

Attribution Of Success And Failure In A Task: Is Group Membership A Determinant?

Jane Okolo, Edwin C. Onyeneje, Ejike A. Okonkwo, Chinwendu M. Okoro,
Adaobi C. Eze, Chinwe M. Chigbo, Ikechukwu B. Nwandu

*Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology,
Enugu Nigeria.*

*Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology,
Enugu Nigeria.*

Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.

Department of Guidance and Counseling, African Thinkers Community of Inquiry College of Education, Enugu.

*Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology,
Enugu Nigeria.*

Registry, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu,

Department of Public Administration, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.

Corresponding Author: Jane Okolo

ABSTRACT: *This study investigated influence of group membership on attribution of success and failure in a task. A total of 36 participants comprising 16males and 20 females between the ages of 22 to 26 years (mean = 23.13, SD = 4.81) were drawn from final year students of Psychology Department, Enugu State University of Science and Technology using multi-stage sampling technique (systematic and odd-even techniques). A 24-item attribution of success and failure scale with four subscales was used for data collection. Double subject design was used while matched t-test was used as statistical test for data analysis. The results indicated that group membership significantly influenced internal and external attributions of success, $t(8) = 7.84$ and $t(8) = 5.86$, $P < .01$ level of significance. Group membership also significantly influenced internal and external attributions of failure $t(10) = 3.42$ and $t(10) = 2.32$, $P < .05$ level of significance. In congruence with Weiner (1986) attribution theory it was concluded that attribution of success and failure by group members are always internal when it is favourable and external when it is unfavourable, hence implications of this for Nigerian educational and other institutions were discussed.*

KEYWORDS: *Attribution, success, failure, task, group membership*

Date of Submission: 09-08-2018

Date of acceptance: 24-08-2018

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

People constantly search for the factors that cause them or other people to behave the way they do. The process of assigning causes to our or other people's behaviour is attribution. Attribution is primarily the process of assigning a cause to an event or clarifying the event (Malle, 2001). According to Heider (1958), people broadly attribute the cause of their behaviour either to internal or external factors. An internal attribution (also called personal or dispositional attribution) refers to causes of behaviour that are associated with the person's innate characteristics such as personality traits, moods, attributes, abilities or efforts etc. An external attribution (also called situational attribution), on the other hand, refers to the causes of behaviour that are external to the person, such as the actions of others, environmental situation or luck etc.

People ascribing reasons and explanations for why they succeed or fail at a task is not surprising considering that they attempt to make sense of observed events to increase their understanding of observed behaviour and increase their ability to predict the course of similar future behaviour (Shaver, 1975). According to Weiner (1986, 2000) attributions come from a person's self-perception and can influence the person's expectancy, values, emotions and beliefs about his/her competence, and in turn influence his/her emotion. And people's beliefs about the causes of their success and failure influence their motivation and learning (Frieze, 1981). Attribution is to say or believe that something is the result of particular thing, for example success is attributed to hard work (Hornby, 2000). People often believe that success could be attributed to internal factors such as skill and ability, while failure could be attributed to external factors such as luck or the environment (Chau & Phillips, 1995, Thompson, Armstrong, & Thomas, 1998, Gilovich & Douglas, 1986, Rotter, 1966). Further, subjective judgments about outcomes, probability and control are often based on heuristics and internal

desires and can thus provide insight into feelings of self efficacy and consequently self-esteem (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). In making internal attributions, therefore it has been suggested that people initiate illusion of controlling chance situations when they are successful to internal factors, and likewise in skill situations to maintain self-esteem in a variety of situations (Rotter, 1966, Hong & Chiu, 1998, Thompson et al. 1998). Thompson et al's (1998) findings regarding attributions in failed situations that initiate less illusions of control and more realistic external attributions seem to further support this notion as there is considerable evidence that people overestimate their control in various situations, but that underestimations of control and accurate assessments also occur.

These inferences that individuals make about the causes of their successes and failures are called attributions (Graham, 1991, Weiner 1986). Attribution has been applied in explaining how people explain their success or failure in a task and in explaining differences in motivation between high and low achievers (Batool, Arif & Ud Din, 2010, Murray & Thompson, 2009). It has received considerable attention in its application in explaining success or failure in academic context. When asked to give the subjective reasons for their academic performance, whether good or bad, students tend to identify factors within themselves (e.g., ability, effort, traits and dispositions) or factors outside of themselves (e.g. luck, ease or difficulty of the task, and help from teacher). An attribution pattern in which a student internalizes success and externalizes failure has long been thought to be beneficial academically and important in explaining success (Schunk & Gunn, 1986). Although ability and effort are both internal attributions, it is better for an individual to attribute success to ability, rather than to effort, because ability attributions are more strongly related to motivation, self-efficacy, and skill development than effort attribution (Schunk & Gunn, 1986).

