

The Impact of Locus of Control on Individual Performance for Shopfloor Employees in Manufacturing Industry.

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Received: 30/06/2025;

Revision: 12/07/2025;

Accepted: 18/07/2025;

Published: 04/08/2025

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is focused on finding and examining the effect and significance of individual employee Locus of control (LOC) on their performance in manufacturing companies for shopfloor employees around Pune. Locus of control has been defined as the extent to which individuals believe that they are masters of their own lives, and they have decisive control over their own life and destiny. Locus of control has a significant role to play for an individual to sustain the individual work performance. Our results conclude that locus of control positively related to the individual work performance. Individual employees with higher internal locus of control (internals) tend to be better performers and result achievers whilst employees with higher attribution to external locus of control don't reach the desirable organization performance requirements and has need to be better at their jobs at their workplace. This difference in the performance can be explained with the direct relation of locus of control with other employee factors like employee satisfaction at workplace and employee organization commitment which in turn has a result on the employee performance and is medium through which Locus of Control creates an indirect impact on the employee work performance. This is also supported by perceived helplessness and effort expectancy where employees with internal locus of control which have higher beliefs of control over their results perform better to achieve better results for organization and in turn for themselves. The research helps to establish that there is a significant relationship between the employee performance and locus of control which recommends future work to be done on employee locus of control to enhance individual workplace performance and organizational performance.

Keywords: locus of control (LOC), work performance, workplace, internal locus of control (internals), external locus of control (externals).

Introduction

Continual evolution, driven by increasing competition in manufacturing sector requires organizations to adapt and evolve. To survive and grow companies must focus on acquiring, developing, and valuing their workforce which can build a competitive advantage and ensure long-term success. Locus of Control (LOC) is a topic that is been discussed for over two decades. Conceptually Locus of Control (LOC), is categorized into internal and external types, has attracted significant attention over recent decades. LOC refers to the degree to which an individual believes they can influence or control the outcomes of events that shape their life and destiny (Thomas, et al., 2006). Individuals with internal Locus of Control (LOC) believe in themselves possessing autonomy and the ability to shape their environment. They perceive their actions, efforts, and decisions as directly influencing the outcomes they encounter, and they tend to take personal responsibility for both their achievements and setbacks. In contrast, those with an external LOC believe they have little or

no control over their circumstances. They attribute their reinforcements to external factors such as luck, fate, other people, or environmental conditions, viewing events as being largely beyond their influence and their outcomes as determined by forces outside their control. (Spector, 2002; Martin et al., 2005).

The probable methodology or process by which Locus of Control affects the individual work performance can be clarified and supported by the theory of learned helplessness along with the control theory. The theory of learned helplessness clarifies and concludes that people experience frequently failures or setbacks are slowly and gradually developing a belief and are convinced in their inability to control situations, thus leading to being demotivated sometimes even borderline depression. They reduce their focus and effort towards trying to achieve and slowdown or even stop participating in such behaviors (Brockner et al., 1983). Accordingly, external Locus of Control type individuals will likely suffer and show signs of

motivational deficits and symptoms of helplessness when encountering particularly challenging or difficult situations (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). Thus, low level of performance behavior and low result accomplishment orientation would be exhibited by them.

LOC has an influence on employee job satisfaction. Employees with internal LOC report a greater level job satisfaction in comparison to individuals with external LOC. Most of the studies have highlighted LOC and job satisfaction of employees have a positive correlation amongst them (Gangai et al., 2016). Job satisfaction and employee work performance are positively correlated to each other. If the employee feels satisfied with their job it will lead to good performance by the individual (Mahajan et al., 2012).

