

Rotter J B. Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychol. Monogr.* 80:1-28, 1966.
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The effects of reinforcement on preceding behavior depend in part on whether or not the reinforcement is perceived as contingent on the person's behavior. Acquisition and performance differ in chance versus skill situations. Stable individual differences in expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement in the same situations can be validly measured. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*[®] (SSCI)[®] indicates that this paper has been cited over 2,735 times since 1966.]

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"This monograph, published in 1966, was an analysis of work begun many years earlier, first as part of my graduate students' research and then as a four-year project supported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research. The dissertations of E. Jerry Phares¹ and William James² were important starts in test construction and initial data gathering, and two colleagues and co-investigators of the research grant, Melvin Seeman and Shepherd Liverant, made important conceptual as well as empirical contributions. The forced choice personality test (I-E Scale) that was presented in the monograph was the fifth revision of a test which first appeared in Phares's dissertation and was revised in James's dissertation.

"By my own estimate, the most important reason for the interest in internal versus external control of reinforcement was the 'real world' sociopolitical concerns of psychologists and other social scientists of the times and the implications of the work for applied

problems. It is interesting that my own original interest was theoretical; that is, a discovery that changes in expectancies were systematically predictable from whether or not the person perceived his or her own actions as the cause of rewards or if he or she saw rewards as not contingent on his or her own behavior. However, by the time this monograph was published the country was involved in the Vietnam War, the student revolution, the black riots, Watergate, and the assassinations. Interest in social action ran high and there was a great deal of disillusionment accompanying people's awareness of their inability to control events important to their lives. Social scientists' interests often reflect their sociopolitical concerns. Many of these problems, such as social action taking behavior in blacks, response to political appeals, efficiency in the practice of psychotherapy, and the effectiveness of self-treatment regimes in medical rehabilitation had potentially important applications and had a special appeal.

"A word should be said about the form of publication. Some of the research reported in the monograph was previously published, some was in press or being prepared for publication, some was only available in the form of unpublished theses and dissertations, and some data were presented only in the monograph. The totality added up to more than the sum of the parts. Without the monograph, most readers would have seen only a small part of the data and perhaps would have been interested but not overly impressed. It seems to me that programmatic research suffers when it is published only piecemeal, so that the reader does not get in one place and at one time the overview of history, theory, empirical data, and potential applications.

"If this analysis is true, it follows that less publications of individual, isolated, non-theoretical articles and more publications of programmatic empirical-theoretical articles and monographs might increase the rate at which stable, major increments in knowledge occur in psychology. More recent work in the field has been published by H.M. Lefcourt³ and me."⁴

1. Phares E J. *Changes in expectancy in skill and change situations*. PhD dissertation. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 1955.
2. James W H. *Internal versus external control of reinforcements as a basic variable in learning theory*. PhD dissertation. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 1957.
3. Lefcourt H M, ed. *Research with the locus of control construct*. Vol. 1. *Assessment methods*. New York: Academic Press, 1981.
4. Rotter J B. Some problems and misconceptions related to the construct of internal versus external control of reinforcement. *J. Consult. Clin. Psychol.* 43:56-67, 1975.