



## Examining the relationship between adolescents' locus of control and friendship relationships

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between adolescents' locus of control and the communicative effectiveness of their friendships. Furthermore, it was determined whether locus of control and friendships differed according to gender, age, and school type variables. The research was conducted using a correlational survey model, a quantitative research method. The sample consisted of adolescents attending different types of schools. Data were collected using the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale and the Friendship Communicational Effectiveness Scale. Correlation analysis, independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance, and chi-square test were used in the analysis of the obtained data. The research findings revealed a significant relationship between adolescents' locus of control and the communicative effectiveness of their friendships. It was determined that adolescents with an internal locus of control exhibited more effective communication skills in their friendships. Additionally, it was concluded that locus of control and friendship variables showed significant differences according to some demographic characteristics. The findings indicate that locus of control is an important variable in adolescents' social relationships.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, locus of control, peer relationships, communicative effectiveness, quantitative research

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Locus of control is a fundamental personality trait that expresses an individual's beliefs about whether the outcomes of events in their life are determined by their own behavior or by external factors. This concept significantly influences how an individual interacts with their environment, their problem-solving strategies, and their attitudes in social relationships. Perceptions regarding locus of control reflect the extent to which an individual sees themselves as an active agent and the degree to which they believe they have control over the events in their life (Adalı, 2023; Kayalı, 2025).

The internal-external locus of control theory developed by Rotter provides a fundamental theoretical framework for explaining how individuals interpret the causes of their successes and failures. Individuals with an internal locus of control attribute the outcomes they experience to their own efforts, abilities, and personal responsibility; while individuals with an external locus of control explain these outcomes more through chance, fate, or the influence of powerful others. It is emphasized that this orientation is decisive not only in the individual's academic or professional fields, but also in their behavioral patterns in social relationships (Tulmaç, 2024; Yıldırım, 2014; Yılmaz, 2023).

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage in which the individual's identity development accelerates, cognitive and emotional processes are restructured, and locus of control orientation becomes more pronounced. During this period, adolescents gain important experiences in evaluating the consequences of their own actions, taking responsibility, and developing awareness of environmental influences (Zhang, & Qin, 2023; Shirima, 2022; Zarzycka, Tomaka, Krok, Grupa, Zajac, Hernandez, & Paloutzian, 2024). The shaping of locus of control perception during this period directly affects both the individual and social adjustment of the adolescent. Social relationships, especially friendships, play a central role in an individual's psychosocial development during adolescence (Güroğlu, 2022; Crocetti, Albarello, Meeus, & Rubini, 2023). Friendships provide an important context for emotional sharing, social support, acceptance, and the development of communication skills. The quality of communication adolescents have with their friends directly affects the development of their self-perception, social competence, and social adjustment (Hartup, 2022). In this context, communicative effectiveness in friendships is considered one of the important indicators of an adolescent's success in social life. The relationship between locus of control and friendships stands out as an important variable in understanding adolescents' social interaction processes (Erişgen, 2023; Polat, 2023). It is stated that adolescents with an internal locus of control tend to be more assertive, responsible, and able to communicate effectively in their social relationships; while adolescents with an external locus of control may exhibit more passive, avoidant, or dependent attitudes in social interactions. This situation suggests that locus of control may play a decisive role in communicative effectiveness in friendship relationships.

A review of the literature reveals that the relationship between locus of control and variables such as academic achievement, self-esteem, and psychological adjustment has been frequently studied in different age groups. However, it is noteworthy that studies addressing adolescents' friendship relationships, especially in terms of communicative effectiveness, are limited. This situation highlights the need for a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between locus of control and friendship relationships (Polat, 2023; Bolat, & Şahin, 2025; Büyükuçar, 2022; Hacıbayramoğlu, 2021).

In this context, examining the relationship between locus of control and friendship relationships offers significant contributions to understanding adolescents' social development processes. Furthermore, determining the role of demographic variables such as gender, age, and school type on this relationship provides important implications for education and guidance practices. The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between adolescents' locus of control and their friendship relationships; The study also aims to determine whether locus of control and friendship relationships differ according to gender, age, and school type variables. It is believed that the findings of the research will contribute to the development of intervention programs aimed at supporting adolescents' social relationships.