According to Graham (1991) students benefit more from attributing academic failure to a lack of effort rather than to a lack of ability. In addition, group membership can also influence students' attribution of academic success or failure. Thus, the relative outcome of one's social group can also shape personal values in a manner that is self-protective (Crocker & Major, 1989). This is consistent with substantial evidence that individuals use their groups and other similar others as sources of information about themselves for example, individuals gain a sense of identity from their social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), are emotionally affected by the performance of their group even when they have no direct role in how their group performs (Major, Schiaccitano & Crocker, 1993) and seem to incorporate aspects of their in group within their own self-concepts (Smith & Henry, 1996). According to Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherall (1987), thinking of oneself in terms of group membership produces a change in one's perception of the self from the "I" to the "We". Through the re-categorization, the individual comes to perceive himself or herself as an interchangeable member of the group who possesses those attributes belonging to the group as a whole. At least two sets of studies support this view by showing that when either group identity is made salient in a situation (Brewer & Weber, 1994) or when group membership is chronically important for an individual (McFarland & Buchler, 1995), the performance of fellow group members directly affects how the individual appraises himself or herself.

The effect of group outcomes on the individual and his or her attitudes may be most powerful when the individual has little or no experience in that domain. Thus, Bandura (1997) noted that by observing others who are similar to oneself, an individual gain a sense of his or her own efficacy in accomplishing some task. In addition, however, he argued that the individuals will be most sensitive to the effects of vicarious experience on their own feelings of self-efficacy to the extent that they are uncertain of their own abilities. Consistent with this idea, Tindale, Kulik and Scott (1991) found that when individuals have no evidence of their own performance, the failure of their in-group leads them to have lower expectations for future personal success. Thus by merely witnessing other in-group members fail in a domain, individuals may make inferences about their own personal aptitude in the domain and those self-appraisals may then lead them to preemptively devalue the domain under the assumption that they too would fail.

Moreover, one of the most robust findings in attribution theory is the self-serving bias. People take personal credit for their success and attribute failure to external circumstances (Gioia & Sims, 1985; Kingdon, 1967; Zuckerman, 1979). Much like individuals, there is increasing evidence that group (Forsyth & Schlenker, 1977) and even organizations (Salancik & Meindl, 1984, Staw, McKechnie & Puffer, 1983) display a similar tendency to take credit for success and attribute failure to their external environment (Johns, 1999). This tendency has been called a group-serving bias (Forsyth & Schlenker, 1977), for instance, members of sport team will often attribute team failure to external circumstances such as bad luck, but attribute success to internal factors such as team cohesiveness (Zaccaro, Peterson & Walker, 1987).

Groups, like individuals, take credit for their success by attributing it to internal as opposed to external factors (Forsyth & Schlenker, 1977). The tendency to attribute success to internal factors allows the entire group to share in and experience the positive emotions associated with success thereby increasing group cohesion (Forsyth & Schlenker, 1977). Conversely, by attributing failure to external factors, the group is able to maintain a positive identity even in the face of difficulties (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980). To avoid uncomfortable

accusations, failure at both the individual and group levels is typically attributed to external and often uncontrollable factors such as time pressure, luck or task difficulty (Johns, 1999, Weiner 1985), hence intergroup attribution.

Intergroup attribution reflects the expression of ethnocentric bias in the attribution made to explain outcomes obtained by in-group and out-group members (Pettigrew, 1979). Negative in-group and positive out-group outcomes are attributed to situational factors, whereas positive in-group and negative out-group outcomes are attributed to causes seen as internal. These dynamics protect the esteem of the in-group and cast the out-group in a bad light (Hewstone & Jasper, 1984; Pettigrew, 1979) thereby augmenting a positive self-identity and insulating negative stereotyped views of the out-group (Hewstone, 1990, Pettigrew 1979).

Research (e.g. Graham, 1991) has shown that attributions of causality vary depending on the person, the task, the culture and the social group. Variations in attribution have been reported for gender (Nelson & Cooper, 1997, Pintrich & Schunck, 2002), self-esteem (Betancourt & Weiner, 1982, Fitch, 1970, Skaalvik, 1994), performance (Carr & Borokowski, 1989, Kristner, Osborne, & Le Verrier, 1988) and for social position (Kluagel & Smith, 1986), hence the need for this present study to consider how other factors such as group membership influence attribution of success and failure in a task.