LITERATURE SURVEY

The concept of locus of control was conceptualized and first coined within the theoretical framework of social learning. Rotter (1996) initially conceptualized this as a personality attribute and used it. As defined by him, the belief of how individuals attribute their reinforcements is referred to as Locus of control. It is the belief based on the outcomes of their experiences, or feelings, or rewards, or recognition, or their achievements or failures. These attributes can be made to various parameters like their associations, other actions, influence of friends and families, good or bad luck, fate, destiny, environment, parents and upbringing, acquaintances, inheritance, market conditions, bureaucracy and similar factors beyond their control or can be attributed to their own actions, efforts, behaviors and influence (Solmus, 2004: 196). LOC points out one's confidence in one's own capabilities to control or influence events (Strauser et al., 2002). Locus of control is defined as the degree to which an individual believes that they control their own destiny or life events (Thomas, et al., 2006). It is an attribute of one's own personality that governs generalized individual expectancies that positively control outcomes, results and reinforcements in their life (O'Connell & Spector, 1994). One's belief in one's own abilities to control life events is conceptualized as Locus of control (Strauser, 2002). In elaboration, the LOC is conceptualized as the degree that one thinks that that he/she believes to have power or influence over the scenario. That he/she is in control or is influencing to a degree to any favorable or unfavorable events happening in life (Sardogan, 2006). The belief pertaining to what has happened in an individual's lives like achievements, rewards, prizes, results, success or failures- is related to locus of control. These attributions refer to luck, fate, chance, and others out of one's control, and also to his/her own outlook towards life and situation and is a part of individual attitude (Basim and Sesen, 2012).

The construct of LOC is a dimension which has dichotomy that are, internal LOC and external LOC. For internal locus of control, the individuals have a belief system that they control and define and are thus masters of their own destiny which result in them exhibiting

behaviors which are backed by confidence, assertion, alertness and forthcoming and active in putting conscious effort to attempt influence and control their external environment. They tend to connect strongly between their actions and the results and see consequences as a direct result of their actions (Thomas et al., 2006). It can be conceptualized as an individuals' belief system that the events are the direct result of their own actions, behaviors and relatively permanent attributes of the individuals (Rotter, 1990; Küçükkaragöz, 1998). Internals display high responses to stimuli to the environmental evolutions and changes, which they have determined to be of help in determining their forthcoming actions and behaviors in future, as in comparison to externals. Internals are more excited and active about the changing environmental factors as they ascribe high significance to their competences, abilities, shortcoming and achievements or failures (Solmus, 2004).

Externals, on the contrary, have a belief system that they have no or very little influence or control of their achievement, failures or destiny and place themselves in a meek or nonassertive roles with respect to the external environment (Thomas et al., 2006). This belief results in them to moreover attribute outcomes to outside factors, fate, luck or coincidence. Externals refer to their belief that an outcome, result, success or failure is by mere fate or other outside circumstances where he/she has no or very little control. In addition, externals may see surrounding oneself by complex and supreme forces as causes of the happening. Individuals, with the belief system where the individual behavior or events they have experienced or incident on them, are primarily due to outside forces rather than themselves, and are so classified as individuals with external LOC (Rotter, 1990).

Work LOC represents the attribution of LOC to work where an employee extends attribute of rewards, recognitions, goal achievement at work to their own knowledge, competencies, skills, work practices, efforts, actions and behavior. As internal for work locus of control shall have a belief that "employees who achieve their work perform levels and fulfill their work or tasks well will generally be rewarded" additionally "If people take adequate efforts, they will grow to be capable of their job responsibilities (Spector, 1988). Work LOC is defined as the extent of power of individual employees over their own destiny at workplace shortly, they are masters of their work destiny (Thomas et al., 2006). The focus of work LOC is towards achieving results or outcomes in the context of the organizational pertaining to incentives realizations, rewards, recognitions, promotions, growth, performance bonuses, salary hikes, role growth and perks and benefits from job (Spector, 1982). Individuals who have internal work LOC have a belief system and see a strong direct relation between their behaviors and their outcomes and reinforcements at work. Hence, show a high probability towards performing good which will lead to productive and effective work results like accelerated growth, achievement, salary rise or

promotion. On the contrary, with external work LOC the individuals show high attribution to their success in job to external factors like luck, coincidence or destiny (Muhonen & Torkelson, 2004).

It is seen that an individual's work LOC has an important part in the output of performance at work. For example, there has been a direct relation established in various important job outcomes like job satisfaction and work performance to the LOC. A study of meta-analysis on work LOC has established significant relationship between perceived job control and stressors at job like role conflict and role ambiguity (Thomas et al. 2006). Research have established a negative correlation between an individual work LOC in general to the levels of job stress which has resulted in better performance of the individual (Chen & Silverthorne, 2008).