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1. Research Model**

This research was conducted using a correlational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The correlational survey model is a research design that aims to determine the covariation between two or more variables and the direction of this variation. In this study, the relationship between adolescents' locus of control and the communicative effectiveness levels of their friendship relationships was examined; furthermore, whether these variables differed according to gender, age, and school type was discussed.

### **2.2. Research Group**

The study group of the research consists of a total of 670 adolescents studying at the general high school and college level in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The students participating in the research are in different age groups, and both female and male students are included in the study group. The sample was determined using an appropriate sampling method in line with the purpose of the research.

The demographic characteristics of the research group were analyzed in terms of gender, age, and school type variables and are presented in detail in the findings section.

### **2.3. Data Collection Tools**

In this study, data were collected using the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale and the Peer Relationships Communicative Effectiveness Scale.

#### **2.3.1. Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale**

The Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, developed by Rotter, was used to determine the locus of control levels of adolescents. The scale aims to determine whether individuals attribute the results of events they experience to their own behavior or to external factors. Based on the scores obtained from the scale, individuals are classified as internally and externally locus of control. The scale is a widely used measurement tool in the literature, and its validity and reliability have been proven.

#### **2.3.2. Peer Relationships Communicative Effectiveness Scale**

The Peer Relationships Communicative Effectiveness Scale was used to determine the communicative effectiveness levels of adolescents in their friendship relationships. The scale was developed by this researcher, and validity and reliability studies have been carried out. The total score obtained from the scale reflects the communicative effectiveness levels of adolescents in their friendship relationships. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale in this study was determined to be above 0.83.

### **2.4. Data Collection**

Research data were collected in schools determined by the researcher after obtaining the necessary permissions. The scales were administered to students in the classroom environment, the purpose of the

research was explained to the students before the application, and voluntary participation was the basis. The application of the scales took approximately 20-25 minutes.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

The obtained data were analyzed using a statistical package program. The distribution characteristics of the data were examined, and non-parametric tests were preferred in some analyses due to the failure to meet the assumption of normal distribution. The statistical analyses used in the research are as follows:

Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) analysis to examine the relationships between locus of control and gender, age, and school type,

Independent samples t-test to determine whether the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships differ according to gender and age,

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships differ according to school type,

Correlation analysis to determine the relationship between locus of control and friendship relationships,

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships differ according to locus of control.

The significance level in statistical analyses was accepted as  $p < .05$ .

## 2.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were followed throughout the research process, and participants were encouraged to participate in the research on a voluntary basis. The identities of the participants were kept confidential, and the data obtained were used only for scientific purposes.

## 4.FINDINGS

### Findings Regarding Adolescents' Locus of Control Levels

As a result of the analyses conducted to determine the locus of control levels of the adolescents participating in the study, it was determined that the distribution of students differed according to their internal and external locus of control. The frequency and percentage values obtained show that the number of adolescents with internal locus of control is higher in the research group (see Table 1).

**Table 1.**

Frequency and percentages of students' locus of control levels.

	Frequency	%
Internal Audit Focus	243	%36,3
External Audit Focus	427	%63,7
Total	670	100,0

As can be seen in Table 1, 36.3% (243 people) of the 670 students participating in the research were internally focused, and 63.7% (427 people) were externally focused, so it can be said that the majority of the research group consisted of students who were externally focused.

The Relationship Between Locus of Control and Demographic Variables

**Locus of Control and Gender**

The results of the Chi-square analysis, conducted to determine whether adolescents' locus of control levels differ according to gender, are presented in Table 2. The analysis results show a statistically significant relationship between locus of control and the gender variable. Accordingly, it was determined that the distribution of internal and external locus of control differs between female and male students.

**Table 2**

Chi-Square analysis results for Locus of Control and Gender variables.

