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REVISITING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH: A META-ANALYTIC EXAMINATION OF LOCUS OF CONTROL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

This study presents a meta-analytic examination of the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being among college students. Given the increasing concerns surrounding student mental health, identifying key psychological determinants has become essential. A systematic search following PRISMA guidelines identified 20 empirical studies examining locus of control and well-being-related outcomes. Effect sizes were extracted and analysed using a random-effects model. The overall results indicated a moderate and statistically significant positive association between locus of control and psychological well-being ($r = 0.36$, 95% CI [0.25, 0.46], $p < .001$), suggesting that students with a more internal locus of control tend to experience higher levels of well-being. A refined subgroup analysis focusing on studies measuring psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and happiness yielded a consistent effect ($r = 0.34$) with reduced heterogeneity ($I^2 \approx 48\%$), indicating greater stability when conceptually aligned measures were used. Publication bias assessment using funnel plot analysis and Egger's regression test ($t = 1.42$, $p = .17$) showed no significant bias. These findings highlight the importance of perceived personal control as a protective psychological factor in student populations. The results support theoretical perspectives emphasising agency, self-regulation, and adaptive coping as central to well-being. Overall, this meta-analysis provides robust evidence for the role of locus of control in enhancing psychological well-being and offers implications for targeted interventions in educational settings.

Keywords: Locus of Control; Psychological Well-being; College Students; Meta-analysis; Mental Health

1. Introduction

The mental and psychological well-being of students nowadays has become one of those issues that have been the priority of the current studies especially in the framework of the fast growing academic requirements, social and worldwide stress, and the fast-changing environments. Psychological well-being is the condition of an individual to perform optimally emotionally, cognitively and socially, that is, the ability to deal with stress, engage in good relationships and achieve personal goals. The mental health of students is closely related to academic performance, motivation, and quality of life. Recent research has signified an increasing rate of stress, a sense of anxiety, and symptoms of depression in student populations, and the necessity to discover protective psychological mechanisms that can enhance well-being (Bono et al., 2020; Liu and Spirito, 2019). The discovery of the psychological factors of student mental health, in turn, has become the subject of interest to researchers and practitioners.

Locus of control (LOC) is one of the strongest psychological constructs connected with mental health and which presupposes belief that people have in relation to the extent to which they can determine the results in their life. People who have an internal LOC view the result as being dependent on their actions, but people with external LOC view the result as being due to an external influence, like luck or fate. This feeling of control is a crucial aspect that defines the behaviour, motivation and psychological adaptation. The

perceived control is also important as it is justified by more extended theoretical frameworks, such as the theory of planned behaviour, which underlines the role of beliefs and perceived control in shaping behaviour and psychological outcomes (Ajzen, 2020). Besides, the concepts of control and expectations play a crucial role in shaping the decision-making and well-being, which the economic and psychological theories of human behaviour focus on (Bénabou and Tirole, 2016).

Research has continually demonstrated that locus of control is strongly related to certain relevant psychological processes including coping, emotional control and resilience. The people having an internal locus of control are more apt to adopt adaptive coping mechanisms and have a sense of agency, which helps them to achieve better mental health outcomes (Compas et al., 2017). Conversely, maladaptive coping, psychological distress and susceptibility to mental illnesses have been linked to an external locus of control. To illustrate, stress and negative experiences can exacerbate emotional and behavioural problems, particularly in individuals with a lower perceived control (Arslan, 2016; Hammen, 2018). Furthermore, psychological resources and mitigation of the negative effects of stress have been shown to be important due to resilience and positive coping (Huang et al., 2022; Yu and Zhang, 2017).

With reference to the student populations, locus of control assumes a special importance related to the specific set of issues that students have to cope with, such as academic pressure and doubts about their future occupations, social transition, etc. Students who have an internal locus of control have a higher likelihood of having increased levels of engagement, persistence, and academic achievements, and having a better psychological condition (Datu et al., 2016; Datu and King, 2018). It is also connected with positive future thinking and goal-oriented behaviour that appear to improve mental health outcomes meaning that the more individuals believe they can control their future, the more they can feel well (MacLeod and O'Connor, 2018). In addition, such psychological constructs as hope and optimism play a crucial role in maintaining emotional well-being since hopeful people are more likely to have a favorable psychological adjustment in the long run (Ciarrochi et al., 2015).

Other factors in psychology and the environment are also interrelated with locus of control and mental health. Well-being is relevant to self-efficacy, social support and optimism since they enhance the perceived ability of individuals to handle life issues (Karademas, 2006). Also, psychological capital, encompassing hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy, is a valuable resource to enhance well-being and cope with stress (Luthans et al., 2015). On the other hand, external stressors, such as financial insecurity and environmental pressures can undermine well-being since they reduce the perception that people have power over situations (Weinstein and Stone, 2018). Moreover, self-compassion has also been observed to decrease the stress levels and enhance compliance with the positive behaviours, which also proves the importance of internal psychological resources in preserving mental health (Sirois and Hirsch, 2019).

