore tend to better control their behaviours and their ability to cope with stressful events in life (Owusu-Ansah, 2008).

Thoits (1995) argues that the most common indicator of a person's coping mechanism is reliance on one's sense of control or mastery over his life. Having a high internal locus of control is associated with one's ability to adapt to difficult situations, such as unemployment. Waters & Moore (2002) also discussed the role of perceived control in relation to unemployment. They argued that high internal locus of control influenced re-employment and lack of internal locus of control contributed to continuing unemployment. Wiener, Oei & Creed (1999) describe the importance of perceived control in relation to unemployment. Low perceived control was found to have a strong correlation with unemployment. The results also showed that individuals with jobs had higher levels of perceived control compared to those who were unemployed. They also came to the conclusion that the longer an individual is unemployed, the greater the risk of low perceived control, which also increased the difficulty of getting a job.

Rosenberg (1965) argues that self-esteem is correlated to one's self-worth and can be described as specific or global. A specific self-esteem concerns only one specific situation, whereas a global self-esteem concerns self-esteem in various situations. The global self-esteem is a better measurement as it gives values of both negative and positive values of the self (Ibid.). Furthermore, he discusses two approaches to what creates self-esteem. The first approach is that self-esteem is something we receive by other people's encouragement and unconditional love in the early stages of our life. The other approach is that, we in our own personal development perceive ourselves as competent and therefore obtain self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965).

For many individuals, work is one of the fundamental objects of human existence and an important factor that gives them the opportunity to participate in society. The work allows them to produce goods and services that are essential in modern life. It also allows people to be a part of the social structure which will make them feel content in terms of personal, familial and social aspects of life (Dolan, 2007). There are several aspects that are essential when working, such as, time structure, social contact,

collective goals, social status and identity, and regular activity (Ibid.). During unemployment these disappear and have a negative effect on the mental health (Jahoda, 1982). It is difficult to find a meaning in life without a job and the well-being of individuals will be jeopardized without these important functions (Ibid.). In other words, people see their own worth through the social roles by which they participate in the society. The occupation of the individuals realized through the work is one of the most important social roles. The existing research findings find unemployment related to low self-esteem, because of the feeling for low self-worth and loss of self-respect. In that manner the unemployment is understood as a loss/absence of an adequate position and role in the society.

A widespread conviction in psychology (Goldsmith & Darity, 1997; Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Fryer & Payne, 1986; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg & Kinicki, 2005) is that the response to stressful events, such as unemployment, takes the form of a progression through stages. Shock tends to characterize the initial phase, during which the individual is still optimistic and unbroken. As unemployment advances, the individual becomes pessimistic and suffers active distress, and ultimately becomes fatalistic about their situation and adapts unenthusiastically to their new state. Thus, the unemployed are expected to exhibit poorer mental health due to elevated levels of anxiety, frustration, disappointment, alienation and depression. Moreover, these feelings are likely to be more pronounced among those who shoulder greater financial responsibilities and persons with a greater sense of self efficacy fostered by prior success in a host of domains including school and work. Thus, the highly educated and parents are particularly vulnerable to the debilitating emotional consequences of unemployment.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the needs of the research study (Топузовска Латковиќ, Борота Поповска & Старова, 2016) a combined methodological approach was used, i.e. quantitative and qualitative analyzes were applied. For the quantitative analysis the data was collected by face-to-face questionnaire on a representative sample (N=1009) consisted of young unemployed people in the country (aged between 15 and 29), while for the qualitative analysis the data was collected by two focus groups held with representatives of the NGO sector, business sector and Agencies for employment and/or recruitment. The main objective of this research study was to investigate the key factors, which make the process of finding a job or even starting an own business difficult for the young people in Republic of Macedonia.

The questionnaire was divided in several thematic blocks: occupational choice, formal education and labor market demands, career maturity, dream job and work preferences, knowledge about the national measures and policies for youth employment, and personal characteristics of the young people (work locus of control, self-esteem and self-efficacy).

The Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS) is a 16 item instrument designed by Paul Spector (1988) to assess control beliefs in the workplace. It is a domain specific locus of control scale that correlates about .50 to .55 with general locus of control. The format is summated rating with six response choices: *disagree very much*, *disagree moderately*, *disagree slightly*, *agree slightly*, *agree moderately*, *agree very much*, and scored from 1 to 6, respectively. Total score is the sum of all items, and ranges from 16 to 96. The scale is scored so that externals receive high scores. Internal consistency (coefficient alpha) generally ranges from .80 to .85 in the English language version. The Work Locus of Control Scale or WLCS, has half of its items written in each direction--external and internal. Scores on the scale can range from 16 to 96. Each item can have a score from 1 to 6 if original response choices are used. High scores on the scale represent externality, so the scores on the internally worded items must be reversed before summing. This is because a score of 6 representing strongest possible agreement on an externally worded item is equivalent to a score of 1 representing strongest possible disagreement on an internally worded item. Responses to the items are numbered from 1 representing strongest disagreement to 6 representing strongest agreement with each. The internally worded items are reverse scored. Internally worded items are 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 14, 15. The scores are summed for all 16 items.

The 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self is developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965). The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Scores are summed for all ten items. The scale ranges from 0 to 30. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

The data is analysed in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science).

3. RESULTS

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the (16 items) work locus of control scale is $\alpha=.707$, so we can say that there is high internal consistency. The scale was validly answered by N=1002 respondents. The minimum value of the range is 22, while the maximum is 82. The mean score of the Macedonian unemployed young people is $M=55,15$ ($std.dev=8,73$) which is exactly at the mid-point of the theoretic scale range (56) and can be interpreted that there is certain ambivalence, i.e. Macedonian young people don't have strict internal or external locus of control. From the test of the bivariate correlation it is observed that work locus of control and age are positively correlated ($r=.107$; $p<0.01$), meaning that more mature young people have more external locus of control, and younger - internal), while the work locus of control and educational level are negatively correlated ($r=-.103$; $p<0.01$), meaning that young people with higher educational level have more internal locus of control and vice versa. But it must be noted that although they are statistically significant the correlations are weak in all confirmed cases.

Table 1: Mean values on the work locus of control scale for each item

<i>Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1-totally disagree, 6 – totally agree)</i>	<i>Arithmetic Mean</i>
1) A job is what you make of it	4,12
2) On most jobs, people can pretty much accomplish whatever they set out to accomplish	3,87
3) If you know what you want out of a job, you can find a job that gives it to you	4,06
4) If employees are unhappy with a decision made by their boss, they should do something about it	4,47
5) Getting the job you want is mostly a matter of luck	4,02
6) Making money is primarily a matter of good fortune	3,67
7) Most people are capable of doing their jobs well if they make the effort	4,54
8) In order to get a really good job, you need to have family members or friends in high places	4,46
9) Promotions are usually a matter of good fortune	3,59
10) When it comes to landing a really good job, who you know is more important than what you know	4,28
11) Promotions are given to employees who perform well on the job	3,97
12) To make a lot of money you have to know the right people	4,19
13) It takes a lot of luck to be an outstanding employee on most jobs	3,86
14) People who perform their jobs well generally get rewarded	3,87
15) Most employees have more influence on their supervisors than they think they do	3,53
16) The main difference between people who make a lot of money and people who make a little money is luck	3,52

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the (10 items) self-esteem scale is $\alpha=.787$, so there is high internal consistency. The scale was validly answered by N=998 respondents. The minimum value of the range is 10, while the maximum is 30. The mean score of the Macedonian unemployed young people is

M=22,31 (std.dev=4,36), so this finding points out that respondents have normal or relatively high level of self-esteem. From the test of the bivariate correlation it is observed that between the level of self-esteem and the age there is no statistically significant correlation, while the level of self-esteem and educational level are positively correlated ($r=,162$; $p<0.01$), meaning that both values proportionally grow.

The nonparametric tests have shown that young people from urban place of living have higher level of self-esteem than the young people from rural environments ($p<0.05$).