The significant role of work LOC in drawing clarity between initiative performance and compliant performance was also experimented. Initiative performance refers to performing above and beyond his/her basic defined job requisitions. On the contrary, compliant performance indicates the employee is performing only on the job requisitions defined as what they are or derived or implied directly. It was researched and concluded positively that work LOC has positive correlation with the compliant performers and inversely correlated to the initiative performer. The study resulted in indicating that the work LOC was related to productivity significantly. In other words, individuals with an internal work LOC showed inclination to initiative performance and individuals with an external work LOC are inclined towards compliant performance (Blau, 1993).

Learning performance has evolved as a critical and important concept due to the growing widespread and importance of data, workforce and technical evolution in Organizations (Molina and Callahan, 2009). Learning and performance for the employees are related in direct correlation by innumerable studies (Michna, 2009). This has generated the need to develop a continuous learning culture, which also focusses on owning responsibility, improving the value continuously, being flexible and welcoming new changes with open arms to improve the effectiveness of organizational for learning. The aim of

organizational learning is to accelerate the organizational performance towards improvement in the upcoming period and to help production of new data and its interpretation which shall play a key catalyst that drives attitudinal changes of organization employees (Kuru, 2007).

LOC is positively correlated with the job satisfaction of employees, which indicates the employees with internal LOC have better levels of job satisfaction whilst employees with external LOC have a lower job satisfaction score. In case of individuals with external LOC and job satisfaction there is a partial positive correlation (Vijayashreea et al., 2011). In Sultanate of Oman a study was carried out amongst teachers which shows a relation in LOC and Job Satisfaction (Hans et al., 2014). A large number of research were conducted areas of Job Satisfaction and LOC indicate that it plays a mediating role in the overall job satisfaction levels of the employees. A positive corelation exists between the LOC and job satisfaction of employees are being highlighted by innumerable studies. Internal LOC is a preferable choice for the job-satisfaction as against external LOC (Gangai et al., 2016). The employees that are satisfied have a positive outlook pertaining to their jobs. The employees that are satisfied show punctuality to attend work, are seen more concern about their behaviour and actions for achieving their goals, work at a higher pace, have error free work without omissions, displays commitment towards the job, shows more independence, ideate more, build and improve knowledge, responsible and show openness to shoulder higher and increased responsibility, adhere to processes and regulations and display positive effort to perform and retain present job. These positive attributes and outlook result in increase in the work quality and quantum of employee performance (Pushpakumari, 2008).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research method followed is exploratory research as it is directed towards identifying the relationship in the employee locus of control and work performance at workplace. Hence the research design that would be adopted shall be that of descriptive nature.

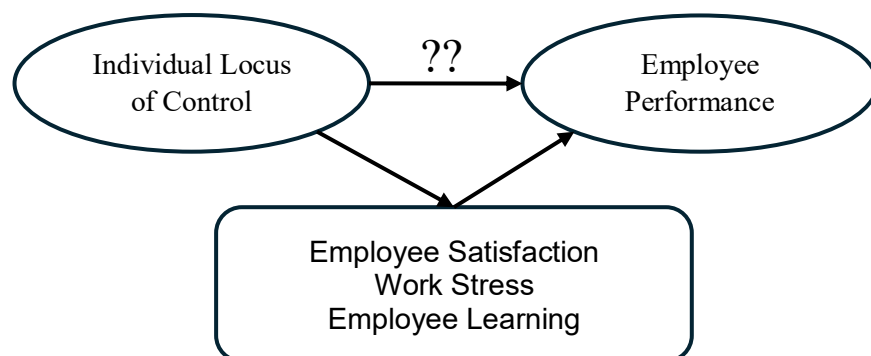


Figure 1: Relationship between Individual Locus of Control and Employee Performance

The objective of the research shall be to,

1. To understand the concept of Locus of control and theoretical framework and its application.
2. To understand if employee Locus of Control has any importance and impact at workplace.
3. Study the nature and distributions employees based on the Locus of Control at the workplace.
4. To explore if any relationship exists between the locus of control and the employee performance at workplace.