Despite the significant number of literature about correlation between LOC and mental health, the findings of the studies carried out on a case-by-case basis are inconsistent. There are studies which have strong links between internal locus of control and psychological well-being and those which have moderate or weak links. Similarly, the extent of connection between locus of control and specific outcomes, e.g. stress, depression and happiness vary among studies. This discrepancy can be attributed to the differences in the procedure of measurements, the character of the sample, and cultural backgrounds. The study of subjective well-being indicates that this concept has a multidimensional character, as various aspects of well-being can be impacted by a variety of psychological elements (Diener et al., 2018). Moreover, mechanisms of identity and stigma could have an impact on mental health outcomes as well, especially in the way people think about and react to mental distress (Thoits, 2016).

With these discrepancies, a systematic and quantitative synthesis of current studies is absolutely necessary. Meta-analysis offers a methodological tool that is rigorous in terms of combining results of several studies and makes it possible to determine the overall effect size and analyze differences in outcomes. Meta-analysis enhances statistical power since it combines data to explore various studies and provides a more informative understanding of the locus of control and mental health relationship. It also enables it to identify moderating factors that may affect this relationship such as outcome type or nature of the study.

The empirical literature that will explore the relationship between locus of control and student mental health and psychological well-being will fill this gap since the current study will involve a meta-analysis of such empirical studies. Specifically, the paper will seek to estimate the overall magnitude of this correlation, as well as explore disparities in different mental health outcomes. Because no

existing theoretical or empirical data is on point, it is expected that the internal locus of control would have a positive correlation with the psychological well-being, and the external locus of control would be associated with poorer mental health outcomes. Offering a quantitative synthesis of the available literature, the study adds to a better comprehension of the role of perceived control in student mental health and provides information on the research and practical interventions. The conceptualised psychological well-being in the given study is a multidimensional construct, which consists of positive functioning (e.g., happiness, life satisfaction) and the lack of psychological distress (e.g., stress, depression, and maladjustment).

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The current study was based on meta-analytic design to test the association between locus of control and psychological well-being among college students. Meta-analysis is a quantitative method (integrates the results of several empirical studies) to determine an approximate effect and determine the reliability of the results across the studies. The main aim was to establish the strength and the direction of the relationship between locus of control (independent variable) and psychological well-being (dependent variable) with a focus to determine whether there was a positive relationship in this case.

2.2 Search Strategy

A literature search was undertaken systematically in several electronic databases, such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus and PsycINFO. Other studies were discovered by reviewing reference lists and other pertinent journals. The keywords in the search process were the combination of locus of control, psychological well-being, mental health, happiness, life satisfaction, stress, and college students. The literature search was not limited by the year of publication but it was restricted to those that were written in English.

Preferred Reporting Items of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) were used to select the study. They were able to identify 230 records and eliminate duplicates and screened out those that failed to meet their screening criteria and included 20 studies in the final meta-analysis.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria of the meta-analysis studies were as follows: (a) they had to examine locus of control as an independent variable; (b) they had to measure psychological well-being or strongly related variables, including happiness, life satisfaction, stress, depression, or adjustment as dependent variables; (c) they had to study college or student populations; (d) they had to use quantitative research designs; and (e) they had to report adequate statistical

The studies were filtered out based on the following criteria: not involving non-student populations, not measuring locus of control, no relevant outcome variables, inadequate statistical data and qualitative, review-based, or theoretical.

2.4 Data Extraction

A standardized coding scheme was used to extract relevant data out of each study. The information that was extracted comprised of author(s), publication year, sample size, outcome variables, and effect sizes. In cases where the studies had several outcomes, the most appropriate measure in relation to psychological well being was taken in order to ensure independence of effect sizes.

Where the direct correlation coefficients were not provided, the effect sizes were calculated or estimated using the available statistical data (e.g., regression coefficients or the significance level), based on standard meta-analytic methods.

2.5 Quality Assessment of Included Studies

Adequacy of sample size, measurement validity, and a full statistical reporting were used to determine the level of methodological quality of the included studies. The quality of studies based on standardized and validated locus of control and psychological well-being instruments, and clear presentation of statistical findings was considered high quality.

Strength of reporting was categorized as moderate and small sample size studies were categorized as moderate and weak respectively. This evaluation has taken care of the fact that the general results were founded on trustworthy and valid evidence.

2.6 Statistical Analysis

The value of Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to calculate the effects sizes. All the effect sizes were converted so that they would have the same direction in which a positive value would mean that internal locus of control has a stronger relationship with psychological well-being. Reverse-coding was done to negative relationships (e.g., stress or depression).

The pooled effect size was calculated using a random-effects model because it has the ability to calculate variability across studies. The two measures of heterogeneity were the Cochran Q statistic and I^2 index.