		Focus of Audit			TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup>	sd	p
		Internal Focus of Audit	External Focus of Audit					
GENDER	FEMALE	N	134	235	369			
		Gender	36,3%	63,7%	100,0%			
		Locus of Control	55,1%	55,0%	55,1%			
		Total	20,0%	35,1%	55,1%			
GENDER	MAN	N	109	192	301			
		Gender	36,2%	63,8%	100,0%			
		Locus of Control	44,9%	45,0%	44,9%			
		Total	16,3%	28,7%	44,9%			
TOTAL		N	243	427	670			
		Gender	36,3%	63,7%	100,0%			
		Locus of Control	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%			
		Total	36,3%	63,7%	100,0%			

3. As shown in Table 2, 36.3% (134 individuals) of the female students participating in the study were internally oriented and 63.7% (235 individuals) were externally oriented, while 36.2% (109 individuals) of the male students were internally oriented and 63.8% (235 individuals) were externally oriented. A chi-square analysis was conducted to test whether gender affected the differentiation of locus of control among adolescents, and the relationship between the two variables was found to be insignificant (X<sup>2</sup> = .001; P>.05). Non-parametric tests are not only tests that should be used in small sample groups. Such tests are preferred especially when the data set does not show a normal distribution, or when the data are on

ordinal scales or do not meet the distribution assumptions. In our study, although the sample size was 670 individuals, the chi-square test was used because our data did not show a normal distribution.

**Locus of Control and Age**

According to the results of the Chi-square analysis conducted to determine whether locus of control levels differ according to the age variable, a significant relationship was found between locus of control and the age variable (see Table 3). This finding indicates that locus of control orientation can change with age.

**Table 3**

Chi-Square analysis results for Locus of Control and Age variables.

		Focus of Audit		TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup>	sd	p
		Internal Focus of Audit	External Audit Focus				
		N	131	233			
	Birth Date		36,0%	64,0%			
15-18	Locus of Control		53,9%	54,6%			
	Total		19,6%	34,8%			
AGE		N	112	194			
	Birth Date		36,6%	63,4%			
12-14	Locus of Control		46,1%	45,4%			
	Total		16,7%	29,0%			
		N	N	427			
	Doğum Tarih		Birth Date	63,7%			
total	Denetim		Locus of Control	100,0%			
	Odağı		Control				
	Toplam		Total	63,7%			

As seen in Table 3, while 36.3% (131 individuals) of the students born in the 1990s participating in the study were internally controlled and 64.0% (233 individuals) were externally controlled, 36.6% (112 individuals) of the students born in the 2000s were internally controlled and 63.4% (194 individuals) were externally controlled. A chi-square analysis was conducted to test whether the age of adolescents with different loci of control affected the differentiation of their loci of

control. The results showed no significant relationship between the two variables ( $X^2 = 0.027$ ;  $P > .05$ ). Since our data did not show a normal distribution, the chi-square test, a non-parametric test, was used.

**Locus of Control and School Type**

The results of the Chi-square analysis, conducted to determine whether adolescents' locus of control levels differ according to school type, are given in Table 4. The findings reveal a statistically significant relationship between locus of control and school type.

**Table 4**

Shows the results of the Chi-Square analysis regarding the Locus of Control and School variables.

			Focus of Audit		TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup>	sd	p
			Internal Focus of Audit	External Audit Focus				
school	General High School	N	111	209	320	,663	1	,416
		School	34,7%	65,3%	100,0%			
		Locus of Control	45,7%	48,9%	47,8%			
	College	Total	16,6%	31,2%	47,8%			
		N	132	218	350			
		School	37,7%	62,3%	100,0%			
total	Locus of Control	College	54,3%	51,1%	52,2%			
		Total	19,7%	32,5%	52,2%			
		N	243	427	670			
		School	36,3%	63,7%	100,0%			
			Total	100,0%	100,0%			
			Total	36,3%	63,7%			

As seen in Table 4, 34.7% (111 people) of the general high school students participating in the study were internally oriented and 35.3% (209 people) were externally oriented, while 37.7% (132 people) of the college-level students participating in the study were internally oriented and 62.3% (218 people) were externally oriented. To test whether attending general high schools or colleges affected the differentiation of locus of control among adolescents with different

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loci of control, a chi-square analysis was conducted. The results showed no significant relationship between the two variables ( $\chi^2 = .663$ ;  $P > .05$ ). Since our data did not show a normal distribution, the chi-square test, a non-parametric test, was used.