In addition, people especially students often believe that success can be attributed to internal factors such as ability while failure can be attributed to external factors such as luck resulting in self serving bias in order to protect and promote their ego. However, as students make this attribution of success and failure to internal and external factors, they are likely to apply this when explaining the behaviour of their group members (Croker & Major, 1989). This is on the basis that one's social group can shape personal values in a manner that is self-protective, hence this present study on the influence of group membership on attribution of success and failure in a task among undergraduate students of the university.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Attribution theory (Weiner, 1986) describes the attributions or explanations people give for their success or failure along three dimensions of locus, stability and control. These explanations depend on whether people perceive their successes or failures as internal or external, stable or unstable, controllable or uncontrollable (Weiner, 1992). These three dimensions have been expanded to include four factors of ability, effort, luck and task ease or difficulty (e.g. Burining, Schraw & Running, 1999, Dornya & Murphey, 2003, Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Locus refers to the location (internal or external) of the perceived cause of a success or failure. Ability is perceived as internal while luck is external. Stability refers to how much a given reason for success or failure could be expected to change (e.g. whether a cause is stable (fixed) or unstable (variable) over time).

Control indicates how much control the individual has over a cause. It distinguishes causes one can control, such as skill/efficacy, from causes one cannot control, such as aptitude, mood, others actions and luck. Thus, this theory explains the factors associated with attribution of success and failure especially among students regarding their performance. Students always make internal and external forms of attribution such as "I scored A" and failure to the second party for example "They gave me D or F." Related to this is the self-protective theory, which refers to the propensity for blaming outside agents (external attributions) for failures (Kruger, 1999). Empirical study (e.g. Sweeney, Moreland & Gruber, 2005) found that successful students (males and females) made internal attributions and were pleased with their performance. Addiba (2004) found that high achievers significantly attributed their outcome to effort and ability (internal) and the low achievers to luck and task difficulty (external). Respondents, who were students learning English in Bahrain attributed failure to mainly external attributions, for example, teaching methods, lack of support from family and teachers, poor comprehension and negative attitude (Kamins & Dweck, 1999, Mucller & Dweck, 1998). Ushioda (2001) found that respondents who were university French learners attributed success to internal locus while attributions of failure were external. Studies (e.g. Graham, 2002, Williams, Burden, Poulet & AL-Baharna, 2001) found that success was attributed to internal factors. In the later study, two internal factors, practice and a positive attitude and one external factor, support from family were cited as attribution for success. Praise from teachers and parents for student's ability may increase the students' fear of failure (Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Mucller & Dweck, 1998). When students attributed their success to ability or received feedback that attributed their success to ability they developed a high self-efficiency and expectations for future skill development (Schunk, 1984, Siegle & McCoach, 2007).

Further studies show that gifted and talented students tend to attribute quality work to ability and not effort (Heller & Zugler, 1996, 2001, McNabb, 2003, Siegle & Reis, 1998). Similarly, Assouline, Calangelo, Ihrig and Forstadt (2006) found that gifted students tended to attribute quality work to effort, but ability was also a major attribution factor for many of these students. In contrast, Gobel & Mori (2007) discovered that first-year Japanese undergraduates in speaking and reading classes attributed success to teachers and the classroom environment while attributing failure to internal factors of lack of ability and lack of effort.

However, as people especially students make this attribution of success and failure to internal and external factors, they are likely to apply same approach when explaining the behaviour of their group members as shown by some studies (e.g. Croker & Major, 1989). This is on the basis that one's social group can shape personal values in a manner that is self-protective. Thus, the following hypotheses:

1. *Group membership will significantly influence internal attribution of success.*
2. *Group membership will significantly influence external attribution of success.*
3. *Group membership will significantly influence internal attribution of failure.*
4. *Group membership will significantly influence external attribution of failure.*

III. METHOD

Participants: Thirty-six participants were drawn from 2014/2015 final year students of Psychology Department, Enugu State University of Science and Technology using multi-stage sampling (systematic and odd-even sampling techniques). They were between the ages of 22 – 26 years (mean age = 23.13).

Instrument: The instrument comprised 24-item attribution of success and failure scale with four subscales developed by the researchers to measure internal attribution of success, external attribution of success, internal attribution of failure and external attribution of failure.

Development of Attribution of Success and Failure Scale: To develop this scale, first, the researchers relying on Vispoel & Austin (1995) based on Weiner (1979) theory of attribution which identified factors that determine internal and external attribution of success and failure generated 26 items.

The researchers also had a focused group discussion with ten (10) final year students of Economics Department of Enugu State University of Science and Technology. They were given pen and paper individually and instructed to list factors that can make a student be a success or failure in a task (examination). This exercise lasted for one and half hours. At the end of this exercise, 20 factors were identified. These items (26 and 20) were collapsed and screened for duplication leaving a total of 36 items.