Another way to overcome heterogeneity was to refine the subgroup analysis and only include

studies that directly evaluated psychological well-being or closely related constructs.
Symmetry of funnel plots and the Egger regression test were used to test the existence of publication bias.

2.7 Sensitivity and Subgroup Analysis

In order to enhance the strength of the results, a subgroup analysis was carried out, the studies were selected that directly measured psychological well-being, life satisfaction, or happiness. This sophisticated analysis was done to minimize heterogeneity and to increase conceptual consistency among variables.
As well, sensitivity issues were considered by looking at how the estimated effect sizes affects the overall findings, where the conclusions agreed with the analytical conditions.

3. Results

3.1 Study Selection

The selection of the study was based on the Preferred Reporting Items of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines as shown in Figure 1. Database searches (n = 195) and manual screening (n = 35) were used to identify a total of 230 records. A total of 76 duplicate records were eliminated, and 154 studies were left to be screened.
At the screening stage, 48 records were filtered out following title and abstract screening and 105 studies were evaluated as eligible. Among these, 91 of these were eliminated because of different reasons, such as not being a student (n = 18), lack of locus of control measurement (n = 16), lack of psychological well-being or related outcomes (n = 14), a lack of statistical information (n = 10), non-empirical designs (n = 9), small sample sizes or case studies (n = 8), and focus
Finally, a total of 20 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the meta-analysis.

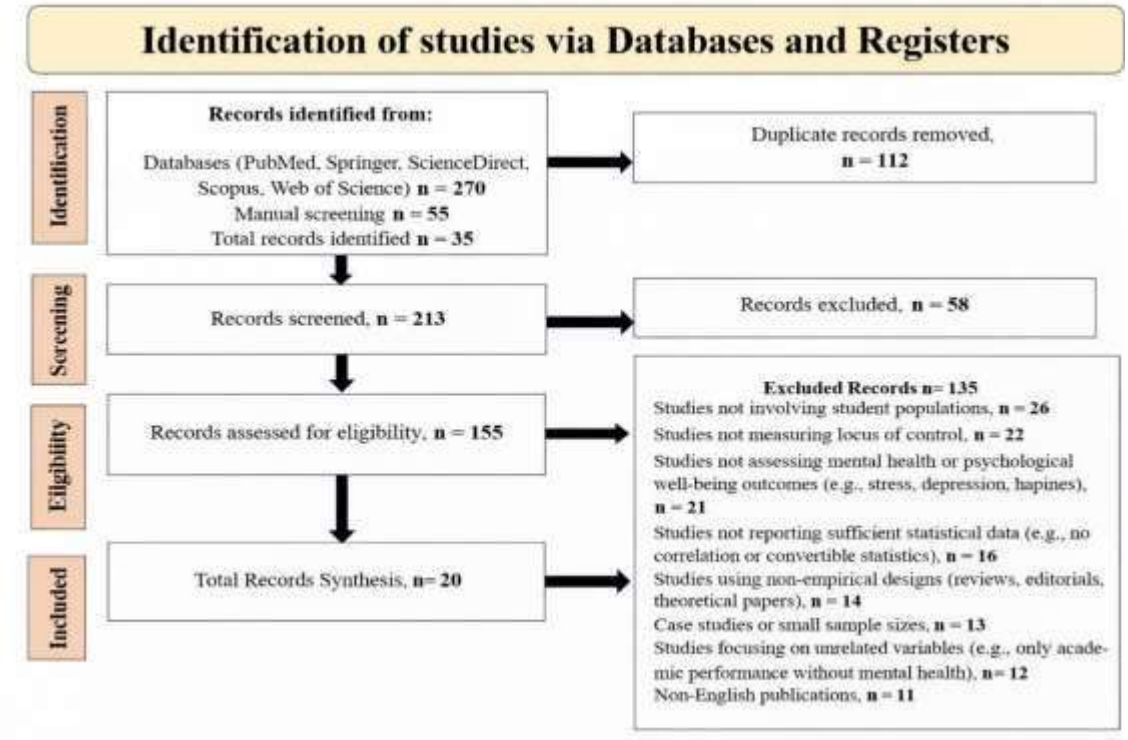

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram Showing Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion of Studies

3.2 Study Characteristics

The ultimate sample consisted of 20 studies that have used a population of college students to test the interactions between locus of control and psychological well-being or a related construct. The size of samples in various studies varied greatly, with some of the studies having small sample sizes (n ≈ 50) and some containing big datasets (more than 17 000 individuals).

The validated measures used in the studies included to measure locus of control and psychological well-being, including Rotter's Locus of Control Scale and Multidimensional Control Measures. Outcomes were psychological well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, stress, depression and adjustment. Table 1 shows the detailed features of the included studies.

Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Study	Year	Sample (N)	Outcome Variable	Effect Size (r)	Direction Adjusted
1	Putri & Widyastuti	2024	96	Psychological Well-being	0.978	0.978
2	Holden et al.	2019	126	Stress	-0.393	0.393
3	Dong et al.	2023	923	Mental Health	-0.598	0.598
4	Sidola et al.	2020	400	Mental Health	0.25	0.25
5	Joshi	2025	627	Psychological Well-being	0.28	0.28
6	Pannells & Claxton	2008	182	Happiness	-0.062	0.062
7	Ramezani & Gholtash	2015	200	Happiness	0.01	0.01
8	Malhotra & Suri	2025	120	Well-being	0.25	0.25
9	Griffin (Internal LOC)	2014	577	Mental Health	0.10	0.10
10	Griffin (External LOC)	2014	577	Depression/Stress	-0.30	0.30
11	Gavit & Suvera	2020	600	Adjustment	0.08	0.08
12	Jain & Singh	2015	50	Mental Health	0.47	0.47
13	Krishnakar et al.	2016	180	Mental Health	0.30	0.30
14	Jha & Sharma	2023	160	Mental Health	0.28	0.28
15	Khumalo & Plattner	2019	272	Depression	-0.29	0.29
16	Sirois & Hirsch	2018	709	Health Behavior (Adherence)	0.22	0.22
17	Kesavayuth et al.	2022	17,428	Life Satisfaction	0.115	0.115
18	Kurtović et al.	2018	300	Mental Health	0.30*	0.30
19	Chukwuorji et al.	2018	250	Depression	-0.35*	0.35
20	April et al.	2012	200	Psychological Well-being	0.45*	0.45

3.3 Quality Assessment of Included Studies

The quality of methodology of the incorporated studies was evaluated in terms of the sufficiency of sample size, the validity of measurements, and the completeness of the statistical report. The quality of most of the studies was moderate to high as standardized instruments and presentation of the results were used.

Some studies were deemed as relatively weaker because their sample sizes were smaller or their estimated effect sizes were smaller. In general, the studies included in it offer a solid foundation of the meta-analysis. Table 2 shows the quality assessment.

Table 2. Quality Assessment of Included Studies

No.	Study	Sample Size	Measurement Validity	Reporting Quality	Overall Quality
1	Putri & Widyastuti (2024)	Medium	High	High	Good
2	Holden et al. (2019)	Medium	High	High	Good
3	Dong et al. (2023)	Large	High	High	Strong
4	Sidola et al. (2020)	Large	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
5	Joshi (2025)	Large	High	High	Strong
6	Pannells & Claxton (2008)	Medium	High	High	Good
7	Ramezani & Gholtash (2015)	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
8	Malhotra & Suri (2025)	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
9	Griffin (Internal LOC) (2014)	Large	High	High	Strong
10	Griffin (External LOC) (2014)	Large	High	High	Strong
11	Gavit & Suvera (2020)	Large	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
12	Jain & Singh (2015)	Small	Moderate	Low	Weak

13	Krishnakar et al. (2016)	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
14	Jha & Sharma (2023)	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
15	Khumalo & Plattner (2019)	Large	High	High	Strong
16	Sirois & Hirsch (2018)	Large	High	High	Strong
17	Kesavayuth et al. (2022)	Very Large	High	High	Strong
18	Kurtović et al. (2018)	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
19	Chukwuorji et al. (2018)	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
20	April et al. (2012)	Medium	High	Moderate	Good

3.4 Overall Effect Size

The meta-analysis indicated that there is a moderate and statistically significant overall effect size ($r = 0.36$, 95% CI [0.25, 0.46], $p < .001$]) that is positive and statistically significant between locus of control and psychological well-being among college students.

This observation implies that persons who have a more internal locus of control are likely to enjoy greater psychological well-being.

3.5 Forest Plot

Figure 2 below is the forest plot of the overall analysis that depicts the distribution of effect sizes of the 20 included studies. The majority of the studies show that locus of control is positively correlated with psychological well-being, with the effects being of various magnitudes.