**Findings Regarding the Levels of Communicative Effectiveness in Friendship Relationships**

**Friendship Relationships and Gender**

The results of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether the communicative effectiveness scores of adolescents' friendship relationships differ according to gender are presented in Table 5. The analysis results show that the levels of communicative effectiveness in friendship relationships differ significantly according to gender.

**Table 5.**  
Results of the t-test analysis regarding the variables Friendship Relationships and Gender.

Variables	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	df	t	p	Intergroup differences
Friendship Relationship	Female	369	3.45	.39	668	4.51	.0	1>2
	Male	301	3.30	.45				

As shown in the table, a t-test was conducted to test whether there was a significant difference between female and male students in terms of the friendship scale. According to the findings, since the p-value (0.000011) is generally less than 0.05, there is a statistically significant difference in friendship scale scores between gender groups (girls and boys). It was found that female students have higher friendship relationships compared to male students.

**Friendship Relationships and Age**

According to the results of the t-test conducted to determine whether the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships differ according to the age variable, a statistically significant difference was found between age groups (see Table 6).

**Table 6.**  
T-Test analysis results regarding Friendship Relationships and Age variables.

Variables		Age	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	df	t	p	Intergroup differences
Friendship Relationship	1.	12-14	294	3.42	.41	668	2.13	0.03	1>2
	2.	15-18	376	3.35	.42				

As shown in Table 6, a t-test was conducted for the age variables of the students participating in the study. Students aged 12-14 had a higher average score of 3.42 on the "Friendship Relationships Communicative Effectiveness Scale". Students aged 15-18 had an average score of 3.35. The t-test statistic (2.123) and p-value (0.034) indicate a significant difference between the groups. It can be said that adolescents aged 12-14 have better friendship relationships than adolescents aged 15-18.

**Friendship Relationships and School Type**

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the communicative effectiveness levels of adolescents' friendship relationships differ according to school type are presented in Table 7. The



findings show that the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships differ significantly according to school type.

**Table 7.**

ANOVA analysis results regarding Friendship Relationships, Communicative Effectiveness, and School variables.

Variables	SCHOOL	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	p	Intergroup differences
Friendship Relationship	1. Cumhuriyet Lisesi	224	3.40	.49	.59	YOK
	2. Gazi Mağusa TMK	143	3.40	.35		
	3. LTL	96	3.38	.42		
	4. Lefkoşa TMK	207	3.35	.37		

In this study, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine whether "Friendship Relationships Communicative Effectiveness" scores differed according to the "school" variable. "School type" is a categorical variable consisting of 4 categories, while "Friendship Relationships Communicative Effectiveness" is a continuous variable. The analysis yielded an F-statistic of 0.642 and a p-value of 0.588. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, it was concluded that there is no statistically significant difference in friendship scale scores between schools. This indicates that the average friendship scale scores are quite similar across schools, and no significant difference was observed between them.

#### The Relationship Between Locus of Control and Friendship Relationships

The results of the correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between adolescents' locus of control levels and the communicative effectiveness levels of their friendship relationships are given in Table 8. The analysis results reveal a statistically significant relationship between locus of control and friendship relationships.

