ROTTER (1966) CONCEPTUALIZED locus of control (LOC) as a generalized construct and assumed that internality and externality are opposite ends of a continuum. The Internal–External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the most popular assessment of LOC, has been criticized on several grounds. The unidimensionality of the LOC construct has been called into question, underscoring the need to have separate measurements for internality and externality. Additionally, goal-specific measures of LOC are better predictors than generalized LOC measures of behavior associated with their respective goals (Lefcourt, Von Baeyer, Ware, & Cox, 1979).

The Multidimensional–Multiattributinal Causality Scale (MMCS; Lefcourt et al., 1979) consists of four subscales, two that concern internal attributions (the
Task-Internal and Person-Internal subscales) and two that concern external attributions (the Task-External and Person-External subscales). The MMCS has been shown to have adequate reliability and validity.

Need for achievement (NACH) and need for affiliation (NAFF) have been extensively researched by McClelland (1961, 1985). Past research has documented a positive correlation between NACH and individualism in Western cultures (Spence, 1985; Waterman, 1984). However, studies using Asian samples have shown that the positive association between NACH and individualism may not be universal and that NACH may be associated with NAFF and concern for interdependence (rather than independence; Hui & Villareal, 1989). Individualism-collectivism is a cultural variable reflecting values of different cultures (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). Individualists define the self independently of groups and place personal goals above the goals of collectives (Hui, 1988). In contrast, collectivists value interdependence and view the self as an aspect of the larger group (Triandis, 1984). The Collectivism Scale (Singh & Vasoo, 1993) we used closely parallels Hui’s (1988) Individualism-Collectivism Scale and was validated for use in Singapore.

Our goal was to explore the effects of domain-specific LOC on NACH and NAFF. We expected to find a positive correlation between NACH and NAFF, a paradoxical phenomenon not found in research among Western people. In addition, we expected collectivism to be positively correlated with both NACH and NAFF.

The participants were 335 students (252 men, 83 women) at the National University of Singapore. The mean age was 21.91 years (SD = 1.88) for men and 20.25 years (SD = 1.52) for women. All of the students completed four scales: the MMCS, the Collectivism Scale, the NACH Scale (Mehrabian & Bank, 1978), and the NAFF Scale (Mehrabian, 1970). Participation was voluntary, and responses were anonymous.

All of the scales were reliable; the Cronbach alphas were as follows: Task-Internal, .77; Task-External, .83; Person-Internal, .74; Person-External, .75; Collectivism, .80; NACH, .90; and NAFF, .80. We conducted two multiple regression analyses: Task-Internal, Task-External, and Collectivism explained 14.8% of the total variance in NACH scores, \( R^2 = .148, p < .01 \). Person-Internal, Person-External, and Collectivism explained 19.8% of the total variance in NAFF scores, \( R^2 = .198, p < .01 \). Neither of the person-oriented variables (i.e., person-internal and person-external) emerged as significant predictors of NACH. Likewise, task-internal and task-external were not significant predictors of NAFF. We obtained a positive correlation between NACH and NAFF, \( r = .14, p < .01 \), and found that collectivism was positively related to NACH, \( r = .20, p < .001 \), and NAFF, \( r = .40, p < .001 \).

Overall, the results suggest that domain-specific measures of LOC are better predictors of behavior for respective domain-relevant goals than for goals in the nonrelated realm. (Affiliation is, for example, a domain-relevant goal of the person-oriented domain but not of the task-oriented domain.) In addition, the positive correlation we found between NACH and NAFF provides support for the argument that achievement in the Asian context does not necessarily encompass individualism, a key element in Western conceptualizations of achievement. Among Asians, achievement-related behavior is seen as an expression of a motive within a socially interdependent context with values emphasizing collectivism.

REFERENCES


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