These 36 items were assessed by 3 social psychologists, 1 industrial psychologist and 1 clinical psychologist. Following this, any item rated relevant by as much as 3 of the 5 panel of experts (60%) was accepted. Thus, 24 items rated relevant by 60% of the subject experts were retained. This enabled the researchers to establish content validity of this scale. Thus, this exercise is in line with Litwin (1995), Rosnow and Rosenthal (2005) who suggest that content validity is assessed by experts with knowledge of the subject matter. Content validity is usually indicated by judgments, and certain logical procedure (Dunn, 1989). Content validity is considered to be a prerequisite for criterion-related and construct validity, and should generally be established before either of these (Thorn & Diatz, 1989).

Pilot Study

The 24-item scale was exposed to pilot study using 81 participants drawn from undergraduate students of Sociology Department, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. These students were administered the 24-item scale in their exam hall. Item-total correlations from item analysis of their responses ranged from 0.27 to 0.76. And also Cronbach Alpha of 0.78 and Spearman-Brown Coefficient Split-Half of 0.79 and mean (N = 81) of 3.37. Cronbach Alpha of 0.78 was accepted as good index of the 24-item attribution of success and failure scale's internal consistency since Mitchel & Jolley (2004) noted that an index of 0.70 (and preferably 0.80) is needed to say that a measure is internally consistent. Factor analysis of the 24-items using Principal Component Analysis followed by Rotated Varimax with Kaiser Normalization indicated that 6 items (1 – 6) had their item loadings on factor 1 – internal attribution of success, 6 of the items (7 – 12) had their item loadings on factor 2 – external attribution of success, 6 of the items (13 – 18) had their item loading on factor 3 – internal attribution of failure and 6 of the items (19 – 24) had their item loading on factor 4 – external attribution of failure. Item loading of these 24 items ranged from 0.47 to 0.78 and were considered acceptable since Mitchel & Jolley (2004) noted that item loading of 0.30 is good and 0.70 very high.

Following the outcome of factor analysis, four subscales emerged and arrangement of the 24 items gave rise to 6 items (1 - 6) measuring internal attribution of success (Split-Half reliability of 0.68 and mean (N = 81) of 3.88), the next 6 items (7 – 12) measuring external attribution of success (split-half reliability of 0.54 and mean (N = 81) of 3.04), 6 items (13 – 18) measuring internal attribution of failure (split-half reliability of 0.73 and mean (N = 81) of 3.56) and the last 6 items (19 – 24) measuring external attribution of failure (split-half reliability of 0.51 and mean (N = 81) of 3.01).

The 24-item attribution of success and failure scale developed by the researchers was administered simultaneously with Rotter (1966) locus of control scale to the same 81 participants mentioned earlier. Correlation of the scores from the two scales yielded coefficient value of 0.61. This enabled the researchers to establish the convergent validity of the 24-item attribution of success and failure scale.

The 24-item attribution of success and failure scale had direct scoring for all the items. Thus, a response of strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1. See appendix for the scale.

Procedure: The researchers wrote to the Head of Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology informing him about the intention to use the final year students of the Department as participants for the study. Following approval the researchers requested the class list of the registered final year students.

Further, the researchers systematically sampled the participants using every 3rd case (student on the list). The sampled students were assigned into two groups using odd-even sampling technique. Thus, participants who fell within the odd numbers were assigned to group A while those that fell within even numbers were assigned to group B. Each group (A and B) independent of the other group was told confidentially that they were in a competition with the other group. They were also told that if one of their members emerged as the best in the forthcoming examination (task), the group will be adequately rewarded.

After the examination (PSY 484) participants within group A were further assigned into groups A1 and A2 using odd-even sample technique. Group A1 members were told that their member finished as the best. Group A2 members were told that their member finished as the worst.

Participants who were within group B were further assigned to groups B1 and B2 using the same odd-even sampling technique. Group B1 members were told that their member finished as the best. Group B2 members were told that their member finished as the worst.

Finally, groups A1 and B1 were administered attribution of success scale (internal and external) while groups A2 and B2 were administered attribution of failure scale (internal and external).

Design/Statistics: Double subject design was used. The choice was on the basis of one of the assumptions which holds that it involves two different equal groups (A1/B1 and A2/B2) randomly and independently selected, and tested under two different conditions – attribution of success and attribution of failure (Aboh, 2004).

The choice also was on the basis of another assumption which holds that it requires the selection of participants randomly and independently, and assigning them to two different equal groups (A and B) tested under one condition (attribution of success or attribution of failure). The two groups must be equal in frequency but no pairwise matching (Aboh, 2004).