The scope of the research is limited to shop floor employees involved in manufacturing activity in the manufacturing industry in and around Pune. Data for this study comprises of primary data directly collected by the researchers and secondary data available which also include any conclusion based on data collected by previous researchers. Primary data was collected for a total of 120 sample size across manufacturing sites in and around Pune. Their selection of these samples was based on the methodology of convenience sampling across manufacturing facilities. For primary data collection Questionnaires was used mainly as an instrument for measurement of locus of control and was administered personally and with the help of Human Resource and Operational representatives from the organization. The rating for employees were taken from the Operational team of the organization in consultation with the Human Resource representative of the organization, however before getting the data ground rules for performance ratings and performance reviews were established. The source of secondary data was mainly from physical and digital unpublished and published sources both and includes but not limit to books, journals, articles, periodicals, magazines, online-news columns, online digital sources.

This researcher modified and used the physical inventory construct developed and designed by Rotter (1996) the Locus of Control Scale. It originally consisted of 29 items from which the first item was excluded and eighth, fourteenth and twenty-fourth modified nineteenth, and twenty-seventh ignored on scores, so the modified scale consists of 28 items constructed to assess control beliefs, the scale is rated inverse such that high score indicates internal LOC and low score indicated external LOC. For measurement of

performance for the employee consideration given were in areas of quantity of output, quality of output, teamwork, and attitude towards work as a consolidated rating on Likert scale of 1 to 5; 1 being low performing and 5 being High performing. Employees who moved into roles for less than 1 year are excluded considering their assimilation in the job in the initial period.

For the data analysis the data collected data was recorded to digital, compiled, and coded. MS Excel and SPSS were extensively used to analyse the clean data. The Frequency tables, percentages, distribution graphs, scatter plots and other descriptive statistical tools were used to analyse the results. A regression analysis including ANOVA was used to explore any relationship between LOC and employee work performance. The result from these analyses provides with a foundation for establishing and exploring relationship between the individual employee LOC and the individual work performance at workplace.

Data Analysis & Data Interpretation

This part of the document deep dives in the analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected from the organization and then attempts to explore the relationship in the employee locus of control and employee work performance. Primary data for the measurement of Locus of Control and employee performance was gathered through a survey administered on the respondents. Data was obtained on the same questionnaire from two categories of respondents: the first data set was obtained from employees for the measurement of their scores Locus of Control and the other being their supervisors in consultation with human resource representatives who rate the employee performance. The survey was taken up by a total of 120 employees who were the respondents and the same were rated for their performance by their supervisors in consultation with human resource representatives. The statistical results derived are presented in this section of the research. These results were obtained by descriptive as well as the inferential statistics and for this Microsoft Excel and SPSS software were utilized.

A summary of the Locus of Control data obtained from respondent employees has been reported as below.

Table 1: Levels of Internal and External amongst respondents

Locus Of Control	Description	Frequency	Percentage	Mean LOC
Above 22	High Internals	21	17.5%	24
18-22	Moderate Internals	43	35.8%	19.6
13-17	Moderate Externals	41	34.2%	15.2
12 and Below	High Externals	15	12.5%	10.7
TOTAL		120	100.0%	17.8

The data in Table 1 indicates that 17.5% of employees are High Internal whilst 12.5% of the employees are High Externals, whilst the majority of 70% of the employees are in the range of moderate internal or moderate external which is moreover inline to the distribution of normalcy and thus explaining the normalized distribution of locus of control amongst the employees.

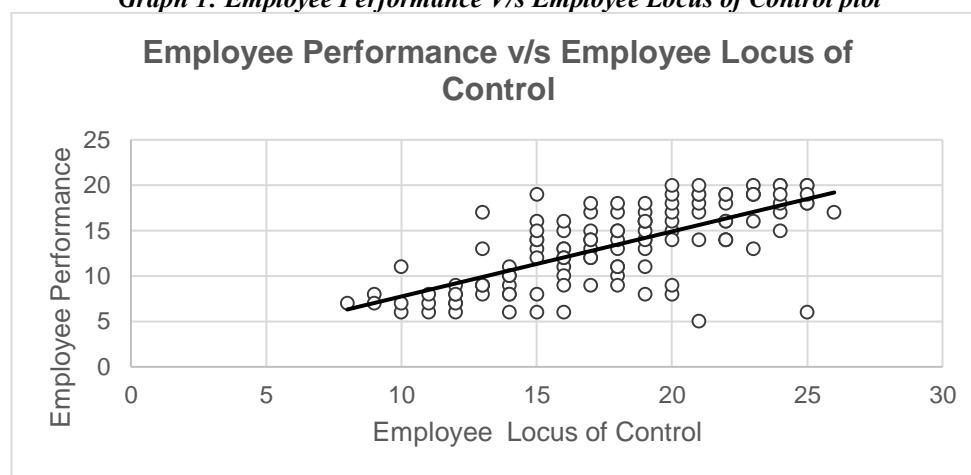
Table 2: Levels of Performance of Employee as per ratings from supervisors