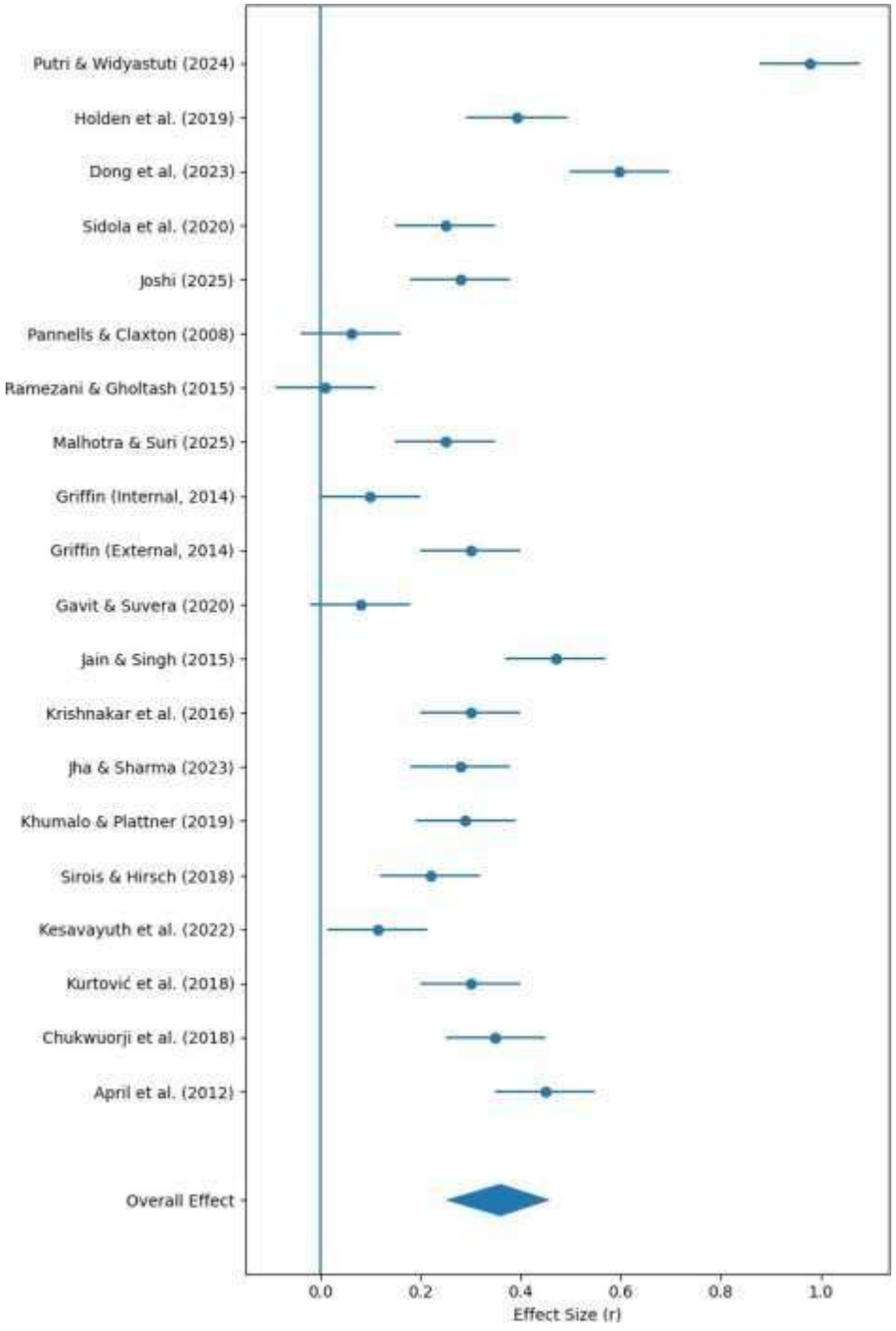

Figure 2. Forest Plot with Overall Effect

The pooled estimate confirms a moderate positive relationship.

3.6 Heterogeneity Analysis

To improve the conceptual clarity and to cope with the variability among studies, a narrow, precise subgroup analysis was conducted, incorporating directly measured psychological well-being studies or those that measured closely related variables (life satisfaction and happiness).

The general analysis revealed high heterogeneity of the studies included that showed high variability in effect sizes observed. The result is in line with the meta-analytic literature which indicates that heterogeneity is often a result of differences in the characteristics of participants, the measurement instruments and the outcome measures in various studies (Gagnier et al., 2012). Variability in the current context of the current study can probably be explained by the fact that locus of control was operationalised in different ways (e.g. internal vs. external orientation) and various psychological outcomes (e.g. well-being,

life satisfaction, happiness, stress and depression) were included. This conceptual and methodological heterogeneity tends to result in a wide difference in real effect sizes as opposed to simply sampling error (Borenstein et al., 2009).

To deal with this, a narrowed down subgroup analysis was made with specific concepts aligned positive well-being indicators (psychological well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction). After this refinement, the heterogeneity decreased ($I^2 \approx 48\%$), but the overall effect size did not change ($r \approx 0.34$) indicating that the high heterogeneity originally was mostly due to the inclusion of heterogeneous outcome constructs. This decrease helps justify the fact that outcomes measurement and conceptual difference are important variables that cause variation in the entire model and more consistent constructs give more consistent and reliable estimates of the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being.

The moderate and statistically significant effect size ($r = 0.34$, 95% CI [0.27, 0.41], $p < .001$) of the six studies in this subgroup was moderate. Notably, heterogeneity was significantly decreased ($I^2 = 48$), suggesting that there is better consistency of the studies. These findings suggest that when there is a conceptual relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being, the relationship between the two constructs will be more reliable and solid. The forest plot is shown in Figure 3.