Finally, matched t-test was used as statistical test for data analysis because each group was repeatedly tested under two experimental conditions (Aboh & Obidigbo, 1998). Thus, group A1 was tested under internal and external attribution of success conditions, group B1 tested under internal and external attribution of success conditions, group A2 tested under internal and external attribution of failure conditions and group B2 also tested under internal and external attribution of failure conditions.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Matched t-test showing influence of group membership on internal and external attribution of success.

Group	Attribution	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	df	P
A1	Internal	9	25.67	1.87	7.84	8	<.01
	External	9	17.78	2.86			

According to table 1 group (A1) membership significantly influenced internal and external attribution of success, $t(8) = 7.84$ at $p < .01$ following this table, members of group A1 attributed success in the task more to internal factors (mean = 25.67) than external factors (mean = 17.78).

Thus, hypothesis 1 which stated that group membership will significantly influence internal attribution of success and hypothesis 2 which stated that group membership will significantly influence external attribution of success were confirmed and accepted.

Table 2: Matched t-test showing influence of group membership in internal and external attribution of success.

Group	Attribution	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	df	P
B1	Internal	9	25.22	2.17	5.86	8	<.01
	External	9	18.67	4.42			

According to table 2, group (B1) membership significantly influenced internal and external attribution of success, $t(8) = 5.86$ at $p < .01$. Following this table, members of group B1 attributed success in the task to internal factors (mean = 25.22) than external factors (mean = 18.67).

These findings hereby confirm the outcome of table I which resulted in the acceptance of hypotheses 1 and 2.

Table 3: Matched t-test showing influence of group membership on internal and external attribution of failure.

Group	Attribution	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	df	P
A2	Internal	11	18.09	2.50	3.42	10	<.05
	External	11	22.09	3.78			

According to table 3, group (A2) membership significantly influenced internal and external attribution of failure, $t(10) = 3.42$ at $p < .05$. This table indicates that members of group A2 attributed failure in the task more to external factors (mean = 22.09) than internal factors (mean = 18.09).

Thus hypothesis 3 which stated that group membership will significantly influence internal attribution of failure and hypothesis 4 which stated that group membership will significantly influence external attribution of failure were confirmed and accepted.

Table 4: Matched t-test showing influence of group membership in internal and external attribution of failure.

Group	Attribution	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	df	P
B2	Internal	7	20.28	3.19	2.32	6	<.05
	External	7	24.71	3.14			

According to table 4, group (B2) membership significantly influenced internal and external attribution of failure, $t(6) = 2.32$ at $p < .05$. Thus, members of group B2 attributed failure in the task to external factors (mean = 24.71) than internal factors (mean = 20.28).

These findings hereby confirm the outcome of table III which resulted in the acceptance of hypotheses 3 and 4.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Group membership significantly influenced internal and external attribution of success in a task as shown in tables 1 and 2. And group membership significantly influenced internal and external attribution of failure in a task as shown in tables 3 and 4.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study while in line with the hypotheses also support findings of previous studies (e.g. Addiba, 2004, Murray & Thompson, 2009, Schunk, 1984, Siegle & McCoach, 2007) that students and people in general attribute success to internal factors than external factors and vice versa for failure. In the current study, group membership significantly influenced internal attribution of success as group A1 attributed their success in the task to internal characteristics of the member. And also group B1 attributed success in the task to internal factors than to external factors. And group membership significantly influenced external attribution of failure as groups A2 and B2 attributed their failure in the task to external factors than internal factors.

The findings also give credence to Weiner (1986) theory which suggests that student always make attribution with regard to classroom situations more to internal than to external factors. People such as students often make attribution based on the favourable outcomes of a situation to in-group and unfavourable to out-group (Weiner, 1986).

In Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions, it is common to hear students say “they gave us” and “we made it” with regards to failure or successful outcome of a task. For example, whenever they do not perform well in a task the students will attribute it to the lecturers and when they have good results they will attribute it to their internal factors such as ability. Attribution bias therefore is a fundamental aspect of human social existence, hence the various attribution processes done by students when they succeed and fail are usually guided by the attribution bias.

VII. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current findings are very imperative in understanding the practical application of social psychology especially in the areas of attribution processes regarding group membership. The findings have demonstrated practically that groups will always attribute success to internal factors and failure to external factors. The study, therefore, to a practical extent provides a platform upon which defenses are made among students in Nigerian schools and other institutions etc. And this line of explanations of behaviour while protecting and promoting the ego of the groups and their members have implications for people not accepting responsibilities for their failure. This indeed could explain why many Nigerian students, workers and others rely on external factors such as fate, luck, nepotism and favouritism rather than internal factors such as intelligence, hard work, competence and merit. This and other related factors like cankerworm have continued to eat deep into the foundation of Nigerian society thereby causing perennial under-productivity and underdevelopment in

both public and private institutions. And one cannot take this away as one of the causes of the present economic recession in Nigeria, hence the following recommendations:

- Teachers should be mindful of these group attribution patterns and try to make students accept responsibility for their individual actions and outcome thereof. This will enthrone hard work and merit.
- The effects of group membership could be positive or negative; therefore parents, guardians and teachers should educate students on the issue of intergroup attribution errors such as attributing failure to external factors and its disadvantages like social loafing, de-individuation etc.
- The National Orientation Agency should make all Nigerians and not just students to understand that the bane of Nigerian state is intergroup (interethnic) attribution of success and failure at every facet of the national level. Thus, this trend has continued to make all Nigerian institutions function on mediocrity, nepotism, favouritism at the expense of hard work, competence and merit. This National Orientation Agency in collaboration with other agencies should design programmes to reverse this negative trend.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Aboh, U. J. (2004). *Basic concepts in experimental Psychology*. Anohabe Research Centre, Enugu.
- [2]. Aboh, U.J. & Obidigbo, G.C.E. (1998). *Quantitative analysis in Psychology*. Eddymore Prompt Enterprises.
- [3]. Adiba, F. (2004). *Study of attribution of low achievers and high achievers about the perceived causes of their success and failure*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Arid Agriculture, Rawalpindi.
- [4]. Assouline, S. G., Colangelo, N., Ihrig, D., & Forstadt, L. (2006). Attributional choice for academic success and failure by intellectually gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 50, 283 – 294.
- [5]. Bandura (1997). *Self efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman U.S.A.
- [6]. Batool, S., Arif, M. H., & Ud Din, M. N. (2010). Gender differences in performance attributions of mainstream and religious school students. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 2(6), 454 – 458.
- [7]. Betan Court H., & Weiner, B. (1982). Attribution for achievement-related events, expectancy and sentiments: A study of success and failure in Chile and U.S. *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, 13, 263 -374. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022002182013003007>.
- [8]. Brewer, M. B. & Weber, J. G. (1994) Self-evaluation effects of interpersonal versus intergroup social comparison. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 268 – 275.
- [9]. Bruning, R. H., Schraw, G. J., & Ronning, R. P. (1999). *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction* (3rd ed.) Upper Saddle River, N. J: Merrill.
- [10]. Carr, M. & Borkowski, J. G. (1989). Attributional retraining and generation of reading strategies by underachievers. *Human Learning and Individual Differences* 1, 327 – 341.
- [11]. Chau, A. & Phillips, J. (1995). Effects of perceived control upon waning and attributions in computer blackjack. *Journal of General Psychology*, 122, 253 – 270.
- [12]. Cialdini, R. B., & Richardson, K. D. (1980). Two indirect tactics of image management: Basketing and blasting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 406 – 415.
- [13]. Crocker, J., & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-productive properties of stigma. *Psychological Review*, 96, 608 – 630.
- [14]. Dornyei, Z., & Murphey, T. (2003). *group dynamics in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [15]. Dunn, W. (1989). Reliability and validity. In L.J Miller (ED). *Developing norm-referenced standards tests*. New York: Haworth Press.
- [16]. Fitch, G. (1970). Effects of self-esteem, perceived performance, and choice on causal attributions. *Personality and Social Psychology*, 16, 311 – 315.
- [17]. Forsyth, D. R. & Schlenker, B. R. (1977). Attributing the causes of group performance: Effects of performance quality, task importance, and future testing. *Journal of Personality* 45, 220 - 236.
- [18]. Frieze, I. H. (1981). Children's attributions for success and failure. In S. S. Brehm, S. M. Kassir, & F. X. Gibbons (Eds.). *Developmental Social Psychology: Theory and research* (pp. 15 – 71). New York: Oxford University Press.
- [19]. Gioia, D. A. & Sims, H. P. (1985). Self-serving bias and actor – observer differences in organization: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 15, 547 – 563.
- [20]. Gilovich, T., & Douglas, C. (1986). Biased evaluation of randomly determined gambling outcomes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 22, 228 – 241.
- [21]. Gobel, P., & Mori, S. (2007). Success and failure in the EFL classroom: Exploring student's attributional beliefs in language learning. *EUROSLA Year book*, 7(1), 149 – 169.
- [22]. Graham, S. (1991). A review of attribution theory in achievement contexts. *Educational Psychology Review*, 3(1), 5 – 39.
- [23]. Graham, T. R., Kowalski, K. C., & Crocker, P. R. E. (2002). The contributions of goal characteristics and causal attributions to emotional experience in youth sport participants. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 3, 273 – 291.
- [24]. Heider, F. (1958). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* New York: Wiley.
- [25]. Heller, K. A., & Ziegler, A. (1996). Gender differences in Mathematics and the sciences: can attributional retaining improve the performance of gifted females? *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 40, 200 – 210.
- [26]. Heller, K. A., & Ziegler, A. (2001). Attributional retaining: A classroom-integrated model for nurturing talents in mathematics and science, in N. Colangelo & S. Assouline (Eds.) *Talent development IV* (pp. 205 – 217). Scottsdale, AZ: Great potentials Press.
- [27]. Hewstone, M., & Jasper, J. M. F. (1984). Social Dimension of Attribution. In H. Tajfel (Ed.). *The Social Dimension: European Developments in Social Psychology* (pp. 379 – 404). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [28]. Hewstone, M. (1990). The ultimate attribution error; A review of the literature on the intergroup causal attribution. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 20, 311 – 335.
- [29]. Hong, Y., Dweck, C. S., Hi-yue Chu, L., Derrick, M. S., & Wan, W. (1999). Implicit theories, attributions and coping: A meaning system approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 588 – 599.
- [30]. Hsieh, P. & Schallert, D. L. (2008). Implications from self efficacy and attribution theories for an understanding of graduates' motivation in a foreign language course. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33(4), 513 – 532.
- [31]. Hornby, A. S. (2000). *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary*. UK: Oxford University Press.