Table 2: Mean values on the self-esteem scale for each item

<i>Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (0-strongly disagree, 3 – strongly agree)</i>	<i>Arithmetic Mean</i>
1) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	2,42
2) At times, I think I am no good at all	0,93
3) I feel that I have a number of good qualities	2,35
4) I am able to do things as well as most other people	2,48
5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of	0,91
6) I certainly feel useless at times	0,91
7) I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	2,15
8) I wish I could have more respect for myself	1,29
9) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	0,54
10) I take a positive attitude toward myself	2,48

3. CONCLUSIONS

From the research findings it can be concluded that there is certain relation between personal (and some demographic) characteristics of the Macedonian young people as work locus of control and self-esteem, and the unemployment - as it was expected. More precisely, the results have confirmed that work locus of control and age are positively correlated, while the work locus of control and educational level are negatively correlated. From the test of the bivariate correlation it is also observed that the level of self-esteem and educational level are positively correlated. The nonparametric tests have shown that young people from urban place of living have higher level of self-esteem than the young people from rural environments.

The mean score of the Macedonian unemployed young people is exactly at the mid-point of the theoretic work locus of control scale (WLCS) range and can be interpreted that there is certain ambivalence. Maybe that explains why Macedonian young people in the past research studies consider the positive life events as their own success, but in the same time they think about the negative events as a bad luck, or someone else's fault.

It is a positive finding that Macedonian young people although unemployed still have normal or relatively high level of self-esteem or feeling of self-worth, which gives a hope that they will manage to find a way to successfully cope with this kind of stressful event as the unemployment is. In the same time the unemployment probably would not negatively affect their mental health, neither to lead to negative/destructive behavior toward job/career in the future, of course if unemployment is no long term. But also it is very important for Macedonian young people to be very careful (proactive, well informed and realistic) and to not let their high self-esteem to be an obstacle for employment, in terms of having very high and unreal expectations from work (high salary, flexible work time, fast career development, fun at workplace, ultra-modern technology...etc.) as our past research work has revealed.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2003). Core self-evaluations: A review of the trait and its role in job satisfaction and job performance. *European Journal of personality, 17*(S1).
- [2] Dolan, S. (2007). *Stress, self-esteem, health, and work*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [3] Eisenberg, P., & Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1938). The psychological effects of unemployment. *Psychological bulletin, 35*(6), 358.
- [4] Fryer, D., & Payne, R. (1986). Being unemployed: A review of the literature on the psychological experience of unemployment. *International review of industrial and organizational psychology, 1*(1), 235-277.
- [5] Goldsmith, A. H., Veum, J. R., & Darity, W. (1997). Unemployment, joblessness, psychological well-being and self-esteem: Theory and evidence. *The Journal of Socio-Economics, 26*(2), 133-158.
- [6] Jahoda, M. (1982). *Employment and unemployment: A social-psychological analysis* (Vol. 1). CUP Archive.
- [7] Joubert, C. E. (1991). Self-esteem and social desirability in relation to college students' retrospective perceptions of parental fairness and disciplinary practices. *Psychological Reports, 69*(1), 115-120.
- [8] Judge, T. A., Erez, A., & Bono, J. E. (1998). The power of being positive: The relation between positive self-concept and job performance. *Human performance, 11*(2-3), 167-187.
- [9] Judge, T. A., & Bono, J. E. (2001). Relationship of core self-evaluations traits—self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability—with job satisfaction and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of applied Psychology, 86*(1), 80.
- [10] McKee-Ryan, F., Song, Z., Wanberg, C. R., & Kinicki, A. J. (2005). Psychological and physical well-being during unemployment: a meta-analytic study. *Journal of applied psychology, 90*(1), 53.
- [11] Phares, E. J. (1976). *Locus of control in personality*. General Learning Press.
- [12] Rosenberg, M. Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1965
- [13] Rosenberg, M. (1965). Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE). *Acceptance and commitment therapy. Measures package, 61*, 52.
- [14] Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological monographs: General and applied, 80*(1), 1.
- [15] Spector, P. E. (1988). Development of the work locus of control scale. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 61*(4), 335-340.
- [16] Топузовска Латковиќ, М., Борота Поповска, М., Старова, Н. (2016) Невработеноста на младите луѓе во Република Македонија. Скопје: Фридрих Еберт Фондација.