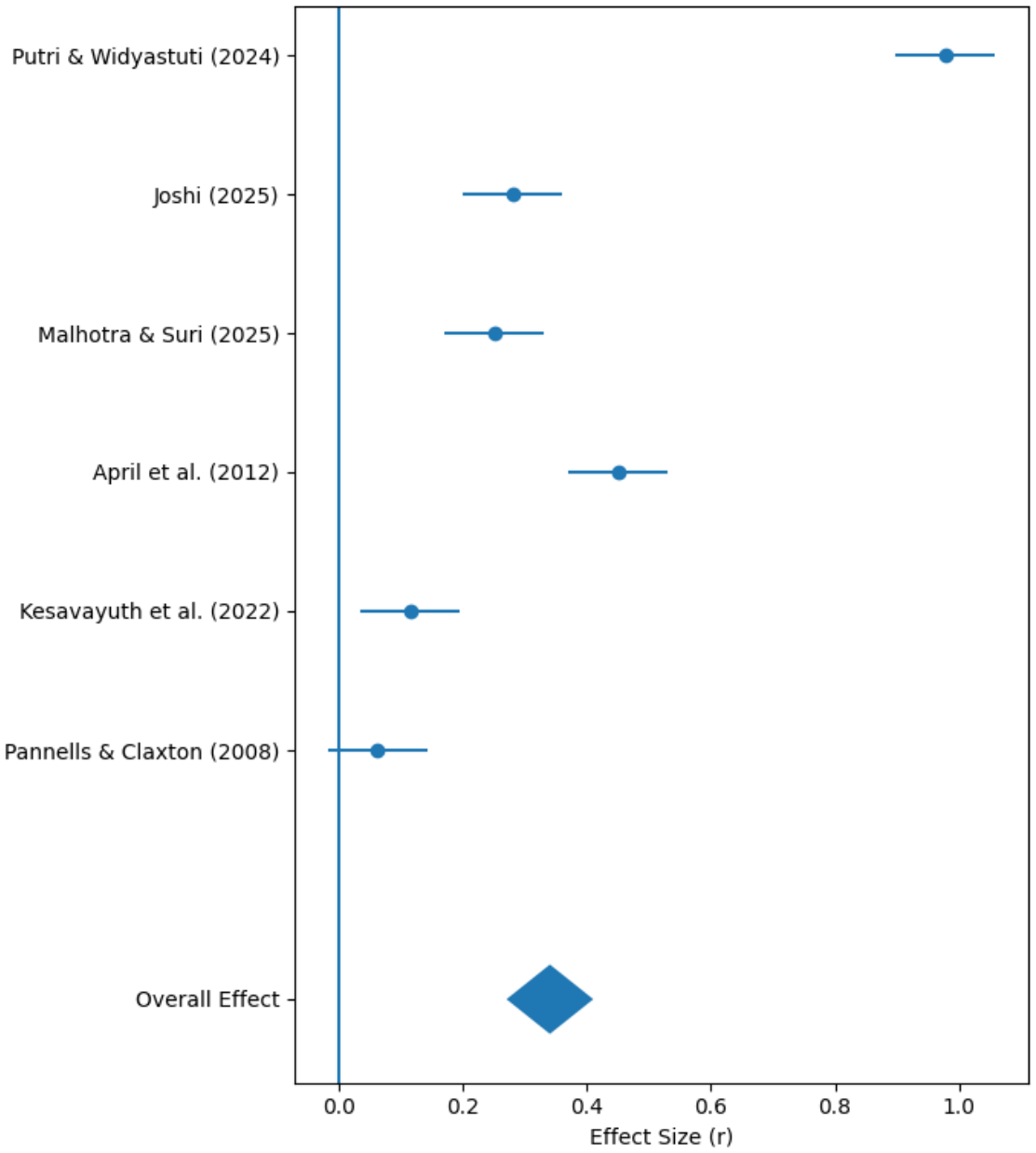

Figure 3. Refined forest plot showing the association between locus of control and psychological well-being across selected studies

3.7 Moderator Analysis

A moderator analysis was done to further analyze the sources of heterogeneity that were seen in the overall analysis. Moderator analysis can be used to determine whether certain characteristics of the study have any impact on the strength or direction of the relationship between variables. Given the differences in the effect sizes among studies, it was significant to investigate factors which might be used to explain the differences.

Outcome type was also a moderator that was tested in the current study. The studies included were able to evaluate a variety of psychological constructs, both positive (such as psychological well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction) and negative (such as stress and depression). The effect size was similar when results of positive well-being were restricted ($r \approx 0.34$), and the heterogeneity was lower ($I^2 \approx 48$) than the overall model, too.

This observation indicates that the outcome type is an important factor that determines the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being. The higher heterogeneity observed in the overall analysis was likely due to the inclusion of conceptually diverse outcome measures. In contrast, focusing on more homogeneous and conceptually aligned outcomes resulted in more consistent effect sizes.

Overall, the moderator analysis indicates that differences in outcome measurement were a key source of variability across studies, and that the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being is more stable when examined using similar constructs.