- [32]. Johns, G. (1999). A multi-level theory of self serving behaviour in and by organizations. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.) Research in *Organizational Behaviour*, 21, 1 – 38.
- [33]. Kamins, M., & Dweck, C. S. (1999). Person vs process praise and criticism: Implications for contingent self worth and coping. *Developmental Psychology* 35, 835 – 847.
- [34]. Kingdon, J. W. (1967). Politicians' belief about voters. *American Political Science Review*, 61, 137 – 145.
- [35]. Kluegel, J., & E. Smith (1986). Belief about inequality: American's view of what ought to be New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- [36]. Kristner, J., Osborne, M., Le Verrier, L. (1988). Casual attribution of LD children: Developmental Patterns and relation to academic progress. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80, 82 – 89.
- [37]. Kruger, J. (1999). Lake Wobegon be go ne the “below-average effect” and the egocentric nature of comparative ability judgements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77, 221 – 232.
- [38]. Litwin, M.S (1995). *How to measure survey reliability and validity*. Thousand Oaks , CA: Sage.
- [39]. Major, B., Scracchitano, A. M., & Crocker, J. (1993). In-group versus out-group comparisons and self-esteem. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19, 711 -721.
- [40]. Malle, B. F. (2001). Attribution process; In N. J. Semelser, & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences 14, Developmental, Social, personality, and motivational psychology*, (Section editor N. Eisenberg, (pp. 913 – 917). Amsterdam: Pergamum/Elsevier.
- [41]. McFarland, C., & Buchler, R. (1995). Collective self-esteem as a moderator of the frog-pond effect in reactions to performance feedback. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 1056 – 1070.
- [42]. McNabb, T. (2003). Motivational issues! Potential to performance. In N Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds.) handbook of gifted education (3rd ed. Pp. 417 – 423). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- [43]. Mitchell, M. L & Jolley, J.M (2004). *Measuring and manipulating variables : Reliability and Validity*. Research Design Explained 5th edition (pp, 104 & 536).
- [44]. Mucller, C. M., & Dweck C. S. (1998). Intelligence can undermine motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 33 – 52.
- [45]. Murray, J., Thompson M. E. (2009). An application of attribution theory to clinical judgement. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 3, 96 – 104.
- [46]. Nelson, L. J., & Cooper, J. (1997). Gender differences in children's reaction to success and failure with computers. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 13, 247 – 267.
- [47]. Pettigrew, T. F. (1979). The ultimate attribution error: Extending Allport's cognitive analysis of prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 5, 461 – 476.
- [48]. Pintrich, P. R. & Schunk, D. (2002). *Motivation education, theory, research, and application* (2nd ed.) Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall.
- [49]. Rosnow, R.L & Rosenthal, R: (2005). *Beginning behavioral research: A conceptual primer* (5th ed). Upper saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- [50]. Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal vs external enforcement. *Psychological Monographs*, 80(1), 609.
- [51]. Salancik, G. R., & Meindl, J. R. (1984). Corporate attributions as strategic illusions of management control. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29, 238 – 254.
- [52]. Shaver, K. G. (1975). *An introduction to attribution process*, Cambridge Winthrop Publisher.
- [53]. Shunk, D. H. (1981). Modeling and attributional effects on children's achievement: A self- efficacy analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73, 93 – 105.
- [54]. Shunk, D. H. (1984). Enhancing self-efficacy and achievement through rewards and goals: Motivational and informational effects. *Journal of Educational Research*, 78, 29 -34.
- [55]. Siegle, D., & Mc Coach, D. B. (2007). Increasing student mathematics self-efficacy through teacher training. *Journal of Advance Academics*, 18, 278 – 312.
- [56]. Siegle, D., & Ries, S. M. (1998). Gender differences in teacher and student participations of students' ability and effort. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 42, 39 -47.
- [57]. Skaalvik, E. (1994). Attribution of perceived achievement in school in general and in math and verbal areas: relations with academic self-concept and self-esteem. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 64, 133 – 143.
- [58]. Smith, E. R., & Henry, S. (1996). An in-group becomes part of the self: Response time evidence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 635 – 642.
- [59]. Sweeney P. D., Moreland R. L., Gruber, K. L. (2005). Gender differences in performance attributions – Student explanations for personal success or failure. *Sex Roles*, 8(4), 359 – 373.
- [60]. Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). Social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In W. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.) *Psychology of intergroup relations* (2nd ed., pp. 7 – 24). Chicago: Nelson. Hall.
- [61]. Tindale, R. S., Kulik, C. T., & Scott, L. A.(1991). Individual and group feedback and performance: An attributional perspective. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 12, 41 – 62.
- [62]. Thompson, S. C., Armstrong, W., & Thomas, C. (1998). Illusions of control, underestimations and accuracy: A control heuristic explanation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 123, 143 – 161.
- [63]. Thorn, D.W & Deitz, J.C (1989). Examining content validity through the use of content experts. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 9(6), 334-346.
- [64]. Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A Self categorization Theory*. New York Blackwell.
- [65]. Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at university: Exploring the role of motivational thinking In Z. Dornyei, & R. Schmidt (Eds.) *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 93 – 126) Honolulu. University of Hawaii.
- [66]. Vispoel, W., & Austin, J. (1995). Success and failure in junior high school: A critical incident approach to understanding students attributional beliefs. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(2), 377 – 412.
- [67]. Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research*. Newbury Park, SAGE.
- [68]. Weiner, B. (1986). *An attribution theory of emotion and motivation*. New York. Springer - Verlag.
- [69]. Weiner, B. (2000). Intrapersonal and interpersonal theories. *Educational Psychology, Review*, 12, 1 – 14.
- [70]. Williams, M., Burden, R., & Al-Baharna, S. (2001). Making sense of success and failure. The role of the individual in motivation theory. In Z. Dornuei & R. Schmidst Eds., *Motivation and second language acquisition* pp. 171 – 184. Honolulu, University of Hawaii.
- [71]. Zaccaro, S. J., Peterson, C., & Walker, S. (1987). Self-servicing attributions for individual and group performance. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 50, 257 – 263.