Appraisal Rating	Description	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Performance
16 and above	High Performer	44	36.7%	17.9
12 to 15	Moderate Above Average	33	27.5%	13.7
8 to 11	Moderate Below Average	29	24.2%	15.2
7 and below	Low Performers	14	11.7%	9.2
TOTAL		120	100.0%	13.3

The data in Table 2 indicate that 36.7% of employees are High Performance and 11.7% of the employees are low performers, which is in line with the mannerisms of performance rating given by supervisors across industry whilst the majority of 52.7% of the employees are in the range of moderate performance which is moreover inline to the distribution of normalcy and thus explaining the normalized distribution of performance that most organizations experience.

Graph 1 shows a trend line liner plot indicating as the Employee Locus of Control increases the employee performance increases thus exists a positive relation amongst the employee locus of control and employee performance. As employee Locus of Control moves from external to internal there is a trend in the rise in employee performance.

Graph 1: Employee Performance V/s Employee Locus of Control plot



To further analyze the understanding provided from the graph the regression analysis has been done for the impact of employee's individual locus of control on employee work performance. Employee work performance is the dependent variable (Variable Y), and the independent variable was individual Locus of

Control (Variable X). The regression model uses employee Locus of Control as an independent variable to predict employee work performance as a dependent variable. The results obtained for the relationship between Locus of Control and performance are depicted in table 3, table 4 and table 5.

Table 3: Regression Statistics between LOC and work Performance

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.69
R Square	0.48
Adjusted R Square	0.48
Standard Error	3.14
Observations	120

Table 4: ANOVA test relationship between LOC and work Performance for employees

	Df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	1116.86	1116.89	112.70	0.00
Residual	118	1169.44	9.91		
Total	119	2286.33			

Table 5: Coefficient and P-Value for Regression between LOC and work Performance

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	0.55	1.238	0.441	0.659

LOC	0.72	0.068	10.616	0.00
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The data as in Table 3 proves a positive correlation (Multiple R; 0.69) between Locus of Control and Employee Performance, establishing significant positive relationship between individual locus of control and employee performance. The R-Squared value (R-squared; 0.48) which significantly explains the variation in employee performance against the Individual Locus of Control.

As per Table 5, P value is very low (P Value; 0.00) which is strong evidence of a significant correlation between the employee locus of control and employee work performance. The coefficient value (Co-efficient; 0.72) which explains a positive relationship and a strong effect of the locus of control on individual performance, states that individual locus of control can be used to predict employee work performance.

This above regression model inferences that, employees with higher score of LOC in this case the higher degree of Internal LOC have a higher probability to have a higher employee work performance rating in comparison to the employees with lower score of LOC or having higher degree of external locus of control. Therefore, an implication can be drawn that employee with internal LOC score or internals having higher LOC score have higher employee work performance in comparison with externals with lower LOC scored employees which exhibit lower work performance.

Key Findings of the Research

1. The LOC is structured in social learning theory and is a personality attribute which was first defined by Rotter (1996). It is a single dimension with two dichotomies where the individuals with internal LOC have attribution of reinforcement, achievement, success, failures, shortcomings or destiny to themselves and has a belief system based on ideologies that they have a higher degree of control over it; whereas individual with external locus of control attribute their success or failures and reinforcement to external factors like environment, luck, fate, others, association etc. Individual locus of control has an outlook of having an influence or control and many studies support that individual internal LOC tend to achieve more, attain better happiness and satisfaction than individual with external LOC.