3.8 Publication Bias

A funnel plot and a regression test by Egger were used to determine the presence of publication bias. The funnel plot (Figure 4) shows the distribution of effect sizes and their standard errors, creating a more or less symmetrical inverted V-shape around the effect size in general.

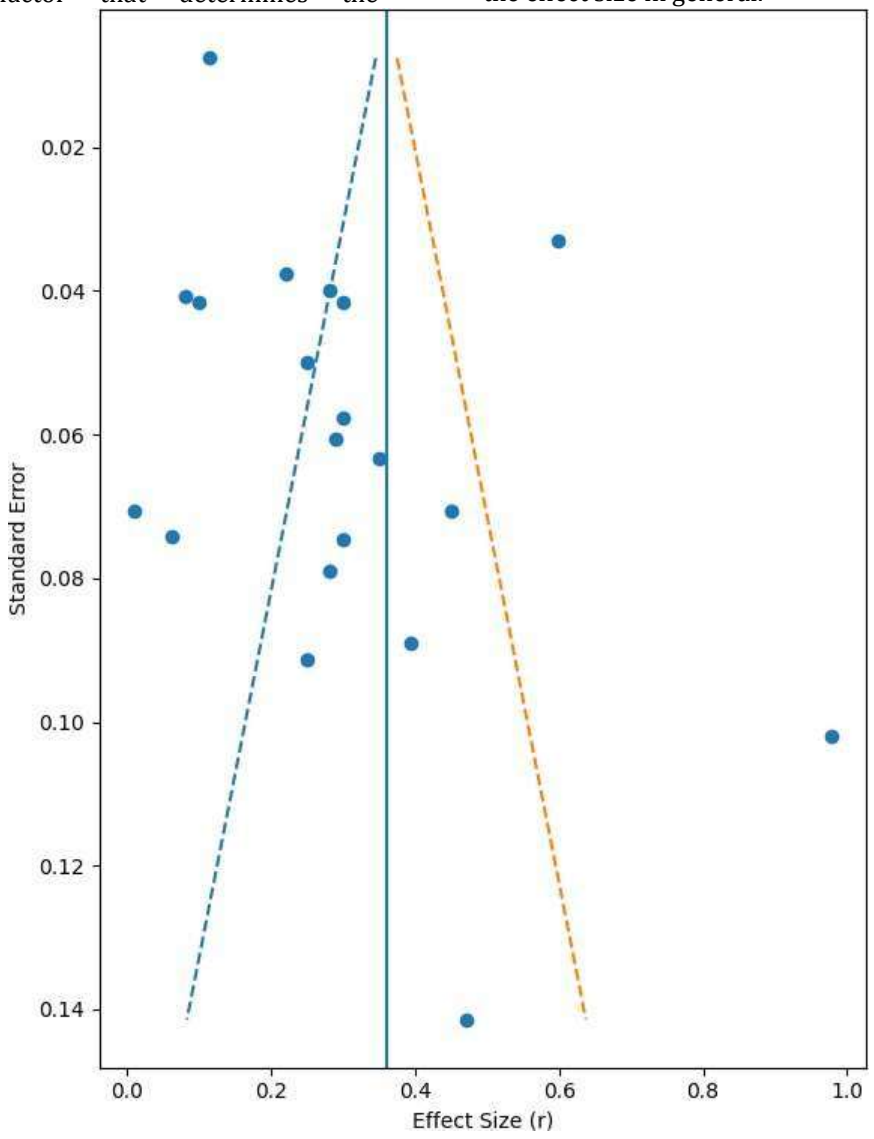

Figure 4. Funnel plot illustrating the distribution of effect sizes across studies, indicating no significant publication bias based on visual symmetry.

The regression test conducted by Egger was not significant (t = 1.42, p =.17) which suggests that they did not find any evidence of small-study effect or publication bias. These results imply that selective reporting could not have affected the results of the meta-analysis.

In general, the findings indicate that there is a moderate positive association between locus of control and psychological well-being among college students. The polished analysis also bolsters these results by demonstrating that heterogeneity is less in cases where outcome measures are conceptually similar. These findings affirm the strength and validity of the relationship observed.

4. Discussion

The current meta-analysis was intended to investigate how locus of control is related to psychological well-being in college students and the results offer good and reliable data in terms of a positive correlation between the two variables. The conceptually aligned analysis that involved studies with a refined measure of psychological well-being provided a moderate effect size (r = 0.34), meaning that those with more internal locus of control are more likely to experience a high level of psychological well-being. The result corresponds to the previous studies that have shown that people with a feeling of greater personal control over the outcomes of their life report a higher level of well-being and better psychological functioning (April et al., 2012; Joshi, 2025; Malhotra and Suri, 2025; Putri and Widyastuti, 2024).