[72]. Zuckerman, M. (1979). Attribution of success and failure revisited, or: The motivational bias is alive and well in attribution theory. *Journal of Personality*, 47, 245 – 287.

APPENDIX

Dear respondent, this is strictly for research purpose. There is neither right nor wrong answer. Please respond by ticking the appropriate responses that are applicable to you. Thank you for your cooperation.

SECTION A (INTERNAL ATTRIBUTION OF SUCCESS)

Please tick (4) at the end of each statement the appropriate option that describes you.

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The student succeeded because of his/her abilities					
2	The student succeeded because of his/her efforts					
3	The student succeeded because of his/her skills					
4	The student succeeded because of hard work					
5	The student succeeded because of his/her intelligence					
6	The student succeeded because of his/her competence					

SECTION B (EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTION OF SUCCESS)

Please tick (4) at the end of each statement the appropriate option that describes you.

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The student succeeded because the task (exam) was easy					
2	The student succeeded because of luck					
3	The student succeeded because the quiz is not difficult					
4	The student succeeded because the quiz covered what he/she read					
5	The student succeeded because of good teachers					
6	The student succeeded because of he/she was helped by other students					

SECTION C (INTERNAL ATTRIBUTION OF FAILURE)

Please tick (4) at the end of each statement the appropriate option that describes you.

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The student failed because of his/her ability					
2	The student failed because of his/her inadequate efforts					
3	The student failed because of his/her poor skills					
4	The student failed because of laziness					
5	The student failed because he/she is not intelligent					
6	The student failed because he/she are not competent					

SECTION D (EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTION OF FAILURE)

Please tick (4) at the end of each statement the appropriate option that describes you.

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The student failed because the tasks (exam) was difficult					
2	The student failed because of bad luck					
3	The student failed because quiz is not easy					
4	The student failed because the questions did not cover what he/she read					
5	The student failed because of not having good teacher					
6	The student failed because he/she was not helped by other students					

Jane Okolo"Attribution Of Success And Failure In A Task: Is Group Membership A Determinant?." International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI) , vol. 07, no. 08, 2018, pp. 25-34.