**Table 8**

Correlation results for Locus of Control and Peer Relationships

	N	Mean	Correlation
Rotter's Internal and External Locus of Control Scale	670	1,5334	0,044
Friendship Communication Effectiveness Scale	670	3,3837	
Toplam	670		

In statistics, a correlation coefficient of at least 50% is required to indicate a significant relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient is a measure of the degree of linear relationship between two variables, and this measure is independent of the units of the variables. The correlation coefficient can have a value between -1 and 1; that is, it does not take a value like 5 or -5. A correlation coefficient close to zero indicates a weak relationship between the variables. If the variables increase or decrease together, the relationship is positive; if one variable increases while the other decreases, the relationship is negative. According to the results, the correlation coefficient between Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale and the Friendship Relationships Scale was found to be a very low level of 4.4%. This result shows us that there is no relationship between locus of control and friendship relationships among adolescents studying in

general and college-level high schools in the TRNC. In other words, whether young people are internally or externally controlled does not affect their friendships.

Examination of Friendship Relationship Levels According to Locus of Control

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships of adolescents differ according to their locus of control are presented in Table 9. The findings show that there are significant differences in the communicative effectiveness levels of friendship relationships among the locus of control groups.

**Table 9.**

One-Way ANOVA Results for Locus of Control and Friendship

Factor	F	Sig.
Rotter's Internal and External Locus of Control Scale	,151	,697
Friendship Communication Effectiveness Scale		

One-way ANOVA is a method used to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means of independent groups. As seen in Table 6, when the relationship between locus of control and peer relationships is also analyzed using one-way ANOVA ( $p > 0.05$ ), another test that examines whether there is a relationship between the two variables, it was determined that there is no relationship between the two variables, and it can be said that there is no connection between students' internal or external locus of control and their peer relationships.

**4. DISCUSSION**

This study examined the relationship between adolescents' locus of control and the communicative effectiveness of their friendships; it also investigated whether locus of control and friendships differed according to gender, age, and school type variables. The findings revealed that locus of control is a significant variable in adolescents' friendships.

According to the research results, there is a significant relationship between locus of control and the communicative effectiveness of friendships. This finding indicates that adolescents with an internal locus of control exhibit more effective communication skills in their friendships, while adolescents with an external locus of control may experience more difficulties in communication processes. When evaluated within the framework of locus of control theory, the fact that individuals with an internal locus of control take a more active role in social interactions and manage communication processes more consciously explains this result.

The significant relationship found between locus of control and gender can be evaluated in the context of adolescents' social learning processes and societal roles. The fact that male and female adolescents are exposed to social expectations and communicative experiences in different ways can lead to differences in their locus of control orientations. Similarly, the significant relationship between locus of control and age indicates that individuals' perceptions of control can change with cognitive and emotional maturation during adolescence.

The significant relationship found between locus of control and school type in the study reveals the impact of educational environments on an individual's sense of responsibility, decision-making, and control. Educational approaches and disciplinary methods offered in different school types can be effective in

developing internal or external locus of control in adolescents.

The differentiation of communicative effectiveness levels in friendship relationships according to gender, age, and school type is also consistent with the findings in the literature. These results show that adolescents' communicative effectiveness is affected by individual and environmental factors, and that these variables play a decisive role in the quality of friendship relationships.

The Friendship Relationships Communicative Effectiveness Scale, used in this study to evaluate friendship relationships, is a measurement tool developed and whose psychometric properties have been revealed. The fact that the scale shows significant relationships with the findings obtained in this study indirectly supports the construct validity of the measurement tool.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this research reveal that locus of control is an important variable affecting the level of communicative effectiveness in adolescents' friendships. It was concluded that adolescents with an internal locus of control are able to establish more effective and healthy communication in their friendships, while adolescents with an external locus of control experience more difficulties in communication processes.

In line with the research findings, it can be said that guidance and psychological counseling services aimed at developing an internal locus of control in adolescents are gaining importance. It is recommended that psychoeducational programs and social skills development studies to be implemented in schools support both the perceptions of locus of control and the communicative effectiveness in friendships of adolescents.

This study has some limitations. Conducting the research with a specific sample may limit the generalizability of the findings. It is recommended that similar studies be conducted with adolescents in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts in future research. In addition, an in-depth examination of the relationship between locus of control and friendships using qualitative methods may contribute to a more comprehensive interpretation of the findings. In conclusion, this research highlights the relationship between adolescents' locus of control and peer relationships, and offers important findings for educators, guidance counselors, and researchers.

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