2. Individual LOC has a positive correlation and tends to affect various parameters like employee job satisfaction, employee commitment and organization commitment. This in turn has a positive correlation with the individual work performance in general. The understanding and relationship of this is supported by the theory of learned helplessness and control theory. The individuals who work LOC affect the work performance of individuals and individuals with internal LOC tend to be more proactive and perform beyond what is expected and defined as their jobs or work,

whereas employees with external LOC display more compliant working style for performance.

3. The use of Rotter's scale modified to measure locus of control for the shopfloor employees across the sample size in and around Pune where the range of the scale used the individual score was minimum 8 to maximum score of 26. The data indicated that a minor portion of employees have either internal LOC (17.5%) or external LOC (12.5%), whilst most of the employees lie in the moderate range of LOC (70%) on the either-sides of the dichotomies creating a spectrum of normalized spread.

4. To understand the casual relationship between the employee LOC and the employee work performance a detailed analysis of the this indicates to have a positive relationship and a significant correlation (Multiple R, 0.69) between them. The coefficient of regression was 0.72 with a low P value (0.00) which indicates a significance level, this implies a strong relationship between the employee LOC and employee work performance. This indicated the employee with higher degree of internal LOC demonstrates higher employee work performance whilst employee with higher degree of external LOC demonstrates lower employee work performance.

CONCLUSION

The study investigates and establishes a positive causal relationship between individual LOC and individual work performance. The findings of the research indicate that most of the employees are in moderate range of locus of control, however employees with high degree of internal LOC and external LOC are present in minority. By using regression analysis, it is observed that there exists a significant relationship between individual LOC and individual work performance. Further it was also found that the employees with a higher degree of internal LOC show better employee work performance in comparison to the employees with a higher degree of external LOC. This is also supported by earlier studies which indicate a positive correlation between individual LOC verses job satisfaction, organization commitment and performance orientation which in turn enhance employee work performance. It is also found through earlier research that employees with internal LOC are better motivated and show ownership and assertiveness and take up complex jobs and deliver beyond the work expectations as compared to externals.

Limitations of the Research

The challenging phase of this research was data collection which required getting the employees to respond to the questionnaire prepared. Due to an ask of equal representation, the data from the shop floor employees wherein they did not have ease of access to internet an email the task was difficult. Due to the nature of the information sought from the employees and researched in the organization premises there is a

challenge to see if any biasness has entered the research, however all efforts were taken to keep this at bay. The studies are done in only three organizations in and around the Pune area and the sample size is only 120, which is a small sample size which makes it difficult to generalize the findings of the study to all the manufacturing sector and areas outside of Pune.

Recommendations

1. The study indicates that LOC is an important construct in social learning theory. A lot of future awareness on this concept of LOC is required and understanding the dichotomy of individuals with internal LOC versus the individuals with external LOC is required as they relate differently to reinforcements and have different belief systems.
2. LOC has a significant correlation with employee satisfaction, organization commitment, employee motivation which has an impact on individual work performance. The orientation towards performance and motivation for internals and externals are different so development of deep understanding this becomes an important aspect to build organization culture and organizational performance.
3. The majority of employee are in the range of moderate employee LOC as compared to the total employee in the higher internal LOC zone. The identification of higher internal LOC employees is also required to build for future talent and leadership performance pipelines and future retention initiatives to build stronger organization. There are employees also in external LOC ratings however these are in minority. There is a need for identification of this in each organization as their belief system are different and shall require different approaches. This will also help to zoom down on the root-cause and what action be taken to build a stronger organization.
4. The study demonstrates that LOC has a positive and significant correlation with the employee performance. This arises a need for the companies to enhance the LOC for the employees to internal LOC to improve individual and overall organizational performance. As the organization are continually searching for ways to enhance performance of their employees and in return the performance of the entire organization, steps may be taken for their employees to develop a strong internal locus of control. Counselling, Self-awareness, Training may be given to develop employees with internal LOC. This will have a cascading effect on improving individual performance and thus contribute significantly to organizational objective achievement.

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How to Cite this: Gadakh RB. The impact of locus of control on individual performance for shopfloor employees workplace in manufacturing industry. J Mark Soc Res. 2025;2(6):19-26.

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