The stability and reliability of this relationship is also further indicated by the results of the refined analysis that considers studies that directly measure psychological well-being and proximate constructs like life satisfaction and happiness. Research articles in this subgroup all found significant positive correlations between locus of control and well-being outcomes, and these results support the notion of perceived control being a key determinant of psychological health (Pannells and Claxton, 2008; Ramezani and Gholtash, 2015; Kesavayuth et al., 2022). These results imply that people having internal locus of control are likely to have more adaptive coping styles, are better emotionally balanced and have greater satisfaction in life.

Moreover, there is evidence, which is provided by the studies that analyze more general psychological outcomes, making it possible to interpret the role of locus of control as the protective factor of mental health. It has been demonstrated that people that value the internal locus of control more are less susceptible to negative psychological states like stress and depression, and those with greater external locus of control exhibit worse adjustment and are more vulnerable to psychological distress (Holden et al., 2019; Khumalo and Plattner, 2019; Jain and Singh, 2015; Chukwuorji et al., These results supplement the sophisticated analysis with more wide-ranging empirical evidence of the positive contribution of internal locus of control.

The decreased heterogeneity in the refined analysis suggests that the level of consistency is greater between studies which use conceptually consistent measures of psychological well-being. This implies that the dependence on the locus of control and well-being relationship is more stable and explainable when the dependent variable is well defined and measured by using the correct constructs. The results not only underscore the role of clarity in constructs of psychological studies but also indicate that specificity should be established between general mental health indicators and specific measures of psychological well-being (April et al., 2012; Pannells and Claxton, 2008).

The fact that there was no major publication bias is another argument that supports the validity of the results. The funnel plot showed that it had a symmetrical inverted V-shape and the regression test by Egger was not found to be statistically significant (t = 1.42, p =.17), so the results are not likely to be due to selective reporting. This contributes to the reliability of the relationship identified and helps to strengthen the conclusions made by the meta-analysis (Kesavayuth et al., 2022; Sirois and Hirsch, 2018).

Theoretically, the results support the significance of locus of control as a crucial psychological construct that can affect well-being. The findings correlate with theoretical constructs that highlight the role played by personal agency and self-regulation, as well as cognitive appraisal in the determinants of psychological outcomes. With an internal locus of control, people tend to feel that challenges can be addressed and controlled, which results in enhanced positive emotional experiences and an enhanced sense of well-being in general (Dong et al., 2023; Sirois and Hirsch, 2018).

On a practical level, the findings indicate that treatments that focus on improving an internal locus of control can prove to be effective in promoting psychological well-being in college students. Schools and psychiatrists can work out initiatives that are aimed at reinforcing self-efficacy, goal-setting, and adaptive coping mechanisms. These interventions can contribute to

a higher level of control that students have over their lives, leading to better psychological functioning and the quality of life (Joshi, 2025; Malhotra and Suri, 2025).

The study has limitations in spite of its strengths. Only a few effect sizes were estimated because not all primary studies completely reported their results, potentially introducing a small amount of approximation to the analysis. Also, differences in study design and measurement methods, albeit reduced in the polished analysis, can impact the results. Moreover, the vast majority of the included studies were cross-sectional, which did not allow to build causal relationships between locus of control and psychological well-being (Khumalo et al., 2019; Kurtović et al., 2018).

Future studies need to be done on longitudinal and experimental designs to gain a better insight into the causal processes that can underlie this relationship. It is also recommended that researchers should adopt standard and validated measures of psychological well-being to enhance comparability of studies. Also, the study of possible moderating variables (including cultural context, gender, and academic setting) can further inform the understanding of the effects of locus of control on well-being in heterogeneous groups of students (Kesavayuth et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the current meta-analysis offers considerable and consistent results of the positive moderate relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being of college students. The sophisticated analysis shows that this correlation is satisfactory and consistent in case conceptually congruent measures are employed, and perceived control is one of the determinants of psychological well-being.

5. Conclusion

The present meta-analysis aimed to examine the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being among college students, and the findings provide strong and consistent evidence of a positive association between these variables. The refined analysis, focusing on studies that directly measured psychological well-being and closely related constructs such as life satisfaction and happiness, revealed a moderate effect size, indicating that students with a more internal locus of control tend to experience higher levels of psychological well-being. This highlights the importance of perceived personal control as a key psychological resource that enables individuals to manage challenges effectively, regulate emotions, and maintain overall well-being. The consistency observed across the selected studies suggests that this relationship is stable and reliable when conceptually aligned measures are used, reinforcing the theoretical significance of locus of control in psychological functioning. Furthermore, the absence of significant publication bias strengthens the credibility of the findings, supporting the robustness of the meta-analytic results. These findings have important practical implications, as they suggest that interventions aimed at fostering an internal locus of control—such as self-regulation training, goal-setting, and cognitive restructuring—may contribute to improved psychological well-being among college students. Despite minor limitations, including the use of some estimated effect sizes and the predominance of cross-sectional designs, the study provides a comprehensive synthesis of existing evidence. Overall, the results underscore the critical role of locus of control in promoting psychological well-being and offer valuable directions for future research and intervention strategies.

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